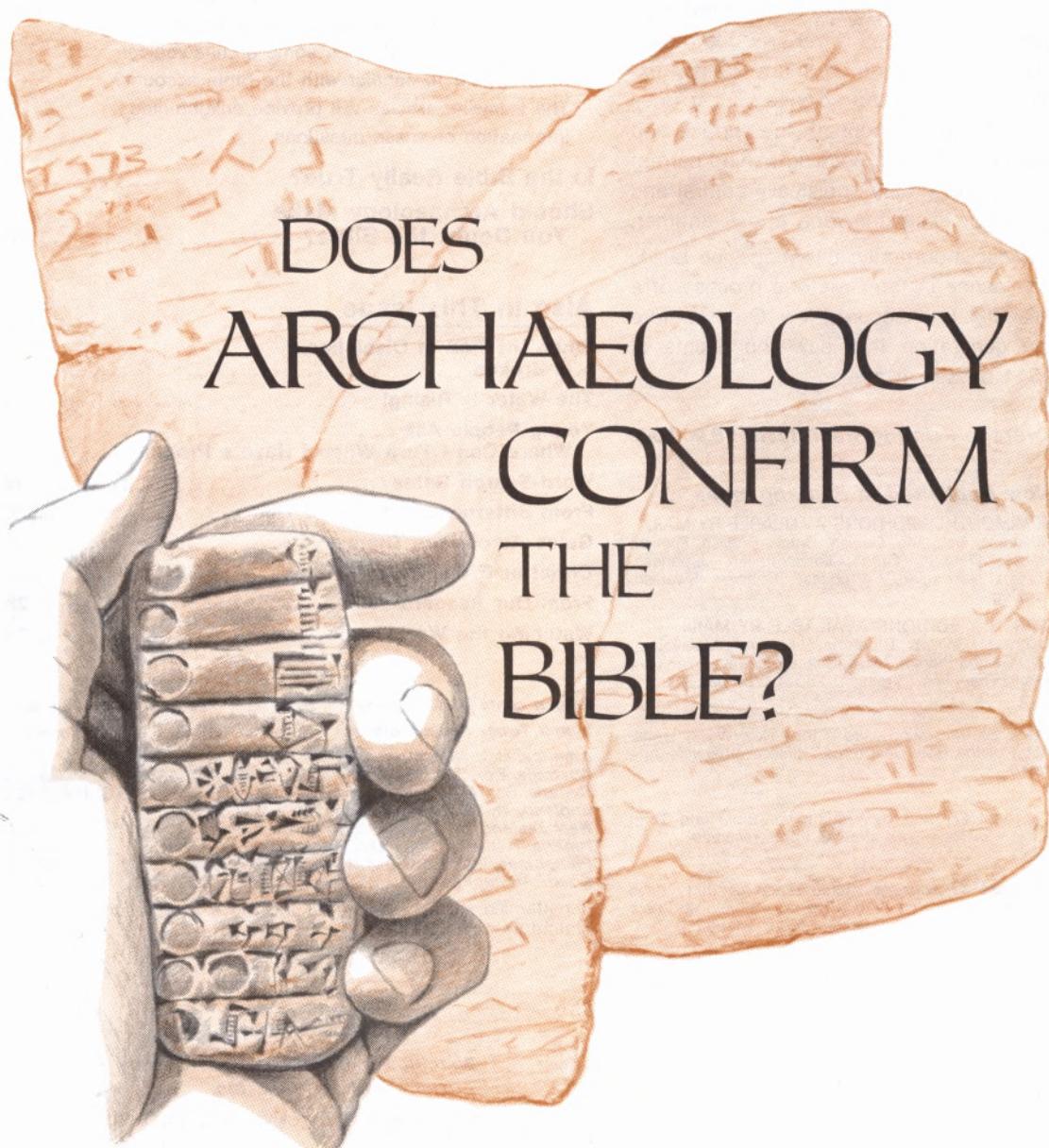


# ***Awake!***

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JULY 8, 1983



DOES  
ARCHAEOLOGY  
CONFIRM  
THE  
BIBLE?

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AWAKE! is 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 stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

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## Feature Articles

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# IS THE BIBLE REALLY TRUE?

'People back then in Bible times were ignorant and superstitious. They could not read or write. They just passed on history by word of mouth. So how can the Bible really be true?'

Have you ever felt that way about the Bible?

MANY sincere persons have. Others, of course, just use such reasoning as a means of evading responsibility. But is it true that society was so primitive and ignorant in Bible times?

In recent years excavations in Ebla, Syria, have uncovered a library of over 16,500 cuneiform tablets (wedge-shaped writing in clay) and fragments depicting many aspects of life in that area. What is the period they cover? The most recent estimates of the archaeologists indicate the third millennium before our Common Era (B.C.E.).

What do they tell us about that ancient human society? Was it primitive, ignorant and illiterate? Philologist Giovanni Pettinato states: "We can already deduce from the initial study of the material that Ebla was a highly industrialized state whose economy was not based on agriculture and sheep-rearing but rather on industrial products and international trade."

What kind of information was stored

in that extensive official library? Scholar Pettinato explains: "70 percent of the texts preserved are economic-administrative . . . Another 10 percent are historical and, containing important international treaties, were jealously to be guarded. A good 20 percent are literary."

Whether this library at Ebla will cast light on Bible events and places remains to be seen. However, the point is made that life was not so primitive over four thousand years ago as some would have us believe.

## *Is There Proof of the Bible's Accuracy?*

Now the question is: Do any ancient cuneiform writings and inscriptions cast light on what the Bible presents as history? Let us examine a few brief examples from the Bible record. First, consider a case from the Israelite conquest of Canaan in the 14th century B.C.E.

1. "Joshua turned about at that time and captured Hazor . . . and he burned Hazor in the fire."—Joshua 11:10, 11.

In 1928 the late professor John Garstang identified Tell-el-Qedah, north of the Sea of Galilee, as the site of the Canaanite city of Hazor. During the period of 1955-58 a team of archaeologists excavated the site. A cuneiform tablet was found there that establishes its identification as Hazor. And "in the southwest corner of the lower City were found Canaanite houses . . . The city level of which these houses formed part . . . showed signs of violent destruction and abandonment. This now fits excellently with the tradition of its capture by Joshua after the Exodus." (*Illustrations of Old Testament History*, R. D. Barnett) This clearly supports the Bible's accuracy.

2. In the book of Ezra the Bible tells

us that Cyrus, king of Persia and conqueror of Babylonia, issued an edict of religious freedom that allowed the Jewish exiles to return to their former lands and reestablish their form of worship. (Ezra 1:1-3) Is there any proof of this policy of religious tolerance that contrasts so vividly with that followed earlier by Babylon and Assyria?

In 1879 H. Rassam, excavating in Babylon on behalf of the British Museum, discovered what is known as the Cyrus Cylinder, inscribed in cuneiform writing. In 1970 an additional fragment was identified as belonging to that cylinder. Thus another part of the text was restored. What does the translation of the text's conclusion indicate?

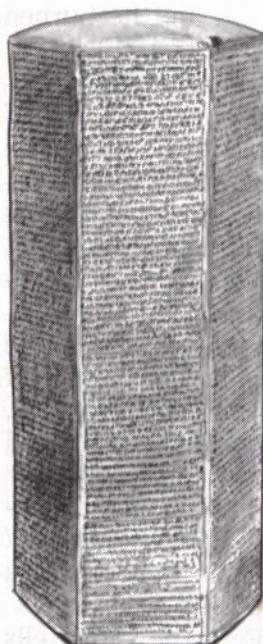
"As far as Ashur and Susa, Agade, Eshnunna . . . as well as the region of the Gutians, I returned to these sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the

sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I (also) gathered all their (former) inhabitants and returned (to them) their habitations."

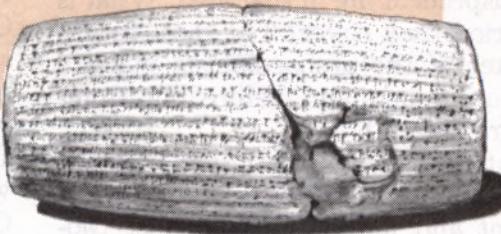
This cuneiform text is a remarkable confirmation of the Bible's accuracy regarding Cyrus' tolerant policy toward foreign religions.

3. The Bible states that "in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib the king of Assyria came up against all the fortified cities of Judah and proceeded to seize them." In the face of this threat Hezekiah opted to pay a tribute to Sennacherib. "Accordingly the king of Assyria laid upon Hezekiah the king of Judah three hundred silver talents and thirty gold talents."—2 Kings 18:13-16.

Are these events confirmed by any other source? During 1847-51 the British



**The Cyrus Cylinder confirms Cyrus' religious tolerance**



**The Taylor Prism parallels the Bible account of tribute paid to Sennacherib**

archaeologist A. H. Layard discovered, in the ruins of Sennacherib's palace, what is now known as King Sennacherib's Prism or the Taylor Prism. In cuneiform writing it presents Sennacherib's version of his exploits. Is Hezekiah mentioned? Does it say anything about the tribute? A translation reads:

"As for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, 46 of his strong, walled cities, as well as the small cities in their neighbourhood, . . . I besieged and took." The account continues, "Himself like a caged bird, I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city." Please note that Sennacherib does not claim he conquered Jerusalem, which agrees with the Bible account. But what about the tribute? "I added to the former tribute, and laid upon him as their yearly payment, a tax . . . 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver . . . [and] all kinds of valuable treasures." The Bible version clearly agrees with Sennacherib's Prism except in the value of the tribute of silver. Should that make us doubt the Bible's accuracy? Why should we believe Sennacherib's boastful version rather than the low-key Bible account?

In Sennacherib's Prism account he also claims that he took 200,150 prisoners from Judah, while the Bible record shows he himself suffered a terrible loss of 185,000 soldiers in one night. (2 Kings 18:13-19:36) How can we account for these differences?

In his book *Light From the Ancient Past* Professor Jack Finegan speaks of the "general note of boasting which pervades the inscriptions of the Assyrian kings." Professor Olmstead, in *Assyrian Historiography*, offers the opinion: "When Sennacherib tells us that he took from . . . Judah no less than 200,150 pris-

oners, and that in spite of the fact that Jerusalem itself was not captured, we may deduct the 200,000 as a product of the exuberant fancy of the Assyrian scribe and accept the 150 as somewhere near the actual number captured."

Evidently exaggerated war reports are not something peculiar to the 20th century! And the failure to recognize a crushing defeat in an official annal is nothing new. But the point is that the inscription on the Taylor Prism points to the Bible's accuracy!

4. Let us take one more example of Bible history confirmed. When the Israelites occupied the Promised Land over 3,400 years ago, the tribe of Dan took over territory to the north of Galilee. The Bible's record says:

"And the sons of Dan proceeded to go up and war against [the Canaanite city of] Leshem [Laish] and to capture it . . . and they began to call Leshem Dan, according to the name of Dan their forefather."—Joshua 19:47; Judges 18:29.

Did such a city ever exist? Was it ever called Dan? At Tell el-Qadi, in 1976, archaeologist Avraham Biran discovered a limestone slab with an inscription in Greek and Aramaic. The Greek text refers to a person named Zoilos who made a vow to the "god who is in Dan." Thus archaeologists know they are working on the site of the ancient Israelite city of Dan, formerly known as Laish or Leshem. Once again the Bible is shown to be accurate. This could be further illustrated with many more examples from archaeological findings if space permitted.

### ***Is the Bible a Reliable Basis?***

In fact, time and again the Bible has been used by archaeologists to establish the geographical location of many an-

cient sites. The value of the Bible in this respect is highlighted by archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni, who wrote: "The Bible still remains the main source for historical geography of Palestine during the Israelite period. Its narratives and descriptions reflect their geographical environment as well as the historical events that took place. It contains references to some 475 local geographical names, many of them in contexts which supply pertinent details about the nature, location and history of the place." This is

true in spite of the fact that "the Bible is neither a textbook on geography nor an encyclopedia."

The more one delves into the facts and artifacts related to the Bible the deeper becomes one's appreciation of its accuracy. But facts and artifacts are one thing. Interpretation, theory and speculation are another. Are the archaeologists always united in their interpretations? Are they always completely objective? Are their theories to be preferred over the Bible's historical account?

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## SHOULD ARCHAEOLOGY MAKE YOU DOUBT THE BIBLE?



**W**HY is archaeology of interest today? Because it is a valuable tool in the investigation of man's past. For example, through it the geography and history of the Bible lands and their peoples are clarified. It relies heavily on the exact sciences and aims to achieve their standard of accuracy. But there is one principal factor working against such achievement—the human factor. Every archaeologist has beliefs, whether he or she be atheist, agnostic, Christian, Jew or Muslim. To what extent will those beliefs or preconceived ideas influence his or her interpretations? Could this hinder their arriving at accurate conclusions?

Archaeological research is a form of

detective work. Circumstantial evidence, in the form of artifacts and remains (pottery, fragments, ruins, debris from previous civilizations, skeletons and the like), is dug up. Then the deduction phase begins: What was the original from which the fragment came? Into which time period could its shape, color and composition be fitted? What was its use? What was its place of origin—the location where it was discovered or somewhere else? Did it originate in the soil stratum in which it was found or has it sunk into a lower level with the passing of time due to local conditions? These and many other factors can influence an interpretation. The conclusions are therefore based on circumstantial evidence and a mixture of objective and subjective interpretation.

How right the Hebrew archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni was when he wrote: "When it comes to historical or historio-geographical interpretation, the archaeologist steps out of the realm of the exact sciences, and he must rely upon value judgements and hypotheses [tentative assumptions] to arrive at a comprehensive historical picture."

What are some of the pitfalls that can exist when evaluating the finds from excavations? Professor Aharoni answers: "The excavator must distinguish carefully between the various strata of his tell [a mound covering the ancient ruins of a city] . . . This is usually not an easy task, because the actual levels in a particular tell are not uniformly laid one above the other. . . . Usually inscriptions only furnish a *terminus a quo* [starting point] for their own stratum because the possibility always exists that the inscribed objects saw a long period of use, or even re-use, after being discarded by the original owners. . . . Comparison with other

countries is also sometimes dangerous, for one may fall into a vicious circle where the objects in the other culture may have been dated by their relationship to the

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## **Are Christians to believe that the Bible is just a 'literary masterpiece' with no relationship to factual experience?**

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Palestinian, without sufficient regard for the circumstances of discovery and the relative chronologies involved. *It goes without saying that historical considerations are especially risky, since they always involve certain presuppositions and subjective attitudes.* We must always remember, therefore, that *not all dates are absolute and are in varying degrees suspect.*"—Italics ours.

### **How Did the Israelites Cross the Red Sea?**

The foregoing warnings are very appropriate today when so many archaeologists are coming out in print with their conflicting findings, theories and chronologies. Let us take as an example the Israelite exodus from Egypt and escape through the Red Sea. The Bible record clearly indicates that the Egyptian chariots and cavalry pursued Israel and got close to them as they reached the Red Sea. How could the Israelites escape with the sea blocking their path? The Bible account answers:

"Moses now stretched his hand out over the sea; and Jehovah began making the sea go back [how?] by a strong east wind all night long and converting the sea basin into dry ground, and the

waters were being split apart. At length the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on dry land, while the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left."—Exodus 14:21, 22.

Please note the specific details of this account. It speaks not just of a strong wind but of a "strong *east* wind." The waters were split apart, converting the sea basin into dry ground. This attention to detail bespeaks an eyewitness account, even as does the poetic version of the event in the song of Moses, related in Exodus chapter 15. As Pharaoh's chariots and military forces rushed into the same gap in pursuit of the Israelites, "the surging waters proceeded to cover them; down they went into the depths like a stone."—Exodus 15:5.

The method of parting the waters is confirmed in the song: "And by a breath from your nostrils waters were heaped up; they stood still like a dam of floods; the surging waters were congealed in the heart of the sea."—Exodus 15:8.

### **What Do the Scholars Say?**

Several experts have come up with varied theories to rationalize this miraculous event. They do not necessarily attempt to say that the Israelites did not cross the Red Sea but try to explain away the divine intervention. For example, the Hebrew words for Red Sea are *yam suph*, "sea of rushes or reeds." Thus some say that the Israelites only crossed a swampy region. But a swampy region would hardly allow for a wall of water to the right and to the left as the account says. The waters of a swamp certainly would not 'cover the war chariots and the cavalrymen' of Egypt's military force.—Exodus 14:28.

Another theory was recently proposed

by Hans Goedcke, an Egyptologist. His explanation of the Exodus account is that in 1477 B.C.E. there was a tremendous volcanic eruption on the island of Thera, some 500 miles (800 km) to the northwest of the supposed Israelite crossing point. It created a tsunami, or huge sea wave, that could have swept over the southeast Mediterranean and rolled into the Nile delta to the edge of the desert plateau. This, theoretically, would have drowned the Egyptians on low ground, leaving safe the Israelites who supposedly were on higher ground.

It is self-evident that this theory pays scant attention to the facts as presented in the Bible. But what have other scholars thought of Dr. Goedcke's theory? Charles Krahmalkov of the University of Michigan rejected it, partly because "in none of the Biblical descriptions of the Exodus is there anything remotely suggesting a huge wave." He then went on to offer an alternative theory to the effect that the Israelites took to sea by boat and that the Egyptians followed them and were drowned by gale-force winds that sank their barges! He then added: "Needless to say, the reconstruction is pure conjecture. But it is far better grounded in the Biblical text than is Professor Goedcke's version." That surely is a matter of opinion.

A third scholar, Eliezer D. Oren of the Ben Gurion University of the Negev, argued strongly against the theory of a tsunami and suggested yet another that he considered even more realistic. However, he added the following significant statement: "We ought not to forget that [it] . . . can in no way be substantiated by archaeological evidence. Personally, I strongly believe that the Miracle of the Sea—a masterpiece of literary composi-



**How did the Israelites really cross the Red Sea?**

tion—has very little to do with history or . . . ‘factual experience.’”

### **Who Is Right?**

Dr. Oren’s remark brings us to the crux of the matter. Are Christians to believe that major portions of the Bible are just ‘literary masterpieces’ with no relationship to “factual experience”? Or can they rely on the Bible as the inspired Word of God? Should we be swayed by the conflicting theories of archaeologists and scholars? Or should we accept as reliable the testimony of the Bible writers and Jesus Christ himself?

The apostle Paul wrote to his fellow Christian Timothy: “From infancy you have known the holy writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through the faith in connection with Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial . . . for setting things straight.” Earlier, to the believers in Rome, he stated: “What, then, is the case? If some did not express faith, will their lack of faith perhaps make the faithfulness of God without effect? Never may that happen! But let God be found true, though every man be found a liar.” —2 Timothy 3:15, 16; Romans 3:3, 4.

Why, then, do Jehovah's Witnesses believe the Bible to be inspired? Does their faith depend on archaeological findings? Briefly, the proof for inspiration is found in the Bible itself, not in archaeology. It is one thing to write accurate history; it is another to write accurate history *in advance*. That is prophecy. The Bible contains hundreds of fulfilled prophecies attesting to its divine authorship. For example, it has been estimated that 332 distinct prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus Christ alone.

Another powerful support of the Bible's authenticity is that its testimony is based on accounts supplied by actual eyewitnesses of the events, often the writer himself. This is the case with the Exodus account written by Moses. Do we have any reason to doubt his honesty

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**I**t has been estimated that 332 distinct prophecies of the Hebrew Scriptures were fulfilled in Jesus Christ alone

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as a witness? No, not when we also acknowledge that he was divinely inspired to write. (2 Timothy 3:16) His self-critical candor is also a fine testimony to his reliability. He does not hide the fact that he killed an Egyptian in defense of a fellow Israelite. Nor does he gloss over his lack of humility and his punishment when he called water from the rock. (Exodus 2:11, 12; Numbers 20:9-13; compare the case of David in 2 Samuel 11; Psalm 51.) For more detailed proof, please read *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* published by the Watchtower Society.

### **Should Theories Shake Your Faith?**

Christians are encouraged by the positive evidence unearthed by patient and skilled archaeologists, evidence that often confirms and elucidates the Bible's contents. Facts and artifacts can tell us a lot about the way of life in ancient times. Inscriptions can bring to bear valuable information. Of course, since very few people ever write an unfavorable autobiography, inscriptions have to be analyzed with great care.

However, when experts begin to offer their *interpretations* and *conjectures* and *theories* about the meaning of an archaeological discovery or the dating of an artifact, then the Christian is wise to proceed with caution. Jehovah inspired faithful men to write his Word but not to mislead us with literary fancies. Yohanan Aharoni was correct in stating: "Various passages [of the Bible] are considered by different scholars to be purely utopian or literary creations having no political, geographical or practical basis whatsoever. We seriously question the validity of this opinion; it appears that most of the geographical texts are taken from life situations, while only our *faulty understanding* and *insufficient information* prevent us from establishing their historical content."—Italics ours.

Present-day Biblical archaeology is apparently divided into two loosely defined camps. On the one hand we have the pious and patriotic investigators who seek support for the Bible record and their own national or ethnic claims. And on the other hand there is the camp of those who, in the words of Professor J. E. Barrett, are inclined "to debunk the piety, patriotism, or accepted wisdom of (usually older) colleagues." This same professor of archaeology adds: "There is

a strange kind of self-righteousness (not to mention sadistic glee) among those who assure us they are *not* pious. . . . The student of modern archaeology should

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**“P*iety, patriotism, ideology, training, and the opposite expressions of these, influence the archaeologist’s judgment, just as they do the historian’s”***

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be aware of these professional, in-house games of one-upmanship.”

We must remember that archaeologists are only human and, therefore, beset with all the foibles of imperfect human nature. Ambition, desire for glory, a competitive spirit, deep subjective involvement—these and other factors can influence an expert’s opinion or interpretation.

To illustrate this point, a prominent 19th-century archaeologist seriously overstated his case with regard to ancient jewelry he had discovered at Troy and golden face masks found at Mycenae. Regarding this overstatement a modern archaeology professor offered the following pointed comment: “These two instances illustrate the influence that a romantic interest in the ancient world can have on the judgment of an archaeologist—the temptation to identify what we find with *what we want to find*. Perhaps the problem is intensified for the Biblical archaeologist, whose piety and patriotism often nurture and renew the romantic interest which first moved him or her to become an archaeologist.” (Italics ours.) And of course the same

problem can also affect the agnostic or the atheist archaeologist, no matter how sincere he or she may be.

Should Christian faith waver, then, because of the theories presented by many scholars and archaeologists? Remember, they are only theories and human opinions, subject to change and the vagaries of time and scholarship. The human element, including its pride and ambition, is also very evident. What Professor Barrett wrote in *Biblical Archaeology Review* (January/February 1981) is true: “Piety, patriotism, ideology, training, and the opposite expressions of these, *influence the archaeologist’s judgment, just as they do the historian’s*. In candid moments, every professional archaeologist knows this—the best scholars know it about themselves; others only know it about their colleagues.”—Italics ours.

Therefore, the reasonable Christian will not expect absolute proof from archaeology for everything stated in the Bible, especially in this imperfect system of things. Nevertheless, he knows the time will soon come when it will be possible to check out perfectly so many of the persons and events related in the Bible. How so? “Because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus Christ’s] voice and come out.” (John 5:28, 29) Yes, in the resurrection it will be possible to question those who actually lived Bible history. How fascinating it will be to hear them fill out the details of so many accounts that intrigue us today! It will no longer be a matter of resorting to human theories and speculation for those details. The very eyewitnesses of the events will present the facts! Will you be there to hear them?

# When the Rod of Discipline Is Broken

“**W**ILL we be opening up shelters for mistreated parents by the year 2000?” asked French psychologist Jean-Pierre Chartier. The reason for this question? Evidence that a disturbing number of children are not only disobedient but abusive to their parents. In his book *Les parents martyrs* Chartier tells of teenagers who have written their parents threatening letters or have even blackmailed them. As to the reason for this phenomenon, Chartier says it is that parents have failed to impart to their children a set of standards to live by. “In some cases,” says he, “it might have been better had they boxed their ears a few times.”

Perhaps you disagree with these sentiments. The unmistakable trend in many parts of the world is for parents to go easy on the old-fashioned rod of discipline, lest they ‘retard their child’s development,’ ‘stunt his personality’ or ‘infringe on his “human rights.”’

Nevertheless, many are disillusioned with liberal child-rearing theories. A 1980 poll, for example, revealed that six out of every ten citizens in the European community felt that parents nowadays are too lenient. “More and more,” said Germany’s *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, “child training has become a matter of simply letting everything run its natural course.” What has resulted? According to John O’Malley, a psychia-

trist recently quoted in *Time* magazine, permissive child rearing has produced teenagers “less respectful and responsive to parental authority. Children do not have firm limits, including standards of behavior.”

Parental disapproval notwithstanding, many youths blatantly take drugs and engage in illicit sex. And if not engaging in such overt acts, some nevertheless manifest a defiant attitude toward their parents. Psychoanalyst Benjamin Wolman thus claimed that parents who fail to teach their children obedience “are raising wild weeds.” He condemns the “do-as-you-please concept” because it “prevents the child’s growth,” provides him with “no inhibitions, no self-restraints,” and possibly sets the stage for later antisocial conduct.

A tragedy that recently took place in Germany illustrates just how antisocial an undisciplined child can become. In this case a 15-year-old carefully planned and executed his mother’s murder. Police officials reported that instead of being remorseful, the boy expressed disappointment that a similar attempt to kill his father had failed.

## Getting Tough

Because so many parents are finding it difficult to raise their children, organizations designed to help parents are springing up rapidly. In the United

States the organization *Families Anonymous* conducts group discussions with parents, friends and relatives of youths with problem behavior.

Another self-help organization, however, tries a firmer approach. It is appropriately named Toughlove. "Drawing the line against out-of-control youngsters and forcing them to behave" is its announced purpose. This it endeavors to do by helping parents set reasonable restrictions on wayward children's behavior—restrictions that are enforced. Member parents give mutual support and help. In just a year the group had by 1982 grown from 25 to 500 units in the United States and Canada.

Both organizations have claimed a measure of success in helping parents and their children. But the idea of disciplining one's children is hardly new. Long ago the Bible said: "Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy; the rod of discipline is what will remove it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15) So it is no surprise that self-help organizations that follow this wise advice experience a measure of success. However, does using the "rod of discipline" mean using brute force on your children?

### **Discipline—A Way of Life**

Some equate discipline with spanking. And, indeed, at times physical punishment has its place. But in the Bible, discipline also includes correction and training. For example, at Proverbs 8:33 the Bible says: "*Listen to discipline and become wise, and do not show any neglect.*" Discipline does not always have to be administered at the end of a strap. Talking with a child and sharing Bible-based counsel is often far more effective.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

Nevertheless, a young person needs more than rules and restrictions. He needs direction and purpose in his life. This only comes when parents impart a knowledge and appreciation of the Bible to their child. Once he is taught God's standards of conduct, he is able to avoid traps other youths may be ensnared in. (Proverbs 2:10-13) Rather than being confused as to which direction his life should take, the "reproofs of discipline" provide him a "way of life" that he can follow.—Proverbs 6:23.

So if "breaking"—failing to apply—the rod of discipline is not working with your children, try applying some Bible-based discipline. Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to show you how this can be done.



**Bible-based counsel is often more effective than the strap**

# The Water Is Rising!

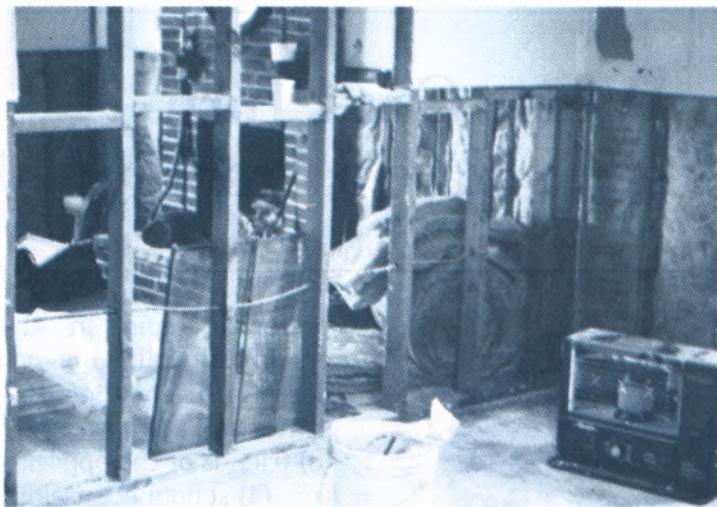


**B**ETWEEN Thursday, December 2, and the following Sunday of last winter, rainstorms poured up to 15 inches (38 cm) of water on some places of the Mississippi Valley, U.S.A. The ground, already drenched from previous winter rains, could absorb no more. Rivers bloated. Dams, reservoirs and levees filled with angry waters. Left in the storm's trail were 22 dead, 35,000 homeless, and 500 million dollars' worth of damage through the three Midwestern states of Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas. "This kind of storm, the worst in a century," said Governor James Thompson of Illinois, "just overwhelms what man can do."

The floodwaters rose rapidly, surprising many. One man from Arnold, Missouri, evacuated his house at 2:00 a.m., Monday, when the floodwaters reached his driveway. He escaped by car but re-

turned by rowboat. In less than eight hours, the waters climbed from his driveway to the roof of his one-story house!

From this widespread destruction came numerous stories of compassion. For example, in one inundated area near the city of St. Louis, Missouri, the Kingdom Hall of the Pacific Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses served as a hub for flood relief. Tuesday evening the city overseer for Jehovah's Witnesses in St. Louis and congregation elders met at the Kingdom Hall with Witness families who suffered flood damage. This was to assure the flood victims of full support from fellow Witnesses. Each family received work sheets for them to list their losses and needs, such as furniture, appliances and clothing. A flood relief fund was established from contributions. On Thursday a team of Witnesses surveyed each home to determine the extent of flood dam-



**Water-damaged paneling, insulation and flooring were torn out and replaced**

age and the amount of material required for repair. Next, a list of local Witnesses skilled in the construction trades was compiled.

That Saturday morning, converging at the Kingdom Hall were a hundred volunteer workers. The ordered building materials arrived too. All was ready for the reconstruction work. The volunteers were divided into two work teams. After a consideration of a Scriptural text and a prayer, the work started at 8:00 a.m.

Over a period of several days (in order to ensure drying from water damage), each work team did the following:

- Tore out paneling/Sheetrock and removed insulation.
- Installed new insulation, paneling/ Sheetrock.
- Taped, finished and painted Sheetrock.
- Removed old flooring; installed moisture barrier.
- Installed new flooring and carpet.

Donated food, clothing and furniture

brought to the Kingdom Hall was sorted and distributed to those in need. Volunteers soaked and laundered salvaged clothing, linens, curtains and other washable items. Pierre, a volunteer worker, said: "You felt an atmosphere of enthusiastic joy and willingness to help all around you." His brother David added: "Young and old worked together. An eight-year-old boy piled wood and then helped me with the Sheetrock." December 22 found most of the aided families back in their homes.

Such evidence of unselfish aid reminds Bible readers of a distinguishing mark of all true Christians—their willingness to help needy persons. "The kind of religion which is without stain or fault in the sight of God our Father is this: to go to the help of orphans and widows in their distress," wrote the Christian disciple James.—James 1:27, *The New English Bible*.

## In Our Next Issue

- *Do You Need a Marriage Counselor?*
- *God's Kingdom—How Real to You?*
- *Does the Devil Really Run Things?*

## Young People Ask...

# Where Can I Turn When I Have a Problem?

**M**OM finds boy, 11, hanged." Are not such newspaper reports painful? Just imagine—someone so young carrying such unresolved problems. Yet it is reported that every year about 2,000 young people in the United States between the ages of 10 and 19 actually kill themselves—twice the number known even ten years ago. Perhaps as many as 50 times this number attempt to do so.

"I didn't really want to die," admitted one 16-year-old girl who was seriously considering suicide. "I just wanted to end the pain and start over." Most young people are not thinking of suicide. But you must admit that many have intense emotional pain that can make life miserable. Fractured or strained relationships with other people (including parents), emphasis on sexual freedoms and school problems are but a few of their troubles. Whom do you turn to when faced with perplexing problems?

### Should I Look to My Peers?

In one study conducted with 14-year-old students, it was disclosed that they



prefer to confide in others in the following order: (1) friends of the same sex, (2) parents, (3) friends of the opposite sex, (4) school counselors and (5) teachers. As the book *Adolescence: Transition From Childhood to Maturity* comments: "It appears then that adolescents often seek help and guidance from their friends, who may be as painfully ignorant as they or even from newspaper columnists, whose answers may be inadequate for the individual's particular problem."

Anthony was one who turned to his peers because of a problem. Like most young people he wanted to be accepted, but he felt painfully inferior to others his age. This 13-year-old wanted to impress others by stylish clothing. But he needed money. He talked it over with his young friends. Their solution? They taught him to shoplift and mug people at knife point. By age 15 he had been arrested four times and had spent time in jail.

What has been your experience when you have sought advice from your peers?

Was it like Anthony's—a source of *more* problems? In Bible times a son of wise King Solomon made a similar mistake. When Rehoboam succeeded his father, Solomon, on the throne, the people pleaded with him to reduce their burdens. First Rehoboam consulted the older men, who counseled him to heed the cry of the people. But instead of following their advice he sought the counsel of "young men that had grown up with him." They told the king to say, 'I'll be even harder!' The result: a revolt that tore the nation of Israel in two.—1 Kings 12:8-17.

Rehoboam learned, the hard way, that advice not founded on experience and wisdom can lead to many sad consequences. But, then, *whom* can you go to that will really understand and give you the proper advice?

### **What About Your Parents?**

When asked how she went about getting advice for problems during her teenage years, without hesitating Susan said: "By communicating with my parents! I can't even think of a time when I have turned to a friend for advice. Whatever I asked my mother and father, even when I was little, I got an answer." Communication with her parents was a way of life.

But you may think of this family relationship as unrealistic. Some feel that asking parents for advice can be risky. If you don't follow it, parents may get angry. "If I ever talked to my mother about sex," bemoaned 14-year-old Betsy, "she would

think I was having it instead of just asking about it." According to a 1981 survey, most teenagers in the United States expressed the wish that their parents would listen to their explanations before passing judgment.

For instance, 16-year-old Petrina was deeply disturbed by the fact that some of her friends were cruelly gossiping about her. "I would wake up at six o'clock in the morning and just cry over the hurt," said Petrina. "But I felt that Mom wouldn't understand. And I didn't want to burden her with my problems."

But soon Petrina realized she couldn't handle her problem and confided in her mother. "It was as if someone had taken a huge load off me," continued Petrina. "Mom listened and she knew exactly what to do to solve the problem. After



**To become a musician, would you seek training from someone your own age?**

it was all settled I realized that while it was such a big problem to me, she had been through this before. Her *experience* was just what I needed."

If you want to master the skill of cooking, playing a musical instrument or operating intricate machinery, wouldn't you consult an experienced teacher? How much more so with the complex affairs of life? Remember that the long experience of your parents can be drawn on to solve your problems.

Yes, your parents can be a big help. Who knows you better than they do? Who appreciates your strengths and yet knows your weaknesses better than they? Who can give you support when you need to follow through on good advice?

True, not all parents discuss problems tactfully. Often this is because communication has been lacking over a period of time, then suddenly a major problem has to be dealt with. So work on improving communication. 'Give your heart' to your mom or dad. Confide in them whenever possible. The outcome will be a rich relationship that will help you to take small problems in stride and deal with serious problems in an atmosphere of understanding and love.—Proverbs 23:26.

### **Reaching Out for Bible-Based Help**

"Suddenly my whole world was turned upside down," stated Kay. At age 18 she found herself in the middle of her parents' divorce, and shortly thereafter her only brother, age 19, was killed in a tragic car accident. Two months later she learned that her father was dying of cancer. When Kay went to see him, her mother out of jealousy locked her out of the house—without clothing or belongings. Whom could she turn to?

For some time Kay had been one

of Jehovah's Witnesses and had appreciated the sincere concern the congregational elders had shown during her troublesome earlier years. Without hesitation she phoned one of these elders and explained her situation. He and his family opened up their home, making a place for her in the basement—for more than a year.

"The emotional pain was so intense that at times I wondered: 'What am I doing? What's the use of even being alive?'" explained Kay. However, the elder and his wife used the Bible to help her see the need of maintaining her high moral standards rather than just plunging into partying and sexual immorality as a way to escape the emotional hurt. Their help worked, for now Kay is happily married and well adjusted.

But you may feel somewhat embarrassed to discuss certain delicate problems. That is how 18-year-old Arlene felt. "I used to fantasize about boys. Since hardly any showed me much attention, I just craved for a man's affection," admitted Arlene. "But I could see what such affection could lead to—five of my six sisters had illegitimate babies. Yet I was ashamed to talk to anyone about these strong feelings." However, one of the congregational elders noticed that she seemed to have a weighty problem and he approached her. He expressed concern. Along with his wife he had weekly Bible discussions with her and through this help she was able to cope with her feelings.

As Arlene looks back today, she wonders why she didn't take steps to get help for herself. "Is there anyone [spiritually] sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him," urges the Bible. (James 5:14) However,

Arlene felt unworthy and so was afraid to approach the elders. Now her advice to other young people with similar feelings is: "Don't feel that way, because they really do care!" Where would Arlene be today without the Bible-based help she received? Her reply: "I would still be with my old girl friends and be pregnant by now."

Yes, God is indeed concerned about

young people—about you! He has lovingly made provision in the family arrangement as well as in the Christian congregation. If you have not become familiar with the helpful congregational arrangements available at your local Kingdom Hall, we invite you to do so. Yes, there are people to turn to for help with life's problems. Learn by experience the great relief such help can bring.

**"He that is walking with wise persons  
will become wise, but he that is having  
dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly."  
—Proverbs 13:20**

## Word-Search Game

In this letter maze are hidden the names of 25 animals mentioned in the Scripture texts shown below. The names may be read forward, backward, up, down or diagonally. They are always in a straight line, and letters are not skipped. See how many you can find and encircle.

### CLUES

1. Numbers 21:4-9
2. Genesis 22:13
3. Jonah 1:17
4. Numbers 22: 21-35
5. Genesis 8:8-12
6. 1 Kings 17:6
7. 1 Samuel 17: 34-37
8. 2 Kings 9:36
9. Judges 15:4, 5
10. Daniel 6:4-27
11. Matthew 21:1-9
12. Exodus 7:8-10
13. Exodus 8:2-15
14. Exodus 8:16-19
15. Exodus 8:21-24
16. Exodus 10:13-15
17. Genesis 24:64
18. Jonah 4:7
19. Exodus 15:1, 21
20. 2 Samuel 12:1-6
21. Genesis 4:2
22. Numbers 19:2-10
23. Leviticus 16:11
24. Genesis 37:31
25. Numbers 11:32

Solutions on page 26.





# From Bitterness to Love for God

**O**URS is a neighborhood in Paris where 30-story apartment buildings tower over others only half as tall. Compared to such buildings I am very small, a woman of 1.2 meters—not quite four feet tall.

When I was born, in 1942, I was, I am told, the largest baby in the family, but unfortunately also the weakest. Eight days after my birth my mother, seeing that I resembled a doll with dislocated arms, went to see a doctor. He diagnosed the disorder as Lobstein's disease,\* which meant that I would remain an invalid all my life. Later, as was to be expected, I broke my legs dozens of times. They became deformed and grew very little. I could not walk.

In spite of my condition I was able to go to a regular school that had three classes reserved for the handicapped. Every morning I would be picked up, and in the evening, brought home. At the age of 14 I left school to enter a hospital center run by nuns in Paris. I stayed there

several years, since in this establishment Professor Jean Ducroquet, a great bone specialist, practiced. To him I owe one of my greatest joys: that of being able to walk a little. In order to do this I underwent several operations and long months immobilized in a cast, followed by interminable and painful periods of rehabilitation. As I grew up I realized that I was not like others and that I could not experience the same joys they did. What is more, I could see no solution to the problem.

It should not be hard for you to understand why I developed bitterness during my early life. But I managed to fight this feeling and come to love the true God. How was this possible?

### **Catholic Teaching Did Not Help Me**

During my stay at the center I became better acquainted with the Catholic religion. I had been baptized, but as my father was a communist I had not been reared to believe in God. Therefore, I proclaimed myself an atheist. Like many people I believed in the theory of evolution that I had been taught in school.

As you might imagine, when the nuns spoke to me of a God of love I responded with bitterness: "Why has your God allowed me to be born with such a handicap?" The answer they gave surprised me: "Because he loves you." What an absurdity! I refused to accept this idea of a God who would make those he loves

\* Bone fragility characterized by multiple fractures of the extremities.

suffer. For me religion was just a question of money and polite custom. However, at the age of 16 I did have my first Communion so as not to disappoint the nuns.

### **Learning a Trade**

Back home again, I wanted to enter into normal life. I took stenography and then was placed in a new school at Choisy-sur-Seine for classes in bookkeeping. I obtained a diploma in this field. At that time I realized that because of my condition no one wanted to hire me.

How do you find work when you are afflicted with dwarfism and with the incapability of using your legs? It wasn't easy. In addition I had to find a company that was not too far from home because at that time I got around in a manual tricycle, which tired me a lot.

Several months went by before I found work. While I was waiting I knitted articles for a small shop. Finally, on January 10, 1966, I entered the bookkeeping department of a publishing house—really a great joy for me. At last I worked like everyone else. I stayed there for seven years. I have not worked since 1973 but live on a pension the State gives because of my infirmity.

### **First Contact With Jehovah's Witnesses**

I was still living with my mother when I was first visited by Jehovah's Witnesses. I accepted two magazines, especially because the contribution was minimal, but I didn't read them. Later my mother and I moved—each one of us living alone.

One Saturday two other Witnesses came to the door of my new apartment. I accepted the magazines, but again I did not read them. Feeling no particular

affinity for religion, I decided I would not open the door when they came back the following Saturday. But I changed my mind, thinking it would not be very polite not to open my door, when I had agreed to the visit.

I must have told them the things that I believed at that time—and that many others believe—that the Bible was written by men and that man descended from a monkey. But what they said whetted my curiosity a great deal. The young lady showed me that there *are* reasons to believe in a Creator. She used Sir Isaac Newton's reasoning regarding the solar system, related in the book *Did Man Get Here by Evolution or by Creation?*\* This logic touched me and made me begin to doubt my conviction that there is no God.

She also explained that God had promised to abolish all the ills of humanity. She reminded me that when Jesus was on earth he had healed all sorts of infirmities. During the visit she showed me three books that discussed the things we were talking about. What struck me the most was the hope of eternal life. I asked: "Do you hope to live forever?" "Yes, of course!" she answered, and she showed me in the Bible the reason for her conviction. "And yet," I thought, "this girl seems to be neither a bigot nor an idiot." I believe it was her good personal appearance and balanced attitude that prompted me to accept the Bible study she offered. As she was leaving she offered me the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, and I asked: "Couldn't I have all three?"

What pleased me was that the study

\* Newton pointed out that inasmuch as it took a skillful mechanic to make a simple hand-cranked model of the solar system, it is foolish to think the real thing came into existence with no designer and no maker.

was free. I was not stingy, but I felt that religion was much too concerned with money. I already had a Bible that a colleague had given me. I had tried to read it but without success. When I got to the genealogies in Genesis I stopped. So, since I was offered a Bible study, why should I refuse? Possibly I was not 100-percent atheist. Perhaps unconsciously I was looking for something else, but religion hadn't seemed able to offer a remedy for my problems. To the contrary, handicapped believers had not generally seemed to be any happier than I was.

### ***Learning to Love God and His People***

The Bible study enabled me to go deeper into the thoughts the young lady had expressed. Logically I agreed with the reasoning and explanation given in the Bible at Romans 5:12: "That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." I understood that my physical handicap was one of the innumerable consequences of Adam's sin. I also accepted the hope of physical healing implied in texts such as Isaiah 35:6, where we are told: "At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness."

But the most difficult thing for me was to learn to love the divine Person whose name is Jehovah. I thought religion should not be a carrot waved in

front of a donkey, but I still wanted the benefits immediately. Later I tested the Bible teachings and saw that good things result from following them. For example, the endurance recommended in 1 Timothy 6:11 helped me mentally to live with my handicap.



**Colette Regnier  
witnessing from  
her wheelchair**

Often Jocelyne, the Witness who conducted my Bible study, invited me to meetings held at the Kingdom Hall. However, I had decided not to accept because I thought that this type of gathering resembled Catholic services. I did finally give in, and Jocelyne came for me in a taxi. I have to admit that I did not understand much of what was said during the talk that was given, but I was profoundly moved by the warm welcome I received. Although I knew no one, people came to shake my hand and to talk with me.

Another Witness and his family drove me home. He acted in a friendly manner, saying he would come for me the following week. I did not like to lie and had no valid objection, so I accepted. In this way, little by little, I regularly went to the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

My thankfulness to God increased as I benefited from his spiritual blessings. I realized that the Bible contained a solid moral foundation. It brought me many blessings. Now I knew what to do and what to believe. It was not just the hope of no longer being handicapped that won my devotion, although obviously that was important. I wanted to be comfort-

ed now, and I found comfort, thanks to the joy from the company of my newfound Christian companions, and the joy of being able to help others spiritually.

About 10 months after having begun the study of the Bible I was baptized, in August 1971.

### **My New Christian Life**

The group of high-rise apartment houses where I now live presents several advantages for me as I move about in my wheelchair. Using the elevators, I can contact many people who live nearby. I am well surrounded by three Christian families who live near me.

In April 1978, I had an operation on the tibia, which made it necessary for me to stay in a rest home for three months. There in the congregation I became acquainted with Christian brothers and sisters who invited me to their homes. Their kindness greatly touched

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**I tested the Bible teachings  
and saw that good things  
result from following them**

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me. While I was gone the Witnesses in my home congregation took advantage of my absence to wallpaper the studio apartment where I live. I am really blessed to receive such help.

In spite of my physical handicap I have found happiness in aiding my fellowman spiritually. Often people are astonished to see me at their door. Some think I have come to solicit. Others accept the Christian publications to please me. In rare cases people have become indignant, saying that Jehovah's Witnesses use a handicapped person to touch peo-

ple's hearts. However, most people are polite to me, and the name of Jehovah is particularly well known in my neighborhood. I "blossom" at the thought of being useful in placing Bible truth before those who do not know God.

Yes, Christianity brought me what I was really searching for—the "promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) In addition, since 1976 I have several times a year had the privilege of spending 60 hours a month in the preaching and teaching work. In fact, since September 1981 I have been able to increase that to about a hundred hours each month.

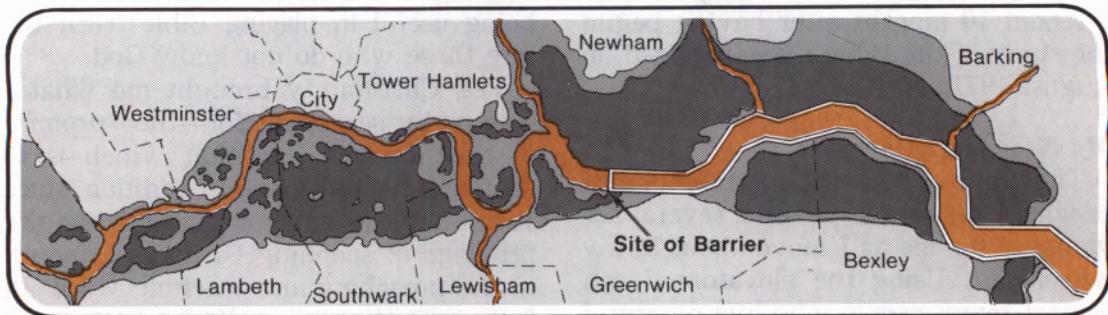
### **My Life Now Makes Sense**

In all, I have been operated on a dozen times—once on my arm, and 11 times on my legs. It still hurts when anyone refers to my small stature or my infirmity, but the hope the Bible gives me of regaining the use of my extremities makes me live.

When I begin to suffer from self-pity, I get out a file in which I keep encouraging articles from *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* These include "Values to Live By" and "Learning to Live With the Unchangeable." I also remember articles about other handicapped persons, such as the paralyzed Witness who, confined to his bed, listens and participates in the meetings by direct wire and serves as an elder in the congregation.\* Such examples help me realize that I can be happy in spite of my handicap. With the aid of the Bible and God's spirit, I have conquered my bitterness and lead a better and happier life.—*As told by Colette Regnier.*

\* *Awake!*, August 8, 1978, pages 3-5; *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1978, pages 3, 4, and November 15, 1979, pages 5, 6.

# Gates Across the Thames



By "Awake!" correspondent in Britain

**T**ONIGHT a million Londoners can sleep more soundly. Until now their lives and homes have been in danger. About 46 square miles (120 sq km) of Greater London are below highest tide levels. The lowest areas are shown in darkest shade on the map above. A serious flood would have caused damage costing at least £3,500 million (\$6,000 million, U.S.), paralysing a large part of the city. Today's answer is a barrier of ten floodgates across the Thames. These became operational in November 1982.

The Thames was not always the well-defined waterway that it is today. There was a time when the area from London to the sea was just a vast marshland, flooded periodically by peak tides. But as the city grew, more and more land was reclaimed and banks were built to keep it dry. Even so, peak tides sometimes breached or surmounted these man-made embankments. An Anglo-Saxon chronicle reported a severe flood in 1099. Later, historian John Stow wrote that in 1236 the Thames overflowed its banks and "a great number of inhabitants there were drowned and in the great Palace of

Westminster men did row with wherries in the midst of the hall."

Flooding became so frequent—every decade or so—that it seems to have been accepted as inevitable. For centuries, flood defence was left to individual land-owners who built and maintained the riverbanks to protect their own property. Then in 1879 an Act of Parliament made the local authority responsible. Still the flood danger increased.

Why? As the magazine *New Scientist* explains: "First, London is gradually sinking. Not only is the bed of clay on which it rests slowly compressing, but over the centuries the whole of Britain is tilting, with . . . the south-east gradually dipping at the rate of 30 cm [1 ft] per century. Secondly, tides in the North Sea are getting higher every year." This is thought to be due to the melting of the polar ice masses. And thirdly, the tidal range of the Thames—the volume of seawater flowing up and down the river—has increased. Repeated dredging and raised embankments have provided a deeper and clearer channel for it to race along. All these factors have com-

bined to raise the tide levels in the centre of London by some two and a half feet (76 cm) in the past hundred years.

### **Tidal Surges—The Real Danger**

The worst threat, though, comes from surges of water caused by storms in the North Sea. When a trough of low atmospheric pressure moves across the Atlantic and around the top of Scotland, it causes the sea beneath it to rise as a "hump" of water. When this huge volume of extra water is propelled by gales down the funnel-shaped North Sea and superimposed on a high tide, London is threatened. And further complications could arise if the freshwater river itself happened to be in spate because of heavy rain.

The last time that central London itself was flooded was in 1928. Fourteen people drowned, a great quantity of merchandise was ruined and enormous damage was done to buildings and installations. In 1953, farther downstream in the estuary, there was a still more disastrous flood, with 300 lives lost.

That same North Sea surge took 2,000 lives in the Netherlands. Central London, however, escaped as the defences there held. Then, on April 8, 1982, the city again came near to tragedy. A surge began coming down the North Sea, coinciding with a high spring tide. With only a few hours

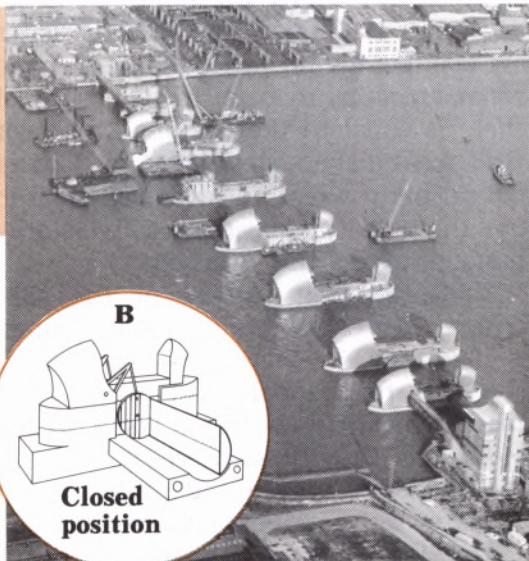
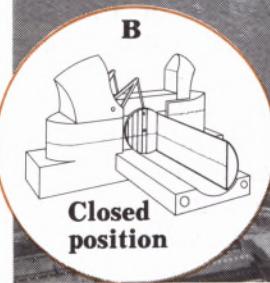
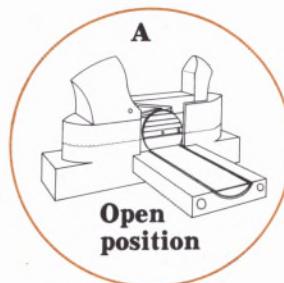
to spare, however, the wind changed and the emergency passed.

### **A Movable Barrier for Protection**

Something was needed that would protect London from flooding and yet keep the river open for shipping. Two options presented themselves. One was to raise the walls and embankments a further six and a half feet (2 m). The advantages would be that walls are easy to maintain and are not likely to fail through human error or mechanical breakdown. But to go on raising their height would make them an eyesore and block the view. So that idea was abandoned.

The other option was to erect some sort of barrier across the river and raise the flood defences downstream. The first proposal was for a dam with locks allowing ships to pass. For a century this scheme was stoutly opposed by dock owners who feared that cumbersome locks would drive shipping elsewhere. Later, the newly formed Port of London Authority also objected because a dam

- A. Gate out of action, recessed in the bed of the river**  
**B. Gate raised for flood protection, blocking water from the sea**



would greatly increase siltation in the river and mean immense dredging bills. After extensive discussion, along with a number of feasibility studies and experiments, it was decided to build a movable barrier that could, if necessary, be converted to a dam. In August 1972 an Act of Parliament opened the way for work to begin. The site chosen was at Silvertown on Woolwich Reach, some eight miles (13 km) downstream from Tower Bridge.

### **How It Works**

Put simply, the barrier consists of three main components: gates, sills and piers. The ten gates, side by side between the piers, span the river's width of 570 yards (520 m). Six of them are "rising sector" gates, as shown in the diagrams. These are designed to lie flat in sills recessed into the bed of the river when not in use. Thus they will not obstruct river traffic, the tides or the flow of the river itself. However, in the raised position they will provide protection from surge tides five and a half feet (1.7 m) higher than the disastrous 1953 tide. Four of these gates are 200 feet (61 m) wide, allowing ample room for ships to pass. In fact, each of them is equal to the opening of Tower Bridge. And these steel gates are 52 feet (16 m) high, which means that when in use they rise higher than a five-storey building above the riverbed.

An interesting feature of the sills, which with ballast weigh 23,000 tonnes, is that they do not depend on the soft riverbed for support. Like the gates themselves, their weight is borne by the piers. And they fit so precisely between the piers that only a negligible amount of water can pass between them.

The nine piers, with the enormous

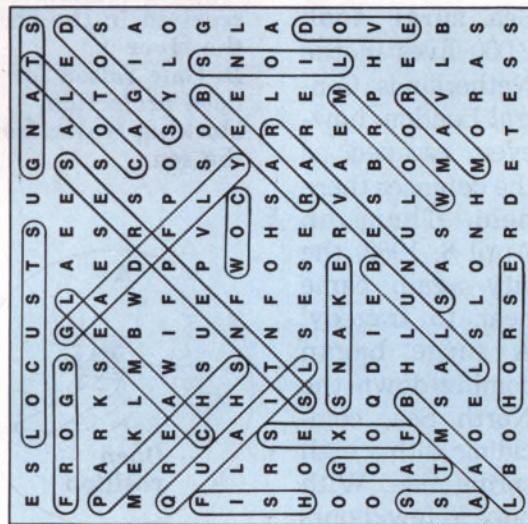
weight of both gates and sills bearing upon them, had to be bedded well down into the chalk, as hard as concrete, 50 feet (15 m) below the riverbed. At the top of the piers is the heavy machinery for manoeuvring the gates. These are protected from the weather by stainless-steel-clad housings that resemble the bows of ships and preserve the nautical motif of the piers themselves.

### **Coping With an Emergency**

All the vital parts of the barrier machinery are duplicated to minimize the possibility of failure during an emergency. Power is available from three sources: the barrier's own generating plant and the national supply from either north or south of the river. Nothing has been left to chance. In just 30 minutes the gates can all be closed—15 minutes in dire necessity. Twice a month all gates will be closed in succession to ensure their proper performance.

Ships and smaller craft on the Thames

### **Word-Search-Game Solutions**



are monitored continuously by radar, just like planes above an airport. In the event of an emergency they will be given two hours' warning. Then the massive lifting beams will raise the gates; they will be locked in position and London will be safe—blocked away from the sea. This was proved for the first time since they became operative, when, on the night of February 1/2, 1983, a combination of high tides and North Sea gales posed a threat to London. Authorities reported that "the system worked perfectly."

At a cost that has exceeded £500 million (\$875 million, U.S.), a question raised is: Is it worth it—especially so since it is expected that the barrier will only be needed two or three times a year during

the remainder of this century? But if the tides keep getting higher at the same rate as during the past 200 years, and as London continues sinking, the barrier will be used more and more. It has been built to last a hundred years. With relatively low running cost, it can be looked upon as an insurance premium to protect the capital, paid in full at the start of the policy. London's population and the colossal investment in property, industry, commerce and essential services will now be secure.

The floodgates across the Thames are indeed a fine example of the benefits that man can enjoy when he puts his remarkable engineering skills to peaceful use.

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## Christ or E.T.?

*E.T.—The Extra-Terrestrial* burst on the scene in the United States this past summer, attracting theater audiences in record numbers. In only six weeks it grossed nearly \$150 million. With spin-offs in E.T. dolls, toys and other merchandise—as well as the movie's release in other parts of the world—it is estimated the public could spend a whopping \$1 billion on *E.T.* Why the *E.T.* fever?

The movie depicts an ungainly 3-foot (90-cm)-high creature from space, stranded on earth, who befriends a ten-year-old boy named Elliott. *E.T.*'s friendliness and benign powers, such as healing the boy's cut finger and bringing flowers to life, win the affection of Elliott and his family. Sadly, a wasting illness appears to take the creature's life. But when he is inexplicably "resurrected" before Elliott's eyes audiences cheer. His touching good-bye, when *E.T.*'s alien friends take him home, leaves hardly a dry eye in the theater.

Interestingly, many have noted parallels in the story to that of the life of Jesus Christ. Said Professor Albert E. Millar, Jr.: "I think the thing that struck me most was the idea of the capacity to heal, and then when *E.T.* died and was resurrected." We have in *E.T.*, then,

an enchanting Messiahlike figure that gives momentary emotional release to our need for a true friend with powers greater than ours. Therein lies the movie's great appeal.

Despite its seemingly Christian message, however, the movie subtly condones youthful misbehavior. In an early scene we find youths playing "Dungeons and Dragons" in a smoke-filled room with a lighted cigarette on the table. Later on, when *E.T.* gets drunk sampling beer, and Elliott in telepathic sympathy feels the effects, it is all portrayed as something cute. Further, some of the language used by these children is gross profanity. This, along with the supernatural aspects of the movie, has bothered many Christians.

Whether parents or their children see this movie is, of course, a matter of personal choice. But because of the movie's great popularity, let us not forget that it becomes an effective vehicle for sugarcoating youthful conduct that is definitely wrong.

*E.T.* may be a skillfully constructed and highly entertaining movie. But it provides no substitute for our True Friend, Jesus Christ, who saves us from this dying, wicked world. After all, *E.T.* is make-believe. Christ is reality.

# From Our Readers

## TV as Robbery Prevention

In your article "There Are Ways to Avoid Robbery" (January 22, 1983), you state: "A television set playing in the living room or den may also serve as a deterrent." May I point out, as a qualified engineer, that there cannot be anything more dangerous to set a fire to a house than this technique. In fact, no electrical appliance should be left unattended.

E. S., England

*The leaving on of any electrical appliance while one is away from the house does increase the fire hazard somewhat, and the custom of leaving TV sets on constantly from morning to night has contributed to more fires in homes and apartments. But fire-prevention authorities in the United States have no national policy discouraging leaving a TV on unattended for two or three hours as a crime prevention, apparently figuring that the risk of robbery is far greater than the risk of fire. It should be kept in mind that the use of home video recorders, which are sold extensively in the United States and England, as well as in many other parts of the world, is based on the idea of having the TV set and recording equipment operating for a short period of time in the absence of the householder. While this may not constitute the most dangerous fire hazard, there is an element of risk, and we believe it wise to pass this caution on to our readers.—ED.*

## The Middle Years

I really appreciate the articles you put out in the magazines, especially the one on "The Middle Years" (February 22, 1983). It helped me to understand my mother better.

N. C., Alabama

## Messiah's Rule

I am a 15-year-old Jewish girl and I must commend you on your articles on the Messiah (March 22, 1983). They are just what I needed to be convinced that Jesus really is the Messiah. I have been reading your articles on and off for about two years now, and this article and the one entitled "Something Was Missing From My Jewish Heritage" (June 22, 1981) really helped me to know Jehovah and Jesus, both of whom I wish to draw closer to. The knowledge that I am not alone in my efforts to find the truth is a great source of encouragement. Please continue these wonderful articles, which give me more hope for the future than I ever had before.

H. S., Texas

## Sports and Violence

I recently read your magazine on "Sports—Why the Increasing Violence?" (May 22, 1982, English edition), and can only congratulate you. For five years I have been a (sports) umpire. Sorry to say, I must agree that brutality is increasing. I often feel that some players go onto the playing field with just the idea in mind of eliminating their opponents. In trying to do so, they ignore every rule of fairness. Many times players are encouraged by spectators to become even more brutal. Thus, it often depends upon the so-called fans whether a game is played according to the rules of fairness or they are ignored.

H. F., Germany

# Watching the World



## Evangelist's New Appeal

● In his latest fund-raising letter, TV evangelist Oral Roberts says that in a seven-hour conversation, Jesus told him: "I was going to give you a plan that will attack cancer in both a physical and spiritual way." This "breakthrough" is to be realized in a yet unfinished 20-story research tower, part of Roberts' \$150-million City of Faith Medical Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma, built with donations he solicited after his alleged vision two years ago of a 900-foot-tall (274 m) Jesus. Now, to finish the research center, Roberts says that Jesus' instruction was: "Ask each friend and partner for \$240 to be given now or to send \$20 a month for the next 12 months. Do this until the full \$240 is planted. Do as I tell you. Obey me."

A cancer patient who received a copy of Roberts' letter said she was "deeply disturbed by Roberts' attempt to capitalize on the fears of those of us who are faced with a terminal disease. In my opinion it is both immoral and un-Christian."

## Lawyers' Obligations

● The American Bar Association recently adopted an

amendment to its code of legal ethics, requiring lawyers to keep their clients' secrets even when they know their clients are committing fraud and crimes short of murder and bodily harm. Opponents protested that the new rule "offended 'common sense and common morality' and would aggravate the public reputation of lawyers as mouthpieces for crooked clients," reports *The New York Times*. But lawyers in favor of the amendment argued that clients will not confide in their lawyers unless they know that the lawyers will not reveal their secrets. However, there are exceptions. Lawyers can disclose secrets if they are sued for malpractice or if a client refuses to pay his bill. "Thus," says *U.S. News & World Report*, "the lawyers took care of their own interests, as they usually do when they act en masse, but the public comes out much worse off than ever."

## What Cost Armaments?

● The nations spend about \$600,000,000,000 a year on armaments, according to the United Nations. To give some meaning to this colossal figure,

Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar drew some comparisons:

"It cost WHO [World Health Organization] less than \$100 million to eradicate smallpox." This is considerably less than the amount spent on the development of an advanced air-to-air missile system.

"One half of one per cent" of that figure "would pay for much of the farm equipment needed by low-income and food-deficit countries to achieve self-sufficiency."

"The price of two strategic bombers of the latest type, approximately \$200 million, could sustain a world-wide literacy campaign."

The total expenditure averages out to \$112 for each person on earth. "This is more than the per capita gross domestic product of some developing countries." It also works out at more than one million dollars a minute.

## England's Unreported Crime

● "Britain's crime rate is a staggering four times higher than official figures," reports the *Daily Post* of Liverpool. According to the recent British Crime Survey, people actually report to police just one out of five cases involving injury, robbery or sexual attacks. Many of those surveyed felt that police could do little to help.

## No Rest in Hospitals

● Common sense would tell us that what a hospital patient needs most is rest and sleep. Yet a recent study, conducted by an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia School of Nursing, found that in a 24-hour period, patients in a respiratory intensive-care ward averaged only five and a half hours of sleep and experienced 40 disturbances. Patient-

care procedures make up a large portion of the disruptions, the study found, but the majority (54 percent) of sleep disturbances were due to hospital noises, which include staff conversations (the single largest category), equipment alarms, intercoms, phones, doors, and so forth. Is all of this necessary? "With a little more awareness," says the professor, "many of the problems could be reduced."

### Bird "Population Crash"

● About 14 million sooty terns, 1.5 million wedge-tailed shearwaters and about one million birds of 16 other species have either died or left Christmas Island, a mid-Pacific atoll, leaving thousands of nestlings to die. Though the exact cause is unknown, authorities surmise that *El Niño*, the abnormal weather system that lashed California and South America recently, has caused both the level and the temperature of the sea in the area to rise. This, in turn, has driven away the fish and squid that are the principal food supply of the birds. "The 'population crash' is probably the largest of its kind ever recorded, and the first near-total disappearance of a major bird population recorded on a tropical island," says *The Washington Post*.

### Children's Language

● "The use of bad language by primary school children has 'exploded,'" reports New Zealand's *Auckland Star*. Describing the strong language of seven- or eight-year-olds as "much more explicit," the liaison officer of the Auckland Federation of Parent Teachers Association said: "The words are used freely and with great skill. You would almost expect the children to know what the words mean." Parents blame

the schools, saying that their children pick up such language in the classrooms. School officials put the blame on parents who "are too lazy to correct their children's language." And everyone blames television: "Many of our children are seeing programmes that simply were not designed for them."

### Deserved Discrimination

● Now interest-free small-business loans will not be granted to smokers in Malaysia. What does smoking have to do with loans? If they can afford to buy cigarettes and smoke their money away, they do not need the government loans, according to Sanusi Junid, minister of National and Rural Development. And the government will not take a loan applicant's word for it. Medical tests will determine whether he uses tobacco.

### "Honorable" Tax Evaders

● "In a sample of 400 [private-duty] nurses, more than 90% failed to report all their income [to the IRS (Internal Revenue Service)]," reports *Time* magazine. "The average nurse owes \$3,500 in back taxes." What kind of people are these? "We're talking about hard-working people in an honorable profession," said a New York City IRS official. This year many such "honorable" U.S. citizens, along with those not so honorable, will evade an estimated \$100 billion in income taxes.

● Over in Sweden, says the *Observer* News Service of London, "the international image of the Swede as an honest, dependable, hardworking . . . citizen has taken a severe knock" with recent revelations of dishonesty. Adult Swedes reportedly cheat an average of \$720 (U.S.) on their income taxes, and au-

thorities are said to be complaining of an "economic crime wave."

### Rome Toppled by Lead?

● Lead poisoning may well have contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire, says Canadian medical researcher Dr. Jerome Nriagu. Roman food and wine contained so much lead, the researcher estimates, that the aristocrats, noted for their orgies and drinking matches, might daily have been consuming six or more times as much lead as modern safety standards would allow. He also points out that two thirds of the Roman emperors from 30 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. were afflicted with nervous and digestive disorders, arthritis or gout, inability to concentrate, poor memory, and even mental retardation, delirium and convulsion, all of which are symptoms of lead poisoning. The "coexistence" of these two factors, says Dr. Nriagu, "has not been previously recognized."

### Suicide in "Paradise"

● Though the idyllic islands of Micronesia may be many people's idea of paradise, there is a more sinister side to them. There "young men are killing themselves at one of the highest rates in the world," reports *The New York Times*. Males between the ages of 15 and 25 on Truk Island have a suicide rate of 250 per 100,000, which is 20 times the rate for youth in the United States. The suicides were often triggered by "crazy little things." A 16-year-old boy hanged himself because his father would not give him one dollar, and a 13-year-old boy did the same after his mother scolded him. Though researchers are hard put to find an explanation for such actions, they note "a pattern of poor fami-

ly relations," and "a long-term intolerable situation."

### Millions More Addicts

● By government standards, many millions can be added to the list of drug addicts in the United States. A new pamphlet by the Office on Smoking and Health entitled *Why People Smoke Cigarettes* labels smoking "the most widespread example of drug dependence in our country." As one proof, it points to continued massive use of tobacco despite public awareness of the health danger involved.

### "Sick Joke"

● "It amazes me that this sick joke could happen," said Wanda Ishmael, a 55-year-old

schoolteacher, after five hours of emergency treatment at the hospital. "My face flushed and I couldn't focus my eyes. I knew I was unable to walk out of the classroom. And then the horrible realization came to me. I had been drugged by one of my students." The doctors confirmed that she had eaten marijuana-laced brownies served by her 10th-grade students. The occasion? A welcome-back party for the teacher who had just returned after undergoing major cancer surgery.

### Better Sober Than Dead?

● A nation-wide drive to raise the minimum drinking age appears to be under way in the United States. Twenty states have already advanced the min-

imum age from 18 by one to three years, and this year 26 states will consider restoring the limit to 21. The reason? An average of 5,000 teenagers die each year in alcohol-related car accidents in the United States, and the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report shows that "young drivers (ages 16 to 24 years), constituting 17% of the U.S. population, were involved in accidents resulting in 48% of the fatalities." The drive to raise the minimum drinking age has had "dramatic" results thus far, reports *Time* magazine. "In at least eight states, a higher drinking age was followed by a 28% reduction in nighttime fatal accidents involving 18- to 21-year-olds," says the report.

Yours in Christ,  
John W. Ritenbaugh  
Bible Student Ministry

Dear Friends,  
I am writing you this letter because I have been asked to do so. I am not a professional writer, but I have written many articles for Awake! magazine over the years. I am also a Bible student and teacher, and I have had the privilege of meeting many people who are interested in God's Word. I have learned a great deal from them, and I hope that my writing can help others to understand the truth of the Bible.

I want to begin by saying that I believe in the infallibility of the Bible. I believe that it is the Word of God, and that it is the truth. I also believe that the Bible is a powerful tool for helping people to live a life that is pleasing to God. I have seen many people who have been transformed by their study of the Bible, and I know that it can do the same for others.

I also believe that the Bible is a source of comfort and encouragement. It tells us that we are not alone, and that God is always with us. It also tells us that we can overcome any difficulty if we trust in God and follow His Word.

I hope that my writing will help others to understand the truth of the Bible, and to live a life that is pleasing to God. I pray that God will bless your efforts to spread the truth of His Word.