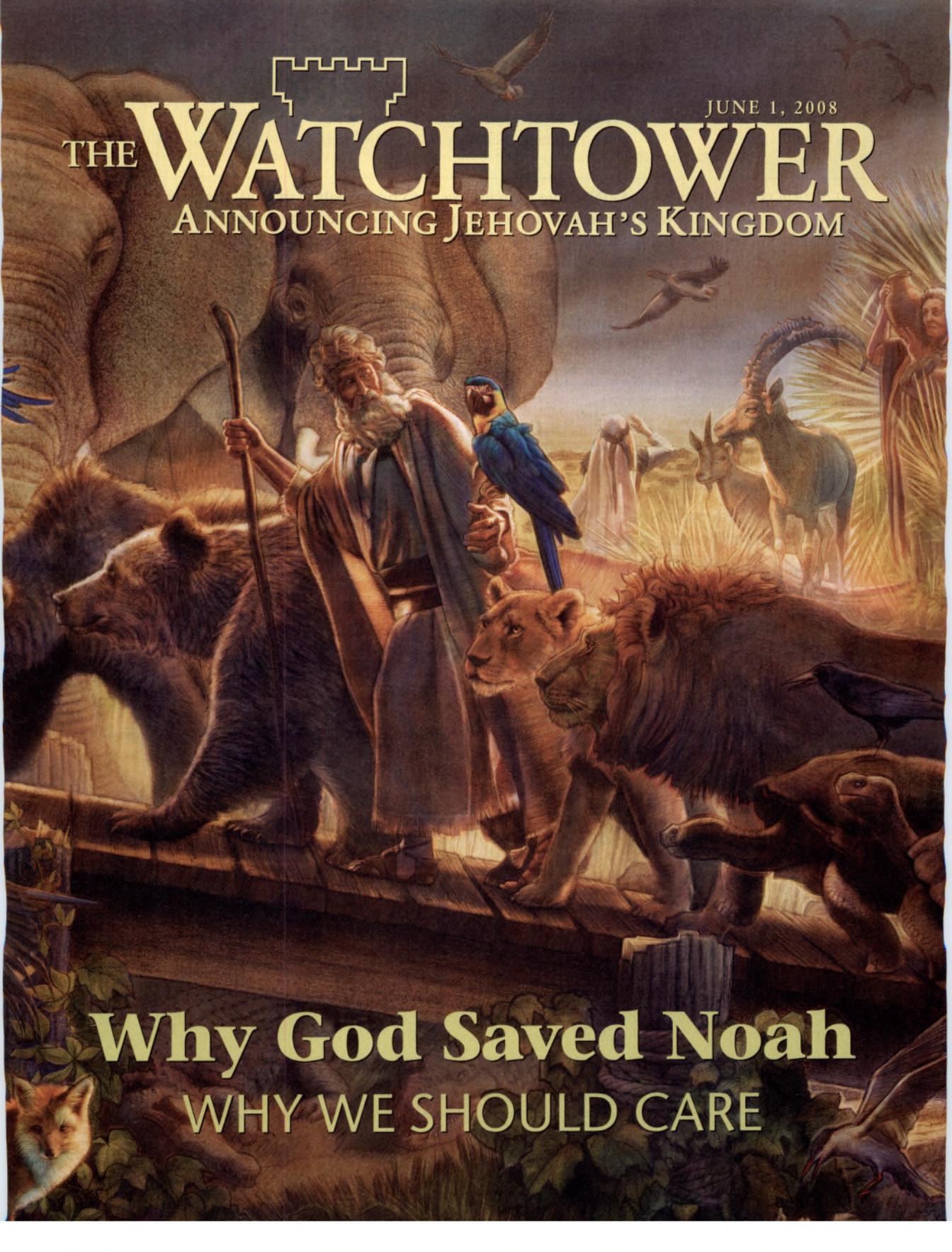


THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 1, 2008

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Why God Saved Noah

WHY WE SHOULD CARE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to 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 by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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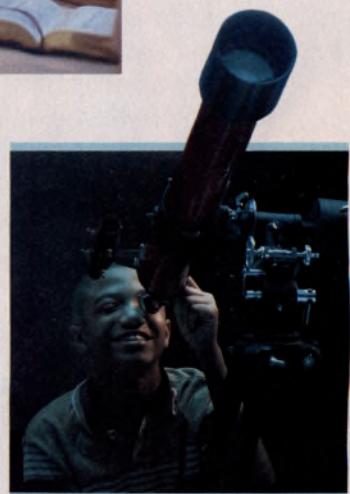
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Noah and the Flood

FACT, NOT FICTION

DO YOU long for a better world—a world where people live at peace with one another? a world in which there is no war, no crime, no oppression? If so, you can find encouragement in a historical account that you may know well. It is the account of Noah, a truly good man who built an ark that saved him and his family through a global flood in which the wicked perished.

Few stories are more widely known. The record of what happened to Noah is found in the Bible book of Genesis, chapters 6 through 9, and it is retold in the Koran and in the legends of countless peoples throughout the earth. Did the Flood really happen, or is it merely an allegorical tale to encourage people to do what is right? Theologians and scientists have debated this question for centuries. Yet, the Bible, the Word of God, allows no room for doubt—the account is fact, not fiction. Consider:

The Genesis account tells us the precise year, month, and day when the Deluge began, when and where the ark came to rest, and when the earth dried off. Details about the ark are also precise—the layout, the measurements, and the material used to build it. Fables, by contrast, are usually vague in their descriptions.

Two genealogical accounts in the Bible testify that Noah was a real person. (1 Chronicles 1:4; Luke 3:36) Both Ezra and Luke, who compiled these genealogies,

were careful researchers. Luke traced Jesus Christ's lineage to Noah.

References to Noah or the Flood were made by the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel and by the Christian apostles Paul and Peter.—Isaiah 54:9; Ezekiel 14:14, 20; Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:19, 20; 2 Peter 2:5.

Jesus Christ referred to the Flood, saying: “Just as it occurred in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of man: they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage, until that day when Noah entered into the ark, and the flood arrived and destroyed them all.” (Luke 17:26, 27) If the Deluge had not happened, then Jesus’ statement about “the days of the Son of man” would be meaningless.

The apostle Peter foretold that there would come “ridiculers” who would scoff at what the Bible says. “According to their wish,” Peter wrote, “this fact escapes their notice, that . . . the world of [Noah’s] time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water.” Should “this fact” escape our notice? Absolutely not! Peter continued: “The heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men.”—2 Peter 3:3-7.

Once again, God will destroy the wicked, and once again, there will be survivors. By patterning our life after Noah’s, we may be among the righteous ones who will be delivered into a better world.



Why God Favored Noah

WHY WE SHOULD CARE

MOST of us remember occasions when we heard important news. We remember details—not only where we were and what we were doing but also how we reacted. No doubt, Noah never forgot the day he received news from Jehovah God, the Sovereign of the universe. And what news could have been more important? Jehovah said that he had determined to bring to ruin “all flesh.” Noah was to build a gigantic ark for the preservation of him, his family, and animals of every kind.—Genesis 6:9-21.

How did Noah respond? Did he rejoice upon hearing the news, or did he protest? How did he break the news to his wife and family? The Bible does not say. What it does tell us is this: “Noah proceeded to do accord-

ing to all that God had commanded him. He did just so.”—Genesis 6:22.

That surely is the important point, for that statement explains in part why Noah found favor in God’s eyes; Noah was willing to do what God asked him to do. (Genesis 6:8) What else caused God to favor Noah? The answer is important because we must be like Noah to survive when God again cleanses the earth of wickedness. First, though, let us consider what life was like for Noah in the days before the Flood.

Demons Come to Earth

Noah lived early in human history. He was born about a thousand years after the first man was created. People then were not the



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cavemen that many envision—hairy, dim-witted creatures who slouched about with clubs in their hands. There were forged tools of iron and copper, and Noah may have used these in constructing the ark. There were also musical instruments. People married, raised families, cultivated crops, and had livestock. They bought and sold things. In these ways, life then was much as it is today.—Genesis 4: 20-22; Luke 17:26-28.

In other ways, things were quite different. One difference was that people lived much longer. It was not unusual for a person to live more than 800 years. Noah lived 950 years; Adam, 930 years; and Methuselah, Noah's grandfather, 969 years.*—Genesis 5:5, 27; 9:29.

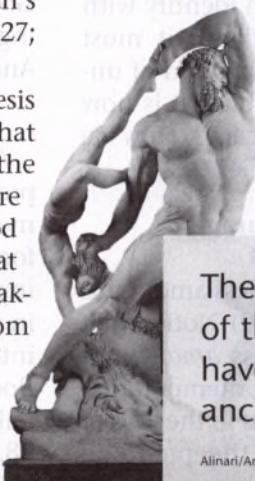
Another difference is described at Genesis 6:1, 2, which says: "Now it came about that when men started to grow in numbers on the surface of the ground and daughters were born to them, then the sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose." These "sons of the true God" were angels from heaven who materialized as humans and roamed the earth as men. They had not come at God's direction; nor had they come to benefit the human family. Instead, they "forsook their own proper dwelling place" in heaven to have sexual relations with the beautiful women on earth. They became demons.—Jude 6.

Rebellious, perverted, superhuman in power and intelligence, these demonic angels exerted a ruinous influence on humans. It is likely that they controlled and dominated human society. They did not operate secretly, like a criminal mastermind who conceals his identity and works his evil, cloaked in shad-

* See the article "Did They Really Live That Long?" in the July 2007 issue of *Awake!* page 30.

ow. Rather, they openly acted in shameless rebellion against the arrangement of God.

These angelic sons of God had relations with women, and the women bore children who grew to possess extraordinary strength. They came to be known by the Hebrew term "Nephilim." We are told: "The Nephilim proved to be in the earth in those days, and also after that, when the sons of the true God continued to have relations with the daughters of men and they bore sons to them, they were the mighty ones who were of old, the men of fame." (Genesis 6:4) The Nephilim were much to be feared. The word "Nephilim" means "Fellers," those who cause others to fall down. They were killers whose violent exploits are likely echoed in ancient myths and legends.



The violent exploits of the Nephilim may have been echoed in ancient legends

Alinari/Art Resource, NY

The Grief of the Righteous

The Bible's description of that generation was one of deep-rooted and widespread corruption. It says: "The badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. . . . The earth became filled with violence. . . . All flesh had ruined its way on the earth."—Genesis 6:5, 11, 12.

This was the world in which Noah lived. In contrast with those around him, "Noah was a righteous man" who "walked with the true God." (Genesis 6:9) It is not easy for a righteous man to live in an unrighteous society.

How Noah must have been grieved by what people said and did! He probably felt as did Lot, another righteous man who lived after the Flood. Lot, who dwelled among the depraved inhabitants of Sodom, “was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct,” and “what he saw and heard while dwelling among them from day to day was tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds.” (2 Peter 2:7, 8) So it must have been with Noah.

Are you distressed by the shocking events in the news or by the godless conduct of people around you? If so, you can identify with Noah. Just imagine how difficult it must have been for him to endure a world of unrighteousness for 600 years, for that is how old he was when the Flood came. How he must have longed for relief!—Genesis 7:6.

Noah Had the Courage to Be Different

Noah “proved himself faultless among his contemporaries.” (Genesis 6:9) Notice that the Bible says he was faultless *among*, not from the viewpoint of, his contemporaries. In other words, he was faultless in the eyes of God, but to the people of the pre-Flood world, Noah was odd. We can be sure that he did not agree with popular opinion, nor did he get involved in the ungodly entertainment and social activities of the day. Imagine how people viewed him when he began to build the ark! They likely laughed at him, ridiculed him. They did not take him seriously.

Furthermore, Noah had deep religious beliefs, and he did not keep them to himself. The Bible says that he was “a preacher of righteousness.” (2 Peter 2:5) Undoubtedly, Noah expected opposition. His great-grandfather Enoch was a righteous man who foretold that God would execute judgment

against the wicked. Evidently, this brought persecution against Enoch, though God did not permit his opposers to kill him. (Genesis 5:18, 21-24; Hebrews 11:5; 12:1; Jude 14, 15) With Satan, the demons, the Nephilim, and most of the people either indifferent or opposed to him, Noah needed courage as well as faith in Jehovah’s ability to safeguard him.

Those who serve God have always been opposed by those who do not. Even Jesus Christ was hated, and so were those who followed him. (Matthew 10:22; John 15:18) Noah had the courage to serve God, though it was not popular to do so. He understood that having God’s favor is far more important than having the approval of those who oppose Him. And Noah was favored by God.

Noah Took Note

As we have seen, Noah courageously preached to others. How did they react to the message he brought? The Bible says that before the Flood people were “eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and *they took no note* until the flood came and swept them all away.” They failed to heed the warning.—Matthew 24:38, 39.

Jesus said that the same would be true in our day. For well over one hundred years, Jehovah’s Witnesses have sounded the warning that Jehovah will take drastic steps to fulfill his promise to establish a new world of righteousness. Though millions have responded positively, billions of earth’s inhabitants take no note. “According to their wish,” they ignore the reality and the significance of the Flood.—2 Peter 3:5, 13.

Noah, however, did take note. He believed what Jehovah God told him. That obedience led to his salvation. The apostle Paul wrote: “By faith Noah, after being given divine warning of things not yet beheld, showed

godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household.”—Hebrews 11:7.

An Example to Imitate

The ark that Noah built was gigantic—longer than a football field and as high as a three-story building. It was more than 100 feet longer than the schooner *Wyoming*, which was reportedly the largest wooden-hulled ship ever built. Of course, the ark was not a ship; it needed only to float. Nevertheless, it required advanced construction techniques. And it had to be covered inside and outside with tar. It may have taken more than 50 years to build.—Genesis 6:14-16.

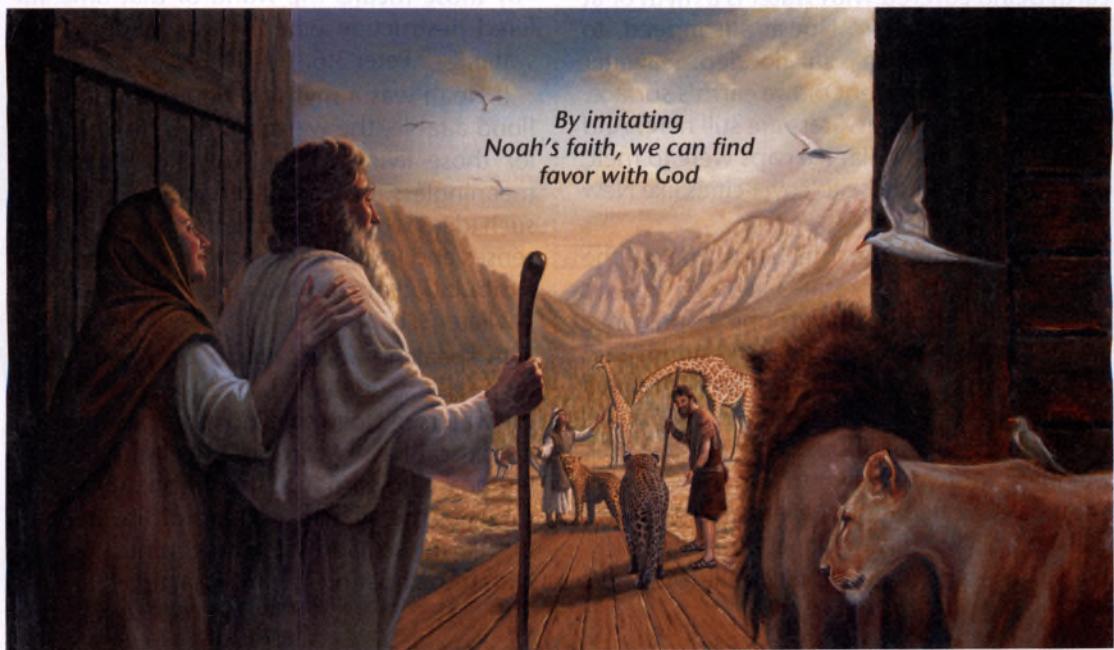
There was more. Noah had to stockpile one year's food supply for his family and for the animals. Before the Flood came, the animals had to be gathered and brought inside. “Noah proceeded to do according to all that Jehovah had commanded him.” What a relief it must have been when everything was ready and Jehovah closed the door of the ark! —Genesis 6:19-21; 7:5, 16.

Then the Deluge came. It rained for 40

days and 40 nights. All had to remain in the ark for a full year until the waters receded. (Genesis 7:11, 12; 8:13-16) All the wicked people perished. Only Noah and his family survived into a cleansed earth.

The Bible says that the global Flood of Noah's day stands as “a pattern . . . of things to come.” In what way? We read: “The heavens and the earth that are now are stored up for fire and are being reserved to the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly men.” As in Noah's day, however, there will be survivors. Be assured that “Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial.”—2 Peter 2:5, 6, 9; 3:7.

Noah was a man of godly devotion, a righteous man among a wicked generation. He obeyed God completely. He had the courage to do what was right even though he knew that this would bring the disdain and hatred of those who did not wish to serve God. By imitating Noah in these ways, we too will find favor with God and have the prospect of deliverance into the new world that is soon to come.—Psalm 37:9, 10.



Our Readers Ask

WAS THE FLOOD OF NOAH'S DAY REALLY GLOBAL?

The Noachian Flood occurred more than 4,000 years ago. So there are no eyewitness survivors on earth to tell us about it. However, there is a written record of that catastrophe, which states that the floodwaters covered the tallest mountain of that time.

The historical document reads: "The deluge went on for forty days upon the earth . . . And the waters overwhelmed the earth so greatly that all the tall mountains that were under the whole heavens came to be covered. Up to fifteen cubits [about 22 feet] the waters overwhelmed them and the mountains became covered."—Genesis 7:17-20.

Some may wonder if the story of the whole earth being covered with water is a myth or at least an exaggeration. Not at all! Indeed, to some extent the earth is still flooded. Seawater covers about 71 percent of the earth's surface. So in reality the floodwaters are still here. And if the glaciers and polar ice caps were to melt, the sea level would rise to cover cities like New York and Tokyo.

Geologists studying the landscape of the northwestern United States believe that as many as 100 ancient catastrophic floods once washed over the area. One such flood is said to have roared through the region with a wall of water 2,000 feet high, traveling at 65 miles an hour—a flood of 500 cubic miles of water, weighing more than two trillion tons. Similar findings have led other scientists to believe that a global flood is a distinct possibility.

For those who believe that the Bible is God's

Word, though, a global flood is more than a possibility. It is a fact. Jesus said to God: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) The apostle Paul wrote that God's will is that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) How could Paul teach followers of Jesus the doctrinal truth if God's Word contains myths?

Not only did Jesus believe that the Flood took place but he also believed that it was global. In his great prophecy about his presence and the end of this system of things, he likened those events to the time of Noah. (Matthew 24:37-39) The apostle Peter also wrote about the floodwaters in Noah's day: "By those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was deluged with water."—2 Peter 3:6.

If Noah was a mythical figure and a global flood a fable, the warnings of Peter and Jesus for those living in the last days would be meaningless. Instead of serving as a warning, such ideas would befuddle a person's spiritual senses and endanger his chances of surviving a tribulation greater than the Noachian Flood.—2 Peter 3:1-7.

In speaking about his abiding mercies for his people, God said: "Just as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more pass over the earth, so I have sworn that I will not become indignant toward you nor rebuke you." As surely as the Noachian Flood did overwhelm the earth, so God's loving-kindness will be with those trusting in him.—Isaiah 54:9.



Does It Matter How We Worship God?

RELIGION is deeply rooted in human nature." So says Professor Alister Hardy in the book *The Spiritual Nature of Man*. The results of a recent survey appear to support this conclusion. It found that about 86 percent of the world's population profess some form of religious affiliation.

The survey also found that the believers belong to 19 major religions and that those who claim to be Christians belong to an astonishing 37,000 different denominations. Does this not make you wonder if all these different ways of worship are equally acceptable to God? In fact, does it matter how we worship him?

In this vital issue, it stands to reason that we cannot simply go by personal feelings or opinions. Logically, we need to find out what God's own view is on the matter. For this we should turn to God's Word, the Bible. Why? Because Jesus Christ himself said in prayer to God: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) And the faithful apostle Paul testified: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight."—2 Timothy 3:16.

The Bible shows that not all worship is acceptable to God. We find historical examples of forms of worship that were acceptable to God and those that were rejected by him. By carefully examining such examples, we can learn what we must do and must not do in order for our worship to be pleasing to God.

An Ancient Example

Through the prophet Moses, Jehovah God gave the Israelites a set of laws that taught

them how to worship God acceptably. When the people did what those laws, commonly called the Mosaic Law, required, they were accepted by God as his people and were blessed by him. (Exodus 19:5, 6) In spite of such favor from God, however, the nation of Israel did not hold fast to the form of worship that was acceptable to him. Time and again, they turned their backs on Jehovah and followed the religious practices of the inhabitants of the land around them.

In the days of the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah in the seventh century B.C.E., many Israelites ignored God's Law and cultivated intimate association with people of the surrounding nations. By following their customs and participating in their festivals, the Israelites were practicing a mixed religion. Many of the Israelites were saying: "Let us become like the nations, like the families of the lands, in ministering to wood and stone." (Ezekiel 20:32; Jeremiah 2:28) They professed to worship Jehovah God, but at the same time, they venerated "dungy idols," even sacrificing their sons to them.—Ezekiel 23:37-39; Jeremiah 19:3-5.

Archaeologists call this form of worship religious syncretism, simultaneous worship of various gods. Or they simply refer to it as folk, or popular, religion. Today, many people feel that in our pluralistic society, we should be broad-minded in all things, including religion. Hence, they feel that there is nothing wrong with worshipping God in any way they please. Is that really so? Is it simply a matter of being tolerant and liberal? Consider some features of the popular

religion practiced by the unfaithful Israelites, and see what those practices led to.

Israel's Form of Mixed Worship

The centers for the mixed worship of the Israelites were “the high places,” or local shrines equipped with altars, incense stands, sacred stone pillars, and sacred poles, apparently wooden symbols of Asherah, a Canaanite goddess of fertility. There were many such centers in Judah. Second Kings 23:5, 8 mentions “high places in the cities of Judah and the surroundings of Jerusalem, . . . from Geba [northern border] as far as Beer-sheba [southern border].”

At these high places, the Israelites made “sacrificial smoke to Baal, to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations of the zodiac and to all the army of the heavens.” They had houses for “male temple prostitutes . . . in the house of Jehovah” and offered their children “through the fire to Molech.” —2 Kings 23:4-10.

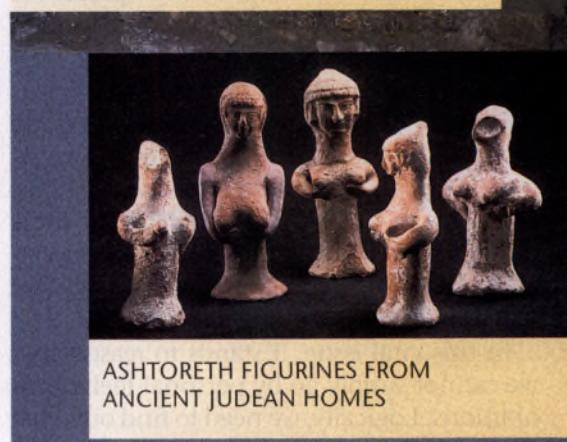
Archaeologists have found hundreds of terra-cotta figurines in Jerusalem and Judah, mainly in the ruins of private homes. Most were depictions of a nude female with exaggerated breasts. Scholars identify these figurines with the fertility goddesses Ashtoreth and Asherah. The figurines are believed to have been “talismans abetting conception and childbirth.”

How did the Israelites view these local centers for mixed worship? Professor Ephraim Stern of Hebrew University observed that many of these high places were probably “dedicated to Yahweh [Jehovah].” Inscriptions found at archaeological sites seem to support this view. For example, one says, “I bless you by Yahweh of Samaria and by his asherah,” and another says, “I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by his asherah!”

These examples illustrate how the Israelites compromised by mixing the pure wor-



AN ANCIENT SHRINE FOR IDOL WORSHIP, TEL ARAD, ISRAEL



ASHTORETH FIGURINES FROM ANCIENT JUDEAN HOMES

Photograph © Israel Museum, Jerusalem; courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

ship of Jehovah God with shameful pagan practices. The result was moral degradation and spiritual darkness. How did God view this form of compromised worship?

God's Reaction to Mixed Worship

God expressed his indignation and denunciation of the Israelites’ debased form of worship through his prophet Ezekiel, saying: “In all your dwelling places the very cities will become devastated and the high places themselves will become desolated, in order that they may lie devastated and your altars may lie desolated and be actually broken and your dungy idols may be actually made to cease and your incense stands cut down and your works wiped out.” (Ezekiel 6:6) There is

no doubt that Jehovah viewed such worship as totally unacceptable and rejected it.

Jehovah God foretold how the devastation would take place. "Here I am sending . . . Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these nations round about; and I will devote them to destruction . . . And all this land must become a devastated place." (Jeremiah 25:9-11) True to those words, in 607 B.C.E., the Babylonians came against Jerusalem and completely destroyed the city and its temple.

Regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, Professor Stern, quoted above, notes that the archaeological remains "are a clear reflection of the biblical sources (2 Kings 25:8; 2 Chronicles 36:18-19) describing the destruction, burning, and collapse of houses and walls." He further observes: "The archaeological evidence for this phase in Jerusa-

lem's history . . . can be counted among the most dramatic at any biblical site."

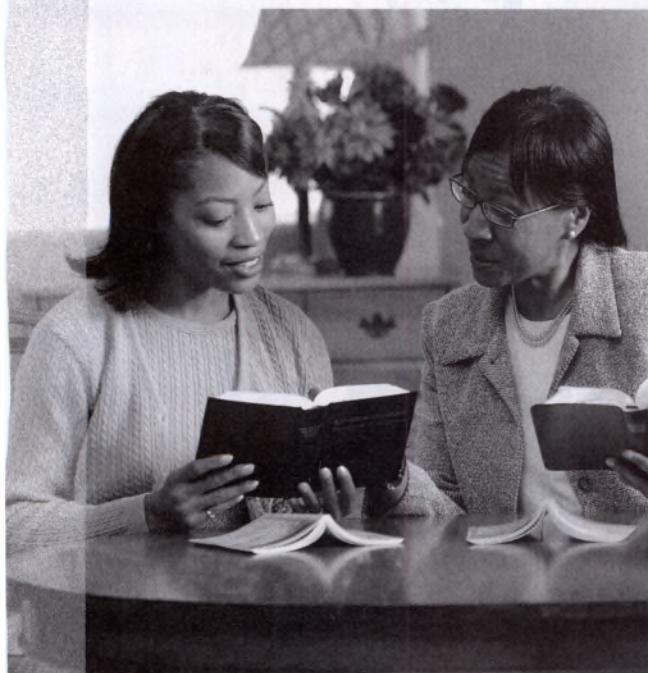
What Lesson for Us?

The major lesson for us is that God does not accept worship that attempts to mix Bible-based teachings with dogmas, traditions, or rituals of other religions. This is a lesson that the apostle Paul clearly took to heart. He was brought up a Jewish Pharisee, educated and trained in the law of the sect. When he finally learned and accepted that Jesus was the promised Messiah, what did he do? "What things were gains to me, these I have considered loss on account of the Christ," he said. He abandoned his former ways and became a devoted follower of Christ.—Philippians 3:5-7.

As a traveling missionary, Paul was well-acquainted with the religious practices and philosophical scruples of diverse people. Thus, to the Christians in Corinth, he wrote: "What sharing does light have with darkness? Further, what harmony is there between Christ and Belial? Or what portion does a faithful person have with an unbeliever? And what agreement does God's temple have with idols? . . . 'Therefore get out from among them, and separate yourselves,' says Jehovah, 'and quit touching the unclean thing'; 'and I will take you in.'"—2 Corinthians 6:14-17.

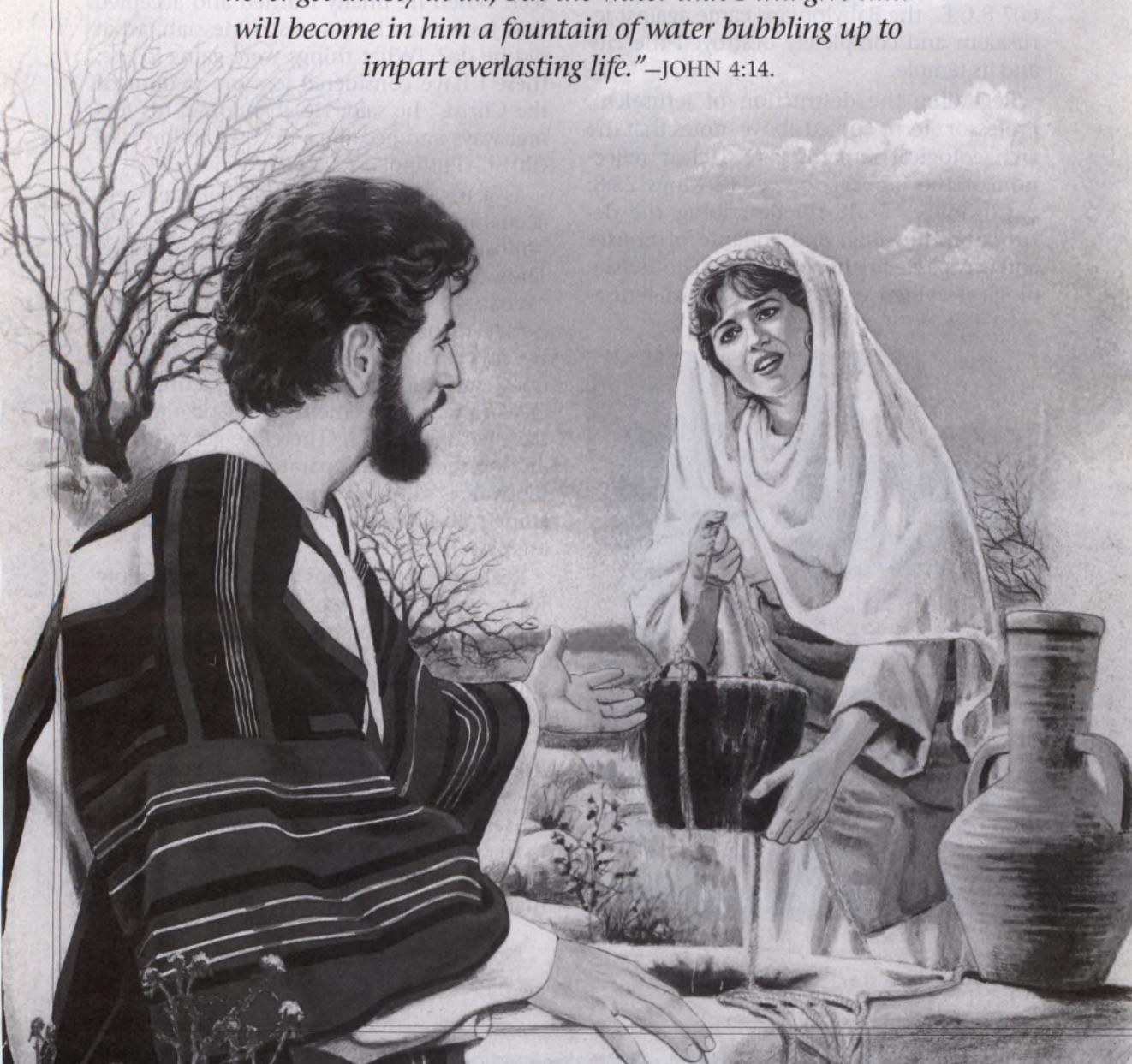
Realizing that it does matter to God how we worship him, we may ask ourselves: 'What kind of worship does God approve? How can I draw close to God? And what should I personally do to worship God in an acceptable way?'

Jehovah's Witnesses are happy to help you find answers to these and other Bible-related questions. We invite you to contact the Witnesses at the local Kingdom Hall or to write to the publishers of this magazine to request a free Bible study at a time and place convenient to you.



WATER BUBBLING UP TO IMPART EVERLASTING LIFE

"Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life."—JOHN 4:14.



SUDDENLY, from behind the rim of the moon, . . . there emerges a sparkling blue and white jewel, a light, delicate sky-blue sphere laced with slowly swirling veils of white, rising gradually like a small pearl in a thick sea of black mystery.”—Edgar Mitchell, astronaut, describing the earth as seen from space.

What gives our planet a hue of such brilliance that the astronaut was moved to wax poetic? It is the water that covers nearly three quarters of the surface of the earth. Actually, water not only makes our planet look beautiful; it also helps keep the creatures on earth alive. In fact, about 65 percent of the human body is made up of water. Thus, regarding water, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* states: “It is vital to life, participating in virtually every process that occurs in plants and animals.”

Thanks to an efficient recycling system, earth’s supply of water never needs replenishing. “Almost every drop of water we use finds its way to the oceans,” explains *The World Book Encyclopedia*. “There, it is evaporated by the sun. It then falls back to the earth as rain. Water is used and reused over and over again. It is never used up.” Some 3,000 years ago, this remarkable process was described in the Bible: “All the winter torrents are going forth to the sea, yet the sea itself is not full. To the place where the winter torrents are going forth, there they are returning so as to go forth.” What a marvel of creation the earth’s water cycle is!—Ecclesiastes 1:7.

In view of water’s importance to life and the marvelous way water is provided, we should not be surprised to find it mentioned over 700 times in the Bible. The Bible often uses water’s unique properties—particularly its power to cleanse and to sustain life—to represent spiritual values.—Isaiah 58:11; John 4:14.

The Bible’s Power to Cleanse

Because of their regular bathing and washing with water, the Israelites were remarkable for their physical cleanliness. It was customary to wash one’s feet upon entering a house for a meal. (Luke 7:44) In addition to keeping their body and belongings clean physically, the Israelites also used water to maintain ceremonial cleanliness. The priests serving at the tabernacle had to wash themselves and their garments frequently. (Exodus 30:18-21) Later, at the temple in Jerusalem, Solomon made a “molten sea” of copper that normally held over 11,500 gallons of water, enough to meet the cleansing requirements of God’s Law. (2 Chronicles 4:2, 6) What meaning does such use of water have for Christians today?

The apostle Paul explained that Jesus had cleansed the Christian congregation “with the bath of water by means of the word.” Like water, which cleanses physically, the truth of God’s Word has power to carry out moral and spiritual cleansing. This cleansing leaves Christ’s disciples “holy and without blemish.” (Ephesians 5:25-27) Thus, all who desire God’s favor must work to keep themselves morally and spiritually “spotless and unblemished.” (2 Peter 3:11, 14) How does God’s Word help them to do this?

Those interested in pleasing Jehovah God take in spiritual water through regular Bible study. When the knowledge they gain touches their mind and heart, it gives such ones a strong desire to do what the Bible directs: “Be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—Romans 12:2.

Accurate knowledge of God’s will enables such individuals to identify stains and blemishes in their conduct and thinking. As they apply Bible principles in their life over a period of time, God’s Word, like water, will help

them to be “washed clean” of even serious sin.—1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

Here is how a young man in Spain experienced this transformation. “At the age of 18, I felt unhappy with my life,” explains Alfonso. He had become a drug addict and a hardened criminal. “I felt dirty because of the way I treated my own body and the way I treated other people.”

“In school, I noticed a young woman my age who had a clean appearance and an innocence that made her stand out from the other students. Her example gave me the desire to lead a clean life like hers. At her suggestion, I attended a meeting of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Soon I began to study the Bible and to build a friendship with God. Within a year, I cleaned up my life and became a baptized Witness. This dramatic change led many parents in my neighborhood to come and ask me to help their teenage children who had become drug addicts.”

Water That Brings Everlasting Life

Jesus once told a Samaritan woman who was fetching water at Jacob’s well about “living water.” He said: “Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life.” (John 4:10, 14) Jesus’ words indicate that “living water” symbolizes the provisions from God

for life, as explained in his Word, the Bible. They make it possible for humans to live forever. An important component of this symbolic water is the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus. “God loved the world so much,” Jesus explained, “that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

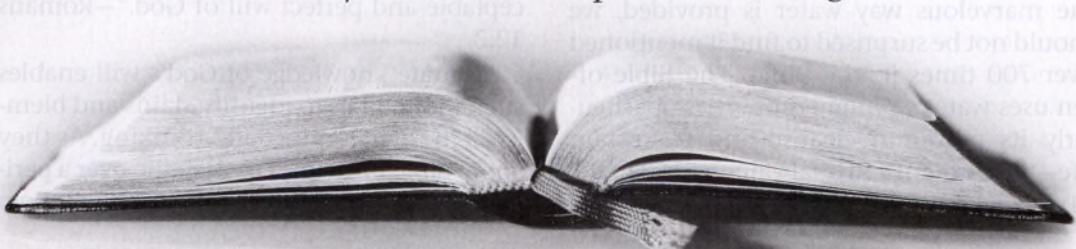
Alfonso, mentioned earlier, has come to value highly the “living water” from God. Referring to those who remained in their life of crime and drugs, he says: “My fleshly brother is dead, and so is every one of my former companions. Knowledge of God’s Word saved me from suffering a similar fate. Thanks to Jehovah’s spiritual provisions, I am alive.” What is more, because of what he has learned from God’s Word, Alfonso looks forward to enjoying life without end in God’s promised new world.—2 Peter 3:13.

An Invitation for All

In the last book of the Bible, we find the description of “a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb.” (Revelation 22:1) The stream represents God’s provisions that will eventually bring human life back to the perfect state that Adam and Eve enjoyed at the start of human history.

After describing that river, the account goes on to relate this invitation: “Let anyone

*Like water, which cleanses physically, Bible truth has power
to carry out moral and spiritual cleansing*



WATER SUPPLY IN BIBLE TIMES

In Bible times, people made extraordinary efforts to locate reliable sources of water. Abraham and Isaac dug wells near Beer-sheba to ensure that they had sufficient water for their

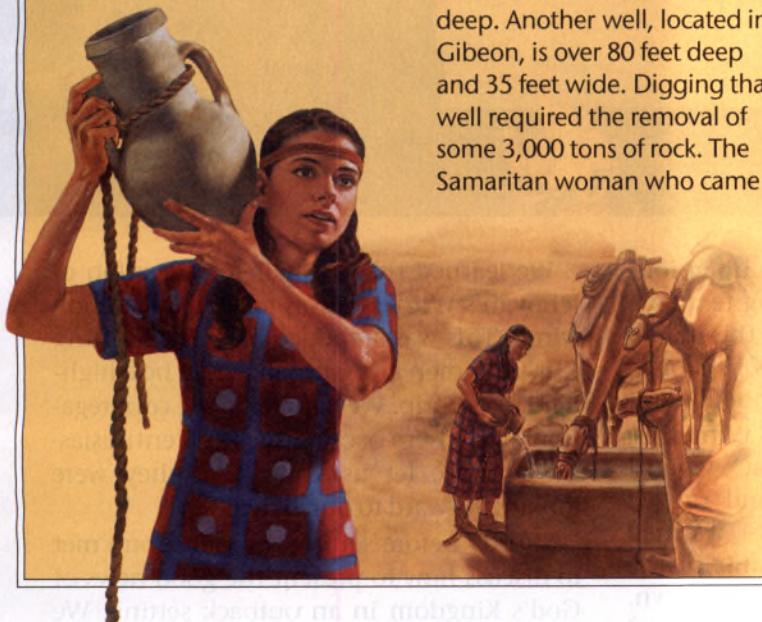
households and flocks.—Genesis 21:30, 31; 26:18.

Shallow wells often dried up during the long, hot summers. To provide a dependable water supply, a well had to be deep. (Proverbs 20:5) One well in Lachish is 144 feet deep. Another well, located in Gibeon, is over 80 feet deep and 35 feet wide. Digging that well required the removal of some 3,000 tons of rock. The Samaritan woman who came

to draw water from Jacob's fountain told Jesus: "The well is deep." The water level there was perhaps 75 feet below ground.—John 4:11.

Cisterns were another source of water in the ancient Middle East. These underground chambers collected rainwater that fell from October to April. Channels were cut in the hillside to direct the runoff into the cisterns. The Israelites hewed out large cisterns to store water.—2 Chronicles 26:10.

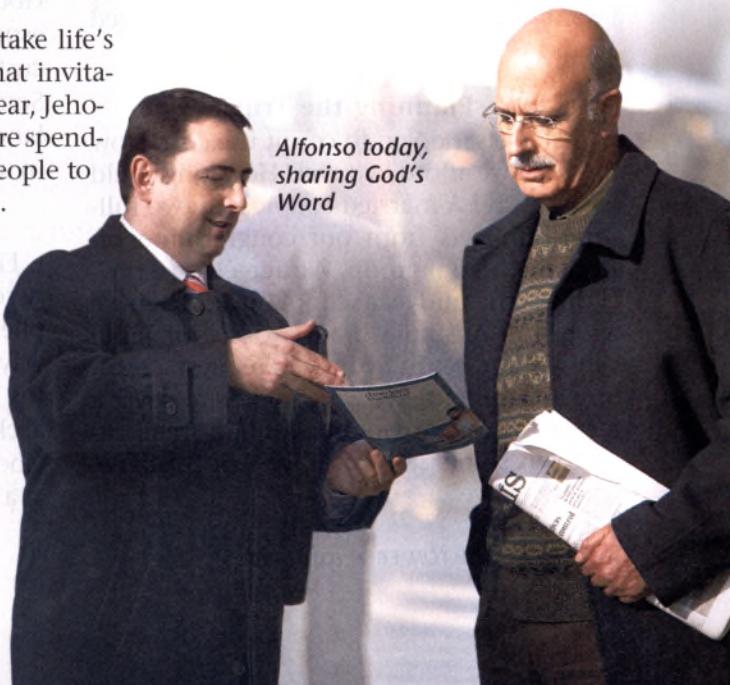
To draw water from wells and cisterns was, and still is, hard work. Women like Rebekah and Jethro's daughters performed a vital service by drawing water every day for their families and livestock.—Genesis 24:15-20; Exodus 2:16.



thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free." (Revelation 22:17) Today, that invitation is being sounded earth wide. Each year, Jehovah's Witnesses in more than 235 lands are spending over one billion hours in helping people to take in life-giving knowledge of the Bible.

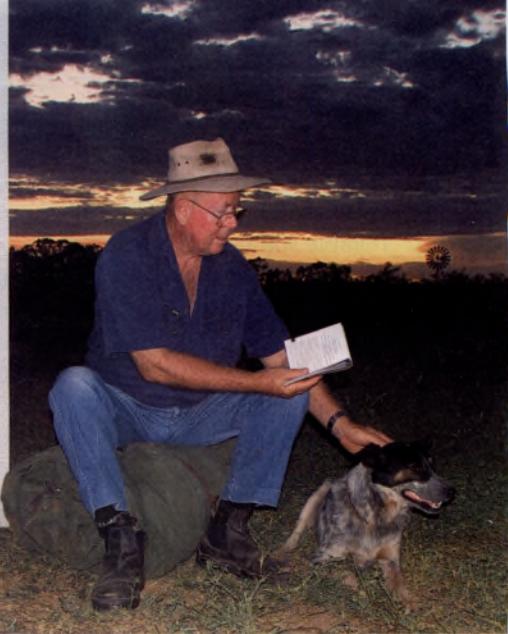
Do you thirst for the water of life? By taking in the crystal-clear water, that is to say, by learning about and making use of the provisions from our Creator, you too can be among those who are "safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life."—1 Timothy 6:19.

Alfonso today,
sharing God's
Word





"I'll Sit and Read It by the Campfire Tonight"



AUSTRALIA'S outback conjures up visions of parched deserts, blistering temperatures, and vast empty spaces. Yet, this inland region is home to some 180,000 people, about 1 percent of the national population.

My parents, who are Jehovah's Witnesses, took me preaching in the outback when I was young. Its immense size and rugged beauty fired my imagination. I also warmed to the hardy, easygoing inhabitants of the area. Now having a young family of my own, I wanted my wife and our two children, aged 10 and 12, to have that experience.

Planning the Trip

First, we sat down to count the cost. How far could we afford to travel? How long could we be away? A married couple and two full-time ministers from our congregation offered to join our group. We agreed on a travel time—the midyear school break. Then we wrote the Australia branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sydney to request a territory assignment. We were invited to cover a remote area near Goondiwindi, a small rural town some 250 miles west of Brisbane, where we live.

We learned that a small congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses was located at Goondiwindi. This was an added blessing. Meeting Christian men and women would be a highlight of our trip. We contacted the congregation to tell them of our visit. Their enthusiastic response let us know that they were looking forward to our arrival.

Shortly before setting off, our group met to discuss how to present the good news of God's Kingdom in an outback setting. We especially wanted to respect the culture and customs of any Aborigines we might meet. Some tribes, for example, consider their land to be their communal home. To barge in uninvited would be impolite.

Into the Outback

Finally, the big day arrived. Our two family sedans, fully loaded with people and supplies, headed inland. Cultivated fields gave way to grassy plains dotted with eucalyptus trees. The warm winter sun sparkled in a cloudless sky. Hours later we arrived at Goondiwindi and settled into rented cabins at a trailer park for the night.

The next day, Sunday, dawned sunny and crisp—perfect weather for preaching. Summer temperatures here regularly soar above 100 degrees Fahrenheit! Our first stop was an Aboriginal community some 20 miles away. We were directed to Jenny, an elderly, gray-haired woman who was a community leader. She listened carefully to our Scriptural presentation and happily accepted the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*.^{*} She then invited us to enter the community to preach to the residents.

Local children ran ahead to announce our visits. Every householder we met listened respectfully to our message and accepted Bible literature. Soon our literature was gone, and it was time to return to town for the congregation meeting. Before we left, we promised to return to visit those whom we had missed.

That afternoon the Kingdom Hall buzzed with happy conversation as new acquaintances quickly became friends. The 25 local Witnesses had faithfully been carrying the Kingdom message to some 11,000 people scattered across 11,500 square miles of countryside. "Thank you for making the effort to come and help us," said one grateful Witness. After a lively meeting, we all adjourned for some refreshments. Before we went to bed that night, we fed the native possums roaming our trailer park.

"By the Campfire Tonight"

Over the next two days, our two car groups visited remote properties scattered along the Queensland-New South Wales border. The countryside, for the most part, was dry eucalyptus scrub interspersed with flat, open grasslands where sheep and cattle grazed. Along the way, we saw several kangaroos, their twitching ears alert to our presence. Stately emus strutted across a dusty paddock in the distance.

Tuesday afternoon we encountered a large herd of cattle moving slowly down the road. Contract drovers have long moved livestock through this area, especially in times of drought. Soon we came across a drover mounted on his horse. Pulling over, I stepped from the car and called out a greeting. "G'day mate," he replied. The elderly man, his cattle dog by his side, stopped to talk.

After chatting for a while about the drought, I introduced our message. "Why, I haven't heard anything from the Bible since I was a child!" the man exclaimed. He held religious leaders responsible for the moral decay in the world. Still, he had a deep respect for the Bible. After a fine Scriptural discussion, I offered him the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*^{*} Grasping it firmly, he placed the book in his shirt pocket and said, "If it tells me what the Bible teaches, I'll sit and read it by the campfire tonight."

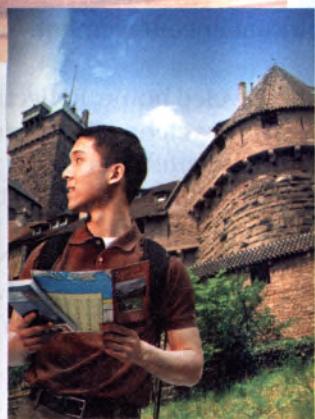
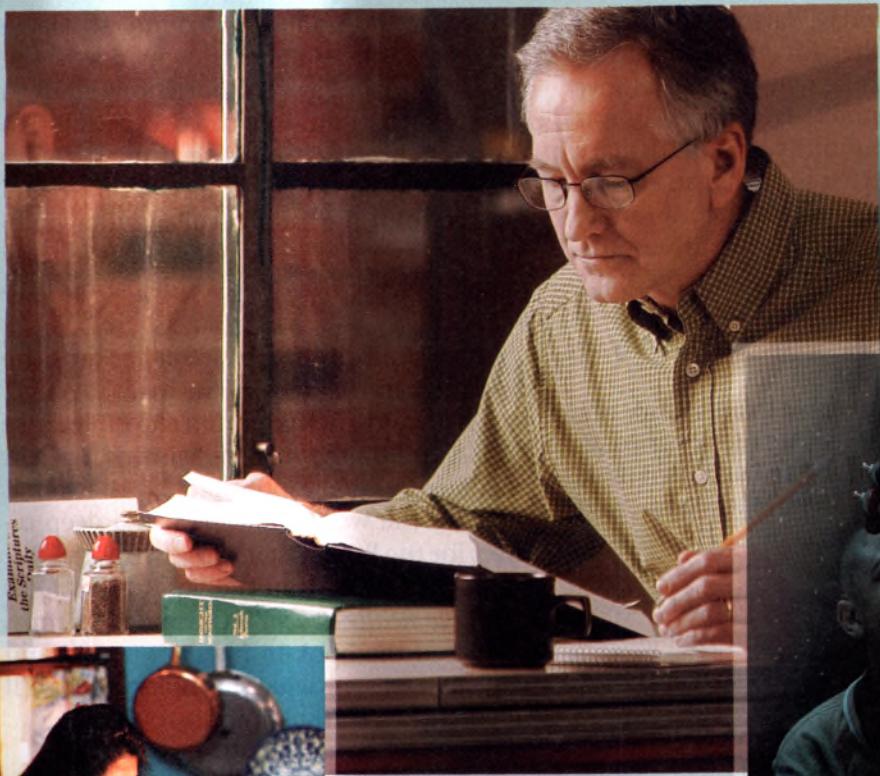
Homeward Bound

That night we related our experiences to our spiritual brothers and sisters at the Kingdom Hall. They promised to call again on the interested ones we had met. When the meeting ended, it was hard to say good-bye. A warm bond of affection had developed among us. We all felt enriched by our interchange of spiritual encouragement.—Romans 1:12.

The next day we traveled home. Reflecting on our trip, we agreed that Jehovah had richly blessed our efforts. We felt spiritually refreshed. When we arrived home, I asked the children: "Where would you like to go for our next vacation? The mountains?" "No, Dad," they replied, "let's go outback witnessing again." My wife chimed in: "Yes, let's. It was the best vacation ever!"

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

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Make Good Use of Your **Curiosity**

"Man is a being who asks questions. From the time we are born we begin to ask questions . . . It might even be said that mankind's history is the history of questions and answers that we men have formulated."

—Octavio Paz, Mexican poet.

WHAT inspires a chef to create a new recipe? What impels an explorer to venture to faraway places? What makes a child ask so many questions? More often than not, it is curiosity.

What about you? Do new ideas or a quest for answers to intriguing questions excite your curiosity? For example, Where does life come from? Why are we here? Does God exist? From childhood, many of us are compelled by curiosity to ask such questions as these and to find out the whys and wherefores of things. When an idea fascinates us, we strive to find out all we can about it. Thus curiosity can lead to many wonderful results. However, it can also lead to problems, even disasters.

Caution and Balance Needed

Many have heard in one form or another the popular saying: Curiosity killed the cat. Yes, if followed improperly, curiosity can be dangerous. For instance, out of curiosity a child might touch a hot stove, with disastrous consequences. On the other hand, an inquiring nature can motivate us to deepen our knowledge, to get to the bottom of things. But would it be wise to pursue just any interest that may excite our curiosity?

Obviously, there is knowledge that is not desirable because it is harmful. Curiosity about pornography, the occult, or teachings of cults or extremist groups can easily endanger our well-being. In these and other areas, we would do well to imitate the Hebrew psalmist who prayed: "Make my eyes pass on from seeing what is worthless."—Psalm 119:37.

Then there is knowledge that may not be harmful in itself but is actually frivolous and unnecessary. For example, what benefit is there in knowing all about the private life of movie stars or celebrities, in learning the sta-

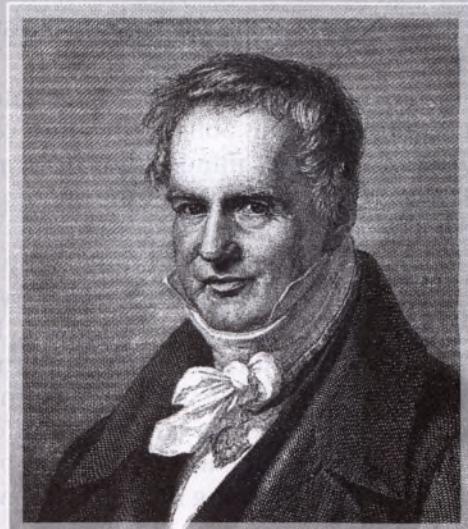
tistics of every sports team and player, or in knowing all about the latest gadgets or the newest models of cars? For most people, being "experts" in these subjects does not lead to anything beneficial.

A Motivating Example

Curiosity, of course, has its positive side. Consider the case of Alexander von Humboldt, the 19th-century German naturalist and explorer after whom the Humboldt Current, off the west coast of South America, was named.

At one point in his life, Humboldt said: "From my earliest youth I had felt an ardent desire to travel into distant regions, which Europeans had seldom visited." This desire arose, he said, when he felt "an irresistible attraction in the impetuous agitations of the mind." At the age of 29, he traveled to Central and South America on an expedition that lasted five years. With the information that he collected, he compiled a 30-volume chronicle of his travels.

Alexander von Humboldt



Everything attracted Humboldt's attention—the temperature of the ocean, the fish that lived in it, the plants he found in his path. He climbed mountains, explored rivers, and sailed the oceans. Humboldt's research laid the foundation in several fields of modern science. It all began with his intense curiosity, and his insatiable desire for knowledge accompanied him throughout his life. In the words of American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Humboldt was one of those wonders . . . who appear from time to time, as if to show us the possibilities of the human mind, the force and the range of the faculties."

A Field Worth Investigating

Of course, very few of us have the circumstances to become world explorers or to make contributions to established sciences. There is, however, one field of knowledge in which we can apply our mental faculties and reap rewards far greater than from any other endeavor. Jesus Christ pointed to this endeavor in prayer to his heavenly Father: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." —John 17:3.

Knowledge of the true God, whose name is Jehovah, and of his Son, Jesus Christ, can reward an inquiring mind in ways that no other information can. Recall the questions about life mentioned at the beginning of this article. To them we can add: Why is there so much suffering in the world? Will the earth be ruined, even destroyed, by men? And what will God do to ensure that mankind will not suffer such an outcome? Finding answers to these questions will do more than satisfy our curiosity. As Jesus put it, "this means everlasting life." Why can we be sure of that?

The Bible is the inspired Word of God. Regarding it, the Christian apostle Paul wrote: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

Just think—the apostle said that the Bible provides knowledge that can equip or enable us to do all that is good. It can help us to look at things from God's point of view. And we know that God's knowledge and wisdom are far above that of anyone else. The prophet Isaiah was inspired to record this profound statement by God: "'The thoughts of you people are not my thoughts, nor are my ways your ways,' is the utterance of Jehovah. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.'”—Isaiah 55:8, 9.

Would you like to know about God's lofty ways and thoughts? Does your curiosity impel you to find out what God's Word, the Bible, has to say about God's ways and thoughts? Are you eager to learn what God will do to end all suffering and what good he has in store for obedient mankind? The Bible extends this invitation to you: "Taste and see that Jehovah is good, O you people; happy is the able-bodied man that takes refuge in him."—Psalm 34:8.

The powerful truths of God's Word can have an impact on a sincere heart much as light can have on a person who sees for the first time. The apostle Paul was moved to declare: "O the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!" (Romans 11:33) The truth is that it will take an eternity for us to come to appreciate fully the riches of God's knowledge and wis-

dom. Before us is the thrilling prospect of never becoming bored, of always discovering something new.

Keep It Alive!

True, most of us will never become famous explorers or inventors. And perhaps we will never in an average lifetime come to understand everything that we would like to understand. Still, do not allow the capacity to be curious to go dormant. Keep alive the thirst for knowledge that God has so lovingly created in us.

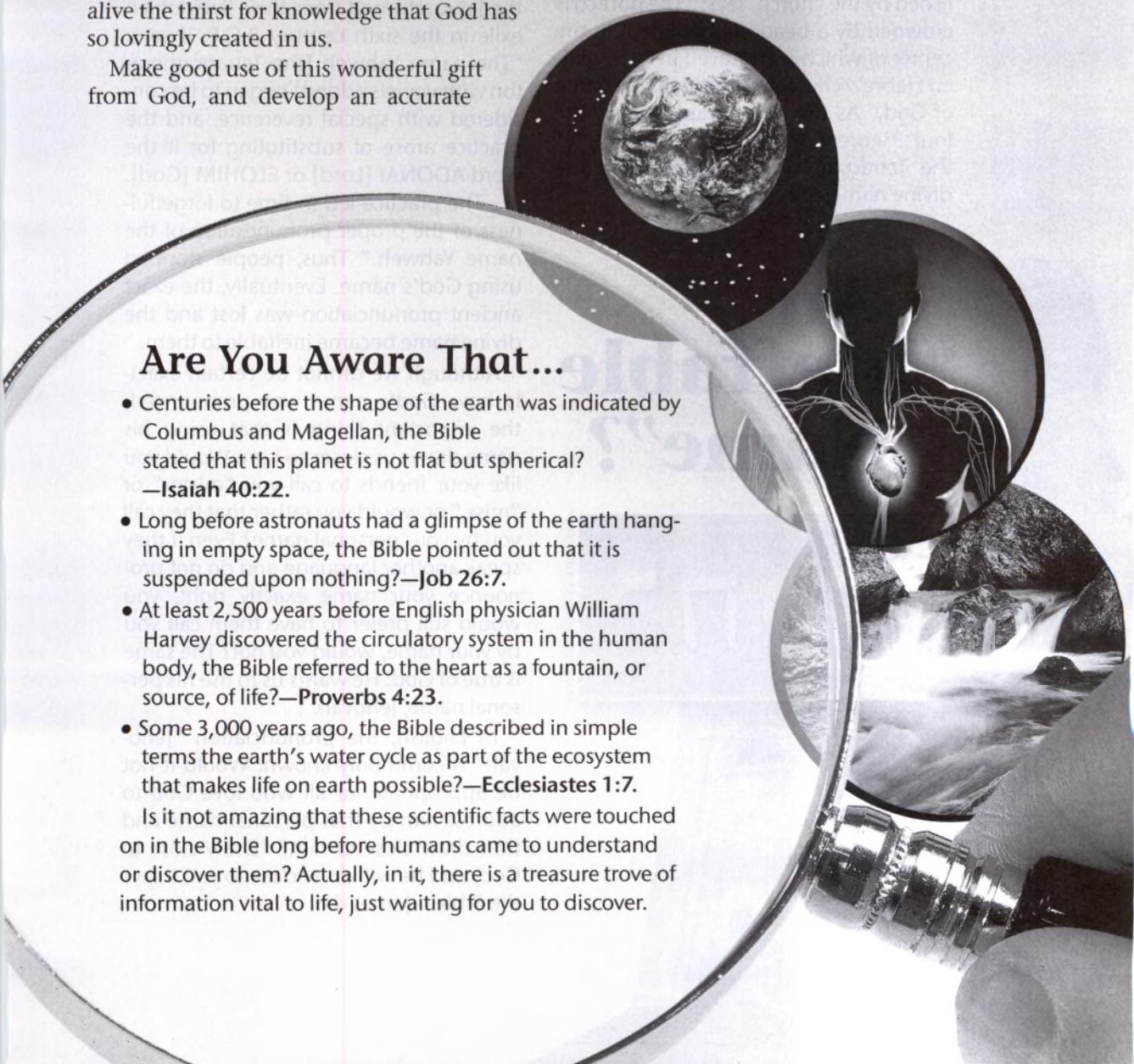
Make good use of this wonderful gift from God, and develop an accurate

understanding of God's inspired Word, the Bible. If you do, you will find meaning and joy in life now, and you can look forward to doing so throughout all eternity. "Everything [God] has made pretty in its time," says the Bible. "Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish."—Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Are You Aware That...

- Centuries before the shape of the earth was indicated by Columbus and Magellan, the Bible stated that this planet is not flat but spherical?
—**Isaiah 40:22.**
- Long before astronauts had a glimpse of the earth hanging in empty space, the Bible pointed out that it is suspended upon nothing?—**Job 26:7.**
- At least 2,500 years before English physician William Harvey discovered the circulatory system in the human body, the Bible referred to the heart as a fountain, or source, of life?—**Proverbs 4:23.**
- Some 3,000 years ago, the Bible described in simple terms the earth's water cycle as part of the ecosystem that makes life on earth possible?—**Ecclesiastes 1:7.**

Is it not amazing that these scientific facts were touched on in the Bible long before humans came to understand or discover them? Actually, in it, there is a treasure trove of information vital to life, just waiting for you to discover.



AT 630 feet, the Gateway Arch on the riverfront in St. Louis, Missouri, is the tallest monument in the United States. Near one side of the arch sits a not-so-tall church, commonly called the Old Cathedral.

Describing the architectural features of the entryway of the church, the booklet *The Story of the Old Cathedral*, published by the church, says: "The portico is crowned by a beautiful pediment in the center of which is engraved in large gilded Hebrew characters the ineffable name of God." As the photograph shows, the four Hebrew letters יהוה (YHWH), or the Tetragrammaton, representing the divine name, are clearly visible.

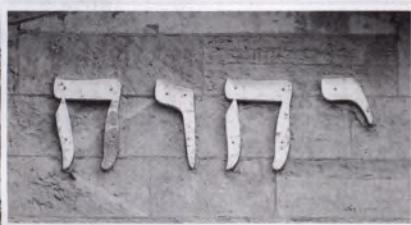
When the cathedral was built in 1834, those of the diocese of St. Louis must have felt that the name in the form of the four Hebrew letters should have a prominent place. Why, then, is the divine name considered to be "ineffable," or "not to be uttered"?

The *New Catholic Encyclopedia* explains what took place some time after the Jews returned from their Babylonian exile in the sixth century B.C.E. It says: "The name Yahweh [the Tetragrammaton with vowels added] began to be considered with special reverence, and the practice arose of substituting for it the word ADONAI [Lord] or ELOHIM [God]. . . . The practice led in time to forgetfulness of the proper pronunciation of the name Yahweh." Thus, people stopped using God's name. Eventually, the exact ancient pronunciation was lost and the divine name became ineffable to them.

Although we cannot be certain exactly how God's name was pronounced, the important thing is that using his name draws us closer to him. Would you like your friends to call you "mister" or "miss," or would you rather that they call you by your personal name? Even if they speak another language and do not pronounce your name exactly right, you would still prefer to have them call you by your name, would you not? The same is true of God. He wants us to use his personal name, Jehovah.

In English, the pronunciation "Jehovah" is commonly known. Would it not be appropriate for all who love God to address him by that personal name and thus draw close to him? "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you," says the Bible.—James 4:8.

An "Ineffable Name"?



A God Willing to Forgive

John 21:15-17

“YOU, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive." (Psalm 86:5) With those heartwarming words, the Bible assures us that Jehovah God is generous with his forgiveness. An incident in the life of the apostle Peter clearly shows that Jehovah forgives "in a large way."—Isaiah 55:7.

Peter was among Jesus' closest companions. Yet, on the last night of Jesus' life on earth, Peter caved in to fear and committed a grievous sin. In a courtyard near the place where Jesus was being illegally tried, Peter publicly denied knowing Jesus—not once but three times. Following Peter's third vehement denial, Jesus "turned and looked upon Peter." (Luke 22:55-61) Can you imagine how Peter felt as Jesus' gaze fell upon him? Recognizing the gravity of his sin, Peter "broke down and gave way to weeping." (Mark 14:72) The repentant apostle might have wondered whether his threefold denial had put him beyond the reach of God's forgiveness.

Following his resurrection, Jesus had a conversation with Peter that no doubt dispelled any doubts about Peter's having been forgiven. Jesus uttered no harsh words, no condemnation. Instead, he asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Peter answered: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." Jesus responded: "Feed my lambs." Jesus repeated the question a second time, and Peter gave the same answer, perhaps more emphatically. Jesus said: "Shepherd my little sheep." Then Jesus asked the same basic question a third time: "Do you have affection for me?" Now "Peter became grieved" and said: "Lord, you know all things; you are aware that I have affection

for you." Jesus answered: "Feed my little sheep."—John 21:15-17.

Why did Jesus ask questions to which he already knew the answers? Jesus could read hearts, so he knew that Peter loved him. (Mark 2:8) By asking those questions, Jesus gave Peter an opportunity to reaffirm his love three times. Jesus' words in response: "Feed my lambs. . . . Shepherd my little sheep. . . . Feed my little sheep," reassured the repentant apostle that he was still trusted. After all, Jesus was commissioning Peter to help care for a most precious possession—Jesus' dear sheeplike followers. (John 10:14, 15) Peter must surely have been relieved to know that he was still trustworthy in Jesus' eyes!

Clearly, Jesus forgave his repentant apostle. Since Jesus perfectly reflects his Father's qualities and ways, we can only conclude that Jehovah too forgave Peter. (John 5:19) Far from being reluctant to forgive, Jehovah is a merciful God who is "ready to forgive" a repentant sinner. Is that not a comforting thought?



She Wanted to Help

HAVE you ever known someone who was very sick?—Did you wish you could do something to help him?—What if he was from a different country or of a different religion? Would you still want to help him get well?—A young girl who lived in the land of Israel nearly 3,000 years ago did. Let's talk about what happened then.

There is often fighting between ancient Israel, where the girl lives, and the nearby country of Syria. (1 Kings 22:1) One day the Syrians come to Israel and capture the little girl. She is taken to Syria, where she becomes the servant of the wife of Naaman, the Syrian army chief. Naaman has a bad disease called leprosy, which can cause some of a person's flesh to fall off.

The servant girl tells Naaman's wife how her husband can be healed. She says: 'If Naaman were in Samaria, Jehovah's prophet Elisha could make his leprosy go away.' Well, the way the servant girl talks about Elisha makes Naaman believe that the prophet really might be able to make him well. So with the approval of Ben-hadad, the king of Syria, Naaman and some attendants make the long trip of about a hundred miles to find Elisha.

First, they go to Jehoram, the king of Israel. They show him King Ben-hadad's letter that asks for help for Naaman. But Jehoram does not have faith in Jehovah or the prophet Elisha. Jehoram thinks Ben-hadad is trying to pick a fight with him. When Elisha hears about this, he tells King Jehoram: "Let him come, please, to me." Elisha wants to demonstrate God's power to heal Naaman of his bad disease.—2 Kings 5:1-8.

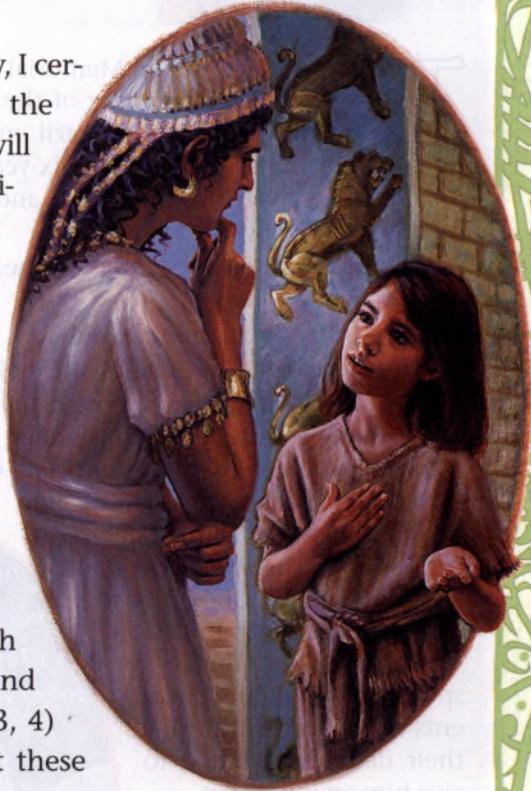
When Naaman arrives at Elisha's house with his horses and chariots, Elisha sends out a messenger to tell him: 'You must bathe seven times in the Jordan River, and you will be healed.' Naaman is angry. He expects Elisha to come out and wave his hand over the leprosy to make it go away. Instead, he sees only this messenger! So Naaman turns away in a rage and begins to go back home.—2 Kings 5:9-12.

What would you have done if you were one of Naaman's servants?—Well, the servants ask him: 'If it was some hard thing Elisha asked you to do, would you not do it? So why not do this simple thing—just bathe and be clean?' Naaman listens to them. He goes "down and [begins] to plunge into the Jordan seven times . . . , after which his flesh [comes] back like the flesh of a little boy."

Naaman returns to Elisha and says: "Here, now, I certainly know that there is no God anywhere in the earth but in Israel." He promises Elisha that he will never again "render up a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other gods but to Jehovah."—2 Kings 5: 13-17.

Would you like to help someone to learn about Jehovah and about what he can do, as that little girl did?—When Jesus was on earth, a man who had leprosy believed in him and said: 'If you really want to help me, you can.' Do you know what Jesus replied?— "I want to." And Jesus healed him, just as Jehovah had healed Naaman.—Matthew 8:2, 3.

Do you know about the new world that Jehovah will create in which all people will be healthy and can live forever?— (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) Surely, then, you will want to tell others about these wonderful things!



Questions:

- How did a little girl help Naaman, whose men had captured her?
- Why was Naaman at first unwilling to obey Elisha, but what changed his mind?
- What must you really want to do in order to imitate that little girl?
- What did Jesus want to do, and why will life be wonderful in God's new world?



A Modern-Day “Israelite Girl”

TWO weeks before the Memorial of Jesus' death, each member of the Sales family in Praia Grande, Brazil, made a list of those they would invite. Six-year-old Abigail was given an invitation and was asked whom she wanted to give it to.

"The man who always smiles at me," she answered.

"Who is he?" her parents asked.

"The one in the wheelchair," she replied.

Four days later, Abigail pointed the man out to her parents. The man, Walter, lived only a block from the Kingdom Hall. Over 15 years ago, when he was 28, an auto accident had left him paralyzed from the waist down. He had two bodyguards, since he was well-to-do. After permission was received for Abigail to speak with Walter, her parents explained to him that their daughter wanted to give him an invitation.

At the end of her presentation, Abigail said: "All the others in our Kingdom Hall have many invitations, but I have only one. So you are the only one I am inviting. If you don't come, I will have nobody. But if you come, I will be very happy, and Jehovah will be even happier."

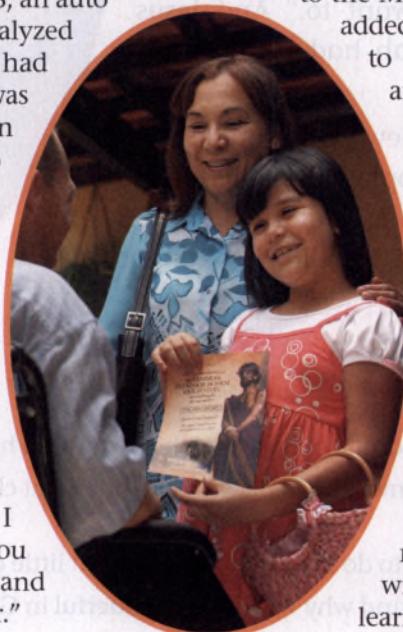
On the day of the Memorial, the Witnesses, including Abigail, were cleaning the Kingdom Hall in preparation for the

evening Memorial program. That afternoon Walter was passing by, and on seeing Abigail, he told his driver to stop the car. A window opened, and he asked Abigail what she was doing. She told him that they were cleaning the hall to make it nice for him.

That evening Abigail was very anxious. The talk began, and she kept looking around to see if Walter had arrived. All of a sudden, he and his bodyguards arrived. Her smile was enormous. After the talk, Walter admitted that he had started out on a trip to another city but then changed his mind and went to the Memorial, just for her. Then he added: "The talk was what I needed to hear." He asked for a Bible and started to study and attend meetings.

In the meantime, Walter's sister said that she wanted to meet this Abigail, whom her brother mentioned so often. When she did, she was delighted to learn what a fine young girl Abigail is. "Now I know why my brother is so happy," she said.

Walter continues to study and attend meetings. He even makes comments and shares with others things that he has learned. Surely little Abigail reminds us of the Israelite girl who helped Naaman to come to know the true God, Jehovah.—2 Kings 5:2-14.



Did You Know?

Why did Pontius Pilate become fearful upon hearing the charge that Jesus had "made himself God's son"?—John 19:7.

The Roman Senate had posthumously raised Julius Caesar to the rank of a god. His adopted son and successor, Octavian, was thereafter declared *divi filius*, that is, "Son of a Divine One," or "Son of God." This Latin designation became a solemn title of the emperors. This is verified by numerous inscriptions on Roman altars, temples, statues, and coins. When the Jews charged Jesus with making himself "God's son," they were, in effect, accusing him of assuming an official title, which was tantamount to treason.

By the time of Jesus' trial, Tiberius had inherited the title of *divi filius*. This emperor had a fearsome reputation for killing any whom he considered to be his enemies. So when the Jews intimated that Pilate would be disloyal to Caesar if he did not condemn Jesus, the Roman governor became "more fearful." Eventually, he caved in under pressure and ordered Jesus' execution.—John 19:8, 12-16.



Drawing by Andre Castaigne (1898-1899)

Why did Zechariah foretell the destruction of Tyre long after it had been destroyed by the Babylonians?

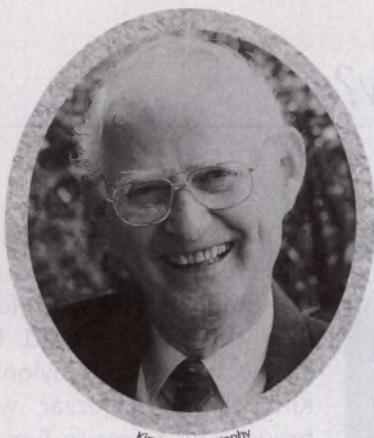
Ancient Tyre, situated on the Mediterranean Coast, actually consisted of two parts. One was on the mainland, and the other was on an island.

At one time, inhabitants of Tyre were friendly to the Israelites. Later, though, Tyre became prosperous and began to defy Jehovah God, to the point of stealing the gold and silver from his people and selling some of them into slavery. (Joel 3:

4-6) This brought Jehovah's adverse judgment. Through his prophets, Jehovah foretold that Tyre would fall at the hands of Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar, who brought his forces to Tyre after he destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E.—Isaiah 23:13, 14; Jeremiah 27:2-7; Ezekiel 28:1-19.

Facing defeat, the people of Tyre escaped with their possessions to the island city. The Babylonians left the mainland city in ruins. Nearly 100 years later, Jehovah inspired his prophet Zechariah to pronounce His judgment against Tyre: "Look! Jehovah himself will dispossess her, and into the sea he will certainly strike down her military force; and in the fire she herself will be devoured."—Zechariah 9:3, 4.

In 332 B.C.E., the island city met destruction at the hands of Alexander the Great, thus fulfilling Zechariah's prophecy. To accomplish that, Alexander constructed a half-mile-long causeway from the mainland to the island, using the wood and stones from the ruins of old Tyre. This, too, was foretold by Ezekiel.—Ezekiel 26:4, 12.



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MY LIFELONG JOY IN DOING GOD'S WILL

AS TOLD BY
BILL YAREMCHUK

In March 1947, just a few weeks after my graduation as a missionary from the eighth class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, then located in South Lansing, New York, U.S.A., I was on my way to my foreign assignment—faraway Singapore.

DAVE FARMER, a fellow Canadian who had graduated from Gilead's seventh class, was to work together with me. We boarded the *Marine Adder*, a former troopship, sailing from San Francisco, California.

Our first port of call in the Orient was Hong Kong. What we saw there was totally shocking. The ravages of World War II were everywhere—people lying on the sidewalks, starving and appearing to be dying. We were soon back on the ship and headed for Manila, the capital of the Philippines.

There, too, we saw the dreadful aftermath of the war. The harbor was strewn with the masts of ships that had been sunk by Allied bombers, and there was poverty all around us. We met up with a handful of Jehovah's Witnesses, who took us to their Kingdom Hall. They were happy in spite of the problems they were facing.

Our next port of call was Batavia (now Jakarta) in Indonesia. A civil war was raging, and there was fighting nearby, so we were not allowed off the ship. As we steamed off to

Singapore, I began to wonder what awaited us there. Was this all that was left of the exotic Orient that we had read about in travel brochures?

Within a few days, my misgivings were dispelled. A drama was about to unfold that would prove beyond any doubt that Dave and I were on a God-approved mission.

How We Were Permitted to Stay

About a month after we left San Francisco, our ship finally anchored at St. John's Island, which was the Singapore quarantine area. Immigration officers came aboard to clear formalities for the passengers, and our passports were stamped "Permitted to Land." The following morning, the ship docked alongside the wharf. After our documents were checked by an officer of the ship, we disembarked.

The next day, we returned to the docks to bid farewell to fellow missionaries with whom we had been traveling. They were continuing on to their destinations in In-

dia and Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). When the ship's captain saw us, he came down to the wharf and confronted us. He was angry and shouted that we were not supposed to be off the ship. Earlier, while we were at sea, the controller of immigration, Mr. Haxworth, ordered him not to allow us to leave the ship when it reached port. We were unaware of the order, as was the officer who permitted us to leave the ship.

We received a fiery reception when we were brought to Mr. Haxworth. He shouted at us, saying that we had been forbidden to enter Singapore. Since we were unaware of any such denial of entry, we showed him our passports with the official stamp "Permitted to Land." He angrily grabbed the passports from our hands and struck out those words. But, alas, the ship had already departed! Mr. Haxworth held on

to our passports for a whole year, finally returning them stamped "Permitted to Land."

Productive Ministry in Singapore

When we arrived in April 1947, a man named Joshua was the only Witness in Singapore. He served as a full-time minister, or pioneer, until his death in the early 1970's. Soon, some who had been learning Bible truths began to share these with others. Our prayers for more workers in the spiritual harvest began to be answered.

—Matthew 9:37, 38.

In 1949, while Mr. Haxworth was on a long vacation in England, six missionaries who had graduated from the 11th class of Gilead arrived in Singapore. Meanwhile, Dave, who had been my missionary partner for several years, found it necessary to leave Singapore because of ill health. He



*Joshua was the only Witness
in Singapore when we arrived
in 1947*



*With Dave Farmer in Hong Kong, en route to
Singapore, 1947*



With Aileen, 1958

immigrated to Australia, where he served faithfully until his death in 1973. Among the six new arrivals was Aileen Franks, whom I married in 1956.

Over the years, we studied the Bible with many who became Witnesses along with their children. Even today, some of them are in the full-time ministry in foreign fields. One heartwarming experience involved Lester and Joanie Haynes, an American couple who lived in Singapore. We started a Bible study with them in the 1950's. The couple made rapid spiritual progress and were baptized after returning to the United States. Later, Lester and Joanie enjoyed a productive ministry. They helped many to become Witnesses, including their three children.

Joanie wrote: "When I think back to that year in Singapore, it really did change the direction of our life. If we hadn't been 'adopted' by you, we would probably still be moving all around the world. I'm glad you were the one to teach Les the truth because from the start, he had a teacher who instilled in him love for Jehovah and for our Christian brothers. He's never lost that."

Serving as a Family in Singapore

In 1962 an unexpected event occurred that was to bring new life to our assignment. Our family doctor advised Aileen that she was pregnant. We wanted to stay in the missionary work, but how could we do so and raise a child? Nathan H. Knorr, who then had oversight of the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, wrote us, encouraging me to get secular work so that we could stay in Singapore. This presented a tremendous challenge.

Most foreigners were employed as executives in foreign companies. I had no experience in the business world, since I had entered the full-time ministry after leaving school some 23 years earlier. So I paid an employment agency in London to make out a

résumé based on my work as a minister of religion in a foreign land, and they sent it to many multinational companies operating in Singapore.

I kept getting replies, "We regret that we are unable to find a position for anyone with your qualifications." They considered me overqualified! Months went by, and our baby, Judy, was born. Brother Knorr was then visiting Singapore, and he went to see Judy and her mother in the hospital. He reassured us, "You can stay in the missionary home for as long as you need until Bill gets a job."

A few months later, I got a job as a sales representative with an international airline. The wages were barely enough to live on. Two years later, an American carrier hired me and doubled my pay. Eventually, I became established in the travel industry, and I was able to devote more time to my family and to the Christian ministry.

We built our life around Jehovah's service, giving spiritual interests priority. This made it possible for me to enjoy many privileges in the organization. Aileen entered the full-time ministry again. Meanwhile, the Kingdom-preaching work flourished in Singapore. In the mid-1960's, we purchased a fine two-story building downtown that served as a Kingdom Hall. Four congregations met there.

Our Work Banned!

In time, dark clouds of opposition loomed on the horizon. On January 14, 1972, we went, as was our custom, to the Kingdom Hall to attend our meeting. But on the gate was a chain with a padlock. A posted notice declared that the Singapore Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses had been deregistered. We were banned!*

The closing of the Kingdom Hall did not stop our worship of Jehovah, but the ques-

* See *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1972, pages 341-9.

tion in my mind was, 'What is God's will for my family?' I reasoned that if we should ever be deported, we would never be able to return and visit our friends in Singapore. So I asked my company manager if I could work in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Then our family might be able to travel back and forth without difficulty. To my surprise, he offered me a job as manager of the Kuala Lumpur office, which would double my salary and provide other benefits.

Then I wondered, 'Is it God's will for us to move away from Singapore and our brothers?' As a family, we took the matter to Jehovah in prayer. We concluded that it was Jehovah who had brought us here. So I made the final decision—we stay. My manager was astounded that I turned down his lucrative offer.

Living and working under ban was very stressful, since we were constantly under threat of arrest and imprisonment. There were occasions that really made us appreciate the words of Psalm 34:7: "The angel of Jehovah

With our daughter, Judy



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vah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them."

A New Assignment

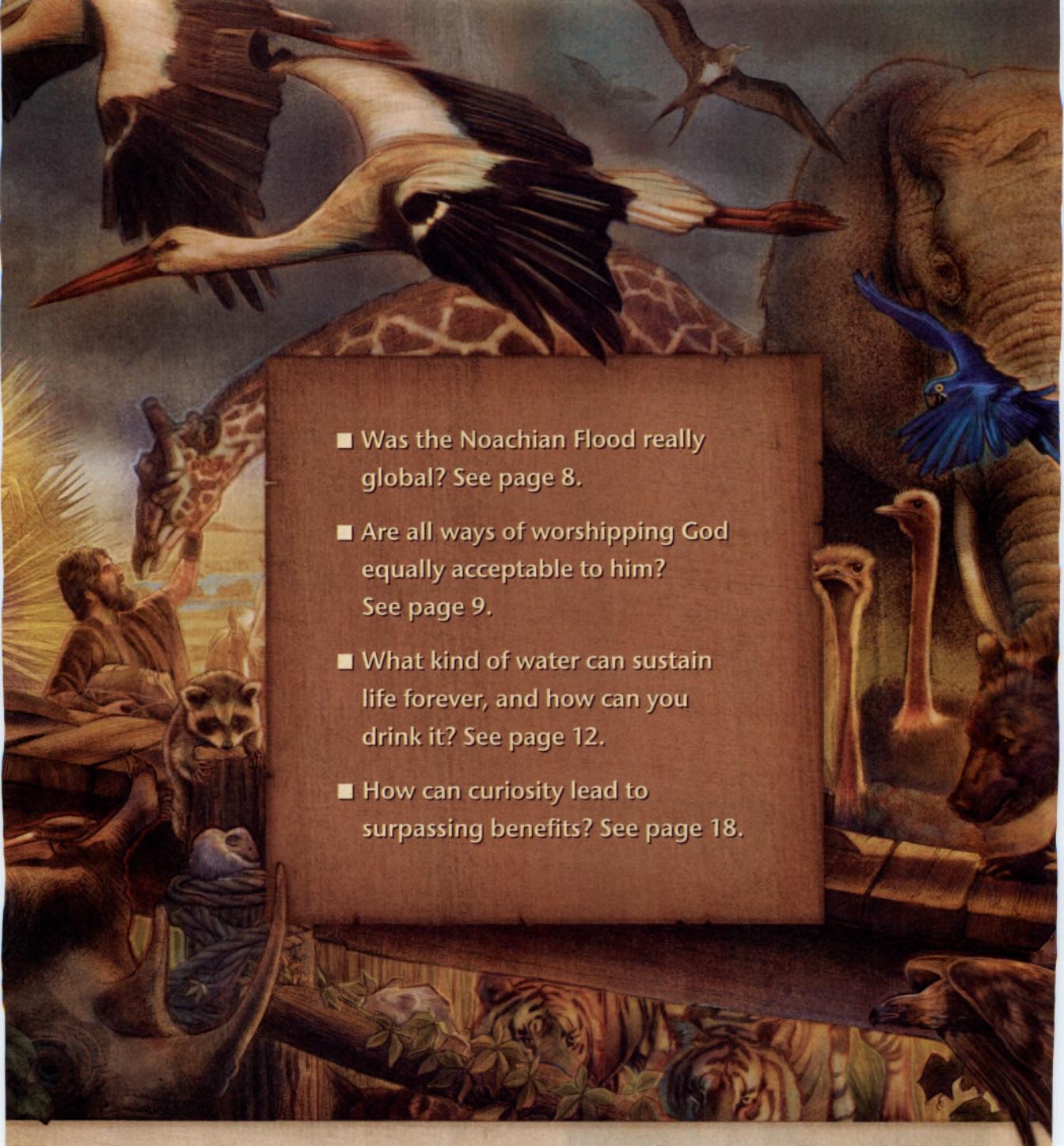
Finally, in 1993, after serving for over 46 years in Singapore, we were asked to move to New Zealand, where we could serve with less stress and anxiety. Needless to say, we were saddened to leave our dear friends in Singapore, whom we had come to love very much. Yet, we were heartened to know that their faith had been built on a solid foundation with fire-resistant materials. This enabled them to stand firm in the face of the tests that they have continued to endure.
—1 Corinthians 3:12-14.

Now, after more than 14 years in New Zealand, Aileen and I, although advanced in years, are still enjoying our ministry as special pioneers. Two of my siblings—Mike, who is 94, and Peter, 90—are still alive, faithfully serving Jehovah in Canada.

In 1998 our daughter, Judy, moved back to the Orient and served there for several years. In one of her letters to us, she wrote: "How thankful I am every single day to Jehovah for the splendid privilege of working here! Thanks, too, to both of you for all the loving training and the sacrifices you made and continue to make for all of this to be possible." In 2003 she moved back to New Zealand to provide Aileen and me with the help we needed.*

We are grateful to Jehovah that our circumstances permitted us to respond to the Master's call for more workers in the harvest. Our doing so has brought us indescribable joy. And when 'the world passes away,' as the Bible says it will, we will enjoy the realization of God's wonderful promise: "He that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:17.

* Dear Aileen passed away on January 24, 2008, as this article was being finalized.

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- Was the Noachian Flood really global? See page 8.
 - Are all ways of worshipping God equally acceptable to him? See page 9.
 - What kind of water can sustain life forever, and how can you drink it? See page 12.
 - How can curiosity lead to surpassing benefits? See page 18.