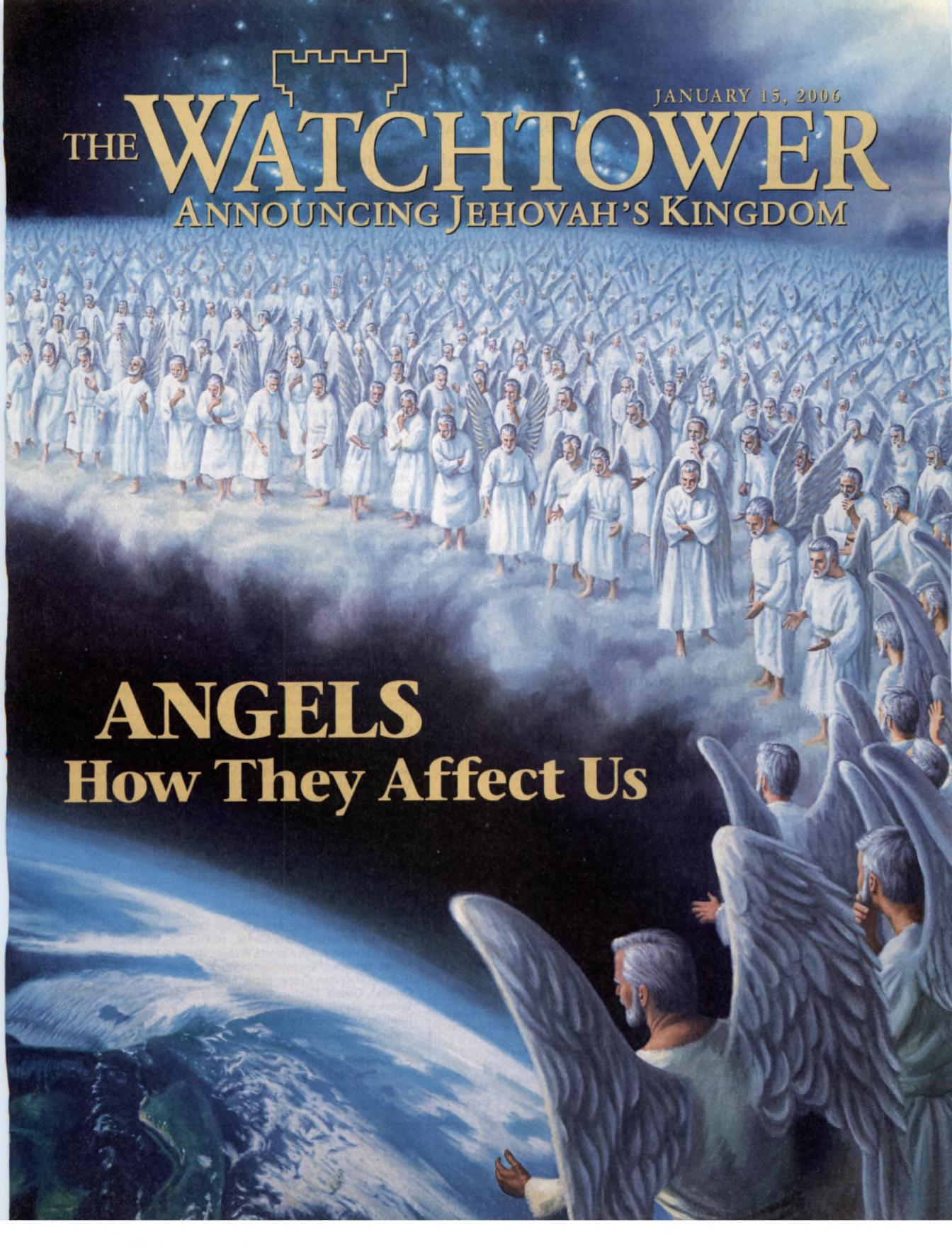


JANUARY 15, 2006

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## ANGELS How They Affect Us



# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Angels—Who They Are
- 4 Angels—How They Affect Us
- 8 'Jah Serves for My Salvation'
- 10 The High Priest Who Condemned Jesus
- 13 Animal Creation Magnifies Jehovah
- 17 Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Ezra
- 21 Do Not Allow Place for the Devil
- 26 Oppose Satan, and He Will Flee!
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 "The Earliest Known Citations of Biblical Texts"

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

FEBRUARY 13-19:

Do Not Allow Place for the Devil.  
Page 21. Songs to be used: 174, 24.

FEBRUARY 20-26:

Oppose Satan, and He Will Flee!  
Page 26. Songs to be used: 27, 143.

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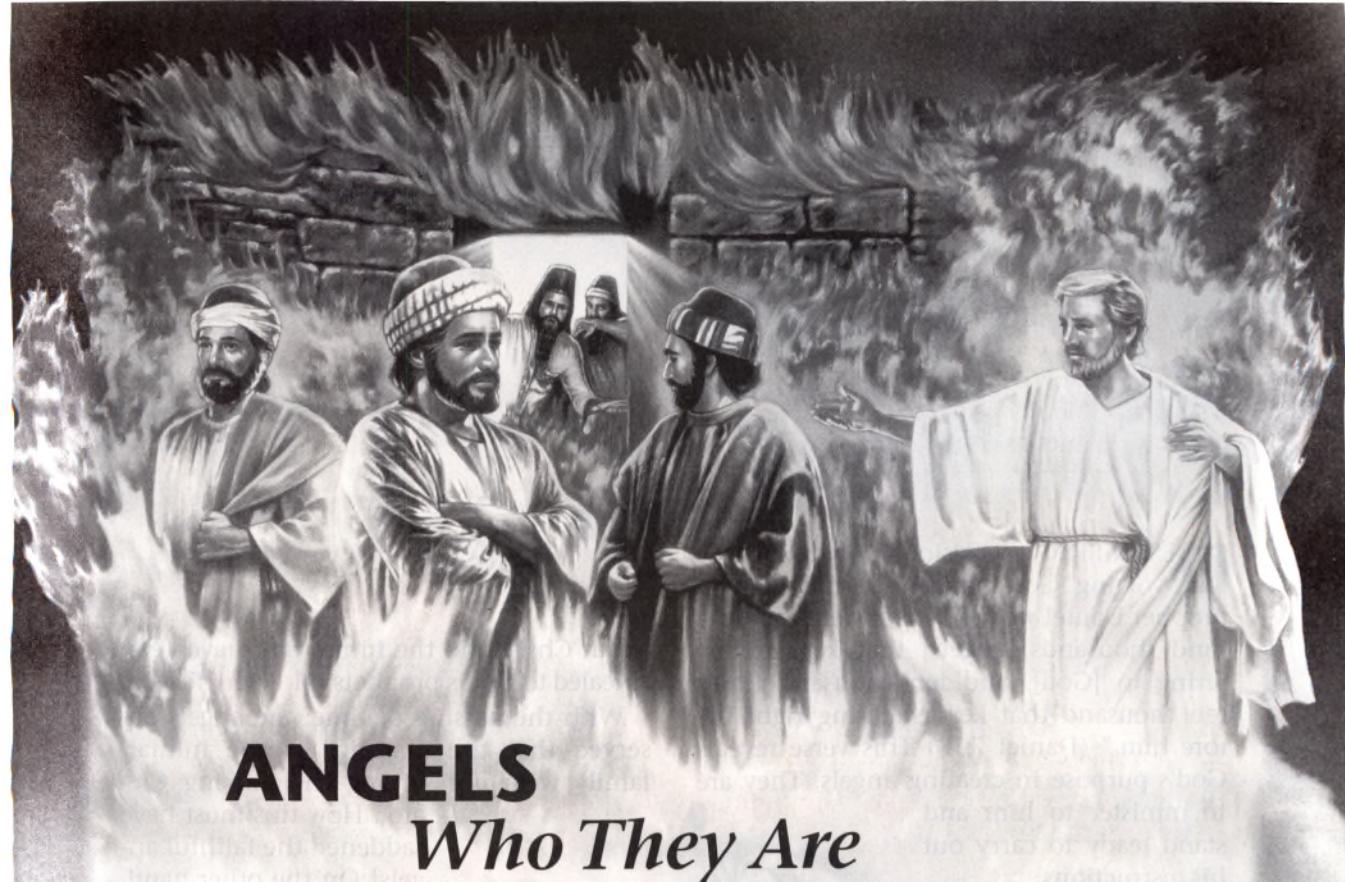
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## ANGELS *Who They Are*

THE monarch of a mighty empire cannot believe his eyes. Three men sentenced to a fiery destruction are rescued from the jaws of death! Who has saved them? The king himself says to the three so delivered: "Blessed be [your God], who sent his angel and rescued his servants that trusted in him." (Daniel 3:28) This Babylonian ruler of over two millennia ago was an eyewitness to an angelic deliverance. Millions of people in the past believed in angels. Many today not only believe that angels exist but also feel that their own lives in some way are affected by angels. Who are the angels, and what is their origin?

According to the Bible, angels are spirits, just as God himself is a Spirit. (Psalm 104:4; John 4:24) The angelic family is large, numbering into the millions. (Revelation 5:11) And all of them are "mighty in power."

(Psalm 103:20) Though angels are like humans in that they have personality and are given free will, they did not begin their lives as humans. In fact, God created angels long before mankind's appearance—even before the creation of planet Earth. When God "founded the earth," says the Bible, "the morning stars [angels] joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4, 7) Since the angels are God's creation, they are called the sons of God.

For what purpose did God create angels? What role, if any, have angels played in human history? Do they affect our life today? Since they are free moral agents, have any of the angels followed the course of Satan the Devil and made themselves God's enemies? The Bible provides truthful answers to these questions.

# ANGELS

## *How They Affect Us*

**D**ESCRIBING the vision he had involving God's angelic family, the prophet Daniel wrote: "There were a thousand thousands [angels] that kept ministering to [God], and ten thousand times ten thousand that kept standing right before him." (Daniel 7:10) This verse reveals God's purpose in creating angels. They are to minister to him and stand ready to carry out his instructions.

God uses angels to perform certain functions in connection with humans. We will consider how he uses them to strengthen and protect his people, to deliver messages to humans, and to execute his judgment upon the wicked.

### Angels Strengthen and Protect

Ever since spirit creatures witnessed the creation of the earth and the first humans, they have shown keen interest in mankind. Speaking as wisdom personified, Jesus Christ, in his prehuman existence, said: "The things I was fond of were with the sons of men." (Proverbs 8:31) And the Bible informs us that "angels are desiring to peer" into facts



*Angels escorted Lot and his daughters to safety*

about Christ and the future that have been revealed to God's prophets.—1 Peter 1:11, 12.

With the passing of time, the angels observed that the majority of the human family were not serving their loving Creator. How this must have saddened the faithful angels! On the other hand, whenever one sinner repents and turns to Jehovah, "joy arises among the angels." (Luke 15:10) Angels have deep concern for the welfare of those who serve God, and Jehovah has repeatedly used them to strengthen and protect his faithful servants on earth. (Hebrews 1:14)

Consider some examples. Two angels helped righteous Lot and his daughters to survive the destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by escorting them out of that area.\* (Genesis 19:1, 15-26) Centuries later, even though the prophet Daniel was thrown into a lions' pit,

\* In the Bible, angels are represented as adult males. Their appearance to humans was always as males.

he was not harmed. Why? "My own God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions," he declared. (Daniel 6:22) Angels supported Jesus at the start of his earthly ministry. (Mark 1:13) And shortly before Jesus' death, an angel appeared to him and "strengthened him." (Luke 22:43) What a blessing that angelic support must have been for Jesus at those crucial times in his life! An angel also freed the apostle Peter from prison.—Acts 12:6-11.

Do angels protect us today? If we worship Jehovah according to his Word, we are assured that his powerful, invisible angels provide us with protection. The Bible promises: "The angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them."—Psalm 34:7.

However, we must recognize that angels are primarily in the service of God, not that of humans. (Psalm 103:20, 21) They respond to God's direction, not to man's summonses or requests. Hence, the one to call upon for help is Jehovah God, not the angels. (Matthew 26:53) Of course, since we do not see the angels, we cannot determine to what extent God uses them in helping people with various matters. But we know that Jehovah does "show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him." (2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 91:11) And we have the assurance that "no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he [God] hears us."—1 John 5:14.

The Scriptures also tell us that our prayers and worship should be directed to God alone. (Exodus 20:3-5; Psalm 5:1, 2; Matthew 6:9)

Faithful angels encourage us to do that. For example, when the apostle John tried to worship an angel, that spirit creature rebuked him, saying: "Be careful! Do not do that! . . . Worship God."—Revelation 19:10.

### Angels Deliver God's Messages

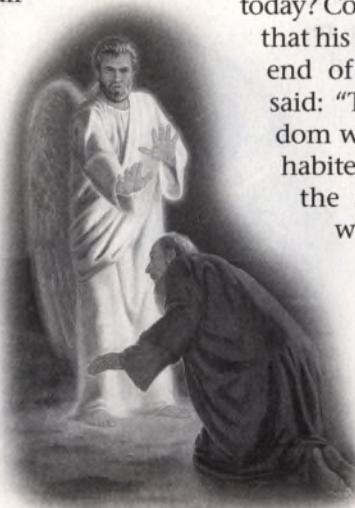
The word "angel" means "messenger," and that is another way angels serve God—as his messengers to humans. For instance, "the angel Gabriel was sent forth from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth." Why? To inform a young woman named Mary that although she was a virgin, she would conceive in her womb and give birth to a son to be named Jesus. (Luke 1:26-31) An angel was also sent to shepherds in the fields to inform them that "Christ the Lord" had been born. (Luke 2:8-11) Similarly, angels delivered messages from God to Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others of Bible record.—Genesis 18:1-5, 10; Exodus 3:1, 2; Luke 22:39-43.

How do angels serve as God's messengers today? Consider the work Jesus foretold that his followers would do before the end of this system of things. He said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:3,

14) Annually, Jehovah's Witnesses spend over a billion hours preaching the good news of God's Kingdom.

But did you know that angels are also involved in this work? The apostle John referred to a vision he had, saying: "I

saw another angel . . . , and he had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth,



*When the apostle John tried to worship the angel, he was told: "Do not do that!"*

## ANGELS—HOW THEY ARE ORGANIZED

Jehovah has his vast angelic family organized as follows: The angel foremost in power and authority is Michael the archangel, or Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9) Seraphs, cherubs, and other angels are under him.

Seraphs occupy a very high position in God's arrangement. They serve as attendants at God's throne. Their assignment includes declaring God's holiness and keeping his people spiritually clean.—Isaiah 6:1-3, 6, 7.

Cherubs are associated with God's throne and uphold Jehovah's majesty.—Psalm 80:1; 99:1; Ezekiel 10:1, 2.

Other angels are agents of Jehovah, and they carry out the divine will.

and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Revelation 14:6, 7) This scripture highlights the foremost work of angels in behalf of humans today.

Jehovah's Witnesses see evidence of angelic direction as they carry out their door-to-door preaching work. They often contact individuals who were just praying for someone to help them understand God's purposes. As a result of angelic guidance and the Witnesses' own initiative, each year hundreds of thousands come to know Jehovah. May you benefit from this lifesaving work done under angelic direction.

### Angels Execute God's Judgment

Though they are not authorized to judge humans, angels are not mere bystanders. (John 5:22; Hebrews 12:22, 23) Serving as executioners, they carried out God's judgments in times past. For example, God used angels in his fight against the ancient Egyptians, who were holding



*Angels execute God's judgment*

the Israelites in bondage. (Psalm 78:49) And it was in one night that "the angel of Jehovah" struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand soldiers in the camp of an enemy of God's people.—2 Kings 19:35.

In the future too, angels will execute God's adverse judgment. Jesus will come "with his powerful angels in a flaming fire, as he brings vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news."

(2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8) That destruction, though, is to be brought upon only those who do not respond to the message now being preached earth wide with the angels' backing. Those who search for God and comply with Scriptural teachings will not be harmed.—Zephaniah 2:3.

How grateful we can be for the faithful angels, who always carry out God's instructions! Jehovah uses them to assist and protect his loyal servants on earth.

This is particularly comforting to us because there are dangerous spirit creatures called demons who want to harm us.

### Demons—Who Are They?

During the 15 centuries following Satan's deception of Eve in Eden, God's family of angels observed that Satan the Devil succeeded in turning aside from God all humans except a few faithful ones, such as Abel, Enoch, and Noah. (Genesis 3:1-7; Hebrews 11:4, 5, 7) Some of the an-

gels also yielded to Satan. The Bible refers to them as the spirits who were disobedient "in Noah's days." (1 Peter 3:19, 20) How did their disobedience become evident?

In Noah's time an unspecified number of rebellious angels left their place in God's heavenly family, came down to the earth, and materialized fleshly bodies. Why? They had developed a desire to have sexual relations with women. This led to their fathering offspring called Nephilim, who became violent giants. Moreover, "the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time." However, Jehovah God did not allow this corruption of mankind to go on. He brought a global Flood, which swept away all wicked humans along with the Nephilim. The only humans preserved alive were God's faithful servants.—Genesis 6:1-7, 17; 7:23.

The rebellious angels escaped destruction at the time of the Flood. They abandoned their fleshly bodies and returned to the spirit realm as spirit creatures. Thereafter, they are referred to as demons. They put themselves on the side of Satan the Devil, who is called "the ruler of the demons." (Matthew 12:24-27) Like their ruler, demons crave the worship of humans.

Demons are dangerous, but we need not dread them. Their power is limited. When the disobedient angels returned to heaven, they were not allowed back into God's family of faithful angels. Instead, they were cut off from any spiritual enlightenment from God, with only a dark outlook for the future. Indeed, they were confined in a condition of spiritual darkness known as Tartarus. (2 Peter 2:4) Jehovah restrained them with "eternal bonds," so that they are in spiritual darkness. Furthermore, they are now unable to materialize human bodies.—Jude 6.

## What Should You Do?

Do demons still exert influence over humans? Yes, they do so by resorting to "machinations," or "crafty acts," such as those used by their ruler, Satan the Devil. (Ephesians 6:11, 12, footnote) By applying the counsel of God's Word, however, we can stand firm against the demons. Moreover, those who love God come under the protection of powerful angels.

How vital that you learn God's requirements set out in the Scriptures and act upon what you learn! You can learn more about Bible teachings by contacting Jehovah's Witnesses in your area or by writing to the publishers of this magazine. Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to study the Bible with you free of charge and at a time that is convenient for you.

*Are you benefiting from the preaching work done under angelic direction?*



## 'Jah Serves for My Salvation'

J EHOVAH'S people faced a choice. Would they comply with the demands of the godless ruler of ancient Egypt? Or would they obey Jehovah God, leave that place of slavery, and claim the Promised Land?

Because defiant Pharaoh of Egypt refused to release Jehovah's people, God sent the Ten Plagues upon the land. How this demonstrated his power! The deities of the Egyptians could do nothing to prevent those blows.

When Pharaoh was told to let God's people go, he sneered: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice to send Israel away? I do not know Jehovah at all and, what is more, I am not going to send Israel away." (Exodus 5:2) As a result, Egypt experienced these blows: (1) water changed to blood, (2) frogs, (3) gnats, (4) gadflies, (5) pestilence upon livestock, (6) boils upon man and beast, (7) hail, (8) locusts, (9) darkness, and (10) the death of Egypt's firstborn, including Pharaoh's son. Finally, Pharaoh let the Hebrews go. He even urged them to leave!—Exodus 12:31, 32.

Some three million people—Israelite men, women, and children as well as a vast mixed company—quickly departed. (Exodus 12:37, 38) Soon, however, Pharaoh was pursuing them with his formidable army. The Israelites seemed to be trapped between the Red Sea, an unforgiving desert, and Pharaoh's forces. Yet, Moses told the people: "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and see the salvation of Jehovah." —Exodus 14:8-14.

Jehovah miraculously parted the waters of the Red Sea for Israel's escape. But when



the Egyptians followed, God caused the waters to return. "Pharaoh's chariots and his military forces [Jehovah] cast into the sea." (Exodus 14:26-28; 15:4)

Refusal to honor Jehovah had led to haughty Pharaoh's disastrous end.

At the Red Sea, Jehovah proved to be "a manly person of war." (Exodus 15:3) "Israel also got to see the great hand that Jehovah put in action against the Egyptians," says the inspired account, "and the people began to fear Jehovah and to put faith in Jehovah." (Exodus 14:31; Psalm 136:10-15) They expressed their heartfelt gratitude to God as the men joined Moses in a victory song and his sister, Miriam, led the women in dance.\*

### Jehovah Still a Deliverer

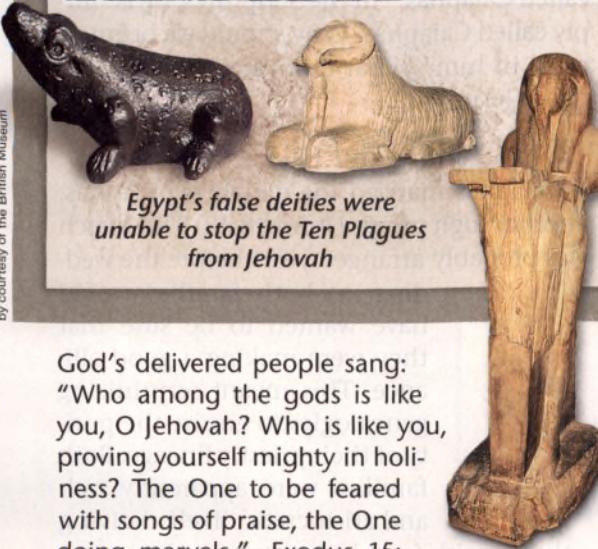
Modern-day servants of Jehovah can draw faith-strengthening lessons from that outstanding act of divine deliverance. One lesson is that Jehovah has *unlimited power* and can fully support his people. In their victory song, Moses and the Israelites triumphantly sang: "Your right hand, O Jehovah, is proving itself powerful in ability, your right hand, O Jehovah, can shatter an enemy."—Exodus 15:6.

Another lesson is that the Almighty *deeply desires* to protect his people. The Israelites sang: "My strength and my might is Jah, since he serves for my salvation. This is my God, and I shall laud him." Still another lesson is that *no one can successfully oppose* the will of Jehovah God. In their triumphant song,

\* See the 2006 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses, January/February.



All three figurines: Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum



*Egypt's false deities were unable to stop the Ten Plagues from Jehovah*

God's delivered people sang: "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah? Who is like you, proving yourself mighty in holiness? The One to be feared with songs of praise, the One doing marvels."—Exodus 15:2, 11.

Like Pharaoh of ancient Egypt, rulers of today's world persecute Jehovah's people. Arrogant leaders may "speak even words against the Most High, and . . . harass continually the holy ones themselves of the Supreme One."

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Jehovah caused a strong wind to blow all night long so that Israel could cross the Red Sea on dry ground.—Exodus 14:21, 22.
- A channel a mile or more in width would have been required for the millions of Israelites to pass through the Red Sea in such a short time.

(Daniel 7:25; 11:36) But Jehovah assures his people: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn. This is the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah."—Isaiah 54:17.

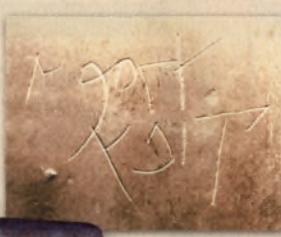
Opposers of God will fail, just as Pharaoh and his army failed. Jehovah's acts of deliverance, such as the Exodus from Egypt, testify that it is right to follow the principle stated by Jesus' apostles, who declared: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

# THE HIGH PRIEST WHO CONDEMNED JESUS

**I**N November 1990, men working on a park and a road less than a mile south of Jerusalem's Old City made a fascinating discovery. A tractor accidentally collapsed the roof of an ancient burial cave. The surrounding area had served as a huge necropolis from the first century B.C.E. to the first century C.E. Intriguing indeed was what archaeologists found inside the chamber.

The cave contained 12 ossuaries, or bone boxes, into which the bones of the dead had been placed after they had lain in tombs for about a year and their flesh had decomposed. Scratched on the side of one splendidly carved ossuary—one of the finest ever found—was the name Yehosef bar Caiapha (Joseph son of Caiaphas).

*Joseph son of Caiaphas ▶*



Ossuary, inscription, and cave in background: Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority



◀ The recently discovered ossuary



Evidence suggests that this may be the tomb of the high priest who presided over the most important trial ever held—that of Jesus Christ. Jewish historian Josephus identifies this high priest as “Joseph, who was called Caiaphas.” In the Scriptures, he is simply called Caiaphas. Why should we be interested in him? What motivated him to condemn Jesus?

## Family and Background

Caiaphas married the daughter of Annas, another high priest. (John 18:13) The match was probably arranged years before the wedding, as both families would have wanted to be sure that they were making a good alliance. This meant scrutinizing genealogies to ensure the purity of their priestly lineage. Both families were apparently rich and aristocratic, likely deriving their wealth from large estates in the Jerusalem area. Annas no doubt wanted to be sure that his future son-in-law would be a reliable political ally. It seems that both Annas and Caiaphas belonged to the powerful sect of the Sadducees.—Acts 5:17.

As a member of a distinguished priestly family, Caiaphas would have received an education in the Hebrew Scriptures and their interpretation. His temple service would have begun when he was 20 years old, but the age at which he became high priest is unknown.

### High Priests and Chief Priests

The high priesthood was originally a hereditary and lifelong appointment. But in the second century B.C.E., the Hasmonaeans usurped the high priesthood.\* Herod the Great appointed and deposed high priests, making it obvious that he was the real authority behind this office. Roman governors followed a similar practice.

These developments led to the formation of a group that the Scriptures refer to as "chief priests." (Matthew 26:3, 4) Besides Caiaphas, this group included former high priests, such as Annas, who had been deposed but continued to hold the title. The group also included the close families of current and former high priests.

The Romans allowed the day-to-day administration of Judaea to rest with the Jewish aristocracy, including the chief priests. This enabled Rome to control the province and secure tax revenues from it without sending many soldiers there. Rome expected the Jewish hierarchy to maintain order and defend her interests. Roman governors had little love for Jewish leaders, who resented Roman domination. But it was in their mutual best interests to cooperate for the sake of a stable government.

By the time of Caiaphas, the high priest was the Jewish political leader. Annas was appointed to this post by Quirinius, Roman governor of Syria, in 6 or 7 C.E. Rabbinic tradition indicates that greed, nepo-

tism, oppression, and violence characterized the leading Jewish aristocratic families. One writer supposes that as high priest, Annas would ensure that his son-in-law was "quickly promoted up the temple hierarchy; after all, the higher the position Caiaphas held, the more useful he was to Annas."

Valerius Gratus, governor of Judaea, deposed Annas in about 15 C.E. Three others, including one of Annas' sons, held the post of high priest in quick succession. Caiaphas became high priest about 18 C.E. Pontius Pilate, who was appointed governor of Judaea in 26 C.E., kept him in office throughout Pilate's ten-year governorship. Caiaphas' tenure spanned the period of Jesus' ministry and the early preaching of his disciples. But Caiaphas was ill-disposed toward the Christian message.

### Fear of Jesus, Fear of Rome

Caiaphas viewed Jesus as a dangerous rabble-rouser. Jesus challenged the hierarchy's interpretation of Sabbath laws and drove the merchants and money changers out of the temple, declaring that they had made it into "a cave of robbers." (Luke 19:45, 46) Some historians believe that those temple markets were owned by the house of Annas—perhaps another reason why Caiaphas tried to silence Jesus. When the chief priests sent officers to arrest Jesus, they were so astounded by his words that they returned empty-handed.—John 2:13-17; 5:16; 7:14-49.

Consider what happened when the Jewish hierarchy heard that Jesus had resurrected Lazarus. John's Gospel reports: "The chief priests and the Pharisees gathered the Sanhedrin together and began to say: 'What are we to do, because this man performs many signs? If we let him alone this way, they will all put faith in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our

\* For a history of the Hasmonaeans, please see *The Watchtower* of June 15, 2001, pages 27-30.

nation.’” (John 11:47, 48) The Sanhedrin saw Jesus as a threat to the authority of the religious establishment and to public order, for which Pilate held them responsible. Any popular movement that the Romans might interpret as seditious could provoke their intervention in Jewish affairs—something that the Sanhedrin wanted to avoid at all costs.

Although unable to deny that Jesus performed powerful works, Caiaphas did not exercise faith but sought to maintain his prestige and authority. How could he acknowledge the raising of Lazarus? As a Sadducee, Caiaphas did not believe in the resurrection!—Acts 23:8.

Caiaphas’ wickedness was exposed when he told fellow rulers: “You do not reason out that it is to your benefit for one man to die in behalf of the people and not for the whole nation to be destroyed.” The account continues: “This, though, he did not say of his own originality; but because he was high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus was destined to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but in order that the children of God who are scattered about he might also gather together in one. Therefore from that day on they took counsel to kill [Jesus].”—John 11:49-53.

Caiaphas was not aware of the full significance of his words. By virtue of his office as high priest, he did prophesy.\* Jesus’ death would be beneficial—but not for the Jews only. His ransom sacrifice would provide the means to release all mankind from bondage to sin and death.

### A Murderous Conspiracy

Jewish chief priests and older men gathered at Caiaphas’ home to discuss how to seize and kill Jesus. The high priest likely had

\* Jehovah previously used wicked Balaam to utter truthful prophecies concerning the Israelites.—Numbers 23:1-24:24.

a hand in determining with Judas Iscariot the price for Jesus’ betrayal. (Matthew 26:3, 4, 14, 15) One murder, however, was not enough to attain Caiaphas’ evil ends. “The chief priests now took counsel to kill Lazarus also, because on account of him many of the Jews were . . . putting faith in Jesus.”—John 12:10, 11.

Malchus, a slave of Caiaphas, was in the mob sent to arrest Jesus. The prisoner was led first to Annas for questioning and then to Caiaphas, who had already convened the Jewish older men for an illegal nighttime trial.—Matthew 26:57; John 18:10, 13, 19-24.

Caiaphas was not thwarted when false witnesses failed to agree in their testimony against Jesus. The high priest knew the opinions of his fellow conspirators regarding any self-proclaimed Messiah. So he demanded to know whether Jesus claimed that title. Jesus responded that his accusers would see him “sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” In a show of piety, “the high priest ripped his outer garments, saying: ‘He has blasphemed! What further need do we have of witnesses?’” The Sanhedrin agreed that Jesus deserved to die.—Matthew 26:64-66.

Executions had to be approved by the Romans. As intermediary between them and the Jews, Caiaphas was probably the one who presented the case to Pilate. When Pilate sought to free Jesus, Caiaphas was likely among the chief priests who shouted: “Impale him! Impale him!” (John 19:4-6) Caiaphas probably urged the crowds to clamor for the release of a murderer instead of Jesus and was among those chief priests who hypocritically proclaimed: “We have no king but Caesar.”—John 19:15; Mark 15:7-11.

Caiaphas rejected evidence of Jesus’ resurrection. He opposed Peter and John and then Stephen. Caiaphas also authorized Saul to arrest any Christians whom he might find in

Damascus. (Matthew 28:11-13; Acts 4:1-17; 6:8-7:60; 9:1, 2) About 36 C.E., however, Caiaphas was deposed by Vitellius, the Roman legate of Syria.

Jewish writings present Caiaphas' family in an unfavorable light. For instance, the Babylonian Talmud laments: "Woe is me because of the house of Hanin [Annas], woe is me because of their whisperings," or "calumnies." This grievance is thought to refer to "secret conclaves to devise oppressive measures."

### A Lesson Caiaphas Teaches

One scholar characterized the high priests as men who were "tough, shrewd and competent—and very likely arrogant." Arrogance prevented Caiaphas from accepting the Mes-

siah. So it should not dismay us when people today reject the Bible's message. Some are not sufficiently interested in Scriptural truth to abandon cherished beliefs. Others may feel that becoming humble preachers of the good news is beneath their dignity. And Christian standards repel those who are dishonest or greedy.

As high priest, Caiaphas could have helped fellow Jews to accept the Messiah, but lust for power caused him to condemn Jesus. That opposition likely continued until Caiaphas was laid in his tomb. The record of his conduct shows that bones are not all we leave behind when we die. By our actions, we establish a lasting reputation with God, either for evil or for good.

# Animal Creation MAGNIFIES JEHOVAH

**J**EHOVAH'S grandeur is evident in the animal kingdom. God takes good care of the animals, even as he makes provision for mankind. (Psalm 145:16) What a mistake it would be to find fault with their Creator and ours! Although the man Job was upright, he did declare "his own soul righteous rather than God." So Job had lessons to learn!—Job 32:2; 33:8-12; 34:5.

Examples drawn from animal creation showed Job that humans are in no position to question God's ways. How clear that becomes when we consider Jehovah's words to his servant Job!

### They Need No Human Help

Job could not answer God's questions about animal life. (Job 38:39-41) Clearly, it is without human help that Jehovah provides for the lion and the raven. Although ravens fly about in search of food, they really get their food from God.—Luke 12:24.

Job was stumped when God asked him about wild animals. (Job 39:1-8) No human can protect the mountain goats and the

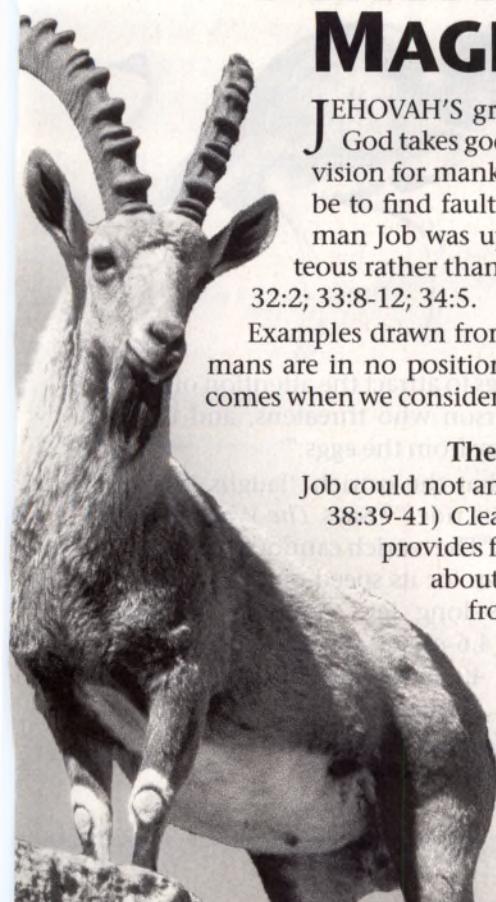
Raven

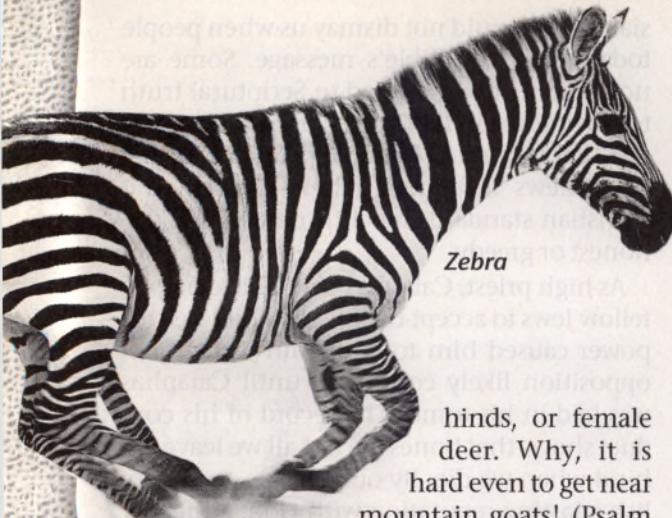


Mountain goat



Lioness





hinds, or female deer. Why, it is hard even to get near mountain goats! (Psalm 104:18) It is by God-given instinct that a hind secludes herself in the forest when about to give birth. She gives her young proper care, but when they "become robust," they "go forth and do not return." Then they are on their own.

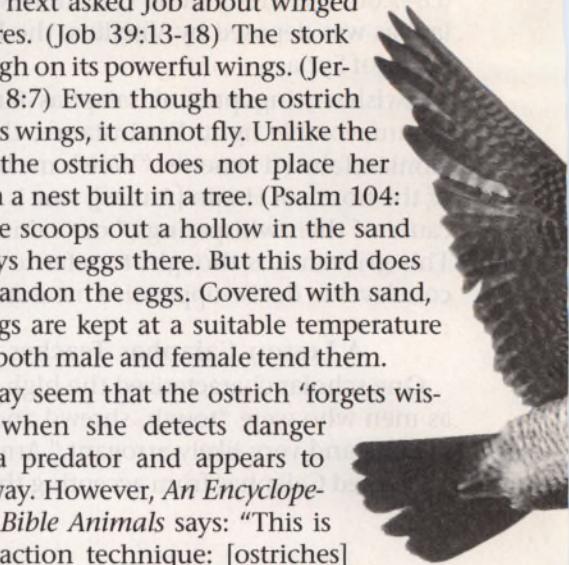
The zebra runs free, and the desert plain is home to the wild ass. Job could not use the wild ass to bear burdens. It seeks "every sort of green plant," exploring the hills for pasturage. This animal will not exchange its freedom for more easily obtained food in towns. "The noises of a stalker it does not hear," for the wild ass darts away if a man invades its domain.

God next mentioned the wild bull. (Job 39:9-12) Concerning it, English archaeologist Austen Layard wrote: "The wild bull, from its frequent representation in the bas-reliefs, appears to have been considered scarcely less formidable and noble game than the lion. The king is frequently seen contending with it, and warriors pursue it both on horseback and on foot." (*Nineveh and Its Remains*, 1849, Volume 2, page 326) Yet, no wise man tries to harness the uncontrollable wild bull.—Psalm 22:21.

## Winged Creatures Magnify Jehovah

God next asked Job about winged creatures. (Job 39:13-18) The stork flies high on its powerful wings. (Jeremiah 8:7) Even though the ostrich flaps its wings, it cannot fly. Unlike the stork, the ostrich does not place her eggs in a nest built in a tree. (Psalm 104:17) She scoops out a hollow in the sand and lays her eggs there. But this bird does not abandon the eggs. Covered with sand, the eggs are kept at a suitable temperature while both male and female tend them.

It may seem that the ostrich 'forgets wisdom' when she detects danger from a predator and appears to run away. However, *An Encyclopedia of Bible Animals* says: "This is a distraction technique: [ostriches] will make themselves conspicuous and



*The ostrich walks away from her eggs, but she does not abandon them*



flap their wings to attract the attention of any animal or person who threatens, and thus lead them away from the eggs."

How is it that the ostrich "laughs at the horse and at its rider"? Says *The World Book Encyclopedia*: "The ostrich cannot fly, but it is known for its speed on the ground.

Its long legs can take 15-foot (4.6-meter) steps at speeds up to 40 miles (64 kilometers) per hour."

*Ostrich eggs*

## God Gives the Horse Mightiness

God next asked Job about the horse. (Job 39:19-25) In ancient times, warriors fought on horseback, and horses pulled chariots carrying a driver and perhaps two soldiers. Impatient for battle, a warhorse neighs and beats the ground with its hooves. It is not terrified and does not turn back on account of a sword. At the sound of the horn, the warhorse reacts as though saying, "Aha!" It surges ahead, 'swallowing up the ground.' Yet, the warhorse obeys its rider.

In a comparable description, archaeologist Layard wrote: "Although docile as a lamb, and requiring no other guide than the halter, when the Arab mare hears the war-cry of the tribe, and sees the quivering spear of her rider, her eyes glitter with fire, her blood-red nostrils open wide, her neck is nobly arched, and her tail and mane are raised and spread out to the wind."

—*Discoveries Among the Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon*, 1853, page 330.

Peregrine falcon

## Consider the Falcon and the Eagle

Jehovah turned his attention to certain other birds. (Job 39:26-30) Falcons 'soar up and spread their wings to the wind.' Citing the peregrine falcon as the fastest-flying bird, *The Guinness Book of Records* says that it "reaches record speed levels when swooping from great heights during territorial displays, or when catching prey in midair." This bird has reached a speed of 217 miles per hour at a 45-degree angle of descent!

Eagles have flown at speeds of over 80 miles per hour. Job compared the swift passing of life to the speed of an eagle searching for prey. (Job 9:25, 26) God gives us strength to go on, as if we were on the seemingly tireless wings of the soaring ea-

gle. (Isaiah 40:31) In flight, the eagle takes advantage of columns of rising warm air called thermals. The bird circles within a thermal, which carries it higher and higher. When the eagle attains a certain height, it glides to the next thermal and can stay aloft for hours with a minimal expenditure of energy.

An eagle "builds its nest high up" on inaccessible heights, placing its young out of danger. Jehovah has made the eagle do this instinctively. And with God-given vision, "far into the distance [the eagle's] eyes keep looking." The ability rapidly to change the focus of its eyes enables an eagle to keep its prey or a carcass in sight during a long dive. An eagle may eat the carcasses of dead animals, so that "where the slain are, there it is." This bird catches small animals and carries them to its young.

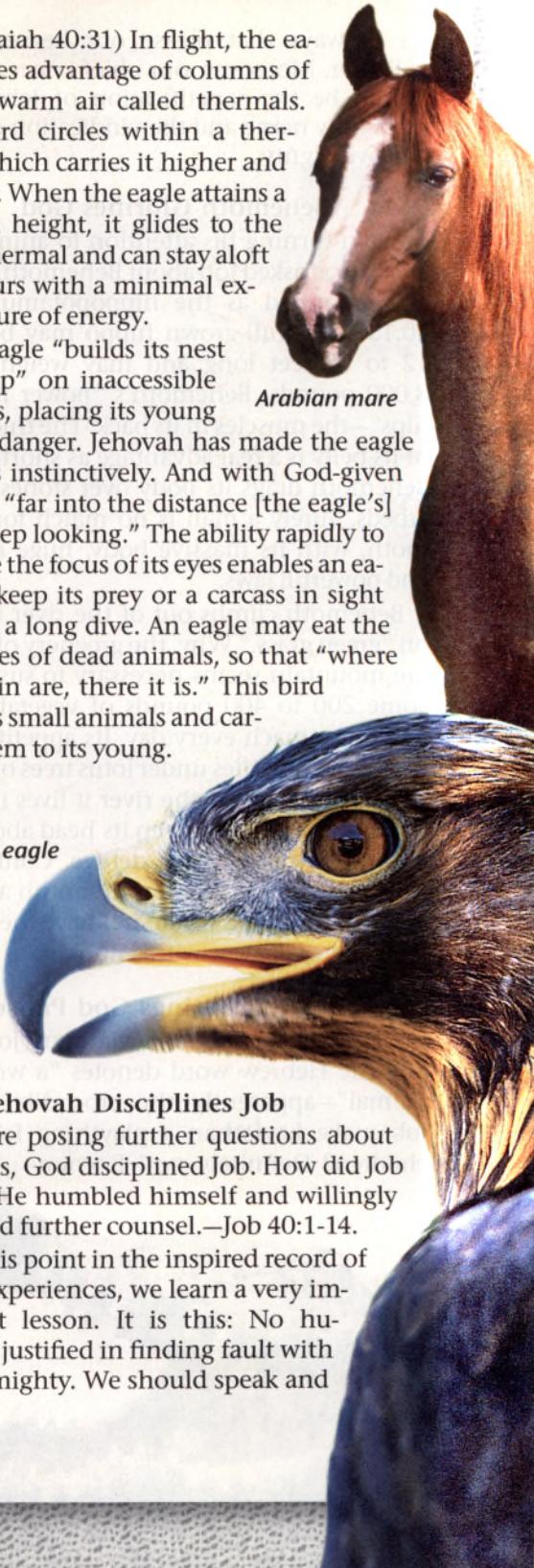
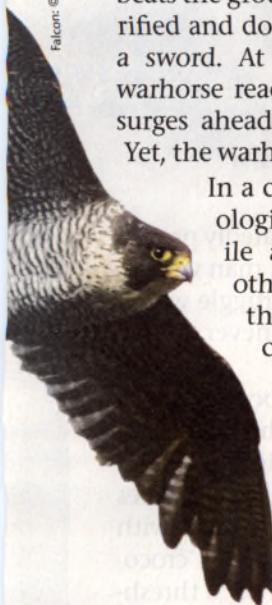
Arabian mare

Golden eagle

## Jehovah Disciplines Job

Before posing further questions about animals, God disciplined Job. How did Job react? He humbled himself and willingly received further counsel.—Job 40:1-14.

At this point in the inspired record of Job's experiences, we learn a very important lesson. It is this: No human is justified in finding fault with the Almighty. We should speak and



act in ways that please our heavenly Father. Moreover, our chief concern should be the sanctification of Jehovah's holy name and the vindication of his sovereignty.

### Behemoth Glorifies God

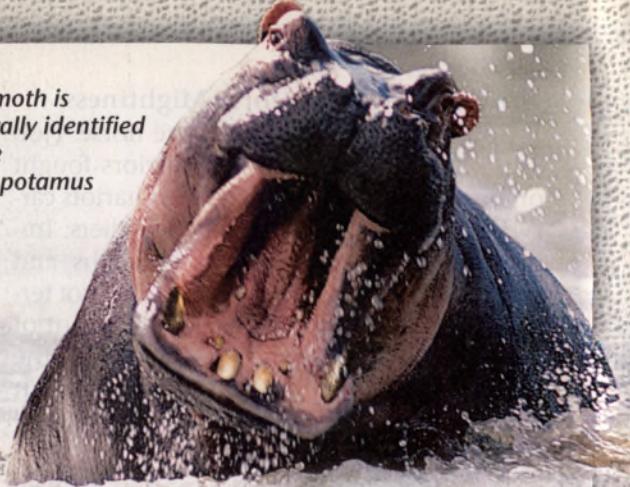
Again turning his attention to animal creation, God asked Job about Behemoth, generally identified as the hippopotamus. (Job 40:15-24) A full-grown hippo may be from 12 to 15 feet long and may weigh up to 8,000 pounds. Behemoth's "power is in its hips"—the muscles in its back. The thick hide of its belly is a real advantage as short-legged Behemoth drags its body over stones in riverbeds. Surely a man is no match for Behemoth, with its massive body, huge mouth, and powerful jaws.

Behemoth climbs out of the river to feast on "green grass." Why, the greenery of an entire mountain seems necessary to sustain it! Some 200 to 400 pounds of vegetation go into its stomach every day. Its appetite satisfied, Behemoth lies under lotus trees or in the shade of poplars. If the river it lives in overflows, the hippo can keep its head above water and swim against a deluge. Confronted with Behemoth's mammoth mouth and formidable tusks, Job would not have the audacity to pierce its nose with a hook.

### Leviathan Brings God Praise

Job next heard about Leviathan. (Job 41:1-34) The Hebrew word denotes "a wreathed animal"—apparently the crocodile. Could Job make Leviathan a plaything for children? Definitely not! Encoun-

*Behemoth is generally identified as the hippopotamus*



ters with this creature have repeatedly proved that it is dangerous. Indeed, if a man were to lay a hand on Leviathan, the struggle would likely be so great that he would never do that again!

As Leviathan lifts its head above water at sunrise, its eyes flash "like the beams of dawn." Leviathan's scales are tightly closed, and embedded in its hide are bony plates hard to pierce with bullets, much less with swords and spears. Sharp scales on a crocodile's belly leave the impression of "a threshing instrument" on mud banks. Its fury in water stirs up a froth like foaming ointment. And because of its size, armor, and weapons—a threatening mouth and powerful tail—Leviathan knows no fear.

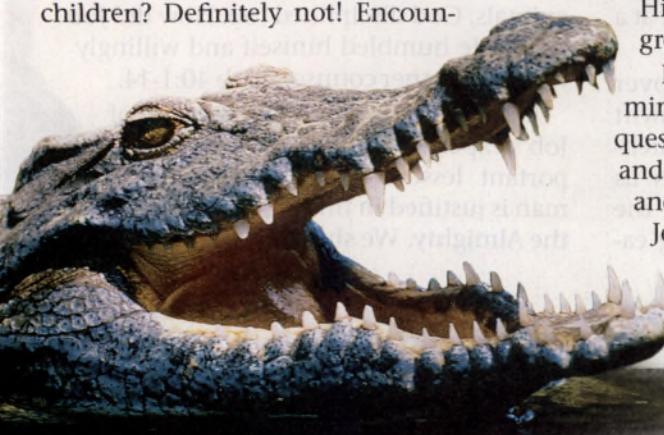
### Job Makes a Retraction

Job acknowledged that he 'talked but did not understand things too wonderful for him.' (Job 42:1-3) He accepted God's correction, made a retraction, and repented.

His companions were rebuked, but he was greatly blessed.—Job 42:4-17.

How wise it is to bear Job's experience in mind! We cannot possibly answer all the questions God asked him. However, we can and should show appreciation for the many and varied creative marvels that magnify Jehovah.

*Leviathan is thought to be the powerful crocodile*



# Jehovah's Word Is Alive

## Highlights From the Book of Ezra

THE Bible book of Ezra picks up where Second Chronicles leaves off. Its writer, Ezra the priest, begins the account with the issuing of a decree by King Cyrus of Persia that allows a remnant of the Jews exiled in Babylon to return to their homeland. The narrative ends with Ezra's taking measures to cleanse those who have defiled themselves with the people of the land. All in all, the book covers a period of 70 years—from 537 to 467 B.C.E.

In writing the book, Ezra has a clear objective: to show how Jehovah fulfilled His promise to free His people from exile in Babylon and to restore true worship in Jerusalem. Hence, Ezra focuses only on the events that pertain to this purpose. The book of Ezra is an account of how the temple was rebuilt and how Jehovah's worship was reestablished despite opposition and the imperfection of God's people. The account is of great interest to us because we too are living in a time of restoration. Many are streaming to "the mountain of Jehovah," and the entire earth is about to be "filled with the knowing of the glory of Jehovah."—Isaiah 2:2, 3; Habakkuk 2:14.

### THE TEMPLE IS REBUILT

(Ezra 1:1–6:22)

In response to Cyrus' liberation decree, about 50,000 Jewish exiles return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Governor Zerubbabel, or Sheshbazzar. The returnees promptly set up the altar on its site and begin to offer sacrifices to Jehovah.

The following year the Israelites lay the foundation of the house of

Jehovah. Enemies keep interfering with the rebuilding work and eventually succeed in getting a royal command issued to halt the work. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah stir up the people so that they resume the temple construction despite the ban. The fear of opposing an unalterable Persian decree originally issued by Cyrus keeps their adversaries at bay. An official investigation brings to light Cyrus' order "concerning the house of God in Jerusalem." (Ezra 6:3) The work progresses well and comes to completion.

### Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:3–6—Were the Israelites who did not volunteer to return to their homeland weak in faith? Some may not have returned to Jerusalem because they were materialistic or lacked appreciation for true worship, but this was not true in every case. First of all, the 1,000-mile journey to Jerusalem took four or five months. Moreover, settling in a land that had remained desolate for 70 years and doing the rebuilding work there would require much physical stamina. Therefore, unfavorable circumstances, such as physical ailments, advanced age, and family obligations, undoubtedly prevented some from returning.



*The Cyrus Cylinder stated the policy of returning captives to their homelands*

Cylinder: Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum

Cyrus

**2:43—Who were the Nethinim?** These were people of non-Israelite origin who served as temple slaves or ministers. Among them were the descendants of the Gibeonites of Joshua's day and others "whom David and the princes gave to the service of the Levites." —Ezra 8:20.

**2:55—Who were the sons of the servants of Solomon?** These were non-Israelites who were given special privileges in Jehovah's service. They may have served as scribes or copyists at the temple or in some administrative capacity.

**2:61-63—Were the Urim and the Thummim, which were used when an answer was needed from Jehovah, available to the returning exiles?** The claimants to priestly descent who failed to establish their genealogy could have given legitimacy to their claim by using the Urim and the Thummim. Ezra mentions this only as a possibility. The Scriptures contain no record of the use of the Urim and the Thummim then or thereafter. Jewish tradition has it that the Urim and the Thummim disappeared with the destruction of the temple in 607 B.C.E.

**3:12—Why did "the old men that had seen the former house" of Jehovah weep?** These men could remember how magnificent the temple built by Solomon was. The groundwork of the new temple that was be-

fore them was "as nothing in [their] eyes" in comparison. (Haggai 2:2, 3) Would their efforts bring back the glory of the former temple? They must have felt disheartened, and therefore they wept.

**3:8-10; 4:23, 24; 6:15, 16—How many years did it take to rebuild the temple?** The foundation of the temple was laid in 536 B.C.E.—"in the second year of their coming." The building work stopped in the days of King Artaxerxes, in 522 B.C.E. The ban continued until 520 B.C.E., the second year of King Darius. The temple was completed in the sixth year of his reign, or 515 B.C.E. (See the box entitled "Persian Kings From 537 to 467 B.C.E.") Thus, the temple construction took about 20 years.

**4:8-6:18 (4:8, footnote)—Why were these verses written in Aramaic?** This portion largely contains copies of letters from government officials to kings and their replies. Ezra copied them from public records written in Aramaic, the commercial and diplomatic language of the day. Other parts of the Bible written in this ancient Semitic language are Ezra 7:12-26, Jeremiah 10:11, and Daniel 2:4b-7:28.

#### Lessons for Us:

**1:2.** What Isaiah prophesied some 200 years earlier came true. (Isaiah 44:28) Prophecies in Jehovah's Word never fail.

#### PERSIAN KINGS FROM 537 TO 467 B.C.E.

Cyrus the Great (Ezra 1:1) died in 530 B.C.E.

Cambyses, or Ahasuerus (Ezra 4:6) 530-22 B.C.E.

Artaxerxes—Bardiya or Gaumata (Ezra 4:7) 522 B.C.E. (Assassinated after reigning only seven months)

Darius I (Ezra 4:24) 522-486 B.C.E.

Xerxes, or Ahasuerus\* (Ezra 4:24) 486-75 B.C.E. (Ruled as coregent with Darius I from 496-86 B.C.E.)

Artaxerxes Longimanus (Ezra 7:1) 475-24 B.C.E.

Ahasuerus

\* Xerxes is not mentioned in the book of Ezra. He is referred to as Ahasuerus in the Bible book of Esther.

**1:3-6.** Like some of the Israelites who remained in Babylon, many of Jehovah's Witnesses cannot take up the full-time ministry or serve where the need is greater. Yet, they support and encourage those who can and make voluntary donations to further the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.

**3:1-6.** In the seventh month of 537 B.C.E. (Tishri, corresponding to September/October), the faithful returnees offered their first sacrifice. The Babylonians had entered Jerusalem in the fifth month (Ab, corresponding to July/August) of 607 B.C.E., and two months later the city's desolation was complete. (2 Kings 25:8-17, 22-26) As foretold, Jerusalem's 70-year desolation ended right on time. (Jeremiah 25:11; 29:10) Anything Jehovah's Word foretells always comes true.

**4:1-3.** The faithful remnant rejected an offer that would have meant forming a religious alliance with false worshippers. (Exodus 20:5; 34:12) Jehovah's worshippers today similarly take no part in any interfaith movements.

**5:1-7; 6:1-12.** Jehovah can maneuver matters for the success of his people.

**6:14, 22.** Zealously sharing in Jehovah's work brings his approval and blessing.

**6:21.** Witnessing the progress of Jehovah's work moved Samaritans who then lived in the Jewish homeland and returnees who had succumbed to pagan influences to make needed changes in their lives. Should we not enthusiastically participate in our God-assigned work, including the Kingdom-proclamation work?

### **EZRA COMES TO JERUSALEM (Ezra 7:1-10:44)**

Fifty years have elapsed since the rebuilt house of Jehovah was inaugurated. The year is 468 B.C.E. Taking along with him a remnant of God's people and contributed funds,

Ezra goes from Babylon to Jerusalem. What does he find there?

The princes tell Ezra: "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands as regards their detestable things." Moreover, "the hand of the princes and the deputy rulers has proved to be foremost in this unfaithfulness." (Ezra 9:1, 2) Ezra is shocked. He is encouraged to "be strong and act." (Ezra 10:4) Ezra takes corrective measures, and the people respond favorably.

### **Scriptural Questions Answered:**

**7:1, 7, 11**—Do all these verses refer to the Artaxerxes who brought a halt to the building work? No. Artaxerxes is a name or title applied to two Persian kings. One was either Bardiya or Gaumata, who ordered the temple work stopped in 522 B.C.E. The Artaxerxes of the time when Ezra came to Jerusalem is Artaxerxes Longimanus.

**7:28-8:20**—Why were many Jews in Babylon reluctant to go up to Jerusalem with Ezra? Even though more than 60 years had passed since the first group of Jews had returned to their homeland, Jerusalem was only sparsely settled. Returning to Jerusalem meant building a new life under uncomfortable and dangerous circumstances. The Jerusalem of the day did not hold out attractive material prospects to the Jews who might have been prospering in

### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

**Money and Morals—A Lesson  
From History**

**Jehovah Helped Me to Find Him**

**"A Witness to All the Nations"**

Babylon. Not to be overlooked was the dangerous journey. The returnees had to have strong faith in Jehovah, zeal for true worship, and courage to make the move. Even Ezra strengthened himself according to the hand of Jehovah upon him. With Ezra's encouragement, 1,500 families—perhaps numbering 6,000 people—responded. After Ezra took additional initiatives, 38 Levites and 220 Nethinim responded.

**9:1, 2—How serious a threat was intermarriage with the people of the land?** The restored nation was to be the guardian of Jehovah's worship until the coming of the Messiah. Intermarriage with other inhabitants was a real threat to true worship. Because some had formed marriage alliances with the idol-worshipping people, the entire nation might eventually be assimilated into the pagan nations. Pure worship could have vanished from the face of the earth. To whom, then, would the Messiah come? No wonder Ezra was stunned at seeing what had taken place!

**10:3, 44—Why were the children put away along with the wives?** If the children had stayed behind, the likelihood that the dismissed wives would return on account of them would have increased. Moreover, little children generally require the care of their mother.

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**7:10.** As a diligent student and effective teacher of God's Word, Ezra set an example for us. He prayerfully prepared his heart to consult the Law of Jehovah. As he consulted it, Ezra gave his utmost attention to what Jehovah was saying. Ezra applied what he learned and exerted himself in teaching others.

**7:13.** Jehovah wants willing servants.

**7:27, 28; 8:21-23.** Ezra gave credit to Jehovah, made sincere entreaty to him

before making a long and dangerous trip to Jerusalem, and was willing to risk personal safety for the sake of God's glory. He thus set a fine example for us.

**9:2.** We must take seriously the admonition to marry "only in the Lord."—1 Corinthians 7:39.

**9:14, 15.** Bad associations can lead to Jehovah's disapproval.

**10:2-12, 44.** The people who had taken foreign wives humbly repented and corrected their erroneous ways. Their attitude and action were exemplary.

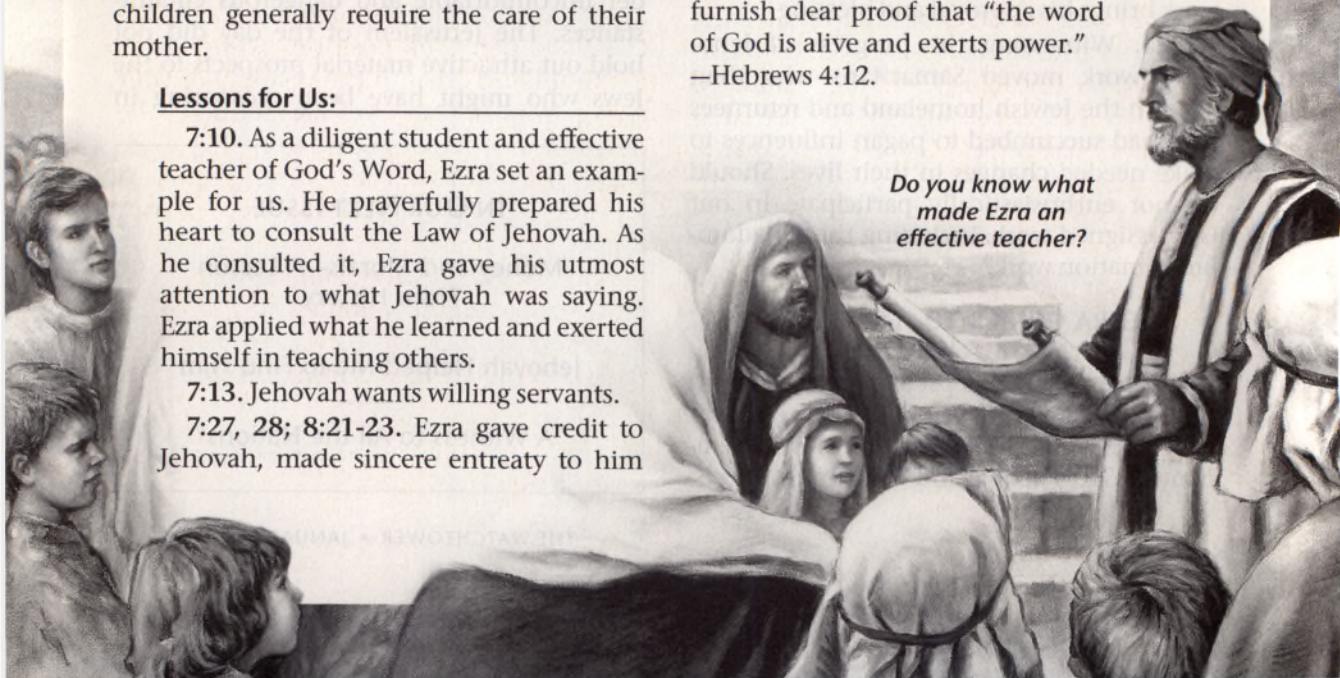
#### **Jehovah Keeps His Promises**

How valuable the book of Ezra is to us! Right on time, Jehovah fulfilled his promise to free his people from Babylonian exile and restore true worship in Jerusalem. Does that not strengthen our faith in Jehovah and his promises?

Think of the examples the book of Ezra provides. Exemplary devotion to God was shown by Ezra and the remnant who returned to have a share in the restoration of pure worship in Jerusalem. This book also highlights the faith of godly foreigners and the humble attitude of repentant wrongdoers. Indeed, Ezra's inspired words furnish clear proof that "the word of God is alive and exerts power."

—Hebrews 4:12.

*Do you know what  
made Ezra an  
effective teacher?*



# DO NOT ALLOW PLACE FOR THE DEVIL

*"Do not give the Devil a chance."—EPHESIANS 4:27, Byington.*

FOR centuries, many people thought of the Devil as a horned, cloven-hoofed creature clad in red and using a pitchfork to cast wicked humans into a fiery hell. The Bible does not support that idea. Undoubtedly, however, such misconceptions have caused millions to question the existence of the Devil or to think that the term applies only to a principle of evil.

<sup>2</sup> The Bible provides eye-witness evidence and clear testimony that the Devil exists. Jesus Christ saw him in the heavenly spirit realm and spoke to him on the earth. (Job 1:6; Matthew 4:4-11) Although the Scriptures do not reveal this spirit creature's original name, they call him the Devil (meaning "Slanderer") because he has slandered God. He is also called Satan (meaning "Resister"), since he resists Jehovah. Satan the Devil is referred to as "the original serpent," apparently because he used a serpent to deceive Eve. (Revelation 12:9; 1 Timothy 2:14) He is also known as "the wicked one."—Matthew 6:13.\*

<sup>3</sup> As Jehovah's servants, in no way do

\* See the cover series "Is the Devil Real?" in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 2005.

1. Why have many questioned the existence of the Devil?
2. What are some Scriptural facts about the Devil?
3. We will consider what question?



we want to resemble Satan, the archenemy of the only true God. We must therefore heed the apostle Paul's counsel: "Do not give the Devil a chance." (Ephesians 4:27, Byington) What, then, are some of Satan's traits that we must not imitate?

## Do Not Imitate the Great Slanderer

<sup>4</sup> "The wicked one" deserves to be called the Devil, for he is a slanderer. Slander is a false, malicious, and defamatory statement about someone. God commanded Adam: "As for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) Eve had been informed of this, but through a serpent, the Devil told her: "You positively will not die. For God knows that in the very day of your eating from it your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad." (Genesis 3:4, 5) That was malicious slander against Jehovah God!

<sup>5</sup> The Israelites were commanded: "You must not go around among your people for the sake of slandering." (Leviticus 19:16) The apostle John stated concerning a slanderer in

4. How did "the wicked one" slander God?
5. Why did Diotrephes deserve to be called to account for slandering?

his day: "I wrote something to the congregation, but Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not receive anything from us with respect. That is why, if I come, I will call to remembrance his works which he goes on doing, chattering about us with wicked words." (3 John 9, 10) Diotrephes was slandering John and deserved to be called to account for it. What loyal Christian would want to be like Diotrephes and imitate Satan, the great slanderer?

<sup>6</sup> Slanderous statements and false accusations are often hurled against Jehovah's servants. "The chief priests and the scribes kept standing up and vehemently accusing [Jesus]." (Luke 23:10) Paul was falsely accused by High Priest Ananias and others. (Acts 24: 1-8) And the Bible speaks of Satan as "the accuser of our brothers . . . , who accuses them day and night before our God." (Revelation 12:10) Those falsely accused brothers are the anointed Christians on earth in these last days.

<sup>7</sup> No Christian would want to slander anyone or make false accusations. Yet, that could happen if we did not have all the facts before bearing witness against someone. Under the Mosaic Law, deliberately testifying falsely could result in death for the accuser. (Exodus 20:16; Deuteronomy 19:15-19) Moreover, things detestable to Jehovah include "a false witness that launches forth lies." (Proverbs 6:16-19) Surely, then, we want to avoid imitating the principal slanderer and false accuser.

### Shun the Ways of the Original Manslayer

<sup>8</sup> The Devil is a manslayer. "That one was a manslayer when he began," said Jesus. (John 8:44) Beginning with his first act in turning

6, 7. Why would we want to avoid slandering anyone?

8. In what way was the Devil "a manslayer when he began"?

Adam and Eve away from God, Satan has been a manslayer. He brought death upon the first human pair and their offspring. (Romans 5:12) It may be noted that this action can be attributed only to a person, not to a mere principle of evil.

<sup>9</sup> "You must not murder," states one of the Ten Commandments given to Israel. (Deuteronomy 5:17) Addressing Christians, the apostle Peter wrote: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer." (1 Peter 4:15) So as Jehovah's servants, we would not commit murder. Yet, we would bear guilt before God if we hated a fellow Christian and wished him dead. "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer [or, "murderer"]," wrote the apostle John, "and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life remaining in him." (1 John 3: 15; *New International Version*) The Israelites were commanded: "You must not hate your brother in your heart." (Leviticus 19:17) May we be quick to resolve any problem that arises between us and a fellow believer, so that the manslayer Satan does not destroy our Christian unity.—Luke 17:3, 4.

### Stand Firm Against the Chief Liar

<sup>10</sup> The Devil is a liar. "When he speaks the lie," said Jesus, "he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." (John 8:44) Satan lied to Eve, whereas Jesus came into the world to bear witness to the truth. (John 18:37) If we are to stand firm against the Devil as followers of Christ, we cannot resort to lies and deception. We must "speak truthfully." (Zechariah 8:16; Ephesians 4:25) "Jehovah the God of truth" blesses only his truthful Witnesses. The wicked have no right to represent him. —Psalm 31:5; 50:16; Isaiah 43:10.

9. As indicated at 1 John 3:15, how can we become manslayers?

10, 11. What must we do in order to stand firm against the chief liar, Satan?



***We will never allow the Devil to destroy our Christian unity***

<sup>11</sup> If we cherish our spiritual freedom from satanic lies, we will cling to Christianity, “the way of the truth.” (2 Peter 2:2; John 8:32) The whole body of Christian teachings constitutes “the truth of the good news.” (Galatians 2:5, 14) Our very salvation depends on our “walking in the truth”—adhering to it and standing firm against “the father of the lie.”—3 John 3, 4, 8.

### **Resist the Foremost Apostate**

<sup>12</sup> The spirit creature who became the Devil was once in the truth. But “he did not stand fast in the truth,” said Jesus, “because truth is not in him.” (John 8:44) This foremost apostate has pursued a relentless course of resistance to “the God of truth.” Some first-century Christians fell into “the snare of the Devil,” apparently becoming his victims because of being misled and deviating from the truth. So Paul urged his coworker Timothy to instruct them with mildness so that they

12, 13. How should we treat apostates?

might recover spiritually and get free from Satan’s snare. (2 Timothy 2:23-26) Of course, it is much better to cling firmly to the truth and not be ensnared by apostate views in the first place.

<sup>13</sup> Because of listening to the Devil and not rejecting his lies, the first human pair apostatized. So, then, should we listen to apostates, read their literature, or examine their Web sites on the Internet? If we love God and the truth, we will not do so. We should not allow apostates into our homes or even greet them, for such actions would make us ‘sharers in their wicked works.’ (2 John 9-11) May we never succumb to the Devil’s wiles by abandoning the Christian “path of truth” to follow false teachers who seek to “introduce ruinous ideologies” and try to ‘exploit us with well-turned phrases.’—2 Peter 2:1-3, *Byington*.

<sup>14</sup> Paul told Christian elders from Ephesus: “Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:28-30) In time, such apostates did arise and “speak twisted things.”

<sup>15</sup> In about 65 C.E., the apostle urged Timothy to ‘handle the word of the truth aright.’ “But,” wrote Paul, “shun empty speeches that violate what is holy; for they will advance to more and more ungodliness, and their word will spread like gangrene. Hyllaeus and Philetus are of that number. These very men have deviated from the

14, 15. What warning did Paul give elders from Ephesus and his coworker Timothy?

truth, saying that the resurrection has already occurred; and they are subverting the faith of some." Apostasy had begun! "For all that," added Paul, "the solid foundation of God stays standing."—2 Timothy 2:15-19.

<sup>16</sup> Satan has often used apostates in an effort to corrupt true worship—but to no avail. About the year 1868, Charles Taze Russell began a careful examination of long-accepted doctrines of Christendom's churches and found misinterpretations of the Scriptures. Russell and a few other truth-seekers formed a Bible study class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. In the nearly 140 years since then, Jehovah's servants have grown in knowledge and love of God and his Word. Despite the wiles of the foremost apostate, the spiritual vigilance of the faithful and discreet slave class has helped these true Christians to remain loyal to Jehovah and his Word.—Matthew 24:45.

### Never Let the World's Ruler Get a Hold on You

<sup>17</sup> Another way that Satan seeks to en-snare us is by inducing us to love this world—unrighteous human society alienated from God. Jesus called the Devil "the ruler of the world" and said: "He has no hold on me." (John 14:30) May Satan never get a hold on us! We realize, of course, that "the whole world is lying in the power of [that] wicked one." (1 John 5:19) So the Devil could offer

16. Despite the wiles of the foremost apostate, why have we been loyal to God and his Word?

17-19. What is the world that is lying in the Devil's power, and why should we not love it?



*Why did John urge us  
not to love the world?*

Jesus "all the kingdoms of the world" for one apostate act of worship—something unequivocally rejected by God's Son. (Matthew 4:8-10) The world ruled by Satan hates Christ's followers. (John 15:18-21) No wonder the apostle John warned us not to love the world!

<sup>18</sup> John wrote: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the

desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:15-17) We must not love the world, for its way of life appeals to the sinful flesh and is diametrically opposed to Jehovah God's standards.

<sup>19</sup> What if love of this world exists in our heart? Then let us pray for God's help to overcome this love and the fleshly desires associated with it. (Galatians 5:16-21) Surely we will strive to keep ourselves "without spot from the world" if we bear in mind that "wicked spirit forces" are the invisible "world rulers" over unrighteous human society.—James 1:27; Ephesians 6:11, 12; 2 Corinthians 4:4.

<sup>20</sup> Regarding his disciples, Jesus said: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) Anointed Christians and their dedicated companions strive to keep morally and spiritually clean, separate from this world. (John 15:19; 17:14; James 4:4) This unrighteous world hates us because we keep separate from it and are 'preachers of righteousness.' (2 Peter 2:5) True, we live in the midst of human society, which includes fornicators, adulterers, extortioners, idolaters, thieves, liars, and drunkards. (1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-11; Revelation 21:8) But we do not breathe in "the spirit of the world," for we are not driven by this sinful motivating force.—1 Corinthians 2:12.

### Allow No Place for the Devil

<sup>21</sup> Instead of being motivated by "the spirit of the world," we are led by God's spirit,

20. Why can it be said that we are "no part of the world"?

21, 22. How can you apply Paul's counsel recorded at Ephesians 4:26, 27?

which produces in us such qualities as love and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) These assist us in withstanding the Devil's assaults on our faith. He wants us to become "heated up only to do evil," but God's spirit helps us to "let anger alone and leave rage." (Psalm 37:8) True, we may at times become justifiably angry, but Paul counsels us: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil."—Ephesians 4:26, 27.

<sup>22</sup> Our anger could result in sin if we remained in a provoked state. Our having this frame of mind would give the Devil a chance to promote discord in the congregation or incite us to engage in evil deeds. Hence, we need quickly to settle differences with others in a godly way. (Leviticus 19:17, 18; Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15, 16) Let us, therefore, be guided by God's spirit, exercising self-control and never letting even justifiable anger degenerate into bitterness, malice, and hatred.

<sup>23</sup> We have discussed certain traits of the Devil that we should not imitate. But some readers may wonder: Should we fear Satan? Why does he foment the persecution of Christians? And how can we avoid being overreached by the Devil?

23. What questions will we consider in the next article?

### What Is Your Reply?

- Why should we never slander anyone?
- In keeping with 1 John 3:15, how can we avoid being manslayers?
- How should we view apostates, and why?
- Why should we not love the world?

# OPPOSE SATAN, AND HE WILL FLEE!

*"Subject yourselves . . . to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you."*

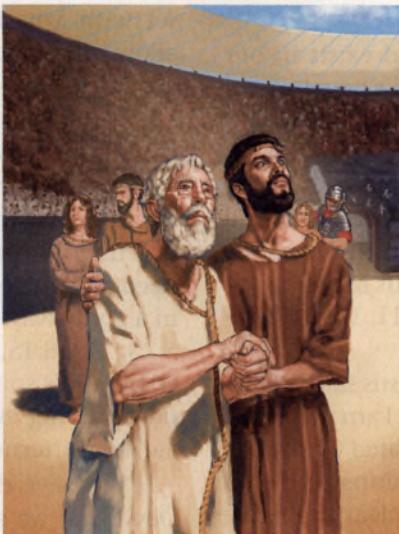
—JAMES 4:7.

THE Devil is the epitome of arrogance. His pride is reflected in words recorded by God's prophet Isaiah. Over a century before Babylonia became the chief world power, Jehovah's people were represented as making this declaration against "the king of Babylon": "You have said in your heart, 'To the heavens I shall go up. Above the stars of God [kings of David's royal line] I shall lift up my throne . . . I shall make myself resemble the Most High.'" (Isaiah 14:3, 4, 12-15; Numbers 24:17) The

pride of "the king of Babylon" was similar to the spirit of Satan, "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) But Satan's arrogance will end in disaster, even as the Babylonian dynasty came to an inglorious end.

2 As long as the Devil exists, however, we may be concerned about such questions as these: Should we fear Satan? Why does he incite people to persecute Christians? How can we avoid being overreached by the Devil?

1, 2. (a) What trait of the Devil is reflected in a declaration recorded in Isaiah chapter 14? (b) We will discuss what questions?



*Fearless early followers of Christ proved faithful to death*

## Should We Fear the Devil?

<sup>3</sup> Very strengthening to anointed Christians are these words of Jesus Christ: "Do not be afraid of the things you are about to suffer. Look! The Devil will keep on throwing some of you into prison that you may be fully put to the test, and that you may have tribulation ten days. Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) Anointed ones and their companions with an earthly hope are not afraid of the Devil.

This lack of fear does not stem from inherent courage. It exists because they have reverential fear of God and 'take refuge in the shadow of his wings.'—Psalm 34:9; 36:7.

<sup>4</sup> Fearless early disciples of Jesus Christ proved faithful to death despite the things they suffered. They did not succumb to fear of what Satan the Devil could do, for they knew that Jehovah would never abandon those who proved loyal to Him. Similarly, in the face of intense present-day persecution, anointed Christians and their dedicated associates are determined not to break their integ-

3, 4. Why are anointed Christians and their companions not afraid of the Devil?

rity to God. However, the apostle Paul indicated that the Devil could cause death. Should that not make us fearful?

<sup>5</sup> Paul said that Jesus 'partook of blood and flesh' that "through his death he might bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil; and that he might emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives." (Hebrews 2:14, 15) As "the one having the means to cause death," Satan got control of Judas Iscariot and then used the Jewish leaders and the Romans to execute Jesus. (Luke 22:3; John 13:26, 27) Through his sacrificial death, however, Jesus frees sinful mankind from Satan's grip and makes it possible for us to have everlasting life.—John 3:16.

<sup>6</sup> To what extent does the Devil have the means to cause death? Well, from the start of Satan's career of wickedness, his lies and leadings have caused death among humans. This is because Adam sinned and thus passed sin and death on to the human family. (Romans 5:12) In addition, Satan's earthly servants have persecuted worshippers of Jehovah, sometimes to the point of death, even as they did in the case of Jesus Christ.

<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, we should not think that the Devil can cause the death of any individual whom he wants to kill. God protects those belonging to Him and will never permit Satan to wipe out all true worshippers on earth. (Romans 14:8) True, Jehovah allows persecution to come upon all his people, and he permits death to come to some of us as a result of the Devil's assaults. Yet, the Scriptures hold out the wonderful hope of a resurrection

5. What do we learn from Hebrews 2:14, 15?

6, 7. To what extent does Satan have the means to cause death?

*The Devil cannot prevent the resurrection  
of those who are in Jehovah's memory*

for those in God's "book of remembrance"—and the Devil can do absolutely nothing to prevent such restoration of life!—Malachi 3:16; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.

### Why the Satanic Persecution?

<sup>8</sup> If we are loyal servants of God, there is a basic reason why the Devil brings persecution upon us. His objective is to cause us to compromise our faith. We have a precious relationship with our heavenly Father, and Satan desires to destroy it. This should not surprise us. In Eden, Jehovah foretold that there would be enmity between his symbolic "woman" and the "serpent"

8. Why does the Devil bring persecution upon God's servants?



and between their respective 'seeds.' (Genesis 3:14, 15) The Scriptures identify the Devil as "the original serpent" and reveal that his time is now short and his anger great. (Revelation 12: 9, 12) As enmity between the two 'seeds' continues, those faithfully serving Jehovah can expect to be persecuted. (2 Timothy 3:12) Are you aware of the underlying reason for such satanic persecution?

<sup>9</sup> The Devil has raised the issue of universal sovereignty. Related to it, he has called into question the integrity of humans to their Creator. Satan brought persecution upon the upright man Job. Why? In order to break Job's integrity to Jehovah. Job's wife and his three "troublesome comforters" served the Devil's purpose at that time. As shown in the book of Job, the Devil challenged God, claiming that no human would remain faithful to Him if Satan were allowed to test that person. But Job held fast his integrity, thus proving Satan a liar. (Job 1:8–2:9; 16:2; 27:5; 31:6) The Devil persecutes Witnesses of Jehovah today in an effort to break their integrity and prove his challenge true.

<sup>10</sup> Knowing that the Devil brings persecution upon us because he desperately wants to break our integrity to God can actually help us to be courageous and strong. (Deuteronomy 31:6) Our God is the Universal Sovereign, and he will help us to maintain our integrity. May we always seek to make Jehovah's heart rejoice by being integrity keepers, giving him a reply to the great taunter, Satan the Devil. —Proverbs 27:11.

9, 10. The Devil has raised what issue, and how is the conduct of humans related to it?



*Do you pray for deliverance from  
"the wicked one"?*

## "Deliver Us From the Wicked One"

<sup>11</sup> Being an integrity-keeper is not a simple matter; it calls for earnest prayer. Especially helpful are the words of the model prayer. In part, Jesus said: "Do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the wicked one." (Matthew 6:13) Jehovah does not tempt us to sin. (James 1: 13) However, the Scriptures sometimes speak of his doing or causing things, when he, in fact, merely

permits them. (Ruth 1:20, 21) By praying as Jesus indicated, then, we are asking Jehovah not to abandon us to temptation. And he will not do so, for we have this Scriptural assurance: "God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it."—1 Corinthians 10:13.

<sup>12</sup> After mentioning temptation in the model prayer, Jesus appropriately said: "Deliver us from the wicked one." Some Bible translations read: "Deliver us from evil" (*King James Version; Revised Standard Version*) or "Protect us from evil." (*Contemporary English Version*) In the Scriptures, however, the expression 'deliver from' is used chiefly with regard to people, and Matthew's Gospel refers to the Devil as "the Tempter," a person. (Matthew 4:3, 11) So it is important to pray for deliverance from "the wicked one," Satan the Devil. He tries to maneuver us into sinning against God. (1 Thessalo-

11. What is meant by the request, "Do not bring us into temptation"?

12. Why do we pray: "Deliver us from the wicked one"?

nians 3:5) When we make the request, "Deliver us from the wicked one," we are asking our heavenly Father to guide and help us so that we are not overreached by the Devil.

### Do Not Be Overreached by the Devil

<sup>13</sup> When Paul urged Christians in Corinth to be forgiving, he wrote: "Anything you kindly forgive anyone, I do too. In fact, as for me, whatever I have kindly forgiven, if I have kindly forgiven anything, it has been for your sakes in Christ's sight; that we may not be overreached by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs." (2 Corinthians 2:10, 11) The Devil can overreach us in various ways, but why did Paul make the statement just quoted?

<sup>14</sup> Paul had reproved the Corinthians because they allowed an immoral man to remain in the congregation. This must have delighted Satan, for reproach fell upon the congregation for tolerating "such fornication as is not even among the nations." Eventually, the wrongdoer was disfellowshipped. (1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11-13) The man later repented. If the Corinthians refused to forgive and reinstate that man, the Devil would overreach them in another way. How so? They would be harsh and merciless, like Satan himself. If the repentant man became "swallowed up by his being overly sad" and gave up entirely, especially would the elders bear some responsibility for this



*Are you wearing "the complete suit of armor from God"?*

before the merciful God, Jehovah. (2 Corinthians 2:7; James 2:13; 3:1) Of course, no true Christian would want to imitate Satan by being cruel, harsh, and merciless.

### Protected by Armor From God

<sup>15</sup> If we are to be delivered from the Devil, we must wage spiritual warfare against the wicked spirit forces. Victory in the face of such odds depends on our wearing "the complete suit of armor from God." (Ephesians 6:11-18) This armor includes "the breastplate of righteousness." (Ephesians 6:14) King Saul of ancient Israel disobeyed God and suffered the loss of holy spirit. (1 Samuel 15:22, 23) But if we practice righteousness and have on the full suit of spiritual armor, we will have God's holy spirit and the needed protection against Satan and his wicked angels, the demons.—Proverbs 18:10.

<sup>16</sup> For continued protection against the wicked spirit forces, we need, among other things, to read and study God's Word regularly, making good use of publications provided through "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:42) We will thus be filling our mind with wholesome spiritual matters, in harmony with Paul's counsel: "Brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken

15. What warfare do we wage, and on what does victory depend?  
16. How can we have continued protection against the wicked spirit forces?

13, 14. Why did the Corinthians need to change the way they dealt with a man in the congregation who had been immoral?

of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things.”—Philippians 4:8.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah enables us to have our “feet shod with the equipment of the good news of peace.” (Ephesians 6:15) Regular participation in Christian meetings equips us to proclaim the good news of God’s Kingdom. What joy we derive from helping others to learn God’s truth and experience spiritual freedom! (John 8:32) “The sword of the spirit, that is, God’s word,” is indispensable in warding off false teachings and “overturning strongly entrenched things.” (Ephesians 6:17; 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5) Deft use of God’s written Word, the Bible, helps us to teach the truth and safeguards us from succumbing to the Devil’s wiles.

<sup>18</sup> Paul opened his discussion of our spiritual armor by saying: “Go on acquiring power in the Lord and in the mightiness of his strength. Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations [“crafty acts,” footnote] of the Devil.” (Ephesians 6:10, 11) The Greek word rendered “stand firm” relates to a soldier’s holding his position. We stand our ground in spiritual warfare, although Satan uses various crafty means in his efforts to dis-

17. What will help us to be effective proclaimers of the good news?

18. How can we “stand firm against the machinations of the Devil”?

### What Is Your Reply?

- Should we fear Satan the Devil?
- Why does Satan bring persecution upon Christians?
- Why do we pray to be delivered from “the wicked one”?
- How can we be successful in waging spiritual warfare?

rupt our unity, corrupt our teachings, or break our integrity to God. But the Devil’s assaults have not succeeded so far—and they never will!\*

### Oppose the Devil, and He Will Flee

<sup>19</sup> We can be successful in our spiritual warfare against the Devil and the wicked spirit forces under his direction. There is no reason to quake in fear of Satan, for the disciple James wrote: “Subject yourselves . . . to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) One way to go on the offensive in opposing Satan and the wicked spirit creatures in league with him is by having nothing to do with occult or magical practices and those indulging in them. The Scriptures clearly show that servants of Jehovah must refuse to look for omens or to engage in astrology, divination, and spiritism. If we are spiritually active and strong, we need not be afraid that someone will cast a spell on us.—Numbers 23:23; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Isaiah 47:12-15; Acts 19:18-20.

<sup>20</sup> We “oppose the Devil” by adhering to Bible standards and truths and by taking a firm stand against him. The world is in harmony with Satan because he is its god. (2 Corinthians 4:4) We therefore reject the world’s traits, such as pride, selfishness, immorality, violence, and materialism. We know that the Devil fled when Jesus resisted his attack by using the Scriptures during the temptation in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10, 11) Likewise, Satan will ‘flee from us’ in defeat if we are in full submission to Jehovah and prayerfully rely on Him. (Ephesians 6:18) With the support of Jehovah God and his beloved Son, nobody can do us permanent harm—no, not even the Devil!—Psalm 91:9-11.

\* For further information on the spiritual armor from God, see *The Watchtower*, May 15, 1992, pages 21-3.

19. What is one way to go on the offensive in opposing the Devil?

20. How can we oppose the Devil?

## Questions From Readers

**Did the ark of the covenant contain only the two stone tablets, or did it also hold other items?**

At the time of the dedication of Solomon's temple in 1026 B.C.E., "there was nothing in the Ark but the two tablets that Moses had given at Horeb, when Jehovah covenanted with the sons of Israel while they were coming out from Egypt." (2 Chronicles 5:10) However, this was not always the case.

"In the third month after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt," they entered the wilderness of Sinai. (Exodus 19:1, 2) Thereafter, Moses went up into Mount Sinai and received the two stone tablets of the Law. He relates: "Then I turned and went down from the mountain and placed the tablets in the ark that I had made, that they might continue there, just as Jehovah had commanded me." (Deuteronomy 10:5) This was a temporary ark, or container, that Jehovah had told Moses to construct to hold the tablets of the Law. (Deuteronomy 10:1) The ark of the covenant was not made ready until about the end of 1513 B.C.E.

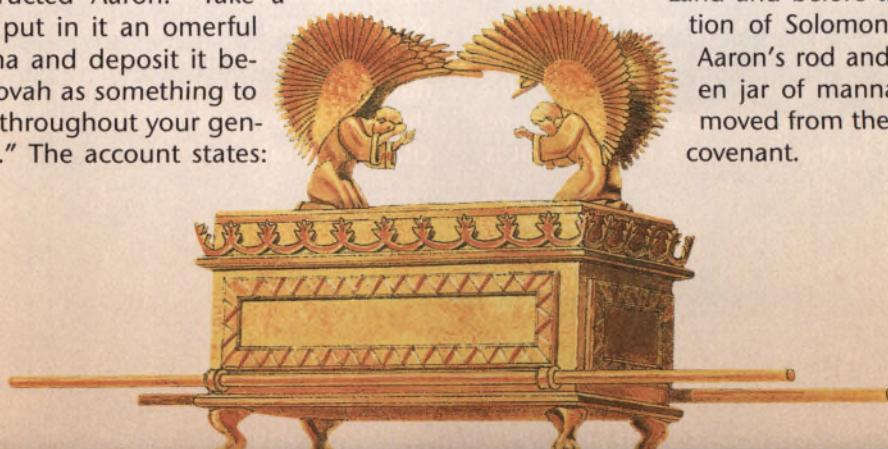
Shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, the Israelites began to murmur about food. So Jehovah provided manna for them. (Exodus 12:17, 18; 16:1-5) At that time, Moses instructed Aaron: "Take a jar and put in it an omerful of manna and deposit it before Jehovah as something to be kept throughout your generations." The account states:

"Just as Jehovah had commanded Moses, Aaron proceeded to deposit it before the Testimony [an archive for the safekeeping of important documents] as something to be kept." (Exodus 16:33, 34) While Aaron undoubtedly gathered manna into a jar at that time, the depositing of it before the Testimony had to wait until Moses made the Ark and placed the tablets in it.

As already noted, the ark of the covenant was constructed late in 1513 B.C.E. Aaron's rod was placed in that Ark much later, after the rebellion of Korah and others. The apostle Paul mentions "the ark of the covenant . . . , in which were the golden jar having the manna and the rod of Aaron that budded and the tablets of the covenant."—Hebrews 9:4.

The manna was a provision made by God during the 40-year sojourn of the Israelites in the wilderness. It was no longer provided when "they began to eat some of the yield of the land" of promise. (Joshua 5:11, 12) Aaron's rod was placed in the ark of the covenant for a purpose—to serve as a sign to or a witness against the rebellious generation. This suggests that the rod remained there at least for the duration of the wilderness journey. It would, then, seem logical to conclude that some time after Israel entered the Promised

Land and before the dedication of Solomon's temple, Aaron's rod and the golden jar of manna were removed from the ark of the covenant.



# "The Earliest Known Citations of Biblical Texts"

TWENTY-FIVE years ago, Israeli archaeologists made a spectacular discovery. In a burial cave on the slopes of the Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem, they found two small silver scrolls with Biblical texts recorded on them. The scrolls dated back to the time before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. The texts quoted part of the blessings recorded at Numbers 6:24-26. God's personal name, Jehovah, appeared several times on both scrolls. The inscriptions have been described as "the earliest known artifacts from the ancient world that document passages from the Hebrew Bible."

Some scholars, however, contested the dating and argued that the scrolls were written in the second century B.C.E. One reason for this disagreement was that the quality of the original photographs of these very small scrolls did not allow for a close enough examination of the details. To solve the dating problem, a team of scholars undertook a new study. They used the latest photographic and computer-imaging technology to produce high-resolution digital images of the scrolls. The results of the new analyses were recently published. What conclusions did the team of scholars reach?

First of all, the scholars emphasize that the *archaeological* data support a date before the Babylonian exile. The *paleographic* observations—the dating of scripts from the shape, form, stance, stroke order, and direction—point to the same time period, that is,



Cave: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.; inscriptions: Photograph © Israel Museum, Jerusalem; courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

to the end of the seventh century B.C.E. And finally, when considering the *orthography*, the science of spelling, this team concludes: "The orthographic data in the plaques [scrolls] is consistent with the archaeological and palaeographical evidence in terms of the dating of the inscriptions."

The journal *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* sums up the study of the silver scrolls, also known as the Ketef Hinnom inscriptions, as follows: "We can thus reassert the conclusion reached by most scholars that the inscriptions found on these plaques preserve the earliest known citations of biblical texts."