

MAY 1, 2005

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

# Will the Dead Live Again?



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.

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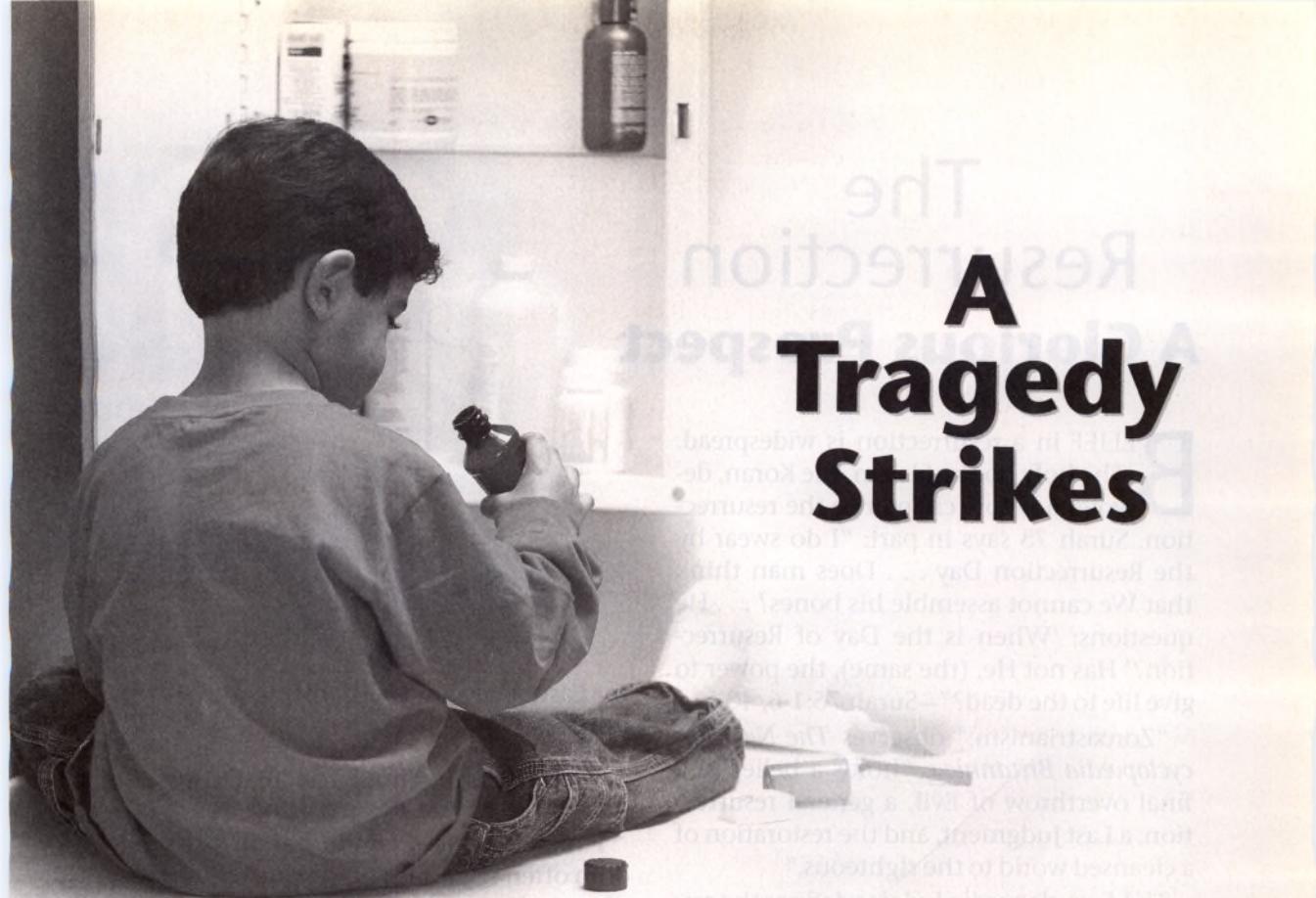
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# A Tragedy Strikes

**O**WEN, a two-and-a-half-year-old boy, was playing in the bathroom of his home. He managed to climb up to a medicine cabinet that his parents believed was beyond his reach. Among its contents, he discovered a bottle that caught his attention. He opened it and drank the liquid inside. Tragedy struck.

The bottle contained a corrosive acid, and sadly, young Owen died. His parents were heartbroken. His father, Percy, sought comfort from his church. "Why did this happen?" he asked. The clergyman answered, "God wanted another little angel in heaven." Devastated, the bereaved parent felt that this was completely unjust. Had God really intended that such a tragedy occur?

Disillusioned, Percy decided to have nothing more to do with his church.

Reflecting on what had happened, Percy wondered: 'Is my little boy still in pain? Will I ever see him again?'

You too may have wondered what happens at death and whether it will be possible to be reunited with dead loved ones in the future. God's Word, the Bible, sheds light on these questions. Its pages contain clear and comforting answers for all who have faced similar tragedies. More than that, it reveals a glorious prospect that God has promised—the resurrection.

Please read the following article to learn more about this marvelous hope.

# The Resurrection A Glorious Prospect

**B**EILF in a resurrection is widespread. The holy book of Islam, the Koran, devotes a whole chapter to the resurrection. Surah 75 says in part: "I do swear by the Resurrection Day . . . Does man think that We cannot assemble his bones? . . . He questions: 'When is the Day of Resurrection?' Has not He, (the same), the power to give life to the dead?"—Surah 75:1-6, 40.

"Zoroastrianism," observes *The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, "holds a belief in a final overthrow of Evil, a general resurrection, a Last Judgment, and the restoration of a cleansed world to the righteous."

The *Encyclopædia Judaica* defines the resurrection as "the belief that ultimately the dead will be revived in their bodies and live again on earth." The same reference work also comments that the belief adopted into Judaism that man has an immortal soul presents a dilemma. It admits: "Basically the two beliefs of resurrection and the soul's immortality are contradictory."

Hinduism teaches that man undergoes a series of rebirths, or reincarnations. For this to be true, man must have a soul that lives on after death. The Hindu holy book *Bhagavad Gita* states: "That which pervades the entire body is indestructible. No one is able to destroy the imperishable soul."

Buddhism differs from Hinduism in that it denies the existence of an immortal soul. Nevertheless, today many Buddhists in the



Far East believe in the transmigration of an immortal soul.\*

## Confusion About the Teaching of the Resurrection

Funeral services conducted in Christendom often refer both to the soul as living on after death and to the resurrection. For example, Anglican clergymen usually recite the words: "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of his great mercy to take unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*The Book of Common Prayer*.

This statement may make one wonder whether the Bible teaches the resurrection or the doctrine of an immortal soul. Note, however, the comment made by French Protestant Professor Oscar Cullmann. He writes in his book *Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Dead?*: "There is a radical

\* See the book *Mankind's Search for God*, pages 150-4, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

difference between the Christian expectation of the resurrection of the dead and the Greek belief in the immortality of the soul. . . . Although Christianity later established a link between these two beliefs, and today the average Christian confuses them completely, I see no reason to hide what I and the majority of scholars consider to be the truth. . . . The life and thought of the New Testament are entirely dominated by faith in the resurrection. . . . The whole man, who is really dead, is brought back to life by a new creative act of God.”

It is little wonder that people in general are confused about death and the resurrection. To resolve the confusion, we need to look to the Bible, which presents truths revealed by man’s Creator, Jehovah God. The Bible documents a number of resurrections. Let us examine four of these accounts and consider what they reveal.

### **“Women Received Their Dead by Resurrection”**

In his letter to Jews who had become Christians, the apostle Paul said that women of faith had “received their dead by resurrection.” (Hebrews 11:35) One of those women lived in Zarephath, a Phoenician town near Sidon on the Mediterranean Coast. She was a widow who hospitably received God’s prophet Elijah and gave him food even during a time of extreme famine. Sadly, this woman’s son fell sick and died. Elijah immediately carried him up

*Jehovah used Elisha to resurrect the Shunammite’s son*

*Elijah petitioned Jehovah to restore a boy’s life*

to the roof chamber where the prophet lodged and petitioned Jehovah to restore the boy’s life. A miracle occurred, and the boy “came to life.” Elijah returned him to his mother and said: “See, your son is alive.” How did she react? She happily said: “Now, indeed, I do know that you are a man of God and that Jehovah’s word in your mouth is true.”—1 Kings 17:22-24.



Nearly 60 miles south of Zarephath lived a generous couple who cared for Elijah’s successor, the prophet Elisha. The wife was a prominent woman in her hometown of Shunem. She and her husband agreed to provide Elisha lodging in a roof chamber in their home. Their sadness over not having children turned to joy when the woman gave birth to a son. As the lad grew, he often accompanied the reapers to join his father in the field. One day tragedy struck. The boy cried out that he had a headache. An attendant rushed him back home. His mother cradled him in her lap, but gradually the child died. The distraught mother decided to call Elisha for help. With an attendant she traveled northwest toward Mount Carmel, where Elisha was staying.

Responding, the prophet sent his attendant, Gehazi, ahead, and he found that the boy was indeed dead. Elisha and the woman followed, but what happened when they finally arrived in Shunem? The account at 2 Kings 4:32-37 relates: “At last Elisha came into the house, and there the boy was dead,



being laid upon his couch. Then he came in and closed the door behind them both and began to pray to Jehovah. Finally he went up and lay down upon the child and put his own mouth upon his mouth and his own eyes upon his eyes and his own palms upon his palms and kept bent over him, and gradually the child's flesh grew warm. Then he began walking again in the house, once this way and once that way, after which he went up and bent over him. And the boy began to sneeze as many as seven times, after which the boy opened his eyes. He now called Gehazi and said: 'Call this Shunammite woman.' So he called her and she came in to him. Then he said: 'Lift up your son.' And she proceeded to come in and fall at his feet and bow down to him to the earth, after which she lifted up her son and went out."

Like the widow of Zarephath, the woman from Shunem knew that what had happened was as a result of God's power. Both these women experienced great joy as God restored their beloved offspring to life.

### Resurrections During Jesus' Ministry

Some 900 years later, a resurrection occurred a short distance north of Shunem outside the village of Nain. As Jesus Christ

and his disciples traveled from Capernaum and neared the gate of Nain, they met a burial procession, and Jesus caught sight of a widow who had lost her only son. Jesus told her to stop weeping. Luke, a physician, described what happened next: "With that [Jesus] approached and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still, and he said: 'Young man, I say to you, Get up!' And the dead man sat up and started to speak, and he gave him to his mother." (Luke 7:14, 15) Those who witnessed this miracle glorified God. News of the resurrection spread southward into Judea and the surrounding district. Interestingly, the disciples of John the Baptizer heard of it and reported the miracle to John. He, in turn, dispatched them to find Jesus and ask him whether He was the expected Messiah. Jesus told them: "Go your way, report to John what you saw and heard: the blind are receiving sight, the lame are walking, the lepers are being cleansed and the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised up, the poor are being told the good news."—Luke 7:22.

The best known of Jesus' resurrection miracles was that performed in behalf of his close friend Lazarus. In this case, there was a delay between Lazarus' death and Jesus' ar-

*Jesus resurrected the son  
of the widow of Nain*



rival at the family home. When Jesus finally reached Bethany, Lazarus had been dead for four days. When Jesus instructed that the stone covering the entrance to the burial chamber be removed, Martha objected, saying: "Lord, by now he must smell, for it is four days." (John 11:39) Yet, any deterioration of Lazarus' body did not prevent the resurrection. At Jesus' command, "the man that had been dead came out with his feet and hands bound with wrappings, and his countenance was bound about with a cloth." The subsequent actions of Jesus' enemies prove that it was indeed Lazarus who had come back to life.—John 11:43, 44; 12:1, 9-11.

What do we conclude from these four resurrection accounts? Each resurrected individual returned to life as the same person. All were recognized, even by their closest relatives. None of the resurrected spoke of what had occurred during the short time they were dead. None spoke of traveling to another world. Apparently, they all returned in good health. For them, it was as though they slept for a while and then woke up, even as Jesus intimated. (John 11:11) Nevertheless, after some time each of these died again.

*The resurrection will  
reunite relatives  
with their loved ones*

## Reunion With Loved Ones —A Glorious Prospect

A short time after the tragic death of Owen, mentioned in the preceding article, his father visited a neighbor's home. There on a table, he found a handbill advertising a public talk organized by Jehovah's Witnesses. Its title, "Where Are the Dead?", appealed to him. That was exactly the question he had on his mind. He attended the discourse and found true comfort from the Bible. He learned that the dead do not suffer. Rather than experiencing torment in a hellfire or being taken by God to become angels in heaven, the dead, including Owen, wait in the grave until it is time to be awakened in the resurrection.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Ezekiel 18:4.

Has tragedy struck your family? Do you, like Owen's father, wonder where your deceased loved ones are now and what possibility there is of seeing them again? If so, we invite you to consider what the Bible further teaches about the resurrection. Perhaps you wonder: 'When will the resurrection occur? Who exactly will benefit from it?' Please read the following articles for a discussion of these and other questions.



# THE RESURRECTION —A TEACHING THAT AFFECTS YOU

*"I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." —ACTS 24:15.*

AT THE end of his third missionary tour<sup>2</sup> in 56 C.E., the apostle Paul was in Jerusalem. After being arrested by the Romans, he was permitted to appear before the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin. (Acts 22:29, 30) As Paul observed the members of that court, he noted that some were Sadducees and others were Pharisees. These two groups differed in one outstanding way. The Sadducees denied the resurrection; the Pharisees accepted it. To show where he stood on that issue, Paul declared: "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of resurrection of the dead I am being judged." In so doing, he threw the assembly into confusion!—Acts 23:6-9.

Years earlier, when he was on the road to Damascus, Paul saw a vision in which he heard Jesus' voice. Paul even asked Jesus: "What shall I do, Lord?" Jesus answered: "Rise, go your way into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything it is appointed for you to do." On arrival in Damascus, Paul was found by a helpful Christian disciple, Ananias, who explained: "The God of our forefathers has chosen you to come to know his will and to see the righteous One [the resurrected Jesus] and to hear the voice of his mouth." (Acts 22:6-16) Little wonder, then, that Paul was prepared to make a de-

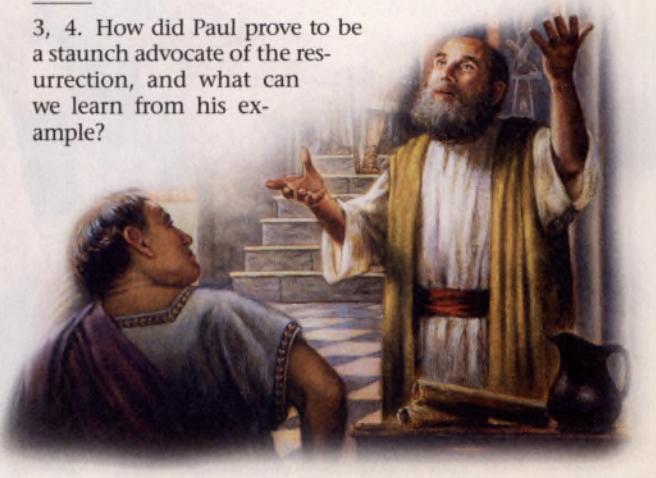
fense of his belief in the resurrection.—1 Peter 3:15.

## Publicly Declaring the Resurrection Hope

<sup>3</sup> Paul later appeared before Governor Felix. On that occasion, Tertullus, "a public speaker" who presented the Jews' case against Paul, accused him of being the leader of a sect and guilty of sedition. In answer Paul forthrightly declared: "I do admit this to you, that, according to the way that they call a 'sect,' in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers." Then, coming to the main issue, he continued: "I have hope toward God, which hope these men themselves also entertain, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." —Acts 23:23, 24; 24:1-8, 14, 15.

<sup>4</sup> About two years later, Felix' successor, Porcius Festus, invited King Herod Agrippa to join him in examining the prisoner Paul. Festus explained that the accusers disputed Paul's assertion that "a certain Jesus who

- 3, 4. How did Paul prove to be a staunch advocate of the resurrection, and what can we learn from his example?



1. How did the resurrection become an issue before the Sanhedrin?
2. Why was Paul prepared to make a defense of his belief in the resurrection?

was dead . . . was alive." In his defense Paul asked: "Why is it judged unbelievable among you men that God raises up the dead?" Then he declared: "Because I have obtained the help that is from God I continue to this day bearing witness to both small and great, but saying nothing except things the Prophets as well as Moses stated were going to take place, that the Christ was to suffer and, as the first to be resurrected from the dead, he was going to publish light both to this people and to the nations." (Acts 24:27; 25:13-22; 26:8, 22, 23) What a staunch advocate of the resurrection Paul was! Like Paul, we too can proclaim with conviction that there will be a resurrection. But what reaction can we expect? Likely the same as Paul received.

<sup>5</sup> Consider what occurred earlier during Paul's second missionary tour (about 49-52 C.E.) when he visited Athens. He reasoned with people who believed in many deities, and he urged them to note God's purpose to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom He had appointed. This was none other than Jesus. Paul explained that God had furnished a guarantee of this by resurrecting Jesus. What was the reaction? We read: "Well, when they heard of a resurrection of the dead, some began to mock, while others said: 'We will hear you about this even another time.'"—Acts 17:29-32.

<sup>6</sup> That reaction mirrored what Peter and John had experienced shortly after Pentecost 33 C.E. Again the Sadducees figured prominently in the controversy. Acts 4:1-4 relates what happened: "Now while the two were speaking to the people, the chief priests and the captain of the temple and

5, 6. (a) The apostles' advocating the resurrection prompted what reaction? (b) As we express our hope in the resurrection, what is vital?

*Paul, appearing before Governor Felix,  
proclaimed with conviction the resurrection hope*

the Sadducees came upon them, being annoyed because they were teaching the people and were plainly declaring the resurrection from the dead in the case of Jesus." Others, however, reacted favorably. "Many of those who had listened to the speech believed, and the number of the men became about five thousand." Evidently, we can expect varied reactions when we speak about the resurrection hope. In view of that, it is vital that we strengthen our faith in this teaching.

### Faith and the Resurrection

<sup>7</sup> Not all who became Christians in the first century C.E. found it easy to accept the resurrection hope. Some who found it difficult were associated with the congregation in Corinth. To them Paul wrote: "I handed on to you, among the first things, that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, yes, that he has been raised up the third day according to the Scriptures." Paul then attested to this truth by stating that the resurrected Christ had "appeared to upward of five hundred brothers," most of whom, added Paul, were still alive. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) He further reasoned: "If Christ is being preached that he has been raised up from the dead, how is it some among you say there is no resurrection of the dead? If, indeed, there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised up. But if Christ has not been raised up, our preaching is certainly in vain, and our faith is in vain." —1 Corinthians 15:12-14.

<sup>8</sup> Yes, so fundamental is the teaching of the resurrection that the Christian faith is in vain if the resurrection is not accepted as

7, 8. (a) As shown in a letter to the first-century Corinthian congregation, how can faith be in vain? (b) How does a correct understanding of the resurrection hope set true Christians apart?

a reality. Indeed, the correct understanding of the resurrection sets true Christians apart from the false. (Genesis 3:4; Ezekiel 18:4) Thus, Paul includes the teaching of the resurrection in “the primary doctrine” of Christianity. May our determination be to “press on to maturity.” “And this we will do,” exhorts Paul, “if God indeed permits.” —Hebrews 6:1-3.

### The Resurrection Hope

<sup>9</sup> To strengthen our faith in the resurrection further, let us review such questions as: What does the Bible mean when it refers to the resurrection? How does the teaching of the resurrection magnify Jehovah’s love? Answers to these questions will draw us closer to God and at the same time help us to teach others.—2 Timothy 2:2; James 4:8.

<sup>10</sup> “Resurrection” is the translation of a Greek word that literally means “a standing up again.” What does that expression involve? According to the Bible, the resurrection hope is the conviction that a dead person can live again. The Bible further shows that the person is restored in either a human or a spirit body, depending on whether he has an earthly or a heavenly hope. We marvel at Jehovah’s love, wisdom, and power manifest in this wonderful resurrection prospect.

<sup>11</sup> The resurrection of Jesus and his anointed brothers provides them with a spirit body fit for service in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-53) Together they will serve as rulers of the Messianic Kingdom, which will bring Paradise conditions to the earth. Under Jesus as High Priest, the anointed constitute a royal priesthood. They will apply the benefits of Christ’s ran-

9, 10. What does the Bible mean when it refers to the resurrection?

11. What resurrection prospects are offered to God’s anointed servants?



*Why did Abraham have faith in the resurrection?*

som sacrifice to mankind in the new world of righteousness. (Hebrews 7:25, 26; 9:24; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 22:1, 2) In the meantime, those of the anointed still alive on earth desire to remain acceptable to God. At their death, they will receive their “award” through resurrection to immortal spirit life in heaven. (2 Corinthians 5:1-3, 6-8, 10; 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52; Revelation 14:13) “If we have become united with him in the likeness of his death,” wrote Paul, “we shall certainly also be united with him in the likeness of his resurrection.” (Romans 6:5) But what about those for whom the resurrection will mean life on earth again as humans? How can the resurrection hope draw them closer to God? We can learn much from the example of Abraham.

### The Resurrection and Friendship With Jehovah

<sup>12</sup> Abraham, who was described as “Jehovah’s friend,” was a man of outstanding faith. (James 2:23) Paul referred to Abraham’s faith three times in his listing of faithful men and women recorded in the

12, 13. What powerful basis for faith in the resurrection did Abraham have?

11th chapter of Hebrews. (Hebrews 11:8, 9, 17) His third reference focuses on the faith Abraham displayed when he obediently prepared to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham was convinced that the promise of a seed through Isaac was guaranteed by Jehovah. Even if Isaac were to die as a sacrifice, Abraham “reckoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.”

<sup>13</sup> As events turned out, when Jehovah saw the strength of Abraham’s faith, he arranged for an animal to substitute as a sacrifice. Still, Isaac’s experience served as an illustration of the resurrection, as Paul explained: “From there he [Abraham] did receive him [Isaac] also in an illustrative way.” (Hebrews 11:19) More than that, Abraham already had a powerful basis for his belief in the resurrection. Had not Jehovah brought back to life Abraham’s reproductive powers when he and his wife, Sarah, came together in their old age and produced their son, Isaac?—Genesis 18:10-14; 21:1-3; Romans 4:19-21.

<sup>14</sup> Paul described Abraham as an alien resident and a tent dweller who was “awaiting the city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God.” (Hebrews 11:9, 10) This was not a literal city like Jerusalem, which was the location of God’s temple. No, this was a symbolic city. It was God’s heavenly Kingdom made up of Christ Jesus and his 144,000 rulers. The 144,000 in their heavenly glory are also spoken of as “the holy city, New Jerusalem,” the “bride” of Christ. (Revelation 21:2) In 1914, Jehovah enthroned Jesus as Messianic King of the heavenly Kingdom and commanded him to rule in the midst of his enemies. (Psalm 110:1, 2; Revelation 11:15) To receive the blessings of Kingdom rule, Abraham, “Jehovah’s

14. (a) According to Hebrews 11:9, 10, what did Abraham await? (b) To receive Kingdom blessings in the new world, what must yet happen to Abraham? (c) How can we receive Kingdom blessings?

friend,” will have to live again. Likewise, for us to receive Kingdom blessings, we must be alive in God’s new world, either as members of the great crowd of Armageddon survivors or as those resurrected from the dead. (Revelation 7:9, 14) What, though, is the basis of the resurrection hope?

### God’s Love—The Basis of the Resurrection Hope

<sup>15</sup> Our close relationship with our loving heavenly Father, our strong faith like that of Abraham, and our obedience to God’s commands allow us to be declared righteous and to be viewed by Jehovah as his friends. This brings us in line to benefit from Kingdom rule. Indeed, the very first prophecy recorded in God’s Word, at Genesis 3:15, lays the basis for the resurrection hope and friendship with God. It foretells not only the crushing of Satan’s head but also, by contrast, the bruising in the heel of the Seed of God’s woman. Jesus’ death on the stake was a figurative bruising in the heel. His resurrection on the third day healed that wound and paved the way for decisive action against “the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil.”—Hebrews 2:14.

15, 16. (a) How does the first prophecy in the Bible lay the basis for our resurrection hope? (b) How can belief in the resurrection draw us closer to Jehovah?

### Do You Recall?

- What reaction did Paul encounter when he declared his hope in the resurrection?
- Why does the resurrection hope set true Christians apart from the false?
- How do we know that Abraham, Job, and Daniel had faith in the resurrection?

<sup>16</sup> Paul reminds us that “God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8) Appreciation for this undeserved kindness truly brings us closer to Jesus and to our loving heavenly Father.—2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

<sup>17</sup> Job, a faithful man from pre-Christian times, also looked forward to a resurrection. He suffered greatly at Satan’s hands.

Unlike his false companions, who never mentioned the resurrection, Job drew comfort from this hope and asked: “If an able-bodied man dies can he live again?” In answer Job himself declared: “All the days of my compulsory service I shall wait, until my relief comes.” Addressing his God, Jehovah, he acknowledged: “You will call, and I myself shall answer you.” Concerning the feelings of our loving Creator, Job noted: “For the work of your hands you will have a yearning.” (Job 14:14, 15) Yes, Jehovah eagerly anticipates the time when faithful ones return to life in the resurrection. How this draws us closer to him as we meditate on the love and undeserved kindness that he shows us even though we are imperfect! —Romans 5:21; James 4:8.

<sup>18</sup> The prophet Daniel, described by God’s angel as a “very desirable man,” lived a long life of faithful service. (Daniel 10:11, 19) His integrity to Jehovah re-

17. (a) What hope did Job express? (b) What does Job 14:15 reveal about Jehovah, and how does this make you feel?

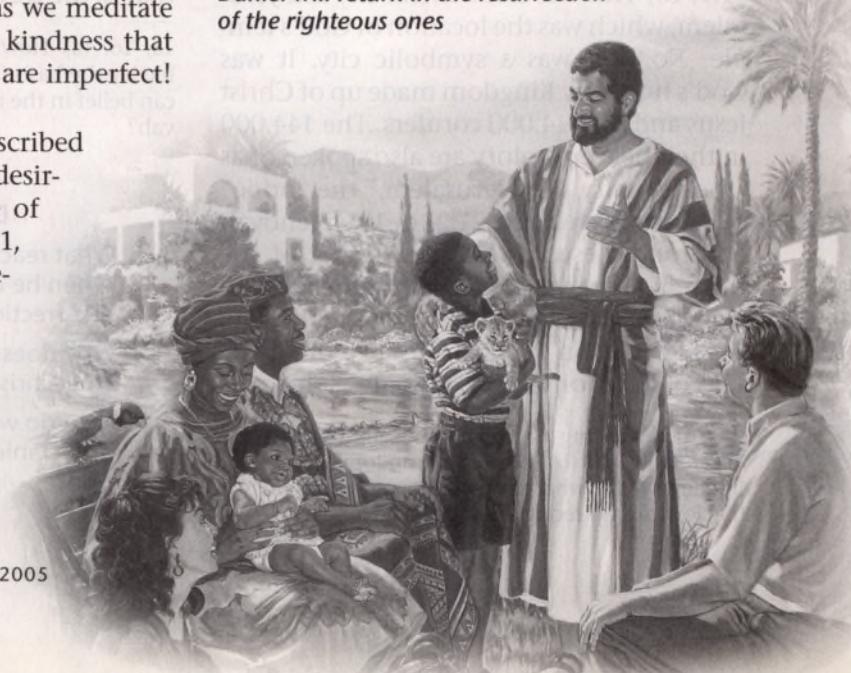
18, 19. (a) What prospect does Daniel have for living again? (b) What will we review in the next article?

### *Job drew comfort from the resurrection hope*

mained intact from his exile in 617 B.C.E. until his death some time after he received a vision in 536 B.C.E., the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia. (Daniel 1:1; 10:1) Some time during that third year of Cyrus, Daniel received a vision of the

March of world powers that culminates in the coming great tribulation. (Daniel 11:1-12:13) As he could not fully understand the vision, Daniel asked the angelic messenger who delivered it: “O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?” In answer the angel called attention to “the time of the end,” during which “the ones having insight will understand.” As for Daniel himself, what were his prospects? The angel acknowledged: “You will rest, but you will stand up for your lot at the end of the days.” (Daniel 12:8-10, 13) Dan-

### *Daniel will return in the resurrection of the righteous ones*



iel will return "in the resurrection of the righteous ones," during Christ's Millennial Reign.—Luke 14:14.

<sup>19</sup> We live deep in the time of the end and nearer the start of Christ's Millennial Rule than when we first became believers. Therefore, we must ask ourselves, 'Will I be there

in the new world to associate with Abraham, Job, Daniel, and other faithful men and women?' We shall be, provided we stay close to Jehovah and obey his commands. In our next article, we will review the resurrection hope in further detail so as to identify who will be resurrected.

## WHO WILL BE RESURRECTED?

*"Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."*—JOHN 5:28, 29.

SOMETHING very unusual occurred more than 3,500 years ago. Moses was caring for the sheep that belonged to the patriarch Jethro. Near Mount Horeb, Jehovah's angel appeared to Moses in a flame of fire in the midst of a thornbush. "As he kept looking, why, here the thornbush was burning with the fire and yet the thornbush was not consumed," relates the Exodus account. Then a voice called to him from the thornbush. "I am the God of your father," the voice declared, "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." (Exodus 3:1-6) Later, in the first century C.E., those words were recalled by none other than God's own Son, Jesus.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus was having a discussion with some Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection. Jesus declared: "That the dead are raised up even Moses disclosed, in the ac-

1. What outstanding declaration did Moses hear at the burning thornbush, and who later recalled those words?

2, 3. (a) What prospect awaits Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (b) What questions arise?

count about the thornbush, when he calls Jehovah 'the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.' He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him." (Luke 20:27, 37, 38) By saying these words, Jesus confirmed that from God's viewpoint the long-dead Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob still lived in God's memory. Like Job, they await the end of their "compulsory service," their sleep in death. (Job 14:14) In God's new world, they will be resurrected.

<sup>3</sup> What, though, about the billions of others who have died throughout human history? Will they too receive a resurrection? Before we can obtain a satisfying answer to that question, let us find out from God's Word where people go when they die.

### Where Are the Dead?

<sup>4</sup> The Bible declares that the dead are "conscious of nothing at all." At death there is no torment in hellfire, no agonizing wait

4. (a) Where do people go when they die? (b) What is Sheol?

in Limbo, but simply a return to the dust. Therefore, God's Word advises the living: "All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10; Genesis 3:19) "Sheol" is an unfamiliar term to many. It is a Hebrew word of uncertain derivation. Many religions teach that the dead are still alive, but as the inspired Word of God shows, those in Sheol are dead, without consciousness. Sheol is the common grave of mankind.

<sup>5</sup> In the Bible, we find the first occurrence of the word "Sheol" at Genesis 37:35. Following the apparent loss of his beloved son Joseph, the patriarch Jacob refused to take comfort, declaring: "I shall go down mourning to my son into Sheol!" Believing that his son was dead, Jacob desired to die and be in Sheol. Later, nine of Jacob's older children wanted to take his youngest son, Benjamin, down to Egypt to find relief from the famine. However, Jacob refused, saying: "My son will not go down with you men, because his brother is dead and he has been left by himself. If a fatal accident should befall him on the way on which you would go, then you would certainly bring down my gray hairs with grief to Sheol." (Genesis 42:36, 38) These two references link death, not some kind of afterlife, with Sheol.

<sup>6</sup> The Genesis account reveals that Joseph had become the food administrator in Egypt. Consequently, Jacob was able to journey there for a joyous reunion with Joseph. After that, Jacob resided in that land until his death at the very advanced age of 147. According to his dying wishes, his sons took his remains and buried them in the cave of Machpelah in the land of Canaan. (Gene-

5, 6. At his death, where did Jacob go, and whom did he join there?

sis 47:28; 49:29-31; 50:12, 13) Thus, Jacob joined Isaac, his father, and Abraham, his grandfather.

### 'Gathered to Their Forefathers'

<sup>7</sup> Earlier, when Jehovah confirmed his covenant with Abraham and promised that his seed would become many, he indicated what would happen to Abraham. "As for you," Jehovah said, "you will go to your forefathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age." (Genesis 15:15) And this is exactly what happened. Genesis 25:8 states: "Then Abraham expired and died in a good old age, old and satisfied, and was gathered to his people." Who were these people? Genesis 11:10-26 lists his ancestors as far back as Noah's son Shem. So it was to these already sleeping in Sheol that Abraham was gathered at death.

<sup>8</sup> The expression "gathered to his people" occurs frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thus, it is logical to conclude that Abraham's son Ishmael and Moses' brother, Aaron, both went to Sheol at their death, there to await a resurrection. (Genesis 25:17; Numbers 20:23-29) Accordingly, Moses too went to Sheol, although no one knew where his grave was. (Numbers 27:13; Deuteronomy 34:5, 6) Similarly, Joshua, Moses' successor as leader of Israel, along with a whole generation of people also descended to Sheol at death.—Judges 2:8-10.

<sup>9</sup> Centuries later, David became king of the 12 tribes of Israel. At his death, he "lay down with his forefathers." (1 Kings 2:10) Was he too in Sheol? Interestingly, on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., the apostle Peter re-

7, 8. (a) Where did Abraham go at his death? Explain. (b) What shows that others entered Sheol at their death?

9. (a) How does the Bible show that the Hebrew word "Sheol" and the Greek word "Hades" refer to the same place? (b) What prospect do those in Sheol, or Hades, have?

ferred to David's death and quoted Psalm 16:10: "You will not leave my soul in Sheol." After mentioning that David was still in his tomb, Peter applied those words to Jesus and indicated that David "saw beforehand and spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he forsaken in Hades nor did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus God resurrected, of which fact we are all witnesses." (Acts 2:29-32) Peter here used the word "Hades," the Greek counterpart of the Hebrew word "Sheol." Thus, those said to be in Hades are in the same situation as those said to be in Sheol. They are sleeping, awaiting a resurrection.

### Are There Unrighteous Ones in Sheol?

<sup>10</sup> After Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt, a rebellion broke out in the wilderness. Moses told the people to separate themselves from the ringleaders—Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They would die violently. Moses explained: "If it is according to the death of all mankind that these people will die and with the punishment of all mankind that punishment will be brought upon them, then it is not Jehovah that has sent me. But if it is something created that Jehovah will create, and the ground has to open its mouth and swallow up them and everything that belongs to them and they have to go down alive into Sheol, you will then know for certain that these men have treated Jehovah disrespectfully." (Numbers 16:29, 30) So whether by the earth opening and swallowing them or by fire consuming them as in the case of Korah and the 250 Levites who sided with him, all these rebels ended up in Sheol, or Hades. —Numbers 26:10.

10, 11. Why can we say that some unrighteous ones go to Sheol, or Hades, at their death?

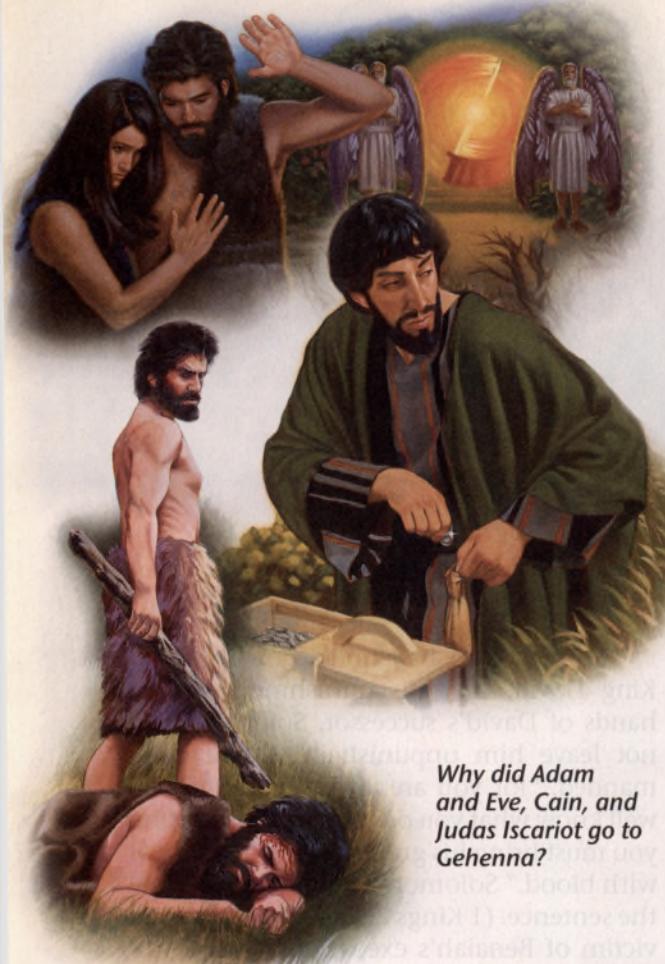


*Like Abraham, those who go to Sheol are in line for a resurrection*

<sup>11</sup> Shimei, who had called down evil on King David, met his punishment at the hands of David's successor, Solomon. "Do not leave him unpunished," David commanded, "for you are a wise man and you well know what you ought to do to him, and you must bring his gray hairs down to Sheol with blood." Solomon had Benaiah execute the sentence. (1 Kings 2:8, 9, 44-46) Another victim of Benaiah's executional sword was Israel's former army chief Joab. His gray hairs did not "go down in peace to Sheol." (1 Kings 2:5, 6, 28-34) Both these examples testify to the truthfulness of David's inspired song: "Wicked people will turn back to Sheol, even all the nations forgetting God." —Psalm 9:17.

<sup>12</sup> Ahithophel was personal adviser to David. His counsel was valued as though it was from Jehovah himself. (2 Samuel 16:23) Sadly, this trusted servant turned traitor and joined in a coup led by David's son Absalom. Apparently, David alluded to this defection when he wrote: "It was not an

12. Who was Ahithophel, and where did he go at his death?



**Why did Adam and Eve, Cain, and Judas Iscariot go to Gehenna?**

enemy that proceeded to reproach me; otherwise I could put up with it. It was not an intense hater of me that assumed great airs against me; otherwise I could conceal myself from him." David continued: "Desolations be upon them! Let them go down into Sheol alive; for during their alien residence bad things have been within them." (Psalm 55: 12-15) At their death, Ahithophel and his companions went to Sheol.

**Who Are in Gehenna?**

<sup>13</sup> Compare David's situation with that experienced by the Greater David, Jesus. One of

13. Why is Judas called "the son of destruction"?

Christ's 12 apostles, Judas Iscariot, turned traitor like Ahithophel. Judas' treacherous act was far more serious than that of Ahithophel. Judas acted against God's only-begotten Son. In a prayer at the end of his earthly ministry, God's Son reported about his followers: "When I was with them I used to watch over them on account of your own name which you have given me; and I have kept them, and not one of them is destroyed except the son of destruction, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled." (John 17: 12) By here referring to Judas as "the son of destruction," Jesus indicated that when Judas died, there was no hope of a return for him. He did not live on in God's memory. He went, not to Sheol, but to Gehenna. What is Gehenna?

<sup>14</sup> Jesus condemned the religious leaders of his day because they made each of their disciples "a subject for Gehenna." (Matthew 23:15) Back at that time, people were familiar with the Valley of Hinnom, an area used as a garbage dump where bodies of executed criminals who were deemed unworthy of a proper burial were deposited. Earlier, Jesus himself had made mention of Gehenna in his Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:29, 30) Its symbolic meaning was clear to his listeners. Gehenna represented complete destruction without hope of a resurrection. Apart from Judas Iscariot of Jesus' day, have others gone to Gehenna rather than to Sheol, or Hades, at their death?

<sup>15</sup> The first humans, Adam and Eve, were created perfect. Their fall into sin was deliberate. Before them was either everlasting life or death. They disobeyed God and sided with Satan. When they died, they had no prospect of benefiting from Christ's ransom sacrifice. Rather, they went to Gehenna.

14. What does Gehenna represent?

15, 16. Who at death went to Gehenna, and why did they go there?

<sup>16</sup> Adam's firstborn son, Cain, murdered his brother Abel and thereafter lived as a fugitive. The apostle John described Cain as one "who originated with the wicked one." (1 John 3:12) It is reasonable to conclude that like his parents, he went to Gehenna when he died. (Matthew 23:33, 35) What a contrast this is with the situation of righteous Abel! "By faith Abel offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness respecting his gifts," explained Paul, adding, "and through it he, although he died, yet speaks." (Hebrews 11:4) Yes, Abel is presently in Sheol awaiting a resurrection.

### A "First" and a "Better" Resurrection

<sup>17</sup> Many who read this will wonder about the situation of those who die during this "time of the end." (Daniel 8:19) Revelation chapter 6 describes the ride of four horsemen during that time. Interestingly, the last of these is named Death, and he is followed by Hades. Thus, many who die an untimely death from the activity of the preceding horsemen end up in Hades, there to await a resurrection in God's new world. (Revelation 6:8) What, then, are the prospects for those in Sheol (Hades) and those in Gehenna? Simply put, resurrection for the former; eternal destruction—nonexistence—for the latter.

<sup>18</sup> The apostle John wrote: "Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years." Those who will be

17. (a) During this "time of the end," who go to Sheol? (b) What are the prospects for those in Sheol and for those in Gehenna?

18. What prospect does "the first resurrection" offer?

corulers with Christ share in "the first resurrection," but what hope is there for the rest of mankind?—Revelation 20:6.

<sup>19</sup> From the days of God's servants Elijah and Elisha, the miracle of the resurrection brought people back to life. "Women received their dead by resurrection," recounted Paul, "but other men were tortured because they would not accept release by some ransom, in order that they might attain a better resurrection." Yes, these faithful integrity-keepers looked forward to a resurrection that would offer them, not just a few more years followed by death, but the prospect of *everlasting life!* That will indeed be "a better resurrection."—Hebrews 11:35.

<sup>20</sup> If we die faithful before Jehovah brings an end to this wicked system, we have the sure hope of "a better resurrection," better in the sense that it is one with everlasting life in view. Jesus promised: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Our next article further considers the purpose of the resurrection. It will show how the resurrection hope strengthens us to be integrity-keepers and helps us to develop the spirit of self-sacrifice.

19. How do some benefit from "a better resurrection"?

20. What will the next article consider?

### Do You Recall?

- Why is Jehovah described as the God "of the living"?
- What is the condition of those in Sheol?
- What are the prospects for those in Gehenna?
- How will some benefit from "a better resurrection"?

# THE RESURRECTION HOPE —WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?

*"You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing."*

—PSALM 145:16.

NINE-YEAR-OLD Christopher and his brother had spent the morning, along with their uncle, aunt, and two cousins, calling from house to house in their Christian ministry near Manchester, England. Our companion magazine, *Awake!*, explained what happened. "In the afternoon, they set out together on a sight-seeing trip to Blackpool, a nearby seaside resort. All 6 were among 12 people killed instantly in a motorway crash, described by the police as 'an absolute holocaust.'"

<sup>2</sup> The night before the tragedy, the family had attended the Congregation Book Study, where the subject of death had been discussed. "Christopher was always a very thoughtful boy," related his father. "That night, he spoke clearly about a new world and his hope for the future. Then, as our discussion continued, Christopher suddenly said: 'The thing about being one of Jehovah's Witnesses is that while death hurts, we know we will see each other again on earth one day.' Little did any of us present realize how memorable those words were going to be."\*

<sup>3</sup> Years earlier, in 1940, an Austrian Witness named Franz was faced with the prospect of execution by guillotine for his refusal to be

\* See *Awake!* July 8, 1988, page 10, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

1-3. What hope do some entertain for the future? Illustrate.

disloyal to Jehovah. Franz wrote to his mother from a Berlin detention center: "With what I knew, if I had taken the [military] oath, I would have committed a sin deserving death. That would be evil to me. I would have no resurrection. . . . And now, my dear Mother and all my brothers and sisters, today I was told my sentence, and don't be terrified, it is death, and I will be executed tomorrow morning. I have my strength from God, the same as it always was with all true Christians away back in the past. . . . If you will stand firm until death, we shall meet again in the resurrection. . . . Until we meet again."\*\*

<sup>4</sup> The resurrection hope meant much to both Christopher and Franz. It was real to them. Surely these accounts touch our heart! To deepen our appreciation for Jehovah and to strengthen our hope in the resurrection, let us consider why the resurrection will occur and how this should affect us personally.

## Vision of the Earthly Resurrection

<sup>5</sup> In a vision of events during the Millennium Reign of Christ Jesus, the apostle John saw the earthly resurrection taking place. "I saw the dead, the great and the small," he reported.

\*\* *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, page 662, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

4. What effect do the experiences related here have on you, and what will we next consider?

5. 6. What does the vision recorded by the apostle John at Revelation 20:12, 13 reveal?

ed. "And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them." (Revelation 20:12, 13) Of whatever rank or station—whether "great" or "small"—all those held captive within Hades (Sheol), the common grave of mankind, will be released. Those who lost their lives at sea will also return to life at that time. This wonderful occurrence is part of Jehovah's purpose.

<sup>6</sup> Christ's reign of a thousand years begins with the binding of Satan and his abyssing. None of those resurrected nor any of the survivors of the great tribulation will be misled by Satan during that reign, for he will be inactive. (Revelation 20:1-3) A thousand years may appear to you to be a long time, but in fact, Jehovah views it "as one day." —2 Peter 3:8.

<sup>7</sup> According to the vision, Christ's Millennial Reign will be a time for judgment. The apostle John wrote: "I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. . . . And they were judged individually according to their deeds." (Revelation 20:12, 13) Notice that the basis for this judging is not what the person had or had not done before he died. (Romans 6:7) Rather, it relates to "scrolls" that are to be opened. A person's deeds performed after he learns the contents of the scrolls will furnish the basis for determining whether his name is written in "the scroll of life."

### "Resurrection of Life" or "Resurrection of Judgment"

<sup>8</sup> Earlier in John's vision, Jesus is described

7. What will be the basis for judgment during Christ's Millennial Reign?
8. What two possible outcomes will there be for the resurrected ones?

as having "the keys of death and of Hades." (Revelation 1:18) He serves as Jehovah's "Chief Agent of life," empowered to judge "the living and the dead." (Acts 3:15; 2 Timothy 4:1) How will he do this? By bringing back to life those who sleep in death. "Do not marvel at this," Jesus said to the crowds to whom he preached, "because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." He then added: "Those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5:28-30) So, what future awaits faithful men and women of old?

<sup>9</sup> When these ancient faithful ones return in the resurrection, they will soon find out that the promises they trusted in are now a reality. How interested they will be to learn the identity of the Seed of God's woman, mentioned in the first prophecy in the Bible, at Genesis 3:15! How happy they will be to hear that this promised Messiah, Jesus, proved faithful to death, thereby giving his life as a ransom sacrifice! (Matthew 20:28) Those welcoming them back to life will find great joy in helping them to appreciate that this ransom provision is an expression of Jehovah's undeserved kindness and mercy. When resurrected ones discover what God's Kingdom is accomplishing in fulfilling Jehovah's purpose for the earth, their hearts will no doubt overflow with expressions of praise to Jehovah. They will have ample opportunity to demonstrate their attachment to their loving heavenly Father and his Son. Everyone living will delight in sharing in the vast educational work needed to teach the billions returning from the grave, who will also need to accept God's ransom provision.

9. (a) On returning in the resurrection, what will many no doubt learn? (b) What vast educational work will be undertaken?

<sup>10</sup> The resurrected Abraham will find great comfort in experiencing the reality of life under the rule of that “city” to which he looked forward. (Hebrews 11:10) What a thrill faithful Job of old will have when he learns that his life course strengthened other servants of Jehovah who faced tests of their integrity! And how much Daniel will want to know about the fulfillment of the prophecies he was inspired to write!

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, all who gain life in the righteous new world, whether by resurrection or by surviving the great tribulation, will have much to learn about Jehovah’s purpose for the earth and its inhabitants. The prospect of living forever and praising Jehovah for all eternity will surely make the Millennial education program a real delight. However, it will be what we do individually as we learn the contents of the scrolls that will count the most. Will we apply what we learn? Will we meditate on and take to heart the vital information that will strengthen us to resist Satan’s final attempt to divert us from the truth?

<sup>12</sup> Not to be forgotten are the wonderful blessings that will result from the application of the benefits of Christ’s ransom sacrifice. Those restored to life in the resurrection will not have the kind of infirmities or disabilities presently experienced. (Isaiah 33:24) A sound body and the prospect of perfect health will allow all inhabitants of the new world to share fully in the educational work of instructing those billions resurrected in the way of life. Those inhabitants will also share in the greatest undertaking ever attempted on earth—that of transforming the

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10, 11. (a) The Millennium will afford what opportunities to all on earth? (b) How should this affect us?

12. What will help each one to have a full share in both the educational work and the transformation of the earth into a paradise?

whole planet into a paradise to Jehovah’s praise.

<sup>13</sup> When Satan is released from the abyss for the final test, he will try to mislead humans once again. According to Revelation 20:7-9, all the ‘misled nations,’ or groups of people, who fall under Satan’s wicked influence will meet their judgment of destruction: ‘Fire will come down out of heaven and devour them.’ For those among them who experienced a resurrection during the Millennium, this destruction will make theirs a resurrection of condemnatory judgment. By contrast, resurrected integrity-keepers will receive the gift of everlasting life. Truly, theirs will be “a resurrection of life.”—John 5:29.

<sup>14</sup> How can the hope of the resurrection comfort us even now? Indeed, what must we do to ensure that we will receive its benefits in the future?

### Lessons to Learn Now

<sup>15</sup> You may recently have lost a loved one in death and may be coping with the big adjustment that such a great loss brings. The resurrection hope helps you to gain an inner calm and strength that those who do not know the truth fail to obtain. “We do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who are sleeping in death,” Paul consoled the Thessalonians, “that you may not sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13) Do you see yourself in the new world, witnessing the resurrection? Find comfort now by meditating on the prospect of meeting your loved ones again.

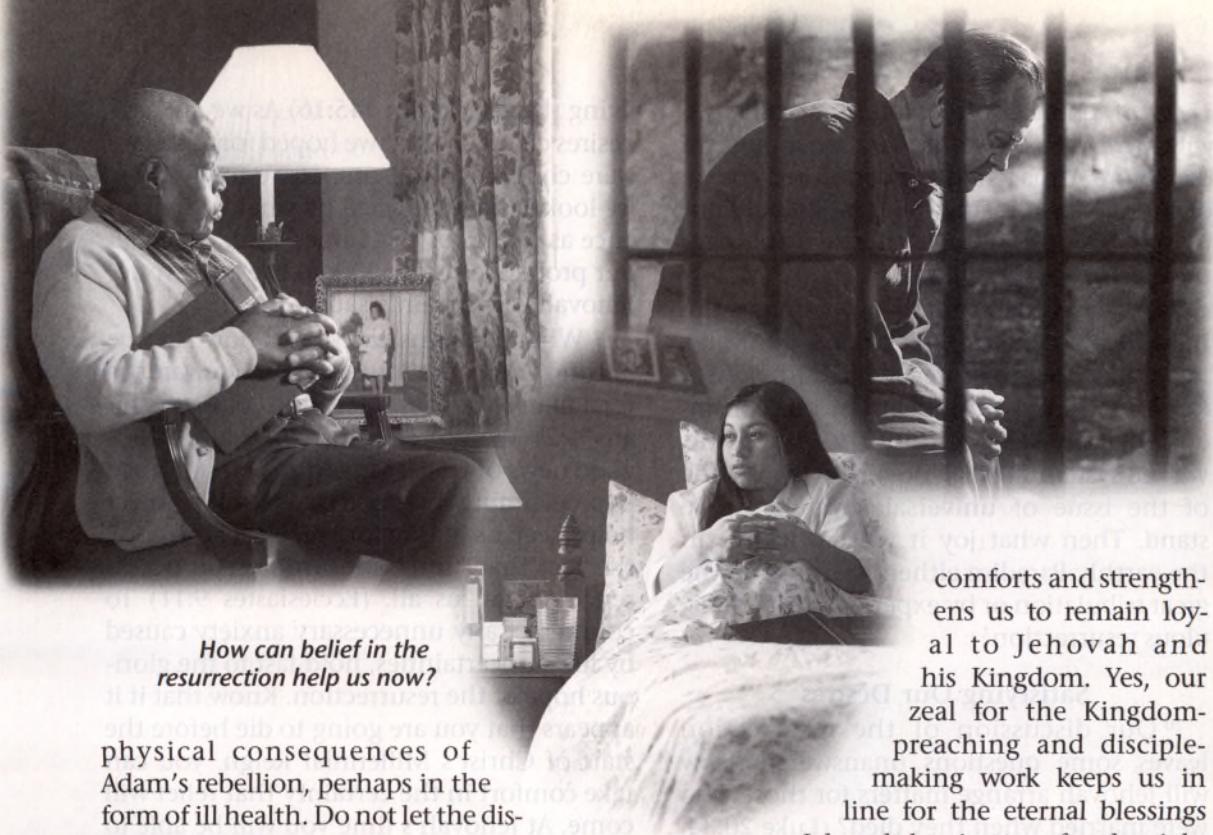
<sup>16</sup> You may at present be suffering the

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13, 14. What is the purpose of Satan’s release at the final test, and what outcome will be possible for us individually?

15. How can belief in the resurrection be of help now?

16. What may well be your feelings when the resurrection occurs?



*How can belief in the resurrection help us now?*

physical consequences of Adam's rebellion, perhaps in the form of ill health. Do not let the distress this brings cause you to forget the joyful prospect of personally experiencing the resurrection and coming to life again with renewed health and vigor in the new world. Then when your eyes open and you see welcoming faces eager to share with you their joy at your resurrection, you will not fail to thank God for his loving-kindness.

<sup>17</sup> In the meantime, consider two lessons that we should take to heart. One is the importance of whole-souled service to Jehovah right now. In imitation of our Master, Christ Jesus, our life of self-sacrifice demonstrates love for Jehovah and our neighbors. If opposition or persecution rob us of our livelihood or our freedom, we resolve to remain firm in the faith whatever trials we may face. Should opposers threaten us with death, then the resurrection hope

<sup>17, 18.</sup> What two important lessons should we take to heart?

comforts and strengthens us to remain loyal to Jehovah and his Kingdom. Yes, our zeal for the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work keeps us in line for the eternal blessings Jehovah has in store for the righteous.

<sup>18</sup> A second lesson relates to how we face temptations caused by the fallen flesh. Our knowledge of the resurrection hope and our appreciation for Jehovah's undeserved kindness strengthen our resolve to remain firm in the faith. "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world," warned the apostle John. "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) The world's allure in the form of materialism will hold little attraction for us when we compare it to "the real life." (1 Timothy 6:

17-19) If tempted to commit immorality, we will firmly resist. We realize that should we die before Armageddon, a continued course of conduct displeasing to Jehovah could put us in the same position as those who have no prospect of a resurrection.

19 Above all, we should never forget the inestimable privilege of making Jehovah's heart glad now and forever. (Proverbs 27:11) Our faithfulness until death or our continued integrity-keeping until the end of this wicked system shows Jehovah on whose side of the issue of universal sovereignty we stand. Then what joy it will be to live in the earthly Paradise either by surviving the great tribulation or by experiencing a miraculous resurrection!

### Satisfying Our Desires

20 Our discussion of the resurrection leaves some questions unanswered. How will Jehovah arrange matters for those who were married when they died? (Luke 20:34, 35) Will resurrections take place in the area where people died? Will the resurrected come back to life close to their families? A host of other questions about the arrangements for the resurrection remain. Nevertheless, we have to keep in mind the words of Jeremiah: "Good is Jehovah to the one hoping in him, to the soul that keeps seeking for him. Good it is that one should wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah." (Lamentations 3:25, 26) In Jehovah's due time, all will be revealed to our fullest satisfaction. Why can we be sure of this?

21 Reflect on the psalmist's inspired words when he sang of Jehovah: "You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every

19. What inestimable privilege should we not forget?

20, 21. What will help us to remain faithful even if we have unanswered questions about the resurrection? Explain.

living thing." (Psalm 145:16) As we age, our desires change. What we hoped for when we were children is not our desire today. How we look at life is affected by what we experience as well as by our hopes. Still, whatever our proper desires will be in the new world, Jehovah will certainly satisfy them.

22 What concerns each of us now is to be faithful. "What is looked for in stewards is for a man to be found faithful." (1 Corinthians 4:2) We are stewards of the glorious good news of God's Kingdom. Our diligence in proclaiming this good news to all we meet helps keep us in line for life. Never overlook the fact that "time and unforeseen occurrence" befall us all. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) To counteract any unnecessary anxiety caused by life's uncertainties, hold fast to the glorious hope of the resurrection. Know that if it appears that you are going to die before the start of Christ's Millennial Reign, you can take comfort in the certainty that relief will come. At Jehovah's time you will be able to echo Job's words addressed to the Creator: "You will call, and I myself shall answer you." Praise be to Jehovah, who yearns to bring back to life all those who are in his memory!—Job 14:15.

22. Why do we have good reason for praising Jehovah?

### Do You Recall?

- On what basis will people be judged during the Millennium?
- Why will some have "a resurrection of life" and others "a resurrection of judgment"?
- How can the resurrection hope comfort us now?
- How do the words of Psalm 145:16 help us to deal with unanswered questions about the resurrection?



## THOUGH WEAK, I AM POWERFUL

AS TOLD BY

**LEOPOLD ENGLEITNER**

Foto Hofer, Bad Ischl, Austria

The SS officer drew his pistol, held it to my head, and asked: "Are you ready to die? I'm going to pull the trigger because you're really a hopeless case." "I'm ready," I said, trying to keep my voice steady. I braced myself, closed my eyes, and waited for him to pull the trigger, but nothing happened. "You're even too stupid to die!" he shouted, removing the gun from my temple. How did I end up in such a desperate situation?

I WAS born on July 23, 1905, in the town of Aigen-Voglhub, nestled in the Austrian Alps. I was the eldest son of a sawmill worker and a local farmer's daughter. My parents were poor but hardworking people. My early years were spent in Bad Ischl, near Salzburg, amid scenic lakes and breathtaking summits.

As a child, I would often muse about life's injustices, not only because my family was poor but also because I suffered from congenital curvature of the spine. The backache

caused by this disorder made it almost impossible for me to stand erect. At school, I was barred from gymnastics and thus became a target of ridicule among my classmates.

At the end of World War I, just shy of the age of 14, I decided that it was time to look for a job in order to escape poverty. Gnawing hunger was my constant companion, and I was weakened by bouts of high fever caused by the Spanish flu, which had sent millions to the grave. "What use could we possibly

have for a weakling like you?" is how most farmers reacted to my request for work. However, one kind farmer did hire me.

### Thrilled by God's Love

Even though Mother was a devout Catholic, I rarely went to church, mainly because my father had liberal views on the matter. As for me, I was disturbed by the worship of images, so widely practiced in the Roman Catholic Church.

One day in October 1931, a friend asked me to accompany him to a religious meeting sponsored by the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. There, I was given Bible answers to important questions, such as: Is image worship pleasing to God? (Exodus 20:4, 5) Is there a fiery hell? (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Will the dead be resurrected?—John 5:28, 29.

What most impressed me was the fact that God does not condone man's blood-thirsty wars, even if they are said to be fought in His name. I learned that "God is love" and that he has an exalted name, Jehovah. (1 John 4:8; Psalm 83:18) I was thrilled to find out that by means of Jehovah's Kingdom, humans will be able to live forever in happiness in an earth-wide paradise. I also learned of the marvelous prospect open to some imperfect humans who have been called by God to share with Jesus in God's heavenly Kingdom. I was prepared to give my all for that Kingdom. So in May 1932, I was baptized and became one of Jehovah's Witnesses. That step required courage, considering the religious intolerance prevailing in the strictly Catholic Austria of the time.

### Facing Contempt and Opposition

My parents were horrified when I quit the church, and the priest was quick to spread the news from the pulpit. Neighbors would spit on the ground in front of me to

show their contempt. Nevertheless, I was determined to join the ranks of full-time ministers, and I started pioneering in January 1934.

The political situation became increasingly tense because of the strong influence the Nazi party was gaining in our province. During my pioneer days in the Styrian Valley of Enns, the police were hot on my heels, and I had to be 'cautious as a serpent.' (Matthew 10:16) From 1934 to 1938, persecution was an inseparable part of my daily life. Though I was unemployed, I was denied unemployment compensation, and I was sentenced to several short and four longer prison terms because of my preaching activity.

### Hitler's Troops Occupy Austria

In March 1938, Hitler's troops marched into Austria. Within a few days, over 90,000 people—about 2 percent of the adult population—were arrested and sent to prisons and concentration camps, accused of opposing the Nazi regime. Jehovah's Witnesses were somewhat prepared for what was in store. In the summer of 1937, several members of my home congregation made the 220-mile trip to Prague by bicycle to attend an international convention. There they heard of the atrocities perpetrated against our fellow believers in Germany. Clearly, now it was our turn.

From the day Hitler's troops set foot in Austria, the meetings and the preaching activity of Jehovah's Witnesses were forced underground. Though Bible literature was being smuggled across the Swiss border, there was not enough to go around. So fellow Christians in Vienna would secretly produce literature. I often served as a courier, delivering literature to the Witnesses.

### To a Concentration Camp

On April 4, 1939, three fellow Christians



### *Arrested by the Gestapo, April 1939*

during his time in office, Jehovah's Witnesses faced countless legal problems in his province. He stated regretfully: "Mr. Engleitner, I cannot undo the wrong, but I do want to apologize. It seems that our government was guilty of a miscarriage of justice. Should you ever need any help, I

would be more than willing to do what I can." Our paths crossed again after the war. He helped me to receive government retirement pay for Nazi victims.

### **"I'm Going to Shoot You"**

On October 9, 1939, I arrived at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Shortly thereafter, the bunker attendant was informed that a Witness was among the newcomers, and I became his target. He ruthlessly beat me.

Then, after realizing that he

could not make me renounce my faith, he said: "I'm going to shoot you, Engleitner. But before I do, I'm going to let you write a farewell card to your parents." I thought of words of comfort I could write to my folks, but every time I put the pen to the paper, he knocked my right elbow, causing me to scribble. He jeered: "Such an idiot! He can't even write two straight lines. But that doesn't keep him from reading the Bible, does it?"

Next the attendant drew his pistol, held it to my head, and made me believe that he was going to pull the trigger, as I related at the outset of this account. Then he crammed me into a small, overcrowded cell. I had to spend the night standing. But

and I were arrested by the Gestapo while we were observing the Memorial of Christ's death in Bad Ischl. We were all taken by car to State police headquarters in Linz. That was my very first car ride, but I was too troubled to enjoy it. In Linz, I was submitted to a series of excruciating interrogations, but I did not renounce my faith. Five months later, I was brought before the examining justice in Upper Austria. Unexpectedly, criminal proceedings against me were dropped; yet that was not the end of my ordeal. In the meantime, the other three were sent to concentration camps, where they died, remaining faithful to the end.

I was kept in custody, and on October 5, 1939, I was notified that I would be taken to the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany. A special train awaited us prisoners at the Linz train station. The boxcars were equipped with two-man cells. The man who shared the cell with me was none other than the former governor of Upper Austria, Dr. Heinrich Gleissner.

Dr. Gleissner and I struck up an interesting conversation. He was sincerely interested in my plight and was appalled that even



**Gestapo document with charges, May 1939**

Both images: Privatarchiv, B. Rammerstorfer

I could not have slept anyway, since my whole body was aching. "Dying for some stupid religion is really such a waste!" was the only "comfort" my cell mates had to offer. Dr. Gleissner was in the adjacent cell. He heard what had happened and pensively said, "The persecution of Christians is once again rearing its ugly head!"

In the summer of 1940, all prisoners were ordered to report for quarry duty on a Sunday, even though we usually had Sundays off. This was a retaliatory measure for some inmates' "misdemeanors." We were ordered to carry large stones from the quarry into the camp. Two prisoners were trying to place a huge stone on my back, and I nearly collapsed under the weight. However, Arthur Rödl, the feared *Lagerführer* (camp supervisor), unexpectedly came to the rescue. Seeing my agonizing efforts to carry the stone, he said to me: "You'll never make it back to the camp with that stone on your back! Put it down immediately!" That was an order I was relieved to obey. Then Rödl pointed to a much smaller stone, saying: "Pick that one up, and bring it into the camp. It's easier to carry!" Afterward, turning to our supervisor, he ordered: "Let the Bible Students return to their barracks. They've worked enough for one day!"

#### **Nearby mountains provided refuge**

At the end of each workday, I was always happy to associate with my spiritual family. We had arrangements for distributing spiritual food. A brother would write a Bible verse on a scrap of paper and pass it on to the others. A Bible had also been smuggled into the camp. It was taken apart and divided into individual books. For three months I was entrusted with the book of Job. I hid it in my socks. The account of Job helped me to remain steadfast.

Finally, on March 7, 1941, I joined a large convoy that was transferred to the Niedergagen concentration camp. My condition was getting worse by the day. One day, two brothers and I were ordered to pack tools into crates. After doing that, we accompanied another group of inmates back to the barracks. An SS man noticed that I was lagging behind. He got so furious that he brutally kicked me from behind without warning, causing serious injury. The pain was excruciating, but despite the pain I went to work the next day.

#### **Unexpected Release**

In April of 1943, the Niedergagen camp was finally evacuated. Following that, I was transferred to the death camp at Ravensbrück. Then, in June 1943, I was unexpected-



edly offered the opportunity of a discharge from the concentration camp. This time, release was not conditional on my abjuring my faith. I just had to agree to do forced labor on a farm for the rest of my life. I was willing to do that to escape the horrors of the camp. I went to the camp doctor for a final checkup. The doctor was surprised to see me. "Why, you're still one of Jehovah's Witnesses!" he exclaimed. "You're right, Herr Doctor," I answered. "Well, in that case I don't see why we should give you a discharge. On the other hand, it would be such a relief to get rid of a wretched creature like you."

His description was no exaggeration. My state of health was truly wretched. My skin had been partly eaten away by lice, beatings had left me deaf in one ear, and my whole body was covered with festering sores. After 46 months of deprivation, endless hunger, and forced labor, I weighed only 54 pounds. In that condition, I was discharged from Ravensbrück on July 15, 1943.

I was sent back to my hometown by train without a guard to escort me, and I reported to Gestapo headquarters in Linz. The Gestapo officer gave me my discharge papers and warned me: "If you think that we are releasing you so that you can persist in your underground activity, you are sadly mistaken! God help you if we ever catch you preaching."

I was home at last! My mother had not changed a thing in my room since I was first arrested, on April 4, 1939. Even my Bible lay open on my bedside table! I got on my knees and said a heartfelt prayer of thanks.

I was soon assigned to work on a mountain farm. The farmer, a childhood friend, even paid me a small salary, though he was not obliged to do so. Before the war, this friend had given me permission to hide

some Bible literature on his premises. I was happy to make good use of that small literature depot to gain strength spiritually. All my needs were satisfied, and I was determined to wait out the war on the farm.

### Hiding in the Mountains

Those calm days of freedom were short-lived, however. In mid-August 1943, I was ordered to report to a military doctor for a medical examination. First, he declared that I was unfit for active service because of my bad back. However, a week later the same doctor revised his findings to read: "Fit for active service on the front lines." The army lost track of me for a while, but on April 17, 1945, shortly before the end of the war, it finally caught up with me. I was drafted for service on the front lines.

Equipped with a few provisions and a Bible, I sought refuge in the nearby mountains. At first, I was able to sleep outdoors, but the weather took a turn for the worse, and two feet of snow fell. I got soaked to the skin. I made it to a mountain cabin located at nearly 4,000 feet above sea level. Shivering, I got a fire going in the fireplace, and I was able to warm myself and dry my clothing. Exhausted, I fell asleep on a bench in front of the fireplace. Before long, I was abruptly awakened by intense pain. I had caught fire! I rolled around on the floor to

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

A World Without Poverty Is Near

Mari—Ancient Queen of the Desert

'Keep Yourself Restrained Under Evil'

extinguish the flames. My whole back was covered with blisters.

At great risk, I sneaked back to the mountain farm before daybreak, but the farmer's wife was so scared that she sent me away, telling me that a manhunt was on to find me. So I went to my parents. At first, even my parents hesitated to take me in, but they finally let me sleep in the hayloft, and Mother tended to my wounds. After two days, however, my parents were so uneasy that I decided it would be best to hide in the mountains again.

On May 5, 1945, I was awakened by a loud noise. I caught sight of Allied airplanes flying low. At that moment, I knew that Hitler's regime had been overthrown! Jehovah's spirit had strengthened me to endure an unbelievable ordeal. I had experienced the truth of the words recorded at Psalm 55:22, which had comforted me so much at the outset of my trials. I had 'thrown my burden upon Jehovah,' and though I was physically weak, he had sustained me as I walked through "the valley of deep shadow."—Psalm 23:4.

#### **Jehovah's Power "Made Perfect in Weakness"**

After the war, life slowly got back to normal. At first, I worked as a hired hand on my farmer friend's mountain farm. It was only after the U.S. occupation army intervened in April 1946 that I was released from my obligation to perform forced agricultural labor for the rest of my life.

At the end of the war, Christian brothers in Bad Ischl and the surrounding district

started holding meetings regularly. They began preaching with renewed vigor. I was offered employment as a night watchman in a factory and was thus able to continue pioneering. Eventually, I settled down in the St. Wolfgang area, and in 1949, I married Theresia Kurz, who had a daughter by a former marriage.

We were together for 32 years until my dear wife died in 1981. I had cared for her for over seven years.

After Theresia's death, I resumed the pioneer service, which helped me get over the great sense of loss. I am presently serving as a pioneer and an elder in my congregation in Bad Ischl. Since I am confined to a wheelchair, I offer Bible literature and talk to people about the Kingdom hope in the Bad

Ischl park or in front of my own home. The fine Bible discussions I have are a source of great joy to me.

In retrospect, I can attest that the dreadful experiences I was forced to endure did not embitter me. Of course, there were times when I felt downcast because of the trials. However, my warm relationship with Jehovah God helped me get over such negative periods. The Lord's admonition to Paul, "My power is being made perfect in weakness" proved true in my life too. Now, at the age of nearly 100, I can join the apostle Paul in saying: "I take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in cases of need, in persecutions and difficulties, for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am powerful."—2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.



## Questions From Readers

Why did Paul write regarding a Christian wife: "She will be kept safe through childbearing"?—1 Timothy 2:15.

What does the context of this verse reveal about what Paul meant? Under inspiration he was giving counsel on the role of the Christian woman in the congregation. He wrote: "I desire the women to adorn themselves in well-arranged dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive garb, but in the way that befits women professing to reverence God, namely, through good works." (1 Timothy 2:9, 10) Paul was urging his Christian sisters to be modest, to be balanced in choosing personal adornment, and to be 'adorned' with good works.

Next, Paul explained the headship arrangement in the congregation, saying: "do not permit a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence." (1 Timothy 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:3) He explains the basis for this arrangement by showing that while Adam was not deceived by Satan, Eve "was thoroughly deceived and came to be in transgression." How could a Christian woman be protected against Eve's error? Paul answers: "However, she will be kept safe through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and sanctification along with soundness of mind." (1 Timothy 2:14, 15) What did Paul mean by these words?

Some translators seem to imply that a woman's salvation depends on her having children. For example, *Today's English Version* says: "A woman will be saved through having children." However, this interpretation of Paul's words is not accurate. Many

scriptures show that to be saved, a person must come to know Jehovah, believe in Jesus, and exercise faith, demonstrating that faith by works. (John 17:3; Acts 16:30, 31; Romans 10:10; James 2:26) In addition, Paul did not mean that safe childbirth is guaranteed to believing women. Women have come safely through the experience of giving birth whether they were believers or not. And sadly, some have died giving birth, whether they were believers or not.—Genesis 35:16-18.

Paul's additional counsel regarding women later in this same letter helps us to understand what he meant. He warns of some younger widows who were "unoccupied, gadding about to the houses; yes, not only unoccupied, but also gossips and meddlers in other people's affairs, talking of things they ought not." What was Paul's advice? He continues: "Therefore I desire the younger widows to marry, to bear children, to manage a household, to give no inducement to the opposer to revile."—1 Timothy 5:13, 14.

Paul highlights the positive role of women in the family arrangement. Occupied with such activities as 'bearing children and managing a household,' a woman who continued "in faith and love and sanctification along with soundness of mind" would not gravitate toward conduct that is not upbuilding. Her spirituality would be preserved, or "kept safe." (1 Timothy 2:15) Following such a course would help many young women to avoid Satan's snares.

Paul's words to Timothy remind all of us, men and women, to be profitably occupied. God's Word advises all Christians: "Keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise but as wise persons."—Ephesians 5:15.

# COURAGE IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION

A FANATIC mob had forced Gaius and Aristarchus, two companions of the apostle Paul, to enter the theater of Ephesus. There, the enraged crowd shouted for two hours: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28, 29, 34) Did Paul's companions stand firm in the face of this opposition? And what had caused this situation in the first place?

Paul had successfully preached in the city of Ephesus for about three years. As a result, many Ephesians had stopped worshiping idols. (Acts 19:26; 20:31) The typical idol of Ephesus was a small silver shrine of Artemis, the goddess of fertility, whose magnificent temple overlooked the city. These small representations of the temple were worn as amulets or were set up in homes. Christians, of course, would not buy these idols.—1 John 5:21.

Demetrius, one of the silversmiths, believed that Paul's ministry threatened their lucrative business. By means of half-truths and exaggerations, he convinced fellow craftsmen that people throughout Asia Minor would

stop worshiping Artemis. Once the angry silversmiths began shouting the praises of Artemis, a veritable riot broke out and the whole city was thrown into confusion.—Acts 19:24-29.

Thousands of people converged on the theater, which could seat 25,000 spectators. Paul offered to address the unruly mob, but friendly officials convinced him otherwise. Finally, the city recorder succeeded in calming the crowd, and Gaius and Aristarchus escaped unharmed.—Acts 19:35-41.

Today, God's people may also face opposers and even riots as they carry on their ministry. They often preach the good news in cities where an atmosphere of idolatry, immorality, and delinquency prevails. Nevertheless, they courageously imitate the apostle Paul, who 'did not hold back from teaching publicly and from house to house' in the city of Ephesus. (Acts 20:20) And they likewise rejoice when they see that 'the word of Jehovah keeps growing and prevailing.'—Acts 19:20.

*Ruins of the theater at Ephesus*



*Erna Ludolph (seated) with members of the Holtz family*

### **Housekeeper With a Difference**

Professor Friedrich Holtz and his wife, Alice, lived in Berlin. They were not members of the Nazi party and did not support its ideology. However, they were related to a senior SS official who was responsible for certain concentration camp inmates. So when the professor and his wife were looking for a housekeeper, this SS officer allowed them to choose a female prisoner. Thus, in March 1943, Alice visited Ravensbrück to select a housekeeper. Whom did she choose? Erna Ludolph. Erna moved in with the Holtz family, who treated her well. After the war ended, she moved with the same family to Halle on the Saale. There, once again Erna met with opposition, this time from the Socialist authorities in East Germany. In 1957 the family was deported to West Germany, and Erna moved with them. At last Erna was free to practice her faith.

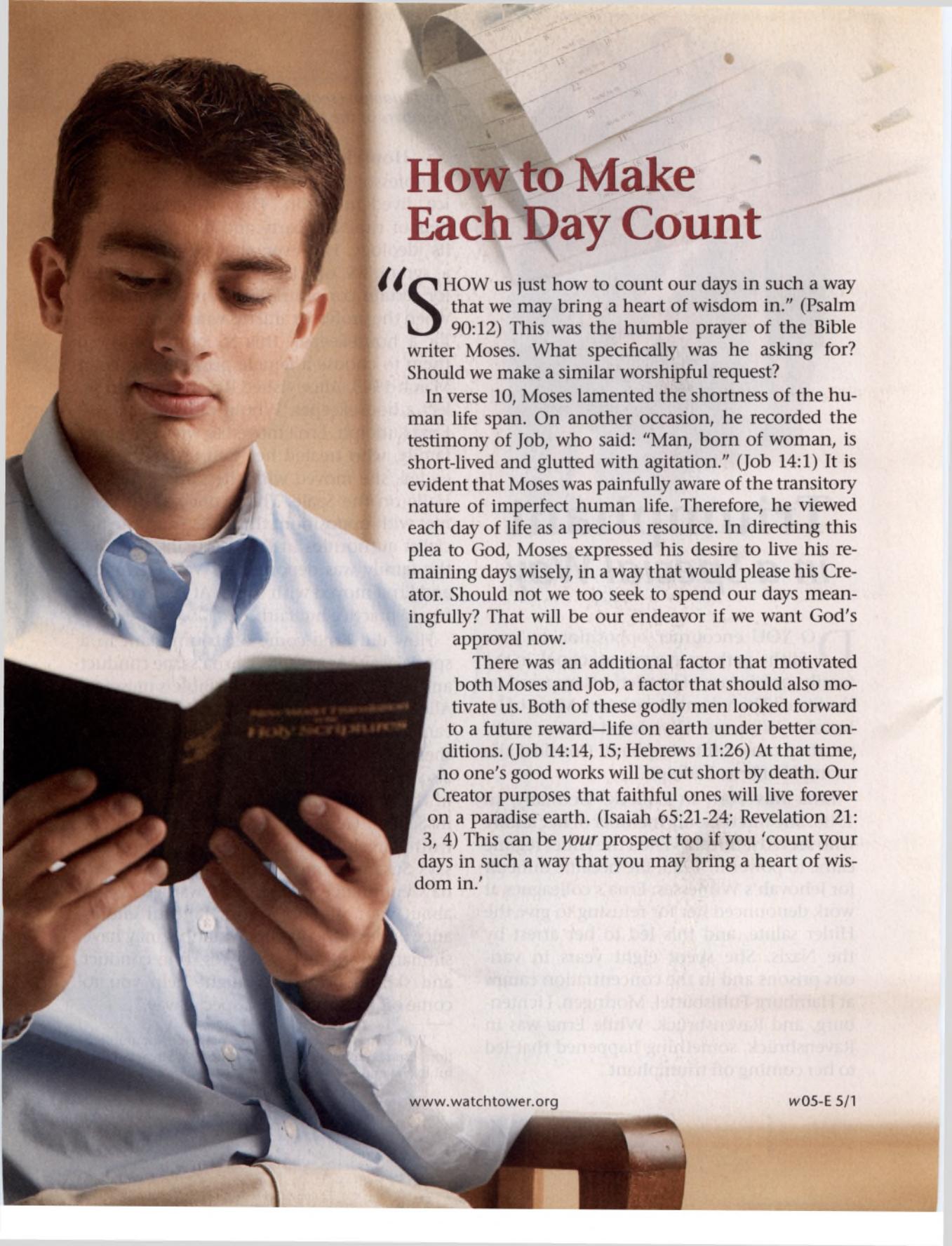
## **Triumphant in a Special Way**

DO YOU encounter opposition to your faith—perhaps at work, at school, in the family, or because of restrictions imposed by the State? Then do not lose heart. Many of Jehovah's Witnesses have faced similar trials, yet they came off triumphant. Consider the example of Erna Ludolph.

Erna was born in Lübeck, Germany, in 1908. She was the only member of her family who served Jehovah. When the Hitler regime came to power in 1933, life became difficult for Jehovah's Witnesses. Erna's colleagues at work denounced her for refusing to give the Hitler salute, and this led to her arrest by the Nazis. She spent eight years in various prisons and in the concentration camps at Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel, Moringen, Lichtenburg, and Ravensbrück. While Erna was in Ravensbrück, something happened that led to her coming off triumphant.

How did Erna come off triumphant in a special way? As a result of Erna's fine conduct and skillful preaching of the Bible's message, Alice Holtz and her five children all became baptized Witnesses of Jehovah. Furthermore, 11 of Alice's grandchildren are also Witnesses. Two of them currently serve in the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Selters, Germany. "Our family is in the truth largely because of Erna's example," says Susanne, one of Alice's daughters. Erna's endurance was richly rewarded. What about your situation? Your faithful endurance under difficult circumstances may have similar rewarding results. Yes, fine conduct and skillful preaching might help you to come off triumphant in a special way.\*

\* While this article was being prepared for publication, Erna Ludolph passed away at age 96. She was faithful to the end.



## How to Make Each Day Count

**H**OW us just how to count our days in such a way that we may bring a heart of wisdom in." (Psalm 90:12) This was the humble prayer of the Bible writer Moses. What specifically was he asking for? Should we make a similar worshipful request?

In verse 10, Moses lamented the shortness of the human life span. On another occasion, he recorded the testimony of Job, who said: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation." (Job 14:1) It is evident that Moses was painfully aware of the transitory nature of imperfect human life. Therefore, he viewed each day of life as a precious resource. In directing this plea to God, Moses expressed his desire to live his remaining days wisely, in a way that would please his Creator. Should not we too seek to spend our days meaningfully? That will be our endeavor if we want God's approval now.

There was an additional factor that motivated both Moses and Job, a factor that should also motivate us. Both of these godly men looked forward to a future reward—life on earth under better conditions. (Job 14:14, 15; Hebrews 11:26) At that time, no one's good works will be cut short by death. Our Creator purposes that faithful ones will live forever on a paradise earth. (Isaiah 65:21-24; Revelation 21:3, 4) This can be *your* prospect too if you 'count your days in such a way that you may bring a heart of wisdom in.'