

Awake!

FEBRUARY 2011

The Truth About the **Occult**



A woman with blonde hair is lying in bed, looking directly at the camera with a shocked or scared expression. Her eyes are wide and green. In the foreground, a smaller image of a woman's face is visible, looking up. The background shows a dark room with a lamp and a dresser.

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BIBLE COMPATIBLE? PAGE 22



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What Draws People to the Occult?

THE answer to that question may depend to a large extent on where a person lives, as well as his or her religious beliefs and cultural background. In your area, what attracts people to the occult? Perhaps they are enticed by one of the following.

- **Curiosity** Humans are innately curious, and the occult smacks of mystery. So some wonder if a hidden power is behind the occult. Others might experiment with a Ouija board or read a horoscope to see if what it says comes true. Still others might attend a séance or consult a psychic.

- **Entertainment** Recent years have seen a surge in entertainment—books, movies, and computer games—based on occult themes and ancient pagan religious superstitions. Some of this entertainment also contains graphic violence and sex.

- **Anxiety about tomorrow** The Bible foretold: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.” (2 Timothy 3:1) Difficult times are indeed upon us, and many people are consulting occult practitioners—such as astrologers, clairvoyants, palm readers, and psychics—for guidance. “It’s one of the few businesses that is recession-proof,” said one psychic. “People don’t usually come to see you when they’re happy.” A clairvoyant in Canada stated: “All of a sudden I’m hearing from business professionals calling on their private office lines or on their cellphones in the hall whispering.” She added: “These are people who, in the past, were usually skeptical and not really comfortable consulting a psychic.”

- **Physical sickness** In some lands people who are seriously ill often give up on medical doctors and revert to traditional healers who use occult methods. Their sicknesses may be blamed on a curse or a spell. In order to lift the spell, friends or relatives of the ailing one may seek help from a fetishist, or an occult practitioner, who may demand a large payment.

- **Desire for protection and good luck** In some regions of Africa, villagers hire a “prophet” from a charismatic church to exorcise bad spirits from the community. Rituals involve drinking potions and “holy water.” Elsewhere, people consult spirit mediums in order to invoke good luck on a new house or a grave.

- **Threats to children** In Papua New Guinea, a mother may refuse to go outside with her newborn at night. Why? She fears that evil spirits might harm the infant. In Uganda, mothers routinely tie strings, sometimes with beads and shells, to the wrists and ankles of their babies to shield them from harm.

- **Loss of a loved one** British author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle lost his son, brother, brother-in-law, and a nephew in World War I. Distraught and desperate, Doyle and his wife attended séances, hoping to speak with their dead son. Today, too, many consult spirit mediums in an effort to speak with dead loved ones. In some lands, traditional religions and so-called Christian churches teach that death is the result of a malevolent act by angry spirits. Several compulsory, expensive rituals

may be performed in order to ward off a chain of deaths in a community.

● **Fear of the dead** Beliefs regarding death and the dead have profoundly influenced humankind. Hence, in many lands people perform all kinds of rituals, including self-injury, to appease the dead or to “prove” their love for them. Among some peoples of the Pacific islands, widows or widowers are forced to wear black clothing and go into mourning

for months, locked up in a house where they must refrain from eating the deceased person’s favorite foods. Individuals who practice this custom can become depressed or sick from hunger or even die.

Clearly, there are many enticements luring people into the occult. How important, then, that we understand the true source of occult teachings! To that end, let us examine the Bible, the only book that gives us the full picture.

Who Is Really Behind the Occult?



CONCERNING our Creator, the Bible says: “God is light and there is no darkness at all in union with him.” (1 John 1:5) That is especially true in a spiritual sense. So could the true God be the power behind the occult? Or is there a sinister force involved?

Foremost among occult practices are divination and spiritism, which include astrology, numerology, palmistry, and sorcery, as well as communicating with the “dead” and casting spells. These practices have a very long history, most dating back to ancient Babylon,

the ruins of which lie in Iraq. (Isaiah 47:1, 12, 13) From Babylon, occult practices spread around the ancient world and became deeply entrenched in many cultures and civilizations.

Consider an event that occurred in the city of Philippi in ancient Macedonia. There, a small group of Christian ministers, which included the apostle Paul and the physician Luke, encountered a girl who had occult powers. Note how the Bible writer Luke revealed the secret source of her powers. He wrote:

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today’s problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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"A certain servant girl with *a spirit, a demon* of divination, met us. She used to furnish her masters with much gain by practicing the art of prediction."—Acts 16:16-18.

Yes, this girl's powers did not come from the true God, Jehovah, but from a demon, an evil spirit. Hence, Paul and his companions refused to listen to her. Perhaps you are now wondering: 'Who are the demons? And where did they come from?' Again, note the Bible's answers.

Who Are the Demons?

Long before Jehovah formed humans, he created an untold number of intelligent spirit "sons of God" in heaven. (Job 38:4, 7) Like humans, they are free moral agents, and for a long time, they all remained loyal to God. But that happy situation came to an abrupt end. How so?

After God created humankind, one spirit creature began to covet something to which he was not entitled—worship. Using a serpent the way a ventriloquist might use a puppet, this wicked angel seduced the first woman, Eve, into disobeying her Creator. (Genesis 3: 1-6) The Bible calls that rebellious angel "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan." (Revelation 12:9) Jesus described him as "a manslayer" who "did not stand fast in the truth," adding: "When he speaks the lie, he speaks according to his own disposition, because he is a liar and the father of the lie." —John 8:44.

In time, other spirit "sons of the true God" joined Satan in his rebellion. (Genesis 6:

1, 2) They are later referred to as "the angels that sinned" and "the angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place," or their assigned place in heaven. (2 Peter 2:4; Jude 6) They came to be called demons. (James 2: 19) Moreover, they are determined to turn as many humans as possible away from true worship, as they did many Israelites in Bible times. (Deuteronomy 32:16, 17) Similarly today, as in the past, Satan and the demons cleverly employ religious lies.—2 Corinthians 11: 14, 15.

Shield Yourself!

Even though wicked spirits have superhuman powers, we can, with God's help, 'take our stand against them' and come off victorious. (1 Peter 5:9) In order to get that help, however, we need to learn God's requirements and act on them. Concerning the Christians in his day, the apostle Paul wrote: "We . . . have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him."—Colossians 1:9, 10.

Those who gained that "accurate knowledge" included a number of people in the city of Ephesus who practiced occult arts. Note how a knowledge of the truth affected them. The Bible states: "Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody." The books, incidentally,

Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)⁺ (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Ciembwa, Croatian, Czech,⁺ Danish,⁺ Dutch,⁺^o English,⁺^o Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,⁺ French,⁺^o Georgian, German,⁺^o Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,⁺^o Japanese,⁺^o Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Korean,⁺^o Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,⁺^o Polish,⁺^o Portuguese,⁺^o Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,⁺^o Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,⁺^o Swahili, Swedish,⁺ Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

⁺ CD also available.

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Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address. **America, United States of:** 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. **Australia:** PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** PO Box N-1247, Nassau, NP. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Am Steinfeis, 65617 Selters. **Guam:** 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St, Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Jamaica:** PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. **Puerto Rico:** PO Box 3980, Guayanabo, PR 00970. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

were worth “fifty thousand pieces of silver,” which was no small amount! (Acts 19:17-19) This courageous example was recorded for our benefit.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Principles That Protect

There are other things that we can do to protect ourselves from the demons. Consider the following Bible guidelines.

“Do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God.” (1 John 4:1) Some statements made by astrologers, psychics, mediums, and witch doctors may indeed be true. For example, the demonized girl in Philippi spoke the truth when she said about Paul and his companions: “These men are slaves of the Most High God, who are publishing to you the way of salvation.” (Acts 16:17) Nevertheless, Paul and his companions did not accept her into their company. Instead, Paul ordered the evil spirit to come out of her. Test religious statements by comparing them with what the Bible says.—Acts 17:11.

“Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7) The demons are God’s enemies and yours too. Do not even become curious about their dark ways. Instead, subject yourself to God by heeding his loving commandments, which are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3) For example, God said to the ancient nation of Israel: “There should not be found in you anyone who . . . employs divination, a practicer of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah.” (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) God’s view has not changed.—Galatians 5:19, 20.

“There is no unlucky spell against [Jehovah’s servants].” (Numbers 23:23) All who want

to please God need not fear the demons. Indeed, those wicked spirits “shudder” before God, aware of his overwhelming power, which he will eventually use to destroy them. (James 2:19) God will “show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him,” and he ‘will never allow the righteous one to totter.’—2 Chronicles 16:9; Psalm 55:22.

“The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) God’s Word teaches that the dead are just that—dead! They should not be feared, for they can no longer harm anyone. (Isaiah 26:14) In order to deceive people, the demons sometimes masquerade as spirits of the dead, which may explain why people find that the “spirit” of a formerly kind person may seem different from the person they knew.

“You cannot be partaking of ‘the table of Jehovah’ and the table of demons.” (1 Corinthians 10:21, 22) All who truly love Jehovah will stay away from books, movies, and computer games that are rooted in the occult or that promote occult practices and beliefs.* “I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing,” says Psalm 101:3. What is more, occult entertainment often glorifies violence and immorality, which “lovers of Jehovah” repudiate.—Psalm 97:10.

The demons have always tried to hide their true nature from humans. But they have not fully succeeded. By means of the Bible, Jehovah has exposed them for what they really are—malicious liars and vicious enemies of mankind. What a contrast to our Creator, Jehovah God! As the following article shows, he loves us, always tells us the truth, and wants us to live happily forever.—John 3:16; 17:17.

* Consciences vary in sensitivity, depending on one’s religious background and spiritual maturity. The important thing is that one maintains a clean conscience before God and does not offend the consciences of others, including family members. “We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God,” says Romans 14:10, 12.



A Sure Source of Guidance and Hope

UNLIKE the demons, Jehovah God is all-wise and all-powerful. He is also the very personification of love. (1 John 4:8) His advice is always good, he offers it free of charge, and he has our best interests at heart. What a contrast to the advice of clairvoyants and psychics! “Hey there, all you [spiritually] thirsty ones!” God says. “Come to the water. And the ones that have no money! Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk even without money and without price. Why do you people keep paying out money for what is not bread, and why is your toil for what results in no satisfaction? Listen intently to me, and eat what is good, and let your soul find its exquisite delight in fatness itself.”—Isaiah 55:1, 2.

Because it was inspired by our loving Creator, the Bible gives us hope, spiritual protection, purpose in life, and the very best principles to live by. Why not reflect for a moment on the following questions and the related passages taken from the Bible?

● How can I find genuine inner peace?

The Bible states: “This is what Jehovah has said, your Repurchaser, the Holy One of Israel: ‘I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.’”—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

● Will evil always exist? “The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it.” (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Yes, wicked humans, as well as the wicked angels, will be destroyed everlasting, as if by fire.—Revelation 20:10, 14.

● Will there be an end to sickness and suffering? “Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his peoples. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things [today’s many problems] have passed away.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Unlike the demons, God never lies. In fact, he “cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2) Moreover, as the final article in this series will show, his truth is both liberating and life-giving.—John 8:32; 17:3.

Bible Truth Set Them Free

JESUS CHRIST said to a group of listeners: “You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:32) As the following examples show, that freedom includes freedom from the demons, the liars and deceivers behind the occult.—John 8:44.

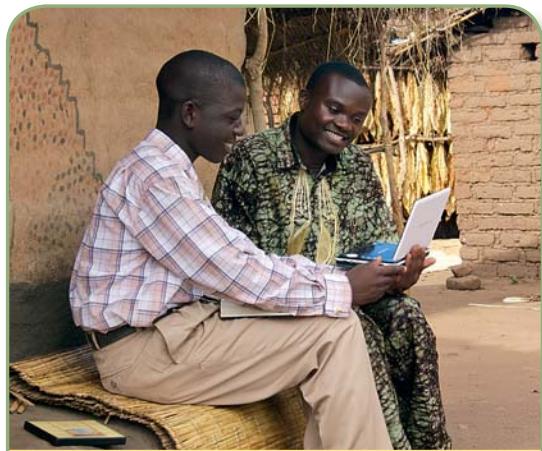
Each of these experiences highlights the liberating power of Bible truth. Yes, it alone truly sets people free. Why not examine the Bible for yourself. You will not be disappointed.

Pictures are reenactments



● **Susanna** was a temple priestess in Brazil. She wanted to use her paranormal powers to help the needy. Additionally, she enjoyed “talking with her dead mother.” In time, however, her “mother” pleaded with her to kill herself and live with her in the spirit world. This tormented Susanna and gave her nightmares. Then Susanna and her husband began studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. They had a hard fight ‘opposing the Devil,’ but eventually he ‘fled from them.’ (James 4:7) Now they have peace, and Susanna no longer has nightmares. “I have so many things to thank Jehovah for,” she wrote, “but I am most thankful that he led us out of spiritual darkness.”

* Some names have been changed.

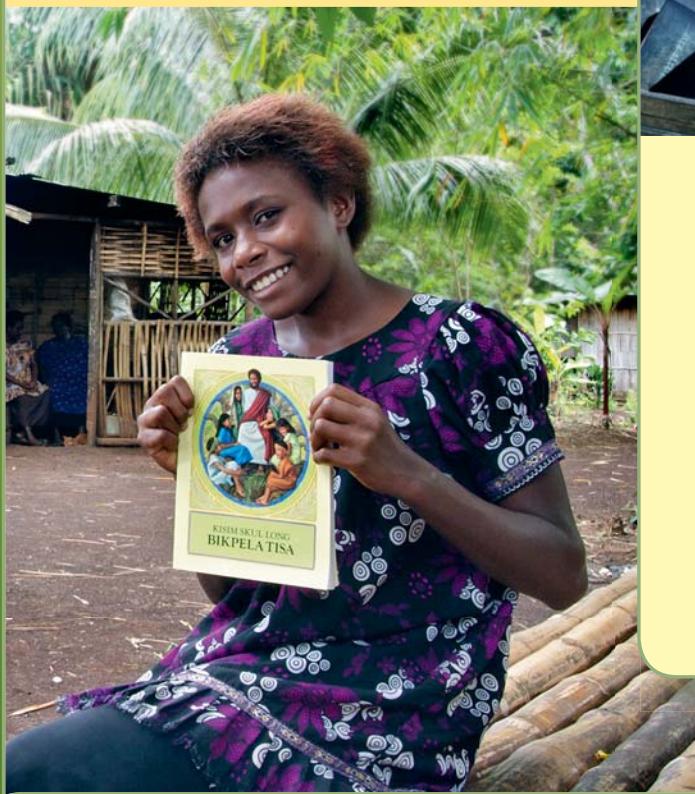


● **Timothy**, who lives in West Africa, is deaf and mute.* Because regular doctors could not help him, he went to faith healers, but in vain. “My heart was broken by the deception,” he wrote. Then Timothy studied the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses, who explained to him God’s purpose to remove all sickness and disabilities. Timothy said, “I eagerly await the day in God’s new world when ‘the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped . . . and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness.’” (Isaiah 35:1-6) In the meantime, he enjoys using a portable DVD player to share Bible truths with other people who are hearing impaired, helping them find true freedom.



● **Evelyn** was deeply involved in the occult in Estonia. Since Jesus cured people, she wanted to do the same. She especially wanted to help her chronically ill mother. Thus, in an effort to diagnose and treat serious illness, she learned how to use pendulums. In time, she examined the Bible. The result? “I came to understand how deceived I had been,” she said. “So I burned my spiritistic literature and pendulums.” She now teaches the Bible’s liberating truths to others.

● **Mary** grew up on one of the islands of Papua New Guinea, where people are afraid of the dead. When someone in her village died, Mary would sleep under another person’s bed, fearing that the spirit of the deceased would harass her if she was alone. Then she learned from the Bible that the dead are asleep—they are in the grave, awaiting a resurrection to life in Paradise on earth. (Luke 23:43; John 11:11-14) As a result, she no longer fears the dead.



● **Alicia**, who was raised in a Christian home in the United States, took an interest in occult books and movies. Then she began to think seriously about the Bible truths she had learned. Realizing that she had, in reality, been trying to ‘partake of the table of Jehovah and the table of demons,’ she changed her ways and now has a clean conscience before God.—1 Corinthians 10:21.

YOUNG PEOPLE ASK



Why won't my parents let me have fun?

For Allison, a teenager in Australia, Monday morning at school is as stressful as it is predictable.*

"Everyone talks about what they did on the weekend," she says. "They tell stories that sound so exciting, like about how many parties they went to and how many boys they kissed—even about running away from the police . . . It sounds so scary, but fun! They come home at five o'clock in the morning, and their parents don't care. I have to be in bed before they even start their night!"

"Anyway, after telling me their weekend action stories, my classmates ask me what I did. And what did I do? I went to Christian meetings. I engaged in the ministry. I feel like I really missed out on a good time. So I usually just tell them that I did nothing. Then they ask why I didn't come with them."

"Once Mondays are over, you'd think it would be easier. But it's not. By Tuesday, everyone is talking about the upcoming weekend! I usually sit and just listen to them talk. I feel so left out!"

* Name has been changed.

IS YOUR Monday morning at school similar? You might feel that there's a world of fun outside your door but that your parents have locked it tight—or as if you're at an amusement park but you're not allowed to get on any of the rides. It's not that you want to do everything your peers do. You'd just like to have fun once in a while! For example, which recreational activity would *you* most like to engage in this coming weekend?

- dancing
- music concert
- movie
- party
- other

You need recreation. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 4) In fact, your Creator wants you to enjoy your youth. (Ecclesiastes 11:9) And although you may doubt it at times, your parents also want you to have fun. Likely, however, your parents will have two legitimate concerns: **(1)** what you will do and **(2)** who will accompany you.

What, though, if you're invited to go out with friends but you aren't sure how your parents will react? When you are faced with a decision, the Bible encourages you to consider the options you have, good *and* bad, and to weigh the consequences. (Deuteronomy 32:29; Proverbs 7:6-23) With regard to the invita-

tion you've received from your friends, what options do you have?

OPTION A: DON'T ASK—JUST GO.

Why you might consider this option: You want to impress your friends with how independent you are. You feel that you know better than your parents, or you have little respect for their judgment.—Proverbs 15:5.

The consequences: Your friends will learn something about you—that you can be deceitful. If you'd deceive your parents, you might be willing to deceive your friends. If your parents find out, they'll feel hurt and betrayed and you'll likely be grounded! Disobeying your parents and going out anyhow is a foolish option.—Proverbs 12:15.

OPTION B: DON'T ASK—DON'T GO.

Why you might consider this option: You think about the offer and decide that the activity doesn't measure up to your principles or that some of those invited would not be good company. (1 Corinthians 15:33; Philippians 4:8) On the other hand, you might want to go but don't have the courage to ask your parents.

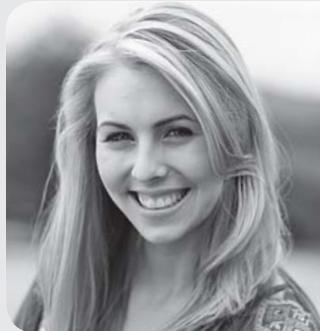
The consequences: If you don't go because you know it's a bad idea, you'll be more confident when answering your friends. But if you don't go simply because you lack the courage to ask your parents, you might end up sitting at home brooding, feeling that you're the only one who's not having fun.

OPTION C: ASK—AND SEE.

Why you might consider this option: You recognize your parents' authority over you and respect their judgment. (Colossians 3:20) You love your parents and don't want to hurt them by sneaking out behind their backs. (Proverbs 10:1) You also have a chance to present your case.

The consequences: Your parents feel that you love and respect them. And if they view your request as reasonable, they might say yes.

“ My parents trust me, largely because I have a good track record. I'm open with them about my friends. I'm also not afraid to leave a gathering if I'm uncomfortable with what's going on there. **”**



Kimberly

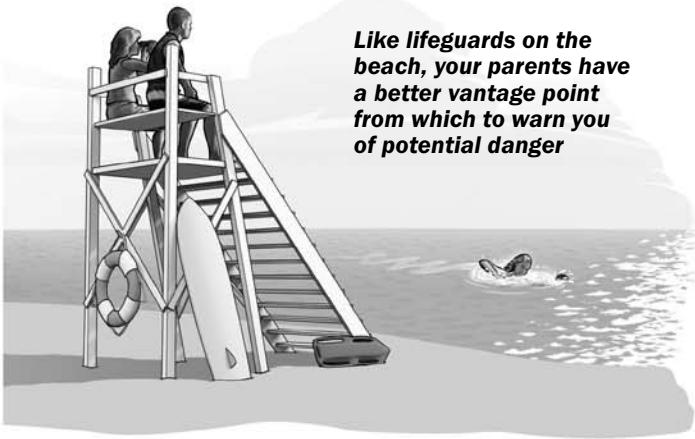
Why Parents Might Say No

What, though, if your parents say no? That can be frustrating. However, understanding their point of view can help you cope with the restrictions. For example, they might say no for one or more of the following reasons.

Greater knowledge and experience. If you had a choice, likely you would prefer to swim at a beach that is manned by lifeguards. Why? Because while you're in the water having fun, your awareness of danger is very limited. But the lifeguards have a better vantage point from which to spot hazards.

Similarly, because of their greater knowledge and experience, your parents may be aware of dangers that you do not see. Like the lifeguards on the beach, your parents' goal is, not to spoil your fun, but to help you avoid dangers that could rob you of enjoyment in life.

Love for you. Your parents have a strong desire to protect you. Love moves them to say yes when they can but no when they have to. When you ask their permission to do something, they ask *themselves* if they can grant the request and then live with the consequences. They will only say yes to themselves—and to you—if they are reasonably convinced that no harm will come to you.



A lack of information. Loving parents will err on the side of caution. If they don't understand what you are asking for or if they feel that vital facts are missing from your request, chances are they will say no.

How to Improve Your Chances of Getting a Yes

Four factors come into play.

Honesty: First, you need to ask yourself honestly: 'Why do I really want to go? Is it primarily the activity that I enjoy, or is it that I want to fit in with my peers? Is it because someone that I'm attracted to will be there?' Then be honest with your parents. They were young once, and they know you well. So they will likely discern your real motives anyhow. They'll appreciate your candor, and you'll benefit from their wisdom. (Proverbs 7:1, 2) On the other hand, if you're not honest, you undermine your credibility and lessen the chances that you'll hear a yes.

Timing: Don't pummel your parents with requests when they have just arrived home from work or when they are concentrating on other matters. Approach them when they are more relaxed. But don't wait until the last minute and then try to pressure them for an answer. Your parents will not appreciate having to make a rushed decision. Ask early, and

your parents will appreciate your consideration.

Content: Don't be vague. Explain exactly what you want to do. Parents feel uncomfortable with the answer "I don't know," especially when they've asked: "Who will be there?" "Will a responsible adult be present?" or "When will the event end?"

Attitude: Don't view your parents as enemies. View them as part of your team—because all things considered, they *are*. If you view your parents as allies, you will be less likely to sound combative and they will be more likely to be cooperative. If they say no, respectfully ask why. For example, if they say no to your going to a concert, try to determine the reason for their concern. Are they worried about the performer? the venue? the company you will keep? the price of admission? Avoid such statements as "You don't trust me," "Everybody else is going," or "My friends' parents are letting *them* go!" Show your parents that you're mature enough to accept their decision and respect it. If you do, they will respect you. And next time, they may be more inclined to look for ways to say yes.

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?

Want to know where your parents stand on the issues raised in this article?
The only way to find out is to ask them!
When the time is right, strike up a conversation about their concerns regarding your having fun. Think of a question you would like to ask them, and write it below.

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.....
.....

SAFETY TIPS

for the Elderly



A GIRL skates around an ice rink. Suddenly she slips and falls. Seconds later she is on her feet again, suffering no more than a little embarrassment. An elderly lady trips and falls in her home, fracturing her hip. She undergoes surgery and spends months in rehabilitation. Now even more afraid of falling, she avoids physical activity and grows weaker.

In one Western land, each year more than a third of the people 65 and older fall. What is more, in that age bracket, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death. With good reason the Bible says of older ones: “They have become afraid merely at what is high, and there are terrors in the way.”—Ecclesiastes 12:5.

Even though old age often brings physical challenges, you can take practical steps to enhance your personal safety and the quality of your life. For one thing, you can strive to maintain reasonable health and strength. For another, you can make your home safer.

Maintain Your Health and Strength

As we age, our coordination may suffer and we may have trouble with our eyesight and sense of balance. We may also become

more frail as our muscles and bones weaken. However, regular physical activity and good eating habits can slow this decline. “It is important to do exercises that improve balance, posture, strength, and flexibility,” says Nita, a physical therapist.

A publication of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services states: “Regardless of their health and physical abilities, older adults can gain a lot by staying physically active. Even if you have difficulty standing or walking, you can still exercise and benefit from it. In fact, in most cases, you have more to lose by *not* doing anything.”* Among other things, physical activity can help you to combat heart disease, joint pain, osteoporosis, and depression. It can improve your circulation, digestion, and sleep, and it can enhance your self-confidence and alertness.

If you are not used to doing physical exercise, you would be wise to see your doctor first. Also, consult him or her if you feel faint or experience chest pain while exercising. In fact, in such a situation, you may be wise to call the emergency telephone number. Do not

* The May 22, 2005, issue of *Awake!* examined in more detail the benefits of regular exercise.

treat such potentially dangerous symptoms lightly! And it is recommended that you have your eyes checked by an eye doctor once a year.

In regard to diet, avoid meals that lack vitamins and minerals, even if they are quick and easy to prepare. Older people especially need food high in vitamin D and calcium, both of which can help to maintain bone mass or at least slow the loss of it. So try to eat meals that include whole grains, low-fat dairy products, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Check with your doctor before you make major changes in your eating habits. He or she may suggest useful dietary options or foods to avoid because of certain health factors.

Additionally, try to stay well hydrated. Dehydration, which is common among older people, especially those living alone or in nursing homes, can predispose one to falls, confusion, constipation, poor skin elasticity, infection, and even death.

Make Your Home Safer

Most falls occur at home. Yet, by taking a few practical precautions, you can significantly reduce that risk. Think about your home as you read the following.

Bathroom:

- The floor should provide good footing when wet.
- The shower or tub should have a non-slip mat or finish, and if you have a shower chair, it should allow easy access to the faucets. It may also be helpful to have a handheld showerhead so that you can remain seated when bathing.
- It is good to have grab bars for support when you step into or out of the bathtub or use the toilet. These supports should be strong and firmly mounted. Also, make sure that the toilet seat is high enough for you to sit and stand without too much exertion.
- Keep night-lights on, or use a flashlight.

Stairs:

- Stairways should be uncluttered, in good condition, and well lit.
- Stairways ought to have stable handrails on both sides if possible as well as nonslip strips and light switches at both the top and the bottom.
- Walking up and down stairs can help older ones to maintain leg strength. If you have balance problems, however, you should try to avoid negotiating stairs alone.

Bedroom:

- Allow sufficient space for you to move around the bed and other furniture safely.
- Have a chair where you can sit to dress.
- Keep a lamp or a flashlight within reach when you are in bed.

Kitchen:

- Countertops should be uncluttered so that you can easily set down groceries and other items.
- The kitchen floor ought to be nonslip and low glare.
- Items in the cupboards should be neither too high nor too low but easy to access without assistance. Try to avoid the use of ladders and step stools, and *never* climb up on a chair!

General:

- Have night-lights that illuminate the way to the bathroom and other areas you may go to at night.
- It can be helpful to use a cane or a walker at night when you are not fully awake or alert.
- Your chairs should be stable (no wheels), have armrests, and be the right height for easy sitting and standing.
- To prevent tripping, you should repair, replace, or remove frayed carpets, lifted linoleum, or broken tiles. Lay all electrical cords along walls and not across walkways.

- Throw rugs can be a trip hazard and should be removed from carpeted areas. If they are placed on a smooth floor, such as tile or wood, they should be firmly anchored with a nonslip backing.

- Avoid wearing slippers that are loose or worn out or do not have backs or nonskid soles. And do not wear high-heeled sandals or shoes.

- Some medicines can make people feel faint or unsteady. If you ever feel like that after taking medication, be sure to tell your doctor. He or she may change the dosage or the medication itself.

If you notice anything that needs attention that you cannot safely attend to yourself, why not seek the help of family members, friends, or those who may be responsible for building maintenance? And try not to procrastinate.

What Others Can Do

If you have aged parents, grandparents, or friends, what can you do to help them avoid potentially harmful falls? For one thing, you can tactfully go over the aforementioned checklist with them and help make arrangements to correct problem areas. Depending on the need, perhaps you could prepare a wholesome meal or two for them each week. Older people also need regular exercise. Can you take them for a walk, perhaps in conjunction with your other activities? Many older ones would be glad to get out of the house if they had a trusted companion to accompany them. In some lands the government offers assistance in the way of home nursing, physical or occupational therapy, and home safety. Your physician should be able to refer you to such services.

Our Creator, who himself is called “the Ancient of Days,” requires that we show respect for the elderly, especially aged parents. (Daniel 7:9) “Honor your father and your mother,” he commands. (Exodus 20:12) He also directs: “Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show consideration for the per-

son of an old man, and you must be in fear of your God.” (Leviticus 19:32) Yes, respect for older ones actually reflects a wholesome fear of God! In turn, when older people are genuinely thankful for help given them, they invite loving, respectful consideration. Assisting such ones is anything but a duty. It is a pleasure!



ELECTRONIC HELP IN AN EMERGENCY

In some lands seniors can obtain a small electronic device that they can use during an emergency, such as a nasty fall, to summon assistance with the push of a button. These devices may be hung around the neck or attached to the wrist. If this service is available in your area, perhaps you could consider taking advantage of it—especially if you live alone.



A BOOK YOU CAN TRUST



Part 4

Medo-Persia in Bible History

This is the fourth in a series of seven articles in consecutive issues of “Awake!” that discuss the seven world powers of Bible history. The objective is to show that the Bible is trustworthy and inspired of God and that its message is one of hope for an end to the suffering caused by man’s cruel domination of his fellow man.

THE ruins of palaces and royal tombs provide only a glimpse of the grandeur, power, and wealth of the ancient dual empire of Media and Persia. Before the two kingdoms united, Media was the dominant kingdom. But in 550 B.C.E., the Medes came under the control of Persian King Cyrus II, who thereafter ruled over the kingdom of Medo-Persia. Centered in the region north of the Persian Gulf, this vast realm eventually stretched from the Aegean Sea to Egypt to northwest India and included Judea.

Medo-Persia ruled over the Jewish nation for more than 200 years—from the overthrow of Babylon in 539 B.C.E. until Medo-Persia itself was defeated by the Greeks in 331 B.C.E. Numerous Bible books comment on significant events that occurred during that time.

Trustworthy History

The Bible tells us that King Cyrus II freed the Jews held captive in Babylon, allowing them to return to Jerusalem and rebuild God’s temple, which the Babylonians had destroyed in 607 B.C.E. (Ezra 1:1-7; 6:3-5) Corroborating this account is a clay document known as the Cyrus Cylinder, discovered in

1879 in the ruins of ancient Babylon. The inscription identifies Cyrus by name and describes his policy of returning previously captured peoples and their religious objects to their native lands. The Bible writer Isaiah recorded Jehovah’s prophetic words concerning Cyrus: “All that I delight in he will completely carry out”; even in my saying of Jerusalem, ‘She will be rebuilt,’ and of the temple, ‘You will have your foundation laid.’” —Isaiah 44:28.

In fact, Cyrus ordered that funds for temple reconstruction “be given from the king’s



house,” says Ezra 6:3, 4. This amazing statement harmonizes with secular history. “It was a consistent policy of Persian kings to help restore sanctuaries in their empire,” says the book *Persia and the Bible*.

The Bible tells us that opposers of the Jews later wrote to Darius the Great (also called Darius I) challenging the Jews’ claim that Cyrus had authorized the reconstruction of the temple. Darius commanded that a search be made for the original written decree. The outcome? A scroll containing Cyrus’ decree was found at Ecbatana, the capital. In response, Darius wrote: “I, Darius, do put through an order. Let it [temple reconstruction] be done promptly.” Opposition to the work then ceased.*—Ezra 6:2, 7, 12, 13.

Secular history supports these details. For one thing, Ecbatana was the summer residence of Cyrus, and he may have issued his decree from there. Also, archaeological discoveries show that Medo-Persian kings took a keen interest in religious matters affecting their realm and wrote letters to resolve disputes.

Trustworthy Prophecy

In a divinely inspired dream, the prophet Daniel saw a series of four beasts rising out of the sea, each representing a successive world power. The first beast, a winged

lion, represented Babylon. The second was “like a bear.” The account continues: “This is what they were saying to it, ‘Get up, eat much flesh.’” (Daniel 7:5) The fearsome bear pictured Medo-Persia.

True to Daniel’s prophecy, Medo-Persia displayed a voracious appetite for conquest. Not long after Daniel’s vision, Cyrus defeated the Medes and then waged war against neighboring Lydia and Babylon. His son Cambyses II conquered Egypt. Later Medo-Persian rulers expanded the empire even farther.

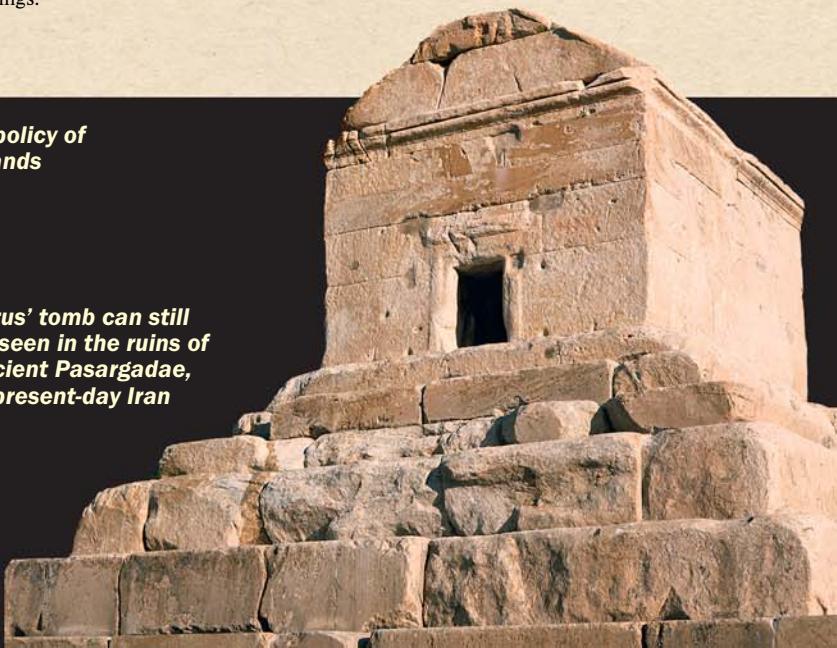
How can we be sure of this interpretation? In a separate but related vision, Daniel saw a ram “making thrusts to the west and to the north and to the south.” The prophecy was fulfilled when Medo-Persia made “thrusts” against other nations, including mighty Babylon. An angel of God interpreted this vision, saying to Daniel: “The ram that you saw possessing the two horns *stands for the kings of Media and Persia.*”—Daniel 8:3, 4, 20.

Furthermore, some two centuries before Babylon’s defeat, the prophet Isaiah foretold both the name of the conquering Persian king—who was not yet born—and his strategy for taking Babylon. Isaiah wrote: “This is what Jehovah has said to his anointed one, to

* The name Darius is applied to at least three kings.

The Cyrus Cylinder describes the policy of returning captives to their homelands

Cyrus' tomb can still be seen in the ruins of ancient Pasargadae, in present-day Iran



Cyrus, whose right hand I have taken hold of, to subdue before him nations, . . . to open before him the two-leaved doors, so that even the gates will not be shut." (Isaiah 45:1) Both Isaiah and Jeremiah foretold that Babylon's "rivers," or canals fed by the Euphrates River, which served as a protective moat, would be dried up. (Isaiah 44:27; Jeremiah 50:38) The Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon confirm the Bible's prophetic accuracy, including the fact that the Babylonians were reveling on the very night that Cyrus took the city. (Isaiah 21:5, 9; Daniel 5:1-4, 30) Having diverted the Euphrates River, Cyrus' armies entered the city through open gates along the river, encountering little resistance. In one night mighty Babylon fell!

This event, in turn, led to the amazing fulfillment of another prophecy. The prophet Jeremiah had earlier foretold that God's people would be exiled in Babylon for 70 years. (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; 29:10) That prophecy was fulfilled right on time, and the exiles were allowed to return to their homeland.

A Hope You Can Trust

Shortly after Medo-Persia conquered Babylon, Daniel recorded a prophecy that sheds light on a most important event in the accomplishment of God's purpose for mankind. The angel Gabriel informed Daniel precisely when the Messiah—the "seed" promised at Genesis 3:15—would appear! God's angel said: "From the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah the Leader, there will be seven weeks, also sixty-two weeks," a total of 69 weeks. (Dan-

iel 9:25) When did this prophetic period begin?

Although Cyrus permitted the Jews to return to their land soon after the fall of Babylon, many years later Jerusalem and its walls were still in disrepair. In 455 B.C.E., King Artaxerxes granted permission to his Jewish cupbearer Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and take the lead in the rebuilding work. (Nehemiah 2:1-6) This marked the start of the 69 weeks.

The 69 weeks, however, were not literal weeks of seven days but weeks of years. In fact, some Bible translations render the expression "weeks" as "weeks of years."* (Daniel 9:24, 25) The Messiah would appear after a period of 69 "weeks" of 7 years each—a total of 483 years. The prophecy was fulfilled in 29 C.E. when Jesus was baptized, exactly 483 years from 455 B.C.E. #

The precise fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy adds to the abundant evidence confirming Jesus' identity. This evidence also confirms our hope for the future. Jesus, as King of God's heavenly Kingdom, will bring an end to harsh human rule. Thereafter, he will fulfill many more Bible prophecies, including those pointing forward to a resurrection of the dead to endless life in Paradise on earth.—Daniel 12:2; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 21:3-5.

* Among the Bible translations that use the phrase "weeks of years" are the following: *Tanakh—A New Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, *The Complete Bible—An American Translation*, and *The Bible—Containing the Old and New Testaments*, by James Moffatt.

For a detailed discussion of the prophecy, including a diagram setting out the 69 weeks of years, see pages 197-199 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

455 B.C.E.

29 C.E.

From the time the command was given to rebuild Jerusalem until the appearance of the Messiah was exactly 483 years





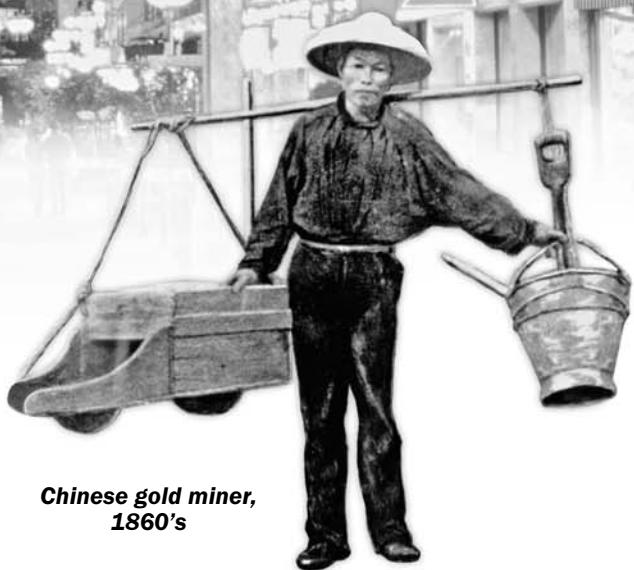
IN SEARCH OF GOLD, THEY FOUND A HOME

CHINATOWN. In many cities around the world, this word evokes vibrant images of Chinese shops, restaurants, festivals, and dragon dances. Yet, each Chinatown has its own history. Those in Australia today owe much to earlier generations of intrepid Chinese immigrants who came to these southern shores, hoping to strike it rich in the newly discovered goldfields.

New Gold Mountain

What had been a light rain of Chinese migration to Australia turned into a downpour when gold was discovered in 1851. Thousands of men left the Pearl River delta in Guangdong Province of China to make the arduous sea voyage south. Gold had been discovered earlier in California, U.S.A., and the Chinese who spoke Cantonese had called those gold-fields Gold Mountain. The Australian gold-fields, therefore, became New Gold Mountain.

It was not just the prospect of finding gold that moved the men to leave their homeland.



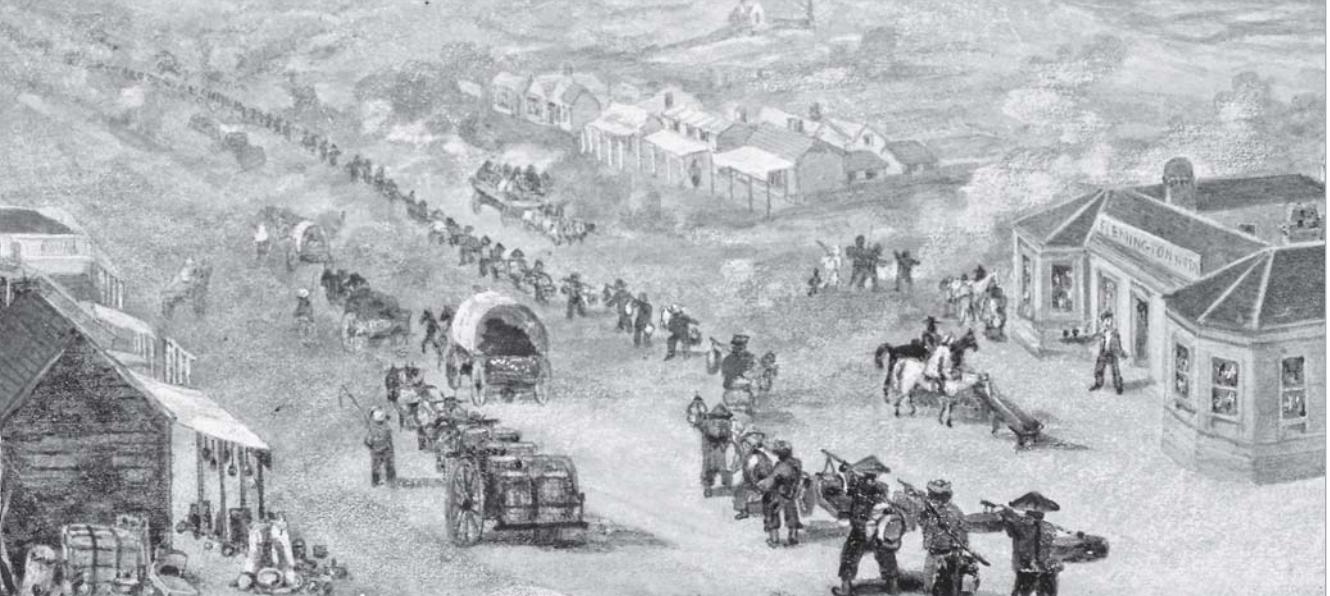
**Chinese gold miner,
1860's**

China had experienced civil war, natural disasters, and poverty, which led to much hardship.

Tragically, some of the pioneers bound for Australia did not live to see its shores. They died of diseases that swept through overcrowded ships on the long voyage. As for the survivors, life was anything but easy when they finally reached the new land.

Toiling in the Goldfields

Loneliness soon became a constant companion, for tradition required that wives and children stay in China to keep their place in the ancestral family lineage. In 1861, more than 38,000 Chinese men lived in Australia



FARTHER THAN THEY THOUGHT

To avoid paying a landing fee, or tax, Chinese passengers would disembark along the Australian coast away from major ports and hundreds of miles (km) from the goldfields. Robe, South Australia, proved to be one such landing place. Robe had a population of between 100 and 200, and in the span of just five months in 1857, at

least 12,000 Chinese passed through it.

In an amazing feat of endurance and cooperation, hundreds of men at a time made their way inland through sparsely inhabited country toward the goldfields. However, it was much farther than they thought, and the trek took up to five weeks. The immigrants harvested

seaweed for the journey and ate kangaroos and wombats en route. They also dug wells and left a trail for others to follow.

Wearing traditional pigtail and coolie hats, the men often jogged single file, chanting as they went. Chinese coinage has been found along the route. The new arrivals discarded the money when they learned that it was valueless in Australia.

Image H17071, State Library of Victoria

but only 11 Chinese women. Few, however, had planned to settle there. Most were determined to return to their homes and families with wealth and honor.

This ambition drove them in their search for gold. The miners lived in tents and toiled for long hours in the hot sun. Some, at least initially, were afraid to mine underground because of certain superstitions. Hence, they started off digging and panning for surface gold, rinsing their tailings in wooden sluices. Their efforts bore fruit. Records show that between 1854 and 1862, just under 600,-

000 ounces (18,662 kg) of gold found in the state of Victoria were sent to China.

Sadly, some of this newfound wealth was eaten up by gambling and opium addiction — vices to which the lonely were more vulnerable. All too often, the consequences were ruined health and the loss of both earnings and the prospects of returning home. Some received help from Chinese organizations and from benevolent individuals, but others died prematurely, impoverished and alone.

The Chinese also had to endure the jealousy and suspicion of non-Chinese miners,

who saw the foreigners as a tightly knit and successful competitive mining community. This ill will led to riots and assaults on Chinese. Their gold was looted, and their tents and provisions were burned. Eventually this hostility eased. Still, about 50 years after gold was discovered, the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 shut the door on Asian immigration into Australia—a door that was not reopened until 1973.

When the Gold Ran Out

When the mines ceased to produce, some Chinese chose to remain in Australia. As a result, gold-rush towns saw the spawning of Chinese laundries, restaurants, and market gardens, or truck farms. The Chinese also developed a good name as furniture manufacturers and marketers of fresh fruit and vegetables. As a result, by the end of the 19th century, Chinese communities, or Chinatowns, could be found in many cities in Australia, including Atherton, Brisbane, Broome, Cairns, Darwin, Melbourne, Sydney, and Townsville.

Because few Chinese-born women came to Australia, a lot of the men remained single. Some, though, married Australian women, despite local prejudice against such unions. In time, descendants of these mixed marriages became an integral part of Australian society.

Nowadays, more Chinese immigrants live in Australia than ever before. Most arrive in search of higher education and business opportunities. What is more, the immigrants now include many women. And in an odd twist resulting from the changing world economy, many male breadwinners, after settling their families in Australia, fly back to Asia to work in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, or Taiwan.

Yes, times have changed. But for immigrants the world over, the basic goals remain much the same—to find security and success in a foreign land.



SOMETHING BETTER THAN GOLD

Wayne Qu worked as an environmental scientist for the Academy of Sciences in China. To advance his career, he and his wife, Sue, went to Europe in the 1990's, where Wayne pursued higher education. While there, the couple met Jehovah's Witnesses and discussed the Bible with them. In 2000, Wayne and Sue moved to Australia, where both continued their secular studies—Sue in molecular biology. They also resumed their Bible study.

Wayne explains: "We had spent decades getting advanced university degrees. Yet, I would say to myself: 'In the end, we all grow old, get sick, and die. Is that the purpose of life?' It all seemed to be in vain. The Bible, however, gave Sue and me logical, satisfying answers to life's most important questions.

"Our study of the Bible also made us examine a concept we had never considered before—the existence of a Creator. I read the Witnesses' publication *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* as well as a work by Charles Darwin on evolution. This reading, along with my own scientific research, convinced me that there is a Creator. Sue came to the same conclusion.

"Another thing that convinced us that there is a God is the power of the Bible to change lives for the better. Indeed, this amazing book has given us not only a hope for the future but also genuine friends and a stronger marriage. Sue and I were baptized in 2005, glad that we had found something of much greater value than higher education and 'gold that perishes.'”—1 Peter 1:7.

Are Science and the Bible Compatible?

"The significance and joy in my science comes in the occasional moments of discovering something new and saying to myself, 'So that's how God did it!'"

—HENRY SCHAEFER, PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY.

SCIENCE does much to help us understand the natural world, revealing a level of order, precision, and sophistication that points, in the eyes of many, to a God of infinite intelligence and power. In their view, science reveals not just details of the natural world but also facets of the mind of God.

That point of view finds abundant support in the Bible. Says Romans 1:20: "[God's] invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship." Likewise, Psalm 19: 1, 2 states: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; and of the work of his hands the expanse is telling. One day after another day causes speech to bubble forth, and one night after another night shows forth knowledge." Despite all its wonders, however, the natural world reveals only some aspects of our Creator.

Where Science Is Limited

Many truths about God are beyond the scope of science. To illustrate, a scientist may be able to describe every molecule in a chocolate cake, but will his analysis reveal why the cake was made or for whom? For answers to questions like that—which most people would regard as the more important ones—he needs to consult the person who baked the cake.

Similarly, science "gives a lot of factual information," wrote Austrian physicist and No-

bel laureate Erwin Schrödinger, "but it is ghastly silent about all . . . that is really near to our heart, that really matters to us." This includes, he says, "God and eternity." For example, only God can answer such questions as the following: Why is there a universe? Why does our planet have an abundance of life, including intelligent life? If God truly is almighty, why does he permit evil and suffering? And is there hope beyond the grave?

Has God answered those questions? Yes, in the pages of the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) 'But how,' you may ask, 'can I be sure that the Bible really is from God?' From a scientific point of view, what the Bible says about the world around us must harmonize with scientific fact, for God does not contradict himself. Does the Bible reflect such harmony? Consider a few examples.

Scientifically Ahead of Its Time

When the Bible was being written, many people believed that various gods inhabited the world and that those gods, not natural laws, controlled the sun, the moon, the weather, fertility, and so on. But that was not the case with the ancient Hebrew prophets of God. Of course, they knew that Jehovah God could directly control the natural world and that he did so on specific occasions. (Joshua 10:12-14; 2 Kings 20:9-11) Nevertheless, John Lennox, professor of mathematics at the University of Oxford, England, observed that



The universe is governed by precise laws—“the statutes of heaven and earth.”—JEREMIAH 33:25

those prophets “did not have to have their universe de-deified [of mythical gods]. . . , for the simple reason that they had never believed in the gods in the first place. What had saved them from that superstition was their belief in One True God, Creator of heaven and earth.”

How did that belief protect them from superstition? For one thing, the true God revealed to them that he governs the universe by precise laws, or statutes. For example, more than 3,500 years ago, Jehovah God asked his servant Job: “Have you come to know the *statutes* of the heavens?” (Job 38:33) In the seventh century B.C.E., the prophet Jeremiah wrote about “the *statutes* of heaven and earth.”—Jeremiah 33:25.

Hence, all who lived in ancient times and had faith in the writings of the Bible prophets could know that the universe was governed, not by mythical, temperamental deities, but by rational laws. As a result, those God-fearing individuals neither bowed down to created entities, such as the sun, the moon, or the stars, nor did they have a superstitious attitude toward them. (Deuteronomy 4:15-19) Rather, they saw God’s works as objects of study that reveal his wisdom, power, and other qualities.—Psalm 8:3-9; Proverbs 3:19, 20.

In harmony with the views of many scientists today, the ancient Hebrews also believed that the universe had a beginning.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” says Genesis 1:1. Also, some 3,500 years ago, God revealed to his servant Job that the earth ‘hangs on nothing,’ or is suspended in space. (Job 26:7) And finally, more than 2,500 years ago, the prophet Isaiah wrote that the earth is a circle or sphere.—Isaiah 40:22.*

Yes, the Bible does harmonize with scientific truths about the natural world. In fact, the two fields of study are more than compatible—they beautifully complement each other. To disregard either one is to leave unopened a door to the knowledge of God.—Psalm 119:105; Isaiah 40:26.

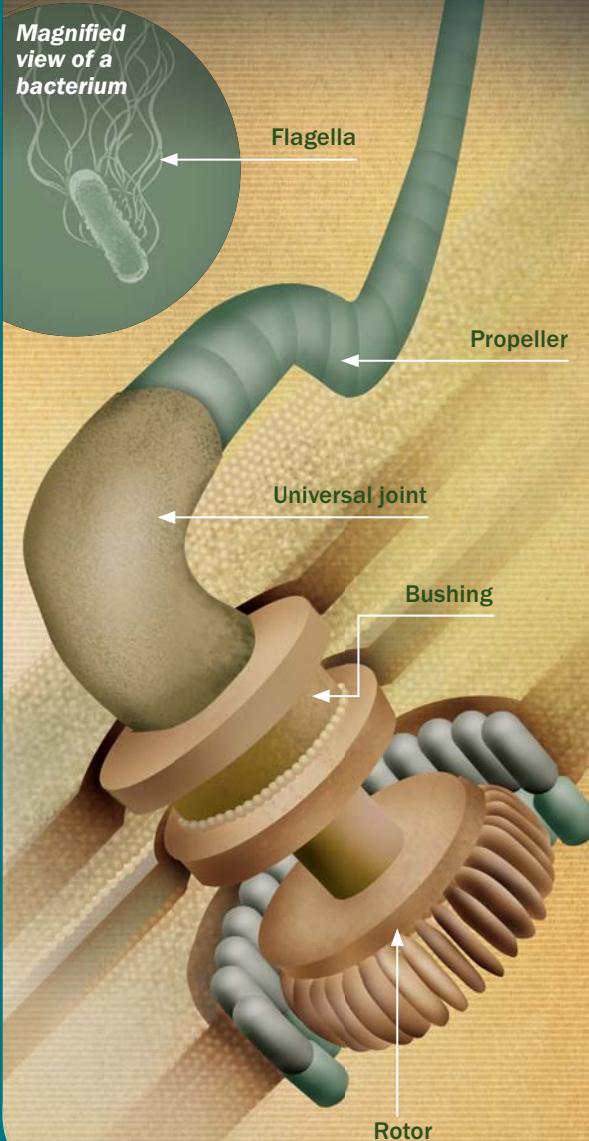
* For a more extensive discussion on the existence of God and the accuracy of the Bible, please read the brochure *Was Life Created?* and the book *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- **What can creation tell us about God?
—Romans 1:20.**
- **What truths about God are beyond the scope of science?—2 Timothy 3:16.**
- **Why did the ancient prophets of the true God not have a superstitious view of creation?—Jeremiah 33:25.**

WAS IT DESIGNED?

The Bacterial Flagellum



- Even under a powerful microscope, it appears tiny and insignificant. It has been compared to a powerful outboard motor attached to a boat. What is the bacterial flagellum?

There are different kinds of flagella, but the bacterial flagellum (Latin, “whip”) is probably the most studied. Attached to the cell wall of bacteria, the flagellum rotates, enabling the micro-organism to go forward, stop, move in reverse, and change direction. It is estimated that half of all known bacteria are equipped with variations of flagella.

The DNA in the bacteria or micro-organism contains the “drawings” of the flagellum and its propulsion unit. The entire assembly consists of about 40 proteins, which can be compared to the parts in a motor. Amazingly, it builds itself in only 20 minutes!

The publication *The Evolution Controversy* states: “The bacterial flagellum includes a rotary motor that spins around at speeds of 6,000 to 17,000 rpm. Even more remarkable, it can change direction in as little as a quarter turn, and then spin 17,000 rpm in the other direction.” *New Scientist* magazine calls the bacterial flagellum “a prime example of a complex molecular system—an intricate nanomachine beyond the craft of any human engineer.”

Scientists are baffled by the fact that the tiny bacterial flagellum *self-assembles* in the exact order that is needed for all 40 parts to fit together properly and function correctly.

What do you think? Did the bacterial flagellum come about by chance, or was it designed?



I Have Led a Most Rewarding Life

AS TOLD BY HERAWATI NEUHARDT

I was born in Cirebon, Indonesia, a city famous for its ornate batik cloth, which is dyed with vivid, hand-drawn motifs. In some ways my life as a missionary has been like that batik—rich in colorful encounters with diverse cultures in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Let me explain.



In 1962, when I was ten years old, my mother started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. In time, she and my father, who are both Indonesian-born Chinese, as well as five of their children, including me, became Witnesses.

Our home was always open to missionaries and traveling overseers, who visited our congregation to give spiritual encouragement. Their fine example and upbuilding conversation made a big impression on me. When I was 19, I decided to take up the full-time Christian ministry. About a year later, I married Josef Neuhardt, a German missionary who had arrived in Indonesia in 1968. After our honeymoon, we moved to Sumatra, the second largest of Indonesia's more than 17,000 islands. There I joined Josef in his work as a traveling overseer, which involved visiting congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Preaching in Sumatra

Our circuit, or assigned area, stretched from the hot, bustling city of Padang, in West Sumatra, to beautiful Lake Toba, a large volcanic lake nestled in the highlands of North Sumatra. Later we covered the south of the island. We were continually on the move in our old Volkswagen Beetle, bumping along pot-holed jungle roads, crossing rickety bridges made of coconut trees, and skirting by towering volcanoes—some dormant, others active. At night we slept on the floor in simple bush houses that had no electricity, plumbing, or bathrooms. We washed in lakes and rivers. It was a simple life, and we loved the people. They warmly welcomed us and fed us, and many showed an interest in the Bible.

Around Padang, the Minangkabau people, mostly Muslims, were surprised and pleased when we showed them from the Bible that

God is *one*—not a Trinity, as the churches of Christendom claim. (Deuteronomy 6:4) Many people happily accepted the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, and some interested ones later made fine spiritual progress. At Lake Toba, the Batak people, most of whom profess Christianity, knew God's name, Jehovah, because of seeing it in their Batak Bible. (Psalm 83:18) Yet, they needed a clearer understanding of God and his purpose for mankind. Many of them accepted a Bible study and became zealous Christian evangelizers.

Opening Hearts in Java

In 1973, Josef and I were assigned to Java, an island half the size of Great Britain, with over 80 million inhabitants.* We shared the good news with the Javanese, Sundanese, and Chinese ethnic groups.

As a result of my Chinese-Indonesian upbringing, I spoke a number of languages, including Javanese, Sundanese, and Indonesian, as well as English. Consequently, I enjoyed many interesting Bible discussions with people in their native language.

* The population of Java today exceeds 120 million.

In the Indonesian capital, Jakarta, located on Java, I shared the hope of everlasting life in Paradise on earth with a dejected-looking 19-year-old girl. As I read from the Bible, she burst into tears. "Thank you, Auntie, for telling me these things," she said, using a term of affection and respect. She added: "By tomorrow, I will need another 1.5 million rupiah [\$160, U.S.] to pay for my university fees, and I was thinking of selling my virginity to get the money. Before you came I was praying for direction. Now I have the answer. I am determined to postpone my studies and stay morally clean." This girl was delighted to receive further spiritual help.

Since that encounter, many more Javanese, including Sundanese and Chinese, have brought their lives into harmony with the wholesome standards in God's Word. This, in turn, has brought them genuine inner peace and happiness, just as God promised.—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

Kalimantan—Home of the Dayak

From Java, Josef and I moved to Kalimantan, an Indonesian province of Borneo, the third-largest island in the world (after Green-

Herawati with Bible students in the Solomon Islands



With Josef in Holland, just before his death in 2005



land and New Guinea). A land of thick jungles, rugged mountains, and mighty rivers, Borneo is home to Chinese, Muslim Malays, and the indigenous Dayak—a largely river-dwelling people who were at one time fierce headhunters.

To reach remote Dayak communities, we typically traveled by boat or canoe along unspoiled, jungle-lined rivers. Huge crocodiles basked on the banks, monkeys stared down at us from the trees, and birds flaunted their colorful plumage. Yes, missionary service there was an adventure!

Most Dayak families lived in stilt houses built with bush materials. Some dwellings were small; others were longhouses that accommodated a number of families. Many people had never seen a European, so Josef proved to be quite a celebrity. Children would run through the village shouting, “Pastor! Pastor!” Everyone then flocked to hear what the white minister had to say. Josef would speak through local Witness interpreters, who would then arrange to conduct Bible studies with the many interested ones.

Off to Papua New Guinea

Because of mounting pressure from religious opposers, the government of Indonesia banned Jehovah’s Witnesses in December 1976. As a result, Josef and I were assigned to Papua New Guinea.

After arriving in Port Moresby, the capital, we completed a two-month language course in Hiri Motu, a local trade language. Then we moved to Daru, a tiny island in a remote western province. There I met Eunice, a big, strong, lovable woman, whose teeth were stained red-black from years of chewing betel nut. When Eunice learned that God wants his servants to be clean physically as well as morally and spiritually, she gave up her addictive habit and became a faithful Christian. (2 Corinthians 7:1) Each time we saw such humble individuals apply Bible truth, we grew to ap-

preciate all the more the words of Psalm 34:8: “Taste and see that Jehovah is good.”

In time, Josef was made a traveling overseer once again, and we visited almost every part of Papua New Guinea, a nation of some 820 languages. So that we could speak to more people, we added another of those languages to our repertoire—Tok Pisin, the local lingua franca. To get to the various towns and villages, we traveled by foot, car, boat, canoe, and light aircraft and endured stifling heat, mosquitoes, and regular bouts of malaria.

Then, in 1985, we accepted yet another missionary assignment—to the Solomon Islands, east of Papua New Guinea. There we worked at the local branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses and also traveled throughout the archipelago to encourage congregations and attend Christian assemblies. Again, we had to tackle a new language—this time Solomon Islands Pidgin. But what a joy it was to converse with Bible-loving Solomon Islanders!

My Most Difficult Journey

In 2001, the ban on Jehovah’s Witnesses in Indonesia was lifted, and Josef and I returned to Jakarta. Soon afterward, however, my dear husband was diagnosed with malignant melanoma, an aggressive form of skin cancer. We traveled to Josef’s homeland, Germany, for treatment. But sadly, in 2005, on our 33rd wedding anniversary, he fell asleep in death, awaiting a resurrection to life in the Paradise new world. (John 11:11-14) He was 62 years old and had spent 40 years in the full-time ministry.

I remained in Jakarta, where I continue to serve as a missionary. I miss my husband dearly. But teaching others the precious truths found in God’s Word helps me to cope, for the ministry gives me a feeling of deep satisfaction and purpose in life. Yes, I can say without a doubt that Jehovah has granted me a most colorful and rewarding life.



Do You Have Realistic Goals?

● What do you want out of life? Do you have reasonable expectations, or do you fantasize about things that may be beyond your ability or means? A keen observer of human nature gave this wise advice: “It is better to be satisfied with what is before your eyes than give rein to desire; this too is emptiness and chasing the wind.”—Ecclesiastes 6:9, *The New English Bible*.

“What is before [our] eyes” refers to our present circumstances and realities. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with trying to improve our lives. The point the Bible makes, however, is that the wise do not pursue unrealistic goals. These may be for fame, riches, the ideal marriage mate, or perfect health.

Moreover, those who attain a certain goal, such as material riches, may still crave more. “A mere lover of silver will not be satisfied with silver, neither any lover of wealth with income.

This too is vanity,” the Bible frankly states. (Ecclesiastes 5:10) The spiritually wise, therefore, try to be content with what they have, “what is before [their] eyes.” Yes, they acknowledge this truth: “We have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out.”—1 Timothy 6:7.

Human nature is such that the greatest happiness comes to those who satisfy their spiritual needs. (Matthew 5:3) How can we do that? Jesus Christ said: “Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4) Those precious utterances are found in the Bible, and they are free for the taking.

One such utterance is found at Psalm 37:4. It reads: “Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart.” As God Almighty, Jehovah will grant his faithful worshippers things that no human can give: perfect health, material security, and everlasting life in Paradise on earth. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4) Trusting in these words is not being unrealistic.

1. Couch. 2. Table. 3. Chair. 4. 2,000. 5. A.

ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31

Few True Friends

"The average Briton has only three true friends [he or she] can rely on," says London's *Daily Telegraph*. According to one study, among the reasons that cause a typical person to lose touch "with an average of 36 friends over the years" are a "busy lifestyle," 'just drifting apart' and, in the case of 43 percent of those polled, "falling out . . . and deciding never to speak again." Nearly one fifth confide in colleagues, having "no-one else to whom they can turn." A poll spokesman commented: "It takes something special to be trusted and relied upon."

Drug-Running Semisubmersibles

The methods used by Colombian drug traffickers to smuggle cocaine into Central America, Mexico, and the United States are becoming more and more sophisticated. Since 1993, at least 42 drug-running semisubmersibles have been intercepted and seized by the Colombian authorities. A number of workshops where such vessels are assembled have also been discovered. Although

Fewer than a quarter of Germans under the age of 40 are in favor of daily prayer with children, and among church members, **only 4 in 10 consider it important.**

—APOTHEKEN UMSCHAU, GERMANY.

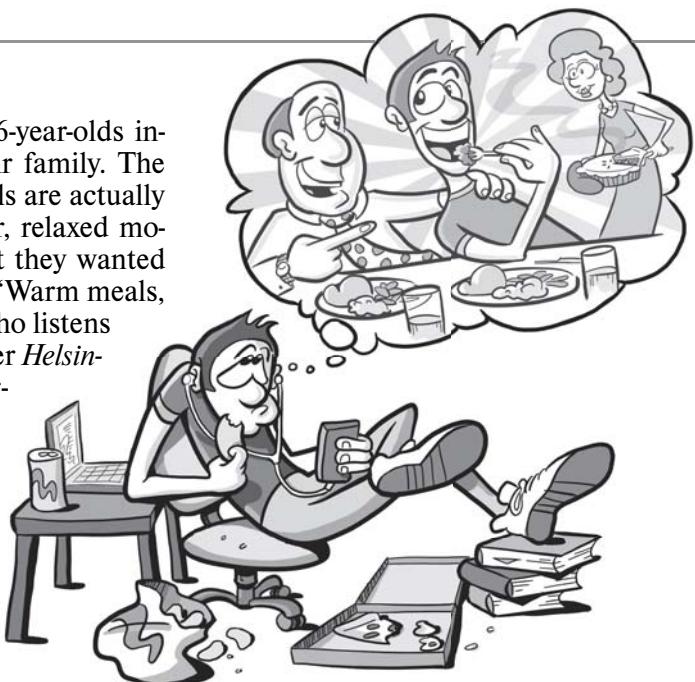
A sperm donor with an undetected genetic mutation linked to heart disease transmitted the same condition to 9 of the 24 children known to be his offspring. Of these, one died from heart failure at the age of two.—JAMA, U.S.A.

"Over 50% of Russians believe that **corruption is an unavoidable and permanent fact of life.**"—RIA NOVOSTI, RUSSIA.

these diesel-powered vessels cannot dive, they are very difficult to detect by radar. Some have a range of 2,000 miles (3,200 km), are capable of carrying between six and ten tons of cocaine, and probably cost up to \$1 million (U.S.) to build.

Benefits of Family Meals

Fewer than half of the Finnish 14- to 16-year-olds interviewed in a recent survey eat with their family. The study revealed that in many homes no meals are actually served. Yet, youths yearn for these regular, relaxed moments with their family. When asked what they wanted from their parents, the message was clear: "Warm meals, eating together as a family, and someone who listens and has time for you," reports the newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat*. Family meals have an important impact on a youth's mental health. According to the article, "youths who take part in family meals are usually doing well in school, they seldom smoke, drink, or use drugs, and they are less frequently depressed."



What Is Missing From This Picture?

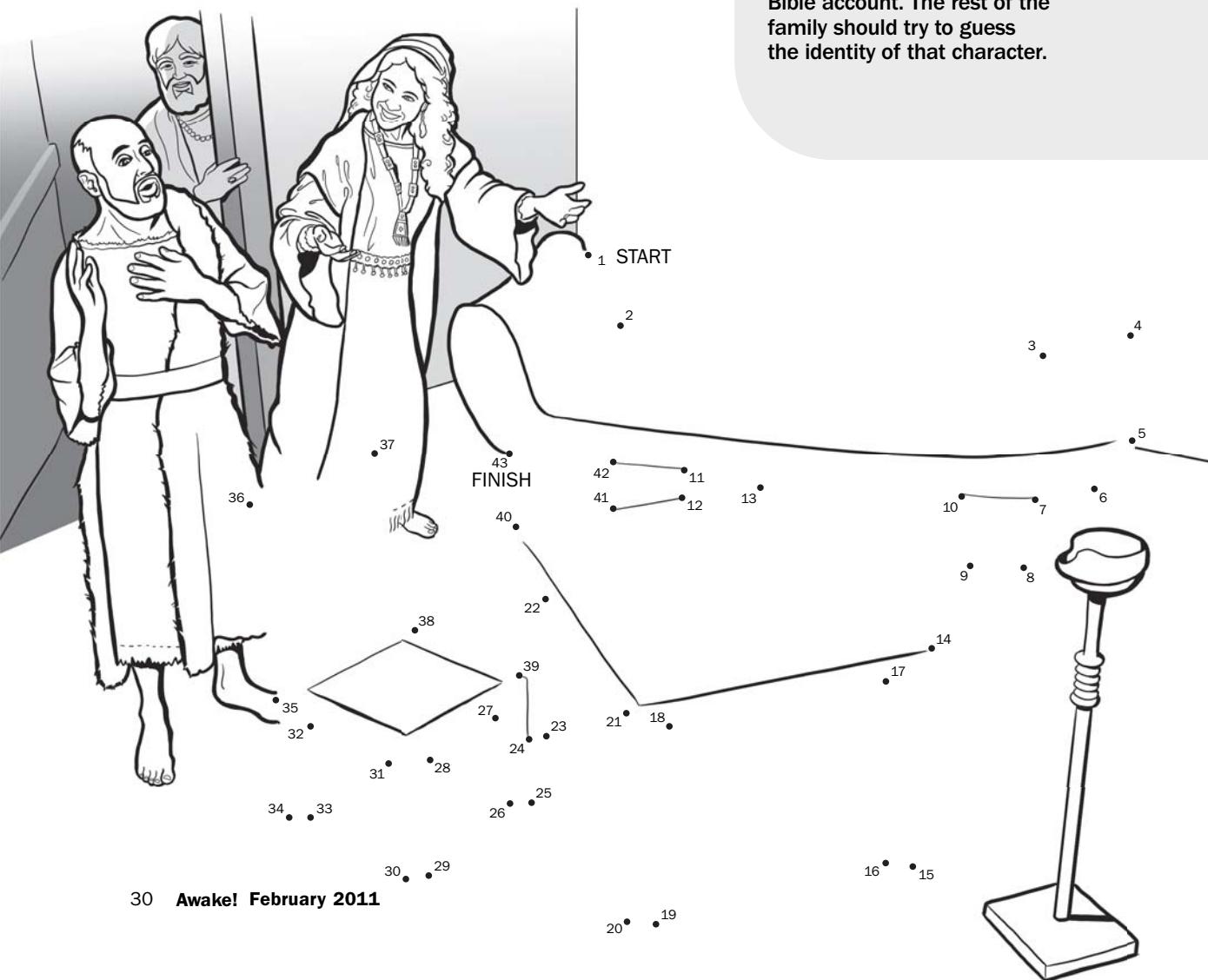
Read 2 Kings 4:8-10. Now look at the picture. What features are missing? Write your answers on the lines below. Connect the dots to complete the picture, and then color it in.

1.....

2.....

3.....

- Answers to pages 30 and 31 on page 28



FOR DISCUSSION: What kindness did this woman display? How did Jehovah bless her kind acts in support of his prophet? **CLUE:** Read 2 Kings 4:32-37. How could you show kindness to servants of Jehovah today? **CLUE:** Read Romans 12:13; Galatians 6:10.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: Without speaking, one family member could act out the part of one of the characters in the above Bible account. The rest of the family should try to guess the identity of that character.

Collect and Learn

Cut out, fold in half, and save



DANIEL

BIBLE
CARD

2



QUESTIONS

- Why was Daniel thrown into the lions' pit?
- What were the Hebrew names of Daniel's three friends?
- Under which two foreign powers did Daniel serve?



DANIEL

PROFILE Likely a prince, born into the tribe of Judah. He was a faithful prophet who was inspired to write the Bible book that bears his name. Daniel was possibly in his teens when he and other royal family members and nobles were taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and moved to Babylon.



Taken from Jerusalem to Babylon

ANSWERS

- He prayed to Jehovah although ordered not to.—Daniel 6:6-17.
- Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah.—Daniel 1:6, 7.
- Babylon and Medo-Persia.—Daniel 5:30; 6:8.

Peoples and Lands

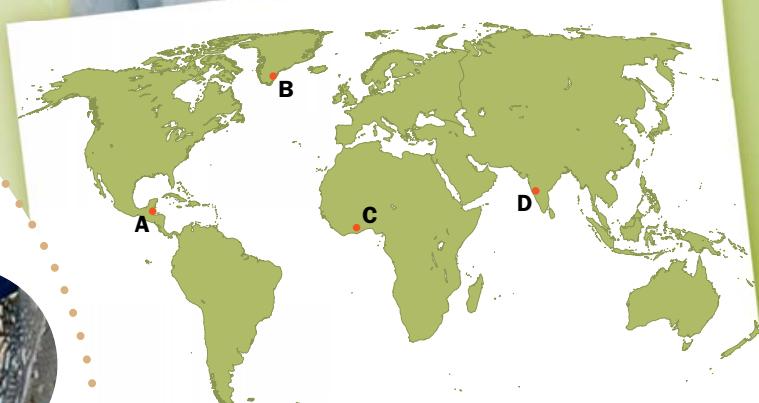
4. Our names are Jorge, Nicolas, and Priscilian. We live in Belize, which is in Central America. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Belize? Is it 600, 2,000, or 3,500?

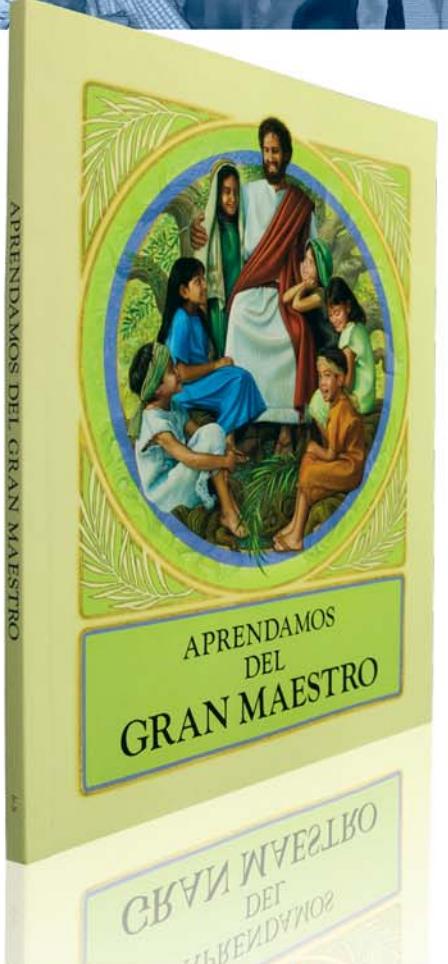
5. Which dot shows where we live? Circle it, and draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Belize.



Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.





They Are Not Too Young

● That is what a mother from California, U.S.A., wrote regarding a matter discussed in the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. She explained: “Just last week when our son Javan, aged 3, saw his pediatrician, she asked if my husband and I had discussed safety with Javan regarding private parts of the body. I was so happy to tell her about the Teacher book, which explains that it would be wrong for anyone to play with ones’ private parts. The doctor was very impressed that we had discussed this.”

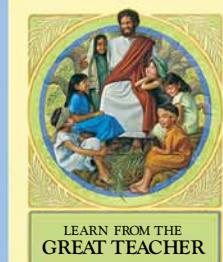
The mother added: “The way in which these things are discussed in the book is perfect.” The chapter she was referring to is entitled “How Jesus Was Protected.” It describes how Jesus’ heavenly Father protected his Son from being hurt by wicked King Herod when Jesus was too young to protect himself. (Matthew 2:7-23) The book then shows how even young children can be taught to protect themselves if someone tries to molest them.

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