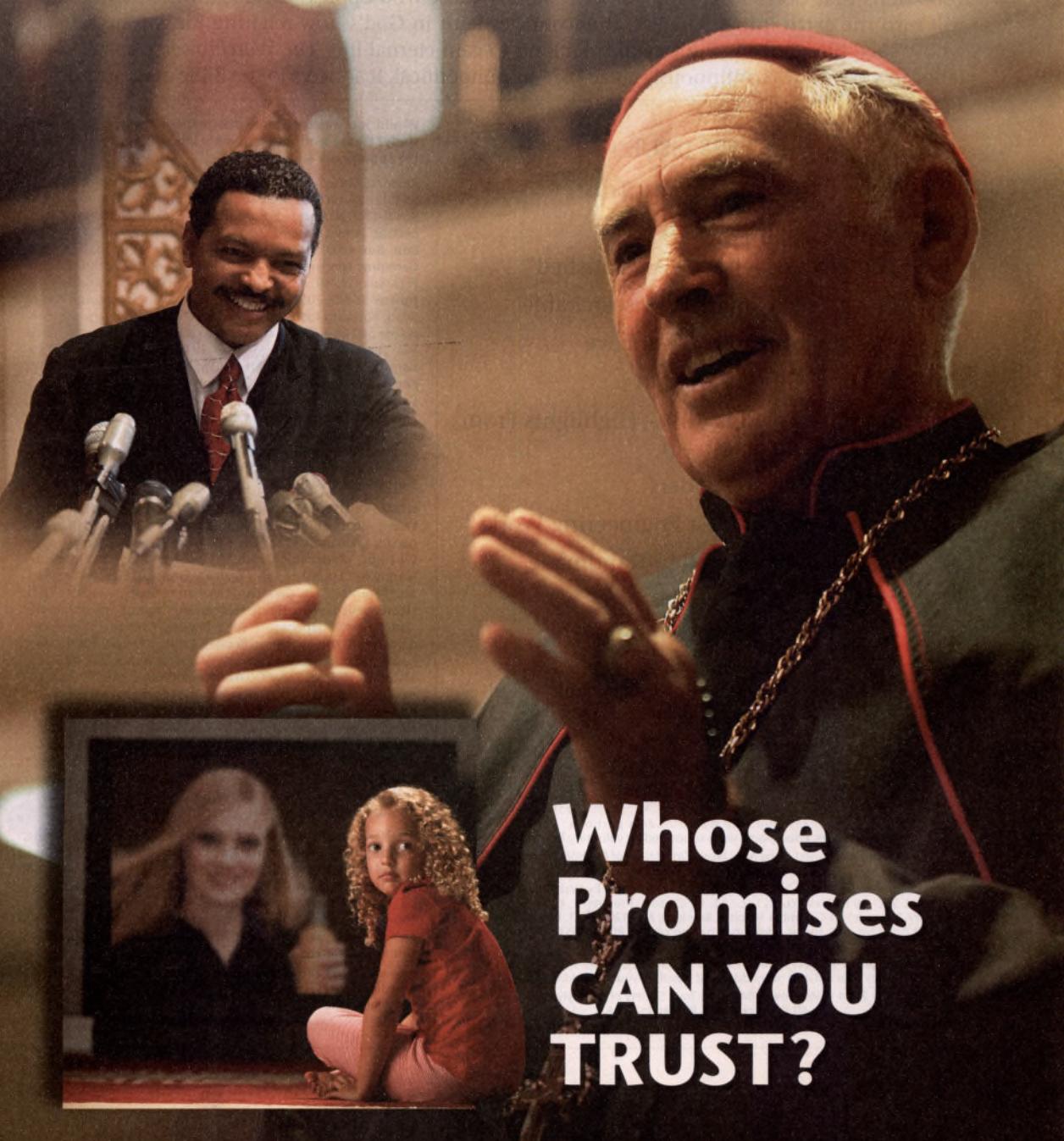


JANUARY 15, 2004

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Whose
Promises
CAN YOU
TRUST?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

January 15, 2004

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

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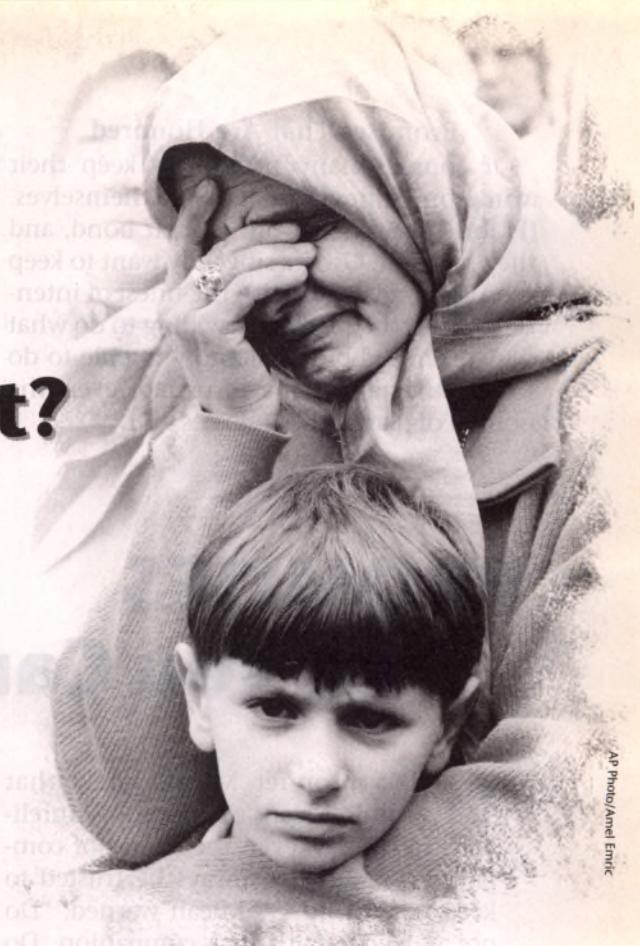
Whose PROMISES Can You Trust?

HIS promises were, as he then was, mighty; but his performance, as he is now, nothing.”—*King Henry the Eighth*, by William Shakespeare.

The mighty promises referred to by Shakespeare were those of English cardinal Thomas Wolsey, who wielded great political power in England during the 16th century. Some would say that Shakespeare’s description also fits most of the promises they hear today. Time and again, people are promised much but receive little. Hence, it is not difficult to understand why they become skeptical of *any* promises.

Disappointments Abound

During the terrible conflict in the Balkans in the 1990’s, for example, the United Nations Security Council declared the Bosnian town of Srebrenica to be “a safe area.” That appeared to be a reliable guarantee by the international community. Thousands of Muslim refugees in Srebrenica thought so. In the end, however, the promise of a safe haven meant absolutely nothing. (Psalm 146:3) In July of 1995, attacking forces simply pushed the UN forces aside and overran the town. More than 6,000 Muslims disappeared, and at least 1,200 Muslim civilians were murdered.



AP Photo/Amel Emric

Every facet of life is littered with broken promises. People feel cheated by the “countless instances of false and misleading advertising” that bombard them today. They are disillusioned by “the broken campaign promises of a thousand politicians.” (*The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, Volume 15, page 37) Trusted religious leaders who promise to care for their flocks abuse them in the vilest fashion. Even in such professions as education and medicine—supposedly governed by compassion and concern for others—some have betrayed their trust and exploited or even murdered those in their care. No wonder the Bible warns us not to put faith in every word!—Proverbs 14:15.

Promises That Are Honored

Of course, many people do keep their word, sometimes at great cost to themselves. (Psalm 15:4) Their word is their bond, and they honor it. Others sincerely want to keep promises they make with the finest of intentions. They are ready and willing to do what they promised but are simply unable to do so. Circumstances may frustrate even the noblest of plans.—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

For whatever reason, the reality is that many people do find it very difficult to put faith in *anyone's* promises. So the question arises: Are there any promises that we can trust? Yes. We can trust the promises found in God's Word, the Bible. Why not examine what the next article says on this subject? You may conclude, as millions already have, that we can really trust God's promises.

PROMISES That You Can Trust

GOD'S prophet Micah knew that promises can often prove unreliable. In his day, even the closest of companions could not always be trusted to keep their word. So Micah warned: "Do not put your faith in a companion. Do not put your trust in a confidential friend. From her who is lying in your bosom guard the openings of your mouth."—Micah 7:5.

Did Micah allow this sad situation to make him skeptical about *all* promises? No! He expressed complete confidence in the promises made by his God, Jehovah. "As for me," wrote Micah, "it is for Jehovah that I shall keep on the lookout. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation."—Micah 7:7.

Why did Micah have such confidence? Because he knew that Jehovah always keeps his word. Everything God had sworn to Micah's forefathers unfailingly came true. (Micah 7:20) Jehovah's faithfulness in the past gave Micah every rea-

Jehovah kept his promises to Israel at the Red Sea and in the wilderness



son to believe that He would keep His word in the future.

"Not One Word . . . Has Failed"

Micah knew, for example, that Jehovah delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. (Micah 7:15) Joshua, who experienced that deliverance, encouraged his fellow Israelites to have faith in all of God's promises. On what basis? "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls," Joshua reminded them, "that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed."—Joshua 23:14.

The Israelites well knew that Jehovah had done wonderful things for them. He had fulfilled his promise to their God-fearing forefather Abraham that his offspring would become as numerous as the stars and would take possession of the land of Canaan. Jehovah also told Abraham that his descendants would suffer affliction for 400 years but would return to Canaan "in the fourth generation." All of this took place.—Genesis 15:5-16; Exodus 3:6-8.

The Israelites were well received in Egypt in the days of Jacob's son Joseph. The Egyptians

later subjected them to brutal slave labor, but true to God's promise, within a period of four overlapping generations from the time they entered Egypt, these descendants of Abraham were liberated from Egyptian bondage.*

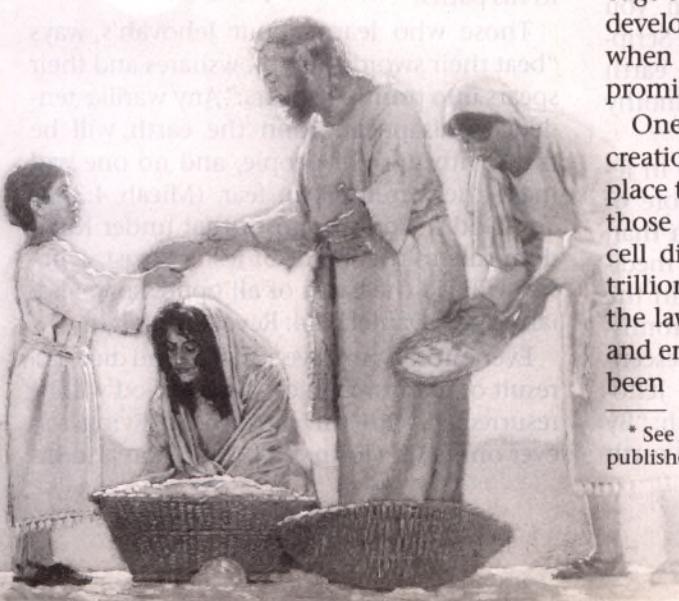
Over the next 40 years, the Israelites had further proof that Jehovah always keeps his promises. When the Amalekites launched an unprovoked attack on the Israelites, God fought for his people and protected them. He satisfied all their material needs during their 40-year trek in the wilderness and eventually settled them in the Promised Land. As Joshua reviewed the history of Jehovah's dealings with these descendants of Abraham, he could confidently say: "Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true."—Joshua 21:45.

Build Confidence in God's Promises

How can you build faith in Jehovah's promises, as Micah and Joshua did? Well, how do you develop trust in others? You get to know as much about them as you can. For instance, you may learn how dependable they are by observing that they faithfully try to fulfill all their promises. As your knowledge of such people grows, you progressively develop trust in them. You can do the same when it comes to building faith in God's promises.

One way you can do this is by reflecting on creation and the laws governing it. Scientists place their confidence in these laws, such as those that govern the way a single human cell divides and multiplies to produce the trillions of cells making up your body. In fact, the laws that govern the behavior of matter and energy in the entire universe must have been established by a totally dependable

* See *Insight on the Scriptures*, volume 1, pages 911-12, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



Lawmaker. Surely you can trust his promises, even as you have confidence in the laws governing his creation.—Psalm 139:14-16; Isaiah 40:26; Hebrews 3:4.

Through the prophet Isaiah, a contemporary of Micah, Jehovah used the regularity of the seasons and the amazing water cycle to illustrate the dependability of his word. Each year the rains came. They saturated the ground and made it possible for people to sow their seed and harvest the produce. In this regard, Jehovah said: "Just as the pouring rain descends, and the snow, from the heavens and does not return to that place, unless it actually saturates the earth and makes it produce and sprout, and seed is actually given to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it."—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

Sure Promises of Paradise

Examining creation can build trust in the Creator, but something more is needed if you want to learn about the promises that are part of the "word that goes forth from [his] mouth." To learn about these promises so that you can place your trust in them, you need to examine the divinely inspired Scriptural record of God's purpose for the earth and his dealings with mankind.—2 Timothy 3:14-17.

The prophet Micah had confidence in Jehovah's promises. You have even more of God's inspired record available to you than Micah did. As you read the Bible and meditate on it, you too can develop faith in the fulfillment of God's promises. These promises involve not simply the natural descendants of Abraham but all mankind. Jehovah promised this God-fearing patriarch: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth

will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Genesis 22:18) The primary part of the "seed," or offspring, of Abraham is the Messiah, Jesus Christ.—Galatians 3:16.

Through Jesus Christ, Jehovah will see to it that blessings flow to obedient mankind. And what has God promised to do in our time? Micah 4:1, 2 answers in these prophetic words: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, and it will certainly be lifted up above the hills; and to it

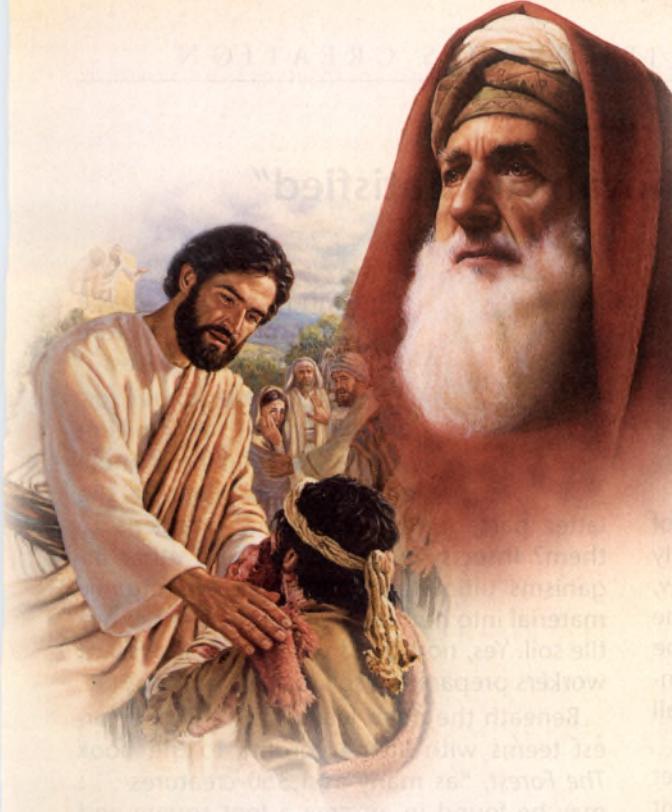
"Not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed."

—JOSHUA 23:14

peoples must stream. And many nations will certainly go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.'

Those who learn about Jehovah's ways "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears." Any warlike tendencies disappear. Soon the earth will be filled with upright people, and no one will make them tremble in fear. (Micah 4:3, 4) Yes, God's Word promises that under Kingdom rule in the hands of Jesus Christ, Jehovah will rid the earth of all oppressors.—Isaiah 11:6-9; Daniel 2:44; Revelation 11:18.

Even those who have suffered and died as a result of man's rebellion against God will be resurrected with the prospect of living forever on earth. (John 5:28, 29) Satan and his



demons, the fomenters of wickedness, will be off the scene, and the effects of Adam's sin will be removed through Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Matthew 20:28; Romans 3:23, 24; 5:12; 6:23; Revelation 20:1-3) And what will be the lot of obedient humans? Why, they will be blessed with everlasting life in perfect health on a paradise earth!—Psalm 37:10, 11; Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3-5.

What promises! But can you believe them? Of course you can. These are not the promises of humans who may have good intentions but who lack the power to carry them out. They are the promises of Almighty God, who cannot lie and who “is not slow respecting his promise.” (2 Peter 3:9; Hebrews 6:13-18) You can have complete trust in all the promises contained in the Bible, for their Source is “Jehovah the God of truth.”—Psalm 31:5.

Jehovah fulfilled his promise to Abraham. His Seed, Jesus Christ, will bring blessings to mankind



to exert efforts, am I not to set them
against you? so that we may
see whether you will believe or
not, or if you will set them to
the test. Now therefore receive the
prophets, that they may witness
against you.

"The Trees of Jehovah Are Satisfied"

HAVE you ever stood in a forest as rays of sunlight streamed between towering trees? Could you hear a rustling as a breeze passed through the leaves?—Isaiah 7:2.

In some areas of the earth during part of the year, the leaves of various trees virtually blaze with shades of red, orange, yellow, and other colors. Why, it is as though the woods are set afire! How well this fits the exclamation: "Become cheerful, you mountains, with joyful outcry, you forest and all you trees in it!"—Isaiah 44:23.*

Almost one third of the land area of planet Earth is covered by forest. In a magnificent way, the forest and the abundant life in it glorify their Designer and Creator, Jehovah God. "Praise Jehovah," sang the inspired psalmist, "you fruit trees and all you cedars."—Psalm 148:7-9.

"Trees are vital to man's existence both materially and aesthetically," states the book *The Trees Around Us*. Forests protect, sustain, and improve mankind's supplies of fresh water. Trees also purify the air. By means of the marvelous process of photosynthesis, leaf cells convert carbon dioxide, water, minerals, and sunlight into nutrients and oxygen.

The forest is a masterpiece of beauty and design. Massive trees are usually the most impressive members of the forest. Growing among them are countless ferns, mosses, vines, shrubs, and herbs. Such plants depend on the environment the trees create,



growing in their shade and absorbing moisture that the forest provides.

In some deciduous forests, up to ten million leaves may fall on a single acre of forest floor in the

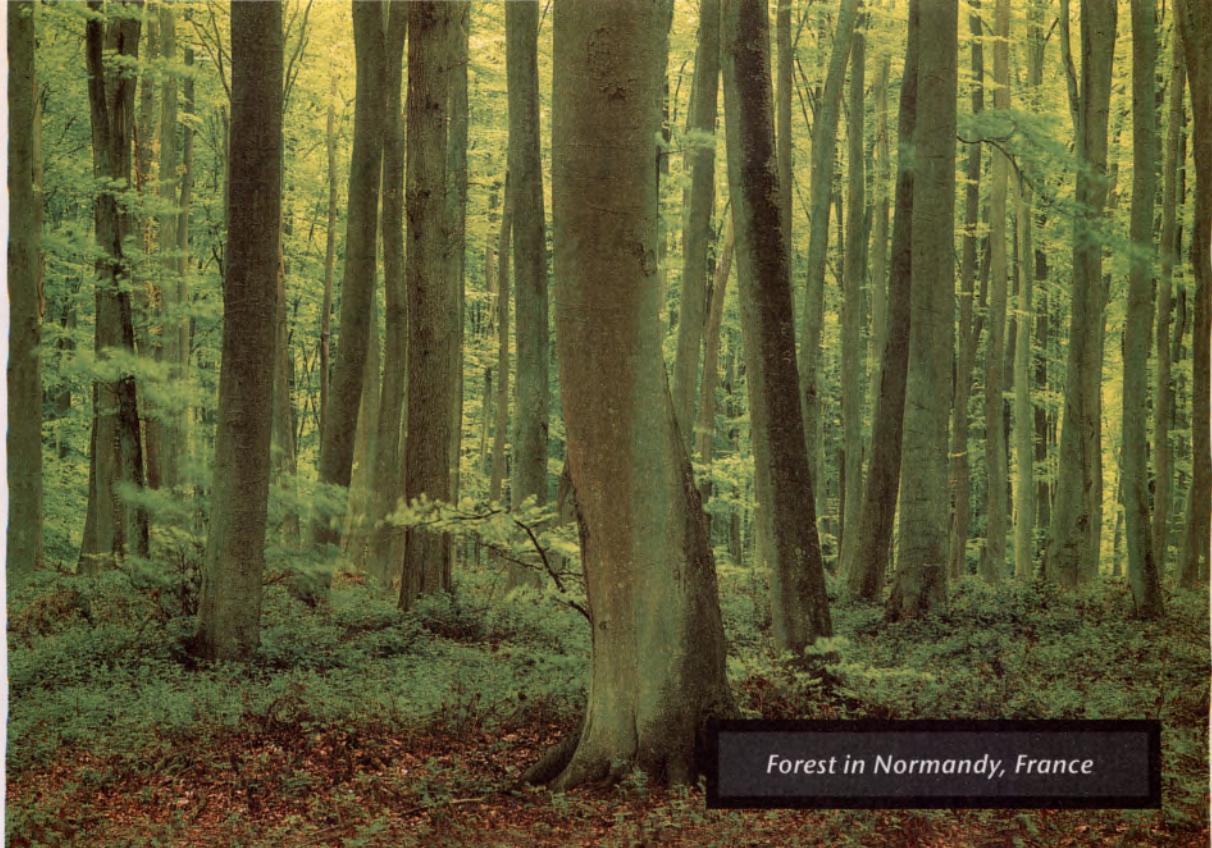
latter part of the year. What happens to them? Insects, fungi, worms, and other organisms ultimately convert all this organic material into humus, a vital ingredient of fertile soil. Yes, nothing is wasted as these silent workers prepare the soil for new growth.

Beneath the dead leaves, the soil of a forest teems with life. According to the book *The Forest*, "as many as 1,350 creatures . . . may be found in an area a foot square and an inch deep, and that does not include the billions of microscopic organisms in every handful of earth." Furthermore, the forest teems with reptiles, birds, insects, and mammals. Who should receive the credit for this beauty and variety? Appropriately, their Creator declares: "To me belongs every wild animal of the forest, the beasts upon a thousand mountains."—Psalm 50:10.

Some animals have been created with a remarkable ability to hibernate and survive the harshness of a cold winter and extended periods of food shortage. Not all animals hibernate, however. Even in the middle of winter, you may see a herd of deer bounding across a field. Deer neither hibernate nor store food, but they forage, nibbling at tender twigs and buds, as you can see in the accompanying picture from Germany.

Plant life is featured prominently in the Scriptures. According to one count, the Bi-

* See the 2004 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses, January/February.



Forest in Normandy, France



One of the most impressive fruit trees of the Middle East is the almond tree. Early in the year—well before most other trees—it

awakens from its sleep. The ancient Hebrews called the almond tree the awakening one, alluding to its early flowering. The tree virtually wakes up with its mantle of delicate pink or white blossoms.—Ecclesiastes 12:5.

Of the some 9,000 known species of birds, about 5,000 are classed as songbirds. Their songs break the silence of the deep forest. (Psalm 104:12) For instance, the song sparrow has a cheerful repertoire. Mourning warblers, like the one pictured here, are little songsters adorned in dramatic combinations of gray, yellow, and olive green.—Psalm 148:1, 10.



ble mentions close to 130 distinctive plants, including some 30 kinds of trees. Commenting on the significance of such references, botanist Michael Zohary notes: "Even in ordinary non-professional secular literature, one does not find so high a proportion of reference to plants related to various aspects of life as that which appears in the Bible."

Trees and forests are exquisite gifts from a loving Creator. If we have spent time in the woods, surely we agree with the psalmist's words: "The trees of Jehovah are satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted, where the birds themselves make nests."—Psalm 104:16, 17.

JEHOVAH'S GREATNESS IS UNSEARCHABLE

"Jehovah is great and very much to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable."

—PSALM 145:3.

THE composer of Psalm 145 is one of history's well-known men. As a boy, he faced an armed giant and killed him. And as a warrior-king, this psalmist vanquished many enemies. His name was David, and he was the second king of ancient Israel. David's reputation lived on after his death, so that even today millions know something about him.

² In spite of David's achievements, he had a humble view of himself. With reference to Jehovah, he sang: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind, and the son of earthling man that you take care of him?" (Psalm 8:3, 4) Instead of thinking that he himself was great, David ascribed deliverance from all his enemies to Jehovah and said of God: "You will give me your shield of salvation, and it is your humility that makes me great." (2 Samuel 22:1, 2, 36) Jehovah displays humility in show-

ing mercy to sinners, and David appreciated God's undeserved kindness.

'I Will Exalt God the King'

³ Although David was God's appointed king, he viewed Jehovah as the true King of Israel. Said David: "Yours is the kingdom, O Jehovah, the One also lifting yourself up as head over all." (1 Chronicles 29:11) And how David appreciated God as Ruler! "I will exalt you, O my God the King," he sang, "and I will bless your name to time indefinite, even forever. All day long I will bless you, and I will praise your name to time indefinite, even forever." (Psalm 145:1, 2) It was David's desire to praise Jehovah God throughout the day and for all eternity.

⁴ Psalm 145 is a powerful answer to Satan's claim that God is a selfish ruler who withholds freedom from his creatures. (Genesis 3:1-5) This

*The galaxies of
the universe testify to
Jehovah's greatness*

Courtesy of Anglo-Australian Observatory; photograph by David Malin

1, 2. What kind of person was David, and how did he see himself in relation to God?

3. (a) What view did David have of Israel's kingship? (b) To what extent did David desire to praise Jehovah?

4. Psalm 145 exposes what false claims?

psalm also exposes Satan's lie that those who obey God do so only for what they can get out of it, not because they love God. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5) Like David, true Christians today are supplying an answer to the Devil's false charges. They treasure their hope of everlasting life under Kingdom rule because they desire to praise Jehovah throughout eternity. Already, millions have started to do so by exercising faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice and by serving Jehovah obediently out of love as his dedicated, baptized worshipers.—Romans 5:8; 1 John 5:3.

⁵ Think of our many opportunities to bless and praise Jehovah as his servants. We can do so in prayer when we are deeply touched by something we read in his Word, the Bible. Grateful praise and thankfulness can be expressed when we are moved by God's way of dealing with his people or when we are thrilled by a certain aspect of his marvelous creation. We also bless Jehovah God when we discuss his purposes with fellow believers at Christian meetings or during private conversations. In fact, all "fine works" done in the interests of God's Kingdom bring praise to Jehovah.—Matthew 5:16.

⁶ Recent examples of such fine works include the construction of many places of worship by Jehovah's people in poverty-stricken lands. Much of this has been done with the financial assistance of fellow believers in other countries. Some Christians have provided help by voluntarily going to such areas in order to share in the construction of Kingdom Halls. And the most important of all fine works is to praise Jehovah by preaching the good news of his Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) As later verses in Psalm 145 show, David appreciated God's rulership and extolled His kingship. (Psalm 145:11, 12) Do you have

5, 6. What opportunities are there to bless and praise Jehovah?

similar appreciation for God's loving way of ruling? And do you regularly speak to others about his Kingdom?

Examples of God's Greatness

⁷ Psalm 145:3 gives a major reason for praising Jehovah. David sings: "Jehovah is great and very much to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable." Jehovah's greatness is without limits. It cannot be fully searched out, comprehended, or measured by humans. But we will certainly benefit from now considering examples of Jehovah's unsearchable greatness.

⁸ Try to recall an occasion when you were away from bright city lights and looked up into a cloudless night sky. Were you not amazed at the multitude of stars visible against the blackness of space? Were you not moved to praise Jehovah for his greatness in creating all those celestial bodies? What you saw, however, was but a tiny fraction of the number of stars in the galaxy of which the earth is a part. In addition, there are estimated to be more than a hundred billion galaxies, only three of which can be seen without the aid of a telescope. Indeed, the countless stars and galaxies that make up the immense universe are a testimony to Jehovah's creative power and unsearchable greatness.—Isaiah 40:26.

⁹ Consider other aspects of Jehovah's greatness—those involving Jesus Christ. God's greatness was shown in creating his Son and using him for aeons as His "master worker." (Proverbs 8:22-31) The greatness of Jehovah's love was manifested when he gave

7. Give a major reason to praise Jehovah.
8. What does the universe reveal as to Jehovah's greatness and power?
- 9, 10. (a) What aspects of Jehovah's greatness have been displayed in connection with Jesus Christ? (b) How should Jesus' resurrection affect our faith?

his only-begotten Son as a ransom sacrifice for mankind. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16; 1 John 2:1, 2) And far beyond human comprehension is the glorious and immortal spirit body that Jehovah fashioned for Jesus at his resurrection.—1 Peter 3:18.

¹⁰ Jesus' resurrection involved many impressive aspects of Jehovah's unsearchable greatness. God undoubtedly restored Jesus' memory regarding the work involved in the creation of both invisible and visible things. (Colossians 1:15, 16) These include other spirit creatures, the universe, the productive earth, and all forms of physical life on our globe. In addition to restoring his Son's knowledge of the complete history of heavenly and earthly life witnessed during the Son's prehuman existence, Jehovah added what Jesus had experienced as a perfect human. Yes, Jehovah's unsearchable greatness is evident in Jesus' resurrection. Moreover, that great act is a guarantee that the resurrection of others is possible. It should strengthen our faith that God can bring back to life the millions of dead people he holds within his perfect memory.—John 5:28, 29; Acts 17:31.

Wonderful Works and Mighty Acts

¹¹ Since Jesus' resurrection, Jehovah has performed many other great and wonderful works. (Psalm 40:5) At Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah brought into existence a new nation, "the Israel of God," made up of Christ's disci-

11. What great work of Jehovah got started at Pentecost 33 C.E.?

ples who were anointed by holy spirit. (Galatians 6:16) In a mighty way, this new spiritual nation expanded throughout the then known world. Despite the apostasy that led to the development of Christendom after the death of Jesus' apostles, Jehovah kept on performing wonderful works to ensure the fulfillment of his purpose.

¹² For example, the Bible canon was preserved and eventually translated into all major languages on earth today. Bible translation was often carried out under difficult circumstances and under the threat of death from Satan's agents. To be sure, Bible translation into over 2,000 languages could not have been accomplished if this had not been the will of the unsearchably great God, Jehovah!

¹³ Jehovah's greatness has been manifested in connection with his Kingdom purposes. For instance, in the year 1914, he installed his Son, Jesus Christ, as heavenly King. Shortly thereafter, Jesus took action against Satan and his demons. They were ousted from heaven and confined to the vicinity of the earth, where they now await their abyssing. (Revelation 12:9-12; 20:1-3) Since then, Jesus' anointed followers have experienced increased persecution. However, Jehovah has sustained them during this time of Christ's invisible presence.—Matthew 24:3; Revelation 12:17.

12. The fact that the Bible is available in all major languages on earth is a testimony to what?

13. Since 1914, how has Jehovah's greatness been manifested in connection with his Kingdom purposes?



How has Jehovah's greatness been manifested in connection with Jesus Christ?



¹⁴ In the year 1919, Jehovah performed another wonderful work that demonstrated his greatness. Jesus' anointed followers, who had been reduced to a state of spiritual inactivity, were revived. (Revelation 11:3-11) In the years since then, the anointed have zealously preached the good news of the established heavenly Kingdom. Other anointed ones have been gathered in order to complete the number of 144,000. (Revelation 14:1-3) And by means of Christ's anointed followers, Jehovah laid the foundation of "a new earth," a righteous human society. (Revelation 21:1) But what will happen to the "new earth" after faithful anointed ones all go to heaven?

¹⁵ In 1935, the August 1 and August 15 issues of this journal contained key articles dealing with the "great crowd," mentioned in Revelation chapter 7. Anointed Christians zealously began to seek out and bring into their association these fellow worshipers from all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues. This "great crowd" will survive the imminent "great tribulation," with the pros-

14. What wonderful work did Jehovah perform in 1919, and what did this accomplish?

15. What work have anointed Christians been spearheading, and with what results?

When the Israelites received the Law at Mount Sinai, they had evidence of Jehovah's glorious dignity

pect of eternal life in Paradise as permanent members of the "new earth." (Revelation 7:9-14) Because of the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, spearheaded by anointed Christians, over six million people now entertain the hope of endless life in an earthly paradise. Who should get the credit for such increase in the face of opposition from Satan and his corrupt world? (1 John 5:19) Only Jehovah could accomplish all of this, using his holy spirit.—Isaiah 60:22; Zechariah 4:6.

Jehovah's Glorious Splendor and Dignity

¹⁶ Whatever their nature, the "wonderful works" and "mighty acts" of Jehovah will never be forgotten. David wrote: "Generation after generation will commend your works, and about your mighty acts they will tell. The glorious splendor of your dignity and the matters of your wonderful works I will make my concern. And they will talk

16. Why can humans not literally see 'the glorious splendor of Jehovah's dignity'?

about the strength of your own fear-inspiring things; and as for your greatness, I will declare it." (Psalm 145:4-6) Yet, how much could David know about the glorious splendor of Jehovah, since "God is a Spirit" and is therefore invisible to human eyes?—John 1:18; 4:24.

¹⁷ Although he could not see God, there were ways for David to grow in appreciation for Jehovah's dignity. For instance, he could read the Scriptural record of God's mighty acts, such as the destruction of a wicked world by means of a global flood. Very likely, David noted how Egypt's false gods were humiliated as God delivered the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Such events testify to Jehovah's dignity and greatness.

¹⁸ David undoubtedly grew in appreciation for God's dignity not only by reading the Scriptures but also by meditating on them. For instance, he may have meditated on what happened when Jehovah gave the Law to Israel. There were thunders, lightnings, a heavy cloud, and a very loud sound of a horn. Mount Sinai rocked and smoked. Assembled at the foot of the mountain, the Israelites even heard "the Ten Words" from the midst of the fire and the cloud as Jehovah spoke to them through an angelic representative. (Deuteronomy 4:32-36; 5:22-24; 10:4; Exodus 19:16-20; Acts 7:38, 53) What manifestations of Jehovah's grandeur! Lovers of

17, 18. How could David grow in appreciation of 'the glorious splendor of Jehovah's dignity'?

How Would You Answer?

- What opportunities are there to praise Jehovah "all day long"?
- What examples show that Jehovah's greatness is unsearchable?
- How can we grow in appreciation for Jehovah's glorious dignity?

God's Word who meditate on these accounts cannot help but be moved by 'the glorious splendor of Jehovah's dignity.' Today, of course, we have the whole Bible, which contains various glorious visions that impress us with Jehovah's greatness.—Ezekiel 1:26-28; Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation, chapter 4.

¹⁹ Another way that David could have been impressed with God's dignity was by studying the laws God gave to the Israelites. (Deuteronomy 17:18-20; Psalm 19:7-11) Obedience to Jehovah's laws dignified the nation of Israel and set it apart from all other peoples. (Deuteronomy 4:6-8) As was true in David's case, reading the Scriptures regularly, meditating on them deeply, and studying them diligently will increase our appreciation for Jehovah's dignity.

How Great God's Moral Qualities!

²⁰ As we have noted, the first six verses of Psalm 145 give us sound reasons to praise Jehovah for things associated with his unsearchable greatness. Verses 7 to 9 magnify God's greatness by referring to his moral qualities. David sings: "With the mention of the abundance of your goodness they will bubble over, and because of your righteousness they will cry out joyfully. Jehovah is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in loving-kindness. Jehovah is good to all, and his mercies are over all his works."

²¹ Here David first highlights Jehovah's goodness and righteousness—qualities called into question by Satan the Devil. What effect do these qualities have on all who love God and submit to his rulership? Why, Jehovah's goodness and his righteous way of ruling

19. What will increase our appreciation for Jehovah's dignity?

20, 21. (a) Psalm 145:7-9 magnifies Jehovah's greatness in connection with what qualities? (b) What effect do God's qualities mentioned here have on all who love him?

bring such joy to his worshipers that they cannot stop bubbling forth his praise. Moreover, Jehovah's goodness extends "to all." Hopefully, this will help many more to repent and become worshipers of the true God before it is too late.—Acts 14:15-17.

²² David also appreciated the qualities that God himself highlighted when He "went passing by before [Moses'] face and declaring: 'Jehovah, Jehovah, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.' " (Exodus 34:6) Thus, David could declare: "Jehovah is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and great in loving-kindness." Though Jehovah is un-

22. How does Jehovah treat his servants?

searchably great, he dignifies his human servants by treating them graciously. He is full of mercy, willing to forgive repentant sinners on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Jehovah is also slow to anger, for he grants his servants opportunity to overcome weaknesses that could bar them from his new world of righteousness.—2 Peter 3:9, 13, 14.

²³ David extols God's loving-kindness, or loyal love. In fact, the rest of Psalm 145 shows how Jehovah displays this quality and how his loyal servants respond to his loving-kindness. These matters will be discussed in the next article.

23. What precious quality will we consider in the next article?

JEHOVAH IS GREAT IN LOYAL LOVE

"Jehovah is . . . great in loving-kindness."—PSALM 145:8.

GOD is love." (1 John 4:8) That heartwarming phrase proves that Jehovah's way of ruling is based on love. Why, even humans who do not obey him benefit from the sun and rain that he lovingly provides! (Matthew 5:44, 45) Because of God's love for the world of mankind, even his ene-

1. How far-reaching is God's love?

mies can repent, turn to him, and attain to life. (John 3:16) Soon, however, Jehovah will sweep away the incorrigibly wicked so that humans who love him can enjoy everlasting life in a righteous new world.—Psalm 37:9-11, 29; 2 Peter 3:13.

² Jehovah shows love for his true worshippers in a precious, lasting way. Such love is denoted by a Hebrew word translated "loving-kindness," or "loyal love." King David of ancient Israel deeply appreciated God's loving-kindness. Because of his personal experience and his meditation on God's dealings with others, David could confidently

2. What special aspect of love does Jehovah show for those who are in a dedicated relationship with him?



sing: "Jehovah is . . . great in loving-kindness [or, "loyal love"]."—Psalm 145:8.

Identifying God's Loyal Ones

³ Regarding Jehovah God, the prophet Samuel's mother, Hannah, said: "The feet of his loyal ones he guards." (1 Samuel 2:9) Who are such "loyal ones"? King David supplies the answer. After extolling Jehovah's marvelous qualities, he states: "Your loyal ones will bless you." (Psalm 145:10) You may wonder how humans can bless God. They do so primarily by praising him or by speaking well of him.

⁴ Jehovah's loyal ones can be identified as those who use their mouths to speak well of him. In social settings and at Christian meetings, what is a common theme of their discussions? Why, it is Jehovah's Kingdom! God's loyal servants share the sentiments of David, who sang: "About the glory of your [Jehovah's] kingship they will talk, and about your mightiness they will speak."—Psalm 145:11.

⁵ Does Jehovah take note when his loyal ones praise him? Yes, he pays attention to what they say. In a prophecy relating to true worship in our day, Malachi wrote: "At that time those in fear of Jehovah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Jehovah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance began to be written up before him for those in fear of Jehovah and for those thinking upon his name." (Malachi 3:16) It pleases Jehovah very much when his loyal ones speak well of him, and he remembers them.

⁶ Jehovah's loyal servants can also be iden-

3, 4. (a) How does Psalm 145 help us to identify Jehovah's loyal ones? (b) How do God's loyal ones "bless" him?

5. How do we know that Jehovah takes note when his loyal ones speak well of him?

6. What activity helps us to identify God's loyal ones?



God's loyal ones take delight in discussing his mighty acts

tified by their courage and initiative in speaking to people who are not worshipers of the true God. Indeed, God's loyal ones "make known to the sons of men his mighty acts and the glory of the splendor of his kingship." (Psalm 145:12) Do you seek and take full advantage of opportunities to speak to strangers about Jehovah's kingship? Unlike human governments, which will soon pass away, his kingship is eternal. (1 Timothy 1:17) It is urgent that people learn about Jehovah's everlasting kingship and take their stand as its supporters. "Your kingship is a kingship for all times indefinite," sang David, "and your dominion is throughout all successive generations."—Psalm 145:13.

⁷ Since 1914, there has been added reason to speak about Jehovah's kingship. In that year, God established the heavenly Messianic Kingdom with Jesus Christ, the Son of David, as King. Jehovah thus fulfilled his promise that David's kingship would be firmly established to time indefinite.—2 Samuel 7:12, 13; Luke 1:32, 33.

⁸ Proof that Jehovah now reigns through the Kingdom of his Son, Jesus Christ, is seen in the ongoing fulfillment of the sign of Jesus' presence. The most outstanding fea-

7, 8. What happened in 1914, and what proof is there that God now reigns through the Kingdom of his Son?



Jehovah's servants courageously help strangers to learn about the glory of his kingship

ture of that sign is the work Jesus foretold for all of God's loyal ones when he said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:3-14) Because God's loyal ones are zealously fulfilling that prophecy, over six million men, women, and children are now sharing in this grand, never-to-be-repeated work. Soon the end will come for all opposers of Jehovah's Kingdom.—Revelation 11:15, 18.

Benefiting From Jehovah's Sovereignty

⁹ If we are dedicated Christians, our relationship with the Sovereign Lord Jehovah brings us many benefits. (Psalm 71:5; 116:12) Because we fear God and practice righ-

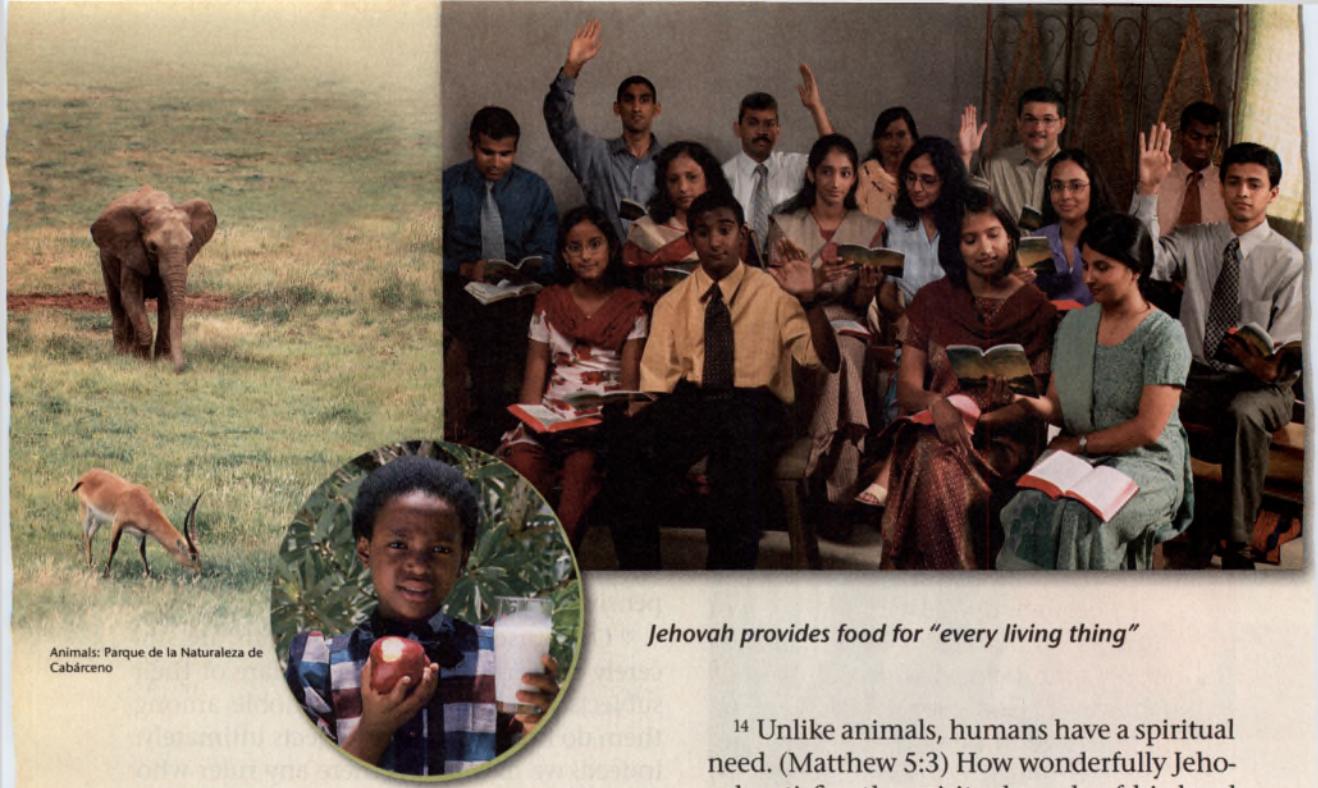
9, 10. What contrast is there between Jehovah and human rulers?

teousness, for instance, we enjoy his approval and are spiritually close to him. (Acts 10:34, 35; James 4:8) By contrast, human rulers are often seen in the company of prominent people, such as military leaders, wealthy businessmen, or sports and entertainment celebrities. According to the African newspaper *Sowetan*, a prominent government official said the following about poverty-stricken areas in his land: "I understand when most of us do not want to go to such areas. It is simply because we want to forget that such situations exist. It pricks our conscience and we are embarrassed by the expensive [automobiles] we drive."

¹⁰ Of course, some human rulers are sincerely concerned about the welfare of their subjects. But even the most noble among them do not know their subjects intimately. Indeed, we may ask: Is there any ruler who cares for *all* his subjects so much that he quickly comes to the aid of each one in times of trouble? Yes, there is. David wrote: "Jehovah is giving support to all who are falling, and is raising up all who are bowed down."—Psalm 145:14.

¹¹ Many trials and calamities befall Jehovah God's loyal ones because of their own imperfection and because they live in a world that is lying in the power of Satan, "the wicked one." (1 John 5:19; Psalm 34:19) Christians experience persecution. Some suffer from chronic illness or because of bereavement. At times, the mistakes of Jehovah's loyal ones may cause them to 'bow down' in discouragement. Whatever trial befalls them, however, Jehovah is always ready to give comfort and spiritual strength to each one of them. The King Jesus Christ has the same loving interest in his loyal subjects.—Psalm 72:12-14.

11. What trials befall God's loyal ones, and what help do they have?



Animals: Parque de la Naturaleza de Cabárceno

Satisfying Food in Season

¹² Out of his great loving-kindness, Jehovah provides for all the needs of his servants. This includes satisfying them with nourishing food. King David wrote: "To you [Jehovah] the eyes of all look hopefully, and you are giving them their food in its season. You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing." (Psalm 145:15, 16) Even in times of calamity, Jehovah can maneuver matters so that his loyal ones get "bread for the day."—Luke 11:3; 12:29, 30.

¹³ David mentioned that "every living thing" gets satisfied. That includes the animals. If it were not for earth's abundant vegetation of the land and plants of the sea, aquatic creatures, birds, and land animals would have no oxygen to breathe or food to eat. (Psalm 104:14) However, Jehovah sees to it that all their needs are satisfied.

12, 13. How well does Jehovah provide for the needs of "every living thing"?

Jehovah provides food for "every living thing"

¹⁴ Unlike animals, humans have a spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) How wonderfully Jehovah satisfies the spiritual needs of his loyal ones! Before his death, Jesus promised that "the faithful and discreet slave" would provide Jesus' followers with spiritual "food at the proper time." (Matthew 24:45) The remnant of the 144,000 anointed ones make up that slave class today. Through them, Jehovah has indeed provided spiritual food in abundance.

¹⁵ For example, most of Jehovah's people now benefit from a fresh and accurate translation of the Bible in their own language. What a marvelous blessing the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* has been! Moreover, millions of Bible study aids continue to be published in over 300 languages. All this spiritual food has been a blessing to true worshipers around the earth. Who deserves the credit for all of this? Jehovah God. By his great loving-kindness, he has made it possible for the slave class to provide "food in its season." Through such provisions,

14, 15. How is spiritual food being provided today?

"the desire of every living thing" in the present-day spiritual paradise gets satisfied. And how Jehovah's servants rejoice in the hope of soon seeing the earth transformed into a physical paradise!—Luke 23:42, 43.

¹⁶ Consider a striking example of spiritual food received in the right season. During 1939, World War II started in Europe. In that same year, the November 1 issue of *The Watchtower* contained an article entitled "Neutrality." As a result of the clear information presented, Jehovah's Witnesses around the world saw the need to maintain strict neutrality in the affairs of the warring nations. This brought upon them the wrath of governments on both sides of that six-year conflict. Despite being banned and persecuted, however, God's loyal ones kept on preaching the good news of the Kingdom. From 1939 to 1946, they were blessed with an amazing increase of 157 percent. Moreover, their striking record of integrity during that war continues to help people to identify the true religion.—Isaiah 2:2-4.

¹⁷ The spiritual food that Jehovah provides is not only timely but also richly satisfying. While the nations were in the thick of battle during World War II, Jehovah's people were helped to focus on something far more important than their own salvation. Jehovah helped them to understand that the primary issue, involving the whole universe, relates to Jehovah's rightful sovereignty. How satisfying it is to know that by their loyalty each Witness of Jehovah had a small part in the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty and in proving the Devil to be a liar! (Proverbs 27:11) Unlike Satan, who slanders Jehovah and his way of ruling, Jehovah's loyal ones con-

tinued to declare publicly: "Jehovah is righteous in all his ways."—Psalm 145:17.

¹⁸ Another example of timely, satisfying spiritual food is the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*, which was released at hundreds of "Zealous Kingdom Proclaimers" District Conventions held around the world in 2002/03. This book, produced by "the faithful and discreet slave" and published by Jehovah's Witnesses, focuses on Jehovah God's marvelous qualities, including those mentioned in Psalm 145. This fine book will surely play an important role in helping God's loyal ones to draw even closer to him.

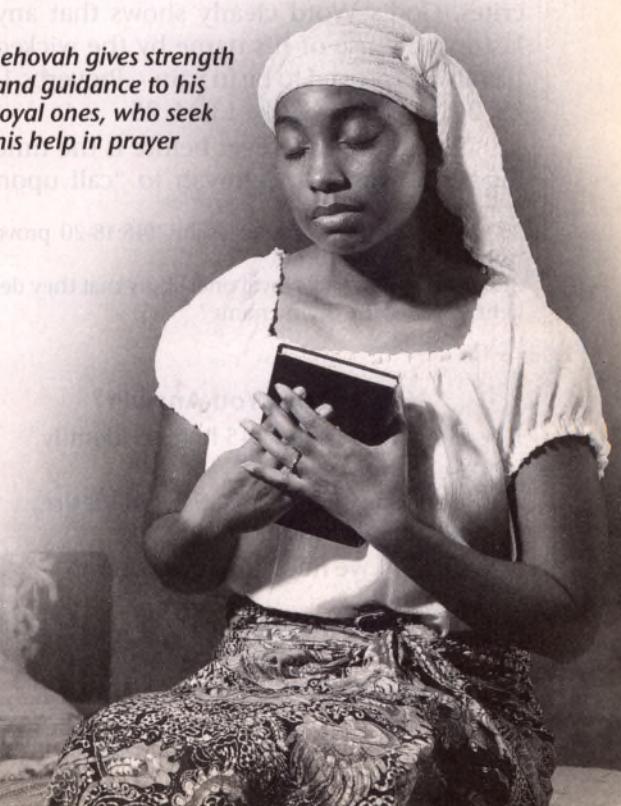
A Time to Draw Closer to Jehovah

¹⁹ A crucial stage in settling the issue of Jehovah's sovereignty is drawing near. As

18. What recent example is there of spiritual food that is both timely and richly satisfying?

19. What crucial time draws near, and how can we deal with it?

Jehovah gives strength and guidance to his loyal ones, who seek his help in prayer



16, 17. (a) What examples are there of spiritual food that came in the right season? (b) How does Psalm 145 express the feelings of God's loyal ones regarding the primary issue raised by Satan?

foretold in Ezekiel chapter 38, Satan will soon complete his role as "Gog of the land of Magog." This will involve a worldwide attack on Jehovah's people. It will be an all-out attempt on the part of Satan to break the integrity of God's loyal ones. As never before, worshipers of Jehovah will need to call upon him earnestly, even crying for help. Will their reverential fear of God and love for him prove to be in vain? No, indeed, for Psalm 145 says: "Jehovah is near to all those calling upon him, to all those who call upon him in trueness. The desire of those fearing him he will perform, and their cry for help he will hear, and he will save them. Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate."—Psalm 145:18-20.

²⁰ How thrilling it will be to experience Jehovah's nearness and his saving power when he annihilates all the wicked! At that crucial time now so near, Jehovah will listen only to "those who call upon him in trueness." He certainly will not listen to hypocrites. God's Word clearly shows that any last-minute use of his name by the wicked has always proved to be in vain.—Proverbs 1:28, 29; Micah 3:4; Luke 13:24, 25.

²¹ Now more than ever before is the time for those who fear Jehovah to "call upon

20. How will the words of Psalm 145:18-20 prove true in the near future?

21. How do Jehovah's loyal ones show that they delight in using the divine name?

How Would You Answer?

- How does Psalm 145 help to identify God's loyal ones?
- How does Jehovah 'satisfy the desire of every living thing'?
- Why do we need to draw closer to Jehovah?

him in trueness." His loyal ones delight to use his name in their prayers and in the comments they make at their meetings. They use the divine name in private conversations. And they courageously declare Jehovah's name in their public ministry.—Romans 10:10, 13-15.

²² To continue benefiting from our close relationship with Jehovah God, it is also vital that we keep on resisting such spiritually detrimental things as materialism, unwholesome entertainment, an unforgiving spirit, or indifference toward needy ones. (1 John 2:15-17; 3:15-17) If not corrected, such pursuits and traits can result in the practice of serious sin and the eventual loss of Jehovah's approval. (1 John 2:1, 2; 3:6) It is the course of wisdom to bear in mind that Jehovah will continue to show loving-kindness, or loyal love, toward us only if we remain faithful to him.—2 Samuel 22:26.

²³ Let us therefore keep our thoughts centered on the grand future that awaits all of Jehovah's loyal ones. By doing so, we have the wonderful prospect of being included among those who will exalt, bless, and praise Jehovah "all day long" and "even forever." (Psalm 145:1, 2) May we therefore 'keep ourselves in God's love with everlasting life in view.' (Jude 20, 21) As we continue to benefit from our heavenly Father's marvelous qualities, including the great loving-kindness he displays toward those who love him, may our sentiments always be like those expressed by David in the final words of Psalm 145: "The praise of Jehovah my mouth will speak; and let all flesh bless his holy name to time indefinite, even forever."

22. Why is it vital to keep resisting worldly attitudes and desires?

23. What grand future awaits all of God's loyal ones?

Give God Glory

NOT MAN

IN RECENT months, lovers of righteousness around the globe learned how to give glory to God as they convened at the "Give God Glory" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. Let us review the educational program presented there.

The Bible-based program ran for three consecutive days for most conventioners and four days for those who were able to attend the special international gatherings. In all, the attendees heard more than 30 Scriptural parts, including talks that deepened spiritual appreciation, experiences that strengthened faith, demonstrations that highlighted practical use of Bible principles, and a full-costume drama that depicted challenges faced by first-century Christians. If you attended one of the conventions, why not review your notes as you read this article? We are sure that it will bring back fond memories of a rich spiritual feast and be instructive as well.

Day One Theme: "You Are Worthy, Jehovah, . . . to Receive the Glory"

After an opening song and prayer, the first speaker warmly welcomed all in attendance with a talk focusing on the main reason for the convention: "Assembled to Glorify God." Quoting from Revelation 4:11, the speaker emphasized the convention's overall theme. He quickly got to the point of what it means to give God glory. Using the book of Psalms, he emphasized that glorifying God involves "worship," "thanksgiving,"



and "praise."—Psalm 95:6; 100:4, 5; 111:1, 2.

The next part was entitled "Blessed Are Those Who Give Glory to God." An interesting observation was made by the speaker. Since more than six million of Jehovah's Witnesses are in 234 lands around the globe, it can be said that the sun never sets on those bringing glory to Jehovah. (Revelation 7:15) An interview of a number of Christian brothers and sisters who are in some form of special full-time service was an appreciated feature of this part that warmed the hearts of the audience.

"Creation Declares the Glory of God" was the next talk. Though silent, the physical heavens magnify God's greatness and help us deepen our appreciation for his loving

care. This was explained in careful detail.—Isaiah 40:26.

Persecution, opposition, worldly influences, and sinful tendencies challenge the integrity of true Christians. Hence, the talk "Walk in the Way of Integrity" warranted rapt attention by the audience. A verse-by-verse discussion of the 26th Psalm ensued, along with interviews of a school-age Witness who had stood firm for morality and another who had been spending too much time with dubious entertainment but who had taken steps to overcome the problem.

The keynote address, "Glorious Prophetic Visions Spur Us On!" ended the morning program. The speaker cited the examples of the prophet Daniel and the apostles John and Peter as those whose faith was invigorated by glorious prophetic visions pertaining to the establishment and operation of God's Messianic Kingdom. With reference to any who may have lost sight of the clear evidence proving that we are in the time of the end, the speaker said: "We sincerely hope that such ones will again focus on the reality of Christ's presence in Kingdom glory and will be helped to recover spiritual strength."

The afternoon program began with a discourse entitled "Jehovah's Glory Revealed to Humble Ones." The speaker showed how Jehovah sets the example in humility, even though he is the highest Person in the universe. (Psalm 18:35) Jehovah favors those who are genuinely humble, but he opposes those who appear humble only when dealing with either their peers or their superiors but then deal harshly with those under their supervision.—Psalm 138:6.

Next, Bible prophecy was featured in a symposium highlighting different aspects of the central theme: "The Prophecy of Amos—Its Message for Our Day." Pointing to the example of Amos, the first speaker drew attention to the responsibility we have to warn

people of Jehovah's coming judgment. The theme of his talk was "Speak God's Word With Boldness." The second speaker posed the question: "Will Jehovah ever put an end to wickedness and suffering on this earth?" His part, "Divine Judgment Against the Wicked," showed that divine judgment is always deserved, is inescapable, and is selective. The final symposium speaker gave attention to the theme "Jehovah Examines the Heart." Those who yearn to please Jehovah will heed the words at Amos 5:15: "Hate what is bad, and love what is good."

Alcoholic beverages, such as wine that makes the heart rejoice, can be misused. In his talk "Avoid the Snare of Alcohol Abuse," the speaker listed the physical and spiritual dangers of immoderate use of alcohol, even if a person does not get drunk. He gave a guiding principle: Since alcohol tolerance varies from person to person, any amount that impairs your "practical wisdom and thinking ability" is too much for you.—Proverbs 3:21, 22.

Since we are living in critical times, the next topic, "Jehovah, Our 'Fortress in Times of Distress,'" proved comforting. Prayer, holy spirit, and fellow Christians can help us cope.

The final talk of the day, "'The Good Land'—Foregleam of Paradise," concluded with a joyous surprise for all—a new publication with many Bible maps! It is entitled *See the Good Land*.

Day Two Theme: "Declare Among the Nations His Glory"

After consideration of the daily text, the second symposium of the convention was presented, with the theme "Reflect Like Mirrors the Glory of Jehovah." The first part elaborated on "Spreading the Good News Everywhere" and included reenactments of actual field service experiences. The second



International Conventions

talk included a demonstration of a return visit as the speaker presented the theme "Removing the Veil From Those Blinded." The last part, entitled "Doing So More Fully in Our Ministry," was enhanced by interesting interviews involving field experiences.

The next segment of the program was entitled "Hated Without Cause." It included powerful interviews of faithful individuals who in God's strength maintained integrity under opposition.

A greatly anticipated feature of conventions is the baptism talk followed by a complete immersion in water of all candidates who qualify. Water baptism symbolizes a person's total dedication to Jehovah. Hence, the subject matter was most fitting: "Living Up to Our Dedication Glorifies God."

Missionaries related faith-strengthening experiences

International conventions of four days in length were held in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and North and South America. Designated Witnesses from around the world were invited to be delegates at these gatherings. In this way there was an "interchange of encouragement" between the visitors and their hosts. (Romans 1:12) Old acquaintances were renewed, and new ones made. A special feature of the international conventions was the part on the program entitled "Reports From Other Lands."



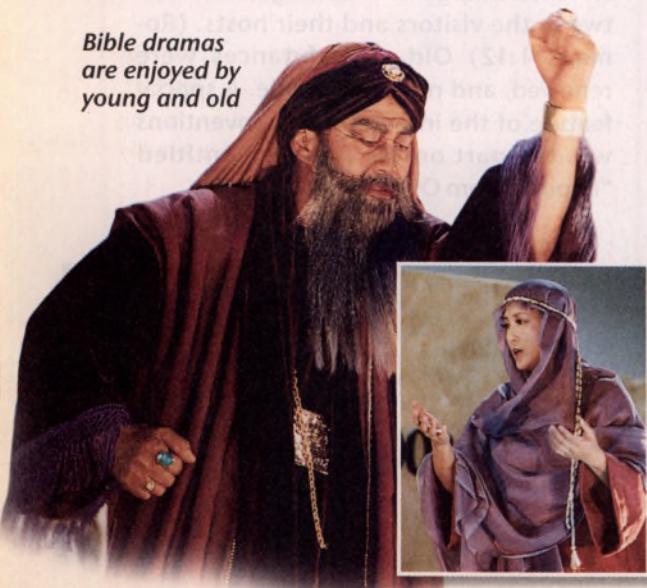


Baptism was an important feature of the "Give God Glory" conventions

The afternoon program began with a talk that encouraged self-examination, "Cultivating a Christlike View of Greatness." The speaker brought out this interesting point: Greatness comes from imitating the humility of Christ. Thus, a Christian should not seek responsibility in order to satisfy personal ambition. He should ask himself, 'Am I willing to perform helpful tasks that will not be readily noticed?'

Do you ever feel tired? The answer is obvious. The talk "Tired but Not Tiring Out" was appreciated by all. The interviews of longtime Witnesses showed that Jehovah can make us "mighty... through his spirit." —Ephesians 3:16.

Bible dramas are enjoyed by young and old



Generosity is a quality that we do not have from birth but that must be learned. This key point was brought out in the part "Be Liberal, Ready to Share." And this thought-provoking question was raised: "Are we ready to share some minutes of our day with brothers and sisters who are elderly, ill, depressed, or lonely?"

"Beware of 'the Voice of Strangers'" captured the audience's attention. This talk compared the followers of Jesus to sheep who listen only to his voice as "the fine shepherd" and who do not listen to "the voice of strangers" as uttered through the many agencies influenced by the Devil. —John 10:5, 14, 27.

A choir must sing in unison to be understood. In order to glorify God, true worshippers around the world must be united. Hence, "Glorify God 'With One Mouth'" gave beneficial instruction on how we all can speak the one "pure language" and serve Jehovah "shoulder to shoulder." —Zephaniah 3:9.

Parents, particularly those with young children, were thoroughly delighted with the last talk of the day, "Our Children—A Precious Inheritance." A new 256-page publication was released, pleasantly surprising the audience. *Learn From the Great Teacher* is a book that will help parents to spend spiritually rewarding time with their children, God's gift to them.

Day Three Theme: "Do All Things for God's Glory"

The daily text reminders started the concluding day of the convention on a spiritual note. The first section of this day's program gave extra attention to the family arrangement. The first talk, "Parents, Build Up the Family Circle," set the tone. After reviewing the responsibilities of parents to provide materially for their family, the speaker proved

that the parents' primary responsibility is to provide for their children spiritually.

The following speaker addressed children and examined the subject "How Youths Are Praising Jehovah." He said that young ones are like "dewdrops" because they are numerous and their youthful zeal is refreshing. Adults are happy to work with them in Jehovah's service. (Psalm 110:3) This part included delightful interviews with exemplary young people.

Full-costume Bible dramas are always an exciting feature of district conventions, and this convention was no exception. The drama "Boldly Witnessing Despite Opposition" depicted first-century followers of Jesus. It was not just entertaining but, more important, instructive. The discourse that followed the drama, "Declare the Good News 'Without Letup,'" drove home the salient points of the drama.

All in attendance were looking forward to a highlight of Sunday's program, the public

talk, "Who Are Giving God Glory Today?" The speaker documented how the scientific and religious communities in general have not glorified God. It is only the people for his name, those preaching and teaching the truth about Jehovah, who are truly glorifying his name today.

The public discourse was followed by a summary of the *Watchtower* magazine's lesson for that week. Then came the final talk, "Keep Bearing Much Fruit" to Jehovah's Glory." The speaker presented a ten-point resolution for all in attendance to adopt. It centered on various ways that glory can be given to Jehovah, the Creator. A unanimous "Aye" traveled through all the conventions from one end of the earth to the other.

The convention thus closed with the theme "Give God Glory" ringing in the ears of each attendee. And with the help of Jehovah's spirit and the visible part of his organization, may we always seek to give God glory and not men.

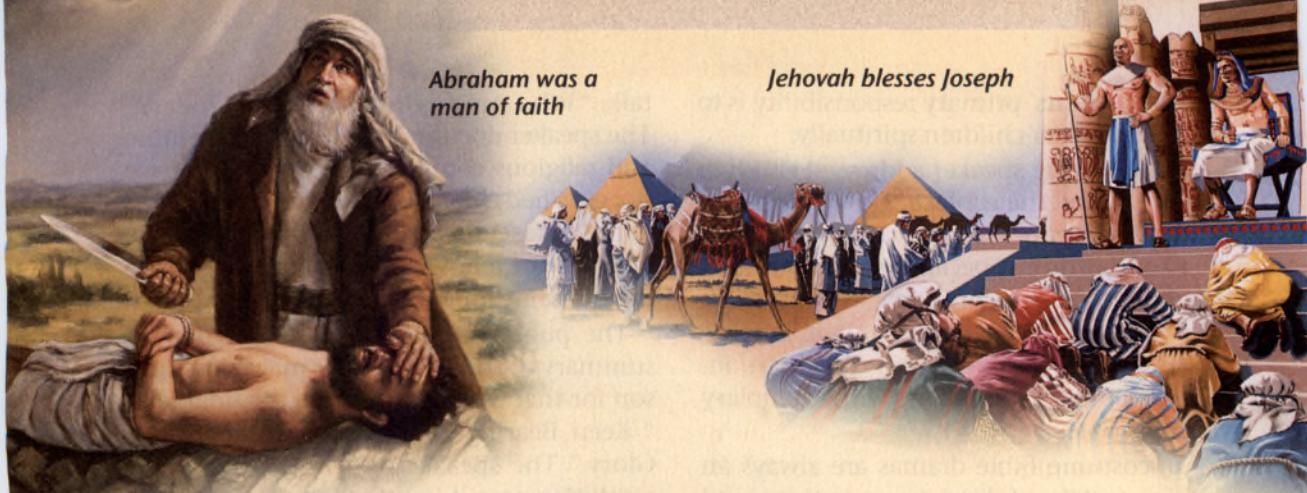
New Publications That Give God Glory



Two new publications were released at the "Give God Glory" District Conventions. The Bible atlas *See the Good Land* has a durable cover and 36 pages of maps and photographs of Biblical sites. Every page is in full color and has maps of the empires of Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. There are separate maps that cover Jesus' ministry and the expansion of Christianity.



Learn From the Great Teacher is a 256-page book with some 230 pictures. Many enjoyable sessions can be spent with children simply looking at the pictures and answering thought-provoking questions found in the book. This new publication is designed to counteract Satan's attack on our young ones, which is aimed at corrupting their morals.



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Genesis—II

FROM the creation of the first man, Adam, to the death of Jacob's son Joseph, Genesis covers 2,369 years of human history. The first 10 chapters as well as 9 verses of the 11th chapter, covering the account from creation to the tower of Babel, were discussed in the preceding issue of this magazine.* This article considers highlights from the remainder of Genesis, pertaining to God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

ABRAHAM BECOMES GOD'S FRIEND (Genesis 11:10–23:20)

Some 350 years after the Flood, a man who proves to be very special to God is born in the

line of descent of Noah's son Shem. His name is Abram, later changed to Abraham. At God's command, Abram leaves the Chaldean city of Ur and becomes a tent dweller in a land that Jehovah promises to give to him and his descendants. Because of his faith and obedience, Abraham comes to be called "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:23.

Jehovah takes action against the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and its nearby cities, while Lot and his daughters are preserved alive. A promise of God is fulfilled in the birth of Abraham's son Isaac. Years later, Abraham's faith is tested when Jehovah instructs him to offer this son as a sacrifice. Abraham is ready to obey but is stopped by an angel. There is no doubt that Abraham is a man of faith, and he is assured that by means of his seed, all nations will bless themselves. The death of his beloved wife, Sarah, brings much sorrow to Abraham.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

12:1-3—When did the Abrahamic covenant go into effect, and for how long? Jeho-



Righteous Lot and his daughters were preserved

vah's covenant with Abram that "all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of [Abram]" apparently went into effect when Abram crossed the Euphrates on his way to Canaan. This must have been on Nisan 14, 1943 B.C.E.—430 years before Israel was delivered from Egypt. (Exodus 12:2, 6, 7, 40, 41) The Abrahamic covenant is "a covenant to time indefinite." It remains in effect until the blessing of the families of the earth and the destruction of all God's enemies have been accomplished.

—Genesis 17:7; 1 Corinthians 15:23-26.

15:13—When was the foretold 400-year affliction of Abram's offspring fulfilled? This period of affliction began in 1913 B.C.E. when Abraham's son Isaac was weaned at about 5 years of age and his 19-year-old half brother, Ishmael, was "poking fun" at him. (Genesis 21:8-14; Galatians 4:29) It ended with the deliverance of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage in 1513 B.C.E.

16:2—Was it proper for Sarai to offer her maid servant Hagar as a wife to Abram? Sarai's offer was in line with the custom of the day—that a barren wife was obligated to provide her husband with a concubine in order to produce an heir. The practice of polygamy first appeared in the line of Cain. Eventually, it became a custom and was adopted by some worshipers of Jehovah. (Genesis 4:17-19; 16:1-3; 29:21-28) However, Jehovah never abandoned his original standard of monogamy. (Genesis 2:21, 22) Noah and his sons, to whom the command to 'be fruitful and fill the earth' was repeated, were evidently all monogamous. (Genesis 7:7; 9:1; 2 Peter 2:5) And this standard of monogamy was reasserted by Jesus Christ.—Matthew 19:4-8; 1 Timothy 3:2, 12.

19:8—Was it not wrong for Lot to offer his daughters to the Sodomites? According to the Oriental code, it was a host's responsi-

bility to protect the guests in his home, defending them even to the point of death if necessary. Lot was prepared to do that. He bravely went out to the mob, closed the door behind him, and faced them alone. By the time he offered his daughters, Lot likely realized that his guests were messengers from God, and he may have reasoned that God could protect his daughters as He had protected his aunt Sarah in Egypt. (Genesis 12:17-20) Indeed, as the matter turned out, Lot and his daughters were kept safe.

19:30-38—Did Jehovah condone Lot's getting drunk and fathering sons by his two daughters? Jehovah condones neither incest nor drunkenness. (Leviticus 18:6, 7, 29; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Lot actually deplored the "lawless deeds" of Sodom's inhabitants. (2 Peter 2:6-8) The very fact that Lot's daughters got him intoxicated suggests that they realized that he would not consent to having sexual relations with them while he was sober. But as aliens in the land, his daughters felt that this was the only way to prevent the extinction of Lot's family. The account is in the Bible to reveal the relationship of the Moabites (through Moab) and the Ammonites (through Benammi) to Abraham's descendants, the Israelites.

Lessons for Us:

13:8, 9. What a beautiful model Abraham provides in handling differences! Never should we sacrifice peaceful relationships for the sake of financial gain, personal preferences, or pride.

15:5, 6. When Abraham was getting old and had not yet had a son, he spoke with his God about the matter. Jehovah, in turn, reassured him. The result? Abraham "put faith in Jehovah." If we open our hearts to Jehovah in prayer, accept his reassurances from the Bible, and obey him, our faith will be strengthened.

15:16. Jehovah withheld the execution of his judgment upon the Amorites (or, Canaanites) for four generations. Why? Because he is a patient God. He waited until all hope of improvement was gone. Like Jehovah, we need to be patient.

18:23-33. Jehovah does not destroy people indiscriminately. He protects the righteous.

19:16. Lot "kept lingering," and the angels almost had to drag him and his family out of the city of Sodom. We are wise not to lose our sense of urgency as we await the end of the wicked world.

19:26. How foolish to be distracted by or longingly look back at what we have left behind in the world!

JACOB HAS 12 SONS (Genesis 24:1–36:43)

Abraham arranges for Isaac's marriage to Rebekah, a woman having faith in Jehovah. She gives birth to the twins Esau and Jacob. Esau despises his birthright and sells it to Jacob, who later receives his father's blessing. Jacob flees to Paddan-aram, where he marries Leah and Rachel and tends the flocks of their father for some 20 years before departing with his family. By Leah, Rachel, and their two maidservants, Jacob has 12 sons as well as daughters. Jacob grapples with an angel and is blessed, and his name is changed to Israel.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

28:12, 13—What was the significance of Jacob's dream involving "a ladder"? This "ladder," which may have looked like a rising flight of stones, indicated that there is communication between earth and heaven. God's angels ascending and descending on it showed that angels minister in some important way between Jehovah and humans who have his approval.—John 1:51.

30:14, 15—Why did Rachel relinquish an opportunity to conceive in exchange for some mandrakes? In ancient times, the fruit of the mandrake plant was used in medicine as a narcotic and for preventing or relieving spasms. The fruit was also credited with the capacity to excite sexual desire and to increase human fertility or aid in conception. (Song of Solomon 7:13) While the Bible does not reveal Rachel's motive for the exchange, she may have thought that the mandrakes would help her conceive and end her reproach of being barren. However, it was some years before Jehovah "opened her womb."—Genesis 30:22-24.

Lessons for Us:

25:23. Jehovah has the ability to detect the genetic bent of the unborn and to exercise his foreknowledge and select beforehand whom he chooses for his purposes. Yet, he does not predetermine the final destiny of individuals.—Hosea 12:3; Romans 9:10-12.

25:32; 32:24-29. Jacob's concern about obtaining the birthright and his wrestling all night with an angel to get a blessing show that he truly appreciated sacred things. Jehovah has entrusted us with a number of sacred things, such as our relationship with him and his organization, the ransom, the Bible, and our Kingdom hope. May we prove to be like Jacob in showing appreciation for them.

34:1, 30. The trouble that "brought ostracism" upon Jacob started because Dinah made friends with people who did not love Jehovah. We must choose our associates wisely.

JEHOVAH BLESSES JOSEPH IN EGYPT (Genesis 37:1–50:26)

Jealousy moves Jacob's sons to sell their brother Joseph as a slave. In Egypt, Joseph is imprisoned because he faithfully and courageously adheres to God's moral standards. In

time, he is brought forth from prison to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, which foretell seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine. Joseph is then made Egypt's food administrator. His brothers come to Egypt seeking food because of the famine.

The family is reunited and settled in the fertile land of Goshen. On his deathbed Jacob blesses his sons and utters a prophecy that gives sure hope of great blessings in centuries to come. Jacob's remains are taken to Canaan for burial. When Joseph dies at the age of 110, his body is embalmed, eventually to be transported to the Promised Land.—Exodus 13:19.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

43:32—Why was eating a meal with the Hebrews detestable to the Egyptians?

This may largely have been because of religious prejudice or racial pride. The Egyptians also detested shepherds. (Genesis 46:34) Why? Sheepherders may simply have been near the bottom in the Egyptian caste system. Or it could be that since the land available for cultivation was limited, the Egyptians despised those seeking pasture for flocks.

44:5—Did Joseph actually use a cup to read omens? The silver cup and what was said about it were evidently part of a subterfuge or stratagem. Joseph was a faithful worshiper of Jehovah. He did not really use the cup to read omens, even as Benjamin did not actually steal it.

49:10—What is the meaning of "the scepter" and "the commander's staff"? A scepter is a baton carried by a ruler as a symbol of royal authority. The commander's staff is a long rod denoting his power to command. Jacob's reference to these indicated that signif-

icant authority and power would reside with the tribe of Judah until the coming of Shiloh. This descendant of Judah is Jesus Christ, the one upon whom Jehovah has bestowed heavenly rulership. Christ holds royal authority and possesses the power to command.—Psalm 2:8, 9; Isaiah 55:4; Daniel 7:13, 14.



*Jacob appreciated sacred things.
Do you?*

Lessons for Us:

38:26. Judah was wrong in his dealings with his widowed daughter-in-law, Tamar. However, when confronted with his responsibility for her pregnancy, Judah humbly admitted his error. We too should be quick to acknowledge our mistakes.

39:9. Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife shows that his thinking was attuned to God's thinking on the matter of morals and that his conscience was guided by godly principles. Should we not also strive for the same as we grow in accurate knowledge of the truth?

41:14-16, 39, 40. Jehovah can bring about a reversal of circumstances for those who fear him. When adversities strike, we are wise to put our trust in Jehovah and remain faithful to him.

They Had Abiding Faith

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph were indeed God-fearing men of faith. The account of their lives, contained in the book of Genesis, is truly faith-strengthening and teaches us many valuable lessons.

You can benefit from this account as you carry out your weekly Bible reading assignment for the Theocratic Ministry School. Considering the foregoing will help make the account come alive.

Questions From Readers

What circumstances caused Judah to have sexual relations with a woman he thought was a harlot, as stated at Genesis 38:15, 16?

While Judah did have sexual relations with a woman he thought was a harlot, in reality she was not a harlot. According to Genesis chapter 38, this is what happened.

Before Judah's firstborn son had any sons by his wife, Tamar, he was put to death because he "proved to be bad in the eyes of Jehovah." (Genesis 38:7) At that time, the custom of brother-in-law marriage was practiced. This required that when a man died without an heir, his brother was to provide the widow with the basis for an heir. But Judah's second son, Onan, refused to fulfill his obligation. Hence, he died as a result of divine judgment. Judah then sent his daughter-in-law Tamar back to her father's home until such time as Judah's third son, Shelah, was old enough to be united with her. As the years went by, however, Judah failed to give Shelah in marriage to Tamar. So when Judah lost his wife in death, Tamar devised a plan to get an heir by Judah, the Israelite who had been her father-in-law. This

she did by disguising herself as a temple prostitute and seating herself on the road along which she knew Judah would be passing.

Not knowing who Tamar was, Judah had relations with her. For her favors, she shrewdly obtained tokens from him, and by these she later proved that she had become pregnant by him. When the truth came out, Judah did not blame her but humbly said: "She is more righteous than I am, for the reason that I did not give her to Shelah my son." And most fittingly, "he had no further intercourse with her."—Genesis 38:26.

Judah acted wrongly in that he did not give Tamar to his son Shelah as promised. He also had relations with a woman he thought was a temple prostitute. This was contrary to God's purpose, which was for a man to have sexual relations only in the marriage arrangement. (Genesis 2:24) In reality, though, Judah did not have relations with a harlot. Rather, he unwittingly took the place of his son Shelah in performing brother-in-law marriage and thus fathered legal offspring.

As for Tamar, her course was not an immoral one. Her twin sons were not considered to be the sons of fornication. When Boaz of Bethlehem took the Moabitess Ruth in brother-in-law marriage, the elders of Bethlehem spoke favorably of Tamar's son Perez, saying to Boaz: "May your house become like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, from the offspring that Jehovah will give you out of this young woman." (Ruth 4:12) Perez is also listed among the ancestors of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:1-3; Luke 3:23-33.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How You Can Satisfy Your Spiritual Needs

"The Scene of This World Is Changing"

You Can Cope With Uncertainty

"ONE OF THE GREATEST ENGINEERING WORKS"

WHEN Jehovah's temple was built in Jerusalem during the reign of King Solomon some 3,000 years ago, a beautiful water reservoir of copper was made and placed outside the temple entrance. It weighed over 30 tons and held some 11,000 gallons of water. This huge basin was called the molten sea. (1 Kings 7:23-26) "There can be little doubt that it was one of the greatest engineering works ever undertaken in the Hebrew nation," says former technical officer at the National Research Council of Canada, Albert Zuidhof, in *Biblical Archeologist*.

How was the sea constructed? "In the District of the Jordan it was that the king cast [copper utensils] in the clay mold," states the Bible. (1 Kings 7:45, 46) "The casting

process must have been similar to the 'lost wax' method still in use for large bronze bells," says Zuidhof. He explains: "Basically this would involve a wax model of the sea being fashioned upside-down over the thoroughly dried core of the casting mold. . . . After this was completed, the foundrymen had to build up the outside mold over the wax model and let it dry. The final steps would be the melting out of the wax and pouring the liquid bronze into the cavity."

The enormous size and weight of the molten sea required great skill in its construction. The inside core structure and the outside mold had to withstand the pressure of about 30 tons of molten copper, and the casting had to be done in one continuous operation to prevent cracks or flaws. This probably required a series of furnaces connected together for the pouring of the melted metal into the mold. A tremendous work!

In his prayer at the inauguration of the temple, King Solomon gave Jehovah God the credit for all the temple work, saying: "You made the promise with your own mouth, and with your own hand you have made the fulfillment."—1 Kings 8:24.



THE apostle Paul undoubtedly was familiar with temples of Athena, for these could be found in many of the cities he visited during his missionary journeys. According to *The Encyclopædia Britannica*, Athena was renowned as goddess not only of war and wisdom but also "of crafts and skilled peacetime pursuits in general."

The most famous temple of Athena was the Parthenon, erected in Athens, the city named after the goddess. Considered one of the greatest temples of the ancient world, the Parthenon housed a 40-foot gold-and-ivory statue of Athena. When Paul visited Athens, this white marble temple had already dominated the city for some 500 years.

With the Parthenon in view, Paul preached to a group of Athenians about the 'God who does not dwell in handmade temples.' (Acts 17:23, 24) Perhaps the majesty of Athena's temples or the grandeur of her idols made her seem more impressive to some of Paul's listeners than an invisible God they did not know. As Paul pointed out, however, it should not be imagined that the Creator of humankind "is like gold or silver or stone, like something sculptured by . . . man."—Acts 17:29.

Gods and goddesses like Athena—whose glory depended on temples and statues—have come and gone. The statue of Athena disappeared from the Parthenon in the fifth century C.E., and only the remains of a few of her temples still exist. Who today look to Athena for wisdom and guidance?

How different it is with Jehovah, "the everlasting God" whom no man has ever seen. (Romans 16:26; 1 John 4:12) The sons of Korah wrote: "This God is our God to time indefinite, even forever. He himself will guide us." (Psalm 48:14) One way to enjoy Jehovah God's guidance is by studying his Word, the Bible, and applying its counsel in our life.

'GOD DOES NOT DWELL IN HANDMADE TEMPLES'

