

Awake!

FEBRUARY 2006



Old Age Meeting the Challenge

ALSO: IS THERE
ONLY ONE TRUE
GOD? PAGE 28



Awake!

AVERAGE PRINTING 32,412,000
PUBLISHED IN 82 LANGUAGES

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Old Age Meeting the Challenge 3-9

How can one cope with the challenges of advancing age? We present suggestions to make old age more bearable.

The Alhambra

—Islamic Jewel of Granada 14

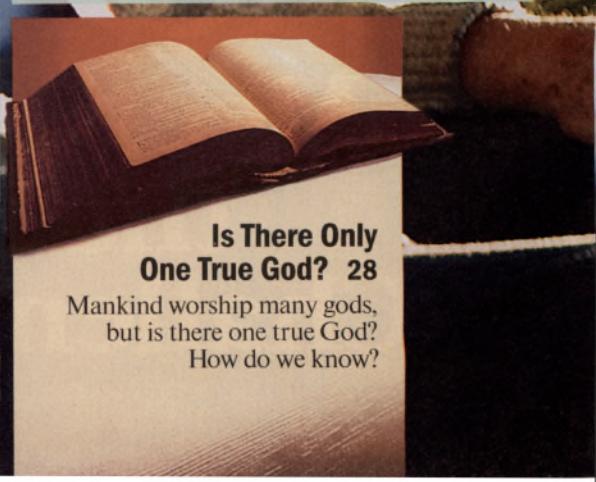
Millions of tourists have visited this marvel of Islamic architecture and have thrilled to see the ingenious use of water.



J. A. Fernández/San Marcos

Is There Only One True God? 28

Mankind worship many gods, but is there one true God? How do we know?



IT IS 6:30 on an icy winter morning in Soweto, in South Africa. Evelyn must get out of bed.* In her house without central heating, this is sheer torture.

She painfully eases her arthritic knees over the edge of the bed. Then she sits and waits. Slowly the ache in her legs subsides. Evelyn now braces herself and stands up. She groans in pain. Hands on hips, just as a "grasshopper drags itself along," Evelyn hobbles slowly to the bathroom.—Ecclesiastes 12:5.[#]

"What an achievement!" Evelyn says to herself. Not only has she lived to see another day but she has also mobilized her aching body.

However, she has another concern. "It is that my mind will become 'derailed,'" Evelyn states. She loses her keys occasionally, but her mind is still sharp. "I just pray that I don't lose my mind," says Evelyn, "like some old ones do."

In her younger days, Evelyn never gave old age a thought. Suddenly, the years seem to have slipped by, and now her body never lets her forget that she is 74 years old.

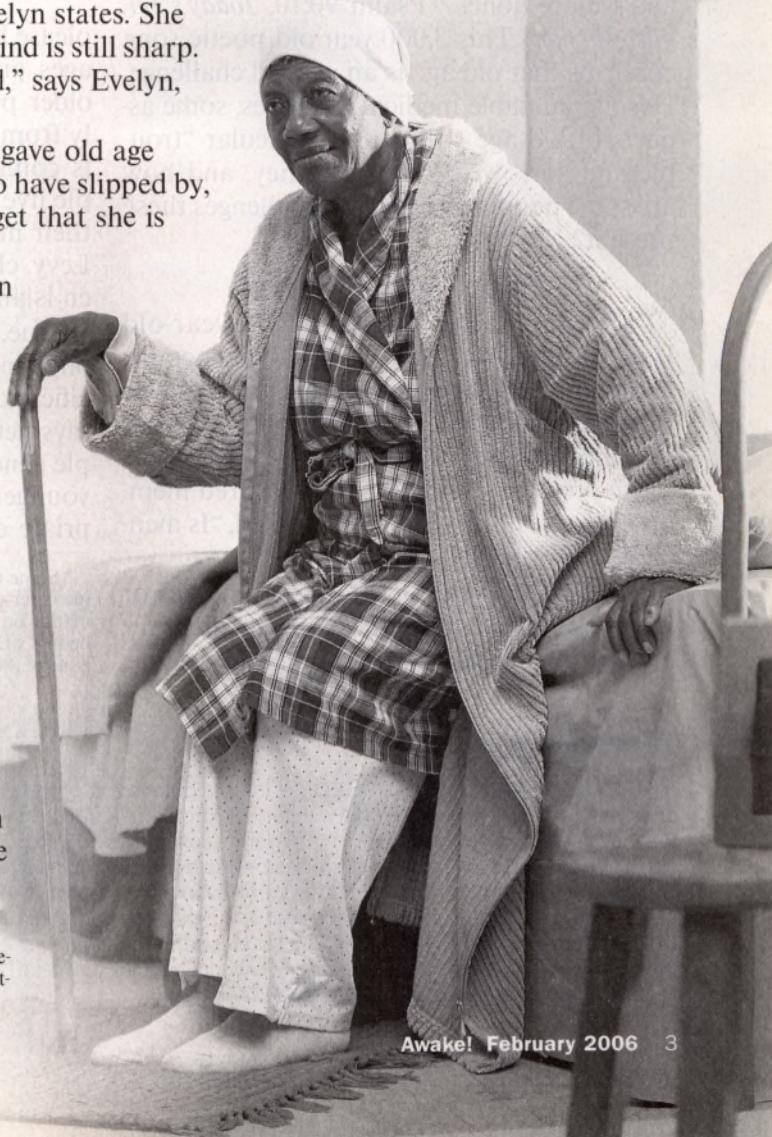
Some who are better off than Evelyn and relatively free of serious illness and stress can comfortably view their later life as golden years. Like the patriarch Abraham, they may reach "a good old age, old and satisfied." (Genesis 25:8) Others experience "dismal days and years" and can only say: "I don't enjoy life." (Ecclesiastes 12:1, *Today's English Version*) In one survey so many people viewed retirement pessimistically that *Newsweek* magazine suggested renaming the golden years the "Dark Ages."

How do you view old age? What are some of the challenges that the elderly face? Is mental decline inevitable in old age? What can be done to promote peace of mind in the golden years?

* Some names in this series have been changed.

[#] This passage in the ancient Bible book of Ecclesiastes has long been recognized as an insightful poetic description of the hardships of aging.

The Golden Years?





Living With the Challenge of Old Age

SEVENTY years is all we have—eighty years, if we are strong; yet all they bring us is trouble and sorrow; life is soon over, and we are gone.” (Psalm 90:10, *Today's English Version*) This 3,000-year-old poetic song confirms that old age is an age-old challenge. Despite laudable medical advances, some aspects of old age still cause particular “trouble and sorrow.” Which are they, and how are some people meeting the challenges these present?

Old and Mentally Sharp

“My worst fear,” agonized 79-year-old Hans, “is senility.” Like many older people, Hans got perturbed about being forgetful. He worried that he was losing control of what one ancient poet called the “the golden bowl”—the precious brain with its treasured memories. (Ecclesiastes 12:6) Hans asked, “Is mental decline a normal part of aging?”

If, like Hans, you have forgotten names or have wondered if such lapses in memory are the beginning of serious mental decline,

please be assured: Forgetfulness occurs at all ages, and changes in mental function that an older person may experience are not usually from dementia.* While some memory loss is common in later life, “most elderly people live out their lives in complete control of their mental abilities,” writes Dr. Michael T. Levy, chairman of behavioral science at Staten Island University Hospital in New York.

True, younger people usually surpass older ones in the speed at which they recall specific facts. But, “if you take away the timer,” says neurologist Richard Restak, “older people generally perform at least as well as their younger counterparts.” In fact, with appropriate education and training, healthy older

* Some researchers claim that “almost 90 percent of all people older than 65 years are free of dementia.” For more information on the treatment of dementia, please see the series “Alzheimer's Disease—Easing the Pain,” in the September 22, 1998, issue of *Awake!*

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.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) is published monthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **Changes of address** should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Awake!*, c/o Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589. © 2006 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

brains continue to learn, to remember, and even to improve specific abilities.

Memory Problems and Treatable Conditions

What, though, if someone experiences more serious memory problems? Even then, he or she should not automatically conclude that dementia is the problem. Many other treatable conditions that occur in later life can cause memory difficulties and sudden unusual confusion. Such disorders are often mislabeled "old age" or "senility"—sometimes even by misinformed professionals. Not only is this demeaning to older patients but it may well prevent them from getting appropriate medical treatment. What might some of these disorders be?

Sudden unusual confusion can be caused by malnutrition, dehydration, anemia, head injury, thyroid problems, vitamin deficiency, side effects of medication, or even a disorienting change in environment. Memory problems can be caused by prolonged stress, and infections are notorious for causing a confused state in the aged. Depression can also be a cause of memory loss and confusion in elderly patients. Hence, "the rapid onset of a confusional state," advises Dr. Levy, "should never be ignored or dismissed as hopeless senility." A thorough medical examination may help to establish the underlying cause of the symptoms.

Dealing With Depression

Depression is not new to humans, even to faithful servants of God. Nearly two thou-

sand years ago, the apostle Paul had to advise fellow Christians: "Speak consolingly to the depressed souls." (1 Thessalonians 5:14) In our stressful times, that need is even greater. Regrettably, though, depression in older ones often remains undiagnosed or is misdiagnosed.

Because of prevailing misconceptions that people become more dejected and moody with advanced age, symptoms may be viewed—by others as well as the elderly themselves—as a normal part of aging. "However, this is not the case," states the book *Treating*

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**Older ones
often feel they are
being left behind in
our modern fast-paced
world**

the Elderly. "Depression among the elderly is not a part of the normal aging process."

Prolonged clinical depression—in contrast with normal sadness or a bout of the blues—is a serious illness with potentially serious consequences and should not be ignored. Untreated depression can worsen and become so entrenched that some despairing

Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech,[#] Danish,[#] Dutch,[#] English,^{#+○} Estonian, Finnish,[#] French,[#] Georgian, German,[#] Greek, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,[#] Japanese,[#] Korean,[#] Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Myanmar, Nepali, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese,[#] Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,[#] Swahili, Swedish,[#] Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

[#]Audio cassettes also available.

^{+○}CD also available.

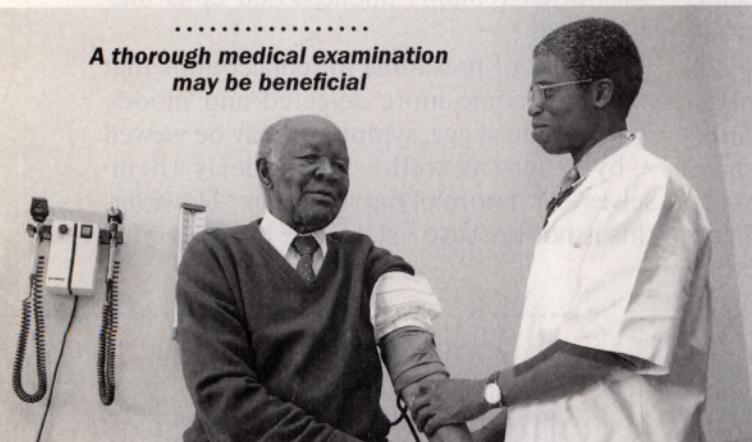
[○]MP3 CD-ROM also available.

Publication of *Awake!* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

Would you welcome more information? Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address: **America, United States of:** Wallkill, NY 12589. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** P. O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

patients resort to suicide. The tragedy of depression in older patients, explains Dr. Levy, is that "the most treatable of all psychiatric illness is also potentially the most lethal." If the depression persists, the patient may need

**A thorough medical examination
may be beneficial**



to be treated by a professional with experience in mood disorders.*—Mark 2:17.

Depressed individuals can be assured that Jehovah "is very tender in affection and compassionate." (James 5:11, footnote) He "is near to those that are broken at heart." (Psalm 34:18) Indeed, he is preeminently the one "who comforts the depressed."—2 Corinthians 7:6, *New American Standard Bible*.

No Need to Feel Useless

"Do not throw me away in the time of old age; just when my power is failing, do not leave me," prayed faithful King David over 3,000 years ago. (Psalm 71:9) Even in the 21st century, such sentiments are not unusual for older individuals who fear that they will no longer be viewed as useful. Limitations that are due to poor health easily contribute to feelings of inadequacy, and compulsory retirement can undermine one's sense of self-worth.

* *Awake!* does not endorse any particular approach. Christians should make sure that the treatment they pursue is in harmony with Bible principles. Please see the series "Understanding Mood Disorders," in the January 8, 2004, issue of *Awake!*

However, by concentrating on what we are able to do rather than being discouraged by what we can no longer do, we can retain a sense of self-worth and usefulness. In this connection a UN report recommended 'continuing growth through formal and informal learning, participation in community organizations, and religious activities.' Ernest, one of Jehovah's Witnesses who is a retired master baker from Switzerland, is an example of the benefit of 'continued growth through learning.' In his 70's, he decided to buy a computer and learn how to use it. Why did he do so, when many at his age are intimidated by technology? "First," he explained, "to keep my mind active as I get older. And second, to keep up with technology that can help me in my Bible research and my activity in the Christian congregation."

Engaging in productive activity can fill many fundamental needs of older ones: It provides a sense of meaning and fulfillment and may even provide some income. Wise King Solomon observed that it is a gift of God for man "to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work."—Ecclesiastes 3:12, 13.

Doing as Much as We Can

In many societies it is the elderly who convey knowledge, as well as moral and spiritual values, to succeeding generations. King David wrote: "Now that I am old and my hair is gray, do not abandon me, O God! Be with me while I proclaim your power and might to all generations to come."—Psalm 71:18, *Today's English Version*.

What, though, if older ones become severely limited by health or circumstances? This predicament upset 79-year-old Sarah, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, who expressed her discouragement to a Christian elder. He remind-

ed her of the Bible principle that ‘a righteous person’s supplication has much force.’ (James 5:16) “Over the years,” he explained, “you have built up an intimate relationship with God. Now you can let the rest of us benefit from that relationship when you pray privately for us.” She was very encouraged when he said, “Sarah, we need your prayers on our behalf.”

As Sarah realized, prayer is a rewarding and meaningful way for many older ones to exert themselves night and day in behalf of others. (Colossians 4:12; 1 Timothy 5:5) At

the same time, such prayers help faithful older ones draw closer to the “Hearer of prayer,” Jehovah.—Psalm 65:2; Mark 11:24.

Older adults who have limitations but are generous with their experience and resources are precious assets in their communities. They prove that “gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness.”—Proverbs 16:31.

We might well ask, though: What does the future hold for us as we get older? Can we realistically look forward to a better life in our later years?

How You Can Help the Elderly

■ Preserve Their Dignity. “Do not sharply rebuke an older man, but be appealing to him as a father, . . . [to] older women as mothers.”—1 Timothy 5:1, 2,
Analytical-Literal Translation of the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

■ Listen Carefully. “Be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath.”—James 1:19.

■ Show Empathy. “All of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate, humble in mind, not paying back injury for injury or reviling for reviling.”—1 Peter 3:8, 9.

■ Discern When Encouragement Is Needed. “As apples of gold in silver carvings is a word spoken at the right time for it.”—Proverbs 25:11.

■ Include Them in Your Activities. “Follow the course of hospitality.”—Romans 12:13.

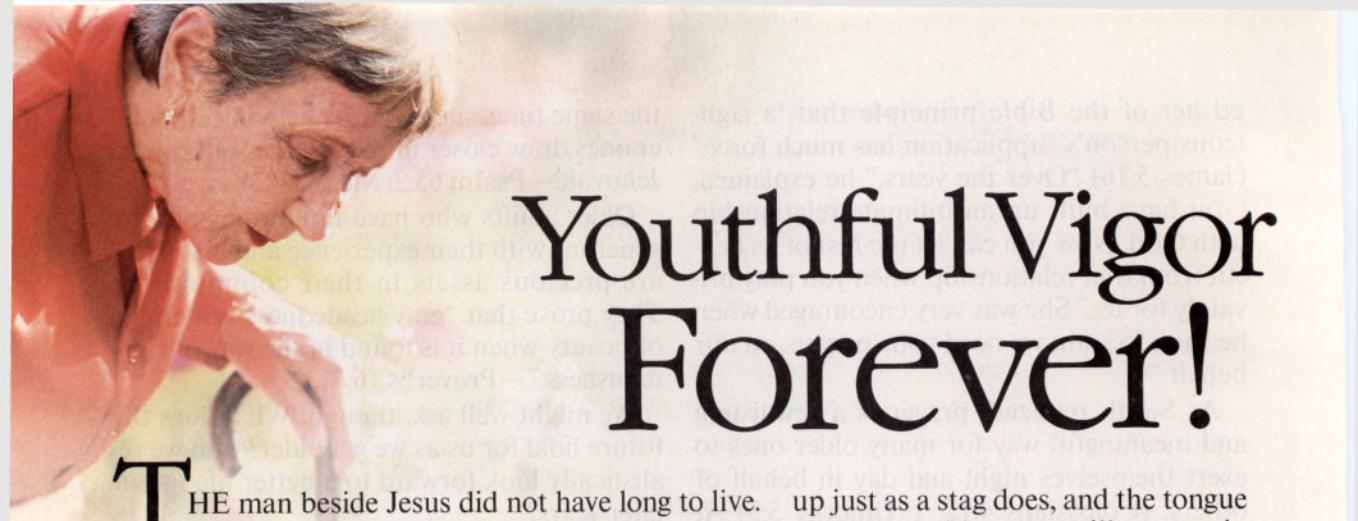
■ Offer Practical Assistance. “Whoever has this world’s means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth.”

—1 John 3:17, 18.

■ Be Long-Suffering. “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering.”—Colossians 3:12.

By caring for the elderly, we show respect for God’s own standards because his Word states: “You must show consideration for the person of an old man [or old woman].”—Leviticus 19:32.





Youthful Vigor Forever!

THE man beside Jesus did not have long to live. "Jesus," he pleaded, "remember me when you get into your kingdom." Jesus replied: "Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:42, 43) True, that unnamed man was not dying from an illness in old age; he was being executed for criminal activity. Nevertheless, aging individuals can derive great encouragement from his desperate situation.

We cannot but admire that man's extraordinary confidence! Even though Jesus was dying on a torture stake next to him, that man had no doubt that Jesus would certainly rule as King in God's Kingdom. Also, he reasoned that Jesus could one day remember him favorably. Just imagine—that condemned man will awaken from death in a glorious paradise, with Jesus as King!

Mankind is in a position similar to that of the dying wrongdoer. How so? Regardless of our age, we are all paying the penalty for sin and are in need of salvation. (Romans 5:12) Like that criminal we can turn to Christ Jesus for hope—even hope for relief from the painful problems that occur in later life! To be sure, Jesus has held out to mankind the prospect of everlasting life in physical and mental perfection on a paradise earth.—John 3:16, 36.

All Things New for Old and Young

Under Christ's Kingdom the inhabitants of the earth "will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace." (Psalm 37:11) No one will say: "I am sick." (Isaiah 33:24) Any incapacity we may have had to endure will be reversed, for "the lame one will climb

up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness." (Isaiah 35:6) Aged individuals will regain their youthful vigor; their flesh will "become fresher than in youth."—Job 33:25.

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***Jesus' promise is that painful
old age will soon disappear, replaced
by youthful vigor forever***



Exercise That Brain!

Just as physical exercise strengthens a muscle, mental training conditions the brain. To stimulate the brain, we need to do new things. The following are some ways to establish and strengthen brain-cell connections.

- Cultivate interests in fresh new areas, such as art, sculpture, word games, or jigsaw and crossword puzzles; learn another language.
- Interact with a variety of people; socialize and converse to avoid monotony and sharpen the mind.
- Cultivate spirituality. "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."—Philippians 4:6, 7.
- Read appropriate material; tell someone about what you have read.
- Recall and relate news items from radio or TV newscasts to exercise your short- and long-term memory.
- Use your nondominant hand (left hand if you are right-handed, or vice versa) to operate the TV

remote control, to use the telephone, or to brush your teeth.

- Use all your senses as much as possible through the day.
- Learn about and travel to places of interest near or far.



However, is it realistic to nurture such a hope? Well, think of the One who held out the hope of Paradise to that dying man. On many occasions the crowds brought people to Jesus who were lame, maimed, blind, and deaf. He eagerly cured "every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity." (Matthew 9:35, 36; 15:30, 31; Mark 1:40-42) He demonstrated tangibly what his Kingdom will accomplish. Jesus even brought back to life a number of people who had died. (Luke 7:11-17; John 11:38-44) In doing so, he added authority to his promise that "all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out."—John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.

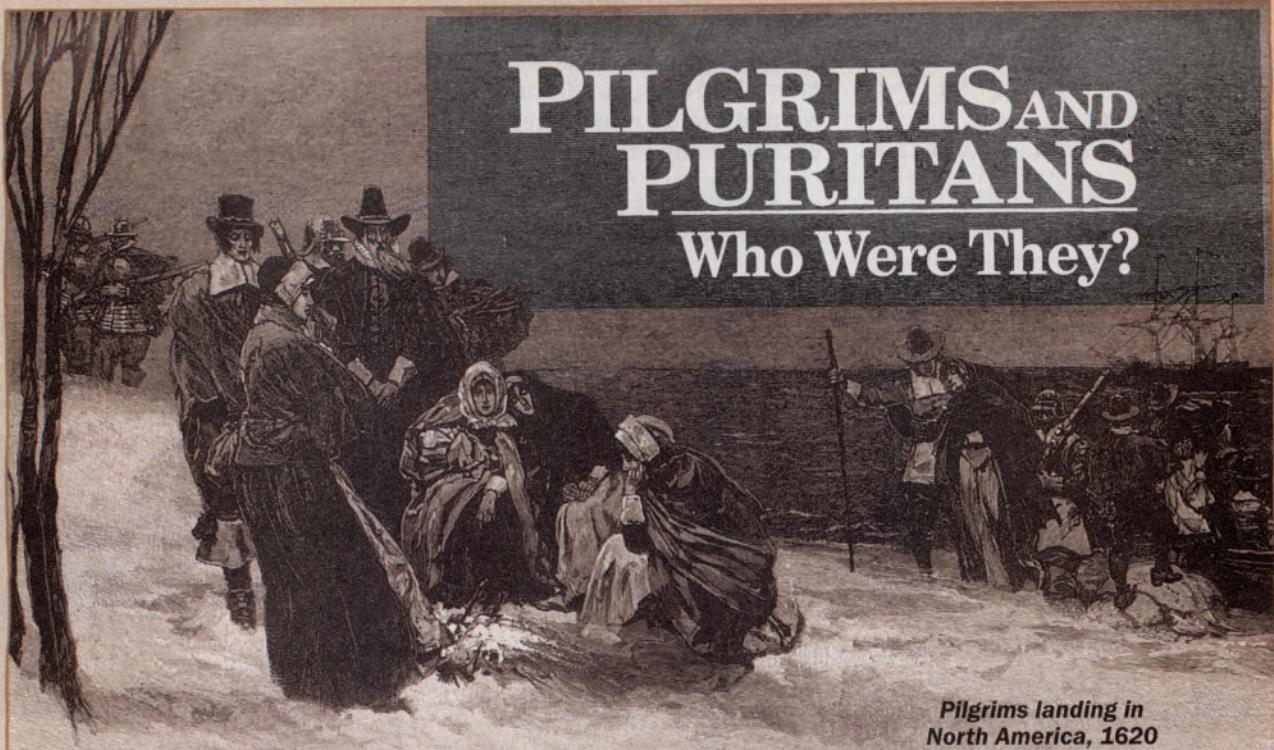
Imagine waking up in Paradise with a new body, clear vision, ears filled with the sounds of birds and happy voices, arms and legs free of pain, and a perfectly sound mind. Gone forever will be "the calamitous days" of old age. (Ecclesiastes 12:1-7; Isaiah 35:5, 6) Even death will be "brought to nothing"—it will be "swallowed up forever."—1 Corinthians 15:26, 54.

Current world events evaluated alongside Bible prophecy indicate that we are rapidly approaching the end of old age as we know it. (Matthew 24:7, 12, 14; Luke 21:11; 2 Timothy 3:1-5) The time is near when the elderly who have exercised faith in God and have served him will once again enjoy youthful vigor—but this time forever!



PILGRIMS AND PURITANS

Who Were They?



Pilgrims landing in North America, 1620

ON THE North American seashore at Plymouth, Massachusetts, lies a large granite stone with the number 1620 carved on its surface. Called Plymouth Rock, it is widely believed to be close to the place where a group of Europeans landed almost 400 years ago. You may know them as the Pilgrims or the Pilgrim Fathers.

Many know the stories of the hospitable Pilgrims inviting their Native American friends to rich harvest meals. But who were the Pilgrims, and why did they come to North America? For answers, let us go back to the time of the English King Henry VIII.

Religious Upheavals in England

Less than 100 years before the Pilgrims set sail, England was a Roman Catholic land and King Henry VIII held the papal title Defender of the Faith. But a breach developed when Pope Clement VII refused to annul Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon, the first of the king's six wives.

While Henry pondered his domestic problems, the Protestant Reformation was causing upheaval in the Roman Catholic Church throughout much of Europe. Reluctant to lose the prestige that the church gave him, Henry at first kept the Reformers out of England. Then he changed his mind. The Catholic Church would not annul his marriage, so Henry would, in effect, annul the church. In 1534 he severed the pope's control over English Catholics and had himself declared supreme head of the Church of England. Soon he was closing monasteries and selling their vast properties. When Henry died in 1547, England was becoming a Protestant nation.

Henry's son Edward VI maintained the break with Rome. After Edward's death in 1553, Mary, Henry's Roman Catholic daughter by Catherine of Aragon, became queen and thereafter tried to make the nation submit to papal authority. She forced many Protestants into exile and had over 300 people burned at the stake, earning herself the name

Bloody Mary. But she could not hold back the tide of change. Mary died in 1558, and her successor and half sister, Elizabeth I, made sure that henceforth the pope would have little say in English religious life.

Some Protestants, however, felt that mere separation from the Church of Rome was not enough—all vestiges of Roman Catholicism had to be removed. They wanted to purify the worship of the church, so they were called Puritans. Some Puritans saw no need for bishops and felt that each congregation should govern itself, separate from the national church. They were called Separatists.

The contentious Puritans came into the open during Elizabeth's reign. The relaxed dress of some clergymen irked the queen, and in 1564 she commanded the Archbishop of Canterbury to hold them to a dress code. Foreseeing a return to the vestments of Catholic priests, the Puritans refused to obey. More controversy arose over the old hierarchy of bishops and archbishops. Elizabeth retained the bishops and required that they swear allegiance to her as head of the church.

From Separatists to Pilgrims

James I succeeded Elizabeth in 1603, and he put great pressure on the Separatists to submit to his authority. In 1608 a Separatist congregation in the town of Scrooby fled to Holland for the freedom offered in that country. In time, however, Dutch tolerance of other religions and loose morals made the Separatists less at ease there than they had been in England. They decided to leave Europe and

take up life in North America. The willingness of this group of Separatists to travel far from home for the sake of their beliefs led in time to their being known as the Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims, which included many Separatists, obtained permission to settle in the British colony of Virginia and embarked for North America in September 1620 on a ship called the *Mayflower*. Approximately 100 adults and children spent two stormy months on the North Atlantic Ocean before arriving at Cape Cod, hundreds of miles north of Virginia. There they wrote the Mayflower Compact, a document that stated their desire to establish a community and submit to its laws. They settled at nearby Plymouth on December 21, 1620.

Starting Life in the New World

The refugees arrived in North America unprepared for winter. Within months, half the group died. With spring, though, came relief. The survivors built adequate houses and learned from the Native Americans how to grow indigenous food crops. By the fall of 1621, the Pilgrims were so prosperous that they set aside time to thank God for his blessing. From that occasion developed the Thanksgiving holiday now celebrated in the United States and other places. More immigrants arrived, so that in less than 15 years, the population at Plymouth surpassed 2,000.

Meanwhile, in England some Puritans also decided, as the Separatists had, that their "Promised Land" lay across the Atlantic. In 1630 a group of them arrived at a point north of Plymouth and established the Massachusetts Bay Colony. By 1640 about 20,000 English immigrants were living in New England. After the Massachusetts Bay Colony



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IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- What Has Happened to Love?
- Was Jesus Really the Son of God?
- An Island Paradise of Sand

Celebrating the first Thanksgiving, 1621



Puritan meetinghouse,
Massachusetts

absorbed Plymouth in 1691, the Separatist Pilgrims were no longer so separate. Boston became the spiritual hub for the region, as the Puritans now dominated New England religious life. How did they carry out their worship?

The Puritans' Worship

The Puritans in the New World first built wooden meetinghouses in which they gathered on Sunday mornings. Conditions inside were endurable in good weather, but winter services tested the forbearance of even the flindest of the Puritans. The meetinghouses were not heated, and the shivering faithful were soon freezing. The preachers often wore mittens to protect their gesticulating hands from the frigid inside air.

The Puritans based their beliefs on the teachings of the French Protestant Reformer John Calvin. They embraced predestination and held that God had foreordained which humans he would save and which he would damn to eternal hellfire. No matter what people did, they could not change their standing before God. A person did not know if at death he would enjoy heav-

en's gentle breezes or burn like a lampwick forever.

In time, Puritan ministers began preaching repentance. They warned that although God was merciful, those who disobeyed his laws were going straight to hell. Those preachers stoked the inferno's fires, keeping them hot, in order to hold the people in line. An 18th-century preacher named Jonathan Edwards once spoke on the subject "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." His descriptions of the abyss were so frightening that other clergymen had to give emotional help to the distraught congregation who heard that sermon.

Evangelizers from outside Massachusetts who preached there did so at their peril. The authorities banished a Quaker preacher named Mary Dyer three times; but each time, she returned and kept voicing her views.

They hanged her in Boston on June 1, 1660. Phillip Ratcliffe apparently forgot the zeal with which the Puritan leaders handled opposers. For his speeches against the government and against the church of Salem, they had him whipped and fined. Then, to

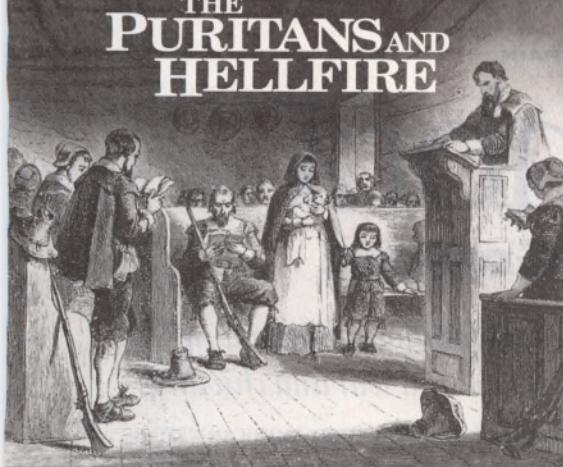


John
Calvin



Jonathan
Edwards

THE PURITANS AND HELLFIRE



help him not to forget, they cut his ears off before sending him away. Puritan intolerance drove people out of Massachusetts and contributed to the growth of other colonies.

Arrogance Brings Violence

Considering themselves to be the "elect" of God, many Puritans viewed the native peoples as subhuman squatters on the land. This attitude created resentment, and some natives began making attacks. So the Puritan leaders relaxed laws involving the Sabbath enough to allow men to carry guns on the way to worship. Then, in 1675, things got worse.

Seeing the loss of his people's territory, Metacomet, also known as King Philip, of the Wampanoag American Indians started raiding Puritan settlements, burning down houses, and massacring settlers. The Puritans retaliated, and the fighting went on for months. In August 1676, the Puritans captured Philip in Rhode Island. They beheaded him and had his body drawn and quartered. Thus ended

**Armed Puritan couple
on their way to church**

Photos: North Wind Picture Archives



By preaching hellfire, the Puritans contradicted God's Word. The Bible teaches that the dead are unconscious, unable to feel pain or pleasure. (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) Moreover, the true God never had ideas of torture 'come up into his heart.' (Jeremiah 19:5; 1 John 4:8) He entreats people to change their lives, and he deals with unrepentant wrongdoers in a humane way. (Ezekiel 33:11) Contrary to these Scriptural truths, Puritan preachers often painted God as cruel and vindictive. They also promoted a heartless view of life that included the use of force to silence opposers.

King Philip's War and independent life for the native peoples of New England.

During the 18th century, Puritan zeal found a new outlet. Some ministers in Massachusetts decried English rule and helped to kindle a desire for independence. They mixed politics and religion into their discussions of revolution.

The Puritans were often hardworking, courageous, and devoted to their religion. People still speak of "Puritan character" and "Puritan honesty." But sincerity alone does not purify someone of wrong teachings. The mixing of politics and religion is something that Jesus Christ avoided. (John 6:15; 18:36) And brutality is a contradiction of this vital truth: "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love."—1 John 4:8.

Does your religion teach hellfire, predestination, or other unbiblical doctrines? Do your religious leaders get involved in political campaigns? A sincere study of God's Word, the Bible, will help you to find "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled," truly pure and acceptable to God.

—James 1:27.



BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SPAIN

The Alhambra

Islamic Jewel of Granada

"How many legends and traditions, true and fabulous; how many songs and ballads, Arabian and Spanish, of love and war and chivalry, are associated with this oriental pile!" —WASHINGTON IRVING, 19TH-CENTURY AMERICAN WRITER.

THE legendary site that inspired those words is the Alhambra, a unique palace that embellishes the Spanish city of Granada. The Alhambra is a sample of Arabia or Persia in the south of Europe. The citadel, or fortress, owes its singular beauty to the Muslim Moors, whose predominating influence in Spain lasted for several centuries.*

The Arab emir Zawi ben Ziri founded the independent kingdom of Granada in the 11th century. It lasted for about 500 years, during which time it flourished artistically and culturally. Its demise came when the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella put an end to Muslim rule in Spain in 1492.

Moorish Granada reached its zenith after Córdoba was conquered by the armies of Christendom in 1236. Granada became the capital of Muslim Spain and successive rulers built a palace complex—the Alhambra—the like of which Europe had never seen. One enthusiastic writer described it as "the most marvelous building that exists in the whole world."

The setting of the Alhambra is as majestic as the complex itself. Towering behind it, like

a monumental backdrop, the snowy peaks of the Sierra Nevada rise to over 11,000 feet. The Alhambra itself stands on the Sabika, a long, wooded hill that rises 500 feet above the city. In the eyes of the 14th-century poet Ibn Zamrak, the hill overlooks Granada like an admiring husband contemplating his wife.

A City Within a City

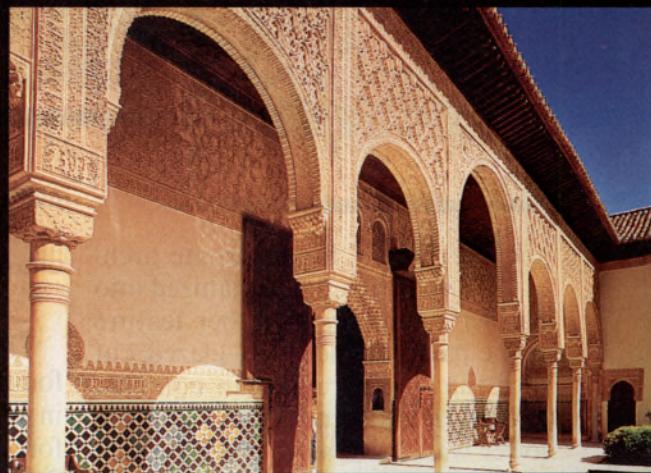
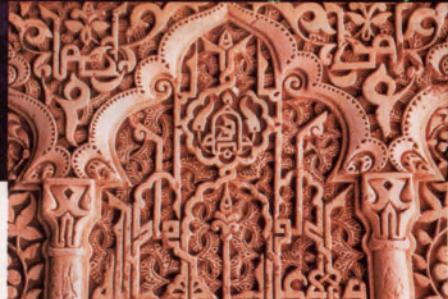
The name Alhambra, which signifies "the red" in Arabic, probably alludes to the color of the bricks that the Moors used to build the outer walls. Nevertheless, some prefer the explanation of Arabian historians who say that the construction of the Alhambra was carried on by "the light of torches." This nighttime illumination, they say, gave the walls the reddish color to which the building's name refers.

The Alhambra is much more than a palace. It could be described as a city within the city of Granada. Nestling behind its extensive ramparts lie gardens, pavilions, a palace complex, the Alcazaba (or, fortress), and even a small *medina*, or town. The Alhambra's Moorish design and later additions have resulted in a unique display of delicate and intricate Arabic art alongside the more robust, balanced lines of the European Renaissance.

The Alhambra owes its beauty to an approach used by the Moors as well as by the ancient Greeks. First they fashioned the col-

* In 711 C.E., Arab and Berber armies entered Spain, and within seven years most of the peninsula came under Muslim rule. Within two centuries, the city of Córdoba became the largest and probably the most cultured city in Europe.





▲ *The Alcazaba*

or and texture of stone with harmony, proportion, and simplicity. Then they adorned their elegant construction. As one expert puts it, "the Moors ever regarded what architects hold to be the first principle of architecture—to decorate construction, never to construct decoration."

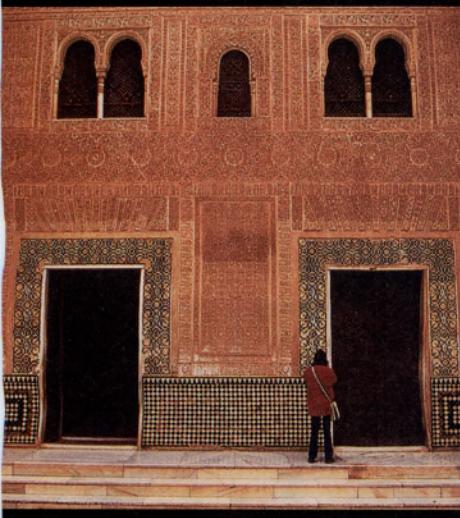
Exploring the Alhambra

Entry to the Alhambra is through a huge horseshoe-shaped arch called the Gate of Justice. Its name recalls the court that during the times of the Muslim occupation gathered

here for the prompt hearing of minor complaints. The rendering of justice at the city gate was a common custom throughout the Middle East and is mentioned in the Bible.*

The elaborate decoration, typical of Arabian palaces such as the Alhambra, is of stucco. The artisans carved this plaster into lace-like artistic patterns that are repeated over

* For example, God instructed Moses: "Set judges and officers for yourself inside all your gates . . . , and they must judge the people with righteous judgment."—Deuteronomy 16:18.



▲ The Court
of the Lions

Generalife ➤
gardens



and over again. Some ornate arches look like stalactites organized into perfect symmetry. Another feature of the palace is the *zillij*—glazed, cut tiles that are arranged in complex geometric patterns. These line the lower walls with vivid colors, which contrast perfectly with the subdued color of the stucco above.

Outstanding among the courtyards of the Alhambra is the Court of the Lions, described as “the most precious example of Arab art existing in Spain.” One local guidebook explains: “There is something about a genuine work of art which escapes all possible imitation and reproduction. . . . Such is the sensation we feel before this Grenadine court.” Its per-

fectly proportioned arcades and slim columns surround a fountain supported by 12 marble lions. It is one of the most photographed sites in Spain.

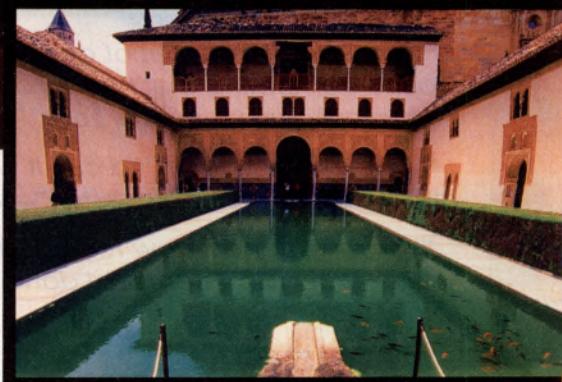
Gardens to Refresh the Spirit

The Alhambra also contains exquisite gardens, fountains, and pools.* According to Enrique Sordo in his book *Moorish Spain*, “the Arabic garden is a foretaste of paradise.” The influence of Islam is evident everywhere. Spanish writer García Gómez noted: “The Muslim paradise is described in detail in the Koran as a luxuriant garden . . . watered by delightful streams.” In the Alhambra, water is used profusely—a luxury for people accustomed to the rigors of the desert. The garden’s designers realized that water could cool the air and gratify the ear with the relaxing murmur of its movement. Rectangular pools of water that mirror the bright Spanish skies give an impression of spaciousness and luminosity.

* The Arabs introduced features of Persian and Byzantine gardens throughout the Mediterranean region, including Spain.



▼ The Water Staircase



Not far from the Alhambra lies the Generalife, a secluded Moorish villa and garden that stand on the Cerro del Sol, a hill next to the Sabika. The Generalife, a fine example of Arabic landscaping, has been called "one of the loveliest gardens in the world."* It was formerly linked to the Alhambra palace by a bridge, and it apparently served as a villa where the rulers of Granada could relax. A courtyard leads to the Water Staircase. Here visitors can let their senses be captivated by light, color, and a myriad of aromas.

The Moor's Sigh

When the last king of Granada, Boabdil (Muhammad XI), surrendered the city to Ferdinand and Isabella, he and his family had to go into exile. After leaving the city, they reportedly paused at a high point that is now called El Suspiro del Moro (The Moor's Sigh). As they looked back to take a final glimpse of their glorious red palace, Boabdil's mother reported-

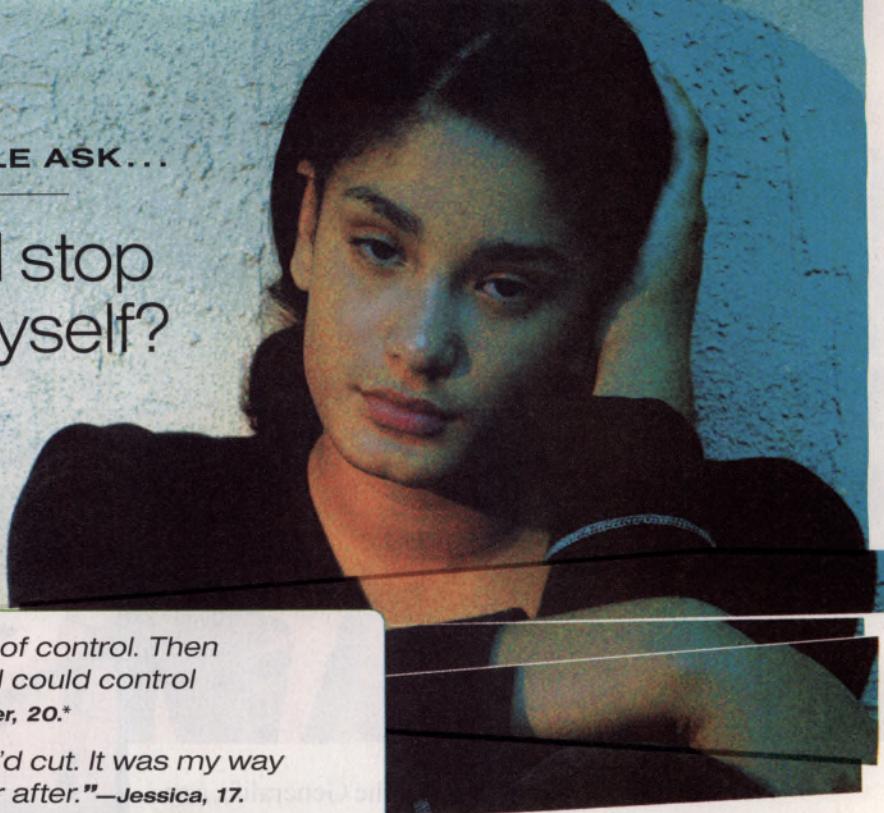
ly said to her son: "Weep like a woman for what you could not defend like a man!"

Nowadays, some of the Alhambra's three million yearly visitors still go to this spot. Here, like Boabdil, they can survey the city of Granada spread out beneath its Arabian palace—the jewel in the crown. If you visit Granada one day, you too may comprehend the sadness of its last Moorish king.

* This name is derived from the Arabic "Jennat-al-Arif," sometimes translated as "the high gardens," although the term more likely signifies "the garden of the architect."



How can I stop hurting myself?



*"My anguish was out of control. Then I found something that I could control—physical pain."—Jennifer, 20.**

"When I'd get upset, I'd cut. It was my way of crying. I'd be happier after."—Jessica, 17.

"I haven't done it now for about two weeks. That's a long time for me. I don't think I will ever totally stop."—Jamie, 16.

JENNIFER, Jessica, and Jamie do not know one another, but they have a lot in common. All three were in emotional anguish. And all three adopted the same method of coping with their despair. Jennifer, Jessica, and Jamie found temporary relief through self-injury.^{*}

Bizarre as it may seem, self-injury—which includes cutting or self-mutilation—has become surprisingly common among teens and young adults. Canada's *National Post* notes that the practice "terrifies parents, baffles [school] guidance counsellors and challenges doctors." It also says that self-injury "can become one of the toughest addictions known to medicine." Have you or someone close to you become enslaved to this habit? If so, what can you do about it?

* Some names in this article have been changed.

^{*} For more information on self-injury—what it includes and its causes—see the article "Young People Ask . . . Why Do I Hurt Myself?" in the January 2006 issue of *Awake!*

First, try to discern the reason why you feel compelled to hurt yourself. Remember, cutting is more than a mere nervous habit. Usually, it is a way of coping with some form of stress. The cutter uses physical pain to alleviate emotional pain. So ask yourself: 'What purpose does self-injury serve for me? What am I thinking about when I feel the urge to cut?' Is there a situation in your life—perhaps with regard to your family or your friends—that is causing you distress?

No doubt it will take courage for you to make such a self-examination. But the rewards can be great. Often, this is the first step toward stopping the practice of self-injury. However, more is needed than simply uncovering the roots of your habit.

The Value of Confiding

If you have succumbed to self-injury, you will benefit by sharing your troubled feelings with a trusted and mature friend. A Bible proverb says: "Worry can rob you of happiness, but kind words will cheer you up." (Proverbs 12:25, *Today's English Version*) Confiding in another can put you in a position to hear the consoling, kind words you need.—Proverbs 25:11.

Whom should you approach? It would be good to select someone older than you who shows wisdom, maturity, and compassion. Christians have the benefit of congregation elders, who are "like a hiding place from the wind and a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless country, like the shadow of a heavy crag in an exhausted land."—Isaiah 32:2.

Granted, the idea of sharing your secret with someone may seem frightening. You may feel as did Sara. "At first, I found it hard to trust," she admits. "I believed that once people knew me—really knew me—they would draw back in loathing and disgust." By confiding, however, Sara came to appreciate the truth of what the Bible states at Proverbs 18:24: "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." She says: "The mature Christians I confided in never reproached me, no matter what I revealed to them about my self-injuring habits. Instead, they provided me with practical suggestions. They reasoned with me from the Scriptures, patiently reassuring me when I felt despondent and utterly worthless."

Why not talk to someone about your prob-

lem with self-injury? If you feel that you cannot bear a face-to-face discussion, try communicating in a letter or over the telephone. Confiding can be a positive step toward your recovery. Jennifer says, "The most important thing was knowing that someone really cared about me, that there was someone I could talk to when things looked bleak."*

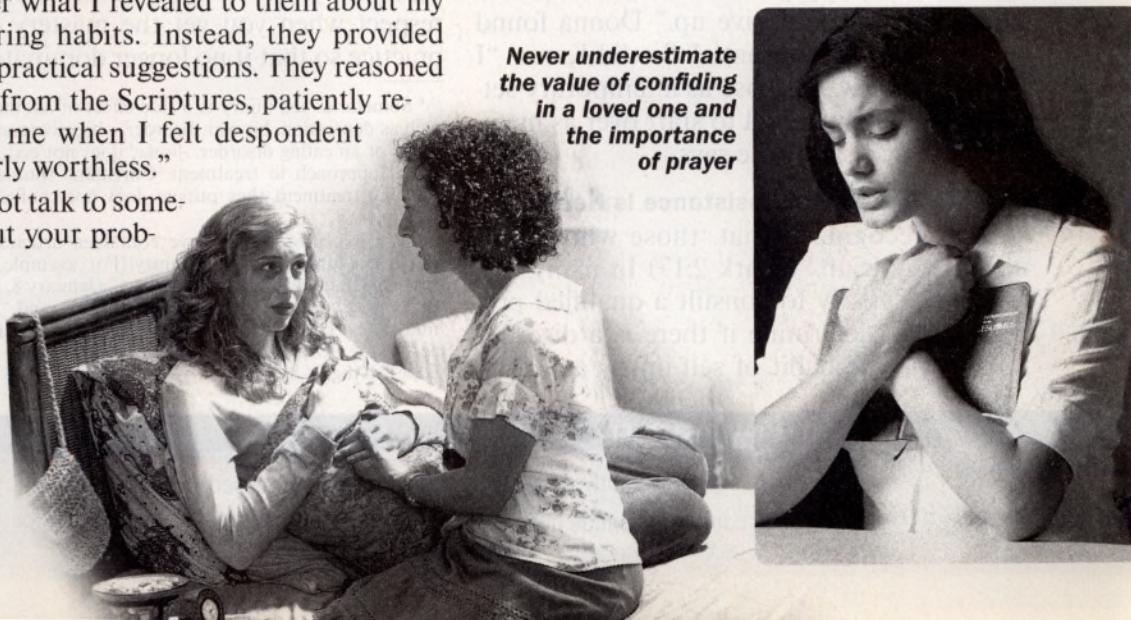
The Importance of Prayer

Donna was at an impasse. On the one hand, she felt that she needed God's help. On the other, she imagined that he would not favor her with his support until she quit cutting herself. What helped Donna? One factor was meditating on 1 Chronicles 29:17, which calls Jehovah God "an examiner of the heart." "Jehovah knew that in my heart I really wanted to stop cutting," says Donna. "Once I started praying to him for help, it was amazing. Little by little, I kept getting stronger."

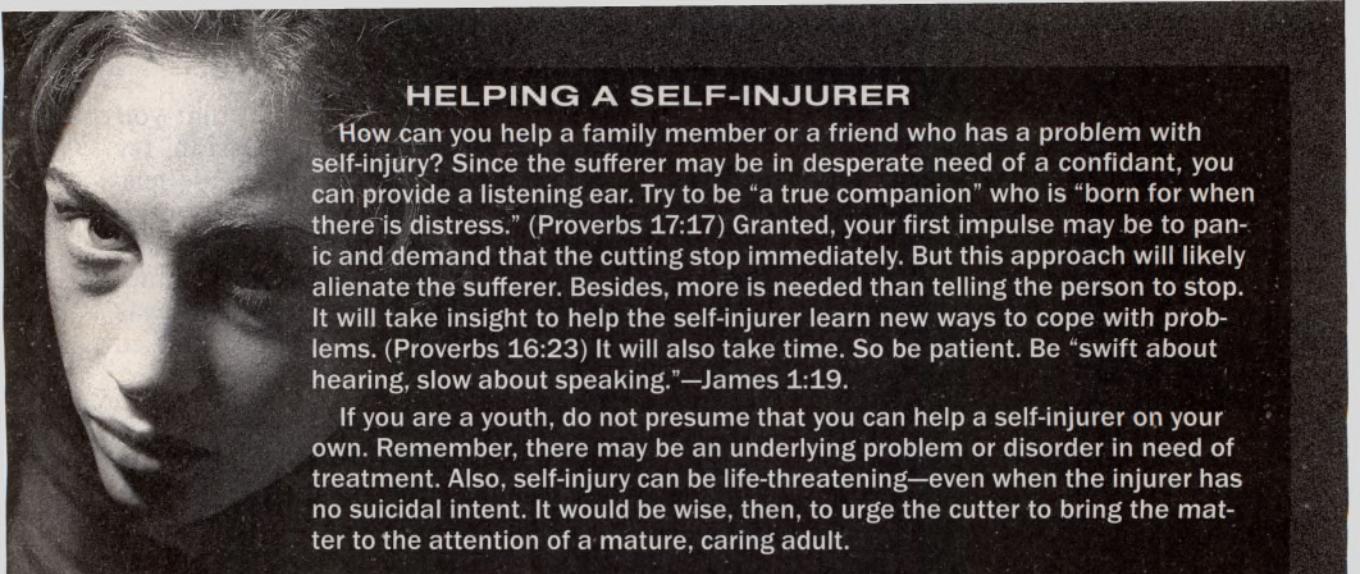
The psalmist David, who was no stranger to adversity, wrote: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22) Yes, Jehovah

* You might practice putting your feelings into words by writing them down at times. The writers of the Bible psalms were men of intense emotion who used words to express their feelings of remorse, anger, frustration, and sadness. As examples, you may wish to review Psalms 6, 13, 42, 55, and 69.

**Never underestimate
the value of confiding
in a loved one and
the importance
of prayer**



HELPING A SELF-INJURER



How can you help a family member or a friend who has a problem with self-injury? Since the sufferer may be in desperate need of a confidant, you can provide a listening ear. Try to be "a true companion" who is "born for when there is distress." (Proverbs 17:17) Granted, your first impulse may be to panic and demand that the cutting stop immediately. But this approach will likely alienate the sufferer. Besides, more is needed than telling the person to stop. It will take insight to help the self-injurer learn new ways to cope with problems. (Proverbs 16:23) It will also take time. So be patient. Be "swift about hearing, slow about speaking."—James 1:19.

If you are a youth, do not presume that you can help a self-injurer on your own. Remember, there may be an underlying problem or disorder in need of treatment. Also, self-injury can be life-threatening—even when the injurer has no suicidal intent. It would be wise, then, to urge the cutter to bring the matter to the attention of a mature, caring adult.

knows about your suffering. More than that, "he cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7) If your heart condemns you, remember that God is 'greater than your heart and knows all things.' Yes, he understands why you self-injure and why you find it difficult to stop. (1 John 3:19, 20) If you approach him in prayer and endeavor to overcome this practice, he will "really help you."—Isaiah 41:10.

What, though, if you experience a relapse? Does that mean you have failed completely? By no means! Proverbs 24:16 says: "The righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up." Reflecting on that Bible verse, Donna says, "I fell more than seven times, but I did not give up." Donna found that persistence is essential. So did Karen. "I learned to view a relapse as a temporary setback, not a failure, and to start over as many times as necessary," she says.

When Additional Assistance Is Needed

Jesus recognized that 'those who are ill need a physician.' (Mark 2:17) In many cases it is necessary to consult a qualified professional to determine if there is a disorder underlying the habit of self-injury and then

to propose treatment.* Jennifer chose to get such help, which complemented the support she received from loving Christian overseers. "The elders are not doctors, but they have been so supportive," she says. "Although the urge to hurt myself still comes at times, I have been successful in controlling it with the help of Jehovah, the congregation, and the coping skills I have learned."*

Be assured that you can learn to replace this habit with more productive ways of coping. Pray as did the psalmist: "Fix my own steps solidly in your saying, and may no kind of hurtful thing domineer over me." (Psalm 119: 133) Surely, you will gain satisfaction and self-respect when you get the mastery over this practice so that it no longer dominates you.

* Sometimes self-injury is a side effect of another condition, such as depression, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, or an eating disorder. *Awake!* does not endorse any particular approach to treatment. Christians should make sure that any treatment they pursue does not conflict with Bible principles.

* Past issues of *Awake!* have contained articles on matters that often lurk behind self-injury. For example, see the series "Understanding Mood Disorders" (January 8, 2004), "Help for Depressed Teens" (September 8, 2001), and "What Is Behind Eating Disorders?" (January 22, 1999), as well as the article "Young People Ask . . . An Alcoholic Parent—How Can I Cope?" (August 8, 1992).

TO THINK ABOUT

- What are some alternatives to cutting when you feel distressed?
- In whom could you confide if you have a problem with cutting?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN NEW ZEALAND

A Visit to an ARTIFICIAL-LIMB CENTER

I HAD a twofold reason for making an appointment at the Artificial Limb Centre in Wellington, New Zealand. First of all, my artificial leg needed some repairs. Second, I wanted to take a tour of the center to learn more about the process involved in making artificial limbs.

My prosthetist kindly agreed to my request for a tour. It turned out to be a rewarding experience, one that enhanced my appreciation for the skillful and dedicated efforts of those involved in the field of prosthetics.

The word "prosthesis" refers to an artificial substitute that replaces a lost limb or body part. Prosthetics is "the field of knowledge relating to prostheses." A prosthetist is "a person skilled in prosthetics and practicing its application."—*Encyclopedia and Dictionary of Medicine, Nursing, and Allied Health, Third Edition*.

How Is an Artificial Leg Made?

The majority of patients who visit the center come for an artificial leg. The first step in its manufacture is fitting a sleeve to the patient's healed stump. A plaster cast is then made, from which an exact duplicate of the stump can be formed. The model is

then used to build a socket into which the new limb is fitted. So begins the journey on the road to producing a fully functional leg to replace the one lost. A newer, more efficient fitting technique is the use of CAD/CAM programs to measure the stump. Then a machine carves out an exact replica of the person's remnant limb.

After observing demonstrations of the technical expertise used at the center, I was shown some of the ready-made, imported prosthetic components. One impressive example was a hydraulic knee joint fitted to a thermoplastic socket that can be heat-molded and reshaped for the patient's comfort. Comprehensive illustrated catalogs of such items are available from a variety of sources worldwide.

In the final stages of leg construction, fine adjustments are made to align the socket, knee, skin, and foot parts in order to ensure the most natural gait possible. Last of all, a foam cover is prepared. This serves to conceal the "bones" of the artificial limb. The cosmetic

Adjusting an artificial leg



© Otto Bock HealthCare



Fitting a patient's prosthesis

New Zealand, were on hand to help the contestants during the games.

Some of the limb parts had been developed especially for athletes. I was shown one example. It was a foot-and-ankle component constructed of a special material that duplicates the natural spring in a human foot.

Modern Advances

What does the future hold for prosthetics? My prosthodontist told me of a computer-controlled artificial leg currently being worn by at least one patient in New Zealand. Apparently it responds to pressure on sensors that are built into the unit. The result is duplication of a natural walking movement.

In some countries a technique called osteointegration is being experimented with by skilled orthopedic surgeons. A special pin, which is inserted in the stump after amputation, provides an anchor whereby an artificial device can be attached. It eliminates the need for casts and sockets.

Child Patients and Athletes

In the course of the tour, my attention was drawn to a little girl. She had no inhibitions when it came to showing us her stump and her prosthetic limb. Later, I watched her skipping about, seemingly without a care in the world.

I was very interested in what my prosthetist had to say about children who experience the loss of a limb. He showed me a miniature hand and explained that such prostheses are fitted to infants as young as six months. Why? To provide training for the later use of an artificial hand or arm. Without such training, he said, the youngster grows up to be one-arm dependent and can find it difficult to adjust to the use of two arms later in life.

I learned that not long ago a European manufacturer shipped a container of components of prosthetic limbs for athletes to Sydney, Australia, for use at the Paralympics. These were supplied to competitors free of charge, and prosthetists, including some from

Research is also being done to integrate receptors into nerve fibers, which will allow a person to control a prosthesis by thought alone. In the United States and some other countries, a limited number of hand transplants have been performed, but this is a fairly controversial procedure that requires recipients to take antirejection drugs for the rest of their life.

In the field of arm prosthetics, a system called myoelectronics is now in use. Electrodes pick up impulses from arm muscles, which are often still present in the remnant

1. Loin's girded with truth, the breastplate of righteousness, feet shod with the good news of peace, the large shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit. **2.** Sandals. **3.** Satan's attack on our faith. **4.** Medo-Persia—from 539 B.C.E. **5.** Greece—from 331 B.C.E. **6.** Babylonia—from 607 B.C.E. **7.** Micah—Judges 17:1-3. **8.** Esau.—Genesis 26:34, 35.

Hands:
© Otto Bock
HealthCare



Myoelectric hands use muscle signals to control speed and grip force

limb. These impulses are then battery amplified to control electronic components in the artificial limb. The latest technology for upper-limb prosthetics uses a computer interface to fine-tune the artificial arm to the individual wearer.

Amazed at these advances in artificial-limb technology, I asked my prosthetist how he would compare their function to the way natural limbs work. Of course, he readily acknowledged that the original was superior. This made me think of the words of the psalmist who, in prayer to his Creator, said: "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made."

—Psalm 139:14.

A miniature hand prosthesis, which is used to train infant amputees

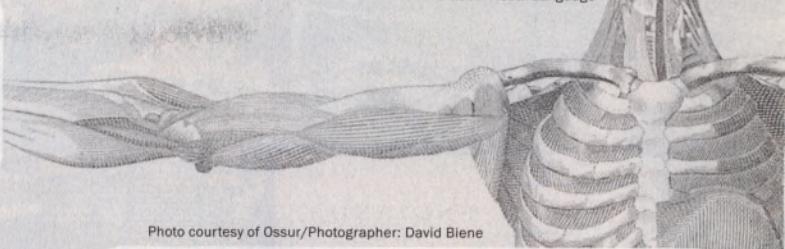
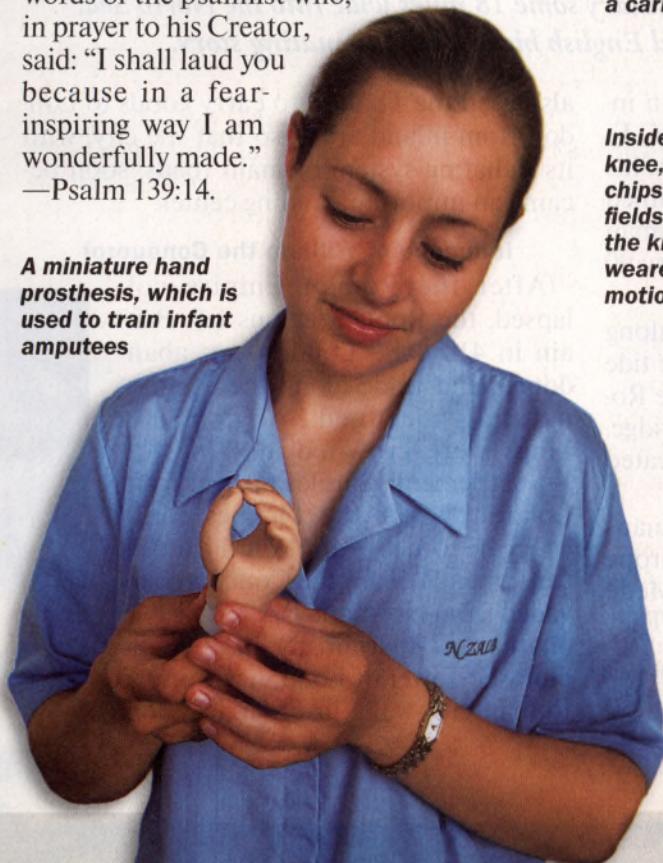


Photo courtesy of Ossur/Photographer: David Biene



In 2004 the winner of the Paralympic 100-meter race ran it in 10.97 seconds with a carbon-fiber foot

Inside this hi-tech knee, computer chips and magnetic fields help adapt the knee to the wearer's walking motion



Knee: Photos courtesy of Ossur



This cross section of the foot shows its foam cover and ankle structure



BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BRITAIN

“Old Father Thames” ENGLAND’S UNIQUE HERITAGE

The river Thames—affectionately known as Old Father Thames—rises from four headstreams in the picturesque Cotswold Hills of south-central England. As it meanders 215 miles eastward, it is joined by other rivers until it finally pours through an estuary some 18 miles wide into the North Sea.

How this short river shaped English history is a fascinating story.

JULIUS CAESAR led the first Roman invasion of England in about 55 B.C.E. When he returned the following year, his advance was impeded by the river he named Tamesis, the Thames. It was left to Roman Emperor Claudius to subdue the country 90 years later.

At that time marshlands extended along both sides of the Thames, but where the tide turns some 30 miles from its estuary, the Roman army later constructed a wooden bridge. There, on the river's north bank, they created a port they called Londinium.*

For the next four centuries, the Romans expanded trade with other parts of Europe and imported luxury items from the Mediterranean—even timber from Lebanon. They

also used the Thames to carry goods to London from inland areas, so that the city, with its radiating system of main roads, soon became an important trading center.

Influence of William the Conqueror

After the Roman Empire collapsed, the Roman legions left Britain in 410 C.E., London was abandoned, and trade along the Thames naturally declined. Anglo-Saxon kings were crowned at Kingston—a settlement 12 miles upriver from London, where the Thames could easily be forded—until the 11th century when William the Conqueror invaded from Normandy. After his coronation at Westminster in 1066, he built the Tower of London within the Roman city walls in order to domi-

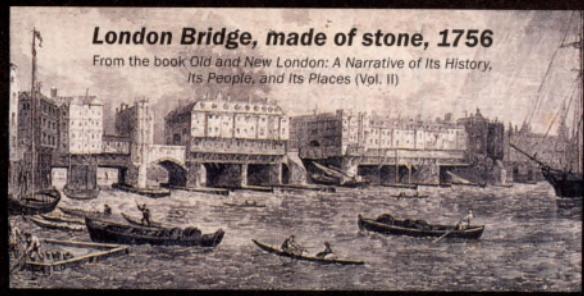


* Although the name London is from the Latin *Londinium*, both may be derived from the Celtic words *llyn* and *din*, which together mean “town [or, stronghold] on the lake.”



London Bridge, made of stone, 1756

From the book *Old and New London: A Narrative of Its History, Its People, and Its Places* (Vol. III)



**Big Ben and
the houses of Parliament,
Westminster, London**



nate and expand the mercantile community as well as to control access to the port. Trade prospered again, and London's population grew to some 30,000.

William the Conqueror also built a fortress atop a chalky outcrop some 22 miles west of London, in what is today known as Windsor. It replaced a royal Saxon residence and commands a magnificent view across the Thames. Windsor Castle is the result of many additions and alterations, and it remains one of the most popular tourist attractions in Britain.

The year 1209 saw the completion of a 30-year project—a stone bridge across the Thames in London—one of the first of its kind in Europe. This extraordinary structure, on which were built shops, houses, and even a chapel, had two drawbridges and a tower at Southwark, on its southern side, for defense.

King John of England (1167-1216) sealed his famous Magna Carta in 1215 at Runnymede, on the Thames near Windsor. By this act he was forced to guarantee not only English civil liberties but also specifically the liberties of the city of London and freedom of commerce for its port and merchants.

The Thames Brings Prosperity

Over the centuries that followed, commerce thrived on the Thames. In time, increasing trade stretched the facilities along the river. Two hundred years ago, the Thames could cater to only 600 vessels at its mooring piers, yet sometimes as many as 1,775 sailing ships were waiting in the port to discharge their cargo. As a result of this congestion, pilfering became a serious problem. Thieves cut vessels adrift from their moorings at night to plunder them, and small boats with contraband made a living plying the Thames. To address this problem, London established the world's first river police force. It still operates.

More was needed, however, to relieve the pressure on the port's facilities. Therefore,

during the 19th century, the English Parliament agreed to the construction of the largest system of enclosed docks in the world, to be cut into low-lying land on both sides of the river. The Surrey Commercial Docks, the London Dock, and the West and East India docks were the first to be completed, in the early 1800's, followed by the Royal Victoria Dock in 1855 and its companion, the Royal Albert Dock, in 1880.

Two engineers—father and son—Marc I. and Isambard K. Brunel, linked both banks of the Thames in 1840 by building the world's first underwater tunnel. It is 1,506 feet long and is still used as part of the network of underground railways serving Greater London. In 1894 the modern tourist attraction Tower Bridge was completed. Its double-leaf bascule provides an opening of 250 feet to allow the passage of large ships between its twin towers. And if you climb nearly 300 steps, you will emerge onto a connecting catwalk and see magnificent views along the river.

By the 20th century, London's dock complex was well equipped to accommodate the growing number of larger steamships needed to handle the trade generated by the city. By the time the last dock, named after King George V, was constructed in 1921, London had become "the largest and richest port system in the world."

The River Hosts Palaces, Royalty, and Pageantry

During the course of London's development, its roads remained poor and unpaved, often impassable in winter. The quickest and

most logical means of transport, therefore, was the Thames, which over the years became a very busy water thoroughfare. The familiar cry "Oars!" arose from Thames watermen as they crowded the riverside steps and stairs, clamoring to carry passengers across, up, or down the waterway or along such meandering tributaries as the rivers Fleet and Walbrook, now long buried beneath the London streets that bear their names.

In time, London came to look much like Venice, with the terraces of its many stately palaces leading down to the river. Living on the banks of the Thames became the height of royal fashion, as the palaces at Greenwich, Whitehall, and Westminster testify. Likewise, Hampton Court has been home to kings and queens of England, and Windsor Castle, upriver, continues as a royal residence.

In 1717, George Frideric Handel composed his "Water Music" to please King George I on the occasion of a royal water picnic. The king's barge was accompanied by "so great a Number of Boats, that the whole River in a manner was cover'd," reported one newspaper of the day. The barge next to the royal one carried 50 musicians, who played Handel's composition three times as they all traveled five miles upriver from Westminster to Chelsea.

A River That Offers Pleasure and Relaxation

Until Westminster Bridge was constructed in the 1740's, the sole means of crossing the Thames on foot was London Bridge,

This 1803 engraving shows the river Thames and hundreds of ships moored in the port



▲ From the book *Old and New London: A Narrative of its History, Its People, and Its Places* (Vol. III).

Corporation of London, London Metropolitan Archive ▼



An engraving of
the 1683 frost fair

which was later remodeled and finally replaced in the 1820's. The piers supporting the 19 arches of the original stone structure greatly impeded the flow of the river. As a result, during the 600 years or so of the bridge's existence, the Thames was frozen over at least

eight times. When this happened, great "frost fairs" were set up on the ice, where many sporting events took place. Oxen were roasted, and royalty could be seen eating there. Books and toys labeled "bought on the Thames" were soon snapped up. Newsheets and even copies of the Lord's Prayer were printed on presses erected on the frozen river!

In more modern times, the University Boat Race, a competition between Oxford and Cambridge universities, has become an annual springtime event. Crowds line the banks of the Thames between Putney and Mortlake to cheer on the competing crews of eight rowers as they cover a distance of just over four miles in less than 20 minutes. The first race was held in 1829 farther upstream at Henley. After the course was moved downriver, Henley sponsored its own royal regatta, the oldest and most distinguished rowing event of its kind in Europe. It attracts the world's finest oarsmen and oarswomen for events rowed over the course of one mile. This summer regatta has now become a fashionable social event.

A guide to Britain says that the Thames "offers many varied pleasures as it passes through typically English countryside of low hills, woods, meadows, country houses, pretty villages and small towns. . . . For long sections no road follows its course but there is usually a towpath. The result is that while the motorist may admire the river in towns along its route, the Thames' quiet beauty can only be fully appreciated from a boat or on foot."

Are you planning a visit to England? Then give yourself time to explore the Thames and savor some of its history. From the rural beauty of its source right through to its busy estuary, there is so much to see, to do, and to learn! "Old Father Thames" will not disappoint you.

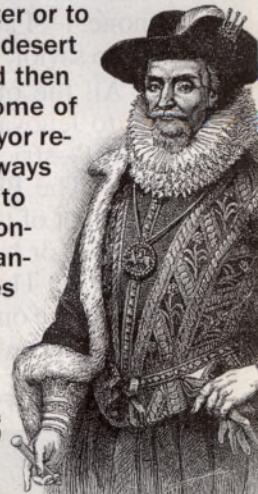
LITERATURE AND THE THAMES

Jerome K. Jerome captured the relaxing atmosphere of the Thames in his book *Three Men in a Boat*. It records the vacation trip of three friends rowing up the river from Hampton Court to Oxford with their dog. Written in 1889 and widely translated, it remains a popular "classic of whimsical humour."

The Wind in the Willows is another well-known story, enjoyed by adults and children alike. Completed in 1908 by Kenneth Grahame, who lived at Pangbourne, a town on the Thames, it is a fantasy about animals that live in or near the banks of the river.

THE KING VERSUS THE THAMES

King James I, who reigned in the early part of the 17th century, once demanded £20,000 from the Corporation of London. When the Lord Mayor refused to comply, the king threatened: "I'll ruin you and your city for ever. I'll remove my courts of law, my Court itself, and my Parliament to Winchester or to Oxford, and make a desert of Westminster; and then think what will become of you!" To this the mayor replied: "There will always be one consolation to the merchants of London: your majesty cannot take the Thames along with you."



Is There Only One True God?

MOLECH, Ashtoreth, Baal, Dagon, Merodach, Zeus, Hermes, and Artemis are some of the gods and goddesses mentioned by name in the Bible. (Leviticus 18:21; Judges 2:13; 16:23; Jeremiah 50:2; Acts 14:12; 19:24) Yet, only Jehovah is identified in the Scriptures as the Almighty God. In a victory song, Moses led his people in singing: "Who among the gods is like you, O Jehovah?"—Exodus 15:11.

Clearly, the Bible places Jehovah above all other gods. But what role do these lesser gods play? Are they and the countless other gods that have been worshipped through the ages real deities subordinate to the Almighty God, Jehovah?

Figments of the Imagination

The Bible identifies Jehovah as the only true God. (Psalm 83:18; John 17:3) The prophet Isaiah recorded God's own words when he said: "Before me there was no God formed, and after me there continued to be none. I—I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior."—Isaiah 43:10, 11.

All the other gods are not merely inferior to Jehovah. In most cases they are nonexistent—strictly figments of human imagination. The Bible refers to these gods as "the product of the hands of man . . . , which cannot see or hear or eat or smell." (Deuteronomy 4:28) The Bible plainly teaches that Jehovah is the only true God.

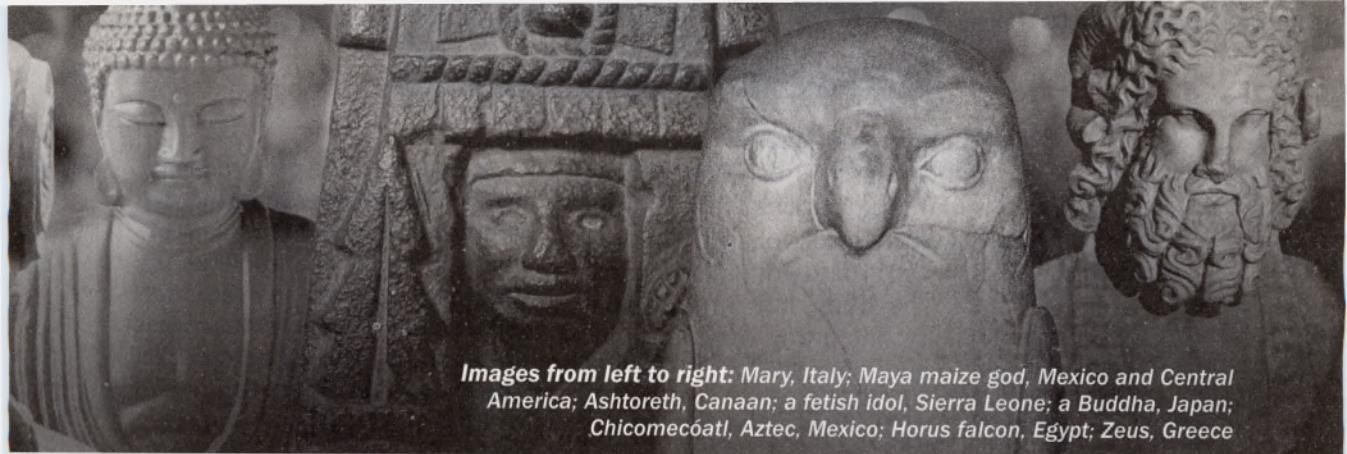
It is no wonder that the Scriptures stern-

ly warn against worshipping any deity other than Jehovah. For instance, in the first of the Ten Commandments given to Moses, the ancient nation of Israel was told not to worship any other god. (Exodus 20:3) Why?

First, to venerate a god that does not even exist is a great insult to the Creator. The worshippers of these false gods are described in the Bible as having "exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service to the creation rather than the One who created." (Romans 1:25) Often these imaginary gods are represented by idols made of materials found in nature, such as metal or wood. Many deities are associated with certain aspects of nature, such as thunder, the oceans, and the wind. Surely, then, the veneration of such pseudo gods is a gross act of disrespect to the Almighty God.

To the Creator, false gods and their idols are repugnant. Yet, God's words of displeasure are mainly directed to the people who have fabricated these false gods. His sentiments are forcefully expressed in these words: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of the hands of earthling man. A mouth they have, but they can speak nothing; eyes they have, but they can see nothing; ears they have, but they can give ear to nothing. Also there exists no spirit in their mouth. Those making them will become just like them, everyone who is trusting in them."

—Psalm 135:15-18.



Images from left to right: Mary, Italy; Maya maize god, Mexico and Central America; Ashtoreth, Canaan; a fetish idol, Sierra Leone; a Buddha, Japan; Chicomecoatl, Aztec; Horus falcon, Egypt; Zeus, Greece

There is another reason for the Bible's stern warning against worshipping anyone or anything other than Jehovah God. Such worship would be a monumental waste of time and effort. The prophet Isaiah aptly stated: "Who has formed a god or cast a mere molten image? Of no benefit at all has it been." (Isaiah 44:10) The Bible also says that "all the gods of the peoples are valueless gods." (Psalm 96:5) False gods are nothing, and worshipping nothing achieves nothing.

Jesus, the Angels, and the Devil

The Scriptures do at times refer to actual persons as gods. However, a careful examination clearly reveals that the term "god" in these instances is not intended to designate these individuals as deities. Rather, in the original languages in which the Bible was written, the term "god" was also used to describe a mighty person or an individual who is divine or closely associated with the Almighty God.

For example, some Bible verses allude to Jesus Christ as a god. (Isaiah 9:6, 7; John 1:1, 18) Does this mean that Jesus is to be worshipped? Jesus himself said: "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him

alone you must render sacred service." (Luke 4:8) Clearly, although Jesus is mighty in power and divine in nature, the Bible does not portray him as an object of worship.

The angels are also referred to as "god-like ones." (Psalm 8:5; Hebrews 2:7) Still, nowhere in the Scriptures are humans encouraged to venerate the angels. In fact, on a certain occasion, the aged apostle John was so awestruck by the presence of an angel that he prostrated himself to worship the angel. However, the angel responded: "Be careful! Do not do that! . . . Worship God."—Revelation 19:10.

The apostle Paul described the Devil as "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) As "the ruler of this world," the Devil has promoted countless false gods. (John 12:31) Hence, all worship addressed to man-made gods is, in effect, worship rendered to Satan. But Satan is not a god who merits our worship. He is a self-appointed ruler, a usurper. In time, he himself, as well as all forms of false worship, will be eliminated. When that happens, all humanity—yes, all creation—will forever acknowledge Jehovah as the only true and living God.—Jeremiah 10:10.

Maize god, Horus falcon, and Zeus: Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- What does the Bible teach about idol worship?—**Psalm 135:15-18.**
- Should Jesus and the angels be worshipped as gods?—**Luke 4:8.**
- Who is the only true God?—**John 17:3.**



"Appreciate Your Mother"

Labor analysts estimate that if a Canadian stay-at-home mom with two school-aged children were paid for all the work she does, her annual salary, including overtime pay, would be \$163,852 (Canadian). The figure is based on current market wages and a "100-hour workweek, consisting of six 15-hour days and one 10-hour day," says the *Vancouver Sun* newspaper. Among the responsibilities of a stay-at-home mom are those of day-care worker, teacher, driver, housekeeper, cook, nurse, and general maintenance worker. The newspaper offers the following advice: "Appreciate your mother: She's probably underpaid."

Confused Values Among Youths

Young Finns are increasingly "creating their own morals," states a bulletin of the University of Jyväskylä, in Finland. Commonly today, "people take elements of their faith from here and there, as if they were shopping," says the bulletin. The results are sometimes contradictory. For example, young ones believe it is important to share wealth and prosperity justly; yet, at the same time, they "have begun to believe in brazenness and harsh competition."

Prion Transfusion Risk

In a recent press release, the French Health and Safety Agency for Medical Products upgraded from possible to probable the risk of transmission of prions through blood transfusion. Prions are the protein molecules thought to be responsible for the development of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans. This fatal neurodegenerative condition, for which there is no known cure, is the human variant of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, more commonly known as mad-cow disease. The upgrading of the risk follows the discovery of two cases in Britain of probable transmission of vCJD through blood transfusion. No reliable test exists to diagnose this disease prior to the onset of clinical symptoms.

■ Based on the preference of each taxpayer, the Spanish government assigns 0.5 percent of taxes to either charitable or Catholic organizations. Although 80 percent of Spaniards profess Catholicism, only 20 percent pick the church option.—*EL PAÍS, SPAIN*.

■ "Being a smoker at the age of 30 cuts a man's life expectancy by 5 ½ years, and a woman's by more than 6 ½," according to life tables produced by the Institute of Actuaries. However, quitting at age 30 reduces much of the risk of dying from a tobacco-related disease.

—*THE TIMES, ENGLAND*.

■ During 2004, world oil consumption rose 3.4 percent to 82.4 million barrels per day. The United States and China accounted for almost half the increase and now use 20.5 million and 6.6 million barrels a day respectively.—*VITAL SIGNS 2005, WORLDWATCH INSTITUTE*.

Yearning for a Slimmer Body

Research has found that "girls as young as five are dissatisfied with their bodies and wish they were thinner," reports *The Sydney Morning Herald*. The report cites a study involving Australian girls aged five to eight. Nearly half the girls wanted to have skinnier bodies, while a similar number said that "they would diet if they put on weight." One researcher suggested that unhealthy body images "could lead to low self-esteem, depression and eating disorders in later life."

DESCRIBE THE ILLUSTRATION

- 1.** List the pieces of spiritual armor mentioned by Paul at Ephesians 6:11-17. Draw a line connecting each of your answers to the picture.
-
.....
.....
.....
.....



- 3.** What do the fiery arrows represent?

■ **For Discussion:** Why do we need to wear the complete suit of spiritual armor?

- 2.** Which piece of armor is this soldier missing?

(Answers on page 22)

WHEN IN HISTORY?

Draw a line from the picture to the correct starting date for that empire.



4



5



6

Based on Daniel 7:4-6

1077 B.C.E.

607 B.C.E. 539 B.C.E.

455 B.C.E.

331 B.C.E.

WHO AM I?

- 7.** I confessed to stealing 1,100 pieces of silver from my mother; then I gave it back to her.

WHO AM I?

- 8.** I chose to be a polygamist, and one of my wives was named Judith.

FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

Page 3 How was Abraham's old age described? (Genesis 25:__)

Page 8 What will happen to older ones under the rule of God's Kingdom? (Job 33:__)

Page 13 Contrary to Puritan teachings, what does the Bible say about the condition of the dead? (Ecclesiastes 9:__)

Page 19 How can prayer help troubled youths? (Psalm 55:__)

Top circle: North Wind Picture Archives; second circle from top:
Photo courtesy of Ossur/Photographer: David Blenie



Children's Picture Search

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



“It Is Simply Fantastic!”

■ In Brazil a teacher of geography was fascinated with the educational value of Awake! He wrote: “The magazine provides me with more teaching material than many of the publications intended for the educational field. Although my religious beliefs differ, I fully agree with the values Awake! conveys.”

This teacher came to realize, however, that Awake! is only one of the many publications Jehovah’s Witnesses provide. He wrote: “One student in the sixth grade lent me the brochure ‘See the Good Land.’ I was amazed by the quality of the information. It is simply fantastic! The ability to visualize and locate Bible events gives Bible study added meaning, especially for young people.”

He added: “Your publications are everywhere: on the bus, among the students, and even in the line at the bank. I am glad to see that they are reaching needy communities where access to good information is very difficult to come by. Congratulations for your wonderful work.”

