

THE WATCHTOWER

AUGUST 15, 2007
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**What Does
DESIGN in NATURE
Reveal?**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellow men 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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DESIGN WITHOUT A DESIGNER?

ALMOST 150 years have passed since Charles Darwin proposed that natural selection explains life's complexity and diversity. However, his theory of evolution and its modern variations have recently come under attack from those who believe that the marvelously fine-tuned architecture of living organisms indicates purposeful design. Even a number of scientists with solid credentials do not accept the idea that evolution accounts for the array of species we see on earth.

Some such scientists offer a counter-argument—known as intelligent design, or ID—asserting that design in creation is firmly supported by biology, mathematics, and common sense. They seek to include discussion of this idea in the science curriculum in schools. The so-called evolution wars are raging mainly in the United States, but similar trends are reported in England, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Serbia, and Turkey.

A Puzzling Omission

There is usually, however, a conspicuous omission in the carefully worded defense of intelligent design. That is the absence of reference to a designer. Do you believe that design is conceivable without a designer? Advocates of intelligent design "make no explicit claims about who or what this designer might be," reported *The New York Times Magazine*. Writer Claudia Wallis stated that intelligent design proponents are "careful



Darwin: From a photograph by Mrs. J. M. Cameron/U.S. National Archives photo

Charles Darwin believed that natural selection explained life's complexity

not to bring God into the discussion." And *Newsweek* magazine commented that "I.D. has nothing to say on the existence and identity of the designer."

You can appreciate, though, that it is futile to try to evade the question of the designer. How could the explanation involving design in the universe and of life itself be complete if the existence and identity of the designer were concealed or not even considered?

To an extent, the debate on whether to invoke a designer or not revolves around these questions: Would accepting the existence of a superhuman designer hamper scientific and intellectual progress? Is an intelligent designer called for only when no other explanation is offered? And does it really make sense to infer from the design that there is a designer? The following article will discuss these and related questions.

ADMIRE THE DESIGN LEARN ABOUT THE DESIGNER

YOU have probably heard of the Italian painter and sculptor Michelangelo. Though you may never have seen the original of any of his masterpieces, you most likely agree with the art historian who called the Italian genius a "marvellous and incomparable artist." Michelangelo's talents cannot be denied. Who would try to separate appreciation for Michelangelo's art from acknowledgment of him as an outstanding artist?

Now think of the mind-boggling complexity and diversity of life that thrives around us on earth. Appropriately, *The New York Times* quoted one professor of biological sciences as stating: "The physical marks of design are visible in aspects of biology." He added: "Life overwhelms us with the appearance of design." Is it intellectually honest to admire the design without acknowledging the designer?

The apostle Paul, a keen observer of things around him, spoke of those who "honoured and served the creature more than him who had created it." (Romans 1:25, *Darby*) Affected by pervasive evolutionary ideas, some refuse or fail to recognize that design certainly points to a designer. But does the theory of evolution represent true science at its best? Note the conclusion that Christoph Schönborn, Catholic archbishop of Vienna, presented in *The New York Times*: "Any system of thought that denies or seeks to explain away



Michelangelo

the overwhelming evidence for design in biology is ideology, not science."

The End of Science?

There are, however, those who feel that accepting the position that there is evidence of a Creator would "stifle research." An article in the magazine *New Scientist* expressed such fears, asserting that "science as an open-ended pursuit would come to an end, halted by an impenetrable barrier labelled 'the designer did it.'" Is that fear well-founded? Not at all. In fact, the opposite is true. Why?

To accept blind chance and subsequent evolution as the cause of our universe and life on earth would actually be to abandon any attempt to get a meaningful explanation. On the other hand, accepting that an intelligent Creator is behind what we see around us can lead us to investigate the nature and application of his intelligence manifested in the physical universe. Consider this: Knowing that Leonardo da Vinci painted the "Mona Lisa" has not stopped art historians from investigating his technique and the

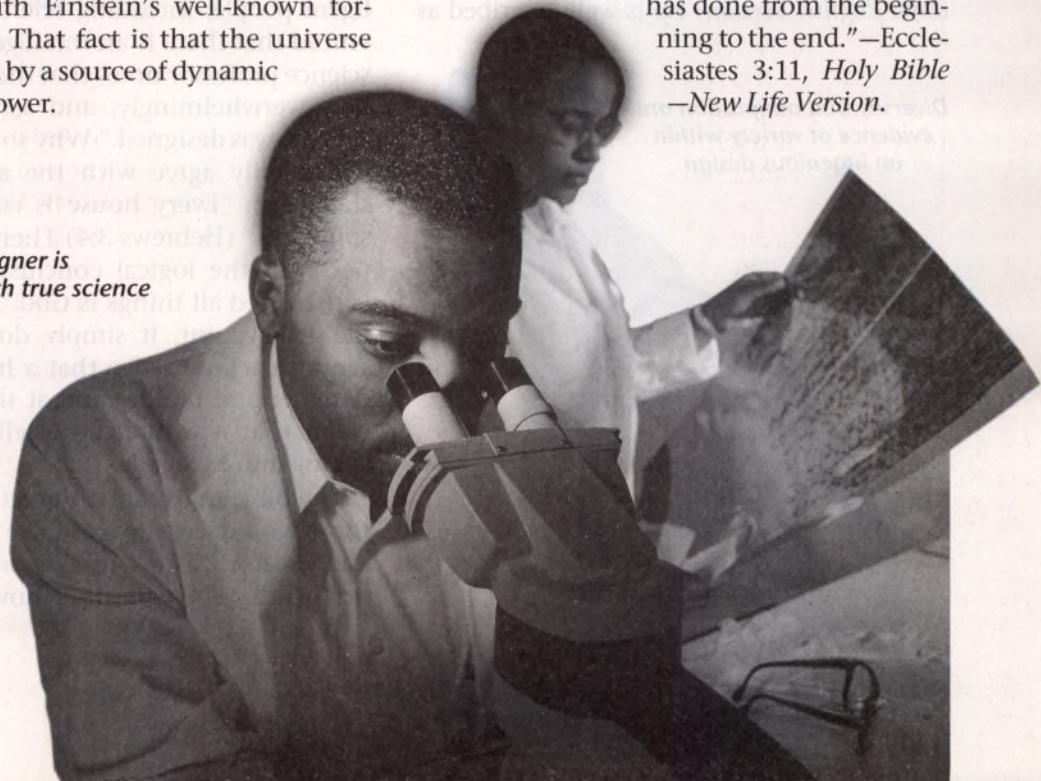
materials he used. Similarly, accepting that there is a Designer should not discourage us from inquiring into the details and complexity of his designs and creations.

Rather than stifling further research, the Bible encourages the search for answers to both scientific and spiritual questions. Ancient King David reflected on the physical makeup of his masterfully formed body. As a result, he said: "In a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware." (Psalm 139:14) In fact, the Bible presents the Creator as asking the patriarch Job: "Have you intelligently considered the broad spaces of the earth?" (Job 38:18) That certainly does not suggest any stifling of inquiry and investigation. On the contrary, the Master Designer here invited a study of his handiwork. Consider, too, the invitation penned by the prophet Isaiah that directs us to increase our understanding of the One responsible for the creation around us: "Raise your eyes high up and see. Who has created these things?" Indeed, Isaiah 40:26 then brings up a fact consistent with Einstein's well-known formula $E=mc^2$. That fact is that the universe was produced by a source of dynamic energy and power.

Belief in a Designer is compatible with true science

Granted, answers to questions regarding creation are not always readily available. In part, this is because our powers of understanding are limited and our grasp of the world in which we live is incomplete. Job understood this. He extolled the Creator, under whose direction our globe hangs on nothing visible in space and water-laden clouds are suspended above the earth. (Job 26:7-9) Yet, Job realized that such wonders 'are but the fringes of the Creator's ways.' (Job 26:14) Job undoubtedly wanted to learn more about the world around him. And David admitted his limitations, writing: "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is so high up that I cannot attain to it."—Psalm 139:6.

Acceptance of the existence of a Creator does not hinder scientific progress. The quest for more comprehensive knowledge in both physical and spiritual matters is indeed open-ended and eternal. An ancient king noted for his broad knowledge humbly wrote: "He has put thoughts of the forever in man's mind, yet man cannot understand the work God has done from the beginning to the end."—Ecclesiastes 3:11, *Holy Bible—New Life Version*.



"God-of-the-Gaps"?

Some object that God is arbitrarily inserted "as an explanatory fix" wherever there is no provable scientific explanation. In other words, the claim is that such a divine Designer becomes the "God-of-the-gaps," as if "God" were a magic word to use whenever men cannot figure things out. But what are the gaps referred to here? Are they merely small and insignificant gaps in our knowledge? No, they are real chasms of plausibility that exist in Darwinian evolution. They are fundamental breaches in aspects of biology that the theory of evolution has been incapable of bridging. In all fairness, evolutionists who rely on unsupported assertions effectively make the Darwinian theory their "God-of-the-gaps."

The Creator presented in the Bible is no "God-of-the-gaps." Rather, his activity covers all phases, aspects, and details of creation. The psalmist emphasized the all-encompassing creative activity of Jehovah: "You are the source of all life, and because of your light we see the light." (*Psalm 36:9, Today's English Version*) He is well described as

the One "who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them." (*Acts 4:24; 14:15; 17:24*) For good reason, a first-century teacher wrote that God "created all things."—*Ephesians 3:9*.

In addition, God established "the statutes of the heavens," the physical laws that govern matter and energy, which laws scientists are still studying. (*Job 38:33*) His design is comprehensive and purposeful, achieving his objective to form the earth to be inhabited by a staggering diversity of living things.

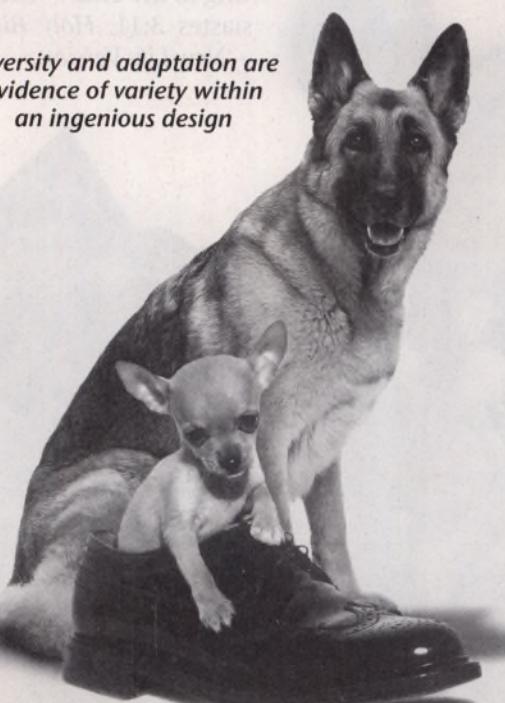
Design and Common Sense

Finally, we need to consider the question of common sense. Commenting in general on the validity of various scientific theories, science writer John Horgan observed: "When the evidence is tentative, we should not be embarrassed to call on common sense for guidance."

Does it really make sense to claim that life came about simply by chance or through blind forces? Despite the widespread popularity of the theory of evolution, many intelligent people, including scientists, are convinced that there is an intelligent Creator. A science professor notes that the general public "overwhelmingly, and sensibly, thinks that life was designed." Why so? Most people will readily agree with the apostle Paul's statement: "Every house is constructed by someone." (*Hebrews 3:4*) Then Paul continues with the logical conclusion: "He that constructed all things is God." From the Bible's viewpoint, it simply does not make sense to acknowledge that a house needs a designer and builder and at the same time claim that a complicated cell accidentally sprang into existence.

The Bible makes an observation regarding those who reject the existence of a Designer and Creator: "The senseless one has said in his heart: 'There is no Jehovah.'" (*Psalm*

Diversity and adaptation are evidence of variety within an ingenious design



14:1) Here, the psalmist reproves those who have yet to be convinced. A person might be guided by personal opinion rather than by pure objectivity. On the other hand, the wise, discerning person humbly acknowledges the existence of a Creator.—Isaiah 45:18.

For many thinking individuals, the evidence that supports a Supreme Designer is unmistakable.

You Can Know the Designer

If we see ourselves as the product of design, for what were we designed? What is the purpose of our life? Science alone is unable to

give satisfying answers to such questions. These fundamental issues, however, require convincing and satisfying answers. The Bible can be of great benefit in this regard. It identifies Jehovah not only as the Creator but also as a Purposer, one who has sound reasons for what he does. The Scriptures reveal God's purpose for humankind, offering us a future and a hope.

Still, who is Jehovah? What kind of God is he? Jehovah's Witnesses invite you to get to know our Masterful Designer as a real person. You can learn about his name and about his qualities and dealings with mankind. Through the pages of his Word, the Bible, you will come to see why we should not simply admire his superb design but also glorify him as the Designer.

—Psalm 86:12; Revelation 4:11.

Design requires a designer



CHRISTIANITY PENETRATES ASIA MINOR

In the first century C.E., many Christian congregations blossomed in Asia Minor (mainly modern-day Turkey). Jews and Gentiles in great numbers responded to the Christian message. One Bible dictionary states: "Apart from Syria-Palestine, it was here in Asia Minor that the Christian movement made its earliest and most extensive advance."

We can get a fuller picture of the spread of Christianity in this region by piecing together information from different sources. Let us see how we can benefit from considering the available information.

The First Christians in Asia Minor

The first significant event in the spread of Christianity in Asia Minor dates back to Pentecost 33 C.E. when a multilingual crowd that included Diaspora Jews (Jews who lived outside Palestine) and Jewish proselytes assembled in Jerusalem. Jesus' apostles preached the good news to these visitors. The historical record says that various ones came from Cappadocia, Pontus, the district of Asia,* Phrygia, and Pamphylia—areas that made up a large part of Asia Minor. About 3,000 listeners accepted the Christian message and were baptized. On their return



home, they took their new faith with them.
—Acts 2:5-11, 41.

We find the next piece of information in the Bible record of the apostle Paul's missionary journeys in Asia Minor. During his first trip, dated to about 47/48 C.E., Paul sailed with his companions from Cyprus to Asia Minor, landing at Perga in Pamphylia. In the inland city of Antioch in Pisidia, their success in preaching provoked jealousy and opposition from the Jews. When Paul moved southeastward to Iconium, other Jews plotted to treat the missionaries insolently. Excitable local people in nearby Lystra at first proclaimed Paul to be a god. But after opposing Jews from Antioch and Iconium arrived, the local crowd proceeded to stone Paul and leave him for dead! After

* In the Christian Greek Scriptures and in this article, "Asia" refers to the Roman province that occupied the western part of Asia Minor, not to the continent of Asia.

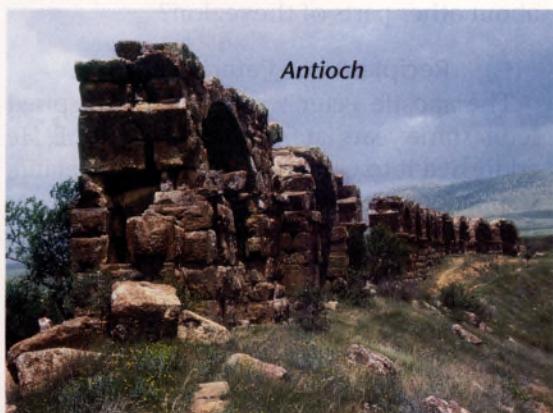


that experience, Paul and Barnabas extended their tour to Derbe in the Roman political province of Galatia, an area where people spoke the Lycaonian language. Congregations were organized, and elders appointed. You can thus see that about 15 years after Pentecost 33 C.E., Christianity was well-established in Asia Minor.—Acts 13:13-14:26.

During his second journey, dated to about 49 to 52 C.E., Paul's group first traveled overland to Lystra, likely passing his home territory of Tarsus in Cilicia. After revisiting the

brothers in Lystra and moving north, Paul attempted to "speak the word" in the provinces of Bithynia and Asia. However, holy spirit forbade that. Those areas would be evangelized later. Instead, God guided Paul through northwestern parts of Asia Minor to Troas on the coast. Then Paul was directed in a vision to declare the good news in Europe. —Acts 16:1-12; 22:3.

During Paul's third missionary tour, dated to about 52 to 56 C.E., he again moved through Asia Minor, reaching Ephesus, an



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Theater in Ephesus.—Acts 19:29



Base of the altar of Zeus in Pergamum. Christians in the city dwelled “where the throne of Satan” was.—Revelation 2:13

important port city of Asia. He had already stopped there when he returned from his second journey. A group of Christians were active in that city, and Paul and his companions joined them for some three years. That interval was punctuated by a number of difficulties and dangers, not least of which was the uproar created by Ephesian silversmiths in defense of their lucrative religious commerce.—Acts 18:19-26; 19:1, 8-41; 20:31.

The Ephesus-based missionary work evidently had far-reaching effects. Acts 19:10 states: “All those inhabiting the district of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.”

Developments in Asia Minor

Near the end of his stay in Ephesus, Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “The congregations of Asia send you their greetings.” (1 Corinthians 16:19) What congregations did Paul have in mind? He probably included those in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.

(Colossians 4:12-16) The book *Paul—His Story* observes: “It seems logical to attribute the creation of communities at Smyrna, Pergamum, Sardis and Philadelphia to the missionary initiative of Ephesus. . . . All were within a 120-mile (192-km) radius of Ephesus and linked by excellent roads.”

So about 20 years after Pentecost 33 C.E., a number of Christian congregations existed in the south and west of Asia Minor. What about other parts of the region?

Recipients of Peter’s Letters

The apostle Peter wrote his first inspired letter some years later, about 62 to 64 C.E. He addressed it to Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Peter’s letter indicates that there likely were Christian congregations in these areas, their elders being exhorted to “shepherd the flock.” When were these congregations founded?—1 Peter 1:1; 5:1-3.

Some of the areas in which the recipients

EARLY CHRISTIANITY IN BITHYNIA AND PONTUS

The combined province of Bithynia and Pontus lay on the Black Sea Coast of Asia Minor. Much is known about daily life in this province from what Pliny the Younger, one of its officials, wrote to the Roman Emperor Trajan.

Some 50 years after Peter's

letters circulated among the congregations in this area, Pliny asked Trajan for advice on how to deal with Christians. "I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature of the extent of the punishments usually meted out to

them," wrote Pliny. "A great many individuals of every age and class, both men and women, are being brought to trial, and this is likely to continue. It is not only the towns, but villages and rural districts too which are infected through contact with this wretched cult."

of Peter's letters lived, such as Asia and Galatia, had been evangelized by Paul. He had not, however, penetrated Cappadocia or Bithynia. The Bible does not tell us how Christianity spread to these regions, but it could have been through Jews or proselytes who were present in Jerusalem at Pentecost 33 C.E. and who later returned home. In any case, about 30 years after Pentecost when Peter wrote his letters, it would appear that there were congregations "dotted all over Asia Minor," as one scholar puts it.

The Seven Congregations of Revelation

The Jewish revolt against the Romans provoked the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It may be that some Judean Christians wound up in Asia Minor.*

Toward the end of the first century C.E., Jesus Christ directed letters to seven congregations in Asia Minor by means of the apostle John. These letters, to congregations in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, reveal that Christians in this part of Asia Minor were

then facing various dangers, such as immorality, sectarianism, and apostasy.—Revelation 1:9, 11; 2:14, 15, 20.

Modest, Whole-Souled Service

The spread of first-century Christianity clearly included more than what we read of in Acts of Apostles. The well-known apostles Peter and Paul were engaged in events described in Acts, but an unknown number of others were preaching elsewhere. Developments in Asia Minor confirm that early Christians took to heart Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

In a similar way today, only a relatively small number of the faithful acts of Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide are known to the international brotherhood. As with most of the faithful evangelizers of first-century Asia Minor, the majority of modern-day preachers of the good news are more or less anonymous. Yet, they too enjoy busy, rewarding lives, and they experience deep contentment from knowing that they are obediently giving of themselves to save others.
—1 Timothy 2:3-6.

* The historian Eusebius (260-340 C.E.) states that some time before 66 C.E., the "apostles, in constant danger from murderous plots, were driven out of Judea. But to teach their message they travelled into every land in the power of Christ."



From the Illustrated Edition of the Holy Scriptures, by Cassell, Petter, & Galpin

'O JEHOVAH, PUT ME TO THE TEST'

JEHOVAH is the examiner of hearts." (Proverbs 17:3) That should be extremely reassuring for all of us. Why? Because unlike humans, who judge merely by what appears to the eyes, our heavenly Father "sees what the heart is."—1 Samuel 16:7.

Actually, even we ourselves are not the best evaluators of our own deepest motives and innermost inclinations. Why? Because our "heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" Well, God knows it, for he declares: "I, Jehovah, am searching the heart, examining the kidneys." (Jeremiah 17:9, 10) Yes, Jehovah understands "the heart"—including our inner motivations—as well as "the kidneys," our deepest thoughts and emotions.

Why Tested?

It is little wonder, then, that King David of old said to God: "Examine me, O Jehovah, and put me to the test; refine my kidneys and my heart." (Psalm 26:2) Was David completely clean in action and in speech, so that he had nothing to fear if Jehovah put him to the test? Of course not! David, like all of us, was imperfect and unable to measure up perfectly to God's standards. Because of his weaknesses, David committed several serious wrongs, but he nevertheless 'walked with integrity of heart.' (1 Kings 9:4) How? By accepting reproof and correcting his way. He thereby showed that he genuinely loved Jehovah. His devotion to God was complete.

What about us today? Jehovah knows that we are imperfect and that we may sin in speech and deed. He does not, however, determine our course of life by using his ability to foreknow our future. He has created us as free moral agents, and he respects our free will—a gift that he has graciously given us.

Still, at times Jehovah does in a sense test our inner person, including our motives. He may do this by allowing us opportunities to reveal our heart condition. He may also allow various circumstances or challenges to reveal our innermost inclinations. This gives us the opportunity to show Jehovah how devoted and loyal we are. Such tests allowed by Jehovah may prove the quality of our faith, whether we are "complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything."—James 1:2-4.

An Ancient Test of Faith

Tests of faith and motives are not new for Jehovah's servants. Consider the patriarch Abraham. "The true God put Abraham to the test." (Genesis 22:1) When those words were spoken, Abraham's faith in God had already been tested. Decades before, Jehovah had asked Abraham to move with his family from the flourishing city of Ur to an unknown land. (Genesis 11:31; Acts 7:2-4) Abraham, who may have been a homeowner in Ur, did not purchase any permanent residence in Canaan, where he lived for decades. (Hebrews 11:9) Abraham's status as a nomad put him and his family in some dan-

ger from famine, armed bands, and pagan rulers of the area. Through all of this, Abraham's faith proved to be of the highest quality.

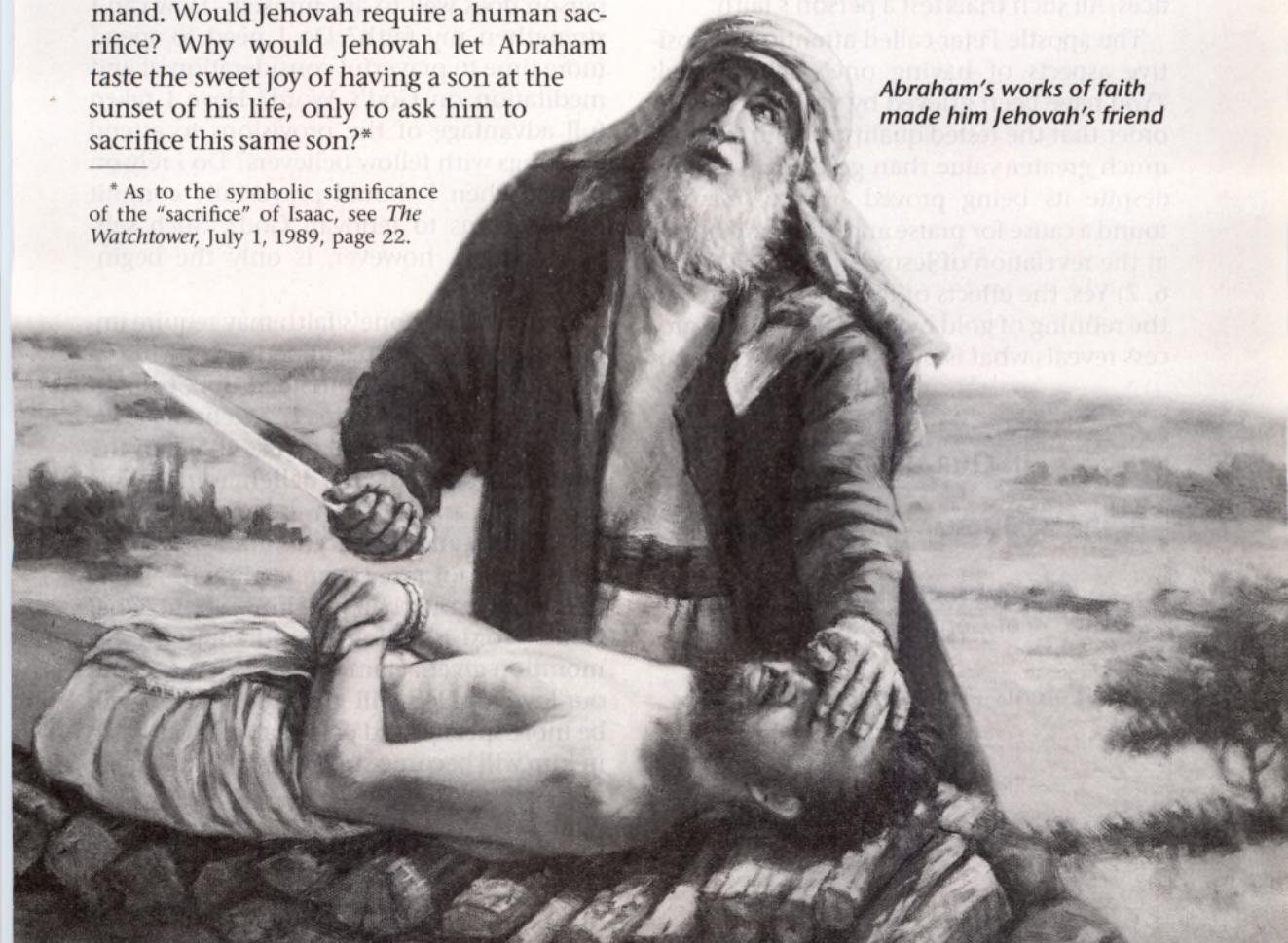
Then Jehovah put Abraham to a greater test. "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and . . . offer him up as a burnt offering." (Genesis 22:2) For Abraham, Isaac was not just any son. He was the only child of Abraham and his wife, Sarah. Isaac was the son of the promise, Abraham's only hope that his "seed" would inherit the land of Canaan and be a blessing to many, according to God's promise. After all, Isaac was *the* son whom Abraham was expected to have and who was born after a miracle from God!—Genesis 15:2-4, 7.

You can imagine how hard it must have been for Abraham to understand this command. Would Jehovah require a human sacrifice? Why would Jehovah let Abraham taste the sweet joy of having a son at the sunset of his life, only to ask him to sacrifice this same son?*

* As to the symbolic significance of the "sacrifice" of Isaac, see *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1989, page 22.

Without having clear answers to these questions, Abraham promptly obeyed. It took him three days to reach the selected mountain. There he built an altar and placed firewood on top. Now came the climax of the test. Abraham took hold of the slaughtering knife, but as he was about to kill his son, Jehovah through an angel stopped him and said: "Now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me." (Genesis 22:3, 11, 12) Think how richly Abraham was rewarded by hearing that! Jehovah's prior estimation of his faith was correct. (Genesis 15:5, 6) Thereupon, Abraham sacrificed a ram that replaced Isaac. Then Jehovah confirmed the covenant promises about Abraham's seed. Understandably, Abraham

Abraham's works of faith made him Jehovah's friend



became known as Jehovah's friend.—Genesis 22:13-18; James 2:21-23.

Our Faith Is Also Tested

We all realize that God's servants today cannot escape tests. In our case, however, the test may be more in what Jehovah allows to happen than in what he tells us to do.

The apostle Paul wrote: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) Such persecution may come from schoolmates, friends, relatives, neighbors, or misinformed governmental authorities. It may include verbal and physical abuse as well as interference with a Christian's making a living. True Christians also experience the problems common to mankind—sickness, disappointments, and injustices. All such trials test a person's faith.

The apostle Peter called attention to positive aspects of having one's faith tested: "You have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:6, 7) Yes, the effects of tests are compared to the refining of gold by fire. The refining process reveals what is pure and removes impu-

rities. Something similar takes place in connection with our faith when we experience tests.

For example, an accident or a natural disaster may result in hardships. Still, those with genuine faith do not give way to undue anxiety. They find comfort in Jehovah's reassurance: "I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5) They continue to give priority to spiritual things, confident that Jehovah God will bless their efforts to procure what they really need. Their faith sustains them through difficult times and prevents them from further complicating their situation by needless worry.

The fact that tests may reveal weaknesses in our faith can also be beneficial if we thus see the need to take corrective measures. A person does well to ask himself: 'How can I strengthen my faith? Do I need to spend more time in prayerful consideration of and meditation on God's Word? Have I taken full advantage of the provisions to attend meetings with fellow believers? Do I rely on myself when I should prayerfully commit my concerns to Jehovah God?' Such self-examination, however, is only the beginning.

Strengthening one's faith may require improving one's spiritual appetite, showing "a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word." (1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14) We should strive to be like the man the psalmist described: "His delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night."—Psalm 1:2.

This calls for more than reading the Bible. It is important that we think about what God's Word is telling us and apply the admonition given. (James 1:22-25) As a result, our love for God will grow, our prayers will be more specific and personal, and our faith in him will become stronger.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Is the "Old Testament" Still Relevant?

Be Alert to the Importance
of Commendation

Parents—Train Your Children
With Love

The Value of a Tested Faith

The realization that faith is an absolute essential in our gaining God's approval is a powerful incentive to strengthen it. The Bible reminds us: "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) Hence, we should feel like the man who implored Jesus: "Help me out where I need faith!"—Mark 9:24.

Tests of our faith can also help others. For instance, when a Christian loses a loved one in death, his strong faith in God's promise of a resurrection sustains him. He mourns, yet he does "not sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope." (1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14) Others who observe the sustaining pow-

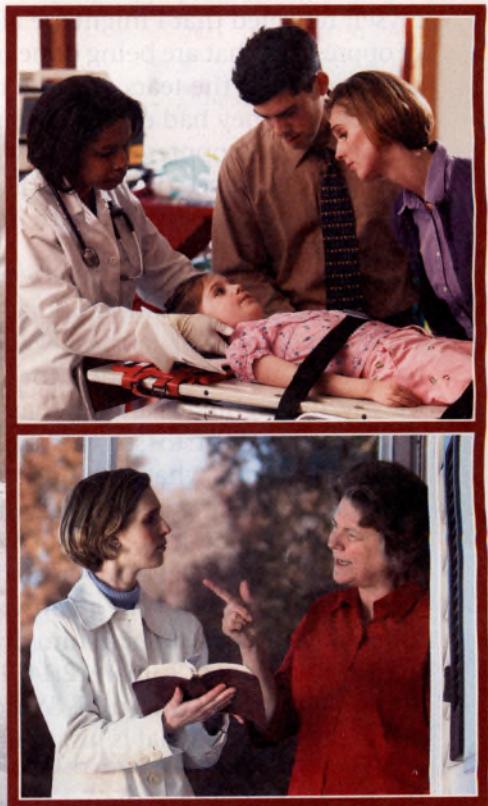
Tests can prove that our faith has real sustaining power



er of a Christian's faith may come to appreciate that he possesses something truly valuable. This may stir in their hearts a desire to have similar faith, moving them to learn about God's Word and to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Jehovah knows that a tested faith has great value. In addition, tests of faith enable us to see whether our faith has real sustaining power. We are helped to detect weaknesses in our faith, putting us in a better position to correct matters. Finally, our passing through tests successfully may help others to become Jesus' disciples. So may we do our utmost to maintain strong faith—faith that after it has been subjected to one test after another "may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

—1 Peter 1:7.



You Can Deal With INJUSTICE!

WHOMO has not experienced injustice of some sort during his lifetime? While some injustices may only be perceived or imagined, others are very real.

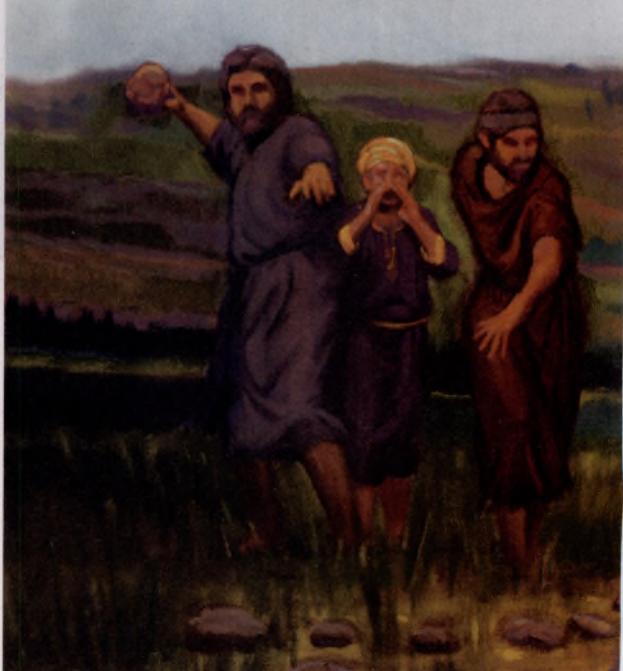
Whenever we experience injustice, we feel some emotional pain and can experience spiritual harm. We may have a keen desire to rectify the situation. Why? One reason is that our Creator, Jehovah God, "with whom there is no injustice," embedded in humans a strong sense of justice. (Deuteronomy 32:4; Genesis 1:26) However, we may face situations in which our sense of justice is not satisfied. A wise man once observed: "I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter." (Ecclesiastes 4:1) How, then, can we deal with injustice?

What Really Is Injustice?

Injustice is the condition or practice of violating standards of fairness. What would be the standard of justice for humans? Clearly, our righteous and unchanging Creator has the right to set the standard for what is just and what is unjust. From his standpoint, walking in "the very statutes of life" involves "not doing injustice." (Ezekiel 33:15) Thus, when Jehovah created the first man, He instilled in him a conscience—an inner voice that could help him distinguish right from wrong. (Romans 2:14, 15) In addition, Jehovah set out in his Word, the Bible, expressions of what is just or unjust.

What if we feel that an injustice was done to us? We do well to examine the matter objectively to see whether injustice was really done. Take, for example, the situation in which the Hebrew prophet Jonah found himself. Jehovah commissioned him to tell the Ninevites of the disaster looming on the horizon. At first, Jonah took to flight without fulfilling the assignment. Eventually, though, he went to Nineveh and warned the inhabitants of the impending doom. Upon their favorable response, Jehovah chose to preserve the city and save its inhabitants. How did Jonah feel? "To Jonah . . . it was highly displeasing, and he got to be hot with anger." (Jonah 4:1) He felt that it was a gross injustice on Jehovah's part.

Obviously, Jehovah, who can read hearts and who "is a lover of righteousness and justice," was not wrong. (Psalm 33:5) Jonah



simply had to learn that the way Jehovah decided was in harmony with perfect justice. When we feel that injustice has been done to us, we might ask ourselves, 'Could it be that Jehovah would view the matter differently?'

Confronting Injustice

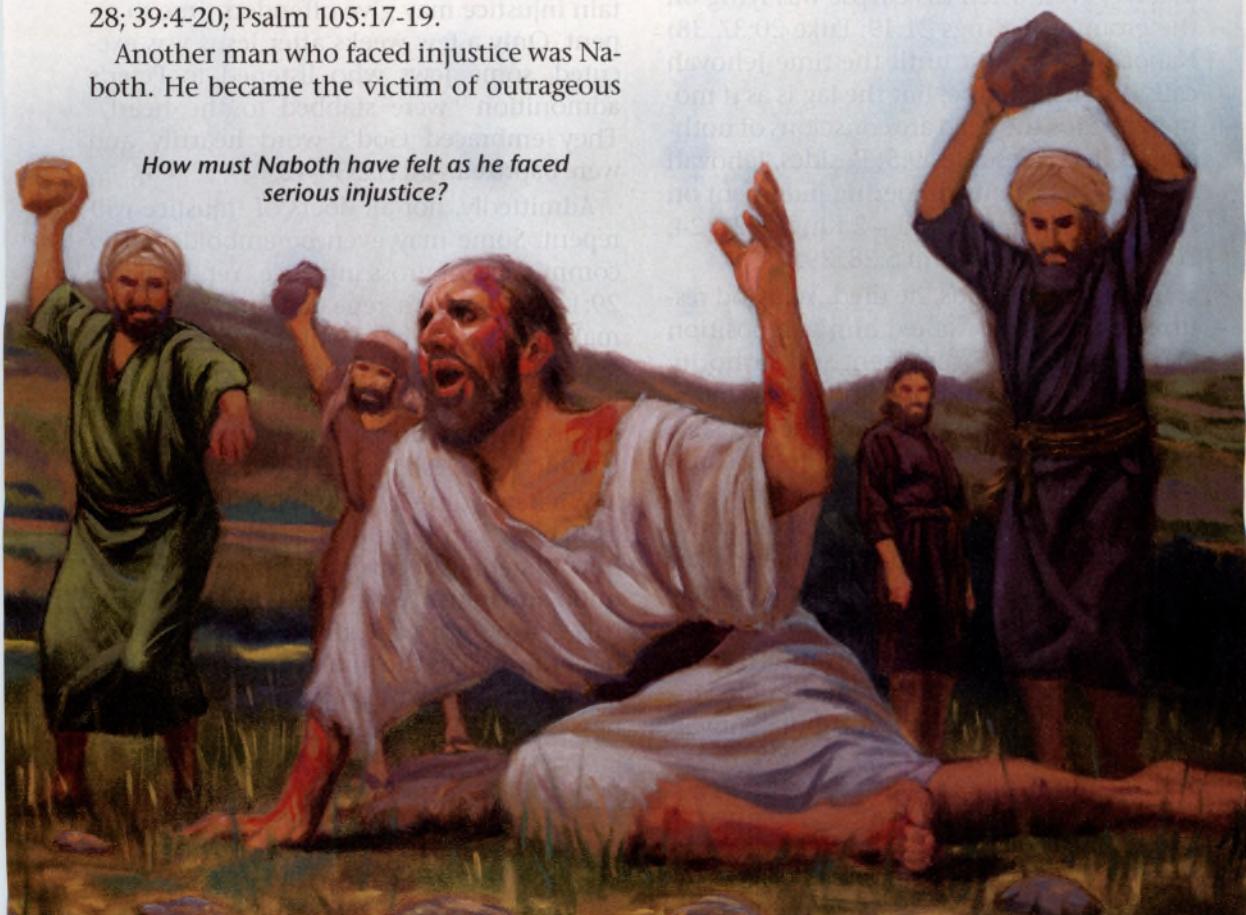
The Bible reports many instances of some who suffered injustice. We can learn much by examining how they faced their difficult problems. Consider Joseph, who was sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. In Egypt his master's wife tried to seduce Joseph, and when she was rejected, she lyingly accused him of making immoral advances. As a result, Joseph found himself in prison. Yet, his faith was stronger than the iron fetters that bound him. He did not allow the injustice to diminish his spirituality nor to weaken his trust in Jehovah.—Genesis 37:18-28; 39:4-20; Psalm 105:17-19.

Another man who faced injustice was Naboth. He became the victim of outrageous

foul play by Jezebel, the wife of King Ahab of Israel. The king craved Naboth's hereditary plot beside the palace. An Israelite was prohibited from permanently giving up his hereditary possession, so Naboth turned down the king's offer to buy the land. (Leviticus 25:23) At that, Ahab's wicked wife set up false witnesses who accused Naboth of blaspheming God and the king. As a result, Naboth and his sons were put to death. Imagine how Naboth must have felt when the people were picking up stones to kill him!—1 Kings 21:1-14; 2 Kings 9:26.

Yet, the foregoing pales into insignificance when compared with the injustices wrought upon Christ Jesus. The death sentence on him involved falsehood and an illegal trial. The Roman governor on the judgment seat lacked the strength to stand up for what he saw was right. (John 18:38-40) Yes, on Christ Jesus, Satan inflicted

How must Naboth have felt as he faced serious injustice?



the greatest injustice ever inflicted on anyone!

Do these instances indicate that Jehovah is indifferent to injustice? No! Jehovah did not view those cases from a mere human point of view. (Isaiah 55:8, 9) Because Joseph was sold into slavery, he was able to save his family. He became the food administrator of Egypt before a great famine that affected his family struck. Think, if Jehovah had not allowed an injustice, Joseph would not have been in prison. It was there that he interpreted the dreams of two inmates, one of whom later told Pharaoh about Joseph, leading to Joseph's becoming the food administrator.—Genesis 40:1; 41:9-14; 45:4-8.

What about Naboth? Again, try to view the matter as Jehovah did. To Jehovah, who can resurrect the dead, Naboth was as good as alive, even when his corpse was lying on the ground. (1 Kings 21:19; Luke 20:37, 38) Naboth has to wait until the time Jehovah calls him back to life, but the lag is as if momentary, for the dead are conscious of nothing at all. (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Besides, Jehovah avenged Naboth by rendering judgment on Ahab and his household.—2 Kings 9:21, 24, 26, 35, 36; 10:1-11; John 5:28, 29.

In the case of Jesus, he died. Yet, God resurrected him and exalted him to a position “far above every government and authority and power and lordship and every name named.” (Ephesians 1:20, 21) The injustice that Satan wrought on Christ Jesus could not prevent Jehovah from rewarding his Son. Jesus was confident that Jehovah could instantly undo the injustice of the illegal arrest if that was His will. Yet, Christ also knew that Jehovah has a time for fulfilling the Scriptures and for undoing any injustices.

Granted, Satan and his agents inflicted injustice upon righteous ones, but Jehovah

eventually settled the account and permanently undid or will undo the injustice. Thus, for an injustice to be rectified, we must wait on God.—Deuteronomy 25:16; Romans 12:17-19.

Why Jehovah May Permit Injustice

Jehovah may even have reasons for not correcting a certain situation. As part of our Christian training, he may permit us to experience injustice. Of course, ‘with evil things God does not try anyone.’ (James 1:13) Still, he may allow a situation to develop without his intervention, and he can sustain those who respond to such training. “After you have suffered a little while,” the Bible assures us, “the God of all undeserved kindness . . . will himself finish your training, he will make you firm, he will make you strong.”—1 Peter 5:10.

Furthermore, Jehovah’s permitting a certain injustice may give offenders time to repent. Only a few weeks after Jesus was executed, some Jews who listened to Peter’s admonition “were stabbed to the heart.” They embraced God’s word heartily and were baptized.—Acts 2:36-42.

Admittedly, not all doers of injustice will repent. Some may even be emboldened to commit acts of gross injustice. Yet, Proverbs 29:1 says: “A man repeatedly reproved but making his neck hard will suddenly be broken, and that without healing.” Indeed, Jehovah will eventually act and wipe out of existence those who persist in inappropriate conduct.—Ecclesiastes 8:11-13.

Whatever time it takes to recover from injustice, we can be sure that Jehovah knows how to help us recover. And he is certain to undo any injustice we may have suffered in this evil system of things. Furthermore, he has promised us the final reward, everlasting life in the new world in which “righteousness is to dwell.”—2 Peter 3:13.

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- **In what four ways do the Christian Greek Scriptures apply the word “congregation”?**

The primary application is to the composite group of anointed Christians (in some texts Christ is included). At other times, “the congregation of God” applies to all Christians living at a certain time. A third application is to all Christians in a geographic area. Finally, the term may be applied to those making up a local congregation.—4/15, pages 21-3.

- **When does the calling of Christians to the heavenly hope end?**

The Bible does not supply a precise answer. That calling began in 33 C.E. and continued into modern times. After 1935 the thrust of the disciple-making work turned to the gathering in of the great crowd. Some who were baptized after 1935 have had witness borne to them by holy spirit that they have the heavenly hope, so we cannot set a specific date for the end of that calling. Truly anointed ones do not have more of God’s spirit, nor do they expect special treatment. Whatever their hope, Christians need to be faithful and keep doing God’s will.—5/1, pages 30-1.

- **When Jephthah made his vow, was he prepared to offer up his daughter as a burnt offering to God?**

No. Jephthah meant that he would devote the one whom he met to the exclusive service of God, a provision of the Mosaic Law. (1 Samuel 2:22) In fulfilling the vow, Jephthah’s daughter kept serving at the tabernacle, a great sacrifice because it meant that she would never marry.—5/15, pages 9-10.

- **What role did the codex play in early Christianity?**

It appears that Christians used mainly the roll, or scroll, at least until the end of the first

century C.E. Over the next century, there was a struggle between advocates of the codex and those of the scroll. Experts believe that the Christians’ use of the codex played a significant role in its widespread acceptance.—6/1, pages 14-15.

- **What is the Gezer Calendar?**

It is a small limestone tablet discovered in 1908 at the site of the city of Gezer. Many think that a schoolboy wrote the tablet as part of an exercise. The tablet sets out a simplified version of an agricultural year, or cycle, starting with the ingathering in the month corresponding to September/October, and it mentions various crops and agricultural activities.—6/15, page 8.

- **What is meant by sinning against the holy spirit?**

It is possible to sin against Jehovah’s holy spirit, a sin that will not be forgiven. (Matthew 12:31) God determines whether we have committed an unforgivable sin, and he can withdraw his spirit from us. (Psalm 51: 11) If we are deeply grieved over a sin, it is very likely that we are truly repentant and thus have not sinned against the spirit.—7/15, pages 16-17.

- **Since he had earlier had dealings with David, why did King Saul ask whose son David was? (1 Samuel 16:22; 17:58)**

Saul was not interested only in knowing the name of David’s father. Having seen David as a person of faith and courage who had just defeated Goliath, Saul wanted to know what kind of man had raised such a boy. Saul may have had in mind adding Jesse or other members of his family to the army.—8/1, page 31.

"The Great Gift" TO POLAND

ON July 6, 1525, Duke Albrecht of Hohenzollern declared Lutheranism to be the State religion. Thus, Ducal Prussia, at the time a fiefdom of the kingdom of Poland, became the first state in Europe to adopt the teachings of Martin Luther officially.

Albrecht wanted to make Königsberg—the capital of East Prussia—a Protestant cultural hub. He established a university in the city and promoted the printing of Lutheran writings in several languages. In 1544 the duke also decreed that the Polish people of his lands should hear portions of the Holy Scriptures read to them in their language. However, no Bible translation was yet available in Polish.

A Translation in "Everyday Speech"

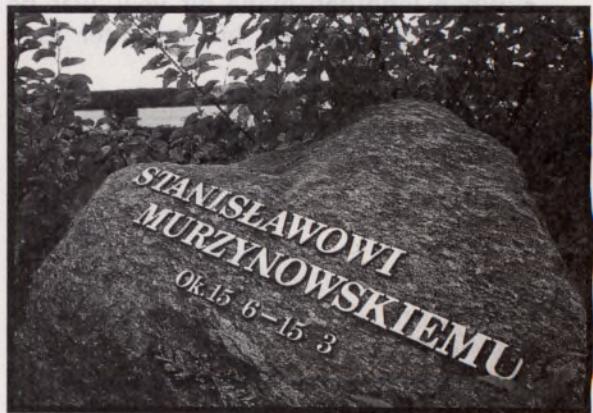
To rectify the situation, Albrecht began searching for someone capable of producing a Polish translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. About the year 1550, he engaged the services of a writer, bookseller, and printer named Jan Seklucjan. Seklucjan was a graduate of the University of Leipzig and had a history of irritating the Catholic Church by spreading Protestant teachings. In fact, he had earlier gone to Königsberg to escape facing trial for propagating his religious beliefs.

Jan Seklucjan was enthusiastic about producing a Polish translation of the Scriptures. Just a year after Seklucjan was com-

missioned, the first copies of the Gospel of Matthew came off the press. This edition included a detailed commentary and helpful marginal notes that provided possible alternate renderings for some passages. Soon afterward, Seklucjan oversaw the printing of an edition containing all four Gospels. Within just three years, he had printed the entire Christian Greek Scriptures.

To produce an accurate rendition, the translator had consulted Greek texts. In addition, the foreword to the 1551 edition stated that Latin translations and "translations to some other languages were consulted." Stanisław Rospond, author of *Studies on the Polish Language of the 16th Century*, describes this translation as being rendered

Memorial stone for Stanisław Murzynowski,
a translator of the "New Testament" into Polish



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C Bog

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Dzięki uprzejmości Towarzystwa Naukowego Płockiego

**Chapter 3 of the book of Matthew translated
by Stanisław Murzynowski**

in "beautiful and flowing prose." The translator was not constrained by "literary language," states Rospond. Rather, he endeavored to use Polish words that were "very close to everyday speech."

Although Seklucjan coordinated this project, evidence indicates that he was not the translator. Who, then, was the scholarly translator? Stanisław Murzynowski, a man likely in his early 20's when Seklucjan engaged him for this difficult task.

Murzynowski was born in a village, but when he was old enough, his father sent him to Königsberg to begin his studies of Greek and Hebrew. Afterward, Murzynow-

ski enrolled at the University of Wittenberg, Germany, where he probably met Martin Luther. The young student listened to lectures by Philipp Melanchthon, who no doubt helped him to master both Greek and Hebrew. After furthering his studies in Italy, Murzynowski returned to Königsberg and offered his services to Duke Albrecht.

"Murzynowski worked diligently and effectively," writes Maria Kossowska in her book *The Bible in the Polish Language*, "but he did not draw attention to himself, pursue a prominent position, or request that his name be put on the title page of the translation." Indeed, this young man writes concerning his own abilities: "I do not know whether it is in Latin or in Polish that I write worse." Despite his doubts, Murzynowski was instrumental in making God's Word available to the Polish people. His associate, Seklucjan, described the translation they produced as "the great gift" to Poland.

One of the Greatest Gifts

Since that first Polish translation of the Bible, many others have followed. In 1994 came the release of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, and in 1997, the complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in Polish. The translators, who do not draw attention to themselves, endeavored to convey God's Word in a manner that is not only accurate but also close to the common speech of today, not that of the 16th century.

Today the Bible is available in whole or in part in some 2,400 languages. If you are able to obtain an accurate translation of God's Word in your native language, it is one of the greatest gifts you could receive, a gift from Jehovah God for your guidance.

—2 Timothy 3:15-17.

JEHOVAH IS A LOVER OF JUSTICE

"I, Jehovah, am loving justice."—ISAIAH 61:8.

JUSTICE is defined as ‘the quality of being impartial, fair, acting in conformity with what is morally upright and good.’ Injustice involves being unfair, prejudiced, bad, inflicting undeserved harm on others.

² Nearly 3,500 years ago, Moses wrote regarding the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah: “All his ways are justice. A God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice.” (Deuteronomy 32:4) Over seven centuries later, God inspired Isaiah to record these words: “I, Jehovah, am loving justice.” (Isaiah 61:8) Then in the first century, Paul exclaimed: “Is there injustice with God? Never may that become so!” (Romans 9:14) And in the same century, Peter declared: “God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:34, 35) Yes, “Jehovah is a lover of justice.”—Psalm 37:28; Malachi 3:6.

Injustice Prevails

³ Justice is not a prevailing quality today. We can become victims of unjust acts at all levels of society—at our place of work, in school, in our dealings with officials, and in other ways—even in the family circle. Of course, such injustices are not new. They came upon the human family when our first parents rebelled and became lawless, spurred on by the rebellious spirit creature who be-

1, 2. (a) What do the words “justice” and “injustice” mean? (b) What does the Bible say about Jehovah and his quality of justice?

3. How did injustice on earth originate?

came Satan the Devil. It surely was unjust for Adam, Eve, and Satan to misuse the wonderful gift of free will that Jehovah had granted them. Their wrong actions would result in enormous suffering and death for the entire human family.—Genesis 3:1-6; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 2:14.

⁴ For some 6,000 years since the rebellion in Eden, injustice has been part of human society. This could well be expected because Satan is the god of this world. (2 Corinthians 4:4) He is a liar and the father of the lie, a slanderer and a resister of Jehovah. (John 8:44) He has always perpetrated gross injustices. For example, in part because of Satan’s evil influence before the Flood of Noah’s day, God noted that “the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time.” (Genesis 6:5) That situation still prevailed in the time of Jesus. He said: “Sufficient for each day is its own badness,” meaning its own distressing problems, such as injustice. (Matthew 6:34) The Bible so accurately says: “All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now.”—Romans 8:22.

⁵ Thus, bad things resulting in gross injustices have been happening throughout human history. Now the situation is worse than ever. Why? Because this present ungodly system of things has been in its “last

4. For how long has injustice been part of human history?

5. Why are there more injustices in our time than ever before?

days" for many decades, experiencing "critical times hard to deal with" as it nears its end. The Bible foretold that during this period in history, people would be "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, . . . unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride." (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Bad traits like those lead to injustices of all kinds.

⁶ The past hundred years have seen injustices on a scale never before experienced. For one thing, these years have been the most war-torn. For example, some historians estimate that in World War II alone, the dead totaled from some 50 million to 60 million, the majority of whom were civilians—innocent men, women, and children. Since that war

6, 7. What huge injustices have afflicted the human family in modern times?

ended, millions more have been killed in various conflicts, the majority again being civilians. Satan promotes such injustices because he is in a rage, knowing that soon Jehovah will totally defeat him. Bible prophecy puts it this way: "The Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time."—Revelation 12:12.

⁷ Global military spending is now about a trillion dollars each year. Hundreds of millions of people do not have the necessities of life, so think of the good all that money could do if spent on peaceful pursuits. About one billion people do not have enough to eat, while others have an abundance. According to a United Nations source, about five million children die from the effects of hunger each year. How unjust! Then, too, consider the many innocents who are killed by abortions. Estimates vary from 40 million to 60 million worldwide every year! What a horrendous injustice!

Badness was abundant before the Flood, and it abounds in these "last days"





⁸ Human rulers are not finding solutions to the vast problems plaguing mankind today; nor will the situation get better because of human efforts. God's Word foretold that in our time "wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled." (2 Timothy 3:13) Injustice is so much a part of the fabric of daily living that men cannot remove it. Only the God of justice can remove it. Only he can remove Satan, the demons, and evil humans.—Jeremiah 10:23, 24.

Understandable Concern

⁹ In the past, even some Bible writers won-

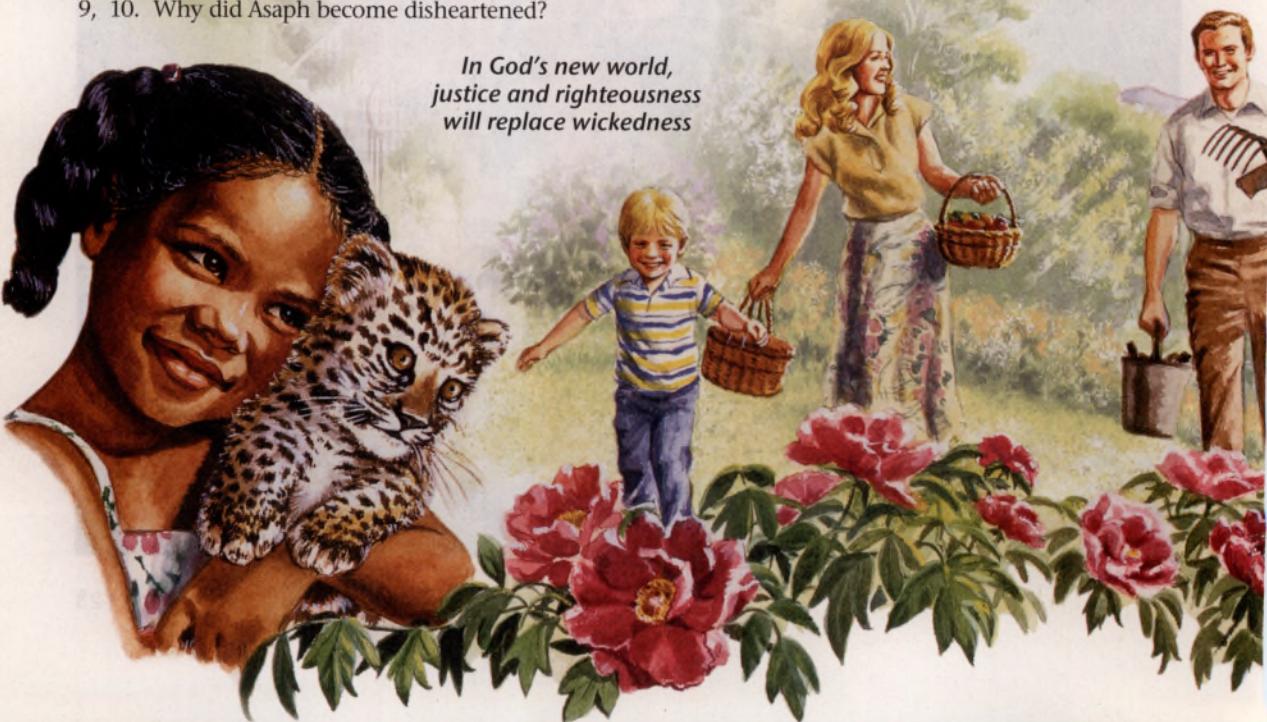
8. How only can true justice for humankind come about?

9, 10. Why did Asaph become disheartened?

dered why God had not already intervened in human affairs and ushered in true justice and righteousness. Take, for example, one particular man in Bible times. The superscription to Psalm 73 provides the name Asaph, referring either to a prominent Levite musician during the reign of King David or to the musicians of the house of which Asaph was the paternal head. Asaph and his descendants wrote many musical compositions that were used in public worship. Yet, at one point in his life, the writer of this psalm became spiritually downhearted. He saw the material prosperity of wicked men, and he noticed that they often seemed to be content with their life, not experiencing any adverse consequences.

¹⁰ We read: "I became envious of the boastful, when I would see the very peace of wicked people. For they have no deathly pangs; and their paunch is fat. They are not even in the trouble of mortal man, and they are not plagued the same as other men." (Psalm 73: 2-8) But in time that Bible writer came to realize that such a negative viewpoint was

*In God's new world,
justice and righteousness
will replace wickedness*



wrong. (Psalm 73:15, 16) The psalmist tried to adjust his thinking, but he could not fully comprehend why the wicked seemed to get away with doing wrong while rightly disposed people often suffered.

¹¹ Eventually, that faithful man of old came to understand what was in store for the wicked—that Jehovah would ultimately set matters straight. (Psalm 73:17-19) David wrote: “Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it.”—Psalm 37:9, 11, 34.

¹² For a certainty, it is Jehovah’s purpose to eliminate wickedness and its accompanying injustices from this earth in his own due time. That is something of which even loyal Christians should remind themselves regularly. Jehovah is going to remove those who go contrary to his will, and he will reward those who live in harmony with it. “His own eyes behold, his own beaming eyes examine the sons of men. Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates. He will rain down upon the wicked ones traps, fire and sulphur and a scorching wind . . . For Jehovah is righteous; he does love righteous acts.”—Psalm 11:4-7.

11. What did the psalmist Asaph come to understand?

12. (a) What is Jehovah’s purpose concerning wickedness and injustice? (b) How do you feel about that solution to the problem of injustice?

A New World of Justice

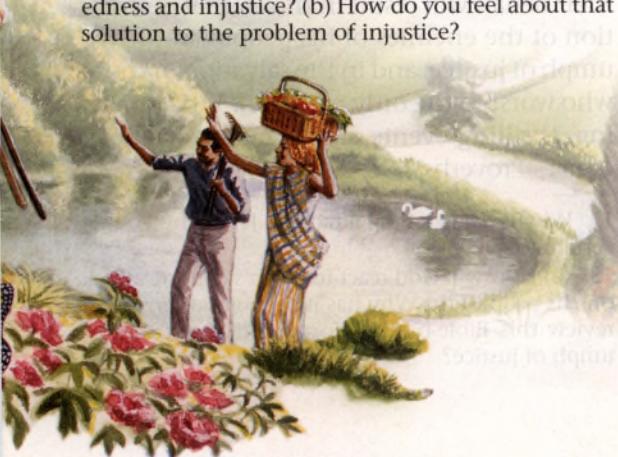
¹³ When Jehovah destroys this unjust system of things that is under Satan’s control, He will usher in a glorious new world. It will be controlled by God’s heavenly Kingdom, for which Jesus taught his followers to pray. Wickedness and injustice will be replaced by righteousness and justice, for then the prayer will be answered in the fullest sense: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.”—Matthew 6:10.

¹⁴ The Bible tells us what kind of rulership we can expect, rulership that all righthearted individuals now long for. Psalm 145:16 will then find fulfillment in its completest sense: “You [Jehovah God] are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing.” Moreover, Isaiah 32:1 says: “Look! A king [Christ Jesus in heaven] will reign for righteousness itself; and as respects princes [Christ’s earthly representatives], they will rule as princes for justice itself.” Regarding the King Jesus Christ, Isaiah 9:7 foretells: “To the abundance of the princely rule and to peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom in order to establish it firmly and to sustain it by means of justice and by means of righteousness, from now on and to time indefinite. The very zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this.” Can you see yourself living under that just rulership?

¹⁵ In God’s new world, we will no longer have reason to express the words we find at Ecclesiastes 4:1: “I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had

13, 14. Why will righteousness and justice prevail in the new world?

15. What will Jehovah do for humankind in the new world?



no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter." Granted, with our imperfect minds, it is difficult to imagine just how wonderful that new world of righteousness will be. Badness will no longer exist; instead, every day will be filled with good things. Yes, Jehovah will correct everything that is wrong, doing so in a way that is far beyond our expectations. How appropriate that Jehovah God inspired the apostle Peter to write: "There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell!"—2 Peter 3:13.

¹⁶ Indeed, the "new heavens," God's heavenly government in the hands of Christ, has been set in place already. Those who will form the nucleus of the "new earth," a new earthly society of rightly disposed people, are being gathered during these last days. They are already nearly seven million strong, in at least 235 lands and in some 100,000 congregations. These millions have been learning the righteous and just ways of Jehovah, and as a result, worldwide they enjoy a unity that is cemented by Christian love. Their unity is the most pronounced and enduring in the history of the world, a unity exceeding anything experienced by Satan's subjects. Such love and unity are foregleams of the marvelous time to come in God's new world, which

16. How has the "new heavens" been established, and in what sense is the "new earth" being prepared today?

How Would You Answer?

- Why is injustice so prevalent?
- How will Jehovah solve the problem of injustice on earth?
- What has touched you in this study about the triumph of justice?

will be governed in righteousness and justice.—Isaiah 2:2-4; John 13:34, 35; Colossians 3:14.

Satan's Attack to Fail

¹⁷ Satan and his followers will soon come against Jehovah's worshippers in an attempt to stamp them out. (Ezekiel 38:14-23) That will be part of what Jesus called the "great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matthew 24:21) Will Satan's attack succeed? No. God's Word assures us: "Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones. To time indefinite they will certainly be guarded; but as for the offspring of the wicked ones, they will indeed be cut off. The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Psalm 37:28, 29.

¹⁸ The attack by Satan and his horde on Jehovah's servants will be the final insult. Jehovah foretold through Zechariah: "He that is touching you is touching my eyeball." (Zechariah 2:8) It is as if someone were thrusting a finger in Jehovah's eyeball. He will respond immediately and eliminate the perpetrators. Jehovah's servants are the most loving, united, peaceful, law-abiding people on earth. So that attack against them will be totally unwarranted, unjust. The great "lover of justice" will not tolerate it. His acting in their behalf will result in the eternal destruction of the enemies of his people, in the triumph of justice, and in the salvation of those who worship the only true God. What amazing, thrilling events are immediately ahead of us!—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

17. Why is Satan's final attack on Jehovah's people certain to fail?

18. (a) How will God react to Satan's coming attack on His people? (b) Why has it been good for you to review this Bible-based information about the triumph of justice?

WE CAN BENEFIT BY ENDURING SUFFERING

"We pronounce happy those who have endured."—JAMES 5:11.

NO NORMAL person wants to suffer; neither does our Creator, Jehovah God, want humans to suffer. We can see this when we examine his inspired Word and note what took place following his creation of man and woman. First, God made the man. "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul." (Genesis 2:7) Adam was perfect in body and mind, and he did not have to get sick or die.

² What about Adam's living conditions? "Jehovah God planted a garden in Eden, toward the east, and there he put the man

1, 2. What shows that Jehovah did not purpose for man to suffer?

Our first parents had a wonderful future ahead of them

whom he had formed. Thus Jehovah God made to grow out of the ground every tree desirable to one's sight and good for food." (Genesis 2:8, 9) Yes, Adam had a marvelous home. There was no suffering in Eden.

³ Genesis 2:18 informs us: "Jehovah God went on to say: 'It is not good for the man to continue by himself. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.'" Jehovah proceeded to create a perfect wife for Adam, making possible the prospect of happy family life. (Genesis 2:21-23) The Bible further informs us: "God blessed them and God said to them: 'Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it!'" (Genesis 1:28) The first human pair would have the wonderful privilege of expanding the Paradise of Eden until, in time, it covered the earth, making a global paradise. And they would produce happy offspring, who would be free from suffering. What a magnificent beginning!—Genesis 1:31.

Suffering Begins

⁴ Yet, when we look at the condition of the human family down through history, it is obvious that something went horribly wrong. Bad things have happened, and the human family has suffered greatly. Over the centuries, all of Adam

3. What prospects did the first human couple have?
4. From a historical standpoint, what is obvious about humankind?

and Eve's descendants have become sick, have grown old, and have eventually died. The earth is very, very far from being a paradise filled with happy people. The situation is accurately described at Romans 8:22: "All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now."

⁵ Jehovah is not to blame for the enormous suffering that has existed for so long. (2 Samuel 22:31) Part of the blame must be placed on humans. "They have acted ruinously, they have acted detestably in their dealing." (Psalm 14:1) Our first parents were given everything good as a start. All that was required for such to continue was obedience to God, but Adam and Eve chose to pursue independence from Jehovah. Since our first parents pulled away from Jehovah, they would no longer be sustained as perfect by him. They would deteriorate until death overtook them. Imperfection has been passed on to us.—Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 5:12.

⁶ Also involved in the beginning of all suffering is the spirit creature who came to be called Satan the Devil. He had been endowed with free will. However, he misused that faculty in an attempt to receive worship. Yet, only Jehovah should be worshipped, not his creations. It was Satan who induced Adam and Eve to seek independence from Jehovah, as if they could thus "be like God, knowing good and bad."—Genesis 3:5.

Only Jehovah Has the Right to Rule

⁷ The bad consequences of rebellion demonstrate that only Jehovah, the Universal Sovereign, has the right to rule and that only

5. How were our first parents involved in introducing suffering into the human family?
6. What part did Satan play in originating suffering?
7. What do the consequences of rebellion against Jehovah demonstrate?

his rule is righteous. The past thousands of years have demonstrated that Satan, who became "the ruler of this world," has developed a wicked, unrighteous, and violent rulership that is completely unsatisfactory. (John 12:31) The long, miserable rulership of humans under Satan's control has also demonstrated that they lack the ability to rule in righteousness. (Jeremiah 10:23) Thus, every conceivable type of rulership apart from Jehovah's must result in failure. History has proved this beyond any doubt.

⁸ Now that Jehovah has allowed thousands of years for humans to experiment with rulership independent from him, he is justified in clearing all these forms of rule off the earth and replacing them with his own government. A prophecy about this says: "In the days of those kings [human rulerships] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom [his heavenly government in the hands of Christ] that will never be brought to ruin.... It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite." (Daniel 2:44) Demonic and human rule will cease, and only God's heavenly Kingdom will exist and rule the earth. Christ will be the King, and he will have as corulers 144,000 faithful humans taken from the earth.—Revelation 14:1.

Benefiting From Suffering

⁹ It is of interest to examine the qualifications of those who will rule in the heavenly Kingdom. First, Christ Jesus showed how well-suited he is for his role as King. He had spent untold ages of time alongside Jehovah doing his Father's will, being His "master worker." (Proverbs 8:22-31) When Jehovah

8. What is Jehovah's purpose as to all forms of human rulership, and how will he accomplish that purpose?
- 9, 10. How did Jesus benefit from the things he suffered?



*Observing suffering helped prepare Jesus
to be a fine King and High Priest*

arranged for him to come to the earth, Jesus willingly complied. There he focused on telling others about Jehovah's sovereignty and Kingdom. Jesus set an excellent example for all of us by being totally submissive to that sovereignty.—Matthew 4:17; 6:9.

¹⁰ Jesus suffered persecution, and finally he was put to death. During his ministry, he was able to note all around him the pitiful condition of humankind. Was there any benefit to him for having seen that and for having suffered personally? Yes. Hebrews 5:8 states: "Although he was a Son [of God], he learned obedience from the things he suffered." Jesus' experience while on the earth made him more understanding and compassionate. He experienced firsthand the human family's condition. He could sympathize with those who suffer and could better appreciate his role in coming to their rescue. Note how the apostle Paul high-

lights this in the book of Hebrews: "He was obliged to become like his 'brothers' in all respects, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, in order to offer propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test." "We have as high priest, not one who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin. Let us, therefore, approach with freeness of speech to the throne of undeserved kindness, that we may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:14-16; Matthew 9:36; 11:28-30.

¹¹ Much the same could be said of the 144,000, who "were bought" from the earth to be corulers with Christ Jesus in the heavenly Kingdom. (Revelation 14:4) They were all born as humans on earth, grew up in a world surrounded by suffering, and suffered themselves. Many were persecuted, and some were even killed because of keeping their integrity to Jehovah and being willing to follow Jesus. But they 'did not become ashamed of the witness about their Lord, taking their part in suffering evil for the good news.' (2 Timothy 1:8) Their experience on earth makes them particularly qualified to judge the human family from heaven. They have learned to be more sympathetic, kind, and eager to help people.—Revelation 5:10; 14:2-5; 20:6.

Happiness of Those With an Earthly Hope

¹² Can present suffering produce anything

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11. How will the experience on earth of the future kings and priests benefit them as rulers?
 - 12, 13. How can those with an earthly hope benefit from suffering?

good in those who hope to live forever on a paradise earth free from sickness, sorrow, and death? The pain and anguish that suffering brings are not in themselves things to be desired. But when we endure such suffering, good personal qualities can be enhanced and happiness produced.

¹³ Consider what God's inspired Word says about this: "Even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy." "If you are being reproached for the name of Christ, you are happy." (1 Peter 3:14; 4:14) "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and leap for joy, since your reward is great in the heavens." (Matthew 5:11, 12) "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life."—James 1:12.

¹⁴ It is certainly not the actual suffering we may go through that makes us happy. The happiness, the satisfaction, comes from knowing that we are suffering because we are doing Jehovah's will and following the pattern of Jesus. For example, in the first century, some of the apostles were jailed and then brought before the Jewish high court and denounced because of preaching about Jesus Christ. They were flogged and then re-

14. What is it about suffering that makes Jehovah's worshippers happy?

How Would You Answer?

- How did humans come to experience suffering?
- Suffering may bring what benefits to earth's future rulers and inhabitants?
- Why can we be happy now in spite of suffering?

leased. What was their attitude? The Bible account says that they "went their way from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name." (Acts 5:17-41) They were happy, not for the flogging and the physical pain that ensued, but for the understanding that this had taken place because they kept their integrity to Jehovah and followed in Jesus' footsteps.—Acts 16:25; 2 Corinthians 12:10; 1 Peter 4:13.

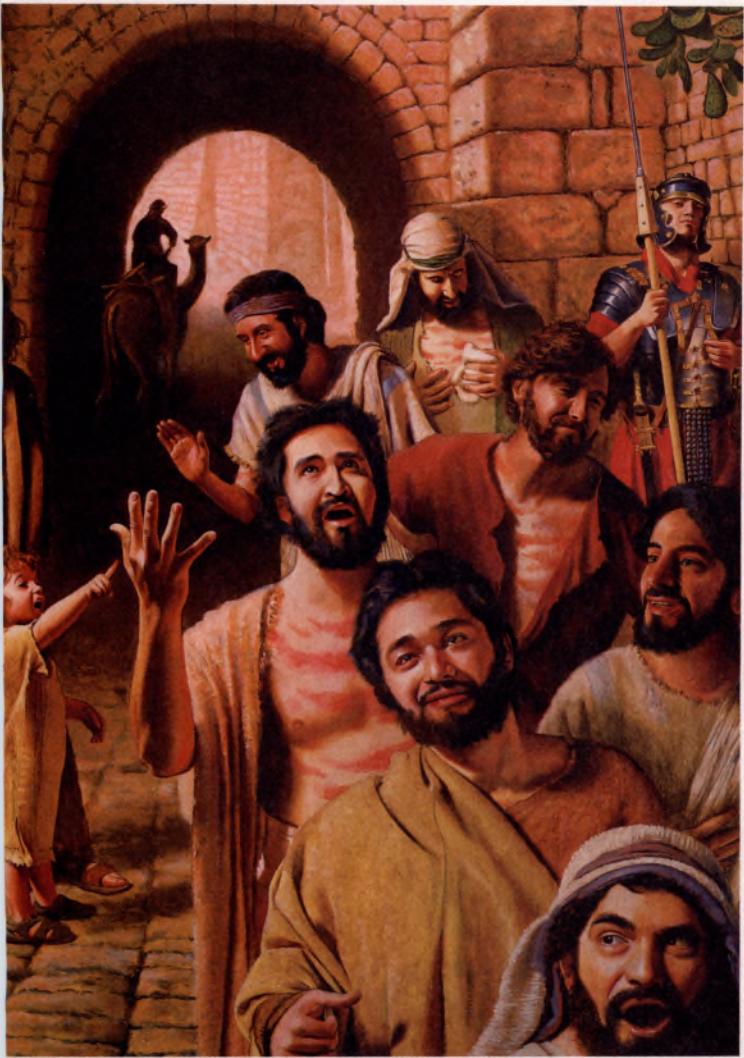
¹⁵ If we endure opposition and persecution with the right attitude, it can build endurance in us. This will help us to weather future sufferings. We read: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance." (James 1:2, 3) Similarly, Romans 5:3-5 informs us: "Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, and the hope does not lead to disappointment." So the more we now endure trials because of our Christian course, the better equipped we will be to endure further trials in this wicked system of things.

Jehovah Will Repay

¹⁶ Even when we experience the loss of material things because of opposition or persecution that we suffer for holding to the Christian way, we can be content knowing that Jehovah will reward us fully. For example, to some who had the hope of going to heaven, the apostle Paul wrote: "You . . . joyfully took the plundering of your belongings, knowing you yourselves have a better and an abiding possession" as rulers in

15. How can our enduring suffering now benefit us in the future?

16. What will Jehovah do for the future kings and priests that will compensate for their suffering?



The apostles 'rejoiced in being counted worthy to be dishonored' for their faith

God's Kingdom. (Hebrews 10:34) And imagine the joy that will be theirs when under the direction of Jehovah and Christ they share in dispensing marvelous blessings to earth's inhabitants in the new world. How true the apostle Paul's words to faithful Christians: "I reckon that the sufferings of the present season do not amount to any-

thing in comparison with the glory that is going to be revealed in us."
—Romans 8:18.

¹⁷ Similarly, no matter what those with the earthly hope may now lose or voluntarily give up because of serving Jehovah, he will reward them superabundantly with what he will do in the future. He will give them perfect, endless life on a paradise earth. In that new world, Jehovah "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore." (Revelation 21:4) What a wonderful promise! Nothing we may willingly or unwillingly give up in this present world for Jehovah's sake can equal the marvelous life to come, which he will give his faithful servants who endure suffering.

¹⁸ Any suffering we may yet have to endure will in no way interfere with our enjoyment of everlasting life in God's new world. All of that will be completely offset by the magnificent conditions in the new world. Isaiah 65:17, 18 tells us: "The former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart. But exult, you people, and be joyful forever in what I am creating." Consequently, it was appropriate for Jesus' half brother

James to declare: "We pronounce happy those who have endured." (James 5:11) Yes, if we faithfully endure present suffering, we can benefit now and in the future.

17. What will Jehovah do for those with the earthly hope who serve him loyally now?

18. What comforting promise does Jehovah give us in his Word?

WRITING

ITS IMPORTANCE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

HAVE you ever read some of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*? Those are thought to have been composed during the ninth or the eighth century B.C.E. How do these works compare with the Bible, which began to be written many centuries earlier? The volume *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible* observes: “The Bible has no fewer than 429 references to writing and to written documents. This is significant if it is remembered that the *Iliad* provides only one reference to writing and there is none in the *Odyssey*. ”

The Oxford Encyclopedia of Archaeology in the Near East explains that “in ancient Israel it seems that writing was an integral part of the religious experience.” For example, the Law covenant was put in writing and was later publicly read on a regular basis before all men, women, and children. It was also read and studied by people both in groups and in private. After considering some features of the Law, Alan Millard, senior lecturer at the University of Liverpool, concludes: “Evidently, reading and writing were assumed to affect life at most levels.”—Deuteronomy 31:9-13; Joshua 1:8; Nehemiah 8:13-15; Psalm 1:2.

The apostle Paul explains how Christians should view the holy writings: “All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” Do you personally show appreciation for the Bible by reading it regularly?—Romans 15:4.

