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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

What
Influence
Does Jesus
Have on
Your Life?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Jesus—What People Say About Him
- 4 Jesus—The Perfect Model to Follow
- 8 Did You Know?
- 13 True Freedom for the Maya
- 16 Teach Your Children—David
—Why He Was Not Afraid
- 22 'Miraculous Healing' Today
—Is It From God?
- 24 A Letter From Ghana
- 26 A Search for Errors Led to the Truth
- 30 Our Readers Ask
- 31 Draw Close to God
—A Creator Worthy of Our Praise



Cleanliness —Why Is It Important?

PAGE 9



Early Christians in the Greek World

PAGE 18

Jesus

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM

"Jesus of Nazareth . . . is easily the dominant figure in history."

—H. G. Wells, English historian.

"Christ stands . . . solitary and alone among all the heroes of history."

—Philip Schaff, Swiss-born theologian and historian.

WHO qualifies to be called the greatest man who ever lived? How should a man's greatness be measured? By his military genius? His physical strength? His mental prowess? Or should it be measured by the extent that his words and deeds affect people and by the example he sets for them?

Note what historians, scientists, scholars, writers, political leaders, and others—past and present—have said about the man from Nazareth, Jesus Christ:

"It would require much exotic calculation, however, to deny that the single most powerful figure—not merely in these two millenniums but in all human history—has been Jesus of Nazareth."—Reynolds Price, American writer and Bible scholar.

"A man who was completely innocent offered himself as a sacrifice for the good of others, including his enemies and became the ransom of the world. It was a perfect act."—Mohandas K. Gandhi, political and spiritual leader of India.

"As a child, I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew, but I am enthralled by the luminous figure of

the Nazarene."—Albert Einstein, German-born scientist.

"Jesus Christ, to me, is the outstanding personality of all time, all history, both as Son of God and as Son of Man. *Everything He ever said or did has value for us today, and that is something you can say of no other man, alive or dead.*"—Sholem Asch, Polish-born essayist as quoted in *Christian Herald*; italics theirs.

"For thirty five years of my life I was, in the proper acceptation of the word, nihilist, a man who believed in nothing. Five years ago my faith came to me. I believed in the doctrine of Jesus Christ and my whole life underwent a sudden transformation."

—Count Leo Tolstoy, Russian novelist and philosopher.

"[Jesus'] life is the most influential ever lived on this planet and its effect continues to mount."—Kenneth Scott Latourette, American historian and author.

"Shall we suppose the evangelic history a mere fiction? Indeed, my friend, it bears not the marks of fiction. On the contrary, the history of Socrates, which nobody presumes to doubt, is not so well attested as that of Jesus Christ."—Jean-Jacques Rousseau, French philosopher.

Clearly, if anyone deserves to be our model in life, it is Jesus Christ. Paul, a learned man of the first century chosen by Jesus to be His follower and to speak about Him to the nations, urges us to "look intently" at Jesus. (Hebrews 12:2; Acts 9:3) What can Jesus teach us about how to live? How can his life benefit you?

Jesus

THE PERFECT MODEL TO FOLLOW

DO YOU want to be a better, happier person? The apostle Peter explains how we can do so. He writes: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) Indeed, having lived an extraordinary life, Jesus Christ had much to offer. By learning about Jesus and modeling our life after his, we can surely become better and happier people. Let us take a closer look at some of the qualities that characterized this great man and see how we can benefit from his example.

Jesus was balanced. Though Jesus said he had "nowhere to lay down his head," he did not practice or advocate an austere lifestyle. (Matthew 8:20) He attended banquets. (Luke 5:29) His first recorded miracle—changing water into fine wine at a wedding feast—shows that he was not antisocial

or an ascetic. (John 2:1-11) Yet, Jesus made clear what was most important to him. He said: "My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."—John 4:34.

□ *Have you analyzed your life to see how you can balance your material and spiritual pursuits?*

Jesus was approachable. The Bible portrays Jesus as a man who was warm and affable. He was not annoyed when people approached him with problems or perplexing questions. On one occasion when a crowd surrounded him, a woman who had been suffering from an affliction for 12 years touched his garment, hoping to get relief. He did not rebuff her for her seemingly presumptuous act but kindly said: "Daughter, your faith has made you well." (Mark 5:25)



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Jesus was balanced . . .



approachable . . .



compassionate

34) Children too were comfortable in his company, without fear of being ignored. (Mark 10:13-16) His dealings with his disciples were marked by open, friendly conversations. They did not hesitate to draw close to him.—Mark 6:30-32.

How freely do others approach you?

He was empathetic and compassionate. One of Jesus' greatest virtues was his ability to put himself in the place of others, to share their feelings, and to respond with helpful action. The apostle John relates that when Jesus saw Mary weeping over the death of her brother, Lazarus, Jesus "groaned in the spirit and became troubled" and "gave way to tears." Onlookers could easily perceive the great affection Jesus felt for that family, an affection that he was not ashamed to manifest openly. And what compassion he showed when he then brought his friend back to life!—John 11:33-44.

On another occasion, a man suffering from leprosy—a dreadful disease that made him live in isolation—begged Jesus: "Lord, if you just want to, you can make me clean." Jesus' response was truly heartwarming: "Stretching out his hand, he touched him, saying: 'I want to. Be made clean!'" (Matthew 8:2, 3) Jesus did not cure people simply to fulfill prophecy. He *wanted* to wipe away their tears. Everything he did was governed

by one of his most often remembered sayings: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

Can your compassion for others be seen in your deeds?

Jesus was understanding and discerning. Although he was a man who committed no error, Jesus never expected perfection of others or assumed an air of superiority; nor did he act with a lack of understanding. Once, a woman "known in the city to be a sinner" showed her faith and appreciation by washing Jesus' feet with her tears. Jesus allowed her to do so, to the surprise of his host, who judged her harshly. Understanding her sincerity, Jesus did not condemn the woman for her sins. Rather, he said: "Your faith has saved you; go your way in peace." As a result of Jesus' warm response, that woman was very likely moved to abandon her former way of life.—Luke 7:37-50.

Are you known for being quick to commend and slow to condemn?

He was impartial and respectful. Perhaps because of a certain affinity of personalities and a possible family connection, Jesus had special affection for his disciple John.*

* John's mother, Salome, was possibly the natural sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Compare Matthew 27:55, 56 with Mark 15:40 and John 19:25.

Nevertheless, he did not show any partiality toward him, or favor him over the other disciples. (John 13:23) In fact, when John and his sibling James asked for privileged positions in God's Kingdom, Jesus answered: "This sitting down at my right or at my left is not mine to give."—Mark 10:35-40.

Jesus was always respectful to others. He did not share in the prejudices of the people in his day. For example, women were commonly treated as inferior to men. Yet, Jesus accorded women due dignity. The first time that he openly declared himself to be the Messiah, it was to a woman who was not a Jew but a Samaritan, whom the Jews in general would disdain, much less greet. (John 4:7-26) And it was to women that Jesus granted the privilege of being the first witnesses of his resurrection.—Matthew 28:9, 10.

□ Are you fair-minded in your dealings with people of a different race, gender, language, or nationality?

He was a dutiful son and brother. Apparently, Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, died when Jesus was still a youth. Most likely, Jesus supported his mother and his younger brothers and sisters by working as a carpenter. (Mark 6:3) During his last moments of life, he entrusted his mother to the care of his disciple John.—John 19:26, 27.

□ Can you imitate Jesus by your assuming family responsibilities as he did?

Jesus was a true friend. As a friend, Jesus was outstanding. How so? He did not reject his friends just because they made mistakes, even the same mistakes repeatedly. His disciples did not always act as he would have liked. But he proved himself their friend by concentrating on their good qualities rather than imputing bad motives to them. (Mark 9:33-35; Luke 22:24-27) While not imposing his viewpoints on them, he invited

them to express themselves freely.—Matthew 16:13-15.

Above all, Jesus loved his friends. (John 13:1) To what extent? He said: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) Could anyone offer his friends something more valuable than his own life?

□ Do you remain a friend even when others irritate or offend you?

He was courageous and manly. Jesus was far different from the weak, passive person portrayed by some artists. The Gospels present him as a strong, vigorous man. Twice, Jesus drove merchants, with their goods, from the temple. (Mark 11:15-17; John 2:14-17) When a mob came to arrest "Jesus the Nazarene," he courageously stepped forward to identify himself and to protect his disciples, declaring firmly: "I am he. If, therefore, it is I you are looking for, let these go." (John 18:4-9) It is no wonder that when Pontius Pilate saw Jesus' courage under arrest and mistreatment, he declared: "Look! The man!"—John 19:4, 5.

□ Do you act decisively and courageously when you see what you must do?

These and other outstanding qualities make Jesus the perfect model for us. If we allow ourselves to be influenced by his conduct, we will be better and happier people. It is for this reason that the apostle Peter urged Christians to follow Jesus' steps closely. Do you try to follow Jesus' steps as closely as possible?

More Than a Model to Follow

Jesus, however, was much more than just a model to follow. He said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6) Besides making known the truth about God,



- *Jesus was impartial and respectful toward all*
- *He was a true friend even to the end*
- *He was courageous*

Do you try to follow Jesus' steps as closely as possible?

thus opening up the way to draw close to Him, Jesus provided the means for faithful ones to gain life.—John 3:16.

Regarding this aspect of his reason for coming to earth, Jesus said: “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28) By offering up his life as a sacrifice, Jesus laid the foundation for humans to enjoy eternal life. What must we do individually to benefit from that provision? Jesus explained: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.”—John 17:3.

Yes, taking in knowledge of Jesus, imitating his way of life, and exercising faith in his

sacrificial death are requirements for gaining everlasting life. We invite you to take the time to study the source of such knowledge, the Bible, and to strive to practice what it says, as Jesus did.*

Jesus’ exemplary life teaches us what kind of person we should be. His sacrificial death can free us from sin and its wages, death. (Romans 6:23) How sad our situation would be without the powerful influence of Jesus Christ! Never allow the preoccupations and anxieties of life to rob you of the opportunity to consider and follow closely the example of the greatest man who ever lived—Jesus Christ.

* For a detailed account of Jesus’ life on earth, see the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Did You Know?

What sort of work would Jesus have done as a carpenter?

Jesus' adoptive father was a carpenter. Jesus learned the same trade. When he began his ministry at the age of "about thirty," he was considered not only "the carpenter's son" but also a carpenter in his own right.—Luke 3:23; Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3.

In Jesus' hometown, there would have been a demand for such farming equipment as plows and yokes, which were primarily made out of wood. Among the carpenter's other regular products would have been pieces of furniture—tables, chairs, stools, and storage chests—as well as such items as doors, windows, wooden locks, and rafters. In fact, part of the carpenter's work involved construction.

In an illustration, John the Baptizer mentioned the ax, a tool that Jesus and other carpenters would likely have used to fell trees. Thereafter, they would either fashion the timber into beams on-site or transport the timber to their workshops. This phase of the job doubtless required great physical strength. (Matthew 3:10) Isaiah lists other instru-

ments used by carpenters in his day: "As for the wood carver, he has stretched out the measuring line; he traces it out with red chalk; he works



it up with a wood scraper; and with a compass he keeps tracing it out." (Isaiah 44:13) Archaeological finds confirm the use of metal saws, stone hammers, and bronze nails in Biblical times. (Exodus 21:6; Isaiah 10:15; Jeremiah 10:4) It is reasonable to suppose that Jesus would have used such things.

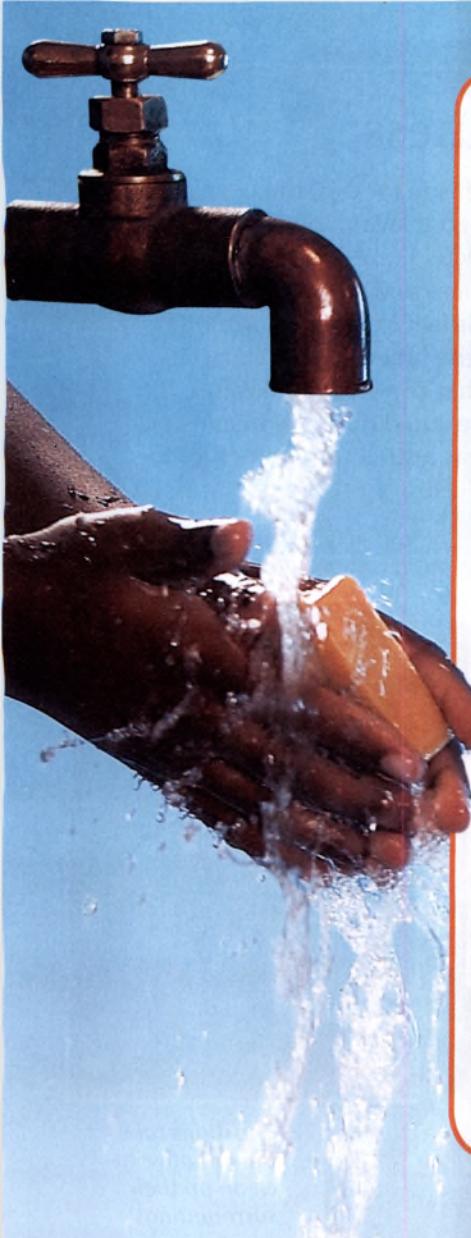
Who were "the bankers" that Jesus mentioned in one of his illustrations, and how did they operate?

Jesus spoke of a master who reprimanded an unpro-

ductive slave, saying: "You ought to have deposited my silver monies with the bankers, and on my arrival I would be receiving what is mine with interest."—Matthew 25:27.

Large-scale financial institutions as we know them today did not exist in Jesus' time. However, moneylenders had long paid interest on money deposited with them and had lent money at a higher interest rate. According to *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, interest-bearing loans were common in Greece by the fourth century B.C.E. And during the period of peace established by the Romans, annual interest rates for credit throughout the Roman Empire fluctuated between 4 and 6 percent.

The Mosaic Law forbade the lending of money on interest to needy Israelites. (Exodus 22:25) This rule seems to have applied primarily to loans to the poor. However, as indicated by Jesus' illustration, it was normal to receive interest on funds deposited with moneylenders, or "bankers." Thus, as usual, Jesus used what was familiar to his listeners.



Cleanliness

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

For thousands of years, plagues and pestilences have afflicted mankind. Some people assumed that these were a sign of the wrath of God and were sent to punish wrongdoers. Patient observation and painstaking research over many centuries have revealed that the culprits were often small creatures that live alongside us.

Medical researchers discovered that rats, mice, cockroaches, flies, and mosquitoes can all serve as hosts for transmitting disease. They also found that people often invite infectious diseases simply by a lack of hygiene. Cleanliness, it seems, can make the difference between life and death.

Obviously, standards of cleanliness vary according to customs and circumstances. In areas where there is no running water or adequate sewage disposal, hygiene can be a real challenge. Nevertheless, God gave the ancient Israelites instructions on cleanliness while they were traveling through the wilderness—some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable for practicing good hygiene!

Why does cleanliness matter to God? What is a reasonable view of cleanliness? What simple precautions can you and your family take to reduce disease?

SCHOOL is over, and little Max,* who lives in Cameroon, arrives back home. Hungry and thirsty, he enters the humble home where he lives, gives his waiting dog a hug, puts his schoolbag on the dining-room table, sits down, and eagerly waits for his food.

Mother, who is in the kitchen, hears Max

* Name has been changed.

come in and brings a plate of hot rice and beans for him. But her expression changes when she sees his schoolbag on the clean table. She looks at her son and slowly utters one single word, "Maaaax!" Her son understands, quickly takes the bag away, and rushes out to wash his hands. Soon he returns for his long-awaited meal. "Sorry, Mum. I forgot," he mumbles guiltily.

God Requires Cleanliness

During their wilderness trek, the Israelites were instructed to take great care when disposing of human waste. (Deuteronomy 23:12-14) This must have been a tiresome chore in view of the size of the camp, but it doubtless helped prevent such diseases as typhoid fever and cholera.

The people were commanded to wash or destroy any item that came in contact with a dead body. Though they might not have un-

derstood the reason for this, the Israelites were thus helped to avoid infection and disease.—Leviticus 11:32-38.

The priests were to wash both their hands and their feet before performing their duties at the tabernacle. Filling the copper basin that contained the water for this purpose could not have been easy, but washing was a strict requirement.
—Exodus 30:17-21.

Washing your clothes helps prevent skin problems and disease



▲ Christians take the initiative to clean up their surroundings



◀ A caring mother can do much when it comes to the cleanliness of her household

Reminders From a Medical Doctor

Water is essential to life, but contaminated water can be the source of sickness and death. Dr. J. Mbangue Lobe, chief of the medical department at the port of Douala, Cameroon, offered some practical pointers in an interview.

"Boil your drinking water when in doubt." But he warned: "The use of bleach or other chemicals are all right but may be hazardous if not handled properly. Always wash your hands with soap and water before a meal and after using the toilet. A bar of soap does not cost a fortune, so even poor people can afford it. Wash your clothes often, using hot water if you have skin problems or diseases."

A caring mother can do a lot when it comes to health and cleanliness, although she needs the cooperation of all members of her household. As the account about Max illustrates, long-term training is necessary because cleanliness requires tireless effort and children need constant reminders.

Max's mother realizes that food can get contaminated in various ways. So she not only washes her own hands carefully before handling food but also keeps food covered to prevent contamination by flies. By making sure that food does not sit unprotected and by keeping the house neat and clean, she has few problems with rats, mice, and cockroaches.

One important reason Max's mother takes such care is that she wants to please God. "The Bible says that God's people must be holy because God is holy," she explains. (1 Peter 1:16) "Holiness is similar to cleanliness," she adds. "So I want my home to be clean, and I want my family to look clean. Of course, this is possible only because everyone in the family helps."

"Good hygiene in and around the house must be observed by all members of the family," continued the doctor. "Toilets and outhouses are often neglected and automatically become a haven for roaches and flies." Adding one important observation concerning children, he cautioned: "Beware of bathing in those small creeks in your neighborhood. They are full of dangerous microbes. Wash nightly at home before going to bed, brush your teeth well at night, and sleep under a mosquito net." The general idea behind all these remarks is to think ahead, take action, and avoid trouble.

Family Cooperation Essential

As Max's mother observes, family hygiene is a family project. From time to time, some families sit down together to discuss what their needs are and what improvements can be made, both inside and outside the home. This also serves to unite the family and to remind each one of his or her share in caring for the welfare of all. For example, Mother may explain to the older children why they must wash their hands after using the toilet and handling things like money and before eating. They, in turn, can make sure that the younger ones take the matter seriously.

Different chores could be divided among all in the family. The family may decide to clean the house regularly each week and to schedule a thorough cleaning once or twice a year. And how about outside the house? Conservationist Stewart L. Udall, referring to the United States, said: "We live in a land of vanishing beauty, of increasing ugliness, of shrinking open space, and of an overall environment that is diminished daily by pollution and noise and blight."

Do you have the same impression of your surroundings? In the old days and in some towns in Central Africa even today, a town crier rings a bell in order to get people's attention. In a loud voice, he reminds the citizens to clean up the town, empty the sewer (drainage or gutters), trim the trees, pull out the weeds, and take care of the garbage.

The disposal of garbage is a worldwide problem and a nightmare for many authorities. Some municipalities fall behind in collecting garbage, which then piles up in the streets. Local citizens may be invited to help. As good citizens, Christians are among the first to respond and comply with Caesar's laws without complaining. (Romans 13:3, 5-7) True Christians are willing to go the extra mile to make a contribution in this regard. They are interested in a clean environment and take the initiative in cleaning up, not always needing a town crier to remind them. They understand that cleanliness is a reflection of good training and responsible behavior. It starts with each individual and each family. Simple application of sanitation and cleanliness around the house will lead to better health as well as improve the overall appearance of the neighborhood.

Personal Cleanliness Honors the God Whom We Worship

Clean and dignified personal appearance is a reflection of our worship and often attracts attention. A group of about 15 young men and women entered a restaurant after attending a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Toulouse, France. An elderly couple at the table next to them expected the worst—noisy talking and heckling. However, they were impressed by the orderly conduct and pleasant conversation of these nicely dressed young people. When the group was ready to leave, the couple commended them for their fine behavior and told one of the young men

that such exemplary conduct is rare these days.

Visitors to the branch offices, printeries, and residence facilities of Jehovah's Witnesses are often impressed by the cleanliness they see there. Clean clothes and regular washing and showering are requirements for the volunteers who work and live at these places. Deodorants and perfumes cannot take the place of good bodily hygiene. When these volunteers, who are full-time ministers, preach to their neighbors in the evenings or on weekends, their clean appearance also reflects favorably on the message they bear.

"Become Imitators of God"

Christians are urged to "become imitators of God." (Ephesians 5:1) The prophet Isaiah recorded a vision in which angels described the Creator with the words "Holy, holy, holy." (Isaiah 6:3) This description emphasizes God's superlative purity and cleanliness. That being the case, God requires that all his servants be holy, clean. "You must be holy, because I am holy," he tells them.—1 Peter 1:16.

The Bible encourages Christians to "dress in becoming manner." (1 Timothy 2:9, *The New English Bible*) Not surprisingly, in the book of Revelation, "bright, clean, fine linen" is said to represent the righteous acts of ones whom God considers holy. (Revelation 19:8) On the other hand, sin is often illustrated in the Scriptures by a stain or by dirt. —Proverbs 15:26; Isaiah 1:16; James 1:27.

Today, millions of people have to live in areas where it is a constant struggle to keep physically, morally, and spiritually clean. The final solution to this problem will come when God 'makes all things new.' (Revelation 21:5) When that promise is fulfilled, filth and uncleanness of all sorts will disappear forever.

TRUE FREEDOM FOR THE MAYA

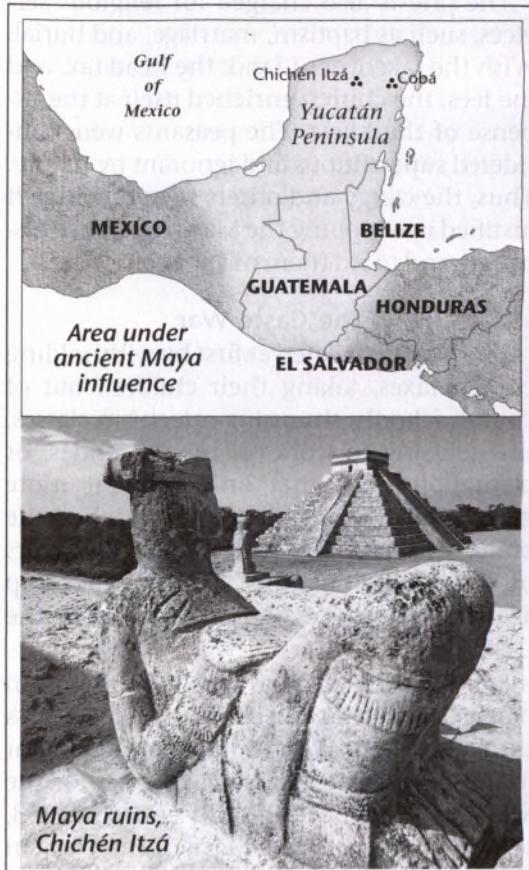
WHOMO has not heard of the Maya? Every year thousands of tourists travel to the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico to marvel at the impressive pyramids, such as those at Chichén Itzá and Cobá. The Maya were remarkable not only for their ingenuity in engineering but also for their accomplishments in writing, mathematics, and astronomy. They developed a sophisticated system of hieroglyphic writing, the concept of the zero, and a 365-day calendar with corrections similar to the leap year.

When it comes to religion, however, we see quite a different picture. The Maya were polytheists; they worshipped gods of the sun, moon, rain, and corn, among many other things. Their priests were assiduous observers of the stars. Their worship included the use of incense and images, self-mutilation, ritual bloodletting, and the practice of human sacrifice—of prisoners, slaves, and children in particular.

The Arrival of the Spaniards

This was the complex civilization that the Spaniards found when they arrived in the early 16th century. The conquistadores, as the Spanish adventurers were called, had a twofold objective: the acquisition of new land and riches and the conversion of the Maya to Catholicism in order to free them from barbaric pagan practices. Did the Spanish conquest bring true freedom, religious or otherwise, to the Maya?

The Spaniards, including the clergy of the Catholic Church, seized the communal lands, which the Maya had used from time immemorial for their traditional slash-and-



burn method of farming. This seizure resulted in great hardship and hostility. The colonists also took control of the cenotes, or deep sinkholes, that were practically the only source of water on the Yucatán Peninsula. Further hardship was caused when the church imposed a yearly head tax on the Maya—12 1/2 reals* for each man and 9

* The real is a former Spanish monetary unit.

for each woman—in addition to the already burdensome state tax. The Spanish landowners exploited the situation by first paying the church tax for the Maya and then forcing them into peonage for what they owed, reducing them to little more than slaves.

The priests also charged for religious services, such as baptism, marriage, and burial. With the takeover of land, the head tax, and the fees, the church enriched itself at the expense of the Maya. The peasants were considered superstitious and ignorant by nature. Thus, the clergy and others in authority felt justified in whipping the Maya to enforce discipline and to rid them of superstition.

The Caste War

The Maya retaliated at first by withholding church taxes, taking their children out of church schools, shunning catechism classes, and refusing to work on the haciendas, or plantations. But that only brought more harsh treatment. The situation reached the boiling point in 1847—after some 300 years of Spanish domination. The Maya rose up against the “whites” in what is called the Caste War.

Rebel leaders used as a rallying point an oracle called the Speaking Cross, a cross through which a ventriloquist preached war to the death. The war was a disaster for the Maya. By the time it officially ended in 1853, some 40 percent of the Maya of the Yucatán had been killed. Still, hostilities continued on and off for 55 years. Finally, the Maya were able to free themselves from the yoke of the Spaniards, and land reform was instituted. What, though, about religious freedom?

No True Freedom

Neither the introduction of Catholicism by the Spanish conquest nor the Caste War brought the Maya true freedom. Today, there remains a kind of syncretic, or fusion, reli-

gion that combines pre-Hispanic native customs with Roman Catholic traditions.

Speaking of the present-day Maya, the book *The Mayas—3000 Years of Civilization* says: “The Mayas venerate their old gods of nature and their ancestors in fields, caves and mountains . . . and at the same time worship saints in church.” Thus, the god Quetzalcoatl, or Kukulkán, is equated with Jesus, and the moon goddess with the Virgin Mary. Furthermore, the worship of the sacred ceiba tree was replaced with the veneration of the cross, which the people still water as if it were a living tree. Instead of bearing representations of Jesus, crosses are decorated with ceiba blossoms.

True Freedom at Last!

In recent years, Jehovah’s Witnesses in Mexico have undertaken a large-scale campaign of Bible education among the Maya.

Bible literature, such as this magazine, has been made available to the Maya in their mother tongue to help them gain an understanding of God’s purpose for mankind. What have been the results? As of this writing, there are some 6,600 Maya-speaking proclaimers of the Kingdom good news associated with 241 congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in the area. Has it been easy for the Maya to free themselves from their traditional beliefs in order to embrace Bible truth?

For many sincere Maya, it has been a struggle. Marcelino and his wife, Margarita, considered themselves zealous Catholics. Every year they paid homage to the cross by carrying it from the church to their home, where they would offer animal sacrifices and there-



after eat the sacrifices with relatives and friends. Then Jehovah's Witnesses called and started to study the Bible with them. "We recognized that what we were learning was the truth," they recall, "but we thought that if we abandoned our former beliefs, we would be attacked by the spirits." Still, they continued their Bible study. "Little by little, Bible truth sank into our heart," says Marcelino. "That gave us the courage to speak to our family and friends about what we had learned from the Bible. We are now happy to be free from the superstitious beliefs to

which we had been enslaved. We are only sorry for not having started sooner. We want to make up for lost time by working hard to tell others about the wonderful truths in the Bible."

Alfonso, aged 73, was a devout Catholic. In his town, he used to organize the religious festivals, which included Masses, dancing, and food and drink for all in attendance. There were also bullfights. "It was normal to expect these festivals to end up with drunken brawls," he comments. "Although I enjoyed the festivals, I felt that something was lacking in my religion." When Jehovah's Witnesses preached to Alfonso, he accepted a Bible study. In spite of poor health, he began attending meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Now he has abandoned all his former religious practices and takes advantage of every opportunity to share his newfound beliefs with those who come to see him at his home.

These are just a few examples of the many sincere Maya who have come to experience true religious freedom. Yes, the descendants of the builders of the impressive pyramids in the Yucatán are still here. They still speak the same language. Many live much as their ancestors did, in palm-thatched homes made of wattle daubed with clay. They cultivate their corn and cotton using the same slash-and-burn method. But now the truth of God's Word has liberated many of the Maya from the bondage of religious falsehood and superstition. They fully appreciate Jesus' powerful words: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—John 8:32.



Marcelino and his wife, Margarita, sharing the good news in the Yucatán

David

—Why He Was Not Afraid

DO YOU ever get afraid?—* Most of us do sometimes. When you are afraid, what can you do?— You can turn to someone who is bigger and stronger than you. Perhaps your father or mother can help. We can learn a lot from David about where to turn for help. He sang to God: “I, for my part, shall trust even in you. . . . In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid.”—Psalm 56:3, 4.

From whom do you think David learned not to be afraid? From his parents?— No doubt he did. His father, Jesse, was a faithful forefather of Jesus Christ, God’s promised “Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6; 11:1-3, 10) Jesse’s father—the grandfather of David—was Obed. A book of the Bible is named after Obed’s mother. Do you know her name?— It is Ruth, a loyal woman whose husband was Boaz.—Ruth 4:21, 22.

Of course, Ruth and Boaz died long before David was born. You may know the name of Boaz’ mother, David’s great-great-grandmother. She lived in Jericho and helped save some Israelite spies. When the walls of Jericho fell, she got protection for her family by hanging a scarlet cord from her window. What is her name?— Rahab, who became a worshipper of Jehovah, and she is given as an example of courage for Christians to imitate.—Joshua 2:1-21; 6:22-25; Hebrews 11:30, 31.

We can be sure that David’s father and mother taught him all about those faithful servants of Jehovah because parents were commanded to teach such things to their children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) The time came when God’s prophet Samuel was directed to pick David, Jesse’s youngest boy, to be the future king of Israel.—1 Samuel 16:4-13.

One day, Jesse sends David to take food to his three older brothers who are fighting God’s enemies, the Philistines. When David arrives, he runs to the battle lines and hears the giant Goliath taunting “the battle lines of the liv-

* If you are reading with children, the dash provides a reminder to stop and direct the question to them.

ing God." All are afraid to accept Goliath's challenge to fight him. King Saul hears that David is willing to go, so he calls him. But when Saul sees David, he says: "You are but a boy."

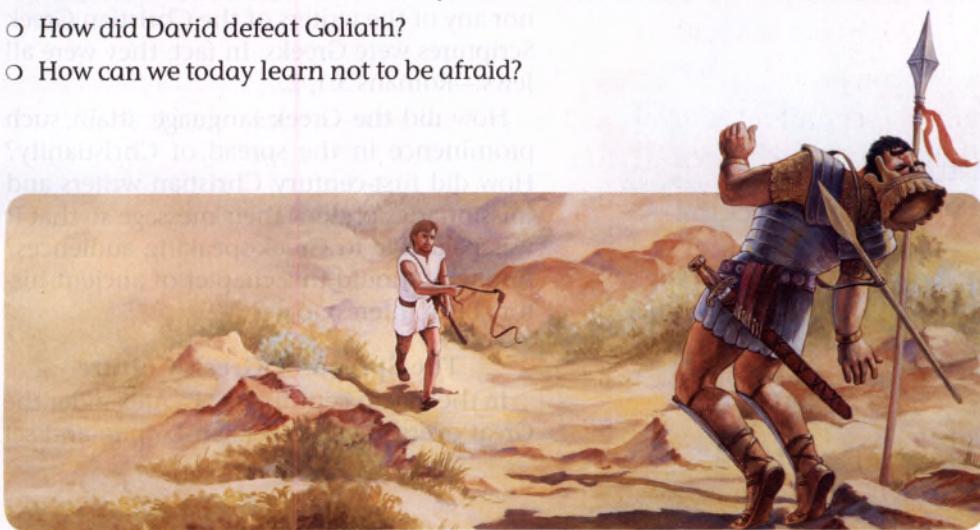
David explains to Saul that he has killed a lion and a bear that tried to carry off his family's sheep. Goliath "must become like one of them," David says. "Go, and may Jehovah himself prove to be with you," Saul replies. David finds five smooth stones, puts them in his shepherds' bag, takes his sling, and goes out to fight the giant. When Goliath sees a mere boy coming, he shouts: "Just come to me, and I will give your flesh to the [birds]." David answers: "I am coming to you with the name of Jehovah," and then he shouts: "I shall certainly strike you down."

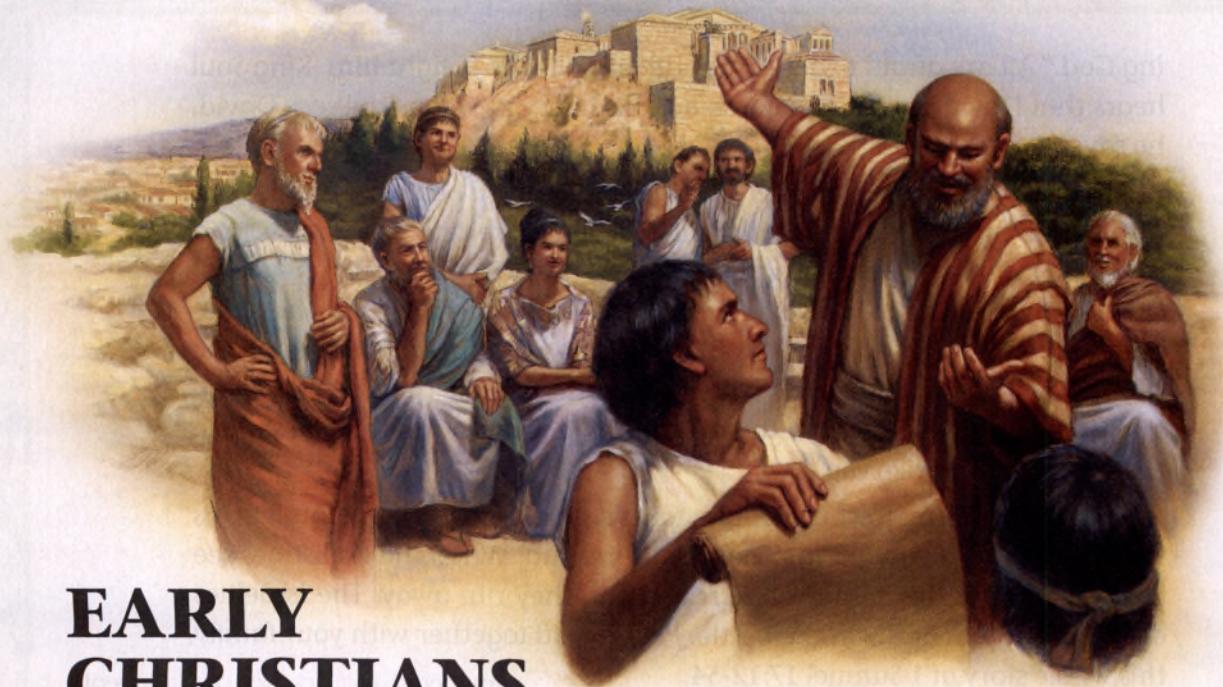
At that David runs toward Goliath, takes a stone from his bag, puts it in his sling, and hurls it straight into Goliath's forehead. When the Philistines see that the giant is dead, they are terrified and they run away. The Israelites chase after them and win the battle. Please read together with your family this whole story at 1 Samuel 17:12-54.

As a youth, you may at times become afraid to follow God's commands. Jeremiah was a young person and he was afraid at first, but God told him: "Do not be afraid . . . for 'I am with you.'" Jeremiah took courage and preached as God instructed him to do. Like David and Jeremiah, if you trust in Jehovah, you too can learn not to be afraid.—Jeremiah 1:6-8.

Questions:

- When Goliath taunted God's army, what did David do?
- How did David defeat Goliath?
- How can we today learn not to be afraid?





EARLY CHRISTIANS IN THE GREEK WORLD



MUCH of the world in which first-century Christians preached spoke Greek. The Scriptures they used to support the message about Jesus circulated in Greek. When writers were inspired to pen what later became the Christian Greek Scriptures, most of them wrote in Greek, using expressions and illustrations easily understood by people who lived in contact with Greek culture. Yet, neither Jesus nor his apostles nor any of the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures were Greeks. In fact, they were all Jews.—Romans 3:1, 2.

How did the Greek language attain such prominence in the spread of Christianity? How did first-century Christian writers and missionaries present their message so that it was palatable to Greek-speaking audiences? And why should this chapter of ancient history be of interest to us?

The Spread of Greek Culture

In the fourth century B.C.E., Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire and set

about conquering more of the world. In order to unify his diverse conquests, he and the kings who succeeded him encouraged "Hellenization," that is, the adoption of the Greek language and way of life.

Even after Rome later subdued Greece and stripped it of all political authority, Greek culture continued to exert a strong influence on neighboring peoples. During the second and first centuries B.C.E., Roman aristocracy nurtured a passion for all things Greek—art, architecture, literature, and philosophy—moving the poet Horace to remark: "Captive Greece took captive her savage conqueror."

Under Roman rule, important cities throughout Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt flourished as centers of Greek culture. As a civilizing factor, Hellenism touched every aspect of life, from institutions of government and law to commerce, industry, and even fashion. Typically, in most Greek cities, there were the gymnasium, where young men trained, and the theater, where Greek dramas were staged.

"Into this stream of Hellenistic culture the Jews were also drawn, slowly and with reluctance, but irresistibly," says historian Emil Schürer. At first, Jewish religious fervor resisted the threat of paganism that accompanied the influx of Greek thought, but eventually many areas of Jewish life were affected. After all, observes Schürer, "the small Jewish territory was surrounded on almost all sides by Hellenistic regions with which, for the sake of trade, it was obliged to be in constant contact."

The Role of the *Septuagint*

As many of the Jews migrated and settled throughout the Mediterranean region, they found themselves living in cities of Hellenistic culture, where the language was Greek. Such settlers continued to practice their Jew-

ish religion and would travel to Jerusalem for the annual Jewish festivals. In time, however, many of them lost their familiarity with the Hebrew language.* The need thus arose for a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek spoken by the masses. Jewish scholars, likely in Alexandria, Egypt—an important center of Hellenistic culture—undertook the task in about 280 B.C.E. The result was the *Septuagint*.

The *Septuagint* has been called epoch-making. It was the key that opened the treasures of the Hebrew Scriptures to Western civilization. Without it, knowledge of God's dealings with Israel would have remained locked up in relatively unknown writings in a language that was no longer widely understood, able to do little to empower worldwide evangelization. As it was, the *Septuagint* provided the background, concepts, and language that made it possible to transmit knowledge of Jehovah God to people of diverse ethnic backgrounds. Widespread familiarity made Greek unrivaled as a means of telling sacred truths to the world.

Proselytes and God-Fearers

By the second century B.C.E., the Jews had translated many of their works of literature

* Many Jews in Jerusalem were Greek-speaking. For example, there were men "of those from the so-called Synagogue of the Freedmen, and of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians and of those from Cilicia and Asia," whose language was presumably Greek.—Acts 6:1, 9.

The "Septuagint"
helped transmit
knowledge of
Jehovah in the
first century

Israel Antiquities Authority



into Greek and were composing new ones directly in that language. This played a significant role in bringing knowledge of Israel's history and religion to the Gentile world. Historians report that during this period, many Gentiles "attached themselves more or less closely to Jewish communities, took part in the Jewish divine service and observed Jewish precepts sometimes more, sometimes less completely."—*The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*.

Some Gentiles progressed to the point of embracing Judaism, accepting circumcision, and becoming proselytes. Others embraced certain aspects of Judaism but held back from conversion. These were often referred to in Greek literature as "God-fearers." Cornelius is called "a devout man and one fearing God." The apostle Paul met many God-fearers associated with the Jews throughout Asia Minor and Greece. In Pisidian Antioch, for example, he addressed those assembled in the synagogue as "men, Israelites and you others that fear God."—Acts 10:2; 13:16, 26; 17:4; 18:4.

So it was that when Jesus' disciples began to preach the good news in Jewish communities beyond the borders of Judea, many who heard it were from an essentially Greek background. Such communities were veritable seedbeds of Christian expansion. When it became clear that God was offering the hope of salvation even to the Gentiles, the disciples realized that in God's eyes, there was "neither Jew nor Greek."—Galatians 3:28.

Preaching to the Greeks

Given the religious and moral standards of people of the nations, some early Jewish Christians were at first hesitant about opening the Christian congregation to Gentile converts. Hence, when it became evident that God was willing to accept Gentiles, the apostles and older men in Jerusalem made clear that such converts were required to abstain from blood, fornication, and idolatry.

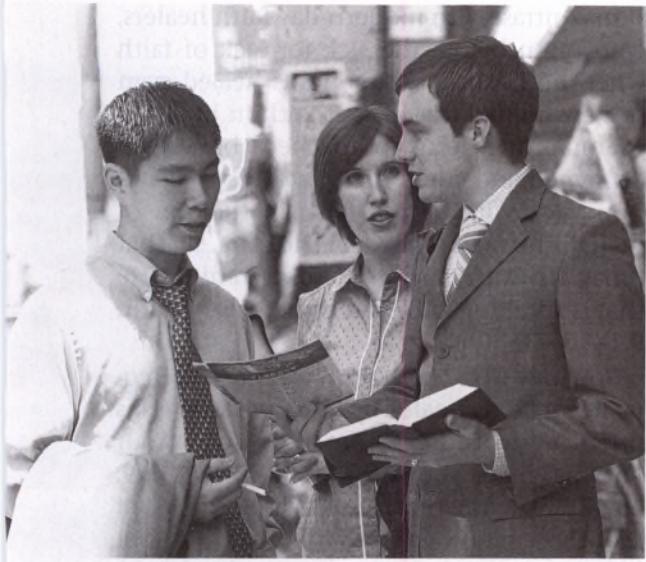
(Acts 15:29) This was essential for any who had followed the Greek way of life because Greco-Roman society was riddled with "disgraceful sexual appetites" and homosexuality. There was no place for such practices among Christians.—Romans 1:26, 27; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

Of the first-century Christian missionaries preaching in the Greek world, no one was more prominent than the apostle Paul. To this day, travelers to Athens, Greece, can see at the foot of the Areopagus a bronze plaque commemorating Paul's famous speech in that city. The account is recorded in chapter 17 of the Bible book of Acts. His opening words, "Men of Athens," were standard for a Greek orator and surely put his audience—among them the Epicurean and the Stoic philosophers—at ease. Instead of showing his irritation or criticizing his listeners' faith, Paul sought their goodwill by acknowledging that they seemed to be very religious. He spoke of their altar "To an Unknown God" and established common ground by saying that this was the God he proposed to discuss.—Acts 17:16-23.

Paul reached his listeners by using concepts they could accept. The Stoics could agree with him that God is the Source of human life, that all men belong to the same race, that God is not far off from us, and that human life is dependent on God. Paul supported this last point by citing works of the Stoic poets Aratus (*Phaenomena*) and



The plaque at the Areopagus commemorating Paul's speech



Cleanthes (*Hymn to Zeus*). The Epicureans too would find that they had much in common with Paul—God is alive and can be known. He is self-sufficient, requires nothing from men, and does not dwell in handmade temples.

Paul's listeners were familiar with the terms he used. Indeed, according to one source, "the world (*kosmos*)," "progeny," and "the Divine Being" were all expressions often used by Greek philosophers. (Acts 17:24-29) Not that Paul was willing to compromise the truth to win them over. On the contrary, his concluding remarks about resurrection and judgment clashed with their beliefs. Even so, he deftly adapted his message, in form and substance, to appeal to his philosophically-minded audience.

Many of Paul's letters were addressed to congregations in Greek cities or Roman colonies that had been thoroughly Hellenized. These writings, in fluent and powerful Greek, made good use of ideas and examples common in Greek culture. Paul mentions the athletic games, the victor's reward, the tutor that accompanied a boy to school, and

many other images from Greek life. (1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Galatians 3:24, 25) While Paul was prepared to borrow terms from the Greek language, he forcefully rejected Greek morals and religious ideals.

Becoming All Things to People of All Sorts

The apostle Paul recognized that in order to share the good news with others, he had to "become all things to people of all sorts." "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews," he wrote, and to the Greeks he became as a Greek, in order to help them grasp God's purposes. Paul, of course, was eminently qualified to do that, being a Jewish citizen of a Hellenized city. All Christians today have to do something similar.—1 Corinthians 9:20-23.

Today millions of people move from one land to another, from one culture to another. This poses a tremendous challenge for Christians, who endeavor to preach the good news of God's Kingdom and to carry out Jesus' command to "make disciples of people of all the nations." (Matthew 24:14; 28:19) Time and again, they find that when people hear the good news in their mother tongue, their hearts are touched and they respond favorably.

For that reason, this magazine, *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, is published every month in 169 languages, and its companion magazine, *Awake!*, in 81 languages. In addition, in order to speak about the good news to people who have moved into their neighborhood, many of Jehovah's Witnesses put forth the effort to learn a new language—including such difficult ones as Arabic, Chinese, and Russian. The objective is the same today as it was in the first century. The apostle Paul put it well when he said: "I have become all things to people of all sorts, that I might by all means save some."—1 Corinthians 9:22.

'Miraculous Healing' Today

Is It From God?

IN CERTAIN lands, it is common to see pilgrims visit shrines where many claim to have been healed of maladies and sicknesses that were "incurable." In other lands, medicine men claim to cure people by supernatural powers. In still other places, emotional rallies are held at which sick people may leap from their wheelchairs or toss away their crutches and claim to be healed.

Those who perform such cures mostly belong to different religions and often accuse one another of being renegade, false, or pagan. The question, then, may be asked, Does God work miracles through multitudes of often conflicting channels? After all, the Bible says: "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." (1 Corinthians 14:33) So, are such 'miraculous healings' really from God? Some healers claim to heal by the power of Jesus. Let us consider how Jesus cured others.

How Jesus Healed People

Jesus healed the sick in ways distinctly different from those of modern-day healers. For example, Jesus healed everyone who came to him for help. He did not heal certain people singled out from a crowd and send others away without a cure. Jesus' cures were also complete and almost always instantaneous. The Bible says: "All the crowd were seeking to touch him, because power was going out of him and *healing them all.*"—Luke 6:19.

In contrast with modern-day faith healers, who often blame the sick for lack of faith when no healing occurs, Jesus healed even some who had not yet put faith in him. For example, once Jesus approached a blind man uninvited and cured him. Later, Jesus asked him: "Are you putting faith in the Son of man?" The man replied: "Who is he, sir, that I may put faith in him?" Jesus told him: "He that is speaking with you is that one."—John 9:1-7, 35-38.

You may wonder, 'If faith was not a prerequisite for being healed by Jesus, why did Jesus often say to those whom he cured: "Your faith has made you well"?' (Luke 8:48; 17:19; 18:42) By saying that, Jesus was pointing out that those who were moved by faith to seek him out were cured, whereas people who declined to approach him missed their opportunity. Those who were healed were not healed by their faith; they were healed by God's power. The Bible says of Jesus: "God anointed him with holy spirit and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil; because God was with him."—Acts 10:38.

More often than not, money seems to play a prominent role in today's apparent healings. Faith healers are noted for being powerful fund-raisers. One such healer reportedly raised \$89 million (U.S.) in one year through his worldwide operations. Church organizations too profit from pilgrims who travel to shrines in hope of a cure. By contrast, Jesus never collected money from the people whom he healed. On occasion, he even provided food for them. (Matthew 15:30-38) When Jesus sent his disciples out to preach, he told them: "Cure sick people, raise up dead persons, make lepers clean, expel demons. You received free, give free." (Matthew 10:8) Why are the practices of modern-day healers so different from those of Jesus?

"Healing" From What Source?

Over the years, some in the medical profession have examined the claims of religious healers. What have they found? According to the *Daily Telegraph* of London, a doctor in England who spent 20 years investigating the subject said: "Charismatic reports of miraculous healing are not supported by a single piece of medical evidence." Yet, many people sincerely believe that they have been cured by the power of relics, shrines, or religious healers. Could they have been victims of deception?

In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that religious impostors would say to him: "Lord, Lord, did we not . . . perform many powerful works in your name?" Yet, he would reply: "I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness." (Matthew 7:22, 23) Regarding the source of the power that such ones claim to have, the apostle Paul warned: "The lawless one's presence is according to the operation of Satan with every powerful work and lying signs and portents and with every unrighteous deception."—2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

Furthermore, "healings" associated with religious relics, idols, and images cannot originate with God. Why not? Because God's Word clearly commands: "Flee from idolatry," and "Guard yourselves from idols." (1 Corinthians 10:14; 1 John 5:21) Such "healings" are part of the Devil's ruse to draw people away from true worship. The Bible says: "Satan himself keeps transforming himself into an angel of light."—2 Corinthians 11:14.

Why Jesus and the Apostles Healed People

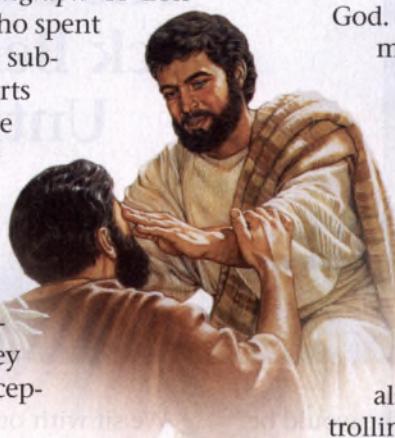
The genuine miraculous healings recorded in the Christian Greek Scriptures clearly identified Jesus and the apostles as being from God. (John 3:2; Hebrews 2:3, 4) Jesus' miraculous cures also supported the message he preached:

"He went around throughout the whole of Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom and curing every sort of disease." (Matthew 4:23) Jesus' powerful works—which included not only healing the sick but also feeding the multitudes,

trolling the elements, and even raising the dead—demonstrated what he will accomplish for obedient mankind under his Kingdom rule. Good news indeed!

Such powerful works, or gifts of the spirit, passed away with the death of Jesus and the apostles and any to whom they passed on the gifts. The apostle Paul wrote: "Whether there are gifts of prophesying, they will be done away with; whether there are [miraculously spoken] tongues, they will cease; whether there is [divinely revealed] knowledge, it will be done away with." (1 Corinthians 13:8) Why? Having accomplished their purpose—identifying Jesus as the promised Messiah and the Christian congregation as favored by God—such powerful works, including healing, are no longer needed; they are "done away with."

Still, Jesus' miracles of healing have an important message for us today. If we pay attention to and exercise faith in what Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God, we can look forward to the time when the inspired prophecy will be fulfilled both spiritually and physically: "No resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isaiah 33:24; 35:5, 6; Revelation 21:4.





The Day the Black Belt Came Untied

HE IS not the way I pictured he would be. Dressed in his flowing robe of crisp white cotton, a two-inch-wide black belt tied snugly around his thin waist, he assumes a fighting position, hands stiff and ready, bare feet planted wide. His face is intense; the brow is furrowed in concentration. His eyes are narrowed, hard, threatening—void of even a hint of softness that would betray weakness.

Suddenly, with a loud yell, he moves. "Hyat!" His hand slices through the air in a blur. Whoosh! A plank of wood snaps with a loud crack and falls to the ground. He whirls again, this time rotating high in the air, his feet and hands in fluid movement to deliver precisely aimed blows to a startled opponent. Could this really be the man who has asked for a Bible study?

I step forward with an outstretched hand. "You must be Kojo. I understand that you would like to study the Bible." He grasps my hand and smiles broadly, his face warm and friendly. His eyes, no longer intense and intimidating, are now full of curiosity. "Yes, I would like that very much," he replies. "When do we start?"

We sit with our Bibles and textbooks on a small veranda attached to his house. Here it is cooler, quieter, and we can be alone. There are three of us: Kojo, me, and his small monkey. The little primate, a mere 14 inches long, has a cap of red fur and a tuft of white beard that make him look comical and mischievous. Cute, playful, and extremely inquisitive, he moves about freely, walking on our papers, snatching our pens, sticking his little paws into our shirt pockets in search of a treat. Like a parent accustomed to the noise and fidgeting of small children, Kojo ignores the distractions and concentrates on the lesson. His many questions show me that he is thinking, eager to learn. Maybe karate has taught him to be wary and cautious, for he does not accept anything unless he is convinced and has proof from the Scriptures.

Our study progresses well. In time, however, I see another fight developing, a struggle deep within him that is intensifying. "The only thing I love in this world is martial arts," he tells me. I can see in this fighter's heart a passion for combat, a devotion to the skill that he has honed and perfected. At 26 years of age, not only does he love karate but

he is good at it, having risen to the level of a black-belt fighter, a status that few have or will ever attain.

I am not sure what Kojo will do. I sense that he realizes that being a karate fighter, hurting others with his hands and feet, cannot be compatible with the compassion, tenderness, and concern that is characteristic of the love found among true Christians. Yet, I know that Bible truth has melted the hearts of harder men. If his heart is right, Kojo too will slowly soften, mellow under the power of God's Word. I must be patient.

One sultry afternoon when we are about to finish our study, we read a Bible text that jolts Kojo like the blow from an opponent's powerful kick. "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one, and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates," he reads. (Psalm 11:5) "Anyone loving violence," he softly repeats to himself. His dark brown eyes, once determined and unyielding, begin to soften. He looks me in the eye and slowly smiles. "I have decided."

Kojo and I are now doing the work we love best—we are volunteer teachers, providing free Bible instruction to those who will listen. This morning we have an appointment to visit a young man named Luke.

On the way to his house, we take the cramped and crowded road through the market. Hundreds of stalls and vendors line the streets with their goods: heaps of red and green chilies, baskets of ripe tomatoes, mounds of okra, as well as radios, umbrellas, bars of soap, wigs, cooking utensils, and piles of secondhand shoes and clothes. Girls peddle hot spicy food in large aluminum bowls balanced gracefully on their heads. They deftly press their way through the crowd, tempting hungry customers with tasty soups and stews of blackened smoked fish, crabs, and snails. Dogs, goats, and squawking chickens scramble underfoot. Radios blare, horns honk, and people shout.

We follow the dirt path leading away from the commotion of town and arrive at a worn-out building displaying a faded sign: "Long Journey Spot." Luke, a slight young man in his early 20's, stands in the doorway and calls us in for a little shade from the sun. His place is stuffed with bags and boxes of dried herbs and roots, leaves tied together with strings, and thick chunks of bark—all belonging to Luke's elderly aunt, who is an herbalist. Generations of knowledge are in her concoctions, specially pounded and brewed and guaranteed to treat ailments of every description. Luke is expecting us. He has swept the clutter aside and has set up three wooden stools. We sit inches from one another and begin our Bible lesson.

Kojo is Luke's teacher. I sit back and listen as the two young men discuss the Bible's answer to why there is so much suffering on earth. When Kojo reaches over to help Luke find a Bible text, I watch as his strong hands gently turn the thin pages to the scripture. And then I remember. Not long ago, those hands were fighter's hands. The power of God's Word takes ingrained negative traits that are so common in this unprincipled world and transforms them into the positive qualities of compassion and love. I can think of no greater achievement.

On our way home, we approach a man sitting in the shade of a mango tree. He quietly listens as Kojo opens the Bible and reads a scripture. When the man realizes that we are Jehovah's Witnesses, he springs to his feet. "I don't like you people!" he snarls. For an instant, Kojo tenses. Then I see him relax and excuse himself. We walk away.

Down the road Kojo leans over and whispers: "My heart was pounding back there when he said that. Do you know what I could have done to that man?" "I know," I say with a smile. He smiles back and we continue on our way.



A SEARCH FOR ERRORS LED TO THE TRUTH

AS TOLD BY
R. STUART MARSHALL

"We do not talk to Jehovah's Witnesses," said the Jesuit priest. "They use the Bible." His answer took me by surprise, since I had just asked him to help my wife by showing her some inconsistencies in the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. I decided I would have to study the Bible with the Witnesses myself so that I could show her.

IT WAS at this point that, at age 43, I set out to refute the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, using my knowledge of logic and theology. From elementary school through college, I had been in Catholic institutions. Though I earned a bachelor of arts degree in economics in 1969 and took the required courses in philosophy and theology along the way, none of my Catholic education included a study of the Bible.

After college, I married Patricia McGinn, a fellow Catholic. Both of us then earned doctorate degrees at Stanford University. Our son, Stuart, was born in 1977, and we eventually settled in Sacramento, California, U.S.A. For the next 23 years, I worked for the state of California in the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO), analyzing the financial impact of state education budgets. I worked hard and enjoyed a good life. I loved being father to our son as he grew up. My beloved wife was my staunchest supporter, and I supported her as well.

A 25-Cent Answer

When our son was two years old, Patricia obtained a Bible from Jehovah's Witnesses and began to study it with them. She was baptized three years later. I felt that Jehovah's Witnesses were narrow in their views on holidays and blood transfusions, yet I found their reasoning on certain subjects compelling. To my surprise, I made my feelings public one day in 1987 when I was called to testify before a joint hearing of the senate and assembly education committees concerning one of my recommendations to the state legislature.

The University of California wanted funds to compete with other states to win a six-billion-dollar federal project. The project was to build a superconducting supercollider for research on subatomic particles. I had recommended against the funding, stating that in the long run, it would provide little for the state economy. The university countered by bringing in two Nobel laureates in physics to

testify before the legislature. Each of them described the knowledge that the project could provide. One said that it could answer questions on the origin of the universe. The other said that it could shed light on the beginning of life on our planet.

The chairman of the committee turned to me.

"Do you think six billion dollars is too much to pay for answers to these questions?" he asked.

"I agree that these are important questions," I answered. "However, Jehovah's Witnesses come to my door on Saturday mornings and offer a magazine on a 25-cent donation that will answer the same questions. And I'm not sure that their 25-cent answer isn't better than the six-billion-dollar answers we might get from this project."



With Patricia on our wedding day

Everyone in the room roared with laughter, including the Nobel laureates. Even though the legislature granted funding to pursue the project, no one refuted my point.

As time went on, I began to see the need to address a developing situation at home. After six years of discussions with Patricia about the Bible and Jehovah's Witnesses, I felt disappointed when she wanted to spend more time in the ministry. This would involve cutting back on her work at the university. How an otherwise logical person could have that kind of goal frustrated me, and there seemed to be nothing that I could say or do that would change her mind.

As I studied the Bible with the Witnesses, what impressed me most was Bible prophecy

I tried to enlist the help of an expert, someone who had more Bible knowledge than I had, someone who, I thought, could easily point out the inconsistencies between the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Bible. Proving just one of their teachings wrong would put the rest into question. That was all I would need to reach my wife's mathematical mind. I contacted the Jesuit priest of the church that Patricia and I had previously attended. Our meeting concluded with the conversation described at the beginning of this article. When the priest refused to talk to my wife, I knew that even though it would take me a little longer, I would have to be the one to find the flaws and point them out to Patricia.

My Search for Errors

As I studied the Bible with the Witnesses, what impressed me most was Bible prophecy. I read from the prophet Isaiah details of the fall of Babylon written nearly 200 years before the event, actually naming Cyrus as

conqueror and describing the tactic of diverting the Euphrates River to conquer Babylon. (Isaiah 44:27–45:4) Years earlier, I had studied the fall of Babylon in a class on military strategy. I also learned that the prophet Daniel had foretold, more than 200 years in advance, details of a powerful king of Greece whose kingdom would be divided into four less-powerful kingdoms after his death. (Daniel 8:21, 22) I remembered that fact about Alexander the Great from my study of ancient history. Through personal research in reference works, I established for myself that these books of the Bible were in fact written before the events they foretold.

The more I studied with the Witnesses, the more convinced I became that the Bible is God's Word, something that years of studying Catholic theology had not done for me. What would I do with this knowledge? I decided to dedicate my life to Jehovah and become one of his Witnesses. (Isaiah 43:10) I was baptized in 1991, just two years after that conversation with the priest. Our son was baptized the following year.

With our new focus, we changed our family goals. One of the first things I did after my baptism was to set in place a five-year plan for my wife to phase out of university teaching by age 50. She wanted to be a pioneer minister, which at that time involved devoting 1,000 hours a year, or about 83 hours a month, to helping others learn Bible truths. By 1994, she had reduced her work schedule enough to enroll as a pioneer. My initial goals included improving my ministry, assisting where I could in our congregation, and volunteering my services to do accounting for the construction of Kingdom Halls in the area.

On occasion, I had the opportunity to discuss the Bible at work. A new budget analyst at the LAO turned out to be a Witness who

was no longer actively practicing what she believed. Doubts about the Bible had weakened her faith. I had the joy of helping her spiritually. She returned to her home state and began pioneering.

In 1995, I was attending a special joint assembly and senate education committee hearing on federal research. The committee chairperson asked the federal representative what had happened to the superconducting supercollider project. In response, the federal official said that the project had been awarded to the state of Texas but that it was never completed for three reasons. First, the cost of the project increased from six billion to nine billion dollars before it was started. Second, the federal government wanted funds to be used elsewhere, notably the 1991 Iraq war. Third, they found out that they could get the answers to life's questions from Jehovah's Witnesses for 25 cents! It appeared that the remark had made its way around and back to where it had started.

As everyone laughed, some committee members looked at me. I spoke out to update all present and said, "You can now get the answers free if you just read the literature."

A Full and Meaningful Life

Once my wife retired, we made a five-year plan for me. I discreetly inquired at other agencies about working part-time because I now wanted to spend more time in teaching Bible truths to others. Unexpectedly, the LAO offered me the opportunity to work a reduced schedule. So, in 1998, I too became a pioneer minister.

One morning as my wife and I were preparing to go in the ministry, I received a phone call from the United States branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. Following up on an earlier survey, the caller asked if I was interested in working on a project in Brooklyn. I responded with a



We enjoy helping others learn the truths of the Bible

definite yes. That led to our working at world headquarters for 18 months. I ended up taking an early retirement from the state of California in order to finish the project. After that, we volunteered our services at the construction of the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses in Fairfield, California. We sold our home in Sacramento and moved to a small apartment in Palo Alto. My early retirement opened up the way for further blessings. We have since worked on projects at branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses in Nigeria, South Africa, Canada, Britain, and Germany.

Like the Witnesses who helped us, my wife and I now have the joy of helping others learn the truths of the Bible. I honestly feel that education from Jehovah is the most rewarding of all my higher education. It is unlike any other educational program on earth in its breadth and comprehensiveness. Jehovah has trained his Witnesses to teach Bible truth in a way that touches both the mind and the heart. That is what motivates me to continue to learn. My wife and I feel thankful for the life we now enjoy and for the privilege of using our education to serve the Sovereign of the universe, Jehovah God.

Our Readers Ask

DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ACCEPT THE OLD TESTAMENT?

Jehovah's Witnesses view the Bible as God's Word and accept both the Old Testament and the New Testament as integral parts of it. However, they prefer to use the more fitting designations "Hebrew Scriptures" and "Christian Greek Scriptures," Hebrew and Greek being the principal languages in which the Old and the New Testaments were originally written.

On the other hand, some who profess Christianity are reluctant to accept the Old Testament. They say that it depicts an angry God who sanctioned wars, murder, and actions hard to harmonize with the all-loving, moral God revealed in the New Testament. Or they reason that since the Old Testament deals chiefly with the Jewish religion, it is not relevant for Christians. However, in view of God's command found at Deuteronomy 12:32 not to add to or take away from his word, are these valid reasons for rejecting some three fourths of the Bible?

Sometime in 50 C.E. when the Christian apostle Paul visited the citizens of Thessalonica, Greece, "he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving by references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead." (Acts 17:1-3) Some of his listeners became Christians, and Paul later commended them, saying: "When you received God's word, which you heard from us, you accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) At the time of his visit, of the 27 books of the Christian Greek Scriptures, apparently only the Gospel of Mat-

thew had been written. So "the Scriptures" that Paul used to prove "by references" were obviously texts from the Hebrew Scriptures.

In fact, Christian Greek Scripture writers *directly* referred to texts in the Hebrew Scriptures some 320 times and *indirectly* another several hundred times. Why? "For 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." (Romans 15:4) This clearly indicates that those who today accept the entire Bible greatly benefit by doing so.

The Christian Greek Scriptures, based on the foundation laid by the Hebrew Scriptures, are a logical extension of God's Word brought about by the gradual unfolding of God's purposes. They in no way diminish the value of the Hebrew Scriptures. Herbert H. Farmer, professor of divinity at Cambridge University, argues that the Gospels "cannot be understood apart from what went before in the history of the old covenant people, as set before us in the Old Testament."

God's Word needs no revision. Nevertheless, "the path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Proverbs 4:18) By adding the Christian Greek Scriptures to the Bible canon, God shed increased light upon the outworking of his purpose without diminishing the value of the Hebrew Scriptures. They are all part of "the saying of Jehovah [that] endures forever."—1 Peter 1:24, 25.

A Creator Worthy of Our Praise

Revelation 4:11

HAVE you ever wondered, ‘What is the meaning of life?’ Those who believe that life is the result of mindless evolution grope in vain for the answer. Not so those who accept the well-established truth that Jehovah God is the Source of life. (Psalm 36:9) They know that he had a purpose in creating us. That purpose is stated at Revelation 4:11. Let us see how those words, penned by the apostle John, explain why we are here.

John presents a heavenly chorus extolling God: “You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.” Jehovah alone is worthy, or deserving, of such homage. Why? Because he “created all things.” What, then, should his intelligent creatures be moved to do?

Jehovah is said to be worthy to “receive” glory, honor, and power. Without question, he is the most glorious, honorable, and powerful Personage in the universe. The majority of humankind, however, do not really recognize his Creatorship. Even so, there are those who clearly see God’s “invisible qualities” through the things he has made. (Romans 1:20) With appreciative hearts, they are moved to give Jehovah glory and honor. They proclaim to all



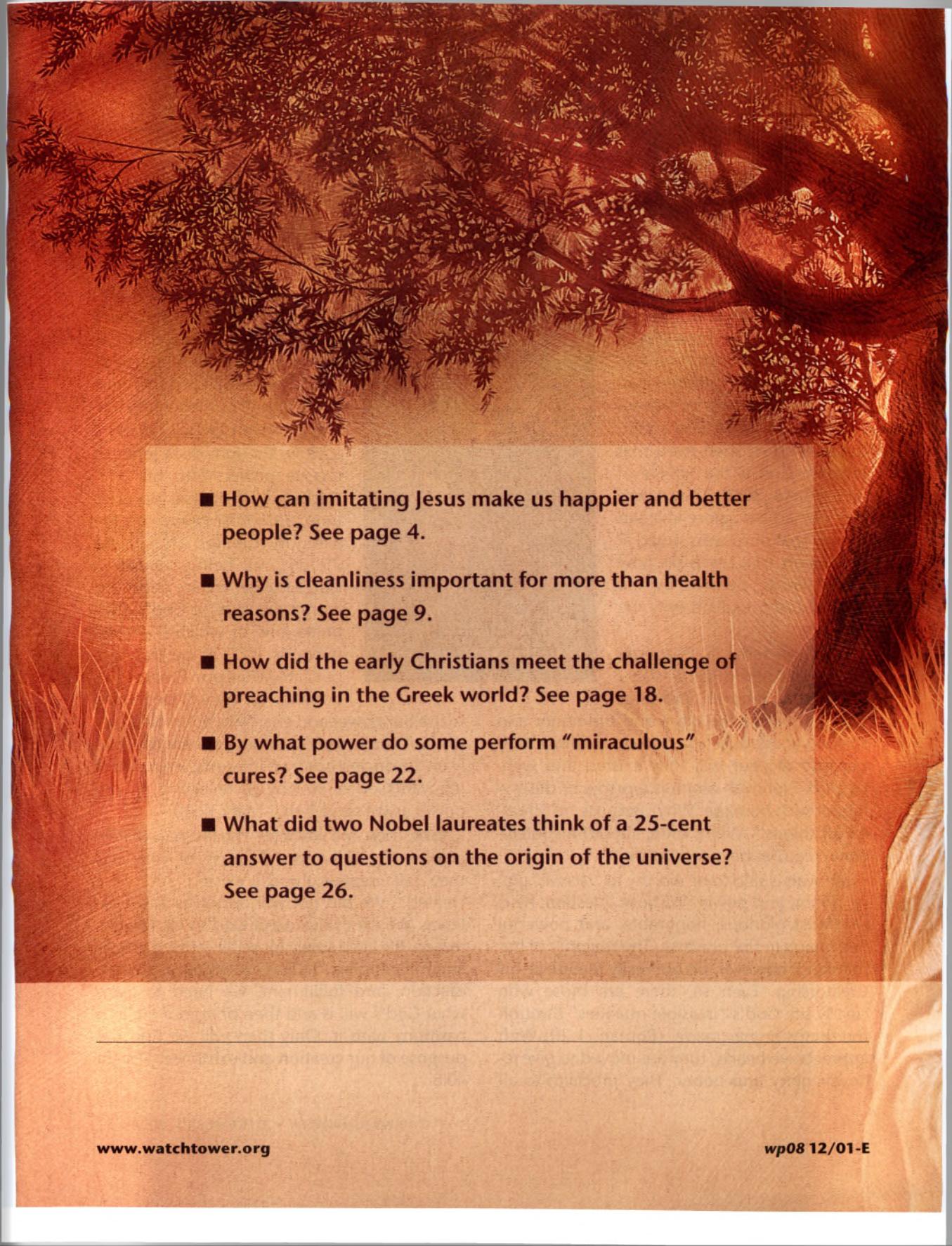
NASA, ESA, and A. Nota (STScI)

who will hear the impressive evidence that Jehovah is the one who made all things wonderfully and that he is therefore deserving of our reverential respect.—Psalm 19:1, 2; 139:14.

How, though, does Jehovah receive power from his worshippers? Of course, no creature can confer power on the almighty Creator. (Isaiah 40:25, 26) Yet, being created in God’s image, we are endowed with a measure of God’s attributes, one of which is power. (Genesis 1:27) If we truly appreciate what our Creator has done for us, we will be moved

to use our power and energy to honor and glorify him. Instead of expending our energy solely on advancing our own interests, we feel that Jehovah God is worthy of receiving all our power as we serve him.—Mark 12:30.

Why, then, are we here? The last part of Revelation 4:11 answers: “Because of your will they [all created things] existed and were created.” We did not will ourselves into existence. We exist because of God’s will. For this reason, life lived solely for self-interest is empty and meaningless. To find inner peace, joy, satisfaction, and fulfillment, we need to learn what God’s will is and then bring our life into harmony with it. Only then will we find the purpose of our creation and existence.—Psalm 40:8.

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- How can imitating Jesus make us happier and better people? See page 4.
 - Why is cleanliness important for more than health reasons? See page 9.
 - How did the early Christians meet the challenge of preaching in the Greek world? See page 18.
 - By what power do some perform "miraculous" cures? See page 22.
 - What did two Nobel laureates think of a 25-cent answer to questions on the origin of the universe? See page 26.