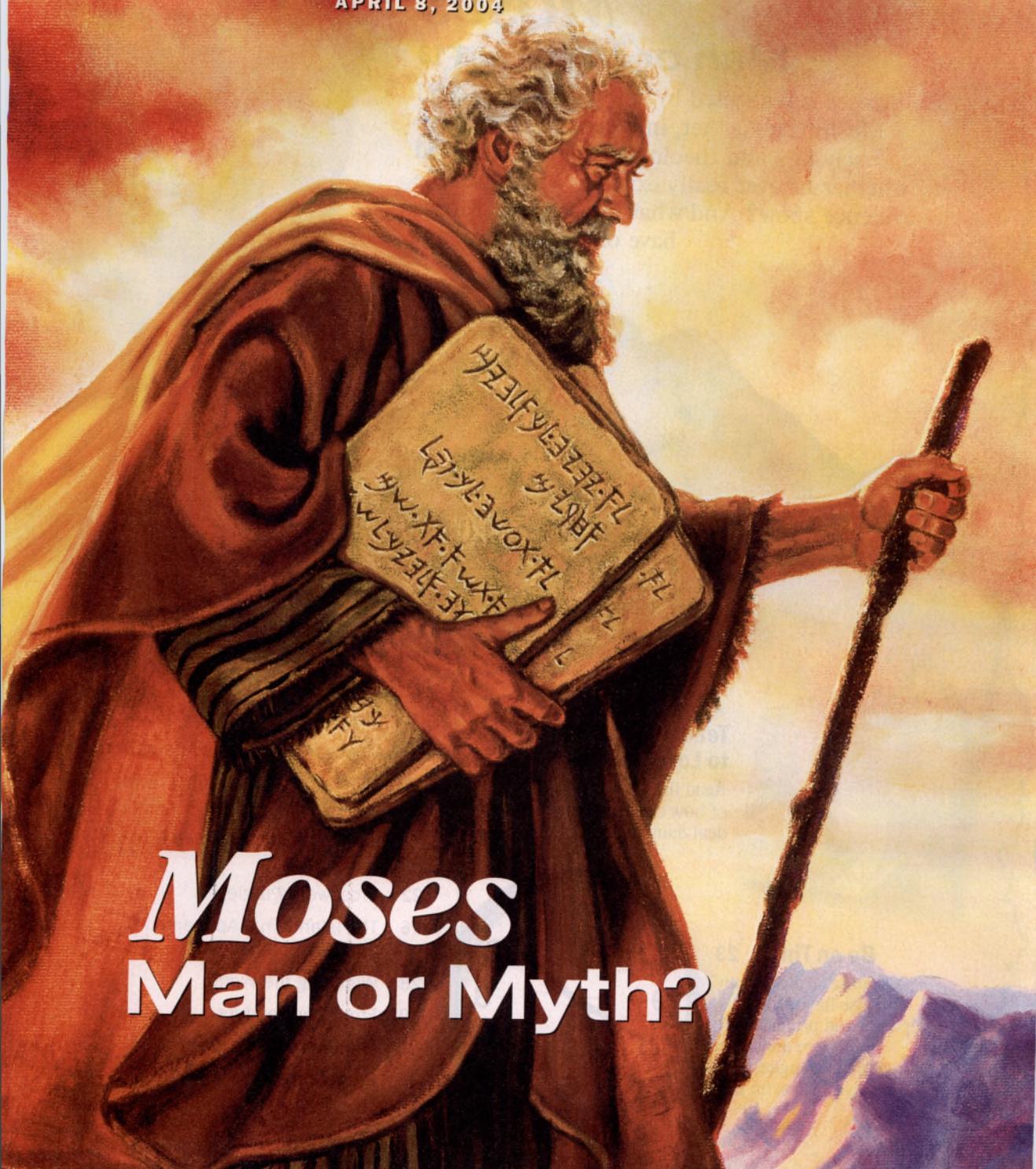


Awake!

APRIL 8, 2004



Moses Man or Myth?

Awake!

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Moses Man or Myth? 3-13

Moses is respected by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. Yet, in recent decades some scholars and theologians have challenged whether he ever really existed. What does the evidence show? And what impact does Moses have on our lives today?



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Moses Under Fire

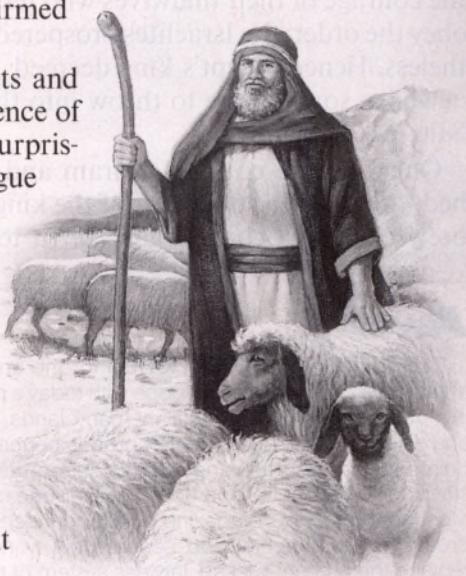
JEWS, Christians, and Muslims have often disagreed about many things. Yet, in spite of their differences, these faiths hold at least one thing in common: profound respect for the man known as Moses. Jews recognize him as “the greatest of all the Jewish teachers”—the founder of the Jewish nation. Christians regard him as a forerunner of Jesus Christ. Muslims view Moses as among their first and greatest prophets.

Moses is thus one of the most influential men in human history. Even so, for well over a century, Moses has come under fire from both scholars and clerics. Many challenge the belief not only that Moses performed miracles and led the Israelites out of Egypt but also that he even existed. The book *Moses—A Life*, by Jonathan Kirsch, concludes: “All that we can say about the historical Moses is that someone like the man described in the Bible *might* have lived at some unknowable time and place in the far-distant past, and his exploits *might* have been the grain of sand around which the pearly accretions of legend and lore slowly built up over the centuries until he became the rich and provocative figure whom we find in the pages of the Bible.”

At first glance, such skepticism might seem to have merit. For example, critics observe that archaeological proof has been found to confirm the existence of such Bible personages as Israelite King Jehu, but no archaeological evidence has been found to confirm the existence of Moses. This is hardly proof that Moses is a myth, however. Skeptics once argued that others mentioned in the Bible, such as Babylonian King Belshazzar and Assyrian King Sargon, were likewise myths—until archaeology later confirmed their historicity.

Author Jonathan Kirsch reminds us: “The remnants and relics of biblical Israel are so sparse that the utter absence of Moses in any source except the Bible itself is neither surprising nor decisive.” According to Kirsch, some thus argue that it is unlikely that Moses could be a mere figment of someone’s imagination, since “a life story so rich in detail and dialogue, so complex . . . , could not have been made up.”

Whether you are a believer or not, you likely have at least a passing acquaintance with the main events of Moses’ life: his encounter with God at the burning bush, the Exodus of Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, the splitting of the Red Sea. But is there reason to believe that any of these things really happened? Or is Moses little more than a mythological figure? The next article addresses these fascinating questions.



Moses Man or Myth?

MOSES was born under the shadow of death. His people were a group of nomadic families who had settled in Egypt with their father Jacob, or Israel, to escape starvation. For decades they had coexisted peacefully with their Egyptian neighbors. But then came an ominous change. A respected historical report says: "There arose over Egypt a new king . . . And he proceeded to say to his people: 'Look! The people of the sons of Israel are more numerous and mightier than we are. Come on! Let us deal shrewdly with them, for fear they may multiply.'" The plan? To control the Israelite population by making them "slave under tyranny" and then by ordering the Hebrew midwives to kill any male children that they delivered. (Exodus 1:8-10, 13, 14) Because of the courage of their midwives who refused to obey the order, the Israelites prospered nevertheless. Hence, Egypt's king decreed: "Every newborn son you are to throw into the river Nile."—Exodus 1:22.

One Israelite couple, Amram and Jochebed, "did not fear the order of the king." (Hebrews 11:23) Jochebed gave birth to a son

who would later be described as "divinely beautiful."* (Acts 7:20) Perhaps they somehow discerned that this child was favored by God. In any event, they refused to give their child up for execution. At the risk of their own lives, they decided to conceal him.

After three months, Moses' parents could no longer hide him. Running out of options, they took action. Jochebed placed the infant in a papyrus vessel and set him afloat on the Nile River. Unwittingly, she was launching him into history!—Exodus 2:3, 4.

Credible Events?

Many scholars today dismiss these events as fiction. "The fact is," says *Christianity Today*, "that not one shred of direct archaeological evidence has been found for [the years] the children of Israel sojourned in Egypt." While direct physical proof may be lacking, there is considerable *indirect* evidence that the Bible account is credible. In his book *Israel in Egypt*, Egyptologist James K. Hoffmeier says: "Archaeological data clearly demon-

* Literally, "beautiful to the God." According to *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, the expression could refer not only to the child's extraordinary physical attributes but to "the qualities of his heart."

Awake!®

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

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strates that Egypt was frequented by the peoples of the Levant [countries bordering on the eastern Mediterranean], especially as a result of climatic problems that resulted in drought . . . Thus, for a period roughly from 1800 to 1540 B.C., Egypt was an attractive place for the Semitic-speaking people of western Asia to migrate.”

Furthermore, it has long been acknowledged that the Bible’s description of Egyptian slavery is accurate. The book *Moses—A Life* reports: “The biblical account of the oppression of the Israelites appears to be corroborated in one often-reproduced tomb painting from ancient Egypt in which the making of mud bricks by a gang of slaves is depicted in explicit detail.”

Moses’ Rescue—A Pagan Legend?

Critics say that Moses’ rescue from the Nile River sounds suspiciously similar to the ancient legend of King Sargon of Akkad—a story that some say predates the story of Moses. It also tells of an infant in a basket who was rescued from a river.

However, history is full of coincidences. And placing an infant in a river may not have been as unusual as it might seem. Observes *Biblical Archaeology Review*: “We should note that Babylonia and Egypt are both riverine cultures and that putting the baby in a waterproof basket might be a slightly more satisfactory way to dispose of an infant than throwing it on the rubbish heap, which was more usual. . . . The story of the foundling rising to eminence may be a motif of folklore, but

that is surely because it is a story that occurs repeatedly in real life.”

In his book *Exploring Exodus*, Nahum M. Sarna observes that while there are some similarities, the story of Moses’ birth departs from “The Legend of Sargon” in “many significant respects.” Claims that the Bible account was derived from a pagan legend thus ring hollow.



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The Bible's description of the tiny ark Jochbed used likewise rings true. The Bible says that it was made of papyrus, which, according to Cook's *Commentary*, "was commonly used by the Egyptians for light and swift boats."

Still, is it not hard to believe that a national leader would order the cold-blooded murder of infants? Scholar George Rawlinson reminds us: "Infanticide . . . has prevailed widely at different times and places, and been regarded as a trivial matter." Indeed, one need not look far to find equally chilling examples of mass murder in modern times. The Bible account may be disturbing, but it is all too credible.

Adopted Into Pharaoh's Household

The fate of Jochebed's infant was not left to chance. She "put [the ark] among the reeds by the bank of the river Nile." This was likely a spot where she hoped it might be discovered. Here Pharaoh's daughter came to bathe, perhaps regularly.*—Exodus 2:2-4.

The tiny ark was quickly spotted. "When [Pharaoh's daughter] opened it she got to see the child, and here the boy was weeping. At that she felt compassion for him, although she said: 'This is one of the children of the Hebrews.'" The Egyptian princess thus decided to adopt him. Whatever name his parents had originally called him is long forgotten. Today he is known the world over by the name his adoptive mother gave him—Moses.#—Exodus 2:5-10.

Is it not farfetched, though, to believe that an Egyptian princess would take in such a

* Bathing in the Nile "was a common practice in ancient Egypt," observes Cook's *Commentary*. "The Nile was worshipped as an emanation . . . of Osiris, and a peculiar power of imparting life and fertility was attributed to its waters."

The etymology of this name is a source of debate among scholars. In Hebrew, Moses means "Drawn Out; Saved Out of Water." Historian Flavius Josephus argued that Moses was a compound of two Egyptian words meaning "water" and "saved." Today, some scholars likewise believe that the name Moses is Egyptian in origin but feel that it most likely means "Son." This argument, however, is based on the similar sound of the word "Moses" and some Egyptian names. Since no one really knows how either ancient Hebrew or Egyptian was pronounced, such theories are speculative.

child? No, for Egyptian religion taught that kind deeds were a requisite for entrance into heaven. As for the adoption itself, archaeologist Joyce Tyldesley observes: "Egyptian women achieved parity with Egyptian men. They enjoyed the same legal and economic rights, at least in theory, and . . . women could make adoptions." The ancient Adoption Papyrus actually documents one Egyptian woman's adoption of her slaves. As for the hiring of Moses' mother as a wet nurse, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* says: "The payment of Moses' natural mother to nurse him . . . echoes identical arrangements in Mesopotamian adoption contracts."

Now that he had been adopted, would Moses' Hebrew heritage be kept from him as a dark secret? Some Hollywood films have made it appear that way. The Scriptures indicate otherwise. His sister, Miriam, cleverly arranged for Moses to be nursed by his own mother, Jochebed. Surely this godly woman would not have concealed the truth from her son! And since children in ancient times were often breast-fed for several years, Jochebed had ample opportunity to teach Moses about 'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.' (Exodus 3:6) Such a spiritual foundation served Moses well, for after being handed over to Pharaoh's daughter, "Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." The claim of historian Josephus that Moses rose to the rank of general in a war with Ethiopia cannot be verified. However, the Bible does say that Moses "was powerful in his words and deeds."**—Acts 7:22.

By the age of 40, Moses was likely poised to become a prominent Egyptian leader. Power and wealth could be his if he remained

* The book *Israel in Egypt* says: "The whole notion of Moses being reared in the Egyptian court seems like a legendary feature. But a closer look at the royal court in the New Kingdom suggests otherwise. Thutmose III . . . initiated the practice of bringing the princes of subject kings of western Asia to Egypt to be trained in Egyptian ways . . . Thus, foreign princes and princesses were no strangers to the Egyptian court."

in Pharaoh's household. Then an event took place that changed his life.

Exile in Midian

One day Moses "caught sight of a certain Egyptian striking a certain Hebrew of his brothers." For years, Moses had enjoyed the best of both the Hebrew and Egyptian worlds. But seeing a fellow Israelite beaten—perhaps in a life-threatening manner—moved Moses to make a dramatic choice. (Exodus 2:11) He "refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, choosing to be ill-treated with the people of God."—Hebrews 11:24, 25.

Moses took swift and irrevocable action: "He struck the Egyptian down and hid him in the sand." (Exodus 2:12) This was not the act of someone "given to sudden outbursts of anger," as one critic alleged. It was likely an act of faith—albeit misguided—in God's promise that Israel would be delivered from Egypt. (Genesis 15:13, 14) Perhaps Moses naively believed that his actions would spur his people on to revolt. (Acts 7:25) To his chagrin, though, his fellow Israelites refused to acknowledge his leadership. When news of the killing reached Pharaoh, Moses was forced to flee into exile. He settled in Midian, marrying a woman named Zipporah, the daughter of a nomadic chief named Jethro.

For 40 long years, Moses lived as a simple shepherd, his hope of being a deliverer shattered. One day, though, he drove Jethro's flocks to a spot near Mount Horeb.

Egyptian tomb painting of slaves making bricks

Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY



There, Jehovah's angel appeared to Moses in a burning bush. Picture the scene: "Bring my people the sons of Israel out of Egypt," God commands. But the Moses who replies is hesitant, diffident, unsure of himself. "Who am I," he pleads, "that I should go to Pharaoh and that I have to bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" He even reveals a personal flaw that some moviemakers have obscured: He evidently has a speech impediment. How different Moses is from the heroes of ancient myths and legends! His 40 years of shepherding have humbled and mellowed this man. Although Moses is unsure of himself, God is confident that he is suited for leadership!—Exodus 3:1-4:20.

Deliverance From Egypt

Moses leaves Midian and appears before Pharaoh, demanding that God's people be freed. When the stubborn monarch refuses, ten devastating plagues are unleashed. The tenth plague results in the death of the

firstborn of Egypt, and a broken Pharaoh finally sets the Israelites free.—Exodus, chapters 5-13.

These events are well-known to most readers. But are any of them historical? Some argue that since the Pharaoh is not named, the account must be fiction.* However, Hoffmeier, quoted earlier, notes that Egyptian scribes often deliberately omitted the names of Pharaoh's enemies. He argues: "Surely historians would not dismiss the historicity of

* Some historians say that the Pharaoh of Exodus was Thutmose III. Others argue for Amenhotep II, Ramses II, and so forth. Because of the chaotic state of Egyptian chronology, it is not possible to determine with any certainty who this Pharaoh was.

Thutmose III's Megiddo campaign because the names of the kings of Kadesh and Megiddo are not recorded." Hoffmeier suggests that Pharaoh is unnamed for "good theological reasons." For one thing, by leaving Pharaoh unnamed, the account draws attention to God, not Pharaoh.

Even so, critics balk at the notion of a large-scale exodus of Jews from Egypt. Scholar Homer W. Smith argued that such a mass movement "would certainly have resounded loudly in Egyptian or Syrian history . . . It is more likely that the legend of the exodus is a garbled and fanciful account of the flight from Egypt to Palestine of a relatively few members."

Who Wrote the "Books of Moses"?

Traditionally, Moses has been credited with being the author of the first five books of the Bible, called the Pentateuch. Moses may have drawn some of his information from earlier historical sources. Many critics believe, though, that Moses did not write the Pentateuch at all. "It is thus clearer than the sun at noonday that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses," asserted the 17th-century philosopher Spinoza. In the latter half of the 19th century, the German scholar Julius Wellhausen popularized the "documentary" theory—that the books of Moses are an amalgam of the works of several authors or teams of authors.

Wellhausen said that one author consistently used the personal name of God, Jehovah, and is thus called J. Another, dubbed E, called God "Elohim." Another, P, supposedly wrote the priestly code in Leviticus, and yet another, called D, wrote Deuteronomy. Though some scholars have embraced this theory for decades, the book *The Pentateuch*, by Joseph Blenkinsopp, calls Wellhausen's hypothesis a theory "in crisis."

The book *Introduction to the Bible*, by John Laux, explains: "The Documentary Theory is built up on assertions which are either arbitrary or absolutely false. . . . If the extreme Documentary Theory were true, the Israelites would have been the victims of a clumsy deception when they permitted the heavy burden of the Law to be imposed upon them. It would have been the greatest hoax ever perpetrated in the history of the world."

Another argument is that stylistic differences in the Pentateuch are evidence of multiple authors. However, K. A. Kitchen notes in his book *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*: "Stylistic differences are meaningless, and reflect the differences in detailed subject-matter." Similar style variations can also be found "in ancient texts whose literary unity is beyond all doubt."

The argument that the use of different names and titles for God is evidence of multiple authorship is particularly weak. In just one small portion of the book of Genesis, God is called "the Most High God," "Producer of heaven and earth," "Sovereign Lord Jehovah,"

True, no Egyptian record of this event has been found. But the Egyptians were not above altering historical records when the truth proved to be embarrassing or went against their political interests. When Thutmose III came to power, he tried to obliterate the memory of his predecessor, Hatshepsut. Says Egyptologist John Ray: "Her inscriptions were erased, her obelisks surrounded by a wall, and her monuments forgotten. Her name does not appear in later annals." Similar attempts to alter or conceal embarrassing facts have even taken place in modern times.

As for the lack of archaeological evidence

for the wilderness sojourn, we must remember that the Jews were nomads. They built no cities; they planted no crops. Presumably, they left behind little more than footprints. Still, convincing evidence of that sojourn can be found within the Bible itself. Reference is made to it throughout that sacred book. (1 Samuel 4:8; Psalm 78; Psalm 95; Psalm 106; 1 Corinthians 10:1-5) Significantly, Jesus Christ also testified that the wilderness events took place.—John 3:14.

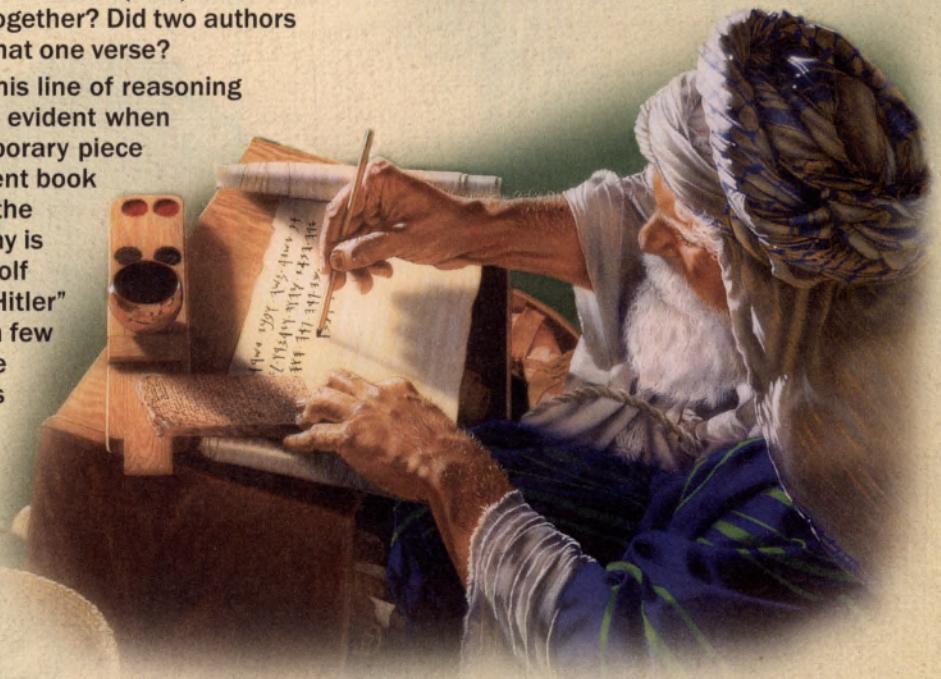
Unquestionably, then, the Bible's account of Moses is credible, truthful. Even so, he lived a long time ago. What impact can Moses have on your life today?

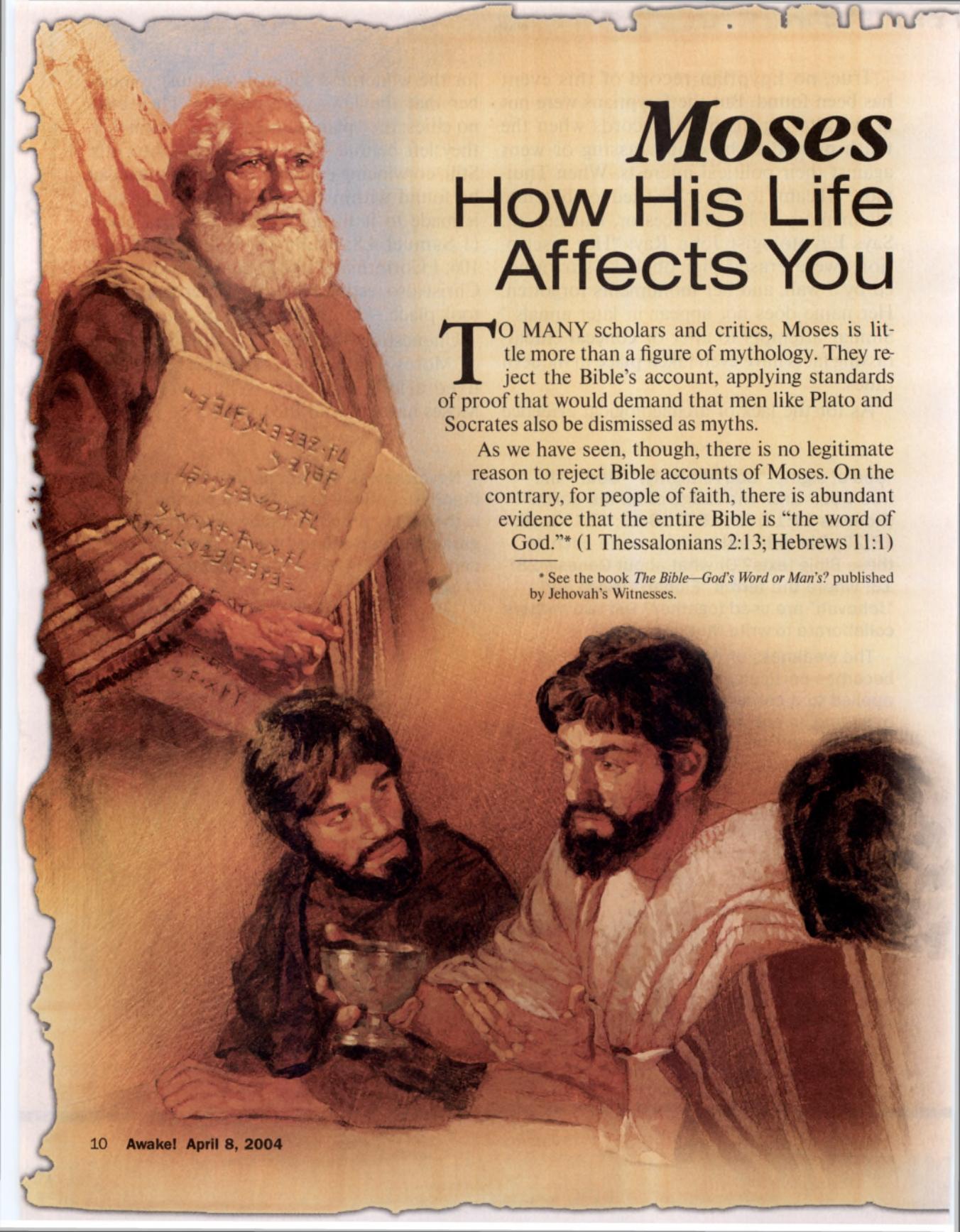
"God of sight," "God Almighty," "God," "the true God," and "the Judge of all the earth." (Genesis 14:18, 19; 15:2; 16:13; 17:1, 3, 18; 18:25) Did different authors write each of these Bible texts? Or what about Genesis 28: 13, where the terms "Elohim" (God) and "Jehovah" are used together? Did two authors collaborate to write that one verse?

The weakness of this line of reasoning becomes particularly evident when applied to a contemporary piece of writing. In one recent book about World War II, the chancellor of Germany is termed "Führer," "Adolf Hitler," and simply "Hitler" in the course of just a few pages. Would anyone dare claim that this is evidence of three different authors?

Moses humbly recorded his failure to give God glory

Nevertheless, variations on Wellhausen's theories continue to proliferate. Among them is the theory propounded by two scholars regarding the so-called J author. They not only deny that it was Moses but also proclaim that "J was a woman."





Moses How His Life Affects You

TO MANY scholars and critics, Moses is little more than a figure of mythology. They reject the Bible's account, applying standards of proof that would demand that men like Plato and Socrates also be dismissed as myths.

As we have seen, though, there is no legitimate reason to reject Bible accounts of Moses. On the contrary, for people of faith, there is abundant evidence that the entire Bible is "the word of God."* (1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 11:1)

* See the book *The Bible—God's Word or Man's?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

For such ones, studying the life of Moses is no mere academic exercise but, rather, a means of building faith.

The Real Moses

Moviemakers often highlight Moses' heroism and physical courage—qualities that have audience appeal. Granted, Moses did have courage. (Exodus 2:16-19) But he was first and foremost a man of faith. God was real to Moses—so real that later the apostle Paul said that Moses “continued steadfast as *seeing* the One who is invisible.”—Hebrews 11:24-28.

Moses thus teaches us the need to cultivate a relationship with God. In our daily lives, we too can behave as if seeing God! If we do so, we will never act in a way that displeases him. Note, too, that Moses' faith was instilled in him while he was a mere babe. His faith was deep enough to survive exposure to “all the wisdom of the Egyptians.” (Acts 7:22) What an encouragement that is to parents to begin teaching their children about God from infancy!—Proverbs 22:6; 2 Timothy 3:15.

Also noteworthy was Moses' humility. He was “the meekest of all the men who were upon the surface of the ground.” (Numbers 12:3) Moses was thus willing to admit his mistakes. He writes of his own negligence in failing to have his son circumcised. (Exodus 4:24-26) He candidly relates his failure to give God glory on one occasion and the devastating punishment God meted out. (Numbers 20:2-12; Deuteronomy 1:37) Further, Moses was willing to take suggestions from others. (Exodus 18:13-24) Would not husbands, fathers, and other men in authority do well to imitate Moses?

True, some critics challenge whether Moses was truly meek, citing the violent actions

he took. (Exodus 32:26-28) Says writer Jonathan Kirsch: “The biblical Moses is seldom humble and never mild, and his conduct cannot always be regarded as righteous. At certain terrifying moments, . . . Moses rears up as arrogant, bloodthirsty, and cruel.” Such criticism is painfully narrow. It overlooks the fact that Moses' actions were driven, not by cruelty, but by a passionate love of justice and an intolerance of wickedness. In these days when it is fashionable to tolerate immoral life-styles, Moses stands as a reminder of the need to have uncompromising standards of morality.—Psalm 97:10.

The Legacy of Moses' Writings

Moses left behind an astonishing collection of writings. These include poetry (Job, Psalm 90), historic prose (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers), genealogies (Genesis, chapters 5, 11, 19, 22, 25), and a remarkable body of legislation called the Law of Moses (Exodus, chapters 20-40; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy). This divinely inspired Law contained concepts, laws, and principles of government that were centuries ahead of their time.

In lands where the head of State also serves as the head of the Church, the result is often intolerance, religious oppression, and the abuse of power. The Law of Moses included the principle of separation of Church and State. The king was not allowed to take on priestly duties.—2 Chronicles 26:16-18.

The Law of Moses also contained concepts of hygiene and disease control, such as the quarantining of sick people and the disposal of human waste, that harmonize with current science. (Leviticus 13:1-59; 14:38, 46; Deuteronomy 23:13) This is remarkable considering that much of Egyptian medicine in Moses' day was a dangerous mixture of quackery and superstition. In developing lands today, millions could be spared from disease and death if the standards of hygiene taught by Moses were practiced.

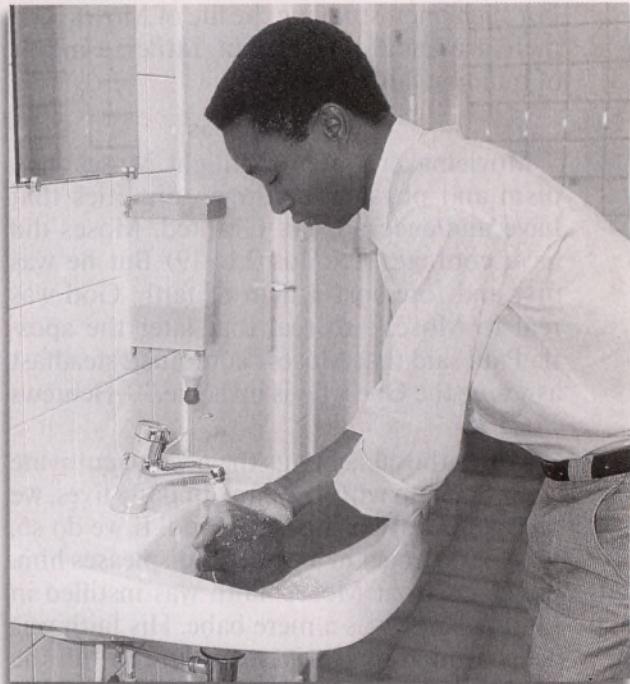
◀ Only Jesus was a prophet
who was truly like Moses

Christians are not obliged to follow the Mosaic Law. (Colossians 2:13, 14) But studying it is still of great value. That Law exhorted Israel to give God exclusive devotion and to shun idolatry. (Exodus 20:4; Deuteronomy 5:9) It commanded children to honor their parents. (Exodus 20:12) The Law also condemned murder, adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting. (Exodus 20:13-17) Those principles are cherished by Christians today.

A Prophet Like Moses

We live in distressing times. Mankind certainly needs a leader like Moses—someone who has not only power and authority but also integrity, courage, compassion, and a heartfelt love of justice. When Moses died, the Israelites must have wondered, ‘Will the world see the likes of him again?’ Moses himself answered that question.

Moses’ writings explain how sickness and death came about in the first place and why God permitted wickedness to contin-



Principles of hygiene taught in the Mosaic Law can help prevent disease

Moses—Fact Versus Fiction

Film portrayals of Moses have perpetuated a number of myths and inaccuracies. Here are just a few:

Myth: Moses did not know of his Jewish heritage.

Fact: Moses was nursed by his Jewish mother, evidently for a few years. Acts 7:23-25 indicates that Moses viewed the Jewish slaves as “his brothers.”

Myth: Moses was a rival for the throne of Egypt.

Fact: The Bible makes no such claim. *Daily Bible Illustrations*, by John Kitto, says that there is no reason to believe that Moses “by this adoption became the heir of the crown. . . . It does not appear that there was any probable want of male heirs to the crown.”

Myth: Moses returned to Egypt to face his enemy.

Fact: The Bible says that all his enemies were dead when he returned.—Exodus 4:19.

Myth: God first spoke the Ten Commandments after Moses ascended Mount Sinai.

Fact: The Ten Commandments were spoken by God, through his angel, to the entire nation of Israel. After that, the frightened Israelites asked Moses to go up and speak for them.—Exodus 19:20-20:19; 24:12-14; Acts 7:53; Hebrews 12:18, 19.

Myth: Pharaoh survived the destruction of his army at the Red Sea.

Fact: “Pharaoh and his military force” perished at the Red Sea.—Exodus 14:28; Psalm 136:15.

ue. (Genesis 3:1-19; Job, chapters 1, 2) At Genesis 3:15, the very first divine prophecy is recorded—a promise that evil will eventually be crushed! How? The prophecy indicated that an individual would be born through whom salvation would come. This promise gave birth to the hope that a Messiah would arise and deliver mankind. But who would the Messiah be? Moses helps us to identify him conclusively.

Toward the end of his life, Moses uttered these portentous words: “A prophet from your own midst, from your brothers, like me, is what Jehovah your God will raise up for you—to him you people should listen.” (Deuteronomy 18:15) The apostle Peter later applied those words directly to Jesus.—Acts 3:20-26.

Most Jewish commentators vigorously deny any comparison of Moses with Jesus. They argue that the words of this text apply to any true prophet who came after Moses. However, according to *Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures*, by the Jewish Publication Society, Deuteronomy 34:10 says: “Never again did there arise in Israel a prophet like Moses—whom the LORD singled out, face to face.”

Yes, many faithful prophets, such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, came after Moses. But none had the unique relationship with God that Moses enjoyed—speaking with him “face to face.” Moses’ promise of a prophet ‘like him’ must therefore apply to one individual—the Messiah! It is noteworthy that before the advent of Christianity—and religious persecution from false Christians—Jewish scholars viewed things similarly. Echoes of this can be seen in Jewish writings, such as the *Midrash Rabbah*, which describes Moses as the forerunner of the “latter Redeemer,” or Messiah.

That Jesus was like Moses in many ways cannot be denied. (See the box “Jesus—A Prophet Like Moses.”) Jesus has power and authority. (Matthew 28:19) Jesus is “mild-

Jesus —A Prophet Like Moses

Here are some of the ways in which Jesus proved to be like Moses:

▲ Moses and Jesus both escaped the wholesale slaughter of male infants as ordered by the ruler of their time.—Exodus 1:22; 2:1-10; Matthew 2:13-18.

▲ Moses was called out of Egypt with Jehovah’s “firstborn,” the nation of Israel. Jesus was called out of Egypt as God’s firstborn Son.—Exodus 4:22, 23; Hosea 11:1; Matthew 2:15, 19-21.

▲ Moses and Jesus both fasted for 40 days in wilderness locations.—Exodus 34:28; Matthew 4:1, 2.

▲ Moses and Jesus were exceptionally meek and humble.—Numbers 12:3; Matthew 11:28-30.

▲ Moses and Jesus both performed miracles.—Exodus 14:21-31; Psalm 78:12-54; Matthew 11:5; Mark 5:38-43; Luke 7:11-15, 18-23.

▲ Moses and Jesus both served as mediators of covenants between God and His people.—Exodus 24:3-8; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Hebrews 8:10-13; 12:24.

tempered and lowly in heart.” (Matthew 11:29) Jesus hates lawlessness and injustice. (Hebrews 1:9) He can therefore give us the leadership we sorely need! It is he who will soon crush wickedness and bring the earth to the Paradise conditions that the Bible describes.*

* If you want to learn more about the Bible’s promise of an earthly paradise under Christ’s Kingdom, please contact Jehovah’s Witnesses. They will be happy to study the Bible with you free of charge.

Teaching Kristi to Love God

OUR daughter, Kristi, was born in 1977. Shortly thereafter, our doctor gave us devastating news: Kristi had been born with severely profound hearing loss and a mild form of cerebral palsy. Little did we know how much our lives would be affected.

A few months later, my husband Gary and I began attending special classes in the city of Melbourne, Australia, where we learned how to work with our daughter. We also visited the National Acoustic Laboratory in Melbourne. There ten-month-old Kristi was fitted with tiny hearing aids. She hated the devices, and since they had wires attached to them, she would pull them out as fast as we could put them back into her little ears! She also had to wear a harness to hold the batteries, which were quite heavy.

Because of the cerebral palsy, Kristi had difficulty learning to walk. That meant weekly sessions with a physical therapist. But by age three, Kristi began to walk by herself, although she had many falls. Physical therapy continued until she was five. Meanwhile, we moved to the nearby town of Benalla, where Gary ran his business.

Kristi's Education

A teacher for the deaf drew our attention to the special educational needs Kristi would have. That meant another move, this time to Bendigo, a city that had a school for the



*Kristi, at 14 months, with
"My Book of Bible Stories"*

deaf. Since I was pregnant with our second child, we delayed this move until Kristi was four years old and our new son, Scott, was five months old. At a hospital in Bendigo, weekly speech-therapy sessions commenced—treatment that would continue for the next ten years. Gary and I also began to learn sign language.

Our biggest concern was Kristi's spiritual education. You see, Gary and I are both Jehovah's Witnesses, and we were determined to raise Kristi "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) But how would we do so? The principal of the school Kristi attended observed: "Teaching Kristi about God will be the most difficult concept to teach. You cannot see God, so how will you explain him to her?" What a huge challenge we now faced! We soon learned that it would take a lot of time, study, and patience.

At first, we used pictures and diagrams, keeping our language as simple as possible. We took her to Christian meetings and in the preaching work, even though she had little understanding of what was going on. As Kristi became adept at sign language, a whole new world opened up for her! Even so, there were many words, phrases, and concepts in the Bible that were difficult to explain. One of her favorite books was *My Book of Bible Stories*,*

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

which was written especially for children. The colorful pictures—along with some diagrams that we made—proved invaluable. In time, a love of God began to grow in Kristi's heart.

Kristi's school principal kindly put us in touch with some other Witnesses who were raising deaf children. A big breakthrough occurred when they explained how the deaf can preach to hearing people. One way is by handing them a card containing a printed Scriptural message. So when Kristi was ready to share Bible truths with others, she could easily do so! She became an unbaptized publisher of the good news at age 14. In 1994 she was baptized at age 17.

Still, Kristi needed wholesome association, and it was difficult for her to develop friendships with hearing Witnesses. So Gary and I began holding sign-language classes for members of our congregation who were interested in working with deaf ones. Some who attended our classes later got jobs interpreting for the deaf. But more important, many who learned how to sign came to enjoy communicating with Kristi very much. Now Kristi was able to benefit more fully from our Christian meetings and assemblies. To this day, she takes an active part in them. Kristi is very grateful for the loving interest the brothers have taken in her.

Kristi presenting the good news using a printed card



One day Kristi expressed to us her desire to become a regular pioneer, or full-time evangelizer. Gary helped her to obtain a driver's license, and after working out other details, Kristi was appointed a regular pioneer in 1995. In 2000, she was also able to take up part-time employment at an elementary school. There she helps out with the education of deaf children.

Now Kristi, Gary, our son Scott, and I all share the joy of serving as regular pioneers. We are delighted to be able to spend time teaching people about our God, Jehovah!

'The Requests of Our Hearts'

Kristi's deafness is an ongoing challenge for all of us. Sometimes when Kristi engages in the Christian ministry, there is no one to interpret for her, no one with whom she can share her thoughts and feelings. She says: "It feels as if I am living in a country where everyone else speaks a different language." Even so, we have all learned to cope well with her situation.

We take comfort in the words of Psalm 37:4: "Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart." Kristi's cherished hope is to hear music and the sounds of nature and to speak to her loved ones audibly. I long for the day when Kristi

will be able to hear my voice. We have faith that these requests of our hearts will soon be granted us, just as the Bible promises.

—Isaiah 35:5.—Contributed.

Scott, Kristi, Gary, and Heather Forbes today





BERMUDA

Nonsuch Island

MY VISIT WITH AN “EXTINCT” BIRD

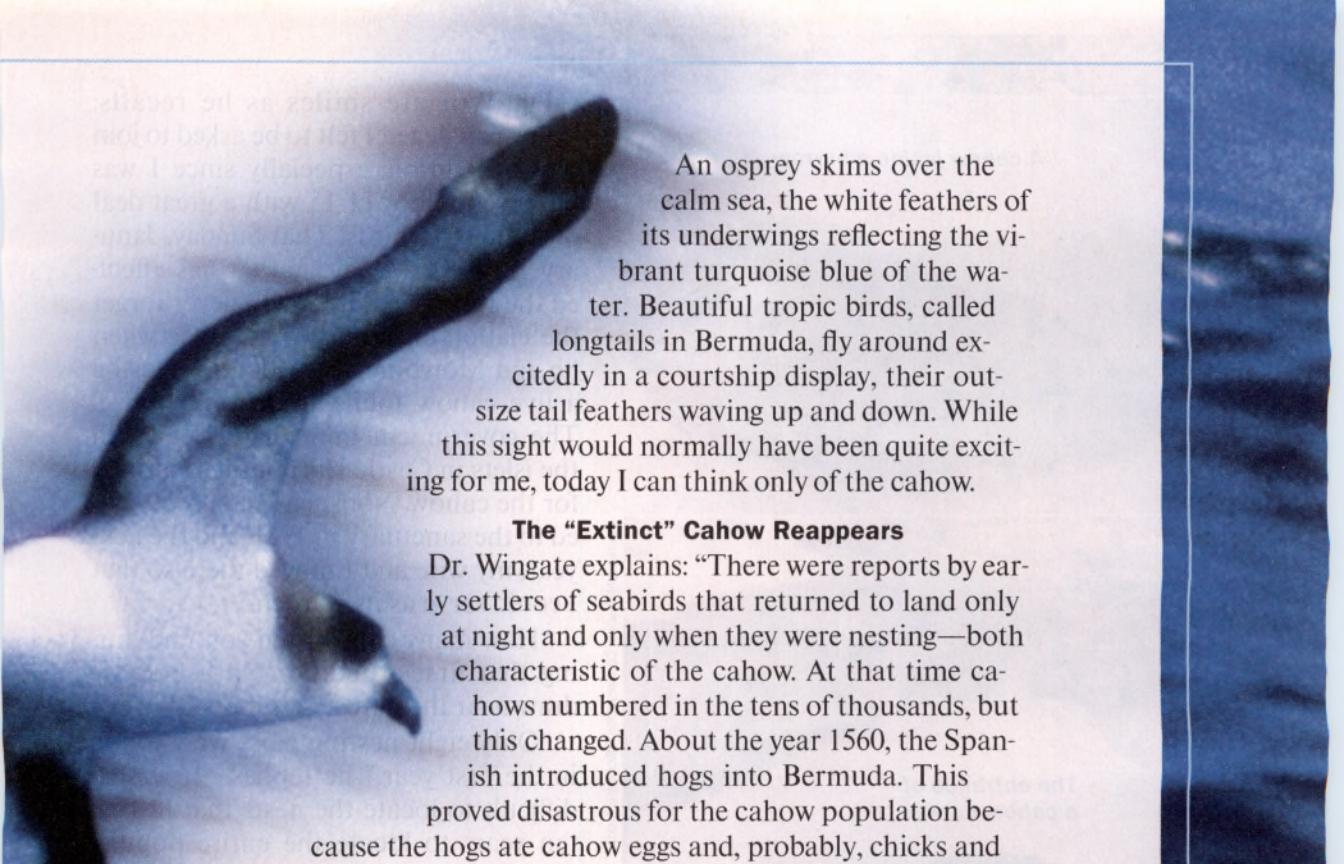
I HAVE always been fascinated by the variety and beauty of birds. While preparing for a visit to Bermuda, I came across a reference to a rare bird called the cahow. “The tiny surviving population of this species,” said one bird guidebook, are “confined to the Castle Harbour island group, the most remote part of Bermuda. Here they are under the strict surveillance and protection of a warden.”

My interest had been aroused! Determined to see this exotic bird for myself, I contacted Dr. David Wingate, Bermuda’s former conservation officer. He is now retired, but at the time he was also warden for the Castle Harbour island group. Dr. Wingate kindly allowed me to accompany him on a visit to the protected nesting area of the cahow.

A “Living Museum”

The Castle Harbour Nature Reserve lies near the main islands of Bermuda, which are situated in the Atlantic Ocean, about 570 miles east of North Carolina, U.S.A. Nonsuch Island is the largest of nine small islands that make up the reserve. Nonsuch is about 15 acres in size and is located at the eastern end of Bermuda. Under Dr. Wingate’s direction, the island was turned into a “living museum” for the eventual reestablishment of Bermuda’s remaining native plant and animal species.

The day is clear and beautiful as we head out in Dr. Wingate’s tiny powerboat from Nonsuch to a nearby islet.



An osprey skims over the calm sea, the white feathers of its underwings reflecting the vibrant turquoise blue of the water. Beautiful tropic birds, called longtails in Bermuda, fly around excitedly in a courtship display, their outside tail feathers waving up and down. While this sight would normally have been quite exciting for me, today I can think only of the cahow.

The "Extinct" Cahow Reappears

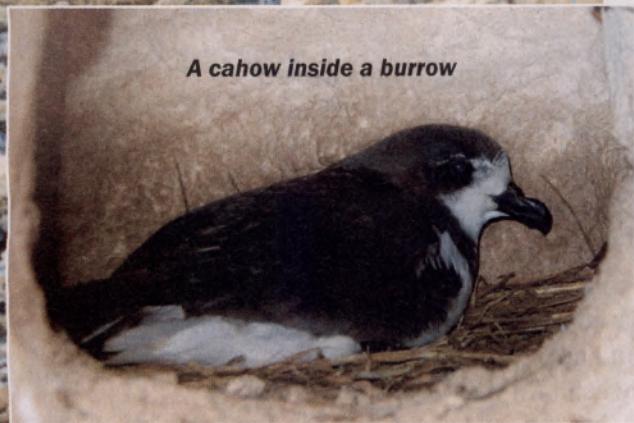
Dr. Wingate explains: "There were reports by early settlers of seabirds that returned to land only at night and only when they were nesting—both characteristic of the cahow. At that time cahows numbered in the tens of thousands, but this changed. About the year 1560, the Spanish introduced hogs into Bermuda. This proved disastrous for the cahow population because the hogs ate cahow eggs and, probably, chicks and even full-grown cahows. Cahows were also an important part of the settlers' diet. When rats were accidentally introduced into

Bermuda in 1614, many more cahows died. The rats would swim out to the tiny islands where the cahows nested and eat their eggs and chicks. So by 1630 the cahow had been reduced from having a population of many thousands to being thought of as completely extinct."

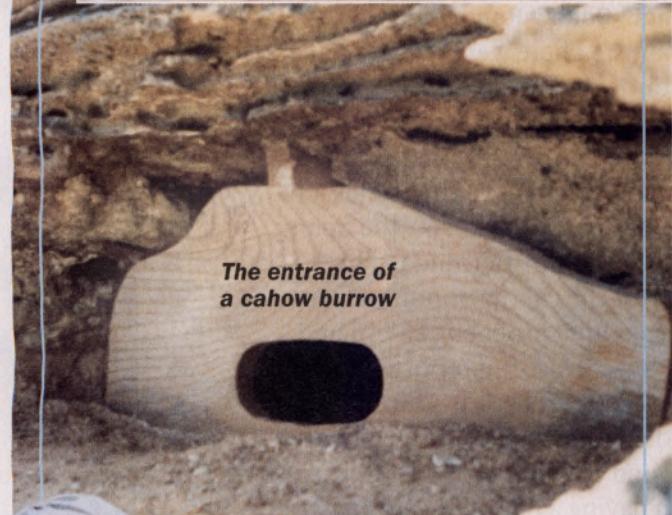
Over the drone of the boat's motor, I ask: "How were the cahows rediscovered?"

Dr. Wingate replies: "In 1906, Louis Mowbray, a naturalist, found a live but strange-looking seabird on an island in Castle Harbour. It was eventually identified as a cahow. Later, in 1935, a fledgling cahow was found that had struck a lighthouse and died. And in 1945 a full-grown cahow washed up on the beach at Cooper's Island, Bermuda. This was enough evidence to warrant an expedition to search for more specimens of this 'extinct' species. The expedition was led by Dr. Robert Cushman Murphy of the American Museum of Natural History and by Louis S. Mowbray, curator of the Bermuda Government Aquarium—son of the Louis Mowbray who found the cahow in 1906."

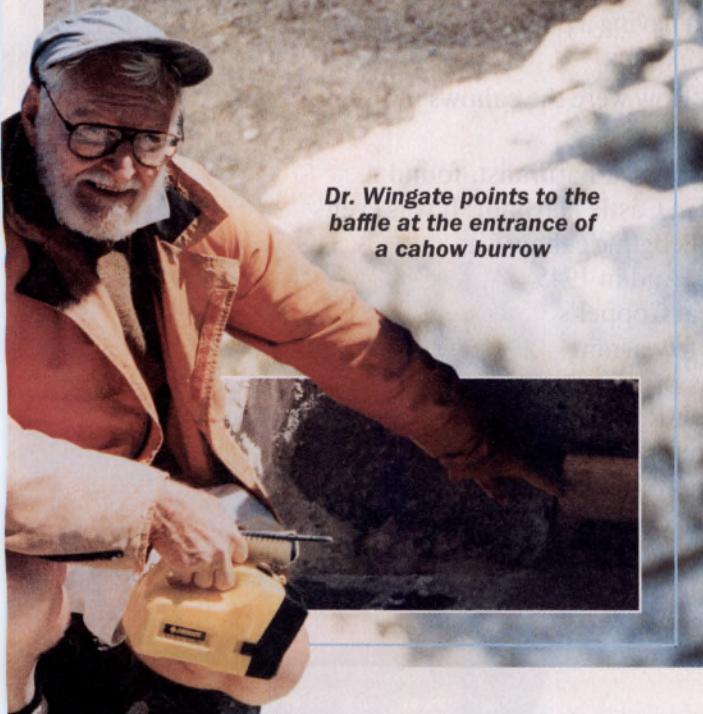
A cahow inside a burrow



The entrance of a cahow burrow



Dr. Wingate points to the baffle at the entrance of a cahow burrow



Dr. Wingate smiles as he recalls: "How privileged I felt to be asked to join that expedition, especially since I was but a schoolboy of 15 with a great deal of interest in birds! That Sunday, January 28, 1951, was a day that has affected the rest of my life. I will never forget the elation on Dr. Murphy's face when he and Mowbray succeeded in noosing a live cahow found in a deep crevice! The government immediately declared the islets in Castle Harbour a sanctuary for the cahow. Nonsuch Island was added to the sanctuary in 1961, and the next year, my wife and I moved there so that I could serve as its warden."

"How many cahows did you find during that first expedition?" I ask as we draw near the nature reserve.

"Only eight nesting pairs were found in the first year," he replies. "It was so difficult to locate the nests that it took ten years to locate the entire population, which at that time included 18 nesting pairs. After another 35 years of conservation, they had increased to a grand total of 52 pairs."

Help From Man

"Cahows nest in burrows 6 to 12 feet long, with a bend so that light does not reach the nest," continues Dr. Wingate. "To provide more nesting sites, we started making artificial burrows. These were made by excavating trenches and then roofing them over with concrete. The nest chamber at the end of the burrow has a removable lid. This enables us to check the nests to see if an egg has been laid or hatched or if we have a failed egg. When a failed egg is abandoned, we can remove it for examination and try to ascertain what went wrong. In the mid-1960's, DDT insecticide residue caused eggshell thinning

▲ Jeremy Madeiros, Conservation Officer, Bermuda

and resulting breakage. Now we are concerned that chemicals like PCB [polychlorinated biphenyl] may have the same effect. Although North America and Europe have banned PCBs, many developing countries have not."

There are additional challenges. Dr. Wingate observes: "There has been an ongoing battle for nesting sites between the cahows and the more aggressive tropic birds. A cahow may choose a nesting site behind a shallow depression, and then a tropic bird will take up residence right at the entrance! The rude intruder will destroy the cahow's egg or attack and kill the chick. Both species always return to their same nesting sites, so the problem continues year after year. To save the cahow, we began to place simple wooden baffles at the entrances of the cahow burrows. The baffles have an elliptical hole of just the right size to let the cahow in but exclude the slightly larger tropic bird. In this case, an eighth of an inch makes a life-and-death difference."

In the Reserve

Finally, we arrive at the little island. Between ocean swells we carefully step from the boat onto the jagged rocks. To reach the nests, we must climb over steep, sharp rock formations. One nest is only accessible by ladder. This may be routine for Dr. Wingate, but for me, it is unique and exhilarating!

Dr. Wingate checks around each site, reading the evidence. Are the pairs still visiting their nests? Are there footprints leading in and out of the burrows? Are there any failed eggs? We find one failed egg, but since the parents have not yet abandoned it, Dr. Wingate leaves the egg there. Often, cahows will continue to incubate a failed egg, refusing to give up. Dr. Wingate also makes an unexpected discovery—a chick where he had not even realized an egg had been laid! This find

outweighs the disappointment of the un-hatched egg.

That all such effort is worthwhile becomes evident when Dr. Wingate removes a lid from a burrow and I look down on a small, gray ball of fluff—a cahow chick. Now and then the chick moves slightly, being disturbed by the light. In other burrows, I peer down and see an adult incubating an egg.

Dr. Wingate has come to the rescue of many chicks in trouble. A tropic bird attacked one chick and broke the chick's bill. In desperation, Wingate glued the bill together. How surprised and pleased he was when the chick survived! Another time, he retrieved a frail chick that had been prematurely abandoned by its parents. He kept it in a box and raised it on a diet of shrimp, squid, cod-liver oil, and vitamins. Eventually, it was able to fly out to sea. So far, efforts to reestablish the cahow are slowly producing results. In fact, the cahow has been called a symbol of hope for conservationists around the world. Dr. Wingate's goal is for Nonsuch eventually to house 1,000 pairs of cahows. Whether his dream will materialize, however, remains to be seen.

My visit with the "extinct" cahow makes me think. Surely, if the Creator notices when a common sparrow falls to the earth, would he not notice when an entire species has been endangered? (Matthew 10:29) How comforting to know that the time will come when human society will no longer threaten the existence of any species on earth!—Isaiah 11:6-9.

—Contributed.

In Our Next Issue

- Hope—Where Can You Find It?
- Why Do They Kiss the Blarney Stone?
- What About Youth Dance Clubs?

IS IT POSSIBLE TO OVERCOME BAD HABITS?

AUTHOR Mark Twain once quipped: "Giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. I know because I've done it thousands of times." Twain's wistful remark no doubt strikes a responsive chord in many people. While they may fully appreciate that certain habits are morally wrong and even harmful, they also know that resisting and overcoming them is another story. Habits can become deeply rooted over the years and can be extremely resistant to efforts to change them. Trying to curb such cravings can be exhausting and even painful.

Dr. Anthony Daniels, a physician who works at a prison, observes that offenders often claim they are hopelessly enslaved to their obsessions and base desires. Once a man is addicted to something, they argue, "he is in the grip of a terrible compulsion, which he is powerless to resist." If such reasoning were true, we could hardly be held responsible for acting on our compulsions. But is it true that we are helpless victims of our inner drives and desires? Or can bad habits actually be overcome? To get an authoritative answer, let us see what the Bible says.

Desire Versus Action

The Bible makes it plain that God holds us responsible for our actions. (Romans 14:12) Also, he requires that we live up to his righteous standards. (1 Peter 1:15) As our Creator, he knows what is best for us, and his principles condemn many of the habits com-



mon to this world. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Galatians 5:19-21) However, he is also realistic and compassionate in what he expects from imperfect humans.—Psalm 78:38; 103:13, 14.

The psalmist thus wrote: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) Yes, Jehovah knows full well that "the inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up." (Genesis 8:21) Our genetic heritage, inbred weaknesses, and past experiences make it impossible for us to avoid all bad thoughts and desires. So, lovingly, Jehovah does not demand perfection of us.—Deuteronomy 10:12; 1 John 5:3.

However, this consideration on God's part does not absolve us of our responsibility to control bad desires. Though admitting that he himself had a struggle against bad desires, the apostle Paul did not give up. (Romans 7:21-24) "I pummel my body," he said, "and lead it as a slave." To what end? That "I myself should not become disapproved somehow." (1 Corinthians 9:27) Yes, self-control is essential in combating our wrong inclinations and habits and ultimately prevailing over them.

Change Is Possible

Behavioral scientists say that bad habits, like good ones, are learned and developed over time. If that is correct, then bad

habits can just as surely be *unlearned*! How? “Think about the benefits of breaking the old pattern,” say the authors of a book on stress management. Then, “make a list of how changing your behavior could improve your life.” Yes, focusing on the benefits of changing our negative behavior can motivate us to change.

Consider the apostle Paul’s admonition for us to be ‘made new in the force actuating our mind.’ (Ephesians 4:22, 23) That force is our dominant mental inclination. You transform that force by drawing closer to God and by cultivating an appreciation for his standards. Knowing that you are pleasing Jehovah helps spur you on to make needed changes.—Psalm 69:30-33; Proverbs 27:11; Colossians 1:9, 10.

Of course, ridding ourselves of bad habits that may have dominated our lives for years will be difficult. We should not underestimate the struggle ahead of us. There will certainly be setbacks and failures. But rest assured,

things usually get easier with time. The more you work at it, the more your new behavior will become a part of you.

One who loves God can also be assured of his help and blessing. “God is faithful,” promises Paul, “and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but . . . he will also make the way out in order for you to be able to endure it.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Soon now, Jehovah God will destroy this wicked system of things and all its base temptations, desires, and cravings. (2 Peter 3:9-13; 1 John 2:16, 17) All imperfect humans who survive this event can in time be completely and eternally healed of all afflictions—physical, mental, and emotional. “The former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart,” God promises. (Isaiah 65:17) Among these “former things” will no doubt be troublesome yearnings and desires. Is this not a grand reason to do our utmost today to resist and fight against bad habits?

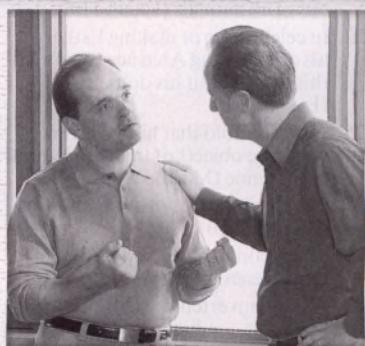
BREAKING BAD HABITS

1. Recognize and admit bad habits. Ask yourself, ‘Do I really benefit from this habit? Is it annoying to others? Does it affect my health, financial status, well-being, family, or peace of mind? How much better off would I be without it?’

2. Replace the bad habit with something positive. For example, do you spend too much time on the Internet, perhaps looking at unwholesome material? Then schedule that time for wholesome reading, study, or exercise.

3. Monitor your progress. Each day reflect for a few minutes on your progress. If you have a relapse, determine what circumstances led up to the problem.

4. Enlist the help of others. Tell friends and family that you are attempting to break this habit, and ask them to remind you when you seem about to fall back into it. Talk to others who have



successfully beaten the same habit.—Proverbs 11:14.

5. Be balanced and realistic. Do not expect immediate success. Some habits that took years to develop may die hard.

6. Pray to God. With God’s help you can break any bad habit.—Psalm 55:22; Luke 18:27.

Crossword Puzzle

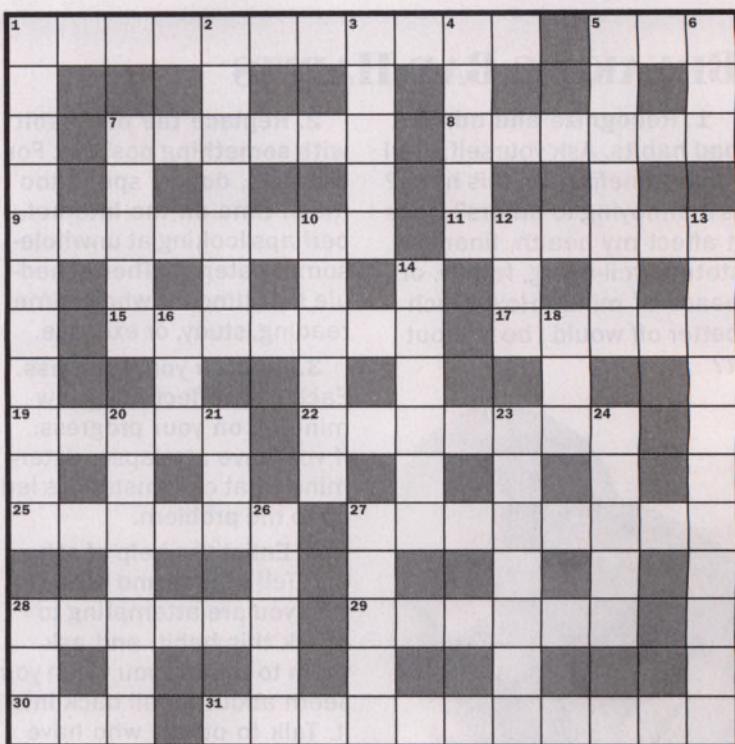
Clues Across

- Abraham purchased this from the sons of Heth for 400 silver shekels [2 words] (Genesis 23:16-20)
- By two signs involving this, Gideon obtained proof of divine support in fighting the Midianites (Judges 6:36-40)
- Reference to this type of structure occurs only in the Bible books of Chronicles, Nehemiah, Esther, and Daniel (Daniel 8:2)
- Achan disregarded God's command because he was attracted to "an official garment" from this area (Joshua 7:21)
- After creating a wife for Adam, God decreed that a married couple would be this [2 words] (Genesis 2:24)
- Ancestor of a family of Nethinim whose descendants returned to Judah from Babylonian captivity in 537 B.C.E. (Ezra 2:52)
- A violent storm (Acts 27:18)
- The practice of this is condemned in the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:10)
- Counted among the most dangerous of all animals (Isaiah 11:8)
- In celebration of making Esther his queen, King Ahasuerus granted this throughout his domain (Esther 2:18)
- Jesus foretold that his followers would be objects of this on account of his name (Matthew 10:22)
- The third warrior in a war chariot (2 Kings 9:25)
- The second-named son of Benjamin (Genesis 46:21)
- A small invertebrate (Mark 1:6)
- The father of Cozbi, the Midianite who was slain by Phinehas when Zimri brought her into Israel's camp for immoral relations (Numbers 25:15)
- The 31st chapter of Proverbs describes her [2 words] (Proverbs 31:10)

Clues Down

- Each of three sections of this prophet's book begins with the word "hear" [3 words]
- Although he was responsible for the murder of David's firstborn son, Amnon, David later pardoned him (2 Samuel 14:32, 33)

- Bloodsucking worm (Proverbs 30:15)*
 - An ancestor of Jesus' mother, Mary (Luke 3:28)
 - When David's wife Michal observed David displaying his joy for Jehovah's worship by doing this, "she began to despise him in her heart" (2 Samuel 6:14-16)
 - The greatest one of all human history takes place at Har-Magedon (Revelation 16:14, 16)
 - What Jehoiada the priest set up for collecting the money that would be used to repair Jehovah's house (2 Kings 12:9)
 - The 11th month of the Jewish sacred calendar (Zechariah 1:7)
 - A type of tree
 - Responsible (Matthew 5:21)
 - In Lystra, after the crowds attempted to sacrifice to Paul, they did this to him instead (Acts 14:19)
- * The scripture cited has a form of the word needed.
- Malchus lost one when Peter struck him with his sword (John 18:10)
 - The Devil tried to get Jesus to do one of worship to him (Matthew 4:9)
 - After Jehovah confused the Philistines by means of thunder, the Israelites pursued them and struck them down as far as this point (1 Samuel 7:11)
 - When Sarah became pregnant with Isaac, she was past this limit (Hebrews 11:11)
 - On seeing Jehovah's angel standing in the narrow way, Balaam's she-ass began to do this to herself against the wall (Numbers 22:25)
 - It causes fermentation
 - A descendant of Judah whose wisdom, though great, was not equal to Solomon's (1 Kings 4:31)
 - At Ezra's urging, this descendant of Zattu dismissed his foreign wife (Ezra 10:27)
 - A son of Abraham's brother Nahor by his wife Milcah (Genesis 22:21)





BE ON TIME!

TARDINESS is a chronic problem among chief executive officers," reports *USA Today*. "They arrive late for six in 10 meetings," it adds, citing a survey of 2,700 chief executive officers.

In the business world, tardiness is considered more than just a display of bad manners. A study of 81,000 job applicants concluded: "Lost hours through tardiness and unauthorized absences are a major source of lost revenue." Of course, it is not only in the business world that tardiness creates problems. A survey of secondary-school principals revealed that "students' tardiness was the primary and most frequently recurring discipline problem."

Our Creator intended for us to be time conscious. He put "the two great luminaries"—the sun and the moon—in place to help us measure time. (Genesis 1:14-16) Nowadays, modern timepieces allow us to measure our time in minutes and seconds. In spite of technology, though,

many of us still have problems being on time—for work, school, or other important appointments.

Is the problem necessarily a lack of time? Granted, the demands of work and family can be overwhelming. Nevertheless, a working mother named Wanda Rosseland says: "I stopped whining about not having enough time when I realized that we all have 24 hours a day. I've thought about it and decided that in our modern world, it's not that we have so little time, but that we have so many disruptions and distractions."

Consider also Renee,* a mother of five who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses. She recalls: "When my children were small, getting them ready for school and Christian meetings was a challenge. Still, I had no problem being on time. But now that they're all grown, I've developed the bad habit of being late." Do you also have this bad habit? If so, it is possible to change! Here are some things you can do.

● **THINK OF THE CONSEQUENCES.** Chronic lateness may seem like a little thing. But consider the Bible's words: "Dead flies are what cause the oil of the ointment maker to stink, to bubble forth. So a little foolishness does to

* Some of the names have been changed.

Being chronically late can make a bad impression on employers and shows a lack of consideration for others



one who is precious for wisdom and glory.” (Ecclesiastes 10:1) Yes, just “a little foolishness” in the form of a lack of consideration for others can tarnish your reputation with a teacher or an employer.

While taking some courses at a local college, a woman named Marie noticed that some of her classmates “were quite casual about time,” often arriving late for class. “But it wasn’t long before they had to change,” she recalls. “Two of the professors were sticklers for time. So if any students were just a few minutes late, they were marked absent. And so many absences made a failing grade.”

Crossword Solutions

B	U	R	I	A	L	P	L	A	C	E	D	E	W	V	I	F	E
O	O	O	B	R	A	A	M	N	E	S	T	Y	U	O	O	O	
O	O	N	E	F	L	E	S	H	M	E	H	I	D	A	C	C	
F	F	S	O	H	S	L	N	C	M	T	E	M	P	E	S	T	
K	H	A	A	C	A	C	C	C	M	T	E	M	P	E	S	T	
O	O	C	A	S	T	L	E	S	H	I	N	A	R	O	O	O	
O	O	B	E	O	A	A	A	A	O	C	A	S	T	L	E	O	
B	B	U	R	I	A	L	P	L	A	C	E	D	E	W	V	I	F

Chronic lateness can also tarnish your reputation with friends and peers. A middle-aged man named Joseph recalls a fellow Christian he knew decades ago. Although this man was respected for his abilities as a teacher, he had an embarrassing flaw. “He was always late,” recalls Joseph. “I mean late for *everything!* And he never seemed to be concerned about it. People joked about his lateness.” Have people begun to refer to you as the person who is always late? If so, they could easily overlook your good qualities.

● **CONSIDER OTHERS.** Tardiness is rude and distracting to others. And it can give the impression that you have a superior attitude. Explaining why so many business executives tend to be tardy for meetings, one businessman admitted: “Most of us are just arrogant.” In contrast, Christians treat others as superior to themselves. (Philippians 2:3) They also apply the Golden Rule and treat others as they like to be treated. (Matthew 7:12) Does it not irritate you when you have to wait for others? Then don’t make others wait for you.

● **LEARN TIME-MANAGEMENT SKILLS.** Do you procrastinate and rush around at the last minute? Do you overschedule yourself, trying to do too many things in too short a period of time? The principle at Ecclesiastes 3:1 can prove helpful: “For everything there is an appointed time.” Having “an appointed time” for things allows you to do them in an orderly manner.

First, list all the things you need to do. Next, follow the principle at Philippians 1:10: "Make sure of the more important things." Yes, *prioritize*. What absolutely has to be done? What are some things that can safely be put off for later? Finally, figure out how much time you need to get things done and when you can do them. Be realistic, and avoid scheduling too much in too little time.

A woman named Dorothy credits her parents with teaching her to be punctual. She relates: "If we had to be at a Christian meeting by 7:30 p.m., my mom started getting us ready an hour and 45 minutes before it. We had to allow time for eating supper, washing the dishes, dressing, and driving to the meeting place. It just became a normal part of our lives to be on time." Sometimes it helps to factor in time for the unexpected. Dorothy recalls: "Recently I had to pick up a few people for a meeting. On the way I had a flat tire. I had it fixed and was still on time to pick

them up. You see, I always allow time for car trouble or heavy traffic."

● **GET SUGGESTIONS FROM OTHERS.** The Bible says at Proverbs 27:17: "By iron, iron itself is sharpened. So one man sharpens the face of another." In harmony with that principle, talk to others whose circumstances are similar to yours—but who manage to be on time for things. Often they will have a number of useful suggestions.

Renee, quoted earlier, is determined to change her tardy behavior. She says: "I have recently resolved to do better. Although it hasn't been easy, I am making some progress." So can you. With the right mind-set and with effort, you can learn to be on time!



Good personal organization can help you to avoid wasting time

The Island That Appeared and Disappeared

By *Awake!*
writer
in Italy

ON June 28, 1831, a violent earthquake hit the west coast of the Mediterranean island of Sicily. At sea, one mariner felt the shock and thought his vessel had struck a sandbank.

For days afterward, the waters off the coast of Sicily continued to boil. Dead fish floated on the surface. The air stank of sulfur. Pumice stones washed up on the beach.

On July 10, Giovanni Corrao, captain of the Neapolitan brigantine *Teresina*, was sailing in the Mediterranean when he saw a sight he could not believe—a huge column of water and smoke that roared to 60 feet

above sea level. "A great noise like thunder" was also heard.

Ferdinand II of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies ordered the warship *Etna* to investigate matters. News of these occurrences also reached Malta, then under British rule. Not to be outdone, Sir Henry Hotham, British vice admiral on the island, likewise dispatched ships "to determine the exact position on the charts, and to make every other observation on the nature of the phenomenon."

Thus began a controversy that continues to this very day.



An Island Is Born

By July 19, 1831, in a region between Sicily and the coast of Africa, a new island could be seen—spawned by the eruption of an underwater volcano. Charles Swinburne, commander of the British sloop *Rapid*, was rounding the western tip of Sicily when he saw a high, irregular column of very white smoke or steam. Swinburne steered straight for it. As night fell, brilliant flashes mingled with the smoke, which remained clearly visible even by moonlight. Eruptions of lurid fire arose in its midst. At daybreak, when the smoke cleared a bit, he could see “a small hillock of a dark colour a few feet above the sea.”

Within a month the island stood some 200 feet out of the water and had a circumference of about two and a half miles. “This event has naturally excited the strongest sensation in these islands,” reported the *Malta Government Gazette*, “and many persons have already repaired to the scene of action.” Among them was Professor Friedrich Hoffmann, a Prussian geologist who happened to be doing research in Sicily. Hoffmann came to within a mere half mile of the island and was able to see it “with the greatest clarity.” Wary of possible danger, however, Hoffmann refused to disembark.

Less cautious was Captain Humphrey Senhouse, who on August 2, it was reported, landed on the island and planted the British Union Jack there. He named the island Graham Island, in honor of Sir James Graham, first lord of the Admiralty.

Catania University in Sicily entrusted the study of the island to Carlo Gemellaro, professor of natural history. He named it Ferdinandea, after Ferdinand II. Unimpressed by the news of the flag already flying on it, Ferdinand formally declared the island to be part of his kingdom, even though it lay outside the territorial waters of Sicily.

Last on the scene were the French. Geologist Constant Prévost named the island Julia, as it had appeared during the month of July.

He too raised his country’s flag over the isle. The purpose of this gesture, he wrote, was “to inform all who will follow that France misses no opportunity to show her interest in scientific matters.”

Disputes over ownership of the island escalated. According to a recent article in the London *Times*, Britain, Italy, and France came to “the brink of conflict” over this speck of land.

The Demise of the Island

The controversy over the island—variously called Julia, Ferdinandea, or Graham* to this very day—proved to be short-lived. “The island is shrinking day by day,” wrote Hoffmann after a visit in September, “and if this destruction, of which we were witnesses, proceeds . . . , the storms of the coming winter will suffice to demolish [it] within a few months.”

By December the island had collapsed on itself and was reduced to a hazardous reef a few feet below sea level. “All that remained of Julia Island,” wrote Italian volcanologist Giuseppe Mercalli, “were the many names imposed upon it by travelers of various nations who had the fortune to witness the spectacle of its formation and disappearance.”

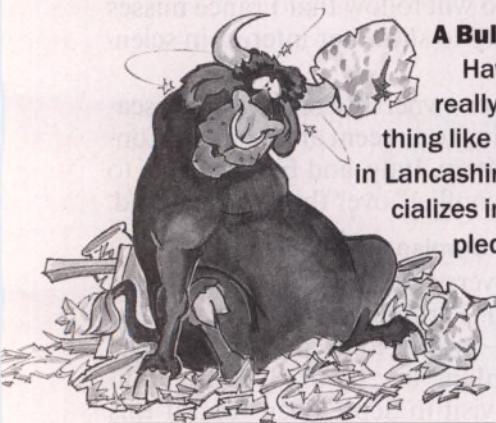
Rising Again?

The end of the story? Hardly! The area where the island once stood is still geologically active. According to Sicilian historian Salvatore Mazzarella, today it is “as strategically important as it was in the 19th century.” Some geologists believe that the island will rise again. Tensions regarding who might own the yet-to-be-resurrected isle are already mounting.

The tale of the island that appeared—and disappeared—has thus become another sad page in the story of human rulership. Italian journalist Filippo D’Arpa puts it well when he calls this tale “a metaphor on the ridiculousness of power.”

* At least four other names were proposed for the island—Corrao, Hotham, Nerita, and Sciacca.

Watching the World



A Bull in a China Shop

Have you ever wondered what would happen if the proverbial bull really did get inside a china shop? Well, BBC News reports that something like that actually took place. A bull escaped from an animal auction in Lancashire, England, and then ran into an antique store. "The store specializes in old china and, as expected, several valuable pieces were trampled," says one newspaper that reported the story. After consulting with the owner of the bull and taking into consideration the risks involved in trying to capture the animal, the authorities decided that it would be best to destroy the bull. So police cordoned off the area and shot the trapped bull in the store.

Mobile-Phone Spying

Mobile phones with built-in cameras are putting confidential business matters at risk, reports the newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. Though the cameras were once thought to be just another gadget to promote sales, the digital pictures taken by this new generation of cellular phones are greatly improved in resolution and are considered a growing problem by the security officers of many companies. Not only are the phone cameras inconspicuous but unlike conventional cameras, they also allow for the instant transmittal of a picture, making them the perfect tool for industrial espionage. Even if the intruder is intercepted, the damage has already been done. For these reasons, a number of companies have already banned the use of mobile phones with

built-in cameras in security-sensitive areas, such as design departments and places where new models of products are tested.

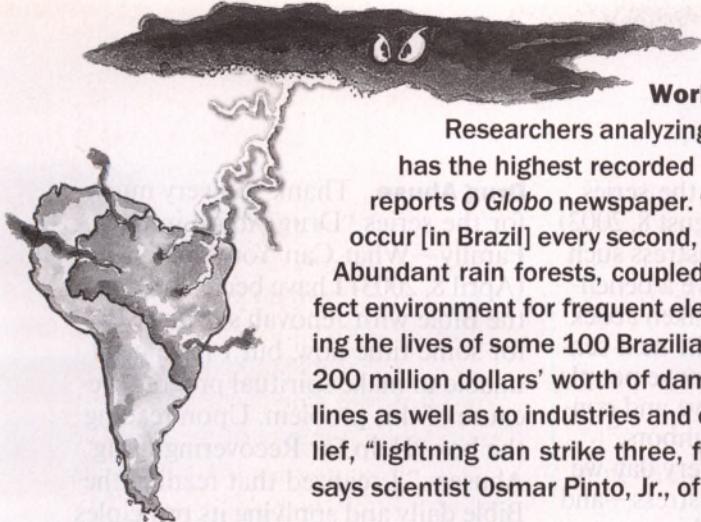
Tragic Toll of Traffic Accidents

"Traffic accidents claim thousands more lives each year than violent crime," reports the Spanish newspaper *El País*. The tragic annual road toll in Europe stands at 55,000 deaths and 3.5 million injuries. In Spain people aged 15 to 29 account for 35 percent of all road deaths, making traffic accidents the principal cause of death for this group. "This is the most serious public health problem there is," says Jeanne Picard Mahaut, spokesperson for La Ligue, a nongovernmental organization dedicated to improving road safety. "If you don't believe me," she adds, "tell that to the doctors who have to deal with

emergency cases every weekend." Among other measures, La Ligue and two other European groups call for factory installation of speed limiters in vehicles and for the fitting of cars with a 'black box' that would reveal the possible cause of an accident.

Bad Year for Alpine Glaciers

The torrid summer of 2003 was "the worst season in living memory" for alpine glaciers, said the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*. As summers have become warmer and average temperatures have risen, accumulated snow and ice on the mountains of northern Italy have been melting at "an unprecedented rate." Among the surprises that recently emerged from the melting ice was a 7,300-pound Austrian-made cannon, found at an altitude of 10,400 feet above sea level. The piece was deployed to



World Leader in Lightning Strikes

Researchers analyzing satellite data have discovered that "Brazil has the highest recorded incidence of lightning strikes in the world," reports *O Globo* newspaper. "Between two and three electric discharges occur [in Brazil] every second, a total of 70 million each year." The cause? Abundant rain forests, coupled with a hot climate. These create the perfect environment for frequent electrical thunderstorms. In addition to claiming the lives of some 100 Brazilians annually, lightning causes an estimated 200 million dollars' worth of damage to telephone and power transmission lines as well as to industries and other facilities. And, contrary to popular belief, "lightning can strike three, five, or even ten times in the same place," says scientist Osmar Pinto, Jr., of the National Institute for Space Research.

attack Italian positions during the first world war. "Finds like this have become increasingly frequent over the last 20 years," the article states. "The warmer summers have turned our glaciers into freezers with the doors left open."

South Korea's Suicide Problem

Suicides in South Korea have steadily been rising each year since 1999, reports *The Korea Times*. "In recent months," the paper says, "tragic stories of people taking their own lives have been reported almost every day, mainly brought forward by economic difficulties, such as credit card debts, but also through individual despair. According to statistics by the National Police Agency, a total of 13,055 people committed suicide [in 2002], a 6.3 percent rise compared to 12,277 the year before. This amounts to 36 people killing themselves per day and 1.5 people per hour." But some-

thing is even more alarming. Says the *Times*: "Despairing parents are choosing to take their children's lives along with theirs." One example was that of a 37-year-old woman who committed suicide after finding out that her husband had lost the equivalent of \$140,000 (U.S.) in stock trading. Both of her children—a son 14 years old and a daughter 12—were also found dead. "Psychologists say that an increasing number of people are being driven to commit suicide as society is failing to give them any hope to overcome their difficulties," the article concludes.

Travelers Susceptible to Ailments

"Worldwide, more than one in nine travellers develops respiratory ailments," says *The Medical Post* of Canada. The finding was the result of a study by GeoSentinel—a partnership of the International Society of Travel Medi-

cine and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It tracks health information through a communication and data collection network of 25 travel-medicine clinics worldwide. Between January 1997 and December 2002, there were 18,817 travelers who visited its clinics, and 2,173 were diagnosed with ailments that ranged from sore throat and ear and sinus infection to pneumonia, bronchitis, and mycobacterial infection. Travelers visiting a high-risk country are advised to make sure that their vaccinations are current and to consider a flu shot regardless of the time of the year. According to Dr. Isabelle Nuttall, an infectious-disease specialist at the World Health Organization, good hygiene is the first line of defense against a bacterial or viral ailment. She stated: "If there is one message we want to say over and over, it is, 'Wash your hands.'"

From Our Readers

Weather I am writing to thank you for the series "What's Happening to the Weather?" (August 8, 2003) When I read the statement, "For all the distress such catastrophic events cause, . . . they can have a beneficial effect," I was taken aback. But when I read the next sentence, "They can move people to demonstrate love and concern for their neighbors," I had to agree. Every day we face all kinds of distress—and not just catastrophic events. I want to keep in mind that whatever happens, there can be a beneficial side too.



S. T., Japan

Disaster Relief I have read the article "Something No Storm Could Wash Away." (August 8, 2003) The way that Jehovah's Witnesses faced the emergencies caused by natural disasters made me appreciate even more being a part of this organization. Thanks for publishing articles like these, which help us to manifest qualities that no storm can wash away.

M. P., Italy

I have personally lived through a number of catastrophes, including floods and earthquakes. I was in the door-to-door preaching work when an earthquake struck in 1989. A young 14-year-old boy who was accompanying me started to run in panic! I took him by the hand and prayed for him to gain his composure. Within seconds, power lines were down all around us. People were panic-stricken! My own home had a huge gash in the concrete floor. But that very afternoon we went back in the door-to-door service, helping others to cope. How this article brought back memories!

B. S., United States

Thank you very much for publishing such encouraging articles as "Something No Storm Could Wash Away." I cried as I read it. For a certainty, no storm can wash away the love we have for our fellow Christians and the unselfish love we have for our neighbors.

I. A., Japan

Drug Abuse Thank you very much for the series "Drug Abuse in the Family—What Can You Do?" (April 8, 2003) I have been studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses for some time now, but I have been unable to make spiritual progress because of this problem. Upon reading the box "Help for Recovering Drug Abusers," I realized that reading the Bible daily and applying its principles will help me in my efforts to recover. Also, knowing that God really cares about me has made a difference.

R.S.A., Brazil

Stressed Children I wish to express my deep appreciation for the series "Children—Are They Growing Up Too Fast?" (April 22, 2003) It was just what I was looking for. As a single mother and full-time evangelizer, I have a very demanding schedule. I often wonder, 'Am I a good mother? Am I being excessively demanding of my daughter?' It is comforting to know where I can improve. I want to enjoy my daughter's childhood now, and I want her to enjoy it too. Although I find all your articles upbuilding, articles like this are very encouraging to me.

M.D.E., Mexico

A Child Seeks God I am 11 years old. I read the article "I Want to Know More About Jehovah." (April 22, 2003) I was encouraged to learn that a girl only a year older than I am was making an effort to study about Jehovah. Now I want to go out and give a witness to others.

Y. T., Japan



The Beautiful Moldavite

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Raw
moldavites



Cut moldavite



Moldavite jewelry

What comes to your mind when you hear the word "moldavite"? In some languages the word may cause one to think of something that comes from the Central European river the Moldau, presently called the Vltava River. Or you might think of a rare, beautiful stone. Interestingly, the moldavite is both.

A moldavite is a green, glassy object. It is found in the southern part of the Czech Republic, in the area along the Vltava River. It is classified as a tektite—a term derived from the Greek word *tektos*, meaning "molten," or "molten." The *Encyclopædia Britannica* explains: "Tektites have been the subject of intense scientific scrutiny throughout much of the 20th century owing to their unknown and possibly extraterrestrial origins, but they are now recognized as having formed from the melting and rapid cooling of terrestrial rocks that have been vaporized by the high-energy impacts of large meteorites, comets, or asteroids upon the surface of the Earth."

Tektites have been found on every continent except Antarctica and South America. Because moldavites have such an exotic origin, some people might think they are charged with mysterious cosmic energy and possess healing powers. Nevertheless, moldavites are just stones—albeit stones that are most beautiful and impressive.

These rare stones have a deep-green color. Unlike other tektites, they can be cut into breathtaking gemstones. Visitors to the Czech Republic can admire moldavites in the mineralogical section of the National Museum in Prague.

The Bible reminds us: "To Jehovah belong the earth and that which fills it." (Psalm 24:1) This includes all the precious stones in the world. You might think of that should you ever have a chance to admire the beautiful moldavite!

That is what the book *Worship the Only True God* will help you to do. It is a publication designed to help students of the Bible to apply the teachings of God's Word in their lives. A Bible teacher in Nigeria, West Africa, observed: "What interested me the most were the thought-provoking questions provided in each chapter, which help the reader absorb what he is reading and meditate upon it."

PROBE INTO GOD'S WORD!

A woman who has been a Bible teacher for years noted: "This book is written so simply! It's a real joy to conduct studies in it."

