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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Has Your Life Been
Decided by Fate?

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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"It Wasn't My Time to Go"

The driver of a massive garbage truck lost control of his vehicle. The truck jumped the curb, hitting a couple and a 23-year-old man walking on the sidewalk. According to a New York City newspaper report, the couple was killed on the spot and the young man was knocked unconscious. When he woke up and saw what had happened, his first thought was: 'I can't believe this is happening. Please, God, let me get through this.' He said, "It wasn't my time to go."



Ken Murray/New York Daily News

YOU have likely heard similar stories. When a person narrowly escapes a disaster, people say, 'It wasn't his time,' but when someone dies in a freak accident, they conclude, 'His time has come' or 'It's the will of God.' Whether they attribute the outcome to fate, luck, destiny, or God, the rationale is basically the same. Many people believe that events in their life and the outcome are predetermined and that there is nothing they can do about it. And this type of reaction is by no means limited only to when death or accidents are involved; neither is it limited to this day and age.

The ancient Babylonians, for example, believed that human affairs are influenced by the stars and their movements. They therefore looked to the heavens for signs and omens to guide them. The Greeks and Romans worshipped goddesses of fate, whose powers to dispense good and bad fortunes at times seemed to overshadow

even the will of their chief gods, Zeus and Jupiter.

In the Orient, Hindus and Buddhists believe that what a person is presently going through is the result of what he did in a past life, and his actions in this life will determine what he will experience in the next life. Other religions—including many churches in Christendom—also give credence to such fatalistic beliefs by their doctrine of predestination.

It is not surprising, therefore, that even in our supposedly enlightened and objective age, many people still believe that their situation in life, the outcome of their daily affairs, and their ultimate destiny are all controlled by fate and that there is little they can do about it. Is that how you feel about life? Are life's events and incidents, successes and failures—even birth and death—really predetermined? Is your life ruled by fate? Let us see how the Bible can help us to answer these questions.

There Is a Time for Everything

"For everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens," says the Bible. The writer of those words, the ancient wise King Solomon, went on to say that there is a time to be born and a time to die, a time to build and a time to tear down, a time to love and a time to hate. Finally, he observed: "What advantage is there for the doer in what he is working hard at?"—Ecclesiastes 3:1-9.

UPON reading those words, some people conclude that the Bible does indeed teach that there is a predetermined time for everything; that is to say, they think that the Bible supports the belief in fate. Is that really so? Does the Bible support the notion that everything in life is controlled by fate? Since "all Scripture is inspired of God," what we read in one part of the Bible must harmonize with what we find in other parts

of it. Therefore, let us see what the rest of God's Word, the Bible, has to say on the matter.—2 Timothy 3:16.

Time and Unforeseen Occurrence

In the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon further wrote: "I returned to see under the sun that the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, nor do the wise also have the food, nor do the understanding ones also have the riches, nor do even those having knowledge have the favor." Why? He explained: "Because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all."—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Rather than suggesting that everything in life is determined by fate, Solomon was pointing out that humans cannot accurately predict the outcome of any endeavor "because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all." Often, something happens to a person simply because he is in the right place at the right time, or we might say, in the wrong place at the wrong time.



Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of the addresses below. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address.

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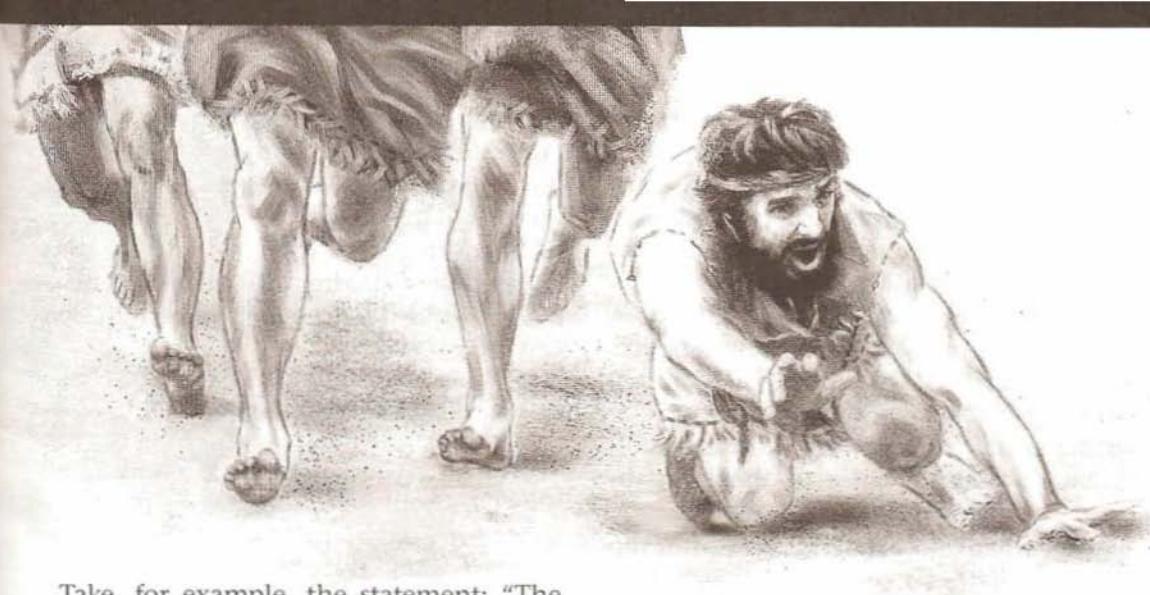
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* Audiocassettes also available.

** CD also available.

*** MP3 CD-ROM also available.

† Audio recordings also available at www.jw.org.



Take, for example, the statement: "The swift do not have the race." You may recall or may have read about the famous, though bizarre, 3000-meter women's race in the 1984 Olympics held in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A. Two runners, one representing Britain and the other representing the United States, were both hoping to win the gold medal. Halfway into the race, however, they collided on the track. One fell and was out of the race; the other was so disheartened that she finished seventh.

Was it fate that things turned out that way? Some may say so. But clearly it was the collision—an accident no one could have foreseen—that caused both of them to lose the race. Then, was it fate that they collide? Again, some may say so. Yet, commentators attributed the accident to the intense competition between two strong athletes running a close race, with each trying to dominate. As the Bible says, "time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all." No matter how well-prepared one may be, there are always some unexpected elements that may affect the outcome of an endeavor, and it has nothing to do with fate.

What, then, does the Bible mean when it says: "For everything there is an appointed

"The swift do not have the race."—Ecclesiastes 9:11

time"? Is there anything we can do that will affect the outcome of our life—our destiny?

The Best Time for Every Endeavor

Far from speaking about any individual's fate or describing the eventual outcome of one's life, the inspired Bible writer was speaking of God's purpose and how it would affect mankind. How do we know that? Basically, that is what the context tells us. After mentioning many things that appear to have "an appointed time," Solomon wrote: "I have seen the occupation that God has given to the sons of mankind in which to be occupied. Everything he has made pretty in its time."—Ecclesiastes 3:10, 11.

God has given mankind many occupations, or things to do—Solomon listed a number of them. God has also given us the free will to choose what we want to do. However, for every task, there is a time that is right, or favorable, producing the best result. Take, for instance, Solomon's

statement “a time to plant and a time to uproot what was planted,” found at Ecclesiastes 3:2. Farmers know that for every crop, there is a right time for planting it. What if a farmer ignores that simple fact and plants a crop at the wrong time or season? Should he blame it on fate if he does not get a good harvest, even though he has worked hard on it? Of course not! He simply did not plant the crop at the right time. The farmer could have done well had he followed the natural order of things established by the Creator.

Thus, what God has set down is, not the fate of individuals or the outcome of all events, but certain principles that govern the operation of human affairs in line with his purpose. For humans to enjoy the result of their endeavors, they must discern and work in harmony with God’s purpose and time. What is predetermined and unalterable is not the fate of individuals but what God has purposed to do. Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah declared: “My word that goes forth from my mouth . . . will not

return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.”—Isaiah 55:11.

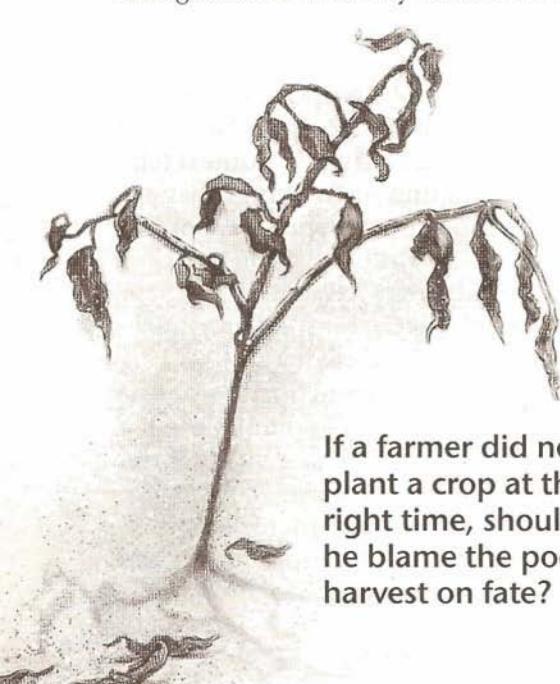
What, then, is God’s “word,” or stated purpose, regarding the earth and mankind’s future that “will have certain success”?

Understanding God’s Time

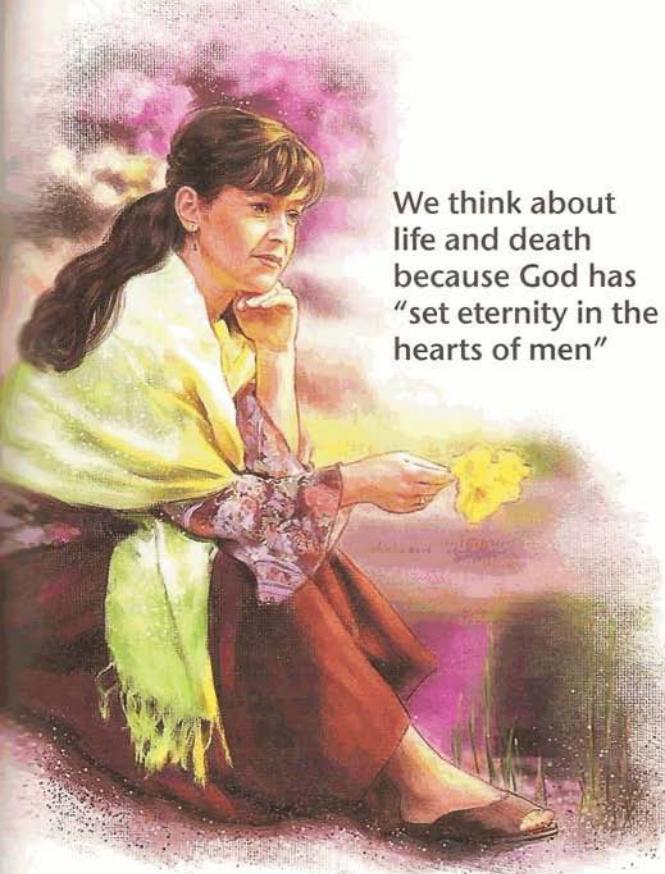
Solomon provided a clue. After saying, “Everything [God] has made pretty in its time,” he went on to say, “Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish.” *The NIV Study Bible* renders this verse: “He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.”—Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Much has been written on this verse. But the simple fact is that deep down in our heart, all of us at one point or another have wondered about the meaning of life and about our ultimate destiny. Throughout the ages, people have found it difficult to accept that life consists solely of toiling at the occupations at hand, only to have death end it all. We humans are unique among all living creatures in that we think not only about the here and now but also about life’s end and beyond. We even yearn for the possibility of living forever, eternally. Why? As the scripture explains, God has “set eternity in the hearts of men.”

To satisfy that yearning, people have grappled with the concept of life after death. Some conclude that something in us lives on after we die. Others believe that we will be reborn in endless reincarnations. Still others think that everything in life is fixed by fate or providence and that there is nothing we can do about it. Sadly, none of these explanations have been completely satisfac-



If a farmer did not plant a crop at the right time, should he blame the poor harvest on fate?



We think about life and death because God has “set eternity in the hearts of men”

tory. This is because by their own efforts, “mankind [will] never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish,” says the Bible.

This deep-seated conflict between the desire to know and the inability to find the answer has tormented thinkers and philosophers throughout the ages. However, since God has put that yearning or desire in our heart, is it not logical to look to him to provide what is needed to satisfy that desire? After all, the Bible says of Jehovah: “You are opening your hand and satisfying the desire of every living thing.” (Psalm 145:16) By turning to God’s Word, the Bible, we can find satisfying explanations about life and death and about God’s eternal purpose regarding the earth and the human family.—Ephesians 3:11.

A Time to Choose

“God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God’s image he created him; male and female he created them.”

—Genesis 1:27.

THOSE familiar words in the opening pages of the Bible set out one of the grandest things that God “has made pretty in its time”—bringing into existence a perfect human couple, Adam and Eve. (Ecclesiastes 3:11) As their Creator, Jehovah God said to them: “Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the

fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth.”—Genesis 1:28.

In that statement to the first human pair, God made known his purpose to them. They were to multiply and to care for the earth, turning it into a global paradise home for themselves and their offspring. There was no predetermined time for them to live and to die. Instead, God placed before them a marvelous prospect. By making the right choice and remaining in harmony with God, they could live in perfect peace and happiness forever.

They chose badly, and as a result, old age and death have been the lot of all humans. In fact, the patriarch Job acknowledged: "Man, born of woman, is short-lived and glutted with agitation." (Job 14:1) What went wrong?

"Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned," explains the Bible. (Romans 5:12) That "one man," of course, was Adam, who deliberately chose to violate God's simple yet clear command. (Genesis 2:17) By his choice, Adam forfeited his opportunity to live forever on a paradise earth. He also forfeited for his offspring a precious inheritance and passed on to them the curse of sin and death. It appeared that everything was lost—or was it?

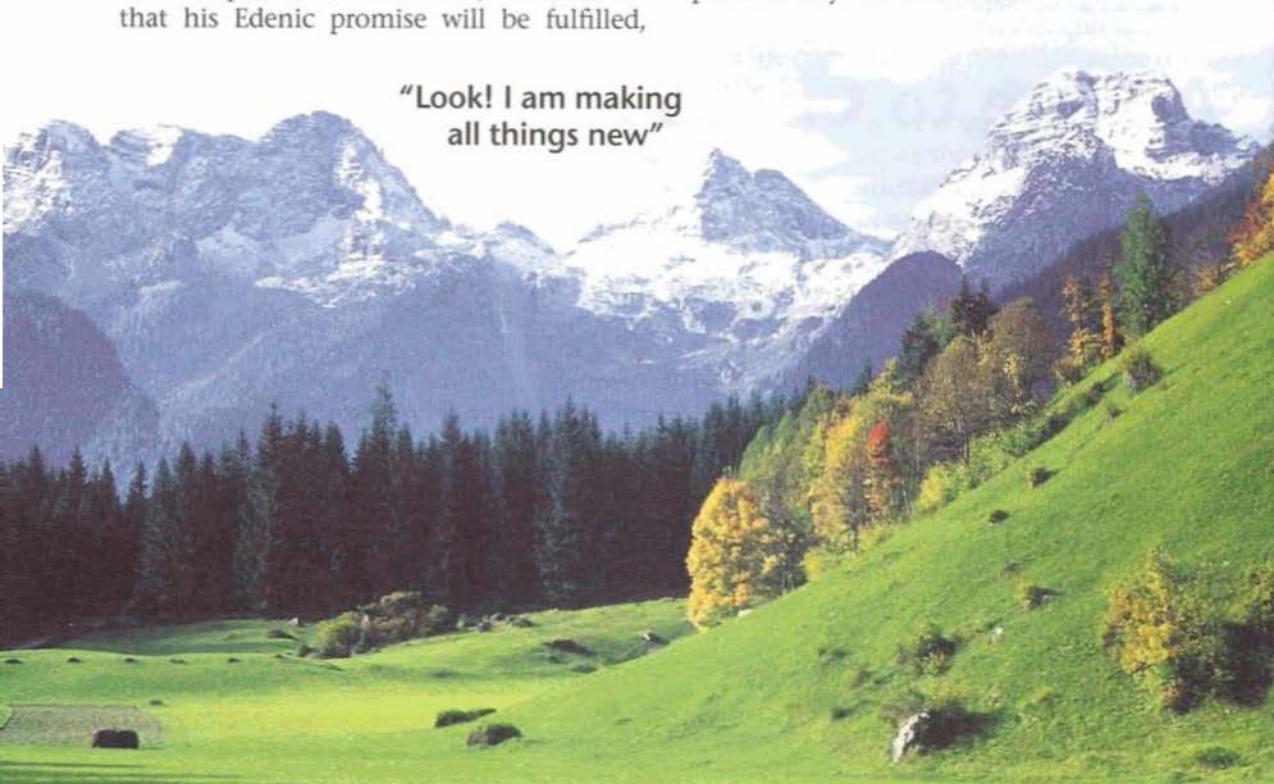
A Time for Renewal

Millenniums later, the psalmist was inspired to write: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) As assurance that his Edenic promise will be fulfilled,

God's Word beautifully describes what he will soon do: "He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." Then God himself says: "Look! I am making all things new."—Revelation 21:4, 5.

Since there is an appointed time for everything, the question that logically arises is, When will that time of renewal come, so that the wonderful promises by God will come true? The publishers of this magazine, Jehovah's Witnesses, have been endeavoring to call to people's attention that we are living in what the Bible calls "the last days" and that the time for God to take action to 'make all things new' is at hand. (2 Timothy 3:1) We urge you to examine the Bible and learn about the wonderful prospects that can be yours. We also urge you to accept this invitation: "Search for Jehovah, you people, while he may be found. Call to him while he proves to be near." (Isaiah 55:6) Rather than being decided by fate, your life and eternal prospects are in your own hands!

**"Look! I am making
all things new"**



Did You Know?

How did God view the practice of astrology among the Israelites?

Astrology, according to one dictionary, is "the study of the movements of the planets, sun, moon, and stars in the belief that these movements can have an influence on people's lives." As the earth orbits the sun each year, constellations of stars change position from the vantage point of the earth. Since ancient times, people observed these changes and attributed great meaning to them.

Astrology probably originated with the early Babylonians, who made the stars and constellations objects of worship. This form of worship came to be practiced by the Israelites when they deviated from true worship. By the time of Judean King Josiah, astrology was widely practiced in the land. God's view of matters was clear. Centuries earlier, the Mosaic Law had prohibited star worship on pain of death.—Deuteronomy 17:2-5.

Among the measures taken by King Josiah to reform the religious practices of the Judaeans was a ban on sacrifices "to the sun and to the moon and to the constellations of the zodiac and to all



BABYLONIAN STELA DEPICTING KING NAZIMARRATTASH WITH CONSTELLATIONS

the army of the heavens." The king took this step, says the Biblical account, because he wanted "to walk after Jehovah and to keep his commandments." (2 Kings 23:3-5) That set a pattern even for people today who want to worship God "with spirit and truth." —John 4:24.

Who were the "Sons of Zeus" mentioned at Acts 28:11?

The Bible book of Acts records that en route to Rome, the apostle Paul sailed from Malta to Puteoli on a boat that bore the figurehead "Sons of Zeus." (Acts 28:11) Such an insignia was popular among ancient sailors and travelers.

According to Greek and Roman mythology, Zeus (also known as Jupiter) and Leda had twin sons, Castor and Pollux. These "Sons of Zeus" were regarded, among other things, as skilled mariners with powers over the wind and waves. Thus, they came to be venerated as patron deities of sailors. Voyagers offered sacrifices to them and invoked their protection during storms. It was commonly believed that the twin deities manifested themselves and their protective powers in the form of St. Elmo's fire, an electric glow that sometimes appears on the masts of ships during a storm.

The worship of Castor and Pollux was widespread among the Greeks and Romans, and one ancient source makes particular mention of it in the district around Cyrene, North Africa. The boat mentioned in Acts was from nearby Alexandria, in Egypt.

DENARIUS COIN DEPICTING THE "SONS OF ZEUS," 114-113 B.C.E.



Myanmar's Cyclone Victims Found Relief

ON May 2, 2008, Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar with devastating force and quickly became international headline news.* Almost 140,000 people were reported dead or missing after a massive storm surge engulfed the Irrawaddy Delta region.

Amazingly, of the many Jehovah's Witnesses in the area, none were harmed. To a large degree, they survived because they sought refuge in their well-constructed Kingdom Halls. In one place, 20 Witnesses and 80 other villagers sat perched on the roof of the Kingdom Hall for nine hours as the floodwaters rose 15 feet. All of them survived. Sadly, 300 others in that village perished. In many villages, the Kingdom Hall was the only building left standing.

Two days after the cyclone, the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yangon dispatched a re-

lief team to the congregation in Bothingone, at the mouth of the delta. Traveling through devastated terrain, evading looters, and passing by decaying bodies of the dead, the team reached Bothingone with supplies of rice, dried noodles, water, and candles. They were the first relief team to reach the area. After giving the relief supplies to the local Witnesses, the team gave Bible talks to encourage them and left Bibles and Bible literature with them, since all their belongings had been swept away in the cyclone.

The attitude of the Witnesses affected by the cyclone was truly outstanding. One from a congregation in the

* The Encyclopaedia Britannica explains: "In the Atlantic and Caribbean regions, tropical cyclones are commonly called hurricanes, while in the western Pacific and China Sea the term typhoon is applied."



devastated Irrawaddy region said: “Everything we had is gone. All our houses are destroyed. All our crops are gone. All the drinking water is spoiled because of the flood. However, the brothers and sisters are not as worried as others are. They trust in Jehovah and his organization. We will follow any direction we receive whether we stay in the village or go somewhere else.”

A group of 30 Witnesses, who also lost everything, joyfully sang Kingdom songs on their ten-hour journey to the place where the relief teams had food, clothing, and shelter for them. Before reaching their destination, they heard that a circuit assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses was being held in a nearby town. They decided to attend the assembly first in order to receive spiritual food and enjoy Christian association.

Throughout the area hit by the cyclone, 35 houses of the Witnesses were destroyed, 125 of their homes were partially damaged, and 8 Kingdom Halls received minor damage. Thankfully, the branch facilities were not seriously affected.

Initially, the cyclone left the branch office completely cut off because large trees had fallen and blocked the roads nearby. Just a few hours after the storm subsided, more than 30 members of the branch staff joined in clearing the trees by hand. As they worked, people stood by simply amazed. Within a short time, a group of Witness women arrived with cold drinks and fresh fruit for the workers as well as for the neighbors, who could not believe what they were seeing. When a journalist observed what was happening, he asked, “Who are these people who are working so efficiently?” After being told, he remarked, “I wish more people showed such true community spirit as Jehovah’s Witnesses do!”

**The Bible says
that true faith is
accompanied by
good deeds**

The Witnesses quickly established two disaster relief committees in separate parts of the country to coordinate the relief work. Hundreds of volunteers worked on the relief teams. Within a few days, new houses were built for Witnesses who had lost their homes. When one of the relief teams arrived to build a new house for a Witness, her neighbors simply stared in disbelief. One neighbor said: “This Witness woman is having her house rebuilt by her church. None of my Buddhist friends came to help me. I should have become a Witness when she preached to me!”

When construction workers and the relief committee inspected a house in Thanlyn that had been all but destroyed, they were deeply moved when the Witness family told them: “Nothing has happened. Our house is fine. We can live here—no problem! Some Witnesses don’t even have a house. Go and help them!”

In one area of Yangon, some people tried to take shelter in one of the local churches. However, the church door had been locked and no one could get in. People got very upset and wanted to break down the church door. By contrast, Jehovah’s Witnesses helped many people find refuge in the Kingdom Halls during the cyclone. For example, at the Kingdom Hall in Dala, a Witness couple took in 20 distraught neighbors who had fled there for safety. In the morning, those families had no homes to return to, and they were hungry. The husband found someone selling rice and bought enough to feed all the people.

Some members of one family in Yangon are Jehovah’s Witnesses, while others attend various churches. After the cyclone, the whole family came to the meeting at the Kingdom Hall. Why? A family member explained: “Our church said they would come

and visit us after the storm, but they never came. Only the Witnesses came. You gave us rice and water. You are not the same as the other churches!" The non-Witness family members enjoyed the discussion of the *Watchtower* article "Jehovah Hears Our Cries for Help" and even offered many comments.

One lady who was studying the Bible with the Witnesses came to the congregation meeting the week after the cyclone. During the meeting, a letter from the branch office was read, explaining what had been done to help and relating experiences of those who had survived the cyclone. As the letter was

being read, the lady started to cry. She was so impressed and happy to hear that all the Witnesses were accounted for and well. Afterward, she was given some relief goods and a tent was put up for her next to her house. She said she felt that the Witnesses had really taken good care of her.

Jesus said: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) And the disciple James emphasized that true faith is accompanied by good deeds. (James 2:14-17) Jehovah's Witnesses take those words to heart and endeavor to show such love by helping and supporting those in need.

Five Reasons to Fear God and Not Man

THE young man was pleasantly surprised. What had just happened was totally unexpected. His discussion with two of Jehovah's Witnesses had been an eye-opener. The question of why God permits suffering had bothered him for years, but now it had been clearly answered from the Bible. He had no idea that the Bible contains so much valuable and heartwarming information.

A few minutes after the visitors left, his landlady stormed into his room and asked angrily, "Who were those people?"

Taken by surprise, the young man could offer no answer.

"I know who they are," she yelled, "and if



you receive them again, you can move out and look for a room elsewhere!"

She slammed the door and left.

Christ's True Followers Expect Opposition

What this young man experienced is not unusual. God's Word, the Bible, explains: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) True Christians generally are not popular and never have been. Why not? The apostle John told his fellow Christians: "We know we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." Satan the Devil is

also portrayed as “a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 John 5:19; 1 Peter 5:8) Fear of man is one of Satan’s most effective weapons.

Even Jesus Christ, who did so much good and committed no sin, was ridiculed and persecuted. He observed: “They hated me without cause.” (John 15:25) On the night before his death, he prepared his followers with these words: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also.”—John 15:18, 20.

On this account, many hesitated to take a stand for true worship. Of those who were looking for Jesus on one occasion, the Bible says: “No one, of course, would speak about him publicly because of the fear of the Jews.” (John 7:13; 12:42) The religious leaders of the day threatened to ostracize any who put faith in Christ. Thus, fear of man prevented many from becoming Christians.—Acts 5:13.

Later, after Christianity had been established, we read of “great persecution” against the congregation in Jerusalem. (Acts 8:1) In fact, throughout the Roman Empire, the Christians faced adversity. Prominent men in Rome told the apostle Paul: “As regards this sect it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.” (Acts 28:22) Yes, genuine Christians were widely opposed.

Even today, Satan still uses the fear of man as a weapon to hinder many from becoming Christ’s genuine followers. Sincere people who are studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses face opposition or ridicule in school, at work, in the neighborhood, or in social circles. They may fear losing respect, friends, or material support. In some rural areas, farmers fear that neighbors might refuse to help with the harvest or to protect their livestock. Despite such fears, however,

millions have resolved to trust in God and to live according to God’s Word, in imitation of Jesus Christ. Jehovah has blessed them for doing so.

Why Fear God, Not Man

The Bible urges us to fear God, not man. It says: “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 111:10) This fear is, not a morbid dread, but a healthy concern over displeasing our Life-Giver. It is a term that is closely related to love. Why, though, should we fear God and not man? Let us consider five reasons.

1 Jehovah is the Supreme One.

Jehovah is far more powerful than any human. By fearing God, we take a stand on the side of the Almighty, to whom “the nations are as a drop from a bucket.” (Isaiah 40:15) Because God is almighty, he has the power to defeat “any weapon whatever that will be formed against” those who are loyal to him. (Isaiah 54:17) And since he will determine who is worthy to receive everlasting life, we are wise to let nothing stop us from learning about him and doing his will.—Revelation 14:6, 7.

2 God will help and protect us.

“Trembling at men is what lays a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected,” says the Bible at Proverbs 29:25. The fear of man is a snare because it can cause us to shrink back from professing faith in God. God assures us of his saving power: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness.”—Isaiah 41:10.

3 God loves those who draw close to him.

The apostle Paul wrote these touching words: “I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor governments nor things now here nor things to

come nor powers nor height nor depth nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:37-39) If we learn to trust in and obey God, we can enjoy the unbreakable love of the Universal Sovereign. What a privilege!

4 We appreciate all that God has done for us. Jehovah is our Creator, the one who has made life possible. In addition, he has provided not just the necessities of life but also the things that make life enjoyable and interesting. Indeed, he is the Source of every good gift. (James 1:17) David, a faithful man who appreciated God's loving-kindness, wrote: "Many things you yourself have done, O Jehovah my God, even your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us . . . They have become more numerous than I can recount."—Psalm 40:5.

5 Some who oppose us may change. You can help those who oppose you by not compromising but holding fast to your fear of God and love for him. Consider Jesus' relatives. At first, they did not put faith in him, but they said: "He has gone out of his mind." (Mark 3:21; John 7:5) Later, after

Jesus' death and resurrection, many of them became believers. Jesus' half brothers James and Jude even shared in the writing of the Scriptures. There was also the fanatic persecutor Saul, who became the apostle Paul. Some who now cause us trouble may come to see that we have the truth from the Bible because of our courageous stand.—1 Timothy 1:13.

For example, Aberash, a woman in Africa, had



Because of her courage, eight of Aberash's relatives continue to enjoy personal Bible studies

been praying to find the truth. After she began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, she faced fierce opposition from her family members and religious leaders. Some of her relatives, who had also begun studying, gave in to the fear of man. But she implored God for strength and courage and was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The result? Eight of her relatives took courage, resumed their Bible studies, and are making good spiritual progress.

You Can Conquer the Fear of Man

To avoid falling prey to the fear of man, do all you can to strengthen your love for God. You can do this by studying the Bible and meditating on such texts as Hebrews 13:6, which says: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" Do not forget the reasons why fearing God rather than man is the right and wise thing to do.

Keep in mind, too, the many blessings that result from applying what you learn from the Bible. You can find satisfying answers to life's important questions. You can gain practical wisdom to deal with life's challenges. You can enjoy a wonderful hope despite today's perplexing conditions. And you can approach the almighty God at any time in prayer.

The apostle John wrote: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) Now is the time to stand firm and walk in the fear of God. Rather than caving in to the fear of man, you can choose to respond to God's exhortation: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me." (Proverbs 27:11) What a grand privilege that is!

Remember, no human can give you what God will give to those who fear him: "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."—Proverbs 22:4.

"I Well Know the Pains They Suffer"

Exodus 3:1-10

HOLY, holy, holy is Jehovah." (Isaiah 6:3) Those inspired words indicate that Jehovah God is clean and pure to the superlative degree. 'Does his holiness make him cold or aloof?' you may ask. 'Could such a holy God really care about me—a sinful, imperfect human?' Let us examine the reassuring words that God spoke to Moses, as recorded at Exodus 3:1-10.

While tending sheep one day, Moses came upon a most unusual sight—a thornbush was on fire but "was not consumed." (Verse 2) Intrigued, he approached to investigate. By means of an angel, Jehovah spoke to Moses from the midst of the fire: "Do not come near here. Draw your sandals from off your feet, because the place where you are standing is holy ground." (Verse 5) Just think—because the holy God was present representatively, the ground itself became holy!

The holy God had a reason for drawing Moses into conversation. God said: "Unquestionably I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their outcry as a result of those who drive them to work; because I well know the pains they suffer." (Verse 7) God was not blind to the misery of his people; nor was he deaf to the voice of their pleadings. Rather, their anguish became his own. Notice that God said: "I well know the pains they suffer." Regarding the words "I well know," one reference work notes: "The expression implies personal feeling, tenderness, and compassion."



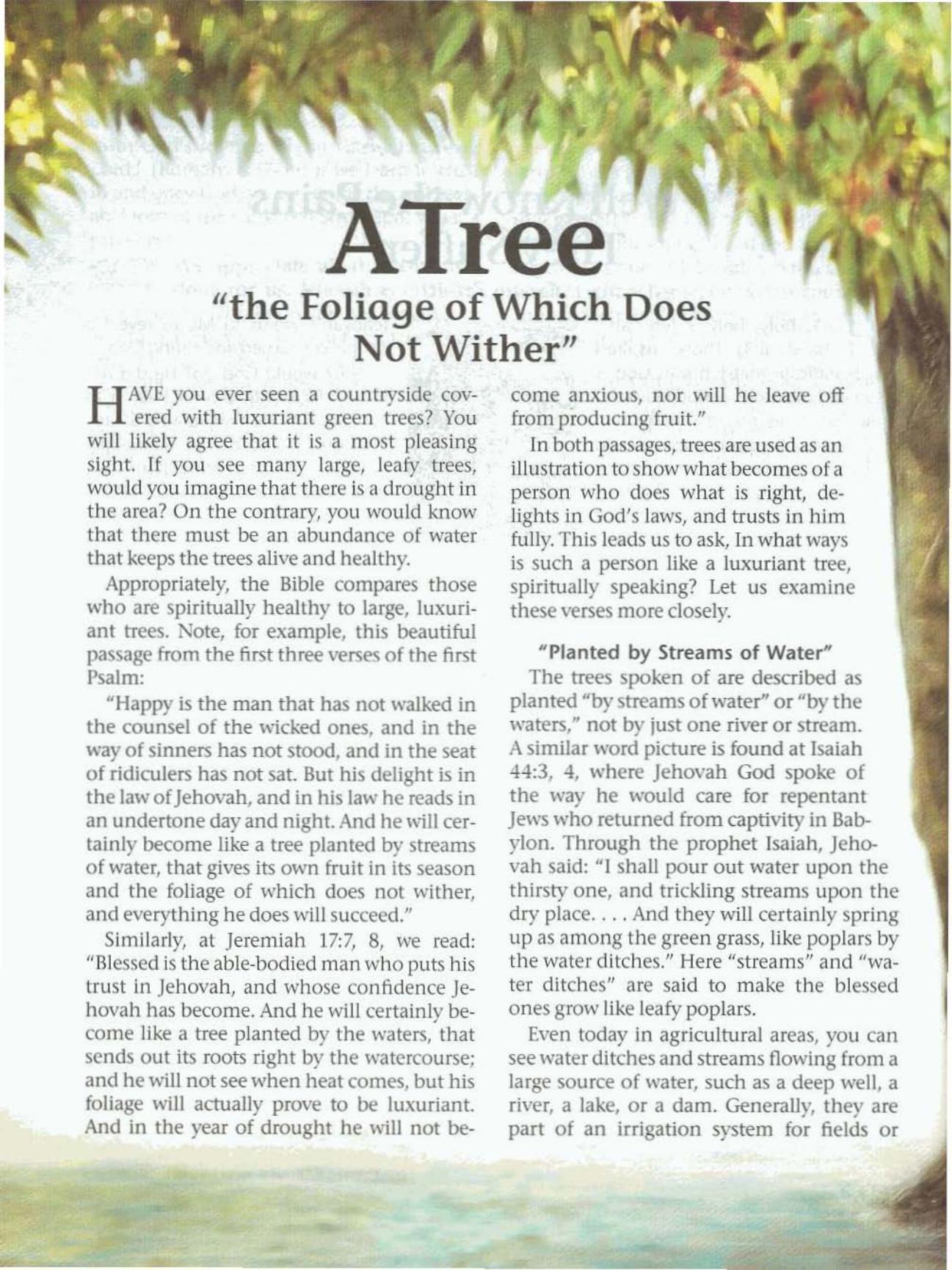
Jehovah's words to Moses reveal a deeply concerned and caring God.

What would God do? He did not merely look with pity or hear with compassion. He was moved to act. He purposed to deliver his people out of Egypt and to bring them "to a land flowing with milk and honey." (Verse 8) To that end, Jehovah commissioned Moses, saying: "Bring my people . . . out of Egypt." (Verse 10) Faithful to that commission, Moses led Israel out of Egypt in 1513 B.C.E.

Jehovah has not changed. His worshippers today can be sure that he sees their adversities and hears their cries for help. He well knows the pains they suffer. But Jehovah does not just *feel* compassion for his devoted servants. The tender God is moved to act in their behalf "because he cares" for them.—1 Peter 5:7.

God's compassion gives us reason for hope. With his help, we imperfect humans can attain a measure of holiness and become acceptable to him. (1 Peter 1:15, 16) One Christian woman who has struggled with depression and discouragement found comfort in the account about Moses' experience at the thornbush. She says: "If Jehovah can make even the dirt holy, then maybe there is a little hope for me. This thought has helped me profoundly."

Are you moved to learn more about the holy God, Jehovah? A close relationship with him is possible, for Jehovah "well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust."—Psalm 103:14.



A Tree

"the Foliage of Which Does Not Wither"

HAVE you ever seen a countryside covered with luxuriant green trees? You will likely agree that it is a most pleasing sight. If you see many large, leafy trees, would you imagine that there is a drought in the area? On the contrary, you would know that there must be an abundance of water that keeps the trees alive and healthy.

Appropriately, the Bible compares those who are spiritually healthy to large, luxuriant trees. Note, for example, this beautiful passage from the first three verses of the first Psalm:

"Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones, and in the way of sinners has not stood, and in the seat of ridiculers has not sat. But his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by streams of water, that gives its own fruit in its season and the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed."

Similarly, at Jeremiah 17:7, 8, we read: "Blessed is the able-bodied man who puts his trust in Jehovah, and whose confidence Jehovah has become. And he will certainly become like a tree planted by the waters, that sends out its roots right by the watercourse; and he will not see when heat comes, but his foliage will actually prove to be luxuriant. And in the year of drought he will not be-

come anxious, nor will he leave off from producing fruit."

In both passages, trees are used as an illustration to show what becomes of a person who does what is right, delights in God's laws, and trusts in him fully. This leads us to ask, In what ways is such a person like a luxuriant tree, spiritually speaking? Let us examine these verses more closely.

"Planted by Streams of Water"

The trees spoken of are described as planted "by streams of water" or "by the waters," not by just one river or stream. A similar word picture is found at Isaiah 44:3, 4, where Jehovah God spoke of the way he would care for repentant Jews who returned from captivity in Babylon. Through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah said: "I shall pour out water upon the thirsty one, and trickling streams upon the dry place. . . . And they will certainly spring up as among the green grass, like poplars by the water ditches." Here "streams" and "water ditches" are said to make the blessed ones grow like leafy poplars.

Even today in agricultural areas, you can see water ditches and streams flowing from a large source of water, such as a deep well, a river, a lake, or a dam. Generally, they are part of an irrigation system for fields or



plantations. At times the channels of water are directed to an orchard of fruit trees. In some cases, the streams irrigate fields on one side and a row of leafy trees on the other, perhaps marking the border of the property.

How do trees planted by such streams fare? Psalm 1:3 speaks of a tree "that gives its own fruit in its season." In the Bible lands, there are fig, pomegranate, and apple trees, as well as date palms and olive trees. Though the fig tree can reach a height of 30 feet with widespread branches, most other fruit trees do not grow very tall. Yet, they can be luxuriant and healthy and give an abundance of fruit at the proper time.

In ancient times, large poplar trees grew along the banks of rivers and streams in Syria and Palestine. References to poplars in the Bible are usually associated with water-courses or 'torrent valleys.' (Leviticus 23: 40) Willows, which are of the same family as poplars, could also be found growing where water was abundant. (Ezekiel 17:5) These large, luxuriant trees well represent the idea that both the psalmist and Jeremiah wanted to impart: Those who seek to follow God's law and trust in him fully will stay spiritually healthy, 'and all that they do will succeed.' Is that not what we want—success in life?

Finding Delight in Jehovah's Law

Today people try to find success in many ways. They immerse themselves in pursuits that could bring them fame and fortune, which all too often prove to be illusive and disappointing.

What, though, can bring true satisfaction and lasting happiness in life? Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount provide the answer. He said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." (Matthew 5:3) Indeed, true happiness comes, not from possessing many material things, but from recognizing and satisfying our spiritual need so that we are spiritually healthy, like luxuriant trees that give their fruit in due season. How can we flourish spiritually?

According to the psalmist, first there are some things we must shun. He mentioned "the counsel of the wicked ones," "the way of sinners," and "the seat of ridiculers." To be happy, we need to turn away from those who ridicule or even ignore God's laws.

Then we should delight in the law of Jehovah. When we delight in something or some activity, we look for every opportunity to engage in it, do we not? So to delight in God's law means having a deep appreciation for God's Word, a desire to learn more about it and to understand it better.

Finally, we need to read it "in an undertone day and night." That means reading the Bible on a regular basis and meditating on what we read. We should feel about God's Word the same way as did the psalmist who sang: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."—Psalm 119:97.

Yes, when we acquire accurate knowledge and understanding of Jehovah God and develop full confidence in him and his promises, we will surely be spiritually healthy. In that case, we will be like the happy man described by the psalmist—"everything he does will succeed."

Making a Diligent Search

IT WAS, as we say here, another soft day. A persistent drizzle left droplets of water on the windshield and blurred my view of the surrounding countryside. After driving ten miles, I reached the top of the hill overlooking Westport, a small coastal town in the west of Ireland. Finally, the sun dispersed the mist to reveal dozens of islets scattered around the bay, as beautiful as emeralds on blue velvet. Few are inhabited, but local farmers ferry their livestock to graze on some of them.

A range of hills follows the coast farther into the west. Clothed in bracken, peat, and heather, the hills had the look of burnished copper in the afternoon sun. Croagh Patrick, the conical peak known locally as the Reek, dominated the skyline. I negotiated my way through Westport's crowded, narrow streets, past the Reek, and on to an area seldom visited by Jehovah's Witnesses.

The man whom I was journeying to see did not know I was coming today. I had received a letter saying that he had recently moved out here and wanted to continue his discussion of the Bible with the Witnesses. I wondered: 'How old is he? Is he single or married? What are his interests?' I glanced down

at my bag and mentally checked again that I had a Bible and a variety of Bible publications. I thought about what I might say to further his interest in the Kingdom message.

The Reek was behind me now. Drystone walls, many built during the Great Famine of the 19th century, outlined a patchwork of empty fields reaching down to the sea. Overhead, a lone seagull glided effortlessly. On the skyline, hawthorn and blackthorn trees, bent and twisted like old men, were huddled together with their backs to the wind.

There are no house numbers or street names in this rural area. The man's address consisted of a house name and the townland.* My first goal, however, was to find the one person guaranteed to know where everyone lived—the postman. Thirty minutes later, I found the post office, a converted room in a terraced house. A sign on the door read "Closed." Undeterred, I inquired at a local shop and was directed to the vicinity of the townland.

* In Ireland, a townland is a geographical unit of land devised in the 11th century. Townlands vary in size, and some may contain hundreds of dwellings. Their names are used in the Irish postal system.

After driving another five miles, I found the landmark I was looking for—a sharp bend to the right with a boreen, or narrow lane, to the left. I knocked on the door of a nearby house. An elderly woman answered and proudly told me that she had lived there all her life but was most disappointed to admit that she did not know the whereabouts of the man I was seeking. She said that she would make a telephone call and invited me in.

As she was talking, she kept glancing at me, no doubt wondering who I was and what I wanted. I noticed a small statue of the Virgin Mary by the door and on the wall, a large picture of Christ. Rosary beads lay on the kitchen table. To put her mind at rest, I simply told her, "I have an important message for him from some friends."

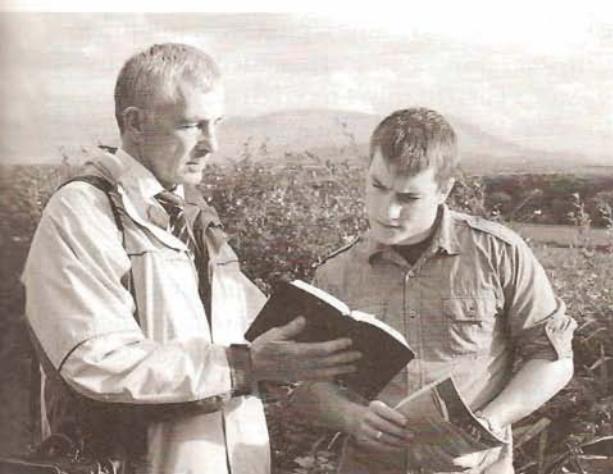
Her husband joined us and began telling me the history of the area. Meanwhile, the lady was unable to find out anything on her first telephone call and insisted that I wait while she telephoned others. Nobody, it seemed, had heard of either the man or the house. I checked my watch. It was now late in the day. I realized that I would have to try again another time. I thanked them both for their help, got back in my car, and began the long journey home.

I returned the following week. This time, I met the postman and received clear directions. Fifteen minutes later, I found the crossroads he had described. I turned left and drove up and down the boreen several times, looking for the next landmark, an old stone bridge. I did not find it. Eventually, I happened upon the last landmark, and there, at the top of the hill, was the house I had spent so much time and effort searching for.

I took a moment to think about how I might present the good news. An elderly man opened the door. "Sorry," he said, "but the house you are looking for is over there." He pointed to a house obscured by trees. Expectantly, I walked down and knocked on that door. While I waited, I gazed out at the Atlantic Ocean only a few hundred yards away. The wind had increased, and the waves were white as they crashed down on miles of unspoiled beach. There was no one in sight and no one at home either.

I made the journey twice more before meeting a young man. "This is the right house," he said, "but the previous tenant, the man you are looking for, has moved out, and I do not know where he has gone." I explained why I had called and found out that this young man had never spoken to Jehovah's Witnesses before. He had been the victim of robbery and had wondered why God allowed this and other injustices to happen. He readily accepted the current issues of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines that dealt with that very topic.

The Scriptures command that we make a diligent search for sheeplike ones. Sadly, I did not find the man I was looking for. Even so, in no way do I consider my efforts wasted. In Ireland, many are eager to learn of the Kingdom message, and with Jehovah's blessing, the small seeds of truth sown in this young man may one day bear fruit.





MAN DOES NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE

How I Survived Nazi Prison Camps

AS TOLD BY
JOSEPH HISIGER

"What are you reading?" I asked a fellow prisoner. "The Bible," he said, adding, "I'll swap it for your week's ration of bread."

I WAS born on March 1, 1914, in Moselle, then part of Germany. After World War I ended in 1918, Moselle was restored to France. In 1940, it was again annexed by Germany. Then, as World War II ended in 1945, it became part of France again. On each occasion, my nationality changed, so I learned to speak both French and German.

My parents were staunch Catholics. Every night before going to bed, our family knelt down to pray. On Sundays and on national holidays, we went to church. I took my religion seriously and belonged to a Catholic study group.

Becoming Engrossed in Our Work

In 1935 my parents were visited by two of Jehovah's Witnesses. The discussion revolved around the involvement of religion in the first world war. After that, my interest in the Bible grew, and in 1936, I asked the priest if I could obtain one. He said I would have to study theology to understand it. This, however, only increased my hunger for a Bible and the desire to read it.

In January 1937 a work colleague, Albin Relewicz, who was a Witness, began talking to me about what the Bible teaches. "I suppose you have one?" I asked. He did, and soon thereafter, he showed me God's name, Jehovah, in a copy of the German Elberfelder version, which he gave me. I became an avid reader of it and began attending meetings of the Witnesses in the nearby town of Thionville.

In August 1937, I accompanied Albin to an international assembly of the Witnesses in Paris. There I began preaching from door to door. Not long afterward, I was baptized, and early in 1939, I became a pioneer, a full-time Christian minister. I was assigned to the city of Metz. Then in July, I received an invitation to work at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Paris.

Wartime Tribulations

My service at the branch was short-lived, for in August 1939, I was called up for service in the French army. I could not conscientiously take part in the war, so I was sentenced to prison. The following May while I

was in prison, Germany launched a lightning attack on France. By June, France was conquered, and once again I was a German. So in July 1940 when I was released from prison, I returned to live with my parents.

Living as we were under the Nazi regime, we met for Bible study in secret. We received *The Watchtower* through Maryse Anasiak, a courageous Christian woman whom I used to meet in a baker's shop owned by a Witness. Up to 1941, I was able to avoid the difficulties encountered by the Witnesses in Germany.

Then one day the Gestapo paid me a visit. After the officer made it clear that the Witnesses had been banned, he asked me if I intended to remain one. When I replied, "Yes," he told me to follow him. Overcome with emotion, my mother fainted. On seeing this, the Gestapo officer told me to stay and take care of her.

At the factory where I worked, I did not greet the manager with a "Heil Hitler!" I also refused to become a member of the Nazi par-



*My dear friend
Albin Relewicz*



*Maryse
Anasiak*

ty. So the following day, I was arrested by the Gestapo. During the interrogations, I refused to reveal the names of fellow Witnesses. My interrogator struck me violently on the head with the butt of a revolver, and I lost consciousness. On September 11, 1942, the *Sondergericht* (Special Court) at Metz sentenced me to three years in prison "for carrying out propaganda on behalf of the Association of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Bible Students."

Two weeks later, I left the Metz prison on a journey that in stages took me to a forced-labor camp at Zweibrücken. There I worked on a railway maintenance crew. We changed heavy rails, bolting them down, and respread stones on the railway track. All we received for nourishment was a mug of coffee and about two ounces of bread in the morning and a bowl of soup at midday and in the evening. Then I was transferred to a prison in a nearby town, where I worked in a cobbler's shop. After several months, I was sent back to Zweibrücken, this time to work in the fields.

Living but Not on Bread Alone

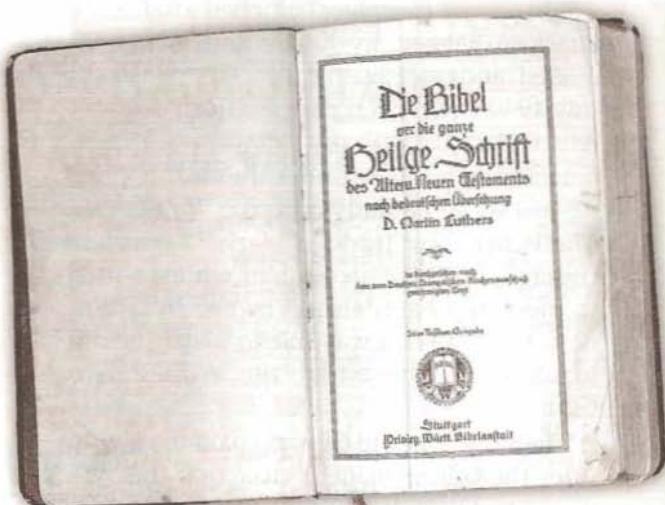
In the prison, my cell mate was a young man from the Netherlands. By learning to speak his language to some extent, I was able to tell him about my beliefs. He made good spiritual progress, to the point that he asked me to baptize him in the river. When he came out of the water, he hugged me and said, "Joseph, I am your brother!" When I was sent back to work on the railways, we were separated.

This time the prisoner I shared a cell with was a German. One evening he began reading a little book—a Bible! It was then that he offered me the Bible for a week's bread allotment. "Deal!" I replied. Although a week's ration of bread was a real sacrifice, I never regretted it. I began to learn the meaning of Jesus' words: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

Now that I had a Bible, the challenge was to keep it. Unlike other prisoners, the Witnesses were not allowed to have a Bible. So I read it in secret at night, hiding under the covers. During the day, I slipped it under my shirt and carried it with me. I would not leave it in the cell because of searches.

One day during roll call, I realized I had forgotten my Bible. That evening I hurried back to my cell, but the Bible was gone. After praying to God, I went to see the guard, explaining that someone had taken a book of mine and I wanted it back. He was not paying much attention, so I was able to recover my Bible. I thanked Jehovah from the bottom of my heart!

On another occasion, I was sent to the showers. When taking off my dirty clothes, I discreetly let the Bible drop to the floor. When the guard was not looking, I pushed it toward the shower with my foot. There I hid



*The Bible that cost
me one week's bread
ration*

it off to the side while I washed. When I came out of the shower, I repeated the process and slid the Bible over to the pile of clean clothes.

The Ups and Downs of Captivity

One morning in 1943 while the prisoners lined up in the courtyard, I saw Albin! He too had been arrested. He glanced at me knowingly and put his hand on his heart in symbol of brotherhood. Then he indicated by gestures that he would write me. The next day when he passed by, he dropped a piece of paper. But the guard saw it, and we both received two weeks' solitary confinement. We had only stale bread and water and slept on wooden planks without blankets.

After that, I was transferred to the prison in Siegburg, where I worked in a metal shop. The work was exhausting, and the food rations were insufficient. At night I dreamed of delicacies—cakes and fruits—and woke up with a growling stomach and a dry throat. I weighed less than a hundred pounds. Each

day, though, I read my small Bible and found a reason to live.

Freedom at Last!

Suddenly one morning in April 1945, the guards fled the prison, leaving the gates wide open. I was free! But first, I had to spend some time recovering in a hospital. By the end of May, I arrived at the house of my parents. They had given up hope that I was still alive. On seeing me, Mother burst into tears of joy. Sadly, my parents died shortly afterward.

I renewed my contact with the Thionville Congregation. What a joy to see my spiritual family again! It was a delight to learn how faithful they had been despite many trials. My dear friend Albin had died at Regensburg, in Germany. Later, I learned that my cousin Jean Hisiger had become a Witness and was executed as a conscientious objector. Jean



Jean Queyroi with his wife, Titica

Queyroi, with whom I had worked at the Paris branch office, had endured five years in a German work camp.*

I quickly got back to preaching in the town of Metz. At that time, I often met the Minzani family. Their daughter, Tina, was baptized on November 2, 1946. She was zealous in the ministry, and I found her charming. We were married on December 13, 1947. In September 1967, Tina took up the full-time preaching work, and she remained in that service until her death in June 2003, at the age of 98. I miss Tina terribly.

Today, at well over 90 years of age, I realize that God's Word has always given me strength to face tests and overcome them. I have at times had an empty stomach, but I have always fed my mind and heart on God's Word. And Jehovah has made me strong. His "own saying has preserved me alive."—Psalm 119:50.

* See *The Watchtower* of October 1, 1989, pages 22-26, for the life story of Jean Queyroi.



With my fiancée, Tina, in 1946

The Resurrection of Lazarus

Instructions: Do this exercise in quiet surroundings. As you read the scriptures, imagine that you are part of the event. Visualize the scene. Hear the voices. Feel the emotions of the main characters.

ANALYZE THE SCENE.—READ JOHN 11:1-45.

What emotion(s) do you see in Martha when you read verse 21 and in Mary when you read verse 32? _____

How do you visualize Jesus' display of strong emotion as described in verses 33 and 35? _____

Try to imagine what it would have been like to experience what is recorded in verses 43 and 44—both from Lazarus' point of view and from the viewpoint of the others who were present.

DIG DEEPER.

Bethany would be a two-day journey from where Jesus was. So why did Jesus decide to delay? (Reread verse 6.) _____

How does the Bible indicate that both Mary and Martha were interested in spiritual things? (Luke 10:38, 39; John 11:24) _____

Why did Jesus resurrect people even though they would only die again? (Mark 1:41, 42; John 5:28, 29; 11:45) _____

APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT...

Jesus' ability and willingness to raise the dead. _____

The depth of Jesus' compassion for those who are grieving. _____

WHOM WOULD YOU LIKE TO MEET OR BE REUNITED WITH IN THE RESURRECTION?

WHAT ASPECT OF THIS ACCOUNT IS MOST MEANINGFUL TO YOU, AND WHY?



G R E E C E



THE CITY OF CORINTH

"MASTER OF TWO HARBOURS"



Todd Bolten/Bible Pictures.com

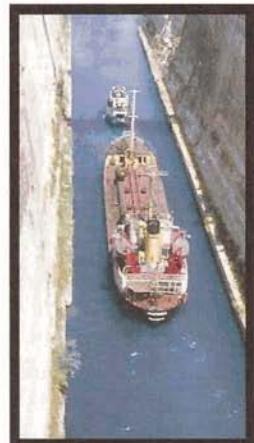
IF YOU look at a map of Greece, you will note that the main part of the country is made up of a peninsula and what looks like a large island in the south. Connecting the two is a narrow strip of land, about four miles across at its narrowest point. Called the Isthmus of Corinth, it links the Peloponnesian peninsula in the south to the main part of the country to the north.

The isthmus is also important in another way. It has been called the bridge of the sea because on the east side is the Saronic Gulf, which opens to the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean, and on the west side is the Gulf of Corinth,

which leads to the Ionian Sea, the Adriatic Sea, and the western Mediterranean. In the midst of all of this is the city of Corinth, an important stop in the apostle Paul's missionary travels, noted in the ancient world for its prosperity, luxury, and licentious living.

A Strategic City

The city of Corinth is situated near the western edge of this vital strip of land. It is served by two ports, or harbors, one on each side of the narrow isthmus—Lechaeum on the west and Cenchreæ on the east. For this reason, Greek geographer Strabo described Corinth as



Freight ships pass through the Corinth Canal today

Cenchreae Harbor



the “master of two harbours.” For its strategic location, the city of Corinth came to dominate an international crossroads, controlling both the north-south overland trade and the east-west maritime commerce.

Since ancient times, ships from the east (Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, and Egypt) and the west (Italy and Spain) came with their cargoes, unloaded them at one harbor, and transported them the few miles overland to the other side of the isthmus. There the cargoes were loaded on other vessels to continue their journey. Smaller crafts were hauled across the isthmus through a track-way, called the *diolkos*.—See box on page 27.

Why did sailors prefer the land route across the isthmus? Because this spared them the risks of a perilous 200-mile voyage in rough seas around the storm-swept promontories of southern Peloponnese. Seamen particularly avoided Cape Malea, about which it was said: “Round Cape Malea and forget about home.”

Cenchreae—A Sunken Harbor Revealed

The port of Cenchreae, about seven miles east of Corinth, was the terminus of the Asiatic sea-lanes. Today it is half submerged because of devastating earthquakes that struck about the end of the fourth century C.E. Strabo described Cenchreae as a busy and wealthy port, and the Roman philosopher Lucius Apuleius called it “a great and mighty haven frequented with the ships of many sundry nations.”

During Roman times, the harbor had two piers that extended into the sea like a horse-shoe, creating a 450- to 600-foot-wide entrance. It was capable of receiving ships up to 130 feet long. Excavations at its southwest side unearthed parts of a temple thought to have been a sanctuary of the goddess Isis. A complex of buildings at the opposite end of the harbor was likely a sanctuary of Aphrodite. These two goddesses were considered patron deities of sailors.

Commercial shipping activities in the port may have played a role in the apostle Paul's working as a tentmaker in Corinth. (Acts 18:1-3) The book *In the Steps of St. Paul* notes: "As winter drew near, the tent-makers of Corinth, who were also sail-makers, would have almost more work than they could execute. With both harbours full of ships laid up for the winter and anxious to refit while the seas were shut, the ships' chandlers of Lechaeum and Cenchreae must have had work for almost any man who could stitch a length of sail-cloth."

After staying in Corinth for more than 18 months, Paul sailed from Cenchreae to Ephesus about 52 C.E. (Acts 18:18, 19) Sometime in the next four years, a Christian congregation was established at Cenchreae. The Bible tells us that Paul asked Christians in Rome to provide assistance to a Christian woman named Phoebe from "the congregation that is in Cenchreae."—Romans 16:1, 2.

Today, visitors to the cove of Cenchreae swim in crystal-clear waters amid the remains of the sunken harbor. Little do most of them realize that centuries ago this place thrived with activities, Christian and com-

mercial. The same is true of Corinth's other port, the harbor of Lechaeum, on the western side of the isthmus.

Lechaeum—Portal to the West

A paved street called Lechaeum Road ran directly from the agora, or marketplace, of Corinth to its western harbor, Lechaeum, 1.5 miles away. Engineers dredged a section of the shoreline to construct the port and piled up the debris on the beach to protect moored ships from fierce winds from the gulf. At one time, this was one of the largest ports in the Mediterranean. Archaeologists have unearthed remains of a lighthouse, a statue of Poseidon holding a flame.

Along Lechaeum Road, which was protected by double walls, were sidewalks, state buildings, temples, and colonnades with shops. Here Paul must have encountered busy shoppers, idle talkers, shopkeepers, slaves, businessmen, and others—a suitable audience for his preaching activity.

Lechaeum was not only a mercantile port but also a major naval base. Some claim that the trireme, one of the most effective battleships of antiquity, was invented

THE DIOLKOS— SHIPPING ON DRY LAND



Toward the end of the seventh century B.C.E., when plans to build a canal failed, Periander, the ruler of Corinth, built an ingenious means for shipping across the isthmus.* Called the *diolkos*, meaning "haul-across," it was a trackway of flagstones with deep grooves fitted with rails of wood that were smeared with fat. Goods from ships docked at one harbor were unloaded, put on wheeled carts, and hauled by slaves over the trackway to the other. Smaller ships, sometimes with cargo aboard, were also hauled across.

* For a history of the construction of the modern canal, see "The Corinth Canal and Its Story," in *Awake!* December 22, 1984, pages 25-27.

in Lechaeum's shipyards by the Corinthian shipbuilder Ameinocles about 700 B.C.E. The Athenians used the trireme's advantages in their crucial victory over the Persian navy at Salamis in 480 B.C.E.

What was once a busy port is today no more than "a series of black, reedy lagoons." Nothing suggests that centuries ago, one of the largest ports in the Mediterranean existed here.

Corinth Challenges Christians

Besides being commercial ports, Corinth's harbors acted as gateways opened to influences that deeply affected the people in the city. For one, these ports attracted commerce and wealth. Corinth amassed riches by collecting high port fees as well as tolls for transporting cargo and ships along the trackway. The city also levied taxes on overland traffic. Near the end of the seventh century B.C.E., State revenues amassed from duties on the city's markets and on the use of its ports even made it possible to abolish citizen taxes.

Corinth received additional income from merchants who stayed there. Many of them indulged in luxurious and licentious revelries. Sailors also thronged to and enriched Corinth. As Strabo notes, they spent their money easily. The city's inhabitants offered many services, including ship repair.

In Paul's day, the city reportedly had a population of about 400,000, exceeded only by Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch of Syria. Greeks, Romans, Syrians, Egyptians, and Jews lived in Corinth. Through its ports, there was a constant flow of travelers, visitors to athletic games, artists, philosophers, entrepreneurs, and others. Those visitors made gifts to the temples and sacrificed to the gods. All of this made Corinth a vibrant, thriving metropolis—but at a price.

The book *In the Steps of St. Paul* notes: "Corinth, situated between two such ports,

developed a cosmopolitanism tinged with the vices of the foreign nations whose ships lay in her harbours." The foibles and vices of East and West met and mingled in the melting pot of the city. As a result, Corinth became morally decadent, wantonly luxurious—the most immoral and licentious city of ancient Greece. To live in the ways of the Corinthians, to be Corinthianized, had become synonymous with leading a debauched and immoral life.

Such a climate of materialism and immorality threatened the spiritual well-being of Christians. Jesus' followers in Corinth needed to be admonished to maintain an acceptable standing in the eyes of God. Appropriately, Paul strongly condemned greediness, extortion, and moral uncleanness in his letters to the Corinthians. As you read those inspired letters, you cannot help but sense the debasing influence that Christians there had to face.—1 Corinthians 5:9, 10; 6:9-11, 18; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

Yet, Corinth's cosmopolitanism had its advantages. The city was subject to a constant flow of ideas. Its residents were more broad-minded than people in other cities visited by Paul. "East met west in this ancient seaport town," says a Bible commentator, "exposing its residents to every conceivable new idea, philosophy, and religion the world had to offer." As a result, different religions were tolerated, and this evidently facilitated Paul's preaching work there.

The two harbors of Corinth—Cenchreæ and Lechaeum—contributed to the prosperity and fame of the city. The same harbors also made living in Corinth a challenge for Christians. Our modern world is similar. Corrupting influences, such as materialism and immorality, pose a spiritual threat to God-fearing individuals. Therefore, we too would do well to take to heart the inspired admonitions that Paul gave to Christians in Corinth.

Our Readers Ask

DOES GOD TAKE CHILDREN TO BECOME ANGELS IN HEAVEN?

When death strikes a child, friends of the bereaved family may try to comfort them by saying, "God must have needed another angel in heaven." Does that sound reasonable to you?

If it were true that God causes children to die because he needs more angels in heaven, it would imply that he is unfeeling, even cruel. The Bible says otherwise. (Job 34:10) A compassionate father would not snatch a child away from its parents just so that he could enlarge his own family. Yet, no human parent has more compassion than Jehovah, whose dominant quality is love. (1 John 4:8) His great love would never permit him to act in such a harsh way.

Ask yourself, 'Does God need more angels in heaven?' The Bible states that all of God's activities are good and perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4) His work of directly creating millions of angels was a perfect accomplishment, and there was no shortage. (Daniel 7:10) Did God somehow miscalculate the number of angels he needed? Impossible! Surely, Almighty God

could never make such an error. True, Jehovah has selected some humans to become spirit creatures as part of his heavenly Kingdom, but they would not be little children at the time of their death.—Revelation 5:9, 10.

Another reason why God would not take children from the earth to become angels in heaven is that it would not be in harmony with his original purpose for children. In the garden of Eden, God told Adam and Eve: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." (Genesis 1:28) Children are gifts from God, essential to his original purpose of filling the earth with a righteous human family. He never purposed for children to have their life cut short and then for them to be transformed into spirit creatures. The Bible affirms that children are "an inheritance from Jehovah." (Psalm 127:3) Would Jehovah, the God of love, take back a gift that he has given parents? Surely not!

A child's untimely death brings great sadness, hurt, and pain. What hope, then, do grieving parents have? The Bible promises that God will resurrect countless millions in a paradise right here on earth. Imagine children—restored with healthy bodies—reunited with their loved ones. (John 5:28, 29) It is God's will for young ones to grow up, to enjoy life, and to learn about him and his purpose for the earth. Thus, young ones who have died are not angels in heaven but are awaiting a resurrection to a paradise earth. At that time, under the loving care of our Creator, both young and old will delight in worshipping Jehovah God for eternity.



2009 "KEEP ON THE WATCH!" DISTRICT CONVENTION LOCATIONS

AMARILLO, TX Cal Farley Coliseum, Civic Center, 401 S. Buchanan St.
ENGLISH July 24-26

AMHERST, MA The Mullins Center, University of Massachusetts, 200 Commonwealth Ave.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5, July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
SPANISH July 10-12

ANCHORAGE, AK George M. Sullivan Arena, 1600 Gambell St.
ENGLISH August 28-30
Williamson Auditorium, University of Alaska, 3211 Providence Dr.
SPANISH July 31-August 2

BAKERSFIELD, CA Rabobank Arena, 1001 Truxtun Ave.
ENGLISH May 29-31, June 19-21, August 7-9
SPANISH June 26-28, July 31-August 2

BELLEVILLE, MI Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 43777 Ecorse Rd.
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE August 7-9

BELTON, TX Bell County Expo Center Arena, 301 W. Loop 121
ENGLISH August 7-9, August 14-16, August 21-23
SPANISH July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2

BILLINGS, MT MetraPark Arena, 308 6th Ave. N.
ENGLISH May 22-24

BIRMINGHAM, AL BJCC Arena, 19th St. & 9th Ave. N.
ENGLISH June 26-28, July 3-5
SPANISH July 10-12

BISMARCK, ND Civic Center Arena, 601 E. Sweet Ave.
ENGLISH July 3-5

BLOOMINGTON, IL U.S. Cellular Coliseum, 101 S. Madison St.
ENGLISH May 22-24
SPANISH June 26-28, July 3-5, July 10-12

BOSSIER CITY, LA CenturyTel Center Arena, 2000 CenturyTel Center Dr.
ENGLISH June 19-21

BROOKLYN, NY Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 973 Flatbush Ave.
ENGLISH May 29-31, June 5-7, June 12-14, June 26-28, July 3-5, July 10-12, August 7-9, August 21-23, August 28-30

RUSSIAN July 24-26
SPANISH June 19-21, July 17-19, July 31-August 2, August 14-16

CHARLESTON, WV Civic Center Coliseum, 200 Civic Center Dr.
SPANISH June 19-21

CLEVELAND, OH Wolstein Center, Cleveland State University, Prospect Ave. & E. 21st St.

ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12, July 24-26

COLUMBIA, MO Mizzou Arena, One Champions Dr.

ENGLISH August 7-9

COLUMBIA, SC The Colonial Center, 801 Lincoln St.

ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5

COLUMBUS, GA Civic Center Arena, 400 4th St.

ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX AmericanBank Center Arena, 1901 N. Shoreline Blvd.

ENGLISH August 21-23

SPANISH August 14-16

CYPRESS, TX Richard E. Berry Center Arena, 8877 Barker Cypress Rd.

ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5

DAYTON, OH Ervin J. Nutter Center, Wright State University, 3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy.

ENGLISH July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 7-9

DE KALB, IL Convocation Center, Northern Illinois University, 1525 W. Lincoln Hwy.

ENGLISH May 29-31, June 26-28, July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16

DENTON, TX Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 14542 Hwy. 380 W.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE July 24-26

DES MOINES, IA Veterans Memorial Auditorium Arena, 833 5th Ave.

ENGLISH June 12-14

DULUTH, GA The Arena at Gwinnett Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Pkwy.

ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12, July 17-19

EVANSVILLE, IN Roberts Stadium, 2600 Division St.

ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5

FORT SMITH, AR Convention Center Exhibit Hall, 800 Rogers Ave.

ENGLISH May 29-31, June 5-7, June 19-21

SPANISH June 12-14

FORT WORTH, TX Convention Center, 1111 Houston St.

ENGLISH July 10-12, July 24-26,

August 21-23

SPANISH June 12-14, June 19-21, July 3-5

FREMONT, CA Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 43400 Osgood Rd.

RUSSIAN July 17-19

GAINESVILLE, FL Stephen C. O'Connell Center Arena, University of Florida, Gale Lemerand Dr. & W. University Ave.

ENGLISH June 26-28, July 3-5

GREEN BAY, WI Resch Center, 1901 S. Oneida St.

ENGLISH May 22-24

HAMPTON, VA Coliseum, 1000 Coliseum Dr.

ENGLISH July 10-12, July 17-19

JACKSON, MS Mississippi Coliseum, 1207 Mississippi St.

ENGLISH June 5-7, June 12-14

JERSEY CITY, NJ Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Blvd.

AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE June 26-28

ENGLISH May 22-24, May 29-31, June 5-7, August 7-9, August 21-23, August 28-30

FRENCH July 10-12, July 17-19

KOREAN July 31-August 2

PORTUGUESE July 24-26

SPANISH June 12-14, June 19-21, July 3-5, August 14-16

JOHNSON CITY, TN Freedom Hall Civic Center Arena, 1320 Pactolas Rd.

ENGLISH June 12-14, June 19-21

KANSAS CITY, MO Kemper Arena, 1800 Genesee St.

ENGLISH June 5-7

KATY, TX Leonard E. Merrell Center, 6301 S. Stadium Ln.

SPANISH July 3-5, July 10-12, July 17-19, July 24-26

KENNEWICK, WA Toyota Center, 7100 W. Quinault Ave.

ENGLISH July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16

SPANISH July 3-5

KISSIMMEE, FL Silver Spurs Arena, 1875 Silver Spur Ln.

ENGLISH July 17-19, July 24-26, August 21-23, August 28-30

SPANISH July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16

LINCOLN, NE Bob Devaney Sports Center, University of Nebraska, 16th St. & Military Rd.

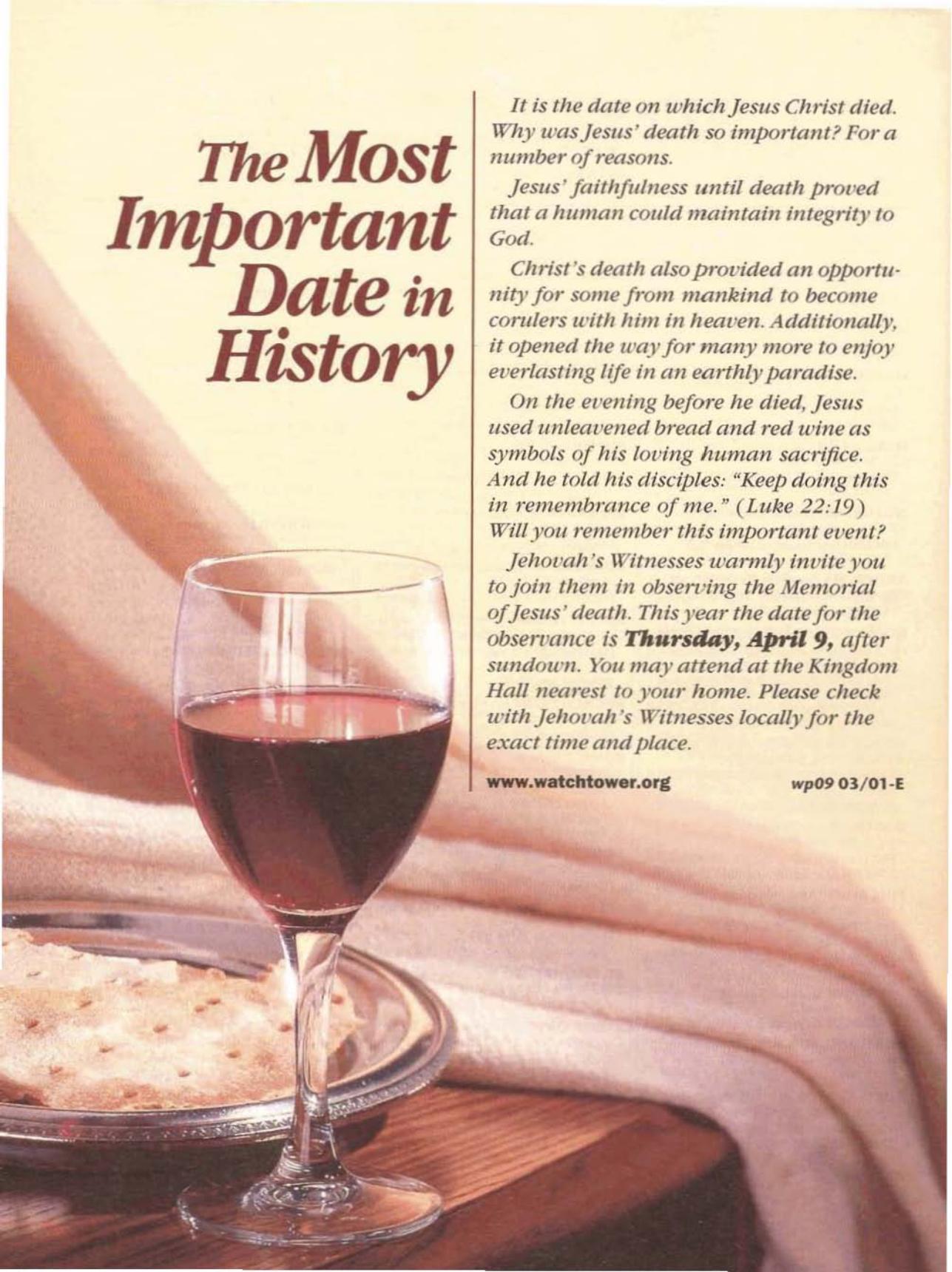
ENGLISH July 3-5

LONG BEACH, CA Convention Center Arena, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

ENGLISH May 22-24, May 29-31, June 5-7, August 7-9, August 21-23 (PERSIAN sessions also), September 4-6

SPANISH June 12-14, July 10-12, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 14-16, August 28-30, September 11-13

- INTERNATIONAL** June 18-21
(Thursday-Sunday)
ENGLISH (Convention Center Arena)
KOREAN (Exhibit Hall A)
JAPANESE (Exhibit Hall B)
TAGALOG (Exhibit Hall C)
VIETNAMESE (Grand Ballroom)
CHINESE (Cantonese) (Promenade Ballroom)
CHINESE (Mandarin) (Terrace Theatre)
- LOVELAND, CO** Budweiser Events Center, The Ranch, 5290 Arena Cir.
ENGLISH June 19-21, July 3-5, July 10-12
- LUBBOCK, TX** City Bank Coliseum, 2732 Drive of Champions
SPANISH June 12-14
- MACON, GA** Centreplex Coliseum, 200 Coliseum Dr.
ENGLISH June 19-21
SPANISH June 26-28
- McALLEN, TX** Convention Center Arena, 29th St. & Ware Rd.
SPANISH June 19-21, July 3-5, July 24-26, August 7-9
- MOBILE, AL** Civic Center Arena, 401 Civic Center Dr.
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 31-August 2, August 7-9
- NATICK, MA** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 85 Bacon St.
PORTUGUESE July 17-19
- NEWBURGH, NY** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 23 Unity Pl.
ENGLISH June 12-14, June 19-21, July 3-5, July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16, August 21-23, August 28-30
SPANISH June 26-28, July 10-12
- NORCO, CA** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1001 Parkridge Ave.
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE July 10-12
ARABIC July 3-5
ARMENIAN July 17-19
- OGDEN, UT** Dee Events Center, 4450 S. Harrison Blvd.
ENGLISH July 3-5
SPANISH June 26-28
- PINE BLUFF, AR** Convention Center Arena, 500 E. 8th Ave.
ENGLISH June 12-14, June 19-21, June 26-28
- PLANT CITY, FL** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1904 N. Frontage Rd.
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE July 31-August 2
PORTUGUESE August 7-9
- PORTLAND, ME** Cumberland County Civic Center, 1 Civic Center Sq.
ENGLISH May 22-24, May 29-31
- PORTLAND, OR** Veterans Memorial Coliseum Arena, One Center Ct.
ENGLISH May 22-24, July 3-5
SPANISH May 29-31, June 26-28
- PUEBLO, CO** Colorado State Fair Events Center, 1001 Beulah Ave.
ENGLISH June 5-7, July 3-5
SPANISH June 12-14, June 19-21
- QUEENS, NY** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 44-17 Greenpoint Ave.
ENGLISH May 22-24, May 29-31, June 19-21, June 26-28, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 21-23, August 28-30
ITALIAN July 17-19
SPANISH June 5-7, June 12-14, July 3-5, July 10-12, August 7-9, August 14-16
- RALEIGH, NC** RBC Center, 1400 Edwards Mill Rd.
ENGLISH July 31-August 2, August 7-9
- READING, PA** Sovereign Center Arena, 700 Penn St.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5, July 24-26, July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 21-23, August 28-30
- RICHMOND, VA** Coliseum, 601 E. Leigh St.
ENGLISH July 10-12, July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
- RIO RANCHO, NM** Santa Ana Star Center, 3001 Civic Center Dr.
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 17-19
- ROANOKE, VA** Civic Center Coliseum, 710 Williamson Rd. NE
ENGLISH July 3-5
- ROCHESTER, MN** Taylor Arena, Mayo Civic Center, 30 Civic Center Dr. SE
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
SPANISH July 17-19
- ROCHESTER, NY** Blue Cross Arena, Broad & Exchange Sts.
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 17-19, July 24-26
- ROME, GA** The Forum Civic Center, 301 Tribune St.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, August 21-23
SPANISH July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16
- ROMEOWVILLE, IL** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 800 N. Schmidt Rd.
POLISH August 21-23
- SAGINAW, MI** The Dow Events Center Arena, 303 Johnson St.
ENGLISH July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
- ST. CHARLES, MO** The Family Arena, 2002 Arena Pkwy.
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12
- SALEM, OR** Oregon State Fair & Expo Center Pavilion, 2330 17th St. NE
ENGLISH May 22-24, May 29-31, June 19-21
- SALISBURY, NC** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 3401 Old Concord Rd.
AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE June 19-21
FRENCH July 3-5
- SAN DIEGO, CA** Qualcomm Stadium, 9449 Friars Rd.
INTERNATIONAL June 4-7
(Thursday-Sunday)
ENGLISH and SPANISH
- SAN FRANCISCO, CA** Cow Palace, 2600 Geneva Ave.
ENGLISH June 5-7, June 12-14, June 19-21, July 10-12 (PORTUGUESE sessions also), July 17-19, July 24-26
SPANISH August 7-9, August 14-16, August 21-23
- TACOMA, WA** Tacoma Dome, 2727 East D St.
ENGLISH June 26-28, July 3-5
- TOLEDO, OH** Seagate Convention Centre Arena, 401 Jefferson Ave.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5, July 10-12, July 17-19, July 24-26
- TUCSON, AZ** Convention Center, 260 S. Church St.
ENGLISH May 29-31, June 5-7, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
SPANISH June 12-14, June 19-21, June 26-28
- TURNERSVILLE, NJ** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 300 Sovereign Way
ENGLISH July 3-5, July 10-12, August 7-9, August 21-23
SPANISH July 17-19, July 24-26, July 31-August 2
TAGALOG August 14-16
- VALLEY CENTER, KS** Britt Brown Arena, Kansas Coliseum, 1229 E. 85th St. N.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28
SPANISH July 3-5, July 24-26
- WEST PALM BEACH, FL** Christian Convention Center of Jehovah's Witnesses, 1610 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd.
ENGLISH May 29-31, June 5-7, June 12-14, July 10-12, July 17-19, July 24-26
FRENCH July 31-August 2
SPANISH June 19-21, June 26-28, July 3-5, August 7-9, August 14-16, August 21-23, August 28-30
- WHEELING, WV** WesBanco Arena, Two 14th St.
ENGLISH July 31-August 2, August 7-9, August 14-16
- WILKES-BARRE, PA** Wachovia Arena at Casey Plaza, 255 Highland Park Blvd.
ENGLISH August 21-23, August 28-30
SPANISH July 3-5, July 10-12
- WILLOUGHBY, OH** Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 38025 Vine St.
GREEK July 3-5
- WINSTON-SALEM, NC** Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum, 2825 University Pkwy.
ENGLISH June 19-21, June 26-28
SPANISH July 3-5, July 10-12



The Most Important Date in History

It is the date on which Jesus Christ died. Why was Jesus' death so important? For a number of reasons.

Jesus' faithfulness until death proved that a human could maintain integrity to God.

Christ's death also provided an opportunity for some from mankind to become co-rulers with him in heaven. Additionally, it opened the way for many more to enjoy everlasting life in an earthly paradise.

On the evening before he died, Jesus used unleavened bread and red wine as symbols of his loving human sacrifice. And he told his disciples: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22:19) Will you remember this important event?

Jehovah's Witnesses warmly invite you to join them in observing the Memorial of Jesus' death. This year the date for the observance is **Thursday, April 9**, after sundown. You may attend at the Kingdom Hall nearest to your home. Please check with Jehovah's Witnesses locally for the exact time and place.

www.watchtower.org

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