

The **WATCHTOWER**

APRIL 15, 1973

Semimonthly

WOULD A GOD OF LOVE
TORMENT SOULS?

—
WHAT IS YOUR SOUL?

Announcing
**JEHOVAH'S
KINGDOM**



HOW RESURRECTION *Benefits All the Dead in Hell*

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"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

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"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

CONTENTS

Would a God of Love Torment Souls?	227
What Is Your Soul?	230
How Resurrection Benefits All the Dead in Hell	232
The Beneficiaries of Resurrection from "Hell"	241
Why You Can Believe in a Resurrection	247
God Resurrected a Nation	249
Are You Responding to God's Love?	252
Questions from Readers	254

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Would A God of Love TORMENT SOULS?

THE dominant quality of the Creator of man is love. He is the very personification of love. That is why the Bible says: "God is love." (1 John 4:16) Of this loving God, the psalmist David sang: "Being under his anger is for a moment, being under his goodwill is for a lifetime." —Ps. 30:5.

The extent of God's love for humankind is evident from his view of those who transgress his laws. Though their actions make him "feel hurt" and 'pain' him, he does not immediately flare up against them in anger. (Ps. 78:38-41) He mercifully extends opportunities for them to change their ways, as he finds no pleasure in having to execute adverse judgment against them. Through his prophet Ezekiel he told disobedient Israel: "I take delight, not in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living. Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die,

O house of Israel?" (Ezek. 33:11) Viewing life as precious, Jehovah God sees to it that warning is given to those who violate his righteous laws.

A case in point is Nineveh, the capital of ancient Assyria. As reported in the Bible, the inhabitants of that city became so wicked that Jehovah had in mind destroying them. Nevertheless, he gave them an opportunity to abandon their wrongdoing. In his boundless love and mercy he sent the prophet Jonah to them. "Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown," was the startling announcement of Jehovah's prophet.—Jonah 3:4.

The Ninevites knew that they had made a bad record for themselves. Their God-given conscience condemned them. Though not worshipers of Jehovah God, they were still given to the fear of deities. So when they heard a foreigner, who had no conceivable personal interest in them, declare with boldness their coming destruction, the Ninevites were shocked to their senses. The whole city, including the king, repented in sackcloth and ashes.

Mercifully the God of love spared the repentant Ninevites from the calamity that his prophet had pronounced against them. Jonah just could not understand this. In fact, he became angry. He left the

city and built a booth for himself to the east of Nineveh. There he remained to see what would happen to the city.—Jonah 4:1-5.

So that Jonah would come to appreciate the rightness of God's sparing the repentant Ninevites, Jehovah chose to teach him by means of an object lesson. He caused a bottle-gourd plant to grow miraculously and provide welcome shade for Jonah in his booth. Later, Jehovah appointed a worm to feed on the plant, causing it to dry up. Deprived of the plant's shade, Jonah was subjected to a parching east wind and the hot sun beating down upon his head. He doubtless began to wonder why the plant had to die, especially since it had been such a blessing to him. Though Jonah had neither planted nor cared for it, he felt sorry for the plant; it seemed a shame that it had to die so soon.—Jonah 4:6-10.

Jehovah God, though, had much more reason to feel sorry for Nineveh. The value of its inhabitants and domestic animals was far greater than that of one bottle-gourd plant. Applying the object lesson, Jehovah asked Jonah: "Ought I not to feel sorry for Nineveh the great city, in which there exist more than one hundred and twenty thousand men who do not at all know the difference between their right hand and their left, besides many domestic animals?"

—Jonah 4:11.

Is it reasonable to conclude that a God who has such tender feelings toward humans would, after their death, torment some of them in a fiery hell for all eternity? If

When the Israelites engaged in the practice of child sacrifice, God expressed his disapproval, saying he had not commanded this and that it 'had not come up into his heart'

Jehovah God finds no delight in the death of the wicked, how could he possibly have any pleasure in seeing people suffer the greatest of agonies for all eternity?

While the Israelites were engaging in the revolting practice of child sacrifice, Jehovah told his prophet Jeremiah: "They have built the high places of Topheth, which is in the valley of the son of Hinnom, in order to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire, a thing that I had not commanded and that had not come up into my heart." (Jer. 7:31) If the abominable practice of child sacrifice was something that could never have been conceived by the God of love, how could he possibly conceive of eternal torment for humans who violate his laws?

GOD DOES NOT WITHHOLD PUNISHMENT

This does not mean that Jehovah God will leave wrongdoing unpunished, that he winks at flagrant violations of his commandments. His Word declares: "Jehovah is a God exacting exclusive devotion and taking vengeance; Jehovah is taking vengeance and is disposed to rage. Jehovah is taking vengeance against his adversaries, and he is resentful toward his enemies. Jehovah is slow to anger and great in power, and by no means will Jehovah

hold back from punishing." (Nah. 1:2, 3) "He is wise in heart and strong in power. Who can show stubbornness to him and come off uninjured?" (Job 9:4) Even those professing to be his people but making themselves guilty of transgression will not be shielded from injury, yes, torment.

If a person tries to con-



ceal his sin, God will not spare him from the tormenting effect of a guilty conscience. One who experienced this was David. He wrote: "When I kept silent my bones wore out through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me. My life's moisture has been changed as in the dry heat of summer."—Ps. 32:3, 4.

Attempted repression of a guilty conscience wore David out. Anguish over what he had done reduced his vigor just as a tree might lose life-giving moisture during the intense heat of a dry summer. The torment that David experienced, however, produced good results. It moved him to confess his sin and regain a proper relationship with his God.

Even the severest discipline to which Jehovah God may subject a people is purposeful. It can bring about their betterment. Never does Jehovah God afflict anyone for the sake of deriving personal pleasure. He has no more delight in administering punishment than does a loving father in dealing with a disobedient child. Illustrating the purpose of his discipline, Jehovah declared through his prophet Isaiah:

"Is it all day long that the plower plows in order to sow seed, that he loosens and harrows his ground? Does he not, when he has smoothed out its surface, then scatter black cummin and sprinkle the cummin, and must he not put in wheat, millet, and barley in the appointed place, and spelt as his boundary? And one corrects him according to what is right. His own God instructs him. For it is not with a threshing instrument that black cummin is given a treading; and upon cummin no wheel of a wagon is turned. For it is with a rod that black cummin is generally beaten out, and cummin with a staff. Is breadstuff itself generally crushed? For never does one incessantly keep treading it out. And he must set the roller of his wagon in motion, and his own steeds, but he will not crush it. This also is what has come forth from Jehovah of armies himself, who has been wonderful in counsel,

who has done greatly in effectual working."— Isa. 28:24-29.

Plowing and harvesting are limited. The hardness of the soil governs the extent or intensity of the plowing. The type of grain determines the force and weight of the instruments used for threshing. Similarly, Jehovah God does not forever discipline or punish those who transgress his law. He disciplines them primarily to soften them, to make them more receptive to his counsel and guidance. This illustrates God's wisdom in cleansing people, getting rid of undesirable traits by means of a treatment that best fits the existing needs.

At times what Jehovah God allows to come upon individuals can be a real torment to them. It may painfully expose their wrong ways. (Compare Revelation 11:10.)

Those who fail to pay attention to the denunciations that Jehovah God has proclaimed through the mouth of his servants experience the tormenting effect of the message. They miss out on the blessings that would come to them if they were to repent and change their ways. However, even in their case, the torment accomplishes a purpose. It reveals that they are not worthy of being spared the execution of God's judgment.

But could it be said that eternal torment would be purposeful? If Jehovah God were to subject humans to eternal torment, would the tormented ones be benefited? Obviously not. Even if they wanted to, they could not become better individuals and improve their situation. Then, too, the Creator would gain nothing from tormenting them eternally. It would only force him to do something that he does not want to do, namely, to look upon constant suffering, suffering that has no good purpose in view for the one who is made to bear it without any possibility of relief. The prophet Habakkuk wrote with reference to God: "You are too pure in eyes

to see what is bad; and to look on trouble you are not able." (Hab. 1:13) How, then, could God for all eternity look upon the anguish of those who transgressed his law?

Truly it is inconceivable that a God of love would do something that is completely contrary to his personality, ways and dealings.

However, it might be asked, Is this the only evidence against the teaching of eternal torment? Is there not evidence to show that something survives the death of the body? Does not conscious existence continue after death? So will there be torment for that which survives the death of the body? For the answer to these questions, we invite you to read the next article.

WHAT IS YOUR SOUL?

MANY people believe that man has a soul that is distinct and separate from the body. This soul is thought to leave the body at death. Depending on whether a person has lived a good life or not, his soul is said to go either to hell and suffer torment or to heaven and enjoy eternal happiness with God.

Belief in a fiery hell is thus seen to rest on the teaching that man has a soul that survives the death of the body. But is this teaching in harmony with the Bible?

The opening book of the Holy Scriptures, Genesis, reveals the nature of the human soul. Describing the creation of the first man, Genesis 2:7 states: "Jehovah God proceeded to form the man out of dust from the ground and to blow into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man came to be a living soul [Hebrew, *ne'phesh*]." Note that the Bible does not say 'man received a soul,' but that "man *came to be a living soul*."

In his inspired letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul shows that Christian teaching about the soul did not differ from

what is set forth in Genesis. He quoted Genesis 2:7 in saying: "It is even so written: 'The first man Adam became a living soul.' " (1 Cor. 15:45) Since Paul used the Greek word for soul, *psy-khe'*, this proves that, like the Hebrew word *ne'phesh*, *psy-khe'* can designate man himself.

It is noteworthy that numerous twentieth-century Bible scholars, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, have openly acknowledged that man himself is a soul. We read:

"The famous verse in Genesis [2:7] does not say, as is often supposed, that man consists of body and soul; it says that Yahweh shaped man, earth from the ground, and then proceeded to animate the inert figure with living breath blown into his nostrils, so that man became a living *being*, which is all that *nephesh* [soul] here means."—*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, Volume 41.

"Man must not be thought of as *having* a soul; he *is* a soul."—*The New Bible Commentary*.

"The soul in the O[ld] T[estament] means not a part of man, but the whole man—man as a living being. Similarly, in the N[new] T[estament] it signifies human life: the

life of an individual, conscious subject."—*New Catholic Encyclopedia*.

"In the New Testament, to 'save one's soul' (*Mk* 8:35) does not mean to save some 'spiritual' part of man, as opposed to his 'body' (in the Platonic sense) but the whole person with emphasis on the fact that the person is living, desiring, loving and willing, etc., in addition to being concrete and physical."—*The New American Bible, "Glossary of Biblical Theology Terms."*

"The Bible does not say we have a soul. 'Nefesh' is the person himself, his need for food, the very blood in his veins, his being."—Dr. H. M. Orlinsky of Hebrew Union College, quoted in *New York Times*, October 12, 1962.

As the original-language words for "soul" (*ne'phesh* and *psy-khe'*) can refer to man himself, we should expect to find the normal physical functions or characteristics of humans attributed to it. Is this the case? Is your soul really you? Consider:

A study of the Bible's use of these Hebrew and Greek words reveals that a human soul is born. (Gen. 46:18) It can eat or fast. (Lev. 7:20; Ps. 35:13) It can be joyful or sorrowful. (Ps. 35:9; Matt. 26:38) It can fall in love. (Gen. 34:3) It can bless others. (Gen. 27:4) It can listen. (Acts 3:23) The soul can sin, swear, crave things and give way to fear. (Lev. 4:2; 5:4; Deut. 12:20; Acts 2:43) It can be kidnapped and put in irons. (Deut. 24:7; Ps. 105:18) Are not all these things that *you* can do or that can be done to *you*? Yes, your soul is you.

So when your soul dies, you die, you cease to have conscious existence. The Bible repeatedly speaks of the soul as dying. Through his prophet Ezekiel, Jehovah declared: "Look! All the souls—to me they belong. As the soul of the father so likewise the soul of the son—to me they belong. The soul that is sinning—it itself will die." (Ezek. 18:4, 20) Respecting the Messiah or Christ, the prophecy of Isaiah foretold: "He poured out his soul to the very death." (Isa. 53:12) And Jesus Christ

said: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it."—John 12:25.

But are there not at least some scriptures that could be understood as suggesting the possibility of man's having an immortal soul? No. Interestingly, even Bible scholars who are not Jehovah's witnesses have reached this conclusion on the basis of their study. Writing in *Presbyterian Life* (May 1970), David G. Buttrick, Associate Professor in Church and Ministry, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, states: "I find nothing in Scripture to back up the idea that souls have 'an immortal subsistence.'" Regarding the significance of the word "soul," this scholar observes: "When the Bible does use that word *soul*, it usually means 'life' or 'livingness,' and not some separate part of us. So think it out: When the Bible tells us we are mortal, it is saying that we die—*we really die*." Continuing his line of argument, he says: "If we had immortal souls, we wouldn't need God—our immortality would do the trick. But the Bible contradicts such vain hope: we are mortal and so we must cling to God's love alone. Christians do not believe in continuation, but in resurrection."

The Bible makes it plain that there is no conscious existence in the death state. Ecclesiastes 9:10, according to the rendering of the Roman Catholic *Douay Version*, reads: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening." There being no immortal soul to survive the death of the body, there is nothing that can be tormented after death in a fiery hell.

God's promise of a resurrection, however, gives assurance that the dead in hell will come to life. Just what is this hell and how can the dead be released from its grip? Please consider the next article.

HOW RESURRECTION Benefits All the Dead in Hell

"If only you would hide me in Sheol,
and shelter me there until your anger
is past."—Job 14:13, Roman Catholic
Jerusalem Bible Version.

ONCE upon a time there was no "hell." And there will be a time again when there will be no "hell." At such a big assertion, people might well ask: How will this come about? Who will bring it about? Shall we live until when it comes about?

When we talk about *our* living to see the time when there will be no "hell," we are led to ask: Will this be of benefit to us living on the earth then? Could "hell's" disappearance release upon this earth a swarm of persons of the worst type to make our moral and social conditions still worse than they are today? Such a suggestion is shocking, frightening. What good could there come from this for anybody, for God or for man, especially for us who are already plagued with troubles and troublemakers? These seem to be hard questions. There are, however, reliable answers to all such questions. Doubtless everybody will be interested to hear them. Then we shall understand what is really coming.

"Hell" has always had a religious connection. So the oldest religious Book, the Bible, should give the right answers. And

1, 2. (a) *The Watchtower's* big assertion about "hell" raises what questions? (b) What questions may those who might be living at that time be led to ask with reference to themselves?

3. How did Tyndale, Luther, and Jerome translate the original Greek word in Matthew 11:23, and how did Dante picture the place?

it does this very thing. The English word "hell" has been used in speech for centuries. For instance, when the persecuted Bible translator, William Tyndale, made his translation of the Greek part of the original Bible, he said, in Matthew 11:23, according to his spelling in the year 1525: "And thou Capernaum, which art lyft up unto heaven, shalt be brought doun to hell." When Dr. Martin Luther translated those Christian Greek Scriptures into German in 1522, he used the similarly sounding German word "Hoelle." But when the Roman Catholic Saint Jerome translated the same scriptures from common Greek into Latin, in 383 C.E., he used the word "infernus." So the Italian poet of the fourteenth century, Dante Alighieri, wrote his famous poem entitled Divine Comedy and called the first part of it "Inferno." He pictured the "Inferno" as a deep pit with gradually contracting circles on which the condemned human souls suffered after the death of the body. Was Dante correct?

The religious clergymen of Christendom have created an image of what they understand to be "hell" or "inferno" in the minds of their church people. It is a terrible image. Their long-taught idea of

4. The image that Christendom's clergy create of "hell" depends upon what doctrine that they teach?

"hell" or "inferno" depends upon the doctrine that they teach about the human soul. They imagine that the human soul is something separate and distinct from the human body. Also, that, whereas the human body is mortal and corruptible, the human soul is immortal and incorruptible, it being spiritual and hence invisible, something that we cannot feel with our sense of touch.

⁵ So, as the clergy say, when the human body dies, the human soul does not die but survives, although we cannot see it with our natural eyes. Since it must now leave the body in which it has been dwelling, it must go somewhere in the invisible, spirit world. But where? Simply stated, the good souls go to heaven, but the bad souls go to hell. Heaven is thus set as opposite from hell, and as heaven is a place of everlasting happiness and blessing, so hell must be the place of everlasting suffering, eternal torment. The clergymen locate fire and brimstone there in hell.

⁶ For many centuries the clergymen of Christendom have taught such an idea of "hell." Since they claim that their teaching is what the Holy Bible says about "hell," we are obliged to go directly to the Bible itself to find out exactly what it does say on this subject. O yes, the word "hell" or "inferno" does occur in various Bible translations scores of times, and according to those translations the Bible does teach that there is a "hell."

5. At death the soul goes where, according to the clergy, and how is "hell" contrasted with heaven?

6. Does the Bible teach there is a "hell," and what is the way to determine what such a place is?

But the point is, What did the writers of the Bible say and show that this "hell" is? We must go according to what they show it to be, and not according to what others say that those Bible writers said it was. We can deceive ourselves by twisting what those Bible writers say.

HOW FAR BACK "HELL" EXISTED

⁷ We know that this "hell" existed as far back at least as the year 1750 before our Common Era, which means more than 3,720 years ago. That was the year when the envious half brothers of Joseph the son of Jacob sold Joseph into slavery in Egypt. Later those half brothers lied to their father Jacob about what had happened to his beloved son Joseph. They gave him the impression that Joseph had been killed by a wild beast. In grief, what did the patriarch Jacob say? Where did he say his son Joseph now was? Jacob was a Hebrew, and the Jerusalem Roman Catholic Bible translation shows the Hebrew word that Jacob used, in Genesis 37: 35. There we read: "All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. 'No,' he said,

'I will go down in mourning to Sheol, beside my son.' Years later, when the half brothers of Joseph asked

for permission to take Joseph's full brother Benjamin down to Egypt, Jacob again used the Hebrew word and said: "If any harm came to him on the journey you are to undertake, you would send me down to Sheol with my



The Italian poet Dante pictured the "Inferno" or "hell" as a place where humans suffered after the death of the body. Was Dante correct?

7. How far back at least do we know that "hell" existed, and what was the ancient-language word that was first used to refer to it?

white head bowed in grief."—Gen. 42:38; see also 44:29, 31.

⁸ Roman Catholics should not overlook the fact that their Saint Jerome's Latin translation of Jacob's words here does not use the Hebrew word Sheol. It uses the Latin word "infernus" and its related word "inferi." But the Roman Catholic Douay translation in English uses the word "hell" in all four places. This means, then, that the Hebrew patriarch Jacob believed that his dear son Joseph was in Sheol, in the *infernus*, in "hell." Also, Jacob expected to go there to join his son.

⁹ Does this not make us wonder? Did Jacob really expect to go to a "hell" such as the clergymen of Christendom have described to the church people for centuries? Did Jacob expect to go to a place of fiery torment of his soul, from which he never could get out; and did he believe that his precious son Joseph was in such a place? So are Jacob and his son Joseph in such a place of eternal fiery torment today after more than 3,600 years since their death? This ought to be hard for us to believe inasmuch as in the very last book of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures the Lord God says through his prophet Malachi: "I loved Jacob, and [his twin brother] Esau I have hated."—Mal. 1:2, 3.

¹⁰ At any rate, when did the patriarch Jacob as a man loved by God go to Sheol, to the *infernus*, to "hell"? This was after he died in the year 1711 B.C.E., and the still living Joseph and his brothers took the embalmed body and buried it in the cave of Machpelah. This is at the city of Hebron, which today is in the land of Israel. In that same cave Jacob's father

8. (a) What word did Jerome use in his Latin translation of Jacob's words? (b) What word did the English Douay Version Bible use, and so where did Jacob believe his son Joseph to be?

9. Why, in view of Malachi 1:2, 3, is it hard for us to believe that Jacob expected to go to such a place as the clergy have long taught?

10. When did Jacob go to "hell," and whom did he join there?

Isaac lay buried, also his grandfather Abraham. Thus Jacob joined Abraham and Isaac in Sheol, in the *infernus*, in "hell."—Genesis 49:33 through 50:13.

¹¹ There is no Bible reason for believing that all three of those Hebrew patriarchs are today suffering in a "hell" of eternal fiery torment. We are helped out of this difficulty of understanding by means of other Bible translators. For example, the former Roman Catholic priest, Martin Luther, translates the word *Sheol* as "the pit" (*die Grube*). And then in the century after Luther, the English Bible that was authorized by King James I of England, in 1611 C.E., translated *Sheol* as "the grave." The Hebrews, the Jews themselves, ought to know what their own word *Sheol* means; and so the English Bible translation by the Jewish Publication Society of America translates the word as "the grave." (1917 C.E.) And so too does the English translation by the Jewish rabbi, Isaac Leeser. (1853 C.E.) Note, however, that *Sheol* does not mean "a grave." It means "the grave," that is, the common grave of all dead mankind. Once we understand this fact about the "hell" as taught in the Holy Bible, it helps us to understand the situation as to dead mankind.

¹² So, beginning with Jacob's use of the Hebrew word, "Sheol" occurs sixty-five (65) times throughout the thirty-nine (39) books of the inspired Hebrew Scriptures. The word was used by the prophet Moses, by Job, by Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah (in Kings), Ezekiel, Hosea, Amos, Jonah and Habakkuk.

¹³ Bible translators have not been uni-

11. (a) How did Martin Luther and the King James Authorized Version help out in understanding what this "hell" is? (b) How did Jewish translators translate their own Hebrew word *Sheol*, and how comprehensive in meaning is this word?

12. How many times does "Sheol" occur in the Hebrew Scriptures, and what men used the word therein?

13. What English terms does the King James Authorized Bible show to be equivalent in meaning, and what does Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 show is not connected with "hell"?

form in rendering that word *Sheol* into their languages. For instance, the English Bible authorized by King James I translates *Sheol* thirty-one times as hell, thirty-one times as "the grave," and three times as "the pit." Any reasonable person will therefore have to admit that in the inspired Hebrew Scriptures the words "hell," "the grave," and "the pit" mean one and the same thing. And there is no connection of it at all with fire, brimstone and eternal torment. If we turn in the English Douay Version Bible to Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, we read: "The living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing more. . . . Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly: for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell [Latin, *inferi*], whither thou art hastening."

¹⁴ No wonder, then, that the patriarch Job, in his terrible sufferings, could say: "Who will grant me this, that thou mayst protect me in hell [Latin, *infernus*], and hide me till thy wrath pass, and appoint me a time when thou wilt remember me?" (Job 14:13, *Douay Version*) The patriarch Job knew that God remembers those in *Sheol*, in "hell," in the *infernus*. Job believed that God would remember him for good because of his faithful integrity toward the true God. The prophet Jonah also appreciated that fact, for, when he was inside the big fish in the Mediterranean Sea he said: "I cried out of my affliction to the Lord, and he heard me: I cried out of the belly of hell [Latin, *inferi*], and thou hast heard my voice." (Jonas 2:3, *Douay*) And then there is the psalmist David, who wrote: "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Latin, *infernus*]; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption."—Ps. 15:10, *Douay*.

14. (a) Why could Job say what he did about "hell" in Job 14:13? (b) How did Jonah and David show that they appreciated that fact also?

WHEN "HELL" DID NOT EXIST

¹⁵ Here, now, is a good time for us to ask, with our corrected understanding of matters from the Bible itself, when was it that "hell," the *infernus*, or *Sheol*, did not exist? This was the time when the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were in the Paradise garden of Eden, almost six thousand years ago. Of that happy time, we read: "And the Lord God had planted a paradise of pleasure from the beginning: wherein he placed man whom he had formed." Later God put the first woman there, alongside Adam.—Gen. 2:8-23; 1:26-28, *Douay*.

¹⁶ "Hell" or *Sheol* did not exist then on earth. There was no cemetery that had been dug by either God or man. The common grave of man such as exists today had not then got started. There was then no need for such a thing, for the Lord God had not created mankind to go eventually either to "hell" (*Sheol*) or to heaven. He lovingly desired mankind to live forever on earth amid paradise conditions. That was why he said to Adam, even before his wife Eve was created: "Of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat. For in what day soever thou shalt eat of it, thou shalt die the death."—Gen. 2:17, *Douay*.

¹⁷ Lest we should pass over this important point, the Lord God, let us note, did not say to Adam that, in whatever day he ate of the forbidden fruit, he would go to a "hell" to suffer consciously forever in fiery torments. He warned Adam that he would die the death for disobedience. Even after Adam followed his wife's example and ate the forbidden fruit, God said to Adam in the sentence of death: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat

15. When did "hell" not exist?

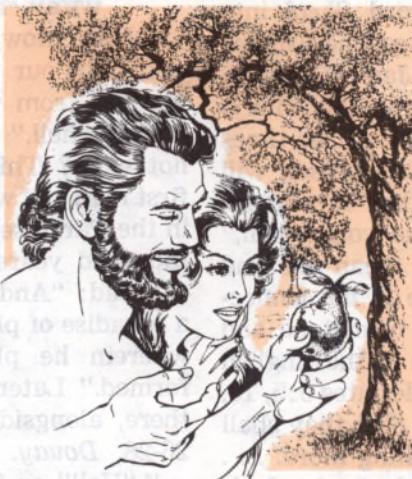
16. Why had "hell" not then begun to exist?

17. (a) What should we note that God said or did not say when warning Adam against disobedience? (b) How do God's words in sentencing Adam to death stand in agreement with the creation account, and so what could not happen when Adam died?

bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou wast taken: for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." (Gen. 3:19, *Douay*) This was in harmony with the description of man's creation, which reads: "And the Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth: and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul." (Gen. 2:7, *Douay*) Man became a living human soul at creation. So at death he would cease to be a living soul, and so there was no soul that survived and that could be consciously tormented in fire and brimstone forever.

¹⁸ Living a condemned life outside the paradise of pleasure for about nine hundred and thirty years, Adam lived more than eight hundred years after the death of his second son Abel. Righteous, God-fearing Abel was murdered by his jealous older brother Cain. No deaths of any of Adam and Eve's children being reported before that, "hell" (the *infernus*, *Sheol*) came into existence with the death and burial of Abel. The Lord God said to the murderous Cain: "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground. And now you are cursed in banishment from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood at your hand."—Gen. 4:1-11; 5:1-5.

¹⁹ Abel was a man of faith in God. In Hebrews 11:4 we read: "By faith Abel



God did not say that if Adam ate the forbidden fruit he would go to a fiery "hell" but that he would die

offered God a sacrifice of greater worth than Cain, through which faith he had witness borne to him that he was righteous, God bearing witness respecting his gifts; and through it he, although he died, yet speaks." (See also 1 John 3:12.) Jesus Christ also spoke of Abel as being righteous. (Matt. 23:35) For that reason the Lord God remembers Abel in his death, and for this reason it was to Sheol, to "hell" or

the *infernus* that Abel went at death and burial. He still lies in the common grave of dead mankind. His death was unlike that of the sentenced sinners, Adam and Eve. We can be sure that God will remember Abel just as he will remember the patriarch Job at the divinely appointed time.—Job 14:13.

"HELL" IN THE CHRISTIAN GREEK SCRIPTURES

²⁰ Since we have just mentioned Jesus Christ, it is timely to ask, Did not Jesus Christ himself teach that there is literal fire in "hell"? Look at what he said in his parable of the rich man and the beggar Lazarus. Jesus said: "And the rich man also died: and he was buried in hell [Latin, *infernus*]. And lifting up his eyes when he was in torments, he saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom: And he cried, and said: . . . I am tormented in this flame." (Luke 16:22-24, *Douay*) This parable was recorded by the Christian disciple Luke in the Greek language,

18. As shown by the Genesis account, with whose death and burial did "hell" begin?

19. What do the Scriptures say about Abel to indicate that he went to Sheol, to be remembered there?

20. What question does Jesus' parable of the rich man and Lazarus raise with regard to "hell," and, according to *The Jerusalem Bible*, what word did Luke's account here use?

and so he did not use the Hebrew word *Sheol*. The Roman Catholic Jerusalem translation of the Bible shows the Greek word used by Luke, for it reads: "The rich man also died and was buried. In his torment in Hades he looked up." Ah, yes, the Greek word Ha'des is here used. And is there fire in Ha'des for tormenting the dead, as *The Jerusalem Bible* would make it appear?

²¹ Before answering that question, we ask: Why does the Greek word Ha'des that is here translated as hell (*infernus*) have the same meaning as the Hebrew word *Sheol*? Why does it not have the idea of Ha'des that is taught in the pagan Grecian mythologies? It was because, after the time of the Greek poet Homer (or before 700 B.C.E.) the proper noun Ha'des came to mean not just the "place of departed spirits" but also "the grave" and "death." (See *Greek-English Lexicon*, by Liddell and Scott, first published in 1843, Volume I, page 21, column 2, under Ha'des, section II.)

²² Hence, when certain Alexandrian Jews, who spoke Greek down in Egypt, began to translate the inspired Hebrew Scriptures into the common Greek, about 280 B.C.E., and started what is now called the Greek *Septuagint Version*, they used the word Ha'des to translate the Hebrew word *Sheol*. So, when translating the words of the patriarch Jacob in Genesis 37:34; 42:38; 44:29, 31, they put the word Ha'des in Jacob's mouth, to mean "the grave," and

21. Why does the Greek word Ha'des here have the same meaning as *Sheol*, and not Homer's idea of Ha'des?

22. So, when the Greek *Septuagint Version* puts Ha'des in the mouth of Jacob, and Ha'des is put in Jesus' mouth, what does it mean and not mean?

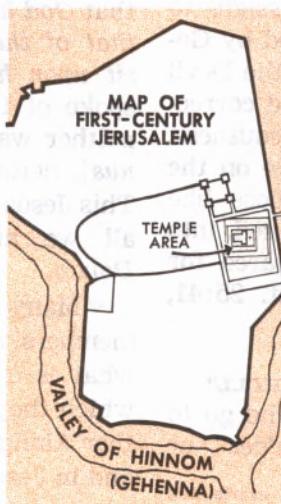
not Homer's false idea of Ha'des. So, when Ha'des is put into the mouth of Jesus Christ, it means no place of fiery torment forever.

"GEHENNA"

²³ The place with which Jesus Christ associated fire was, not Ha'des, but Gehenna. The name really means "Valley of Hin-nom." This, in its literal sense, means the valley of Hinnom to the south and southwest of Jerusalem. In Jesus' day this was used as a city dump or depository for refuse, and fire mingled with brimstone or sulfur was used to dispose of the refuse, even dead bodies of criminals who were thought to be too vile to be buried in Ha'des, the common grave of mankind. In a symbolic sense, the way in which Jesus used it, Gehenna was a symbol of total everlasting destruction, a blotting of one out of existence forever. Annihilation! The name Gehenna occurs just twelve times in

the inspired Christian Greek Scriptures. Jesus is first reported as using the word in Matthew 5:22, 29, 30. There we read (Rotherham's):

²⁴ "Every one who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment,—and whosoever shall say to his brother, Worthless one! shall be liable to the high council; and whosoever shall say, Rebel! shall be liable unto the fiery gehenna. And if thy right eye is causing thee to stumble pluck it out, and cast it from thee,—for it profiteth thee that one of thy members



Gehenna or the valley of Hinnom was a city dump and became a symbol of everlasting destruction

23, 24. (a) With what word did Jesus associate fire, and to what did it literally apply, but what symbolic meaning did it have? (b) How did Jesus, according to Matthew 5:22, 29, 30, warn against Gehenna?

should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into gehenna. And if thy right hand is causing thee to stumble cut it off, and cast it from thee,—for it profiteth thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body into gehenna depart.”—See Mark 9:43-47.

²⁵ To illustrate that Gehenna pictures total everlasting destruction, Jesus said to his twelve apostles: “And be not in fear by reason of them that are killing the body,—and the soul are not able to kill. But fear rather him who is able both soul and body to destroy in gehenna!” (Matt. 10:28, *Rotherham's*) If, now, what is called the “soul” is destroyed, how could it be tormented consciously in fire and brimstone forever? In the Dark Ages it did not take religious persecutors forever to burn the body of a so-called “heretic” at the stake. Fire does not preserve one.

²⁶ For other occurrences of Gehenna, see Matthew 18:9; 23:15, 33; Luke 12:5, and James 3:6. In all these cases Jerome's Latin Vulgate uses the word *gehenna*, and not *infernus*. Those whom God assigns to everlasting destruction as pictured by Gehenna are those who, like Satan the Devil and his demon angels, are beyond correction, beyond recovery to righteousness. That is why Jesus, in his parable on the sheep and the goats, says to those like goats: “Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels.”—Matt. 25:41, *Douay*.

NOT WIPE OUT FOREVER IN “HELL”

²⁷ Does this mean that those who go to “hell,” that is to say, to “Ha'des” or

25. To illustrate that Gehenna means everlasting destruction, what did Jesus say about the soul in Matthew 10:28?

26. In all places where this Greek word occurs, what word does Jerome's Latin translation use, and who are the ones that are assigned to this place?

27. 28. (a) Whose particular experience shows whether those who go to “hell” are wiped out forever? (b) In Psalm 16:10, did David refer to himself, and what did Peter say about this on Pentecost?

“Sheol,” are not wiped out forever there, do not remain there for all time to come? This must be the case if the Holy Bible shows that someone got out of “hell” (*infernus*, Ha'des, Sheol), to stay out forever. Let us remember what the psalmist David wrote: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Latin, *infernus*]; nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption.” (Ps. 15:10, *Douay*; 16:10, *Authorized Version*) Was David here speaking about himself? The Christian apostle Peter says No. On the day of Pentecost of the year 33 C.E., Peter quoted this psalm of David and applied it to the right one. Peter said:

²⁸ “*Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Latin, infernus], nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.* Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David; that he died, and was buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this present day. Whereas therefore he was a prophet, and knew that God hath sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne. Foreseeing this, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For neither was he left in hell [Latin, *infernus*], neither did his flesh see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses.”—Acts 2:27-32, *Douay*.

²⁹ Many persons who have been church members will remember reciting unitedly what is called “The Apostles' Creed,” in which they said: “I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who . . . was crucified, dead, and buried: he descended into hell [Latin, *inferna*]; the third day he rose from the dead; he

29. How does “The Apostles' Creed,” recited by church people, show whether “hell” is a place of eternal torment in fire?

ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty." Thus the reciters of this Creed have expressed the belief that Jesus Christ "descended into hell." Did they mean by those words that he descended into fire and brimstone under the earth in order to be tormented there forever in place of mankind? They could not have meant that, for in the very next words they said: "the third day he rose from the dead." Thus they themselves, as well as the apostle Peter, confess that, in the case of Jesus Christ, "hell" (*infernus*) is not a place from which dead humans, once entering into it, cannot ever get out. Jesus felt no torment there.

³⁰ Jesus Christ was in "hell" (Ha'des or Sheol) for parts of three days (Nisan 14-16, 33 C.E.). As Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 tells us, while he was there he was conscious of nothing. He found no work, reason, wisdom or knowledge there. Though really dead, he was as if he were asleep, inactive, unaware of everything. That is why the Christian apostle Paul writes concerning Christ's resurrection from the dead: "But now Christ is risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep." (1 Cor. 15:20, *Douay*) Truly, then, the resurrection benefited Jesus Christ, who was dead in "hell" (Ha'des or Sheol). And for that reason the resurrection is purposed by God the Almighty to benefit all the rest of the dead in that "hell." Jesus Christ was merely "the firstfruits" of those sleeping there in death. The full crop of the human dead will be awakened and be brought forth in God's appointed time. This is the key idea in the inspired words of the apostle Paul:

³¹ "For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall

30, 31. (a) According to Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, what was Christ's experience down in "hell," and so he was as if he were doing what? (b) In that Jesus Christ is called "the firstfruits" of the dead in "hell," this means what for the rest of those there?

be made alive."—1 Cor. 15:21, 22, *Douay*.

³² That "hell" (Ha'des or Sheol) is the place out of which all the dead are to be released by a resurrection is made sure for us by the words of the resurrected Jesus Christ. About the year 96 C.E., or thirty-two years after the burning of Rome by Emperor Nero, the resurrected Jesus Christ appeared to the apostle John in a vision. This vision is set out in the last book of the Bible, called *Apocalypse* or *Revelation*, and in it he says to the apostle John: "I am the first and the last, and alive, and was dead, and behold I am living for ever and ever, and have the keys of death and of hell [Latin, *infernus*]."

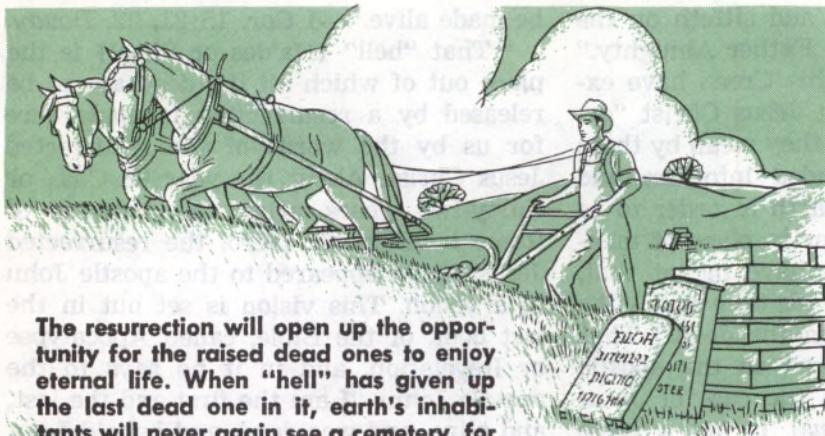
—Apoc. 1:17, 18, *Douay*.

³³ In having the "keys of death and of hell," is it the purpose of the resurrected Jesus Christ to keep those in death and in hell locked up forever? Or does he have to have money paid to him first by relatives or friends of the dead ones before he will use the keys and let those in death and hell out? How selfish and commercialistic that would be for him to take such an advantage of his having the "keys of death and of hell"!

³⁴ In total rejection of such an idea, Jesus said to his apostles: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a redemption for many." (Matt. 20:28, *Douay*) When on earth as a man, Jesus Christ never charged a single silver denarius coin for raising from the dead any of the dead persons whom he brought back to life. Not to keep the dead locked up forever, but to release them lovingly and freely, is the purpose of the resurrected Jesus Christ respecting the use of the "keys of

32. That "hell" is a place from which there is a release is indicated by what words of Jesus in Revelation 1:17, 18?

33, 34. (a) What shows whether Jesus Christ will have to be paid money by relatives and friends before using the keys to release those in death and hell? (b) From what was Jesus Christ himself released, and why has God entrusted to him the "keys"?



The resurrection will open up the opportunity for the raised dead ones to enjoy eternal life. When "hell" has given up the last dead one in it, earth's inhabitants will never again see a cemetery, for "hell" itself will be given the deathblow

death and of hell." God himself, who resurrected his Son Jesus Christ from "hell," entrusted those "keys" to him for that very purpose.

³⁵ Looking forward to that joyful time for him, Jesus Christ said to the Jews: "As the Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son also to have life in himself. And he hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of man. Wonder not at this; for the hour cometh, wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And they that have done good things, shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:26-29, *Douay*) Plainly that resurrection of all those dead in "hell" is for their benefit. It is only after any who have been resurrected from "hell" return to evildoing willfully that their having been resurrected will end up in a judgment of condemnation to everlasting destruction. So the purpose of the resurrection is beneficial, with the eternal benefit of the dead in view. It opens up to them the opportunity to enjoy eternal life in God's new order.

35. (a) What did Jesus say with regard to the joyful time for him to use the key of "hell"? (b) Why or how is the purpose of the resurrection a beneficial one?

³⁶ In that same Revelation or Apocalypse to the apostle John, the resurrected Jesus Christ gave a picture of the time when "hell" will be no more. This is after this old worldly system of things has been destroyed, and God creates new heavens and a new earth, that is, a new heaven-

only government and a new earthly human society. Describing the wonderful scene, John writes:

³⁷ "And I saw a great white throne, and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell [Latin, *infernus*] gave up their dead."—Apoc. 20: 11-13, *Douay*.

³⁸ Ah, yes, when "hell" (Ha'des or Sheol) has given up the last dead one in it, by the resurrection of all the dead for whom Jesus Christ gave his human life as a redemption, then there will be no hell anymore. All the earth around, the inhabitants will not see a single cemetery nor a grave marker. The common grave of mankind will have been destroyed forever. That is why Apocalypse

36, 37. To whom was given a vision of when "hell" will be no more, and how did this one describe the scene?

38. (a) So how will "hell" be put out of existence, and how does the Revelation picture this? (b) How will "death" and wickedness be made to cease?

20:14, 15, *Douay*, goes on to say: "And hell [Latin, *infernus*] and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire." What a glorious judgment day that will be! "Hell" will be given the deathblow. The death that all mankind has

inherited from the sinful Adam and Eve will be put to death, cease to exist because of the bringing of all obedient mankind to the perfection of human life in a paradise of pleasure restored. Evildoing will be stopped by the destroying of all who turn willfully wicked and who must suffer the penalty of second death.

The Beneficiaries OF RESURRECTION FROM "HELL"

AMONG those who are dead in "hell" and who will benefit by the resurrection from the dead will be who? We remember that the patriarch Jacob expected to go to "hell" or Sheol. (Gen. 37: 35) Will he be among the beneficiaries? Yes. We remember the words of Jesus Christ, who, before raising his friend Lazarus from his four-day-long death state, said to the sister Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, although he be dead, shall live." (John 11:25, *Douay*) Just some weeks after that, Jesus had to defend the teaching of the resurrection before Jewish unbelievers, the Sadducees. In doing so he referred to Jacob. In answer to the catch question put by the Sadducees, Jesus said:

² "Now that the dead rise again, Moses also shewed, at the bush, when he called the Lord, *The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the

living: for all live to him."—Luke 20:37, 38, *Douay*.

³ So, from God's standpoint, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were then living. The resurrection of these faithful patriarchs was so certain in God's appointed time, that God spoke of those three men as being then alive, although they were then dead,

3. (a) From whose standpoint are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob now alive, and why? (b) Of what kind of persons is Jehovah the God?



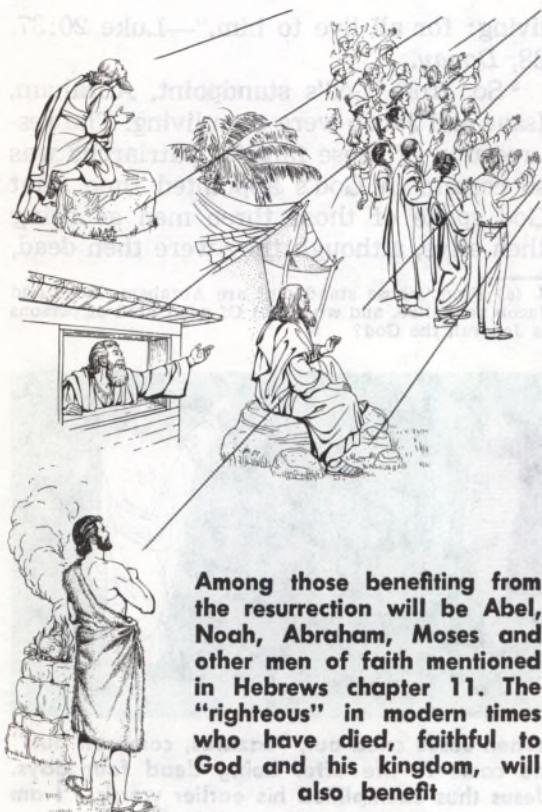
When Jesus cried out, "Lazarus, come on out!" he came to life after being dead four days. Jesus thus exemplified his earlier words: "I am the resurrection and the life"

1, 2. (a) What Hebrew patriarch said he expected to go to "hell"? (b) How did Jesus, when defending the resurrection doctrine, give assurance of Jacob's benefiting therefrom?

unconscious, in "hell," in Ha'des or Sheol. If they were to remain dead forever and never get out of "hell" (Ha'des or Sheol), Jehovah would never have spoken to the prophet Moses at the burning thornbush in the desert of Sinai as being the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So Jesus said God's making this declaration proved that there would be a resurrection of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and, of course, of all others with them in "hell." Jehovah is not a past God of people of the dead past, but is the God of his faithful worshipers who will live in the future by means of resurrection of the dead.

⁴ The patriarch Abraham believed in a resurrection for his son Isaac. In proof of this we have the inspired words of He-

4. How does Hebrews 11:17-19 prove that Abraham believed in a resurrection for his son Isaac?



Among those benefiting from the resurrection will be Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses and other men of faith mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11. The "righteous" in modern times who have died, faithful to God and his kingdom, will also benefit

brews 11:17-19: "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, as good as offered up Isaac, and the man that had gladly received the promises attempted to offer up his only-begotten son, although it had been said to him: 'What will be called "your seed" will be through Isaac.' But he reckoned that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; and from there he did receive him also in an illustrative way [figuratively, *The Jerusalem Bible*; as a type, *Catholic Confraternity Version*]."

⁵ Evidently before the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the men of faith named Abel, Enoch and Noah believed in the resurrection of the dead from "hell," for they are listed among the "so great a cloud of witnesses" who are named in Hebrews, chapter 11. (Hebrews 11:1 through 12:1) When the inspired writer refers to how the prophet Elijah raised to life the son of the widow of Sarepta and how the prophet Elisha raised to life the son of the hospitable woman of Shunem, he says: "Women received their dead by resurrection; but other men were tortured because they would not accept release by some ransom, in order that they might attain a better resurrection.... And yet all these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise, as God foresaw something better for us, in order that they might not be made perfect apart from us." (Heb. 11:35-40) Thus we have the inspired proof that, before the coming of Jesus Christ, men and women of faith in Almighty God Jehovah looked forward to the resurrection of the dead from "hell" or Sheol.

⁶ This is why the woman Martha of Bethany said to Jesus, before he raised her brother Lazarus from the dead: "I know

5. How does Hebrews, chapter 11, indicate that men even before Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and men of faith since, believed in resurrection from "hell"?

6. How did Martha of Bethany and Hannah the mother of Samuel express faith in resurrection from "hell"?

that he shall rise again, in the resurrection at the last day." (John 11:24, *Douay*) That is why, also, the woman Anna (or, Hannah) of more than a thousand years earlier said, when she presented her son Samuel to the high priest of Israel: "The Lord killeth and maketh alive, he bringeth down to hell [Latin, *inferi*; Hebrew, *Sheol*] and bringeth back again."—1 Kings (or, 1 Samuel) 2:6, *Douay*.

THE TRUE CHURCH GETS BACK FROM "HELL"

⁷ Not only did Jesus Christ himself go to hell and get out again, but he assured his apostles that the true Church, the true Christian congregation, would imitate him in this respect. When speaking to the apostle Peter in the hearing of the other apostles, Jesus said: "Thou art Peter [Greek, *Petros*]; and upon this rock [Greek, *petra*] I will build my church and the gates of hell [Greek, *Ha'des*; Latin, *infernus*] shall not prevail against it." (Matt. 16:18, *Douay*) By death the members of the true Christian congregation would enter through the gates into "hell." (Isa. 38:10, 18, *Douay*) But those "gates of hell" would not prevail over the Christian congregation by keeping closed over the congregation forever. Why not? Because the resurrected Jesus Christ, who has the "keys of death and of hell," will use the key and unlock those gates and let his congregation out by a resurrection.

⁸ Thus the "gates of hell" shall not prevail over Christ's congregation, but Christ shall prevail over the "gates of hell" in behalf of his congregation. This explains why he said to the congregation: "Be thou faithful unto death: and I will give thee the crown of life."—Apoc. 2:10; 1:17, 18, *Douay*.

7, 8. (a) In what way will the "gates of hell" not prevail against Christ's true congregation? (b) How does Revelation 2:10 require that Jesus prevail against hell's gates?

⁹ This true congregation of just 144,000 faithful members is called forth from "hell" (*Ha'des*, or, *infernus*) to a heavenly, spiritual resurrection. Thus they become "the bride, the wife of the Lamb." (Apocalypse 21:9 through 22:17, *Douay*) Like a faithful wife, they are united to the heavenly Bridegroom Jesus Christ in wedlock forever. It is written concerning their resurrection: "It is sown a natural body, it shall rise a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:42-44, *Douay*) This heavenly spiritual estate is the "something better" that "God foresaw" for the congregation of faithful followers and imitators of his Son Jesus Christ.—Heb. 11:39, 40.

THE REDEEMED DEAD OF MANKIND GET OUT OF "HELL"

¹⁰ The resurrected Jesus Christ will do more than prevail against the "gates of hell" in behalf of his bridal congregation. He will also prevail against those "gates" in behalf of all mankind for whom he gave his life as a redemption. (Matt. 20:28, *Douay*) He will use his "keys of death and of hell" and unlock those symbolic "gates" and let all these of mankind out by a resurrection to life on earth under the heavenly kingdom of himself and his spiritual bride. Those who had a watery grave in the sea will be brought back to life on dry land. Those who were buried in the earth in single graves, or cemeteries, will likewise be brought out to life on earth under the new government, God's heavenly kingdom by his Son Jesus Christ. Hundreds of thousands today living will survive the coming "great tribulation" to see in actuality what the apostle John saw merely in the apocalyptic vision, which he describes, saying: "And I saw the dead,

9. How many will compose this Christian congregation, and what is the "something better" that "God foresaw" for them?

10. (a) In behalf of whom else will Jesus prevail over hell's gates, and how? (b) So what was it that the apostle John saw take place in vision that others will see take place in actuality?

great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, . . . and the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell [Latin, *infernus*; Greek, *Ha'des*] gave up their dead that were in them."—Apoc. 20: 12, 13; 7:14, *Douay*.

¹¹ This will include Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Job, Moses, yes, all the dead in "hell" who went there before the Christian congregation was founded on the day of Pentecost of the year 33 C.E., when the apostle Peter spoke to thousands of Jews about the resurrection of Jesus Christ from "hell" (the common grave of dead mankind). It will include also all those of mankind who went to "hell" since that day of Pentecost and who did not become members of the bridal congregation of Jesus Christ. None of these belong to the "church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens." (Heb. 12:23, *Douay*) For all of these Jesus Christ died as a redemption sacrifice, just as the Christian apostle John wrote, saying to the congregation: "And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, *Douay*) In agreement with that the Christian apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: "For there is one God, and one mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus: who gave himself a redemption for all."—1 Tim. 2:5, 6, *Douay*.

¹² However, some persons might be alarmed at the thought of this. They might say: 'Will this not flood the earth with thousands of millions of evildoers and fill the earth with more wickedness and violence than it has ever had before? For did not the apostle Paul say: "There shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust"?' (Acts 24:15, *Douay*) Certainly in

11. This includes whom that went to "hell" before Pentecost of 33 C.E., and includes whom that went there since, according to 1 John 2:2 and 1 Timothy 2:5, 6?

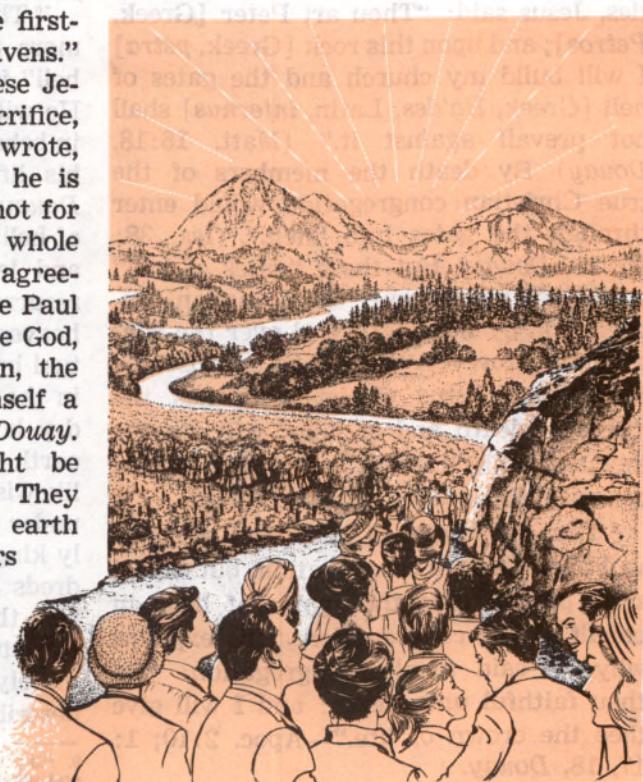
12. Why might the thought of all these returning from "hell" alarm some people?

the resurrection from "hell" the unjust ones will far outnumber the just ones. And for ordinary human rulers that would create a serious problem.

¹³ The opening of the "gates of hell" is not going to let loose upon earth's inhabitants legions of demons and their prince, Satan the Devil. They have never been down in "hell" waiting for Jesus Christ to use the key and unlock "hell's" gates.

¹⁴ Happily for mankind, at the time of emptying "hell" Satan and his demon angels will be bound as with chains and isolated and restrained in what the apostle John calls "the bottomless pit" or "the Abyss."

13, 14. (a) What forces will the opening of "hell's" gates not release upon earth's inhabitants, and why not? (b) What about imperfect human governments at that time and those finally found supporting them?



After the coming universal war, the God-fearing survivors will have a righteous new start—without the Devil and his demons to dominate the earth

(Apoc. 20:1-3, *Douay; The Jerusalem Bible*) So these spirit forces that have spurred mankind onward in wickedness will be gone. There will be a righteous heavenly government over all the earth and all the resurrected dead. Moreover, the imperfect human governments that held control of the earth will be no more. They will have been crushed to pieces in the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, immediately before the binding and abyssing of their invisible rulers, Satan the Devil and his legions of demons. (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:11-21; 20:1-3) In that universal "war of the great day" all the people who are found backing those human governments instead of God's kingdom by Christ will be annihilated with them. They will not survive.

¹⁵ Just as human society had a righteous new start in Noah and his family after the global flood of 2370-2369 B.C.E., so humankind will again have a righteous new start in the God-fearing survivors of the universal war at Har-Magedon, and this time without Satan the Devil and his demons being still on the loose to dominate the earth from their invisible, superhuman position. (Matt. 24:37-39; Genesis 8:15 through 9:17) Even the apostle Peter looked forward to that glorious time for mankind. Shortly before the cruel persecution blazed forth from Roman Emperor Nero against the Christian congregation, Peter wrote: "We look for new heavens

15. (a) What kind of start will human society be given as foreshadowed by Noah and his family after the flood? (b) What will be the new heavens to which Peter looked forward, and what will it enforce here?



It will be a glorious time to live in God's righteous and paradisaic new order and a thrilling joy to talk with resurrected faithful ones such as Abel and Abraham. Will you enjoy this privilege by doing the right thing now?

and a new earth according to his promises, in which justice dwelleth." (2 Pet. 3:13, *Douay*) The "new heavens," namely, God's heavenly kingdom

in the hands of Jesus Christ, who has been given all the needed power in heaven and in earth, will irresistibly enforce absolute righteousness in the earth. (Matt. 28:18) So it is not for nothing that genuine Christians are praying: "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:9, 10, *Douay*.

¹⁶ Bear this fact in mind: "Hell" will not disgorge all its dead at one time, on one twenty-four-hour day, thus producing a bewildering population explosion for the relatively few God-fearing survivors of the universal war of Har-Magedon. The release of the dead from "hell" will be wisely controlled from heaven by God's kingdom under Christ. (1 Cor. 15:23) None of the politicians of the past, destroyed worldly governments will be put back into power. Oversight of human affairs will be put into the hands of lovers of Jehovah God, from Abel to fearers of Jehovah God today, who, during the past millenniums of time, have looked forward to God's kingdom.

¹⁷ All those who are released from "hell" and who, after an adequate period of test, stubbornly refuse to learn righteousness and obey the Kingdom will be executed. Their names will not be written in the "book of life" as worthy of eternal life. No, they will not be returned to "hell" and stay there forever. John tells us: "And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the pool of fire."—Apoc. 20:14, 15, *Douay*.

16. How will the resurrection from "hell" proceed, and oversight of human affairs will be put in whose hands on earth?

17. Why will some not get their names written in the "book of life," and what will be done with these?

¹⁸ That "pool of fire," which symbolizes "the second death," corresponds with what Jesus when on earth called Gehenna. So it symbolizes eternal destruction, a death from which there is no resurrection. Just as death inherited from Adam and Eve and "hell" will forever cease to exist, so will these incorrigible earthly subjects of God's kingdom cease to exist and will be as if they had never been. This will leave on earth only those who love righteousness with all their heart and who prove themselves unbreakably loyal to the theocratic government of Jehovah God the Almighty. These are the ones found written in the "book of life," whom the Supreme Judge Jehovah justifies to endless life in peace and happiness in the Paradise of Pleasure then restored to earth.

¹⁹ Just think of it, though! There are people today living on this polluted, war-threatened earth who will never go to "hell." They will never have to be brought back from "hell." Who are these, and is it possible for any of us to be among them?

²⁰ These are sheeplike God-fearing persons who wholeheartedly give their support and service to the heavenly kingdom of God's dear Son Jesus Christ and hence abstain from the politics of this world. (Matt. 25:31-46) Now, before the universal war of Har-Magedon, they sincerely hail Jehovah God on his heavenly throne and his Lamblike Son Jesus Christ. This class of Christian witnesses of Jehovah will be preserved alive through the violent end of the present global system of things and be ushered into God's new system of things in which righteousness must dwell. (Rev. 7:9-17) There the death inherited

18. (a) What does the "pool of fire" symbolize, and what happens to them therefore? (b) What kind of persons will "second death" of such unwritten ones leave on earth, and to what will the Supreme Judge justify them?

19, 20. (a) Who are those who will never go to "hell," and why not? (b) How may you be among them?

from Adam and Eve, which has already put thousands of millions in "hell," will be wiped out, so that these survivors will never have to fear "hell" then. By continuing their course of righteousness and

devotion to God's kingdom by Christ, they will live on to see the sea and "hell" give up the dead in them. Yes, by doing the right thing now, you may be among those blessed survivors.

Why You Can Believe in A RESURRECTION

MILLIONS today do not believe in a resurrection. Some even pride themselves in not being like people who, in their estimation, are gullible enough to believe in something so farfetched as the raising of the dead to life. But does their unbelief make it easier for them to face the prospect of death? Does it make them less sorrowful when their loved ones die? Would they not be far better off if they had the positive hope of living again and seeing dead loved ones return to life? Is such a positive hope possible?

For the person who believes that God exists, belief in a resurrection is not difficult. It is reasonable for him to conclude that the One who originally started off human life is also wise enough to restore the dead to life, to re-create dead humans. This One, Jehovah God, has promised a resurrection or re-creation and given reassurance that his promises are reliable.

Centuries ago, in the case of Abraham and Sarah, Jehovah God performed a miracle comparable to a resurrection. All human possibility was against Sarah's bearing a son, for she had stopped menstruating. (Gen. 18:11) And Abraham was

as good as dead in the sense of being unable to father offspring. Yet the humanly impossible happened. Jehovah God revived the reproductive powers of Abraham and Sarah, thereby preserving the family line of Abraham through his beloved wife Sarah. Concerning this miracle, the inspired letter to the Hebrews states: "By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed, even when she was past the age limit, since she esteemed him faithful who had promised. Hence also from one man, and him as good as dead, there were born children just as the stars of heaven for multitude."—Heb. 11:11, 12.

Stupendous as the reviving of the reproductive powers of Abraham and Sarah was, Jehovah God performed still other miracles that furnish faith-strengthening examples of his resurrection power. He empowered some of his devoted servants to perform actual resurrections. The prophet Elijah resurrected the only son of a widow at Zarephath. (1 Ki. 17:21-23) His successor the prophet Elisha raised the only son of a prominent, hospitable woman at Shunem. (2 Ki. 4:8, 32-37) Jesus Christ resurrected the daughter of

Jairus, a presiding officer of a synagogue; the only son of a widow at Nain, and his dear friend Lazarus, who had been dead four days. (Mark 5:22, 35, 41-43; Luke 7:11-17; John 11:38-45) At Joppa, the apostle Peter raised Dorcas (Tabitha) from the dead. (Acts 9:36-42) And the apostle Paul resurrected Eutychus after a fatal accident.—Acts 20:7-12.

The most remarkable resurrection of all, however, was that of Jesus Christ. That resurrection provided the strongest proof that there will be a resurrection of the dead. As the apostle Paul told those assembled at the Areopagus in Athens, Greece: “[God] purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead.”—Acts 17:31.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ was historically confirmed by many eyewitnesses. On one occasion he appeared to upward of 500 disciples, most of whom were still alive when the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was so well established that Paul could write in this letter: “If, indeed, there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised up. But if Christ has not been raised up, our preaching is certainly in vain, and our faith is in vain. Moreover, we are also found false witnesses of God, because we have borne witness against God that he raised up the Christ, but whom he did not raise up if the dead are really not to be raised up.”—1 Cor. 15:13-15.

First-century Christians, like the apostle Paul, knew for a certainty that Jesus had been resurrected. They were willing to face hardships of all kinds, even death itself, in the full assurance that they would be rewarded in the resurrection.

WHAT WILL BE RESURRECTED?

The resurrection of Jesus Christ reveals that raising the dead does not mean the bringing back to life of the identical body. Jesus was not resurrected to human life but to spirit life. First Peter 3:18 tells us: “Why, even Christ died once for all time concerning sins, a righteous person for unrighteous ones, that he might lead you to God, he being put to death in the flesh, but being made alive in the spirit.” At his resurrection Jesus received a body, not of flesh and blood, but one suitable for heavenly life.—1 Cor. 15:40, 44-50.

To be seen by his disciples after his resurrection, Jesus Christ took on flesh along with appropriate clothing, just as angels had done earlier when they appeared to humans. This explains why Jesus’ disciples did not always recognize him at first and why Jesus could appear and disappear suddenly. (Luke 24:15-31; John 20:13-16, 26) Be it also remembered that Jesus was not buried with clothing but was wrapped up in fine linen bandages. After his resurrection the bandages remained in the tomb. So just as Jesus had to materialize clothing, he also took on flesh to make himself visible to his disciples.—Luke 23:53; John 19:40; 20:6, 7.

This may give rise to the questions, What about those who, unlike Jesus Christ, will be resurrected to earthly life? Will their bodies be exact duplicates of what they were at the moment of death? No, that would not be reasonable, as this would mean that they would be brought to life in a condition just short of death. Those who were resurrected in the past were not brought back in the sickly condition that led to their death. Though not perfect at the time of their resurrection, they had a whole, sound body.

Manifestly the same body, of exactly the same atoms, could not be restored to life. Through the process of decay the human

body is reconverted into organic chemicals that may be absorbed by vegetation. People may eat this vegetation. As a result, the elements making up the original person can come to be in other people. Obviously the same atoms cannot be in the original person and in all the others at the time of the resurrection.

Jehovah God, however, can reconstruct the same person in the resurrection. We are what we are because of our personality, experiences and mental growth, not because of the physical substance making up our bodies. Approximately seven years ago the molecules that made up your body were different from what they are today. They have been replaced. So the gradual turnover that is accomplished in about seven years of your life can be performed instantaneously in the resurrection.

While this may sound almost unbelievable, yet it is not too different from what takes place at the time of human conception. The tiny cell that is formed by the uniting of the sperm and the egg has the potential of becoming a person different from any other person that has ever lived. Within this cell there is, in effect,

a pattern of what the person to develop from it will be like. This pattern becomes part of the body of the human that develops. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that man's Creator can resurrect or re-create a body with the personality and life record of the dead person?

Thus resurrection or re-creation actually depends upon God's memory of the life pattern of humankind. We can have confidence in that memory. Why, even imperfect men can preserve and reconstruct visible and audible scenes by means of videotape. How much greater is God's ability to keep records, for he calls all the countless stars by name! (Ps. 147:4) Because of his perfect memory of life patterns and his purpose to resurrect the dead, Jehovah God could count faithful men like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as being alive.—Luke 20:37, 38.

Truly there is abundant reason to believe in the resurrection or re-creation of the dead. Belief in the resurrection is based on God's reliable promises, historically verified resurrections in the past and trust in God's ability to preserve and reconstruct life patterns perfectly.

God Resurrected A NATION

IN THE year 607 B.C.E. Jerusalem was destroyed and a great number of the surviving Jews were dragged off into Babylonian exile. The Jewish nation was practically dead. The majority of the exiles had no hope of living again as a united nation in their God-given land. The

land of Babylon appeared to be the burial place of their nation. Would Jehovah God resurrect the dead nation?

Such a resurrection would not be too difficult for the Almighty God to perform. Earlier he had empowered the faithful prophets Elijah and Elisha to raise the

dead to life. (1 Ki. 17:17-24; 2 Ki. 4:32-37; 8:4, 5; Heb. 11:35) So it should come as no surprise that Jehovah God, in a vision, revealed to the prophet Ezekiel that he would revive the dead nation.

After coming under the operation of God's spirit, Ezekiel found himself in the midst of a valley plain filled with dry human bones. Then Ezekiel heard a voice, "Son of man, can these bones come to life?" "Sovereign Lord Jehovah," answered Ezekiel, "you yourself well know." It was not long before Ezekiel also knew the answer to that question. He was commanded to address those bones with the words: "O you dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said to these bones: 'Here I am bringing into you breath, and you must come to life. And I will put upon you sinews and cause to come upon you flesh, and I will overlay upon you skin and put in you breath, and you must come to life; and you will have to know that I am Jehovah.' "—Ezek. 37:1-6.

A miracle! "A sound began to occur . . . and here there was a rattling, and bones began to approach, bone to its bone." The dry bones became reclothed with sinews, flesh and skin. This is something that scientists even in the twentieth century cannot accomplish. Although knowing how to put human skeletons together, they cannot put sinews and flesh upon those reconstructed bones and the vital organs within the framework. But Jehovah God, in vision, represented himself as doing the humanly *impossible*.—Ezek. 37:7, 8.

Then came the most amazing thing of all. As divinely directed, Ezekiel called upon the wind to blow upon those reconstructed human bodies. At that "breath proceeded to come into them, and they began to live and stand upon their feet, a very, very great military force."—Ezek. 37:9, 10.

How awe-inspiring this must have been to Ezekiel! As a "great military force" or army, those reanimated ones were no weaklings. They were able-bodied persons qualified for military service. Ezekiel was thus privileged to see in a visionary way the resurrection of the Jewish nation. This is confirmed by the explanation given to him right afterward. We read:

"As regards these bones, they are the whole house of Israel. Here they are saying, 'Our bones have become dry, and our hope has perished. We have been severed off to ourselves.' Therefore prophesy, and you must say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: 'Here I am opening your burial places, and I will bring you up out of your burial places, O my people, and bring you in upon the soil of Israel. And you will have to know that I am Jehovah when I open your burial places and when I bring you up out of your burial places, O my people.'" 'And I will put my spirit in you, and you must come to life, and I will settle you upon your soil; and you will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have spoken and I have done it,' is the utterance of Jehovah."—Ezek. 37:11-14.

The exiled Jews, then inclined to hopelessness, were to become reanimated with new hope based upon the unbreakable word of Jehovah. As Jehovah's mouthpiece, Ezekiel, by his prophesying, was to have a part in the enlivening of those depressed Israelites with hope of restoration to their beloved homeland, hundreds of miles away. But Jehovah was the One who, by putting his holy spirit in the repentant Israelites, would really organize them and make them alive with eagerness and willingness to be restored to their own soil. He was the One that would miraculously open the way for them to leave their "burial places" in the land of Babylon and go back to the "soil of Israel." The "whole house of Israel" was to share in this, including members of the ten tribes that had been deported earlier by the Assyrians.

The prophetic vision was fulfilled. In

537 B.C.E., King Cyrus the conqueror of Babylon issued his decree freeing the Israelites to leave their exile in Babylon and return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple of their God. Cyrus gave the responsibility for this to Jehovah. The decree, as set forth at 2 Chronicles 36:23, reads:

"This is what Cyrus the king of Persia has said, 'All the kingdoms of the earth Jehovah the God of the heavens has given me, and he himself has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, Jehovah his God be with him. So let him go up.'

The purpose for such 'going up' to Jerusalem is presented in the additional details provided in the book of Ezra:

"So let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel—he is the true God—which was in Jerusalem. As for anyone that is left from all the places where he is residing as an alien, let the men of his place assist him with silver and with gold and with goods and with domestic animals along with the voluntary offering for the house of the true God, which was in Jerusalem."—Ezra 1:3, 4.

When Cyrus the Great thus associated Jehovah with this unexpected event, the Israelites knew that Jehovah was the One responsible for opening their burial places in Babylon and bringing them out alive for further activity in his service and worship in their desolated homeland. Assisted by sympathetic Israelites who could not then conveniently leave Babylon, 42,360 Israelites responded to Jehovah's outpoured spirit and became alive to the opportunity to repopulate the hills, mountains and valleys of the soil of Israel, rebuild Jerusalem and its temple and restore Jehovah's worship there. More than 7,500 non-Israelite slaves and professional singers accepted the privilege to go with them for the united service of Jehovah. (Ezra 2:64-67) This was indeed like a "very, very great military force."—Ezek. 37:10.

A MODERN-DAY RESURRECTION

The historic fulfillment of Ezekiel's vision of the valley plain full of dry bones was as prophetic as the vision itself. This future fulfillment is pointed to in the book of Revelation, written more than seven centuries after Ezekiel's vision. There the reviving of spiritual Israel is depicted as follows:

"When they have finished their witnessing, the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss will make war with them and conquer them and kill them. And their corpses will be on the broad way of the great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt, where their Lord was also impaled. And those of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their corpses for three and a half days, and they do not let their corpses be laid in a tomb. And those dwelling on the earth rejoice over them and enjoy themselves, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those dwelling on the earth.

"And after the three and a half days spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon those beholding them. And they heard a loud voice out of heaven say to them: 'Come on up here.' And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies beheld them."—Rev. 11:7-12.

In the modern outworking of this prophetic picture the remnant of Christian spiritual Israelites were killed, as far as their work of prophesying and witnessing publicly and freely was concerned. This came at the climax of the international persecution against them in the last year of World War I. They came into a spiritual condition just like that of the dry bones seen by Ezekiel in the valley plain, in Babylon. (Gen. 11:2-9) Their continuing in this condition was pictured as being for three and a half days, long enough for rigor mortis to take hold of a corpse. However, in the spring of the following year, 1919 C.E., "spirit of life from God" entered them and resurrected them to vigorous public activity again in preaching

"this good news of the kingdom" internationally. (Matt. 24:14) The 'going up to heaven in the cloud' indicated that they were religiously separated from the "great city which is in a spiritual sense called Sodom and Egypt" (antitypical Jerusalem or Christendom, the predominant religious member of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion). They came to know very definitely that Jehovah had opened their "burial places" in Babylon the Great and brought them out spiritually alive, restoring them to their proper spiritual estate.

What Jehovah God did in resurrecting both natural and spiritual Israel forcefully illustrates that his promises are dependable. It is also noteworthy that the ancient

Hebrews, including the forefather of the Israelites, Abraham, believed in the resurrection of the dead. Concerning Abraham's faith in Jehovah's power to make dead things live, we read: "(He [Abraham] is the father of us all, just as it is written: 'I have appointed you a father of many nations.') This was in the sight of the One in whom he had faith, even of God, who makes the dead alive and calls the things that are not as though they were." (Rom. 4:16, 17) Though not to be viewed as depicting the resurrection of the human dead, Ezekiel's vision of a valley plain full of dry bones is in agreement with belief in a resurrection. So the vision's fulfillment provides additional confirmation of the resurrection hope.

Are You

RESPONDING TO GOD'S LOVE?

GOD'S purpose to restore the dead to life is an expression of his love. He is under no obligation to sinful, dying mankind. He does not owe dead humans a resurrection. Yet his love for the world of mankind is so great that he did not spare his dearest Son in order to provide a basis for dealing with mankind and restoring dead humans to life. (Rom. 8:32) As Jesus Christ said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life."—John 3:16.

What Jehovah God did in giving his Son made it possible for millions who died

without a real knowledge of him to be restored to life and come to know and love him. In the case of those who have entered into a relationship with God, the resurrection hope has enabled them to endure faithfully to the very death and to find comfort upon losing loved ones.—1 Thess. 4:13, 14; Rev. 2:10.

How are you responding to God's love? Is it moving you to get to know him better, to learn as much as you can about his ways and dealings with mankind?

By means of his spirit, Jehovah God guided about forty different men over a period of some sixteen centuries to write a dependable record of his purposes, ways

and dealings. That record is contained in the sixty-six books of the Holy Bible. It reveals what Jehovah God did in dealing with individuals, peoples and nations through the course of many centuries. It helps us to appreciate God's reaction to a great variety of circumstances and the reasons for his actions. Thus, by means of the Bible, we can come to know God well.

If you are moved to study the Bible because of a sincere desire to know God better, you are responding to God's love. You show that you appreciate that God has provided a dependable written record for mankind.

Of course, study of the Bible in itself is not enough. We must also want to apply the things learned, heeding his commands and imitating the endearing qualities of God—his love, justice, compassion and mercy. "This is what the love of God means," wrote the inspired apostle John, "that we observe his commandments." —1 John 5:3.

We can rest assured that whatever God commands us in his Word will be for our benefit. Being a God of love, justice and infinite wisdom, he has laid down only such commands as would ensure the happiness and welfare of humankind. A faithful servant of God who deeply appreciated this was King David. He made this acknowledgment: "The law of Jehovah is perfect, bringing back the soul. The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise. The orders from Jehovah are upright, causing the heart to rejoice; the commandment of Jehovah is clean, making the eyes shine. The fear of Jehovah is pure, standing forever. The judicial decisions of Jehovah are true; they have proved altogether righteous. They are more to be desired than gold, yes, than much refined gold;

and sweeter than honey and the flowing honey of the combs. Also, your own servant has been warned by them; in the keeping of them there is a large reward." —Ps. 19:7-11.

One of the commands resting upon Christians is that they meet regularly with those who desire to increase in the accurate knowledge of God. When some were neglecting such meeting together in the first century C.E., they were encouraged: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another." —Heb. 10:24, 25.

Assembling with others can be an expression of our love for them. Is it not true that we delight to be with those whom we love? So, then, were we to neglect meeting with those wanting to do God's will, would we not, in effect, be saying that we do not love them enough to want to be with them?

Meetings of devoted Christians have a wholesome purpose. What is that purpose? It is to provide encouragement to manifest love in all aspects of life and to abound in fine works. Such fine works include rendering material aid and other kindnesses to needy ones, assisting people to gain accurate knowledge of God's will and maintaining wholesome, upbuilding speech and upright conduct.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Eph. 4:28; Phil. 4:14-19; Titus 2:6-10; Jas. 1:27.

The sincere, heartfelt expressions made by those in attendance at Christian meetings contribute toward 'inciting others to love and fine works.' Those hearing such expressions are strengthened thereby to continue in their faithful service to God.

If you are not now associating with Jehovah's Christian witnesses, we invite you

to investigate whether they are truly a people who are responding to God's love. In making your investigation, apply the rule set forth by Jesus Christ: "By their fruits you will recognize them. Never do people gather grapes from thorns or figs from thistles, do they? Likewise every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit; a good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit."—Matt. 7:16-18.

Rightly you should expect to find a people who respect the Bible. They should be demonstrating by word and deed that they believe that "all Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

This means that you should be able to observe in the lives of Jehovah's Christian witnesses that their applying Bible teaching has produced better husbands and fathers, better wives and mothers and better

sons and daughters. You should be able to see a people who are striving to do what God requires of Christians:

"Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness. But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you. Therefore, become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved you and delivered himself up for you as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling odor. Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people; neither shameful conduct nor foolish talking nor obscene jesting, things which are not becoming, but rather the giving of thanks. . . . Go on walking as children of light, for the fruitage of the light consists of every sort of goodness and righteousness and truth."—Eph. 4:31-5:9.

If you wish to be among people who desire to conform their lives to these lofty requirements, we invite you to go to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses nearest your home. Why not do so this week?

even something as precious and indispensable as their seeing eyes, to assist him in seeing. Similarly Jesus Christ made reference to the eye as representing something gifted with sight when he said: "If, now, that right eye of yours is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you." (Matt. 5:29) The use of sight to look at something causing one to stumble to a spiritual fall was to be deadened. Neither Jesus nor Paul were discussing the subject of transplanting body organs.

● At the time of baptism, what is the proper attire for a woman?—U.S.A.

The Bible does not say that either a man or a woman should wear a special garment at the time of baptism. So it is up to the woman to decide what she considers to be appropriate.



- Does Galatians 4:15 show how Christians should view the transplanting of body organs?—U.S.A.

Galatians 4:15 reads: "If it had been possible, you would have gouged out your eyes and given them to me." Here the apostle Paul was simply using a figure of speech. So great was the regard and affection the Galatians had for Paul that they would have been willing to sacrifice anything useful to themselves, yes,

Many women find that a modest swimsuit serves that purpose well. In some parts of the world women wear a dress or a robe. Of course, in choosing what to wear at the time of her baptism, a woman should keep in mind the seriousness of the occasion. Manifestly it would be unbecoming for her to wear a swimsuit that would be considered extreme and shockingly revealing. Neither would she wear a dress that immodestly clung to the body when wet. In harmony with 1 Timothy 2:9, her choice should reflect "modesty and soundness of mind."

● Why are women allowed to speak up at the meetings of Jehovah's Christian witnesses even though 1 Corinthians 14:34 says that "it is not permitted for them to speak"?—U.S.A.

The application of the apostle Paul's inspired command should be understood in the light of the context. When Paul wrote, the meetings of the congregation at Corinth, including those meetings where unbelievers were present, lacked order. More than one person at a time would be prophesying or speaking in a tongue. (1 Cor. 14:22-32) Evidently some women there would raise challenging questions and dispute with men appointed to teach the congregation. Thus these women were actually assuming the position of teachers and ignoring the position of headship assigned to the man.—1 Cor. 11:3.

Correcting the situation, Paul called attention to the fact that "God is a God, not of disorder, but of peace." (1 Cor. 14:33) Respecting women, he wrote: "Let the women keep silent in the congregations, for it is not permitted for them to speak, but let them be in subjection, even as the Law says. If, then, they want to learn something, let them question their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in a congregation." (1 Cor. 14:34, 35) This admonition is in agreement with Paul's later words in his first letter to Timothy: "Let a woman learn in silence with full submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence."—1 Tim. 2:11, 12.

Accordingly, the command for women not to speak applied whenever such speaking had the unwholesome effect of undermining the authority of the men in the congregation. That it did not rule out all speaking on the part of women is evident from 1 Corinthians 11:5: "Every woman that prays or prophesies with her head uncovered shames her head." However, it would have been dis-

graceful for women to raise challenging questions or to lift themselves up above the men assembled and begin instructing them. For them to do such things would also have brought reproach on their husbands.

In keeping with the apostolic pattern, women in the congregations of Jehovah's Christian witnesses do not teach the congregation at public meetings. They do not exercise authority over men. Any speaking they do is under the direction of men appointed to oversee the meeting. Thus at no time does their speaking contradict the authority men exercise in the congregation.

● Does not the Bible example in which Jehovah expressed his disapproval of Onan for wasting his semen show that the use of contraceptives is wrong?—U.S.A.

No, for an examination of the record about Onan reveals that he was not put to death for practicing birth control.

After the death of his brother Er, Onan was instructed by his father Judah to perform brother-in-law marriage with Tamar. This was with the express purpose of 'raising up offspring' for his dead brother. He would have no right to have relations with her otherwise. Of Onan's response to Judah's command, we read: "Onan knew that the offspring would not become his; and it occurred that when he did have relations with his brother's wife he wasted his semen on the earth so as not to give offspring to his brother. Now what he did was bad in the eyes of Jehovah." (Gen. 38:8-10) Brother-in-law marriage was later incorporated into the Law covenant at Jehovah's command.—Deut. 25:5, 6.

THE NEXT ISSUE

- "Make Disciples, Baptizing Them."
- The Superlative Role of Christ Jesus in God's Purposes.
- Is International Unity Possible?

By acting contrary to the purpose of brother-in-law marriage, Onan demonstrated disrespect for his father. In disobedience to his father's command, he selfishly held back from preserving Er's family line. This was also an expression of hatred for Er, as Onan worked, not for, but against his dead brother's interests. Onan callously disgraced his brother's widow. He selfishly laid bare her nakedness but withheld from her the rightful due of motherhood. He also showed that he had no appreciation for "sacred things," as there was a possibility that the promised Messiah would have come through the offspring he might have fathered by means of Tamar. (Compare Hebrews 12:16.) All these factors reveal that Onan was a wicked man who had no regard for the interests of others when his own interests seemed to be at stake. It is because of the baseness of Onan's reason for failing to give offspring to his dead brother that Jehovah slew him.

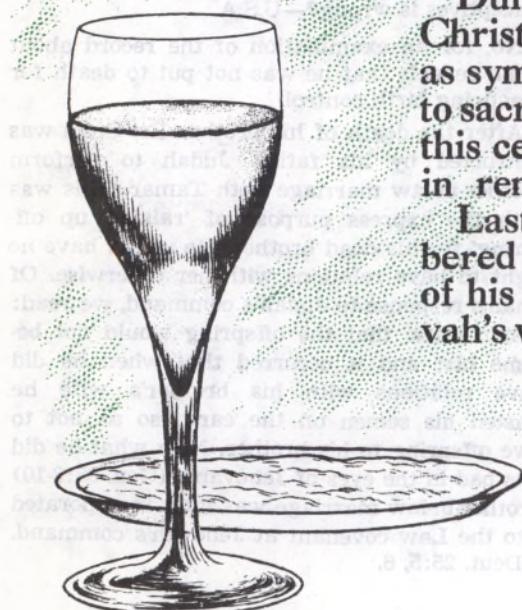
The case of Onan's being one that involved selfish disregard for the purpose of brother-in-law marriage cannot be used to condemn birth control. It is noteworthy that the Bible nowhere discusses the use of contraceptives or birth control in marriage. Nor does it say that Christians are obliged to produce children. Consequently, with regard to birth control, Christian married couples must allow their Bible-trained conscience to govern.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

May 20: How Resurrection Benefits All the Dead in Hell, ¶1-29. Page 232. Songs to Be Used: 98, 44.

May 27: How Resurrection Benefits All the Dead in Hell, ¶30-38, and The Beneficiaries of Resurrection from "Hell." Page 239. Songs to Be Used: 53, 119.

Commemorating Jesus' Death



During a simple ceremony, Jesus Christ used wine and unleavened bread as symbols of the human life that he was to sacrifice for mankind. When instituting this ceremony, he said: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me."—Luke 22:19.

Last year, 3,662,407 persons remembered Jesus by attending the memorial of his death at special meetings of Jehovah's witnesses. You are cordially invited to attend the Memorial observance this year at the Kingdom Hall nearest to your home. It will be held Tuesday, April 17, after 6 p.m. Check with Jehovah's witnesses locally for the exact time.