

# Awake!

MAY 2011



**HUMAN LIFE**  
A PRECIOUS GIFT

# Awake!

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# YOU ARE “WONDERFULLY MADE”!

**W**HEN you reflect on the remarkable abilities of various animals, do you sometimes feel a twinge of envy? Perhaps you wish that you could soar like an albatross, swim like a dolphin, see like an eagle, or run like a cheetah.

Yes, animals have some amazing abilities. But so do we! Indeed, the human body has been described as the perfect machine. Of course, we are much more than a machine. We have creativity, curiosity, imagination, and ingenuity—qualities that move us to devise machines that enable us to do virtually anything we set our minds to. We can fly, even beyond the speed of sound; navigate above or below the surface of vast oceans; gaze some 14 billion light-years into space; peer into the living cell; and design medicines, therapies, and technologies that help us diagnose and treat diseases.

Even with little or no external assistance, healthy, well-trained humans are capable of

doing astonishing things. At the Olympic Games, for example, gymnasts, high divers, ice-skaters, skiers, and others perform amazing feats with a level of agility, artistry, creativity, and grace that leave audiences enthralled.

Do you appreciate the special gifts that you have as a human? Granted, you may not be an Olympic athlete, but you have many gifts for which to be thankful. An ancient Bible writer expressed his appreciation to God in song: “I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made.”\* (Psalm 139:14) Why not think about that statement as you consider the articles that follow? They will examine in more detail some of the wonders of the human body, as well as other far more important traits that make us truly unique.

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\* Readers interested in the question of creation versus evolution might like to read the brochures *Was Life Created?* and *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*. These brochures may be obtained from Jehovah’s Witnesses locally or from the publishers of this magazine.

## BUILT TO CONSERVE ENERGY

Our upright stance is very energy efficient, for it demands little muscle action to sustain the vertical alignment of our body. In fact, we ‘use only 7% more energy standing than when lying down,’ says neuroscience researcher John R. Skoyles. He adds that a dog uses about 70 percent more energy when standing (on all fours) than when lying down.



# APPRECIATE YOUR SPECIAL GIFTS

**T**HE human body is outstandingly versatile. No animal has the sheer range of abilities that we humans do. One reason for our versatility is our upright stance, which not only expands our area of vision but also frees our arms and hands for any number of tasks. Imagine how our activities would be curtailed if we had to walk on all fours!

Another asset is our highly sophisticated sensory system, which will be the focus of this article. The system includes the hands, the ears, the eyes and, of course, our exceptional brain. Let's look at these individually.

## The Human Hand

Our hands are beautiful instruments of amazing precision. With them we can thread a needle or swing an ax, paint a portrait or play the piano. Our hands are also highly sensitive. Even a brief touch may reveal whether a substance is fur, paper, skin, metal, water, or wood. Yes, our hands are much more than implements for grasping and manipulation. They are also a source of knowledge about

our world. And they are a means of conveying warmth and affection.

Why is the human hand so adept, so expressive, so sensitive, and so versatile? The reasons are many. Consider four.

**1.** Our two hands have a total of more than 50 bones, about a quarter of all the bones in the body. The intricate assembly of the parts of the hand—the bones, the joints, the ligaments—gives the human hand extraordinary flexibility.

**2.** The hand has an opposable thumb mounted on a saddle joint, an ingenious configuration of two saddle-shaped surfaces at right angles to each other. This joint, along with the associated muscles and other tissues, gives the thumb amazing flexibility and strength.

**3.** Three sets of muscles control the hand. The two most powerful sets—the extensors and the flexors—are in the forearm and operate the fingers by means of tendons. How bulky and unwieldy the hand would be if these muscles were located in it! The third set, much smaller, which does lie within the hand, gives the fingers precision of movement.

**4.** Your fingers are, in effect, living sensors—the fingertips having about 2,500 receptors in just one sixth of a square inch (1 sq cm). Moreover, the receptors are varied, each kind having its own function, enabling you to feel texture, temperature, wetness, vibration, pressure, and pain. As a result, the human finger is the most sensitive touch sensor known.

## Awake!®

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

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### The Human Ear

Although some animals can hear sound frequencies beyond the range of human hearing, the combination of a human's ears and brain is a formidable one, say audio experts. Our hearing enables us to determine loudness, pitch, and tone and to approximate the direction and distance of a sound source. The frequency range of a healthy human ear is roughly 20 to 20,000 hertz, or cycles of sound oscillation per second. The most sensitive region is in the 1,000 to 5,000 hertz range. Moreover, we may be able to detect a change of just one hertz from, say, 440 hertz to 441 hertz.

Indeed, a healthy ear is so sensitive that it can detect sounds when the vibration, or to-and-fro movement, of the air at the eardrum is less than the diameter of an atom! According to a university course on hearing, "the hu-

man hearing system is close to the theoretical physical limits of sensitivity. . . . There would be little point in being much more sensitive to sound, as all we would hear would be a 'hiss,' the result of the random movement of the atoms and molecules that make up the air.

Eardrum vibrations are amplified mechanically by lever action and are transferred to the inner ear by means of the ossicles—tiny bones known as the hammer, the anvil, and the stapes. But what if your ears are suddenly struck by a deafening sound? In that event, they have a built-in protective mechanism in the form of muscle action that adjusts the ossicles to reduce the force of the sound. However, the ears are not equipped to deal with prolonged loud noise. Such exposure can permanently damage the hearing. So take good care of this "wonderfully made" gift from your Creator.—Psalm 139:14.

**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)°, (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,° Danish,° Dutch,+° English,+° Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,° French,+° Georgian, German,+° Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,+° Japanese,+° Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Korean,+° Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,+° Polish,+° Portuguese,+° Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,+° Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,+° Swahili, Swedish,° Tagalog,° Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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Your auditory system also helps you to detect a sound source. The secret lies in a number of factors, including the shell-like shape of the outer ear, its grooves, the separation of the two ears, and some computational brilliance on the part of your brain. Thus, if the intensity of a sound fades just slightly from ear to ear or if the sound reaches one ear just 30 millionths of a second before it reaches the other, your brain will promptly point your eyes toward the sound source.

Imagine if you had to make all those computations consciously! To be sure, you would have to know how to use very advanced mathematics—and with lightning speed! If an engineer were to design a “hearing” system that came even remotely close to the one your Creator gave you, he would receive many accolades. Yet, how often do you hear people give due credit to God for his awesome works? —Romans 1:20.

### **The Human Eye**

Some researchers estimate that people who can see well gain approximately 80 percent of their information about the world through their eyes. In combination with our brain, our eyes enable us to see in full color, to track moving objects and images smoothly, to recognize patterns and shapes, and to see in three dimensions. Furthermore, we can see in varying degrees of light.

The latter involves a number of complementary mechanisms. For example, the pupil can expand from 0.06 inch to 0.3 inch (1.5 mm to 8 mm) in diameter, resulting in a possible 30-fold increase in the amount of light entering the eye. The light then passes through the lens, which focuses it onto the retina, concentrating the light energy by a factor of 100,000 times. So *never* look directly at the sun with the naked eye!

The retina, in turn, houses two types of photoreceptors—cones (approximately 6 million), which give us color vision and high resolution, and rods (120-140 million), which

are more than a thousand times as sensitive as the cones and help us to see in dim light. Indeed, under optimal conditions, a rod can detect a single photon, or elementary particle of light!

Another adaptive mechanism involves retinal neurons linked to the cones and rods. These neurons adapt “in seconds and can improve night vision by a factor of 10 or more,” says the American Optometric Association. “Neural adaptation is rather like having low-speed and high-speed film simultaneously available in your camera.”

Engineers often design cameras, scanners, and computers, along with compatible software. But the degree of integration and the level of sophistication attained are vastly inferior to those of our sensory system. Ask yourself, ‘Is it reasonable to attribute our vastly superior living sensory system to blind chance, as evolutionists do?’ An ancient servant of God named Job knew little about the human body compared with what we know today. Even so, he felt impelled to say to God: “Your own hands have shaped me.”—Job 10:8.

### **The Human Brain**

With astonishing efficiency, the brain decodes the streams of signals pouring in through the nerves from the sense organs. Moreover, it links these signals with details stored in its memory. Thus, a certain smell may immediately trigger the brain to retrieve a long-forgotten experience or event. And if you see just a small part of something familiar—the tip of your cat’s tail, for example—your brain will fill in the missing details so that you know your cat is nearby.

Of course, your brain was not preprogrammed with images of cats, just as it was not preprogrammed with the smell of a rose or the sound of running water or the feel of fur. Your brain learned these associations. The experiences of people who were born blind but have been given the ability to see, perhaps through surgery, make this evident.



Their brain had to learn to interpret the flood of visual signals now flowing to it. How do such people fare?

They soon report the ability to detect color, motion, and simple forms. But after that, progress varies. Children, especially the very young, continue to learn quite well. But that is not the case with adults. Even their ability to recognize faces remains highly impaired. And, tragically, a common feature with “cured” adults “is initial euphoria followed by disappointment and disorientation with the restored vision, often leading to severe depression,” says the Koch Laboratory at the California Institute of Technology.

These facts help us to appreciate more fully the degree of healing that Jesus Christ performed during his ministry on earth. The blind and the deaf not only had their eyes and ears opened but also began to recognize the sights and sounds around them. Likewise, the mute spoke normally, which would have been especially amazing in the case of those who were born with this disability. (Matthew 15:30; Mark 8:22-25; Luke 7:21, 22) And we can be confident that none of the blind who were healed spiraled into depression. In fact, one healed man courageously defended Jesus, saying to Jesus’ religious enemies: “From of old it has never been heard that anyone opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing at all.”—John 9:1-38.

***Your brain interprets signals streaming in from the senses and links these with details stored in your memory***

In the following article, we will examine some of our inner qualities, including courage and love. Have you wondered why humans alone have the potential to display such qualities? To be sure, the existence of such uniquely human traits has presented a major obstacle to people who wish to prove that we are merely highly evolved animals.

## YOUR AMAZING BRAIN

How does your brain feel, hear, see, and smell? Scientists are baffled. “There is no hint in your brain as to how you see the words you are now reading,” said scientist Gerald L. Schroeder.

He also wrote: “Revelation of the previously unimagined intricate workings of the brain has challenged the simplistic theory of life’s random evolution.” He continued: “Had Darwin known of the wisdom hidden within life, I have confidence that he would have proposed a very different theory.”





## INNER GIFTS THAT ELEVATE US

*We enjoy many beautiful and pleasurable things that are not essential for life*

**A** 50-YEAR-OLD construction worker was waiting for his train at a New York City subway station. Nearby, a young man stumbled to the edge of the platform and fell onto the tracks just as a train was coming. Making a split-second decision, the construction worker leaped onto the tracks and held the other man down as the train passed safely over them both.

During the Nazi era, Jehovah's Witnesses in Europe refused to say "Heil Hitler!" because the German word *heil* means "salvation." Their deeply held belief was that Jesus Christ was their Savior and that "there is no salvation in anyone else." (Acts 4:12) For refusing to idolize Hitler, many were torn away from their home and sent to concentration camps, where they continued to hold to their Christian principles.

These examples show that a human can put the welfare of another—even a total stranger—before self and a respect for principles before personal freedom. Does such behavior reflect the notion that humans are simply highly evolved animals? Or does it

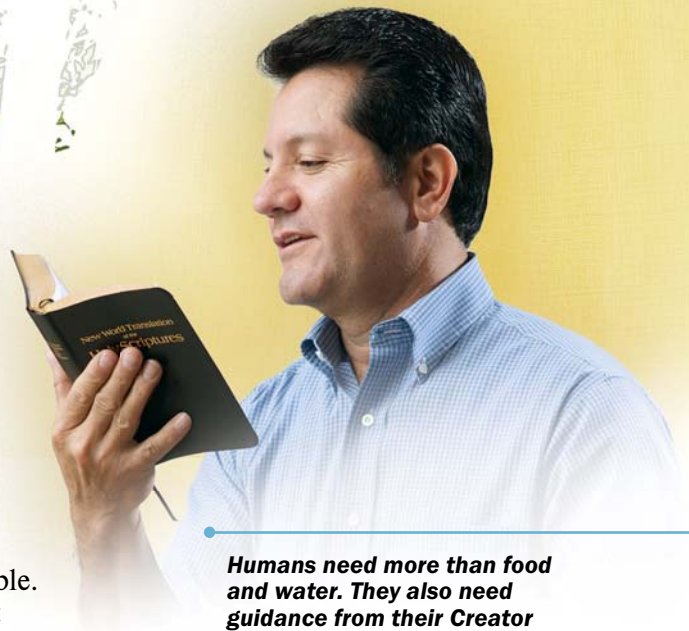
suggest that we are a higher creation? Think about that as you reflect on the following questions:

- Why do we have a conscience, an inner sense of right and wrong?
- Why do we feel awe when we reflect on the wonders of creation?
- Why do we enjoy music, painting, poetry, and other art forms? After all, they are not essential for our survival.
- Why do people of virtually every culture manifest a desire to commune with a higher being?
- Why do we ask: 'Why am I here?' 'What is the purpose of life?'
- When someone dies, why do we engage in various ceremonies and rituals?
- And why is belief in an afterlife virtually universal? Is our inborn desire to live forever just an evolutionary hoax?

### Where Answers Can Be Found

The most reasonable answers to these questions can be found in the most widely





available sacred text in the world—the Bible. Consider what it says about the following:

**Human nature.** Humankind was created “in God’s image,” meaning that we have the potential to reflect our Creator’s qualities. (Genesis 1:27) Thus, the first man was a “son of God.”—Luke 3:38.

**Our need to love and be loved.** “God is love,” says 1 John 4:8. Formed in God’s image, we need love from the cradle to the grave. If I “do not have love, I am nothing,” wrote the Christian apostle Paul. (1 Corinthians 13:2) He also said: “Become imitators of God, as beloved children.”—Ephesians 5:1.

**Our spiritual need.** “Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah’s mouth.” (Matthew 4:4) God’s utterances recorded in the Bible reveal his personality and his purpose for us. We cannot live truly meaningful lives in spiritual ignorance.

***Humans need more than food and water. They also need guidance from their Creator***

**Why we die.** “The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life.” (Romans 6:23) Sin is a failure to live up to God’s moral and spiritual standards. God, however, has purposed to remove sin, rehabilitate all who love and obey him, and grant them everlasting life in Paradise on earth.—Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Luke 23:43.

Do you want to experience life to the full, perhaps developing talents that you never dreamed you could? Do you want to learn more about your Creator and his wonderful purpose for you? If so, then we invite you to examine the Bible, the source of spiritual truth. No other endeavor could give you greater happiness both now and in the future.—Matthew 5:3; John 17:3.

## FROM INFANCY WE NEED LOVE

“Stimulation and love are the recipes the young brain calls for,” says scientist Gerald L. Schroeder. How important, then, that parents heed the Bible injunction, given especially to mothers, for them “to love their children!”—Titus 2:4.



# Honey Ants

## A Desert Delicacy

**Y**UMINIYA, our Aboriginal friend, wants to share one of her desert secrets with us. Leading us into arid scrub north of Alice Springs in central Australia, she carefully examines the sandy ground. There, underneath the mulga trees, a species of acacia, she spies the tiny creatures that will lead us to a sweet reward. They are honey ants.

She digs vigorously, following ant tunnels deep into the sandy soil. Soon her hole is more than three feet (1 m) deep and wide enough to sit in. "You can dig for honey ants any time of the year, but winter is best because in summer you get too hot," she calls out from the hole. We watch as she studies the exposed tunnels with a trained eye. "You need to know which one to follow," she explains.

Yuminiya soon finds the nest. Inside are at least 20 honey ants whose swollen abdomens, as large as grapes, are filled with amber liquid. The little insects





**The swollen abdomen of the honey ant is filled with sweet nectar**

hang from the earthen ceiling, unable to move because of their bloated state. Within minutes, Yuminiya collects over a hundred ants from several chambers. “The honey of these ants is one of our sweetest bush foods,” she says.

### **Living Honey Pots**

Honey ants are one of the most unusual of the more than 10,000 known ant species. Unlike bees, which store honey in honeycombs, honey ants store nectar inside the living bodies of worker ants called repletes. The ant colony draws upon these living “honey pots” during lean times.

To deposit or withdraw food, an ant will use its antennae to tap the right code on the antennae of a replete. The replete then opens its mouth to unlock the “honey pot.” A spe-

cial stomach valve, composed of four flaps, controls the flow in or out. Over a lifetime of several months, a replete can apparently be drained and refilled several times.

Repletes normally live a sedentary but safe existence underground, where they are protected from drought, heat, and insect predators. In this dark subterranean world, they guard against bacteria and fungi by smearing their bodies with antibiotic fluid from a special gland.

Where does the “honey” come from? The food chain, as it were, begins with the sap and nectar of acacia trees. Next, tiny insects called aphids feed on these natural juices. Worker ants then milk the aphids of some of their excess sugar, which is called honeydew, or they collect nectar directly from the trees. Finally, the workers feed this collected liquid to the repletes. Of course, since the inactive repletes have modest nutritional needs, most of the honeydew ends up in the “honey bank”!

But what about the aphids? Are they the losers here? Not at all. For one thing, the ants leave them adequate nectar. For another, the ants protect the aphids from parasites and predators. Yes, both ants and aphids are winners in this symbiotic partnership called mutualism.

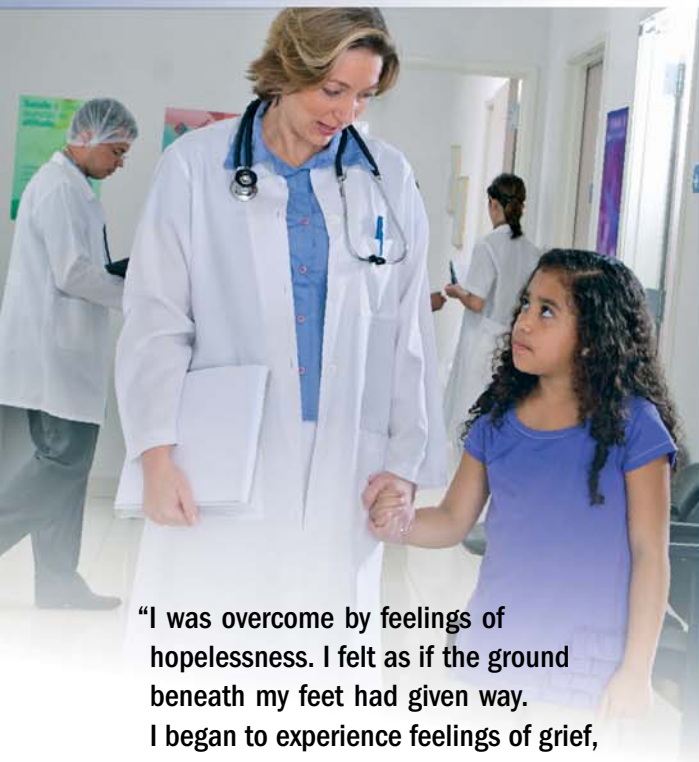
“Go to the ant,” says the Bible, “see its ways and become wise. Although it has no commander, officer or ruler, it prepares its food even in the summer; it has gathered its food supplies even in the harvest.” (Proverbs 6:6-8) How true these words, for ants are indeed cooperative, highly organized, and industrious! And how amazing that these hardy desert dwellers manage to produce such a sweet delicacy in such inhospitable surroundings!

**1. A cow. 2. A sheep. 3. 38,600. 4. C.**

**ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31**



# When a Child Has Cancer



**"I was overcome by feelings of hopelessness. I felt as if the ground beneath my feet had given way. I began to experience feelings of grief, as if my little girl were already dead."**  
—Jaílton, when he discovered that his daughter had cancer.

**L**EARNING that your child has cancer can be an overwhelming, even terrifying, experience. How often does it occur? According to the International Union Against Cancer, although "childhood cancers represent a small percentage of all cancers, each year more than 160,000 children [worldwide] are diagnosed and cancer is the second most common cause of death, after accidents, among children in developed countries." For example, "there are an estimated 9,000 new cases of childhood cancer

each year" in Brazil, states the National Institute of Cancer.

Childhood cancer strikes "a terrible blow that afflicts, without exception, all the members of the family," says the book *A margem do leito—A mãe e o câncer infantil* (At the Bedside—The Mother and Child Cancer). The diagnosis often means surgery, as well as chemotherapy or radiation or both, along with their unpleasant side effects. For the parents, it brings trauma, giving rise to fear, sadness, guilt, anger, and denial. How can parents cope with this painful experience?

A major source of comfort is, of course, caring medical professionals. "They can add facts that may be encouraging, as well as explain and anticipate certain future side effects. This information may make the experience less traumatic," says a doctor from New York who has assisted many cancer patients. Much comfort can also be given by other parents of children who have had cancer. With that in mind, *Awake!* interviewed five such parents who live in Brazil.

● **Jaílton and Néia** "We learned that our daughter had acute lymphoblastic leukemia when she was two and a half years old."

## **How long did the treatment last?**

"She underwent chemotherapy for nearly two and a half years."

## **What side effects did she experience?**

"She vomited a lot and lost her hair. The enamel on her teeth darkened. And on three occasions she developed pneumonia."

## **How did that make you feel?**

"At first we panicked. But when we saw her health improve, we became confident that she would be cured. She is now almost nine years old."

## **What helped you to deal with this traumatic situation?**

"Without a doubt, it was our trust in Jehovah God, who 'comforted us in all our tribulation,' as the Bible states at 2 Corinthis



**Néia, Sthefany, and Jailton**

**Luiz, Aline, and Fabiana**



**Aline and Rosimeri**

ans 1:3, 4. Our Christian brothers and sisters also gave us marvelous support. They wrote letters of encouragement, they phoned, they prayed with us and for us, and they even helped us financially. Then, when our daughter had to be moved to a hospital in another state, the Witnesses there provided us with accommodations and took turns taking us to the hospital. Words cannot convey our gratitude for all the support we received.”

● **Luiz and Fabiana** “In 1992 we learned that our daughter had a rare, aggressive form of ovarian cancer. She was 11 years old.”

**What was your initial reaction?**

“Denial. We could not accept that our girl had cancer.”

**How was she treated medically?**

“She had both surgery and chemotherapy, the effects of which drained us all physically and emotionally. Twice our daughter had pneumonia. The second time she almost died. She also developed a platelet deficiency, which led to random bleeding from her skin and nose. Medication helped to reduce this reaction.”

**How long did the treatment last?**

“It was about six months from the initial biopsy to the last cycle of chemotherapy.”

**How did your daughter feel about her diagnosis and treatment?**

“Initially, she did not know what was happening. The doctor told her she had ‘a little round ball in her stomach that needed to

## Bible Verses That Comfort

“Don’t worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.”—Matthew 6:34, *Contemporary English Version*.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation.”  
—2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

“Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6, 7.

“Throw all your anxiety upon [God], because he cares for you.”—1 Peter 5:7.

be removed.' Finally she realized that it was rather serious. 'Daddy, do I have cancer?' she asked. I struggled to find the right reply."

**How did you feel seeing your daughter suffer?**

"It is not easy to describe the emotional pain we went through. Imagine, for example, watching your little girl help the nurse find a vein for the chemotherapy. During the most difficult periods, I would go into the bathroom to cry and pray. One night I felt so distraught that I asked Jehovah to let me die instead of my little girl."

**What helped you to deal with the situation?**

"A major factor was the support we received from our Christian brothers, some of whom phoned from different parts of the country. One dear brother asked me to get my Bible. Then he warmly read some verses from the book of Psalms. Those texts were just what my wife and I needed to hear, for we were going through one of the most difficult periods of our daughter's treatment."



## A Loving Arrangement

Hospital Liaison Committees for Jehovah's Witnesses seek to promote hospital and patient cooperation. To that end, they help Witness patients find competent doctors who respect their desire to heed the Biblical injunction, "abstain from . . . blood." —Acts 15:20.

● **Rosimeri** "My daughter was four years old when she was diagnosed with a form of leukemia."

**What was your first reaction?**

"I found it hard to believe. I wept day and night and begged God for help. My other daughter also suffered emotionally when she saw just how ill her sister was. In fact, I had to send her to my mother's house."

**What side effects did your little girl experience?**

"Her daily sessions of chemotherapy made her anemic, so doctors also gave her iron supplements and erythropoietin to build up her red blood cell count. Her blood count was a source of constant concern. She also had seizures."

**How long did the treatment continue?**

"She went through two years and four months of intensive chemotherapy. During that time, she lost her hair and put on a lot of weight. Fortunately, her sense of humor helped her cope. After about six years, the doctors said that my daughter no longer showed any signs of the disease."

**What helped you to deal with this very trying situation?**

"My daughter and I prayed often, and we reflected on Bible examples of faithful servants of God who endured various trials. We also took to heart Jesus' words at Matthew 6:34 that we should not allow anxiety about tomorrow add to our concerns of today. Much help also came from fellow Christians, including the local Hospital Liaison Committee, and from caring medical staff, who regularly deal with such situations."

Has childhood cancer struck someone you know, perhaps even a child in your family? If so, may these interviews help you to understand that your grief is normal. As the Bible says, there is "a time to weep." (Ecclesiastes 3:4) Above all, be assured that the true God, Jehovah, who is called the "Hearer of prayer," will comfort all those who turn to him with a sincere heart.—Psalm 65:2.



## A BOOK YOU CAN TRUST



### Part 7

# The Seventh World Power

*This is the final article in a series of seven in consecutive issues of "Awake!" that discuss the seven world powers of Bible history. The objective is to show that the Bible is trustworthy and inspired of God and that its message is one of hope for an end to the suffering caused by man's cruel domination of his fellow man.*

**W**E LIVE in a very special and momentous time—that of the appearance of the seventh world power of Bible history. Moreover, this power is the only one mentioned in the Bible purely as prophecy, for the previous six were woven into the Bible's historical record. Concerning the seven powers, or "kings," the Bible foretold: "There are seven kings; five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived, but when he does arrive he must remain a short while."\*—Revelation 17:10.

A little over 1,900 years ago, when those words were written, five of the seven "kings," or political empires, 'had fallen.' They were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The expression "one is" referred to Rome. But Rome would not last forever. There would be one more empire, but the prophecy stated: "[It] has not yet arrived." True to Bible prophecy, the seventh 'king' did arrive on the world scene! What did this empire prove to be? Will it exercise its dominion

indefinitely? If not, how will it exit the world stage? The Bible leaves us in no doubt.

#### Reliable Prophecy

The seventh power began to take shape when England rose out of obscurity in the northwestern corner of the Roman Empire. By the 1760's, this island nation had become the mighty British Empire. Britain continued to grow in wealth and power, and in the 19th century, it was the richest and most powerful nation on earth. "The British Empire," states one reference work, "was the largest the world had ever seen." It "included 372 million inhabitants and extended over 11 million square miles [28 million sq km]."

However, the first world war (1914-1918) moved Britain to embark on a special relationship with the United States, a previous colony. The result? The British Empire gave way to the Anglo-American alliance, in many respects a dual English-speaking world power that has lasted until the present.—See the box "A Noteworthy Alliance."

The prophecy at Revelation 17:10 complements another prophecy found in the book

\* Because the empires mentioned in the Bible were usually ruled by a king, the empires themselves are often referred to as "kings," "kingdoms," or both.—Daniel 8:20-22.



**Babylon**

**Medo-Persia**

**Greece**

**Rome**

**Britain and the United States**



of Daniel. Daniel wrote about an “immense image” that Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar saw in a vision given him by God. (Daniel 2:28, 31-43) Daniel revealed to the monarch that the sections of the body of the image represented the succession of political empires that began with Babylon, the world power at the time. (Egypt and Assyria had already come and gone.) History now confirms the following:

The **head** of gold represented the Babylonian Empire.

The **breasts and arms** of silver depicted Medo-Persia.

The **belly and thighs** of copper pointed to ancient Greece.

The **legs** of iron pictured the Roman Empire.

The **feet**, an amalgam of iron and clay, symbolize the politically and socially incohesive state of affairs during the time of the Anglo-American world power.

According to Revelation 17:10, the seventh world power “must remain a short while.” How long will that prove to be? How will it disappear from the world scene? And what will happen thereafter? Daniel sheds much light on these questions.

### **A Hope You Can Trust**

After describing the aforementioned image, Daniel wrote: “A stone was cut out [of a mountain] not by hands, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and of molded clay and crushed them.” (Daniel 2:34) What did this awesome spectacle portend?

Daniel continued: “In the days of those [final] kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these [earthly] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”\* (Daniel 2:44, 45) Note these important points:

**1.** The victorious Kingdom, represented by a large stone, is “set up” by God himself, not by human “hands.” Hence, it is rightly called *God’s Kingdom*.

**2.** God’s Kingdom “will crush” all human rulerships, including the seventh world power. Why? All these will refuse to relinquish power and will face off against God in a final great war at a figurative place called Har-Magedon, or Armageddon. The Bible makes clear that this war involves “the kings of the entire inhabited earth.”—Revelation 16:13, 14, 16.

\* For more information about God’s heavenly Kingdom, see chapters 8 and 9 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

3. Unlike transitory human governments, including the seven world powers, God's Kingdom "will *never* be brought to ruin." Also, it will rule over the entire earth.—Daniel 2:35, 44.

The final destruction of God's opposers will be a spectacular fulfillment of the prophecy at Genesis 3:15, mentioned in the first article in this series. The Seed of the woman, Jesus Christ, would crush the symbolic serpent, Satan, and his seed. (Galatians 3:16) Satan's seed includes all humans who adopt his wicked ways and who promote human self-determination as opposed to rule by God and Christ.—Psalm 2:7-12.

This brings us to a very important question: When will that final destruction occur? Yes, when will the "stone"—God's Kingdom—remove every trace of human rulership? The Bible answers that question by way of a "sign" that would identify the last days.—Matthew 24:3.

### Recognize "the Sign"!

The sign of the end includes global war, "great earthquakes," "pestilences," and major "food shortages." (Luke 21:10, 11; Matthew 24:7, 8; Mark 13:8) Also marking the "last days" would be a serious moral and spiritual breakdown in society. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Have "all these things" occurred? (Matthew 24:8) Yes—to the point that many people fear the future. The newspaper *The Globe and Mail* stated: "Some of the most respected thinkers about science and society are issuing alarming prognostications about humanity coming to an end."

In one very important respect, however, those prognostications are wrong—humanity itself will not end. In fact, the intervention by God's Kingdom guarantees it! When giving the sign of the end, Jesus Christ stated: "This *good news* of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will

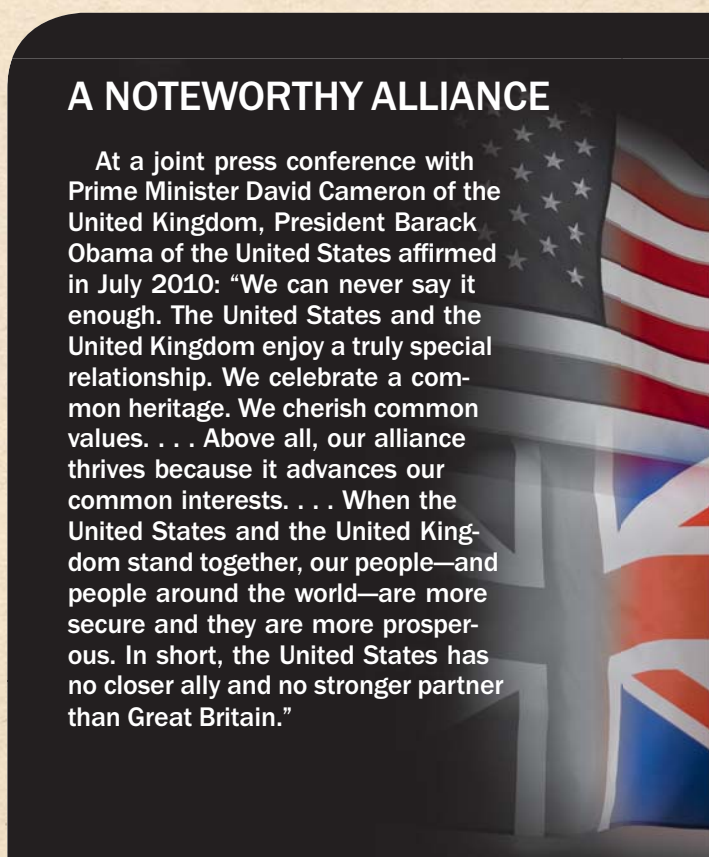
come." (Matthew 24:14) How has this prophecy unfolded?

In over 230 lands, Jehovah's Witnesses are proclaiming the Kingdom of God. Indeed, the title of their primary journal is *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*—Jehovah being God's personal name. (Psalm 83:18) The Witnesses' program of Bible education is helping countless individuals and families to replace harmful lifestyles with clean and peaceful conduct that conforms to God's standards. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) As a result, millions of people worldwide are confident that they will gain God's protection when his Kingdom intervenes in mankind's affairs.

Indeed, they will see with their own eyes the fulfillment of Christ's model prayer, sometimes called the Lord's Prayer, which states, in part: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will

## A NOTEWORTHY ALLIANCE

At a joint press conference with Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom, President Barack Obama of the United States affirmed in July 2010: "We can never say it enough. The United States and the United Kingdom enjoy a truly special relationship. We celebrate a common heritage. We cherish common values. . . . Above all, our alliance thrives because it advances our common interests. . . . When the United States and the United Kingdom stand together, our people—and people around the world—are more secure and they are more prosperous. In short, the United States has no closer ally and no stronger partner than Great Britain."







**The Bible promises that genuine peace will prevail under the rule of God's Kingdom**

be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matthew 6:10, *King James Version*) Have you wondered what life on earth will be like when all humans love and obey God? The following Bible passages may help you to understand why the expression “good news” is fitting.

#### **When God's Will Is Done on Earth . . .**

- **There will be genuine peace, not just the absence of war.** “Jehovah . . . is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth. The bow he breaks apart and does cut the spear in pieces; the wagons he burns in the fire.” (Psalm 46:8, 9) “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:11.

- **All will have an abundance of food.** “There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow.”—Psalm 72:16.

- **Perfect health will prevail.** “No resident will say: ‘I am sick.’”—Isaiah 33:24.

- **Everyone will have a comfortable home.** “They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating.”—Isaiah 65:21, 22.

- **All forms of suffering will end.** “The tent of God is with mankind, . . . and he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

Do those promises appeal to you? If so, Jehovah's Witnesses encourage you to look further into the Bible. Indeed, by doing so you will see even more evidence that man's cruel domination of his fellow man is about to end. You will also see that the Bible is deserving of your full trust, that it truly is inspired by God.—2 Timothy 3:16.\*

\* To learn more about the Bible, feel free to contact Jehovah's Witnesses locally, write to the appropriate address listed on page 5, or visit our Web site [www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org).



# ARE YOUR LIPS “PRECIOUS VESSELS”?

● “There exists gold, also an abundance of corals; but the lips of knowledge are precious vessels,” wrote King Solomon of old. (Proverbs 20:15) Gold has always been highly valued, and in Solomon’s day, corals too were prized. Yet, our lips can be even more precious than these. How? Not because of their physical appearance, but because of the thoughts they express.

Precious lips radiate goodness, kindness, and love. And as “lips of knowledge,” they speak the truth about God as recorded in the Bible. Yes, this ancient book is filled with wisdom and truth about our Creator, as well as excellent advice for life. —John 17:17.

Sadly, many people misuse their lips by saying things about God that are untrue. For example, some blame him for the injustice and suffering in the world, much of which is mankind’s own doing. In this regard, Proverbs 19:3 states: “Some people ruin themselves by their own stupid actions and then blame the Lord.”—*Today’s English Version*.

Others cheapen the value of their lips through insincere speech, hurtful gossip, or even slander. Using powerful imagery, Proverbs 26:23 reads: “As a silver glazing overlaid upon a fragment of earthenware are fervent lips along with a bad heart.” Like “silver glazing” that conceals the underlying earthenware, “fervent lips,” which convey strong feelings and even sincerity, may in fact conceal “a bad heart.”—Proverbs 26:24-26.

Of course, such badness is not hidden from God. He sees what we *really* are! Accordingly, Jesus Christ said: “Cleanse first the *inside* of the cup and of the dish, that the outside of it also may become clean.” (Matthew 23:26) How true! Moreover, internal cleanness, or purity, along with a heart filled with spiritual truth, will be reflected in our words. The result? Our lips will be “precious vessels,” especially in the eyes of God.



***The lips of the wise are  
“precious vessels”***

## Why Are Jesus' True Followers Hated?

**"People will deliver you up to tribulation and will kill you, and you will be objects of hatred by all the nations on account of my name."**

**—MATTHEW 24:9.**

**J**ESUS spoke those words just a few days before he was brutally killed. On the night before his death, he said to his faithful apostles: "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also." (John 15:20, 21) But why would people hate those who obey Jesus and try to be like him? After all, he expended himself in behalf of others, comforting the poor and giving hope to the downtrodden.

The Bible reveals specific reasons for that hatred. When we examine these, we see why people today who follow Christ face much of the same opposition that he did.

### **Opposers May Act in Ignorance**

Jesus said to his followers: "The hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a sacred service to God. But they will do these things because they have not come to know either the Father or me." (John 16:2, 3) To be sure, many persecutors professed to serve the same God Jesus served, but they were influenced by false religious beliefs and traditions. Yes, they had "a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge." (Romans 10:2) One such opposer was Saul of Tarsus, who later became the Christian apostle Paul.

Saul belonged to a group known as the Pharisees, a politically powerful and influential Jewish sect that opposed Christianity. "I was a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man," Saul later acknowledged. He also said: "I was ignorant and acted with a

lack of faith." (1 Timothy 1:12, 13) However, once he learned the truth about God and His Son, he immediately changed his ways.

The same has happened to many former persecutors today. What is more, some of these, like Saul, have become objects of persecution themselves. Nevertheless, they have not returned evil for evil but have followed Jesus' exhortation: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you." (Matthew 5:44) Jehovah's Witnesses strive to apply those words, hopeful that at least some opposers will have a change of heart, as Saul did.

### **Some Opposers Are Envious**

Many who opposed Jesus did so out of envy. Indeed, Roman governor Pontius Pilate "was aware that because of envy the chief priests had handed [Jesus] over" to be impaled. (Mark 15:9, 10) Why were the Jewish religious leaders envious of Christ? One factor was his popularity with the common people, whom the former looked down on. "The world has gone after him," the Pharisees complained. (John 12:19) Likewise, when people later responded positively to the ministry of Christ's followers, religious opposers once again became "filled with jealousy" and lashed out at the Christian evangelizers. —Acts 13:45, 50.

Other enemies resented the good conduct of God's servants. To fellow Christians, the apostle Peter said: "Because you do not con-





**In 1945, Jehovah's Witnesses experienced mob violence in Quebec, Canada, for preaching the good news of God's Kingdom**

tinue running with them [the wicked] in this course to the same low sink of debauchery, they are puzzled and go on speaking abusively of you." (1 Peter 4:4) The same negative attitude can be seen today. Of course, true Christians, while avoiding bad conduct, do not display a self-righteous, superior attitude. That, in fact, would be unchristian, for all humans are sinners and in need of God's mercy.—Romans 3:23.

### **Hated for Being "No Part of the World"**

"Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world," the Bible says. (1 John 2:15) To which world was the apostle John referring? The world of mankind estranged from God and in submission to Satan. He is "the god of this world."—2 Corinthians 4:4, *The New Testament in Modern English*; 1 John 5:19.

Sadly, some who love the world and its bad ways oppose those who try to live by Bible teachings. Hence, Jesus said to his apostles: "If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own. Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you."—John 15:19.

How sad that people hate Jehovah's servants for not embracing a world that is rid-

dled with corruption, injustice, and violence and that is ruled by Satan! Many sincere people want to make the world a better place, but they are no match for its unseen ruler. Only Jehovah God can get rid of Satan—and he will, by utterly destroying him, as if by fire!—Revelation 20:10, 14.

That wonderful prospect is a key element in the precious "good news of the kingdom" proclaimed worldwide by Jehovah's Witnesses. (Matthew 24:14) Yes, the Witnesses are convinced that only God's Kingdom, his government by Christ, will bring lasting peace and happiness to the earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Hence, they will continue to proclaim that Kingdom, viewing God's approval as far more important than that of men.

### **HAVE YOU WONDERED?**

- Why did Saul of Tarsus oppose Christ's followers?—1 Timothy 1:12, 13.
- Some of Jesus' enemies were motivated by what bad attitude?—Mark 15:9, 10.
- How do true Christians view the world?—1 John 2:15.

▲ Courtesy Canada Wide



# A WALK ALONG THE SLAVE ROUTE



**F**ROM the 17th to the 19th century, the city of Ouidah served as a major slave-trading post in West Africa. Located in what is now the Republic of Benin, Ouidah witnessed the export of more than a million slaves. Often, Africans supplied fellow Africans as human cargo in exchange for such items as alcohol, cloth, bracelets, knives, swords, and especially guns, which were in high demand because of intertribal warfare.

Between the 16th and the 19th centuries, an estimated 12 million Africans were shipped across the Atlantic to satisfy the demand for slave labor in the plantations and mines of the New World. About 85 percent of the slaves, says the book *American Slavery—1619-1877*, “went to Brazil and the various Caribbean colonies of the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch.” An estimated 6 percent

went to the colonies that would later become part of the United States.\*

At the start of their journey, many of the slaves—chained, beaten, and branded—walked the two-and-a-half-mile (4 km) route that now goes from the Ouidah Museum of History, a reconstructed fortress, to what is called the Door of No Return, which stands on the beach. The door marks the end of the Slave Route. It is more symbolic than literal, for the slaves did not all depart from the same spot. Why did slavery become so popular?

## A Long, Ugly History

In very early times, African rulers sold war captives to Arab traders. Later, European powers entered the slave trade, especially after establishing colonies in the Americas. At that time, intertribal warfare and the resulting captives provided an abundance of slaves, making war a lucrative enterprise for both the victors and the greedy slave traders. In addition, slaves were acquired through kidnapping or from African traders who brought

\* From its relatively small beginnings, the slave population in the United States expanded, largely because of natural population growth as slaves had their own children.

© Gary Cook/Alamy

**Built in 1721, this Portuguese fort now serves as the Ouidah Museum of History**



them from the interior. Nearly anyone could be sold as a slave, even a prince who had fallen out of his king's good graces.

A well-known dealer was Brazilian Francisco Félix de Souza. In 1788, De Souza took command of the fortress that was the hub of the Ouidah slave market in the Bight of Benin. At the time, Ouidah was under the Kingdom of Dahomey. However, De Souza and Dahoman King Adandozan had a falling out. So De Souza, perhaps while in prison, conspired with the king's brother, and together they ousted the ruler in 1818. Thus began a lucrative relationship between the new king, Ghezo, and De Souza, who was placed in charge of the slave trade.\*

Ghezo was intent on expanding his kingdom and needed European weapons to do it. Hence, he appointed De Souza as viceroy of Ouidah to help administer trade with the Europeans. With exclusive rights over the sale of slaves in that part of Africa, De Souza soon amassed a fortune, and the slave market, situated near his house, became a hub for foreign and local buyers.

\* "Ghezo" is spelled in various ways.

### A Walk Wet With Tears

For the modern-day visitor, a tour of the Ouidah Slave Route begins at the reconstructed Portuguese fort. Originally built in 1721, the fort now serves as the aforementioned museum. Captives destined to be slaves were confined in the large central courtyard. Most had walked, chained together, for many nights before their arrival. Why nights? Darkness helped to keep them disoriented and made it harder for escapees to return home.

When a group of slaves arrived, an auction was held, after which traders branded their acquisitions. Slaves consigned for export were taken to the beach, where canoes or small boats ferried them to ships.

Another point on the historical Slave Route is the former site of the Tree of Forgetfulness. Today a memorial stands in place of the tree around which the slaves were forced to walk—males allegedly nine times and females seven. This exercise, they were told, would clear their memory of their homeland, making them less inclined to rebel.

The route also features a monument that memorializes the *Zomaï* huts, which no longer exist. *Zomaï* refers to the constant

© Danita Delmont/Alamy



A statue of a slave bound and gagged

The Door of No Return—a memorial that symbolizes the slaves' final moments on African soil





darkness inside the huts, which got the cramped captives used to the wretched conditions they would encounter aboard the ships. Indeed, they may have been held in the huts for months while awaiting transportation. Those who died during the ordeal were thrown into a mass grave.

A monument called Zomachi, which symbolizes repentance and reconciliation, is especially poignant. There, every January, descendants of both slaves and slave merchants request forgiveness for those who perpetrated the injustices.

The last stop along the tour route is the Door of No Return—a memorial that symbolizes the slaves' final moments on African soil. This large, arched entrance features bas-relief friezes of two rows of chained Africans con-

verging on the nearby beach, with the Atlantic in front of them. At this point, some desperate captives are said to have eaten sand so as to remember their native land. Others chose death, strangling themselves with their own chains.

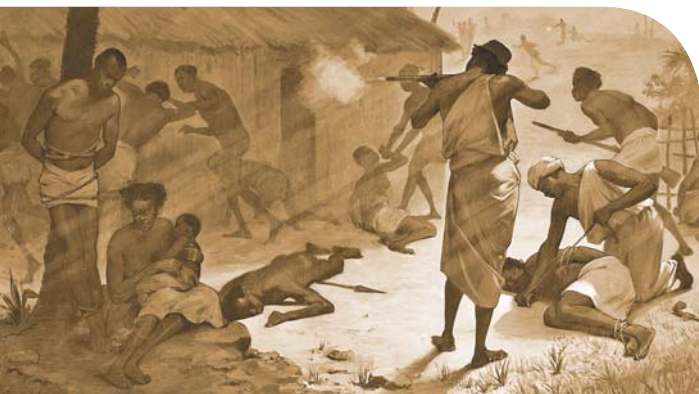
### Emancipation!

Beginning in the early 1800's, efforts to abolish slavery mounted. The last boatload of slaves sent from Ouidah to the United States arrived in Mobile, Alabama, in July 1860. Their servitude, however, was short-lived, for the U.S. government issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. Slavery finally came to an end in the Western Hemisphere in 1888 when Brazil abolished the practice.\*

A most visible legacy of the slave trade is the vast African diaspora, which has significantly influenced the demographics and culture of many lands in the Americas. Another legacy is the spread of voodoo, a form of religion involving magic and spells that is especially popular in Haiti. "The term *voodoo*," says *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "is derived from the word *vodun*, which denotes a god, or spirit, in the language of the Fon people of Benin (formerly Dahomey)."

Sadly, harsh forms of slavery continue today, although not always in a literal sense. Millions, for example, slave to survive under harsh economic conditions. Others struggle under oppressive political regimes. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) And millions are held captive by false religious teachings and superstitions. Can human governments emancipate their subjects from those forms of slavery? No. Only Jehovah God can do that, and he will! Indeed, his written Word, the Bible, promises that all who turn to Jehovah by worshipping him in harmony with Bible truth—the truth that sets men free—will one day enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God." —Romans 8:21; John 8:32.

\* The Bible's view of slavery is discussed in the article "The Bible's Viewpoint: Did God Condone the Slave Trade?" in the September 8, 2001, issue of *Awake!*



### "MAN HAS DOMINATED MAN TO HIS INJURY"

Many believe that the slave traders obtained their quarry by raiding villages and kidnapping whomever they wanted. While this may have happened, slavers likely would not have taken away many millions of people "without the cooperation of a huge network of African rulers and merchants," said professor of African history Dr. Robert Harms in a radio interview. How true that "man has dominated man to his injury"!—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

## WAS IT DESIGNED?

# The Navigation System of the Sea Turtle



### FAST FACTS

- After laying and concealing her eggs, the female turtle abandons the nest.
- To break out of its shell, the hatchling uses a special tooth called a caruncle, which then falls off.
- Sea turtles spend 90 percent of their life in the ocean.

● Researchers describe the sea turtle's migration from its feeding ground to its nesting beach as "one of the most remarkable acts in the animal kingdom." For decades, this reptile has intrigued them.

**Consider:** Every two to four years, the female turtle comes ashore to lay her eggs—numbering about a hundred in a single nest—and conceal them in the sand. Once hatched, the baby turtles make their way to the ocean. They then embark on an amazing journey that, all told, may cover a distance of some 8,000 miles (12,900 km). Years later, the female turtles, now mature, return to lay their own eggs—at the same stretch of beach where they were hatched!

How do sea turtles navigate? "It seems they inherited some sort of magnetic map," says biologist Kenneth Lohmann of the University of North Carolina in the United States, quoted in *National Geographic News*. Research indicates that the turtle may determine its position by detecting the angle and intensity of the earth's magnetic field. This amazing ability enables these tiny, defenseless hatchlings to embark on their 8,000-mile (12,900-km) migration around the Atlantic, "and they do it alone without following other turtles," says Lohmann.

**What do you think?** Did the navigating ability of the sea turtle come about by chance, or was it designed?

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**YOUNG  
PEOPLE  
ASK**

# Am I a failure?

*"I used to feel inferior to a friend of mine. Everything was so easy for her—she never seemed to work for any of it! It made me wonder just what in the world was the matter with me. I can be my own worst enemy."—Annette.\**

\* Name has been changed.

**D**O FEELINGS of inadequacy prevent you from taking on new challenges? Do the well-meaning comments of those you respect sometimes undermine your confidence? Does discouragement over past blunders hold you back from trying again? If so, how can you come to terms with your failures—real or perceived?

You have everything to gain by finding the answer to that last question because sooner or later everyone fails at something. (Romans 3:23) But people who can deal with failures are *resilient*. That means they can put their mistakes in perspective, get up, and try again. And next time, they're more likely to succeed! So let's see how you can cope with three challenges—potential failure, perceived failure, and actual failure.

**POTENTIAL FAILURE ► WHAT COULD HAPPEN** You expect the worst and therefore hold back from making an attempt, thinking that your chances of success are slim.

**Identify the challenge.** Below, put a ✓ next to the task that you would *like* to succeed

in—but feel certain that you would fail at if you tried.

- ☐ **Defending your beliefs before classmates**
- ☐ **Applying for a job**
- ☐ **Speaking before an audience**
- ☐ **Participating in a sport**
- ☐ **Singing or playing a musical instrument**
- ☐ **Other** .....

**Think it through.** Consider the task that you identified above, and weigh the possible outcomes by answering these questions:

'What would I *like* to have happen?'

'What do I *fear* will happen?'

Now write one reason why you should attempt the task, despite the risk of failure.

**Bible example.** When Moses was commissioned by Jehovah God to lead the nation of Israel, his first reaction was to think of what could go wrong. "Suppose everyone refuses to listen to my message?" he asked God. Then he started to dwell on his faults. "I have

never been a good speaker,” he said. “I can never think of what to say.” Even after Jehovah promised to help him, Moses pleaded: “Please send someone else to do it.” (Exodus 4:1, 10, 13, *Contemporary English Version*) Moses finally accepted his assignment, and the rest is history. Under God’s direction, Moses led the people of Israel for 40 years.

**What you can do.** King Solomon wrote: “All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power.” (Ecclesiastes 9:10) So instead of letting fear of failure immobilize you, put your heart into the task. Why not think of an occasion on which you did *better* than you expected? What lesson did you learn about yourself from your success? How can that lesson help you conquer any fear of failure you may be experiencing now?

Hint: If necessary, get input from a parent or a mature friend who can help you build up your self-confidence.\*

**PERCEIVED FAILURE ➡ WHAT YOU THINK HAS HAPPENED** When another person succeeds at some endeavor, you feel that you’re a failure by comparison.

**Identify the challenge.** To whom are you comparing yourself, and what achievement on that person’s part made you feel as if you were a failure?

.....

.....

**Think it through.** Does that person’s success *really* mean that you’ve failed? Below, write about a recent event, such as a test at school, where you did OK but someone else did better.

.....

.....

Now write about why it was worth attempting the endeavor.

.....

.....

\* For more information, see *Awake!* of May 2010, pages 26-28.

## WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

“If you do only things that you’re good at—if you never try new things for fear of failing—then you’re cheating yourself.”



**Andrea**

“You can learn from failure and be motivated to improve, or you can focus on what went wrong and stay within your comfort zone. It depends on what kind of person you choose to be.”



**Trenton**

“If I know I’m likely to fail at something, I make light of the situation. It’s better to laugh than to sulk. If your expectations for yourself are too high, you’ll never be happy.”



**Naomi**

**Bible example.** Cain was “hot with anger” when it became evident that Jehovah looked with favor on his brother Abel. Jehovah warned Cain about his jealousy, but he also expressed confidence that Cain could



**After a fall, the resilient person gets up—with help if necessary**



succeed if he chose to. “If you turn to doing good,” Jehovah said to him, “will there not be an exaltation?”\*—Genesis 4:6, 7.

**What you can do.** Instead of “stirring up competition”—even if it is just in your mind—acknowledge the accomplishments of others. (Galatians 5:26; Romans 12:15) At the same time, without becoming boastful, recognize your own unique abilities. The Bible states: “Let each one prove what his own work is, *and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone.*”—Galatians 6:4.

#### **ACTUAL FAILURE ► WHAT HAS HAPPENED**

You reflect on a previous failure and feel that success is not worth the effort.

**Identify the challenge.** Which personal failing do you find most discouraging?

**Think it through.** Does the failing you wrote above *truly define you*? For example, if you have given in to some weakness, does that really mean you’re hopeless? Or is it merely an indication that you need assistance? If you fell while engaging in a sport, you’d accept a helping hand to get back in the game. Why not take the same approach to coping with

\* Cain chose to disregard Jehovah’s admonition. His downfall underscores the need for you to curb any tendencies toward jealousy that might arise over another person’s success. —Philippians 2:3.

a personal failing? Write below the name of a person you could talk to about your problem.\*

**Bible example.** At times, the apostle Paul felt discouraged over his weaknesses. “What a miserable person I am,” he wrote. (Romans 7:24, *CEV*) Evidently, though, Paul realized that his imperfections did not define him. He wrote: “I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith.”—2 Timothy 4:7.

**What you can do.** Instead of focusing only on your faults, reflect on your good points as well. Jehovah certainly does. The Bible states: “God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.” —Hebrews 6:10; Psalm 110:3.

Remember this: No one is perfect. *Everyone* fails at something, sometime. If you can learn to be resilient, you will have acquired a vital asset that will serve you well in adulthood. Proverbs 24:16 states: “The righteous one may fall even seven times, and *he will certainly get up.*” That’s the sort of person *you* can be!

\* A Christian who has committed a serious error will benefit by talking to a congregation elder.—James 5:14, 16.

More articles from the “Young People Ask” series can be found at the Web site [www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)

#### **WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?**

**When you were my age, what personal disappointments did you encounter? How did you cope with them? Do you still face such challenges from time to time?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

### Importing Asian Brides

“Asian men from rich countries such as Japan and South Korea are increasingly seeking brides from poorer [Asian countries] like Vietnam and the Philippines,” says the online Philippine newspaper *BusinessWorld*. Between 1995 and 2006, the number of Japanese men marrying foreign women increased by 73 percent. Why? “Economically liberated local women get picky,” says the report, and are more reluctant to wed. Women from poorer countries, on the other hand, are willing to wed even working-class men in richer nations, because they “offer hope of a better life.”

### Perfecting Infidelity?

A controversial online dating site operating in five countries promotes its services with the slogan: “Life is short. Have an affair.” According to its founder, the service does not make people more likely to be unfaithful to their partners, since those who turn to it have “already reached that decision.” “Most of the problems associated with infidelity come because people get caught. We allow people

**“Women living in poor countries are 300 times more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than if they lived in rich countries.”—BUSINESSWORLD, PHILIPPINES.**

According to a survey in Germany, 40 percent of **11- to 15-year-olds there do not know that the sun rises in the east**; 60 percent do not know that the period between successive full moons is four weeks.—WELT ONLINE, GERMANY.

### Archaeologists have found a Philistine temple in ancient Gath.

The structure, anchored on two central columns, is reminiscent of the Biblical account of Samson, who braced himself against such pillars, causing the temple to collapse.—THE JERUSALEM POST, ISRAEL.

who want to have affairs to do so discreetly,” he asserts. “We did not invent infidelity—we just perfected it.” The service currently boasts some 6.4 million members.

### Born to Dance?

“Humans have a unique ability to coordinate their motor movements to an external auditory stimulus, as in music-induced foot tapping or dancing,” says a report published by researchers from the universities of York, England, and Jyväskylä, Finland. The researchers found that even before infants learned to speak, they responded to the rhythm of music and spontaneously tried to move in time with the beat. The more successful their attempts, the longer they smiled. This suggests that the sense of rhythm and a desire to move with music are not something we pick up but something that comes naturally.





## What Is Missing From This Picture?

**Read Genesis 13:5-17.** Now look at the picture. What features are missing? Write your answers on the lines below. Connect the dots to complete the picture, then color in the drawing.

1. ....

2. ....

● "FOR FAMILY REVIEW" answers on page 11

**FOR DISCUSSION:** What disagreement arose between Lot and Abraham and the herders of their livestock? Despite his own rights, how did Abraham make peace? **CLUE:** Read Genesis 13:7-9. Did Abraham hold on to any ill feeling he may have had toward Lot? **CLUE:** Read Genesis 14:12-16. How was Abraham rewarded for his godly qualities? **CLUE:** Read Genesis 13:14-17. How can you show that you are a peacemaker? **CLUE:** Read 1 Corinthians 13:4, 5; James 3:13-18.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** Without speaking, one family member could act out the part of one of the characters in the above Bible account. The rest of the family should try to guess the identity of that character.



## Collect and Learn

Cut out, fold in half, and save



ABRAHAM

BIBLE  
CARD

5



### QUESTIONS

- How old was Abraham when his son Isaac was born?
- What promise did Jehovah give to Abraham?
- Fill in the blank. Because of his great faith and works, Abraham came to be called \_\_\_\_\_.

98 C.E.

Last Bible  
book written

1 C.E.

Lived circa  
1900's B.C.E.

4026 B.C.E.

Adam  
created



### ABRAHAM



**PROFILE** A faithful man who left behind the prosperous city of Ur in order to carry out Jehovah's will, despite not knowing where he would live. (Hebrews 11:8-10) He constantly taught his household to "keep Jehovah's way to do righteousness." (Genesis 18:19) The Bible calls him "the father of all those having faith." —Romans 4:11.

### ANSWERS

- A hundred years old.  
—Genesis 21:5.
- By means of his seed all nations will certainly bless themselves.  
—Genesis 22:16-18.
- "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:21-24.

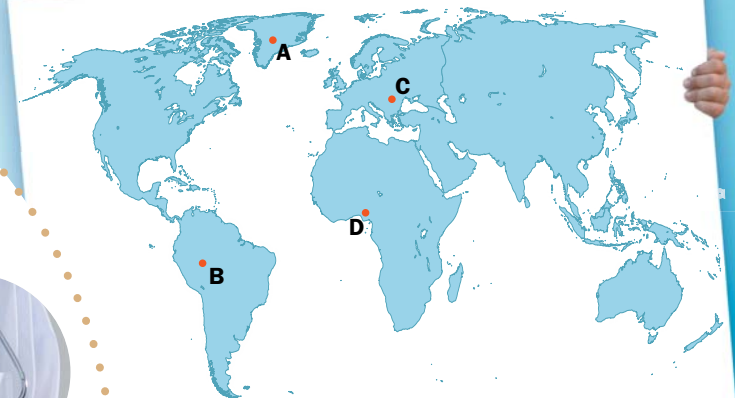
## Peoples and Lands

- Our names are Rahela and Andrei. We are both seven years old, and we live in Romania. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Romania? Is it 38,600, 68,300, or 83,600?
- Which dot shows where we live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Romania.



## Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.







# “WILL HUMANS RUIN THIS EARTH?”

● From outer space, planet Earth looks like a beautiful blue-and-white jewel. But closer inspection reveals that our home is in trouble. Why? The answer is simple: Humans have been poor tenants. What is more, they are ruining the earth not only literally by means of pollution, deforestation, and exploitation but also morally and spiritually through violence, bloodshed, and sexual immorality.

This sad state of affairs was foretold some two thousand years ago in amazing prophecies recorded in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Revelation 11:18) The Bible also foretold that God—not any human—will fully correct matters. These important topics will be developed in the public talk “Will Humans Ruin This Earth?” The discourse will be delivered at the “Let God’s Kingdom Come!” District Conventions of Jehovah’s Witnesses, beginning in May in the United States and continuing around the world.

You are cordially invited to attend the convention nearest you. For specific details, please contact Jehovah’s Witnesses in your area or write to the publishers of this magazine. The Web site [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) lists the convention locations in Canada and the United States.

[www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org)

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