

# Awake!

SEPTEMBER 2012

## DOOMSDAY

FACT, FICTION, AND FANTASY





# Awake!

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## DOOMSDAY

FACT, FICTION, AND FANTASY

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## The Fascination With **Doomsday**

**D**OES the future make you nervous? If so, you are not alone. From ancient times, people have speculated about the things to come, and many have concluded that the outlook is not exactly rosy. The prospect of doomsday, or the end of the world, has intrigued and fascinated people for millennia.

Consider, for example, recent fiction. Comics, TV, hundreds of movies, and thousands of books weave tales of impending doom. There seems to be no end to the forces ready to pounce upon and lay waste to humanity—killer robots, monsters of all sorts, aliens, zombies, ghosts, dragons, apes, birds, mutant rats, and giant wasps. Hardly would anyone take such stories seriously!

Of course, other stories and theories make some people much more nervous. Some of these claim to be scientific. One foretells that the earth's entire crust will experience a massive shift that will result in immense tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes. Another holds that the planets will come into a straight alignment and that this will cause the sun's solar winds to intensify and wreak havoc on earth. Still another asserts that earth's magnetic poles will suddenly reverse and cause radiation from the sun to kill us all. Don't worry. These things will not happen. Still, such scenarios continue to captivate the imagination of many.

What about the countless books and doomsday Web sites that predict



that the world will end on December 21 of this year? One claim is that a supposed planet named Nibiru (or Planet X) is on a collision course with the earth and will reach here in December 2012. This and other theories unsupported by fact have been linked to interpretations of an ancient Maya calendar, which, according to some, ends at the winter solstice of 2012.

Persuaded by similar predictions of disasters, some have built shelters in their backyard or, at considerable expense, have reserved quarters in underground community bunkers. Others have moved to the mountains and have become self-sufficient, living “off the grid,” independent of public utilities, such as water, heat, or electricity.

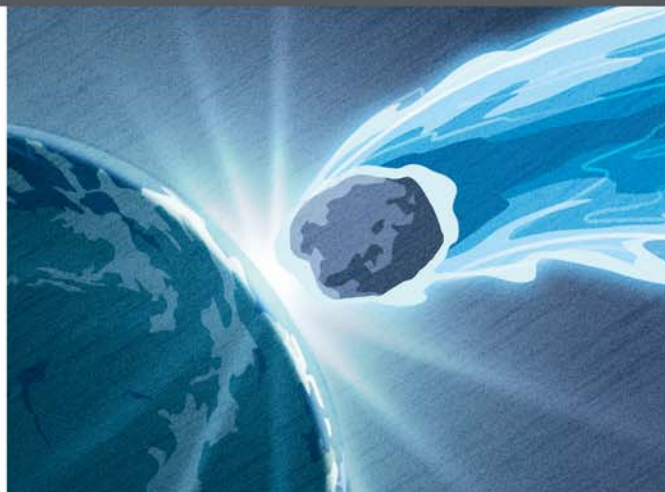
Of course, there are those who will have none of this. They scorn the idea of an imminent end of the world. Scientists at NASA, for example, assert: “Nothing bad will happen to the Earth in 2012. Our planet has been getting along just fine for more than 4 billion years, and credible scientists worldwide know of no threat associated with 2012.”

It would be a mistake, however, to conclude that humanity faces no peril or that only the gullible believe that doomsday is something more than the stuff of fiction and fantasy. Will doomsday really come? If so, how and when?

## Doomsday Fears Loom Large

**A** PART from the fanciful doomsday threats mentioned in the preceding article, there are concerns that merit serious consideration. Many people worry about overpopulation and the water and food shortages it may bring. Others fret about the consequences of a global financial collapse. What about natural disasters, epidemics, or nuclear war? Could such events bring about a global catastrophe?

Let us consider briefly some commonly discussed doomsday scenarios. Not all threaten to kill everyone on earth, but they certainly appear to have the potential to bring doom to civilization as we know it. They include the following.



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# Supervolcanoes

In 1991, Mount Pinatubo erupted in the Philippines, killing more than 700 people and leaving some 100,000 homeless. A huge cloud of ash rose 19 miles (30 km) into the sky and then fell to the earth, burying crops and causing the roofs of buildings to collapse. Pinatubo and other volcanoes like it cause changes in climate for several years after erupting.

Super eruptions, such as those that have occurred in the distant past, would be hundreds of times larger and more devastating than any eruptions in recorded history and would do far more damage. Apart from the immediate destructive power, global climate change would cause crop failure, disrupt food supplies, and lead to mass starvation.



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***“Volcanoes kill plants and animals for miles around; supervolcanoes threaten whole species with extinction by changing the climate across the entire planet.”***

—“National Geographic.”

# Asteroids

Early one morning in 1908, a man was sitting on the front porch of a trading post in Vanavara, Siberia, when an explosion flung him from his chair. The heat was so intense that he felt as though his shirt were on fire. Ground zero for that explosion was some 40 miles (60 km) away. The blast was caused by an asteroid that was about 120 feet (35 m) in diameter and weighed approximately 220 million pounds (100 million kg). After entering earth's atmosphere, the asteroid exploded as a result of the pressure and the heat of its descent. The explosion released energy equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima-sized bombs and flattened some 800 square miles (2,000 sq km) of Siberian forest. A larger asteroid, of course, would do much more damage, generating immense firestorms, which would be followed by plummeting global temperatures and major extinctions.

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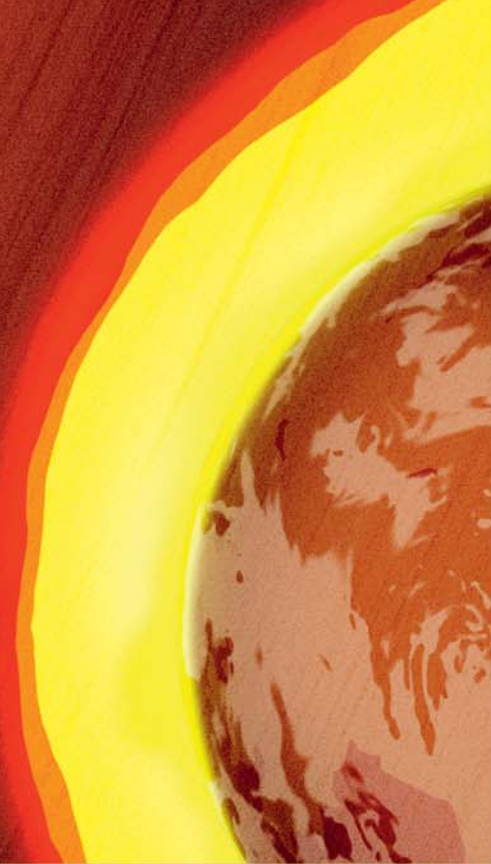
***“Throughout earth's history, we have been bombarded by comets and asteroids from space. Impacts happened more frequently in the past, but they will happen again. It is just a matter of when.”***—Chris Palma, senior lecturer in astronomy and astrophysics at Penn State University.

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## Climate Change

Scientists believe that a rise in the earth's average temperature, extremes in weather, the melting of ice caps and glaciers, and the death of coral reefs and important species all point to global climate change. Though the subject is debated, many hold the cause to be the burning of coal, oil, and natural gas—fossil fuels that emit high amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere—by cars and industry.

Some experts believe that those emissions act like a greenhouse, slowing the escape of heat from the earth into space and causing temperatures to rise. Because trees absorb carbon dioxide, large-scale deforestation may also contribute to climate change.

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***“If present rates of global warming continue and production of carbon dioxide is not curtailed, many scientists believe the Earth’s average temperature will continue to rise, resulting in wilder and more unpredictable climatic swings and higher ocean levels that could threaten the low-lying coastal areas where much of humanity makes its home.”—“A Mind for Tomorrow: Facts, Values, and the Future.”***

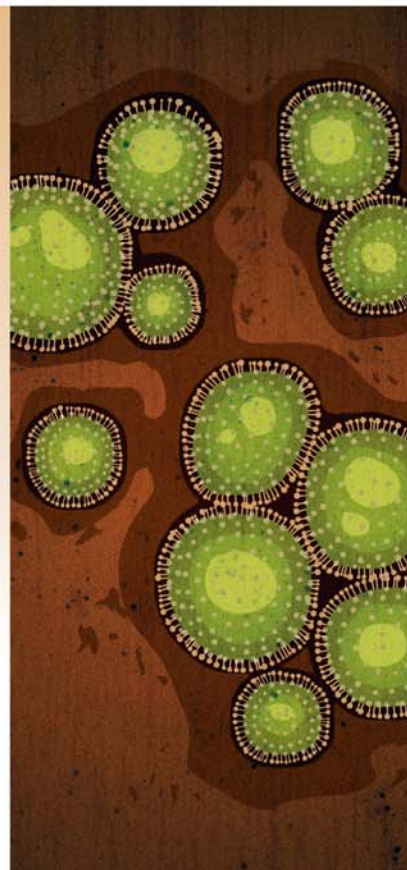
## Disease Pandemic

In the 14th century, the Black Death wiped out a third of the population of Europe in just two years. Between 1918 and 1920, the Spanish flu killed at least 50 million people. Slow methods of travel impeded the spread of those diseases. However, with the growth of cities and the ease of international travel today, a similar disease could rapidly spread across all continents.

Such a pandemic disease could be a natural occurrence. But there are also growing fears of biological weapons, man-made diseases. Experts in the field say that a small group of people who are trained in key disciplines could buy equipment on the Internet and produce deadly biological weapons.

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***“Naturally occurring disease remains a serious biological threat; however, a thinking enemy armed with these same pathogens—or with [multidrug-resistant] or synthetically engineered pathogens—could produce catastrophic consequences”—The Bipartisan WMD Terrorism Research Center.***







## Extinction of Critical Species

Over the past five years, beekeepers in the United States have lost about 30 percent of their bees each year on account of colony collapse disorder, a global phenomenon in which entire colonies of bees abruptly and mysteriously disappear from their hives. Bees do more than provide us with honey. They pollinate key crops, including grapes, apples, soybeans, and cotton. We depend on bees.

We also depend on phytoplankton. Without it we would have no fish. Without worms to aerate the soil, we would have far fewer crops. The extinction of such key species would result in food shortage and starvation, leading to violence and riots. Pollution, overpopulation, overharvesting, habitat destruction, and climate change contribute to the extinction of animal species perhaps as much as 1,000 times more than natural rates.

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***“Every year, between 18,000 and 55,000 species become extinct. The cause: human activities.”—United Nations Development Program.***

## Nuclear War

One nuclear explosion can instantly obliterate a city—a somber fact that was demonstrated twice in August 1945. A nuclear explosion is horrendously powerful, destroying and killing by means of blast wave, wind, heat, fire, and radiation. Radiation also contaminates food and water. A nuclear war would cause tons of dust to be thrown into the air, blocking sunlight and causing global temperatures to plummet. Food crops and other plants would die. Without food to eat, humans and animals would die of starvation. Some nine countries are said to have the capacity to launch nuclear attacks. A few other nations appear to be in the process of developing their own nuclear weapons. And terrorist organizations are only too eager to get hold of them.

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***“Nuclear weapons remain the gravest and most immediate threat to human civilization. . . . There are still some 25,000 nuclear weapons worldwide . . . Eventually, terrorists will get the bomb.”—Union of Concerned Scientists.***



# Doomsday

## May Not Be What You Think

**A**PART from being utterly pessimistic, the foregoing doomsday scenarios have three things in common. First, they are based on the speculation of men, and humans have a far-from-perfect record when it comes to guessing the future. Second, human survival, if possible, would be a matter of chance. Third, survivors of a post-doomsday world would have a real struggle to stay alive.

In contrast, the Bible's version of what the future holds paints a more reasonable picture. According to the Bible, for a certainty, a great change is coming. But survival is guaranteed to all who do God's will. Furthermore, the Bible does not foretell that the earth will be blasted to a cinder or frozen like an ice cube. It will be transformed into a global paradise.

Many people, though, have a problem accepting such Bible predictions. Skeptics

view as fantasy the Bible's teachings about a great tribulation, Armageddon, a millennium, and Paradise. These concepts have been endlessly discussed, debated, and interpreted by theologians. Their theories compete and clash with one another. Concerning the time of the end, author Bruce A. Robinson states: "Probably more obscure theological text has been written on this topic than on any other belief in Christendom." The result? Confusion.

Yet, the Scriptures are not obscure. The Bible is God's message, and he does not want us to be puzzled about what lies ahead. Consider some frequently asked questions, followed by what the Bible itself says. If you want to learn more, request the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.





### Will the earth and the human race be destroyed?

“The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it.”  
—Psalm 37:29.

### Will any humans lose their lives?

“The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it.”—Proverbs 2:21, 22.

### Has God acted against ungodly people in the past?

God “did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people; and by reducing the cities Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come.”—2 Peter 2:5, 6.

### Can we know the date when God’s judgment will come?

“Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. For just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark; and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be.”—Matthew 24:36-39.

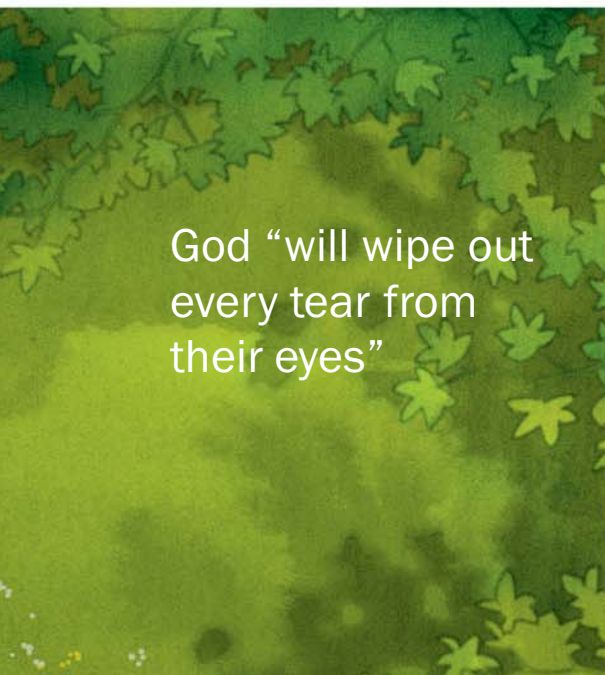
### Is there any indication that the end will come soon?

“In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power.”—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

### What does the future hold for humankind on earth?

God “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 21:4.

Though the Scriptures give us but a glimpse of what lies ahead, they assure us that humanity is not doomed. The future will be glorious beyond our ability to comprehend. You can count on that, confident that what Jehovah God has promised, he is also able to do.



God “will wipe out every tear from their eyes”

# What can I expect from marriage? PART 1

*"When we're together, I'm walking on clouds! I can't wait to be with him!"*



*"We hardly have anything in common. Rather than marriage mates, we're roommates. I feel so lonely!"*

**A**S YOU probably guessed, the statement above was made by a single girl; the statement to the left, by someone who is married. What you may not realize is that both statements were made *by the same person*.

What went wrong? If you look forward to getting married someday, how can you prevent a romantic dream from turning into a troublesome marriage?

**Fact of life:** Much of your happiness in marriage depends on what you expect from it.

This article—along with the “Young People Ask” article in next month’s *Awake!*—will help you to have realistic expectations.



What can you realistically expect from marriage?  
In short, you can:

- (1) Expect benefits
- (2) Expect challenges
- (3) Expect the unexpected

Let's take a close look at each of these.

## EXPECT BENEFITS

The Bible promotes a positive view of marriage. (Proverbs 18:22) Here are some benefits you can expect.

**Companionship.** The Bible says that some time after the first man, Adam, was created, God said: "It is not good for the man to continue by himself," after which He created Eve as Adam's companion. (Genesis 2:18) God made each of them with unique attributes so that they would be different, yet compatible. Thus, a husband and wife make excellent companions for each other.—Proverbs 5:18.

**Partnership.** The Bible says: "Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively." (Ecclesiastes 4:9, *Good News Translation*) That is certainly true of marriage. "It's all about working as a team and being humble and willing to yield once in a while," says a recently married young woman named Brenda.\*

**Intimacy.** The Bible says: "The husband should meet his wife's sexual needs, and the wife should do the same for her husband." (1 Corinthians 7:3, *Common English Bible*) When married, you can enjoy having sex without the anxiety and regret that are so often the sad consequences of premarital sex.—Proverbs 7:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 7:8, 9.

**The bottom line:** Marriage is a gift from God. (James 1:17) When you abide by his principles, you can expect marriage to be a richly rewarding way of life.

**To think about:** Is your view of marriage soured by poor examples that you have observed—perhaps in your own family? If so, what *positive* role models can you look to that are worthy of imitation?

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

## WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY



**Brittany**—*I think it's a bad idea to get married simply because you're tired of being asked, "When are you going to get married?" After all, when problems arise, you will be the one who has to deal with them—not the people who are pressuring you.*



**Ciara**—*Emotions can keep people from thinking clearly. That's why I think parents should have a big part in your choosing a mate. After all, they know you really well, so they should be able to help you find someone who is right for you.*

## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Josh and Melanie have been dating for a year. During that time they nearly broke up twice. The first time, Josh threatened to call it quits when he accused Melanie of flirting with other boys. The second time, Melanie gave Josh an ultimatum when she could no longer endure his accusations. *Both* times Josh and Melanie were able to resolve their differences.

What do you think? Do you see any danger signs in the relationship described above? The fact that Josh and Melanie nearly broke up more than once indicates what? On the other hand, what does the fact that they resolved their problems tell you? What, do you think, can Josh and Melanie expect from marriage?

### WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?

Discuss the box “What Do You Think?” with your parents. See if their views of Josh and Melanie differ from yours.

## EXPECT CHALLENGES

The Bible presents a realistic view of marriage. (1 Corinthians 7:28) Here are some challenges you can expect.

**Conflict.** No two humans are identical—except that they’re imperfect. (Romans 3:23) So a husband and wife will occasionally have conflicts, no matter how compatible they seem. Sometimes they may even say unpleasant things that they later regret. “A person who never said anything wrong . . . would be perfect,” says the Bible. (James 3:2, *Holy Bible—Easy-to-Read Version*) Rather than idealistically trying to avoid all disagreements, successful couples learn how to discuss and settle them when they arise.

**Disappointment.** “We’re bombarded with movies and TV shows in which the girl finds her ‘perfect’ match and lives happily ever after,” says a girl named Karen. When a marriage fails to live up to such an ideal, both mates may become disillusioned. Of course, after marriage both mates are bound to discover additional imperfections and quirks in each other. The key is to remember that *true* love “endures all things”—even disappointment.—1 Corinthians 13:4, 7.

**Anxiety.** The Bible says that married people are “anxious for the things of the world.” (1 Corinthians 7:33, 34) Such anxiety is normal and often even proper. For example, you may find it challenging to make ends meet. Both mates might have to work just to pay for food, clothing, and a place to live. But you can succeed if you work as a team to provide for your household.—1 Timothy 5:8.

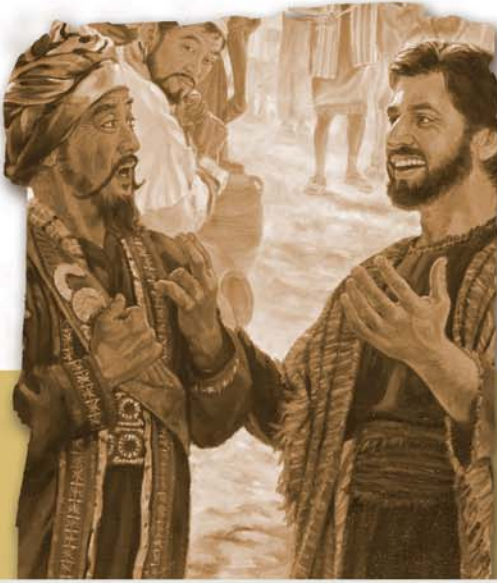
**The bottom line:** If dating is like flying a kite, marriage is like piloting a plane. You’ll need considerably more skill and effort to deal with the turbulent challenges—but you can succeed.

**To think about:** How do you handle conflict *now* with your parents and siblings? Are you able to put disappointments in perspective? How do you deal with anxiety?

**IN THE NEXT “YOUNG PEOPLE ASK” . . . How can Bible principles help you to expect the unexpected?**

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





*This eight-part series in “Awake!” is examining an outstanding feature of the Bible—its prophecies, or predictions. The articles will help you to answer these questions: Are Bible prophecies merely the work of clever humans? Do they bear the hallmark of divine inspiration? We invite you to weigh the evidence.*

## Good News for All Mankind

**G**OD’S message to mankind is found in the Bible, and that message is one of good news. Accordingly, Jesus Christ spent his life declaring “the good news of the kingdom.” (Luke 4:43) The Bible indicates that this Kingdom is God’s government and that it will remove oppressive human rulership, establish peace, and eliminate all causes of human suffering. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 6:9, 10) Good news indeed!

Surely such good news would deserve the widest possible distribution. Yet, when Jesus was executed, he left only a small number of followers. Would his message die with him? The Bible predicted just the opposite. It foretold the following: (1) The good news would spread internationally. (2) It would endure intense opposition. (3) False, or imitation, Christians would arise and mislead many. Let us consider these prophecies.

### **Good News to Be Proclaimed to All Nations**

**Prophecies:** *“In all the nations the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:10) “You will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.”—Acts 1:8.*

**Fulfillment:** Soon after Jesus’ death in 33 C.E., his disciples filled Jerusalem with the Kingdom message. They spread throughout Judea and nearby Samaria, and within 15 years, Christian missionaries had been sent to other parts of the Roman Empire. By the year 61 C.E., it could be said that the good news had been preached in many “distant” parts of the earth.

### What history reveals:

● Non-Biblical writings from the second century testify to the rapid expansion of the original form of Christianity. Roman historian Suetonius alludes to the Christians as having been established in Rome as early as the year 49 C.E. A letter written to Emperor Trajan about 112 C.E. by Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia (in modern-day Turkey), refers to Christianity as a “contagion” that had “spread not merely through the free towns, but into the villages and farms.” Reviewing the evidence, one historian concluded: “Within less than a hundred years after the apostolic age places of Christian worship were to be seen in the chief cities of the Empire.”

● In the book *The Early Church*, Professor Henry Chadwick states: “The expansion of the church seemed an extraordinary chain of improbabilities. Nothing could have been less likely to succeed by any ordinary standard of expectation.”

### Opposition to the Good News

**Prophecy:** *“People will deliver you up to local courts, and you will be beaten in synagogues and be put on the stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them.”*  
—Mark 13:9.

**Roman Emperors Nero (shown at right), Domitian, Marcus Aurelius, and Diocletian instigated vicious persecution of early Christians**

Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum



**Fulfillment:** Christians were persecuted by the Jews and the Romans. They suffered arrest, imprisonment, beatings, and execution.

### What history reveals:

● Flavius Josephus, a Jewish historian writing in the first century, records the execution of Jesus’ brother James at the hands of Jewish religious leaders. The Bible records that Gamaliel, a respected member of the Jewish high court, urged moderation when Jesus’ disciples were sentenced at trial. (Acts 5:34-39) Scholarly works confirm the existence of Gamaliel and say that he displayed an open mind.

● Historians tell us that beginning with Emperor Nero in 64 C.E., Roman emperors subjected Christians to waves of persecution. The correspondence between Emperor Trajan and Pliny the Younger discusses penalties for Christians who would not recant their faith.

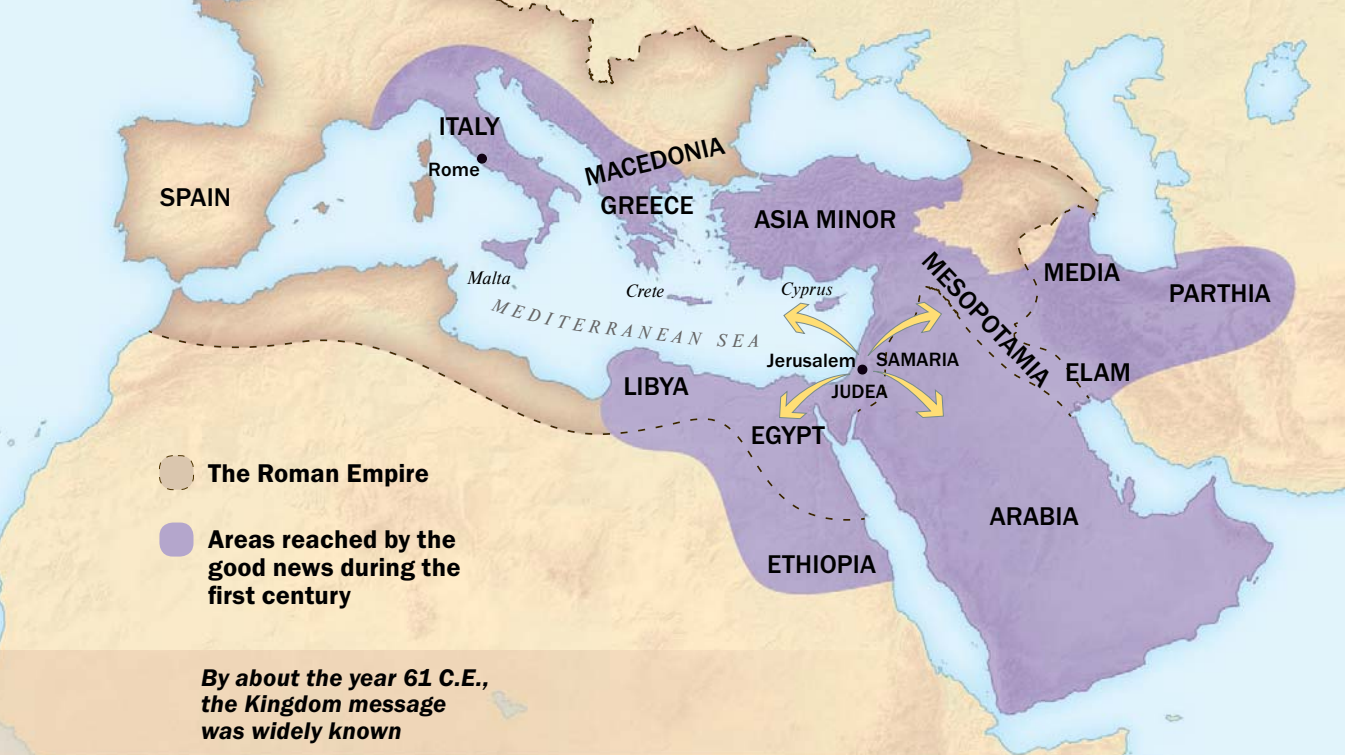
● “Persecution, so far from driving the church underground, had the opposite effect,” states Professor Chadwick, quoted earlier. As Christians fled harm’s way, they took their message to new areas. (Acts 8:1) They persevered, often in the face of ostracism by family and friends. This is noteworthy, for Jesus’ followers were “unlettered and ordinary,” with no political influence. (Acts 4:13) Historians agree that “among the small shopkeepers and tradesmen, . . . the Gospel spread most easily.”

In hindsight, scholars marvel at how a group so insignificant could spread Christianity so quickly in the face of such fierce opposition. Yet, Jesus foretold those improbable events *before* they happened. The Scriptures also predicted that this preaching activity would be interrupted.

### Imitation Christians to Arise

**Prophecies:** *“Oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with*





tenderness, and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20: 29, 30) “There will also be false teachers among you. These very ones will quietly bring in destructive sects . . . , and on account of these the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively.” —2 Peter 2:1, 2.

**Fulfillment:** The Christian congregation was corrupted by harsh, deceitful, ambitious individuals.

#### What history reveals:

● Especially after the death of Jesus’ original followers, true Christianity was gradually eclipsed by prominent men who rose from within and adulterated Christian teaching with Greek philosophy. A clergy class soon developed and began to acquire the trappings of political rulers. According to historians, by the time “Christianity” was adopted as Rome’s State religion, not even a

shadow of the first-century congregation remained.

● Over the centuries, this adulterated form of Christianity left a record of violence and greed. Rather than proving themselves to be followers of Jesus, the clergy persecuted those who imitated Jesus’ method of preaching and those who tried to publish the Bible in the language of the people.

During the centuries in which counterfeit Christianity wielded great power, the good news seemed all but snuffed out. However, Jesus indicated that the good news would be revived in the last days. He likened this period to a harvest when false Christians, pictured as weeds, would be separated from genuine Christians, pictured as wheat. (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43) At that time, the prophecy about the preaching of the good news would have its greatest fulfillment. (Matthew 24:14) Our next installment will consider that exciting prophecy.



## A Closer Look at Today's Zoos

**T**HREE thousand years ago, a Chinese emperor created a park and called it the Garden of Intelligence. The park had many live animals on display and covered an area of 1,500 acres (607 ha). Back then, such a park must have been a rarity.

Today, however, zoos are accessible to millions of people worldwide. “In a world where natural areas are shrinking and populations are increasingly urbanized, for many people zoos have become the most accessible place to get in touch with wildlife,” notes the book *Zoos in the 21st Century*.

### **What a Modern Zoo Can Offer**

Zoos offer visitors the opportunity to see some of the earth's most attractive and im-

pressive animals in a reasonably natural setting. You may see brilliant butterflies fluttering in a tropical garden or penguins getting a shower of ice in an enclosure that mimics the frozen wastes of the Antarctic.

You may walk through a miniature equatorial forest and spot some of the animals and birds that live in that habitat. Or you might enter a darkened chamber to observe animals that are active at night. In some zoos you can even see exhibits of birds of prey in flight or watch dolphins performing their own aerial acrobatics. The cages that used to house dangerous animals have made way for open-air enclosures with moats that separate the wild creatures from the public.





*Clockwise from top left: tropical butterfly, Bengal tiger, giant panda, bald eagle, California sea lion*



### Both Sides of a Controversy

Some animal-rights activists question whether species should be taken from the wild and confined in unnatural environments. Activists argue that zoos restrict the animals' movements and disrupt their instinctive behavior.

In reply to this criticism, zookeepers say that they carry out a vital role in conservation and education. "Our goal is to engender respect for the animals," explains Jaime Rull,

of Faunia, Madrid, Spain. "We want to create in our visitors a desire to help conserve the animals' habitats, without which they will not survive." Some surveys indicate that effective zoo exhibits do indeed increase public awareness of the need to protect endangered species.

Some rare species—such as the giant panda—seem to have developed a special place in the public's affection. "All the visitors want to see our two pandas," says Noelia Benito,



Hai-Bar, Yotvata, Israel

## RESCUED FROM THE BRINK

At least a dozen species of animals have been rescued from extinction by the combined efforts of zoos. The following are just two examples.

- The European bison disappeared from the wild in 1925. Thanks to breeding programs in zoos, wild herds now roam in parts of Belarus, Poland, and Russia.

- The Arabian oryx is a hardy desert antelope. Hunters killed the last surviving wild oryx in 1972, but thanks to a small population in various zoos, this magnificent animal survived. It now wanders freely in several protected areas on the Arabian Peninsula.

Zoos are limited in the number of endangered species they can successfully breed. And many well-intentioned programs to reintroduce animals into the wild have proved unsuccessful.

### ◀ *Arabian oryx*

of Madrid's Zoo Aquarium. "This flagship species has become a symbol of our fight to save endangered species. We are hoping that the pandas will breed, although these animals are very choosy about their mates."

Unlike the pandas, many animals do breed freely in zoos, thanks to improved conditions and good veterinary attention. Successful breeding programs have helped answer critics who argue that zoos should not be involved in the trade of endangered species. Apart from maintaining a pool of animals for exhibition, many zoos also try to breed endangered animals in the hope that they can eventually be reintroduced into the wild.

A principal cause of extinctions in the wild is the loss of habitat. Thus, zoos have become actively involved in funding conservation programs, working directly with wildlife sanctuaries in tropical countries.\*

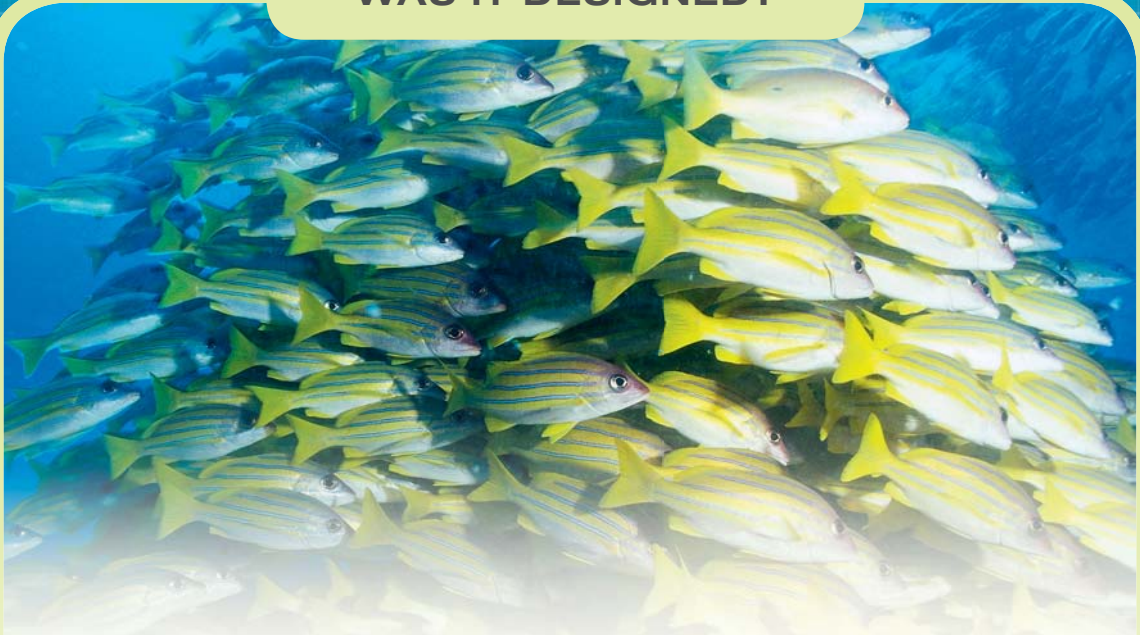
### **The Face of Nature**

Since most children have a natural fascination with animals, a weekend or vacation visit to a zoo by the whole family offers parents the opportunity to teach their children about God's creation. They can together gaze at the face of nature.

From the beginning of history, mankind has had a keen interest in the animal world. It is an interest worth cultivating in our children, since the natural world gives us insight into the personality of its Creator. A visit to the zoo can also enhance our respect for and awareness of the wonderful creatures that inhabit our fragile planet.

\* Efforts by zoos to help protect the tiger in Asia, lemurs in Madagascar, and primates in Africa appear to have been successful.





# Fish Schooling

● Car accidents kill more than one million people and injure approximately 50 million each year. Yet, millions of fish can swim together in a school with virtually no collisions. How do fish do it, and what can they teach us about how to reduce car crashes?

**Consider:** Schooling fish learn about their surroundings through their eyes and a special sense organ called the lateral line. They use these senses to perceive the location of other fish around them, and they then react as follows:

1: *Traveling side by side.* They match the speed of the fish beside them and maintain their distance from them.

2: *Approaching.* They draw nearer to fish that are farther away.

3: *Collision avoidance.* They change direction to avoid contact with other fish.

Based on those three behaviors of schooling fish, a Japanese car manufac-

turer designed several tiny robot cars that can travel in a group without colliding. Instead of eyes, the robots use communication technologies; instead of a lateral line, they use a laser range finder. The company believes that this technology will help them to create “collision-free” cars and “contribute to an environmentally friendly and traffic-jam-free driving environment.”

“We recreated the behavior of a school of fish [by] making full use of cutting-edge electronic technologies,” says Toshiyuki Andou, the principal engineer of the robot-car project. “We, in a motorized world, have a lot to learn from the behavior of a school of fish.”

**What do you think?** Did fish schooling come about as the result of a mindless process? Or was it designed?



## Do You Need Organized Religion?

**I**F YOU have been disillusioned with organized religion or have dismissed it as irrelevant, you are not alone. In fact, the number of people who are choosing not to be affiliated with organized religions is mushrooming.

Some have abandoned organized religions because they believe that such institutions breed hypocrisy and intolerance. Others find it too complicated to follow a structured form of worship. Still others feel that organized religion is nothing but a superfluous “middleman” between God and his worshippers. What does the Bible really teach about organized religion?

### God's Friends in Ancient Times

The Bible provides a clear description of the form of worship practiced by ancient patriarchs, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For instance, on one occasion God said: “I have become acquainted with [Abraham] in order that he may command his sons and his household after him so that they shall keep Jehovah’s way to do righteousness and judgment.” (Genesis 18:19) Abraham was a friend of God and thus had a personal relationship with the Creator as an individual. But he also worshipped in the company of his household. Likewise, other patriarchs who were friends of God engaged in worship as a community, usually with immediate and extended family members as well as their servants.

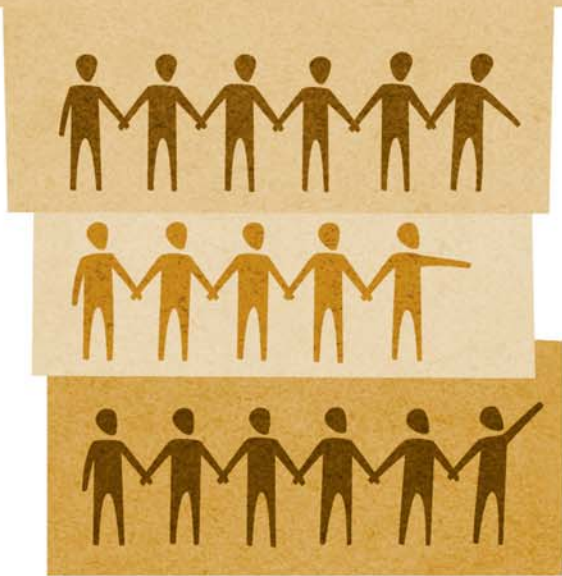
In time, God required the ancient Israelites, and later the first-century Christians, to congregate for worship. (Leviticus 23:2, 4; Hebrews 10:24, 25) Those occasions for organized worship included singing, readings from the Scriptures, and public prayer. (Nehemiah 8:1-8; Colossians 3:16) The Scriptures also prescribed that a qualified body of men lead the congregation in worship.—1 Timothy 3:1-10.

### The Benefits of Worshipping as a Congregation

Based on these Scriptural patterns, it is reasonable to conclude that today, too, God would expect his friends to worship him in an organized fashion. And there are benefits from worshipping God as part of a congregation.

For instance, the Scriptures liken the genuine worshipper to one who is traveling over a cramped road; and in another instance, to a runner in a race. (Matthew 7:14; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27) When running a long, hard race over difficult terrain, a runner may easily tire out and eventually give out. However, a runner can often push himself beyond his personal threshold if he has encouragement from others. Likewise, a spiritually-minded person can successfully maintain his relationship with God despite adversities if he has encouragement from other worshippers.

This explains the words at Hebrews 10:24, 25, where the Bible says: “Let us consider



## Should you dismiss all organized religion?

one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together.” In fact, the Scriptures state that true worshippers would render worship as brothers and sisters, united as a figurative body.

The Bible describes that body, or congregation, as being united by a bond of love and peace. For instance, Ephesians 4:2, 3 admonishes true worshippers to act “with complete lowliness of mind and mildness, with long-suffering, putting up with one another in love, earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” How could you comply with this admonition if your worship were independent and detached from other worshippers?

It is God’s will that instead of being a loose association of spiritually-minded individuals, true worshippers merge into a tight community of faith. The Bible exhorts worshippers to speak in agreement, to avoid divisions, and to be “fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.” (1 Corinthians 1:10) Those words would make little sense if God wanted people to worship him only as individuals apart from one another.

Clearly, evidence from the Bible points to an organized form of worship as the kind

that is acceptable to God. And the organized religion that the Scriptures describe, the one that God sponsors, can give you the support you require to be successful in satisfying your spiritual needs.—Matthew 5:3.

Granted, many organized religions today are guilty of hypocrisy and countless atrocities. Yet, this does not mean that you should repudiate all organized religion. There must be a religion on earth that is organized to show love to all people—a religion that is organized to educate others about God’s moral principles. Such an organized religion can help you to build genuine faith. The Bible provides the necessary clues that can help you to identify the kind of organized worship that is acceptable to God.

### HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Does the Bible provide a precedent for organized religion?—**Leviticus 23:2, 4.**
- What is one important benefit of worshipping God as part of a congregation?—**Hebrews 10:24, 25.**
- What uniting bond brings people together in organized worship?—**Ephesians 4:2, 3.**



# MEDIEVAL MASTERS of Medicine

**M**ANY aspects of modern medicine may not be as modern as some think. In fact, a number of today's common medical practices were already in place centuries ago in some lands. Consider, for example, the history of medicine in medieval times in the Middle East.

● In 805 C.E., **CALIPH HARUN AR-RASHID** established a hospital in his capital, Baghdad. From the 9th century through the 13th, other rulers built and maintained hospitals throughout the Islamic empire, from Spain to India.

These hospitals welcomed the rich and the poor of all religions. Professional physicians not only treated the sick there but also did research and trained new practitioners. Separate wards were set aside for different specialties—internal medicine, ophthalmology, orthopedics, surgery, contagious disease, and mental infirmity. Doctors, accompanied by their students, examined the sick each morning and prescribed diets and drugs for them. And in-house pharmacists dispensed medicines. A managerial staff took care of keeping records, controlling expenditures, and supervising food preparation, as well as other administrative tasks—just like today.

Historians consider these hospitals “one of the great achievements of medieval Islamic society.” Throughout the Islamic empire, “the hospital as an institution was being developed in revolutionary ways that would shape the course of health sciences and health care right down to modern times,” says author and historian Howard R. Turner.

● **RHAZES** was born in the mid-ninth century in the ancient city of Rayy, now a suburb of Tehran. He is dubbed “the greatest physician and clinician of Islam and indeed of the whole Middle Ages.” For the benefit of other

practitioners, this scientific thinker recorded his experimental methods, conditions, apparatuses, and results. And he advised all doctors to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in their field.

Rhazes had a number of achievements. For instance, his medical writings are featured in the 23-volume *Al-Hawi* (Comprehensive Book), which ranks among the great medical texts. It is claimed that the origins of obstetrics, gynecology, and ophthalmic surgery are traced to this book. Among his 56 works on medical topics are the oldest reliable descriptions of smallpox and measles. Rhazes also discovered that fever is one of the body's defenses.

Moreover, he ran hospitals in Rayy and in Baghdad, where his work with the mentally ill led to his being acclaimed the father of psychology and psychotherapy. In addition to medicine, Rhazes also found time to write books on chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy, and theology.

● **AVICENNA**, another leader in the medical field, hailed from Bukhara, in modern Uzbekistan. He became one of the great physicians, philosophers, astronomers, and mathematicians of the 11th century. Avicenna wrote an encyclopedia, *The Canon of Medicine*, which covered the whole range of known medical knowledge.

Avicenna stated in his *Canon* that tuberculosis is contagious, that disease can spread



**Rhazes, a physician and alchemist, in his laboratory**

through water and soil, that emotions affect physical well-being, and that nerves transmit both pain and impulses for muscle contraction. *The Canon* described some 760 pharmacological preparations—their properties, actions, and indications—and provided principles for testing new drugs. Translated into Latin, this text remained in use in European medical schools for hundreds of years.

● **ALBUCASIS** also stands tall in the history of medicine. This tenth-century innovator, from Andalusia, in modern Spain, produced a 30-volume compendium, including a 300-page treatise on surgery. In it, he described such advanced procedures as the use of catgut for internal stitching, the removal of bladder stones using an instrument in-

serted through the urinary passage, thyroidectomy, and the removal of cataracts.

Albucasis used what are described as “relatively modern clinical techniques” to simplify difficult births and treat dislocated shoulders. He introduced cotton as a surgical dressing and used plaster casts for setting bones. He also described techniques to reimplant dislodged teeth, make false teeth, correct misaligned teeth, and remove dental tartar.

**1.** There should be 10 lepers, not 11. **2.** The lepers in this account were all men. **3.** The man who came back “fell upon his face at Jesus’ feet, thanking him.” **4.** 24,000. **5.** B.

**ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31**



Albucasis' treatise on surgery illustrated the surgeon's tools for the first time. It presented clear drawings of some 200 surgical instruments and gave direction on how and when to use them. Some of his designs have undergone few changes in a millennium.

### Knowledge Spreads to the West

In the 11th and 12th centuries, scholars began to work on Latin translations of Arabic medical texts, particularly in Toledo, Spain, and in Monte Cassino and Salerno, Italy. Physicians then studied those translations in universities throughout Latin-speaking Europe. Middle Eastern medical knowledge thus "penetrated deep into Europe in the following centuries, perhaps more so than any other Islamic science," says science writer Ehsan Masood.

Clearly, the discoveries and inventions of medieval masters like Rhazes, Avicenna, Albucasis, and their contemporaries can rightly be described as the foundation of what we today call modern medicine.



**Arabic manuscript illustrating Albucasis' surgical instruments**



**Avicenna oversees the preparation of remedies for smallpox**



# Medical Alternatives to **BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS**



**L**EADING experts from over 40 countries gathered in Moscow for the 60th Jubilee International Congress of the European Society for Cardiovascular and Endovascular Surgery on May 20-22, 2011. “For doctors, an event of this scale is as meaningful as are the Olympics for athletes,” stated a Russian TV journalist.

Attracting great attention on all three days of the convention was a booth supplying information on medical alternatives to blood transfusions. Hospital Information Services for Jehovah’s Witnesses (HIS) staffed this booth. From it, doctors eagerly took hundreds of information folders, books, DVDs, and medical articles on this important topic. Demand was especially strong for the DVD featuring the video entitled *Transfusion-Alternative Strategies—Simple, Safe, Effective*.\*

*Hospital Information Services for Jehovah’s Witnesses staffed this booth. From it, doctors eagerly took hundreds of folders, books, DVDs, and medical articles*

\* Produced by Jehovah’s Witnesses.





*Successful bloodless surgery is achieved through the appropriate combinations of medical and surgical blood-conservation techniques, devices, and pharmaceuticals*

Many doctors who visited the booth agreed that there is a need for blood conservation in surgical practice. A cardiac surgeon from Italy who spoke at the congress said that he is well acquainted with Jehovah's Witnesses and has successfully completed about 70 bloodless heart operations on Witness patients. He also said that bloodless surgery is perfectly normal in his clinic. A professor of the *Deutsches Herzzentrum Berlin* (German Heart Institute Berlin) took a copy of the DVD for himself and another for a colleague. He told the audience that he had recently performed bloodless surgery on a baby weighing just 5.5 pounds (2.5 kg); and his clinic has performed heart surgery on babies weighing even less.

A month after the Moscow convention, doctors from various countries attended the Fourth Belomorsk Symposium of Anesthe-

siologists and Intensive Care Physicians of the Northwest Region of Russia, in the city of Arkhangel'sk. HIS set up the same information booth there, and again it attracted much attention. On seeing the materials presented, a doctor from St. Petersburg exclaimed, "This is just what we need!" She expressed regret that simply out of force of habit, some of her colleagues continue to administer transfusions to burn patients. "Your materials would be very useful at the conference on treatment of burn patients that is being planned for St. Petersburg," she added enthusiastically.

The world over, more and more doctors are seeing the advantages of bloodless medicine and bloodless surgery. Time will tell whether these will one day be the universal gold standard in medical treatment.

## Medical Tourism in Asia

More and more patients from various parts of the world are traveling abroad to receive quality medical care, often at a fraction of the price they would have to pay at home. *Business World* reports that one million “medical tourists” are expected per year in the Philippines by 2015, and the same number are expected in South Korea by 2020. India, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand are also popular destinations. Demand is not limited to Westerners seeking help in such areas as orthopedics and cardiology. Many newly affluent Chinese are also visiting plastic surgeons with pictures of “celebrities they want to look like,” says the report.

## Multitaskers Perform Poorly

Technology often obliges employees to work on two or more complex tasks simultaneously and answer queries immediately. Yet, “workers who are doing multiple things at one time are doing them poorly,” says Clifford Nass, director of the Communication Between Humans and Interactive Media Laboratory, at Stanford University, U.S.A. Reportedly, multitaskers are often stressed, are more easily distracted by irrelevant stimuli, do not think deeply and, as a result, miss important details. Nass suggests: “When you start to do something, do it and nothing else for 20 minutes. This trains you to focus, to think deeply.”



“At the beginning of 2011, there were **5.4 billion mobile cellular subscriptions worldwide.**”—*UN CHRONICLE*, U.S.A.

Over the past decade, “**disasters have caused more than 780 000 deaths**, with earthquakes accounting for nearly 60% of all disaster-related mortality.”—*THE LANCET*, BRITAIN.

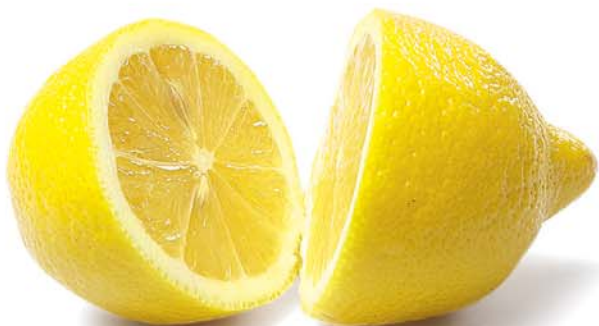
“Over the last 20 years, about **800,000 Russians have committed suicide.**”

—*ROSSIISKAYA GAZETA*, RUSSIA.

In the Philippines, a country where divorce is not permitted, the proportion of 15- to 49-year-old women who cohabit in common-law, or “**live-in arrangements . . . , more than doubled between 1993 and 2008.**”—*THE PHILIPPINE STAR*, PHILIPPINES.

In the Republic of Georgia, “**79.2 percent of the population . . . is affected by passive smoking.**” In the capital, Tbilisi, “**87.7 percent of children are affected.**”—*TABULA*, GEORGIA.





# The Versatile Lemon

**I**MAGINE a product that can be used as medicine, a cleaning agent, a disinfectant, and a beauty treatment. You can eat it, drink its juice, and extract essential oil from it. It comes attractively packaged, is available all over the world, and is inexpensive. You may even have one in your kitchen right now. What is it? The lemon!

It is thought that lemons originated in Southeast Asia. From there they were gradually carried westward, toward the Mediterranean. Lemon trees thrive in mild climates, which is why they grow so well in places like Argentina, Italy, Mexico, Spain, and even parts of Africa and Asia. A mature tree, depending on the variety and location, can produce anywhere from 200 to a staggering 1,500 lemons a year. The cultivated varieties bloom in different periods, making it possible to harvest lemons year-round.

## **Lemons Take Root in Italy**

Whether the ancient Romans grew lemons is a hotly debated subject. There is written evidence that the Romans knew about the citron, another

member of the citrus family, which strongly resembles a large lemon. In his work *Natural History*, Roman historian Pliny the Elder specifically mentions the citron tree and its fruit. However, leading experts believe that the Romans knew about lemons too. Why? Because numerous frescoes and mosaics apparently depict these fruits and not citrons. One such example is from a villa unearthed in Pompeii, appropriately called The Orchard House, as it is decorated with frescoes that depict various plants, including a lemon tree. Admittedly, at the time, it was likely considered an exotic tree and may have been used only as a medicinal plant. It is impossible to tell how easy lemons were to grow and how widespread they were.

The island of Sicily, with its long warm summers and mild winters, has become the leading producer of citrus fruit including lemons. But there are other areas, mainly along the coast, where good-quality lemons are cultivated.

The beautiful town of Sorrento is just south of Naples, and south of it

is the Amalfi coast—just over 25 miles (40 km) of spectacular sprawling coastline. Tucked away in coves along the coast are the picturesque towns of Amalfi, Positano, and Vietri sul Mare, just to mention a few. Sorrento and the Amalfi coast produce lemons that have the Protection Authority certificate, a guarantee that they were actually cultivated there. The locals are rightly protective of their lemon trees, as these trees were cleverly planted on terraces on the side of the mountain, where they soak up the sun and produce wonderfully perfumed, juicy lemons.

You don't need lots of space to grow a lemon tree. Even a sunny balcony is enough, as dwarf lemon trees can be grown in pots and are beautifully ornamental. They like sunny, wind-free spots where they can soak up the warmth, preferably against a wall. However, if the temperature drops a lot during the winter, they need to be covered or brought indoors.

### **Not Just for Flavor**

How often do you use lemons? Some put a slice in a cup of tea; others use the zest or a few drops of the juice in cake recipes. Maybe you squeeze them to use the juice for lemonade. Chefs around the world always have lemons on hand for endless uses in cooking. But have you ever used lemon juice as a disinfectant or to help remove a stain?

Actually, some people clean up and disinfect their chopping boards by rubbing them with half a lemon. Instead of using bleach for stains or cleaning the sink, some use a mixture of lemon juice and baking soda. And half a lemon in the refrigerator

or dishwasher is said to eliminate bad odors and keep the appliances smelling fresh.

Lemons are a source of citric acid, which is used as a natural preservative and to give a sour taste to food or drink. The lemon's pith and peel yield pectin, which is used in the food industry as a thickener, emulsifier, and gelling agent. Additionally, there is an oil extracted from the peel that is used in the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic industries. The list of uses for lemons could go on and on. Lemons truly are a colorful, flavorful, versatile fruit.

## **Vitamin C**

Vitamin C is vital for the body's growth and maintenance. Fortunately, it is found in many foods, such as green leafy vegetables, tomatoes, sweet bell peppers, black currants, and strawberries. Citrus fruits are one of the principal suppliers of vitamin C, and this, of course, includes lemons. The amount of vitamin C in a lemon depends on many factors, such as the climatic conditions the fruit grew in, the ripeness of the fruit, and even the position of the fruit on the tree.

In some countries the recommended daily intake of vitamin C for healthy adults is about 100 milligrams. An average-size lemon would provide an adult with about half the daily recommended amount of vitamin C.



## What Is Wrong With This Picture?

**Read Luke 17:11-19.** What three features of this drawing are incorrect? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by coloring it.

1 .....

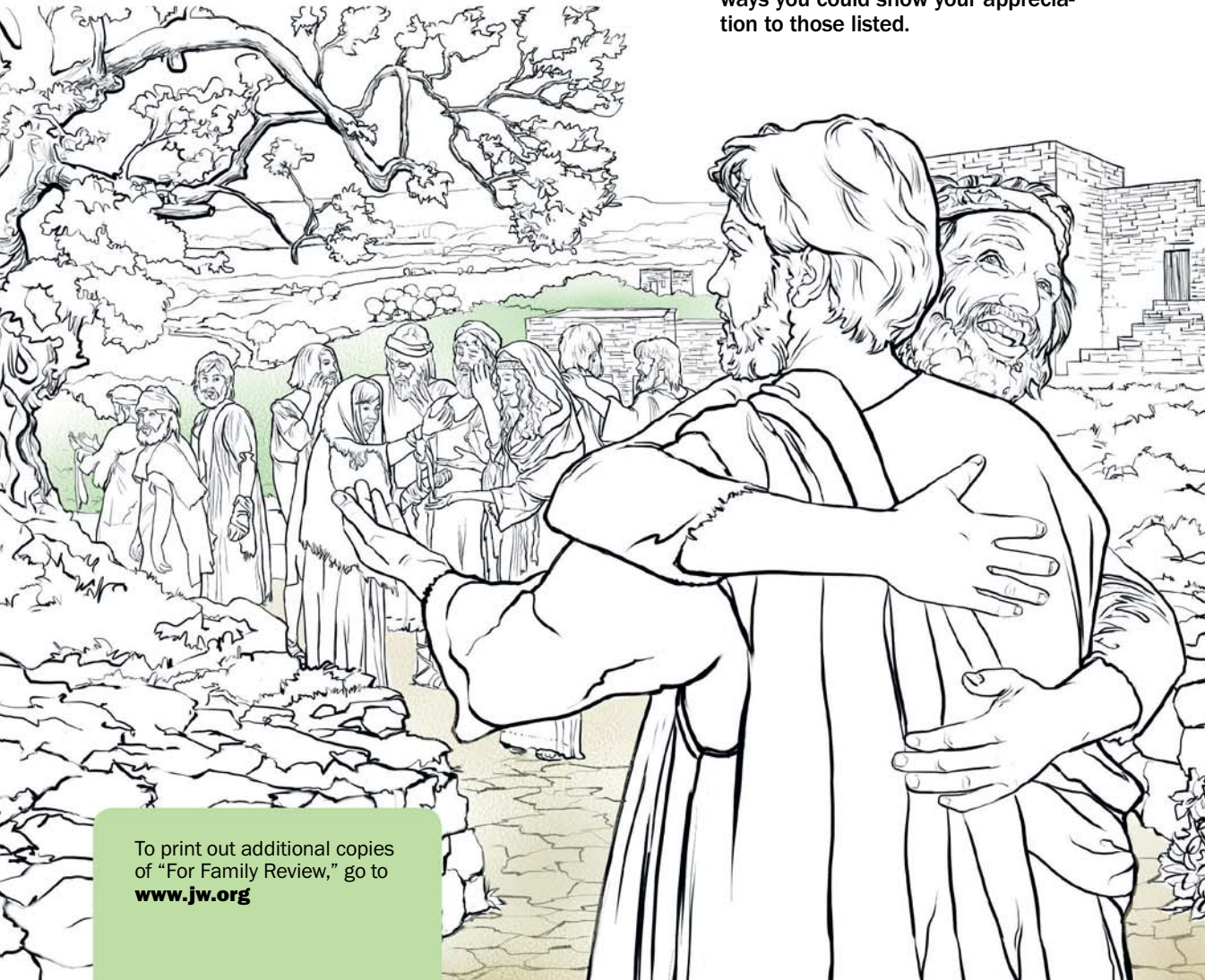
2 .....

3 .....

● “FOR FAMILY REVIEW” answers on page 23

**FOR DISCUSSION:** What did one leper do that the others did not? **CLUE:** Read Luke 17:15, 16. How can you imitate his example? **CLUE:** Read Colossians 3:15; 1 Thessalonians 5:18. Whom should you remember to thank every single day? **CLUE:** Read Psalm 107:8; James 1:17.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** Have family members individually write down at least one reason why they are grateful to Jehovah God, one reason why they are grateful to someone in their family, and one reason why they are grateful to a good friend outside the family. Next, make a list of practical ways you could show your appreciation to those listed.



To print out additional copies of “For Family Review,” go to [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)





## MOSES

BIBLE  
CARD

21



### QUESTIONS

- A.** Jehovah inspired Moses to write what Bible books?
- B.** Moses' parents were named \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. He was adopted by \_\_\_\_\_.
- C.** Complete the Bible's statement: Moses "continued steadfast as . . ."

1 C.E.

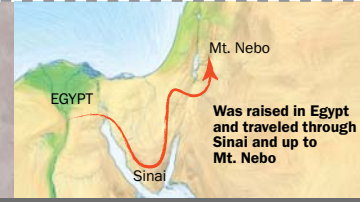
4026 B.C.E.

98 C.E.

Last Bible book written

Lived about 1500 B.C.E.

Adam created



Was raised in Egypt and traveled through Sinai and up to Mt. Nebo

## MOSES

**PROFILE** The first man in the Bible empowered to perform miracles, Moses served as God's prophet, as well as a judge, lawgiver, and leader in ancient Israel. The Israelites viewed him as a man who did many awesome things.—Deuteronomy 34:10-12; Exodus 4:1-9.

### ANSWERS

- A.** Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Job, as well as Psalm 90 and perhaps 91.
- B.** Amram, Jochebed, Pharaoh's daughter.—Exodus 1:15–2:10; 6:20.
- C.** "... seeing the One who is invisible." —Hebrews 11:27.

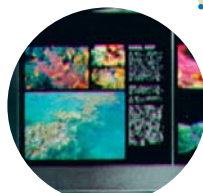
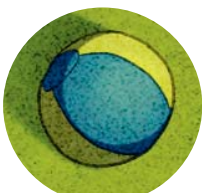
## Peoples and Lands

**4.** My name is Mampionona. I am eight years old, and I live in Madagascar. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Madagascar? Is it 10,000, 24,000, or 62,000?

**5.** Which dot shows where I live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Madagascar.

## Children's Picture Search

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





# She “Could Not Put It Down”

● A woman from New York, U.S.A., was captivated by the discussion of major religions of the world in the book *Mankind's Search for God*. She explained: “I started to read it and could not put it down! Thank you for providing such well-balanced, informative literature.”

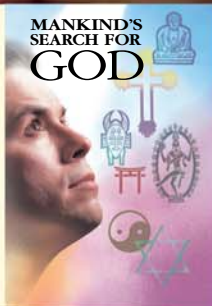
Another reader wrote: “I read the book from the front to the back cover. I also checked most of the references, and there are many! I confidently recommend the book to anyone. Of course, there is also something about the faith of Jehovah's Witnesses, but that is only a minute part of this brilliant history of religion.”

You may request a copy of this 384-page book by filling in the accompanying coupon and mailing it to an appropriate address on page 5 of this magazine.

☐ Without obligation, I request a copy of the book shown here.

Indicate which language.

☐ Please contact me concerning a free home Bible study.



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