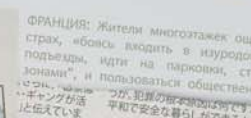


SEPTEMBER 1, 2010



ZA: A mother and daughter

犯罪の風は止まらなくなっているのでは  
うか。犯罪の根本原因は何ですか。本当に  
平和で安全な暮らしができるようになります

# Why Do People Do Bad Things?

THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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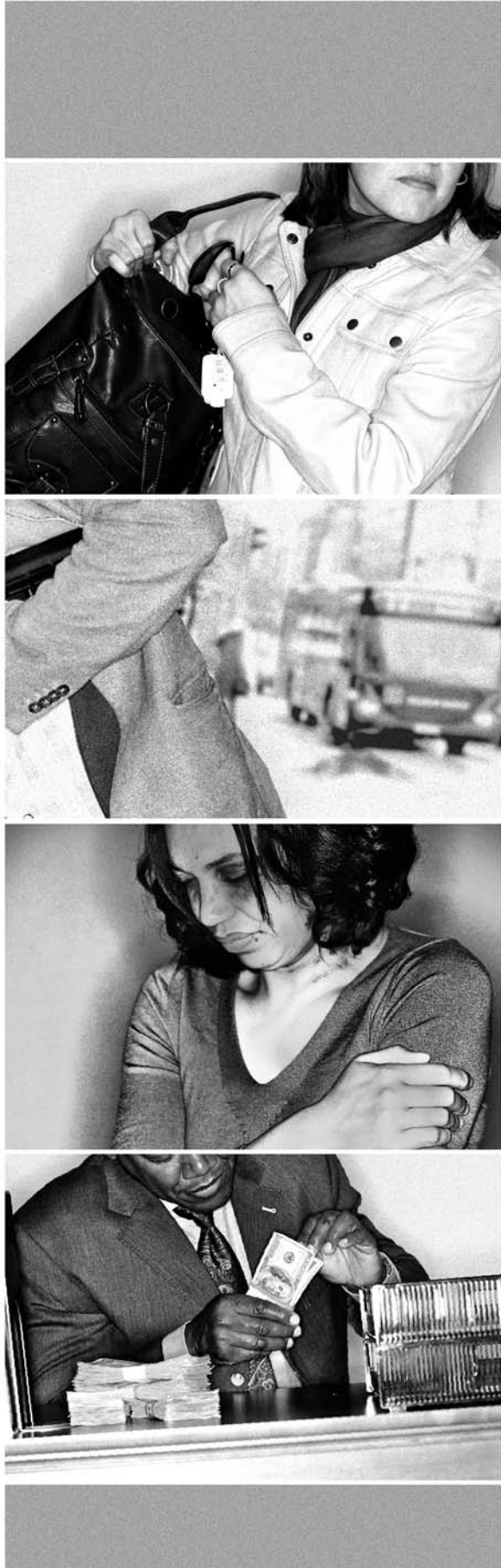
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# WHY DO PEOPLE DO BAD THINGS?

THERE is one thing that few people will dispute: We are all imperfect and therefore make mistakes and do things that we come to regret. Still, does that explain the many bad deeds, both major and minor, that we see or hear about almost daily, either in person or in the media?

In spite of human imperfection, people generally acknowledge that there are moral boundaries that should never be crossed and that humans are capable of abstaining from evil acts. Most would also readily agree that there is a difference between inadvertent untruth and outright slander, between causing an accidental injury and committing premeditated murder. Still, shocking deeds are often perpetrated by seemingly ordinary people in the neighborhood. Why? Why do people do bad things?

The Bible sheds light on this subject. It accurately identifies key reasons why people act in ways that they know to be bad. Consider what it says.

■ ***“Mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy.”***—ECCLESIASTES 7:7.

The Bible acknowledges that at times people feel driven by force of circumstance to do what they otherwise would not do. Some may even commit criminal acts in an effort to bring about what they perceive as solutions to hardships and injustices. “In many cases,” says the book *Urban Terrorism*, “the primary motivation for a terrorist is a genuine frustration with seemingly intractable political, social, and economic forces.”

■ ***“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.”***—1 TIMOTHY 6:10, AMERICAN STANDARD VERSION.

The old adage, Every man has his price, implies that even good people are willing to violate the rules of decency and morality when enough money is involved. Some who appear amiable and kind under normal circumstances seem to undergo a personality change when money is at stake, transforming themselves into obnoxious and hostile characters. Think of the many crimes that are rooted in greed—blackmail, extortion, fraud, kidnapping, and even murder.

■ ***“Because sentence against a bad work has not been executed speedily, that is why***

***the heart of the sons of men has become fully set in them to do bad.”***—ECCLESIASTES 8:11.

That scripture points out the human tendency to think that one can get away with anything when those in authority are not watching. This is true of people speeding on the highway, cheating on exams, embezzling public funds, and worse. When enforcement is lax or when fear of getting caught is absent, people who are normally law-abiding may feel emboldened to do what they otherwise would not do. “The ease with which criminals get away unpunished,” observes the magazine *Arguments and Facts*, “seems to inspire ordinary citizens to commit the most brutal of crimes.”

■ ***“Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin.”***—JAMES 1:14, 15.

All humans are susceptible to wrong thinking. Every day, we are bombarded with countless suggestions and temptations to do wrong. Back in Bible times, Christians were told: “No temptation has taken you except what is common to men.” (1 Corinthians 10:13) Even so, the outcome depends on the choice one makes—to dismiss the bad thought quickly or to entertain it and allow it to grow. The scripture above from the inspired letter of James warns that if one allows the wrong desire to “become fertile,” bad actions are sure to follow.



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

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■ *“He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly.”*

—PROVERBS 13:20.

There is no minimizing the influence—for good or for bad—that our associates can have on us. So often, people do what they have no intention of doing—all because of peer pressure or, as many say, because they fell into bad company, with disastrous results. In Bible language, “stupid ones” refers, not to those who lack intelligence, but to those who ignore the wise counsel from God’s Word. Young or old, if we do not choose our friends

and associates wisely, that is, by the good standards from the Bible, we can expect that we will “fare badly.”

These and many other verses in the Bible succinctly explain why people—perhaps otherwise ordinary people—do bad, even shocking, things. While it is helpful to understand the forces that move people to do terrible things, is there hope of a change for the better? Yes, for the Bible not only explains why people commit evil acts but also promises that such acts will be no more. What are these promises? Will all the bad things in the world really come to an end? The next article provides the answers.

## THE END OF EVIL DEEDS IS ASSURED!

GOD has given us his inspired Word, which points out the reasons why people do bad things. He has also given us free will and the ability to exercise self-control, making it possible for us to choose not to do bad things. (Deuteronomy 30:15, 16, 19) Thus equipped, we can recognize any bad tendencies we may have and take the necessary corrective steps. In the end, our refrain-

ing from bad actions will bring happiness both to us and to those around us.—Psalm 1:1.

Nevertheless, no matter how hard we individually try to resist doing bad things, the world continues to be plagued by evil acts perpetrated by fellow humans. The Bible warns: “Know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.”

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To show what makes the days “hard to deal with,” it goes on to say: “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; and from these turn away.” —2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Perhaps you noticed the expression “the last days” in the prophetic statement quoted above. What does that mean to you? As it is commonly understood, to say “the last days” suggests that something is coming to an end. What might that be? Note what God promises in his Word.

## **The wicked will be completely removed.**

*“Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more; and you will certainly give attention to his place, and he will not be. But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”* —PSALM 37:10, 11.

*“Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate.”* —PSALM 145:20.

## **There will be no more oppression.**

*“He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul.”* —PSALM 72:12, 14.

*“The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.”* —ROMANS 8:21.

## **People’s material needs will be satisfied.**

*“They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble.”* —MICAH 4:4.

*“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. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full.”* —ISAIAH 65:21, 22.

## **Justice will prevail.**

*“Certainly, then, shall not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night . . . ? I tell you, He will cause justice to be done to them speedily.”* —LUKE 18:7, 8.

*“Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones. To time indefinite they will certainly be guarded.”* —PSALM 37:28.

## **Selfishness will be replaced by righteousness.**

*“Righteousness is what the inhabitants of the productive land will certainly learn.”* —ISAIAH 26:9.

*“There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell.”* —2 PETER 3:13.

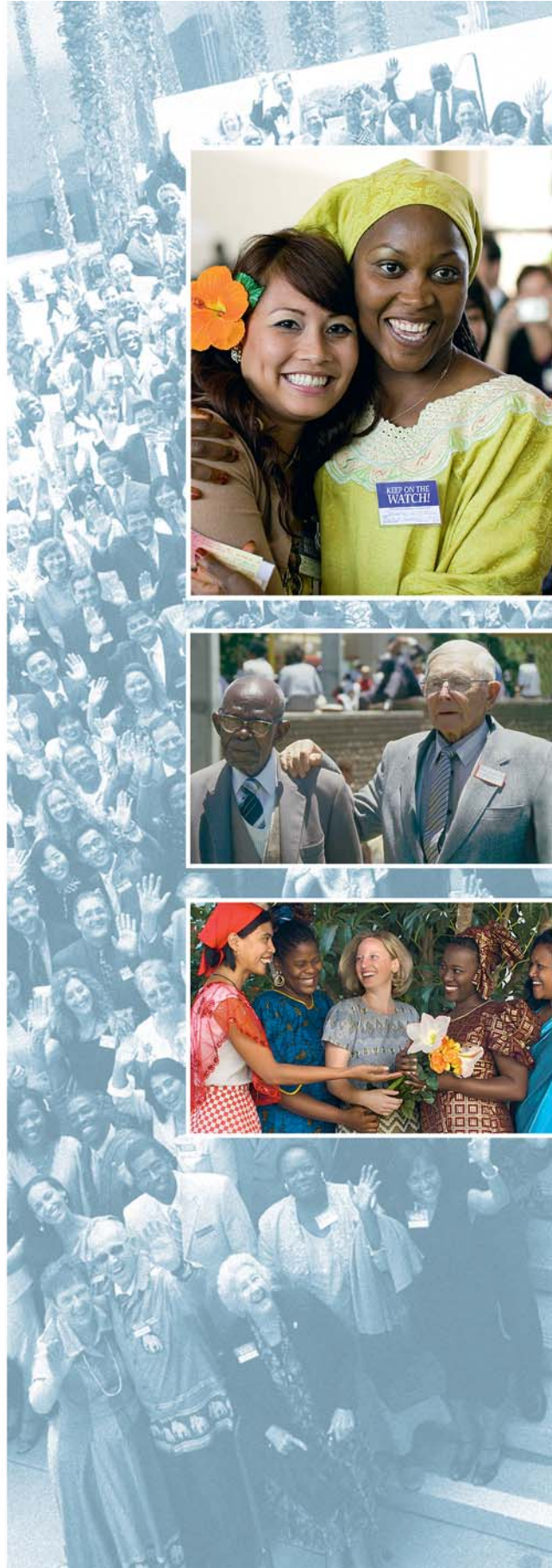
## People Are Changing—Even Now

Without a doubt, all of us would be delighted by such promises. But what assurance is there that they will be fulfilled? Actually, evidence that God's promises will come true is with us right now. What is that evidence? It is the fact that millions of people worldwide today have already enjoyed success in ridding themselves of selfish, immoral, or violent personality traits and have learned to be honest, peaceable, and kind individuals. Today, Jehovah's Witnesses, numbering over seven million, are an international brotherhood that transcends racial, ethnic, nationalistic, political, and economic barriers, which have caused so much hatred, violence, and bloodshed throughout history.\* That such changes are taking place today provides a firm basis for believing that God's promises will be fulfilled on a grand scale.

What is it, though, that brings about such changes? The answer lies in yet another of the Bible's promises, recorded by the prophet Isaiah. He wrote:

"The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them. . . . Even the lion will eat straw just like the bull. And the sucking child will certainly play upon the hole of the cobra; and upon the light aperture of a poisonous snake will a weaned child actually put his own hand. They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea."—Isaiah 11:6-9.

\* For more information, see the brochure *Jehovah's Witnesses—Who Are They? What Do They Believe?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.





Is this prophecy merely foretelling a time when animals will live in harmony with humans? No, there is more to it than that. Note that the last part of the passage indicates what causes the transformation: "The earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah." Does knowledge of God change animal behavior? Hardly. But it can and does change people! This prophecy foretells that those who may have had animalistic tendencies would put them aside and develop a Christlike personality because of learning and applying what the Bible teaches.

Take as an example Pedro.\* He believed that he was fighting for justice when he

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\* Name has been changed.

joined a terrorist organization. After receiving training, he was ordered to blow up a police barracks. While making preparations to do so, he was arrested. Pedro spent 18 months in prison, where he continued his subversive activity. Meanwhile, Pedro's wife began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Upon his release, Pedro also started to study the Bible, and what he learned about Jehovah God moved him to make great changes in his attitude and his approach to life. "I thank Jehovah that I never actually killed anyone during my years as a terrorist," says Pedro. "Now I use the sword of God's spirit, the Bible, to give people a message of true peace and justice—the good





news of God's Kingdom." Pedro even visited the barracks he had planned to destroy in order to share his message of peace and of a world without violence.

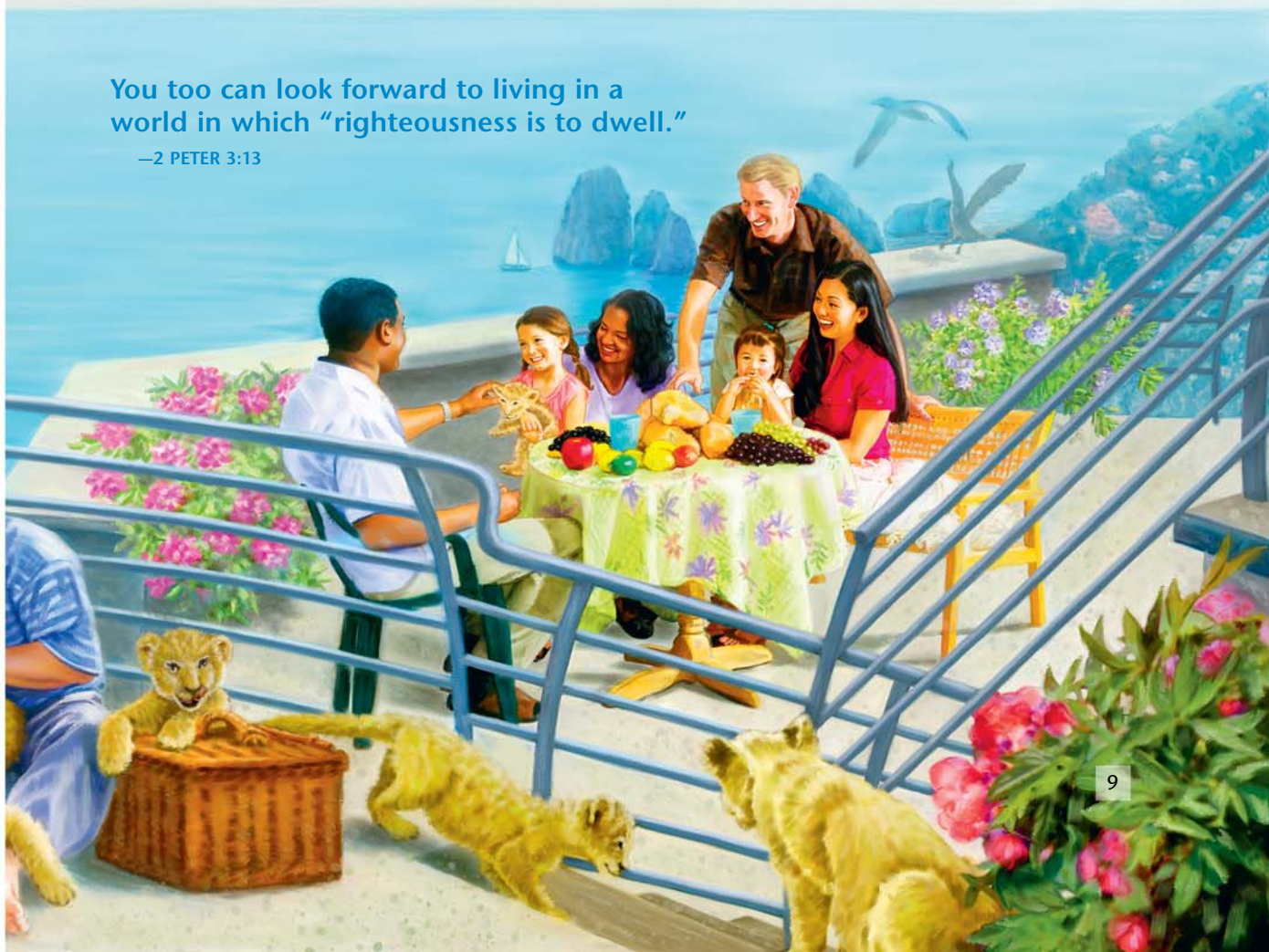
The powerful effect that God's Word can have on people gives all the more reason for us to have faith in God's promise that the end of all evil deeds is assured. Yes, people will not do bad things forever but will change for the better. Soon Jehovah will remove the originator of evil deeds, Satan the Devil, who is behind the scenes, as it were, maneuvering the affairs of the world. The Bible says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) But soon he will be put away. Gone too will be

those who stubbornly refuse to leave their wicked ways. How wonderful to live at such a blessed time!

What must one do to be assured of such a future? Recall that it is "the knowledge of Jehovah" that is bringing about the change in people today and that will bring about a worldwide change in the near future. By gaining accurate knowledge of the Bible and applying it—as did Pedro—you too can look forward to living in a world in which "righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) We therefore urge you to seize the opportunity still available to take in knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, for that can mean everlasting life for you.—John 17:3.

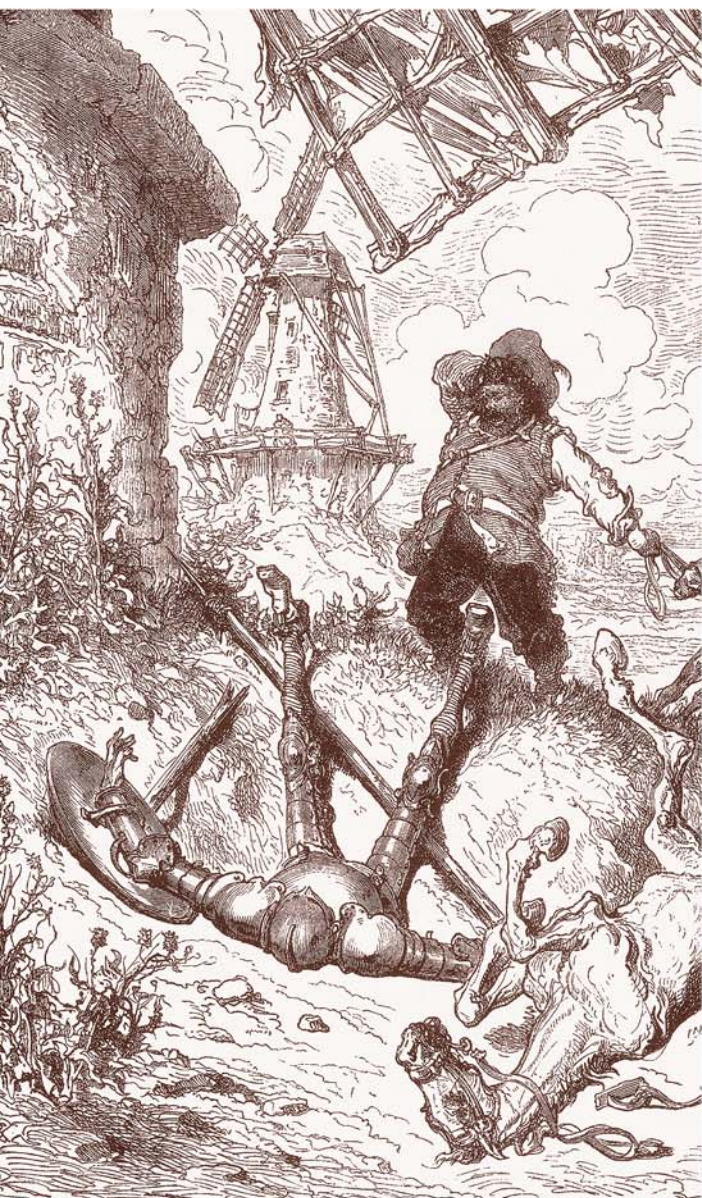
**You too can look forward to living in a world in which "righteousness is to dwell."**

—2 PETER 3:13





# Guard Against Being Deceived



Engravings by Doré

**D**ON QUIXOTE is a well-known fictional character created by 16th-century Spanish author Miguel de Cervantes in his classic novel by that name. In that novel, Don Quixote fills his mind with legends and fables about brave knights in glittering armor coming to the rescue of damsels in distress. Soon he begins to believe that he too is a noble knight. In one famous episode, he attacks a group of windmills that he sees as a band of dangerous giants. Convinced in his own mind that he is serving God's interests by killing those giants, he ends up totally humiliated.

Don Quixote, of course, is only make-believe, but being deceived is seldom a laughing matter. Think, for example, about the alcoholic who believes that he can drink all he wants, only to end up ruining his health and wrecking his family life. Or consider the unfortunate soul suffering from anorexia who thinks that she is well-nourished and healthy but actually is slowly starving herself to death.

Could any of us fall into the trap of being deceived? Sadly, the answer is yes. In truth, *all* of us are susceptible to such danger. And that includes the possibility of being deceived about our cherished religious beliefs—with potentially catastrophic consequences. Why is that so? How can you guard against being deceived?

## The Dangers of Being Deceived

To deceive, says one dictionary, means “to cause to accept as true or valid what is false or invalid.” It also implies “imposing a false idea or belief that causes ignorance, bewilderment, or helplessness.” The basic idea of the word, along with such

other words as “mislead” and “delude,” is to lead someone astray by underhanded means. Surely, a person who is not aware that he or she is being kept in a state of “ignorance, bewilderment, or helplessness” by deliberate misinformation is in serious danger.

The really sad fact is that very often the person who is deceived or deluded tends to hold on to his belief in spite of strong evidence proving otherwise. Perhaps he gets so emotionally attached to his belief that he simply shuts his eyes and closes his ears to any evidence that might challenge it.

### Are We in Danger?

‘Is it not an exaggeration to say that *all* of us are in danger of being deceived with regard to our religious beliefs?’ you might ask. No, it is not. This is because Satan the Devil, whom Jesus called “the father of the lie,” is bent on deceiving and deluding all of us. (John 8:44) Satan is also described in the Bible as “the god of this system of things.” He has “blinded the minds” of millions of people throughout history. (2 Corinthians 4:4) Even now, he is “misleading the entire inhabited earth.”—Revelation 12:9.

Satan began deceiving mankind at the very start of human history. For example, he deceived Eve into believing that she was not subject to the laws of her Creator and that she could “be like God, knowing good and bad,” that is, deciding for herself what was good and what was bad. (Genesis 3:1-5) That was the first great deception, for even though humans were given the freedom to choose what they would do, they were not created with the ability to determine for themselves what is right and what is wrong. Only God himself, as Creator and Sovereign, has that right and authority. (Jeremiah 10:23; Revelation 4:11) What a delusion to believe that the right to *choose* between good

and bad means the right to *determine* what is good and what is bad! Unfortunately, we imperfect humans easily fall into that trap.

### Could It Happen to You?

Your cherished religious beliefs may have existed for centuries, perhaps having been passed down from generation to generation. That, however, does not necessarily mean that they are true. Why not? Well, the Bible record shows that soon after the death of Christ’s apostles, deceitful men arose in the Christian congregation and taught “twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:29, 30) They very skillfully misled people “with persuasive arguments” as well as “through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men.”—Colossians 2:4, 8.

Are things any different today? Not really, for the apostle Paul warned that things would get worse in “the last days,” the time in which we are now living. “Wicked men and impostors will advance from bad to worse,” he wrote, “misleading and being misled [or, “deluding others and deluding themselves,” *Phillips*].”—2 Timothy 3:1, 13.

It is therefore the course of wisdom to take seriously the warning given by the apostle Paul: “Consequently let him that thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.” (1 Corinthians 10:12) Paul, of course, was speaking about one’s standing before God. In fact, to think that Satan could never deceive you is, in itself, a great delusion. Absolutely no one is immune to Satan’s “crafty acts.” (Ephesians 6:11, footnote) That is why the apostle expressed his fear regarding his fellow Christians that “somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning, [their] minds might be corrupted away from the sincerity and the chastity that are due the Christ.”—2 Corinthians 11:3.



### How Can You Guard Against Being Deceived?

So how can you guard against being deceived by Satan? How can you make sure that you “worship [God] with spirit and truth”? (John 4:24) Use what Jehovah God has given you. First of all, he has given you intellectual capacity so that you can distinguish truth from falsehood. (1 John 5:20) He has also made it possible for you to identify Satan’s designs. (2 Corinthians 2:11) In fact, he has given you everything you need to counteract Satan’s attempts to mislead you.—Proverbs 3:1-6; Ephesians 6:10-18.

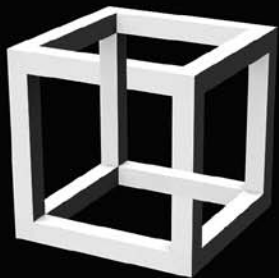
Most important, God has provided you with an infallible means with which to protect yourself. What is that? The same one that the apostle Paul encouraged his companion Timothy to rely on when it came to matters of religious faith. After giving the warning about “wicked men and impostors,” the apostle Paul told Timothy to resist them by basing everything he believed on

“the holy writings”—that is, on God’s holy Word, the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:15.

Of course, some may say that anyone who believes in God and accepts the Bible as His inspired Word is misguided. In reality, though, the misguided ones are those who stubbornly ignore all the evidence that proves the existence of a Creator and that the Bible is truly God’s inspired Word.\*—Romans 1:18-25; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.

Rather than being deceived by what is “falsely called ‘knowledge,’” use God’s Word to establish the truth. (1 Timothy 6:20, 21) Be like the noble-minded men and women whom the apostle Paul preached to in Beroea. They “received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind.” Not only were they keenly believing what the apostle Paul taught them but they were also “*carefully ex-*

\* For further details, see the books *Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?* and *The Bible—God’s Word or Man’s?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.



### Do You See Things as They Really Are?

In the 1930’s, Swedish artist Oscar Reutersvärd drew and made public a series of what came to be called impossible figures. A modern example is shown at left. At a quick glance, these drawings

seem to make believable what clearly violates all rules of common sense. When examined carefully, however, they can be seen as clever tricks invented by the artist to confuse or deceive the eye and mind of the beholder.

Impossible figures are not the only things that appear different from what they really are. Some two thousand years ago, the Bible

warned: “Look out: perhaps there may be someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ.”—Colossians 2:8.

What adds weight to this warning is that the writer of those words himself had been a victim of deceit. Having been educated at the feet of one of the most renowned religious teachers of his time and having connections in high places, he was the type least likely to be deceived.—Acts 22:3.

This man—Saul of Tarsus—had been led to believe that anyone who did not share his religious traditions and customs was con-

*amining the Scriptures daily* as to whether these things were so.”—Acts 17:11.

You have nothing to fear from examining your beliefs in this way. In fact, the Bible encourages you to “make sure of all things” before accepting them as true. (1 Thessalonians 5:21) Toward the end of the first century C.E., the apostle John urged his fellow Christians: “Beloved ones, do not believe every inspired expression, but test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God.” (1 John 4:1) Yes, even though a certain religious teaching *seems* to be “inspired”—or to come from God—it is still the course of wisdom to examine the Scriptures to make sure before accepting it as true.—John 8:31, 32.

### Act on What You Learn

There is, however, something more that is required. The disciple James wrote: “Become doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves with false reasoning.” (James 1:22) It is not enough to *know* what

the Bible teaches. You have to put it into practice. How? By doing what God commands you to do and not doing the things that he prohibits.

Look at the moral breakdown all around us, for example. Does that not show you how successful Satan has been in deluding people into thinking that they can ignore God’s moral laws with impunity? Because of this, the apostle Paul gave Christians this frank warning: “Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”—Galatians 6:7.

Do not be like the “foolish man” whom Jesus described as “hearing” his sayings and not “doing them.” Like Cervantes’ Don Quixote, who was deceived by his own fanciful imagination, that man was deceived because he thought he could build a solid, secure house on a shaky, shifting foundation of sand. Instead, be like the man who “built his house upon the rock-mass.” Jesus called this man “discreet” because he hears Jesus’ sayings “and does them.”—Matthew 7:24-27.

demned. Empowered by the Jewish religious leaders, he considered it his God-given duty to prosecute any who refused to recant. He even supported the murder of one of his countrymen on the mistaken charge of blasphemy.—Acts 22:4, 5, 20.

In time, Saul was helped to see the distinction between what is right and what is wrong, what God approves and what He disapproves. Once Saul realized that he was wrong, this zealous man changed his ways and became known as Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. No longer a victim of deception, Paul found the true way of worship.—Acts 22:6-16; Romans 1:1.

Like Paul, many sincere people were once deceived by teachings that might be likened to impossible figures—beliefs that seem plausible but are not based on God’s Word. (Proverbs 14:12; Romans 10:2, 3) Then they were helped to see the beliefs and the fruits of their religion for what they really are. (Matthew 7:15-20) As they gained accurate knowledge of the Bible, they made changes in their beliefs and lifestyle in order to have God’s approval.

Would you be willing to follow the example of the apostle Paul and examine your beliefs in the light of God’s Word, the Bible? Jehovah’s Witnesses will be glad to help you.



## DRAW CLOSE TO GOD

# He Dignifies Us With Free Will

2 KINGS 18:1-7

**P**ARENTS are supposed to set a good example for their children. A positive parental influence may help a child to develop endearing qualities and to make wise choices in life. Sadly, many parents set a poor example for their children. Are such children doomed to fail? We find the answer in a most reassuring truth—Jehovah God has dignified each of us with the gift of free will. Consider the case of Hezekiah, as found at 2 Kings 18:1-7.

Hezekiah was “the son of Ahaz the king of Judah.” (Verse 1) Ahaz led his subjects away from Jehovah’s pure worship. This wicked king carried on Baal worship, with its rites of human sacrifice. He had one or more of Hezekiah’s own brothers slaughtered. Ahaz had the doors of the temple closed and “made altars for himself at every corner in Jerusalem.” He “offended Jehovah.” (2 Chronicles 28:3, 24, 25) Clearly, Hezekiah could hardly have had a worse father. But was Hezekiah destined to repeat his father’s mistakes?

Upon succeeding Ahaz to the throne, Hezekiah soon showed that he was not the helpless victim of a poor paternal example. Hezekiah “continued to do what was right in Jehovah’s

eyes.” (Verse 3) Hezekiah trusted in Jehovah, and “there proved to be no one like him among all the kings of Judah.” (Verse 5) In the first year of his reign, the young king began a spiritual reform that led to the removal of the high places, where pagan idols were worshipped. The temple was reopened, and pure worship was restored. (Verse 4; 2 Chronicles 29:1-3, 27-31) Hezekiah “kept sticking to Jehovah . . . , and Jehovah proved to be with him.” —Verses 6, 7.

What enabled Hezekiah to rise above his father’s poor example? Is it possible that his mother, Abijah—about whom little is known—exerted a positive influence on her son? Did the good example of Isaiah, who began his prophetic service before Hezekiah was born, have a molding effect on the young prince? The Bible does not say. Whatever the case, one thing is certain: Hezekiah chose to pursue a course that was in stark contrast with that of his father.

The example of Hezekiah is encouraging to any who may have experienced a difficult childhood because of poor parenting. The past is unalterable; we cannot erase painful past experiences. But such experiences do not doom us to failure. We can make choices in the present that can lead to a happy future. Like Hezekiah, we can choose to love and worship the true God, Jehovah. Such a course results in a satisfying life now and can lead to everlasting life in God’s new world. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) How grateful we should be to the loving God who has dignified each of us with a most precious gift—free will!

\* Isaiah prophesied from about 778 B.C.E. until sometime after 732 B.C.E. Hezekiah began reigning in 745 B.C.E., when he was 25 years old.







## DID YOU KNOW?

### Was Jesus related to any of his 12 apostles?

■ The Scriptures do not provide a definitive answer to this question. However, circumstantial evidence and tradition suggest that some of the 12 were related to Jesus.

The Gospel writers provide the names of the women who were looking on as Jesus was dying on the torture stake. John 19:25 identifies four of them: “His mother [Mary] and the sister of his mother; Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.” Comparison of this verse with Matthew’s and Mark’s descriptions of the same scene may lead to the conclusion that the sister of Jesus’ mother was Salome. This Salome, in turn, seems to have been the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

(Matthew 27:55, 56; Mark 15:40) Her sons, elsewhere identified as James and John, would thus be Jesus’ first cousins. Jesus called these two brothers, who were fishermen, to be his disciples.—Matthew 4:21, 22.

Extra-Biblical tradition claims that Clopas, or Alphaeus, the husband of one of the women mentioned at John 19:25, was the brother of Joseph, Jesus’ adoptive father. If this tradition is based on fact, then James the son of Alphaeus, another of the 12 apostles, was also Jesus’ cousin.—Matthew 10:3.

### How were Jesus and John the Baptizer related?

■ Some believe that the two men were second cousins. This belief is based on an imprecise translation of Luke 1:36. In that verse, the *King James Version*, for example, states that John’s mother, Elizabeth, and Jesus’ mother, Mary, were cousins.

In reality, however, the word used in the original Greek of this verse is not so specific. It indicates merely that the two women were related, not necessarily that they were cousins. As *The Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* puts it, “the term is too broad to be of help in determining their precise relation-

ship.” From where, then, does the idea come that Jesus and John were cousins? *The Catholic Encyclopedia* answers: “All our information concerning . . . the parents of Mary . . . is derived from apocryphal literature.”

Thus, Jesus and John were at least distantly related, though not necessarily second cousins.





## A LETTER FROM GRENADA

# A Day at the Beach

**I**F YOU should ever receive an assignment to take up missionary service in a foreign land, you will find that the excitement is almost unbearable. Like a curious, wide-eyed little child, you wonder about the people, the surroundings, and the experiences that await you in the ministry.

When my wife and I were assigned to Grenada, which boasts a gorgeous coastline with some 45 beaches, we could not help but wonder what those beaches would be like. Soon we were to experience a happy day at one of them, but our happiness had more to do with people than with sun and surf.

It is a short drive from our home in Grenada to Grand Anse Beach—but what a beautiful drive it is! The road twists and turns, affording us some of the most scenic views imaginable. The hillsides are luxuriously green. Mountains, rain forest, waterfalls, and spectacular ocean vistas greet us at almost every turn. No wonder tourists from all over the world come to visit! The scenery is so beautiful that a driver has to be careful not to be distracted. The roads wind and weave and, at times, squeeze

two-way traffic so close that you wonder how it is possible not to bump into oncoming vehicles.

We arrived at the Convention Trade Center, located along the road by Grand Anse Beach. Soon a group of Jehovah's Witnesses, numbering nearly 600, gathered for a joyful day of association and Bible instruction. The day was especially meaningful to Lesley and Daphne, a married couple in their 70's. Lesley was to be baptized. Daphne had been eagerly awaiting this day for a long time, as she had been baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1958.

For the Witnesses, baptism—performed by complete immersion in water—has great meaning. It is a step taken when a person has gained an accurate knowledge of Bible truth and is applying it in his or her life. It is a public ceremony in which a person goes on record as having dedicated himself to Jehovah God.

I had been asked to address the audience to explain what the Scriptures say about baptism. At the end of the talk, Lesley stood up along with two others who were also to be







baptized. He wore a nicely pressed white shirt, a tie, and a broad smile. I asked: "Have you repented of your sins and dedicated yourself to Jehovah to do his will?" You could sense the sincerity and devotion as he and the others answered with a heartfelt "Yes!"

Knowing Lesley's background, I was particularly moved. For decades he had held back from studying the Bible. Then he and his wife visited another island. While there, they decided that they would each attend their own religious services. "You go to your church, and I'll go to mine," Lesley said to Daphne.

Lesley dropped Daphne off at the Kingdom Hall and went on to the Anglican church in the same neighborhood. When the church services ended, Lesley returned to the Kingdom Hall to pick up his wife. At the hall, he was surrounded by kind, friendly people who warmly welcomed him, though they had never met him before. That touched Lesley. At his church, no one had said a word to him. "I'm never going back to that church again," Lesley told Daphne. "Not one person paid attention to me, not even the priest. No one greeted me. I walked in, and I walked out." When Lesley walked out, he walked out for good.

After that, Lesley began a serious study

of God's Word. And now he was ready to be baptized. The baptism candidates were off to the beach, and we were close behind. With the ocean so near, there was no need to set up a baptism pool as is done at most conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses. Here we just crossed the road.

The Grand Anse Beach is a stunning two-mile stretch of white sand with year-round warm blue waters. Tourists looked puzzled when they saw our group arrive at the beach, men dressed in shirts and ties, and women in dresses and skirts. Lesley had changed and was wearing a T-shirt and short pants. Imagine how Daphne felt to see her husband get baptized some 50 years after she had done so! The noonday sun was bright, and so was her smile. Even the tourists shared in the joy of the occasion. They joined in clapping as each one was baptized.

Blue skies, white sands, and gentle waves—this beach already gives glory to its Creator. It did so even more as the three newly baptized ones came up out of the water. Seeing them warmed our hearts more than the sun warmed our skin. The day was truly special. For Lesley and Daphne, this day at the beach was the best yet.







# 500 Years of Calvinism

## What Has It Achieved?

**J**EAN CAUVIN (John Calvin) was born in Noyon, France, in 1509. He founded a religious movement that played a significant role in the life of many people in parts of Europe, the Americas, South Africa, and elsewhere. He is regarded as one of the major church Reformers in Western history.

Today, some 500 years after Calvin's birth, Calvinism—the ideas and teachings of Calvin—in one form or another still flourishes in such Protestant denominations as Re-

formed, Presbyterian, Congregational, Puritan, and others. As of last September, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches reported having 75 million adherents in 107 countries.

### At Odds With Catholicism

Calvin's father was an attorney and a secretary for the Catholic church in Noyon. His work probably brought him face-to-face with much of the widespread misconduct of

the clergy at the time. Whether this led to protest or irreverence, we cannot be sure, but in time John's father and brother were both excommunicated by the church. When his father died, John had difficulty securing a Christian burial for him. That incident likely cemented John's mistrust of Catholicism.

Most works on Calvin have little to say about him as a youth except to describe him as reserved and uncommunicative in character. Even as a student in Paris, Orléans, and Bourges, he seemed to have few friends. But Calvin was gifted with a quick mind and an astonishing memory. This, coupled with an awesome capacity for work—he studied daily from five o'clock in the morning until midnight—enabled him to become a doctor of law before he turned 23. He also learned Hebrew, Greek, and Latin in order to study the Bible. First and foremost, however, Calvin was known for his solemn, disciplined work ethic, a characteristic that many link to Calvinism even today.

Meanwhile, across the border in Germany, Martin Luther openly criticized the Catholic Church for its corruption and unbiblical teachings. It is popularly thought that in 1517 he nailed his 95 theses, or protests, to a church door in Wittenberg, urging church reform. Many agreed with Luther, and the Reformation quickly spread throughout Europe. Understandably, it stirred up strong opposition in many areas, and the protesters, or Protestants, expounded their views at their own peril. In 1533 in Paris, Calvin's friend Nicholas Cop delivered a speech supporting Luther, and since Calvin helped write the speech, both he and Cop had to flee for their lives. Calvin never again returned to live in France.

In 1536, Calvin published *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a veritable textbook on Protestant faith. He addressed it to King Francis I in defense of French Protes-

tants, later known as Huguenots. Calvin attacked Catholic teachings and upheld the cornerstone of his own faith—God's sovereignty. In addition to its impact on religious matters, Calvin's *Institutes* is also noted for its influence on French language and literary style. Calvin was acclaimed as one of the foremost Reformers. He eventually settled in Geneva, Switzerland, and from 1541 onward, he made that city the focal point of his reforms.

### Pursuing Reforms in Geneva

Calvin exerted a dramatic influence on Geneva. Driven by a strong sense of morality and righteousness, he changed Geneva from "a city of ill repute to one in which a strict moral code regulated the lives of all," observes the *Encyclopedia of Religion*. Changes came about in other ways as well. Dr. Sabine Witt, curator of Berlin's German Historical Museum, explains: "As a result of the religious wars in France, the population [of Geneva] doubled within a few years following the influx of thousands of Protestant



Calvin's  
"Institutes"  
(1536)  
provided  
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for the  
Protestant  
faith

refugees.” The Huguenots, possessed of a work ethic like that of Calvin, boosted the economy of the city, establishing Geneva as a center for printing and for the manufacture of timepieces.

Refugees from other lands also came to Geneva, including many from England, where Protestants were under threat from Queen Mary I. Made up mostly of exiled minorities, Calvinists thus developed what the religious journal *Christ in der Gegenwart* (Contemporary Christian) describes as “the theology of the persecuted.” In 1560 the refugees published the *Geneva Bible*, the first Bible in English to contain numbered verse divisions. Because of its compact size, this Bible facilitated personal study of God’s Word. This was probably the Bible translation taken by the Puritans when they emigrated to North America in 1620.

Geneva did not provide safe refuge for everyone, however. Michael Servetus, born in 1511 in Spain, studied Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and medicine and might have met Calvin when both were students in Paris. Servetus recognized from his study of the Bible that the doctrine of the Trinity was un-

scriptural. He tried to correspond with Calvin on the subject, but the latter viewed Servetus less as a friend than a foe. Persecuted by Catholics in France, Servetus fled to Calvin’s city, Geneva. Rather than being met with a welcome, he was arrested, tried for heresy, and burned at the stake in 1553. “The execution of Servetus continues to be a stigma on the life and work of the otherwise great Reformer [Calvin],” says historian Friedrich Oehninger.

Calvin turned out a prodigious amount of work while pursuing the goal of reform. He is said to have written more than 100 reference works and 1,000 letters as well as to have delivered some 4,000 sermons in Geneva. Through it all, Calvin not only propounded his view of what Christianity should be but also endeavored to enforce the way he thought Christians ought to live, especially in Geneva, which he envisioned as something of a city of God.\*

What have Calvin’s tireless reform efforts in Geneva produced? According to the Swiss Federal Statistics Office, in the year 2000, just 16 percent of the inhabitants of Geneva belonged to the Reformed (Calvinist) Church, and there are more Catholics than Calvinists in that city.

### Religious Disunity Proliferates

In the wake of the Reformation, individual cities and states declared their allegiance to Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Calvinism, making Europe a hotbed of religious disunity. Although the Reformers were united in their criticism of the Catholic Church, they were at odds with one another. Dr. Witt, quoted earlier, notes: “Theological disagreements developed even within the Protestant camp.” Although all acknowl-

\* For more information, see the book *Mankind’s Search for God*, pages 321-325, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

*The execution of Servetus remains a stigma on Calvin’s life and work*



© Mary Evans Picture Library



edged that the Bible should be the basis of Christian faith, there was considerable disagreement in their teachings. The immediate issue was the meaning of the Last Supper and of Christ's presence. In time, Calvinism developed one of its most controversial doctrines: predestination.

There was much debate on the definition of predestination. One group of Calvinists claimed that before humans sinned, God had decided that a chosen few were to be led to salvation through Christ, whereas all others were to be abandoned to their fate. This group, therefore, believed that salvation was the decree of God and that men were not all equal. Other Calvinists thought that salvation was open to all humankind, and it was a matter of individual choice whether to accept it or not. This meant that salvation depended upon man's free will. Until long after Calvin's death, Calvinism struggled with such topics as God's decree, man's free will, and the equality of opportunity among humankind.

### Calvinism's Blemished Legacy

In the 20th century, the Calvinist Dutch Reformed Church presented predestination as a basis for racial discrimination in South Africa. Regarding the government's policy of white supremacy, Nelson Mandela, who became the first black president of South Africa, asserted: "The policy was supported by the Dutch Reformed Church, which furnished apartheid with its religious underpinnings by suggesting that Afrikaners were God's chosen people and that blacks were a subservient species. In the Afrikaner's world view, apartheid and the church went hand in hand."

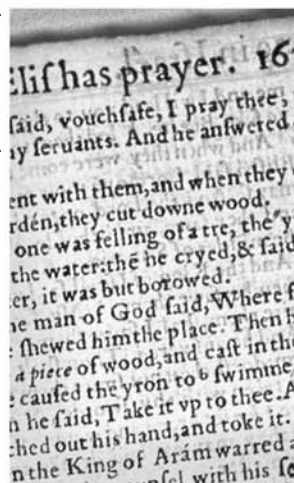
In the 1990's, the Dutch Reformed Church apologized publicly for its support of

In the wake of the Reformation, individual cities and states declared their allegiance to Catholicism, Lutheranism, or Calvinism, making Europe a hotbed of religious disunity

apartheid. In a formal statement called the Rustenburg Declaration, church leaders acknowledged: "Some of us actively misused the Bible to justify apartheid, leading many to believe that it had the sanction of God." Over the years, the church's stand on apartheid not only contributed to the suffering that resulted from racial prejudice but even suggested that God was to blame!

John Calvin died in Geneva in 1564. At the end, he reportedly thanked his fellow churchmen "for having conferred so many honours on one who plainly deserved nothing of the kind" and begged forgiveness for his enduring weaknesses of impatience and anger. Be that as it may, there is no denying that the Protestant work ethic—characterized by industriousness, self-discipline, and dedication to duty—bears close resemblance to the person and values of John Calvin.

Courtesy American Bible Society



*The "Geneva Bible" (1560) is the first English Bible to have numbered verses*



# Is Confession of Sins Required by God?

Personal confession of sins into the ear of a priest or a minister continues to be part of the religious ritual and worship in many churches. Yet, in today's permissive and tolerant society, is confession relevant or even necessary?

**F**EELINGS on this matter are mixed. For example, the *National Post* of Canada reports on one person who admits that while it is difficult to tell someone else what you did wrong, "there is something extremely freeing about having someone acknowledge it, praying with you and saying this is what you need to do." Conversely, the book *Bless Me, Father, for I Have Sinned* quotes a man who said: "Confession is one of the most crippling facets of the Church. It perpetuates neurotic patterns." What does the Bible have to say on this subject?

## What the Bible Says

In the Law that God gave to the nation of Israel, we find specific instructions on what needed to be done when an individual sinned. For example, when a person sinned against a fellow man or broke one of God's laws, he would have to confess to an appointed priest of the tribe of Levi, who would then make atonement in his behalf by offering a sacrifice to God for forgiveness of sin.—Leviticus 5:1-6.

Centuries later, when the prophet Nathan reproved King David for his sins, how did David respond? He immediately admitted: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (2 Samuel

12:13) He also prayed, pleading with God to show him favor. The result? David later wrote: "My sin I finally confessed to you, and my error I did not cover. I said: 'I shall make confession over my transgressions to Jehovah.' And you yourself pardoned the error of my sins."—Psalm 32:5; 51:1-4.

Confession of sins remained a requirement by God in the Christian congregation in the first century of our Common Era. James, the half brother of Jesus and one of the principal men of the congregation in Jerusalem, urged fellow Christians: "Openly confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may get healed." (James 5:16) What, then, are Christians required to confess, and to whom?

## What Should Be Confessed?

Every day, we imperfect humans are prone to act thoughtlessly or to misuse our tongue and thus sin against one another. (Romans 3:23) Does this mean that we must confess every such transgression to a certain appointed human authority or agent?

While every sin is an offense in God's sight, he mercifully takes into consideration our failings because of inherited human imperfection. Indeed, the psalmist acknowl-

edged: “If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand? For there is the true forgiveness with you, in order that you may be feared.” (Psalm 130:3, 4) So, what should we do when we err and sin against others, perhaps unintentionally? Recall that the model prayer that Jesus taught his followers to pray includes this request: “Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves also forgive everyone that is in debt to us.” (Luke 11:4) Yes, God will grant us forgiveness if we come to him and ask for it in Jesus’ name.—John 14:13, 14.

Note that Jesus included the condition that we also forgive those “in debt to us.” The apostle Paul reminded his fellow believers: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32) When we forgive others their faults, we will have good reason to expect God to forgive us ours.

What, though, about such grievous sins as stealing, intentional lying, sexual immorality, drunkenness, and so on? Anyone committing such sins is breaking God’s laws and is thus sinning against God. What should be done?

### **To Whom Should Sins Be Confessed?**

God does not authorize men to forgive sins against him; only he can do so. The Bible tells us clearly: “If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and righteous so as to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9) However, to whom should such sins be confessed?

Since forgiveness can come only from God, confession must be made to him. That is what David did, as we have noted. On what basis, though, would forgiveness be granted? The Bible tells us: “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come

from the person of Jehovah.” (Acts 3:19) Yes, forgiveness is contingent not only on one’s recognizing and confessing the sin but also on one’s being willing to desist from the wrong course. This additional step is often difficult. But there is help.

Recall the words of the disciple James that we referred to earlier: “Openly confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may get healed.” To those words, James added: “A righteous man’s supplication, when it is at work, has much force.” (James 5:16) The ‘righteous man’ can be one

God will overlook our shortcomings and grant us forgiveness if we come to him and ask for it in Jesus’ name



of “the older men of the congregation,” whom James mentioned in verse 14. In the Christian congregation, there are spiritually “older men,” or elders, appointed to assist those who want to gain God’s forgiveness. No, such “older men” cannot absolve anyone of sins, for no man is authorized to forgive a fellow human for a wrong against God.\* However, they are spiritually qualified to reprove and readjust a person guilty of a serious sin, helping him to recognize the gravity of his sin and the need to repent.—Galatians 6:1.

\* Some view Jesus’ words found at John 20:22, 23 as support for the role of human confessors. For a detailed discussion on this point, see *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1996, pages 28-29.



### Why Confess One's Sins?

Whether the sin is grievous or not, the person who committed it has damaged his relationship with his fellow man and with God. Consequently, he may feel troubled or ill at ease. This is the work of the faculty of conscience, with which our Creator has endowed us. (Romans 2:14, 15) What can be done?

Turning once again to the book of James, we find these encouraging words: "Is there anyone [spiritually] sick among you? Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him."—James 5:14, 15.

Here again, the older men, or elders, are called upon to respond to the needs of the flock. How? Not by merely hearing a confession. Rather, since spiritual sickness is involved, something needs to be done in order to "make the indisposed one well." There are two things James mentioned that can be done.

First, there is the 'greasing with oil.' This refers to the healing power of God's Word. The apostle Paul explained that "the word of God is alive and exerts power . . . and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart," reaching deep into one's mind and heart. (Hebrews 4:12) By skillful use of the Bible, the older men can help the spiritually sick one to see the cause of the problem and take appropriate steps to correct matters before God.

Then, there is "the prayer of faith." Although the prayers of the older men will not alter God's application of justice, these prayers do count with God, who is eager to pardon sin on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice. (1 John 2:2) God is ready to help any sinner who is genuinely repentant and who produces "works that befit repentance." —Acts 26:20.

The foremost reason to confess a sin—committed either against a fellow human or against God—is to gain an approved standing with God. Jesus Christ indicated that we must first resolve any difficulty with our fellow men and make peace with them before we can worship God with a good conscience. (Matthew 5:23, 24) Proverbs 28:13 says: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy." When we humble ourselves in the eyes of Jehovah God and ask for forgiveness, we will win his favor and be exalted in due course.—1 Peter 5:6.

*The foremost reason to confess a sin is to gain an approved standing with God*





## OUR READERS ASK . . .

### Where did Cain find his wife?



■ “If Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel, where did Cain’s wife come from?” Although this is often asked as a trick question by Bible skeptics, the Bible does provide sufficient detail to give a satisfactory answer.

Genesis chapters 3 and 4 present the following information: (1) Eve was “the mother of everyone living.” (2) Time elapsed between the birth of Cain and his offering the sacrifice

that was rejected by God. (3) Following his banishment to become “a wanderer and a fugitive,” Cain worried that ‘anyone finding him’ might try to kill him. (4) God set up a sign to protect Cain, indicating that either his siblings or other relatives might try to kill him. (5) “Afterward,” Cain had intercourse with his wife in “the land of Fugitiveness.”—Genesis 3:20; 4:3, 12, 14-17.

From the above, we can rightly conclude that Cain’s wife was a descendant of Eve born on an unknown date. Genesis 5:4 acknowledges that during his 930 years of life, Adam “became father to sons *and daughters*.” Of course, the Bible does not specify that Cain’s wife was Eve’s daughter. Indeed, the fact that she is mentioned after Cain’s banishment indicates that enough time had passed that she could even have been one of Adam and Eve’s granddaughters. Hence, *The Amplified Old Testament* describes Cain’s wife simply as “one of Adam’s offspring.”

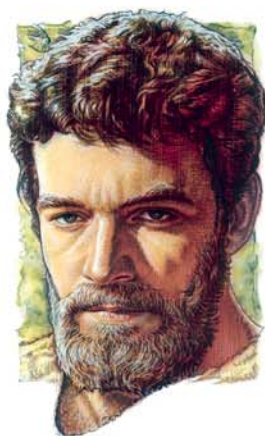
Nineteenth-century Bible commentator Adam Clarke speculated that God’s establish-

ing a sign as a result of Cain’s fear came about because several generations of Adam’s descendants already existed—enough “to found several villages.”

That Cain married his sister or a later female descendant of Adam through the marriage of any of Adam’s sons or daughters is viewed by some societies today as unthinkable. This is usually because of societal taboos or fear of genetic defects.

Nevertheless, F. LaGard Smith comments in *The Narrated Bible in Chronological Order*: “It is altogether likely that these first brothers and sisters enter into marriages with each other, despite the sense of inappropriateness which would be felt should that occur in following generations.” Also, it is noteworthy that it was not until Moses received God’s laws for the nation of Israel in 1513 B.C.E. that intercourse between such close relatives was specifically forbidden.—Leviticus 18:9, 17, 24.

Today, we are millennia away from the perfection once possessed by our original parents. The effect that genetics and heredity have on us might not have been a factor for them. Furthermore, recent studies, such as one published in the *Journal of Genetic Counseling*, show that unions between first cousins face lower risks of having children with birth defects than is widely perceived. Reasonably, such issues would not have been a serious concern during Adam’s life span or even prior to Noah’s day. Thus, we can conclude that Cain’s wife was one of his female relatives.





# TRUST IN JEHOVAH

## HE WILL REALLY HELP YOU

AS TOLD BY EDMUND SCHMIDT

As I was about to appear before a court in New York in October 1943, the above advice came to mind. By the time I turned 25, I had spent nearly four years in prison because of Christian neutrality. Like Jesus' early followers, I had resolved to "obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) But before I tell you about that, let me explain how I came to believe so firmly in God.

I WAS born on April 23, 1922, in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., in our apartment one floor above my father's bakery. Four months later, my father, Edmund, attended a convention of the Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called) at Cedar Point, near Sandusky, about a hundred miles from our home.

At that convention, the delegates were urged to "advertise, advertise, advertise [God's] King and his kingdom." The following Sunday, Father began sharing in that work. He kept on doing so for the next 66 years, until his death on July 4, 1988. My mother, Mary, died faithful to God in 1981.

### Joining My Parents in Worship

Our family attended the Polish-language congregation in Cleveland. On Saturday afternoons, many of us children, accompanied

by adults, shared in preaching the good news from house to house. On Sundays, our parents enjoyed a Bible talk in the main auditorium of our meeting place. At the same time, an experienced Bible teacher conducted a Bible study with about 30 of us young ones, using the Bible study aid *The Harp of God*.<sup>\*</sup> Soon I was conducting Bible studies myself, with good results.

In July 1931, our family, which now included my brother Frank, attended another Bible Students' convention, this time in Columbus, about one hundred miles south. That was when the Bible Students wholeheartedly adopted the Bible-based name Jehovah's Witnesses. (Isaiah 43:10-12) On that occasion, I shared in the public ministry, in-

<sup>\*</sup> Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.





viting people to hear the featured talk by J. F. Rutherford, who was then taking the lead in the work of Jehovah's Witnesses. For more than 79 years since, my life has revolved around serving Jehovah God with his people.

### **Hard Times and a Rewarding Ministry**

By 1933 the Great Depression was being felt worldwide. In the United States, over 15 million people, or one quarter of the workforce, were unemployed. Cities went bankrupt, and there was no provision of social security or welfare for the poor. Yet, our Christian brothers and sisters helped one another. On Sundays, our family took bread and pastries from our bakery to the meeting place to share with others. Any funds Father had after expenses were paid at the end of the month, he sent to the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York. He knew that this money would be used to help finance the printing of Bible literature.

During those years, radio broadcasts played a major part in our ministry. Over 400 stations carried Bible talks delivered at our conventions. In the 1930's, the Witnesses also produced phonographs and records at their Brooklyn factory. We used them in our ministry and reported how many times we

played Bible talks to non-Witnesses and how many people listened to them.

In 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party came to power in Germany. Jehovah's Witnesses there were subjected to fierce persecution because of their Christian neutrality. (John 15:19; 17:14) For refusing to participate in political activities or to hail Hitler, a large percentage of the Witnesses in Germany were sent to prisons or concentration camps. Many were executed; others were worked to death. Because of the brutal treatment, many died shortly after their release. Not so well-known is the mistreatment suffered by Jehovah's Witnesses in other lands, including the United States.

In 1940, we attended a convention in Detroit, Michigan. There, on July 28, I was baptized in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah God. The month before that convention, the Supreme Court of the United States had ruled that refusal to salute the flag was a federal offense, punishable by expulsion from school. How did the Witnesses deal with this decision? Many of them operated their own schools in order to provide education for their children. These were called Kingdom Schools.

World War II had begun in September 1939 in Europe, and war hysteria swept

*Preaching in Louisiana in the early 1940's*



through the United States. Young Witnesses suffered harassment and beatings by misguided youths and adults alike. It was reported that from 1940 to 1944, Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States suffered more than 2,500 violent mob assaults. The persecution increased when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. A few weeks earlier, I had begun serving as a pioneer, as full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses are called. I saved money and bought a 22-foot house trailer, and several of us moved to Louisiana to serve there.

### **Persecution in the South**

We received permission from local residents to park our trailer in a pecan orchard near the city of Jeanerette. One Saturday we decided to do public preaching on the street, but the chief of police summoned his men and took us as prisoners to city hall. A mob of about 200 formed outside, and the police sent us out to them without any offer of protection. To our relief, the mob parted and allowed us to pass. The next day, we went to Baton Rouge, a large city nearby, to tell fellow Witnesses about what had happened.

When we returned to Jeanerette, we found a message attached to our trailer door: "Please see me at the oil camp." It was signed "E. M. Vaughn." We found Mr. Vaughn, and he invited us to a meal with him and his wife. He said that he and his men were among the crowd on Saturday, and had it been necessary, he would have defended us from the mob. We appreciated his encouragement and support.

The following day, gun-toting deputy sheriffs arrested us and confiscated our literature. They took the keys to my house trailer and jailed me for 17 days in solitary confinement with next to nothing to eat. Mr. Vaughn made efforts to help us, but without much success. During our confinement, the mob

robbed us and burned everything we owned, including my trailer. At the time, I did not realize that Jehovah was preparing me for what I was soon to face.

### **Imprisonment in the North**

A month after returning to the north, I was appointed as a special pioneer to serve in Olean, New York, along with other Witnesses. While there, the government required me to register for the draft, and I was given conscientious objector status. After I passed the physical and a mental test, my paper was stamped "Candidate for Officers Training Academy."

I was able to continue in the pioneer work for another year or so. Then, in 1943, because I refused to discontinue my ministry and report for military training, the FBI arrested me and instructed me to report to the federal court in Syracuse, New York, the following week for trial. I was indicted, and my trial was scheduled for two days later.

I represented myself. At our Christian meetings, we young Witnesses received instruction on how to defend our constitutional rights in court and how to conduct ourselves properly there. I remembered well the advice mentioned at the outset of this article. Some prosecutors even complained that the Witnesses knew more about the law than they did! The jury, nevertheless, found me guilty. When the judge asked if I had anything further to say, I simply replied, "Today the nation is on trial before God as to how it treats those who serve him."

I received a sentence of four years in the federal prison in Chillicothe, Ohio. There I was assigned to work as secretary to an officer of the prison's selective service department. After a few weeks, a special investigator from Washington, D.C., came to our office and said that they were investigating Hayden Covington. He was a defense lawyer for Jeho-

*Serving as a baker for the  
headquarters staff*

vah's Witnesses and was widely recognized as one of the best constitutional lawyers in America.

The investigator said that he wanted the complete files on two inmates—Danny Hurtado and Edmund Schmidt. "What a coincidence," my supervisor responded, "this is Mr. Schmidt." The investigator had come on a secret mission, but he suddenly realized that we had become aware of it all. Soon I was given a job change to the kitchen.



**Pioneering, Bethel, and Marriage**

On September 26, 1946, I was released on parole, and I resumed pioneering, this time with the Highland Park Congregation in California. Later, in September 1948, I realized my long-hoped-for goal. I was invited to serve as the baker at headquarters (Bethel) in Brooklyn, where Bible literature is produced for use in our worldwide preaching work. I immediately quit my job as pastry chef at a restaurant in Glendale and moved to Bethel.

Seven years later, in 1955, several international conventions were to be held in Europe. My family provided funds for me to attend. I enjoyed the conventions in London, Paris, Rome, and especially the one in Nuremberg, Germany, where more than 107,000 were present in the huge stadium where Hitler had once proudly reviewed his troops. Among those at the convention were Witnesses whom Hitler had vowed to exterminate. What a thrilling experience to be with them!

At the Nuremberg convention, I met and fell in love with a young German Witness



*With my wife, Brigitte*

—Brigitte Gerwien. We were married less than a year later and returned to Glendale to live near my parents. Our first son, Tom, was born in 1957, our second, Don, in 1958, and our daughter, Sabena, in 1960.

**A Full, Satisfying Life**

Some have asked if I ever regretted the mobbings and imprisonments that I suffered for serving God. On the contrary, I thank Jehovah that I have had the privilege to serve him along with so many of his faithful ones. And I hope that my experiences encourage others to draw closer to God and never leave him.

Many servants of God have suffered terribly for serving him. But is that not what we were told to expect? "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted," the Bible says. (2 Timothy 3:12) Yet, how true the words of Psalm 34:19 have proved to be: "Many are the calamities of the righteous one, but out of them all Jehovah delivers him"!



## God Is Impartial

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

**Main characters:** Cornelius, Peter

**Summary:** Peter imitates God's impartiality by preaching to Cornelius, a Gentile.

### ① **ANALYZE THE SCENE.—READ ACTS 10:1-35, 44-48.**

Describe the appearance of Cornelius as you imagine him. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What emotions do you sense in Cornelius during his conversation with the angel, as recorded in verses 3 to 6? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What conversation do you imagine took place between Cornelius and his attendants, as alluded to in verses 7 and 8? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### ② **DIG DEEPER.**

Why was the illustration that was presented to Peter in verses 10 to 16 effective? (Clue: Consider Peter's background as a Jew, as suggested in verse 14.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What quality do you see in Cornelius in verse 25? Why might that quality be rare in someone of his position? (Clue: See verse 1.) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Using research materials available to you, find out how many men made up the Italian army band over which Cornelius had authority. \_\_\_\_\_

Why was the conversion of Cornelius particularly noteworthy? \_\_\_\_\_

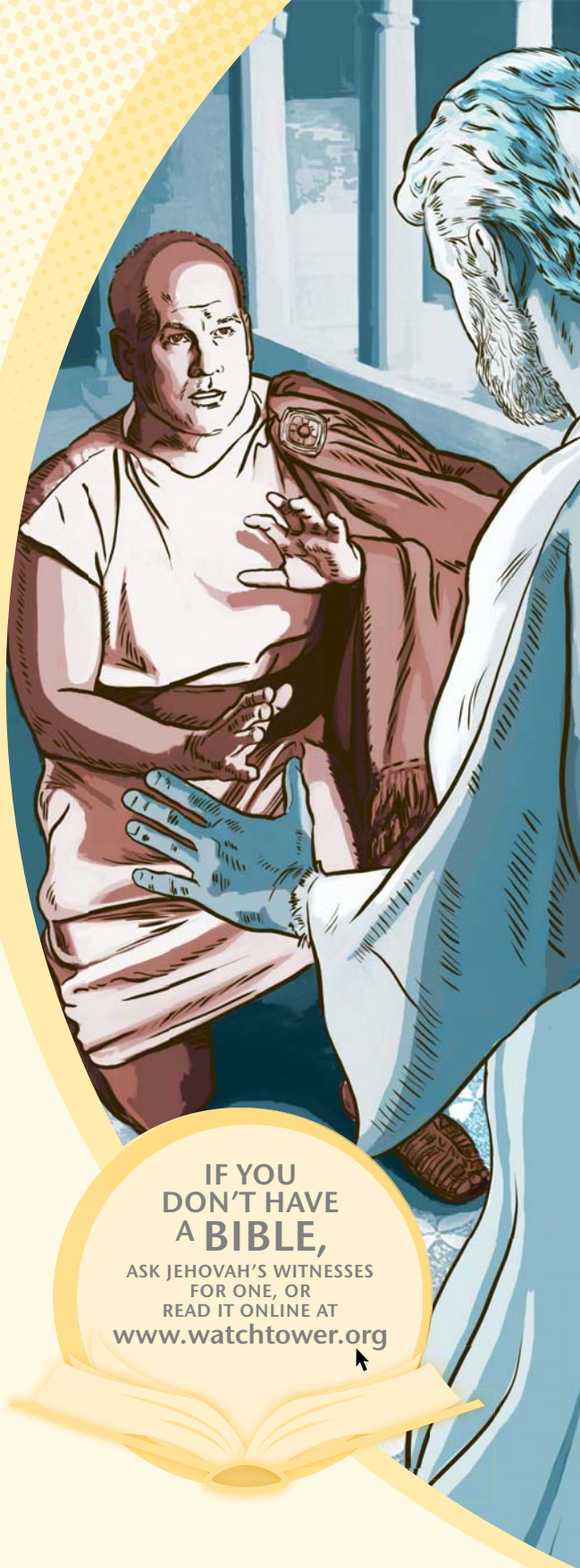
**3 APPLY WHAT YOU LEARNED. WRITE DOWN WHAT YOU LEARNED ABOUT . . .**

The effective use of illustrations. \_\_\_\_\_

God's impartiality. \_\_\_\_\_

How you too can show yourself to be impartial. \_\_\_\_\_

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



IF YOU  
DON'T HAVE  
A **BIBLE**,  
ASK JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES  
FOR ONE, OR  
READ IT ONLINE AT  
[www.watchtower.org](http://www.watchtower.org)



What does the Bible say about the end of all evil deeds?

SEE PAGE 5.



Could you possibly be deceived about your most cherished beliefs? SEE PAGE 10.



What has Calvinism achieved in its 500 years of history?

SEE PAGE 18.



Is confession of sins necessary? SEE PAGE 22.



Where did Cain, the son of Adam and Eve, find his wife?

SEE PAGE 25.

**Would you welcome a visit?**