

JUNE 1, 2013

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



A WORLD WITHOUT
PREJUDICE
WHEN?

THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, honors Jehovah God, the Ruler of the universe. It comforts people with the good news that God's heavenly Kingdom will soon end 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 continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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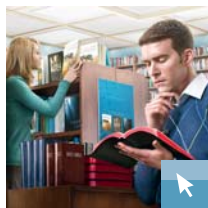
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Prejudice

A Global Problem

JONATHAN, a Korean-American, was a victim of racial prejudice as a child. As he grew up, he searched for a place where people would not prejudge him based on his facial features or racial background. He became a medical doctor in a town in northern Alaska, U.S.A., where his physical appearance was similar to that of many of his patients. He hoped that perhaps there, amid the cold winds of the Arctic Circle, he had finally escaped the even colder winds of prejudice.

Any such hope was shattered when he provided medical assistance to a 25-year-old woman. As the patient came out of a coma, she looked at Jonathan's face and uttered a taunt with an expletive, revealing her deep-seated disdain for Koreans. For Jonathan, the incident was a painful reminder that all his efforts to move and to blend in could not provide him with an escape from prejudice.

Jonathan's experience highlights a grim reality. Prejudice is found in every corner of the earth. It appears that wherever there are people, there is prejudice.

THE GLOBAL FACE OF PREJUDICE

Canada: "Despite embracing [the country's] diversity and instituting numerous legal and policy provisions to protect the rights of diverse communities, racism has continued to be a serious human rights challenge."

—Amnesty International briefing on Canada, 2012.

Europe: "[Forty-eight] percent of Europeans believe that too little is done to tackle discrimination in their country."—*Intolerance, Prejudice and Discrimination: A European Report*, 2011.

Africa: "Violence and discrimination against women remained widespread in many countries."—*Amnesty International Report 2012*.

Nepal: "Dalits ('untouchables') suffer from endemic discrimination, especially in the economic, social, and cultural spheres."—*Human Rights Watch World Report*, 2012.

Eastern Europe: "Scapegoated abroad and the victims of prejudice at home, eastern Europe's Roma are the problem no politician wants to solve."—*The Economist*, September 4, 2010.

WHAT IS PREJUDICE?

Researchers struggle to define prejudice. Some say it is “a negative attitude or feeling toward an individual based solely on that individual’s membership in a certain group.” Others say that this attitude is based on “insufficient information,” which leads to the “prejudgment of members of [a] group.” Whatever the case, prejudices can be formed against another person because of his race, weight, gender, language, religion, or virtually any perceived difference.

Despite the prevalence of prejudice, however, most people are quick to condemn it. This is truly a paradox. How could something so disliked be at the same time so widespread? Evidently, many who disapprove of prejudice fail to recognize it in themselves. Could that be true of you? How would you answer that question?

A PERSONAL ISSUE

Whether we realize it or not, it is difficult for us to detect if we harbor certain prejudices in our heart. The Bible explains why this is so when it states: “The heart is more deceitful than anything else.” (Jeremiah 17:9, *Holman Christian Standard Bible*) Thus, we might deceive ourselves into believing that we are tolerant of people of all types. Or we might rationalize that we have a valid reason to hold a negative view of people of certain groups.

To illustrate the challenge of discerning whether we might harbor a hidden prejudice, imagine the following scenario: You are walking down a street alone in the dark of night. Two young men whom you have never seen before are approaching you. They look strong, and one of them appears to have something in his hand.

Do you conclude that the young men pose a threat to you? Granted, your past experiences may tell you that you should be cautious, but do those experiences really justify your concluding that *these* two young men are a danger? A more probing question would be, Which race or ethnic group did you imagine these men to be? Your answer to this question could be quite revealing. It may indicate that to some extent, you have already been affected by the seeds of prejudice.

If we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that deep down we all harbor varying degrees of prejudice in one form or another. Even the Bible acknowledges a very common form of prejudice when it states: “People judge others by what they look like.” (1 Samuel 16:7, *Contemporary English Version*) Since all of us are plagued with this human tendency—often with disastrous consequences—is there any hope that we can overcome or eliminate prejudice in our life? And will we ever see a time when the whole world will be free of prejudice?



HOW WOULD YOU
FEEL IF YOU WERE
FACED WITH A
SCENE LIKE THIS?

A World Without Prejudice When?

"I HAVE a dream." Fifty years ago, on August 28, 1963, American civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., uttered those words in his most famous speech. Using that captivating refrain, King expressed his dream, or hope, that one day people would enjoy life free from racial prejudice. Though his aspirations were addressed to an audience in the United States, the essence of his dream has been embraced by people in many nations.



Martin Luther King, Jr.,
giving his civil rights
speech

© Bob Adelman/Corbis

believe that at best such improvements only help prevent *discrimination* but may be powerless at eliminating *prejudice*. Why so? Because discrimination is an act that can be seen and punished by law, whereas prejudice is related to people's inner thoughts and emotions, which cannot be easily regulated.

Therefore, any attempt to eliminate prejudice must not merely curb discriminatory acts but also change a person's thoughts and feelings toward people of another group. Can this really be done? If so, how? Let us look into a number of real-life cases that will help us see not only that it is possible for people to make the change but also that there is something that can help them to do so.

THE BIBLE HELPED THEM OVERCOME PREJUDICE

Linda: I was born in South Africa. I viewed any South Africans who were not white as inferior, uneducated and untrustworthy and only as servants for the white people. I was trapped in a mind-set of prejudice and did not even realize it. That attitude began to change, however, once I started to study the Bible. I learned that "God is not partial" and that the heart is more important than the color of our skin or the language we speak. (Acts 10:34, 35; Proverbs 17:3) The scripture at Philippians 2:3 helped me to see that if I considered everyone as superior to me, I would be able to overcome prejudice. Living by Bible principles such as these has helped me to take an interest in others no matter what color skin they have. Now I feel liberated from the cage of prejudice.

Three months after King's speech, on November 20, 1963, over 100 countries adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Other global initiatives were adopted in the decades that followed. All such worthy efforts inevitably raise the question, What has been the result?

On March 21, 2012, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated: "There are many valuable treaties and tools—as well as a comprehensive global framework—to prevent and eradicate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Nevertheless, racism continues to cause suffering for millions of people around the world."

Even in lands where some progress has been made in combating racial and other forms of prejudice, the question remains: Have the improvements really rooted out the deep-seated feelings of people or have they merely curbed the outward manifestation of those feelings? Some

“I feel liberated
from the cage of
prejudice.”—Linda



“I came to see
how God views
people.”—Michael



Michael: I grew up in an area where there were mostly white Australians, and I developed a very strong prejudice toward Asians, particularly Chinese. When I was driving in a car and I saw someone who looked Asian, I would roll down the window and yell abusive things, such as “Go home, Asian!” Later, when I began to study the Bible, I came to see how God views people. He loves them no matter where they are from or what they look like. This love touched me, and my hatred turned into love. To experience such a dramatic change is amazing. Now I find great pleasure in associating with people from all countries and backgrounds. This has broadened my outlook on life and brought me much joy.

Sandra: My mother was from Umunede in Delta State, Nigeria. My father’s family, however, is from Edo State and speaks the Esan language. Because of these differences, my mother was the victim of intense prejudice from my father’s family until the day she died. So I vowed that I would have nothing to do with anyone who spoke the

Esan language and that I would never marry anyone from Edo State. But when I started to study the Bible, I began to see things from a different perspective. Since the Bible says that God is not partial and that anyone who fears him is acceptable to him, who am I to hate people because of their tribe or language? I adjusted my thinking and made peace with my father’s family. Applying Bible principles has made me happy and has given me peace of mind. It has also helped me to get along with others regardless of their background, race, language, or nationality. And the man I married? He is from Edo State and speaks the Esan language!

Why has the Bible been able to help these and many others to overcome deep-seated hatred and prejudice? It is because the Bible is God’s Word. It has the power to change the way a person



“I adjusted my thinking
and made peace.”—Sandra



thinks and feels about others. Furthermore, the Bible shows what else is needed in order to end *all* prejudice.

GOD’S KINGDOM WILL END ALL PREJUDICE

While Bible knowledge can help to control and root out strong emotions, there are two other elements that must be dealt with before prejudice can be completely eliminated. First, there is sin and human imperfection. The Bible plainly states: “There is no man that does not sin.” (1 Kings 8:46) So no matter how hard we try, we face the same internal struggle as the apostle Paul, who wrote: “When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.” (Romans 7:21) Thus, from time to time, our imperfect heart will resort to “injurious reasonings” that can lead to prejudice.—Mark 7:21.

Second, there is the influence of Satan the Devil. The Bible describes him as “a manslayer” and says that he “is misleading the entire inhab-

ited earth.” (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9) That explains why prejudice is so prevalent and why mankind seems so helpless in the face of bigotry, discrimination, genocide, and other forms of racial, religious, and social intolerance.

Hence, before there can be the total elimination of prejudice, there must be the removal of human sin, imperfection, and the influence of Satan the Devil. The Bible shows that God’s Kingdom will accomplish just that.

Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray to God in these words: “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.” (Matthew 6:10) God’s Kingdom is the means by which all injustices—including all forms of intolerance and prejudice—will be done away with.

When God’s Kingdom comes and takes control over earth’s affairs, Satan will be “bound,” or completely restrained, so that “he might not mislead the nations.” (Revelation 20:2, 3) There will then be a “new earth,” or human society, in which “righteousness is to dwell.”*—2 Peter 3:13.

Those living in that righteous human society will be brought to perfection, free from sin. (Romans 8:21) As subjects of God’s Kingdom, “they will not do any harm or cause any ruin.” Why? “Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” (Isaiah 11:9) At that time, all mankind will learn Jehovah God’s ways and imitate his loving personality. This will indeed mean the end of all prejudice, “for there is no partiality with God.”—Romans 2:11. ■

* For more information about God’s Kingdom and what it will soon accomplish, see chapters 3, 8, and 9 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Jehovah “Is Not Partial”

Have you ever been a victim of discrimination? Have you ever been denied a request, refused a service, or otherwise treated with disdain because of your skin color, ethnic background, or social status? If so, you are far from alone. Here, though, is the good news: Such indignities, though commonplace on earth, are nonexistent in heaven. “God is not partial,” said the Christian apostle Peter with the utmost conviction.—**Read Acts 10:34, 35.**

Peter spoke those words in a most unusual setting—in the home of a Gentile named Cornelius. Peter, born a Jew, lived at a time when Jews viewed Gentiles as unclean and thus unacceptable for any kind of fellowship. So, why was Peter in Cornelius’ home? Put simply, because Jehovah God arranged the meeting. Peter had received a divine vision in which he was told: “You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.” Unknown to Peter, a day earlier, Cornelius had also received a vision, in which an angel directed him to summon Peter. (Acts 10:1-15) When Peter recognized Jehovah’s hand in the matter, he could not hold back from speaking.

“For a certainty,” said Peter, “I perceive that God is not partial.” (Acts 10:34) The Greek word rendered “partial” literally means “taker of faces.” (*The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*) Regarding this term, one scholar explains: “It refers to a judge who looks at a man’s face and renders a verdict, not in accord with the merits of the case, but according as he likes or dislikes the man.” God does not favor one face over another because of race, nationality, social standing, or any other external factors.

Rather, Jehovah sees what is in our heart. (1 Samuel 16:7; Proverbs 21:2) Peter next said: “In every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.” (Acts 10:35) To fear God means to respect, honor, and trust him, avoiding anything that displeases him. To work righteousness involves willingly doing what is right in God’s eyes. Jehovah finds pleasure in the man whose heart is filled with reverential awe that moves him to do what is right.—Deuteronomy 10:12, 13.

When Jehovah looks down from heaven, he sees just one race—the *human* race

If you have ever experienced discrimination or prejudice, there is good reason for you to take heart from Peter’s words about God. Jehovah is drawing people of all nations to true worship. (John 6:44; Acts 17:26, 27) He listens and responds to the prayers of his worshippers regardless of their race, nationality, or social standing. (1 Kings 8:41-43) We can be confident that when Jehovah looks down from heaven, he sees just one race—the *human* race. Are you moved to learn more about this impartial God? ■

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR JUNE
John 17–Acts 10



A Treasure Hidden for Centuries

The scholar cannot believe his eyes. He carefully examines the piece of ancient text again and again. The calligraphy and the grammar have convinced him—he has before him fragments of the oldest known translation of the Bible in the Georgian language!

THAT treasure was discovered in late December 1922, when the Georgian academic Ivané Javakhishvili was doing research on how the Georgian alphabet was developed. He came across a copy of the Jerusalem Talmud. As he examined it, he could see under the Hebrew text some partially erased writing in Georgian characters.*

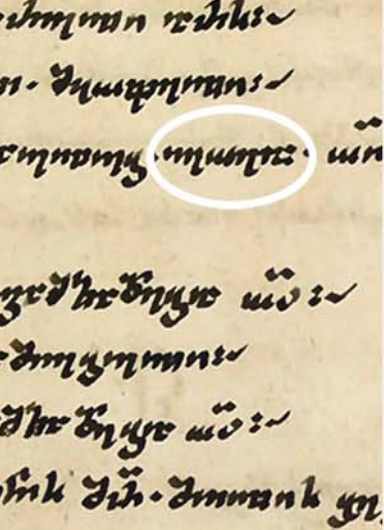
The writing “hidden” under the Talmud was a copy of a portion of the Bible book of Jeremiah dating back to the fifth century C.E. Before this find, the oldest known Georgian Bible manuscript was from the ninth century C.E. Soon, parts of other Bible books from the fifth century C.E. or even earlier were found. Imagine discovering Bible material that dates to within just a few hundred years of Jesus and the apostles!

Who made this translation? Was it the work

* In ancient times, writing materials were scarce and costly. So it was a common practice to scrape off an older text from a manuscript and use the material again for new text. Such manuscripts are called palimpsests, from a Greek word meaning “scraped again.”

of one person or of a group of devoted translators? So far, no historical record has been discovered to provide the answer. Whatever the case, it is evident that the Bible, or at least parts of it, had been translated into Georgian as early as the fourth century and that God’s Word has been available or known to the Georgian people in their mother tongue since then.

An account that shows the extent to which the Georgian people were acquainted with the Scriptures is found in the book *The Martyrdom of St. Shushanik the Queen*, likely written in the late fifth century. In relating the tragic story of the queen, the author includes quotations from and allusions to passages in the Psalms, the Gospels, and other parts of the Bible. He also relates that in an effort to appease the Persian overlords, Shushanik’s husband Varsken, a governor of the Georgian Kingdom of Kartli, abandoned “Christianity,” converted to Persian Zoroastrianism, and demanded that his wife do the same. According to the book, she refused to renounce



National Center of Manuscripts

THE DIVINE NAME IN THE GEORGIAN BIBLE

The personal name Jehovah (in Hebrew, יהוה), by which God identifies himself in the Bible, appears some 7,000 times in the original-language manuscripts. Most Georgian translations have replaced this name with the title “Lord.” However, in an appendix of the so-called *Saba’s Bible*, Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani gives the meaning of the name Jesus in this way: “Ieses: From Hebrew: leova the Lord savior.” Happily, God’s name, Jehovah, appears in all its rightful places in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in Georgian, published in 2006 by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

her beliefs and found comfort from the Scriptures during her final days.

Since the fifth century, the translating and copying of the Georgian Bible evidently never ceased. The stream of Bible manuscripts in the Georgian language testifies to the labor of devoted copyists and translators. Let us explore two areas of this compelling story—the translating and the printing of the Bible.

EXPLOSION OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

“I, Giorgi, a humble monk, have translated this book of Psalms from new Greek into Georgian with great diligence and labor.” Those are the words of 11th-century Georgian monk Giorgi Mtatsmindeli. Why was there a need for translating the Bible when a Georgian translation had already existed for some centuries?

By the 11th century, very few of the early handwritten manuscripts of the Georgian Bible were still in circulation. Some books had been lost altogether. Also, the language had changed somewhat, so it was difficult for readers to understand earlier copies. Though a number of translators endeavored to restore the Georgian Bible, Giorgi’s role was the most significant. He compared existing Georgian versions with Greek manuscripts and translated missing portions, even whole books. During the day, he

cared for his duties as the head of a monastery. At night he translated the Bible.

Giorgi’s contemporary Ephrem Mtsire took Giorgi’s work a step further. He formulated what was essentially a guide for translators. It contained fundamental translation principles, such as working from the original language whenever possible and following the source text closely but without sacrificing naturalness. He also introduced the practice of including footnotes and marginal references in Georgian translations. Ephrem made a completely new translation of a number of the Bible books. The work of Giorgi and Ephrem laid a solid foundation for further translation activity.

Over the next century, literary production in general flourished in Georgia. Academies were founded in the towns of Gelati and Ikalto. Most scholars believe the so-called *Gelati Bible*, currently kept at the Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts, is a completely new Bible translation made by one of the Gelati or Ikalto scholars.

What influence did this Bible translation activity have on the Georgian people? In the 12th century, the Georgian poet Shota Rustaveli wrote *Vepkhis-tqaosani* (Knight in the Panther Skin), a work so influential over the centuries that it has been called the Georgians’ second Bible. Modern-day Georgian scholar K. Kekelidze ob-

serves that whether or not the poet quoted directly from the Bible, “some of his views are direct reflections of various Bible passages.” The poem, though highly romanticized, frequently deals with such themes as true friendship, generosity, respect for women, and unselfish love for strangers. These and other values taught by the Bible played a role in the thinking of the Georgian people for generations and are still considered to be their moral ideals.

CHRISTIANITY IN GEORGIA

When did Christianity reach Georgia? No irrefutable secular records have been found so far. However, the book of Acts mentions that some Jews or proselytes from Pontus were among those in Jerusalem who heard the good news at Pentecost 33 C.E. They may have returned home and spread the Christian message there. Christian congregations evidently existed in Pontus in about 62 C.E. In the first century, Pontus referred to the region in the northeastern corner of present-day Turkey, bordering Georgia. —Acts 2:9; 1 Peter 1:1.



BIBLE PRINTING—A ROYAL AFFAIR

At the end of the 17th century, the Georgian royal family was keen to have the Bible printed. To this end, King Vakhtang VI built a printery in the capital city, Tbilisi. However, the text of the Bible was not ready for printing. In a way, the Georgian Bible had become hidden again. Only incomplete manuscripts for some parts were available, and the language used was not up-to-date. The revision and restoration of the Bible text was entrusted to Sulokhan-Saba Orbeliani, an expert linguist.

Orbeliani embarked on the work conscientiously. Knowing several languages, including Greek and Latin, he was able to consult different sources in addition to existing Georgian manuscripts. However, his open-minded approach did not sit well with the Georgian Orthodox Church. The clergy accused him of betraying the church and managed to convince the king to stop him from working on the Bible. According to certain Georgian sources, at a church council the clergy forced Orbeliani to burn the Bible that he had worked on for years!

Significantly, one copy of the Mtskheta (Mtskheta) Manuscript, also known as *Saba's Bible*, that has survived to our day contains Orbeliani's handwritten comments. Some, however, doubt whether this is the Bible the clergy were fighting against. Only the appendix material is attributed to him with certainty.

Despite the challenges, Bible printing remained a priority for some of the royal family. Between 1705 and 1711, parts of the Bible were printed. Thanks to the efforts of Georgian Princes Bakari and Vakhushiti, the complete Bible finally came off the press in 1743. It could be hidden no longer. ■



Should We Pray to Saints?

WHO has not experienced anxiety and felt the need to turn to someone for help? Depending on the cause of our anxiety, we would probably choose a friend who is sympathetic and has experience with the difficulty we face. The combination of compassion and experience makes a truly desirable friend.

Some might feel the same when it comes to prayer. Instead of approaching God—who might seem too lofty and awe-inspiring to them—they feel more comfortable appealing to one of the saints. They reason that saints, having experienced the trials and hardships that are common to humans, would be more empathetic. For example, people who have lost something very important to them might prefer to approach “Saint” Anthony of Padua—the traditional patron of lost or stolen articles. If praying for a sick animal, they may choose “Saint” Francis of Assisi or to “Saint” Jude Thaddeus if they are at the point of despair over a lost cause.

How, though, can we be sure whether it is appropriate to pray to saints, according to the Scriptures? Since our prayers are expressions to God, surely we would want to know: Are our prayers being heard by him? And should we not also ask: How does God feel about prayer to saints?

PRAYER TO SAINTS—THE SCRIPTURAL VIEW

The practice of praying to saints is based on the doctrine of intercession by saints, taught by the Catholic Church. The basic idea is “pleading by one who in God’s sight has a right to do so in order to obtain mercy for one in need,” according to the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*. Thus, one praying to saints does so with the hope that special favor may be obtained through them because of their blessed position before God.

Does the Bible teach such a doctrine? Some say that the apostle Paul provided a foundation for prayer to saints in his writings. For example, to the Christians in Rome, he wrote: “Now I exhort you, brothers, through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the spirit, that you exert yourselves with me in prayers to God for me.” (Romans 15:30) Was Paul asking his fellow Christians to intercede for him before God? Hardly. If anything, they would ask Paul, an apostle of Christ, to intercede for them. Paul was showing that it is appropriate to *ask* a fellow Christian to pray to God in our behalf. But it is a completely different matter to *pray to* someone who is believed to be in heaven to make our request known to God for us. Why so?

In the apostle John’s Gospel, Jesus states: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one

comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6) He also says: “The Father will give you anything you ask him in my name.” (John 15:16, *The New Jerusalem Bible*) Jesus did not say that we should direct our prayers to him and that he would then speak to God on our behalf. Rather, for our prayers to be heard, we must address our prayers to God through Jesus and through no one else.

When Jesus’ disciples asked him to teach them how to pray, Jesus replied: “Whenever you pray, say, ‘Father, let your name be sanctified.’” (Luke 11:2) Yes, “whenever,” or each time we pray, we should address, not Jesus or anyone else, but God himself. In view of these unambiguous teachings of Jesus, is it not logical to conclude that our prayers should be directed to God through Jesus Christ and not to any intercessors or “saints”?

Prayer is a very important part of our worship, and to worship anyone other than God is clearly not in harmony with Bible teaching. (John 4:23, 24; Revelation 19:9, 10) That is why we should address our prayers only to God.

SHOULD YOU BE AFRAID TO APPROACH GOD?

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave the example of a child who asks his father for something to eat. Would a father give his child a stone instead of bread? Or a poisonous snake instead of a fish? (Matthew 7:9, 10) It would be unthinkable for a loving parent to do such a thing!

Think of a similar illustration from a parent’s viewpoint. Imagine your child has some earnest request to make of you. You have carefully nurtured your relationship with him, and you have always been approachable. Nevertheless, because of his unfounded fear of your reaction, he asks someone else to pass on the request to you. How would you feel? What if he makes a practice of communicating with you only through this other person and there is every indication that he intends to continue doing so? Would you be happy with that arrangement? Of course not!



Like a loving father with his child, God wants us to communicate with him

Loving parents want their children to approach them directly and to feel comfortable asking for what they need.

In applying his illustration of the child asking for food, Jesus said to the crowd: “Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him?” (Matthew 7:11) Undoubtedly, the desire of a parent to give good things to his child is strong. Our heavenly Father’s desire to hear and answer our prayers is even stronger.

God wants us to approach him directly in prayer even if we are burdened down by personal shortcomings. He does not assign others to hear our prayers. The Bible urges us: “Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you.” (Psalm 55:22) Rather than depending on the intercession of saints or anyone else, we would do well to develop a positive view of Jehovah God.

Our heavenly Father cares about us as individuals. He wants to help us with our problems and invites us to draw close to him. (James 4:8) How happy we are that we have the opportunity to approach our God and Father, the “Hearer of prayer”—Psalm 65:2. ■



What Can We Learn From a Criminal?

The criminal we can learn from is the one you see Jesus speaking to in the picture. That criminal is sorry for his crimes. He asks Jesus: “Remember me when you get into your kingdom.” Now, as you can see in the picture, Jesus is speaking to this criminal. ***Do you know what Jesus is saying to him?**** Jesus is promising him: “Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.”

What do you think that Paradise will be like?—

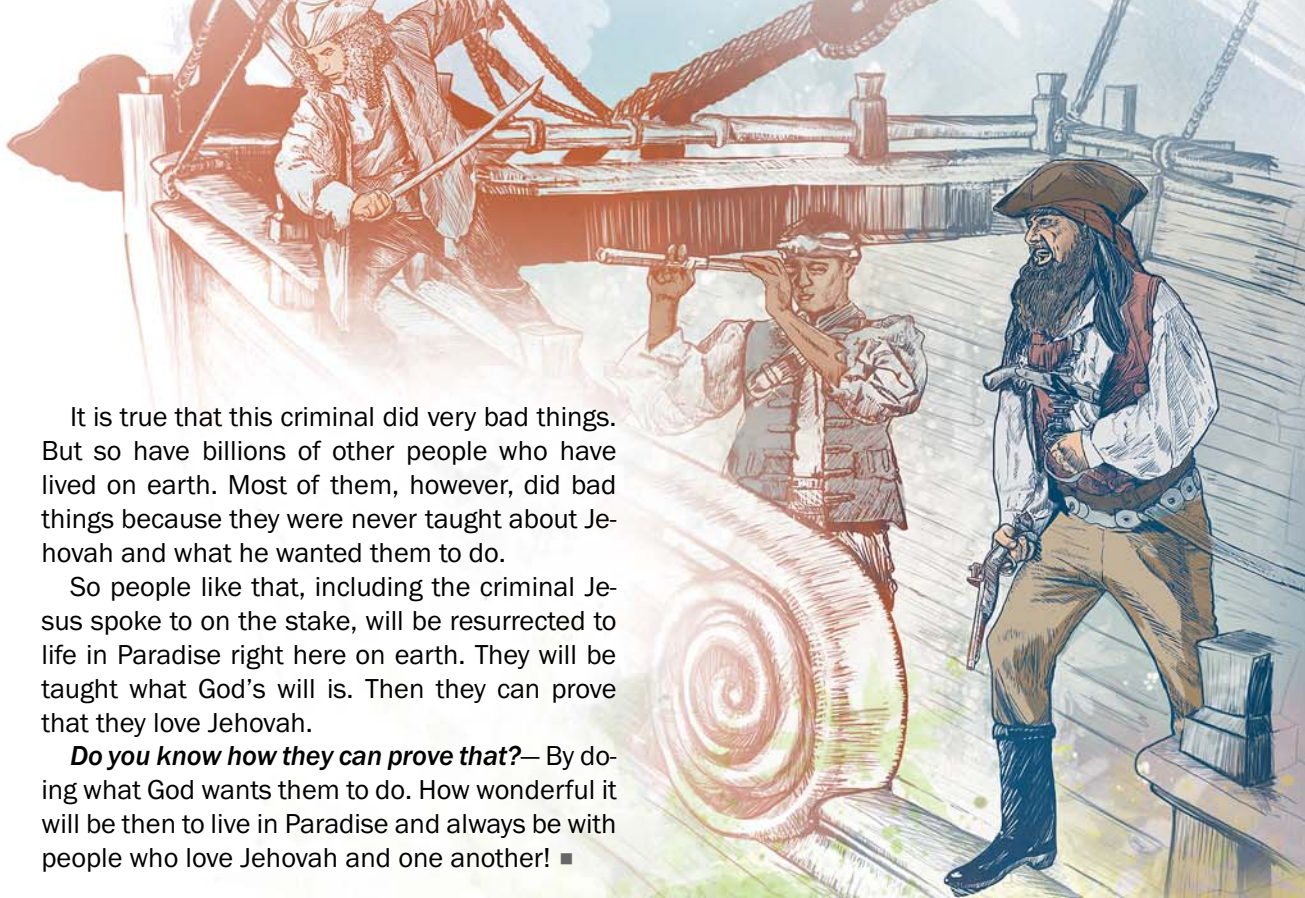
To make sure we get the right answer, let’s talk about the Paradise that God made for the first man and woman, Adam and Eve. Where was that Paradise? ***Was it in heaven, or was it on earth?***—

You are right if you say it was on earth. So when we think of the criminal being “in Paradise,” we should think of him living right here on earth when it becomes a paradise. ***What will that Paradise be like?***— Let’s see.

After Jehovah God created the first human pair, Adam and Eve, the Bible says that he put them in a paradise right here on earth. It was called “a garden in Eden.” ***Can you imagine how beautiful the “garden in Eden” must have been?***— Surely, it was a nicer and more beautiful place to live than anyone today has ever seen!

What do you think? ***Will Jesus be here on the earth with the criminal who was sorry for his sins?***— No, Jesus will be in heaven ruling as King over the Paradise earth. So Jesus will be with the criminal in that he will raise him from the dead and see that he is taken care of in the Paradise on earth. ***But why will Jesus let a man who was a criminal live in Paradise?***— Let’s talk about this.

* If you are reading with a child, the dash provides a reminder to pause and encourage the child to express himself.

A detailed illustration of three pirates on the deck of a wooden sailing ship. One pirate in the background is looking through a telescope. Another in the middle is aiming a long-barreled gun. A third pirate with a long beard and a red bandana is in the foreground, holding a cut-throat razor. The ship's rigging and wooden planks are visible.

It is true that this criminal did very bad things. But so have billions of other people who have lived on earth. Most of them, however, did bad things because they were never taught about Jehovah and what he wanted them to do.

So people like that, including the criminal Jesus spoke to on the stake, will be resurrected to life in Paradise right here on earth. They will be taught what God's will is. Then they can prove that they love Jehovah.

Do you know how they can prove that?—By doing what God wants them to do. How wonderful it will be then to live in Paradise and always be with people who love Jehovah and one another! ■

An illustration of three people sitting on a grassy hill. A man in a green shirt and white pants is pointing to an open book. A woman with a mustache, wearing a white shirt and a dark vest, is also looking at the book. A young boy in a blue shirt is pointing at the text. The background shows a soft-focus landscape with trees and a body of water.

READ IN YOUR BIBLE

Luke 23:32-43

Genesis 2:7-9

Revelation 21:3-5



Why is world peace so elusive?

The Bible points to two main reasons. First, although humans have accomplished marvelous things, they are not created with the ability to direct their own steps. Second, human schemes have failed because “the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one,” Satan the Devil. Thus, human efforts have not been able to bring world peace.—**Read Jeremiah 10:23; 1 John 5:19.**

Human self-interest and ambition have also made world peace elusive. Only a world government that can teach people to love what is right and care for one another will bring world peace.—**Read Isaiah 32:17; 48:18, 22.**

Who will establish peace on earth?

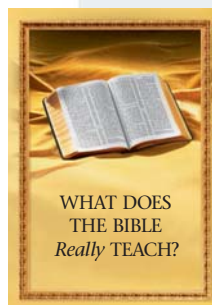
Almighty God has promised to establish a single government to rule over all mankind. It will replace human governments. (Daniel 2:44) God’s Son, Jesus, will rule as the Prince of Peace. He will eliminate evil from all the earth and will teach people the way of peace.—**Read Isaiah 9:6, 7; 11:4, 9.**

Already, under Jesus’ direction, millions worldwide are using God’s Word, the Bible, to teach people how to be at peace with others. Soon, world peace will be a reality.—**Read Isaiah 2:3, 4; 54:13.**



Fatmir Boshnjaku

Only a government that can change people’s hearts will bring world peace



For more information, see chapter 3 of this book, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses

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