


NOVEMBER 1, 2013

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark blue long-sleeved top, stands in a field at night. She is looking upwards with an expression of awe or contemplation. The sky is dark and filled with stars, with a layer of clouds just above the horizon. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

Lies
That Make God
Seem Unlovable

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.

Would you welcome
more information or a
free home Bible study?

Visit www.jw.org
or send your request to one
of the addresses below.

For the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

Jehovah's Witnesses
25 Columbia Heights
Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483

For CANADA:

Jehovah's Witnesses
PO Box 4100
Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4

For a complete list of worldwide addresses,
see www.jw.org/en/contact.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, **Walkkill, NY 12589-3299**. © 2013 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All rights reserved. Printed in Canada.

Printing Each Issue:

44,978,000 IN 210 LANGUAGES **NOVEMBER 1, 2013**

COVER SUBJECT

Lies That Make God Seem Unlovable

 PAGES 3-7

The Struggle to Love God 3

The Lie That Made God Nameless 4

The Lie That Made God a Mystery 5

The Lie That Made God Cruel 6

The Truth Can Set You Free 7

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Keys to Family Happiness

—Talk to Your Teenager—Without Arguing 8

Draw Close to God

—“The Rewarder of Those Earnestly Seeking Him” 11

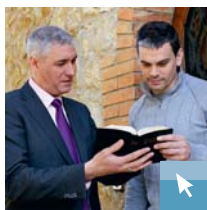
Imitate Their Faith

—She Was “Declared Righteous by Works” 12

Bible Questions Answered 16



READ MORE ONLINE | www.jw.org



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

—Do You Believe That You Have the One True Religion?

(Look under ABOUT US > FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

DOWNLOAD THIS
MAGAZINE IN VARIOUS
FORMATS ONLINE



Top, trinity: Museo Bardini, Florence; middle, hell: © Photononstop/Superstock



The Struggle to Love God

“‘You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment.”—**Jesus Christ**, 33 C.E.*

Some people find it difficult to love God. To them, God seems unfathomable, distant, or even cruel. Consider the following expressions:

“I prayed to God for help, but at the same time, I felt that he was far away, almost unreachable. To me, God was an abstract entity without feelings.”
—**Marco**, Italy.

“Although I sincerely wanted to serve God, he seemed so far off. I thought he was a harsh God who only punishes us. I didn’t believe that he had tender feelings.”—**Rosa**, Guatemala.

“As a child, I believed that God was searching for our mistakes, ready to punish us if we deserved it. Later, I saw him as aloof. God was like a prime minister who manages the affairs of the people he leads—but who is not really interested in them.”
—**Raymonde**, Canada.

What do you think? Is God unlovable? Christians have raised that question for centuries. In fact, during the Middle Ages, most inhabitants of Christendom did not even pray to Almighty God. Why not? People were in morbid fear of him. Historian Will Durant put it this way: “How could a simple sinner dare to take his prayer to so awful and distant a throne?”

How did God come to be viewed as “awful and distant”? What does the Bible really teach about God? Can learning the truth about God help you to love him?

* Matthew 22:37, 38.



Concealing or replacing God's personal name is like cutting it out of the Bible

The Lie That Made God Nameless

WHAT MANY BELIEVE “We have gained no consensus as to whether we can even speak of ‘the’ name of God, and if so, what that name might be.”—Professor David Cunningham, *Theological Studies*.

THE TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE God said: “I am Jehovah. That is my name.” (Isaiah 42:8) Jehovah is a Hebrew name that means “He Causes to Become.”—Genesis 2:4, footnote.

Jehovah wants us to use his name. “*Call upon his name,*” states the Bible. “*Make known among the peoples his dealings. Make mention that his name is put on high.*”—Isaiah 12:4.

Jesus used God’s name. In prayer, Jesus told Jehovah: “I have made your name known to them [Jesus’ disciples] and will make it known.” Why did Jesus make the divine name known to his disciples? He continued: “In order that the love with which you [God] loved me may be in them and I in union with them.”—John 17:26.

WHY IT MATTERS “A man who does not know God by name does not really know him as a person,” wrote theologian Walter Lowrie, “and he cannot love him, if he knows him only as an impersonal force.”

A man named Victor attended church weekly, but he did not feel that he really knew God. “Then I learned that God’s name is Jehovah, and it was like an official introduction to him,” he says. “I felt as though I had finally met the One about whom I had heard so much. I came to see him as a real Person and to develop a friendship with him.”

Jehovah, in turn, draws close to humans who use his name. Regarding “those thinking upon his name,” God promises: “I will show compassion upon them, just as a man shows compassion upon his son who is serving him.” (Malachi 3:16, 17) God also rewards those who call upon his name. The Bible says: “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”—Romans 10:13.



Museo Bardini, Florence

The Lie That Made God a Mystery

WHAT MANY BELIEVE The Christian religion “in its three classic forms of Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism acknowledges one God in three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. According to Christian theology, this acknowledgment is not a recognition of three gods but that these three persons are essentially one.”—*The New Encyclopædia Britannica*.

THE TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE Jesus, the Son of God, never claimed to be equal to or of the same substance as his Father. Rather, he said: “I am going my way to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am.” (John 14:28) He also told one of his followers: “I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.”—John 20:17.

The holy spirit is not a person. Early Christians “became *filled* with holy spirit,” and Jehovah said: “I shall *pour out* some of my spirit upon every sort of flesh.” (Acts 2:1-4, 17) The holy spirit is not part of a Trinity. It is God’s active force.

WHY IT MATTERS The Trinity, explain Catholic scholars Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler, “could not be known without revelation, and even after revelation cannot become wholly intelligible.” Can you really love someone who is impossible to know or understand? The doctrine of the Trinity, therefore, is a barrier to knowing and loving God.

Marco, quoted in an earlier article, saw the Trinity as a barrier. “I thought God was hiding his identity from me,” he says, “and that just made him even more distant, mysterious, and unapproachable.” However, “God is not a God of confusion.” (1 Corinthians 14:33, *American Standard Version*) He has not hidden his identity from us. He wants us to know him. Jesus said: “We worship what we know.”—John 4:22.

“When I learned that God is not part of a Trinity,” says Marco, “I was finally able to establish a personal relationship with him.” If we view Jehovah as a distinct Person rather than a mysterious stranger, it is far easier to love him. “He that does not love has not come to know God,” says the Bible, “because God is love.”—1 John 4:8.



© Photononstop/SuperStock

The Lie That Made God Cruel

WHAT MANY BELIEVE “Immediately after death the souls of those who die in a state of mortal sin descend into hell, where they suffer the punishments of hell, ‘eternal fire.’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*) Some religious leaders say that hell is a state of complete isolation and separation from God.

THE TRUTH FROM THE BIBLE “The soul that is sinning—it itself will *die*.” (Ezekiel 18:4) The dead “are conscious of nothing at all.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5) If the soul dies and is unconscious, how could it suffer “eternal fire” or even the pain of everlasting separation from God?

In the Bible, the Hebrew and Greek words often translated “hell” actually refer to the common grave of mankind. For example, when Job suffered a painful illness, he prayed: “I wish you would hide me in my grave [“in hell,” *Douay-Rheims Version*].” (Job 14:13, *Holy Bible—Easy-to-Read Version*) Job wanted to rest, not in a place of torment or alienation from God, but in the grave.

WHY IT MATTERS Cruelty does not endear us to God; it repels us. “From infancy I was taught the doctrine of hellfire,” says Rocío, who lives in Mexico. “I was so terrified that I could not imagine that God had any good qualities. I thought that he was angry and intolerant.”

The Bible’s clear statements about God’s judgments and the condition of the dead changed the way Rocío viewed God. “I felt free—that a big emotional burden had been lifted off me,” she says. “I began to trust that God wants the best for us, that he loves us, and that I can love him. He is like a father who takes his children by the hand and wants the best for them.”—Isaiah 41:13.

Many have striven to be pious out of fear of hellfire, but God does not want you to serve him because you are terrified of him. Rather, Jesus said: “You must *love* Jehovah your God.” (Mark 12:29, 30) Moreover, when we realize that God does not act unjustly today, we can trust his future judgments too. Like Job’s friend Elihu, we can confidently say: “Far be it from the true God to act wickedly, and the Almighty to act unjustly.”—Job 34:10.

The Truth Can Set You Free

One day, in Jerusalem, Jesus was talking about his Father, Jehovah, and exposing the false religious leaders of his day. (John 8:12-30) What he stated on that occasion teaches us how to examine popular beliefs about God today. Jesus said: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”—John 8:31, 32.

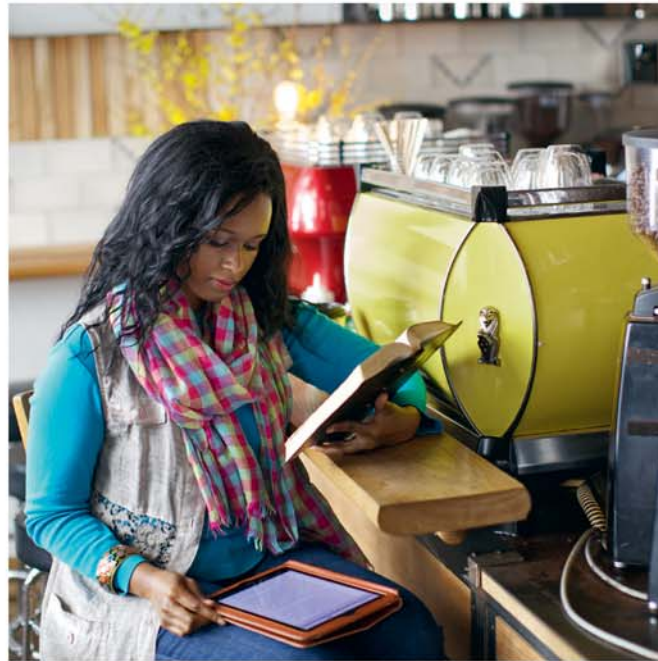
“Remain in my word.” Here Jesus sets the standard for evaluating whether religious teachings are “the truth.” When you hear a statement about God, ask yourself, ‘Does this harmonize with Jesus’ words and the rest of the Holy Scriptures?’ Imitate those who heard the apostle Paul speak and who were “carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things [the things they were learning] were so.”—Acts 17:11.

Marco, Rosa, and Raymonde, all quoted in the first article of this series, carefully examined their beliefs by studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. What did they learn?

Marco: “Our Bible teacher used the Scriptures to answer every question my wife and I had. Our love for Jehovah started to grow, and we also grew closer as husband and wife!”

Rosa: “At first, I thought that the Bible was nothing more than a book of philosophy that attempts to explain God using human reasoning. Gradually, however, I found the Bible’s answers to my questions. Now, Jehovah is real to me. He is Someone whom I can trust.”

Raymonde: “I prayed to God for help to learn about him. Soon thereafter, my husband and I started to study the Bible. Finally, we learned the truth about Jehovah! We were overjoyed to discover the kind of God he is.”



The Bible does far more than simply expose lies about God; it reveals the truth about his appealing qualities. It is his inspired Word, and it helps us to “know the things that have been kindly given us by God.” (1 Corinthians 2:12) Why not see for yourself how the Bible can answer common yet fundamental questions about God, his purpose, and our future? Read the answers to some of these questions under “Bible Teachings > Bible Questions Answered” at www.jw.org. You can also request a Bible study on that Web site or from one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. We are confident that if you do, you will find God easier to love than you ever thought possible. ■



Talk to Your Teenager —Without Arguing

*“When my daughter was 14, she started to talk back to me. If I told her, ‘It’s time to eat dinner,’ she would reply, ‘I’ll eat when I feel like it.’ If I asked her if she had finished her chores, she would say, ‘Stop bugging me!’ Many times, she and I would raise our voices and shout at each other.”—MAKI, JAPAN.**

If you are the parent of a teenager, conflict may test every bit of your parenting skills—and your patience. “When my daughter challenges my authority, it makes my blood boil,” says Maria, the mother of a 14-year-old in Brazil. “We get so frustrated that we yell at each other.” Carmela, in Italy, faces a similar challenge. “Arguments with my son are always heated,” she says, “and they end with him shutting himself up in his room.”

Why do some teenagers seem so contentious? Are their peers to blame? Perhaps. The Bible says that a person’s associates can be a powerful influence, either for good or for bad. (Proverbs 13:20;

1 Corinthians 15:33) Then, too, much of today’s youth-oriented entertainment fosters the stereotype of teenage defiance.

But there are other factors to consider—factors that are not too difficult to deal with once you understand how they might affect your teenager. Consider some examples.

DEVELOPING THE “POWER OF REASON”

The apostle Paul wrote: “When I was a babe, I used to speak as a babe, to think as a babe, to reason as a babe; but now that I have become a man, I have done away with the traits of a babe.” (1 Corinthians 13:11) As Paul’s words indicate, children and adults think differently. In what way?

* Names in this article have been changed.

Children tend to think in concrete, black-and-white terms. In contrast, adults are often better able to grasp abstract concepts and think on a deeper level when reaching conclusions or making decisions. For example, adults are more likely to consider the ethical issues behind a matter and think about how their actions will affect others. They may be used to thinking that way. Teenagers, by comparison, are new to the process.

The Bible encourages young people to cultivate their “thinking ability.” (Proverbs 1:4) In fact, the Bible urges *all* Christians to use their “power of reason.” (Romans 12:1, 2; Hebrews 5:14) At times, though, your teenager’s reasoning skills might cause him to argue with you, even over a seemingly trivial matter.* Or he may express a view to you that clearly shows a lack of good judgment. (Proverbs 14:12) In such a situation, how can you reason with him instead of arguing?

TRY THIS: Consider that your teenager may simply be trying out his newly discovered reasoning skills, and he may not be that committed to his viewpoint at all. To test him out, first commend your teenager for his thinking ability. (“I like the way your mind works, even if I don’t agree with all the conclusions you reach.”) Then, help him to examine his thinking. (“Do you think that what you just said applies in every situation?”) You might be surprised at how your teenager reexamines his own ideas and refines them.

A word of caution: When reasoning with your teenager, do not think that you have to have the last word. Even if what you say seems to fall on deaf ears, your teenager will probably take away more from the discussion than you expect—or than he will admit. Do not be surprised if in a few days, your teenager has swung around to your viewpoint—perhaps even claiming it as his own.

“Sometimes my son and I would argue about little things—for example, about not being wasteful or about teasing his sister. But in most cases he seemed to want me to ask what he was thinking and to show

some understanding and say, ‘Oh, so that is the situation’ or ‘So that is what you think.’ Looking back, I see that if I had just said something like that, we probably could have avoided many of our arguments.”—Kenji, Japan.

FORMING CONVICTIONS

A major part of raising an adolescent is preparing him for the day when he will be able to leave home and live as a responsible adult. (Genesis 2:24) Part of that process involves forming an identity—a set of traits, beliefs, and values that define who he is. When confronted with pressure to do wrong, a teenager with a strong sense of identity will do more than think about the consequences. He will also ask himself: ‘What sort of person am I? What values do I hold? What would a person with those values do in this situation?’—2 Peter 3:11.

The Bible tells us about Joseph, a young man who had a strong sense of identity. For example, when Potiphar’s wife urged him to have sex with her, Joseph replied: “How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9) Even though a law forbidding adultery had not yet been given to the Israelites, Joseph perceived God’s view of the matter. More than that, the words “*how could I*” indicate that he had made God’s view his own—a part of his very identity.—Ephesians 5:1.

Your teenager too is in the process of forming an identity. This is good, for his convictions will help him to cope with pressure from his peers and stand up to them. (Proverbs 1:10-15) On the other hand, that same sense of identity might compel him to stand up to *you*. If that happens, what can you do?

TRY THIS: Instead of getting embroiled in an argument, simply restate his position. (“Let me make sure I understand. You’re saying that . . .”) Then, ask questions. (“What makes you feel that way?” or “What led you to that conclusion?”) Draw out your teenager. Let him express his convictions. If the difference of opinion is just a matter of preference and not an issue of right and wrong, show

* Although in this article we refer to the teenager as a male, the principles discussed apply to both genders.



Wise parents create an environment in which teenagers can express their convictions

your *No, No.*" (Matthew 5:37) Teenagers are less likely to argue with you when they know that you are consistent.

At the same time, be reasonable. Let your teenager explain, for example, why he feels that his curfew should be adjusted in a particular instance. In such a case, you are not caving in to pressure but simply following the Bible's advice: "Let your reasonableness become known."—Philippians 4:5.

TRY THIS: Hold a family meeting in which you discuss curfews and other house rules. Show that you are willing to listen and weigh all factors involved before making a decision. "Teenagers should see that their parents are willing to say yes to a request if a Bible principle isn't violated," recommends Roberto, a father in Brazil.

Of course, no parent is perfect. The Bible says: "We all stumble many times." (James 3:2) If you find that you are at least partly responsible for an argument, do not hesitate to apologize to your teenager. Admitting your error sets an example in humility and will pave the way for your teenager to act in a similar manner.

"After one argument, when my feelings had calmed down, I apologized to my son for my emotional outburst. That helped calm him down too and made it easier for him to listen to me."—Kenji, Japan. ■

your teenager that you can respect his viewpoint—even if you do not fully agree with it.

Developing an identity—and the convictions that come along with it—is not only normal but also beneficial. After all, the Bible says that Christians should not be like young children who are "tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching." (Ephesians 4:14) So allow and even encourage your teenager to develop an identity along with firm convictions.

"When I show my daughters that I'm willing to listen to them, they're more inclined to consider my viewpoint, even if it differs from theirs. I'm careful not to force them into my thinking but to let them form their own convictions."—Ivana, Czech Republic.

FIRM, YET FLEXIBLE

Like younger children, some teenagers have learned the art of bringing up a matter repeatedly in an effort to wear their parents down. If that happens frequently in your household, be careful. Although giving in might bring momentary relief, it teaches your teenager that arguing is a way to get what he wants. The remedy? Follow Jesus' advice: "Just let your word *Yes* mean *Yes*,

ASK YOURSELF . . .

- *In what ways might I be contributing to arguments with my teenager?*
- *How could I use the material in this article to understand my teenager better?*
- *What can I do to communicate with my teenager—without arguing?*

“The Rewarder of Those Earnestly Seeking Him”

Does Jehovah value what his worshippers do in trying to please him? Some might say no, claiming that God is not interested in us. But such a claim promotes a gross misrepresentation of God. His Word, the Bible, sets the record straight. It assures us that Jehovah appreciates the efforts of his faithful worshippers. Consider the words of the apostle Paul found at **Hebrews 11:6**.

What does it take to please Jehovah? “Without faith it is impossible to please [God] well,” writes Paul. Notice that Paul does not say that it is *difficult* to please God without faith. Rather, the apostle says that it is *impossible* to do so. In other words, faith is an essential ingredient for pleasing God.

What kind of faith pleases Jehovah? Our faith in God must involve two aspects. First, we “must believe that he is.” Other translations say “believe that he is real” and “believe that he exists.” How could we possibly please God if we doubted his existence? Still, genuine faith involves more, for even the demons believe that Jehovah exists. (James 2:19) Our faith that God is real should move us to action, that is, to prove our faith by living in a way that is pleasing to him.—James 2:20, 26.

Second, we “must believe that” God is “the rewarder.” A person with true faith is fully convinced that his efforts to live in a way that pleases God will not be in vain. (1 Corinthians 15:58) How could we please Jehovah if we doubted his ability or desire to reward us? (James 1:17; 1 Peter 5:7) A person who concludes that God must be uncaring, unappreciative, and ungenerous does not know the God of the Bible.

Whom does Jehovah reward? “Those earnestly seeking him,” says Paul. A reference work for Bible translators notes that the Greek word rendered “earnestly seeking” does not mean “going out to find” but, rather, implies coming to God “in worship.” Another reference work explains that this Greek verb is in a form that suggests intensity and concentrated effort. Yes, Jehovah rewards those whose faith moves them to worship him with wholehearted love and zeal.—Matthew 22:37.

How could we please Jehovah if we doubted his ability or desire to reward us?

How does Jehovah reward his faithful worshippers? He has promised a priceless future reward that reveals the depth of his generosity and love—everlasting life in Paradise on earth. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Even now, those who earnestly seek Jehovah experience rich blessings. With the help of his holy spirit and the wisdom found in his Word, they enjoy a rewarding and satisfying way of life.—Psalm 144:15; Matthew 5:3.

Truly, Jehovah is an appreciative God who cherishes the faithful service of his devoted worshippers. Does knowing that move you to want to draw closer to him? If so, why not learn more about how you can cultivate and demonstrate the kind of faith that Jehovah will richly reward? ■

SUGGESTED BIBLE READING FOR NOVEMBER
Titus 1–James 5



She Was “Declared Righteous by Works”

RAHAB peered from her window as the light of dawn streamed onto the plain surrounding Jericho. An invading army was gathered out there—the forces of Israel. As they began yet another march around the city, the dust rose in their wake and the blare of horns again pierced the air.

Jericho was Rahab’s home; she knew its streets, its houses, its teeming markets and shops. She knew its people even better. She could sense their fear intensifying as the days passed and Israel continued this strange ritual—marching around the city once each day. As the sound of their horns echoed in the streets and squares of Jericho, though, Rahab did not feel the dread and despair that her people did.

Rahab watched as the army began its march early on this seventh day. Amid the Israelite soldiers, she saw their priests blowing horns and bearing the sacred ark that represented the presence of their God, Jehovah. We might imagine Rahab’s hand resting on a scarlet cord hanging from her window, which looked out from Jericho’s great wall. That cord reminded Rahab of her hope that she and her family would survive the destruction of the city. Was Rahab a traitor? Certainly not to Jehovah; he saw her as a woman of remarkable faith. Let us go back to the beginning of Rahab’s story and see what we can learn from her.

RAHAB THE PROSTITUTE

Rahab was a prostitute. That stark fact so alarmed some Bible commentators in the past that they claimed that she was merely an innkeeper. The Bible, though, is quite clear and does not whitewash the facts. (Joshua 2:1; Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25) In Canaanite society, Rahab’s profession was probably respectable enough. However, culture cannot always eradicate conscience, that inner sense of right and wrong that Jehovah has given us all. (Romans 2:14, 15) Rahab may have keenly sensed that her way of life was degrading. Perhaps, like many today in such walks of life, she felt that she was trapped, with no other choice if she wanted to care for her family.

No doubt Rahab longed for a better life. Her homeland was full of violence and depravity, including incest and bestiality. (Leviticus 18:3, 6, 21-24) The prevalence of such evils in the land had much to do with religion. The temples promoted ritual prostitution, and the worship of such demonic gods as Baal and Molech included the burning of children alive in sacrificial fires.

Jehovah was not blind to what was going on in Canaan. In fact, because of the many wicked practices of the Canaanites, Jehovah said: “The land is unclean, and I shall bring punishment for its error upon it, and the land will vomit its inhabitants out.” (Leviticus 18:25) What did “punishment for its error” involve? In general,

Rahab put
her faith in
the God of
the Israelites



Israel was given this divine promise: “Jehovah your God will certainly push these nations away from before you little by little.” (Deuteronomy 7: 22) Centuries earlier, Jehovah had promised the land to the family of Abraham, and “God . . . cannot lie.”—Titus 1:2; Genesis 12:7.

However, Jehovah also decreed that certain groups in the land were to be completely wiped out. (Deuteronomy 7:1, 2) As the righteous “Judge of all the earth,” he had read every heart and knew well how deeply entrenched their wickedness and depravity were. (Genesis 18: 25; 1 Chronicles 28:9) What was it like for Rahab to live in such a condemned city? We can only imagine how she felt as reports about Israel reached her ears. She learned that the God of Israel had led his people—a downtrodden nation of slaves—to complete victory over the army of Egypt, the mightiest fighting force in the world of that time. And now Israel was about to attack Jericho! Yet, the people of that city persisted in their wickedness. We can see why the Bible speaks of Rahab’s fellow Canaanites as “those who acted disobediently.”—Hebrews 11:31.

Rahab was different. Over the years, she could have contemplated the reports she heard about Israel and its God, Jehovah. How completely unlike the Canaanite gods he was! Here was a God who fought for his people instead of victimizing them, who elevated the morals of his worshipers instead of debasing them. This God treated women as precious, not as mere sexual objects

to be bought, sold, and degraded in vile worship. When Rahab learned that Israel was camped across the Jordan, poised to invade, she must have been dismayed over what that could mean for her people. Did Jehovah notice Rahab and value the good in her?

Today, there are many people like Rahab. They feel trapped, stuck in a way of life that robs them of dignity and joy; they feel invisible and worthless. Rahab’s case is a comforting reminder that none of us are invisible to God. No matter how low we feel, “he is not far off from each one of us.” (Acts 17:27) He is close by, ready and eager to offer hope to all those who put faith in him. Did Rahab do that?

SHE RECEIVED THE SPIES

One day, sometime before Israel marched around Jericho, two strangers appeared at Rahab’s door. The two men were hoping to pass unnoticed, but in that tense city, many were on the alert to detect any potential spies from Israel. Sharp-eyed Rahab may have been quick to draw her own conclusions. Not that it was unusual for strange men to come to her door, but these two wanted only lodging—not the services of a prostitute.

The two men were, in fact, spies from the camp of Israel. Their commander, Joshua, had sent them to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of Jericho. This was the first city of Canaan that Israel was to invade and perhaps the

strongest of them all. Joshua wanted to know just what he and his men would be facing. The spies no doubt chose Rahab's house deliberately. Here of all places, at the home of a prostitute, strangers might pass unnoticed. Perhaps the spies also hoped to pick up useful information from any careless talk they might overhear.

The Bible says that Rahab "received the messengers hospitably." (James 2:25) She took them into her home, and even if she had suspicions about who they were and why they were there, she let the men stay. Perhaps she hoped to learn more about their God, Jehovah.

Suddenly, though, messengers from the king of Jericho arrived! Word had spread that spies from Israel had come to the house of Rahab. What would Rahab do? If she protected those two strangers, might she not put herself and her entire household at risk? Would not the people of Jericho slaughter them all if she sheltered such enemies? On the other hand, Rahab could now have no doubt about the identity of the men. If she already knew that Jehovah was a far better God than her own, might this be her opportunity to take a stand on Jehovah's side?

Rahab had little time to think, yet she was resourceful and acted quickly. She had the spies

hide among stalks of flax that were laid out to dry on the flat roof of her house. Then she spoke to the king's messengers, saying: "Yes, the men did come to me, and I did not know from where they were. And it came about at the closing of the gate by dark that the men went out. I just do not know where the men have gone. Chase after them quickly, for you will overtake them." (Joshua 2:4, 5) Imagine Rahab watching the faces of the king's emissaries. Did she wonder if they could tell that her heart was racing?

Her ruse worked! The king's men hurried off in the direction of the fords of the Jordan. (Joshua 2:7) Rahab must have breathed a quiet sigh of relief. Using simple strategy, she had misdirected murderous men who had no right to the truth and she had saved innocent servants of Jehovah.

Rahab hurried back to her roof and told the two spies what she had done. She also revealed a vital fact: Her people had lost heart and were terrified of the invaders. This piece of good news must have thrilled the spies. Those wicked Canaanites were becoming terrified of the power of Israel's God, Jehovah! Rahab then revealed something of even greater importance to us. She said: "Jehovah your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." (Joshua 2:11)

Rahab hid two servants of Jehovah under stalks of flax, thereby risking her life



The reports she had heard about Jehovah were enough to teach her at least this much: Israel's God was worthy of her trust. She put her faith in Jehovah.

To Rahab, there was no question that Jehovah would give his people the victory. So she begged for mercy, pleading that she and her family be spared. The spies agreed, stipulating that Rahab must keep their secret and must hang a scarlet cord from her window in the city wall so that the soldiers could protect her and her family.—Joshua 2:12-14, 18.

We can learn an essential truth about faith from Rahab. As the Bible puts it, “faith follows the thing heard.” (Romans 10:17) She heard reliable reports about the power and the justice of Jehovah God, so she put her faith and trust in him. Today, we have far more knowledge about Jehovah available to us. Will we seek to get to know him and put faith in him based on what we learn in his Word, the Bible?

A MIGHTY CITADEL FALLS

Following Rahab's advice, the two spies clambered down the wall by means of a rope hanging from her window and then slipped off toward the mountains. There were many caves along the steep slopes to the north of Jericho where the spies could hide until it was safe to return to the Israelite camp with the good news that they had acquired from Rahab.

Later, the people of Jericho surely shook with fear when they learned that Jehovah had miraculously stopped up the Jordan River, allowing Israel to cross over on the dry riverbed. (Joshua 3:14-17) But for Rahab, that news only gave more proof that her faith in Jehovah was well-placed.

Then came the long days of Israel's marches around Jericho—six days, one march each day. Now the seventh day was here, and it was different. As mentioned at the outset of this article, the march began at sunrise, and after the army had circled the city once, it kept going, marching around Jericho again and again. (Joshua 6:15) What were the Israelites doing?

Finally, at the end of the seventh march on that seventh day, the army stopped. The horns stopped. Silence hung in the air. The tension in that city must have been almost palpable. Then, on a signal from Joshua, the army of Israel raised their voices for the first time, letting out a mighty shout. Did the guards atop the wall of Jericho think that this was some strange sort of attack, this mere cry? If so, they did not think so for long. The massive wall began to tremble under their feet. It shook, it cracked, and then it fell—crashing to the ground! As the dust cleared, though, one segment of the wall emerged intact. Rahab's house still stood, a solitary monument to one woman's faith. Imagine her feelings when she saw how Jehovah had shielded her!*

Her family was safe!—Joshua 6:10, 16, 20, 21.

Jehovah's people likewise honored the faith of Rahab. When they saw that one house sticking up from the ruined wall like a lone tooth, they knew that Jehovah was with this woman. She and her family were spared the execution that came upon that evil city. After the battle, Rahab was allowed to dwell near the encampment of Israel. In time, Rahab became part of the Jewish people. She married a man named Salmon. Their son, Boaz, grew up to be a man of remarkable faith. He married Ruth the Moabitess.[#] (Ruth 4:13, 22) King David and later the Messiah himself, Jesus Christ, descended from that outstanding family.—Joshua 6:22-25; Matthew 1:5, 6, 16.

Rahab's story shows that none of us are insignificant to Jehovah. He sees us all, he reads our hearts, and he is delighted when he finds a spark of faith like the one that lit up the heart of Rahab. Her faith moved her to action. As the Bible says, she was “declared righteous by works.” (James 2:25) How wise we would be to imitate her faith! ■

* Interestingly, Jehovah respected the agreement the two spies had made with Rahab.

[#] To learn more about Ruth and Boaz, see the “Imitate Their Faith” articles in the July 1 and October 1, 2012, issues of *The Watchtower*.

Who will go to heaven, and why?

Millions long for life in heaven. Jesus said that his faithful apostles would live there. Before he died, he promised to prepare a place for them with his heavenly Father.—**Read John 14:2.**

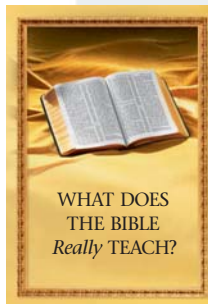
Why will people from earth be resurrected to life in heaven? What will they do there? Jesus told his apostles that they would be kings. They will rule over the earth.—**Read Luke 22:28-30; Revelation 5:10.**

Do all good people go to heaven?

In most lands, only a few people are rulers. Since Jesus resurrects people to heavenly life so that they can rule over the earth, we would expect those chosen to be few. (Luke 12:32) The Bible says exactly how many will rule with Jesus.—**Read Revelation 14:1.**

Those going to heaven will not be the only ones rewarded. Faithful subjects of Jesus' Kingdom will enjoy life without end in a restored paradise on earth. (John 3:16) Some will enter Paradise by surviving the destruction of the present wicked system of things. Others will enter by resurrection.—**Read Psalm 37:29; John 5:28, 29.**

Jesus has prepared places in heaven for some of his followers. Do you know what they will do there?



For more information, see chapter 8 of this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Available for download at www.jw.org

READ ANSWERS TO MORE
BIBLE QUESTIONS ONLINE



Free downloads
of this magazine
and past issues



Bible available
online in about
50 languages

Visit www.jw.org,
or scan code

