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THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



WOULD YOU LIKE TO
STUDY THE BIBLE?

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.

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Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4

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Why Study the Bible?

What is the purpose of life?

Why do people suffer and die?

What does the future hold?

Does God care about me?



Have you ever asked yourself questions like those? If so, you are not alone. People around the world are pondering life's big questions. Can you find the answers?

Millions of people would say, "Yes!" Why? Because they have found satisfying answers to their questions in the Bible. Would you like to know what the Bible says? Then you may wish to benefit from a free Bible study program offered by Jehovah's Witnesses.*

True, when it comes to looking into the Bible, some people say: "I'm too busy." "It's too hard." "I'm wary of commitment." But others take a different view. They welcome the opportunity to learn what the Bible teaches. Consider just a few examples:

"I attended Catholic and Protestant churches, a Sikh temple, and a Buddhist monastery, and I studied theology at a university. Yet many of my spiritual questions went unanswered. Then one of Jehovah's Witnesses called at my home. Impressed by her Bible-based answers, I agreed to a Bible study."—Gill, England.

"I had many questions about life, but my church pastor's responses did not satisfy me.

However, one of Jehovah's Witnesses answered my questions using only the Bible. When he asked me if I wanted to learn more, I gladly accepted."—Koffi, Benin.

"I was curious about the condition of the dead. I believed that the dead could harm the living, but I wanted to know what the Bible said. So I started studying the Bible with a friend who was a Witness."—José, Brazil.

"I tried reading the Bible but could not understand it. Then Jehovah's Witnesses called on me and clearly explained several Bible prophecies. I wanted to see what else I could learn."—Dennize, Mexico.

"I wondered if God truly cared about me. So I decided to pray to the God of the Bible. The next day the Witnesses knocked on my door, and I accepted a Bible study."—Anju, Nepal.

Those experiences remind us of Jesus' words: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need." (Matthew 5:3) Yes, humans have an innate spiritual need. Only God can fill that need, and he does so through his Word, the Bible.

So, what does a Bible study involve? How can it benefit you? These questions will be answered in the following article.

* Jehovah is the name of God as revealed in the Bible.



BIBLE FACTS

NAME: From the Greek word *bi·bli'a*, meaning “little books”

CONTENTS: 39 books in Hebrew (with some passages in Aramaic) and 27 books in Greek

WRITTEN: By about 40 writers over some 1,600 years, from 1513 B.C.E. to about 98 C.E.*

LANGUAGES: Translated in whole or in part into over 2,500 languages

DISTRIBUTION: An estimated five billion Bibles, making it the world’s most widely distributed book

* The abbreviation B.C.E. means “Before the Common Era,” and C.E. means “Common Era.”



A BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM FOR ALL

Jehovah’s Witnesses are well-known for their public preaching. But did you know that we also conduct a global Bible study program?

In 2014, over 8,000,000 Witnesses in 240 lands conducted nearly 9,500,000 Bible studies each month.* Indeed, the number of people studying the Bible with us exceeds the individual population of some 140 countries!

To carry out this educational work, Jehovah’s Witnesses publish nearly one and a half *billion* Bibles, books, magazines, and other Bible study aids each year—in some 700 languages! This unequalled publishing effort allows people to study the Bible in the language of their choice.

* Bible studies are generally conducted with individuals or small groups of people.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED ABOUT OUR BIBLE STUDY PROGRAM

What is the format of the study course?

We take various Bible topics and examine Bible verses that relate to those subjects. For example, the Bible answers such questions as these: Who is God? What is he like? Does he have a name? Where does he live? Can we draw close to him? The challenge is knowing where to look in the Bible for the answers.

To help people find the answers, we normally use the 224-page book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?** This book was specially designed to help people understand the basic teachings of the Bible. It includes lessons on God, Jesus Christ, human suffering, the resurrection, prayer, and many more subjects.

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses. More than 230 million copies of this book have been printed in over 260 languages.

.....
"I never liked studying in school, but this study was fun. And the things I learned were so comforting!"—Katlego, South Africa.



.....
"The course covered all my questions and many more."
—Bertha, Mexico.



.....
“The Bible study was held at my home at a time that I found suitable. What more could I want!”

—Eziquiel, Brazil.



.....
“The lessons were sometimes 15 to 30 minutes long—other times longer—whatever was convenient for me.”

—Viniana, Australia.



.....
“The course was free—it was amazing!”

—Aimé, Benin.



.....
“My Bible teacher was so patient and kind. We developed a close bond.”

—Karen, Northern Ireland.



.....
“Many people study the Bible without becoming Witnesses.”

—Denton, England.



When and where can the study be held?

The study can be held at a time and place convenient for you.

How long are the study sessions?

Many people set aside an hour or so each week to study the Bible. But the length of the study is flexible. We will adapt it to fit your schedule. Some study for just 10 or 15 minutes each week.

How much does the course cost?

The course and the study materials are free. This is in line with Jesus' direction to his disciples: “You received free, give free.”—Matthew 10:8.

How long does the course last?

The length of the study course depends on you. The book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* contains 19 lessons. You can cover any or all of the lessons at a pace that suits you.

Do I have to become one of Jehovah's Witnesses?

No. We respectfully recognize that each person has the right to choose what he or she will believe. People who gain a basic knowledge of the Bible, however, can make an informed choice.



Where can I get more information?

The Web site jw.org provides accurate information about the beliefs and activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

How can I request a Bible study?

- Submit a request online at www.jw.org.
- Write to the nearest address listed on page two of this magazine.
- Contact Jehovah's Witnesses near you. You can look for "Jehovah's Witnesses" in a listing of local telephone numbers. ■



HELP FOR FAMILIES

"When my wife started studying the Bible, I noticed significant changes in her. Our family life improved. Curious to see what she was learning, I began to study too. What I learned made me a better person. Studying the Bible brought our family together."—**Eziquiel**.

"After I began studying the Bible, I kicked my drug habit, stopped abusing alcohol, and learned to control my anger. My house is cleaner and tidier. I appreciate my family more and enjoy doing things to make them happy. I am so much happier."—**Karen**.

"Some people criticized me for studying the Bible. But my husband supported my decision, saying: 'I don't care what people say. Seeing you change for the good—that is what matters to me. Keep doing what you are doing.' Our family life has never been better!"—**Viniana**.



AS TOLD BY DORIS ELDRED

YEAR BORN

1949

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

UNITED STATES

HISTORY

SEARCHED FOR
MEANING IN LIFE



Three questions changed my life

MY PAST: I grew up in Ancram, a small town in upstate New York, U.S.A. The town consisted mostly of dairy farms. In fact, the town had more cows than people.

My family attended the only church in town. On Sunday mornings, Grandpa would polish my shoes, and then I would head off to Sunday school with the little white Bible my grandmother had given me. My siblings and I were taught to work hard, respect and help our neighbors, and be thankful for our blessings.

When I grew up, I moved away and became a school teacher. I had many questions about God and life. Some of my students were quite gifted. Others were not as gifted but worked very hard. Some had physical disabilities, while others excelled physically. I felt that the situation was unfair. Sometimes the parents of my less-fortunate students would say things such as, "This is the way God wants my child to be." I wondered why God would allow some babies to be born with disabilities. After all, the baby hadn't done anything wrong.

I also wondered, 'What meaningful thing am I supposed to do with my life?' I felt that my life was passing quickly. I had grown up in a nice family, I went to good schools, and now I was working at a job that I loved. But the remainder of my life seemed empty. At best, I could hope to get married, have a nice home and some children, continue working until I retired, and eventually move into a nursing home. I wondered if there was more to life.

HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE: One summer, I toured Europe with some fellow teachers. We went to Westminster Abbey, Notre-Dame de Paris, and the Vatican, as well as to many smaller churches. Everywhere I went, I asked my questions. After returning home to Sloatsburg, New York, I visited a number of churches. But no one could give me satisfying answers.

One day, a 12-year-old student approached me and asked *me* three questions. First, she asked if I knew that she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I said yes. Second, she asked if I would like to know more about Jehovah's Witnesses. Again, I said yes. Third, she asked where I lived. When I told her my address, we learned that I lived around the corner from her family. Little did I know that those three questions from a young girl would change my life forever.

Soon thereafter, she rode her bicycle to my home and started a Bible study with me. I asked her the questions that I had asked many religious leaders. Unlike them, she showed me clear and satisfying answers from my own Bible—answers that I had never seen before!

What I learned from the Bible filled me with joy and contentment. I was moved when I read 1 John 5:19, which says: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." I was relieved to learn that it is, not God, but Satan who causes all the sorrow we see around us—and that God will remedy the situation. (Revelation 21:3, 4) I discovered that the Bible makes sense when it is explained clearly. Although the Witness who was studying with me was only 12 years old, I reasoned that the truth is the truth no matter who speaks it.

Even so, I wanted to see if the Witnesses practiced what they preached. For instance, the young girl emphasized that true Christians display such qualities as patience and kindness. (Galatians 5:22, 23) I decided to test her to see if she showed those qualities herself. One day, I intentionally arrived late for my study. I wondered: "Will she be waiting for me? And if so, will she be angry that I was late?" As I pulled into my driveway, I saw her waiting on the front steps of my home. She ran to my car and said: "I was about to go home and tell my mother that we need to call the hospitals and the police to see if you're OK because you are never late for your study. I was worried about you!"

On another occasion, I asked a question that I thought would be too difficult for a 12-year-old to answer. I wanted to see if she would just make up an answer. When I asked the question, she looked at me very seriously and said: "That is a hard question. I'm going to write it down and ask my parents." Sure enough, the next time she arrived for our study, she brought an issue of *The Watchtower* that contained the answer to my question. This is what drew me to the Witnesses—their publications provided Bible-based answers to all my questions. I continued studying with that young girl, and one year later I was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

HOW I HAVE BENEFITED: When I finally received satisfying answers to my questions, I wanted to share them with everyone. (Matthew 12:35) At first, my family opposed my new beliefs. In time, though, they softened their attitude. Near the end of my mother's life, she began to study the Bible. Although she did not live long enough to be baptized, I am sure that she had decided to serve Jehovah.

In 1978, I married a Witness named Elias Kazan. In 1981, Elias and I were invited to become members of the United States Bethel family.[#] Sadly, after we had served there for just four years, Elias passed away. Though widowed, I remained in my Bethel assignment, which gave me something to focus on and brought me a measure of comfort.

In 2006, I married Richard Eldred, a fellow member of the Bethel family. Richard and I continue to enjoy the privilege of serving at Bethel. Knowing the truth about God, I truly feel that I have found not only the answers I was searching for but also a real purpose in life—and it all started with three questions from a young girl. ■

* All told, the girl and her siblings helped five of their teachers study the Bible and begin worshipping Jehovah.

[#] "Bethel," meaning "House of God," is the term that Jehovah's Witnesses use to describe their branch facilities around the world. (Genesis 28:17, 19, footnote) Members of the Bethel family care for various assignments that support the educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Rescuing an Ancient Gem From the Trash

WHAT comes to your mind when you think of a rubbish heap? You likely associate such a sight with refuse and an unpleasant smell. So you would hardly expect to find anything of value there, much less a priceless gem.

Yet, a century ago a treasure of sorts was found in just such a place—the trash. The treasure was, not a literal gem, but something else of great value. What kind of treasure was uncovered? Why is its discovery important to us today?

AN UNEXPECTED FIND

At the turn of the 20th century, Bernard P. Grenfell and Arthur S. Hunt, scholars at the University of Oxford, visited Egypt. There, among the garbage heaps close to the Nile Valley, they discovered a number of papyrus fragments. Later, in 1920, while the two colleagues were busy cataloging the collection, Grenfell acquired some additional fragments that had been dug up in Egypt. He acquired these on behalf of The John Rylands Library in Manchester, England. However, both men died before the catalog was finished.

Colin H. Roberts, another scholar at Oxford University, completed the task. While he was sorting the fragments, he spotted a papyrus scrap measuring 3.5 by 2.4 inches (9 x 6 cm). To his amazement, the Greek handwriting contained words that were familiar to him. On one side were words taken from John 18:31-33. The other side contained parts of verses 37 and 38. Roberts realized that he had stumbled upon a priceless gem.

DETERMINING ITS AGE

Roberts suspected that this papyrus scrap was very old. But how old? To find out, he compared the handwriting on it with other dated ancient manuscripts—a discipline called paleography.* By applying this method, he was able to assign an approximate age. But he wanted to be sure. So he photographed the fragment, sent copies of it to three papyrologists, and asked them to determine its age. What did these experts conclude?

By studying the style of the script and the strokes, all three of the expert scholars agreed that the fragment had been written in the first half of the second century C.E.—just a few decades after the apostle John’s death! Paleography, however, is not a foolproof method of dating manuscripts, and another scholar believes that the text could have been written anytime during the second century. Yet, this tiny scrap of papyrus was—and still is—the oldest existing manuscript fragment of the Christian Greek Scriptures that has ever been found.

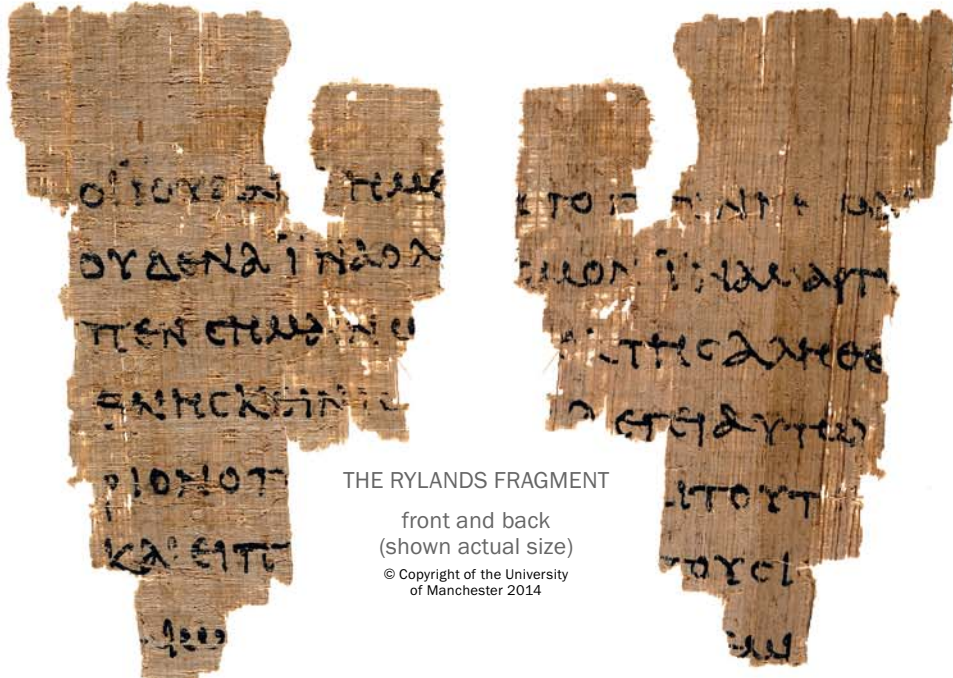
WHAT THE RYLANDS FRAGMENT REVEALS

Why is this fragment of John’s Gospel so important to lovers of the Bible today? For at least two reasons. First of all, the format of the fragment gives us some insight into how the early Christians valued the Scriptures.

In the second century C.E., written text came

* According to the book *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible*, paleography “is the science that studies ancient writing.” Over a period of time, handwriting style changes. These changes can reveal the age of a manuscript if it can be compared to other reliably dated documents.

Why is this fragment of John's Gospel so important to lovers of the Bible today?



THE RYLANDS FRAGMENT

front and back
(shown actual size)

© Copyright of the University
of Manchester 2014

in two formats—the scroll and the codex. Scrolls were pieces of papyrus or parchment that were pasted or stitched together to form one long sheet. This sheet could then be rolled up and unrolled whenever needed. In most cases, only one side of a scroll was used for writing.

However, the tiny fragment that Roberts discovered has handwriting on both sides. This suggests that it came from a codex rather than a scroll. A codex was made from sheets of parchment or papyrus that were sewn together and folded in a format resembling a book.

What were the advantages of the codex over the scroll? Well, the early Christians were evangelizers. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) They spread the Bible's message wherever they could find people—in homes, in marketplaces, and on the street. (Acts 5:42; 17:17; 20:20) So having access to the Scriptures in a compact format was much more practical.

The codex also made it easier for congregations and individuals to make their own copies of the Scriptures. Thus, the Gospels were copied over and over again, and this no doubt contributed to the rapid growth of Christianity.

A second reason why the Rylands fragment is important to us today is that it reveals how reliably the original Bible text was transmitted. Though the fragment contains just a few verses from John's Gospel, its contents agree almost exactly with what we read today in our own copies of the Bible. The Rylands fragment thus shows that the Bible has not been altered despite being copied and recopied over time.

Of course, the Rylands fragment of John's Gospel is but one piece of evidence among the thousands of fragments and manuscripts that confirm the reliable transmission of the original Bible text. In his book *The Bible as History*, Werner Keller concluded: "These old [manuscripts] are the most convincing answer to all doubts as to the genuineness and reliability of the text that we have in our Bibles today."

True, Christians do not base their faith on archaeological finds. They believe that "all Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16) Nonetheless, how reassuring it is when priceless gems from the past confirm what the Bible has said all along: "The saying of Jehovah endures forever"! —1 Peter 1:25. ■

Why Commemorate the Death of Jesus?

The following is a conversation that one of Jehovah's Witnesses might have with a neighbor. Let us imagine that a Witness named Megan has called at the home of a woman named Shirley.



"KEEP DOING THIS IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME"

Megan: Hi, Shirley. It was so good to see you at the Memorial of the death of Jesus Christ last week.* What did you think of the meeting?

Shirley: I enjoyed being there, but I must admit that I didn't fully understand everything that was said. I've heard of people celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas and his resurrection at Easter, but I've never heard of anyone commemorating his death.

Megan: It's true, Christmas and Easter are popular celebrations around the world. But Jehovah's Witnesses feel that it's important to memorialize the death of Jesus. If you have a few minutes, I would be glad to review the reasons for this.

Shirley: Sure, I have some time.

Megan: Basically, Jehovah's Witnesses commemorate the death of Jesus because he instructed his followers to do so. Consider what happened on the night before Jesus died. Do you recall hearing about a special meal that he shared with his faithful followers?

Shirley: You mean the Last Supper?

Megan: Exactly. It's also called the Lord's Evening Meal. During that meal, Jesus gave his fol-

lowers clear instructions. Would you please read his words recorded here at Luke 22:19?

Shirley: OK. "Also, he took a loaf, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to them, saying: 'This means my body, which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.'"

Megan: Thank you. Notice Jesus' instructions in the final sentence of that verse: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." And right before instructing his followers to remember him, Jesus made it clear *what* they were to remember about him. He said that his life would be given in behalf of his followers. Jesus expressed this thought in similar terms, as recorded at Matthew 20:28. That verse reads: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many." In a nutshell, that is why Jehovah's Witnesses gather each year on the anniversary of the death of Jesus—to remember the ransom sacrifice that Jesus offered. His death can mean life for all obedient humans.

WHY WAS A RANSOM NEEDED?

Shirley: I've heard people say that Jesus died so that we could have life. But to be honest, I've never really understood how that works.

Megan: You're not alone, Shirley. The subject of Jesus' ransom sacrifice is a deep one.

* Once a year, Jehovah's Witnesses gather on the anniversary of the death of Jesus to remember his sacrifice. This year, that anniversary falls on Friday, April 3.

But it's also one of the most beautiful truths in God's Word. By the way, how are you doing on time?

Shirley: I have a few more minutes.

Megan: Good. I've just been reading up on the topic of the ransom, and I will try to explain it in a simple way.

Shirley: OK.

Megan: In order to understand the ransom, we first need to grasp the situation that Adam and Eve created when they sinned in the garden of Eden. To help us comprehend the issue involved, let's read together Romans 6:23. Would you please read that verse?

Shirley: Sure. It says: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."

Megan: Thank you. Let's analyze those words. First, notice how the verse begins: "The wages sin pays is death." This is a simple rule that God set out at the outset of human history—the wage, or penalty, for sin is death. Of course, in the beginning, no one was a sinner. Adam and Eve were created perfect, and all their children would have been born perfect. So there would have been no reason for anyone to die. Adam and Eve and all their offspring had the prospect of eternal life in happiness. But as we know, things didn't work out that way, did they?

Shirley: No. Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit.

Megan: That's right. And when they did—when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God—they sinned. In effect, they chose to become imperfect, to become sinners. That choice would have disastrous consequences not just for Adam and Eve but also for all their offspring.

Shirley: What do you mean?

Megan: Well, maybe I could use an illustration. Let me ask you, do you like to bake?

Shirley: Yes! I love to.

Megan: Let's say that you have a nice new pan

for baking bread. Before you have an opportunity to use it even once, though, it falls on the floor and gets a big dent. Now, what will happen to any loaves of bread you bake in that pan? Won't they too have a dent in them?

Shirley: Yes, of course.

Megan: In a similar way, when Adam and Eve chose to disobey God, they became "dented," or blemished, by sin and imperfection. And because they became sinners before they had any children, all their children would be born with

The ransom sacrifice is the greatest expression of love ever

the same "dent." They would all be born in a sinful condition. In the Bible, the word "sin" refers not only to an act but also to the condition that we have inherited. The end result is that even though you and I hadn't done anything wrong—we hadn't even been born when Adam and Eve sinned—they doomed us and all their future offspring and ours to a life of imperfection and sin that would end in death. As we read at Romans 6:23, the penalty for sin is death.

Shirley: That doesn't seem fair. Why should all humans suffer forever because of the sin of Adam and Eve?

Megan: You're right—it doesn't seem fair. But there is more to it than that. In his perfect justice, God determined that Adam and Eve should die for their sins, but we as their offspring were not left without hope. God made a way for us to get out of this predicament. That is where the ransom sacrifice of Jesus comes in. Look again at Romans 6:23. After mentioning that "the wages sin pays is death," the verse says: "But the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our

Lord.” So it’s the death of Jesus that opens the way for us to escape from sin and death.*

THE RANSOM—GOD’S GREATEST GIFT

Megan: There’s another detail in this verse that I would like to draw to your attention.

Shirley: What’s that?

Megan: Notice that the verse says: “The gift *God* gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.” Now, if Jesus is the one who suffered and died for us, giving up his life in our behalf, why does the verse speak of the ransom as “the gift *God* gives”? Why not, “the gift Jesus gives”?#

Shirley: Hmm. I don’t know.

Megan: Well, God created Adam and Eve, and he was the one they sinned against when they disobeyed in the garden of Eden. He must have been deeply hurt when his first two human children rebelled against him. But Jehovah immediately stated a solution.[^] He purposed that one of his spirit creatures come to the earth, live as a perfect human, and ultimately offer his life as a ransom sacrifice. So, really, the entire provision of the ransom was a gift from God. There’s another way too in which the ransom was God’s gift. Have you ever thought of what *God* must have felt when Jesus was put to death?

* A future article in this series will consider how the ransom sacrifice of Jesus provides escape from sin, as well as what we must do in order to benefit from the ransom.

According to the Bible, God and Jesus are two separate individuals. For more information, see chapter 4 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.

[^] See Genesis 3:15.

Shirley: No, I guess I haven’t.

Megan: I see some toys here in the front yard. You must have children.

Shirley: Yes, I have two—a boy and a girl.

Megan: As a parent, stop and think about how Jesus’ heavenly Father, Jehovah God, must have felt on the day that Jesus died. I mean, how did he feel watching from heaven as his dear Son was arrested, ridiculed, and struck with fists? And how did the Father feel as his Son was nailed to a wooden pole and left there to die a slow, agonizing death?

Shirley: He must have felt terrible. I never thought of that before!

Megan: Of course, it’s impossible for us to say exactly how God felt on that day. But we do know that he has feelings, and we also know *why* he allowed all of that to happen. It’s explained beautifully for us in a famous scripture, John 3:16. Would you please read that?

Shirley: Yes. It says: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”

Megan: Thank you. Look again at the beginning of that verse. It says: “God loved the world.” That’s the key—*love*. Love moved God to send his Son to earth to die in our behalf. Really, the ransom sacrifice is the greatest expression of love ever. And that’s what Jehovah’s Witnesses gather to remember each year on the anniversary of the death of Jesus. Has this review been helpful?

Shirley: Yes, it has. Thank you for taking the time to go over this with me. ■

Is there a particular Bible subject that you have wondered about? Are you curious about any of the beliefs or religious practices of Jehovah’s Witnesses? If so, do not hesitate to ask one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He or she will be pleased to discuss such matters with you.

What was the role of a centurion in the Roman army?

The Christian Greek Scriptures make a number of references to Roman centurions. The army officer who oversaw Jesus' execution held that rank, as did Cornelius, the first Gentile convert to Christianity. The officer who was to oversee the apostle Paul's scourging and Julius, who escorted Paul to Rome, were also centurions.—Mark 15:39; Acts 10:1, footnote; 22:25; 27:1.

A centurion normally commanded a century, which consisted of between 50 and 100 foot soldiers. His duties included training and disciplining his men, inspecting their clothes and equipment, and commanding them during deployments.

The rank of centurion was the highest that an ordinary soldier could reach. Those who filled this office were career soldiers who had to be good leaders. The discipline and efficiency of the Roman military machine depended on them. According to one source, centurions “were often the most experienced and best-informed men in the army.” ■



STELA OF CENTURION
MARCUS FAVONIUS FACILIS

© Colchester and Ipswich Museums

How did mirrors in Bible times differ from those of today?

Unlike the glass mirrors of today, mirrors in Bible times were generally made of metal that was highly polished—usually bronze, but possibly also copper, silver, gold, or electrum. The first mention of mirrors in the Bible is in connection with the construction of the tabernacle, Israel's first center of worship. Women contributed mirrors for the fabrication of a sacred copper basin and its stand. (Exodus 38:8) Presumably, the mirrors would have to be melted down to be used for that purpose.

Mirrors recovered from archaeological excavations in and around Israel have usually been found with jewelry and other items of feminine adornment. Typically, those mirrors were circular in shape, with an ornamented wood, metal, or ivory handle, which was frequently shaped like a female figure. The mirror's unpolished face was usually left unadorned.

The reflecting ability of ancient mirrors was limited compared to that of today's glass mirrors. This likely explains what the apostle Paul was referring to when he said: “Now we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror.”—1 Corinthians 13:12. ■

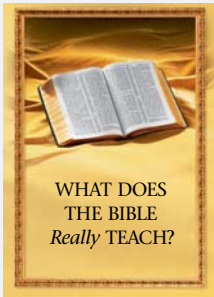


ANCIENT
EGYPTIAN
MIRROR

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HOW DOES JESUS' DEATH MAKE POSSIBLE
A SOCIETY WHERE PEOPLE CARE FOR
ONE ANOTHER?



For more
information
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What does the future hold for humankind?

Humans no doubt will continue to make scientific advances. But will they on their own ever build a society in which people really care for one another? No. Today, the world is driven by selfishness and greed. However, God purposes something better for the human family.—**Read 2 Peter 3:13.**

God's Word describes a future worldwide society in which people will love one another. People will live in security, and there will be no one to cause them harm.—**Read Micah 4:3, 4.**

How will selfishness be eliminated?

God originally created man without any selfish tendency. But by choosing to disobey God, the first human lost his perfection. We inherited the tendency to be selfish from him. And yet God will use Jesus to restore humankind to perfection.—**Read Romans 7:21, 24, 25.**

In harmony with God's will, Jesus died as a sacrifice and canceled the effect of the first man's disobedience. (Romans 5:19) Thus Jesus made possible a marvelous future when people will be free from the selfish tendency to do wrong.—**Read Psalm 37:9-11.**

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