

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## How to Get More From Reading the Bible



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Is the Bible outdated in our modern age?  
Or does it still have value? The Bible itself says:  
*“All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial.”*  
—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

This issue of *The Watchtower* highlights examples of the Bible’s practical wisdom and offers suggestions on how to get the most out of your Bible reading.

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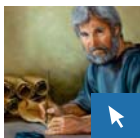
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### Are There Contradictions in the Bible?

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS >  
BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED)

THE **WATCHTOWER**<sup>®</sup>  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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## COVER SUBJECT

# Why Read the Bible?

“I thought the Bible would be so hard to understand.”—Jovy

“I felt that it would be boring.”—Queennie

“When I looked at how thick the Bible is, I lost any desire to read it.”—Ezekiel

Have you ever thought about reading the Bible but held off because of feelings like those above? For many, reading the Bible seems daunting. But what if you learned that the Bible can help you to have a happier and more satisfying life? And what if you found out that there are some approaches to reading it that can make it more interesting? Would you be willing to take a look at what the Bible can offer you?

Consider just a few comments from those who found it to be rewarding when they started reading the Bible.

Ezekiel, who is in his early 20's, says: “In the past, I was like someone who is driving a car without any destination in mind. But reading the Bible has helped me have a meaningful life. It contains practical advice that I can use every day.”

Frieda, also in her 20's, explains: “I used to

be hotheaded. But because of my Bible reading, I've learned to control myself. This has made me a lot easier to get along with, so I have more friends now.”

A woman in her 50's named Eunice says of the Bible, “It is helping me to become a better person, to change my not-so-good habits.”

As those readers and millions more have learned, reading the Bible can help you to live a more enjoyable life. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Among other things, it can help you (1) make good decisions, (2) make real friends, (3) cope with stress, and (4) best of all, learn the truth about God. The Bible's advice comes from God, so you can never go wrong following it. God never gives bad advice.

The important thing is to get started. What practical tips can make getting started easier and more enjoyable?

# How Can I Get Started?

What approach will help you to enjoy your Bible reading and get the most out of it? Take note of five suggestions that have worked for many.

**Create the right surroundings.** Try to find a setting that is quiet. Minimize distractions so you can focus on what you read. Good lighting and fresh air may help you to get the most from your reading.

**Have the right frame of mind.** Since the Bible is from our heavenly Father, you will benefit the most if you have the attitude of a child who is ready to learn from a loving parent. If you have

any negative, preconceived ideas about the Bible, try to set them aside so that God can teach you. —Psalm 25:4.

**Pray before you read.** The Bible contains God's thoughts, so it is not surprising that we need his help to understand it. God promises to give "holy spirit to those asking him." (Luke 11:13) The holy spirit can help you to understand God's thinking. In time, it will open your mind to grasp "even the deep things of God."—1 Corinthians 2:10.

**Read to understand.** Do not read just to cover material. Actively think about what you are reading. Ask yourself such questions as these: 'What qualities do I see in the person I am reading about? How can I apply this in my life?'

**Set specific goals.** To be rewarded by your Bible reading, set out to learn something that will truly enrich your life. You may set goals like the following: 'I want to learn more about God himself.' 'I want to become a better person, a better husband or wife.' Then select portions of the Bible that will help you reach those goals.\*

These five suggestions will help you get started. But how might you make your reading even more interesting? The next article offers some suggestions.

\* If you are not sure what portions of the Bible would be most suitable in that regard, Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you.



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## GET MORE OUT OF YOUR READING

- ▶ Take your time, and avoid rushing
- ▶ Immerse yourself in what you read—visualize it
- ▶ Try to see how verses fit in their context
- ▶ Search for lessons in what you read



## DIG INTO THE BIBLE BY GETTING TO KNOW ITS PEOPLE

### Some faithful women

<b>Abigail</b>	1 Samuel chapter 25
<b>Esther</b>	Esther chapters 2-5, 7-9
<b>Hannah</b>	1 Samuel chapters 1-2
<b>Mary</b>	(Jesus' mother) Matthew chapters 1-2; Luke chapters 1-2; see also John 2:1-12; Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4
<b>Rahab</b>	Joshua chapters 2, 6; see also Hebrews 11:30, 31; James 2:24-26
<b>Rebekah</b>	Genesis chapters 24-27
<b>Sarah</b>	Genesis chapters 17-18, 20-21, 23; see also Hebrews 11:11; 1 Peter 3:1-6

### Some outstanding men

<b>Abraham</b>	Genesis chapters 11-24; see also 25:1-11
<b>David</b>	1 Samuel chapters 16-30; 2 Samuel chapters 1-24; 1 Kings chapters 1-2
<b>Jesus</b>	The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
<b>Moses</b>	Exodus chapters 2-20, 24, 32-34; Numbers chapters 11-17, 20, 21, 27, 31; Deuteronomy chapter 34
<b>Noah</b>	Genesis chapters 5-9
<b>Paul</b>	Acts chapters 7-9, 13-28
<b>Peter</b>	Matthew chapters 4, 10, 14, 16-17, 26; Acts chapters 1-5, 8-12

# What Will Make It Interesting?

Boring? Or refreshing? What will Bible reading be for you? Much depends on how you approach your reading. Let us take a look at what you can do to increase your interest and enjoyment.

**Select a reliable, modern-language translation.** If you read material that contains a great many difficult or out-of-date words that you do not know, you are not likely to enjoy reading it. So look for a Bible that uses easy-to-understand language that will touch your heart. At the same time, though, it should be carefully and accurately translated.\*

\* Many have found the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* to be accurate, reliable, and very readable as well. This Bible, produced by Jehovah's Witnesses, is available in over 130 languages. You can download a copy from the website [jw.org](http://jw.org) or download the *JW Library* app. Or if you prefer, Jehovah's Witnesses can deliver a printed copy to your home.

**Use modern technology.** Today the Bible is available not only as a bound, printed book but also as a digital book. Some Bibles can be read online or downloaded for personal reading on computers, tablets, or cell phones. Certain versions include additional tools that allow you quickly to check other Bible verses on the same topic or even compare several translations. If you prefer to listen rather than to read, the Bible is also available in recorded form. Many people enjoy listening while they commute by public transportation, do laundry, or engage in some other activity that permits listening. Why not try a method that suits you?

**Use Bible study tools.** Bible study tools can help you get much more out of your reading. There are maps of the Bible lands, which will help



## BIBLE STUDY TOOLS PRODUCED BY JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

- ▶ **JW.ORG**—This website features many study tools, including the feature “Bible Questions Answered.” It also contains instructions for downloading the *JW Library* app
- ▶ **“See the Good Land”**—This brochure features maps and photographs of places mentioned in the Bible
- ▶ ***Insight on the Scriptures***—A two-volume Bible encyclopedia that includes explanations of people, places, and terms found in the Bible
- ▶ ***“All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial”***—This scholarly book explains when, where, and why each book of the Bible was written and gives a summary of each book’s contents
- ▶ ***The Bible—God’s Word or Man’s?***—This small, carefully researched book examines the evidence for the Bible’s claim that it is the inspired Word of God
- ▶ ***The Bible—What Is Its Message?***  
—A 32-page brochure that summarizes the Bible’s overall theme

you locate places you encounter in your reading and put events in perspective. Articles such as those in this magazine or in the “Bible Teachings” section of the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website can help you explore the meaning of many parts of the Bible.

**Vary your approach.** If reading the Bible from cover to cover seems daunting, why not stimulate your interest by starting with a portion that especially appeals to you? If you want to find out about famous people in the Bible, you could try character-based reading. A sample of that approach is included in the accompanying box “Dig Into the Bible by Getting to Know Its People.” Or maybe you want to read the Bible by topic or by the order in which events occurred. Why not try one of these approaches?

## How Can the Bible Improve My Life?

The Bible is no ordinary book. It contains advice from our Creator. (2 Timothy 3:16) Its message can influence us profoundly. In fact, the Bible states: “The word of God is alive and exerts power.” (Hebrews 4:12) It has the power to improve our life in two key ways—offering guidance in our daily life now and helping us get to know God and his promises.—1 Timothy 4:8; James 4:8.

**Improving your life now.** The Bible can help with very personal matters. It gives practical advice about the following.



- ▶ Relationships with others.  
—Ephesians 4:31, 32; 5:22, 25, 28, 33.
- ▶ Emotional and physical health.  
—Psalm 37:8; Proverbs 17:22.
- ▶ Moral values.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.
- ▶ Economic welfare.—Proverbs 10:4;  
28:19; Ephesians 4:28.\*

A young couple in Asia greatly appreciated the value of the Bible’s advice. Like many newly married couples, they struggled with adjusting to each other’s personality and with having open communication. But they began applying what they read in the Bible. With what result? The husband, Vicent, says: “What I read in the Bible helped me to deal with challenges in our marriage in a loving way. Living by the Bible has given us a happy life together.” His wife, Annalou, agrees: “Reading examples in the Bible helped us. I now feel happy and content with our marriage and our goals in life.”

**Getting to know God.** Aside from his comments about marriage, Vicent also says: “By reading the Bible, I feel much closer to Jehovah now than ever before.” Vicent’s observation focuses on an important point—the Bible can help you get acquainted with God. In so doing, you will not only benefit from his advice but also find that you can get to know him as a friend. And you will see

\* For more examples of the Bible’s practical advice, see our website, [jw.org](http://jw.org). Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED.

that he reveals details about a better future, a time when you can enjoy “the real life”—which will last forever. (1 Timothy 6:19) That is something that no other book can offer.

If you set out to read the Bible and keep at it, you too can gain those benefits—improving your life now and getting to know God. However, as you read the Bible, you will likely think of numerous questions. And when you do, keep in mind the good example of an Ethiopian official who lived 2,000 years ago. He was full of questions about the Bible. When asked if he understood what he was reading, he replied: “Really, how could I ever do so unless someone guided me?”\* He then eagerly accepted help from someone who was already a qualified Bible teacher, Philip, an early disciple of Jesus. (Acts 8:30, 31, 34) In the same spirit, if you would like to know more about the Bible, we invite you to submit a request online at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org) or write to the nearest address, as listed in this magazine. You may also contact Jehovah’s Witnesses near you or visit a Kingdom Hall in your area. Why not pick up a Bible today and let it guide you to a better life? ■

\* Also see the article in this issue entitled “Is It Just a Small Misunderstanding?”

If you are wondering whether you can fully trust the Bible, please see the short video *How Can We Be Sure the Bible Is True?* You can find it by scanning the code or by going to [jw.org](http://jw.org), clicking the Search button, and entering the title





AS TOLD BY  
YVONNE QUARRIE

#### YEAR BORN

1964

#### COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

ENGLAND

#### HISTORY

WAYWARD TEENAGE MOTHER



# I Did Not Want to Die!

## MY PAST

I was born in Paddington, a densely populated area of London, England. I lived with my mother and three older sisters. My father came in and out of our lives as a result of his problems with alcohol.

When I was a child, my mother taught me to pray every night. I had a small Bible containing just the Psalms, and I made up tunes so that I could sing them. I remember reading a phrase in one of my secular books that stuck in my mind: "Someday there will be no tomorrow." Those words made me lie awake at night thinking about the future. 'Surely there must be more to life,' I thought. 'Why am I here?' I did not want to die!

I became very curious about the occult. I tried to talk to the dead, visited graveyards with school friends, and watched horror movies with them. We thought it was both exciting and frightening at the same time.

I started to go wayward when I was only ten years old. I began smoking tobacco, and I quickly became addicted. Later, I progressed to smoking marijuana. By the age of 11, I was experimenting with alcohol. Although I did not like the taste of it, I liked the effect of getting drunk. I also loved music and dancing. I went to parties and nightclubs whenever I could. I used to sneak out at night and sneak back in again just before the morning light. Tired the next day, I regularly played hooky from school. When I did attend, I often drank alcohol between lessons.

I received very poor grades in my final year at school. Mostly unaware of the extent of my wayward behavior, my mother was disappointed and angry. We quarreled, and I ran away from home. For a while, I stayed with my boyfriend, Tony, who was Rastafarian. He was involved in petty crime and selling drugs and had a reputation for being extremely violent. I soon became pregnant and, at just 16 years of age, gave birth to our son.



## HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE

I first met Jehovah's Witnesses while I was living at a hostel for unmarried mothers and their babies. I had been given a room there by the local authorities. Two female Witnesses regularly visited some of the other young mothers. One day I joined in a discussion with them. I intended to prove the Witnesses wrong. Yet they answered each one of my many questions calmly and clearly from the Bible. They were so kind and gentle, which I found very appealing. So I agreed to study the Bible with them myself.

I soon learned something from the Bible that changed my life. Ever since I was young, I had feared dying. Yet now I discovered Jesus' teaching about the resurrection! (John 5:28, 29) Also, I learned that God cared about me personally. (1 Peter 5:7) I was especially touched by the words of Jeremiah 29:11, which says: "For I well know the thoughts that I am thinking toward you," declares Jehovah, "thoughts of peace, and not of calamity, to give you a future and a hope." I began to believe that I could have the hope of living forever in Paradise on earth.—Psalm 37:29.

Jehovah's Witnesses expressed genuine love toward me. When I first attended one of their meetings, the atmosphere was warm and inviting—everyone was so friendly! (John 13:34, 35) That was a big contrast to the treatment I had received at a local church. The Witnesses welcomed me despite my circumstances. They gave me time, care, and attention, as well as much practical help. I felt as though I were part of a big, loving family.

From my Bible study, I realized that I would have to make changes in my life to meet God's high moral standards. I did not find it easy to stop smoking tobacco. At the same time, I recognized that certain music increased my desire to smoke marijuana, so I changed the music that I listened to. Wanting to stay sober, I stopped going to parties and nightclubs where I would be tempted to get drunk. And I sought out new friends whose positive influence would help me in my new lifestyle.—Proverbs 13:20.

Meanwhile, Tony had also been studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. As the Witnesses answered his questions from the Bible, he too became convinced of the truth of what he was learning. He made major changes in his life: he withdrew from his previous violent associates, stopped his petty criminal activities, and gave up smoking marijuana. In order to please Jehovah fully, we also both saw the need to adjust our immoral way of life and provide a stable environment for our son. We were married in 1982.

"I no longer lie awake at night worrying about the future or death"

I remember searching out articles in *Watchtower* and *Awake!*\* magazines with stories of people who had successfully made the changes I wanted to make. I was so encouraged by their examples! I felt strengthened to keep trying hard and not give up. I kept praying to Jehovah not to give up on me. Tony and I were baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses in July 1982.

## HOW I HAVE BENEFITED

Developing a friendship with Jehovah God saved my life. Tony and I have also experienced Jehovah's support through difficult times. We have learned to rely on God through difficulties, and we feel that he has always helped and sustained our family.—Psalm 55:22.

I have taken delight in helping our son and daughter get to know Jehovah as I do. Now I feel similar joy as I see their children also growing in knowledge of God.

I no longer lie awake at night worrying about the future or death. Tony and I are fully occupied with traveling to different congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses each week to encourage them. We join them in teaching others that if they exercise faith in Jesus, they too can enjoy everlasting life. ■

\* Also published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

# “He Had Pleased God Well”



ENOCH had lived a long time. It might be hard for us to imagine, but that man’s life stretched back for some 365 years—more than four very long life spans by today’s standards! But he was not truly old, not in the world of his time. Back then, over 50 centuries ago, people lived far longer than they do today. Adam, the first man, had been living for over six hundred years when Enoch was born, and Adam lived on for another three centuries! Some of Adam’s descendants lived even longer than that. So at 365, Enoch may still have looked fairly vibrant, like a man who had much of his life yet ahead of him. In fact, though, he did not.

Enoch was likely in grave danger. Picture him on the run, unable to put out of his mind the reaction of the people to whom he had recently spoken a message from God. Their faces were twisted with rage. Those people hated him. They despised his message, and they loathed the God who had sent him. They could not strike out at Enoch’s God, Jehovah, but they could certainly strike out at this man! Perhaps Enoch wondered if he would ever see his family again. Did he think of his wife and daughters or of his son Methuselah or of his grandson Lamech? (Genesis 5:21-23, 25) Was this the end?

Enoch is a somewhat mysterious figure in the Bible record. Only three short Bible passages deal with him at any length. (Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5; Jude 14, 15) However, those verses provide, in effect, enough brushstrokes to paint a picture

of a man of great faith. Do you provide for a family? Have you ever faced the struggle of standing up for what you know to be right? If so, you may learn much from the faith of Enoch.

## “ENOCH KEPT WALKING WITH THE TRUE GOD”

Mankind was in a bad way when Enoch came along. It was the seventh generation in the line of Adam. Granted, humans were much closer to the physical perfection that Adam and Eve had once possessed and lost. That is why people still lived so long. Yet, they were in a terrible condition morally and spiritually. Violence was prevalent. That trend had started in the second generation, when Cain murdered his brother Abel. One of Cain’s descendants seems to have been quite proud of being even more violent and vengeful than Cain! In the third generation, a new evil arose. People began calling on the name of Jehovah, but not as a reverent act of worship. They were evidently using God’s sacred name in a blasphemous, disrespectful way.—Genesis 4:8, 23-26.

That kind of corrupt religion was likely in full sway during Enoch’s time. As Enoch grew up, then, he faced a choice. Would he fit in with the crowd of his day? Or would he search for the true God, Jehovah, who had made the heavens and the earth? He must have been deeply moved to learn about Abel, who had died as a martyr because he worshipped Jehovah in a way that pleased Him. Enoch decided to take a similar

stand. Genesis 5:22 tells us: “Enoch continued to walk with the true God.” That remarkable expression singles out Enoch as a godly man in a godless world. He is the first human the Bible describes in that way.

The same Bible verse says that Enoch continued to walk with Jehovah after he fathered his son Methuselah. So we see Enoch as a family man when he was about 65 years old. He had a wife, unnamed in Scripture, and an unspecified number of “sons and daughters.” If a father is to walk with God while raising and providing for a family, he must try to care for his family in God’s way. Enoch understood that Jehovah expected him to stick faithfully to his wife. (Genesis 2:24) And he surely did his best to instruct his children about Jehovah God. With what result?

The inspired record offers only tantalizing hints on that score. It says nothing about the faith of Enoch’s son Methuselah, whose life span became the longest in the Bible record, ending in the year that the great Deluge came. However, Methuselah fathered a son named Lamech. Lamech’s life overlapped with that of his grandfather Enoch for over a century. And Lamech grew up to show notable faith. Jehovah inspired him to utter a prophecy about Noah, Lamech’s son, and that prophecy came true after the Flood. Noah, like his great-grandfather Enoch, was singled out as a man who walked with God. Noah never met Enoch. But Enoch left a rich legacy. Noah could have learned of that legacy from his own father, Lamech, or from his grandfather Methuselah or perhaps even from Jared, Enoch’s father, who died when Noah was 366 years old.—Genesis 5:25-29; 6:9; 9:1.

Think of the contrast between Enoch and Adam. Adam, though perfect, sinned against Jehovah and left his descendants a legacy of rebellion and misery. Enoch, though imperfect, walked with God and left his descendants a legacy of faith. Adam died when Enoch was 308 years old. Did Adam’s family mourn that profoundly selfish forefather? We do not know. In any case, Enoch “kept walking with the true God.”—Genesis 5:24.

If you are providing for a family, consider what you can learn from the faith of Enoch. Vital though it is to provide for your family physically, there is no need more important than the spiritual kind. (1 Timothy 5:8) You fill that need not only by what you say but what you do. If you choose to walk with God as Enoch did, letting God’s inspired standards guide you in life, you too will give your family a rich legacy—a priceless example for them to imitate.

### ENOCH “PROPHESIED ABOUT THEM”

Enoch may have felt lonely as a man of faith in such a faithless world. But did his God, Jehovah, take notice of him? He did. The day came when Jehovah communicated with this faithful servant of his. God gave Enoch a message to deliver to the people of his day. He thus made Enoch a prophet, the first one whose message is revealed in the Bible. We know of this because Jude, a half brother



Enoch fearlessly proclaimed God’s message to a hostile world

of Jesus, was inspired to write down Enoch’s prophetic words many centuries later.\*

What was Enoch’s prophecy? It went as follows: “Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him.” (Jude 14, 15) Now, the first thing you may notice is that Enoch spoke in the past tense, as if God had already done what the prophecy describes. That is a pattern that many prophecies thereafter followed. The idea is this: The prophet is speaking of something that is so certain to occur that it may be described as if it has already happened!—Isaiah 46:10.

What was it like for Enoch to deliver that pronouncement, perhaps by preaching it to all who would hear? Notice how forceful the warning was—four times it used the word “ungodly” to denounce the people, their deeds, and the way they carried out those deeds. The prophecy thus warned all humans that the world they had built up since the expulsion from Eden was corrupt through and through. That world would face a cataclysmic end when Jehovah would come with his “holy myriads”—legions of mighty angels in battle array—to bring destruction. Enoch fearlessly shared that divine warning, and he did it alone! Perhaps young Lamech watched, in awe of his grandfather’s courage. If so, we can well understand why.

\* Some Bible scholars assert that Jude quoted an apocryphal work called the Book of Enoch, but that book is a fanciful work of uncertain origin, falsely attributed to Enoch. It contains an accurate mention of Enoch’s prophecy, but that may have been drawn from an ancient source now lost to us—whether a written document or an oral tradition. Jude may have used the same ancient source, or he may have learned about Enoch from Jesus, who witnessed Enoch’s life course from heaven.

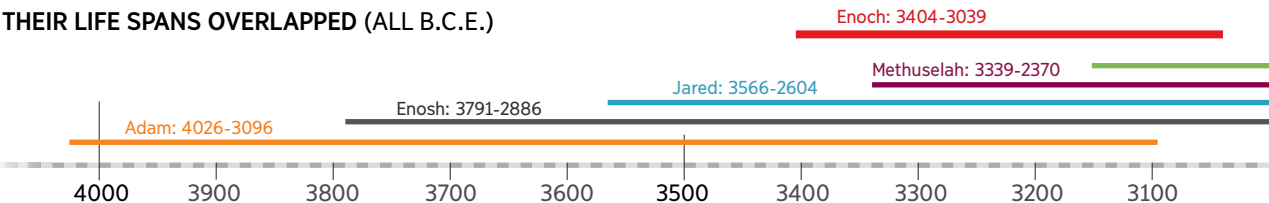
Enoch’s faith may move us to ask ourselves whether we see the world in which we live as God sees it. The judgment that Enoch bravely proclaimed still stands; it applies to today’s world just as it did to the world of Enoch’s day. In harmony with Enoch’s warning, Jehovah brought the great Deluge against that ungodly world in Noah’s day. But that destruction set the pattern for a greater destruction yet to come. (Matthew 24:38, 39; 2 Peter 2:4-6) Today, as then, God stands poised with his holy myriads to bring a righteous judgment against an ungodly world. Each of us needs to take Enoch’s warning to heart and share it with others. Our family and friends might stand apart from us. We may feel alone at times. But Jehovah never abandoned Enoch; neither will he abandon his faithful servants today!

“TRANSFERRED SO AS NOT TO SEE DEATH”

How did the end come for Enoch? In a way, his death is even more mysterious and intriguing than his life. The Genesis account simply says: “Enoch kept walking with the true God. Then he was no more, for God took him.” (Genesis 5:24) In what way did God take Enoch? The apostle Paul later explained: “By faith Enoch was transferred so as not to see death, and he was nowhere to be found because God had transferred him; for before he was transferred he received the witness that he had pleased God well.” (Hebrews 11:5) What did Paul mean by that phrase “transferred so as not to see death”? Some Bible translations say that God took Enoch to heaven. But that cannot be. The Bible shows that Jesus Christ was the first one ever resurrected to heaven.—John 3:13.

In what sense, then, was Enoch “transferred” so that he did not “see death”? Jehovah likely transferred Enoch gently from life to death, sparing

THEIR LIFE SPANS OVERLAPPED (ALL B.C.E.)





Enoch was likely facing a violent end when Jehovah took him



him any pangs of death. But first, Enoch received “the witness that he had pleased God well.” How? Just before his death, Enoch may have received a vision from God, perhaps one showing him the earth as a paradise. With that vivid sign of Jehovah’s approval, Enoch fell asleep in death. Writing about Enoch and other faithful men and women, the apostle Paul stated: “In faith all of these died.” (Hebrews 11:13) Thereafter, his enemies may have searched for the body, but it was “nowhere to be found,” perhaps because Jehovah disposed of it, preventing them from desecrating it or using it to promote false religion.\*

With that Scriptural reasoning in mind, then, let us try to imagine how Enoch’s life might have ended. Picture this scenario, remembering that it is only one possibility. Enoch was on the run, nearing exhaustion. His persecutors were after him, seething with rage over his judgment message. Enoch found a place to hide and rest for a while, but he knew that he could not escape for long. A violent death loomed very near now. As he rested, he prayed to his God. Then a profound sense of peace came upon him. A vision, as vivid as if Enoch were really there, took him far away.

Imagine that a view opened before him, showing a world wholly different from the one he knew.

\* Similarly, God likely ensured that the bodies of Moses and Jesus were beyond the reach of such abuses.—Deuteronomy 34:5, 6; Luke 24:3-6; Jude 9.

It seemed to him that it was as beautiful as the garden of Eden, but there were no cherubs guarding it to keep humans out. Men and women—all full of health and youthful vigor—were numerous. Peace reigned among them. There was no trace of the hatred and religious persecution that Enoch knew only too well. As for himself, Enoch sensed Jehovah’s assurance, love, and approval. He felt sure that this place was where he belonged; it would be his own home. As peace stole over him, Enoch closed his eyes and drifted into a deep, dreamless sleep.

And there he remains to this day—asleep in death, carefully preserved in the limitless memory of Jehovah God! As Jesus later promised, the day will come when all those who are in God’s memory will hear Christ’s voice and come out of the grave, opening their eyes to a beautiful and peaceful new world.—John 5:28, 29.

Would you like to be there? Imagine the thrill of meeting Enoch. Think of the fascinating things we could learn from him! He could tell us if our imaginary scenario about his final moments was close to the truth. But there is something we urgently need to learn from him right now. After discussing Enoch, Paul went on to say: “Without faith it is impossible to please God well.” (Hebrews 11:6) What a powerful reason for each of us to imitate the courageous faith of Enoch! ■

Lamech: 3152-2375

— 20 years

Noah: 2970-2020

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# IS IT JUST A SMALL MISUNDERSTANDING?

A little girl saw smoke rising from factory smokestacks and expanding into what looked like puffy clouds. She concluded that the purpose of the factory was to make clouds. Such a small misunderstanding on the part of a child can be amusing. However, a major misunderstanding can impact our lives. For example, misreading the label on a container of medicine could bring serious consequences.

Misunderstandings about spiritual matters can be even more serious. For example, some people misunderstood Jesus' teachings. (John 6:48-68) Instead of learning more, they rejected everything that Jesus taught. What a loss!

Do you read the Bible for guidance? That is commendable. Is there a danger, though, that you might misunderstand something that you have read? It happens to many people. Consider three common misunderstandings.

► Some people misunderstand the Bible command to “fear the true God.” They assume that a morbid dread of God is called for. (Ecclesiastes 12:13) But God does not want those who worship him to feel that way about him. He says: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.” (Isaiah 41:10) To fear God simply means to feel awe and deep respect for him.

► Some people misread these inspired words: “There is an appointed time for everything, . . . a time for birth and a time to die.” They conclude that God has decided the exact moment when each human will die. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 2) However, that passage is actually commenting on the cycle of life and noting that death is our common lot. God's Word also teaches that our own deci-

sions can affect our life span. For example, we read: “The fear of Jehovah prolongs life.” (Proverbs 10:27; Psalm 90:10; Isaiah 55:3) How so? For instance, respect for God's Word will move us to avoid such unhealthy practices as drunkenness and immorality.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

► Some take the Bible literally when it states that the heavens and the earth are “reserved for fire,” and they conclude that God will destroy this planet. (2 Peter 3:7) But God promises that he will never allow the literal earth to be destroyed. God “has established the earth on its foundations; it will not be moved from its place forever and ever.” (Psalm 104:5; Isaiah 45:18) It is this corrupt world system of things, not the literal planet, that will meet its permanent end, as if destroyed by fire. As for the heavens, when the word is meant literally, it may refer either to the sky, the starry universe, or God's place of dwelling. None of these will be destroyed.

## WHY IS THE BIBLE SOMETIMES MISUNDERSTOOD?

As you can see from those examples, people often misunderstand passages they read in the Bible. But why would God allow that to happen? Some might reason: ‘If God is all-wise and all-knowing, he could have provided us with a book so clearly written that everyone would easily understand it. Why did he not do that?’ Consider three reasons why the Bible is often misunderstood.

**1. The Bible is designed to be understood by those who are humble and willing to learn.** Jesus said to his Father: “I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because

you have carefully hidden these things from wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to young children.” (Luke 10:21) The Bible is written in such a way that only those with the right attitude would understand its message. People with a proud attitude—a common trait of “wise and intellectual ones”—tend to misunderstand the Bible. But people who read the Bible with the attitude of “young children”—humble and eager to learn—are rewarded with a better understanding of God’s message. How skillfully God has designed the Bible!

**2. The Bible is directed to people who honestly want God’s help to understand it.** Jesus showed that people would need help to understand fully what he taught. How would they receive it? Jesus explained: “The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things.” (John 14:26) So God provides his holy spirit—his powerful active force—to help people understand what they read in the Bible. However, God withholds his spirit from people who do not rely on him to help them, so the Bible often seems obscure to them. The holy spirit also moves more knowledgeable Christians to come to the aid of those seeking greater understanding.—Acts 8: 26-35.

**3. Some Bible passages can be understood by humans only at the proper time in history.** For example, the prophet Daniel was told to write down a message for the future. An angel told him: “Daniel, keep the words secret, and seal up the book until the time of the end.” Over the centuries, many people have read the Bible book of Daniel but could not really understand it. In fact, even Daniel himself did not understand some of what

he wrote down. He humbly admitted: “I heard, but I could not understand.” Eventually, people would correctly understand God’s prophecy written down by Daniel, but only at the particular time in history that God selected. The angel explained: “Go, Daniel, because the words are to be kept secret and sealed up until the time of the end.” Who will understand God’s messages? “None of the wicked will understand; but those having insight will understand.” (Daniel 12:4, 8-10) So God does not reveal the meaning of certain Bible passages until the right time arrives.

Has timing ever caused Jehovah’s Witnesses to misunderstand the Bible? Yes. But when God’s time came to make matters clearer, the Witnesses readily adjusted their understanding. They believe that they thereby imitate Christ’s apostles, who humbly adjusted their thinking whenever Jesus corrected them.—Acts 1:6, 7.

A little girl’s fanciful ideas about where clouds come from may be just a small misunderstanding. However, what the Bible teaches is of major importance to you. The Bible’s message is too important for anyone to try to understand on his own by private Bible reading. So seek help to understand what you are reading. Seek out those who study the Bible with a humble attitude, people who rely on God’s holy spirit to understand the Bible, people who are convinced that we are living at a point in history when God wants us to understand the Bible as never before. Do not hesitate to speak with Jehovah’s Witnesses or to read their careful research on the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website. The Bible promises: “If you call out for understanding . . . , you will find the knowledge of God.”—Proverbs 2:3-5. ■



## Does God cause suffering?

### What would you say?

- ▶ Yes
- ▶ No
- ▶ Maybe

### What the Bible says

“It is unthinkable for the true God to act wickedly, for the Almighty to do wrong!”  
(Job 34:10) God *never* brings about the evil and suffering we see in the world.

### What else can we learn from the Bible?

- ▶ Satan the Devil, “the ruler of the world,” is the main cause of suffering.—John 14:30.
- ▶ Suffering and evil also often result from the bad choices people make.—James 1:14, 15.

## Will suffering ever end?

### Some people believe

that humans can eliminate suffering through their combined efforts, while others see little hope of world conditions changing for the better so drastically. **What do you think?**

### What the Bible says

God will eliminate suffering. “Death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.”—Revelation 21:3, 4.

### What else can we learn from the Bible?

- ▶ God will use Jesus to undo the suffering caused by the Devil.—1 John 3:8.
- ▶ Good people will live in peace on earth forever.—Psalm 37:9-11, 29.



The world is full of suffering, but is God behind it?



Please send me a copy of  
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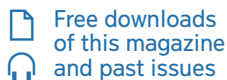
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