

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## ANGELS

Are They Real? Why It Matters



## WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Are angels real? The Bible says:

*“Praise Jehovah, all you his angels, mighty in power, who carry out his word, obeying his voice.”*  
—Psalm 103:20.

This issue of *The Watchtower* shows what the Bible says about angels and how they affect our life now.

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**Is It Necessary to Belong to an Organized Religion?**

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED)

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## COVER SUBJECT

# Angels—Can They Affect Your Life?

One Sunday afternoon, Kenneth and Filomena, who live in Curaçao, went to visit a married couple with whom they were conducting a Bible study.

“When we arrived,” relates Kenneth, “the house was closed up and the car was gone. But something impelled me to call the wife’s phone.”

The woman answered the call and explained that her husband was at work. However, as soon as she realized that Kenneth and Filomena were there, she came to the door and invited them in.

They could immediately see that she had been crying. As Kenneth began the Bible study by opening with prayer, the woman started to cry again. So Kenneth and Filomena kindly asked her what was wrong.

The woman explained that she had planned to kill herself that very afternoon, and she was writing a suicide note to her husband when Kenneth’s phone call stopped her. She told them that she was suffering from depression, so they shared with her some comforting thoughts from the Bible. That encouragement proved to be a lifesaver.

“We thanked Jehovah for letting us help this distraught lady,” says Kenneth, “and especially for

moving us—perhaps by an angel or by His holy spirit—to make that phone call!”\*

Are Kenneth and Filomena right to believe that God intervened, whether by means of an angel or by His holy spirit, or active force? Or was Kenneth’s timely phone call simply a happy coincidence?

We cannot say for sure. But what we do know is that God uses his angels to help people spiritually. For example, the Bible says that God used an angel to direct the Christian evangelizer Philip to help an Ethiopian official who was looking for spiritual guidance.—Acts 8:26-31.

Various religions promote belief in supernatural spirit creatures, some of whom are portrayed as benevolent creatures who carry out God’s will or act as personal guardians. Many people believe not only that angels exist but also that those spirits affect them in some meaningful way. However, many other people do not believe in angels at all.

Are angels real? If so, what is their origin? What is the truth about angels? Can they affect your life? Let us examine the evidence.

\* Jehovah is the name of God as found in the Bible.—Psalm 83:18.





# The Truth About Angels

Would you like to know the truth about angels—who they are, how they came into existence, and what they do? There is no better place to look for the answers than in God’s inspired Word, the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) What does the Bible tell us?

- ▶ Just as God is a Spirit, angels too are invisible spirits who do “not have flesh and bones.” The loyal angels reside in the heavens and have direct access to God’s heavenly presence.—Luke 24:39; Matthew 18:10; John 4:24.
- ▶ Angels have at times appeared in human form to care for God-given assignments on earth and then dematerialized after completing their assignments.—Judges 6:11-23; 13:15-20.
- ▶ Although angels are presented in the Bible as males and have always materialized as males, there is no male or female distinction among them. They do not marry and reproduce their own kind. Moreover, angels did not first come into existence as humans on earth—whether as babies, children, or adults. Angels were created by Jehovah; thus the Bible calls them “sons of the true God.”—Job 1:6; Psalm 148:2, 5.
- ▶ The Bible speaks of “the tongues of men and of angels,” indicating that spirit persons have language and speech. Although God has used angels to communicate with humans, he does not permit us to worship angels or pray to them.—1 Corinthians 13:1; Revelation 22:8, 9.
- ▶ There are myriads upon myriads of angels, perhaps numbering into the billions.\*—Daniel 7:10; Revelation 5:11.
- ▶ Angels are “mighty in power”—much more powerful than humans—and they have super-human intelligence. They evidently can travel at tremendous speeds, far exceeding the limits of the physical world.—Psalm 103:20; Daniel 9:20-23.
- ▶ Despite their higher mental and spiritual powers, angels have limitations, and there are some things they do not know.—Matthew 24:36; 1 Peter 1:12.
- ▶ Angels were created with personalities, divine qualities, and free will. Hence, like humans, they can choose to do right or wrong. Sadly, some angels chose to rebel against God.—Jude 6.

\* A myriad is 10,000. One myriad times one myriad is 100 million. Yet, Revelation speaks of “myriads of myriads” of angels. That is hundreds of millions, perhaps billions, of spirit creatures!



## HOW ARE GOD'S ANGELS ORGANIZED?

**The archangel, Michael,** is the chief angel in terms of power and authority. The Scriptures clearly indicate that Michael is another name for Jesus Christ.—1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 9.

**Seraphs** rank very high among the angels in privileges and honor, and they are in attendance around God's throne.—Isaiah 6:1-3.

**Cherubs** too have high rank and care for special responsibilities that are intimately associated with the Almighty's glorious personage. They are often shown to be in attendance upon him.—Genesis 3:24; Ezekiel 9:3; 11:22.

**The myriads of other angelic messengers** serve as the Most High's agents and deputies in carrying out the divine will.\*—Hebrews 1:7, 14.

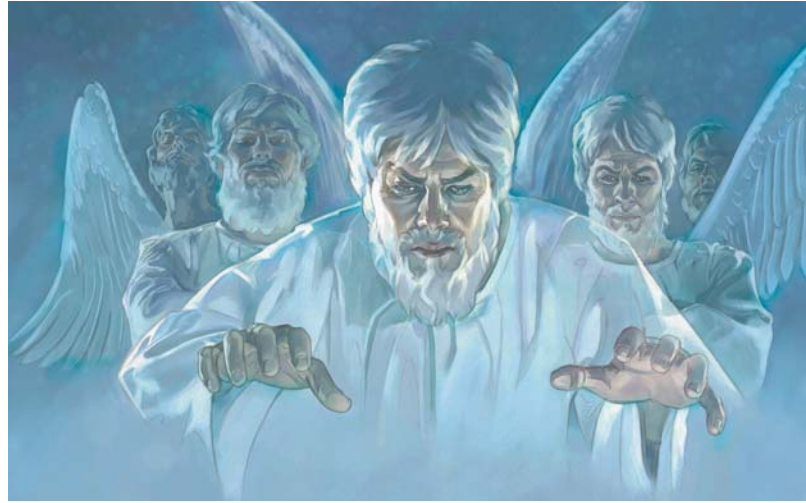
\* For more information on angels, see chapter 10 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* as well as the related appendix article "Who Is Michael the Archangel?" published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Also available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).

# Do You Have a Guardian Angel?

The Bible does not teach that each individual has a guardian angel. True, Jesus once said: "See that you do not despise one of these little ones [Christ's disciples], for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10) However, rather than implying that each person has a guardian angel, Jesus was simply saying that angels take an active interest in each of his disciples. Hence, true worshippers do not take unwise and careless risks, presuming that God's angels will protect them.

Does that mean that angels do not help hu-

mans? No. (Psalm 91:11) Some feel quite strongly that God has provided them with angelic protection and guidance. Kenneth, mentioned in the opening article, is one who feels that way. Though we cannot be dogmatic, he may be correct. Jehovah's Witnesses frequently see evidence of angelic intervention as they engage in their preaching work. However, because angels are invisible, we cannot say to what extent God uses them in helping individuals with various matters. Nevertheless, we cannot go wrong by thanking the Almighty for whatever support he may have provided.—Colossians 3:15; James 1:17, 18.



# Are There Evil Angels?

Yes, there are evil angels. Where did they come from? Recall that God created angels with the gift of free will. Shortly after the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, were created, a perfect spirit creature abused his freedom of choice and instigated rebellion on earth. He succeeded in getting Adam and Eve to rebel against God. (Genesis 3: 1-7; Revelation 12:9) The Bible does not specify what this spirit creature's name was or what rank he held in heaven before he rebelled. But after his rebellion, the Bible appropriately calls him Satan, which means "Resister," and the Devil, which means "Slanderer."—Matthew 4:8-11.

Sadly, the ungodly rebellion did not end there. In Noah's day an unspecified number of angels "forsook their own proper dwelling place" in God's heavenly family. They came down to the earth and took on fleshly bodies to pursue a depraved and immoral course, deviating from the purpose of their existence.—Jude 6; Genesis 6: 1-4; 1 Peter 3:19, 20.

What became of those evil angels? When God brought a global deluge to sweep the earth clean, they dematerialized and returned to the spirit realm. However, God did not permit the disgraced angels to return to "their original posi-

tion." Instead, he confined them to a debased condition of "dense [spiritual] darkness," known as Tartarus. (Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:4) These demons have placed themselves under the control of Satan the Devil, "the ruler of the demons," who "keeps disguising himself as an angel of light."—Matthew 12:24; 2 Corinthians 11:14.

The Bible teaches that God's Messianic Kingdom, a heavenly government, was established in 1914.\* Following that momentous event, Satan and his demons were ousted from heaven and confined to the vicinity of the earth. The rampant wickedness and gross immorality that plague our planet are evidence of their vengeful and destructive influence.—Revelation 12:9-12.

However, the increase in depravity and shocking violence confirm that the end of their reign of terror is near. Soon, these tyrannical spirit creatures will be taken out of action. After God's Kingdom has ruled over a paradise earth for 1,000 years, those wicked spirits will have one brief, final opportunity to test humankind. Then they will be destroyed forever.—Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:1-3, 7-10.

\* For more information regarding God's Kingdom, see chapter 8 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses. Also available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).



# How Angels Can Help You

Faithful angels are keenly interested in human affairs and are actively involved in carrying out Jehovah's will. When God created the earth, the angels "joyfully cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause." (Job 38:4, 7) Throughout the course of history, angels have desired "to peer" into prophetic utterances regarding future events on earth.—1 Peter 1:11, 12.

The Bible shows that in order to accomplish God's will, angels have at times provided a measure of protection for true worshippers. (Psalm 34:7) For example:

- ▶ When Jehovah brought destruction on the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, angels helped righteous Lot and his family to flee.—Genesis 19:1, 15-26.
- ▶ In ancient Babylon when three young Hebrews were condemned to die in a fiery furnace, God "sent his angel and rescued his servants."—Daniel 3:19-28.
- ▶ After the righteous man Daniel spent the night in a den of ravenous lions, he explained that he had survived because "God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions."—Daniel 6:16, 22.

## THE ANGELS SUPPORTED THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

At times, God's angelic messengers intervened in the activities of the early Christian congregation when that was necessary to fulfill Jehovah's purpose. For example:

- ▶ An angel opened the doors of a prison and directed the apostles imprisoned there to continue preaching in the temple.—Acts 5:17-21.
- ▶ An angel instructed the evangelizer Philip to go to the desert road that ran from Jerusalem

to Gaza and preach to an Ethiopian who had gone to Jerusalem to worship.—Acts 8:26-33.

- ▶ When it was God's time for non-Jews to become Christians, an angel appeared to the Roman army officer Cornelius in a vision and instructed him to summon the apostle Peter to his home.—Acts 10:3-5.
- ▶ When the apostle Peter was imprisoned, an angel appeared to him and led him out of the prison.—Acts 12:1-11.



Angels have a long history of helping faithful people



Angels help declare the good news throughout the earth

### HOW ANGELS CAN HELP YOU

There is no evidence that God is now using angels to help people miraculously in the ways described in the Bible. However, regarding our time, Jesus said: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” (Matthew 24:14) Did you know that Christ’s disciples are doing this work under the supervision of the angels?

The book of Revelation indicates that angels would be diligently helping people earth wide to learn about Jehovah God and his purpose for mankind. The apostle John wrote: “I saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people. He was saying in a loud voice: ‘Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of judgment by him has arrived, so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and the springs of water.’” (Revelation 14:6, 7) Many modern-day experiences give evidence that angels are supporting the worldwide Kingdom-preaching work. Indeed, when even one sinner repents and turns to Jehovah, “joy arises among the angels of God.”—Luke 15:10.

What will happen when the preaching work is completed? Then angelic “armies in heaven” will support Jesus Christ, the King of kings, in fighting “the war of the great day of God the Almighty” at Armageddon. (Revelation 16:14-16; 19:14-16) Powerful angels will serve as executioners of divine judgment as the Lord Jesus “brings vengeance on those who . . . do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.”—2 Thessalonians 1:7, 8.

Be assured, therefore, that the angels are personally interested in you. They have deep concern for the welfare of those who desire to serve God, and Jehovah has repeatedly used them to strengthen and protect his faithful servants on earth.—Hebrews 1:14.

Each one of us, then, has a crucial choice to make. Will we listen to and obey the good news that is being proclaimed earth wide? Jehovah’s Witnesses in your community will be happy to assist you to benefit from the loving help of God’s mighty angels. ■



For more information on what the Bible says about loyal and disloyal angels, see chapter 10 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses, available on [jw.org](http://jw.org) or by scanning this code.





A child with a puppy, Greek or Roman statuette (first century B.C.E. to the second century C.E.)

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York/  
Rogers Fund, 1913/www.metmuseum.org

## Was Jesus' illustration about "little dogs" meant to be insulting?

On one occasion, when Jesus was outside Israel's borders in the Roman province of Syria, a Greek woman approached to ask for help. Jesus' response included an illustration that suggested a comparison between non-Jews and "little dogs." Under the Mosaic Law, dogs were deemed to be unclean animals. (Leviticus 11:27) But did Jesus mean to insult this Greek woman and other non-Jews?

Not at all. Jesus' point, as he explained to his disciples, was that his priority at that time was to help the Jews. So he illustrated the point, saying to the Greek woman: "It is not right to take the bread of the children and throw it to the little dogs." (Matthew 15:21-26; Mark 7:26) Among the Greeks and Romans, the dog was often a beloved pet that lived in its owner's house and played with the children. So the expression "little dogs" might have called to mind a warm, endearing picture. The Greek woman picked up on Jesus' words and replied: "Yes, Lord, but really the little dogs do eat of the crumbs falling from the table of their masters." Jesus commended her faith and healed the woman's daughter.—Matthew 15:27, 28. ■



A relief carving of a large cargo ship (first century C.E.)

©Ministry of Culture/Directorate General  
of Antiquities-National Museum of Beirut

## Did the apostle Paul give sound advice when he recommended delaying a sea voyage?

The ship that was carrying Paul to Italy was struggling against contrary winds. During a stopover, the apostle advised that the remainder of the voyage be postponed. (Acts 27:9-12) Was there a basis for such counsel?

Sailors in antiquity well knew that navigation on the Mediterranean was hazardous during the winter months. Between mid-November and mid-March, the sea was considered closed to shipping. But the voyage Paul spoke about was to take place in September or October. In his *Epitome of Military Science*, the Roman writer Vegetius (fourth century C.E.) explained about navigation on that sea: "Some months are very suitable, some are doubtful, and the rest are impossible." Vegetius said that sailing was safe from May 27 to September 14 but that the two doubtful, or dangerous, periods ran from September 15 to November 11 and from March 11 to May 26. Paul, a seasoned traveler, was no doubt well aware of such facts. The pilot and the shipowner likely knew such things too, but they ignored Paul's counsel. The voyage ended in shipwreck.—Acts 27:13-44. ■

# For Me, God Did Not Exist



AS TOLD BY  
ANDREAS GOLEC

YEAR BORN

1974

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

HISTORY

ATHEIST



## MY PAST

I was born in a village in Saxony, in what was then the German Democratic Republic (GDR). The atmosphere at home was warm and loving, and my parents taught me sound moral values. The GDR was a Communist state, so for most people in Saxony, religion was unimportant. And for me, God did not exist. Two ideologies shaped the first 18 years of my life: atheism and Communism.

Why did Communism appeal to me? Because I liked the idea that all people are equal. Furthermore, I believed that all property ought to be distributed fairly, since this would put an end to extremes of wealth and poverty. So I got busy in a Communist youth organization. When I was 14 years old, I spent a lot of time working on an environmental project to recycle wastepaper. The local town of Aue was so grateful for my efforts that the authorities there presented me with an award. Though still young, I got to know some top GDR politicians. I felt that I was pursuing the right goals and that my future was bright.

Then my world suddenly fell apart. In 1989 the Berlin Wall came down and with it the Communist bloc of Eastern Europe. One shock led to another. I soon discovered that injustice had been common in the GDR. For example, people who did not support Communism had been treated as second-rate citizens. How was that possible? Did we Communists not believe that all people are equal? Was Communism just an illusion? Anxiety gripped me.

So I switched priorities and focused on music and art. Since I was able to study at a music academy—with the likelihood of moving on to university—I dreamed of a career as a musician-artist. Furthermore, I threw overboard the moral values I had learned as a child. What was now important was to have a good time, which included dating several girls at once. But music, art, and a free lifestyle did not ease my anxiety. Even the pictures I painted reflected a morbid fear. What did the future hold? And what was the purpose of life?

When I finally found the answers I was looking for, they astonished me. One evening at the academy, I sat with a group of students discussing the future. Mandy\* was a student and also one of Jehovah's Witnesses. That evening she pointed me in the right direction. "Andreas," she said, "if you want answers to your questions about life and the future, take a careful look at the Bible."

I felt both skeptical and curious, but curiosity won the day. Mandy directed me to Daniel chapter 2, and what I read there stunned me. This prophecy describes a series of world powers, governments that would have a major impact down to our day. Mandy showed me other Bible prophecies that concern our future. At last I was finding answers to my questions! But who wrote those prophecies, and who could predict the future so accurately? Could it be that God exists after all?

#### HOW THE BIBLE CHANGED MY LIFE

Mandy put me in touch with Horst and Angelika, a Witness couple who helped me understand God's Word better. I quickly recognized that Jehovah's Witnesses are the only religious organization that consistently uses and draws attention to God's personal name, Jehovah. (Psalm 83:18; Matthew 6:9) I learned that Jehovah God offers mankind the prospect of living forever on a paradise earth. Psalm 37:9 states: "Those hoping in Jehovah will possess the earth." It appealed to me that this prospect is open to all individuals who endeavor to live up to God's standards of conduct as explained in the Bible.

However, I struggled to change my ways so as to live in harmony with the Bible. Success as a musician-artist made me proud, so I first needed to learn some humility. Moreover, it was not easy for me to abandon a morally loose lifestyle. How grateful I am that Jehovah shows patience, mercy, and understanding toward those who try their best to practice what the Bible teaches!

\* Name has been changed.

Communism and atheism formed me during the first 18 years of my life; the Bible has been transforming my life ever since. What I learned quelled my anxiety about the future and gave me a purpose in life. In 1993, I got baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and in 2000, I married Tabitha, a zealous fellow believer. We spend as much time as possible helping others get to know the Bible. Many we meet have a background like mine, one shaped by Communism and atheism. I feel deep satisfaction when I show them how to get to know Jehovah.

#### HOW I HAVE BENEFITED

When I first began to associate with Jehovah's Witnesses, my parents were horrified. Since then, however, they have come to see the positive effect that associating with the Witnesses has had on my life. To my joy, they now read the Bible and attend Christian meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Tabitha and I enjoy a good marriage because we try to follow closely the advice given in the Bible to married couples. For instance, heeding its counsel about marital faithfulness continues to strengthen our marriage.—Hebrews 13:4.

I am no longer fearful of life and anxious about the future. I feel part of a worldwide family of fellow believers, one that enjoys real peace and unity. Within this family we treat one another as equals. That is something I have believed in and wanted to achieve all my life. ■

With my wife, Tabitha, in the public ministry





# God Called Her “Princess”



SARAH straightened up from her work and turned toward the horizon. Under her wise guidance, the servants were happily and busily employed. Industrious Sarah did her own part too. Picture her thoughtfully rubbing her hands together, massaging the aches away. Perhaps she had been engrossed in sewing a patch over a tear in the tent that was their home. The coarse goat-hair fabric was faded by years of sun and rain, reminding Sarah of how long they had been living a nomadic life. The afternoon fled by, and now the light was turning golden. She had watched Abraham\* leave in the morning, and she gazed expectantly in the same direction. As her husband’s familiar form crested a nearby hill, a smile lit up her lovely face.

A decade had passed since Abraham led his large family group across the Euphrates River and down into Canaan. Sarah had willingly supported her husband in this great journey into the unknown, for she knew that he was to play a vital role in Jehovah’s purpose to produce a highly favored offspring and a nation. What part, though, could Sarah play? She had always been barren, and she was 75 years old now. She might well have wondered, ‘How can Jehovah’s promise come true while I am Abraham’s wife?’ It would

certainly be understandable if she felt concern—or even impatience.

We too may at times wonder when God’s promises will come true. Patience rarely comes easily to us, especially when we are awaiting the fulfillment of a hope we cherish. What can we learn from the faith of this remarkable woman?

## “JEHOVAH HAS PREVENTED ME”

The family had recently returned from Egypt. (Genesis 13:1-4) They were encamped in the highlands east of Bethel, or Luz, as the Canaanites called it. From this lofty plateau, Sarah could see a great deal of the Promised Land. There were Canaanite villages and roads that led travelers to far-off lands. In all that panorama, though, there was nothing like Sarah’s hometown. She had grown up in Ur, a Mesopotamian city that was a 1,200-mile (1,900 km) journey away. There she had left behind many of her relatives, the conveniences of a thriving city with markets and bazaars, and her comfortable home with a solid roof and walls, perhaps even with running water! Yet, if we imagine Sarah gazing sadly to the east, pining for the comforts of her childhood home, we do not know this godly woman.

Note what the apostle Paul was inspired to write some 2,000 years later. Speaking of the faith of Sarah and Abraham, he said: “If they had kept remembering the place from which they had depart-

\* Technically, the couple were known as Abram and Sarai until God later renamed them, but for the sake of simplicity, we will use the names by which they are most commonly known.

ed, they would have had opportunity to return.” (Hebrews 11:8, 11, 15) Neither Sarah nor Abraham looked longingly to the past. Had they indulged in such thinking, they might well have decided to return home. Back in Ur, though, they would have missed out on the remarkable privilege Jehovah was offering them. And they would surely have faded from human memory instead of becoming inspiring examples of faith that have touched millions of hearts.

Rather than looking behind, Sarah looked ahead. So she kept supporting her husband in his sojourn in the land, helping to pack up the tents, move with the herds, and set up camp again. She endured further challenges and changes. Jehovah renewed his promise to Abraham—but still no mention of Sarah!—Genesis 13:14-17; 15:5-7.

Finally, Sarah decided that it was time to speak to Abraham of a plan that had been forming in her mind. Picture her face showing conflicting emotions as she said: “Please now! Jehovah has prevented me from bearing children.” Then she asked her husband to become father to children by means of her servant girl, Hagar. Can you imagine Sarah’s anguish in asking that of her husband? It may seem a strange request to us today, but it was not unusual in those times for a man to take a secondary wife, or concubine, in order to pro-

duce an heir.\* Might Sarah have felt that in this way God’s purpose to produce a nation of descendants through Abraham would be realized? At any rate, she was willing to make a difficult sacrifice. Abraham’s reaction? We read that he “listened to what [Sarah] said.”—Genesis 16:1-3.

Does the account suggest that Jehovah moved Sarah to make such an offer? No. Rather, her proposal reveals a very human outlook. She thought that God was responsible for her troubles, and she could not imagine that he had another solution. Sarah’s own solution would bring her pain and trouble. Still, her proposal showed an admirable lack of selfishness. In a world where people so often put their own personal desires ahead of all else, does not Sarah’s selfless spirit shine through? If we are willing to put God’s purposes ahead of selfish interests, we will imitate Sarah’s faith.

#### “YOU DID LAUGH”

It was not long afterward that Hagar became pregnant by Abraham. Perhaps convinced that her pregnancy made her more important than Sarah, Hagar began to despise her mistress. What a blow for barren Sarah! With Abraham’s

\* Jehovah tolerated polygamy and concubinage for a time, but he later authorized Jesus Christ to restore marriage to the original standard of monogamy set in Eden.—Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-9.



Sarah loved showing hospitality

## Jehovah called Sarah “Princess,” but she did not expect to be treated like royalty

permission and God’s backing, Sarah in some undisclosed way chastised Hagar. A son, Ishmael, was born to Hagar, and then years passed. (Genesis 16:4-9, 16) The next time the record reveals a message from Jehovah, Sarah was 89 years old and her husband 99. And what an amazing message they received!

Again, Jehovah promised his friend Abraham that He would multiply his offspring. God also changed the man’s name. Up to this point, he had been known as Abram. But Jehovah renamed him Abraham, which means “Father of a Multitude.” And now, for the first time, Jehovah showed where Sarah fit into the picture. He changed her name from Sarai, which may have meant something like “Contentious,” to Sarah, the name familiar to us all. What does Sarah mean? “Princess”! Jehovah explained why he chose that name for this beloved woman: “I will bless her and also give you a son by her; I will bless her and she will become nations; kings of peoples will come from her.”—Genesis 17:5, 15, 16.

Jehovah’s covenant to bring forth an offspring who would bless all nations would be fulfilled through Sarah’s son! The name that God chose for the boy, Isaac, means “Laughter.” When Abraham first learned of Jehovah’s purpose to bless Sarah with a child of her own, he “fell facedown and began to laugh.” (Genesis 17:17) He was amazed and overjoyed. (Romans 4:19, 20) And what of Sarah?

Not long afterward three men, strangers, came to Abraham’s tent. It was during the heat of the day, but this elderly couple immediately hurried to welcome these guests. Abraham said to Sarah: “Quick! Get three measures of fine flour, knead the dough, and make loaves of bread.” Hospitality

involved a lot of work back then. Abraham did not leave all the work to his wife; he rushed about to slaughter a young bull and prepare more food and drink. (Genesis 18:1-8) Those “men” turned out to be Jehovah’s angels! The apostle Paul likely had this incident in mind when he wrote: “Do not forget hospitality, for through it some unknowingly entertained angels.” (Hebrews 13:2) Can you imitate the splendid example of hospitality set by Abraham and Sarah?

When one of the angels repeated to Abraham God’s promise about Sarah giving birth to a son, she was out of sight, within her tent, listening. The thought of giving birth at her age struck her as being so bizarre that she could not hold back—she laughed to herself, saying: “After I am worn out and my lord is old, will I really have this pleasure?” The angel corrected Sarah with the pointed question, “Is anything too extraordinary for Jehovah?” Sarah’s reaction was fearful, defensive, and only too human. She blurted out: “I did not laugh!” The angel replied: “Yes! You did laugh.”—Genesis 18:9-15.

Was Sarah’s laughter evidence that she lacked faith? Not at all. The Bible says: “By faith also Sarah received power to conceive offspring, even when she was past the age, since she considered Him faithful who made the promise.” (Hebrews 11:11) Sarah knew Jehovah; she knew that he could fulfill any promise that he made. Who of us does not need more faith of that kind? We do well to get to know the God of the Bible better. As we do, we will see that Sarah was right to have the faith that she did. Jehovah truly is faithful and carries out his every promise—at times, he might even do so in ways that surprise us into amazed or incredulous laughter!

### “LISTEN TO HER”

At 90 years of age, Sarah finally got to relish the moment she had longed for all her adult life. She bore a son to her beloved husband, now a century old! Abraham named the baby Isaac, or “Laughter,” just as God had said. We may picture Sarah’s



weary but glowing smile as she explained: “God has brought me laughter; everybody hearing of it will laugh with me.” (Genesis 21:6) This miraculous gift from Jehovah surely delighted her till the end of her days. However, it also brought her great responsibilities.

When Isaac was five years old, the family held a feast to mark the occasion of the weaning of the child. But not all was well. We read that Sarah “kept noticing” a troubling pattern of behavior. Ishmael, the 19-year-old son of Hagar, kept mocking little Isaac. This was not mere playful teasing. The apostle Paul was later inspired to call Ishmael’s behavior persecution. Sarah saw this bullying for what it was: a serious threat to the well-being of her son. Sarah knew well that Isaac was more than just her son; he was assigned a key role in Jehovah’s purpose. So she mustered up courage and spoke forthrightly to Abraham. She asked him to send Hagar and Ishmael away.—Genesis 21:8-10; Galatians 4:22, 23, 29.

How did Abraham respond? We read: “What she said about his son was very displeasing to Abraham.” He was fond of Ishmael, and he could not see past his own fatherly emotions on this issue. However, Jehovah saw the matter clearly, so he intervened. We read: “Then God said to Abraham: ‘Do not be displeased by what Sarah is saying to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her, for what will be called your offspring will be through Isaac.’” Jehovah assured Abraham that Hagar and the boy would be provided for. Faithful Abraham complied.—Genesis 21:11-14.

Sarah was a true wife to Abraham, a genuine complement. She did not merely tell her husband whatever he wanted to hear. When she saw a problem, one that mattered to the family and their future, she spoke candidly to her husband. Her directness should not be mistaken for disrespect. In fact, the apostle Peter, himself a married man, later referred to her as a sterling example of a wife who showed deep respect for her husband. (1 Corinthians 9:5; 1 Peter 3:5, 6) In truth, if Sarah

had kept silent about this matter, she would have failed to respect Abraham, for the cost to him and the whole family might have been great indeed. Sarah lovingly said what needed to be said.

Many wives cherish Sarah’s example. From her they learn to communicate honestly and respectfully with their husbands. Some wives might wish, at times, that Jehovah would intervene as he did in Sarah’s case. Even so, they learn from Sarah’s remarkable faith, love, and patience.

Though this beloved woman was named “Princess” by Jehovah himself, she did not expect to be treated like royalty. It is small wonder that when she died at 127 years of age, Abraham “began to mourn and to weep over Sarah.”\* (Genesis 23: 1, 2) He sorely missed his beloved “Princess.” Without a doubt, Jehovah God also misses this faithful woman—and he intends to restore her to life on a paradise earth. An eternal and blissful future awaits Sarah—and all who imitate her faith.—John 5:28, 29. ■

\* Sarah is the only woman in the Bible whose age at the time of her death is included in the inspired record.

Jehovah rewarded Sarah for her precious faith



## Will there ever be peace on earth?

### What would you say?

- Yes   ► No   ► Maybe

### What the Bible says

Under the rule of Jesus Christ, “peace will abound until the moon is no more”—meaning forever.—Psalm 72:7.

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

- Wicked people will be removed from the earth, allowing good people to “find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”  
—Psalm 37:10, 11.
- God will bring all wars to an end.  
—Psalm 46:8, 9.

## Is real peace of mind possible now?

### Some people believe . . .

that real peace of mind cannot be found as long as the world is filled with suffering and injustice. **What do you think?**

### What the Bible says

Even now, those who are close to God can have “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.”—Philippians 4:6, 7.

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

- God promises to eliminate suffering and injustice, “making all things new.”—Revelation 21:4, 5.
- We can gain inner peace by caring for our “spiritual need.”—Matthew 5:3.



All weapons of war  
will be destroyed



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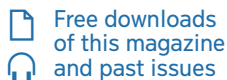
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