

UNSEEN SPIRITS

Do They Help Us?
or
Do They Harm Us?

TODAY there is widespread interest in unseen spirits. Some persons believe in them; others do not. What evidence is there as to whether superhuman spirits really exist? How can we know for certain?

Numerous reports tell of communications from the spirit realm. Can the living really talk with the dead? Can dead ancestors help us? Are there other sources from which spirit messages come?

This booklet has been published to aid you to find satisfying answers to these questions.

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—Do They Help Us?

Or Do They Harm Us?

DARK clouds gather. Thunder rumbles. Heavy drops of rain come pelting down. Inside a small home a family of seven persons is gathered and the members are hoping that their dead ancestors will protect them. Suddenly, with a frightful crash, lightning strikes and the home catches fire. Only two in the family survive. These two are now "afraid of staying in the same village as they believe that it has been bewitched and that some wizard is trying to wipe out the whole family."



1, 2. (a) What do some believe about disasters caused by such things as lightning?
(b) What do many believe about the dead?

² That report appeared in *The Times of Swaziland*, January 28, 1977. This family may well have known that lightning is caused by electricity forming in the clouds. But the report shows that they also believed that an enemy can get invisible spirits to direct lightning toward a certain place, and they believed that dead ancestors can give needed protection.

³ Look now into an African city and the residence of a diviner or "medicine man." A mother is there with her sick infant. When it started having fever and stomach disorders she promptly took it to the city hospital. After weeks of repeated visits and the use of medicines prescribed at the hospital, the child is as sick as ever. In her despair the mother has come to the medicine man, hoping for a cure. She is not the only one there. A young man has come seeking some "medicine" to solve his difficulties in finding a job. An older man, preparing for a long journey, has just received some "protection" to take along. All these people, of course, know of bacteria as causes for disease, of economic depression as a cause of unemployment, of drunken driving and faulty vehicles as causes for road accidents. But they also believe that these same misfortunes can be caused or prevented by unseen spirits and that the medicine man has power from these unseen spirits.

⁴ In Africa, many islands of the Pacific, Asia, parts of South America and in other places around the earth, millions of persons share similar beliefs. Throughout their daily life they are concerned as to what such invisible spirits may do, either for

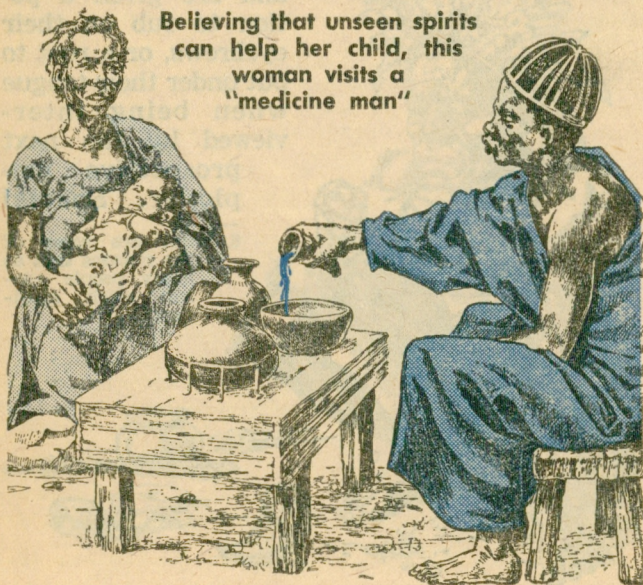
3. What do many persons believe to be the causes of accidents, illnesses and other problems?

4, 5. Why does spiritism play such a large part in the lives of many people in different parts of the world? How?

or against them. They believe that death is not the end of life but is the release of the spirit from the body. For them, death is merely the moment when the spirit passes to the next life or the "spirit world."

⁵ This is believed not only by people in rural or tribal communities or among uneducated persons, but also among many educated people in large cities. Along with practicers of traditional tribal religions, many members of Christendom's churches and Muslim sects believe that the events of life are controlled by or are related to unseen spirits. If misfortune strikes, such as a severe sickness or a sudden death in the family, they consult a diviner or medicine man. He may throw "magical bones" or use some other method as a means for telling

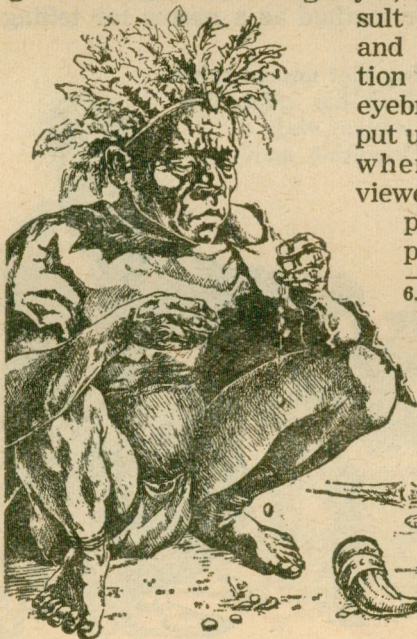
Believing that unseen spirits
can help her child, this
woman visits a
"medicine man"



the inquirers whether the spirits of their ancestors are angered or whether the inquirers are the victims of a spell cast by enemies. He may give them amulets to wear or potions to take for protection. Often a goat, sheep or chicken is slaughtered to appease the unseen spirits.

⁶ The reasons that people around the earth consult spirit mediums or medicine men are many: to protect the home and family; to protect a newborn child; to overcome sterility or prevent miscarriages; to detect thieves; to make friends; to have success in love, in business, when hunting, in examinations at school and even in sports. Football teams have hired medicine men to help them gain victories. On losing a job, some persons consult

a medicine man and are given a potion to rub on their eyebrows, or a root to put under their tongue when being interviewed by the next prospective employer. Special



6. What are some of the reasons that so many people consult spirit mediums?

rites are performed in agricultural areas when sowing crops or in efforts to produce rain. Among many peoples, when a person dies each tribe or locality will administer its own particular rites and customs. But whatever the occasion, in almost every case the purpose is to appease the anger of unseen spirits or to invoke their help. Though the connection may not always be apparent, many, many traditional rites and practices surrounding childbirth, circumcision, initiation ceremonies, marriage, hunting, cattle-raising, land ownership and death are directly or indirectly tied in with spirit worship.

⁷ Do unseen spirits having superhuman powers really exist? There is convincing evidence to show that they do. In such case, will it be to our good or to our harm to seek to communicate with those unseen spirits or petition their help? Are such ones the spirits of dead ancestors? Can dead relatives, for example, really help, protect or advise the living? If seeking the help of unseen spirits is beneficial, why is it that so often we hear reports of greed, deceit, immorality and even murder among those deeply involved in spirit worship? Why are there so many different ideas, practices and views, many of which are contradictory? Where can we turn for the right answers?

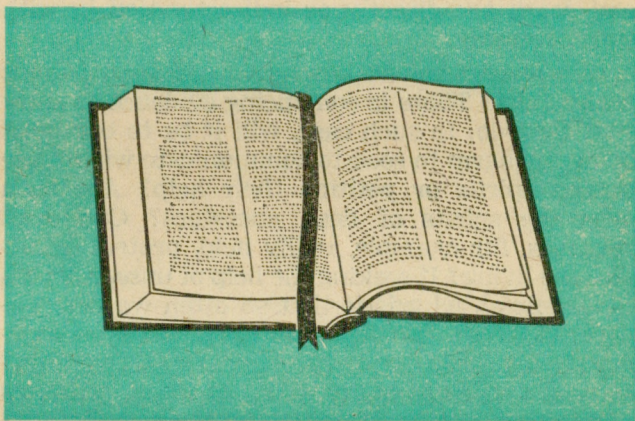
HOW WE CAN FIND THE RIGHT ANSWERS

⁸ Whatever their views about spirit forces may be, most persons agree that there must be someone who is the Source of all life, an eternal Creator. As the original Life-Giver he can rightly be referred to as the great Father of all humankind.

7. What questions now arise, and what shows that human answers alone are not enough?

8. What collection of "letters" has the Creator provided? Why?

Consider, then, this question: If you were the father of a family and had to be a long distance away from your children, would you not write to them from time to time? Good fathers do that, sending their children news about themselves and giving loving counsel. Does humankind have any such communication from their Creator and Father? The answer is, Yes, there is a collection of 66 "letters" or writings inspired and provided



by the Creator that contain vital information and counsel for us all. That collection of inspired writings is: the Bible.

⁹ The Bible was written, not by Europeans, but by men in the Middle East, in Asia. Yet it is for all people everywhere. It makes no distinction between people on the basis of geographical loca-

9. What shows that the Bible is not a book for any one race or people?

tion, race or color, whether yellow, black, brown or white. In it we find these inspired words of the apostle Peter: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—Acts 10:34, 35.

¹⁰ Of all the countless books written, the Bible reaches farther back in human history than any other ancient writings, being written by some 40 men starting with Moses almost 3,500 years ago (in 1513 B.C.E.). Nevertheless, there is a remarkable harmony in all the Bible's 66 books. Thousands of millions of copies, complete or in part, have been distributed in over 1,600 languages. It is a fact that in some languages the Bible is the only printed book that exists. More importantly, it is the only book on earth that gives a clear account of man's origin, why his present problems exist and what his future will be. The Bible is, unquestionably, unique.

¹¹ The Bible reveals to us the name of the Creator of heaven and earth—Jehovah—a Hebrew name meaning "He Causes to Become." Of him Psalm 83:18 says: "That people may know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth." He is the God "who cannot lie," mentioned in Titus 1:2. So you can trust Jehovah. He does not lie, he does not deceive, he does not play tricks. Also, Psalm 86:15 says of him: "But you, O Jehovah, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and trueness." How can we be sure of that? How can we be confident that his book, the Bible, is a book of truth?

10. In what ways is the Bible unique, distinctly different?

11. What is the name of the Creator, and what are some of his qualities?

BIBLE PROPHECIES PROVE TRUE

¹² Strong proof that the Bible is true is that it contains hundreds of prophecies that have been fulfilled. A prophecy is a foretelling of future events. There are, for example, many, many prophecies about the Master Teacher, Jesus Christ. They were all made hundreds of years before his birth. Yet they all proved true. The prophet Isaiah foretold that Jesus would be born of a virgin. (Isaiah 7:14) Over 700 years later this was fulfilled. (Matthew 1:23) Micah 5:2 foretold that he would be born at Bethlehem. Zechariah 11:12 foretold that he would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. Psalm 22:16-18 foretold that his hands and feet would be wounded and that lots would be cast for his clothing. Even his cry of anguish on the torture stake was foretold in Psalm 22:1. All these prophecies, and many others, were fulfilled, as eyewitness accounts show.—Matthew 2:1-6; 26:14, 15; John 20:25; Matthew 27:35, 46.

¹³ Does this not give us strong evidence that the Bible is a book of truth? Someone, however, may say, 'Yes, but all that happened a long time ago.' True, but even today, before our eyes, many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled. Since 1914 we have seen the greatest wars and slaughter of mankind ever known, along with widespread food shortages and disease, just as described in symbolic language at Revelation 6:1-8. Many world leaders admit they do not know how to solve the countless problems that are steadily increasing among mankind. These things cause much fear, just as the Bible foretold: "Anguish of nations, not knowing the

12. (a) What proves that the Bible is true? (b) What are some prophecies about Jesus Christ that came true hundreds of years after they were written?

13. What ancient prophecies are coming true today?

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way out . . . men become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth.”—Luke 21:25, 26; read also 2 Timothy 3:1-5.*

¹⁴ What, then, does the Bible tell us about unseen spirits? Who are they and where did they come from? What about their ability either to help or to harm us? And what do we need to do to be able to enjoy the happy, peaceful and secure lives that all normal persons want?

WHO ARE THOSE INHABITING THE SPIRIT REALM?

¹⁵ The Bible shows that we humans who live here on the earth are not the only living, intelligent persons in the universe. It reveals that, just as there is a fleshly realm of creatures who breathe earth’s air, drink its water and feed on its food, there is also a spirit realm, not dependent on earth’s provisions for life. And it shows that the Chief One in that spirit realm is the Creator himself, Jehovah God. Of him Jesus said: “God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth.”—John 4:24.

¹⁶ There are about four thousand million people now living on earth. The Bible reveals that in the spirit realm there are, besides the Creator, millions of other spirit persons who are known as angels. (Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 5:11) All these others received their life from the Creator of heaven and earth and came into existence long before the

* Further proof of the Bible’s truthfulness can be found in the books *Is the Bible Really the Word of God?* and *“All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial.”*

14. What questions will the Bible truthfully answer for us?

15, 16. (a) Are there other spirit persons in addition to Jehovah God? (b) To whom do all these persons, spirit or human, owe their life?

first humans were created. As Revelation 4:11 says: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created." There are no persons, human or spirit, who do not owe their life to Jehovah God, the Creator.

¹⁷ The Bible's historical account shows that after the creation in Eden of God's first human son and daughter, Adam and Eve, a certain powerful angel, moved by vanity and ambition, rebelled against God. Using deception and appealing to selfishness, he succeeded in getting the first human pair to join him in his rebellion. Since he became the enemy of Jehovah, the Creator, he is called Satan, which in Hebrew means "resister" or "adversary." (Genesis 3:1-13; Revelation 12:9) He later induced other heavenly sons of God or angels to follow a similar course of rebellion.

¹⁸ The apostle Peter speaks of those spirits who were "disobedient when the patience of God was waiting in Noah's days." (1 Peter 3:19, 20) Bible history shows that sex attraction played its part in this disobedience, causing these spirit sons to come to earth, take on human form and thus leave their assigned place in Jehovah's service. Of the days of Noah before the flood, we read at Genesis 6:2: "Then the sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose."

¹⁹ Jehovah God did not allow this to go on in-

17. (a) Who was the first to rebel against God? (b) What other rebels joined him?

18. (a) When did those spirit creatures rebel? (b) What induced them to leave Jehovah's service?

19. What happened to these rebel angels when the Flood came?



definitely. He brought a global flood of waters upon the earth, sweeping away all corrupt humanity and preserving only his faithful servants. Hence, the disobedient spirit sons had to dematerialize, that is, abandon human form and return to the spirit realm. Thereafter they are referred to as demons or evil spirits. Showing that God has not allowed them again to take up human form and has kept them in a degraded, condemned condition, Jude 6 says: "The angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place he [God] has reserved with eternal bonds under dense darkness for the judgment of the great day."

14 UNSEEN SPIRITS—DO THEY HELP US? OR DO THEY HARM US?

²⁰ Since that time, and with the support of these wicked spirits or demons, Satan has been the “god” of this world and its corrupt systems. This may surprise you. But read John 14:30 and 2 Corinthians 4:4 and you will see that when God’s Word speaks of the “ruler of the world” or “the god of this system of things” it does not refer to Jehovah God but to Satan the Devil. The apostle John writes: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one,” and also refers to Satan as “misleading the entire inhabited earth.” —1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9.

²¹ The Bible, then, shows that there are not only good spirits, such as angels, but also demons or bad spirits. Knowledge of these truths is very important, for it is the key that opens the door for understanding the relationship of unseen spirits to us and the events of our daily lives. Let us see how accurate knowledge of God’s Word helps us to find the answer to the following important questions.

WHERE DO SPIRIT MESSAGES COME FROM?

²² Many people in different parts of the earth believe that messages can be received from the spirit world. Typical of many who say they have received such messages is the experience of a certain young girl in Brazil. One day she began to hear “voices.” She applied to spirit mediums for help. For years after that she would suddenly see a dark figure before her and she would go into a trance. In that state she would prescribe remedies

20. (a) Who is the “god” of this world? (b) How great is his power?

21. Why is the accurate knowledge of God’s Word important?

22. What experience did a girl in Brazil have with messages from the spirit world?

for illnesses and do things to relieve persons who were under attack from superhuman forces.

²³ Frequently a sick person may go to a spirit medium, medicine man or psychic healer in order to get something to cure his sickness. The medium tells him to go home and return in the morning. During the night the sick person, in a dream, is told what kind of root to take for his illness and where to find it. It is believed that this message comes from a dead relative, perhaps a grandmother whom he actually seems to see in the dream.

²⁴ Most of those who believe in such messages also believe that their dead ancestors are alive in the spirit world and that these ancestors can either help or do harm to those living on earth. Members of Christendom's churches usually believe that at death the soul, which they say is immortal, goes to either heaven or hell, or, if they are Roman Catholics, that it may go to a place called purgatory before going to heaven. Some people, a minority, believe that death is the end, that there is no life after death. Human beliefs about the dead are clearly contradictory. Why not consider, then, what Jehovah God, the Almighty Spirit who created all life, has to say about this?

IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?

²⁵ Let us examine first the popular, widespread belief that the soul is immortal, that it can never die. Is that what you believe? How can any of us be sure? Certainly the One who created the soul

23. (a) How do some sick people try to cure their illnesses?

(b) From whom do they believe these messages come?

24. What different opinions do people have about the dead?

25. How can we "let God be found true"? (Read also 2 Timothy 3:16.)



Statues representing the spirits of dead ancestors are made in the mistaken belief that these ancestors are alive in the spirit world

should know, for he inhabits the spirit realm, being the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God. The Bible says: "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar." (Romans 3:4) Are you willing to accept God's word over that of men? What does the Bible reveal?

²⁶ If you were to read the Bible from start to finish you might be surprised to find that what it says about the soul is very different from what so many people believe. First, you would find that the expression "immortal soul" does not appear anywhere in the Bible, not even once. On the other hand, you would find in various places that fish, birds and animals are all referred to as "souls."—Genesis 1:20, 21, 24, 30; Numbers 31:28.

²⁷ Perhaps even more surprising, at Numbers 23:10; Luke 6:9; Acts 3:23 and in many other scriptures you would find that a "soul" can be "destroyed." In the prophecy of Ezekiel, Jehovah God plainly tells us that "the soul that is sinning

26. (a) How often is the expression "immortal soul" found in the Bible? (b) What other creatures, besides men, are referred to as souls?

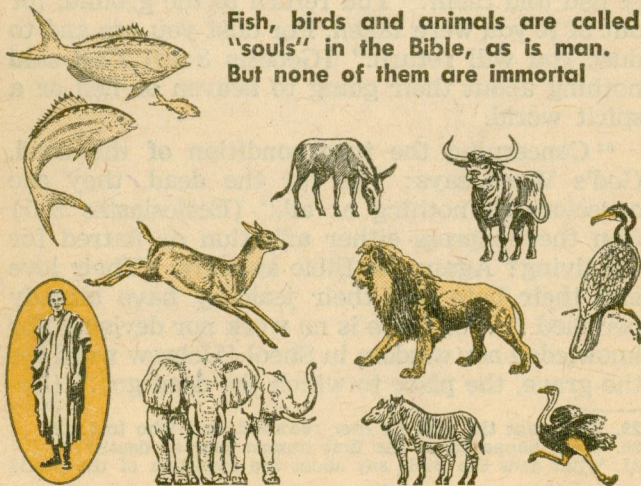
27. Can souls be destroyed? How does Ezekiel 18:4, 20 show this?

—it itself will die.” (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) Since the soul dies, it clearly is not immortal.

²³ The Bible shows plainly that immortality is not something we are born with, as so many people think. Among all the creatures of Jehovah God, the resurrected Jesus Christ is spoken of as “the one alone having immortality.” (1 Timothy 6:16) And 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 states that, as a reward for their faithfulness to him, certain servants of God will receive immortality. This means that the popular belief that everyone is born with an immortal soul finds no support whatsoever in God’s Word. In whose word, then, will we put our trust, in that of the Creator or in that of men? Surely the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God, merits our confidence. Men may lie, but the God of truth does not.

28. (a) What does the Bible say about immortality? (b) What popular belief finds no support in the Bible?

**Fish, birds and animals are called
“souls” in the Bible, as is man.
But none of them are immortal**



WHAT DOES HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE DIE?

²⁹ What happens to our ancestors when they die, and what could happen to us if we should die? Consider what happened to our very first ancestors, the first human pair, Adam and Eve. They were perfect and could have lived forever if they had remained obedient to God. But God warned them of the terrible consequence if they disobeyed, saying, "You will positively die." (Genesis 2:17) Later, the great adversary and deceiver, Satan, approached Eve and told the first lie ever recorded. In an effort to deceive her and turn both Eve and her husband Adam away from God, Satan used a serpent as his mouthpiece, saying, "You positively will not die."—Genesis 3:4.

³⁰ Who was right, God or Satan? Can we still find Adam living somewhere on the earth? Of course not. Just as God said would happen, Adam died. (Genesis 5:5) And when the first human pair died, what happened was just as God so plainly had told them: "You return to the ground, for out of it you were taken. For dust you are and to dust you will return." (Genesis 3:19) God said nothing about their going to heaven or hell or a spirit world.

³¹ Concerning the true condition of the dead, God's Word says: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) Can they express either affection or hatred for the living? Again the Bible answers: "Their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished . . . for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol [Hebrew word for the grave, the place to which the dead go]." (Ec-

29. What was the first lie ever recorded, and who told it?

30. What happened to the first human pair at death?

31. What does the Bible say about the condition of the dead?

clesiastes 9:6, 10) Confirming this, Psalm 146:4 says that man “goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish.” And Psalm 115:17 adds: “The dead themselves do not praise Jah [Jehovah], nor do any going down into silence.”

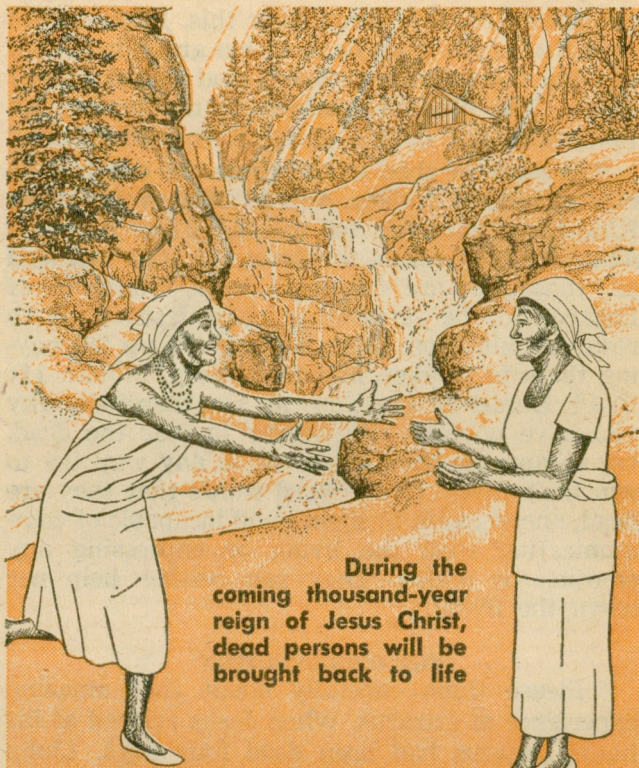
³² Because of this, in the Bible the death state is often likened to sleep. Acts 13:36 says that when King David died he “fell asleep.” First Thessalonians 4:13, 14 refers to Christians who had died as “those who are sleeping.” Jesus, too, spoke of Lazarus in the same way when Jesus went to resurrect him from death. He said: “I am journeying there to awaken him from sleep.” (John 11:11-14; Daniel 12:13) You can see, therefore, why you have no need whatsoever to fear the dead, try to appease their anger or in any way try to win their favor. God’s Word shows that they are dead, unconscious, in silence and incapable of communicating with the living or expressing any emotion or action. They can neither help nor harm the living.

THE RESURRECTION

³³ Please think carefully about that amazing experience of Lazarus. When Jesus arrived at his home Lazarus had been dead four days. (John 11:39) His body had already begun to decompose. Then Jesus did something that no medicine man or faith healer can ever do. He “cried out with a loud voice: ‘Lazarus, come on out!’ The man that had been dead came out.” (John 11:43, 44) Where did he come from? From the “ghost world”? No, he came out of the tomb where he had been lying

32. (a) Death is compared in the Bible to what? (b) Can the dead help or harm the living?

33. (a) What wonderful experience did Lazarus have? (b) Where had he been for four days?



unconscious, asleep in death, for the four days.

³⁴ On another occasion Jesus resurrected a 12-year-old girl from the dead. You can imagine the joy of her parents when this happened! The account in Mark 5:42 says that “they were beside themselves with great ecstasy.” To see their young daughter cold and lifeless one minute and then

34. What other miracle is recorded in Mark 5:42, and how did the parents of the little girl feel about it?

embrace her alive and well the next was a marvelous experience. Surely this was far, far better than receiving a message, supposedly from a dead loved one, through a spirit medium or a medicine man.

³⁵ But there is a wonderful lesson for all of us here. What Jesus did when on earth in resurrecting the dead was but a small demonstration of what he will do on a vast scale during his reign of a thousand years of peace, now near at hand. Jesus himself said: "All those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." (John 5:28, 29) Describing that marvelous time, Revelation 20:13 says: "And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades [the grave] gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds." The apostle Paul said: "I have hope toward God . . . that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous."—Acts 24:15.

³⁶ Now, please answer these questions in your own mind: Does not this clear promise of the resurrection disprove the idea that the dead are alive? If the dead were alive and enjoying existence in heaven or some spirit world, what would be the purpose of the resurrection? There would be no need for it. It should be clear from God's Word that the idea that 'death is merely the moment of the passing of the spirit to the next life' is completely false. The Bible plainly teaches that the dead are actually dead, unconscious, asleep until the great awakening by resurrection in God's new order.

35. (a) What will Jesus do on a large scale during his thousand-year reign of peace? (b) How did Paul confirm this?

36. What does the wonderful promise about the resurrection show as to the condition of the dead?

³⁷ But, you may say: 'If that is true, how can we explain all the manifestations and messages that have been received?' In our day, countless persons around the earth have had contact with the spirit world by means of mediums, medicine men, dreams and other means. Since the dead are unconscious and cannot communicate with the living, from whom do these messages come?

THE REAL SOURCE OF SPIRIT MESSAGES

³⁸ We have learned the identity of the ones inhabiting the spirit world. Besides the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God, and his faithful angels, there are God's adversary, Satan, and his host of unfaithful angels or demons. We have seen the way in which God has provided his message or communication for us. It is through his inspired Word, the Bible, which he transmitted to faithful men in the past and which has been preserved till this day for our guidance.

³⁹ What about these other messages then? Could it be that instead of coming from dead ancestors they come from God's adversary and his demons? Do you think it would be hard for such wicked angels to masquerade as or pretend to be the dead and thus deceive persons? Since Satan tried to deceive the first human pair about death, would this not be a clever way for him to try to support his false teaching? Yes, especially when we keep in mind that the Bible calls Satan "a liar and the father of the lie."—John 8:44.

37. What questions now have to be answered?

38. (a) Who inhabit the spirit world? (b) How does God communicate with us today?

39. (a) What is the true source of messages that appear to come from the dead? (b) Who is the 'father of lies'?

⁴⁰ But you may say: ‘Why, then, do some of these messages seem to be good or helpful, as in the healing of illness by means of a certain spirit medium or medicine man?’ God inspired the apostle Paul to give a very simple answer to this, saying: “There is nothing surprising about that; Satan himself *masquerades as an angel of light*. It is therefore a simple thing for his agents to *masquerade as agents of good*.” (2 Corinthians 11:14, 15, *New English Bible*) Obviously, to deceive and mislead people more easily, the demons often *play the part* of being helpful. Paul gives further warning of this campaign of deception by saying: “Some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons.”—1 Timothy 4:1.

⁴¹ If these spirit messages really were from a good source they would be all good, would they not? As Christ Jesus said: “Either you people make the tree fine and its fruit fine or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten; for by its fruit the tree is known.” (Matthew 12:33) What kinds of “fruit” do we often find associated with these spirit communications?

⁴² Consider the case of a certain widow in Lisbon, Portugal. She read books about communicating with unseen spirits and began to hear a voice telling her how to write literature in French. This pleased her and she continued to receive such messages. Later, however, she began to hear frightening noises in her room at night. At times she

40. (a) What conclusion can be drawn from 2 Corinthians 11:14, 15? (b) According to 1 Timothy 4:1, who are conducting a campaign of deception?

41. What should we expect if spirit messages were from a good source?

42. (a) How does the experience of the widow in Lisbon illustrate the need to know where spirit messages come from? (b) Does the Great Spirit, Jehovah God, terrorize people?

even felt as if an invisible force was trying to push her down the stairs. What at first had the appearance of benefit now became a source of terror to her. Doubtless you have heard of persons having similar experiences, perhaps even worse problems, so that they went to the point of becoming desperate for relief. But is that the way the Great Spirit, Jehovah God, deals with people? The Bible tells us that God is love and that he wants us to love him. (1 John 4:8) And at 1 John 4:18 it says that we can approach Jehovah God with freeness of speech because "there is no fear in love, but perfect love throws fear outside . . . he that is under fear has not been made perfect in love."

⁴³ Because he is love, the Great Spirit, our Creator, has our best interests at heart. He teaches us to be unselfish and to show others the same kind of love that he shows toward us. But what do we often find in connection with those practicing spiritism?

THE LOVE OF MONEY

⁴⁴ How often have you heard of medicine men or spirit mediums giving their services to people free of charge? Jesus told his disciples, "You received free, give free." (Matthew 10:7, 8) Is that the case among those practicing spiritism? In one country in southern Africa a medicine man or faith healer will come to a home and sprinkle a mixture of ashes, herbs and water around it, perhaps marking crosses on the door and even "inoculating" the family with some of the mixture. Is this done as an expression of kindness, free of

43. What does Jehovah teach us to be toward others, and what question does this raise?

44. How do medicine men or spirit mediums, contrary to the spirit shown by Jesus and his disciples, show a love of money?

charge? No, instead, for this supposed protection against being harmed by unseen spirits, the medicine man will charge as much money as the owner of the home may earn in three or four weeks of work.

⁴⁵ In other areas, medicine men take certain objects and perform mystical rites over these to place a charm upon them. Then they deliberately leave these objects on pathways so that people will pick them up. Those who do, often become fearful that they will now suffer harm and they go to the medicine men for help. But the help must be paid for, and so the medicine men get their money. Do you think this is the right way to do things?

⁴⁶ Back in Bible times this same greed was shown by persons involved with spiritism. While in

45. What other method do medicine men use, in some areas, to make more money?

46. What happened to Paul in Philippi? Why?



the town of Philippi, the apostle Paul was continually pestered by a slave girl possessed by a "demon of divination." Finally Paul called on the demon to "come out of her" and the spirit left her. Paul did this completely free, with no payment asked or taken. But the girl's masters, instead of being happy, became angry and had Paul thrown into prison. Why? The Bible tells us that it was because they had been making "much gain" from the girl's activities in divining.—Acts 16: 16-24.

SEXUAL IMMORALITY

⁴⁷ We have already learned that it was sexual attraction that led some of Jehovah's spirit sons to leave his service, with the result that they became rebels. Do we find sexual immorality connected with the worship of unseen spirits today? In some places it is not unusual to hear of women in bed feeling the presence of an unseen person to the point of their becoming sexually stimulated as though such unseen person were having relations with them.

⁴⁸ In other parts of the world, sterile women often consult the unseen spirits by means of a spirit medium in order to find a remedy for their sterility. But at times they are required to have sexual relations with the "doctor" as part of their "cure."

⁴⁹ Do you think that such things bring good or that they can help produce happy families and happy communities? The Bible shows that when those spirit sons rebelled before the Flood and engaged in sexual immorality, then "the earth

47, 48. What unclean practices are associated with evil spirits?
49. What did sexual immorality produce before the Flood, and what does it produce today?

became filled with violence.” (Genesis 6:1-11) Sexual immorality today also brings quarrels, fights and even bloodshed.

MURDERS AND CRUELTY

⁵⁰ No one of us wants to lose his life at the hands of a murderer. The Bible shows that Jehovah God hates murderers. One of his Ten Commandments says: “You must not murder.” (Exodus 20:13) What do we find as to the practice of spiritism or ancestor worship in this regard? Consider the following facts:

⁵¹ Ritual murders and human sacrifices are illegal in all countries. Yet, among ancestor worshipers and medicine men in some lands these cruel practices still continue. In Ghana, for example, when a high-ranking chieftain dies he is customarily buried with the skulls of victims of secret ritual murders. As late as 1974 two persons were convicted of ritual murder there in connection with the death of a paramount chief. Although illegal, the custom persists due to the belief, based on the religious lie, that the souls of the victims accompany the chieftain to minister to his needs in the “ghost world.”

⁵² On August 9, 1977, a newspaper in Liberia, *The Liberian Age*, carried the headline “Ritual Killings—As Probe Continues ‘Gang of 11’ Charged with Murder.” It related that 11 men, including some high-ranking officials, had been charged with the brutal killing of a man in a ritualistic murder, the man’s eyes, ears, nose, testicles and tongue all being cut out of his body. The report said that these were to serve as “jujus”

50. How does Jehovah feel about murder?

51-54. Give examples of murder related to spiritism.

to aid those charged with the murder in attaining higher positions.

⁵³ A news report from Botswana on June 8, 1977, says: "A 'traditional doctor' [spirit medium] alleged today that a former Botswana politician had given him a list of 18 people he wanted killed by witchcraft."

⁵⁴ Even more terrible is the fact that young people and children have become victims. A report from Nigeria says:

"The worship of money has now driven many Nigerians into such primitive practices as kidnapping young people for slaughter in money-manufacturing shrines.

"It is an open question whether some Nigerian medicine-men can convert human heads into money. But what is not in doubt is that young Nigerian children are being kidnapped for this purpose."—*Daily Times*, December 31, 1976.

⁵⁵ Surely if you are a person who appreciates what is good, then the above practices must fill you with a feeling of disgust as well as sorrow at the suffering caused. Of course, you likely have heard the argument often presented that spiritism has its good side. Most medicine men, for example, will insist that they use charms and fetishes and 'casting of spells' only for good purposes. Yet anyone who observes them must admit that rarely, if ever, do they hesitate to use these same things to bring a curse upon others, often in return for money or some gift.

⁵⁶ This matter deserves your careful thought. While you may hear of manifestations, messages

55. While some may claim that spiritism has its "good" side, what do the facts show?

56, 57. (a) Why should you give this matter careful thought?

(b) Where will we get the truth on the matter?

and dreams that appear to be good, the inspired Word of God warns us that Satan and his demons operate "with every powerful work and lying signs and portents and with every unrighteous deception for those who are perishing."—2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

⁵⁷ With these things in mind, consider now what God's Word has to say about spirit mediums and magic-practicing priests or medicine men.

WHAT THE BIBLE SHOWS ABOUT MEDIUMS AND DIVINERS

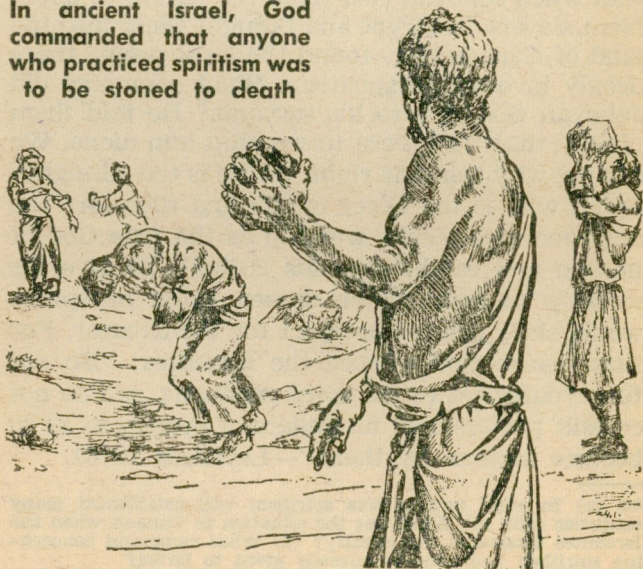
⁵⁸ The Bible reveals that thousands of years ago the worship of spirits and the practice of magic were common in lands such as Egypt, Babylon and Canaan. (Exodus 7:10-12; Deuteronomy 18:14; Isaiah 47:1, 12, 13) It is not surprising, then, that when Jehovah God freed the nation of Israel from slavery in Egypt and brought them into the land of Canaan they found the local people there deeply involved in spiritism. What command did Jehovah God give to his servants? He told them plainly that they were to worship him alone. We can see why this was right, for he is the Almighty Spirit who is the Giver of life and therefore the only one who merits worship as the true God of heaven and earth. (Exodus 20:3-6) To give his worship to some other unseen spirit or spirits would show grave disrespect for the Creator. For that reason God warned the Israelites: "Do not turn yourselves to the spirit mediums, and do not consult professional foretellers of events, so as to become unclean by them."—Leviticus 19:31.

58. (a) In what nations was spiritism well established many centuries ago? (b) What was the situation in Canaan when the Israelites conquered the country? (c) What command concerning spiritism had Jehovah already given to Israel?

⁵⁹ Jehovah God warned the Israelites that they would lose not only his blessing but also their lives if they disobeyed his prohibition of such worship of spirits, saying: "As for the soul who turns himself to the spirit mediums and the professional foretellers of events so as to have immoral intercourse with them, I shall certainly set my face against that soul and cut him off from among his people. And as for a man or woman in whom there proves to be a mediumistic spirit or spirit of prediction, they should be put to death without fail."—Leviticus 20:6, 27.

59. What did Jehovah's law say about punishment for those who practice spiritism?

In ancient Israel, God commanded that anyone who practiced spiritism was to be stoned to death



⁶⁰ Later, God gave still more emphasis to his hatred for the disobedient practices connected with the worship of unseen spirits, such as sorcery and fortune-telling, saying through the prophet Moses: "When you are entered into the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, you must not learn to do according to the detestable things of those nations. There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, anyone who employs divination, a practitioner of magic or anyone who looks for omens or a sorcerer, or one who binds others with a spell or anyone who consults a spirit medium or a professional foreteller of events or anyone who inquires of the dead. For everybody doing these things is something detestable to Jehovah."—Deuteronomy 18:9-12.

⁶¹ Is that not very plain and does it not show clearly how the Almighty God feels about spirit mediums and diviners and their worship of unseen spirits? According to his inspired Word, Jehovah God hates all such practices no matter what form they take or on what continent they are found. And because of his love, he provides us these warnings so that we will not suffer the harm that such practices are sure to bring.

⁶² When on earth, Jesus Christ was opposed by God's adversary, Satan, and the spirit rebels that joined him. When Satan endeavored to get Jesus to perform an act of worship to him in return for power and glory, Jesus replied: "Go away, Satan! For it is written [in the Bible at Deuteronomy 5:9; 6:13], 'It is Jehovah your God you must

60, 61. (a) So how does Jehovah feel about spiritism? (b) What are some of the ways it is practiced locally?

62. What experiences did Jesus and the apostles have with evil spirits?

worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'” (Matthew 4:8-10) On many occasions, he and his apostles likewise expelled evil spirits or demons from people who were troubled by them.—Mark 1:39; 3:14, 15.

⁶³ Jesus taught his disciples to worship only the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God, and to believe in his Word, the Bible. (John 4:23, 24; 17:6, 17) His disciples had the same view of spiritism and its practices as their heavenly Father, Jehovah. Inspired by God, the apostle Paul wrote this to fellow worshippers: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, and they are fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, *practice of spiritism* . . . I am forewarning you . . . that those who practice such things will not inherit God’s kingdom.” (Galatians 5:19-21) The Creator and Source of all life cannot and will not give life everlasting to persons who, contrary to his Word, give the worship that belongs to him to unseen spirits. According to the prophecy in the book of Revelation, persons who unrepentantly continue to be among “those practicing spiritism” will go down into the “second death,” which means everlasting destruction from which there is no resurrection.—Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

⁶⁴ Yes, the Bible lists spiritism as one of the “works of the flesh,” along with fornication and uncleanness. We have seen much evidence that spiritism is indeed unclean and harmful. It takes our worship and devotion away from the One who should rightly have it, Jehovah God. Any unseen spirit, therefore, that would allow persons to give

63. What will happen to Christians who practice spiritism?

64. (a) How does the Bible classify spiritism? (See Galatians 5:19, 20.) (b) What kind of spirit would allow persons to give him devotion and service?

him such devotion and service could not be a good spirit but must be an evil spirit or demon. The apostle John was helped by an angel to write part of the Bible. But when John fell down before this angel to do obeisance to him, the faithful angel said: "Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who have the work of witnessing to Jesus. Worship God."—Revelation 19:10.

⁶⁵ And, since God's Word shows that being a spirit medium or a diviner or a fortune-teller or one who communicates with the dead is something God detests, then it is plain that any unseen spirit that would cooperate with such persons must likewise be an evil spirit or demon. Any messages received from such a source could never be from the true God, the Almighty Spirit, nor have his approval.

⁶⁶ That is why God, by his prophet Isaiah, said these words of warning to the Israelites: "And in case they should say to you people: 'Apply to the spiritistic mediums or to those having a spirit of prediction who are chirping and making utterances in low tones,' is it not to its God that any people should apply? Should there be application to dead persons in behalf of living persons?" (Isaiah 8:19) If we want to know the truth and have a sure hope for the future we must turn, not to the dead or to spirit mediums, but to the living God, the Creator of all life.

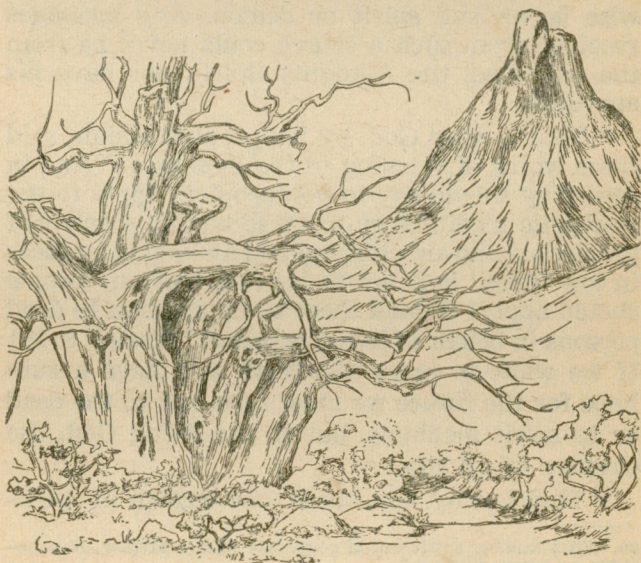
⁶⁷ That is why, too, those who engage in spirit-

65. What kind of spirit would cooperate with a diviner, fortune-teller or spirit medium?

66. Whom did Isaiah show we should turn to for the truth and to have a sure hope for the future?

67. (a) What did Paul say to a certain sorcerer? (b) What is Jehovah's counsel about involvement with such unclean practices?

istic activities always oppose the message found in God's Word. Back in the first century, there was a sorcerer on the island of Cyprus and he tried to keep others from listening to the message of good news brought by the apostle Paul. Paul said to him: "O man full of every sort of fraud and every sort of villainy, you son of the Devil, you enemy of everything righteous, will you not quit distorting the right ways of Jehovah?" (Acts 13:9, 10) Rather than be among those distorting or twisting the right ways of God, we should want to free ourselves completely from the unclean wor-



Certain trees, large rocks, rivers, waterfalls, mountains or other places are regarded by some people as the resting-places of unseen spirits

ship of spirits, a practice that is contrary to God's Word. From the Almighty Spirit comes the call: "‘Get out from among them, and separate yourselves,’ says Jehovah, ‘and quit touching the unclean thing.’"—2 Corinthians 6:17.

⁶⁸ Perhaps you find yourself in circumstances that make this seem very difficult. You may be like many others who have practiced ancestor worship or some other form of spiritism all your life. Possibly your relatives and most people in your area still follow traditions related to these, and they may still consider certain trees, rocks, rivers, mountains or other places as resting-places of spirits. How, then, can you free yourself from such worship of unseen spirits and gain the favor, protection and blessing of the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God?

BREAKING FREE FROM THE POWER OF WICKED SPIRITS

⁶⁹ Once wicked spirits have gained control or influence over a person it is not easy to obtain relief from them. But, with the help of Jehovah God, it can be done and has been done by thousands of persons. An encouraging example is that of the young girl in Brazil who came under spirit influence and who prescribed cures for people. (See paragraph 22.) Years later, while asleep one night, she felt some force pulling her from her bed. Though still asleep, she walked outside and toward a nearby ditch filled with water. Then she tripped and awoke. The experience greatly disturbed her and made her want to get free from the

68. What question presents itself about people who have been involved with some form of spiritism?

69-71. How did the young girl in Brazil get free from wicked spirits?

control of the unseen spirits with whom she had been dealing. What did she do?

⁷⁰ Her first step was to pray to God to deliver her. The following morning someone knocked at her door. She heard spirit "voices" telling her not to open the door, that "the Devil was waiting for her." But, with great effort, she did open the door. The visitor was not the Devil but was a young man who presented to her a copy of a Bible magazine, *The Watchtower*. In it was an article on the influence of wicked spirits. She felt sure this must have been an answer to her earnest prayer.

⁷¹ She began to study the Bible and to apply it by making changes in her life, not only learning but also doing God's will. Gradually she became free from demon control. How happy she was to experience the great lesson that Jesus taught: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."—John 8:32.

⁷² It was similar with the widow in Lisbon, mentioned earlier. (See paragraph 42.) When her communication with unseen spirits began to cause her great trouble and even terror, she was shortly thereafter contacted by Jehovah's Witnesses and began to study the Bible with them. She learned what the Bible says about the true condition of the dead, the hope of the resurrection and the glorious good news of God's kingdom. When she realized that she, like so many others in all parts of the earth, had been deceived by the demons, she put faith in the Almighty Spirit, Jehovah God, and severed all contact with those misleading spirits.

72. What did the widow in Lisbon do to break away from evil spirits?

⁷³ Yes, many, many persons around the earth have had their eyes opened to the truth about the spirit world. But not all cases are extreme ones like those mentioned. Millions of persons who are not spirit mediums and who do not personally claim to have ever heard “voices” of unseen spirits are nevertheless still in need of turning “from darkness to light and from the authority of Satan



Wrong beliefs hold many people in a “web” of fear

to God.” (Acts 26:18) Why so? Because they are deeply concerned in their daily life about such things as omens, the “evil eye,” taboos, and protective charms and rites that are tied in with the worship of spirits other than the true God, the all-powerful Creator of heaven and earth.

⁷³ Why do millions of people not directly involved with spiritism need to know the truth about it?

⁷⁴ Like a spider web that entangles and holds a fly or other creature that gets into it, so too there is a web of family and tribal traditions and rites that holds many people in the grip of fear. They are afraid that, if they do not observe all these traditions, they will not receive the help of departed ancestors or that they will be harmed by other unseen spirits. They fear they will not be successful in having children or that their children will die, or that their cattle will sicken and die, that their farms will not produce or that their businesses will not be successful.

⁷⁵ Only the truth of God's Word can set them free. By learning what his Word says, they can come to appreciate that there are unseen spirits who cooperate with spirit mediums and medicine men but that their power is as nothing when compared with the power of the true God. Persons who come to appreciate that God's help is of far, far greater value than help from any other source realize that no hurt that any spirit medium, medicine man or any unseen spirit might threaten to bring upon them would be as damaging as their losing the favor and blessing of the one and only Source of life.—Matthew 10:28.

⁷⁶ Knowledge about the true God and his purposes is therefore the first step toward freedom from such enslavement. By the study of God's Word we learn the true condition of the dead, that they are sleeping in death, unconscious and not capable of expressing love or hate, or of giving help or causing harm. We also understand the

74. From what "web" do many people need freedom?

75. To whom do people need to turn for help?

76. (a) So what is the first step in breaking free from spirit worship? (b) What question now arises?

identity of those who actually inhabit the spirit world and that many spirit sons of God rebelled. But why has God allowed these rebel spirits to continue till now?

⁷⁷ It is because that rebellion was a challenge to Jehovah God. Satan and his demons do not challenge God's almighty power, for they know he is more powerful than they are and has the power to destroy them. In the Bible at James 2:19 we read: "You believe there is one God, do you? You are doing quite well. And yet the demons believe and shudder." They shudder because they know that Jehovah has declared his purpose to destroy them. When Jesus Christ, acting as God's representative, was about to free certain persons from the influence of demons, these cried out asking if he had come to 'destroy them before the right time.' (Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:24) So the rebel spirit sons know they cannot successfully challenge the power of the Almighty God.

⁷⁸ What Satan did was to challenge the rightness of God's rulership over all His creatures. His words to Eve show that he tries to cause persons to believe that God is really not a loving Father who has the best interests of his creatures at heart. The fact that the first human pair joined in that rebellion also raised another question. That question was whether all others of God's creatures could be induced to turn away from Him and put their trust in someone else. We can see this in the case of God's servant Job. Satan claimed that Job would serve Jehovah God only if things went well for him but that if Job had to experience hard times or

77. In rebelling against God, did Satan and his demons challenge God's power?

78. (a) What did Satan challenge? (b) What other question was raised and what example of this is found in the Bible?

endure suffering then he would stop putting faith in God and turn away from Him.—Job 1:7-12; 2:4, 5.

⁷⁹ To answer this challenge and settle these questions clearly and beyond doubt would require time. So, even though the first human pair had proved rebellious, Jehovah God allowed them to live on for a time and produce children. (Genesis 3:14-19) He has allowed Satan and his demons to try to prove their side of the great controversy and has allowed humans to be tested as to whether they will put faith in the Most High God or, for selfish reasons, will turn away from him. It is true that about 6,000 years have passed since the challenge was first made in Eden. But the Bible tells us that, for the Eternal God, 'a thousand years is as one day.' (2 Peter 3:8) So these six thousand years are like only six days for Him. God's Word shows that the time is running out and that Satan now has "great anger, knowing he has a short period of time" remaining until God takes action to bring the rebellion to a halt.—Psalm 90:2, 4; Revelation 12:12.

WITH FULL FAITH TAKE ACTION NOW

⁸⁰ Because of God's patience, long-suffering and mercy, each one of us is being given the opportunity to show where we stand and in whom we will put our trust. If you desire to be free from enslavement to unseen spirits and the web of traditions and rites that bring people into such slavery, then do not hesitate to turn for help now to Jehovah, "a God merciful and gracious . . . abundant in loving-

79. (a) What would be required to settle these questions fully?

(b) What is happening to the time Satan has left to him?

80. Why can you have confidence when you turn to Jehovah for help?

kindness and truth.” (Exodus 34:6) God’s messenger, Jesus Christ, taught his followers to pray: “Deliver us from the wicked one.” (Matthew 6:13) You can be confident that Jehovah hears prayers that come from a pure heart. “The eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication.”—1 Peter 3:12; Proverbs 15:29.

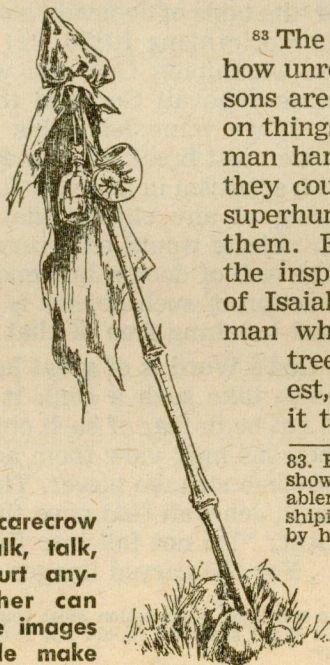
⁸¹ Being sincere, you will also back up your requests to God by acting in harmony with what you request. What does this mean as regards traditions and rites connected with spiritism? The inspired apostle Paul writes: “I do not want you to become sharers with the demons . . . you cannot be partaking of ‘the table of Jehovah’ and the table of demons.” (1 Corinthians 10:20, 21) We must choose between worshiping God and worshiping the demons, since Jehovah God and the demons are at enmity. If we want Jehovah’s friendship and protection we must break all connections and associations with spiritism in its many forms. That includes disposing of any objects that relate to spiritism. Such objects would only serve to keep us captive in the web of demon influence. The removal or destruction of such objects is an important step toward breaking free of that influence.

⁸² Here, too, God’s Word is of great help to give us the courage to take such a step. It shows us why we should not be in fear of such objects, even though some persons may view them as charmed or possessed of some strange power. Through his prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah God gave these words of encouragement: “Do not fall into the ways of the nations . . . For the carved images of the na-

81. To be free from spiritism, what action must you take? Why?

82. How does God’s Word show we should not fear any object, such as an image?

tions are a sham, they are nothing but timber cut from the forest, worked with his chisel by a craftsman; he adorns it with silver and gold, fastening them on with hammer and nails so that they do not fall apart. They can no more speak than a scarecrow in a plot of cucumbers; they must be carried, for they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them: they can do no harm, and they have no power to do good." (Jeremiah 10:2-5, *New English Bible*) A small child may be in fear of a scarecrow out in a field but grown persons know better. And God's Word shows that, just as a scarecrow cannot talk or walk or help or hurt anyone, the same is true of the images that men make and call sacred.

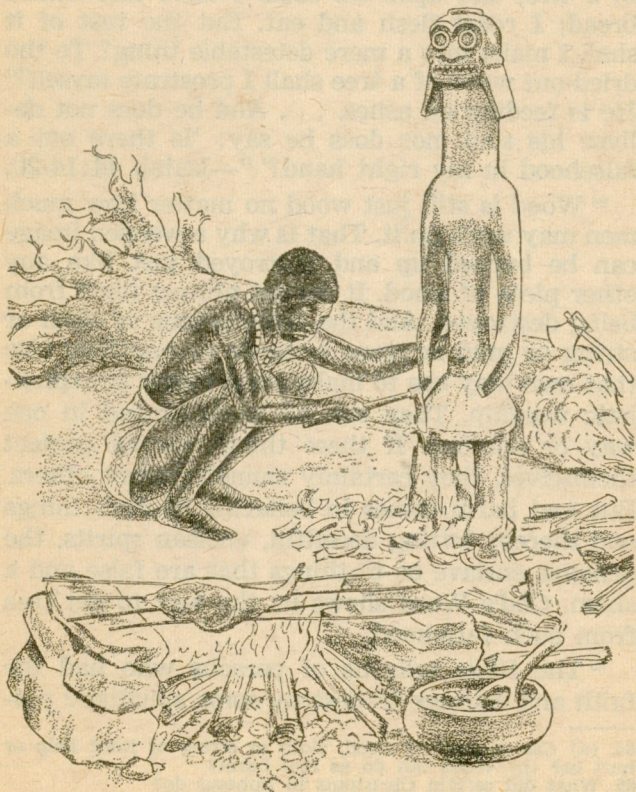


Just as a scarecrow cannot walk, talk, help or hurt anyone, neither can any of the images that people make

⁸³ The Bible shows how unreasonable persons are who look upon things made by human hands as though they could have some superhuman power in them. For example, the inspired prophecy of Isaiah tells of the man who cuts a big tree from the forest, takes part of it to make a fire

83. How does the Bible show the unreasonableness of one's worshipping anything made by human hands?

Does an idol made by humans have any supernatural powers? This idol is made from the same tree that the wood the man is burning to cook his food came from. Since the idol can be burned up by the man just as easily as the firewood, could it have any power to help or to harm humans?



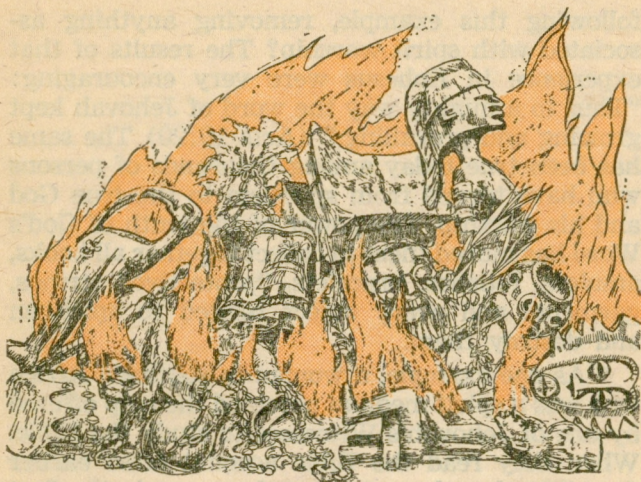
and to bake some bread and then uses the other part to make an image and "bows down and prays to it and says: 'Deliver me, for you are my god.' " Jehovah God says of such ones: "They have not come to know, nor do they understand, because their eyes have been besmeared so as not to see, their heart so as to have no insight. And no one recalls to his heart or has knowledge or understanding, saying: 'The half of it I have burned up in a fire, and upon its coals I have also baked bread; I roast flesh and eat. But the rest of it shall I make into a mere detestable thing? To the dried-out wood of a tree shall I prostrate myself?' He is feeding on ashes. . . . And he does not deliver his soul, nor does he say: 'Is there not a falsehood in my right hand?'" —Isaiah 44:14-20.

⁸⁴ Wood is still just wood no matter how much men may work on it. That is why a wooden image can be burned up and destroyed just like any other piece of wood. It cannot protect itself from being destroyed. And the same is true of cloth or string or mud or stone or seeds or anything else that men may use to make some object for spiritistic worship. They can all be destroyed in one way or another. If these things cannot protect themselves, they certainly cannot protect others. But real harm comes in believing in such things and thereby letting deceitful, unclean spirits, the demons, enslave us to things that are false and a sham. God's Word shows us the way to get free from such falsehood.

⁸⁵ The Bible tells us of persons who had the faith and courage to destroy some spiritistic pos-

84. (a) Can a piece of wood, cloth or string of itself help or hurt us? (b) What can do us real harm?

85. What did certain Christians in Ephesus do?



Thousands of persons have turned away from spiritism and have destroyed the objects related to it

sessions, even though it was at great cost to them. After describing the witnessing about the true God done by the apostle Paul in the city of Ephesus, the Bible book of Acts states: "Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated together the prices of them and found them worth fifty thousand pieces of silver." (19:19) Think of what a fortune that was! Yet, having the approval of the Almighty God and being free from demon influence meant much more to them than what that money represented.

⁸⁶ Why not look around your home and ask yourself if you are showing the same faith and

86. (a) What were the results of that experience? (b) How has the same been true among many people today?

following this example, removing anything associated with spirit worship? The results of that experience in Ephesus were very encouraging: "Thus in a mighty way the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing." (Acts 19:20) The same has been true today among thousands of persons who have turned from spiritism to the true God and his worship. The power of the truth of God's Word has moved them to collect together all books, amulets, fetishes, bracelets, "protective" strings, garments and every object related to spiritism and destroy them.

⁸⁷ As one example, a woman in southern Africa who was a spirit medium accepted the help offered by one of Jehovah's Witnesses to study the Bible. When they read the Bible account cited earlier describing how honest-hearted persons in the first century destroyed their books on spiritism, the woman asked if she should do the same. The Witness showed how this could bring God's favor, and they agreed on a date to do this. On arriving, the Witness found the woman ready with all her religious garments and spiritistic objects and some paraffin. They made a fire and burned all the objects. What resulted? The woman gained relief from demon influence and she is now enjoying the grand privilege herself of aiding others to put their trust in the true God.

⁸⁸ Similarly, a man in the same region had begun to train with a famous medicine man and had made quick progress, becoming the chief assistant to his spiritist teacher. The teacher's wife, however, began studying the Bible with Jehovah's

87. What did a woman in southern Africa do, and what was the result?

88. How did a man in the same region break free from the worship of spirits?

Witnesses. One day this assistant sat in on the study. Scriptures were discussed showing that God prohibits the drinking or taking of blood. (Leviticus 17:10-14; Deuteronomy 12:23, 24; Acts 15:20, 29) This impressed the man deeply. He was about to “graduate” from his course in “medicine” and magic and knew that drinking blood was part of the “graduation” ceremony. What did he decide? He wanted to please the Source of all life, Jehovah, rather than try to get the favor of opposing unseen spirits. So he stopped practicing spiritism immediately, continued studying the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses and now rejoices in his freedom from bondage to selfish unseen spirits.

⁸⁹ To break free from such unseen spirits, it is essential not only that you pray for Jehovah God’s help, but that you “persevere in prayer.” (Romans 12:12) God’s Word shows that it is vital not only to stop spiritistic practices but also to clean out any spiritistic objects that would maintain your ties with the worship of unseen spirits. And, if you are to gain victory and the freedom it brings, you need to avail yourself of help from others so that you do not face the spirit adversaries alone.

ASSOCIATING WITH SERVANTS OF THE TRUE GOD

⁹⁰ The Bible urges us to meet together with others to be built up in love and faith. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) With whom can you do that? Members of the churches of Christendom, though professing belief in the Bible, often are right in among those seeking the services of spirit mediums and medicine men in different parts of the earth. However, Jehovah’s Witnesses take a different course. They

89. What vital actions must be taken to gain the victory over unseen spirits?

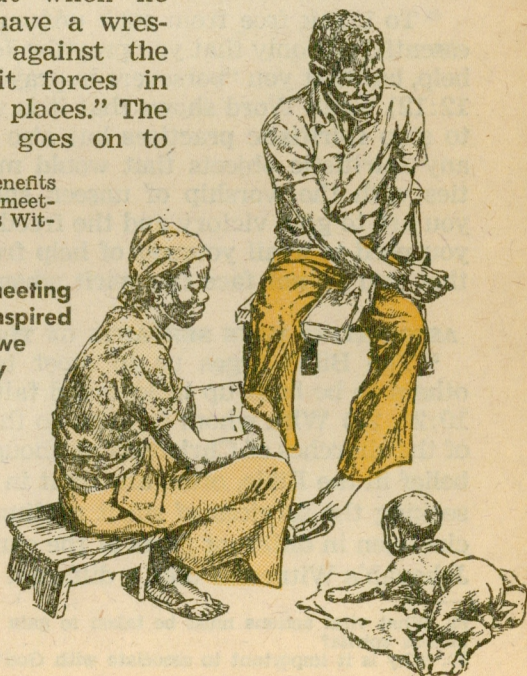
90. Why is it important to associate with God’s people?

keep fully clean from anything that could lead to control by unseen spirits in opposition to the teachings of God's Word. They are happy to help anyone to study the Bible and learn its freedom-giving truth. And, like Jesus and his disciples, they do this free of charge. They will be happy to help you find the answers to your questions through such a free study.

⁹¹ They also meet regularly for group study of the inspired writings of God's Word, and these meetings likewise are free, with no collections taken. To attend these is a tremendous help in carrying on the warfare that the apostle Paul writes about when he says: "We have a wrestling . . . against the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places." The apostle then goes on to

91, 92. What benefits will attending meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses bring?

By regularly meeting to study the inspired Word of God, we can successfully fight against "the wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places"



urge us all to "take up the complete suit of armor from God," and to "stand firm, . . . girded about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, . . . the large shield of faith, . . . the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word."—Ephesians 6:12-17.

⁹² To know how to use this spiritual armor and the "sword of the spirit" effectively may take some time. But your association with others who have gained and are gaining victories in their spiritual warfare will help you make good progress. As you learn more about the purposes of the Universal Creator and Ruler, Jehovah God,

and see the wisdom of his laws and righteous requirements, your faith will grow. You will gain the marvelous hope of life in a paradise earth, where the meek of the earth will enjoy endless life, free from sickness and suffering, under God's kingdom by Christ Jesus. You will learn how you can be among those who will live to see the time when God will "wipe out ev-



50 UNSEEN SPIRITS—DO THEY HELP US? OR DO THEY HARM US?
ery tear from their eyes.”—Revelation 21:4;
Psalm 37:10, 11; Matthew 5:5.

⁹³ To stay free from control by selfish unseen spirits we need to follow the Bible’s counsel to “put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct” and “put on the new personality which was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Ephesians 4:22-24) Our former course of conduct may have been governed, not by God’s will, but by human traditions and the customs of people in our area. We need to examine our conduct to see that we are avoiding all things that have any connection with the demonic lie that the dead can help or hurt the living.—2 Corinthians 13:5.

KEEP FIGHTING THE FINE FIGHT OF THE FAITH

⁹⁴ Once you have broken free from demonism you must fight hard to keep free. Jesus said that only “he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) Day by day we need to keep resisting efforts to draw us back into the web of traditions and demonistic practices that will rob us of God’s blessing.

⁹⁵ Satan and his demons can employ many different methods to try to make us weaken. They may use relatives or friends to give opposition. It frequently is as Jesus foretold: “A man’s enemies will be persons of his own household.” (Matthew 10:36) If you are seeking to keep free from all demonistic practices in order to prove your

93. What personality change is required?

94. Once we are free from demonism, what does it take to stay free?

95. What methods does Satan often use to weaken us?

love for God and be true to his commandments no matter what other people may say or do, consider now a few of the many tests that might confront a person.—1 John 5:3; Colossians 2:8.

WHEN SOMEONE DIES

⁹⁶ In parts of Africa, it is usual to arrange for a “wake” when a person dies. Relatives and friends gather at the home of the deceased or at the “family house.” There is wailing, singing, the beating of drums, drinking and the carrying on of other practices according to the local custom. In some instances the deceased, washed and dressed up in the best of his clothing, is “laid in state” where friends and relatives file past the bed to have a last look at him before he is buried.

⁹⁷ It is normal to be sad after the death of a friend or relative. Jesus was grieved at the death of his friend Lazarus and even gave way to tears. (John 11:33, 35) However, tears of genuine sadness are quite different from the wailing and crying that generally accompany many funerals in certain lands. It is natural to cry, even to the point of wailing, at the loss of a loved one. (2 Samuel 1:11, 12) However, to cry and wail out of fear of displeasing unseen spirits, or because of fear of other family members, is contrary to God’s Word. Often the words used during the wailing and singing address the deceased or other ancestors in prayer or supplication. Indeed, some wakes are kept entirely out of fear of the dead. So while it is not wrong for one who fears Jehovah to attend a funeral, it is good to remember the counsel to

96, 97. (a) What funeral custom is closely related to demon worship? (b) What is the Christian viewpoint about funerals?

'separate ourselves and quit touching the unclean thing.' (2 Corinthians 6:17) We can find ways to show our sympathy and give true comfort without taking part in any activity that is connected with spirit worship. Too, Jehovah's people should not allow themselves to be overcome by grief, since they have the hope of the resurrection. That is why the Bible says: "Moreover, brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant concerning those who are sleeping in death; *that you may not sorrow just as the rest also do who have no hope.*" —1 Thessalonians 4:13.

⁹⁸ Of course, customs connected with death, funerals and restrictions on surviving relatives vary greatly according to local beliefs and traditions. But quite often they are based on the belief that the dead can observe the living, and they involve many practices that are contrary to God's Word. A true servant of God would not want to contaminate himself with these. In some areas in Africa, a year after a person's death, special rites are even performed 'to bring the dead man back home.' It is believed that at death the soul does not go at once to the 'spirit world' but enters an inactive state until a second funeral rite has been held and that then it can enter the 'land of the spirits.' In other places an animal often is slaughtered and drinks are offered at the funeral in sacrifice to dead ancestors. Followers of both Christendom's churches and Islam take part in such rituals.

⁹⁹ The important thing, however, is what God's Word says about such practices. For example, at

98. What other customs may also be related to demonism?

99, 100. (a) Why should Christians be alert on such occasions?

(b) What can Jehovah not tolerate?

Psalm 106:28, 29 it speaks of unfaithful Israelites who took up false worship and began to "eat the sacrifices of the dead ones." It shows that "they were causing offense" to God by such dealings and suffered the loss of his favor. We have already learned from the Bible that when a person dies, only God can cause such a one to live again by means of a resurrection.—See paragraphs 33 to 36.



¹⁰⁰ Yes, deaths, funerals, marriages, pregnancies, births, circumcisions are all occasions to be alert. God's Word warns: "Awake! be on the alert! Your enemy the devil, like a roaring lion, prowls round looking for someone to devour." (1 Peter 5:8, *New*

English Bible) It is very easy to give in to pressure and put on some little "medicine" like an amulet. But one who wants God's approval will remember that Jehovah is a "God exacting exclusive devotion." (Exodus 20:4-6) He does not tolerate false worship based on lies nor will he bless any of his servants if they are "lukewarm" about his commandments.—Revelation 3:16.

TIMES OF ILLNESS

¹⁰¹ In times of illness some persons have tried a number of doctors and hospitals but have not found relief. Some may feel they should turn to what is called in some places "country medicine," that is, the help of a healer who offers cures. Most of these "doctors" use herbs and other natural remedies, which, by themselves, may be quite harmless. But the danger lies in the fact that such herbalists or "country doctors" may combine spiritism with their use of herbs and other medicines. In the Bible, the term "spiritism" as found in the *New World Translation* at Revelation 21:8 comes from the Greek word *phar-ma-ki'a*, which literally means "druggery." This is because in ancient times many diviners and other practitioners of spiritism made use of drugs in the rites they performed.

¹⁰² Practicers of healing may work spiritism into their cures by making use of a sacrifice (the bird or animal being provided by the sick person), by use of magic, or by casting a spell. In a country of western Africa, a man was directed to a tribeswoman for an herb to cure a tooth ailment. In giving him the medicine, the woman told him not

101. What danger could there be in "country medicine"?

102. How can spiritism be involved with suggested "cures"?

to look at it. When asked why, she said that the medicine 'would lose its power' if he looked at it. But how can an herb or other medicine know if it is 'being looked at'? Do such things have eyes? Obviously not, and so it is clear that the healer believed that spirit forces would work through the medicine, in effect giving it magical power.

¹⁰³ Some "country doctors" may even claim they respect God's laws against spiritism, whereas in reality they resort to magic in their practices. They may use a poultice of mud or herbs for healing purposes. But, on removing the poultice, they produce some object, perhaps a rock or an old rag, and then claim that this is the cause of the sickness that they say they have removed from the body.

¹⁰⁴ We have already read what the Almighty God thinks of those who practice magic and sorcery and how he views them as "detestable." (Deuteronomy 18:10-12; see paragraphs 58 to 61.) "Country medicine" often uses ceremonies, rituals and sacrifices to appeal to 'the gods.' So, then, if some "country doctor" were to ask you to bring a chicken or goat for sacrificing, what would that mean? To whom would such an animal really be sacrificed? The inspired apostle Paul says: "The things which the nations sacrifice they sacrifice to demons, and not to God; and I do not want you to become sharers with the demons."
—1 Corinthians 10:20-22.

¹⁰⁵ If we have become free from enslavement to demon influence, we cannot let ourselves be drawn

103. What do some "country doctors" resort to in their practice?

104. What can be said of sacrifices connected with "country medicine"?

105. If we or our children cannot get healed after using every proper means, what should we do?

back into the web of false practices and traditions and still remain free. But what if we have tried every proper means of being healed from sickness and have had no success? The Bible tells us: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Psalm 55:22) Pray to him, not that you may be healed by some miracle, but that you may have the wisdom to select wise and proper treatment and, most of all, that you may remain spiritually healthy and strong, keeping firm faith and a happy outlook, however long or serious your period of illness may prove to be. To Jehovah you can also entrust your children. To Him they owe their life. He can also preserve them but not by such things as "protective medicine" or strings, sacrifices, rituals or other ceremonies.



¹⁰⁶ We know that people who practice spiritism, including the healers and "country doctors" as well, get sick sooner or later and all die from one cause or another. Even though God's true servants and their children who stay free from spiritism should suffer for a time or even be afflicted by some incurable ailment, they have a wonderful hope to sustain them. They know that Jehovah God has an appointed time when he will eliminate all sickness and death. Those who stay faithful to God will then be able to receive life-giving provisions, pictured by the "river of water of life" lined by trees whose leaves are "for the curing of the nations." (Revelation 22:1, 2) So, even though faced with death, we can keep in mind Jesus' words: "Whoever wants to save his soul will lose it; but whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it." (Matthew 16:25) Rather than trying to save our lives by turning to unclean practices of spiritism, we can look to the power of the Almighty God and trust that he will bring us back from death by means of a resurrection to life in his healthful new order.

DREAMS

¹⁰⁷ The invisible spirit adversary, Satan, can also use dreams to turn God's servants from pure worship. Many people attach great importance to dreams. In a few cases they seem to foretell events that later do take place. And it is true that in ancient times a few of God's servants, like Jacob's beloved son Joseph, were used to foretell certain events through dreams. However, we need to keep

106. What hope sustains God's servants who get sick and may even die?

107, 108. (a) Why does Jehovah not use dreams to guide us today? (b) Relying on dreams has what bad effect?

in mind that in those days they did not have all the writings of the Bible to provide a complete guide for them. Today we have this. Of those writings we read: "All Scripture is inspired of God . . . that the man of God may be *fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.*" —2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

¹⁰⁸ God's Word, the Bible, is a COMPLETE guide for us in every activity that is good. Ever since God caused it to be written in its entirety, that inspired Word, and not dreams, has been God's way for guiding his true servants, right until the present day. In fact, his Word warns us about dreams that are associated with divination and false worship, saying: "The practicers of divination, for their part, have visioned falsehood, and valueless dreams are what they keep speaking." (Zechariah 10:2; Deuteronomy 13:1-3) God's inspired Word will guide us in right paths. But those who rely on dreams are sure to be led into false paths, away from pure worship.—Jeremiah 23:25-27, 32; 27:9, 10.

A GLORIOUS FUTURE FOR TRUE WORSHIPERS

¹⁰⁹ Instead of putting your trust in dreams, turn to the marvelous prophecies found in God's Word. That Word does not deceive you but tells the truth about the worship of unseen spirits and the real condition of the dead. By showing you that the dead are unconscious and cannot help or harm the living, it frees you from enslaving fear. It protects you by exposing the demons as deceitful spirits who can pretend to be the dead and thereby fool many people. On the other hand, when you

109. How does God's Word serve for your blessing and protection?

put the Bible's teachings into practice in your life, you will find that they bring great benefits, such as peace of mind and happiness of heart. And you can see how accurately Bible prophecies are coming true today.

¹¹⁰ What do these prophecies tell us as to the future? They foretell that shortly all false worship, including the worship of selfish unseen spirits with its spiritistic traditions and practices, will be utterly destroyed. In the Bible all the false religions of the whole world, including the false religions of Christendom, are represented by a symbolic unclean woman called "Babylon the Great." She is pictured as a great city-kingdom that "sits on many waters" and those waters "mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues."—Revelation 17:1, 5, 15, 18.

¹¹¹ We can see how false religion of different kinds has built up an empire that enslaves and oppresses people in all parts of the earth right till this day. To that symbolic city, God's Word says: "By your spiritistic practice all the nations were misled." (Revelation 18:23) Because false religion is used by selfish unseen spirits to mislead the people and turn them from pure worship, God hates it. Of the empire of false religion, symbolic Babylon the Great, the Bible says: "She will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong." Though the demons and their ruler Satan have superhuman powers, they are weak when compared with Jehovah God and his angelic forces. Those selfish unseen spirits will never be able to save those who engage in

110. What does "Babylon the Great" represent?

111. Why does Jehovah warn his people to get out of Babylon the Great?

practices that are contrary to God's Word, when God's time comes to do away with the world empire of false religion, Babylon the Great. That is why God warns us: "Get out of her, my people, if you do not want to share with her in her sins."—Revelation 18:4, 8.

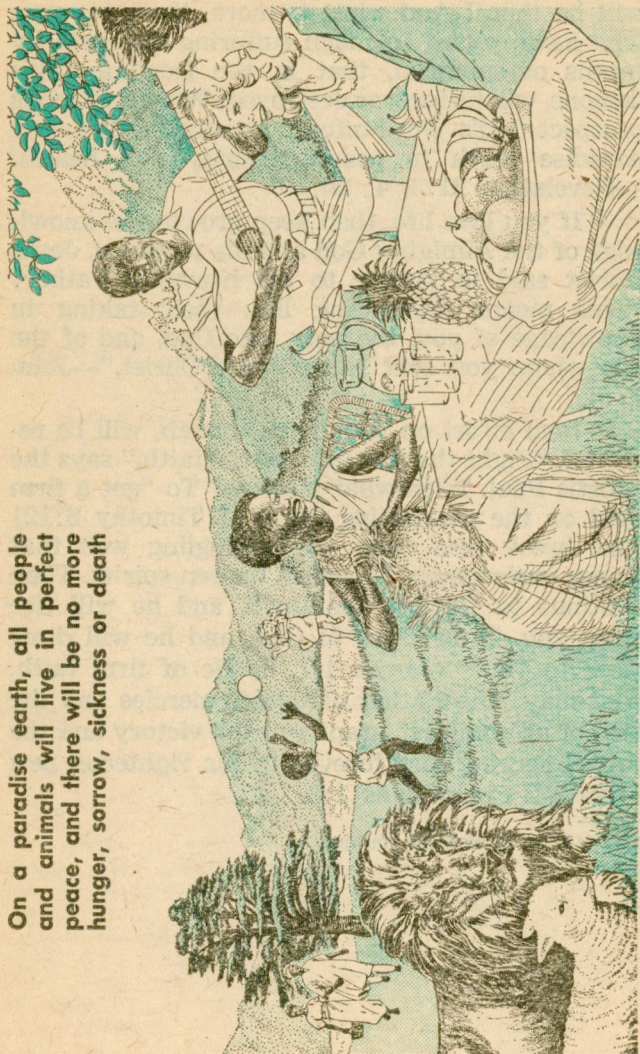
¹¹² That destruction of false religion will be swiftly followed by the "war of the great day of God the Almighty." Then, as God's representative, the glorified Christ Jesus will lead the majestic forces of heavenly angels against all enemies of God on earth. In this way God will sweep the earth clean of wickedness just as easily as a woman can clean her home. (Revelation 16:14-16) Will there be any survivors? The Bible says that "the upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it." (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Yes, "the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—Psalm 37:10, 11, 29; Proverbs 12:7.

¹¹³ Can you imagine living on an earth restored to a beautiful paradise with truly humble and loving people as your companions, not under any selfish, oppressive political system but under a perfect and righteous government? (Daniel 2:44; Isaiah 65:17, 21, 22, 25) Would you like to live in such a time when the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven and where people will learn war no more? (2 Peter 3:13; Matthew 6:10; Micah 4:3, 4) No sickness, pain or fear of death

112. What war will then follow? Who will survive it?

113. What glorious future lies before us?

On a paradise earth, all people
and animals will live in perfect
peace, and there will be no more
hunger, sorrow, sickness or death



will be there! And what is more, the very ones who have caused so much suffering on earth by means of spiritism, that is, the Devil and his demons, will be forever destroyed! What a glorious prospect God's Word offers: Everlasting life on a paradise earth in peace, security and health!—Revelation 21:3, 4; 20:10.

¹¹⁴ If you love life, then keep growing in knowledge of the Almighty God and his purposes. Jesus Christ said in prayer to his heavenly Father: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—John 17:3.

¹¹⁵ Real effort on your part, though, will be required. "Fight the fine fight of the faith," says the apostle Paul. With what purpose? To "get a firm hold on the everlasting life." (1 Timothy 6:12) Yes, break free from the entangling web that brings enslavement to selfish unseen spirits. Then continue to "oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." (James 4:7, 8) Be of firm faith. And may "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort" grant you the victory and the joy of serving him forever in his righteous new order.—2 Corinthians 1:3.

114, 115. So what must you do?

Other Bible Truths Made Clear

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