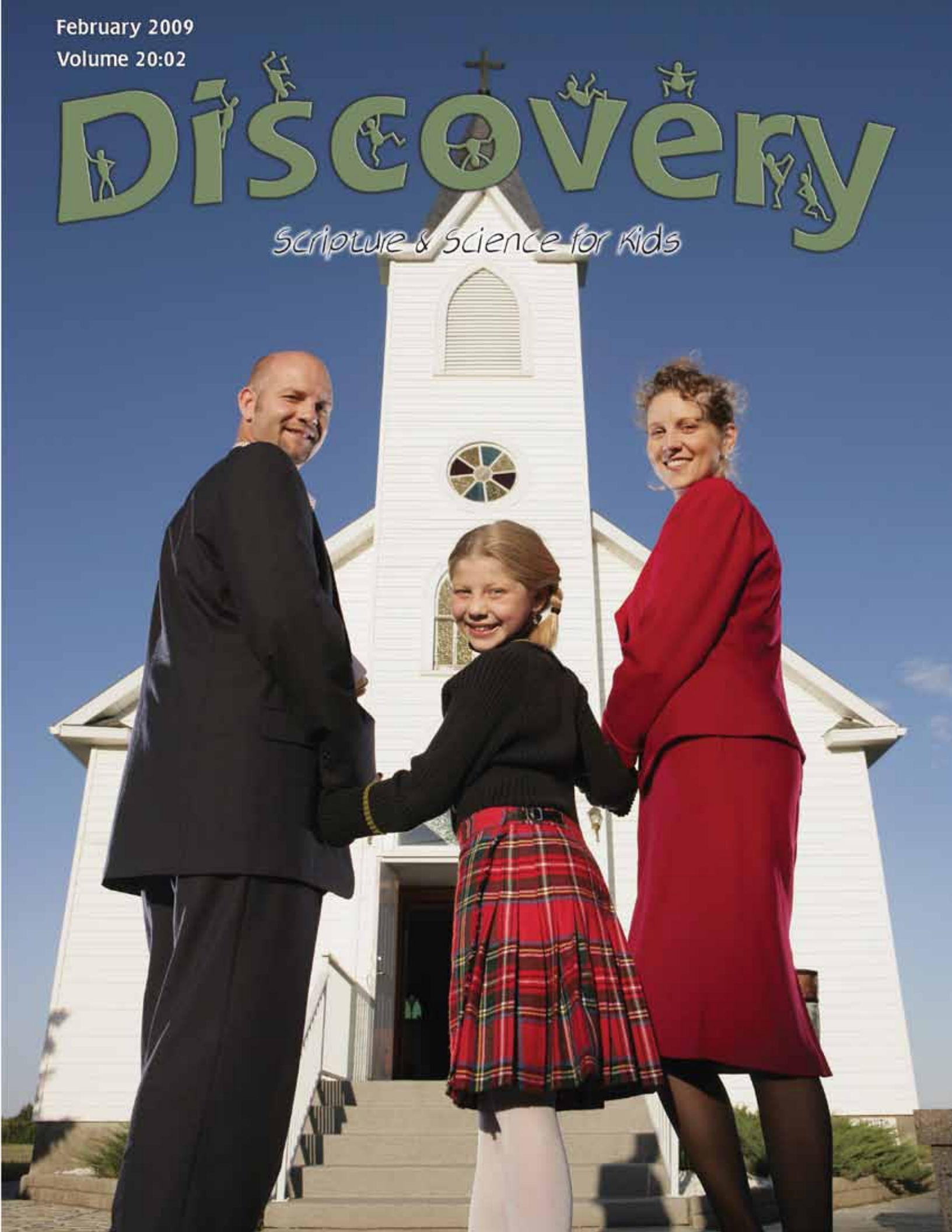


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Discovery

Scripture & Science for Kids



COMING BEFORE GOD



KYLE BUTT

Imagine being invited to meet the president of the United States. You win an essay contest, and the grand prize is a trip to Washington, D.C. You are excited, but nervous at the same time. You wonder what clothes you should wear, what time you should arrive, what you should call the president—"Mr. President" or "President, Sir." You also wonder what to say and how to say it. You are thinking that you need to be on your best behavior.

Now let's change the scene. Suppose you get to be in the presence of the God of the Universe Who is **much** more important than the president. What do you wear? What do you say? How should you act? The truth is, this is not an imaginary scenario. God designed a way for humans to come before His throne. It is called worship. When we worship God, we are singing and praying to God, Who hears us. Even though we cannot physically see God, we are still in His presence spiritually.

So, how should we act when we go to worship? First, we should prepare our minds before we get there. Worship is a spiritual event, which means

that it is done with our spirits or minds. We must try to stop thinking about ordinary things like video games, sports, or school, and focus on important, spiritual things like Jesus, God, and the Bible.

Second, during worship we should always be respectful. It is a shame to misbehave when the Bible is being read, during the singing of a song of praise to God, or during the Lord's Supper. We would not even think about misbehaving in the presence of the president, yet some young people talk, giggle, and misbehave in the presence of God. We should always be respectful, and remember that we are worshipping before God's throne.

In the book of Leviticus, two men were severely punished because they worshiped God incorrectly. To explain why He did this, God said: "By those who come near Me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified" (Leviticus 10:3). When we worship God, we must remember that we have come into the presence of the Ruler of the Universe.



Going Through the Motions

ERIC LYONS

Have you ever spoken with someone who seemed distracted? Most likely this has happened to you many times. Maybe you really needed to talk with your older brother about something, but as soon as you began speaking to him, a football game came on TV. Once his attention was distracted, he rarely made eye contact with you while you continued speaking. He only responded to you by giving very brief answers, like "uh sure," "well...yeah, okay," "maybe later." You could tell he really didn't want to talk to you while the game was on TV.

What if something like this happened every time you talked with your brother—you begin speaking, and he quickly is distracted by something or someone? You probably would begin to think that your brother really did not love you very much. If he cared about your feelings, then he would pay more attention to you, right?

Do you realize that every time we go to worship, **God** wants our attention? It is true that our whole lives should be focused on trying to please God, but worship is a special time in which we should be focused on Him.

Jesus once rebuked a group of scribes and Pharisees by quoting from the prophet Isaiah, who said: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9).

God wants our attention in worship. When we pray, He does not want us merely to get into some kind of prayer posture (like bowing our heads or kneeling); He wants us to pray from our hearts (even when someone else is leading the prayer). He expects us to worship Him "in spirit" (John 4:23-24). God does not simply want us to move our mouths when we sing or eat the bread during communion. He wants us to worship Him by having our **minds** in tune with what we are doing—whether it's praying, singing, listening to the preacher, giving money, or eating the Lord's Supper.

When the church comes together to worship God, it is not a time just to "go through the motions"; it is a time to glorify God respectfully for Who He is and what He has done for us.

WHY WORSHIP

ON

Sunday?

Christians meet on various days of the week to worship God and to study the Bible. In many places, Christians meet on Wednesdays for Bible study, or on other weeknights for special singings or gospel meetings. Christians can also be found worshipping on Sundays. Have you ever wondered why we worship on the first day of the week? Is it tradition? Is it because everyone else is doing it? Or, did God command us to worship on the first day of the week?

There are important reasons why we come together to worship on Sunday. One of them is to take the Lord's Supper. The Bible records in Acts 20:7—"Now upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread..." The first-century Christians came together to break bread (take the Lord's Supper), and we should follow their example by doing the same.

We also know that the early Christians set aside money to give to God on the first day of the week. To the Christians in Corinth Paul wrote: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given

orders to the church of Galatia, so you must do also: **on the first day of the week** let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

Christians gather to worship on Sunday because Christ rose from the grave on the first day of the week. In Matthew 28, Jesus' crucifixion is vividly described, but the cross did not stop Him. He rose from the tomb on the third day after His brutal death. Matthew 28:6 says simply: "He is not here; for He is risen." Because Jesus is no longer dead, but alive, we have the privilege of praising His name on the first day of every week—the day the early Christians came together to worship God, and the day God's people today gather together to glorify His name.



Addition
&
Subtraction

When your parents tell you to do something, they expect you to do it. If they ask you to mow the lawn, they expect you to get out the lawn mower, and cut only the grass. What if you decided to mow down all of your mother's flowers instead? Or what if you decided to burn the grass on the lawn instead of mowing it? What if you chose not to mow at all? Would your parents be happy with you? No, because when your parents tell you what to do, they expect you to do it—without any additions or subtractions.

In the same way, God has told us to do certain things in our worship. Christians are told to sing, pray, teach, give, and take the Lord's Supper. However, what if we **add** things to the worship, or **take** something away from the worship? Will God be happy with us? Some churches add instrumental music to their singing, and others take away the Lord's Supper. What does God think about these actions?

Throughout the Bible, God has commanded His people not to take away from or add to anything that He commanded. "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it

nor take away from it" (Deuteronomy 12:32; also read Deuteronomy 4:2). God has specific commands that He wants His people to keep—without anything being added. Concerning the book of Revelation, the apostle John wrote: "For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:18-19).

When we worship God, we must be careful to do exactly as He has commanded us, not adding or subtracting from anything God has said. When we follow God's commands without any additions or subtractions, we show our love for Him. Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Let us try to show

love to God and Christ by keeping their commands—all of them—without adding to or subtracting from them.



ACTIVITY PAGES



COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES (NKJV)

1. "NOW CONCERNING THE COLLECTION FOR THE _____, AS I HAVE GIVEN ORDERS TO THE CHURCHES OF _____, SO YOU MUST DO ALSO: ON THE _____ DAY OF THE WEEK, LET EACH ONE OF YOU LAY SOMETHING ASIDE, STORING UP AS HE MAY PROSPER, THAT THERE BE NO COLLECTIONS WHEN I COME" (1 CORINTHIANS 16: 1-2).
2. "GOD IS _____, AND THOSE WHO _____ HIM MUST WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH" (JOHN 4:24).
3. "BY THOSE WHO COME NEAR ME I MUST BE REGARDED AS _____; AND BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE I MUST BE GLORIFIED" (LEVITICUS 10:3).
4. "THESE PEOPLE DRAW NEAR TO ME WITH THEIR _____, AND HONOR ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR _____ IS FAR FROM ME. AND IN VAIN THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN" (MATTHEW 15:8-9).

1. We must be reverent when _____ God.
2. We are supposed to worship God in spirit and in _____.
3. All Christians should assemble to worship God on the _____ day of the week.
4. God is _____ (John 4:24).
5. The purpose of going to worship is not to be _____.
6. _____ chose to obey God when sacrificing, but his brother Cain did not.
7. _____ is infinitely more important than any president or king.
8. In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus rebuked a group of scribes and Pharisees by quoting from the prophet _____.

G Z H U T C U W Q S E B D
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SOLVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE

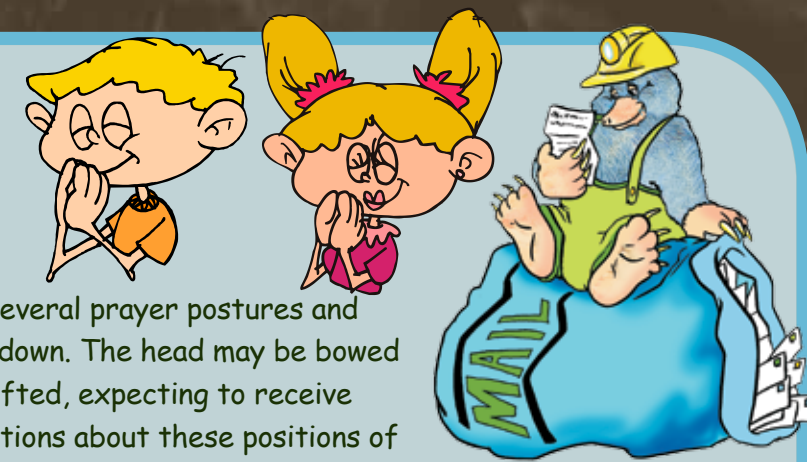
Dear Digger Doug,

Do we have to close our eyes when we pray?

Dear reader,

What an interesting question! The Bible mentions several prayer postures and positions. These include standing, kneeling, and lying down. The head may be bowed or looking up into the heavens. The hands may be uplifted, expecting to receive blessings from God. The Bible gives no direct instructions about these positions of the body. It appears that they are acceptable since they convey specific meaning. For example, kneeling shows submission. Bowing the head shows humility and respect. Falling on one's face would show complete dependency. If the person is sincere, and not trying to "put on a show" or impress others, these positions are acceptable.

But what about our eyes when we pray? On two occasions, when Jesus prayed to the Father, He lifted up His eyes to heaven (John 11:41; 17:1). On the other hand, when the tax collector prayed, he "would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven" (Luke 18:13). So the Bible simply does not specify whether our eyes are to be closed or open. Most people probably close their eyes so that they are not distracted by movement around them, enabling them to concentrate better on the prayer. The important thing is to pray with the right attitude and in harmony with God's will (James 5:13-15).



TRUE OR FALSE

1. _____ GOD IS NOT CONCERNED WITH HOW CHRISTIANS WORSHIP.
2. _____ PARTAKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER IS A PART OF WORSHIPING GOD ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.
3. _____ THE MAIN POINT OF WORSHIP IS TO HAVE FUN AND BE ENTERTAINED.
4. _____ TRUE WORSHIP INVOLVES THE RIGHT ACTIONS WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE.
5. _____ PROPER WORSHIP INVOLVES FOCUSING ON GOD.
6. _____ THE BOOK OF LEVITICUS TELLS OF TWO MEN WHO WERE SEVERELY PUNISHED BECAUSE THEY WORSHIPED GOD INCORRECTLY.
7. _____ WE SHOULD NEVER ADD TO OR SUBTRACT FROM GOD'S WORD.
8. _____ CHRISTIANS IN THE FIRST CENTURY WORSHIPED GOD ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.



ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER

1. EXPLAIN WHY IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO ADD TO OR TAKE AWAY FROM GOD'S COMMANDS.
2. TELL WHY WE SHOULD BE REVERENT WHEN WORSHIPING GOD.



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Entertaining OURSELVES or Worshiping God?

MICHAEL CORTEZ

In Ezekiel 33:31-32, God told Ezekiel: “They come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but **their hearts pursue their own gain.** Indeed **you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument;** for they hear your words, but they do not do them.” In other words, the people were entertained by Ezekiel’s preaching. They listened, and even acted like God’s children, but in their hearts, they just wanted to be entertained.



This attitude has plagued religion for centuries, but has now been taken a step further. Instead of being entertained by worship, people have tried to make worship entertainment. For example, they have introduced mechanical instruments, dramas, and hand-clapping into the worship service. Sadly, these additions can be found even in the church of our Lord. It seems as though some people have forgotten what worship is all about. And that leads us to an important question: how does God feel about all of these things?

From the beginning, God wanted man to worship Him according to the commandments He gave. When Cain and Abel offered their worship to God, Abel’s was acceptable, but Cain’s was not (Genesis 4:1-5). Why? Abel **obeyed** what God said to do in worship, but Cain did not. Later, under the Law of Moses, two priests tried to change things in their approach to God, and God sent fire to consume them (Leviticus 10:1-2). The lesson is obvious: **do not change God’s pattern for worship.** Therefore, when the New Testament tells us what God considers acceptable worship (singing, giving, preaching, praying, and partaking of the Lord’s Supper), we should make no changes. Worship was **never** intended to be “entertaining,” and people should be ashamed when they try to make it so. Worship is a blessing that is only given to a Christian, and it should be done “in spirit and truth” (John 4:24). Today, too many people are like the people in Ezekiel’s day who were going “after their gain,” forgetting that worship is not for them, but for God.

ANSWERS

COMPLETE THE BIBLE VERSES: 1. saints, Galatia; 2. Spirit, worship; 3. holy; 4. mouth, heart, SOVE, FIND, AND CIRCLE; 1. worship-
 ing; 2. truth; 3. first; 4. Spirit; 5. entertained; 6. Abel; 7. God; 8. Isaiah, TRUE OR FALSE; 1-F; 2-T; 3-F; 4-T; 5-T; 6-T; 7-T; 8-T.
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