

- Song 92 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Jehovah’s People Are Zealous for True Worship”:** (10 min.)  
Ps 69:9—Our zeal for true worship should be clearly evident (w10 12/15 7-11 ¶2-17)  
Ps 71:17, 18—Older ones can help younger ones to be zealous (w14 1/15 23-25 ¶4-10)  
Ps 72:3, 12, 14, 16-19—Our zeal moves us to tell others what the Kingdom will do for mankind (w15 10/1 16 ¶3; w10 8/15 32 ¶19-20)
  - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Ps 69:4, 21—How did these verses apply prophetically to the Messiah? (w11 8/15 11 ¶17; w11 8/15 15 ¶15)
- Ps 73:24—How does Jehovah lead his servants to glory? (w13 2/15 25-26 ¶3-4)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ps 73:1-28

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) wp16.4 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) wp16.4 cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) fg lesson 5 ¶3-4

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 140
- **“Could You Try It for One Year?”:** (15 min.)  
Begin with a brief discussion of the article along with “Schedules for Regular Pioneering.” Then play and discuss the JW Broadcasting video *Choosing a Career With Eternal Future*. (Go to VIDEO ON DEMAND > TEENAGERS.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) ia chap. 19 ¶17-31, box on p. 170, review on p. 171
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 123 and Prayer

## Could You Try It for One Year?



Try what? Regular pioneering! What rich blessings you will enjoy!—Pr 10:22.

**BY PIONEERING, YOU CAN . . .**

- gain skill as an evangelizer and enjoy the ministry more
- strengthen your relationship with Jehovah. The more you talk about him to others, the more you will be reminded of his awe-inspiring qualities
- experience the satisfaction that comes from putting Kingdom interests ahead of your own and the joy that results from giving of yourself in behalf of others. —Mt 6:33; Ac 20:35
- attend the pioneer meeting conducted during the visit of the circuit overseer, the special meeting in conjunction with the circuit assembly, and Pioneer Service School
- have more opportunities to start and conduct Bible studies
- spend more time with fellow preachers, enjoying an interchange of encouragement. —Ro 1:11, 12

- 29** Because of your temple at Jerusalem,<sup>a</sup>  
Kings will bring gifts to you.<sup>b</sup>
- 30** Rebuke the wild beasts of the reeds,  
The assembly of bulls<sup>c</sup> and their calves,  
Until the peoples bow down bringing\* pieces of silver.  
But he scatters the peoples who delight in war.
- 31** Bronze articles will be brought\* out of Egypt;<sup>d</sup>  
Cush will hasten to offer gifts to God.
- 32** O kingdoms of the earth, sing to God,<sup>e</sup>  
Sing praises\* to Jehovah, (*Selah*)
- 33** To the one who rides the ancient heaven of heavens.<sup>f</sup>  
Look! He thunders with his voice, his mighty voice.
- 34** Acknowledge God's strength.<sup>g</sup>  
His majesty is over Israel,  
And his strength is in the skies.\*
- 35** God is awe-inspiring from his\* grand sanctuary.<sup>h</sup>  
He is the God of Israel,  
Who gives strength and power to the people.<sup>i</sup>  
Praise to God.

To the director; set to "The Lilies." Of David.

- 69** Save me, O God, for the waters threaten my life.<sup>\*j</sup>
- 2** I have sunk down into the deep mud, where there is no solid ground.<sup>k</sup>  
I have come into deep waters,  
And the rushing stream has swept me away.<sup>l</sup>

**68:30** \*Or possibly, "stamping down on." **68:31** \*Or possibly, "Ambassadors will come." **68:32** \*Or "Make music." **68:34** \*Lit., "clouds." **68:35** \*Lit., "your." **69:1** \*Or "have come to my soul."

## CHAP. 68

- a 1Ki 6:1  
1Ch 16:1  
Ezr 5:14
- b 1Ki 10:10  
2Ch 32:23  
Ps 72:10
- c Eze 39:18
- d Isa 45:14  
Isa 60:5
- e De 32:43
- f Ps 104:3
- g Ps 96:7
- h Ps 47:2  
Ps 66:5
- i Ps 29:11  
Isa 40:29-31

## CHAP. 69

- j Ps 144:7  
La 3:54  
Jon 2:5
- k Ps 40:2
- l Ps 32:6  
Jon 2:3

## Second Col.

- a Ps 22:2
- b Ps 119:82  
Ps 119:123  
Isa 38:14
- c Lu 23:22  
Joh 15:24, 25
- d Ps 22:6  
Jer 15:15
- e Isa 50:6  
Mt 26:67  
Mt 27:29
- f Job 19:13  
Ps 31:11  
Joh 1:11  
Joh 7:5

- g 1Ki 19:10  
Ps 119:139  
Mt 21:12, 13  
Mr 11:15-17  
Joh 2:13-17

- h Ro 15:3

- 3** I am exhausted from calling out;<sup>a</sup>  
My throat has become hoarse.  
My eyes have grown weary while waiting for my God.<sup>b</sup>
- 4** Those hating me without cause<sup>c</sup>  
Are more numerous than the hairs of my head.  
Those who would do away with me,  
My treacherous enemies,\* have become many.  
I was forced to hand over what I had not stolen.
- 5** O God, you are aware of my foolishness,  
And my guilt is not hidden from you.
- 6** May those hoping in you not be put to shame because of me,  
O Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of armies.  
May those seeking you not be humiliated because of me,  
O God of Israel.
- 7** I suffer reproach on your account;<sup>d</sup>  
Humiliation covers my face.<sup>e</sup>
- 8** I have become a stranger to my brothers,  
A foreigner to the sons of my mother.<sup>f</sup>
- 9** Zeal for your house has consumed me,<sup>g</sup>  
And the reproaches of those reproaching you have fallen upon me.<sup>h</sup>
- 10** When I humbled myself\* with fasting,<sup>h</sup>  
I was reproached for it.
- 11** When I made sackcloth my clothing,  
I became an object of scorn\* to them.

**69:4** \*Or "enemies for no reason." **69:10** \*Lit., "my soul." <sup>#</sup>Or possibly, "When I wept and fasted." **69:11** \*Lit., "a proverb."

- 12** I am the talk of those sitting  
in the city gate,  
And the drunkards make me  
the subject of their songs.
- 13** But may my prayer come to  
you,  
O Jehovah, at an acceptable  
time.<sup>a</sup>  
In your abundant loyal love,  
O God,  
Answer me with your sure  
acts of salvation.<sup>b</sup>
- 14** Rescue me from the mire;  
Do not let me sink down.  
Rescue me from those who  
hate me  
And from the deep waters.<sup>c</sup>
- 15** Do not let the rushing flood-  
waters sweep me away,<sup>d</sup>  
Or let the deep swallow me,  
Or let the well\* close its  
mouth over me.<sup>e</sup>
- 16** Answer me, O Jehovah, for  
your loyal love is good.<sup>f</sup>  
According to your abundant  
mercy turn toward me,<sup>g</sup>
- 17** And do not hide your face  
from your servant.<sup>h</sup>  
Answer me quickly, for I am  
in distress.<sup>i</sup>
- 18** Come near to me and rescue  
me;\*  
Redeem me on account of my  
enemies.
- 19** You know my reproach and  
my disgrace and my humil-  
iation.<sup>j</sup>  
You see all my foes.
- 20** Reproach has broken my  
heart, and the wound is  
incurable.\*  
I was hoping for sympathy,  
but there was none,<sup>k</sup>  
And for comforters, but  
I found none.<sup>l</sup>
- 21** But for food they gave me  
poison,<sup>\*m</sup>

**69:15** \*Or "pit." **69:18** \*Or "Come near to my soul and reclaim it." **69:20** \*Or "and I am to the point of despair." **69:21** \*Or "a poisonous plant."

## CHAP. 69

- a Isa 49:8  
Heb 5:7
- b Ps 68:20
- c Ps 144:7
- d Ps 69:2
- e Ps 16:10
- f Ps 63:3  
Ps 109:21
- g Ps 25:16
- h Ps 27:9  
Ps 102:2
- i Ps 31:9  
Ps 40:13
- j Ps 22:6
- k Ps 142:4
- l Job 19:14
- m Mt 27:34  
Mr 15:23

## Second Col.

- a Mt 27:48  
Mr 15:36  
Lu 23:36  
Joh 19:29
- b Ro 11:9,10
- c Ps 21:9
- d Ac 1:20
- e Ex 32:33
- f Php 4:3  
Re 3:5  
Re 13:8
- g Ps 109:22
- h Ps 50:13-15  
Ho 14:2

- i Ps 10:17  
Ps 102:17  
Isa 66:2

- And for my thirst they gave  
me vinegar to drink.<sup>a</sup>
- 22** Let their table become a trap  
for them,  
And their prosperity,  
a snare.<sup>b</sup>
- 23** Let their eyes become dark-  
ened so that they cannot  
see,  
And make their hips tremble  
constantly.
- 24** Pour out upon them your  
indignation,\*  
And may your burning anger  
overtake them.<sup>c</sup>
- 25** Let their encampment\*  
become desolate;  
Let there be no inhabitant  
in their tents.<sup>d</sup>
- 26** For they pursue the one  
whom you struck,  
And they keep recounting  
the pains of those you  
wounded.
- 27** Add more guilt to their guilt,  
And may they have no share  
in your righteousness.
- 28** Let them be erased from the  
book of the living,<sup>\*e</sup>  
And may they not be  
enrolled among the  
righteous.<sup>f</sup>
- 29** But I am afflicted and in  
pain.<sup>g</sup>  
May your saving power,  
O God, protect me.
- 30** I will sing praises to the  
name of God,  
And I will magnify him with  
thanksgiving.
- 31** This will please Jehovah  
more than a bull,  
More than a young bull with  
horns and hooves.<sup>h</sup>
- 32** The meek will see it and  
rejoice.  
You who are seeking God,  
may your hearts revive.
- 33** For Jehovah is listening to  
the poor,<sup>i</sup>

**69:24** \*Or "wrath." **69:25** \*Or "walled camp." **69:28** \*Or "book of life."

And he will not despise his captive people.<sup>a</sup>

**34** Let heaven and earth praise him,<sup>b</sup>

The seas and everything that moves in them.

**35** For God will save Zion<sup>c</sup> And will rebuild the cities of Judah,

And they will dwell there and possess it.\*

**36** The descendants of his servants will inherit it,<sup>d</sup> And those who love his name<sup>e</sup> will reside in it.

To the director.  
Of David, to serve as a reminder.\*

**70** O God, save me;  
O Jehovah, hurry to help me.<sup>f</sup>

**2** May those seeking to take my life\*

Be put to shame and disgraced.

May those who delight in my calamity

Retreat in humiliation.

**3** May those who are saying:  
“Aha! Aha!”

Be driven back in shame.

**4** But let those who are seeking you

Exult and rejoice in you.<sup>g</sup>

May those who love your acts of salvation always say:

“May God be magnified!”

**5** But I am helpless and poor;<sup>h</sup>

O God, act quickly in my behalf.<sup>i</sup>

You are my helper and my rescuer;<sup>j</sup>

O Jehovah, do not delay.<sup>k</sup>

**71** In you, O Jehovah, I have taken refuge.

May I never be put to shame.<sup>l</sup>

**2** In your righteousness save me and rescue me.

CHAP. 69

a Ps 146:7

Isa 61:1

Lu 4:18

b Ps 96:11

Isa 49:13

c Ps 51:18

d Isa 61:9

Isa 66:22

e Ps 91:14

Jas 1:12

CHAP. 70

f Ps 40:13-17

g Ps 5:11

La 3:25

h Ps 109:22

i Ps 141:1

j Ps 18:2

k Ps 13:3

CHAP. 71

l Ps 25:2

Ps 31:1-3

Isa 45:17

Jer 17:18

Second Col.

a Ps 34:15

b 2Sa 22:2, 3

Ps 18:2

Ps 144:2

c Ps 17:8, 9

Ps 59:1

Ps 140:4

Mt 6:13

d 1Sa 17:45

Jer 17:7

e Ps 22:9, 10

Ps 139:16

Isa 46:3

f Ps 51:15

Heb 13:15

g Ps 92:14

h Ps 73:26

Ec 12:3

i 2Sa 17:1, 2

j Ps 3:2

Ps 42:10

Mt 27:42, 43

k Ps 22:11

Ps 35:22

Ps 38:21, 22

Incline your ear\* to me and save me.<sup>a</sup>

**3** Become for me a rock fortress

Where I can always enter.  
Give the command to

save me,

For you are my crag and my stronghold.<sup>b</sup>

**4** O my God, rescue me from the hand of the wicked,<sup>c</sup>

From the grasp of the unjust oppressor.

**5** For you are my hope,  
O Sovereign Lord Jehovah;

I have trusted in you\* since my youth.<sup>d</sup>

**6** I have depended on you from birth;

It was you who took me from my mother's womb.<sup>e</sup>

I praise you constantly.

**7** I have become like a miracle to many,

But you are my strong refuge.

**8** My mouth is filled with your praise;<sup>f</sup>

All day long I tell about your splendor.

**9** Do not cast me off in my old age;<sup>g</sup>

Do not abandon me when my strength fails.<sup>h</sup>

**10** My enemies speak against me,

And those seeking to take my life\* conspire together;<sup>i</sup>

**11** Saying: “God has abandoned him.

Chase after him and seize him, for there is no one to save him.”<sup>j</sup>

**12** O God, do not remain far away from me.

O my God, hurry to help me.<sup>k</sup>

**13** May those who are resisting me\*

69:35 \*That is, “the land.” 70:Sup \*Or “to bring to remembrance.” 70:2 \*Or “soul.”

71:2 \*Or “Bend down and listen.” 71:5 \*Or “You are my confidence.” 71:10 \*Or “seeking my soul.” 71:13 \*Or “my soul.”

- Be put to shame and perish.<sup>a</sup>  
 May those seeking my calamity  
 Be covered with disgrace  
 and humiliation.<sup>b</sup>
- 14** But as for me, I will continue  
 to wait;  
 I will add to your praise.
- 15** My mouth will recount your  
 righteousness,<sup>c</sup>  
 All day long your acts of sal-  
 vation,  
 Though they are too many  
 for me to grasp.<sup>\*d</sup>
- 16** I will come and tell about  
 your mighty acts,  
 O Sovereign Lord Jehovah;  
 I will mention your righ-  
 teousness, yours alone.
- 17** O God, you have taught me  
 from my youth,<sup>e</sup>  
 And until now I keep declar-  
 ing your wonderful works.<sup>f</sup>
- 18** Even when I am old and  
 gray, O God, do not  
 abandon me.<sup>g</sup>  
 Let me tell the next genera-  
 tion about your power\*  
 And about your mightiness  
 to all those who are to  
 come.<sup>h</sup>
- 19** Your righteousness, O God,  
 reaches to the heights;<sup>i</sup>  
 You have done great things;  
 O God, who is like you?<sup>j</sup>
- 20** Though you have made me  
 experience much distress  
 and calamity,<sup>k</sup>  
 Revive me again;  
 Bring me up from the  
 depths\* of the earth.<sup>l</sup>
- 21** May you increase my great-  
 ness  
 And surround and  
 comfort me.
- 22** Then I will praise you on a  
 stringed instrument  
 Because of your faithful-  
 ness, O my God.<sup>m</sup>

71:15 \*Or "number." 71:18 \*Lit.,  
 "arm." 71:20 \*Or "watery deeps."

CHAP. 71

- a 2Sa 17:23  
 b Ps 109:29  
 c Ps 35:28  
 Ps 40:9  
 d Ps 40:5  
 e Ps 71:5  
 f 2Sa 22:1  
 1Ch 16:4  
 Ps 9:1  
 g Ps 37:25  
 Ps 71:9  
 h Ex 13:8  
 1Ch 29:10, 11  
 Ps 78:2-4  
 i Ps 36:6  
 j Ex 15:11  
 Ps 86:8  
 Ps 89:6  
 Jer 10:7  
 k 2Sa 12:10, 11  
 l Ps 40:2  
 Ps 86:13  
 m Ps 25:10  
 Ps 108:4  
 Ps 146:6
- Second Col.  
 a Ps 63:5  
 Ps 104:33  
 b 2Sa 4:9  
 Ps 103:4  
 c Ps 71:8  
 d Ps 71:13

CHAP. 72

- e 1Ch 22:11, 12  
 1Ch 29:19  
 Jer 23:5  
 f 1Ki 3:9, 28  
 g Isa 11:4  
 h Ps 89:36, 37  
 Lu 1:32, 33  
 Re 11:15  
 i 2Sa 23:3, 4  
 Pr 16:15  
 Pr 19:12  
 j Isa 61:11  
 k 1Ki 4:25  
 1Ch 22:9  
 Isa 2:4  
 Isa 9:6

I will sing your praises\* with  
 the harp,  
 O Holy One of Israel.

- 23** My lips will shout joyfully as  
 I sing praises to you,<sup>a</sup>  
 For you have saved my life.<sup>\*b</sup>
- 24** My tongue will speak about\*  
 your righteousness all day  
 long,<sup>c</sup>  
 For those seeking my de-  
 struction will be ashamed  
 and disgraced.<sup>d</sup>

Regarding Solomon.

- 72** O God, give your judg-  
 ments to the king,  
 And endow the son of the  
 king with your righteous-  
 ness.<sup>e</sup>
- 2** May he plead the cause  
 of your people with righ-  
 teousness,  
 And of your lowly ones with  
 justice.<sup>f</sup>
- 3** May the mountains bring  
 peace to the people,  
 And may the hills bring righ-  
 teousness.
- 4** Let him defend\* the lowly  
 among the people,  
 Let him save the sons of the  
 poor,  
 And let him crush the de-  
 frauder.<sup>g</sup>
- 5** They will fear you as long as  
 there is a sun  
 And as long as the moon re-  
 mains,  
 For generation after genera-  
 tion.<sup>h</sup>
- 6** He will be like the rain that  
 falls on the mown grass,  
 Like showers of rain that wa-  
 ter the earth.<sup>i</sup>
- 7** In his days the righteous will  
 flourish,<sup>\*j</sup>  
 And peace will abound<sup>k</sup> until  
 the moon is no more.

71:22 \*Or "make music to you." 71:23  
 \*Or "redeemed my soul." 71:24 \*Or  
 "meditate on." 72:4 \*Lit., "judge."  
 72:7 \*Lit., "sprout."

- 8** He will have subjects\* from sea to sea  
And from the River<sup>#</sup> to the ends of the earth.<sup>a</sup>
- 9** The desert dwellers will bow down before him,  
And his enemies will lick the dust.<sup>b</sup>
- 10** The kings of Tar'shish and of the islands will pay tribute.<sup>c</sup>  
The kings of She'ba and of Se'ba will present gifts.<sup>d</sup>
- 11** All the kings will bow down before him,  
And all the nations will serve him.
- 12** For he will rescue the poor who cry for help,  
Also the lowly one and whoever has no helper.
- 13** He will have pity on the lowly and the poor,  
And the lives\* of the poor he will save.
- 14** From oppression and from violence he will rescue them,\*  
And their blood will be precious in his eyes.
- 
- 72:8 \*Or "will rule." <sup>#</sup>That is, the Euphrates. 72:13 \*Or "souls." 72:14 \*Or "redeem their souls."
- CHAP. 72**  
a Ex 23:31  
1Ki 4:21  
Ps 2:8  
Ps 22:27, 28  
Da 2:35  
Zec 9:10  
b Ps 2:9  
Ps 110:1  
c 1Ki 4:21  
d 1Ki 10:1, 2
- Second Col.**  
a 1Ki 10:10  
b Isa 30:23  
c Isa 35:1, 2  
d 1Ki 4:20  
e Ps 45:17  
Ps 89:35, 36  
f Ge 22:18  
Ga 3:14  
g 1Ch 29:10  
h Ex 15:11  
i Re 5:13  
j Nu 14:21  
Hab 2:14  
k 1Sa 17:58

- 15** May he live and be given the gold of She'ba.<sup>a</sup>  
May prayers be said for him continually,  
And may he be blessed all day long.
- 16** There will be an abundance of grain on the earth;<sup>b</sup>  
On the top of the mountains it will overflow.  
His fruit will flourish as in Leb'a-non,<sup>c</sup>  
And in the cities people will blossom like the vegetation of the earth.<sup>d</sup>
- 17** May his name endure forever,<sup>e</sup>  
And may it prosper as long as the sun.  
May people obtain a blessing for themselves by means of him;<sup>f</sup>  
May all nations pronounce him happy.
- 18** May Jehovah God be praised, Israel's God,<sup>g</sup>  
Who alone does wonderful things.<sup>h</sup>
- 19** May his glorious name be praised forever,<sup>i</sup>  
And may his glory fill the whole earth.<sup>j</sup>  
Amen and Amen.
- 20** This completes the prayers of David, the son of Jes'se.<sup>k</sup>

### BOOK THREE (Psalms 73-89)

- A melody of A'saph.<sup>a</sup>
- 73** God is truly good to Israel,  
to those pure in heart.<sup>b</sup>
- 2** As for me, my feet had almost strayed;  
My steps had nearly slipped.<sup>c</sup>
- 3** For I became envious of the arrogant\*  
When I would see the peace of the wicked.<sup>d</sup>
- 4** For they have no pain in their death;
- 
- 73:3 \*Or "boasters."
- CHAP. 73**  
a 2Ch 35:15  
b Ps 84:11  
Mt 5:8  
c Ps 94:18  
d Job 21:7  
Jer 12:1
- Second Col.**  
a Ec 7:15  
b Job 12:6  
Job 21:7, 9  
c Jer 12:1  
d Job 21:14, 15

- Their bodies are healthy.<sup>\*a</sup>
- 5** They are not troubled like other humans,<sup>b</sup>  
Nor do they suffer like other men.<sup>c</sup>
- 6** Therefore, haughtiness is their necklace;<sup>d</sup>  
Violence clothes them as a garment.
- 7** Their prosperity\* makes their eyes bulge;
- 
- 73:4 \*Or "Their paunch is fat." 73:7 \*Lit., "fat."

- They have exceeded the imaginations of the heart.
- 8** They scoff and say evil things.<sup>a</sup>  
They arrogantly threaten oppression.<sup>b</sup>
- 9** They speak as if they were as high as heaven,  
And their tongues swagger about in the earth.
- 10** So his people turn aside to them,  
And they drink from their abundant water.
- 11** They say: "How does God know?<sup>c</sup>  
Does the Most High really have knowledge?"
- 12** Yes, these are the wicked,  
who always have it easy.<sup>d</sup>  
They keep increasing their wealth.<sup>e</sup>
- 13** Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure  
And washed my hands in innocence.<sup>f</sup>
- 14** And I was troubled all day long;<sup>g</sup>  
Every morning I was chastised.<sup>h</sup>
- 15** But if I had said these things,  
I would have betrayed your people.\*
- 16** When I tried to understand it,  
It was troubling to me
- 17** Until I entered the grand sanctuary of God,  
And I discerned their future.
- 18** Surely you place them on slippery ground.<sup>i</sup>  
You make them fall to their ruin.<sup>j</sup>
- 19** How suddenly they are devastated!<sup>k</sup>  
How sudden is their finish as they come to a terrible end!
- 20** Like a dream when one wakes up, O Jehovah,

73:15 \*Lit., "the generation of your sons."

CHAP. 73

- a Ps 53:1  
b 1Ki 21:7  
c Ps 10:4, 11  
Ps 94:3, 7  
Eze 8:12  
Zep 1:12  
d Ps 37:35  
e Ps 17:14  
f Job 34:7, 9  
Job 35:3  
g Ps 34:19  
h Job 7:17, 18  
i Ps 35:6, 7  
Jer 23:11, 12  
j Ps 37:10, 20  
Ps 55:23  
Pr 3:33  
k Job 21:23  
Ps 37:1, 2  
Isa 30:13

Second Col.

- a Ps 73:3  
b Ps 16:8  
Ps 63:8  
Isa 41:10  
c Ps 25:9  
Ps 32:8  
Ps 37:23  
Ps 143:10  
Pr 3:6  
d Ps 37:34  
e Ps 42:2  
Ps 84:2  
Isa 26:9  
f Ps 16:5  
La 3:24  
g Nu 15:39  
Jas 4:4  
h Ps 65:4  
Jas 4:8  
i Ps 118:17

CHAP. 74

- j 1Ch 25:1  
2Ch 35:15  
k La 5:20  
l De 29:19, 20  
Ps 100:3  
m De 9:29

When you rouse yourself,  
you will dismiss\* their image.

- 21** But my heart was sour,<sup>a</sup>  
And deep inside\* I felt sharp pain.
- 22** I was unreasoning and lacked understanding;  
I was like a senseless beast before you.
- 23** But now I am continually with you;  
You have taken hold of my right hand.<sup>b</sup>
- 24** You guide me with your advice,<sup>c</sup>  
And afterward you will lead me to glory.<sup>d</sup>
- 25** Whom do I have in the heavens?  
And besides you I desire nothing on earth.<sup>e</sup>
- 26** My body and my heart may fail,  
But God is the rock of my heart and my portion forever.<sup>f</sup>
- 27** Truly, those keeping far from you will perish.  
You will put an end to\* everyone who immorally<sup>g</sup> leaves you.<sup>g</sup>
- 28** But as for me, drawing near to God is good for me.<sup>h</sup>  
I have made the Sovereign Lord Jehovah my refuge,  
To declare all your works.<sup>i</sup>
- A mas'kil.\* Of A'saph.<sup>j</sup>
- 74** Why, O God, have you rejected us forever?<sup>k</sup>  
Why does your anger burn\* against the flock of your pasture?<sup>l</sup>
- 2** Remember the people\* you acquired long ago,<sup>m</sup>

73:20 \*Lit., "despise." 73:21 \*Lit., "in my kidneys." 73:27 \*Lit., "silence."  
\*Or "unfaithfully." 74:Sup \*See Glossary. 74:1 \*Lit., "smoke." 74:2 \*Lit., "your assembly."

*“Preach the Word”*

(2 Timothy 4:2)

1. God has commanded us this day;  
He has given us a charge to obey.  
At all times, be ready to impart  
The reason for the hope within your heart.

*(CHORUS)*

*So preach the Word,  
Oh, how vital that all hear!  
Preach the Word,  
As this system's end draws near.  
Preach the Word,  
Help the meek to understand.  
Preach the Word,  
Throughout the land!*

2. Seasons of trouble we will face;  
Opposition may bring shame and disgrace.  
Though preaching may out of season seem,  
Our trust is in our God, who is supreme.

*(Chorus)*

3. Seasons of favor we will see,  
And the need for us to teach, there will be.  
The way to salvation we proclaim  
And help to sanctify Jehovah's name.

*(Chorus)*



- Song 92 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Jehovah’s People Are Zealous for True Worship”:** (10 min.)  
Ps 69:9—Our zeal for true worship should be clearly evident (w10 12/15 7-11 ¶2-17)  
Ps 71:17, 18—Older ones can help younger ones to be zealous (w14 1/15 23-25 ¶4-10)  
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Ps 73:24—How does Jehovah lead his servants to glory? (w13 2/15 25-26 ¶3-4)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

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## Could You Try It for One Year?



Try what? Regular pioneering! What rich blessings you will enjoy!—Pr 10:22.

**BY PIONEERING, YOU CAN . . .**

- gain skill as an evangelizer and enjoy the ministry more
- strengthen your relationship with Jehovah. The more you talk about him to others, the more you will be reminded of his awe-inspiring qualities
- experience the satisfaction that comes from putting Kingdom interests ahead of your own and the joy that results from giving of yourself in behalf of others. —Mt 6:33; Ac 20:35
- attend the pioneer meeting conducted during the visit of the circuit overseer, the special meeting in conjunction with the circuit assembly, and Pioneer Service School
- have more opportunities to start and conduct Bible studies
- spend more time with fellow preachers, enjoying an interchange of encouragement. —Ro 1:11, 12

# PSALMS 69-73 | Jehovah's People Are Zealous for True Worship

69:9

**Our zeal for true worship should be clearly evident**

- David showed zeal for Jehovah throughout his life
- David did not tolerate any rivalry or reproach of Jehovah's name

71:17, 18

**Older ones can help younger ones to be zealous**

- The writer of this psalm, perhaps David, expressed a desire to encourage the next generation
- Parents and experienced Christians can train younger ones



72:3, 12, 14, 16-19

**Our zeal moves us to tell others what the Kingdom will do for mankind**



**Verse 3**—Everyone will have peace



**Verse 12**—The poor will be rescued



**Verse 14**—Violence will not exist



**Verse 16**—There will be plenty of food for everyone

(w10 12/15 7-11 ¶2-17) <sup>2</sup> For true Christians today, nothing is more urgent than preaching the good news of the Kingdom and making disciples of people of all the nations. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Quoting Jesus, the disciple Mark wrote that this work must be done “first,” that is, before the end comes. (Mark 13:10) That, of course, is the way it should be. Jesus said: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” A harvest cannot wait; it must be brought in before the season is over.—Matt. 9:37.

<sup>3</sup> Because the preaching work is of such importance to us, it deserves our giving it as much of our time, energy, and attention as possible. Commendably, many are doing just that. Some have simplified their personal affairs so as to take up the full-time ministry as pioneers or missionaries or to serve at one of the Bethel homes around the world. Their life is very busy. They may have made many sacrifices, and they have many challenges to meet. Yet, they are richly blessed by Jehovah. We are happy for them. (*Read Luke 18:28-30.*) Others, while unable to join the ranks of full-time proclaimers, devote as much time as

possible to this lifesaving work, which includes helping our children to get saved.—Deut. 6:6, 7.

<sup>4</sup> As we have seen, a sense of urgency is usually connected with a time limit, a deadline, an end. We are living in the time of the end, and there is plenty of evidence—both Scriptural and historical—to prove that. (Matt. 24:3, 33; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) Still, no man knows the exact time when the end will come. When giving the details of “the sign” marking “the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus specifically said: “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matt. 24:36) That being so, some might find it difficult to maintain a sense of urgency year after year, especially if they have been doing so for a long time. (Prov. 13:12) Do you at times find yourself feeling that way? What can help us to develop or maintain a sense of urgency for the task that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ want us to do today?

### **Consider Our Exemplar, Jesus**

<sup>5</sup> Of all those who demonstrated urgency in their service to God, Jesus Christ is surely the foremost example. One reason for his urgency was that he had much to do in a span of only

three and a half years. Nevertheless, Jesus accomplished more with regard to true worship than anyone else has ever done. He made known his Father's name and purpose, preached the good news of the Kingdom, exposed the hypocrisy and false teachings of the religious leaders, and upheld Jehovah's sovereignty even to the point of death. He spared no effort in traversing the land—teaching, helping, and curing the people. (Matt. 9:35) No one has ever accomplished so much in such a short time. Jesus worked as hard as anyone possibly could.—John 18:37.

<sup>6</sup> What moved Jesus to work tirelessly throughout his ministry? From Daniel's prophecy, Jesus could have known where he was in relation to Jehovah's timetable. (Dan. 9:27) Thus, as noted, his earthly ministry was to end "at the half of the week," or after three and a half years. Shortly after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem in the spring of 33 C.E., Jesus said: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." (John 12:23) Although Jesus knew that his death was imminent, he did not let that become the focus in his life, the prime reason for working hard. Rather, he focused on using

every opportunity to do his Father's will and to show love to his fellow humans. That love moved him to gather and train disciples, sending them out in preaching campaigns. That was so that they would carry on the work he had started and would accomplish even greater works than he did.—*Read John 14:12.*

<sup>7</sup> One event in Jesus' life forcefully demonstrated what zeal he had. It was early in his ministry, in the Passover season of 30 C.E. Jesus and his disciples came to Jerusalem and saw in the temple "those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats." What was Jesus' response, and what impression did it make on his disciples?—*Read John 2:13-17.*

<sup>8</sup> What Jesus did and said on that occasion fittingly brought to the disciples' mind the prophetic words of one psalm by David: "Sheer zeal for your house has eaten me up." (Ps. 69:9) Why? Because what Jesus did involved a great deal of risk and danger. After all, the temple authorities—the priests, the scribes, and others—were behind the scandalous profit-making business taking place there. To expose and disrupt their scheme, Jesus was pitting

himself against the religious establishment of the day. As the disciples correctly assessed the situation, ‘zeal for God’s house,’ or zeal for true worship, was clearly in evidence. What, though, is zeal? Is it different from urgency?

### **Urgency and Zeal Compared**

<sup>9</sup> One dictionary defines “zeal” as “eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something,” and it offers as synonyms such words as passion, fervor, ardor, and enthusiasm. Surely Jesus’ ministry can be characterized by all these expressions. Hence, *Today’s English Version* renders the verse: “My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire.” Interestingly, in some Oriental languages, the term for “zeal” is made up of two parts that literally mean “hot heart,” as though the heart were burning. It is no wonder that the disciples recalled David’s words when they saw what Jesus did at the temple. What, though, set Jesus’ heart on fire, as it were, and propelled, or moved, him to act that way?

<sup>10</sup> The word “zeal” in David’s psalm is derived from a Hebrew word that is often translated “jealous” or “jealousy” in other parts of the Bible. The *New World Translation* sometimes

renders it “exacting exclusive devotion.” (*Read Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Joshua 24:19.*) One Bible dictionary says of this term: “It is often used in connection with the marriage relation . . . Just as jealousy in husband or wife is the forceful assertion of an exclusive right, so God asserts His claim, and vindicates it, on those who are His sole possession.” Thus, zeal in the Biblical sense is more than fervor or enthusiasm for a certain pursuit, such as many fans show for their favorite sport. David’s zeal was jealousy in the positive sense, that is, an intolerance of rivalry or reproach, a strong urge to protect a good name or to correct an injury.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus’ disciples were not mistaken in associating David’s words with what they saw Jesus do at the temple. Jesus exerted himself not simply because he had a deadline but because he was zealous—or jealous—for his Father’s name and for pure worship. When he saw the reproach and blasphemy heaped upon God’s name, he was rightly zealous, or jealous, and acted to correct the situation. When Jesus saw the humble people oppressed and exploited by the religious leaders, his zeal moved him to bring relief to the people as well



as to utter forceful denunciations against the oppressive religious leaders.—Matt. 9:36; 23:2, 4, 27, 28, 33.

## **Be Zealous for True Worship**

<sup>12</sup> The religious scene around us today is similar—if not worse—than it was in Jesus' day. For example, recall that the first thing Jesus taught his followers to pray for concerned God's name: "Let your name be sanctified." (Matt. 6:9) Do we see the religious leaders, especially the clergy of Christendom, teaching people to know God by his name and to sanctify, or honor, that name? On the contrary, they have misrepresented God by such false teachings as the Trinity, immortality of the human soul, and hellfire, making God appear mysterious, unfathomable, cruel, even sadistic. They have also brought reproach on God by their scandals and their hypocrisy. (*Read Romans 2:21-24.*) Furthermore, they have done everything possible to hide God's personal name, even removing it from their translations of the Bible. They thus hinder people from drawing close to

God and cultivating a personal relationship with him.—Jas. 4:7, 8.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus also taught his followers to pray for God's Kingdom: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) Though Christendom's religious leaders often repeat that prayer, they have urged people to support political and other human institutions. Moreover, they belittle those who endeavor to preach and bear witness to this Kingdom. As a result, among many who claim to be Christians, God's Kingdom is no longer a topic for discussion, let alone a matter of faith.

<sup>14</sup> In prayer to God, Jesus clearly stated: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) And before leaving the earthly scene, Jesus indicated that he would appoint "the faithful and discreet slave" to provide spiritual food for his people. (Matt. 24:45) Though quick to claim stewardship of God's Word, have the clergy of Christendom proved to be faithful to the Master's trust? No. They have been inclined to label what the Bible says as fable or myth. Rather than feeding their flock with spiritual food, thus bringing them comfort and

enlightenment, the clergy have tickled the believers' ears with human philosophy. In addition, they have watered down God's moral standards to cater to the so-called new morality.—2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Because of all that has been done—supposedly in the name of the God of the Bible—many sincere people have become disillusioned or have completely lost their faith in God and in the Bible. They have fallen prey to Satan and his wicked system of things. When you see and hear about such things taking place day after day, how do you feel? As a servant of Jehovah, when you see the reproach and blasphemy heaped upon God's name, do you not feel impelled to do what you can to right the wrong? When you see sincere and honesthearted people being deceived and exploited, do you not feel moved to bring comfort to the oppressed souls? When Jesus saw people of his day being “skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd,” he did not just feel pity. He “started to teach them many things.” (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34) We have every reason to be zealous for true worship, as Jesus was.

<sup>16</sup> When we view our ministry that way, the apostle Paul's words found at 1 Timothy 2:3, 4 take on special meaning. (*Read.*) We work hard in the ministry not only because we know we are living in the last days but also because we realize that it is God's will. He wants people to come to a knowledge of the truth so that they too can learn to worship and serve him and be blessed. We are impelled to exert ourselves in the ministry, not primarily because of a time limit, but because we want to honor God's name and help people to come to know his will. We are zealous for true worship.—1 Tim. 4:16.

<sup>17</sup> As Jehovah's people, we have been blessed with the knowledge of the truth about God's purpose for mankind and the earth. We have the means to help people find happiness and a sure hope for the future. We can point them to the way to stay safe when destruction comes upon Satan's system of things. (2 Thess. 1:7-9) Rather than feel frustrated or discouraged because Jehovah's day seems to be delayed, we should be glad that there is still time for us to be zealous for true worship. (Mic. 7:7; Hab. 2:3) How can we develop such zeal? We will consider this in the following article.

(w14 1/15 23-25 ¶4-10)

## **UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES LATER IN LIFE**

<sup>4</sup> If you have acquired decades of experience as an adult, you have a key question to ask yourself, ‘What will I do with my life now while I still have some energy and strength?’ As an experienced Christian, you have opportunities that are not open to others. You can pass on to younger ones what you have learned from Jehovah. You can strengthen others by relating experiences you have enjoyed while serving God. King David prayed for opportunities to do so. He wrote: “O God, you have taught me from my youth . . . Even when I am old and gray, O God, do not abandon me. Let me tell the next generation about your power and about your mightiness to all those who are to come.”—Ps. 71:17, 18.

<sup>5</sup> How could you make known the wisdom you have acquired over the years? Could you invite younger servants of God to your home for some upbuilding association? Could you ask them to accompany you in the Christian ministry and show them the joy you experience in serving Jehovah? Elihu of ancient times said: “Let age speak, and let a multitude of years declare

wisdom.” (Job 32:7) The apostle Paul urged experienced Christian women to encourage others by word and example. He wrote: “Let the older women be . . . teachers of what is good.”—Titus 2:3.

## **CONSIDER YOUR POTENTIAL FOR HELPING OTHERS**

<sup>6</sup> If you are an experienced Christian, you have great potential. Consider what you understand now that you did not know 30 or 40 years ago. You can skillfully apply Bible principles in life. No doubt you have the ability to reach the hearts of others with Bible truth. If you are an elder, you know how to help brothers who take a false step. (Gal. 6:1) Perhaps you have learned how to oversee congregation activities, assembly departments, or Kingdom Hall construction. You may know how to encourage doctors to use health-care strategies that avoid the use of blood. Even if you have only recently learned the truth, you have valuable experience in life. For example, if you have raised children, you will have gained much practical wisdom. Older Christians are a potentially powerful source of encouragement for Jehovah’s people by teaching, leading, and

strengthening the brothers and sisters.—**Read Job 12:12.**

<sup>7</sup> How could you use your potential more fully? Perhaps you could show younger ones how to start and conduct Bible studies. If you are a sister, could you suggest to young mothers how they might keep up with spiritual activities while caring for small children? If you are a brother, could you teach young brothers to give talks with enthusiasm and to be more effective preachers of the good news? Could you show them how you visit elderly brothers and sisters to encourage them spiritually? Even if you do not have the physical power that you used to have, you have splendid opportunities to train younger ones. God's Word says: "The glory of young men is their strength, and the splendor of old men is their gray hair."—Prov. 20:29.

### **SERVING WHERE THE NEED IS GREATER**

<sup>8</sup> The apostle Paul used his full potential to serve God later in life. By the time he was released from prison in Rome about 61 C.E., he had endured many years of rigorous missionary service, and he could have settled down to preach in Rome. (2 Cor. 11:23-27) The brothers

in that large city would no doubt have valued his continued support. But Paul saw that the need was even greater overseas. With Timothy and Titus, he resumed his missionary activity, traveling to Ephesus, then on to Crete, and probably to Macedonia. (1 Tim. 1:3; Titus 1:5) We do not know if he visited Spain, but he intended to do so.—Rom. 15:24, 28.

<sup>9</sup> The apostle Peter may have been over 50 when he moved to where the need was greater. Why may that be true? If he was about the same age as Jesus or perhaps somewhat older, he would have been about 50 years old when he met with the other apostles in Jerusalem in the year 49 C.E. (Acts 15:7) Some time after that meeting, Peter went to live in Babylon, doubtless to preach to the large population of Jews in that area. (Gal. 2:9) He was residing there when he wrote his first inspired letter, about 62 C.E. (1 Pet. 5:13) Settling in a foreign land can be challenging, but Peter did not allow the fact that he was advancing in age to rob him of the joy of serving Jehovah fully.

<sup>10</sup> Today, many Christians in their 50's and older find that their circumstances have



changed and that they are able to serve Jehovah in new ways. Some have moved to where the need is greater. For example, Robert writes: “My wife and I were in our mid-50’s when we realized what opportunities lay before us. Our only son had left home, we no longer had aging parents needing care, and we had received a small inheritance. I calculated that the sale of our house would suffice to pay off the mortgage and provide for us until I received income from my retirement pension. We heard that in Bolivia the number of people accepting Bible studies is high but the cost of living is low. So we decided to move. Adapting to our new home was not easy. Everything was so different from what we were accustomed to in North America. But our efforts were well rewarded.”

**(w15 10/1 16 ¶3)** God has appointed his Son, Jesus, to rule over all mankind. (Psalm 2:4-8) Jesus will rescue the poor and bring an end to oppression and violence.—**Read Psalm 72:8, 12-14.**

## **(w10 8/15 32 ¶19-20) A New World of Plenty Awaits Us**

<sup>19</sup> Try again to visualize the future of upright humans in God's new world under the rule of the Greater Solomon. "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth," we are promised. "On the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." (Ps. 72:16) Since grain is not ordinarily produced on mountain tops, these words emphasize how productive the earth will become. Its produce "will be as in Lebanon," a region that produced abundantly at the time of Solomon's reign. Just think! No more food shortages, no one undernourished, nobody starving! All will then enjoy "a banquet of well-oiled dishes."—Isa. 25:6-8; 35:1, 2.

<sup>20</sup> To whom will credit go for all these blessings? Primarily to the Eternal King and Universal Ruler, Jehovah God. In effect, all of us will then joyfully add our voices to the concluding portion of this beautiful and heartwarming song: "Let his name [that of the King Jesus Christ] prove to be to time indefinite; before the sun let his name have increase, and by means of him let them bless themselves; let all nations pronounce him happy. Blessed be

Jehovah God, Israel's God, who alone is doing wonderful works. And blessed be his glorious name to time indefinite, and let his glory fill the whole earth. Amen and Amen."—Ps. 72:17-19.

(w11 8/15 11 ¶17) <sup>17</sup> *The Messiah would be hated without cause.* (Ps. 69:4) The apostle John quotes Jesus as saying: "If I had not done among [the people] the works that no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have both seen and hated me as well as my Father. But it is that the word written in their Law may be fulfilled, 'They hated me without cause.'" (John 15:24, 25) Often the "Law" means the whole body of Scripture. (John 10:34; 12:34) The Gospel accounts prove that Jesus was hated, especially by the Jewish religious leaders. Moreover, Christ said: "The world has no reason to hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness concerning it that its works are wicked."—John 7:7.

(w11 8/15 15 ¶15) <sup>15</sup> *The Messiah would be given vinegar and gall.* “For food they gave me a poisonous plant,” said the psalmist, “and for my thirst they tried to make me drink vinegar.” (Ps. 69:21) Matthew tells us: “They gave [Jesus] wine mixed with gall to drink; but, after tasting it, he refused to drink.” Later, “one of them ran and took a sponge and soaked it with sour wine and put it on a reed and went giving him a drink.”—Matt. 27:34, 48.

(w13 2/15 25-26 ¶3-4) <sup>3</sup> The psalmist expressed confidence that Jehovah would take hold of him by the right hand and lead him to genuine glory. (***Read Psalm 73:23, 24.***) How does Jehovah do this? Jehovah leads his humble servants to glory by honoring them in numerous ways. He blesses them with an understanding of his will. (1 Cor. 2:7) He bestows upon those who listen to his word and obey him the honor of a close personal relationship with him.—Jas. 4:8.

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah also entrusts his servants with the glorious treasure of the Christian ministry. (2 Cor. 4:1, 7) And this ministry leads to glory.

To those who use their privilege of service to his praise and to the benefit of others, Jehovah promises: “Those honoring me I shall honor.” (1 Sam. 2:30) Such ones are honored with a good name with Jehovah, and they are likely to be well spoken of by other servants of God.—Prov. 11:16; 22:1.

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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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are printed, distributed, and  
became more widely known.

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the name *Jehovah* in the English Bible. He was later persecuted for his efforts to  
bring the Bible to the people. Today, his work has become one of the most widely known.



## THE BIBLE

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A Story That Matters 3

The Bible Survived Decay 4

The Bible Survived Opposition 5

The Bible Survived Attempts to Alter Its Message 6

Why the Bible Has Survived 8

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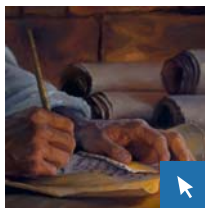
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OTHER BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED

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## A Story That Matters

The Bible stands alone among religious texts. No other book has shaped the beliefs of so many people over such a long period of time. On the other hand, no other book has prompted so much scrutiny and criticism.



For instance, some scholars doubt that modern Bibles are reliable copies of the original writings. “We simply cannot be sure that we have reconstructed the original text accurately,” says one professor of religious studies. “We have only error-ridden copies, and the vast majority of these are centuries removed from the originals and different from them, evidently, in thousands of ways.”

Others question the authenticity of the Bible because of their religious background. Faizal, for example, was taught by his non-Christian family that the Bible is a holy book but that it had been changed. “As a result, I was somewhat suspicious when people wanted to talk to me about the Bible,” he says. “After all, they didn’t have the original Bible. It had been changed!”

Does it matter whether or not the Bible has been changed? Well, consider these questions: Can you trust the Bible’s comforting promises for the future if you do not know whether those promises were in the original text? (Romans 15:4) Would you use Bible principles to make important decisions about your employment, family, or worship if modern Bibles were merely flawed copies recorded by humans?

Although the original books of the Bible have disappeared, we can consult ancient copies—including thousands of Bible manuscripts. How did those manuscripts survive decay, opposition, and attempts to tamper with the text? How can their survival build your confidence in the authenticity of the modern Bible available to you? Consider the answers to those questions in the following story of survival.

# The Bible Survived Decay

**THE THREAT:** Papyrus and parchment were the primary writing materials used by Bible writers and copyists.\* (2 Timothy 4:13) How did those materials put the Bible’s survival in jeopardy?

Papyrus tears, discolors, and weakens easily. “A sheet can eventually decay into a skeleton of fibres and a handful of dust,” say Egyptologists Richard Parkinson and Stephen Quirke. “When in storage, a roll can grow mould or rot with the damp and can be eaten by rodents or insects, particularly by white ants, when it is buried.” Some papyri, after their discovery, were exposed to excessive light or humidity, accelerating their deterioration.

Parchment is more durable than papyrus, but it too degrades if mishandled or exposed to extreme temperatures, humidity, or light.† Parchment is also a target of insects. Consequently, for ancient records, states the book *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East*, “survival is the excep-

\* Papyrus is a writing material made from an aquatic plant of the same name. Parchment is made from animal skins.

† For example, the official signed copy of the U.S. Declaration of Independence was written on parchment. Now, less than 250 years later, it has faded to the point of being barely legible.

tion rather than the rule.” If the Bible had thus decayed, its message would have died with it.

**HOW THE BIBLE SURVIVED:** Jewish law compelled every king to “write for himself in a book a copy of this Law,” the first five books of the Bible. (Deuteronomy 17:18) Moreover, professional copyists produced so many manuscripts that by the first century C.E., the Scriptures could be found in synagogues throughout Israel and even in distant Macedonia! (Luke 4:16, 17; Acts 17:11) How did some very old manuscripts survive until today?

“Jews were known to put scrolls containing Scripture in pitchers or jars in order to preserve them,” says New Testament scholar Philip W. Comfort. Christians evidently continued that tradition. Consequently, some early Bible manuscripts have been discovered in clay jars, as well as in dark closets and caves and in exceptionally dry regions.

**THE RESULT:** Thousands of portions of Bible manuscripts—some over 2,000 years old—survive to this day. No other ancient text has so many manuscripts from so long ago.

Photograph taken by courtesy of the British Museum



Manuscripts known as the Dead Sea Scrolls survived for centuries in clay jars stored in caves in a dry climate



Shrine of the Book, Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem

# The Bible Survived Opposition

**THE THREAT:** Many political and religious leaders pursued an agenda contrary to the Bible's message. Often, they used their authority to stop people from owning, producing, or translating the Bible. Consider two examples:

- *About 167 B.C.E.:* Seleucid King Antiochus Epiphanes, who sought to force Greek religion on the Jews, ordered all copies of the Hebrew Scriptures to be destroyed. His officials "tore and burnt the rolls of the Law whenever they found them," wrote historian Heinrich Graetz, "and killed those who were found to seek strength and consolation in their perusal."

- *Middle Ages:* Some Catholic leaders, upset that the laity were preaching what the Bible teaches rather than Catholic dogma, branded as heretics any laymen who possessed Bible books other than the Psalms in Latin. One church council enforced the command by directing that their men "diligently, faithfully, and frequently seek out the heretics . . . by searching all houses and subterranean chambers which lie under any suspicion. . . . The house in which any heretic shall be found shall be destroyed."

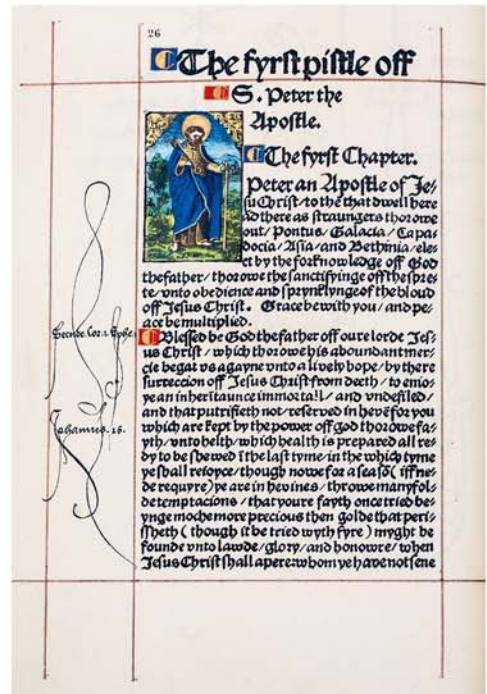
If the Bible's enemies had succeeded in stamping it out, its message would have disappeared.

**HOW THE BIBLE SURVIVED:** King Antiochus focused his campaign on Israel, but the Jews had formed communities in numerous other lands. In fact, scholars estimate that by the first century C.E., over 60 percent of Jews lived outside Israel. In their synagogues, the Jews kept copies of the Scriptures—the same Scriptures that were used by future generations, including Christians.—Acts 15:21.

During the Middle Ages, lovers of the Bible braved persecution and continued to translate and copy the Scriptures. Even before the movable-type printing press was invented in the

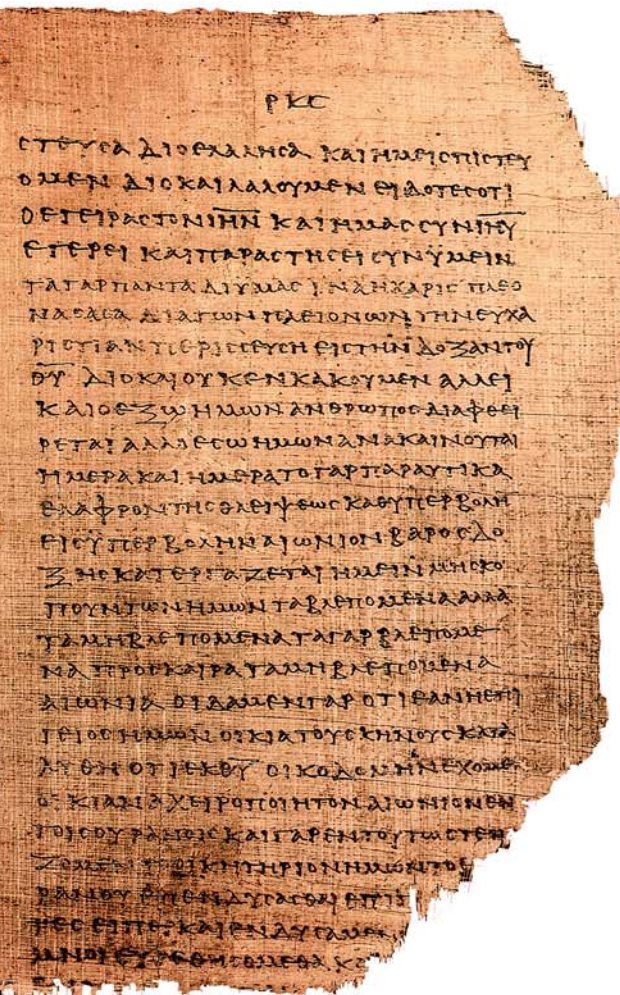
middle of the 15th century, portions of the Bible may have been available in as many as 33 languages. Thereafter, the Bible was translated and produced at an unprecedented pace.

**THE RESULT:** Despite threats from powerful kings and misguided clergymen, the Bible is the most widely distributed and most translated book in history. It has shaped the laws and languages of some countries, as well as the lives of millions.



William Tyndale's English translation of the Bible survived despite a ban, Bible burnings, and the execution of Tyndale himself in 1536

# The Bible Survived Attempts to Alter Its Message



Chester Beatty P46, a papyrus Bible manuscript from about 200 C.E.

© The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin

**THE THREAT:** External threats such as decay and opposition have not destroyed the Bible. Yet, some copyists and translators have attempted to alter the Bible’s *message*. At times, they have tried to make the Bible conform to their doctrines rather than conform their doctrines to the Bible. Consider some examples:

- *Place of worship:* Between the fourth and second centuries B.C.E., the writers of the Samaritan Pentateuch inserted after Exodus 20:17 the words “in Aargaareezem. And there you shall build an altar.” The Samaritans thus hoped to make the Scriptures support their construction of a temple on “Aargaareezem,” or Mount Gerizim.

- *Trinity doctrine:* Less than 300 years after the Bible was completed, a Trinitarian writer added to 1 John 5:7 the words “in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” That statement did not appear in the original text. “From the sixth century onwards,” notes Bible scholar Bruce Metzger, those words were “found more and more frequently in manuscripts of the Old Latin and of the [Latin] Vulgate.”

- *Divine name:* Citing a Jewish superstition as their authority, many Bible translators decided to remove the divine name from the Scriptures. They replaced that name with titles such as “God” or “Lord,” expressions applied in the Bible not only to the Creator but also to men, objects of false worship, and even the Devil.—John 10:34, 35; 1 Corinthians 8:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 4:4.\*

**HOW THE BIBLE SURVIVED:** First, although some Bible copyists were careless or even deceitful, many others were highly skilled and meticulous. Between the sixth and tenth centuries C.E., the Masoretes copied the Hebrew Scriptures and produced what is known as the Masoretic text.

\* For more information, see Appendixes A4 and A5 in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, available at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).

“It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted”

They reportedly counted the words and the letters to verify that no mistakes crept in. Where they suspected errors in the master text they were using, they noted these in the margin. The Masoretes refused to tamper with the Bible text. “Interfering with it purposely,” wrote Professor Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, “would have been for them the worst crime possible.”

Second, the sheer volume of manuscripts today actually helps Bible scholars to spot errors. For example, religious leaders taught for centuries that their Latin versions contained the authentic Bible text. Yet, at 1 John 5:7, they had inserted the spurious words referred to earlier in this article. The error even crept into the influential English *King James Version*! But when other manuscripts were discovered, what did they reveal? Bruce Metzger wrote: “The passage [at 1 John 5:7] is absent from the manuscripts of all ancient versions (Syriac, Coptic, Armenian,

Ethiopic, Arabic, Slavonic), except the Latin.” As a result, revised editions of the *King James Version* and other Bibles have removed the erroneous phrase.

Do older manuscripts prove that the Bible’s message has been preserved? When the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947, scholars could at last compare the Hebrew Masoretic text to what appeared in Bible scrolls that had been written more than a thousand years earlier. A member of the editorial team of the Dead Sea Scrolls concluded that one scroll “provides irrefutable proof that the transmission of the biblical text through a period of more than one thousand years by the hands of Jewish copyists has been extremely faithful and careful.”

The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland, features a collection of papyri that represents nearly every book of the Christian Greek Scriptures, including manuscripts dating from the second century C.E.—only about 100 years after the Bible was completed. “Although the Papyri supply a wealth of new information on textual detail,” *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* observes, “they also demonstrate remarkable stability in the transmission history of the biblical text.”

**THE RESULT:** Rather than corrupting the Bible text, the age and multitude of Bible manuscripts have actually improved it. “No other ancient book has anything like such early and plentiful testimony to its text,” wrote Sir Frederic Kenyon about the Christian Greek Scriptures, “and no unbiased scholar would deny that the text that has come down to us is substantially sound.” And regarding the Hebrew Scriptures, scholar William Henry Green stated: “It may be safely said that no other work of antiquity has been so accurately transmitted.”



The Masoretes carefully copied the Scriptures

# Why the Bible Has Survived

The Bible has survived. As a result, you can obtain and read a copy of it today. And when you choose a good translation of the Scriptures, you can be certain that you are reading a dependable copy of the original writings.\* But *why* has the

\* See the article “How Can You Choose a Good Bible Translation?” in the May 1, 2008, issue of this magazine.



“I am now convinced that the Bible that I have is a gift from God”

Bible endured despite natural decay, fierce opposition, and deliberate tampering with its message, often with astounding accounts of survival? What is so special about that book?

Many students of the Bible have come to the same conclusion as the apostle Paul, who wrote: “All Scripture is inspired of God.” (2 Timothy 3:16) They believe that the Bible has survived because it is the unique Word of God and because God has preserved it until today. Faizal, quoted in the opening article of this series, eventually decided to investigate those claims for himself by studying the Bible. What he discovered surprised him. He soon learned that many of the teachings that are prevalent in Christendom are not found in the Bible. Furthermore, he was touched by God’s purpose for the earth as revealed in His Word.

“I am now convinced that the Bible that I have is a gift from God,” he says. “After all, if God can make the universe, wouldn’t he have the power to give us a book and preserve it for us? To say otherwise would be to limit God’s power. To limit the power of the Almighty—who am I to do that?” —Isaiah 40:8. ■



This series of articles has discussed the *preservation* of the Bible. But how can you be sure that the Bible is really “the word of God” and not just a collection of myths and legends? (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Watch the short video *How Can We Be Sure the Bible Is True?* at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org). (Click the Search button, and enter the title)

1. At the start of the day, with the sun yet to rise,  
We are making our way  
with the sleep in our eyes,  
and we pray.

We are there with a smile for the people we meet.  
Some may stop for a while,  
some pass by on the street, but we stay.

*(CHORUS)*

*It's the life that we choose;  
For Jehovah we live.  
And whatever he asks, we will do.  
In the work we endure,  
Whether sunshine or rain.  
It's a way we can say ev'ry day:  
"I love you."*

2. At the end of the day, with the sun sinking low,  
Feeling happy and tired,  
in our heart there's a glow,  
and we pray.

It's a life that we love, always giving our best.  
And Jehovah we thank,  
for by him we are blessed ev'ry day.

*(Chorus)*

- Song 92 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Jehovah’s People Are Zealous for True Worship”:** (10 min.)  
Ps 69:9—Our zeal for true worship should be clearly evident (w10 12/15 7-11 ¶2-17)  
Ps 71:17, 18—Older ones can help younger ones to be zealous (w14 1/15 23-25 ¶4-10)  
Ps 72:3, 12, 14, 16-19—Our zeal moves us to tell others what the Kingdom will do for mankind (w15 10/1 16 ¶3; w10 8/15 32 ¶19-20)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Ps 69:4, 21—How did these verses apply prophetically to the Messiah? (w11 8/15 11 ¶17; w11 8/15 15 ¶15)

Ps 73:24—How does Jehovah lead his servants to glory? (w13 2/15 25-26 ¶3-4)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ps 73:1-28

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) wp16.4 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) wp16.4 cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) fg lesson 5 ¶3-4

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 140
- **“Could You Try It for One Year?”:** (15 min.)  
Begin with a brief discussion of the article along with “Schedules for Regular Pioneering.” Then play and discuss the JW Broadcasting video *Choosing a Career With Eternal Future*. (Go to VIDEO ON DEMAND > TEENAGERS.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) ia chap. 19 ¶17-31, box on p. 170, review on p. 171
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 123 and Prayer

## Could You Try It for One Year?



Try what? Regular pioneering! What rich blessings you will enjoy!—Pr 10:22.

**BY PIONEERING, YOU CAN . . .**

- gain skill as an evangelizer and enjoy the ministry more
- strengthen your relationship with Jehovah. The more you talk about him to others, the more you will be reminded of his awe-inspiring qualities
- experience the satisfaction that comes from putting Kingdom interests ahead of your own and the joy that results from giving of yourself in behalf of others. —Mt 6:33; Ac 20:35
- attend the pioneer meeting conducted during the visit of the circuit overseer, the special meeting in conjunction with the circuit assembly, and Pioneer Service School
- have more opportunities to start and conduct Bible studies
- spend more time with fellow preachers, enjoying an interchange of encouragement. —Ro 1:11, 12



## Schedules for Regular Pioneering

Regular pioneering requires a good schedule. If you share in the ministry 18 hours a week, you can pioneer—and still have time for vacation! Such a schedule even allows for some unexpected disruptions, perhaps because of sickness or inclement weather. The accompanying chart offers ideas for publishers who work part-time or full-time or whose poor health or lack of energy limits them. With some adjustments, perhaps someone in the family can begin pioneering in September. Why not discuss this during your next family worship?



### I WORK PART-TIME

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
WORK	WORK	WORK	<b>6 hours</b>	<b>6 hours</b>	<b>4 hours</b>	<b>2 hours</b>

### I WORK FULL-TIME

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>2 hours</b>	<b>2 hours</b>	MIDWEEK MEETING	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>2 hours</b>	<b>6 hours</b>	<b>4 hours</b>

### I HAVE HEALTH LIMITATIONS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
REST	<b>3 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>	<b>3 hours</b>

### MY SCHEDULE

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



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<sup>16</sup> Joseph used a wide range of tools, some likely handed down from his father. He may have used a square, a plummet, a chalk line, a hatchet, a saw, an adze, a hammer, a mallet, chisels, a drill that he worked by pulling a bow back and forth, various glues, and perhaps some nails, though they were costly.

<sup>17</sup> Imagine Jesus as a small boy watching his adoptive father at work. His eyes wide and intent on Joseph's every movement, he no doubt admired the strength in those broad shoulders and sinewy arms, the skill of the hands, the intelligence in the eyes. Perhaps Joseph began showing his young son how to perform such simple tasks as using dried fish skin to smooth out rough spots on wood. He likely taught Jesus the differences between the varieties of wood that he used—the sycamore fig, oak, or olive, for example.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus learned, too, that those strong hands that felled trees, hewed beams, and pounded joints together were also gentle hands that caressed and

**17, 18. (a) What did Jesus learn from his adoptive father? (b) Why did Joseph have to work ever harder at his trade?**

comforted him, his mother, and his siblings. Yes, Joseph and Mary had a growing family that eventually included at least six children in addition to Jesus. (Matt. 13:55, 56) Joseph had to work ever harder to care for and feed them all.

<sup>19</sup> Joseph, however, understood that caring for his family's spiritual needs was paramount. So he spent time teaching his children about Jehovah God and His laws. He and Mary regularly took them to the local synagogue, where the Law was read aloud and explained. Perhaps Jesus was full of questions afterward, and Joseph tried hard to satisfy the boy's spiritual hunger. Joseph also took his family to religious festivals in Jerusalem. For the annual Passover, Joseph may have needed two weeks to make the 75-mile journey, observe the occasion, and return home.

<sup>20</sup> Christian family heads today follow a similar pattern. They give of themselves for their children, putting spiritual training above every other concern, including material comforts. They go to great lengths

**19. How did Joseph care for his family's spiritual needs?**

**20. How can Christian family heads follow the pattern set by Joseph?**

to conduct family worship at home and to take their children to Christian meetings both large and small. Like Joseph, they know that there is no better investment they can make for the sake of their children.

### **“In Mental Distress”**

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus was 12 years old, Joseph took the family to Jerusalem as usual. It was Passover, a festive time, and large families traveled together in long caravans through the lush spring countryside. As they approached the starker landscapes near lofty Jerusalem, many would sing the familiar psalms of ascent. (Ps. 120-134) The city likely teemed with hundreds of thousands of people. Afterward, the families and their caravans began to head homeward. Joseph and Mary, perhaps with much to do, assumed that Jesus was traveling with others, maybe family members. Only after Jerusalem lay a full day behind them did they realize a terrifying truth—Jesus was missing!—Luke 2:41-44.

<sup>22</sup> Frantically, they retraced their steps all the

**21. What was Passover time like for Joseph’s family, and when did Joseph and Mary notice that Jesus was missing?**

**22, 23. What did Joseph and Mary do about their missing boy, and what did Mary say when they finally found him?**



way to Jerusalem. Imagine how empty and strange the city seemed to them now as they paced the streets, calling out their son's name. Where could the boy be? By the third day of searching, did Joseph begin to wonder if he had failed terribly in this sacred trust from Jehovah? Finally, they went to the temple. There they searched until they came upon a chamber where many learned men, versed in the Law, were gathered—with young Jesus sitting among them! Imagine the relief Joseph and Mary felt!—Luke 2:45, 46.

<sup>23</sup> Jesus was listening to the learned men and eagerly asking questions. The men were amazed at the child's understanding and his answers. Mary and Joseph, though, were astounded. In the Bible record, Joseph is silent. But Mary's words speak eloquently for both of them: "Child, why did you treat us this way? Here your father and I in mental distress have been looking for you."—Luke 2:47, 48.

<sup>24</sup> Thus in a few deft strokes, God's Word paints a realistic picture of parenthood. It can be stressful—even when the child is perfect! Parenting in today's

**24. How does the Bible paint a realistic picture of parenthood?**

dangerous world can bring untold “mental distress,” but fathers and mothers can take comfort in knowing that the Bible acknowledges the challenge they face.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus had stayed in the one place in the world where he felt the closest to his heavenly Father, Jehovah, eagerly soaking up anything he could learn. He answered his parents in simple sincerity: “Why did you have to go looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?”—Luke 2:49.

<sup>26</sup> Joseph surely thought about those words many times. Perhaps he came to beam with pride over them. After all, he had worked diligently to teach his adopted son to feel that way about Jehovah God. By that time in his life as a boy, Jesus already had warm feelings about the word “father”—feelings shaped largely by his years with Joseph.

<sup>27</sup> If you are a father, do you realize how privileged you are to help your children to form a concept of

**25, 26. How did Jesus answer his parents, and how might Joseph have felt about his son’s words?**

**27. As a father, how are you privileged, and why should you remember Joseph’s example?**

what a loving, protective father is? Likewise, if you have stepchildren or adopted children, remember Joseph's example and treat each child as unique and precious. Help those children to draw closer to their heavenly Father, Jehovah God.—*Read Ephesians 6:4.*

### **Joseph Persevered Faithfully**

<sup>28</sup> The Bible discloses only a few more traces of Joseph's life, but they are worth considering carefully. We read that Jesus "continued subject to them"—his parents. We also find that "Jesus went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men." (*Read Luke 2:51, 52.*) What do those words reveal about Joseph? Several things. We learn that Joseph continued taking the lead in his household, for his perfect son respected his father's authority and remained in subjection to it.

<sup>29</sup> We further learn that Jesus continued to grow in wisdom. Joseph surely had much to do with his son's progress in that regard. In those days, there was a time-honored proverb among the Jews. It can still

**28, 29. (a) What do the words recorded at Luke 2:51, 52 reveal about Joseph? (b) Joseph played what role in helping his son progress in wisdom?**



## **When Did Joseph Die?**

We know that Joseph was alive when Jesus was 12 years old. At that age many Jewish youths began to learn their father's trade and became apprentices at 15. Joseph evidently lived long enough to teach Jesus to be a carpenter. Was Joseph still living when Jesus began his ministry at about 30 years of age? That seems very doubtful. Jesus' mother, brothers, and sisters are all mentioned as living at that time but not Joseph. Jesus was once even called "the son of Mary," not the son of Joseph. (Mark 6:3) Mary is spoken of as acting and taking initiatives on her own, without consulting a husband. (John 2:1-5) That would have been unusual in Bible times unless she was a widow. Finally, as he was dying, Jesus entrusted the care of his mother to the apostle John. (John 19:26, 27) There would have been no need to do so if Joseph were still living. Likely, then, Joseph died when Jesus was still a relatively young man. As the eldest son, Jesus undoubtedly took over the carpentry business and cared for the family until his baptism.

be found and read today. The saying asserts that only men of leisure can become truly wise, whereas tradesmen, such as carpenters, farmers, and blacksmiths, "cannot declare justice and judgment; and

they shall not be found where parables are spoken.” Later, Jesus exposed the emptiness of that proverb. As a boy, how often he had heard his adoptive father, humble carpenter though he was, teach effectively about Jehovah’s “justice and judgment”! No doubt, there were countless occasions.

<sup>30</sup> We can also see evidence of Joseph’s influence in Jesus’ physical growth. A well-cared-for boy, Jesus grew into a strong, healthy man. Further, Joseph trained his son to be skilled at his physical work. Jesus was known not only as the carpenter’s son but also as “the carpenter.” (Mark 6:3) So Joseph’s training was successful. Family heads wisely imitate Joseph, caring for the practical well-being of their children and ensuring that they can support themselves.

<sup>31</sup> Once we reach the point in the Bible record where Jesus is baptized at about the age of 30, we find that Joseph is no longer part of the story. Evidence suggests that Mary was a widow by the time Jesus began his ministry. (See the box “When Did

**30. How did Joseph set an example for family heads today?**

**31. (a) What does evidence suggest regarding the end of Joseph’s life? (Include the box.) (b) What example did Joseph leave for us to imitate?**

Joseph Die?”) Yet, Joseph left a clear mark—a shining example of a father who protected his family, provided for them, and persevered faithfully to the end. Any father, any family head, or any other Christian would do well to imitate the faith of Joseph.

### **TO THINK ABOUT . . .**

- In what ways did Joseph act to protect his family?
- How did Joseph provide for those who were his own?
- What shows that Joseph persevered in his God-given assignment?
- In what ways would you like to imitate the example of Joseph?

# 123      *Shepherds—Gifts in Men* (Ephesians 4:8)

1. Help in our lives, Jehovah provides,  
    Shepherds to tend his flock.  
    By their example they serve as guides,  
    Showing us how to walk.

*(CHORUS)*

*God gives us men who have earned our trust,  
Men who are loyal and true.  
They show concern for his precious flock;  
Love them for all that they do.*

2. Shepherds who love us care how we feel;  
    Gently they guide the way.  
    When we are hurt, they help us to heal,  
    Kind in the words they say.

*(Chorus)*

3. Godly advice and counsel they give,  
    That we may never stray.  
    Thus they assist us, God's way to live,  
    Serving him ev'ry day.

*(Chorus)*

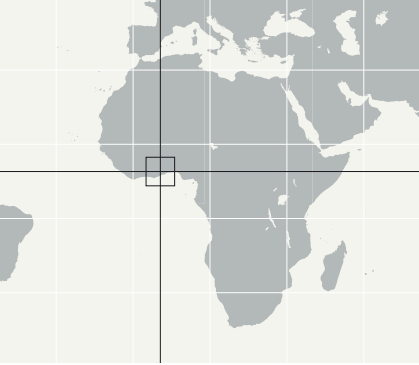
MAY 2016

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
JUNE 27–JULY 31, 2016



COVER IMAGE:  
**GHANA**

A resourceful Kingdom proclaimer uses one of our tracts to witness to fellow students. She lives in the town of Ho in the Volta region of Ghana

PUBLISHERS  
**125,443**

BIBLE STUDIES  
**382,408**

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE  
(2014)  
**347,725**

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Because of our inherited imperfection, we are sure to face situations that cause ill feelings. This article shows how Bible principles can be applied in order to settle differences with others.

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### 8 WEEK OF JULY 4-10 “Go, . . . and Make Disciples of People of All the Nations”

This article discusses evidence that Jehovah’s Witnesses are the only people on earth today who are fulfilling Jesus’ prophetic words found at Matthew 24:14. It also explains what is involved in becoming “fishers of men.”—Matt. 4:19.

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### 13 WEEK OF JULY 11-17 How Do You Make Personal Decisions?

When you make personal decisions, do you simply do what feels right to you? Or do you ask others what they would do? This article explains why the best decisions are made when we allow Jehovah God’s thinking to be the determining factor.

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### 18 WEEK OF JULY 18-24 Is the Bible Still Changing Your Life?

Do you find the refining of your Christian qualities now harder than the larger changes you made before baptism? This article explains why this challenge exists and how we can continue to cultivate godly qualities with the help of God’s Word.

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### 23 WEEK OF JULY 25-31 Benefit Fully From Jehovah’s Provisions

This article alerts us to a trap that could cause us to miss out on beneficial spiritual provisions. We will consider how we can avoid falling into that trap, and we will learn how to benefit from all the spiritual food available to us.

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### 28 FROM OUR ARCHIVES

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### 30 QUESTIONS FROM READERS

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

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# 69            *Make Me Know Your Ways*

(Psalm 25:4)

1. We're gathered together Jehovah, our God,  
    Accepting your warm invitation.  
Your Word is a lamp that lights up our roadway,  
    The source of divine education.

*(CHORUS)*

*Teach me your ways, and make me understand;  
Incline my ear to hear your wise command.  
Cause me to walk in ways of truth and right,  
And make your law my principal delight.*

2. Unreachably high is your wisdom, O God;  
    Your judgments we find reassuring.  
Your Word is a source of unending wonder;  
    Your sayings of truth are enduring.

*(Chorus)*

# How Do You Make Personal Decisions?

*“Keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is.”*  
—EPH. 5:17.

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SONGS: 69, 57

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can our decisions affect us and others?

When the Bible does not give us a specific law, how can we know what would please Jehovah?

How can we get to know more about the way Jehovah thinks?

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THROUGH his written Word, Jehovah has given us a number of specific commands. For example, he forbids sexual immorality, idolatry, stealing, and drunkenness. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Additionally, God’s Son, Jesus Christ, gave his followers this challenging, though thrilling, command: “Go, . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) What a pro-

1. What are some examples of Bible laws, and how does obeying them benefit us?



tection divine laws and commandments have proved to be! Obeying them has increased our self-respect, contributed to good health, and enhanced family happiness. More important, our loyal adherence to Jehovah's commands, including the command to share in the preaching work, has brought us his approval and blessing.

2 However, there are numerous situations for which the Bible provides no specific command. For example, the Scriptures do not contain detailed rules regarding what kind of clothing is appropriate attire for Christians. How does this reflect Jehovah's wisdom? Styles and customs vary not only in different parts of the world but also from one decade to the next. If the Bible had provided a list of acceptable styles of dress and grooming, it would now be out-of-date in that regard. For similar reasons, God's inspired Word does not provide a lot of rules designed to govern a Christian's choice of employment, health care, and entertainment. Individuals and family heads are therefore free to make decisions regarding these matters.

3 Does this mean that it does not matter to Jehovah what we choose to do when we face the challenge of making important decisions, some of which might have a profound

2, 3. (a) Why does the Bible not give us rules for every situation in life? (b) What questions will be considered in this article? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

effect on our life? Will our heavenly Father approve of any decision we make as long as it does not break a Bible law? In the absence of specific laws, how can we know what choices will please Jehovah?

## **DO PERSONAL DECISIONS MATTER?**

**4** Some may feel that it does not matter what we choose to do. To make wise decisions that please Jehovah, however, we must consider the laws and principles found in his written Word and comply with them. For instance, to have God's approval, we must act in harmony with his law on blood. (Gen. 9:4; Acts 15:28, 29) Prayer will help us to make decisions that relate to Scriptural principles and laws.

**5** Weighty personal decisions can have quite a bearing on our spiritual health and welfare. Every choice we make will likely affect our relationship with Jehovah—either for good or for bad. A good decision will strengthen our relationship with God, whereas a bad one may damage it. Moreover, a poor decision could injure others spiritually by disturbing, or even stumbling, them or by disrupting the unity of the congregation. Indeed, our personal decisions do matter.—Read **Romans 14:19; Galatians 6:7**.

**6** What should we do in situations that do not involve a di-

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**4, 5.** How could our decisions affect us and others?

**6.** What should guide our decisions?

rect Bible command? Under such circumstances, it is our personal responsibility to examine the details and make a choice that is guided, not by mere personal preference, but by what Jehovah will approve of and bless.—Read Psalm 37:5.

### PERCEIVE JEHOVAH'S WILL

7 You may wonder, ‘How can we know what Jehovah approves of if his Word provides no specific command on the matter?’ Ephesians 5:17 states: “Keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is.” In the absence of a direct Bible law, how can we perceive the will of God? By praying to him and accepting his guidance by holy spirit.

8 Consider how Jesus perceived what his Father wanted him to do. On two reported occasions, Jesus first prayed and then miraculously provided food for large crowds. (Matt. 14:17-20; 15:34-37) Yet, he refused to turn stones into bread when he was hungry and was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness. (Read Matthew 4:2-4.) Because he was familiar with his Father’s thinking, Jesus knew that he should not turn the stones into bread. Yes, Jesus realized that it was not God’s will that he use such power for his own personal

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7. Where there is no Bible law, how can we find out what Jehovah would want us to do in a certain situation?

8. How did Jesus perceive what Jehovah wanted him to do? Give an example.

benefit. By refusing to do so, he showed that he was relying on Jehovah for guidance and sustenance.

9 If we are to make wise decisions, as Jesus did, we must rely on Jehovah for guidance. We need to act in accord with these wise words: “Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not become wise in your own eyes. Fear Jehovah and turn away from bad.” (Prov. 3:5-7) Getting to know Jehovah’s thinking through Bible study can help us to perceive what God would want us to do in a particular situation. The more familiar we are with Jehovah’s thoughts, the more our heart will become sensitive to his guidance.—Ezek. 11:19, ftn.

10 To illustrate: Imagine a married woman who is shopping. She sees a pair of shoes that she would like to have, but they are very expensive. So she asks herself, ‘How would my husband feel about my spending that much money?’ Likely, she already knows the answer, even though her husband is not with her. Why does she know? Because over a period of time, she has become familiar with his way of thinking about their limited budget. As a result, she perceives what her husband’s thoughts on such a purchase would be. In a comparable way, as we become progressively acquainted with Jehovah’s thoughts and ways, we improve in our ability to perceive

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9, 10. What will help us make wise decisions? Illustrate.

what our heavenly Father would want us to do in various circumstances.

## HOW CAN YOU FIND OUT WHAT JEHOVAH THINKS?

11 To acquaint ourselves with Jehovah's thinking, we need to make personal study a priority. When reading or studying God's Word, we might ask ourselves, 'What does this material reveal about Jehovah, his righteous ways, and his thinking?' We need to have an attitude like that of the psalmist David, who sang: "Make me know your ways, O Jehovah; teach me your paths. Cause me to walk in your truth and teach me, for you are my God of salvation. In you I hope all day long." (Ps. 25:4, 5) As you meditate on a Bible passage, you might consider questions like these: '*How* can I apply this information in my family? *Where* can I apply it? At home? At work? At school? In the ministry?' Once we have determined *where* the material can be applied, it may become easier to perceive *how* we can put it to work.

12 Another way to become more familiar with Jehovah's thinking is by paying close attention to Bible-based guidance from his organization. For example, the *Watch Tower*

11. What questions can we ask ourselves when we read or study the Bible? (See the box "When Studying God's Word, Ask Yourself.")

12. How can our publications and meetings help us to get to know what Jehovah thinks about various matters?

## **WHEN STUDYING GOD'S WORD, ASK YOURSELF:**

- What does this teach me about Jehovah's righteous ways? (Ps. 25:4)
- How can I apply this information . . .
  - at home?
  - at work?
  - at school?
  - in the ministry?

*Publications Index* and the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses* are produced to help us learn about Jehovah's thinking on numerous situations requiring that we make personal decisions. We also benefit greatly by listening carefully at Christian meetings and participating in them. Meditating on what is being taught will help us to discern more about Jehovah's thinking and to make his thoughts our own. By making diligent use of Jehovah's provisions for spiritual feeding, we will progressively become more familiar with his ways. As a result, we will be in a better position to make personal decisions that our loving God will bless.

## LET JEHOVAH'S THINKING GUIDE YOUR DECISIONS

13 Consider an example that shows how knowledge of Jehovah's thinking can help us to make wise decisions. As Kingdom publishers, we may desire to enter the full-time ministry as regular pioneers. In order to make this possible, we begin taking steps to simplify our life. At the same time, we may find ourselves worrying about whether we could be genuinely happy with less in a material way. Of course, there is no Bible command that we pioneer; we could continue serving Jehovah as faithful publishers. However, Jesus assures us that those who make sacrifices for the Kingdom will receive abundant blessings. (Read Luke 18:29, 30.) Moreover, the Scriptures show that it pleases Jehovah when we make "voluntary offerings of praise" to him and cheerfully do what we can to advance true worship. (Ps. 119:108; 2 Cor. 9:7) From these Scriptural points, along with prayers for guidance, can we not perceive Jehovah's thinking? Reflecting on these thoughts may help us come to a decision that will be practical for us and will have our heavenly Father's blessing.

14 Consider another example: Suppose you are drawn to a certain style of dress that could possibly disturb some in

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13. Give an example of how we can make a wise decision when we consider what Jehovah thinks.

14. How can you determine if a certain style of clothing is pleasing to Jehovah?

the congregation. Yet, you may know of no specific Bible law that forbids it. What is Jehovah's mind on the matter? The apostle Paul offered this inspired counsel: "The women should adorn themselves in appropriate dress, with modesty and soundness of mind, not with styles of hair braiding and gold or pearls or very expensive clothing, but in the way that is proper for women professing devotion to God, namely, through good works." (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) In principle, this counsel applies equally to Christian men. As devoted servants of Jehovah, we are concerned not only with our personal preferences but with the effect that our dress and grooming could have on others. Modesty and love move us to take into account the opinions of fellow believers in order to avoid distracting or even offending them. (1 Cor. 10:23, 24; Phil. 3:17) Bearing in mind what the Scriptures say can help us perceive Jehovah's thinking on this matter and can guide us in making decisions that please him.

15 The Bible reveals that Jehovah is saddened when people pursue a wicked course and 'the inclination of their thoughts is only bad all the time.' (Read Genesis 6:5, 6.) From this we can perceive that sexual fantasizing is wrong

15, 16. (a) How does Jehovah feel if we keep on thinking about sexually immoral things? (b) When we are choosing entertainment, how can we know what is pleasing to Jehovah? (c) How should weighty decisions be made?



because it can lead to serious sin that is forbidden in the Scriptures and is out of harmony with Jehovah's way of thinking. The disciple James wrote: "The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, not hypocritical." (Jas. 3:17) Being aware of this, we should be moved to reject entertainment that fuels impure thoughts and inclinations. Perceptive Christians do not need to ask whether it is acceptable to be entertained by a certain book, movie, or game that features what Jehovah hates. His mind on such matters is made clear in his Word.

16 Many matters could be decided one way or another, and Jehovah would still be pleased. In the case of weighty decisions, though, it is sometimes advisable to seek counsel from the elders or the advice of other experienced Christians. (Titus 2:3-5; Jas. 5:13-15) Of course, it would be inappropriate to ask others to make a decision for us. Christians must train and exercise their powers of discernment. (Heb. 5:14) All of us should act in accord with Paul's inspired words: "Each one will carry his own load of responsibility."—Gal. 6:5, ftn.

17 When we base our decisions on Jehovah's thinking, we draw closer to him. (Jas. 4:8) We enjoy his approval and blessing. This, in turn, strengthens our faith in our heavenly Father. Therefore, let us be guided by Bible laws and

17. How do we benefit from making decisions that please Jehovah?

principles, for they reveal God’s mind on matters. Of course, we will always have something new to learn about Jehovah. (Job 26:14) With diligent effort, however, we can even now acquire the wisdom, knowledge, and discernment needed to make wise decisions. (Prov. 2:1-5) The ideas and plans of imperfect humans come and go, but the psalmist fittingly reminds us: “The decisions of Jehovah will stand forever; the thoughts of his heart are from generation to generation.” (Ps. 33:11) Clearly, we can make the best personal decisions when our thoughts and actions are in harmony with the thinking of our all-wise God, Jehovah.

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# 57      *The Meditation of My Heart* (Psalm 19:14)

1. The meditation of my heart,  
    The thoughts I ponder through the day—  
    May they be pleasing to you, Lord,  
    And keep me steadfast in your way.  
When worries weigh upon my mind  
    And make me restless in the night,  
Then may I meditate on you  
    And things I know to be upright.
2. Whatever things are chaste and true,  
    Whatever virtue there may be,  
Whatever things well-spoken of—  
    May thoughts of these bring peace to me.  
How precious are your thoughts, O God!  
    Beyond all counting is their sum.  
So may I ponder your own words,  
    Absorbed in them may I become.