

- Song 147 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Jehovah Takes Care of His People”:** (10 min.)
Isa 25:4, 5—Jehovah is a spiritual refuge to all who want to serve him (*ip-1* 272 ¶5)
Isa 25:6—Jehovah has kept his promise to provide an abundance of spiritual food (*w16.05* 24 ¶4; *ip-1* 273 ¶6-7)
Isa 25:7, 8—Sin and death will soon be done away with forever (*w14* 9/15 26 ¶15; *ip-1* 273-274 ¶8-9)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 26:15—How can we help as Jehovah extends “all the borders of the land”? (*w15* 7/15 11 ¶18)

Isa 26:20—What appears to be linked to the foretold “inner rooms”? (*w13* 3/15 23 ¶15-16)

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) Isa 28:1-13

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. During January, publishers have the option of offering the brochure *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking* if they meet someone who would benefit from a more in-depth discussion about evidence of a Creator. Encourage them to be alert for opportunities to play the video *Was Life Created?*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 2
- **Local Needs:** (15 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb16* 140-142)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 6 ¶8-15, box on p. 63
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 37 and Prayer

ISAIAH 24-28 | Jehovah Takes Care of His People

Like a generous host, Jehovah supplies us with an abundance of spiritual food.



25:6

“Jehovah of armies will make for all the peoples a banquet”

- In Bible times, when people ate a meal together, it signified peace and friendship
- “Of rich dishes filled with marrow, of fine, filtered wine”
- Rich dishes and fine, filtered wine picture the very best of spiritual food that Jehovah provides for us

147 *Life Everlasting Is Promised*

(Psalm 37:29)

1. Life everlasting is promised.
Our earthly home will endure.
'Meek ones will thrive,' said the psalmist.
This grand future is sure.

(CHORUS)

*We can live forever.
It's worth all endeavor.
God's promise is faithful.
His Word will come true.*

2. Paradise brought to perfection;
All of God's children set free.
Under Jehovah's direction,
Peace on earth we will see.

(Chorus)

3. Soon in the grand resurrection,
Sorrow will all disappear.
Showering tender affection,
God will dry ev'ry tear.

(Chorus)

Isaiah 24-28

24 Look! Jehovah is emptying the land and making it desolate.

He turns it upside down and scatters its inhabitants.

² It will be the same for everyone:

The people as well as the priest,

The servant and his master,

The servant and her mistress,

The buyer and the seller,

The lender and the borrower,

The creditor and the debtor.

³ The land will be completely emptied;

It will be completely plundered,

For Jehovah has spoken this word.

⁴ The land mourns; it is wasting away.

The productive land withers; it is fading away.

The prominent people of the land wither.

⁵ The land has been polluted by its inhabitants,

For they have bypassed the laws,

Changed the regulation,

And broken the lasting covenant.

⁶ That is why the curse devours the land,

And those inhabiting it are held guilty.

That is why the inhabitants of the land have
dwindled,
And very few men are left.

⁷ The new wine mourns, the vine withers,
And all those cheerful at heart are sighing.

⁸ The joy of the tambourines has ceased;
The noise of the revelers has ended;
The happy sound of the harp has ceased.

⁹ They drink wine without song,
And alcohol tastes bitter to those drinking it.

¹⁰ The deserted town is broken down;
Every house is shut up so that no one can enter.

¹¹ They cry out for wine in the streets.
All rejoicing has disappeared;
The joy of the land has gone.

¹² The city is left in ruins;
The gate has been crushed to a heap of rubble.

¹³ For this is how it will be in the land, among the
peoples:
As when an olive tree is beaten,
Like the gleaning when the grape harvest comes
to an end.

¹⁴ They will raise their voice,
They will shout joyfully.

From the sea they will proclaim the majesty of
Jehovah.

¹⁵ That is why they will glorify Jehovah in the region
of light;

In the islands of the sea they will glorify the
name of Jehovah the God of Israel.

¹⁶ From the ends of the earth we hear songs:

“Glory to the Righteous One!”

But I say: “I am wasting away, I am wasting
away!

Woe to me! The treacherous have acted
treacherously;

With treachery the treacherous have acted
treacherously.”

¹⁷ Terror and pits and traps await you, inhabitant of
the land.

¹⁸ Anyone fleeing from the sound of terror will fall into
the pit,

And anyone coming up from the pit will be
caught in the trap.

For the floodgates above will be opened,
And the foundations of the land will quake.

¹⁹ The land has burst apart;

The land has been shaken up;

The land convulses violently.

²⁰ The land staggers like a drunken man,

And it sways back and forth like a hut in the
wind.

Its transgression weighs heavily on it,
And it will fall, so that it will not rise up again.

²¹ In that day Jehovah will turn his attention to the
army of the heights above
And to the kings of the earth upon the earth.

²² And they will be gathered together
Like prisoners gathered into a pit,
And they will be shut up in the dungeon;
After many days they will be given attention.

²³ The full moon will be abashed,
And the shining sun will be ashamed,
For Jehovah of armies has become King in
Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
Glorious before the elders of his people.

25 O Jehovah, you are my God.
I exalt you, I praise your name,
For you have done wonderful things,
Things purposed from ancient times,
In faithfulness, in trustworthiness.

² For you have turned a city into a pile of stones,
A fortified town into a crumbling ruin.
The foreigner's tower is a city no more;
It will never be rebuilt.

³ That is why a strong people will glorify you;

The city of tyrannical nations will fear you.

- ⁴ For you have become a stronghold to the lowly,
A stronghold to the poor in his distress,
A refuge from the rainstorm,
And a shade from the heat.
When the blast of the tyrants is like a rainstorm
against a wall,
- ⁵ As the heat in a parched land,
You subdue the uproar of strangers.
Like heat is subdued by the shadow of a cloud,
So the song of the tyrants is silenced.
- ⁶ In this mountain Jehovah of armies will make for all
the peoples
A banquet of rich dishes,
A banquet of fine wine,
Of rich dishes filled with marrow,
Of fine, filtered wine.
- ⁷ In this mountain he will do away with the shroud
that is enveloping all the peoples
And the covering that is woven over all the
nations.
- ⁸ He will swallow up death forever,
And the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away
the tears from all faces.
The reproach of his people he will take away
from all the earth,

For Jehovah himself has spoken it.

⁹ In that day they will say:

“Look! This is our God!

We have hoped in him,

And he will save us.

This is Jehovah!

We have hoped in him.

Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by
him.”

¹⁰ For the hand of Jehovah will rest on this mountain,
And Mo'ab will be trampled on in its place
Like straw trampled into a pile of manure.

¹¹ He will slap out his hands into it
Like a swimmer slapping out his hands to swim,
And he will bring down its haughtiness
With the skillful movements of his hands.

¹² And the fortified city, with your high walls of
security,
He will bring down;
He will knock it down to the ground, to the very
dust.

26 In that day this song will be sung in the land of
Judah:

“We have a strong city.

He makes salvation its walls and its ramparts.

- ² Open up the gates so that the righteous nation may enter,
A nation that is keeping faithful conduct.
- ³ You will safeguard those who fully lean on you;
You will give them continuous peace,
Because it is in you that they trust.
- ⁴ Trust in Jehovah forever,
For Jah Jehovah is the eternal Rock.
- ⁵ For he has brought low those inhabiting the height,
the lofty city.
He brings it down,
He brings it down to the earth;
He casts it down to the dust.
- ⁶ The foot will trample it,
The feet of the afflicted, the steps of the lowly.”
- ⁷ The path of the righteous one is upright.
Because you are upright,
You will smooth out the course of the righteous.
- ⁸ As we follow the path of your judgments, O
Jehovah,
Our hope is in you.
We long for your name and your memorial.
- ⁹ In the night I long for you with my whole being,
Yes, my spirit keeps looking for you;

For when there are judgments from you for the earth,
The inhabitants of the land learn about righteousness.

¹⁰ Even if the wicked is shown favor,
He will not learn righteousness.
Even in the land of uprightness he will act wickedly,
And he will not see the majesty of Jehovah.

¹¹ O Jehovah, your hand is raised, but they do not see it.
They will see your zeal for your people and be put to shame.
Yes, the fire for your adversaries will consume them.

¹² O Jehovah, you will grant us peace,
Because everything we have done
You have accomplished for us.

¹³ O Jehovah our God, other masters besides you have ruled over us,
But we make mention of your name alone.

¹⁴ They are dead; they will not live.
Powerless in death, they will not rise up.
For you have turned your attention to them
To annihilate them and destroy all mention of them.

- ¹⁵ You have enlarged the nation, O Jehovah,
You have enlarged the nation;
You have glorified yourself.
You have greatly extended all the borders of the
land.
- ¹⁶ O Jehovah, during distress they turned to you;
They poured out their prayer in a whisper when
you disciplined them.
- ¹⁷ Just as a pregnant woman about to give birth
Has labor pains and cries out in pain,
So we have been because of you, O Jehovah.
- ¹⁸ We became pregnant, we had labor pains,
But it is as if we have given birth to wind.
We have not brought salvation to the land,
And no one is born to inhabit the land.
- ¹⁹ “Your dead will live.
My corpses will rise up.
Awake and shout joyfully,
You residents in the dust!
For your dew is as the dew of the morning,
And the earth will let those powerless in death
come to life.
- ²⁰ Go, my people, enter your inner rooms,
And shut your doors behind you.
Hide yourself for a brief moment
Until the wrath has passed by.

²¹ For look! Jehovah is coming from his place
To call the inhabitants of the land to account for
their error,
And the land will expose her bloodshed
And will no longer cover over her slain.”

27 In that day Jehovah, with his harsh and great and
strong sword,
Will turn his attention to Le·vi'a·than, the gliding
serpent,
To Le·vi'a·than, the twisting serpent,
And he will kill the monster that is in the sea.

² In that day sing to her:
“A vineyard of foaming wine!

³ I, Jehovah, am safeguarding her.
Every moment I water her.
I safeguard her night and day,
So that no one may harm her.

⁴ There is no wrath in me.
Who will confront me with thornbushes and
weeds in the battle?
I will trample them and set them on fire all
together.

⁵ Otherwise, let him hold fast to my stronghold.
Let him make peace with me;
Peace let him make with me.”

⁶ In the coming days Jacob will take root,

Israel will blossom and sprout,
And they will fill the land with produce.

⁷ Must he be struck with the stroke of the one
striking him?
Or must he be killed as with the slaughter of his
slain?

⁸ With a startling cry you will contend with her when
sending her away.
He will expel her with his fierce blast in the day
of the east wind.

⁹ So in this way the error of Jacob will be atoned for,
And this will be the full fruitage when his sin is
taken away:
He will make all the stones of the altar
Like chalkstones that have been pulverized,
And no sacred poles or incense stands will be
left.

¹⁰ For the fortified city will be deserted;
The pastures will be forsaken and abandoned
like a wilderness.
There the calf will graze and lie down
And will consume her branches.

¹¹ When her twigs have dried up,
Women will come and break them off,
Making fires with them.
For this people is without understanding.

That is why their Maker will show them no
mercy,
And the One who formed them will show them
no favor.

¹² In that day Jehovah will beat out the fruit from the
flowing stream of the River to the Wadi of Egypt, and
you will be gathered up one after the other, O people of
Israel. ¹³ In that day a great horn will be blown, and
those who are perishing in the land of As·syr'i·a and
those dispersed in the land of Egypt will come and bow
down to Jehovah in the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

28 Woe to the showy crown of the drunkards of
E'phra·im
And the fading blossom of its glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fertile valley of those
overcome with wine!

² Look! Jehovah has someone strong and mighty.
Like a thundering hailstorm, a destructive
windstorm,
Like a thunderstorm of powerful floodwaters,
He will forcefully hurl it down to the earth.

³ The showy crowns of the drunkards of E'phra·im
Will be trampled underfoot.

⁴ And the fading flower of its glorious beauty,
Which is on the head of the fertile valley,
Will become like the early fig before summer.

When someone sees it, he swallows it as soon as it is in his hand.

⁵ In that day Jehovah of armies will become a glorious crown and a beautiful garland to those left of his people. ⁶ And he will become a spirit of justice to the one who sits in judgment and a source of mightiness to those who repel the attack at the gate.

⁷ And these also go astray because of wine;
Their alcoholic beverages make them stagger.
Priest and prophet go astray because of alcohol;
The wine confuses them,
And they stagger from their alcohol;
Their vision makes them go astray,
And they stumble in judgment.

⁸ For their tables are full of filthy vomit
—There is no place without it.

⁹ To whom will one impart knowledge,
And to whom will one explain the message?
To those who have just been weaned from milk,
Those just taken away from the breasts?

¹⁰ For it is “command after command, command after command,
Line by line, line by line,
A little here, a little there.”

¹¹ So by means of those with stammering speech and a foreign language, he will speak to this people. ¹² He

once told them: “This is the resting-place. Let the weary one rest; this is the place of refreshment,” but they refused to listen. ¹³ So to them the word of Jehovah will be:

“Command after command, command after command,
Line by line, line by line,
A little here, a little there,”
So that when they walk,
They will stumble and fall backward
And be broken and ensnared and caught.

¹⁴ So hear the word of Jehovah, you boasters,
You rulers of this people in Jerusalem,

¹⁵ For you men say:

“We have made a covenant with Death,
And with the Grave we have made an
agreement.
When the raging flash flood passes through,
It will not reach us,
For we have made a lie our refuge
And we have hidden ourselves in falsehood.”

¹⁶ Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Here I am laying as a foundation in Zion a
tested stone,
The precious cornerstone of a sure foundation.
No one exercising faith will panic.

- 17 And I will make justice the measuring line
And righteousness the leveling tool.
The hail will sweep away the refuge of lies,
And the waters will flood out the hiding place.
- 18 Your covenant with Death will be dissolved,
And your agreement with the Grave will not
stand.
When the raging flash flood passes through,
You will be crushed by it.
- 19 As often as it passes through,
It will sweep you away;
For it will pass through morning after morning,
During the day and during the night.
Only terror will make them understand what was
heard.”
- 20 For the bed is too short to stretch out on,
And the woven sheet is too narrow to wrap up
in.
- 21 For Jehovah will rise up as at Mount Pe-ra'zim;
He will rouse himself as in the valley near
Gib'e-on,
That he may do his deed—his strange deed—
And that he may carry out his work—his unusual
work.
- 22 Now do not scoff,
So that your bonds may not be further tightened,

For I have heard from the Sovereign Lord,
Jehovah of armies,
That an extermination has been determined for
all the land.

²³ Give ear and listen to my voice;
Pay attention and listen to what I say.

²⁴ Does the plow keep plowing all day before he
sows seed?
Does he continually break up and harrow his
ground?

²⁵ When he has smoothed out its surface,
Does he not then scatter black cumin and sow
cumin,
And does he not plant wheat, millet, and barley
in their places
And spelt around the edges?

²⁶ For He teaches him the right way;
His God instructs him.

²⁷ For black cumin is not crushed with a threshing
sledge,
And a wagon wheel is not driven over cumin.
Rather, black cumin is beaten out with a rod,
And cumin with a staff.

²⁸ Does a person crush grain for bread?
No, he does not thresh it incessantly;

And when he drives the roller of his wagon over
it with his horses,
He does not crush it.

²⁹ This also comes from Jehovah of armies,
Whose counsel is wonderful
And whose achievements are great.

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January 2-8

Treasures From God's Word

Isaiah 25:4, 5—Jehovah is a spiritual refuge to all who want to serve him

Reference: ip-1 272 **paragraph 5**.

Although fearsome when viewed by his enemies, Jehovah is a refuge to the meek and humble who want to serve him. Religious and political tyrants may try everything to break the faith of true worshipers, but they fail because these have absolute confidence in Jehovah. Eventually, he easily silences his opposers, doing so as if he were covering the burning desert sun with a cloud or blocking the force of a rainstorm with a wall.—*Read **Isaiah 25:4, 5***.

Isaiah 25:6—Jehovah has kept his promise to provide an abundance of spiritual food

Reference: w16.05 24 **paragraph 4**.

In addition to publications for Jehovah's Witnesses in general, we receive Bible-based material that appeals to specific groups. Some material is especially designed to help young people; other material assists their parents. Much of the material in print and on our website is prepared with the non-Witness public in mind. Such an abundance of spiritual food reminds us

that Jehovah has kept his promise to “make for all the peoples a banquet of rich dishes.”—**Isaiah 25:6**.

Reference: *ip-1 273 paragraphs 6-7*.

‘A Banquet for All the Peoples’

6 Like a loving father, Jehovah not only protects but also feeds his children, especially in a spiritual way. After liberating his people in 1919, he set before them a victory banquet, an abundant supply of spiritual food: “Jehovah of armies will certainly make for all the peoples, in this mountain, a banquet of well-oiled dishes, a banquet of wine kept on the dregs, of well-oiled dishes filled with marrow, of wine kept on the dregs, filtered.”—Isaiah 25:6.

7 The banquet is spread in Jehovah’s “mountain.” What is this mountain? It is “the mountain of the house of Jehovah” to which all nations stream “in the final part of the days.” It is Jehovah’s “holy mountain,” where his faithful worshipers do no harm and cause no ruin. (Isaiah 2:2; 11:9) In this elevated place of worship, Jehovah spreads his lush banquet for faithful ones. And the spiritual good things now supplied so generously foreshadow the physical good things that will be provided when God’s Kingdom becomes the sole government of mankind. Then hunger will be no more. “There will come to be plenty of grain on the

earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow.”—**Psalm 72:8, 16.**

Isaiah 25:7, 8—Sin and death will soon be done away with forever

Reference: w14 9/15 26 **paragraph 15.**

By the end of the thousand years of Kingdom rule, obedient mankind will have been liberated from all enemies introduced by Adam’s disobedience. The Bible says: “Just as in Adam all are dying, so also in the Christ all will be made alive. But each one in his own proper order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to the Christ [his joint rulers] during his presence. Next, the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. For he must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. And the last enemy, death, is to be brought to nothing.” (**1 Corinthians 15:22-26**) Yes, death inherited from Adam will at last be done away with. “The shroud” that entraps the entire human family will have been removed forever.—**Isaiah 25:7, 8.**

Reference: ip-1 273-274 **paragraphs 8-9.**

8 Those who now partake of the divinely provided

spiritual feast have glorious prospects. Listen to Isaiah's next words. Comparing sin and death to a suffocating "woven work," or "envelopment," he says: "In this mountain [Jehovah] will certainly swallow up the face of the envelopment that is enveloping over all the peoples, and the woven work that is interwoven upon all the nations. He will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—**Isaiah 25:7, 8a.**

9 Yes, no more sin and death! (**Revelation 21:3, 4**) Moreover, the lying reproach that Jehovah's servants have endured for thousands of years will also be done away with. "The reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth, for Jehovah himself has spoken it." (Isaiah 25:8b) How will this happen? Jehovah will remove the source of that reproach, Satan and his seed. (Revelation 20:1-3) Little wonder that God's people will be moved to exclaim: "Look! This is our God. We have hoped in him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah. We have hoped in him. Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by him."—Isaiah 25:9.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Isaiah 26:15—How can we help as Jehovah extends "all the borders of the land"?

Reference: w15 7/15 11 **paragraph 18.**

It is an honor to be allowed by Jehovah to contribute to the beauty of our spiritual paradise. We do that by zealously preaching the Kingdom good news and making more disciples. Each time we help a person progress to Christian dedication, we have worked to extend the borders of the spiritual paradise.—**Isaiah 26:15; 54:2.**

Isaiah 26:20—What appears to be linked to the foretold “inner rooms”?

Reference: *w13 3/15 23 paragraphs 15-16.*

Our “Real Dwelling” as the End Approaches

15 As Satan’s world nears its end, its “pangs of distress” will get worse. (**Matthew 24:7, 8**) Things will definitely get worse during the great tribulation.

Infrastructures will collapse, and people will fear for their very lives. (**Habakkuk 3:16, 17**) Out of sheer desperation, they will, as it were, seek refuge “in the caves and in the rock-masses of the mountains.”

(**Revelation 6:15-17**) But neither literal caves nor mountainlike political and commercial organizations will afford any protection.

16 Jehovah’s people, however, will continue to enjoy the safety of their “real dwelling,” Jehovah God. Like the prophet Habakkuk, they “will exult in Jehovah

himself.” They “will be joyful in the God of [their] salvation.” (**Habakkuk 3:18**) In what ways will Jehovah prove to be “a real dwelling” during that tumultuous time? We will have to wait and see. But of this we can be sure: Like the Israelites at the time of the Exodus, the “great crowd” will remain organized, ever alert to divine direction. (**Revelation 7:9**; *read Exodus 13:18.*) That direction will come theocratically, probably by means of the congregation arrangement. Indeed, the many thousands of congregations around the world appear to be linked to the protective “interior rooms” foretold at Isaiah 26:20. (*Read.*) Do you value the congregation meetings? Do you act promptly on the direction Jehovah provides through the congregation arrangement?—**Hebrews 13:17**.

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- Song 37 and Prayer

ISAIAH 24-28 | Jehovah Takes Care of His People

Like a generous host, Jehovah supplies us with an abundance of spiritual food.



25:6

“Jehovah of armies will make for all the peoples a banquet”

- In Bible times, when people ate a meal together, it signified peace and friendship

“Of rich dishes filled with marrow, of fine, filtered wine”

- Rich dishes and fine, filtered wine picture the very best of spiritual food that Jehovah provides for us

Jehovah Is Your Name

(Psalm 83:18)

1. The living and true God—
 The God of all creation
 In ev'ry generation—
 Jehovah is your name.
 We're honored and we're proud
 To be your congregation.
 In ev'ry tribe and nation,
 Your glory we proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, Jehovah,
 There is no God like you.
 There's no other in the heavens
 Or on the earth below.
 You alone are God Almighty,
 And this all men must know.
 Jehovah, Jehovah,
 We have no other God but you.*

2. You cause us to become
 Whatever you desire,
 To do as you require—
 Jehovah is your name.
 And Witnesses for you
 Is what you've kindly named us.
 We're honored you have claimed us—
 A people for your name.

(Chorus)

had every reason to be confident that he would have loyal supporters who would offer themselves willingly to preach the good news in all the earth. What do the historical facts show? Has the King, in fact, raised up an army of willing preachers in these last days?

**“My Privilege and Duty
Is to Announce That Message”**

⁷ Shortly after he was installed as King, Jesus took steps to prepare his followers for the vast work to be done. As we saw in Chapter 2, he did an inspection and a cleansing work from 1914 to early 1919. (Mal. 3:1-4) Then, in 1919, he appointed the faithful slave to take the lead among his followers. (Matt. 24:45) Especially from that time onward, that slave began dispensing spiritual food—by means of convention discourses and printed publications—that repeatedly emphasized the responsibility of all Christians to have a *personal* share in preaching.

⁸ **Convention discourses.** Eager for direction, the Bi-

7. After he was installed as King, what steps did Jesus take to prepare his supporters for the work ahead?

8-10. How did conventions give impetus to the preaching work? Give an example. (See also the box “Early Conventions That Gave Impetus to the Preaching Work.”)

ble Students gathered at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., from September 1 to 8, 1919, for their first major convention following World War I. On the second day, Brother Rutherford gave a discourse in which he pointedly told the delegates: “A Christian’s mission on earth . . . is to proclaim the message of the Lord’s kingdom.”

⁹ The climax of that convention came three days later when Brother Rutherford delivered the talk entitled “Address to Co-laborers,” which was published in *The Watch Tower* under the title “Announcing the Kingdom.” He stated: “In sober moments a Christian naturally asks himself, Why am I on the earth? And the answer of necessity must be, The Lord has graciously made me his ambassador to bear the divine message of reconciliation to the world, and my privilege and duty is to announce that message.”

¹⁰ In that historic discourse, Brother Rutherford announced that a new magazine, *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*), would be published for use in directing people to the Kingdom as mankind’s only hope. He then asked how many of those in the audience wanted to have a share in distributing this

journal. A report on the convention explained: “The response was an inspiring scene. Six thousand people, as one person, arose.”*[2] Clearly, the King had willing supporters who were eager to proclaim his Kingdom!

11 Printed publications. Through the pages of *The Watch Tower*, the significance of the work Jesus foretold—namely, the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom—became clearer and clearer. Consider some examples from the early 1920’s.

12 What message would be proclaimed in fulfillment of Matthew 24:14? When would that work be done? The July 1, 1920, issue of *The Watch Tower*, in the article entitled “Gospel of the Kingdom,” explained the message, stating: “The good news here is

*[2] The pamphlet *To Whom the Work Is Entrusted* explained: “*The Golden Age* work is a house-to-house canvass with the kingdom message. . . . In addition to the canvass, a copy of *The Golden Age* is to be left at each home, whether a subscription is taken or not.” For years thereafter, the brothers were encouraged to offer people subscriptions to *The Golden Age* as well as to *The Watch Tower*. Beginning February 1, 1940, Jehovah’s people were encouraged to distribute individual copies of the magazines and to report the number placed.

11, 12. What did *The Watch Tower* in 1920 say as to when the work that Jesus foretold would be done?

EARLY CONVENTIONS THAT GAVE IMPETUS TO THE PREACHING WORK

■ **1919, Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A.** The program highlighted that a Christian’s vocation was “to announce the incoming glorious kingdom of Messiah.” An announcement was made that a new magazine, *The Golden Age*, would be published for use in directing people to the Kingdom. To organize and give impetus to the work, a service director would be appointed for each class, or congregation, of Bible Students.

■ **1922, Cedar Point, Ohio.** During the discourse entitled “The Kingdom,” the speaker urged: “Advertise, advertise, advertise the King and his Kingdom.” One of those present, Anna E. Zimmerman, later recalled: “Our mission was now loud and clear—to advertise the King and the Kingdom, and we went forth from that convention and did just that.”

■ **1931, Columbus, Ohio.** The Bible Students adopted a new name—Jehovah’s Witnesses. That name clearly identified the responsibility of those who worship Jehovah, namely, to proclaim his name and Kingdom.

■ **1935, Washington, D.C.** The “great multitude,” or “great crowd,” was identified as consisting of individuals who have the prospect of living forever on earth. (Rev. 7:9-17; *King James Version*) With their understanding thus clarified, Jehovah’s people discerned that the scope of the preaching work before them was indeed great.

concerning the end of the old order of things and the establishment of Messiah's kingdom." The article clearly showed when this message would be preached, saying: "This message must be delivered between the time of the great world war [World War I] and the time of the 'great tribulation.'" Hence, the article noted: "Now is the time . . . to proclaim far and wide in Christendom this good news."

¹³ Would God's people be pressured into doing the work that Jesus foretold? No. The article "Be of Good Courage," in the March 15, 1921, issue of *The Watch Tower*, appealed to the willing spirit of anointed Christians. Each one was encouraged to ask himself: "Is it not my greatest privilege, as well as my duty, to participate in this work?" The article went on to say: "We feel assured that when you do see it [as a privilege to share in the work] you will be like Jeremiah, in whose heart the word of the Lord was 'as a burning fire shut up in [his] bones,' urging him on so that he could not refrain from speaking." (Jer. 20:9) That warm encouragement reflected the confi-

13. How did *The Watch Tower* in 1921 appeal to the willing spirit of anointed Christians?

dence that Jehovah and Jesus have in loyal Kingdom supporters.

¹⁴ How should true Christians reach others with the Kingdom message? The short but powerful article entitled “Service Essential,” in the August 15, 1922, issue of *The Watch Tower*, urged anointed Christians to take part in “actively carrying the printed message to the people and talking to them at their doors, giving the witness that the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

¹⁵ Clearly, from 1919 on, Christ has used his faithful and discreet slave to emphasize repeatedly that a Christian’s privilege and duty on earth is to proclaim the Kingdom message. How, though, did the early Bible Students respond to the encouragement to share in the work of Kingdom proclamation?

“The Faithful Will Be Volunteers”

¹⁶ In the 1920’s and 1930’s, some resisted the idea that *all* anointed Christians should share in the ministry. The November 1, 1927, *Watch Tower* explained

14, 15. In 1922, *The Watch Tower* urged anointed Christians to reach others in what way?

16. How did some of the elected elders react to the idea that all should share in the ministry?

37 *Serving Jehovah Whole-Souled* (Matthew 22:37)

1. O Jehovah, Sov'reign Ruler,
You are the one I love and obey.
You deserve my full devotion;
You are my God; I'll serve you each day.
Your commands I loyally follow;
How I love reminders from you!

(CHORUS)

*O Jehovah, you are worthy;
Whole-souled devotion I give to you.*

2. Father, all your works exalt you.
Earth, moon, and stars your glory proclaim.
May I also be as faithful,
Using my strength to make known your name.
May I use my whole life to serve you,
Proving to be loyal and true.

(Chorus)

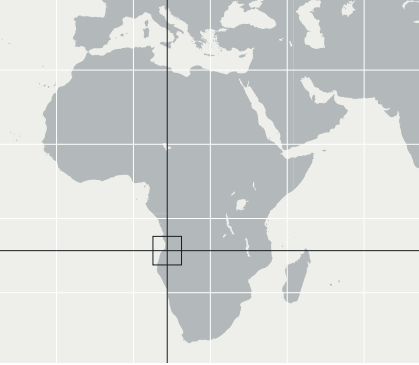
NOVEMBER 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 26, 2016–JANUARY 29, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
ANGOLA

In the city of Benguela, special pioneers are conducting a Bible study in sign language, using the brochure *Listen to God and Live Forever*. The 10 deaf publishers in that city were delighted that 62 people attended the Memorial there in 2015

PUBLISHERS
115,948

BIBLE STUDIES
502,848

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
529,827

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31 FROM OUR ARCHIVES

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.



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6 *The Heavens Declare God's Glory* (Psalm 19)

1. The heavens tell the glory of Jehovah.
 The work of his own hand,
 we see in skies above.
And each new day brings to him rightful praise.
 The starlit night proclaims his might,
 His wisdom, and his love.
2. Jehovah's law is perfect, life-restoring,
 And his reminders guide
 the steps of old and young.
His rulings prove to be true, right, and just.
 His word is sure, his law so pure,
 So sweet upon the tongue.
3. The fear of God is pure and lasts forever.
 The worth of his commands
 exceeds the finest gold.
His orders lead and preserve all his own.
 His honor, fame, and holy name,
 We loyally uphold.

Organized in Harmony With God's Own Book

“Jehovah founded the earth in wisdom. He solidly established the heavens in discernment.”—PROV. 3:19.

SONGS: 6, 24

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What convinces you that Jehovah is the incomparable Organizer?

Why is it reasonable to conclude that Jehovah's worshippers would be organized?

How does the counsel in God's Word help us to maintain cleanness, peace, and unity?

DOES God have an organization? “You don't need an organization to direct you,” some may say. “All you need is a personal relationship with God.” Is that viewpoint correct? What do the facts indicate?

2 In this article, we will discuss evidence that Jehovah, the God of order, is the incomparable Organizer. We will also consider how we should respond to the direction we receive from Jehovah's organization. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) In the first century C.E. and in our day, the Scriptures have helped the

1, 2. (a) How do some react to the thought that God has an organization? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

earthly part of Jehovah's organization to do the far-reaching work of preaching the good news. Because we stick to the Bible and comply with organizational instructions, we promote the cleanness, peace, and unity of the entire congregation.

JEHOVAH, THE INCOMPARABLE ORGANIZER

3 Creation proves that God is the incomparable Organizer. "Jehovah founded the earth in wisdom," says the Bible. "He solidly established the heavens in discernment." (Prov. 3:19) We know only "the fringes of [God's] ways," and "only a faint whisper has been heard of him." (Job 26:14) Yet, the little we know about planets, stars, and galaxies moves us to acknowledge that these celestial bodies are superbly organized. (Ps. 8:3, 4) Galaxies consist of millions of stars, all moving in space in an orderly way. Why, planets in our solar system travel in orbits around the sun as though they were humbly obeying traffic laws! Surely the mind-boggling order evident in the universe helps us to see that Jehovah, who "skillfully made the heavens" and the earth, deserves our praise, loyalty, and worship.—Ps. 136:1, 5-9.

4 Science has revealed much about the universe and our earthly home, and it has brought us advantages in various aspects of life. But there are many questions science has not been able to answer. For instance, astronomers cannot tell us

3. What convinces you that Jehovah is the incomparable Organizer?

4. Why has science failed to answer many questions?

exactly *how* the universe came into existence or *why* we are on planet Earth with its abundance of life. Also, people in general cannot explain why mankind has a strong desire to live forever. (Eccl. 3:11) Why are there so many important but unanswered questions? Partly because numerous scientists and others tend to promote godless thinking and endorse the theory of evolution. But in his own Book, Jehovah answers questions weighing on the hearts of people everywhere.

5 We are dependent on the consistent and reliable laws of nature established by Jehovah. Electricians, plumbers, engineers, pilots, surgeons—all of them depend on these laws in order to do their work. For instance, surgeons count on the fact that the human anatomy is basically consistent. So a surgeon does not have to search for a patient's heart. And all of us respect the laws of nature. Trying to defy the law of gravity might cost us our life!

ORGANIZED BY GOD

6 The universe truly is a marvel of organization. Surely, then, we should expect that Jehovah wants his worshippers to be well-organized. In fact, to that end God has provided the Bible for our guidance. Living without the help of God's

5. In what ways are we dependent on the laws of nature?

6. Why should we expect Jehovah's worshippers to be organized?

organization and his standards would result in unhappiness and misery.

7 The Bible is no mere collection of unrelated Jewish and Christian literature. Rather, it is a well-organized book—a divinely inspired masterpiece. The individual books of the Bible are interconnected. Interwoven from Genesis to Revelation is the Bible’s central theme—the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty and the fulfillment of his purpose for the earth by means of his Kingdom under Christ, the promised “offspring.”—Read **Genesis 3:15; Matthew 6:10; Revelation 11:15.**

8 The people of ancient Israel were a model of organization. Under the Mosaic Law, for example, there were “women who were organized to serve at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” (Ex. 38:8) The moving of the Israelite camp and the tabernacle took place in an orderly way. Later, King David organized the Levites and the priests into effective divisions. (1 Chron. 23:1-6; 24:1-3) And when they obeyed Jehovah, the Israelites were blessed with order, peace, and unity.—Deut. 11:26, 27; 28:1-14.

9 The first-century Christian congregation was organized,

7. What shows that the Bible is a well-organized book?

8. Why can we say that the Israelites were well-organized?

9. What shows that the first-century Christian congregation was organized?

and it benefited from the direction of the governing body, initially made up of the apostles. (Acts 6:1-6) Later, additional brothers were added to that governing body. (Acts 15:6) Counsel and instructions were also provided by means of inspired letters written by men who were members of or closely associated with the first-century governing body. (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) How did the congregations benefit from following the direction of the governing body?

10 Read Acts 16:4, 5. Brothers traveling on behalf of the governing body shared “the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem.” As congregations observed those decrees, they “continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.” Does this Bible account contain a lesson that we are wise to apply within God’s organization today?

DO YOU FOLLOW DIRECTION?

11 What should members of Branch Committees or Country Committees, circuit overseers, and congregation elders do when they receive direction from God’s organization today? Jehovah’s own Book directs all of us to be obedient and

10. What resulted when the early congregations observed the decrees decided on by the governing body? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

11. How should appointed men respond to the direction they receive from God’s organization?

submissive. (Deut. 30:16; Heb. 13:7, 17) A critical or rebellious spirit has no place in God’s organization, for such an attitude could disrupt our loving, peaceful, and united congregations. Of course, no loyal Christian would want to display a disrespectful and disloyal spirit like that of Diotrephes. (Read 3 John 9, 10.) We might well ask ourselves: ‘Do I contribute to the spirituality of those around me? Am I quick to accept and support the direction given by the brothers taking the lead?’

12 Consider a recent decision made by the Governing Body. “Questions From Readers” in *The Watchtower* of November 15, 2014, outlined an adjustment in how elders and ministerial servants are appointed. The article noted that the first-century governing body authorized traveling overseers to make such appointments. In line with that pattern, since September 1, 2014, circuit overseers have been appointing elders and ministerial servants. The circuit overseer tries to get to know the men who are recommended and to work with them in the field service if possible. He also observes the family of the brother under consideration. (1 Tim. 3:4, 5) The body of elders and the circuit overseer carefully consider the Scriptural qualifications for ministerial servants and elders.—1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13; 1 Pet. 5:1-3.

12. What adjustment has been made in how elders and ministerial servants are appointed?

13 We need to follow the Bible-based direction we receive from the elders. These loyal shepherds within God’s organization are guided by “wholesome,” or “healthful; beneficial,” instruction found in God’s own Book. (1 Tim. 6:3; ftn.) Recall Paul’s counsel regarding disorderly ones in the congregation. Some individuals were ‘not working at all but were meddling with what did not concern them.’ They were evidently admonished by the elders but persisted in disregarding the counsel. How was the congregation to deal with such a person? Paul directed: “Keep this one marked and stop associating with him.” That counsel was balanced with the caution not to treat such a person as an enemy. (2 Thess. 3:11-15) Today, elders may give a warning talk about someone’s persisting in a course that reflects badly on the congregation, such as dating an unbeliever. (1 Cor. 7:39) How do you react when the elders find it necessary to give such a talk? If you are aware of the situation described in the talk, will you take care to avoid socializing with such an individual? Your loving concern and firm stand may move the person to abandon a disorderly course.[1]

MAINTAIN CLEANNES, PEACE, AND UNITY

14 We can contribute to the spiritual cleanness of the

13. How can we show our support for the direction we receive from the elders?

14. How can we contribute to the congregation’s cleanness?

congregation by following the direction found in God's Word. Consider the situation in ancient Corinth. Paul had poured himself out preaching in that city, and he loved his fellow "holy ones" there. (1 Cor. 1:1, 2) But how troubling it must have been for him to have to address the problem of sexual immorality that was being tolerated in that congregation! Paul directed the elders to hand the immoral man over to Satan—in other words, to disfellowship him. To preserve the congregation's purity, the elders needed to clear out the "leaven." (1 Cor. 5:1, 5-7, 12) When we support the elders' decision to disfellowship an unrepentant wrongdoer, we help to maintain the cleanness of the congregation and perhaps move the person to repent and seek Jehovah's forgiveness.

15 Another problem in Corinth had to be addressed. Some brothers were taking fellow believers to court. Paul asked them a sobering question: "Why not rather let yourselves be wronged?" (1 Cor. 6:1-8) Similar situations have arisen today. At times, peace among spiritual brothers has been disrupted because a failed business venture led to loss of money and perhaps to accusations of fraud. Some have taken their brothers to court, but God's own Book helps us to see that it is better to suffer loss than to bring reproach on God's name or disturb the peace of the congregation.[2] To resolve serious problems and disputes, we should of course apply Je-

15. How can we maintain peace in the congregation?

sus' counsel. (Read Matthew 5:23, 24; 18:15-17.) When we do so, we promote unity in the family of Jehovah's worshippers.

16 Jehovah's own Book shows why we should expect his people to be united. The psalmist sang: "Look! How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) When they obeyed Jehovah, the Israelites were organized and unified. Foretelling the future condition of his people, God declared: "In unity I will place them, like sheep in the pen." (Mic. 2:12) Moreover, Jehovah foretold through the prophet Zephaniah: "I will change the language of the peoples to a pure language [of Scriptural truth], so that all of them may call on the name of Jehovah, to serve him shoulder to shoulder [or, "worship him in unity," ftn.]" (Zeph. 3:9) How grateful we are to have the privilege of worshipping Jehovah in unity!

17 If unity and cleanness are to be maintained in a congregation, the elders must care for judicial matters promptly and in a loving way. Paul knew that God's love is not guided by mere sentiment, and He does not turn a blind eye to wrongdoing. (Prov. 15:3) So Paul did not hold back from writing First Corinthians, a strong yet loving letter. Second

16. Why should we expect God's people to be united?

17. To maintain a congregation's unity and cleanness, how should the elders handle cases of wrongdoing?

Corinthians, written some months later, shows that progress was made because the elders had applied the apostle's direction. If a Christian takes a false step before he is aware of it, qualified men should try to readjust him in a spirit of mildness.—Gal. 6:1.

18 It is clear that the inspired counsel in God's own Book helped first-century Christians in Corinth and elsewhere to maintain cleanness, peace, and unity in their congregations. (1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:11-13, ftn.; 1 Pet. 3:8) As a result, our brothers and sisters of that time were able to accomplish much in the ministry. In fact, Paul could say that the good news "was preached in all creation under heaven." (Col. 1:23) Today, knowledge of God's wonderful purposes is being spread throughout the earth as a result of the efforts of those who are part of one united preaching organization. The next article will give further proof that these ones highly esteem the Bible and are determined to honor the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.—Ps. 71:15, 16.

18. (a) In what ways did counsel provided in God's Word help the first-century congregations? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

ENDNOTES:

[1] (paragraph 13) See *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*, pp. 134-136.

[2] (paragraph 15) For information about situations in which one Christian might decide to take legal action against another Christian, see "*Keep Yourselves in God's Love*," p. 223, ftn.

24 *Come to Jehovah's Mountain*

(Isaiah 2:2-4)

1. Raise your eyes up and see,
Far above the highest hill.
There stands Jehovah's mountain
Lifted up in this day.

People come from afar,
Ev'rywhere from sea to sea,
Calling to one another,
'Come serve God and obey.'

Now the time has arrived
For the small, a great nation to be.
As we grow and we thrive,
God's direction and blessing we see.

Millions now come to God
And accept his sov'reignty.
Loyal they vow to be
And from his side never stray.

2. Jesus gave the command
 To go forth and preach the word.
Good news about the Kingdom
 Reaches all men today.

Christ now rules from above,
 Urging all to take his side.
Meek ones who hear his voice
 Let God's Word show them the way.

 It brings joy to the heart,
 As the great crowd continues to grow.
And we all have a part,
 As we strive to let ev'ryone know.

Let us lift up the voice,
 Calling out for all to hear,
'Come to Jehovah's mountain,
 Here forever to stay.'

(See also Ps. 43:3; 99:9; Isa. 60:22; Acts 16:5.)