

- Song 63 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Hezekiah’s Faith Was Rewarded”:** (10 min.)  
Isa 36:1, 4-10, 15, 18-20—The Assyrians taunted Jehovah and threatened his people (*ip-1* 386-388 ¶7-14)  
Isa 37:1, 2, 14-20—Hezekiah put his trust in Jehovah (*ip-1* 389-391 ¶15-17)  
Isa 37:33-38—Jehovah acted in defense of his people (*ip-1* 391-394 ¶18-22)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Isa 35:8—What was “the Way of Holiness,” and who qualified to walk on it? (*w08* 5/15 26 ¶4; 27 ¶1)

Isa 36:2, 3, 22—How did Shebna set a good example of one who accepted discipline? (*w07* 1/15 8 ¶6)

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 36:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Mt 24:3, 7, 14—Teach the Truth—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) 2Ti 3:1-5—Teach the Truth—Leave a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 31-32 ¶11-12—Invite the person to the meeting.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 30
- **“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”:** (15 min.) Questions and answers. Begin by playing “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”—*Excerpt* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 7 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

**“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”**



It is important for us to trust in Jehovah both in good times and in bad. (Ps 25:1, 2) In the eighth century B.C.E., the Jews in Judah faced a crisis that tested their trust in God. What occurred provides many lessons for us. (Ro 15:4) After watching the video “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You,” how would you answer the following questions?

1. What crisis did Hezekiah face?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Hezekiah apply the principle found at Proverbs 22:3 when anticipating a possible siege?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Hezekiah not consider surrendering to Assyria or making an alliance with Egypt?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How is Hezekiah a good example for Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What situations today test *our* trust in Jehovah?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I WANT TO SHOW MORE TRUST IN JEHOVAH WHEN . . .**

# We're Jehovah's Witnesses!

(Isaiah 43:10-12)

Ab Eb7/G Ab Db/Ab Ab Eb7/Db Ab/C Bbm7 Db/Eb Eb9

Men make gods of wood and stone, But the true God  
Proud - ly we de - clare God's name, Bear - ing wit - ness  
Wit - ness - ing ex - alts God's name, Lifts there - from re -

Ab Absus4 Ab Ab/C Eb7/Bb Ab A°

they've not known. He is God Al - might - y,  
to his fame. News a - bout his King - dom,  
proach and shame. And it warns the wick - ed,

Eb/Bb Bb7 Eb Fm11 Eb/G Eb7/G Ab Ab/C Eb7

As he's of - ten shown. Oth - er gods just can - not see  
Bold - ly we pro - claim. We help oth - ers come to see  
Who God's name de - fame. Par - don it holds out to men,

Bbm7 Bbm7/Eb Eb+5 Ab6 Ab Eb Bbm Bbm/Db

What in fu - ture days will be. For wit - ness - es they  
How the truth can set them free. As they grow strong, their  
If they turn to God a - gain. Whole - souled de - vo - tion

# We're Jehovah's Witnesses!

Eb
Bbm
Bb7
Ab/Bb Bb7

look all in vain, Since none their god - ship  
 voic - es they'll raise, Sing - ing to God this  
 brings joy and peace; Prom - ise of life that

Chorus

Eb
Bb7
Eb
Eb7
Ab
Ab/Eb
Ab/C
Ab
Eb7

can main - tain.  
 song of praise. We're Je - ho - vah's Wit - ness - es.  
 will not cease.

Bbm7
B°
Ab/C
Eb7
Ab6
Ab
C7
Fm

We speak out in fear - less - ness. Ours is the God of

Bbm/Db
F/C
Bbm
Ab/Eb
Eb7
Ab

true proph - e - cy; What he fore - tells comes to be.

He is the One who will  
save us.<sup>a</sup>

**23** Your ropes will hang loose;  
They cannot hold up the  
mast nor spread the sail.  
At that time an abundance of  
spoil will be divided up;  
Even the lame will take much  
plunder.<sup>b</sup>

**24** And no resident\* will say:  
"I am sick."<sup>c</sup>  
The people dwelling in the  
land will be pardoned for  
their error.<sup>d</sup>

**34** Come close to hear,  
you nations,  
And pay attention, you  
peoples.  
Let the earth and that which  
fills it listen,  
The land and all its produce.

**2** For Jehovah's indignation  
is against all the nations,<sup>e</sup>  
And his wrath is against  
all their army.<sup>f</sup>  
He will devote them to  
destruction;  
He will give them to the  
slaughter.<sup>g</sup>

**3** Their slain will be thrown  
out,  
And the stench of their  
carcasses will ascend;<sup>h</sup>  
The mountains will melt  
because of\* their blood.<sup>i</sup>

**4** All the army of the heavens  
will rot away,  
And the heavens will be  
rolled up like a scroll.  
All their army will wither  
away,  
As a withered leaf falls from  
the vine  
And a shriveled fig from  
the fig tree.

**5** "For in the heavens my  
sword will be drenched.<sup>j</sup>  
It will descend on E'dom  
in judgment,<sup>k</sup>

**33:24** \*Or "inhabitant." **34:3** \*Or "will  
flow with."

CHAP. 33

a Isa 12:2  
Zep 3:17

b Isa 33:4

c De 7:15  
Re 21:4  
Re 22:1, 2

d Jer 50:20  
Mic 7:18, 19

CHAP. 34

e Jer 25:15  
Joe 3:12  
Zep 3:8  
Zec 14:3

f Isa 30:27  
Na 1:2

g Re 19:11, 15

h Jer 25:33

i Eze 39:4

j De 32:41

k Ps 137:7  
Jer 49:7, 22

Second Col.

a Le 3:16

b Isa 63:1-3  
Ob 8, 9

c De 32:41  
Ps 94:1

d Isa 35:4

e Mal 1:4

On the people whom  
I devoted to destruction.

**6** Jehovah has a sword; it will  
be covered with blood.  
It will be covered with the  
fat,<sup>a</sup>  
With the blood of young  
rams and goats,  
With the kidney fat of rams.  
For Jehovah has a sacrifice  
in Boz'rah,  
A great slaughter in the land  
of E'dom.<sup>b</sup>

**7** The wild bulls will go down  
with them,  
The young bulls with the  
powerful ones.  
Their land will be drenched  
in blood,  
And their dust will be soaked  
with fat.<sup>c</sup>

**8** For Jehovah has a day of  
vengeance,<sup>c</sup>  
A year of retribution for the  
legal case over Zion.<sup>d</sup>

**9** Her\* streams will be changed  
into pitch,  
And her dust into sulfur,  
And her land will become  
like burning pitch.

**10** By night or by day it will not  
be extinguished;  
Its smoke will keep  
ascending forever.  
From generation to gener-  
ation she will remain  
devastated;  
No one will pass through her  
forever and ever.<sup>e</sup>

**11** The pelican and the porcu-  
pine will possess her,  
And long-eared owls and  
ravens will reside in her.  
He will stretch out over  
her the measuring line of  
emptiness  
And the plumb line\* of  
desolation.

**12** None of her nobles will be  
called to the kingship,

**34:9** \*Evidently referring to Bozrah,  
the capital of Edom. **34:11** \*Lit., "the  
stones."

- And all her princes will come to nothing.
- 13** Thorns will grow in her fortified towers,  
Nettles and thorny weeds in her fortresses.  
She will become a lair of jackals,<sup>a</sup>  
An enclosure for ostriches.
- 14** Desert creatures will meet up with howling animals,  
And the wild goat\* will call to its companion.  
Yes, there the nightjar will settle and find a place of rest.
- 15** There the arrow snake will make its nest and lay eggs,  
And it will hatch them and gather them in its shadow.  
Yes, there the kites will gather, each one with her mate.
- 16** Search in the book of Jehovah and read it out loud:  
Not one of them will be missing;  
None of them will be lacking a mate,  
For it is the mouth of Jehovah that has given the order,  
And it is his spirit that has gathered them together.
- 17** He is the One who has cast the lot for them,  
And his own hand has measured out their assigned place.\*  
They will possess it for all time;  
They will reside in it throughout all generations.
- 35** The wilderness and the parched land will exult,<sup>b</sup>  
And the desert plain will be joyful and blossom as the saffron.\*<sup>c</sup>
- 34:14** \*Or possibly, "the goatlike demon."  
**34:17** \*Lit., "divided it for them with a measuring line."  
**35:1** \*Or "crocus."

## CHAP. 34

a Mal 1:3

## CHAP. 35

b Isa 29:17  
Isa 32:14, 15c Isa 4:2  
Isa 27:6  
Isa 35:6  
Isa 51:3  
Eze 36:35

## Second Col.

a Ho 14:5, 6

b Isa 60:13

c Jer 50:19

d Isa 65:10

e Heb 12:12

f Jer 51:56

g Isa 25:9  
Zep 3:16, 17h Ps 146:8  
Isa 42:16  
Mt 9:28-30i Isa 29:18  
Jer 6:10  
Mr 7:32-35  
Lu 7:22j Mt 11:5  
Ac 8:7  
Ac 14:8-10

k Mt 15:30

l Isa 44:3

m Jer 9:11

n Eze 1:3  
Isa 11:16  
Isa 49:11  
Isa 62:10  
Jer 31:21

o Isa 52:1

- 2** Without fail it will blossom;<sup>a</sup>  
It will rejoice and shout for joy.  
The glory of Leb'a-non will be given to it,<sup>b</sup>  
The splendor of Car'mel<sup>c</sup>  
and of Shar'on.<sup>d</sup>  
They will see the glory of Jehovah, the splendor of our God.
- 3** Strengthen the weak hands,  
And make firm the knees that are shaking.<sup>e</sup>
- 4** Say to those who are anxious at heart:  
"Be strong. Do not be afraid.  
Look! Your own God will come with vengeance,  
God will come with retribution.<sup>f</sup>  
He will come and save you."<sup>g</sup>
- 5** At that time the eyes of the blind will be opened,<sup>h</sup>  
And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.<sup>i</sup>
- 6** At that time the lame will leap like the deer,<sup>j</sup>  
And the tongue of the speechless will shout for joy.<sup>k</sup>  
For waters will burst forth in the wilderness,  
And streams in the desert plain.
- 7** The heat-parched ground will become a reedy pool,  
And the thirsty ground springs of water.<sup>l</sup>  
In the lairs where jackals rested,<sup>m</sup>  
There will be green grass and reeds and papyrus.
- 8** And a highway will be there,<sup>n</sup>  
Yes, a way called the Way of Holiness.  
The unclean one will not travel on it.<sup>o</sup>  
It is reserved for the one walking on the way;  
No one foolish will stray onto it.

9 No lion will be there,  
And no vicious wild beasts  
will come on it.  
They will not be found  
there;<sup>a</sup>

Only the repurchased ones  
will walk there.<sup>b</sup>

10 Those redeemed by Jehovah  
will return<sup>c</sup> and come to  
Zion with a joyful cry.<sup>d</sup>

Unending joy will crown  
their heads.<sup>e</sup>

Exultation and rejoicing  
will be theirs,

And grief and sighing  
will flee away.<sup>f</sup>

**36** In the 14th year of King  
Hez-e-ki'ah, Sen-nach'er-ib  
the king of As-syr'i-a<sup>g</sup> came  
up against all the fortified cit-  
ies of Judah and captured them.<sup>h</sup>

2 The king of As-syr'i-a then  
sent the Rab'sha-keh<sup>\*i</sup> with a vast  
army from La'chish<sup>j</sup> to King Hez-  
e-ki'ah in Jerusalem. They took  
up a position by the conduit of  
the upper pool,<sup>k</sup> which is at  
the highway of the laundry-  
man's field.<sup>l</sup> 3 Then E-li'a-kim<sup>m</sup>  
son of Hil-ki'ah, who was in  
charge of the household,<sup>n</sup> Sheb'-  
na<sup>n</sup> the secretary, and Jo'ah son  
of A'saph the recorder came out  
to him.

4 So the Rab'sha-keh said to  
them: "Please, say to Hez-e-ki'ah,  
'This is what the great king, the  
king of As-syr'i-a, says: "What is  
the basis for your confidence?"<sup>o</sup>

5 You are saying, 'I have a strat-  
egy and the power to wage war,'  
but these are empty words. In  
whom have you put trust, so that  
you dare to rebel against me?<sup>p</sup>

6 Look! You trust in the sup-  
port of this crushed reed, Egypt,  
which if a man should lean on it  
would enter into his palm and  
pierce it. That is the way Phar'-  
aoh king of Egypt is to all those

36:2 \*Or "the chief cupbearer." 36:3  
\*Or "palace."

#### CHAP. 35

a Isa 11:6, 7  
Isa 65:25  
Eze 34:25  
Ho 2:18

b Ps 107:2, 3  
Isa 62:12

c De 30:4

d Isa 51:11  
Jer 31:11, 12

e Jer 33:10, 11

f Isa 30:19  
Isa 65:19

#### CHAP. 36

g Isa 10:5

h 2Ki 18:13  
2Ch 32:1  
Isa 8:7, 8  
Isa 10:28-32  
Isa 33:8

i 2Ch 32:9

j 2Ki 19:8

k Isa 7:3

l 2Ki 18:17, 18

m Isa 22:20, 21

n 2Ki 19:2

o 2Ki 18:19-25  
2Ki 19:10

p 2Ki 18:1, 7

#### Second Col.

a 2Ki 17:4  
Isa 30:2, 7  
Jer 37:7

b 2Ki 18:1, 4  
2Ch 31:1

c De 12:11  
2Ch 7:12  
2Ch 32:12

d 2Ki 18:13

e Isa 22:15

f 2Ki 18:17

g Ezr 4:7  
Da 2:4

h 2Ki 18:26, 27

i 2Ch 32:18

j 2Ki 18:28-35

k 2Ch 32:11, 15  
Da 3:15

l 2Ki 19:22

who trust in him.<sup>a</sup> 7 And if you  
should say to me, 'We trust in  
Jehovah our God,' is he not the  
one whose high places and altars  
Hez-e-ki'ah has removed,<sup>b</sup> while  
he says to Judah and Jerusalem,  
'You should bow down before  
this altar?'"<sup>c</sup> 8 So now make  
this wager, please, with my lord  
the king of As-syr'i-a:<sup>d</sup> I will give  
you 2,000 horses if you are able  
to find enough riders for them.

9 How, then, could you drive  
back even one governor who is  
the least of my lord's servants,  
while you put your trust in Egypt  
for chariots and for horsemen?  
10 Now is it without authoriza-  
tion from Jehovah that I have  
come up against this land to de-  
stroy it? Jehovah himself said to  
me, 'Go up against this land and  
destroy it.'

11 At this E-li'a-kim and  
Sheb'na<sup>e</sup> and Jo'ah said to the  
Rab'sha-keh:<sup>f</sup> "Speak to your ser-  
vants, please, in the Ar-a-ma'-  
ic\* language,<sup>g</sup> for we can under-  
stand it; do not speak to us in  
the language of the Jews in the  
hearing of the people on the  
wall."<sup>h</sup> 12 But the Rab'sha-keh  
said: "Is it just to your lord and  
to you that my lord sent me to  
speak these words? Is it not also  
to the men who sit on the wall,  
those who will eat their own ex-  
crement and drink their own  
urine along with you?"

13 Then the Rab'sha-keh  
stood and called out loudly in  
the language of the Jews,<sup>i</sup> say-  
ing: "Hear the word of the  
great king, the king of As-syr'i-a.<sup>j</sup>  
14 This is what the king says,  
'Do not let Hez-e-ki'ah deceive  
you, for he is not able to rescue  
you.<sup>k</sup> 15 And do not let Hez-  
e-ki'ah cause you to trust in Je-  
hovah<sup>l</sup> by saying: "Jehovah will  
surely rescue us, and this city  
will not be given into the hand

36:11 \*Or "Syrian."

of the king of As-syr'i-a." **16** Do not listen to Hez-e-ki'ah, for this is what the king of As-syr'i-a says: "Make peace with me and surrender,\* and each of you will eat from his own vine and from his own fig tree and will drink the water of his own cistern, **17** until I come and take you to a land like your own land,<sup>a</sup> a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards. **18** Do not let Hez-e-ki'ah mislead you by saying, 'Jehovah will rescue us.' Have any of the gods of the nations rescued their land out of the hand of the king of As-syr'i-a?<sup>b</sup> **19** Where are the gods of Ha'math and Ar'pad?<sup>c</sup> Where are the gods of Seph-ar-va'im?<sup>d</sup> And have they rescued Sa-mar'i-a out of my hand?<sup>e</sup> **20** Who among all the gods of these lands have rescued their land out of my hand, so that Jehovah should rescue Jerusalem out of my hand?"<sup>f</sup>

**21** But they kept silent and did not say a word to him in reply, for the order of the king was, "You must not answer him."<sup>g</sup> **22** But E-li'a-kim son of Hil-ki'ah, who was in charge of the household,\* Sheb'na<sup>h</sup> the secretary, and Jo'ah son of A'saph the recorder came to Hez-e-ki'ah with their garments ripped apart and told him the words of the Rab'sha-keh.

**37** As soon as King Hez-e-ki'ah heard this, he ripped his garments apart and covered himself with sackcloth and went into the house of Jehovah.<sup>i</sup> **2** Then he sent E-li'a-kim, who was in charge of the household,\* Sheb'na the secretary, and the elders of the priests, covered with sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah,<sup>j</sup> the son of A'moz. **3** They said to him: "This is what

## CHAP. 36

a 2Ki 17:6  
2Ki 17:22, 23

b 2Ki 19:11, 12  
2Ch 32:14  
Isa 37:11, 12

c Jer 49:23

d 2Ki 17:24

e 2Ki 17:6  
2Ki 17:22, 23  
Isa 10:11

f 2Ki 19:17, 18  
2Ch 32:15  
Isa 37:23

g 2Ki 18:36, 37  
Pr 9:7

h Isa 22:15

## CHAP. 37

i 2Ki 19:1-4

j 2Ch 26:22  
Isa 1:1

## Second Col.

a Isa 26:17, 18

b 1Sa 17:45  
2Ki 18:28, 35

c 2Ch 32:20  
Ps 50:15  
Joe 2:17

d 2Ki 17:18

e 2Ki 19:5-7

f De 20:1

g 2Ki 18:17

h Pr 21:1

i 2Ch 32:21  
Isa 37:37, 38

j Jos 10:29, 30  
2Ki 8:22  
2Ki 19:8-13

k 2Ki 18:17

l 2Ch 32:15

m 2Ki 17:5, 6  
2Ch 32:13  
Isa 10:11

Hez-e-ki'ah says, "This day is a day of distress, of rebuke,\* and of disgrace; for the children are ready to be born,<sup>n</sup> but there is no strength to give birth.<sup>a</sup> **4** Perhaps Jehovah your God will hear the words of the Rab'sha-keh, whom the king of As-syr'i-a his lord sent to taunt the living God,<sup>b</sup> and he will call him to account for the words that Jehovah your God has heard. So offer up a prayer<sup>c</sup> in behalf of the remnant who have survived."<sup>d</sup>

**5** So the servants of King Hez-e-ki'ah went in to Isaiah,<sup>e</sup> **6** and Isaiah said to them: "This is what you should say to your lord, 'This is what Jehovah says: "Do not be afraid<sup>f</sup> because of the words that you heard, the words with which the attendants of the king of As-syr'i-a<sup>g</sup> blasphemed me. **7** Here I am putting a thought in his mind,\* and he will hear a report and return to his own land;<sup>h</sup> and I will make him fall by the sword in his own land."<sup>h</sup>

**8** After the Rab'sha-keh heard that the king of As-syr'i-a had pulled away from La'chish, he returned to him and found him fighting against Lib'nah.<sup>i</sup> **9** Now the king heard it said about King Tir-ha'kah of E-thi-o-pi-a: "He has come out to fight against you." When he heard this, he sent messengers again to Hez-e-ki'ah,<sup>k</sup> saying: **10** "This is what you should say to King Hez-e-ki'ah of Judah, 'Do not let your God in whom you trust deceive you by saying: "Jerusalem will not be given into the hand of the king of As-syr'i-a."<sup>l</sup> **11** Look! You have heard what the kings of As-syr'i-a did to all the lands by devoting them to destruction.<sup>m</sup> Will you alone

36:16 \*Lit., "Make with me a blessing and come out to me." 36:22; 37:2 \*Or "palace."

37:3 \*Or "insult." <sup>n</sup>Lit., "have come to the opening of the womb." 37:7 \*Lit., "a spirit in him."

be rescued? **12** Did the gods of the nations that my forefathers destroyed rescue them?<sup>a</sup> Where are Go'zan, Ha'ran,<sup>b</sup> Re'zeph, and the people of E'den who were in Tel-as'sar? **13** Where is the king of Ha'math, the king of Ar'pad, and the king of the cities of Seph-ar-va'im,<sup>c</sup> and of He'na, and of Iv'vah?"

**14** Hez-e-ki'ah took the letters out of the hand of the messengers and read them. Hez-e-ki'ah then went up to the house of Jehovah and spread them\* out before Jehovah.<sup>d</sup> **15** And Hez-e-ki'ah began to pray to Jehovah<sup>e</sup> and say: **16** "O Jehovah of armies,<sup>f</sup> the God of Israel, sitting enthroned above\* the cherubs, you alone are the true God of all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. **17** Incline your ear, O Jehovah, and hear!<sup>g</sup> Open your eyes, O Jehovah, and see!<sup>h</sup> Hear all the words that Sen-nach'er-ib has sent to taunt the living God.<sup>i</sup> **18** It is a fact, O Jehovah, that the kings of Assy'r'i-a have devastated all the lands,<sup>j</sup> as well as their own land. **19** And they have thrown their gods into the fire,<sup>k</sup> because they were not gods but the work of human hands,<sup>l</sup> wood and stone. That is why they could destroy them. **20** But now, O Jehovah our God, save us out of his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone are God, O Jehovah."<sup>m</sup>

**21** Isaiah son of A'moz then sent this message to Hez-e-ki'ah: "This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says, 'Because you prayed to me concerning King Sen-nach'er-ib of Assy'r'i-a,<sup>n</sup> **22** this is the word that Jehovah has spoken against him:

**37:14** \*Lit., "it." **37:16** \*Or possibly, "between."

## CHAP. 37

- a Isa 36:19  
b Ge 11:31  
c 2Ki 17:24  
Isa 36:19  
d 2Ki 19:14-19  
e 1Ki 8:30  
2Ch 6:20  
2Ch 20:9  
Da 9:3  
f Ps 46:7  
Isa 8:13  
g 2Ch 6:40  
Ps 65:2  
h 2Ch 16:9  
1Pe 3:12  
i Isa 37:4  
j 2Ki 15:29  
2Ki 16:8, 9  
1Ch 5:26  
k Isa 10:11  
l Isa 40:19  
Isa 41:7  
Jer 10:3  
Ho 8:6  
Ac 17:29  
m De 32:31, 39  
Ps 83:18  
Ps 96:5  
n 2Ki 19:20, 21

## Second Col.

- a 2Ki 19:4, 16  
b 2Ki 18:30, 35  
Isa 10:12, 13  
c Ex 15:11  
2Ki 19:22-24  
Isa 10:20  
Eze 39:7  
d 2Ch 32:17  
e Isa 10:10, 11  
f Ps 33:11  
Isa 46:10  
g Isa 55:10, 11  
h 2Ki 19:25, 26

"The virgin daughter of Zion despises you, she scoffs at you.

The daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head at you.

**23** Whom have you taunted<sup>a</sup> and blasphemed?

Against whom have you raised your voice<sup>b</sup>

And lifted your arrogant eyes?

It is against the Holy One of Israel!<sup>c</sup>

**24** Through your servants you have taunted Jehovah<sup>d</sup> and said,

'With the multitude of my war chariots

I will ascend the heights of mountains,<sup>e</sup>

The remotest parts of Leb'a-non.

I will cut down its lofty cedars, its choice juniper trees.

I will enter its highest retreats, its densest forests.

**25** I will dig wells and drink waters;

I will dry up the streams\* of Egypt with the soles of my feet.<sup>f</sup>

**26** Have you not heard?

From long ago it was determined.\*

From days gone by I have prepared<sup>g</sup> it.<sup>f</sup>

Now I will bring it about.<sup>g</sup>

You will turn fortified cities into desolate piles of ruins.<sup>h</sup>

**27** Their inhabitants will be helpless;

They will be terrified and put to shame.

They will become as vegetation of the field and green grass,

As grass of the roofs that is scorched by the east wind.

**37:25** \*Or "the Nile canals." **37:26** \*Lit., "done." <sup>f</sup>Or "formed."



**28** But I well know when you sit,  
when you go out, when you  
come in,<sup>a</sup>

And when you are enraged  
against me,<sup>b</sup>

**29** Because your rage against  
me<sup>c</sup> and your roaring have  
reached my ears.<sup>d</sup>

So I will put my hook in  
your nose and my bridle<sup>e</sup>  
between your lips,  
And I will lead you back  
the way you came.”

**30** “And this will be the sign  
for you: \* This year you will eat  
what grows on its own;<sup>f</sup> and  
in the second year, you will eat  
grain that sprouts from that; but  
in the third year you will sow  
seed and reap, and you will plant  
vineyards and eat their fruitage.<sup>g</sup>

**31** Those of the house of Judah  
who escape, those who are left,<sup>g</sup>  
will take root downward and  
produce fruit upward. **32** For a  
remnant will go out of Jerusalem  
and survivors from Mount Zion.<sup>h</sup>  
The zeal of Jehovah of armies  
will do this.<sup>i</sup>

**33** “Therefore this is what  
Jehovah says about the king of  
As-syr'i-a:<sup>j</sup>

“He will not come into  
this city<sup>k</sup>

Or shoot an arrow there  
Or confront it with a shield  
Or cast up a siege rampart  
against it.”<sup>l</sup>

**34** ‘By the way he came he will  
return;

He will not come into this  
city,’ declares Jehovah.

**35** ‘I will defend this city<sup>m</sup> and  
save it for my own sake<sup>n</sup>

And for the sake of my  
servant David.”<sup>o</sup>

**36** And the angel of Jehovah  
went out and struck down 185,-  
000 men in the camp of the AS-  
syr'i-ans. When people rose up

**37:30** \*That is, Hezekiah. #Or “the  
growth from spilled kernels of grain.”

#### CHAP. 37

- a Pr 5:21  
Pr 15:3  
Heb 4:13  
b 2Ki 19:27, 28  
c Ps 46:6  
Isa 10:15  
Isa 37:23  
d Isa 36:4, 20  
e Ps 32:9  
f 2Ki 19:29-31  
g Isa 1:9  
Isa 10:20, 21  
h 2Ki 19:4  
i Isa 59:17  
Joe 2:18  
Zec 1:14, 15  
j Isa 10:24  
k 2Ch 32:22  
Isa 10:32  
l 2Ki 19:32-34  
m Isa 31:5  
n De 32:27  
1Sa 12:22  
2Ki 20:6  
Eze 36:22  
o 1Ki 15:4

#### Second Col.

- a 2Ki 19:35-37  
2Ch 32:21  
b Ge 10:8, 11  
Jon 1:2  
c 2Ki 19:7, 28  
d 2Ch 32:21  
e Ge 8:4  
f Eze 4:1, 2

#### CHAP. 38

- g 2Ch 32:24  
h 2Ki 19:20  
Isa 1:1  
i 2Ki 20:1-3  
j Ne 13:22  
Ps 20:1-3  
Heb 6:10  
k 2Ch 31:20, 21  
l 2Ki 20:4-6  
m Pr 15:29  
1Jo 5:14  
n Ps 39:12  
Ps 56:8  
o De 32:39  
1Sa 2:6  
p 2Ch 32:22  
q 2Ki 20:8-11  
r Jos 10:12, 13

early in the morning, they saw  
all the dead bodies.<sup>a</sup> **37** So  
King Sen-nach'er-ib of As-syr'i-a  
departed and returned to Nin'e-  
veh<sup>b</sup> and stayed there.<sup>c</sup> **38** And  
as he was bowing down at the  
house\* of his god Nis'roch, his  
own sons A-dram'me-lech and  
Shar-e'zer struck him down with  
the sword<sup>d</sup> and then escaped to  
the land of Ar'a-rat.<sup>e</sup> And his  
son E'sar-had'don<sup>f</sup> became king  
in his place.

**38** In those days Hez-e-ki'ah  
became sick and was at  
the point of death.<sup>g</sup> The proph-  
et Isaiah<sup>h</sup> the son of A'moz came  
and said to him, “This is what  
Jehovah says: ‘Give instructions  
to your household, for you will  
die; you will not recover.’”<sup>i</sup> **2** At  
that Hez-e-ki'ah turned his face  
to the wall and began to pray  
to Jehovah: **3** “I beg you, O Je-  
hovah, remember,<sup>j</sup> please, how  
I have walked before you faith-  
fully and with a complete heart,<sup>k</sup>  
and I have done what was good  
in your eyes.” And Hez-e-ki'ah be-  
gan to weep profusely.

**4** Then the word of Jehovah  
came to Isaiah, saying: **5** “Go  
back and say to Hez-e-ki'ah,<sup>l</sup>  
“This is what Jehovah the God  
of David your forefather says:  
“I have heard your prayer.<sup>m</sup>  
I have seen your tears.<sup>n</sup> Here  
I am adding 15 years to your  
life,<sup>o</sup> **6** and I will rescue you  
and this city out of the hand  
of the king of As-syr'i-a, and  
I will defend this city.<sup>p</sup> **7** This  
is the sign from Jehovah to  
show you that Jehovah will car-  
ry out the word that he has spo-  
ken:<sup>q</sup> **8** Here I will make the de-  
clining shadow of the sun on the  
stairway\* of A'haz go back ten  
steps.”<sup>r</sup> So the sun went back  
ten steps on the stairway that it  
had already descended.

**37:38** \*Or “temple.” **38:5** \*Lit., “days.”  
**38:8** \*Perhaps these stairs were used to  
count time, as on a sundial.

- Song 63 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Hezekiah’s Faith Was Rewarded”:** (10 min.)  
Isa 36:1, 4-10, 15, 18-20—The Assyrians taunted Jehovah and threatened his people (*ip-1* 386-388 ¶7-14)  
Isa 37:1, 2, 14-20—Hezekiah put his trust in Jehovah (*ip-1* 389-391 ¶15-17)  
Isa 37:33-38—Jehovah acted in defense of his people (*ip-1* 391-394 ¶18-22)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Isa 35:8—What was “the Way of Holiness,” and who qualified to walk on it? (*w08* 5/15 26 ¶4; 27 ¶1)

Isa 36:2, 3, 22—How did Shebna set a good example of one who accepted discipline? (*w07* 1/15 8 ¶6)

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 36:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Mt 24:3, 7, 14—Teach the Truth—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) 2Ti 3:1-5—Teach the Truth—Leave a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 31-32 ¶11-12—Invite the person to the meeting.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 30
- **“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”:** (15 min.) Questions and answers. Begin by playing “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”—*Excerpt* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 7 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

**“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”**

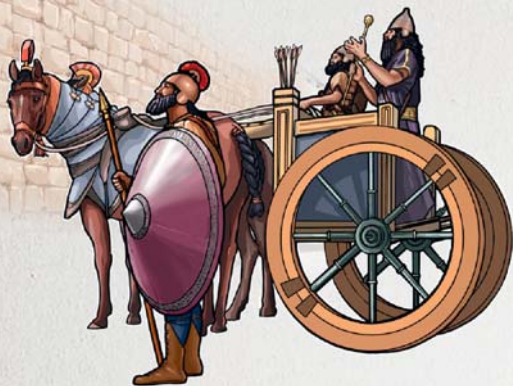


It is important for us to trust in Jehovah both in good times and in bad. (Ps 25:1, 2) In the eighth century B.C.E., the Jews in Judah faced a crisis that tested their trust in God. What occurred provides many lessons for us. (Ro 15:4) After watching the video “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You,” how would you answer the following questions?

1. What crisis did Hezekiah face?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Hezekiah apply the principle found at Proverbs 22:3 when anticipating a possible siege?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Hezekiah not consider surrendering to Assyria or making an alliance with Egypt?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How is Hezekiah a good example for Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What situations today test *our* trust in Jehovah?  
\_\_\_\_\_

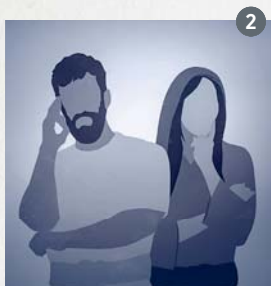
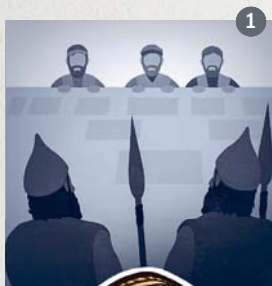
**I WANT TO SHOW MORE TRUST IN JEHOVAH WHEN . . .**

## ISAIAH 34-37 | Hezekiah's Faith Was Rewarded



King Sennacherib of Assyria sent the Rabshakeh to Jerusalem to demand the city's surrender. The Assyrians used various arguments in an attempt to make the Jews give up without a fight.

- 1 **Isolation.** Egypt will be of little help to you.—Isa 36:6
- 2 **Doubt.** Jehovah will not fight for you because he is displeased with you.—Isa 36:7, 10
- 3 **Intimidation.** You do not stand a chance against the powerful Assyrian army.—Isa 36:8, 9
- 4 **Temptation.** Surrendering to Assyria will improve the quality of your life.—Isa 36:16, 17



37:1, 2, 14-20, 36

### Hezekiah showed unwavering faith in Jehovah

- He did what he reasonably could to prepare the city for the siege
- He prayed to Jehovah for deliverance and encouraged the people to do the same
- His faith was rewarded when Jehovah sent an angel to strike down 185,000 Assyrian warriors in one night



# January 16-22

## Treasures From God's Word

Isaiah 36:1, 4-10, 15, 18-20—The Assyrians taunted Jehovah and threatened his people

Reference: *ip-1* 386-388 paragraphs 7-14.

### Rabshakeh Presents His Case

7 Sennacherib dispatches Rabshakeh (a military title, not a personal name) along with two other dignitaries to Jerusalem to demand the city's surrender. (2 Kings 18:17) These are met outside the city wall by three of Hezekiah's representatives, Eliakim the overseer of Hezekiah's household, Shebna the secretary, and Joah the son of Asaph the recorder.—Isaiah 36:2, 3.

8 Rabshakeh's aim is simple—convince Jerusalem to surrender without a fight. Speaking in Hebrew, he first cries out: "What is this confidence in which you have trusted? . . . In whom have you put trust, that you have rebelled against me?" (Isaiah 36:4, 5) Then Rabshakeh taunts the frightened Jews, reminding them that they are completely isolated. To whom can they turn for support? To that "crushed reed," Egypt? (Isaiah 36:6) At this time, Egypt does resemble a crushed reed; in fact, that former world power has been temporarily conquered by Ethiopia, and Egypt's present Pharaoh, King Tirhakah, is not an Egyptian but an Ethiopian. And he is about to be defeated by Assyria. (2 Kings 19:8, 9) Since Egypt cannot save itself, it will be of little help to Judah.

9 Rabshakeh now argues that Jehovah will not fight for His people because He is displeased with them. Rabshakeh says: "In case you should say to me, 'It is Jehovah our God in whom we have trusted,' is he not the one whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has removed?" (Isaiah 36:7) Of course, far from rejecting Jehovah by tearing down the high places and the altars in the land, the Jews have actually returned to Jehovah.

10 Next Rabshakeh reminds the Jews that militarily they are hopelessly outclassed. He issues this arrogant challenge: "Let me give you two thousand horses to see whether you are able, on your part, to put riders upon them." (Isaiah 36:8) In reality, though, does it matter whether Judah's trained cavalry are many or few? No, for Judah's salvation does not depend upon superior military strength. Proverbs 21:31 explains matters this way: "The horse is something prepared for the day of battle, but salvation belongs to Jehovah." Then Rabshakeh claims that Jehovah's blessing is with the Assyrians, not the Jews. Otherwise, he argues, the Assyrians could never have penetrated so far into Judah's territory.—Isaiah 36:9, 10.

11 Hezekiah's representatives are concerned about the effect that Rabshakeh's arguments will have on the men who can hear him from the top of the city wall. These Jewish officials request: "Speak, please, to your servants in the Syrian language, for we are listening; and do not speak to us in the Jews' language in the ears of the people that are on the wall." (Isaiah 36:11) But Rabshakeh has no intention of speaking in the Syrian language. He wants to sow seeds of doubt and fear in the Jews so that they will surrender and Jerusalem can be conquered without a fight! (Isaiah 36:12) Hence the Assyrian speaks again in "the Jews' language." He warns the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "Do not let Hezekiah deceive you people, for he is not able to deliver you." Following this, he tries to tempt those listening by painting a picture of life as it could be for the Jews under Assyrian rule: "Make a capitulation to me and come out to me and eat each one from his own vine and each one from his own fig tree and drink each one the water of his own cistern, until I come and actually take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards."—Isaiah 36:13-17.

12 There will be no harvest for the Jews this year—the Assyrian invasion has prevented them from planting crops. The prospect of eating succulent grapes and of drinking cool water must be very appealing to the men listening on the wall. But Rabshakeh has not yet finished trying to weaken the Jews.

13 From his arsenal of arguments, Rabshakeh draws another verbal weapon. He warns the Jews against believing Hezekiah should he say: “Jehovah himself will deliver us.” Rabshakeh reminds the Jews that the gods of Samaria were unable to prevent the ten tribes from being overcome by the Assyrians. And what of the gods of the other nations Assyria has conquered? “Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad?” he demands. “Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand?”—Isaiah 36:18-20.

14 Of course, Rabshakeh, a worshiper of false gods, does not understand that there is a big difference between apostate Samaria and Jerusalem under Hezekiah. Samaria’s false gods had no power to save the ten-tribe kingdom. (2 Kings 17:7, 17, 18) On the other hand, Jerusalem under Hezekiah has turned its back on false gods and has returned to serving Jehovah. However, the three Judean representatives do not try to explain this to Rabshakeh. “They continued to keep silent and did not answer him a word, for the commandment of the king was, saying: ‘You must not answer him.’” (Isaiah 36:21) Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah return to Hezekiah and make an official report of the words of Rabshakeh.—Isaiah 36:22.

Isaiah 37:1, 2, 14-20—Hezekiah put his trust in Jehovah

Reference: *ip-1* 389-391 paragraphs 15-17.

### Hezekiah Makes a Decision

15 King Hezekiah now has a decision to make. Will Jerusalem surrender to the Assyrians? join forces with Egypt? or stand her ground and fight? Hezekiah is under great pressure. He goes to Jehovah’s temple, while dispatching Eliakim and Shebna, along with the older men of the priests, to inquire of Jehovah through the prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 37:1, 2) Dressed in sackcloth, the king’s emissaries approach Isaiah, saying: “This day is a day of distress and of rebuke and of scornful insolence . . . Perhaps Jehovah your God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria his lord sent to taunt the living God, and he will actually call him to account for the words that Jehovah your God has heard.” (Isaiah 37:3-5) Yes, the Assyrians are challenging the living God! Will Jehovah give attention to their taunts? Through Isaiah, Jehovah reassures the Jews: “Do not be afraid because of the words that you have heard with which the attendants of the king of Assyria spoke abusively of me. Here I am putting a spirit in him, and he must hear a report and return to his own land; and I shall certainly cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.”—Isaiah 37:6, 7.

16 Meanwhile, Rabshakeh is called away to be at Sennacherib’s side while the king wages war at Libnah. Sennacherib will deal with Jerusalem later. (Isaiah 37:8) Still, Rabshakeh’s departure brings no letup of pressure on Hezekiah. Sennacherib sends threatening letters describing what the inhabitants of Jerusalem can expect if they refuse to surrender: “You yourself have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the lands by devoting them to destruction, and will you yourself be delivered? Have the gods of the nations that my forefathers brought to ruin delivered them? . . . Where is the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad and the king of the city of Sepharvaim—of Hena and of Ivvah?” (Isaiah 37:9-13) Basically, the Assyrian is saying that it is senseless to resist—resistance will only bring more trouble!

17 Deeply concerned about the consequences of the decision he must make, Hezekiah spreads Sennacherib's letters out before Jehovah in the temple. (Isaiah 37:14) In heartfelt prayer he implores Jehovah to give ear to the Assyrian's threats, concluding his prayer with the words: "And now, O Jehovah our God, save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Jehovah, are God alone." (Isaiah 37:15-20) From this it is clear that Hezekiah is primarily concerned, not with his own deliverance, but with the reproach that will be heaped upon Jehovah's name if Assyria defeats Jerusalem.

**Isaiah 37:33-38**—Jehovah acted in defense of his people

Reference: *ip-1* 391-394 **paragraphs 18-22**.

18 Jehovah's answer to Hezekiah's prayer comes through Isaiah. Jerusalem must not surrender to Assyria; she must stand her ground. Speaking as to Sennacherib, Isaiah boldly states Jehovah's message to the Assyrian: "The virgin daughter of Zion has despised you, she has held you in derision. Behind you the daughter of Jerusalem has wagged her head [mockingly]." (**Isaiah 37:21, 22**) Jehovah then adds, in effect: 'Who are you to taunt the Holy One of Israel? I know your deeds. You have great ambitions; you make great boasts. You have trusted in your military power and have conquered much land. But you are not invincible. I will frustrate your plans. I will conquer you. Then I will do to you as you have done to others. I will put a hook in your nose and lead you back to Assyria!'—Isaiah 37:23-29.

### **"This Will Be the Sign for You"**

19 What guarantee does Hezekiah have that Isaiah's prophecy will be fulfilled? Jehovah answers: "This will be the sign for you: There will be an eating this year of the growth from spilled kernels, and in the second year grain that shoots up of itself; but in the third year sow seed, you people, and reap, and plant vineyards and eat their fruitage." (Isaiah 37:30) Jehovah will provide food for the trapped Jews. Although unable to plant seed because of the Assyrian occupation, they will be able to eat from the gleanings of the preceding year's harvest. The following year, a sabbath year, they must let their fields lie fallow, despite their desperate situation. (Exodus 23:11) Jehovah promises that if the people obey his voice, enough grain will sprout in the fields to sustain them. Then, in the following year, men will sow seed in the usual way and enjoy the fruitage of their labor.

20 Jehovah now compares his people to a plant that cannot easily be uprooted: "Those who escape of the house of Judah . . . will certainly take root downward and produce fruitage upward." (**Isaiah 37:31, 32**) Yes, those who trust in Jehovah have nothing to fear. They and their offspring will remain firmly established in the land.

21 What of the Assyrian's threats against Jerusalem? Jehovah answers: "He will not come into this city, nor will he shoot an arrow there, nor confront it with a shield, nor cast up a siege rampart against it. By the way by which he came he will return, and into this city he will not come." (**Isaiah 37:33, 34**) There will be no battle between Assyria and Jerusalem after all. Surprisingly, it will be the Assyrians, not the Jews, who are defeated without a fight.

22 True to his word, Jehovah sends an angel who strikes down the cream of Sennacherib's troops—185,000 men. This apparently happens at Libnah, and Sennacherib himself wakes up to find the leaders, chiefs, and mighty men of his army dead. Shamefaced, he returns to Nineveh, but despite his resounding defeat, he stubbornly remains devoted to his false god Nisroch. Some years later, while worshiping in the temple of Nisroch, Sennacherib is assassinated by two of his sons. Once again, lifeless Nisroch proves powerless to save.—Isaiah 37:35-38.

## Digging for Spiritual Gems

**Isaiah 35:8**—What was “the Way of Holiness,” and who qualified to walk on it?

Reference: *w08 5/15 26* paragraph 4.

Jehovah foretold that his people who were in Babylonian exile would be restored to their homeland. The prophecy of restoration contained this guarantee: “There will certainly come to be a highway there, even a way; and the Way of Holiness it will be called.” (**Isaiah 35:8a**) These words show that Jehovah not only opened the way for the Jews to get home but assured them of his protection along the way.

Reference: *w08 5/15 27* paragraph 1.

In 537 B.C.E., the returning Jews had to meet an important requirement. Regarding those qualified to walk on “the Way of Holiness,” Isaiah 35:8b states: “The unclean one will not pass over it. And it will be for the one walking on the way, and no foolish ones will wander about on it.” Since the purpose of the Jews’ return to Jerusalem was to reestablish pure worship, there would be no place for those who had selfish motives, lacked respect for sacred things, or were spiritually unclean. The returnees needed to maintain Jehovah’s high moral standards. Those desiring God’s favor today need to meet the same requirement. They must pursue “holiness in God’s fear.” (**2 Corinthians 7:1**) What unclean practices, then, ought we to shun?

**Isaiah 36:2, 3, 22**—How did Shebna set a good example of one who accepted discipline?

Reference: *w07 1/15 8* paragraph 6.

Though dismissed from serving as a steward, Shebna was allowed to continue in the king’s service as a secretary to his replacement. (**Isaiah 22:15, 19**) If we are removed from a position of responsibility in Jehovah’s organization for some reason, should we not continue to serve God in whatever capacity he permits?

- Song 63 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Hezekiah’s Faith Was Rewarded”:** (10 min.)  
Isa 36:1, 4-10, 15, 18-20—The Assyrians taunted Jehovah and threatened his people (*ip-1* 386-388 ¶7-14)  
Isa 37:1, 2, 14-20—Hezekiah put his trust in Jehovah (*ip-1* 389-391 ¶15-17)  
Isa 37:33-38—Jehovah acted in defense of his people (*ip-1* 391-394 ¶18-22)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Isa 35:8—What was “the Way of Holiness,” and who qualified to walk on it? (*w08* 5/15 26 ¶4; 27 ¶1)

Isa 36:2, 3, 22—How did Shebna set a good example of one who accepted discipline? (*w07* 1/15 8 ¶6)

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 36:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Mt 24:3, 7, 14—Teach the Truth—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) 2Ti 3:1-5—Teach the Truth—Leave a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 31-32 ¶11-12—Invite the person to the meeting.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 30
- **“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”:** (15 min.) Questions and answers. Begin by playing “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”—*Excerpt* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 7 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

**“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”**



It is important for us to trust in Jehovah both in good times and in bad. (Ps 25:1, 2) In the eighth century B.C.E., the Jews in Judah faced a crisis that tested their trust in God. What occurred provides many lessons for us. (Ro 15:4) After watching the video “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You,” how would you answer the following questions?

1. What crisis did Hezekiah face?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Hezekiah apply the principle found at Proverbs 22:3 when anticipating a possible siege?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Hezekiah not consider surrendering to Assyria or making an alliance with Egypt?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How is Hezekiah a good example for Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What situations today test *our* trust in Jehovah?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I WANT TO SHOW MORE TRUST IN JEHOVAH WHEN . . .**



answered Satan's challenge? Would it have proved that God's way of ruling is right?

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah's perfect sense of justice would not allow him to put the rebels to death right away. He decided that time was needed to answer Satan's challenge in a satisfying way and to prove that the Devil is a liar. So God determined that he would permit humans to rule themselves for some time under Satan's influence. Why Jehovah did that and why he has allowed so much time to pass before settling these issues will be discussed in Chapter 11 of this book. Now, though, it is good to think about this: Were Adam and Eve right to believe Satan, who had never done anything good for them? Was it right for them to believe that Jehovah, who had given them everything they had, is a cruel liar? What would you have done?

<sup>10</sup> It is good to think about these questions because each of us faces similar issues today. Yes, you have the opportunity to support Jehovah's side in answer to Satan's challenge. You can accept Jehovah as your Ruler and help to show that Satan is a liar. (Psalm 73:28; Proverbs 27:11) Sadly, only a few among the billions of people in this world make such a choice. This raises an important question, Does the Bible really teach that Satan rules this world?

## **WHO RULES THIS WORLD?**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus never doubted that Satan is the ruler of this world. In some miraculous way, Satan once showed Jesus

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10. How can you support Jehovah's side in answer to Satan's challenge?

11, 12. (a) How does a temptation of Jesus reveal that Satan is the ruler of this world? (b) What else proves that Satan is the ruler of this world?

“all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.” Satan then promised Jesus: “All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me.” (Matthew 4:8, 9; Luke 4:5, 6) Think about this. Would that offer have been a *temptation* to Jesus if Satan was not the ruler of these kingdoms? Jesus did not deny that all these worldly governments were Satan’s. Surely, Jesus would have done that if Satan was not the power behind them.

<sup>12</sup> Of course, Jehovah is the Almighty God, the Creator of the marvelous universe. (Revelation 4:11) Yet, nowhere does the Bible say that either Jehovah God or Jesus Christ is ruler of this world. In fact, Jesus specifically referred to Satan as “the ruler of this world.” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) The Bible even refers to Satan the Devil as “the god of this system of things.” (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) Regarding this opposer, or Satan, the Christian apostle John wrote: “The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.”—1 John 5:19.

### HOW SATAN’S WORLD WILL BE REMOVED

<sup>13</sup> With each passing year, the world is becoming more and more dangerous. It is overrun with warring armies, dishonest politicians, hypocritical religious leaders, and hardened criminals. The world as a whole is beyond reform. The Bible reveals that the time is near when God will eliminate the wicked world during his war of Armageddon. This will make way for a righteous new world.—Revelation 16:14-16.

<sup>14</sup> Jehovah God selected Jesus Christ to be Ruler of His heavenly Kingdom, or government. Long ago, the Bible

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13. Why is there a need for a new world?

14. Whom has God selected to be Ruler of His Kingdom, and how was this foretold?

- Song 63 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Hezekiah’s Faith Was Rewarded”:** (10 min.)  
Isa 36:1, 4-10, 15, 18-20—The Assyrians taunted Jehovah and threatened his people (*ip-1* 386-388 ¶7-14)  
Isa 37:1, 2, 14-20—Hezekiah put his trust in Jehovah (*ip-1* 389-391 ¶15-17)  
Isa 37:33-38—Jehovah acted in defense of his people (*ip-1* 391-394 ¶18-22)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Isa 35:8—What was “the Way of Holiness,” and who qualified to walk on it? (*w08* 5/15 26 ¶4; 27 ¶1)

Isa 36:2, 3, 22—How did Shebna set a good example of one who accepted discipline? (*w07* 1/15 8 ¶6)

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 36:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Mt 24:3, 7, 14—Teach the Truth—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) 2Ti 3:1-5—Teach the Truth—Leave a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 31-32 ¶11-12—Invite the person to the meeting.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 30
- **“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”:** (15 min.) Questions and answers. Begin by playing “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”—*Excerpt* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 7 ¶1-9
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

**“O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You”**



It is important for us to trust in Jehovah both in good times and in bad. (Ps 25:1, 2) In the eighth century B.C.E., the Jews in Judah faced a crisis that tested their trust in God. What occurred provides many lessons for us. (Ro 15:4) After watching the video “O Jehovah, . . . I Trust in You,” how would you answer the following questions?

1. What crisis did Hezekiah face?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How did Hezekiah apply the principle found at Proverbs 22:3 when anticipating a possible siege?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Why did Hezekiah not consider surrendering to Assyria or making an alliance with Egypt?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. How is Hezekiah a good example for Christians?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What situations today test *our* trust in Jehovah?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I WANT TO SHOW MORE TRUST IN JEHOVAH WHEN . . .**

# My Father, My God and Friend

(Hebrews 6:10)

C Fma7/C G7/C C Am Em/G

Life in this world can be hard. Life in this world can bring  
Gone are the days of my youth; Days of ca - lam - i - ty

F Dm Dm/C Dm/B E7

tears and pain. Still ev - 'ry day I will say, "My  
now are here. Still through the eyes of my faith, My

Am7 D9 F/G Chorus G7 C

life is not in vain." For God is not un -  
hope is bright and clear.

Em F Am

right - teous, And he re - mem - bers the love I've shown. So

*My Father, My God and Friend*

Dm7 Em F

he is ev - er near me; With Je - ho - vah, I'm not a -

G7 C Em

lone. Yes, God is my pro - vid - er and my pro -

F Fm/D

tec - tor down to the end. Yes, Je -

C/G G7sus4 G7 G7/C C

ho - vah is my Fa - ther, My God and Friend.

- Song 63 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

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\_\_\_\_\_

**I WANT TO SHOW MORE TRUST IN JEHOVAH WHEN . . .**

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# 7

## Methods of Preaching Using Every Means to Reach People

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### FOCUS OF CHAPTER

God's people use a variety of methods of preaching to reach the largest audience possible

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- 1, 2. (a) What technique did Jesus use in order to speak to a large audience?  
(b) How have faithful disciples of Christ followed his example, and why?
3. How were enemies of the truth frustrated by our use of newspapers?

CROWDS gather around Jesus on the shore of a lake, but he boards a boat and pulls away a short distance. Why? He knows that the surface of the water will amplify his voice and that the large audience will be able to hear his message more clearly.—**Read Mark 4:1, 2.**

<sup>2</sup> In the decades surrounding the Kingdom's birth, faithful disciples of Christ followed his example, using novel techniques to spread the good news of the Kingdom to large audiences. Under the direction of the King, God's people continue to innovate and adapt as circumstances change and new technologies become available. We want to reach as many as possible before the end comes. (Matt. 24:14) Consider just some of the methods we have used to reach people, no matter where they live. Think, too, of ways that you can imitate the faith of those who spread the good news in the early days.

### Reaching Large Audiences

<sup>3</sup> **Newspapers.** Brother Russell and his associates had been publishing the *Watch Tower* since 1879, bringing the Kingdom message to many people. In the decade prior to 1914, however, Christ seems to have maneuvered matters so that the good news would reach an even wider audience. The chain of events began in 1903. In that year, Dr. E. L. Eaton, a spokesman for a group of Protestant ministers in Pennsylvania, challenged Charles Taze Russell to a series of debates on Bible doctrine. In a letter to Russell, Eaton wrote: "I have thought that a public debate of some of those questions about which you and I differ . . . would be of immense interest to the public." Russell and his associates also thought the public would be interested, so they arranged to have the debates published in a leading newspaper, *The Pittsburgh Gazette*. The newspaper articles were so

popular and Russell's clear explanation of Bible truth so compelling that the paper offered to publish Russell's lectures every week. How that development must have frustrated enemies of the truth!

<sup>4</sup> More newspapers soon wanted to carry Russell's lectures. By 1908, the *Watch Tower* could report that the sermons were published in "eleven newspapers regularly." However, brothers familiar with newspaper work advised Russell that if he moved the Society's offices from Pittsburgh to a city that was better known, more newspapers would carry the Bible-based articles. After weighing that advice and other factors, Russell moved the offices to Brooklyn, New York, in 1909. The result? Just months after that move, some 400 newspapers were publishing the lectures, with more constantly being added to the list. By the time the Kingdom was established in 1914, over 2,000 newspapers in four languages were publishing Russell's sermons and articles!

<sup>5</sup> What important lesson does that development provide? Those who have a measure of authority in God's organization today do well to imitate Russell's humility. In what way? When making important decisions, consider the advice of others.—**Read Proverbs 15:22.**

<sup>6</sup> The Kingdom truths published in those newspaper articles changed people's lives. (Heb. 4:12) For example, Ora Hetzel, who was baptized in 1917, was one of many who first learned the truth through such articles. "After I was married," said Ora, "I went to visit my mother in Rochester, Minnesota. When I arrived, I found her cutting out articles from a newspaper. They were sermons by Russell. Mother explained the things she had learned from them." Ora accepted the truths she learned and for some six decades was a faithful proclaimer of God's Kingdom.

<sup>7</sup> In 1916, two key events caused those taking the lead to reassess the use of newspapers in spreading the good news. First, the Great War that was raging at the time made printing supplies difficult to obtain. In 1916, a report from our newspaper department in Britain highlighted the challenge, saying: "There are just over 30 papers publishing the Sermons at the present time. It is quite likely that this number will be greatly reduced shortly owing to the increasingly high price of paper." The second event was the death of Brother Russell on October 31, 1916. Thus, *The Watch Tower* of December 15, 1916, announced: "Now that Brother Russell has passed beyond, the sermon feature [in the

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4, 5. What quality did Russell display, and how can those with positions of responsibility imitate his example?

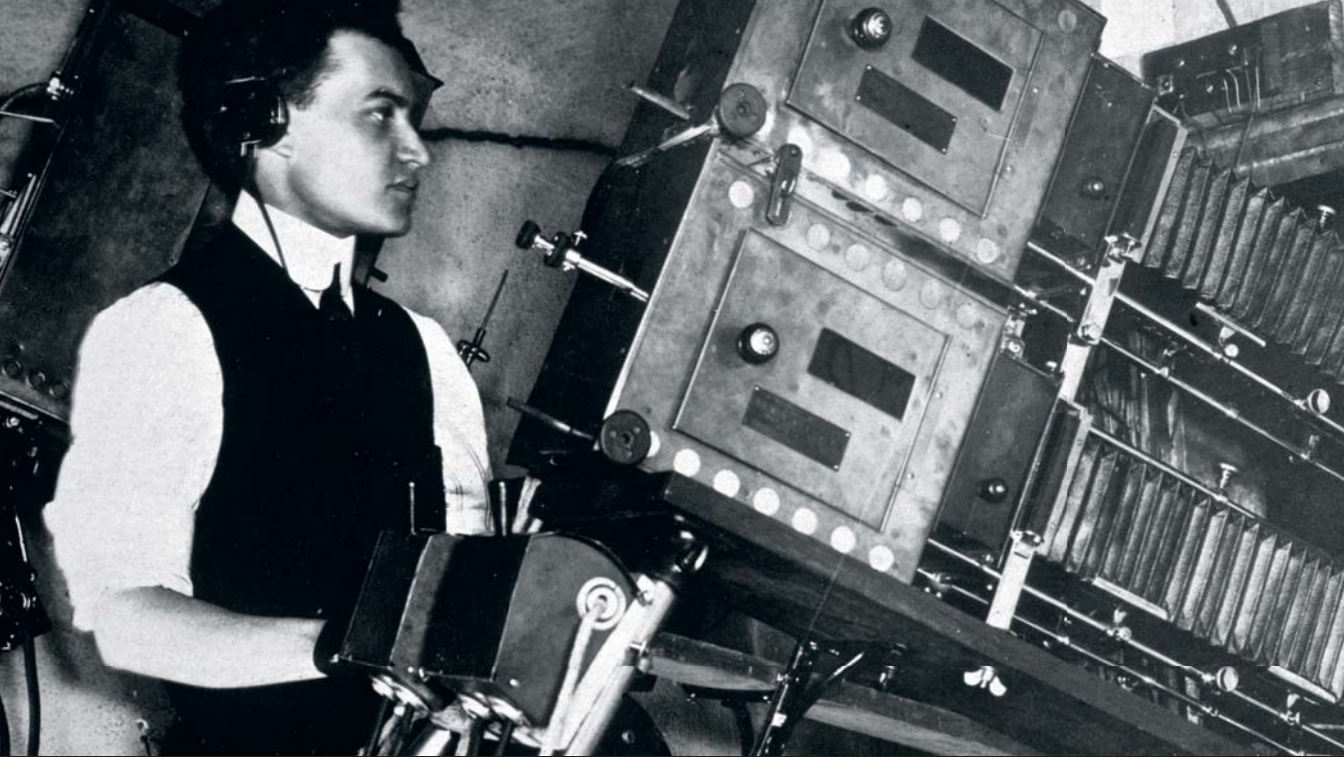
6. How did the truths published in newspaper articles affect one person?

7. Why did those taking the lead reassess the use of newspapers?

---

By 1914, over 2,000 newspapers were publishing Russell's sermons





A “Photo-Drama”  
projection booth

“Photo-Drama”  
glass slides

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8. What was involved in producing the “Photo-Drama of Creation”?

newspapers] will be discontinued entirely.” Although this avenue of preaching came to an end, other methods, such as the “Photo-Drama of Creation,” continued to have great success.

**8 Picture presentations.** Russell and his associates worked for some three years to produce the “Photo-Drama of Creation,” which was released in 1914. (Prov. 21:5) The Drama, as it was called, was an innovative combination of moving pictures, sound recordings, and colored glass slides. Hundreds of people took part in reenacting Bible scenes that were captured on film, and even animals were involved. “The largest part of the population of one of the large zoological gardens,” says a report from 1913, “was brought into use in order to reproduce in Motion talking

pictures Noah's part in the big show." As for the hundreds of different glass slides used in the production, artists in London, New York, Paris, and Philadelphia colored each one by hand.

9 Why was so much time and expense poured into making the "Photo-Drama"? A resolution adopted at the 1913 series of conventions explains: "The unprecedented success of the American newspapers in moulding public opinion by the aid of cartoons and illustrations in their news and magazine sections, together with the wonderful popularity and adaptability of moving pictures, has fully demonstrated their worth and, we believe, fully justifies us, as progressive preachers and Bible class teachers, in giving our unqualified endorsement of moving pictures and stereopticon slides as an effective and desirable method for evangelists and teachers."

10 During 1914, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in 80 cities each day. Almost eight million people in the United States and Canada saw the presentation. That same year, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in Australia, Britain, Denmark, Finland, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, and Switzerland. A simplified version of the production, one that did not include the motion pictures, was assembled for use in smaller towns. That version—the "Eureka Drama"—was cheaper to produce and easier to transport. By 1916, either the "Photo-Drama" or the "Eureka Drama" had been translated into Armenian, Dano-Norwegian, French, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Spanish, and Swedish.

11 The French translation of the "Photo-Drama" had a great impact on an 18-year-old named Charles Rohner. "It was presented in my town—Colmar, Alsace, France," says Charles. "From the very outset, I was impressed by the clear presentation of Bible truth."

12 As a result, Charles was baptized and in 1922 entered full-time service. One of his first assignments was to help present the "Photo-Drama" to audiences in France. Describing this work, Charles says: "I was assigned several jobs—to play the violin, to be the accounts servant, and to be the literature servant. I was also asked to quiet the audience before the program began. During intermission, we presented literature. We assigned each brother or sister a section of the hall. Each one had an armful of literature and approached every person in the section. In addition, at the entrance to the hall, we had tables full of literature." In

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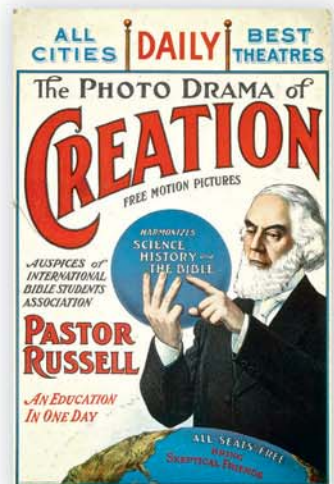
9. Why was so much time and expense poured into making the "Photo-Drama"?

10. How widely was the "Photo-Drama" shown?

11, 12. What impact did the "Photo-Drama" have on one young man, and what example did he set?

---

During 1914, the "Photo-Drama" was shown in packed auditoriums



# Search Out Deserving Ones

(Matthew 10:11-15)

D G A G/B A6/C# D Em/G A

In preach - ing the King - dom and teach - ing the truth, Our  
All those who re - ceive you re - ceive him as well, Re -

Em D/F# Gma7 G6 A G/A F#m/A Em/A

Lord showed us how to pro - ceed: 'Search  
spond when their heart o - pens wide. Their

D G A G/B A6/C# D Em11 D/F# G

out those de - serv - ing and read - y to hear, Those a -  
right dis - po - si - tion for un - end - ing life Will im -

D/A Em F#m G/A A7 D

ware of their spir - i - tual need. By  
pel them to serve at your side. And

# Search Out Deserving Ones

G/A A7 D/A G/A A#° Bm

greet - ing the house - hold and wish - ing it peace, Then it  
nev - er be anx - ious a - bout what to say, For Je -

D/E E13 E9 Em7 A9

may be that peace you'll im - part. But  
ho - vah will help you to speak. Your

D G A G/B A6/C# D Em11 D/F# G

when they re - fuse you or turn you a - way, Shake the  
an - swer when gra - cious and sea - soned with salt Will ap -

D/A Em F#m G/A A7 D

dust from your feet and de - part.  
peal to the hum - ble and meek.

(See also Acts 13:48; 16:14; Col. 4:6.)

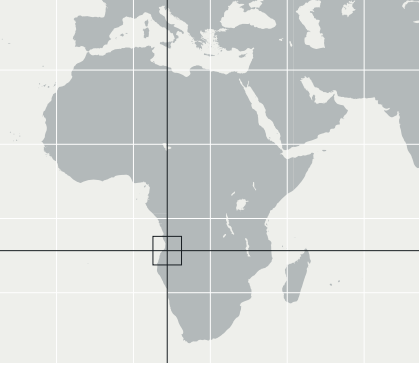
NOVEMBER 2016

# 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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### 3 A Word That Meant So Much!

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#### 4 WEEK OF DECEMBER 26–JANUARY 1 “Keep On Encouraging One Another Each Day”

Jehovah God and Jesus Christ are the foremost examples of giving encouragement. The apostle Paul also considered encouragement to be very important. Following their lead will help all of us to make our home and the local Kingdom Hall places of love and encouragement.

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#### 9 WEEK OF JANUARY 2-8 Organized in Harmony With God’s Own Book

#### 14 WEEK OF JANUARY 9-15 Do You Highly Esteem Jehovah’s Own Book?

These articles answer the following questions: Why should we expect Jehovah’s worshippers to be organized? How can we be organized in harmony with God’s own Book? How can we show that we loyally support Jehovah’s organization?

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### 19 “The Work Is Great”

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#### 21 WEEK OF JANUARY 16-22 Called Out of Darkness

#### 26 WEEK OF JANUARY 23-29 They Broke Free From False Religion

These articles explain when God’s people came into Babylonian captivity and what efforts anointed Christians made in the late 1800’s to understand Jehovah’s Word correctly. We will also consider the firm stand the Bible Students took regarding Babylon the Great, and we will learn when the Babylonian captivity ended.

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### 31 FROM OUR ARCHIVES

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To make a donation, please visit [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).



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

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# The Light Gets Brighter

(Proverbs 4:18)

B $\flat$  Cm9/B $\flat$  Cm/B $\flat$

The proph - ets of old sought to learn of the Christ, The  
Our Lord has ap - point - ed a trust - wor - thy slave, Through

B $\flat$ ma7 Cm Dm/B $\flat$  Cm/B $\flat$  E $\flat$ /B $\flat$  B $\flat$ ma7 Cm Dm

hope of all groan - ing cre - a - tion. God's spir - it re - vealed that Mes -  
whom He gives food in due sea - son. The light of the truth has grown

Cm/B $\flat$  Dm/B $\flat$  Cm Dm Cm/B $\flat$  Cm

si - ah would come, Pro - vid - ing the means of sal - va - tion. The  
bright - er with time, Ap - peal - ing to heart and to rea - son. Our

Dm Cm/E $\flat$  Dm Cm/E $\flat$  B $\flat$ m/F C $\flat$ /G $\flat$

time has ar - rived, the Mes - si - ah now reigns, The proof of his pres - ence is  
path ev - er clear - er, our steps ev - er firm, We walk in the bright - ness of

# The Light Gets Brighter

Db/Ab      Cb/Gb   Bb/F      Cm/F      Dm/F      Cm/F

clear.                      How great is the fa - vor of learn - ing such things; In - to  
day.                      All thanks to Je - ho - vah, the Source of all truth, We most

Dm/F      Eb/F      F                      *Chorus*  
Eb/F      Bb      F/A

these e - ven an - gels would peer!                      Our path now be - comes ev - er  
grate - ful - ly walk in his way.                      grate - ful - ly walk in his way.

Gm7      Bb/F      Eb      Bb/D      C7sus4      F      F#°

bright - er;      We walk in the full light of day.                      Be -

Gm      Bb/F      Ebma7      Cm/Eb      C7/E      Bb/F      Cm7/F      F7      Bb

hold what our God is re - veal - ing;      He guides us each step of the way.





## Called Out of Darkness

*“[Jehovah] called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.”*

—1 PET. 2:9.

IN 607 B.C.E., a massive Babylonian army under the command of King Nebuchadnezzar II invaded the city of Jerusalem. Regarding the bloodbath that followed, the Bible says: “[Nebuchadnezzar] killed their young men with the sword in the house of their sanctuary; he felt no compassion for young man or virgin, old or infirm. . . . He burned down the house of the true God, tore down the wall of Jerusalem, burned all its fortified towers with fire, and destroyed everything of value.”—2 Chron. 36:17, 19.

<sup>2</sup> The destruction of Jerusalem should have come as no surprise to its inhabitants. For years, God’s prophets had warned the Jews that if they continued to disregard God’s Law, they would be delivered into the hands of the Babylonians. Many Jews would die by the edge of the sword; any who escaped death would likely have to spend the rest of their lives in exile in Babylon. (Jer. 15:2) What was life like for exiles there? Does the Babylonian captivity find a parallel in Christian times? If so, when?

1. Describe the events that occurred at the destruction of Jerusalem.
2. What warning of Jerusalem’s impending destruction did Jehovah give, and what would happen to the Jews?

SONGS: 95, 74

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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In what sense did God’s people come into Babylonian captivity from the second century C.E. onward?

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In the mid-15th century, what factors contributed to a slight loosening of false religion’s grip on the people?

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In the late 1800’s, what efforts did the anointed make to understand God’s Word correctly?

## LIFE IN EXILE

<sup>3</sup> What the prophets had foretold came to pass. Through Jeremiah, Jehovah advised the future exiles to accept their new situation and make the most of it. He said: “Build houses [in Babylon] and live in them. Plant gardens and eat their fruit. And seek the peace of the city to which I have exiled you, and pray in its behalf to Jehovah, for in its peace you will have peace.” (Jer. 29:5, 7) Those who submitted to the will of God lived a relatively normal life in Babylon. Their captors allowed them to administer their own affairs to some extent. The exiles even had freedom to move about the country. Babylon was a center of trade and commerce in the ancient world, and documents that have been unearthed indicate that many Jews learned the art of buying and selling there, while others became skilled craftsmen. Some Jews even became prosperous. Exile in Babylon was nothing like the slavery in Egypt that the Israelites had experienced centuries before.—**Read Exodus 2:23-25.**

<sup>4</sup> Although the material needs of the exiled Jews were being met, what of their spiritual needs? Jehovah’s temple with its altar had been destroyed, and the priesthood was no longer functioning in an organized manner. Among the exiles were faithful servants of God who had done nothing deserving of punishment, but they had to suffer along with the rest of the nation. Nevertheless, they did what they could to observe God’s Law.

---

3. How did exile in Babylon differ from the slavery the Israelites had experienced in Egypt?

4. Besides rebellious Israelites, who were affected by captivity in Babylon, and what limitations were placed on their ability to worship God acceptably?

For example, in Babylon, Daniel and three of his companions—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego—abstained from foods that were forbidden to Jews. And we know that Daniel maintained regular communication with God in prayer. (Dan. 1:8; 6:10) Still, under a pagan administration, it was impossible for a God-fearing Jew to do everything the Law required.

<sup>5</sup> Would the Israelites ever again be able to worship God in a completely acceptable way? At the time, it seemed most unlikely that they would. Babylon never released its captives. That policy, however, did not take Jehovah God into account. He had promised that his people would be liberated, and so they were. God’s word of promise never fails.—Isa. 55:11.

## IS THERE A MODERN-DAY PARALLEL?

<sup>6</sup> Have Christians ever experienced anything comparable to the Babylonian captivity? For many years, this journal suggested that God’s modern-day servants entered into Babylonian captivity in 1918 and that they were released from Babylon in 1919. However, for the reasons that we shall outline in this article and in the one following, a reexamination of the subject was necessary.

<sup>7</sup> Consider: Babylon the Great is the world empire of false religion. Thus, in order to be subject to Babylonian captivity in 1918, God’s people would have had to become enslaved to false religion in some way at that time. The facts

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5. What hope did Jehovah give his people, and why was this promise remarkable?

6, 7. Why is it appropriate for us to clarify our understanding of the modern-day Babylonian captivity?

show, however, that in the decades leading up to World War I, God's anointed servants were actually breaking free from Babylon the Great, not becoming enslaved to it. While it is true that the anointed were persecuted during the first world war, the tribulation they experienced was caused mainly by the *secular authorities*, not by Babylon the Great. So it does not really seem that Jehovah's people entered into captivity to Babylon the Great in 1918.

#### **BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY—BUT WHEN?**

<sup>8</sup> At Pentecost 33 C.E., thousands of Jews and proselytes were anointed with holy spirit. These new Christians became “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession.” (**Read 1 Peter 2:9, 10.**) The apostles kept careful watch over the congregations of God's people as long as they lived. However, especially after the death of the apostles, men arose who spoke “twisted things” in order to “draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:30; 2 Thess. 2:6-8) Many of these men had responsible positions in the congregations, serving as overseers and later as “bishops.” A clergy class was taking shape, although Jesus had said to his followers: “All of you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8) Prominent men who were enamored of the philosophies of Aristotle and Plato introduced false religious ideas, gradually replacing the pure teachings of God's Word.

<sup>9</sup> In 313 C.E., this apostate form of

Christianity was granted legal recognition by the pagan Roman Emperor Constantine. From that time on, Church and State began working hand in hand. For example, after the Council of Nicaea, Constantine, who was present at the council, ordered Arius, a dissenting priest, into exile because Arius refused to acknowledge Jesus as God. Later, under Emperor Theodosius I (379-395 C.E.), the Catholic Church, as the contaminated form of Christianity came to be known, became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Historians refer to pagan Rome as having been “Christianized” in the fourth century. The truth is that by that time an apostate form of Christianity had joined the pagan religious organizations of the Roman Empire as members of Babylon the Great. Even so, a small number of anointed wheatlike Christians were doing their best to worship God, but their voices were being drowned out. (**Read Matthew 13:24, 25, 37-39.**) They truly were in Babylonian captivity!

<sup>10</sup> Still, for the first few centuries of our Common Era, many people could read the Bible in either Greek or Latin. They were thus in a position to compare the teachings of God's Word with the dogmas of the church. On the basis of what they read in the Bible, some among them rejected the unscriptural creeds of the church, but it was dangerous—even fatal—to express such opinions openly.

<sup>11</sup> In time, Bible languages fell into disuse by the masses, and the church

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8. Explain how genuine Christianity came to be corrupted. (See opening picture.)

9. Describe how apostate Christianity received the backing of the Roman State and what resulted.

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10. On what basis could sincere people question church teachings during the first few centuries of our Common Era?

11. How did the Bible come to be under the control of the clergy?

opposed efforts to translate God’s Word into the common tongues. As a result, only the clergy and some other educated people could read the Bible for themselves, although not all of the clergy could read and write well. Any dissent from what the church taught was severely punished. Faithful anointed servants of God had to meet together in discreet groups—if they could meet at all. As was the case in the earlier Babylonian exile, the anointed “royal priesthood” could not function in an organized way. Babylon the Great held the people in a vise-like grip!

### THE LIGHT BEGINS TO APPEAR

**12** Would true Christians ever be free to worship God openly and acceptably?

12, 13. What two factors contributed to a slight loosening of the grip of Babylon the Great on the people? Explain.

Yes! Glimmers of spiritual light began to penetrate the darkness, thanks to two important factors. The first was the invention in the mid-15th century of a printing press that used movable type. Before printing was brought to the Western world, the Bible was painstakingly copied by hand. Copies of the Bible were rare and expensive. It has been said that it would take ten months for a skilled copyist to produce just one handwritten copy of the Bible! In addition, the materials on which the copyists wrote (vellum or parchment) were costly. In contrast, using a press and paper—a more practical alternative—a skilled printer could produce 1,300 pages per day!

**13** The second notable factor was the decision by a few courageous men at the dawn of the 16th century to translate God’s Word into the languages spoken by the common people. Many transla-



Innovations in printing and courageous Bible translators helped loosen Babylon’s grip (See paragraphs 12, 13)

tors undertook this work at the risk of their lives. The church was horrified. A Bible in the hands of a God-fearing man or woman could be a dangerous weapon—or so the church leaders feared! And as the Bible became available, people did read it. As they read, they asked questions: ‘Where in God’s Word is there mention of purgatory? of paid masses for the dead? of popes and cardinals?’ From the point of view of the church, this was an outrage. How dare the multitudes question church leaders! The church fought back. Men and women were condemned for heresy because they rejected teachings of the church, some of which were based on the pagan philosophies of Aristotle and Plato—men who lived before Jesus Christ was born. The church handed down the death sentence; the State carried it out. The goal was to discourage people from reading the Bible and questioning the church. For the most part, the scheme worked. Nevertheless, a few brave souls refused to be cowed by Babylon the Great. They had now had a taste of God’s Word—and they wanted more! The stage was being set for a future deliverance from false religion.

<sup>14</sup> Many who thirsted for Bible truth fled to countries where the influence of the church was less pervasive. They wanted to read and study and converse with one another without being told what to think. It was in one such country, the United States, that Charles Taze Russell and a few associates began their systematic study of the Bible in the late

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14. (a) What conditions contributed to a greater understanding of Bible truth in the late 1800’s? (b) Describe Brother Russell’s quest for the truth.

1800’s. Initially, Brother Russell’s goal was to ascertain which of the prevailing religions was teaching the truth. He had carefully compared the teachings of many different religions, even non-Christian religions, with what the Bible says. He soon realized that not one of those religions completely adhered to God’s Word. At one point, he met with a number of local clergymen in hopes that these men would accept the truths that Russell and his associates had discovered from the Bible and teach them to members of their congregations. The clergymen were not interested. The Bible Students would have to face the facts: There could be no partnership with those determined to hold on to false religion.—**Read 2 Corinthians 6:14.**

<sup>15</sup> Thus far we have seen that true Christians came into Babylonian captivity soon after the death of the last of the apostles. However, a number of questions arise: What additional evidence is there that in the decades leading up to 1914, the anointed were actually breaking free from Babylon the Great, no longer being enslaved by her? Is it true that Jehovah was displeased with his servants because they had slowed down in their preaching activity during World War I? And did some of our brothers during that period compromise their Christian neutrality and thereby incur Jehovah’s displeasure? Finally, if Christians went into bondage to false religion from the second century C.E. onward, when did they get freed? Excellent questions these. They will be answered in the next article.

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15. (a) When did Christians come under the yoke of Babylon the Great? (b) What questions remain for the next article to answer?

# Join in the Kingdom Song!

(Psalm 98:1)

Ab/Bb Bb7 Ebma7 E° Fm11

This is a song, a hap - py song of vic - t'ry;  
 With this new song, we ad - ver - tise the King - dom.  
 This King - dom song, all hum - ble ones can mas - ter.

Bb7 E° Fm7 Ab/Bb Bb7 Ebma7

It mag - ni - fies the One who is su - preme.  
 Christ Je - sus rules; the earth is his do - main.  
 The words are clear, their mes - sage warm and bright.

Eb6 Bb/D Bbm6/Db Bbm6/C C7b9b13 Bb° Abma7 Ab6

The words give hope and prompt all to be loy - al.  
 And as fore - told, there is a new - born na - tion:  
 In all the earth, a mul - ti - tude have learned it,

Db7 Eb/Bb C° Bb7sus4 Ab/Bb Gm/Bb Bb7 Eb Chorus Eb/G

Come sing with us; en - joy its King - dom theme:  
 The King - dom heirs, who wel - come Je - sus' reign: 'Come  
 And they in turn still oth - ers now in - vite:

# Join in the Kingdom Song!

Bb7/F Eb Bb7sus4 Bb7 Ebma7/Bb

wor - ship God Be - fore his throne.

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the song. The treble clef staff has a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a common time signature. The melody starts on a whole note chord of Bb7/F, moves to Eb, then Bb7sus4, Bb7, and finally Ebma7/Bb. The bass clef staff provides a simple accompaniment with quarter notes and rests.

Eb6/Bb Cm6/A D7sus4 D7 Gm

His Son is King; Let's make it known!

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The treble clef staff continues the melody with chords Eb6/Bb, Cm6/A, D7sus4, D7, and Gm. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.

Fm7 Ab/Bb Bb7 Eb Eb/Db Ab/C

Come learn this song, this song a - bout the King - dom;

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The treble clef staff features chords Fm7, Ab/Bb, Bb7, Eb, Eb/Db, and Ab/C. The melody includes a quarter rest in the first measure. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.

Abm/Cb Eb/Bb C° Bb7sus4 Ab/Bb Gm/Bb Bb7 Eb

Bow down to God, and praise his ho - ly name.'

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures. The treble clef staff has chords Abm/Cb, Eb/Bb, C°, Bb7sus4, Ab/Bb, Gm/Bb, Bb7, and Eb. The melody ends with a long note in the final measure. The bass clef staff continues the accompaniment.