

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Let Jehovah Mold Your Thinking and Conduct”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 18:1-4—A potter has authority over the clay (w99 4/1 22 ¶3)
 Jer 18:5-10—Jehovah has authority over mankind (it-2 776 ¶4)
 Jer 18:11—Respond favorably to Jehovah’s molding (w99 4/1 22 ¶4-5)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 17:9—How may the heart’s treachery become manifest? (w01 10/15 25 ¶13)

Jer 20:7—In what way did Jehovah use his strength against Jeremiah and fool him? (w07 3/15 9 ¶6)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 21:3-14

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. Encourage all to make return visits on those who accepted the tract *What Is the Kingdom of God?*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 85
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (yb16 22)
- **“Warmly Welcome Them”:** (10 min.) Begin with a three-minute talk. Conclude by playing the video *Steve Gerdes: We Will Never Forget the Greeting* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 10 ¶12-19, box on p. 105 (right), review box on p. 107
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 13 and Prayer

Warmly Welcome Them

Warmly welcome whom? *Anyone* who attends our Christian meetings—from newcomers to longtime friends. (Ro 15:7; Heb 13:2) It could be a fellow believer visiting from another country or an inactive Christian attending for the first time in years. Imagine how you would feel in such circumstances. Would you not appreciate a warm greeting? (Mt 7:12) So why not make a greater effort to move about the Kingdom Hall and greet others before and after the meeting? This contributes to a warm and loving atmosphere and brings honor to Jehovah. (Mt 5:16) Of course, it will likely not be possible to speak personally with everyone present. Nevertheless, everyone will feel welcome if we all do our part.*

True hospitality is shown not just on special occasions like the Memorial but at all times. When newcomers see and experience Christian love in action, they may be moved to praise God and join us in pure worship.—Joh 13:35.

* Bible principles limit our dealings with disfellowshipped or disassociated ones who may attend meetings.—1Co 5:11; 2Jo 10.



SUGGESTIONS TO HELP NEWCOMERS

- Introduce yourself and ask for their name
- Invite them to sit with you
- Share your Bible and songbook with them
- After the meeting, make yourself available to answer questions
- Offer a Bible study when appropriate

Make Me Know Your Ways

(Psalm 25:4)

A F#m C#m G/A A7

We're gath - ered to - geth - er, Je - ho - vah our God, Ac -
Un - reach - a - bly high is your wis - dom, O God; Your

D F#7+5 Bm Bm/A

cept - ing your warm in - vi - ta - tion. Your
judg - ments we find re - as - sur - ing. Your

Bm/G# C#7 F° F#m

Word is a lamp that lights up our path - way, The
Word is a source of un - end - ing won - der; Your

A/B B13 Bm7 E13sus4 E7

source of di - vine ed - u - ca - tion.
say - ings of truth are en - dur - ing.

Make Me Know Your Ways

Chorus

A C#+5 D Bm7

Teach me your ways, and make me un - der - stand; In -

E7sus4 E/D A/C# Bm11 E7

cline my ear to hear your wise com - mand.

G/A A13 Dma7 G13sus4 Dm6/F

Cause me to walk in ways of truth and right, And

A/E D/E E7 A

make your law my prin - ci - pal de - light.

9 "For this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, 'Here in this place, in your days and before your very eyes, I will put an end to the sounds of exultation and rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.'^a

10 "When you tell this people all these words, they will ask you, 'Why has Jehovah spoken of all this great calamity against us? What error and what sin have we committed against Jehovah our God?'^b 11 You must reply to them, "Because your forefathers abandoned me,"^c declares Jehovah, "and they kept following other gods and serving them and bowing down to them.^d But me they abandoned, and my law they did not keep.^e 12 And you have behaved far worse than your forefathers,^f and each one of you follows the stubbornness of his wicked heart instead of obeying me.^g 13 So I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your forefathers have known,^h and there you will have to serve other gods day and night,ⁱ because I will show you no favor."^j

14 "However, the days are coming," declares Jehovah, "when they will no longer say: "As surely as Jehovah is alive, who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt!"^j 15 but rather: "As surely as Jehovah is alive, who brought the people of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands to which he had dispersed them!" and I will bring them back to their land, which I gave to their forefathers."^k

16 'Here I am sending for many fishermen,' declares Jehovah, 'And they will fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters,

CHAP. 16

a Isa 24:7, 8
Jer 7:34
Re 18:23

b Jer 5:19

c Jg 2:12

d Jer 8:1, 2

e Da 9:11
Am 2:4

f Jer 7:26

g Ne 9:29
Jer 6:28

h 2Ch 7:20
Jer 15:14
Jer 17:4

i De 4:27, 28
De 28:36

j Ex 20:2
Jer 23:7, 8

k De 30:1-3
Jer 3:18
Jer 24:6
Jer 30:3
Jer 32:37
Am 9:14

Second Col.

a Isa 40:2

b Le 26:30
Ps 106:38

c Jer 17:17

d Jer 10:5, 14

e Ps 115:4
Jer 2:11
1Co 8:4

And they will hunt them down on every mountain and every hill

And out of the clefts of the crags.

17 For my eyes are on everything they do.*

They have not been hidden from before me,

Nor has their error been hidden from my eyes.

18 First, I will repay the full amount due for their error and their sin,^a

For they have profaned my land with the lifeless figures* of their disgusting idols

And have filled my inheritance with their detestable things."^b

19 O Jehovah, my strength and my stronghold,

My place to flee in the day of distress,^c

To you the nations will come from the ends of the earth,

And they will say: "Our forefathers inherited utter falsehood,

Futility and useless things of no benefit."^d

20 Can a man make gods for himself

When they are not really gods?^e

21 "So I will make them know, At this time I will make them know my power and my might,

And they will have to know that my name is Jehovah."

17 "The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus.

With a diamond point it is engraved on the tablet of their heart

And on the horns of their altars,

16:17 *Lit., "on all their ways." 16:18

*Lit., "the corpses."

- 2** While their sons remember their altars and their sacred poles^a
Beside a luxuriant tree, on the high hills,^b
- 3** On the mountains in the open countryside.
Your resources, all your treasures, I will give as plunder^c
—Yes, your high places because of sin throughout your territories.^d
- 4** You will forfeit, of your own accord, your inheritance that I gave you.^e
And I will make you serve your enemies in a land you do not know,^f
For you have kindled my anger like a fire.^g
It will burn for all time.”
- 5** This is what Jehovah says: “Cursed is the man* who puts his trust in mere humans,^h
Who relies on human power,ⁱ
And whose heart turns away from Jehovah.
- 6** He will become like a solitary tree in the desert.
He will not see when good comes,
But he will reside in parched places in the wilderness,
In a salt land where no one can live.
- 7** Blessed is the man* who puts his trust in Jehovah,
Whose confidence is in Jehovah.^j
- 8** He will become like a tree planted by the waters,
That sends out its roots to the stream.
He will not notice when heat comes,

17:2 *See Glossary. 17:4 *Or possibly, “For as a fire you have been ignited in my anger.” 17:5, 7 *Or “strong man.” 17:5 [#]Lit., “makes flesh his arm.”

CHAP. 17

- a Jg 3:7
2Ch 24:18
2Ch 33:1, 3
- b Isa 1:29
Eze 6:13
- c 2Kl 24:11, 13
Jer 15:13
- d Le 26:30
Eze 6:3
- e La 5:2
- f De 28:48
Jer 16:13
- g Isa 5:25
Jer 15:14
- h Isa 30:1, 2
- i 2Kl 16:7
- j Ps 34:8
Ps 146:5
Isa 26:3

Second Col.

- a Ps 1:3
Ps 92:12, 13
- b Ge 6:5
Ge 8:21
Pr 28:26
- c 1Sa 16:7
1Ch 28:9
Pr 17:3
Pr 21:2
- d Ro 2:6
Ga 6:7
Re 2:23
Re 22:12
- e Pr 28:20
Isa 1:23
Jas 5:4
- f 2Ch 2:5
Isa 6:1
- g Ps 73:27
Isa 1:28
- h Jer 2:13
Re 22:1
- i Jer 15:20

- But his leaves will always flourish.^a
And in the year of drought he will not be anxious,
Nor will he quit producing fruit.
- 9** The heart is more treacherous* than anything else and is desperate.^{#b}
Who can know it?
- 10** I, Jehovah, am searching the heart,^c
Examining the innermost thoughts,^{*}
To give to each one according to his ways,
According to the fruitage of his works.^d
- 11** Like a partridge that gathers what it has not laid,
So is the one who acquires riches dishonestly.^{*e}
They will leave him in midlife,
And in the end he will prove senseless.”
- 12** A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning,
Is the place of our sanctuary.^f
- 13** O Jehovah, the hope of Israel,
All those who abandon you will be put to shame.
Those apostatizing from you* will be written in the dust,^g
Because they have abandoned Jehovah, the source of living water.^h
- 14** Heal me, O Jehovah, and I will be healed.
Save me, and I will be saved,ⁱ
For you are the object of my praise.
- 15** Look! There are those saying to me:

17:9 *Or “deceitful.” [#]Or possibly, “incurable.” 17:10 *Or “deepest emotions.” Lit., “kidneys.” 17:11 *Or “but not with justice.” 17:13 *Lit., “from me,” apparently referring to Jehovah.

"Where is the word of
Jehovah?"^a

Let it come, please!"

16 But as for me, I did not run
away from following you
as a shepherd,

Nor did I long for the day of
disaster.

You well know everything my
lips have spoken;

It all took place before your
face!

17 Do not be a cause of terror
to me.

You are my refuge in the day
of calamity.

18 Let my persecutors be put to
shame,^b

But do not let me be put to
shame.

Let them be struck with
terror,

But do not let me be struck
with terror.

Bring the day of calamity on
them,^c

And crush them and destroy
them completely.*

19 This is what Jehovah told
me: "Go and stand in the gate of
the sons of the people by which
the kings of Judah go in and
out, and in all the gates of
Jerusalem.^d **20** You must say
to them, 'Hear the word of Je-
hovah, you kings of Judah, all
people of Judah, and all inhabi-
tants of Jerusalem, who enter by
these gates. **21** This is what Je-
hovah says: "Watch yourselves,*
and do not carry any load on
the Sabbath day or bring it in
through the gates of Jerusalem."^e

22 You must not bring any load
out of your homes on the Sab-
bath day; and you must do no
work at all.^f Keep the Sabbath
day sacred, just as I commanded
your forefathers.^g **23** But they
did not listen or incline their ear,

and they stubbornly refused* to
obey or to accept discipline."^a

CHAP. 17

a Isa 5:19

2Pe 3:4

b Jer 15:15

Jer 20:11

c Jer 18:23

d Jer 7:2

e Ne 13:19

f Ex 20:9,10

Le 23:3

g Ex 31:13

Second Col.

a Isa 48:4

Eze 20:13

b De 5:12-14

c Ps 132:11

d Jer 22:4

e Jer 32:44

f Jer 33:13

g Le 1:3

h Eze 3:3

i Le 2:1, 2

j Ps 107:22

Ps 116:17

Jer 33:10, 11

k 2Ki 25:9, 10

Jer 39:8

l 2Ki 22:16, 17

La 4:11

CHAP. 18

m Jer 19:1

and they stubbornly refused* to
obey or to accept discipline."^a

24 "“However, if you strict-
ly obey me,” declares Jeho-
vah, “and you bring in no load
through the gates of this city on
the Sabbath day, and you keep
the Sabbath day sacred by not
doing any work on it,^b **25** then
kings and princes who sit on the
throne of David^c will also en-
ter in through the gates of this
city, riding in the chariot and on
horses, they and their princes,
the men of Judah and the in-
habitants of Jerusalem;^d and this
city will be inhabited for all
time. **26** And people will come
from the cities of Judah, from
the places around Jerusalem,
from the land of Benjamin,^e from
the lowland,^f from the moun-
tainous region, and from the
Neg’eb,^g bringing whole burnt
offerings,^h sacrifices,^h grain of-
ferings,ⁱ frankincense, and
thanksgiving sacrifices into the
house of Jehovah.^j

27 "“But if you do not obey
me by keeping the Sabbath day
sacred and by not carrying loads
and bringing them through the
gates of Jerusalem on the Sab-
bath day, I will set her gates on
fire, and it will certainly con-
sume the fortified towers of Je-
rusalem^k and will not be extin-
guished.””^l

18 This is the word that came
to Jeremiah from Jeho-
vah: **2** “Rise up and go down
to the house of the potter,^m and
there I will cause you to hear my
words.”

3 So I went down to the
house of the potter, and he was
working on the potter’s wheels.

4 But the vessel that the pot-
ter was making with the clay
was spoiled in his hand. So the

17:18 *Or “destroy them twice over.”

17:21 *Or “your souls.”

17:23 *Lit., “they hardened their neck.”

17:26 *Or “the south.”

potter reworked it into another vessel, just as he saw fit.*

5 Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: **6** "Can I not do to you just as this potter did, O house of Israel?" declares Jehovah. 'Look! As the clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.^a

7 Whenever I may speak about uprooting and pulling down and destroying a nation or a kingdom,^b **8** and that nation abandons its wickedness that I spoke against, I will also change my mind concerning* the calamity that I intended to bring against it.^c **9** But whenever I speak about building up and planting a nation or a kingdom, **10** and it does what is bad in my eyes and does not obey my voice, I will change my mind concerning* the good that I intended to do for it.^c

11 "Now say, please, to the men of Judah and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, 'This is what Jehovah says: "Here I am preparing* a calamity and devising a scheme against you. Turn back, and reform, from your bad ways, and reform your ways and your practices."^d

12 But they said: "It is hopeless!^e For we will walk after our own thoughts, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his wicked heart."^f

13 Therefore this is what Jehovah says:

"Ask for yourselves, please, among the nations.

Who has heard anything like this?

The virgin of Israel has done a most horrible thing.^g

14 Does the snow of Leb'a-non disappear from the rocks on its slopes?

18:4 *Lit., "as it was right in the eyes of the potter to make." 18:8, 10 *Or "feel regret over." 18:11 *Lit., "forming."

CHAP. 18
a Ro 9:20, 21

b Jer 1:10
Jer 12:14
Jer 25:9
Jer 45:4

c 1Ki 8:33, 34
Ps 106:45
Jer 7:3
Jer 26:3
Eze 18:21
Joe 2:13
Jon 3:5, 10

d Isa 1:16
Eze 18:23

e Jer 2:25

f De 29:19, 20
Jer 7:24

g Jer 2:13

Second Col.

a Jer 2:19
Jer 3:21

b Jer 10:14, 15

c Jer 6:16

d Le 26:33
Eze 6:14

e 1Ki 9:8
Jer 19:8
La 2:15
Mic 6:16

f De 28:37

g De 31:17

h Jer 11:19

i Ps 35:7

Or will cool waters flowing from afar dry up?

15 But my people have forgotten me.^a

For they make sacrifices* to something worthless,^b

And they make men stumble in their ways, the ancient paths,^c

To walk on back roads that are not smooth and level,[#]

16 In order to make their land an object of horror^d

And something to whistle at forever.^e

Every last one passing by it will stare in horror and shake his head.^f

17 Like the east wind, I will scatter them before the enemy.

I will show them my back, not my face, in the day of their disaster."^g

18 And they said: "Come, let us devise a plot against Jeremiah,^h for the law* will not perish from our priests or counsel from the wise men or the word from the prophets. Come and let us speak against him[#] and pay no attention to what he says."

19 Do pay attention to me, O Jehovah, And listen to what my opponents are saying.

20 Should good be repaid with bad?

For they have dug a pit for my life.^{#i}

Remember how I stood before you to speak good about them,

To turn your wrath away from them.

21 So give their sons over to the famine,

18:15 *Or "sacrificial smoke." #Or "not built up." 18:18 *Or "instruction." #Lit., "strike him with the tongue." 18:20 *Or "soul."

And hand them over to the power of the sword.^a

May their wives become bereaved of children and widowed.^b

May their men be killed with deadly plague,

Their young men struck down with the sword in battle.^c

22 Let a cry be heard from their houses

When you bring marauders on them suddenly.

For they have dug a pit to capture me

And have laid traps for my feet.^d

23 But you, O Jehovah, Well know all their schemes against me to kill me.^e

Do not cover their error, And do not wipe out their sin from before you.

Let them stumble before you^f When you take action against them in your anger.^g

19 This is what Jehovah said: "Go and buy an earthenware flask from a potter.^h Take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests, **2** and go out to the Valley of the Son of Hin'nom,ⁱ at the entrance of the Gate of the Potsherd. And there proclaim the words that I speak to you. **3** You will say, 'Hear the word of Jehovah, you kings of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says:

"I am about to bring a calamity on this place, and the ears of anyone who hears about it will tingle. **4** It is because they abandoned me^j and made this place unrecognizable.^k In it they are sacrificing to other gods, whom they and their forefathers and the kings of Judah had not known, and they have filled this place with the blood of the in-

CHAP. 18

a Jer 12:3

b La 5:3

c 2Ch 36:17

d Ps 38:12

e Jer 11:19, 20

f Ps 35:4

g Jer 15:15

CHAP. 19

h Jer 18:2

i Jos 15:8, 12
2Ch 28:1, 3
Jer 7:31

j 2Ki 22:16, 17
Isa 65:11

k 2Ch 33:1, 4

Second Col.

a 2Ki 21:16
Isa 59:7
Jer 2:34
La 4:13
Mt 23:34, 35

b 2Ch 28:1, 3
2Ch 33:1, 6
Isa 57:5

c Le 18:21
Jer 7:31
Jer 32:35

d Jer 7:32

e De 28:25, 26
Ps 79:2
Jer 7:33
Jer 16:4

f 1Ki 9:8
Jer 18:16
La 2:15

g Le 26:29
De 28:53
La 2:20
La 4:10
Eze 5:10

h Jer 7:32

nocent ones.^a **5** They built the high places of Ba'al in order to burn their sons in the fire as whole burnt offerings to Ba'al,^b something that I had not commanded or spoken of and that had never even come into my heart."^{*c}

6 "Therefore look! the days are coming," declares Jehovah, "when this place will no longer be called To'pheth or the Valley of the Son of Hin'nom but the Valley of the Slaughter.^d **7** I will thwart the plans of Judah and Jerusalem in this place, and I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those seeking to take their life.^e And I will give their dead bodies as food to the birds of the heavens and to the beasts of the earth.^e **8** And I will make this city an object of horror and something to whistle at. Every last one passing by it will stare in horror and whistle over all its plagues.^f **9** And I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will each eat the flesh of his fellow man, because of the siege and their desperation when they are hemmed in by their enemies and those seeking to take their life."^{*g}

10 "Then break the flask before the eyes of the men who go with you, **11** and say to them, 'This is what Jehovah of armies says: "This is how I will break this people and this city, like someone who breaks a potter's vessel so that it can never be repaired; and they will bury the dead in To'pheth until there is no more room to bury them."^h

12 "That is what I will do to this place," declares Jehovah, "and to its inhabitants, to make this city like To'pheth. **13** And

19:5 *Or "had never entered my thoughts." **19:7, 9** *Or "seeking their soul."

the houses of Jerusalem and the houses of the kings of Judah will become unclean like this place, To'pheth,^a yes, all the houses on whose roofs they offered sacrifices to all the army of the heavens^b and where they poured out drink offerings to other gods."^c

14 When Jeremiah returned from To'pheth where Jehovah sent him to prophesy, he stood in the courtyard of the house of Jehovah and said to all the people: **15** "This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, 'Here I am bringing on this city and on all its towns all the calamity that I have spoken against it, because they stubbornly refused* to obey my words.'"^d

20 Now Pash'hur the son of Im'mer, the priest, who was also the leading commissioner in the house of Jehovah, was listening when Jeremiah prophesied these things. **2** Then Pash'hur struck Jeremiah the prophet and put him in the stocks^e that were at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, which was in the house of Jehovah. **3** But on the following day when Pash'hur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him:

"Jehovah has named you, not Pash'hur, but Terror All Around.^f **4** For this is what Jehovah says, 'I will make you an object of terror to yourself and to all your friends, and they will fall by the sword of their enemies while your eyes are looking on;^g and I will give all Judah into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he will take them into exile in Babylon and put them to death by the sword.^h **5** And I will give all the wealth of this city, all its resources, all its precious things, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah into

19:15 *Lit., "hardened their neck so as not."

CHAP. 19
a Ps 79:1
b Jer 8:1, 2
 Zep 1:4, 5
c Jer 7:18
 Jer 32:29
d Ne 9:17, 29
 Zec 7:12

CHAP. 20
e 2Ch 16:10
f Jer 6:25
g De 28:32
h Jer 25:9
 Jer 39:9

Second Col.
a 2Ki 20:17
 2Ki 24:11, 13
 2Ki 25:13-15
 La 1:10
b 2Ch 36:10
 Jer 15:13
c Jer 14:14
 Jer 28:15
 Jer 29:21
d Eze 3:14
 Mic 3:8

e Ps 22:7
 Jer 15:10, 15
f 2Ch 36:16
 Jer 6:10
g 1Ki 19:2, 4
 Jon 1:3
h Jer 6:11
 Am 3:8
 Ac 4:19, 20
i Ps 31:13
j Ps 38:16
k Jer 1:8
 Ro 8:31

l Ps 27:2
 Jer 15:15, 20
 Jer 17:18

the hand of their enemies.^a And they will plunder them and seize them and take them to Babylon.^b **6** And as for you, Pash'hur, and all who live in your house, you will go into captivity. You will go off to Babylon and die there, and you will be buried there with all your friends, because you have prophesied lies to them."^c

- 7** You have fooled me, O Jehovah, and I was fooled.
 You used your strength against me, and you prevailed.^d
 I have become a laughing-stock all day long;
 Everyone ridicules me.^e
- 8** For whenever I speak, I must cry out and proclaim, "Violence and destruction!" For me the word of Jehovah has been the cause of insults and jeering all day long.^f
- 9** So I said: "I am not going to make mention of him, And I will speak no more in his name."^g
 But in my heart it became like a burning fire shut up in my bones,
 And I was tired of holding it in;
 I could no longer endure it.^h
- 10** For I heard many evil rumors;
 Terror surrounded me.ⁱ
 "Denounce him; let us denounce him!"
 Every man wishing me peace was watching for my downfall;^j
 "Perhaps he will make a foolish mistake,
 And we can prevail and take our revenge against him."^k
- 11** But Jehovah was with me like a fearsome warrior.^k
 That is why those persecuting me will stumble and will not prevail.^l

They will be put to great shame, for they will not succeed.

Their everlasting humiliation will not be forgotten.^a

- 12 But you, O Jehovah of armies, are examining the righteous one;

You see the innermost thoughts* and the heart.^b

Let me see your vengeance on them,^c

For to you I have committed my legal case.^d

- 13 Sing to Jehovah! Praise Jehovah!

For he has rescued the poor one* from the hand of evildoers.

- 14 Cursed be the day I was born!

May the day my mother gave birth to me not be blessed!^e

- 15 Cursed be the man who brought good news to my father, saying:

“A son has been born to you, a boy!”

Making him rejoice greatly.

- 16 May that man become like cities that Jehovah overthrew without regret.

May he hear an outcry in the morning and the sound of alarm at midday.

- 17 Why did he not put me to death in the womb,

So that my mother would become my burial place

And her womb would always remain pregnant?^f

- 18 Why did I have to come out of the womb

To see trouble and grief,
To end my days in shame?^g

21 Jeremiah received the word from Jehovah when King Zed-e-ki'ah^h sent to him Pash'hur' son of Mal-chi'jah

20:12 *Or “deepest emotions.” Lit., “kidneys.” 20:13 *Or “the soul of the poor one.”

CHAP. 20

a Ps 6:10

b Jer 17:10

c Ps 59:10
Jer 17:18

d Jer 11:20
1Pe 2:23

e Job 3:3
Jer 15:10

f Job 10:18

g Job 3:20

CHAP. 21

h 2Ki 24:18
1Ch 3:15
2Ch 36:9, 10

i Jer 38:1

Second Col.

a Jer 29:25
Jer 37:3
Jer 52:24, 27

b 2Ki 25:1
Jer 32:28
Jer 39:1

c 1Sa 7:10
2Ch 14:11
Isa 37:36, 37

d Jer 32:5

e Isa 63:10
La 2:5

f Isa 5:25

g De 28:21, 22
Eze 7:15

h 2Ki 25:6, 7
Jer 37:17
Jer 39:5-7
Jer 52:9-11
Eze 17:20

i De 28:49, 50
2Ch 36:17

and Zeph-a-ni'ah^a son of Ma-sei'ah, the priest, requesting: **2** “Please inquire of Jehovah in our behalf, because King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar* of Babylon is waging war against us.^b Perhaps Jehovah will perform one of his wonderful works in our behalf, so that he will withdraw from us.”^c

3 Jeremiah said to them: “This is what you should say to Zed-e-ki'ah, **4** ‘This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says: “Here I am turning around against you* the weapons of war that are in your own hands, with which you are fighting the king of Babylon^d and the Chal-de'ans who are outside the wall besieging you. And I will gather them into the middle of this city. **5** And I myself will fight against you^e with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm, with anger and wrath and great indignation.^f **6** I will strike the inhabitants of this city, both man and beast. By a great pestilence* they will die.”^g

7 ““And after that,” declares Jehovah, “I will give King Zed-e-ki'ah of Judah and his servants and the people of this city—those who survive the pestilence, the sword, and the famine—into the hand of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar* of Babylon, into the hand of their enemies, and into the hand of those who are seeking to take their life.”^h He will strike them down with the sword. He will not feel sorry for them, nor will he show compassion or have any mercy.”ⁱ

8 “And to this people you should say, ‘This is what Jehovah says: “Here I am putting before you the way of life and the

21:2, 7 *Lit., “Nebuchadrezzar,” a variant spelling. 21:4 *Or “turning in reverse.” 21:6 *Or “disease.” 21:7 #Or “seeking their soul.”

way of death. **9** Those who remain in this city will die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence. But whoever goes out and surrenders to the Chal-de'ans who are besieging you will keep living, and he will have his life* as a spoil."^a

10 "“For I have set my face against this city for calamity and not for good,”^b declares Jehovah. “It will be given into the hand of the king of Babylon,^c and he will burn it with fire.”^d

11 “To the household of the king of Judah: Hear the word of Jehovah. **12** O house of David, this is what Jehovah says:

“Uphold justice every morning,
And rescue the one being robbed from the hand of the defrauder,^e
So that my wrath does not blaze like a fire^f
And burn with no one to extinguish it
Because of your evil deeds.”^g

13 ‘Here I am against you,
O inhabitant of the valley,*
O rock of the level land,’
declares Jehovah.
‘As for you who say: “Who will come down against us?
And who will invade our dwellings?”

14 I will hold an accounting against you
As your deeds deserve,^h
declares Jehovah.
‘And I will set her forest ablaze,
And it will consume all the things around her.’ⁱ

22 This is what Jehovah says: “Go down to the house* of the king of Judah, and deliver this message. **2** You must

21:9 *Or “soul.” ^aOr “will escape with his life.” 21:13 *Or “low plain.” 22:1 *Or “palace.”

CHAP. 21

a Jer 27:12, 13
Jer 38:2, 17

b Jer 44:11

c Jer 38:3

d 2Ch 36:17, 19
Jer 17:27
Jer 34:2
Jer 37:10
Jer 39:8

e Isa 1:17
Jer 22:3
Eze 22:29
Mic 2:2

f De 32:22
Isa 1:31
Jer 7:20

g Jer 7:5-7

h Jer 5:9
Jer 9:9

i 2Ch 36:17, 19
Jer 52:12, 13

Second Col.

CHAP. 22

a Le 19:15
Isa 1:17
Eze 22:7
Mic 2:2

b 2Ki 24:3, 4
Jer 7:6, 7

c 1Ki 2:12

d Jer 17:24, 25

e Jer 39:8
Mic 3:12

f Isa 6:11
Jer 7:34

g Eze 9:1

h Jer 21:14

i De 29:24-26
1Ki 9:8, 9
La 2:15

say, ‘Hear the word of Jehovah, O king of Judah who sits on the throne of David, you with your servants and your people, those who enter through these gates. **3** This is what Jehovah says: “Uphold justice and righteousness. Rescue the one being robbed from the hand of the defrauder. Do not mistreat any foreign resident, and do not harm any fatherless child* or widow.^a And do not shed any innocent blood in this place.^b **4** For if you are careful to carry out this word, then the kings who sit on the throne of David^c will enter through the gates of this house, riding in chariots and on horses, they with their servants and their people.”^d

5 “But if you will not obey these words, by myself I do swear,’ declares Jehovah, ‘that this house will become a devastated place.’^e

6 “For this is what Jehovah says concerning the house of the king of Judah,

‘You are as Gil’e-ad to me,
Like the summit of
Leb’a-non.
But I will make you a
wilderness;
Not one of your cities will
be inhabited.’^f

7 And I will appoint* destroyers against you,
Each with his weapons.^g
They will cut down your
choicest cedars
And make them fall into the
fire.^h

8 “And many nations will pass by this city and say to one another: “Why did Jehovah do this to this great city?”ⁱ

9 And they will reply: “Because they abandoned the covenant of Jehovah their God and bowed

22:3 *Or “any orphan.” 22:7 *Lit., “sanctify.”

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Let Jehovah Mold Your Thinking and Conduct”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 18:1-4—A potter has authority over the clay (w99 4/1 22 ¶3)
 Jer 18:5-10—Jehovah has authority over mankind (it-2 776 ¶4)
 Jer 18:11—Respond favorably to Jehovah’s molding (w99 4/1 22 ¶4-5)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 17:9—How may the heart’s treachery become manifest? (w01 10/15 25 ¶13)

Jer 20:7—In what way did Jehovah use his strength against Jeremiah and fool him? (w07 3/15 9 ¶6)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 21:3-14

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. Encourage all to make return visits on those who accepted the tract *What Is the Kingdom of God?*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 85
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (yb16 22)
- **“Warmly Welcome Them”:** (10 min.) Begin with a three-minute talk. Conclude by playing the video *Steve Gerdes: We Will Never Forget the Greeting* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 10 ¶12-19, box on p. 105 (right), review box on p. 107
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 13 and Prayer

Warmly Welcome Them

Warmly welcome whom? *Anyone* who attends our Christian meetings—from newcomers to longtime friends. (Ro 15:7; Heb 13:2) It could be a fellow believer visiting from another country or an inactive Christian attending for the first time in years. Imagine how you would feel in such circumstances. Would you not appreciate a warm greeting? (Mt 7:12) So why not make a greater effort to move about the Kingdom Hall and greet others before and after the meeting? This contributes to a warm and loving atmosphere and brings honor to Jehovah. (Mt 5:16) Of course, it will likely not be possible to speak personally with everyone present. Nevertheless, everyone will feel welcome if we all do our part.*

True hospitality is shown not just on special occasions like the Memorial but at all times. When newcomers see and experience Christian love in action, they may be moved to praise God and join us in pure worship.—Joh 13:35.

* Bible principles limit our dealings with disfellowshipped or disassociated ones who may attend meetings.—1Co 5:11; 2Jo 10.



SUGGESTIONS TO HELP NEWCOMERS

- Introduce yourself and ask for their name
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- Offer a Bible study when appropriate

JEREMIAH 17-21 | Let Jehovah Mold Your Thinking and Conduct

18:1-11

Respond favorably to Jehovah's molding

- Jehovah shapes our spiritual qualities through counsel or discipline
- We need to be malleable and obedient
- Jehovah never forces us to do things against our will

A potter may change his mind about what to do with a vessel

- Because Jehovah has given us free will, we can choose either to accept his molding or to reject it
- Jehovah adjusts his dealings with people according to the way they respond to his direction



DID YOU KNOW?

Clay was a common material in Bible times. When moist, clay is soft and pliable, and it will maintain the impressions made on it. But clay, even when baked hard, is not a strong material.

In what ways do I need Jehovah to mold me?



April 3-9

Treasures From God's Word

Jeremiah 18:1-4—A potter has authority over the clay

Reference: w99 4/1 22 **paragraph 3**.

The need for a willing, obedient response on your part if you are to benefit from Jehovah's molding influence was powerfully illustrated when Jehovah told the prophet Jeremiah to visit the workshop of a potter. Jeremiah saw the potter change his mind about what to do with one vessel when the product he was trying to make "was spoiled by the potter's hand." Jehovah then said: "Am I not able to do just like this potter to you people, O house of Israel? . . . Look! As the clay in the hand of the potter, so you are in my hand, O house of Israel." (Jeremiah 18:1-6) Did that mean that people in Israel were just like lumps of lifeless clay in Jehovah's hands for him to mold arbitrarily into one kind of vessel or another?

Jeremiah 18:5-10—Jehovah has authority over mankind

Reference: it-2 776 **paragraph 4**.

A potter may begin to make one type of vessel and then change to another style if the vessel is "spoiled by the potter's hand." (**Jeremiah 18:3, 4**) By this example Jehovah illustrates, *not* that he is like a human potter in 'spoiling by his hand,' but rather, that he has divine *authority* over mankind, authority to adjust his dealings with them according to the way they respond or fail to respond to his righteousness and mercy. (Compare **Isaiah 45:9**; **Romans 9:19-21**.) He can thus "feel regret over the calamity that [he] had thought to execute" upon a nation, or "feel regret over the good that [he] said to [himself] to do for its good," all depending upon the reaction of the nation to his prior dealings with it. (**Jeremiah 18:5-10**) Thus, it is not that the Great Potter, Jehovah, errs, but rather, that the human "clay" undergoes a "metamorphosis" (change of form or composition) as to its heart condition, producing regret, or a change of feeling, on Jehovah's part.

Jeremiah 18:11—Respond favorably to Jehovah's molding

Reference: w99 4/1 22 **paragraphs 4-5**.

Jehovah never uses his almighty power to make people do things against their will; nor is he responsible for defective products, as might be the case with a human potter. (Deuteronomy 32:4) Defects develop when those whom Jehovah tries to mold in a positive way resist his direction. That is one huge difference between you and a lifeless lump of clay. You have free will. Exercising it, you can choose to respond to Jehovah's molding influence or deliberately reject it.

What a sobering lesson! How much better to listen to Jehovah's voice instead of arrogantly asserting, "No one tells me what to do"! We all need Jehovah's guiding influence. (John 17:3) Be like the psalmist David, who prayed: "Make me know your own ways, O Jehovah; teach me your own paths." (Psalm 25:4) Remember what King Solomon said: "A wise person will listen and take in more instruction." (Proverbs 1:5) Will you listen? If you do, then "thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you."—Proverbs 2:11.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Jeremiah 17:9—How may the heart's treachery become manifest?

Reference: w01 10/15 25 **paragraph 13**.

"The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate," warned Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 17:9) This treachery of the heart may manifest itself when we make excuses for our errors, minimize shortcomings, rationalize away serious personality flaws, or exaggerate accomplishments. A desperate heart is also capable of taking on a two-sided posture—smooth lips saying one thing, actions saying another. (Psalm 12:2; Proverbs 23:7) How vital that we be honest as we examine what comes out of the heart!

Jeremiah 20:7—In what way did Jehovah use his strength against Jeremiah and fool him?

Reference: w07 3/15 9 **paragraph 6**.

Because of facing indifference, rejection, and persecution when declaring Jehovah's judgments, Jeremiah might have felt that he did not have the strength to continue. However, Jehovah used his strength against such inclinations, empowering Jeremiah to continue. Jehovah thus fooled Jeremiah by using him to accomplish what the prophet himself thought he could not do.

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

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- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 21:3-14

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. Encourage all to make return visits on those who accepted the tract *What Is the Kingdom of God?*

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Welcome One Another

(Romans 15:7)

D A7/E D/F# Bm G D/F# A7/E D A A/C#

Wel - come to all who gath - er here this day To
 Thanks to our God for broth - ers such as these, Who
 God's in - vi - ta - tion reach - es all man - kind, That

D C#7 F#m F#m/E B/D# A/E E7 A

hear God's Word and to learn his way,
 wel - come us and who seek to please.
 all sin - cere ones the truth may find.

A7/G D/F# A7/E A D A7/E D/F# G D

Life - giv - ing truth he of - fers to us all; With
 May we keep hold - ing men of that sort dear, And
 God by his Son has drawn us to His side. So

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

thank - ful - ness of heart, we re - spond to his call.
 now we wel - come oth - ers who meet with us here.
 wel - come one an - oth - er with hearts o - pened wide.

one text message, Anibal's mother wrote, "Today I am feeling much better because you have given me comfort and helped me to increase my faith."

Special metropolitan public witnessing has been organized at 127 locations in 14 cities in the **United States**. During the first seven months of the 2015 service year, 8,445 Bible studies were started! This form of witnessing has also been instrumental in helping many who were formerly associated to get involved with true worship once again. For instance, a man named Terry was looking over one of our literature displays in Los Angeles, California, so the Witness couple at the table asked if he had read our literature before. He explained that he is one of Jehovah's Witnesses but that he had been inactive for about four years. The couple read and discussed with him Ezekiel 34:11, where Jehovah says: "I myself will search for my sheep, and I will care for them." They told him about our website and JW Broadcasting. The next morning Terry e-mailed the brother, explaining that just moments before he saw the witnessing table, he had begged for God's forgiveness for neglecting congregation meetings. He had also asked for help to draw closer to Jehovah. "Then you greeted me warmly," said Terry. "You read that encouraging scripture to me and provided me with the information that I need to get back in step with Jehovah's organization. It was an answer to my prayer."

There are four special metropolitan public witnessing locations in Addis Ababa, **Ethiopia**. In three months the brothers placed 37,275 publications, and 629 people requested a visit from the Witnesses. Among the many who accepted a *Bible Teach* book was an older

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“CHRISTMAS, ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE”

IN December 1928, Brother Richard H. Barber (circled at left) delivered a powerful radio discourse on the subject of Christmas. The content of that discourse was published in *The Golden Age* of December 12, 1928, under the title “Christmas, Its Origin and Purpose.” Among the statements in the discourse were the following:

- “Satan . . . has taught the people to give more prominence to the *birth* of the

babe Jesus than to the *death* of the *man* Jesus, in order to hide the importance of the *ransom*.”

- “Every one is aware of the spirit of frivolity, debauchery, drunkenness and revelry so prevalent during the Christmas season . . . Surely none of these things honor either Jehovah God or His Son.”
- “The Devil has now succeeded in grafting his counterfeit festivals, feast days, fast days and holy days upon the church . . . The Devil has succeeded in getting the people to adopt all his wicked schemes and to give them the name Christian, in order that thus he might mock the great Jehovah God.”

unclean origins of this holiday. How did God’s people respond to the clear direction from headquarters? Recalling when he and his family stopped celebrating Christmas, Brother Charles Brandlein said: “Did we mind putting those pagan things away? Absolutely not! . . . It was just like taking a soiled garment off and throwing it away.” Reflecting a similar spirit, Brother Henry A. Cantwell, who later served as a traveling overseer, recalled: “We were pleased that we were able to give up something to prove our love for Jehovah.” Christ’s loyal followers were willing to make the needed changes and have no part in a celebration that stemmed from unclean worship.^[4]—John 15:19; 17:14.

11 What a fine example those faithful Bible Students set for us! Reflecting on their example, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘How do I view the direction we receive from headquarters? Do I gratefully accept it and apply what I learn?’ Our willing obedience shows our support for the Messianic King, who is using the faithful slave to dispense timely spiritual food.—Acts 16:4, 5.

Should Christians Use the Cross?

12 For many years, the Bible Students viewed the cross as an acceptable symbol of Christianity. They certainly did not feel that the cross should be worshipped, for they

11. How can we show our support for the Messianic King?

12. For many years, how did the Bible Students view the cross?

FOOTNOTE

[4] In a personal letter dated November 14, 1927, Brother Frederick W. Franz wrote: “We will have no Christmas this year. The Bethel family has voted not to have Christmas anymore.” A few months later, in a letter dated February 6, 1928, Brother Franz wrote: “Little by little the Lord is cleansing us from the errors of the Devil’s Babylonish organization.”

13. What enlightenment did Christ's followers receive about use of the cross? (See also the box "Progressively Enlightened About Use of the Cross.")

14. How did God's people respond to the progressive enlightenment they received about the cross?

15, 16. How can we show that we are determined to keep the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple clean?



Cross-and-crown emblem
(See paragraphs 12 and 13)

understood that idolatry is wrong. (1 Cor. 10:14; 1 John 5:21) As early as 1883, the *Watch Tower* frankly stated that "all idolatry is an abomination to God." Yet, at first, the Bible Students saw no objection to what they thought were appropriate uses of the cross. For example, they proudly wore a cross-and-crown pin as an identifying badge. To them it signified that if they proved faithful to death, they would receive the crown of life. Beginning in 1891, a cross-and-crown symbol appeared on the cover of the *Watch Tower*.

13 The Bible Students cherished the cross-and-crown emblem. Starting in the late 1920's, however, Christ's followers were progressively enlightened regarding the use of the cross. Reflecting on the 1928 assembly held in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., Brother Grant Suiter, who later served on the Governing Body, recalled: "At the assembly the cross-and-crown emblems were shown to be not only unnecessary but objectionable." Over the next few years, more enlightenment followed. It was clear that the cross has no place in worship that is pure and spiritually clean.

14 How did God's people respond to the progressive enlightenment they received about the cross? Did they continue to hold on to the cross-and-crown emblem, which had been so dear to them? "We easily gave it up when we realized what it represented," recalled Lela Roberts, a long-time servant of Jehovah. Another faithful sister, Ursula Serrenco, expressed the feelings of many, saying: "We came to recognize that what we once cherished as symbolic or representative of the death of our Lord and of our Christian devotion was really a pagan symbol. In harmony with Proverbs 4:18, we were grateful that the path was being more brightly illuminated." Christ's loyal followers wanted to have no part in unclean false religious practices!

15 We share that determination today. We recognize that Christ has been using a clearly recognizable channel—his faithful and discreet slave—to help his people keep spiritually clean. Hence, when the spiritual food we receive alerts us to observances, practices, or customs that are tainted by false religion, we promptly and obediently respond. Like our brothers and sisters who lived in the early part of Christ's presence, we are determined to keep the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual temple clean.

16 Throughout the last days, Christ has also been working behind the scenes to protect the congregations of Jehovah's people from individuals who could cause spiritual contamination. How has he done so? Let us see.

EXPOSING OTHER HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

OVER the years, Christ has helped his followers to remain no part of the world. Here are some of the earliest references that alerted God's people to various holidays and celebrations that true Christians avoid.

- **Easter.** "The prominent heathen festival of Easter was also brought over and engrafted into the so-called Christian church."—*The Golden Age*, December 12, 1928, page 168.
- **Valentine's Day.** "St. Valentine's Day has nothing very saintly to commend it as to its origin."—*The Golden Age*, December 25, 1929, page 208.
- **Birthdays.** "There are but two such celebrations mentioned in the Scriptures, one of the heathen king Pharaoh of Egypt, in the days of Joseph, and the other of [Herod,] whose birthday cost John the Baptist his life. In the Bible there is no instance of celebrations of birthdays by any of God's people."—*The Golden Age*, May 6, 1936, page 499.
- **New Year's Day.** "The whole New Year's celebration with its high jinks and drunken revelry is not Christian, regardless of the day on which it occurs. Early Christians did not observe it."—*Awake!* December 22, 1946, page 24.



PROGRESSIVELY ENLIGHTENED ABOUT USE OF THE CROSS

- Cross-and-crown pins are not only unnecessary but also objectionable.—Assembly in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., 1928.
- Cross-and-crown pins are idols.—*Preparation*, 1933, page 239.
- The cross is pagan in origin.—*The Golden Age*, February 28, 1934, page 336.
- Jesus died on a stake, not on a cross.—*The Golden Age*, November 4, 1936, page 72; *Riches*, 1936, page 27.

The Greek word *stau-ros*' is translated "cross" in many Bible translations. Notice, however, what various sources say about the meaning of this word:

"The Greek word [*stau-ros*'] properly . . . means merely a stake."—*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

"A pole in the broadest sense. It is not the equivalent of a 'cross.'"—*Crucifixion in Antiquity*.

"A strong stake, such as farmers drive into the ground to make their fences or palisades—no more, no less."—*History of the Cross*.

"It never means *two* pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone."—*The Companion Bible*.

"An upright pole or stake . . . It never means two pieces of wood joining each other at any angle."—*A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*.



The dragnet represents
the Kingdom preaching that
is taking place throughout
the sea of humanity
(See paragraph 18)

Separating “the Wicked From Among the Righteous”

17 The King Jesus Christ keeps a watchful eye on the congregations of God’s people earth wide. In ways that we cannot fully perceive, Christ and the angels have been doing a separating work. Jesus described this work in his illustration of the dragnet. **(Read Matthew 13:47-50.)** What does the illustration mean?

18 *Letting “a dragnet . . . down into the sea.”* The dragnet represents the Kingdom preaching that is taking place throughout the sea of humanity. *“Gathering fish of every kind.”* The good news attracts people of all kinds—those who take steps to become true Christians, as well as many others who may initially show some interest but do not really take a stand for pure worship.^[5] *Collecting “the fine ones into containers.”* Honesthearted ones are gathered into containerlike congregations, where they can render clean worship to Jehovah. *Throwing away “the unsuitable” fish.* Throughout the last days, Christ and the angels have been separating “the wicked from among the righteous.”^[6] As a result, those who lack the right heart condition—who are perhaps unwilling to abandon wrong beliefs or practices—have not been allowed to taint the congregations.^[7]

19 Is it not reassuring to know that our King, Jesus Christ, is protective of those under his care? And is it not comforting to know that his zeal for true worship—and true worshippers—is as fervent today as it was when he cleansed the temple in the first century C.E.? How thankful we are that Christ has been working to safeguard the spiritual cleanness of God’s people and the purity of true worship! We can show our support for the King and his Kingdom by avoiding all contact with false religion.

17, 18. In the illustration of the dragnet, what is the meaning of (a) letting down the dragnet, (b) “gathering fish of every kind,” (c) collecting the fine fish into containers, and (d) throwing away the fish that were not suitable?

19. How do you feel about what Christ has been doing to safeguard the cleanness of God’s people and the purity of true worship?

FOOTNOTES

[5] Consider, for example, that in 2013, there was a peak of 7,965,954 publishers, while 19,241,252 attended the annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death.

[6] The separating of the fine fish from the unsuitable fish is *not* the same as the separating of the sheep from the goats. (Matt. 25:31-46) The separating, or final judgment, of the sheep and the goats takes place during the coming great tribulation. Until then, those who are like unsuitable fish may return to Jehovah and be gathered into containerlike congregations.—Mal. 3:7.

[7] Eventually, the unsuitable ones will symbolically be cast into a fiery furnace, denoting their future destruction.

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- What is spiritual cleanness, and through what channel has Christ helped his followers to be spiritually clean?
- How did Christ use his faithful and discreet slave to help his followers to abandon the celebration of Christmas and the use of the cross-and-crown emblem?
- How do you feel about what Christ has done to safeguard true worship?

Christ, Our Model

(1 Peter 2:21)

C/E C/G C G7sus4 C C/B F/A G/B

What love Je - ho - vah showed, What good - ness from him flowed,
 Je - ho - vah's Word, he said, Sus - tained his life like bread.
 Like Je - sus, may our days Pro - vide Je - ho - vah praise,

G G/F C/E F C/G F6/A G/B F/C C

When for all man - kind he of - fered his First - born.
 It gave him wis - dom and knowl - edge and in - sight.
 And may his foot - steps be - come our own road - way.

C/E Dm11 C Bm11 E7 Am Cma7/G Fma7 C/E Dm7

Christ took on hu - man form— The Son of man was born—
 His Fa - ther's will - ing slave, A mod - el Je - sus gave;
 Let Je - sus' mod - el be Our path e - ter - nal - ly,

G7 G/D G/F Em7 C/E F C/G G13sus4 G7 C

By his ex - am - ple, God's name he a - dorned.
 To please his Fa - ther would bring him de - light.
 And then God's fa - vor we'll know day by day.

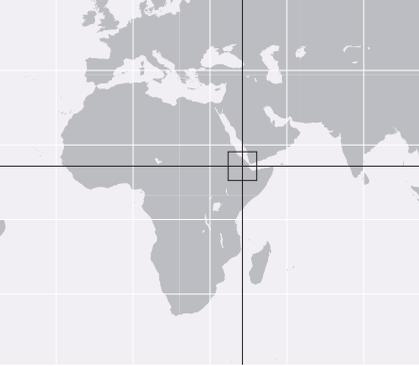
FEBRUARY 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
APRIL 3-30, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
ETHIOPIA

A brother uses the Bible to share the Kingdom message with two villagers in the central highlands of Ethiopia. The men wear the handwoven cotton shawls typical of the area

POPULATION
99,391,000

PUBLISHERS
10,083

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
25,323

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A Special Possession

(1 Peter 2:9)

F Fsus4

God has a new cre - a - tion, His
 They are a ho - ly na - tion, Who
 Faith - ful to their com - mis - sion, They

C/E F

spir - it - a - noint - ed sons. He has
 han - dle the truth a - right. God has
 gath - er the oth - er sheep. To the

Dm7 Gm7

bought them from man - kind; His ap -
 called them from dark - ness To his
 Lamb they are loy - al. His com -

E_b C/E Chorus

prov - al they've won.
 won - der - ful light.
 mand - ments they keep. A

A Special Possession

spe - cial pos - ses - sion, They're a peo - ple for your

The first system of music features a treble clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is in the bass clef. Chords are indicated above the staff: F, Bb/F, and C/E. The lyrics are: "spe - cial pos - ses - sion, They're a peo - ple for your".

name. They love you. They praise you. As

The second system of music continues the melody and bass line. Chords are indicated above the staff: Dm, Dm/C, Bb, Gm/Bb, and F/A. The lyrics are: "name. They love you. They praise you. As".

one they de - clare a - broad your fame.

The third system of music concludes the piece. Chords are indicated above the staff: Gm7, C7sus4, and F. The lyrics are: "one they de - clare a - broad your fame.".



Jehovah's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled!

“I have spoken, and I will bring it about. I have purposed it, and I will also carry it out.”—ISA. 46:11.

THE very first words of the Bible make this simple but profound statement: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) It is true that we have only a little understanding of the many things God created, such as space, light, and gravity, and we have seen only a small fraction of the universe. (Eccl. 3:11) Yet, Jehovah has revealed to us his purpose for the earth and for mankind. The earth was to be an ideal home for men and women created in God’s image. (Gen. 1:26) They would be his children, and Jehovah would be their Father.

² As explained in the third chapter of Genesis, Jehovah’s purpose encountered a challenge. (Gen. 3:1-7) However, that challenge was by no means insurmountable. No one can stand in Jehovah’s way. (Isa. 46:10, 11; 55:11) Therefore, we can be certain that Jehovah’s original purpose will be fulfilled exactly on time!

³ No doubt, we are familiar with Bible truths about God’s

1, 2. (a) What has Jehovah revealed to us? (b) What assurance do we find at Isaiah 46:10, 11 and 55:11?

3. (a) What truths are fundamental to our understanding of the Bible’s message? (b) Why do we review such teachings now? (c) What questions will we consider?

SONGS: 25, 18

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is Jehovah’s purpose for mankind?

What rebellious actions did not defeat Jehovah’s purpose?

How will Jehovah’s purpose be fulfilled?

purpose for the earth and mankind and about the central role of Jesus Christ in the outworking of God's purpose. They are of fundamental importance and are likely among the first truths we learned when we began to study God's Word. We, in turn, want to help sincere people to become familiar with these vital teachings. Currently, as we are considering this article as a congregation, we are striving to invite as many people as possible to the Memorial of Christ's death. (Luke 22:19, 20) Those who attend will learn much regarding God's purpose. So in these last few days before the Memorial, it is timely that we think about specific questions that we can use to stimulate the interest of our Bible students and other sincere individuals in this important event. We will consider three questions: What was God's original purpose for the earth and mankind? What went wrong? And why is Jesus' ransom sacrifice the key that unlocks the door for God's purpose to be accomplished?

WHAT WAS THE CREATOR'S ORIGINAL PURPOSE?

⁴ Jehovah is an awe-inspiring Creator. Everything he creates meets the highest standards. (Gen. 1:31; Jer. 10:12) What can we learn from the beauty and order that are evident in creation? When observing creation, we are impressed with the way all of Jehovah's creative works, small and large, serve a beneficial purpose. Who does not marvel at the intricacies of the human cell, the delicateness of a newborn baby, or the splendor of a gorgeous sunset? We admire these creations because we have a built-in

4. How does creation declare Jehovah's glory?

sense of what is truly beautiful.—**Read Psalm 19:1; 104:24.**

⁵ As is evident in creation, Jehovah lovingly set boundaries. He made both natural laws and moral laws to ensure that everything functions harmoniously. (Ps. 19:7-9) Hence, all things in the universe have an assigned place and function according to their role in God's purpose. Jehovah sets the standard for how his creation should work together. Thus, the law of gravity holds the atmosphere close to the earth, regulates tides and oceans, and contributes to the physical order essential to life on earth. All creation, including humans, moves and functions within these boundaries. Clearly, the order in creation testifies that God has a purpose for earth and mankind. In our ministry, can we draw attention to the Cause of this impressive order?—Rev. 4:11.

⁶ Jehovah's original purpose was for mankind to live forever here on earth. (Gen. 1:28; Ps. 37:29) He generously gave Adam and Eve a variety of precious gifts that enabled them to enjoy life. (**Read James 1:17.**) Jehovah gave them free will, the ability to reason, and the capacity to love and to enjoy friendship. The Creator spoke to Adam and instructed him on how to show his obedience. Adam also learned how to take care of his needs and how to care for the animals and the land. (Gen. 2:15-17, 19, 20) Jehovah also created Adam and Eve with the senses of taste, touch, sight, sound, and smell. Thus they could enjoy to the full the beauty and bounty of

5. How does Jehovah ensure that all creation functions harmoniously?

6, 7. What are some gifts that Jehovah gave Adam and Eve?

their Paradise home. For the first human pair, the possibilities for satisfying work, accomplishment, and discovery were endless.

⁷ What else was part of God's purpose? Jehovah created Adam and Eve with the ability to have perfect children. God had in mind for their children to have children, until the human family filled the whole earth. He wanted Adam and Eve and all parents after them to love their children as Jehovah loved his first perfect human children. Earth, with all its resources, was to become their permanent home.—Ps. 115:16.

WHAT WENT WRONG?

⁸ Things did not immediately work out as God had purposed. Why not? Jehovah gave Adam and Eve a simple law that served to test whether they recognized the limits of their freedom. He said: "From every tree of the garden you may eat to satisfaction. But as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat from it, for in the day you eat from it you will certainly die." (Gen. 2:16, 17) It was not hard for Adam and Eve to understand this law; nor was it a hardship for them to obey it. After all, they had more food available than they could eat.

⁹ Satan the Devil, using a serpent, fooled Eve into disobeying her Father, Jehovah. **(Read Genesis 3:1-5; Rev. 12:9)** Satan made an issue of the fact that God's human children were not allowed to eat "from every tree of the gar-

den." It was as if he were saying: "You mean you cannot do what you want?" Next, he told a blatant lie: "You certainly will not die." Then he tried to convince Eve that she need not listen to God, saying: "God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened." Satan implied that Jehovah did not want them to eat the fruit because doing so would enlighten them. Further, Satan made this false promise: "You will be like God, knowing good and bad."

¹⁰ Now Adam and Eve had to decide what to do. Would they obey Jehovah, or would they listen to the serpent? They decided to disobey God. By doing so, they joined Satan's rebellion. They rejected Jehovah as their Father and estranged themselves from the security of his protective rule.—Gen. 3:6-13.

¹¹ By rebelling against Jehovah, Adam and Eve lost their perfection. Moreover, their rebellion resulted in alienation from Jehovah because his "eyes are too pure to look on what is evil." Therefore, he "cannot tolerate wickedness." (Hab. 1:13) If he had tolerated it, the well-being of all living creatures—in heaven and on earth—would be threatened. Above all, had God done nothing about the sin committed in Eden, his own trustworthiness would have been called into question. But Jehovah is faithful to his own standards; he never violates them. (Ps. 119:142) Thus, having free will did not entitle Adam and Eve to disregard God's law. As a consequence of rebelling against Jehovah, they died and returned to the dust from which they had been created.—Gen. 3:19.

8. What purpose was served by the law found at Genesis 2:16, 17?

9, 10. (a) What accusation did Satan hurl against Jehovah? (b) What did Adam and Eve decide? (See opening image.)

11. Why does Jehovah not tolerate rebellion?

¹² When Adam and Eve ate of that fruit, they put themselves in a position where they could no longer be accepted as members of God’s universal family. God expelled them from Eden, and they had no hope of ever returning. (Gen. 3: 23, 24) In doing so, Jehovah justly made them face the consequences of their own decision. **(Read Deuteronomy 32: 4, 5.)** No longer perfect, man could not reflect God’s qualities perfectly. Adam not only lost a marvelous future for himself but also handed down to his children imperfection, sin, and death. (Rom. 5:12) He deprived his offspring of the prospect of life without end. Furthermore, Adam and Eve could no longer have a perfect child; neither could any of their children have a perfect child. After turning Adam and Eve away from God, Satan the Devil has continued to mislead mankind until today. —John 8:44.

THE RANSOM HEALS A RIFT

¹³ God’s love for humans, however, endures. Despite Adam and Eve’s rebellion, Jehovah wants mankind to enjoy a good relationship with him. He does not desire any to die. (2 Pet. 3:9) So right after the rebellion, God made arrangements to enable humans to restore their friendship with him while he at the same time maintained his own righteous standards. How did Jehovah accomplish this?

¹⁴ **Read John 3:16.** Many whom we

12. What happened to Adam’s children?
13. What does Jehovah want for mankind?
14. (a) According to John 3:16, what provision did God make to restore mankind? (b) What question might we consider with interested ones?

invite to the Memorial will know this verse by heart. But the question is, *How does Jesus’ sacrifice make everlasting life possible?* The Memorial campaign, the Memorial itself, and the calls we later make on those who attended may provide us with the opportunity to help sincere truth-seekers to understand the answer to that important question. Such ones may be impressed when they begin to understand to a fuller degree how Jehovah’s love and wisdom are expressed by the ransom provision. What points about the ransom could we highlight?

¹⁵ *Jehovah provided a perfect man who could become the ransomer.* That perfect man would need to be loyal to Jehovah and be willing to give his life in exchange for doomed humanity. (Rom. 5: 17-19) Jehovah transferred the life of his very first creation from heaven to earth. (John 1:14) Jesus thus became a perfect human, just as Adam had been. But unlike Adam, Jesus lived up to the standard Jehovah expected from a perfect man. Even under the most extreme tests, Jesus never sinned nor broke any of God’s laws.

¹⁶ *As a perfect man, Jesus could save humankind from sin and death by dying in their behalf.* He corresponded exactly to all that Adam should have been—a perfect man, absolutely loyal and obedient to God. (1 Tim. 2:6) Jesus became the ransom sacrifice that opened the way to endless life “for many”—men, women, and children. (Matt. 20:28) Indeed, the ransom is the key that unlocks the door to the fulfillment of God’s original pur-

15. How did the man Jesus differ from the man Adam?
16. Why is the ransom such a precious gift?

pose. (2 Cor. 1:19, 20) The ransom gives all faithful humans the prospect of everlasting life.

JEHOVAH OPENED THE DOOR FOR US TO RETURN

¹⁷ Jehovah provided the ransom at great cost to himself. (1 Pet. 1:19) He values humanity so highly that he was willing to let his only-begotten Son die in our behalf. (1 John 4:9, 10) In a sense, Jesus takes the place of our original human father, Adam. (1 Cor. 15:45) By doing so, Jesus restores more than life; he gives us the opportunity to return eventually to God's family. Yes, on the basis of Jesus' sacrifice, Jehovah can accept humans back into his family without compromising his righteousness. Is it not heartwarming to think of a time when all faithful humans will be brought to perfection? There will be complete unity between the heavenly and earthly parts of his family. In the fullest sense, we will all be children of God.—Rom. 8:21.

¹⁸ Satan's rebellion did not stop Jehovah from extending his love to mankind, nor can it prevent even imperfect humans from being loyal to Jehovah. Through his provision of the ransom, Jehovah will help all of his children to become completely righteous. Imagine what life will be like when everyone "who recognizes the Son and exercises faith" will have everlasting life. (John 6:40) With great love and wisdom, Jehovah will bring the human family to perfection, according to his original purpose. Jehovah, our Father, will

17. What does the ransom make possible?

18. When will Jehovah become "all things to everyone"?



Let Us Keep Searching Out Deserving Ones

THE Memorial invitation is one of the most widely circulated publications that we print. Last year, we produced some 440,000,000 copies in more than 530 languages. Do you still have some printed copies of this year's invitation that you could distribute before the Memorial? One of the remaining invitations that you have might help a deserving one to make the decision to attend the Memorial. Who knows?—Matt. 10:11.

then become "all things to everyone."
—1 Cor. 15:28.

¹⁹ Gratitude for the ransom should motivate us to do all we can to make others aware that they can benefit from that priceless gift. People need to know that the ransom is the means by which Jehovah lovingly offers all mankind the prospect of everlasting life. Still, the ransom accomplished even more than that. The next article will consider how Jesus' sacrifice also addresses the moral issues that were raised by Satan back in the garden of Eden.

19. (a) Gratitude for the ransom should move us to do what? (See the box "Let Us Keep Searching Out Deserving Ones.") (b) What aspect of the ransom will we consider next?

18

Grateful for the Ransom

(Luke 22:20)

E_b *A_badd9* *C_m* *C_m/B_b* *G_m/B_b*

To - day, Je - ho - vah God, we stand be - fore your
It was a will - ing sac - ri - fice that Je - sus

A_b *E_badd9/G* *F_m* *D_b* *A_b* *F_m7*

throne, For you showed the great - est love that could ev - er be
made. Out of love, his per - fect life was the price that he

B_bsus4 *B_b* *A_b/B_b* *B_b7sus4* *B_b* *E_b* *A_b*

shown. You gave the gift of your dear
paid. We had no hope un - til he

C_m *C_m/B_b* *G_m/B_b* *A_b* *F_m7* *B_b* *C_m* *G_m*

Son, that we might live. No great - er sac - ri - fice than
came to save man - kind. But now our hope is find - ing

Grateful for the Ransom

Chorus

Ab6 Ab/Bb Eb Eb7sus4 Eb Eb7ma7/G

this could you ev - er give.
 life, leav - ing death be - hind. He gave his

Ab Fm7 Bb7sus4 Bb Cm Eb/G Ab Fm7

life to set us free. His pre - cious blood pro - vides the

Bb7sus4 Bb Cm Eb/Bb Ab Eb/G

key. With all our hearts, we'll go on thank - ing

Fm7 Ab/Bb Eb Eb7sus4 Eb

you e - ter - nal - ly.

