

- Song 36 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Do You Have ‘a Heart to Know’ Jehovah?”:** (10 min.)
Jer 24:1-3—Jehovah compared people to figs (w13 3/15 8 ¶2)

Jer 24:4-7—The good figs represented those who had a receptive, obedient heart (w13 3/15 8 ¶4)

Jer 24:8-10—The bad figs represented those who had a rebellious, disobedient heart (w13 3/15 8 ¶3)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Jer 22:30—Why did this decree not annul Jesus’ right to ascend the throne of David? (w07 3/15 10 ¶9)

Jer 23:33—What is “the burden of Jehovah”? (w07 3/15 11 ¶1)

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 23:25-36

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) g17.2 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) g17.2 cover—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 38
- **“You Can Encourage an Inactive Christian”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Encourage the Inactive Ones* (video category THE BIBLE).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 11 ¶1-8
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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JEREMIAH 22-24 | Do You Have “a Heart to Know” Jehovah?

Jehovah compared people to figs

24:5

- Faithful ones among the Jewish exiles in Babylon were like good figs

24:8

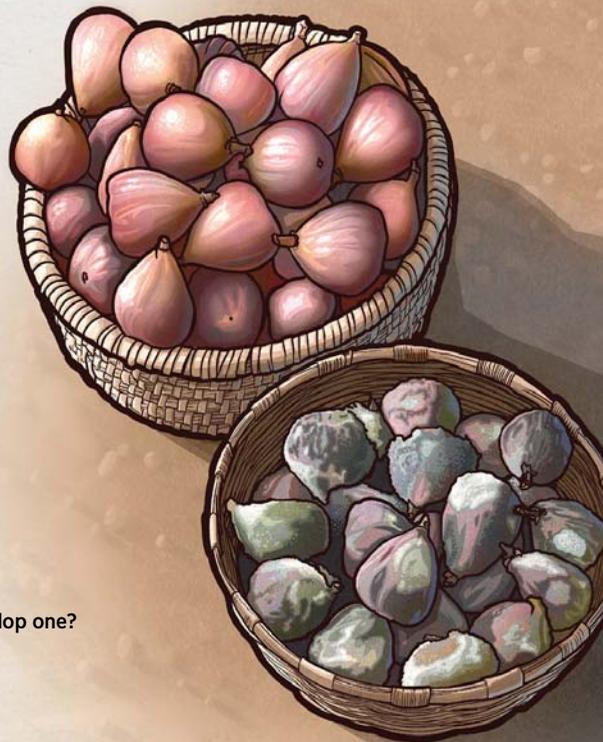
- Unfaithful King Zedekiah and others who did what was bad were like bad figs

How can we develop “a heart to know” Jehovah?

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- Jehovah will give us “a heart to know” him if we study and apply his Word
- We must honestly inspect our heart and root out attitudes and desires that jeopardize our relationship with Jehovah

Consider: Do I have “a heart to know” Jehovah? How can I develop one?



1. We guard our hearts, it means our life;
We shun the path of sin.
God reads the heart, and there he finds
The person deep within.
Sometimes the heart deceives the mind,
And we begin to stray.
So may our mind direct our heart
And keep Jehovah's way.
2. Prepared in heart, we search for God
By means of earnest prayer.
Each day we give him praise and thanks,
Revealing ev'ry care.
The things Jehovah teaches us,
We gladly will obey.
We cultivate a loyal heart,
To please him ev'ry day.
3. Our hearts we shield from harmful thoughts,
We dwell on what is true.
We love God's Word to touch our hearts,
To strengthen and renew.
Jehovah loves his loyal ones;
On this we can depend.
We'll worship him wholeheartedly
Forever as his friend.

Jeremiah 22-24

22 This is what Jehovah says: “Go down to the house of the king of Judah, and deliver this message. ² You must 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. And do not shed any innocent blood in this place. ⁴ For if you are careful to carry out this word, then the kings who sit on the throne of David will enter through the gates of this house, riding in chariots and on horses, they with their servants and their people.”

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

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.

⁷ And I will appoint destroyers against you,
Each with his weapons.

They will cut down your choicest cedars
And make them fall into the fire.

⁸ ““And many nations will pass by this city and say to one another: ‘Why did Jehovah do this to this great city?’” ⁹ And they will reply: ‘Because they abandoned the covenant of Jehovah their God and bowed down to other gods and served them.’”

¹⁰ Do not weep for the dead one,
And do not sympathize with him.
Instead, weep profusely for the one going away,
For he will return no more to see the land of his
birth.

¹¹ “For this is what Jehovah says concerning Shal'lum son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah who is reigning instead of his father Jo-si'ah and who has gone out of this place: ‘He will return there no more. ¹² For he will die in the place where they have taken him into exile, and he will see this land no more.’

¹³ Woe to the one who builds his house without
righteousness
And his upper rooms without justice,
Who makes his fellow man serve him for
nothing,
Whose wages he refuses to pay;

¹⁴ The one saying, ‘I will build for myself a roomy
house

With spacious upper rooms.
I will fit it with windows
And panel it with cedar and paint it with
vermilion.'

¹⁵ Will you continue reigning because you outdo
others in your use of cedar?
Your father also ate and drank,
But he upheld justice and righteousness,
And it went well with him.

¹⁶ He defended the legal claim of the afflicted one
and the poor one,
So that it went well.
'Is that not what it means to know me?' declares
Jehovah.

¹⁷ 'But your eyes and heart are set only on your
dishonest gain,
On shedding innocent blood,
And on committing fraud and extortion.'

¹⁸ "Therefore this is what Jehovah says concerning
Je-hoi'a-kim son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah,
'They will not mourn him:
"Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!"
They will not mourn him:
"Alas, O master! Alas, his majesty!"

¹⁹ With the burial of a donkey he will be buried,
Dragged about and thrown away,

Outside the gates of Jerusalem.'

²⁰ Go up to Leb'a-non and cry out,
Raise your voice in Ba'shan,
And cry out from Ab'a-rim,
For all your passionate lovers have been
crushed.

²¹ I spoke to you when you felt secure.
But you said, 'I will not obey.'
This has been your course since youth,
For you have not obeyed my voice.

²² A wind will shepherd all your shepherds,
And your passionate lovers will go into captivity.
Then you will be put to shame and humiliated
because of all your calamity.

²³ O you who dwell in Leb'a-non,
Nestled among the cedars,
How you will groan when pangs come on you,
Anguish like that of a woman giving birth!"

²⁴ "'As surely as I am alive,' declares Jehovah, 'even if Co-ni'ah son of Je-hoi'a-kim, the king of Judah, were the seal ring on my right hand, I would pull you off from there! ²⁵ I will give you into the hand of those seeking to take your life, into the hand of those whom you fear, into the hand of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chal-de'ans. ²⁶ And I will hurl you and your mother who gave birth to you into another

land where you were not born, and there you will die.

²⁷ And they will never return to the land they yearn for.

²⁸ Is this man Co-ni'ah just a despised, broken pot,
A vessel that nobody wants?

Why are he and his descendants hurled down
And thrown into a land they do not know?'

²⁹ O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of Jehovah.

³⁰ This is what Jehovah says:

'Write down this man as childless,
As a man who will not have any success during
his lifetime,

For none of his descendants will succeed
In sitting on David's throne and ruling again in
Judah.'

23 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares Jehovah.

² Therefore this is what Jehovah the God of Israel says against the shepherds who are shepherding my people: "You have scattered my sheep; you kept dispersing them, and you have not turned your attention to them."

"So I will turn my attention to you because of your evil deeds," declares Jehovah.

³ "Then I will gather together the remnant of my sheep from all the lands to which I have dispersed them, and I will bring them back to their pasture, and

they will be fruitful and become many. ⁴ And I will raise up over them shepherds who will really shepherd them. They will no longer be afraid or be terrified, and none will be missing,” declares Jehovah.

⁵ “Look! The days are coming,” declares Jehovah, “when I will raise up to David a righteous sprout. And a king will reign and show insight and uphold justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will reside in security. And this is the name by which he will be called: Jehovah Is Our Righteousness.”

⁷ “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!’ ⁸ but rather, ‘As surely as Jehovah is alive, who brought out and brought back the descendants of the house of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands to which I had dispersed them,’ and they will dwell in their own land.”

⁹ Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me.

All my bones are shaking.

I am like a man who is drunk

And like a man overcome by wine,

Because of Jehovah and because of his holy words.

¹⁰ For the land is full of adulterers;

Because of the curse the land has gone into
mourning
And the pastures of the wilderness have dried
up.

Their course is evil, and they abuse their power.

¹¹ “Both the prophet and the priest are polluted.
Even in my own house I have found their
wickedness,” declares Jehovah.

¹² “So their path will become slippery and dark;
They will be pushed and will fall.
For I will bring calamity on them
In the year of reckoning,” declares Jehovah.

¹³ “And in the prophets of Sa-mar'i-a I have seen
what is repulsive.

Their prophecies are incited by Ba'al,
And they lead my people Israel astray.

¹⁴ And in the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen
horrible things.

They commit adultery and walk in falsehood;
They encourage evildoers,
And they do not turn away from their
wickedness.

To me they are all like Sod'om,
And her inhabitants are like Go-mor'rah.”

¹⁵ Therefore this is what Jehovah of armies says
against the prophets:

“Here I am making them eat wormwood
And giving them poisoned water to drink.
For from the prophets of Jerusalem apostasy
has spread throughout the land.”

¹⁶ This is what Jehovah of armies says:

“Do not listen to the words of the prophets who
are prophesying to you.

They are deluding you.

The vision they speak is from their own heart,
Not from the mouth of Jehovah.

¹⁷ They are saying again and again to those who
disrespect me,

‘Jehovah has said: “You will enjoy peace.”’

And to everyone who follows his own stubborn
heart they say,

‘No calamity will come upon you.’

¹⁸ For who has stood in the inner circle of Jehovah
To see and hear his word?

Who has paid attention to his word in order to
hear it?

¹⁹ Look! The windstorm of Jehovah will burst out in
fury;

Like a whirling tempest it will whirl down on the
head of the wicked.

²⁰ The anger of Jehovah will not turn back

Until he has carried out and accomplished the intentions of his heart.

In the final part of the days you will clearly understand this.

²¹ I did not send the prophets, yet they ran.
I did not speak to them, yet they prophesied.

²² But if they had stood in my inner circle,
They would have made my people hear my words
And would have caused them to turn back from their bad way and their evil deeds.”

²³ “Am I only a God nearby,” declares Jehovah, “and not a God also from far away?”

²⁴ “Can any man hide in a concealed place where I cannot see him?” declares Jehovah.
“Do I not fill the heavens and the earth?” declares Jehovah.

²⁵ “I have heard the prophets who are prophesying lies in my name say, ‘I had a dream! I had a dream!’

²⁶ How long will this continue in the heart of the prophets, to prophesy lies? They are prophets of the deceit of their own heart. ²⁷ They intend to make my people forget my name by the dreams they relate to one another, just as their fathers forgot my name because of Ba'al. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream relate the dream, but the one who has my word should speak my word truthfully.”

“What does the straw have in common with the grain?” declares Jehovah.

²⁹ “Is not my word just like a fire,” declares Jehovah, “and like a forge hammer that smashes the crag?”

³⁰ “So here I am against the prophets,” declares Jehovah, “who steal my words from one another.”

³¹ “Here I am against the prophets,” declares Jehovah, “those who use their tongue to say, ‘He declares!’”

³² “Here I am against the prophets of lying dreams,” declares Jehovah, “who relate them and lead my people astray because of their lies and their boasting.”

“But I did not send them or command them. So they will not benefit this people at all,” declares Jehovah.

³³ “And when this people or a prophet or a priest asks you, ‘What is the burden of Jehovah?’ you should reply to them, “‘You people are the burden! And I will cast you off,’” declares Jehovah.’ ³⁴ As for the prophet or the priest or the people who say, ‘This is the burden of Jehovah!’ I will turn my attention on that man and on his household. ³⁵ This is what each of you is saying to his fellow and to his brother, ‘What has Jehovah answered? And what has Jehovah spoken?’ ³⁶ But the burden of Jehovah you should mention no more, for the burden is each one’s own word, and you have

changed the words of the living God, Jehovah of armies, our God.

³⁷ “This is what you will say to the prophet, ‘What answer has Jehovah given you? And what has Jehovah spoken?’ ³⁸ And if you keep saying, ‘The burden of Jehovah!’ this is what Jehovah says: ‘Because of your saying, ‘This word is the burden of Jehovah,’ after I told you, ‘You must not say: “The burden of Jehovah!”’ ³⁹ look! I will lift you up and throw you away from my presence, both you and the city that I gave to you and your forefathers. ⁴⁰ And I will bring on you everlasting disgrace and everlasting humiliation, which will not be forgotten.’”

24 Then Jehovah showed me two baskets of figs set before the temple of Jehovah, after King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon had carried into exile Jec·o·ni'ah son of Je·hoi'a·kim, the king of Judah, along with the princes of Judah, the craftsmen, and the metalworkers; he took them from Jerusalem to Babylon. ² One basket had very good figs, like early figs, but the other basket had very bad figs, so bad that they could not be eaten.

³ Jehovah then asked me: “What do you see, Jeremiah?” So I said: “Figs; the good figs are very good, but the bad ones are very bad, so bad that they cannot be eaten.”

⁴ Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying:
⁵ “This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says, ‘Like these good figs, so I will regard in a good way the exiles of Judah, whom I have sent away from this place to the land of the Chal-de'ans. ⁶ I will keep my eye on them for their good, and I will cause them to return to this land. I will build them up, and I will not tear down; I will plant them, and I will not uproot. ⁷ And I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah. They will become my people, and I will become their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

⁸ ““But concerning the bad figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten, this is what Jehovah says: “So I will regard King Zed·e·ki'ah of Judah, his princes, the remnant of Jerusalem who are left in this land, and those who are dwelling in the land of Egypt. ⁹ I will make them an object of horror and calamity to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach, a proverbial saying, a cause for ridicule, and a curse in all the places to which I disperse them. ¹⁰ And I will send against them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, until they have perished from the land that I gave to them and to their forefathers.”””

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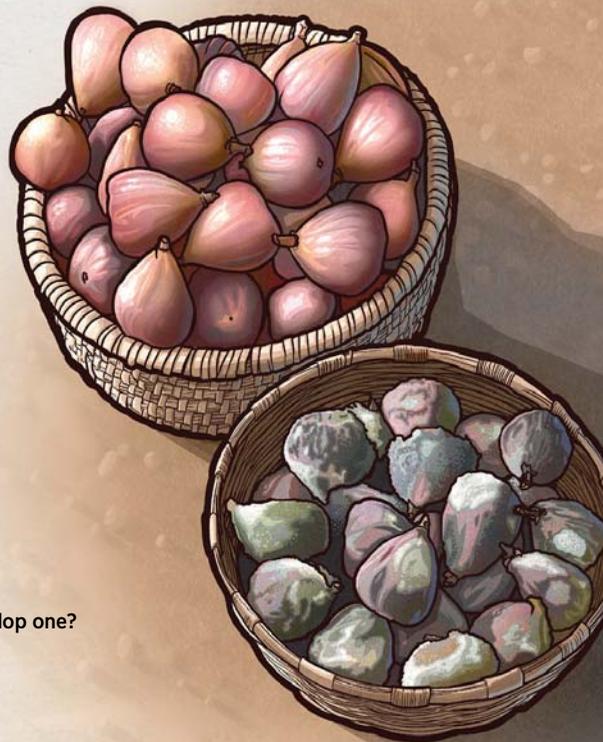
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April 10-16

Treasures From God's Word

Jeremiah 24:1-3—Jehovah compared people to figs

Reference: w13 3/15 8 **paragraph 2**.

Jehovah once linked figs to hearts. God was not describing the nutritional benefit of eating figs. He was speaking figuratively. What he said through the prophet Jeremiah has implications for your heart and the hearts of your loved ones. As we consider what he said, think about what this can mean for Christians.

Jeremiah 24:4-7—The good figs represented those who had a receptive, obedient heart

Reference: w13 3/15 8 **paragraph 4**.

Jehovah said of those represented by the good figs: “I will give them a heart to know me, that I am Jehovah; and they must become my people.” (**Jeremiah 24:7**) That is the theme text of this article, and how encouraging it is! God is willing to give individuals “a heart to know” him. In this case, the “heart” relates to one’s disposition. Certainly, you want to have such a heart and to be part of his people. Steps to that end include studying and applying his Word, repenting and turning around, dedicating your life to God, and being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and holy spirit. (**Matthew 28:19, 20**; Acts 3:19) You may already have taken

those steps, or you may be regularly associating with Jehovah's Witnesses and be in the process of doing so.

Jeremiah 24:8-10—The bad figs represented those who had a rebellious, disobedient heart

Reference: w13 3/15 8 **paragraph 3**.

Let us first consider something God said in Jeremiah's day about figs. In 617 B.C.E., the nation of Judah was in a bad spiritual state. God gave a vision about what the future held, illustrating it with two types of figs—"very good" figs and "very bad" ones. (Read Jeremiah 24:1-3.) The bad figs meant King Zedekiah and others like him who faced severe treatment by King Nebuchadnezzar and his troops. But what of Ezekiel, Daniel and his three companions already in Babylon, and some Jews soon to be taken there? They were like good figs. A remnant of them would return to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple. In time, that did occur.—**Jeremiah 24:8-10; 25:11, 12; 29:10**.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Jeremiah 22:30—Why did this decree not annul Jesus' right to ascend the throne of David?

Reference: w07 3/15 10 **paragraph 9**.

Did this decree annul Jesus Christ's right to ascend the throne of David? (**Matthew 1:1, 11**) No, it did not. The decree barred any descendant of Jehoiachin from "sitting

upon the throne of David . . . in Judah.” Jesus was to rule from the heavens, not from a throne in Judah.

Jeremiah 23:33—What is “the burden of Jehovah”?

Reference: w07 3/15 11 **paragraph 1**.

In Jeremiah’s day, the weighty pronouncements uttered by the prophet regarding Jerusalem’s destruction were a burden to his fellow countrymen. In turn, the unresponsive people were such a burden to Jehovah that he would cast them off. Similarly, the Scriptural message regarding the coming destruction of Christendom is a burden to Christendom, and the people who give no heed are wearisome to God.

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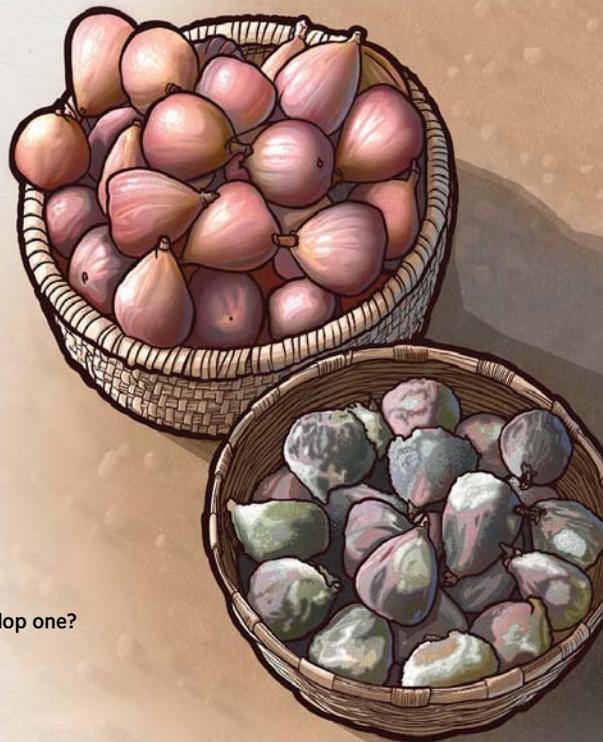
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WHAT IS BEHIND THE **SUPERNATURAL?**



3 COVER SUBJECT
Intrigued by the Supernatural!

4 What Does the Bible Teach About Spiritism?

Movies and TV shows today often feature supernatural characters—wizards, witches, and vampires.

What do you think? Is it all just harmless fun, or are there hidden dangers?

This issue of “Awake!” discusses why people are fascinated by the supernatural as well as what is really behind it.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

7 WAS IT DESIGNED?
The Landing Strategy of the Honeybee

8 HELP FOR THE FAMILY
When a Parent Dies

10 When Children Grieve

12 LANDS AND PEOPLES
A Visit to Spain

14 THE BIBLE’S VIEWPOINT
The Cross

16 Would You Like to Understand the Bible?

MORE ONLINE

YOUNG PEOPLE ASK



How Can I Deal With Tragedy?

Two young people share what helped them cope with deep personal loss.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS)

BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Are Demons Real?

If they are, where do they come from? Can they affect you?

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED)

“This Is What the Love of God Means”

“This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.”—1 JOHN 5:3.

DO YOU love God? If you have come into a dedicated relationship with Jehovah God, your answer surely is an emphatic yes—and rightly so! It is only natural for us to love Jehovah. Our love for God is really in response to his love for us. The Bible puts it this way: “As for us, we love, because he [Jehovah] first loved us.”—1 John 4:19.

² Jehovah has taken the initiative to express his love for us. He provides us with a beautiful earthly home. He cares for our physical and material needs. (Matthew 5:43-48) More important, he looks after our spiritual needs. He gives us his Word, the Bible. In addition, he invites us to pray to him with the assurance that he will hear us and will give us his holy spirit to help us. (Psalm 65:2; Luke 11:13) Above all,

1, 2. What motivates you to love Jehovah God?

he sent his most precious Son to be our Ransomer so that we might be delivered from sin and death. What great love Jehovah has shown to us!—John 3:16; Romans 5:8.

³ Jehovah wants us to benefit from his love forever. Whether we will or not, however, is really up to us. God’s Word admonishes us: “Keep yourselves in God’s love . . . with everlasting life in view.” (Jude 21) The phrase “keep yourselves” suggests that to remain in God’s love, action on our part is required. We need to respond to his love in concrete ways. An important question for us to consider, then, is this, ‘How can I demonstrate my love for God?’ The answer is found in the inspired words of the apostle John: “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3) We do well to examine carefully the meaning of these words, for we want to show our God just how much we love him.

3. (a) To remain in God’s love, what is required on our part? (b) What important question do we need to consider, and where is the answer found?

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Jer 23:33—What is “the burden of Jehovah”? (w07 3/15 11 ¶1)

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 23:25-36

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) g17.2 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) g17.2 cover—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) lv 5 ¶1-2—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 38
- “You Can Encourage an Inactive Christian”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Encourage the Inactive Ones* (video category THE BIBLE).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 11 ¶1-8
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 82 and Prayer

JEREMIAH 22-24 | Do You Have “a Heart to Know” Jehovah?

Jehovah compared people to figs

24:5

- Faithful ones among the Jewish exiles in Babylon were like good figs

24:8

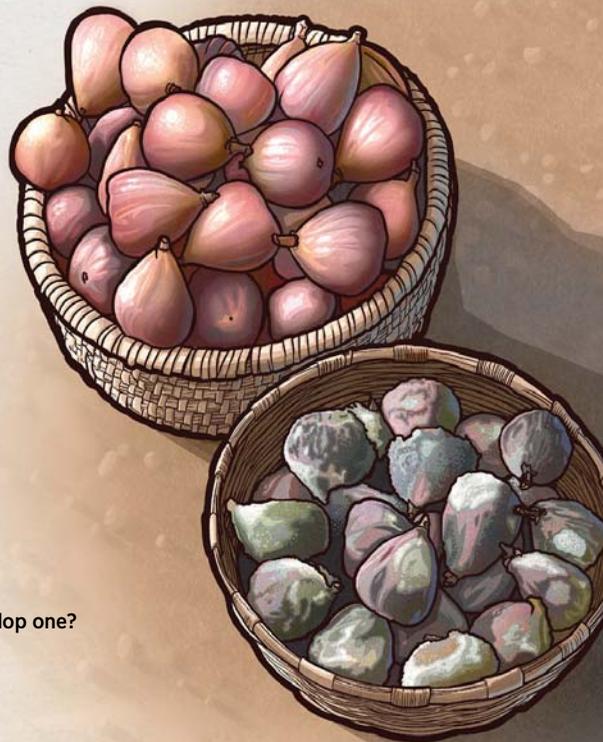
- Unfaithful King Zedekiah and others who did what was bad were like bad figs

How can we develop “a heart to know” Jehovah?

24:7

- Jehovah will give us “a heart to know” him if we study and apply his Word
- We must honestly inspect our heart and root out attitudes and desires that jeopardize our relationship with Jehovah

Consider: Do I have “a heart to know” Jehovah? How can I develop one?



He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

1. There was a reason why God brought the truth to you
And called you from the darkness to the light.
Within your heart, he saw the longing that you had
To search for him and practice what is right.
You promised him in prayer to do his will;
He helped you then, and he will help you still.

(CHORUS)

*With Jesus' blood He bought you,
to God you now belong.*

*So he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

*He'll guide you and protect you,
as he has all along.*

*Yes, he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

2. God gave his own beloved Son in your behalf;
On this account, He wants you to succeed.
If He did not withhold the gift of His dear Son,
Then never doubt He'll give the strength you need.
He won't forget the faith and love you've shown;
He will not fail to care for all His own.

(Chorus)

You Can Encourage an Inactive Christian

On Tuesday, April 11, many inactive Christians will attend the Memorial. They started running the race for life but have slowed down for various reasons, some of which are addressed in the brochure *Return to Jehovah*. (Heb 12:1) Yet, inactive ones remain precious to Jehovah, who purchased them with the blood of his Son. (Ac 20:28; 1Pe 1:18, 19) How can we help them return to the congregation?

Congregation elders seek to find and help inactive Christians just as a shepherd diligently searches for sheep that have strayed from the flock. (Lu 15:4-7) This reflects Jehovah's loving care. (Jer 23:3, 4) All of us, not just the elders, can encourage such ones. Our efforts to show kindness and fellow feeling are pleasing to Jehovah and can be very rewarding. (Pr 19:17; Ac 20:35) Therefore, think about whom you can encourage, and do so without delay!

WATCH THE VIDEO *ENCOURAGE THE INACTIVE ONES*, AND THEN CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What initiative did Abbey take when she met a Witness whom she did not know?

- Why should we approach the elders if we are thinking of helping someone who is inactive?

- How did Abbey prepare to visit Laura the second time?

- How did Abbey demonstrate persistence, patience, and love while trying to encourage Laura?

- What can we learn from Jesus' illustration found at Luke 15:8-10?

- What blessings came as a result of the combined efforts to help Laura?



11 Moral Refinements

Reflecting God's Holiness

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

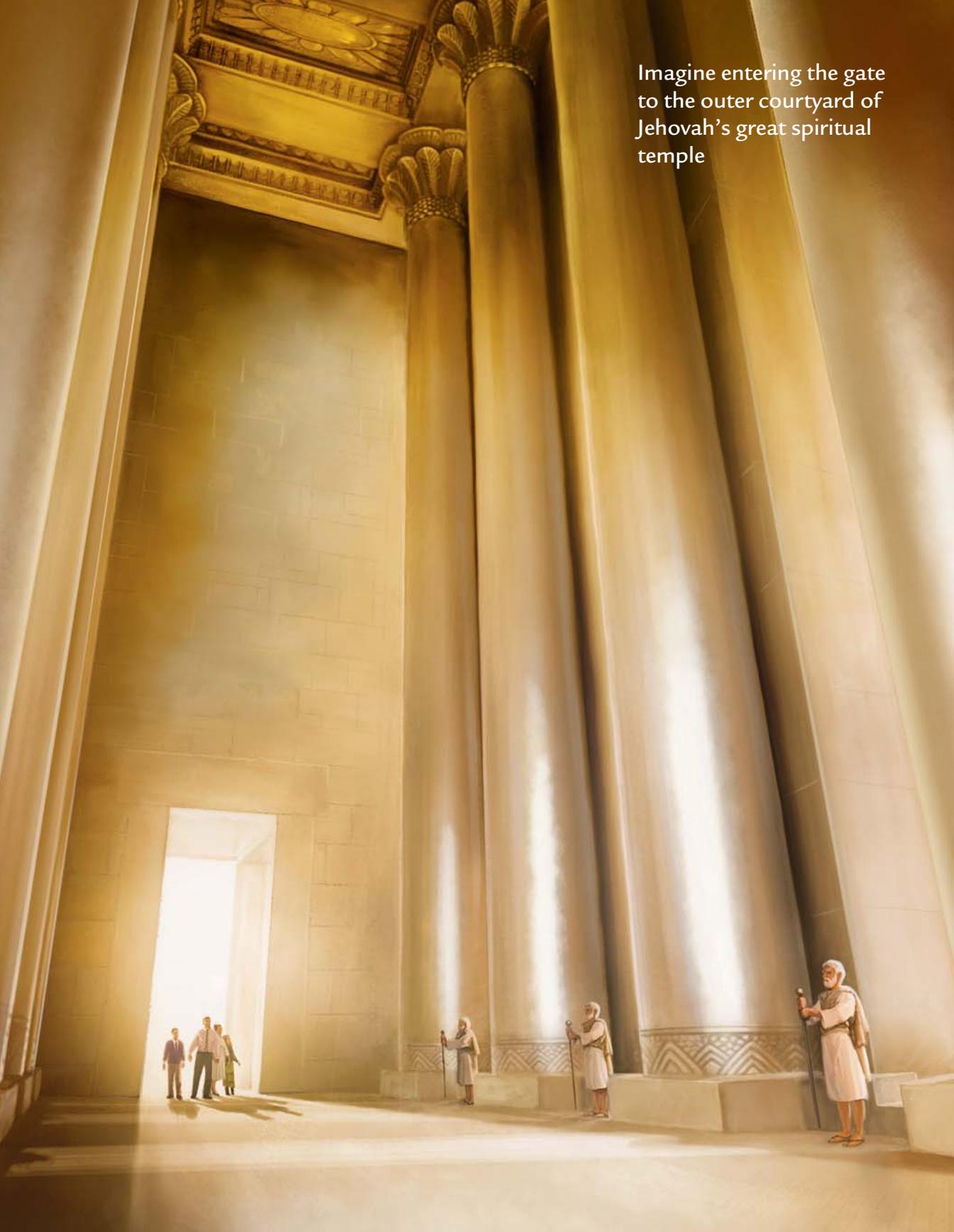
How the King has taught his subjects to respect God's moral standards

WHAT if you could have an experience like that of the prophet Ezekiel some 25 centuries ago? Imagine this: You approach a vast, gleaming temple complex. A mighty angel is there to show you this awesome place! You climb the seven steps that lead up to one of the three gates. These entrances fill you with awe. They tower upward about 100 feet. Within the entryways, you see that there are guard chambers. The pillars feature an elegant palm-tree design.—Ezek. 40: 1-4, 10, 14, 16, 22; 41:20.

² This is the visionary spiritual temple. Ezekiel described it in such detail that his account fills chapters 40 through 48 of his prophetic book. This

- 1. What did Ezekiel see that fills us with awe?**
- 2. (a) What does the visionary temple represent? (See also the footnote.) (b) What may we learn from features of the temple's entrances?**

Imagine entering the gate
to the outer courtyard of
Jehovah's great spiritual
temple



temple represents Jehovah's arrangement for pure worship. Every feature has meaning for our own worship in these last days.*^[1] What do the lofty gates signify? They remind us that those who enter Jehovah's arrangement for pure worship must live by God's lofty and upright standards. Even the carvings of palm trees make a similar point, for palms are sometimes used in the Bible to stand for uprightness. (Ps. 92:12) And the guard chambers? Clearly, those who fail to respect divine standards are refused entrance into this beautiful, life-giving way of pure worship.—Ezek. 44:9.

³ How has Ezekiel's vision been fulfilled? As we noted in Chapter 2 of this book, Jehovah used Christ to put his people through a special refining process from 1914 to early 1919. Did the refining stop then? Far from it! Throughout the past century, Christ has

*^[1] In 1932, Volume 2 of the book *Vindication* first showed that the Bible prophecies focusing on the restoration of God's people to their homeland saw a modern-day fulfillment, not on fleshly Israel, but on *spiritual* Israel. Those prophecies point to the restoration of pure worship. *The Watchtower* of March 1, 1999, explained that Ezekiel's temple vision is such a restoration prophecy and therefore has an important spiritual fulfillment during the last days.

3. Why have Christ's followers needed continual refinement?

continued to uphold Jehovah's holy standards of conduct. His followers have thus needed continual refinement. Why? Because Christ has been gathering his followers from this morally corrupt world and Satan never stops trying to draw them back into the mire of immorality. (**Read 2 Peter 2:20-22.**) Let us examine three areas in which true Christians have steadily been refined. First, we will consider some moral refinements, then a vital provision for keeping the congregation clean, and finally the family arrangement.

Moral Refinements Through the Years

⁴ Jehovah's people have always been keenly interested in moral, upright conduct. Hence, they have embraced ever clearer instruction on the subject. Consider a few examples.

⁵ **Sexual immorality.** Jehovah designed sexual relations between marriage mates to be clean and beautiful. Satan delights in wrenching that precious gift from its proper context by twisting it into something dirty and using it to tempt Jehovah's people so that they lose God's favor. Satan used that tactic with

4, 5. Satan has long used what tactic, and with what success?

tragic success back in the days of Balaam, and he has been using it more than ever in these last days.—Num. 25:1-3, 9; Rev. 2:14.

⁶ To counteract Satan's efforts, the June 15, 1908, *Watch Tower* published a vow that included this commitment: "I will at all times and at all places, conduct myself toward those of the opposite sex in private exactly as I would do with them in public."*[2] Although the vow was not a requirement, many took it and submitted their names to be published in *Zion's Watch Tower*. Years later, it was rightly seen that this vow, while helpful to many in its time, was becoming a mere ritual; so it fell into disuse. However, the high moral principles it represented were always upheld.

⁷ Satan's attacks only intensified. The March 1,

*[2] The vow prohibited a man and a woman from being alone in a room together unless the door was left wide open—or unless they were marriage mates or close family members. For some years, this vow was recited daily as part of the Morning Worship program at Bethel.

6. What vow was published in the *Watch Tower*, how was it used, and why did it eventually fall into disuse? (See also the footnote.)

7. In 1935, *The Watchtower* addressed what problem, and what standard did it reaffirm?

1935, issue of *The Watchtower* squarely addressed a growing problem among God’s people. Some evidently thought that sharing in the ministry somehow exempted them from holding to Jehovah’s moral standards in their private life. *The Watchtower* pointedly stated: “One should remember that merely engaging in the witness work is not all that is required. Jehovah’s witnesses are his representatives, and the obligation rests upon them to properly represent Jehovah and his kingdom.” The article then gave clear counsel about marriage and sexual morals, thus helping God’s people to “flee from sexual immorality.”—1 Cor. 6:18.

⁸ In more recent decades, *The Watchtower* has repeatedly stressed the proper definition of the word used in the Greek Scriptures for sexual immorality—*por·nei’a*. The meaning is not limited to the act of sexual intercourse. Rather, *por·nei’a* includes a wide variety of immoral acts, generally encompassing all the lewd acts carried out in houses of prostitution. Christ’s followers have thus been protected from the

8. Why has *The Watchtower* repeatedly stressed the full meaning of the Greek word for sexual immorality?

plague of sexual perversion that has overtaken so many in today's world.—**Read Ephesians 4:17-19.**

⁹ **Alcohol abuse.** The March 1, 1935, issue of *The Watchtower* raised another moral issue: “It has likewise been noticed that some take part in the field service and perform other duties in the organization while under the influence of [alcohol]. Under what condition is the use of wine approved in the Scriptures? Would it be proper to use wine to the extent that it affects one's service in the Lord's organization?”

¹⁰ The answer discussed the balanced view of alcoholic beverages that is found in God's Word. The Bible does not condemn the use of wine and other alcoholic drinks in moderation, but it does strongly condemn drunkenness. (Ps. 104:14, 15; 1 Cor. 6:9, 10) As to taking part in sacred service while under the influence of alcohol, God's servants have long been reminded of the account about Aaron's sons, whom God put to death for offering illegitimate fire upon God's altar. Shortly thereafter, the account reveals

9, 10. (a) What moral issue did *The Watchtower* address in 1935? (b) What is the Bible's balanced teaching on the use of alcohol?

“Let Your Light Shine”

(Matthew 5:16)

1. Jesus has commanded
That we shine our light,
Like the sun, impartial,
Comforting and bright.
Through the Holy Scriptures,
Thoughts of peace are heard.
May we now reflect his light
As we teach God’s Word.
2. Let God’s Kingdom message
Speak to ev’ry heart;
Let it shine before us
As we play our part.
Light from Scripture guides us
As we bring good news.
Sharing truth with ev’ryone;
Truth is theirs to choose.
3. Light from acts of kindness
Brightens up this world,
To our words adds beauty
Like a priceless pearl.
May our light keep shining
As we do what’s right,
Then our works will always be
Pleasing in God’s sight.

FEBRUARY 2017

THE **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
APRIL 3-30, 2017

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



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

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4 WEEK OF APRIL 3-9

Jehovah's Purpose Will Be Fulfilled!

16 WEEK OF APRIL 10-16

The Ransom—A “Perfect Present”
From the Father

Christ's ransom sacrifice is fundamental to our faith and to the outworking of Jehovah's original purpose for mankind. These two articles examine why the ransom became necessary, what it accomplished, and how we can show heartfelt gratitude for this most loving of all gifts from our heavenly Father.

20 *You Gave Your Precious Son* (1 John 4:9)

1. Jehovah, dear Father,
 There seemed no hope for us.
The ransom has given
 Hope to ev'ryone!
We give our lives to you,
 Our best in all we do.
And we'll tell others too,
 That your will might be done.

(CHORUS)

*You gave your precious Son,
And now we sing as one,
A song we'll sing forever,
for giving us your precious Son.*

2. Your kindness, your mercy,
 They draw us close to you.
Your great name, your friendship,
 These we've come to love.
But something more than this
 Is your most precious gift.
He died that we might live.
 You sent him from above.

(Chorus)

(ENDING)

Jehovah, dear Father, we pray in gratitude.
 We offer our thanks for giving us your precious Son.



SONGS:

20, 15

**WHAT ROLE DOES
THE RANSOM PLAY
IN . . .**

the sanctification
of Jehovah's name?

the rule of
God's Kingdom?

the accomplish-
ment of God's
purpose?

The Ransom A "Perfect Present" From the Father

*"Every good gift and every perfect
present is from . . . the Father."*

—JAS. 1:17.

MANY are the blessings made possible by the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The ransom arrangement opens the door for all those of Adam's children who love righteousness eventually to

1. The ransom arrangement makes possible what blessings?

become part of God’s family. The ransom also makes it possible for us to have the opportunity to live forever in happiness. Still, Christ’s ransom does more than provide a blessed future for obedient mankind. Jesus’ willingness to die while upholding Jehovah’s righteousness addresses matters of universal importance.—Heb. 1:8, 9.

² Some two years before Jesus died and provided the ransom sacrifice, he taught his disciples to pray: “Our Father in the heavens, let your *name* be sanctified. Let your *Kingdom* come. Let your *will* take place, as in heaven, also on earth.” (Matt. 6: 9, 10) To heighten our appreciation for the ransom, let us consider how it relates to the sanctification of God’s name, the rule of God’s Kingdom, and the accomplishment of God’s purpose.

“LET YOUR NAME BE SANCTIFIED”

³ Jesus mentioned the sanctification of God’s name as the first request in his model prayer. Jehovah’s name embraces the full scope of His excellence, majesty, and holiness. In another prayer,

2. (a) What matters of universal importance are found in Jesus’ prayer? (See opening image.) (b) What will we consider in this article?

3. What does Jehovah’s name embrace, and how did Satan slander that sacred name?

Jesus addressed Jehovah as “Holy Father.” (John 17:11) Since Jehovah is holy, all principles and laws that originate with him are holy. In spite of this, in the garden of Eden, Satan slyly questioned God’s right to set standards for humans. By lying about Jehovah, Satan slandered God’s sacred name.—Gen. 3:1-5.

⁴ Jesus, on the other hand, truly loved the name of Jehovah. (John 17:25, 26) Jesus contributed to the sanctification of the divine name. (Read Psalm 40:8-10.) By his perfect life course on earth, Jesus proved that it is reasonable and righteous for Jehovah to set standards for his intelligent creatures. Even when Satan subjected Jesus to an agonizing death, Jesus remained completely loyal to his heavenly Father. By being loyal, Jesus proved that a perfect human could maintain perfect obedience to God’s righteous standards.

⁵ How can we show that we love Jehovah’s name? By our conduct. Jehovah requires that we be holy. (Read 1 Peter 1:15, 16.) This means that we worship only Jehovah and that we obey him with our whole heart. Even when we are persecuted, we do

4. How did Jesus contribute to the sanctification of God’s name?

5. How can we share in sanctifying God’s name?

our best to live according to his righteous principles and laws. By performing righteous deeds, we let our light shine and thus bring glory to Jehovah's name. (Matt. 5:14-16) As holy people, we prove by the way we live our lives that Jehovah's laws are good and that Satan's accusations are false. When we make mistakes, as we all do, we genuinely repent and turn away from practices that dishonor Jehovah.—Ps. 79:9.

⁶ On the basis of Christ's sacrifice, Jehovah forgives the sins of those who exercise faith. He accepts as his worshippers those who dedicate themselves to him. Jehovah declares anointed Christians righteous as his sons and those of the "other sheep" righteous as his friends. (John 10:16; Rom. 5:1, 2; Jas. 2:21-25) So even now, the ransom enables us to have a righteous standing with our Father and to share in the sanctification of his name.

"LET YOUR KINGDOM COME"

⁷ In the model prayer, Jesus next petitioned God: "Let your Kingdom come." How does the

6. Why can Jehovah view us as righteous, even though we are imperfect?

7. What blessings under Kingdom rule does the ransom make possible?

ransom relate to the Kingdom of God? The ransom makes possible the gathering of 144,000 to serve as kings and priests with Christ in heaven. (Rev. 5:9, 10; 14:1) Jesus and his co-rulers, who together make up God's Kingdom, will administer the benefits of the ransom to obedient mankind over a period of a thousand years. The earth will be transformed into a paradise, and all faithful humans will be lifted to perfection, fully uniting the heavenly and earthly parts of God's family. (Rev. 5:13; 20:6) Jesus will crush the serpent's head and erase from the universe all traces of Satan's rebellion.—Gen. 3:15.

⁸ While on earth, Jesus helped his disciples to see the importance of God's Kingdom. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus proclaimed "the good news of the Kingdom of God" far and wide. (Luke 4:43) In his last words to his disciples before he returned to heaven, Jesus instructed them to be witnesses of him "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:6-8) By means of the Kingdom-preaching work, people throughout the earth would have an opportunity to learn about the ransom and become subjects of God's King-

8. (a) How did Jesus help his disciples to see the importance of God's Kingdom? (b) How do we show our support for the Kingdom today?

dom. Today, we show our support for the Kingdom by assisting Christ's brothers on earth in carrying out the commission to preach the good news of the Kingdom worldwide.—Matt. 24:14; 25:40.

“LET YOUR WILL TAKE PLACE”

⁹ What did Jesus mean when he next said: “Let your will take place”? Jehovah is the Creator. Once he gives the word for something to happen, it is as good as done. (Isa. 55:11) He will not allow Satan's rebellion to derail His purpose for mankind. From the beginning, it was Jehovah's will for the earth to be filled with the perfect children of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 1:28) Had Adam and Eve died childless, God's purpose to fill the earth with their offspring would have come to nothing. Thus, after Adam and Eve sinned, Jehovah allowed them to have children. Through the ransom, God gives all who exercise faith the opportunity to reach perfection and live forever. Jehovah loves people, and it is his will that obedient humans live the way he intended.

¹⁰ What about the billions of people who died

9. Why can we be confident that Jehovah will fulfill his purpose for mankind?

10. How does the ransom benefit humans who have died?

without ever having an opportunity to know and serve Jehovah? The ransom makes possible the resurrection of the dead. Our loving heavenly Father will bring them back to life and give them an opportunity to learn about his purpose and to gain everlasting life. (Acts 24:15) Jehovah wants people to live, not die. As the Source of life, he becomes the Father of everyone who is resurrected. (Ps. 36:9) How appropriate, therefore, that Jesus taught us to pray: “Our *Father* in the heavens.” (Matt. 6:9) Jehovah has given Jesus an important share in resurrecting the dead. (John 6:40, 44) In Paradise, Jesus will fulfill his role as “the resurrection and the life.”—John 11:25.

¹¹ Jehovah’s generosity is not limited to a few privileged people, for Jesus said: “*Whoever* does the will of God, this one is my brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:35) It is God’s will that a numberless “great crowd” from all nations and tribes and tongues become his worshippers. Those who exercise faith in Christ’s ransom and who do the will of God can be among those who shout: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 7:9, 10.

11. What is God’s will for the “great crowd”?

¹² Jehovah's purpose for obedient mankind is reflected in the petitions found in Jesus' model prayer. In harmony with this prayer, we want to do our utmost to sanctify, or treat as holy, Jehovah's name. (Isa. 8:13) Jesus' own name means "Jehovah Is Salvation," and our salvation by means of the ransom brings honor and glory to Jehovah's name. God's Kingdom will be used to apply the benefits of the ransom to obedient mankind. Indeed, the model prayer assures us that nothing can stop the will of God from taking place.—Ps. 135:6; Isa. 46:9, 10.

SHOW YOUR GRATITUDE FOR THE RANSOM

¹³ One important way in which we show gratitude for the ransom is by dedicating ourselves to Jehovah on the basis of our faith in the ransom and getting baptized. Our baptism shows that "we belong to Jehovah." (Rom. 14:8) It represents our request to God for a good conscience. (1 Pet. 3:21) Jehovah responds to that request by applying the cleansing blood of Christ's sacrifice to us. We are

12. How is Jehovah's purpose for obedient mankind reflected in the model prayer?

13. What do we show by our baptism?

fully confident that he will give us all that he has promised.—Rom. 8:32.

¹⁴ What is yet another way to show our gratitude for the ransom? Since everything Jehovah does is influenced by love, it is his will that all his worshippers display love as their dominant quality. (1 John 4:8-11) We prove that we desire to be “sons of [our] Father who is in the heavens” by loving our neighbor. (Matt. 5:43-48) The command to love our neighbor is second only to the command to love Jehovah. (Matt. 22:37-40) One important way that we show such love for neighbor is by obeying the command to preach the good news of God’s Kingdom. As we show love for fellow humans, we reflect God’s glory. In fact, love

14. Why are we commanded to love our neighbor?



In what ways do we show our gratitude for the ransom?

(See paragraphs 13, 14)

for God is “made perfect in us” when we obey the command to love others, especially our brothers. —1 John 4:12, 20.

THE RANSOM BRINGS “SEASONS OF REFRESHING” FROM JEHOVAH

¹⁵ The door to complete forgiveness opens to us when we exercise faith in the ransom. God’s Word assures us that our sins can be “blotted out.” (Read Acts 3:19-21.) As we considered earlier, on the basis of the ransom, Jehovah adopts his spirit-anointed servants as his children. (Rom. 8:15-17) As to those of us who are of the “other sheep,” it is as though Jehovah has drawn up an adoption certificate with our name on it. After we have reached perfection and have passed the final test, Jehovah will be delighted to sign the certificate, as it were, and adopt us as his beloved earthly children. (Rom. 8:20, 21; Rev. 20:7-9) Jehovah’s love for his precious children is everlasting. The benefits of the ransom last forever. (Heb. 9:12) This gift will never lose its value. No person or power can take it away from us.

15. (a) What blessings do we now receive from Jehovah? (b) What blessings await us?

¹⁶ There is nothing that the Devil can do to prevent all who genuinely repent from eventually becoming part of Jehovah’s family. Jesus came to earth and died “once for all time.” Thus the ransom has been paid permanently. (Heb. 9:24-26) It completely cancels the condemnation inherited from Adam. Thanks to Christ’s sacrifice, we are free from enslavement to this world under Satan’s control, and we no longer live in fear of death. —Heb. 2:14, 15.

¹⁷ God’s promises are absolutely reliable. Just as his laws of creation never fail, Jehovah will never fail us. He does not change. (Mal. 3:6) Jehovah gives us far more than just the gift of life. He gives us his love. “We have come to know and believe the love that God has for us. God is love.” (1 John 4:16) The whole earth will be made a paradise of exquisite delight, and everyone on earth will reflect God’s love. May we join our voices with those of God’s faithful heavenly creatures in saying: “Let the praise and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength be to our God forever and ever. Amen.” —Rev. 7:12.

16. How does the ransom enable us to be truly free?

17. What does Jehovah’s love mean to you?

15 Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!

(Hebrews 1:6)

1. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
God's duly appointed King.
He reigns for truth and justice;
Rich blessings his rule will bring.

With dignity and splendor
And love for God's great name,
He'll vindicate Jehovah,
His sov'reignty proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!
All praise God's anointed Son.
Installed upon Mount Zion,
His Kingship has now begun!*

2. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
Who died so that we may live.
He humbly paid the ransom;
Our sins God can now forgive.

The bride of Christ awaits him,
Adorned for him in white.
This marriage in the heavens
Will prove God's rule is right.

(Chorus)

