

- Song 73 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Be Courageous Like Jeremiah”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 26:2-6—Jehovah instructed Jeremiah to proclaim a warning message (w09 12/1 24 ¶6)
 Jer 26:8, 9, 12, 13—Jeremiah did not let his opponents frighten him (jr 21 ¶13)
 Jer 26:16, 24—Jehovah protected his courageous prophet (w09 12/1 25 ¶1)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 27:2, 3—Why might messengers from various nations have been in Jerusalem, and why did Jeremiah make yoke bars for them? (jr 27 ¶21)

Jer 28:11—How did Jeremiah show common sense when Hananiah opposed him, and what can we learn from his example? (jr 187-188 ¶11-12)

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 27:12-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) T-36—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) T-36—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) lv 7 ¶4-5—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 61
- **“Kingdom Songs Inspire Courage”:** (15 min.)
 Discussion. Play the video *A Song That Inspired Laborers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 11 ¶9-21
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 31 and Prayer

Kingdom Songs Inspire Courage

Paul and Silas praised God with song while in prison. (Ac 16:25) In modern times, fellow believers sang Kingdom songs while in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Nazi Germany and while in exile in Siberia. These examples illustrate the power of songs to inspire courage in Christians who are facing trials.

Many additional languages will soon have the new songbook entitled “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to Jehovah. Once we obtain a copy, we can etch the lyrics in our mind by practicing the songs during family worship. (Eph 5:19) Then holy spirit will help us to recall them when trials arise. Kingdom songs can help us to focus on our hope. They can inspire us when we are facing trials. And when we are in good spirits, the uplifting lyrics enable us to “sing out joyfully” because of the good condition of our heart. (1Ch 15:16; Ps 33:1-3) Let us by all means make good use of our Kingdom songs!

WATCH THE VIDEO A SONG THAT INSPIRED LABORERS, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- What circumstances led Brother Frost to compose a song?

- How did the song inspire the brothers in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp?

- In what daily circumstances could Kingdom songs strengthen you?

- Which Kingdom songs would you like to memorize?

Grant Us Boldness

(Acts 4:29)

1. As we tell about the Kingdom,
As we witness for your name,
There are many who oppose us
And who try to bring us shame.
But instead of fearing men,
It's really you we must obey.
So we beg you now for your spirit;
O Jehovah, hear what we pray.

(CHORUS)

*Grant us boldness as we witness;
Help us overcome our fear.
Give us confidence and courage
So that all the world may hear.
Armageddon draws ever near,
But until that great day is here,
Grant us boldness as we witness.
This is our prayer.*

2. Even though we may be fearful,
You remember we are dust.
Your assurance to support us
Is a promise we can trust.
Give attention to the threats
Of those who persecute and blame.
May you help us all to continue
As we boldly speak in your name.

(Chorus)

Jeremiah 25-28

25 The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Je-hoi'a-kim son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah, which was the first year of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon. ² This is what Jeremiah the prophet spoke concerning all the people of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem:

³ “From the 13th year of Jo-si'ah son of A'mon, the king of Judah, to this day, these 23 years, the word of Jehovah has come to me, and I kept speaking to you again and again, but you would not listen. ⁴ And Jehovah sent all his servants the prophets to you, sending them again and again, but you would not listen or incline your ear to hear. ⁵ They would say, ‘Turn back, please, each of you from your evil ways and your evil deeds; then you will continue dwelling for a long time to come in the land that Jehovah long ago gave to you and to your forefathers. ⁶ Do not follow other gods and serve them and bow down to them, offending me with the work of your hands; otherwise I will bring calamity on you.’

⁷ “‘But you would not listen to me,’ declares Jehovah. ‘Instead you offended me with the work of your hands, to your own calamity.’

⁸ “Therefore this is what Jehovah of armies says, “‘Because you would not obey my words, ⁹ I am sending for all the families of the north,” declares

Jehovah, “sending for King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon, my servant, and I will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction and make them an object of horror and something to whistle at and a perpetual ruin. ¹⁰ I will put an end to the sound of exultation and the sound of rejoicing from them, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the hand mill and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ And all this land will be reduced to ruins and will become an object of horror, and these nations will have to serve the king of Babylon for 70 years.”

¹² “‘But when 70 years have been fulfilled, I will call to account the king of Babylon and that nation for their error,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and I will make the land of the Chal-de'ans a desolate wasteland for all time. ¹³ I will bring on that land all my words that I have spoken against it, all that is written in this book that Jeremiah has prophesied against all the nations. ¹⁴ For many nations and great kings will make slaves of them, and I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their own hands.’”

¹⁵ For this is what Jehovah the God of Israel said to me: “Take this cup of the wine of wrath out of my hand, and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. ¹⁶ And they will drink and stagger and act like madmen because of the sword that I am sending among them.”

¹⁷ So I took the cup out of the hand of Jehovah and made all the nations to whom Jehovah sent me drink: ¹⁸ starting with Jerusalem and the cities of Judah, her kings and her princes, to make them a ruin, an object of horror, something to whistle at and a curse, as it is today; ¹⁹ then Phar'aoh king of Egypt and his servants, his princes, and all his people, ²⁰ and all their mixed populations; all the kings of the land of Uz; all the kings of the land of the Phi-lis'tines, Ash'ke-lon, Gaz'a, Ek'ron, and those remaining of Ash'dod; ²¹ E'dom, Mo'ab, and the Am'mon-ites; ²² all the kings of Tyre, all the kings of Si'don, and the kings of the island in the sea; ²³ De'dan, Te'ma, Buz, and all those with hair clipped at the temples; ²⁴ all the kings of the Arabians and all the kings of the mixed populations who reside in the wilderness; ²⁵ all the kings of Zim'ri, all the kings of E'lam, and all the kings of the Medes; ²⁶ and all the kings of the north near and far, one after the other, and all the other kingdoms of the earth that are on the surface of the ground; and the king of She'shach will drink after them.

²⁷ “And you must say to them, ‘This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says: “Drink and get drunk and vomit and fall so that you cannot get up because of the sword that I am sending among you.”’” ²⁸ And if they refuse to take the cup out of your hand to drink, say to them, ‘This is what Jehovah of armies says: “You must

drink it! ²⁹ For look! if I am bringing calamity first on the city that bears my name, should you go unpunished?”

“You will not go unpunished, for I am calling for a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth,’ declares Jehovah of armies.

³⁰ “And you are to prophesy all these words to them and say to them,

‘From on high Jehovah will roar,
And from his holy dwelling he will make his voice heard.

He will roar loudly against his abiding place.
Shouting like those treading the winepress,
He will sing triumphantly against all the inhabitants of the earth.’

³¹ ‘A noise will resound to the ends of the earth,
For Jehovah has a controversy with the nations.
He will personally pass judgment on all humans.
And he will put the wicked to the sword,’
declares Jehovah.

³² This is what Jehovah of armies says:

‘Look! A calamity is spreading from nation to nation,

And a great tempest will be unleashed from the remotest parts of the earth.

³³ “And those slain by Jehovah in that day will be from one end of the earth clear to the other end of the earth. They will not be mourned, nor will they be

gathered up or buried. They will become like manure on the surface of the ground.'

³⁴ Wail, you shepherds, and cry out!

Wallow about, you majestic ones of the flock,
Because the time of your slaughter and your
dispersion has come,
And you will fall like a precious vessel!

³⁵ The shepherds have no place to flee,
And there is no escape for the majestic ones of
the flock.

³⁶ Listen! The outcry of the shepherds
And the wailing of the majestic ones of the flock,
For Jehovah is devastating their pasture.

³⁷ And the peaceful dwelling places have been made
lifeless
Because of the burning anger of Jehovah.

³⁸ He has left his lair just like a young lion,
For their land has become an object of horror
Because of the cruel sword
And because of his burning anger.”

26 In the beginning of the reign of Je-hoi'a-kim son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah, this word came from Jehovah: ² “This is what Jehovah says, ‘Stand in the courtyard of the house of Jehovah and speak concerning all the people of the cities of Judah who are coming in to worship at the house of Jehovah. Tell

them everything that I command you; do not take away a word. ³ Perhaps they will listen and each one will turn back from his evil way, and I will change my mind concerning the calamity that I intend to bring on them because of their evil deeds. ⁴ Say to them: “This is what Jehovah says, ‘If you will not listen to me by following my law that I have placed before you, ⁵ by listening to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I am sending to you again and again, whom you have not listened to, ⁶ then I will make this house like Shi'loh, and I will make this city an object of cursing to all the nations of the earth.’””

⁷ And the priests and the prophets and all the people heard Jeremiah speaking these words in the house of Jehovah. ⁸ So when Jeremiah had finished speaking all that Jehovah had commanded him to speak to all the people, then the priests and the prophets and all the people seized him and said: “You will surely die. ⁹ Why have you prophesied in the name of Jehovah, saying, ‘This house will become like Shi'loh, and this city will be devastated and left without an inhabitant?’” And all the people gathered around Jeremiah in the house of Jehovah.

¹⁰ When the princes of Judah heard these words, they came up from the house of the king to the house of Jehovah and sat down at the entrance of the new gate of Jehovah. ¹¹ The priests and the prophets said to the princes and to all the people: “This man

deserves the death penalty, because he has prophesied against this city just as you have heard with your own ears.”

¹² Jeremiah then said to all the princes and to all the people: “It was Jehovah who sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that you have heard. ¹³ So now, reform your ways and your actions and obey the voice of Jehovah your God, and Jehovah will change his mind concerning the calamity that he has spoken against you. ¹⁴ But as for me, I am in your hand. Do to me whatever seems good and right in your eyes. ¹⁵ Only know for certain that if you put me to death, you will bring innocent blood upon yourselves and upon this city and upon her inhabitants, for in truth Jehovah sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.”

¹⁶ Then the princes and all the people said to the priests and the prophets: “This man does not deserve the death penalty, for he spoke to us in the name of Jehovah our God.”

¹⁷ Furthermore, some of the elders of the land rose up and began saying to the entire congregation of the people: ¹⁸ “Mi'cah of Mo'resh-eth was prophesying in the days of King Hez-e-ki'ah of Judah, and he said to all the people of Judah, ‘This is what Jehovah of armies says:

“Zion will be plowed up as a field,

Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins,
And the mountain of the House will become like
high places in a forest.”

¹⁹ “Did King Hez·e·ki'ah of Judah and all Judah then put him to death? Did he not fear Jehovah and beg for Jehovah's favor, so that Jehovah changed his mind concerning the calamity that he had spoken against them? So we are about to bring a great calamity on ourselves.

²⁰ “And there was another man prophesying in the name of Jehovah, U·ri'jah son of She·mai'ah from Kir'i·ath-je'a·rim, who prophesied against this city and against this land with words like those of Jeremiah.

²¹ King Je·hoi'a·kim and all his mighty men and all the princes heard his words, and the king sought to put him to death. When U·ri'jah heard of it, he at once became afraid and fled to Egypt. ²² Then King Je·hoi'a·kim sent El·na'than the son of Ach'bor and other men with him to Egypt. ²³ They brought U·ri'jah from Egypt and took him to King Je·hoi'a·kim, who then struck him down with the sword and cast his dead body into the graveyard of the common people.”

²⁴ But A·hi'kam the son of Sha'phan supported Jeremiah, so that he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

27 In the beginning of the reign of Je·hoi'a·kim son of Jo·si'ah, the king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah

from Jehovah: ² “This is what Jehovah has told me, ‘Make for yourself straps and yoke bars, and put them on your neck. ³ Then send them to the king of E'dom, the king of Mo'ab, the king of the Am'mon-ites, the king of Tyre, and the king of Si'don by the hand of the messengers who have come to Jerusalem to King Zed·e·ki'ah of Judah. ⁴ Give them this command for their masters:

“““This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says; this is what you should say to your masters, ⁵ ‘It is I who made the earth, mankind, and the beasts that are on the surface of the earth by my great power and by my outstretched arm; and I have given it to whomever I please. ⁶ And now I have given all these lands into the hand of my servant King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon; even the wild beasts of the field I have given him to serve him. ⁷ All the nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his own land comes, when many nations and great kings will make him their slave.’

⁸ ““““If any nation or kingdom refuses to serve King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon and refuses to put its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will punish that nation with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence,’ declares Jehovah, ‘until I have finished them off by his hand.’

⁹ “““Therefore, do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your magicians, and your sorcerers, who are saying to you: “You will not serve the king of Babylon.” ¹⁰ For they are prophesying lies to you, so that you will be taken far away from your land and I will disperse you and you will perish.

¹¹ “““But the nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serves him, I will allow to remain on its land,’ declares Jehovah, ‘to cultivate it and dwell in it.’”””

¹² Also to King Zed-e-ki'ah of Judah I spoke in the same way, saying: “Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him and his people, and you will keep living. ¹³ Why should you and your people die by the sword, by famine, and by pestilence, as Jehovah has said about the nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? ¹⁴ Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are saying to you, ‘You will not serve the king of Babylon,’ because they are prophesying lies to you.

¹⁵ ““For I have not sent them,’ declares Jehovah, ‘but they are prophesying lies in my name, with the result that I will disperse you and you will perish, you and the prophets who are prophesying to you.’”

¹⁶ And to the priests and to all this people I said: “This is what Jehovah says, ‘Do not listen to the words of your prophets who are prophesying to you: “Look! The

utensils of the house of Jehovah will be brought back from Babylon very soon!” for they are prophesying lies to you. ¹⁷ Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon and you will keep living. Why should this city become a ruin? ¹⁸ But if they are prophets and if the word of Jehovah is with them, please let them beg Jehovah of armies that the remaining utensils in the house of Jehovah, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem may not be taken away to Babylon.’

¹⁹ “For this is what Jehovah of armies says concerning the pillars, the Sea, the carriages, and the remaining utensils that are left in this city, ²⁰ which King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon did not take when he took into exile Jec-o-ni'ah son of Je-hoi'a-kim, the king of Judah, from Jerusalem to Babylon, together with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem; ²¹ yes, this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says concerning the utensils that are left at the house of Jehovah, in the house of the king of Judah, and in Jerusalem: ²² “To Babylon they will be brought, and there they will remain until the day I turn my attention to them,” declares Jehovah. “Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.””

28 In that same year, in the beginning of the reign of King Zed-e-ki'ah of Judah, in the fourth year, in the fifth month, the prophet Han-a-ni'ah the son of Az'zur from Gib'e-on said to me in the house of Jehovah in the presence of the priests and all the people: ² “This is

what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. ³ Within two years I am bringing back to this place all the utensils of the house of Jehovah that King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon took from this place and brought to Babylon.'”

⁴ “‘And I will bring back to this place Jec·o·ni'ah son of Je·hoi'a·kim, the king of Judah, and all the exiles of Judah who have gone to Babylon,’ declares Jehovah, ‘for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.’”

⁵ Then Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Han·a·ni'ah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of Jehovah.

⁶ Jeremiah the prophet said: “Amen! May Jehovah do this! May Jehovah fulfill your words that you prophesied by bringing back from Babylon to this place the utensils of the house of Jehovah and all the exiled people! ⁷ However, hear, please, this message that I am speaking in your ears and in the ears of all the people. ⁸ Long ago the prophets who were prior to me and prior to you used to prophesy concerning many lands and great kingdoms, about war, calamity, and pestilence. ⁹ If a prophet prophesies about peace and the word of that prophet comes true, then it will be known that Jehovah truly sent that prophet.”

¹⁰ At that Han·a·ni'ah the prophet took the yoke bar off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it.

¹¹ Han·a·ni'ah then said in the presence of all the people: “This is what Jehovah says, ‘Just like this I will

break the yoke of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon from off the neck of all the nations within two years.” And Jeremiah the prophet went on his way.

¹² After Han-a-ni'ah the prophet had broken the yoke bar from off the neck of Jeremiah the prophet, this message of Jehovah came to Jeremiah: ¹³ “Go and say to Han-a-ni'ah, ‘This is what Jehovah says: “You have broken yoke bars of wood, but instead of them you will make yoke bars of iron.” ¹⁴ For this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says: “I will put an iron yoke bar on the neck of all these nations, to serve King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon, and they must serve him. Even the wild beasts of the field I will give him.””

¹⁵ Jeremiah the prophet then said to Han-a-ni'ah the prophet: “Listen, please, O Han-a-ni'ah! Jehovah has not sent you, but you have caused this people to trust in a lie. ¹⁶ Therefore this is what Jehovah says, ‘Look! I am removing you from the face of the ground. This year you will die, for you have urged rebellion against Jehovah.””

¹⁷ So Han-a-ni'ah the prophet died in that year, in the seventh month.

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- How did the song inspire the brothers in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp?

- In what daily circumstances could Kingdom songs strengthen you?

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JEREMIAH 25-28 | Be Courageous Like Jeremiah

26:6

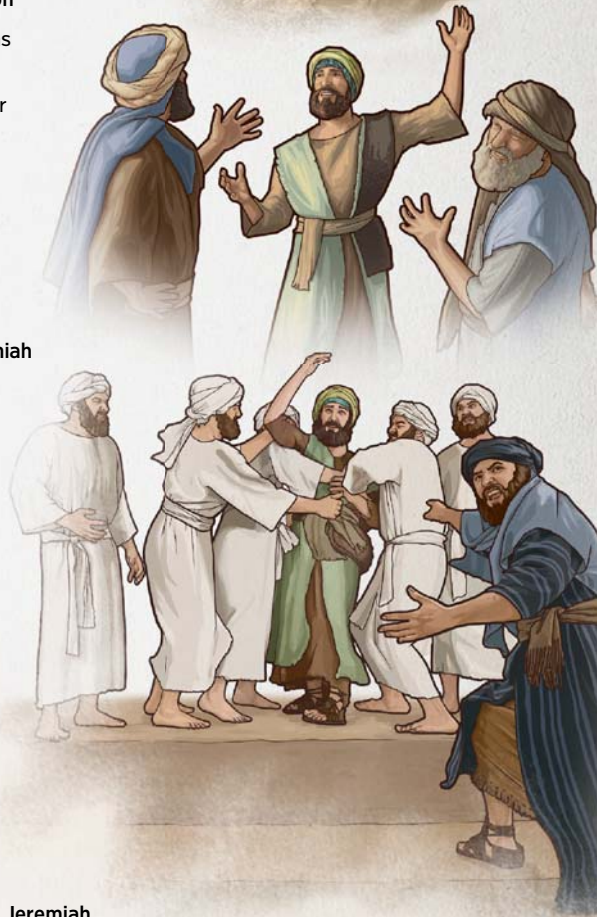
Jeremiah warned that Jerusalem would become devastated like Shiloh

- The ark of the covenant, which represented Jehovah's presence, was once kept in Shiloh
- Jehovah allowed the Philistines to capture the Ark, and it was never returned to Shiloh

26:8, 9, 12, 13

The priests, the prophets, and all the people threatened to kill Jeremiah

- The people seized Jeremiah because of his prophesying against Jerusalem and the temple
- Jeremiah did not give up and run away



26:16, 24

Jehovah protected Jeremiah

- Jeremiah maintained his courage, and Jehovah did not abandon him
- God moved courageous Ahikam to protect Jeremiah

With Jehovah's backing and encouragement, Jeremiah was able to declare an unpopular message for 40 years

April 17-23

Treasures From God's Word

Jeremiah 26:2-6—Jehovah instructed Jeremiah to proclaim a warning message

Reference: w09 12/1 24 **paragraph 6**.

Jehovah told Jeremiah to warn the people that Jerusalem would be destroyed if they did not change their bad ways. When Jeremiah gave that warning, the people became angry and said: “To this man the judgment of death belongs.” Jeremiah, however, pleaded with them to “obey the voice of Jehovah.” Then he said: ‘You should know that if you put me to death, you are killing an innocent man, for God sent me to speak to you.’ Do you know what happened then?—

Jeremiah 26:8, 9, 12, 13—Jeremiah did not let his opponents frighten him

Reference: jr 21 **paragraph 13**.

Given the religious and political climate prevailing in Judah, how would the religious leaders react to Jeremiah's speech? According to the prophet's own account, “the priests and the prophets and all the people laid hold of [me], saying: ‘You will positively die.’” They were livid, declaring: “To this man the judgment of death belongs.” (Read Jeremiah 26:8-

11.) Jeremiah's opponents, however, did not prevail. Jehovah was with his prophet to deliver him. As for Jeremiah personally, he did not allow the opponents' menacing appearance or numbers to frighten him. Neither should you.

Jeremiah 26:16, 24—Jehovah protected his courageous prophet

Reference: w09 12/1 25 **paragraph 1**.

The Bible says: "The princes and all the people said to the priests and to the prophets: 'There is no judgment of death belonging to this man, for it was in the name of Jehovah our God that he spoke to us.'" So when Jeremiah did not let fear cause him to quit, Jehovah protected him. Let's see now what happened to Urijah, another prophet of Jehovah, who acted quite differently.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Jeremiah 27:2, 3—Why might messengers from various nations have been in Jerusalem, and why did Jeremiah make yoke bars for them?

Reference: jr 27 **paragraph 21**.

Evidently early in the reign of Zedekiah, messengers arrived

in Jerusalem from the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon. Perhaps their aim was to get Zedekiah to join a coalition against Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah, however, urged Zedekiah to submit to Babylon. In line with that, Jeremiah presented the messengers with yoke bars to picture that their nations too should serve the Babylonians. (**Jeremiah 27:1-3, 14**) That stance was not popular, and Jeremiah's role as a spokesman with an unpopular message was made no easier by Hananiah. He was a false prophet who publicly asserted in God's name that the Babylonian yoke would be broken. Jehovah's word through Jeremiah, however, was that within a year, the impostor Hananiah would die. That is what occurred.—**Jeremiah 28:1-3, 16, 17.**

Jeremiah 28:11—How did Jeremiah show common sense when Hananiah opposed him, and what can we learn from his example?

Reference: jr 187-188 **paragraphs 11-12.**

11 It is good to bear in mind that Jeremiah was not a fanatic. He used common sense when facing opposers. He knew when to withdraw. For instance, consider his experience with Hananiah. After that false prophet contradicted Jehovah's prophetic word in public, Jeremiah corrected him and explained how to recognize a true prophet. Jeremiah had been carrying a wooden yoke to signify coming under the

yoke of Babylon; Hananiah got violent and broke the yoke. Who could know what Hananiah would do next? So, what did Jeremiah do? We read: “The prophet proceeded to go his way.” Yes, Jeremiah left the scene. Later, at Jehovah’s direction, he returned and told Hananiah what God would bring about—bondage to the king of Babylon for the Jews and death for Hananiah.—**Jeremiah 28:1-17.**

12 It is clear from this inspired account that in preaching, we do well to couple our boldness with sound judgment. If at one home someone refuses to accept Scriptural reasoning and becomes angry, even threatening violence, we can excuse ourselves courteously and move on to another house. There is no need to have a heated argument with anyone regarding the good news of the Kingdom. By keeping ourselves “restrained under evil,” we leave the way open to help the householder at a more favorable time.—Read 2 Timothy 2:23-25; **Proverbs 17:14.**

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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 27:12-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) T-36—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) T-36—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 61
- **“Kingdom Songs Inspire Courage”:** (15 min.)
 Discussion. Play the video *A Song That Inspired Laborers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 11 ¶9-21
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 31 and Prayer

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Paul and Silas praised God with song while in prison. (Ac 16:25) In modern times, fellow believers sang Kingdom songs while in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Nazi Germany and while in exile in Siberia. These examples illustrate the power of songs to inspire courage in Christians who are facing trials.

Many additional languages will soon have the new songbook entitled “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to Jehovah. Once we obtain a copy, we can etch the lyrics in our mind by practicing the songs during family worship. (Eph 5:19) Then holy spirit will help us to recall them when trials arise. Kingdom songs can help us to focus on our hope. They can inspire us when we are facing trials. And when we are in good spirits, the uplifting lyrics enable us to “sing out joyfully” because of the good condition of our heart. (1Ch 15:16; Ps 33:1-3) Let us by all means make good use of our Kingdom songs!

WATCH THE VIDEO A SONG THAT INSPIRED LABORERS, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- What circumstances led Brother Frost to compose a song?

- How did the song inspire the brothers in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp?

- In what daily circumstances could Kingdom songs strengthen you?

- Which Kingdom songs would you like to memorize?

TO THINK ABOUT

What will life be like under the rule of God's Kingdom?

The Bible answers that question at PSALM 37:29 and ISAIAH 65:21-23.



TO LEARN MORE WITHOUT COST

Read lesson 7 of this brochure.

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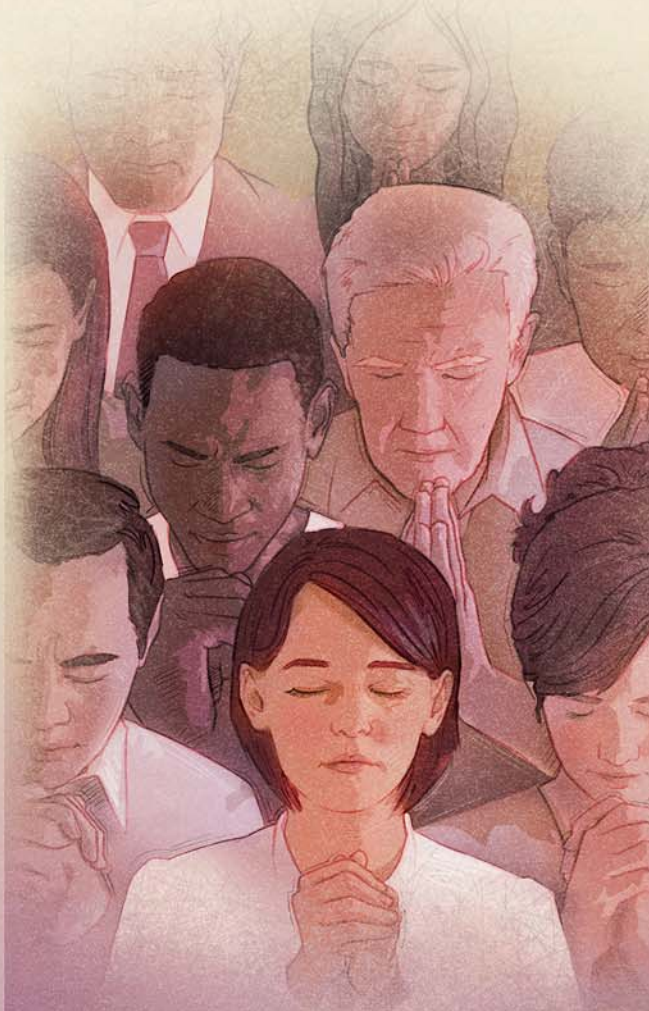


Scan code to watch the video
Why Study the Bible?



T-36E
140303

What is the Kingdom of God?



Would you say it is . . .

- something within your heart?
- a figure of speech?
- a government in heaven?

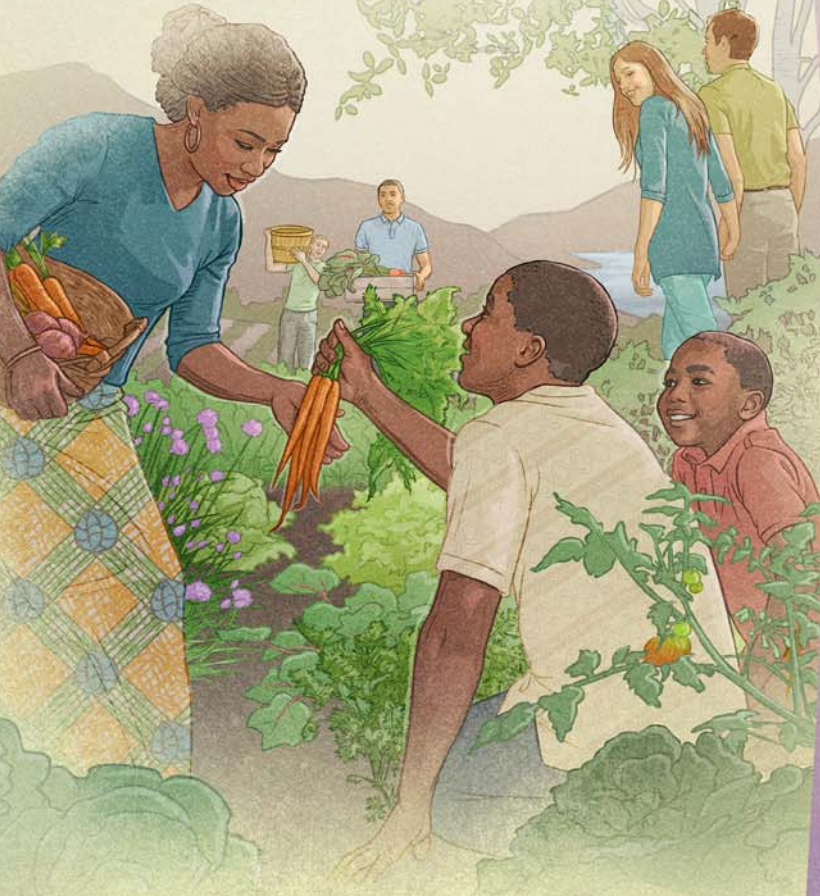
WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

“The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.”

—Daniel 2:44, *New World Translation*.

“A son has been given to us; and the *government* will rest on his shoulder.”

—Isaiah 9:6; footnote.



WHAT THAT CAN MEAN FOR YOU

- A righteous government that can benefit you personally.—Isaiah 48:17, 18.
- In a coming new world, life in perfect health and happiness.
—Revelation 21:3, 4.

CAN WE REALLY BELIEVE WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS?

Yes, for at least two reasons:

- ***Jesus showed what God’s Kingdom will accomplish.*** Jesus taught his followers to pray for God’s Kingdom to come and for God’s will to be done on earth. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Jesus demonstrated how that prayer will be answered.

While on earth, Jesus fed the hungry, healed the sick, and restored life to the dead! (Matthew 15:29-38; John 11:38-44) As the future Ruler of God’s Kingdom, Jesus provided a beautiful preview of what that Kingdom will do for its subjects.—Revelation 11:15.

- ***World conditions confirm that God’s Kingdom will soon come.*** Jesus foretold that just before the Kingdom brings peace to the earth, our world would be plagued with wars, famines, and earthquakes.—Matthew 24:3, 7.

We see those very conditions today. So we can be confident that God’s Kingdom will soon bring an end to all such problems.

If you do not have a Bible, you can read it online at www.jw.org/en
(Go to PUBLICATIONS > BIBLE)

“THIS IS WHAT THE LOVE OF GOD MEANS”

⁴ “The love of God”—what did the apostle John have in mind when he penned those words? This expression refers, not to God’s love for us, but to our love for him. Can you recall when love for Jehovah began to grow in your heart?

⁵ Reflect, for a moment, on when you first learned the truth about Jehovah and his purposes and you began to exercise faith. You came to understand that although you were born a sinner alienated from God, Jehovah through Christ opened the way for you to attain the perfection that Adam lost and to inherit everlasting life. (Matthew 20:28; Romans 5:12, 18) You began to appreciate the magnitude of the sacrifice Jehovah made in sending his most precious Son to die for you. Your heart was moved, and you began to feel a love for the God who has shown such great love for you.—1 John 4:9, 10.

⁶ That feeling, however, was but the beginning of genuine love for Jehovah. Love is not just a feeling;

4, 5. (a) To what does the expression “the love of God” refer? (b) Describe how love for Jehovah began to grow in your heart.

6. How is genuine love expressed, and what did love for God move you to do?

61 *Forward, You Witnesses!*

(Luke 16:16)

1. Firm and determined in this time of the end,
Prepared are God's servants the good news to defend.
The Devil has fought and opposed them.
With Jehovah, they take their stand against him.

(CHORUS)

*Then forward, you Witnesses, ever strong of heart!
Rejoice that in God's work, you too may have a part!
Go tell far and wide that the Paradise is near
And that soon all its blessings will be here.*

2. Servants of Jah do not seek a life of ease;
The world and its rulers we do not try to please.
Unspotted at all times remaining,
Our integrity we will keep maintaining.

(Chorus)

3. God and his Kingdom are mocked and pushed aside;
His great name is slandered, its holiness denied.
Let's share in its sanctification,
And declare it to ev'ry tribe and nation.

(Chorus)

- Song 73 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Be Courageous Like Jeremiah”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 26:2-6—Jehovah instructed Jeremiah to proclaim a warning message (w09 12/1 24 ¶6)
 Jer 26:8, 9, 12, 13—Jeremiah did not let his opponents frighten him (jr 21 ¶13)
 Jer 26:16, 24—Jehovah protected his courageous prophet (w09 12/1 25 ¶1)
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- Which Kingdom songs would you like to memorize?

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?

what likely led those men to doing something so inappropriate, for God gave a law forbidding all the priests to use alcohol while engaged in their sacred duties. (Lev. 10:1, 2, 8-11) Applying that underlying principle today, Christ's followers are careful to avoid being under the influence of alcohol while taking part in their sacred service.

¹¹ In more recent decades, Christ's followers have been further blessed with increased understanding about alcoholism, a condition involving persistent, addictive misuse of alcohol. Thanks to timely spiritual food, many have been helped to handle that condition appropriately and regain control of their lives. Many more have been helped to avoid the problem altogether. None need to allow alcohol abuse to rob them of their dignity, their family and, above all, their privilege of engaging in pure worship of Jehovah.

¹² **Use of tobacco.** Christ's servants began taking a dim view of the use of tobacco even before the last

11. Why has it been a blessing for God's people to receive increased understanding about alcoholism?

12. How did Christ's servants view the use of tobacco even before the last days began?

days began. A number of years ago, an elderly brother, Charles Capen, recalled his first meeting with Charles Taze Russell late in the 19th century. Capen, then 13 years old, and three of his brothers were on the staircase of the Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania. As Russell passed them, he inquired: “Are you boys smoking? I smell tobacco smoke.” They assured him that they were not smoking. Surely they were left with no doubts about his views on the subject. In the *Watch Tower* of August 1, 1895, Brother Russell commented on 2 Corinthians 7:1, saying: “I cannot see how it would be to God’s glory, or to his own profit, for any Christian to use tobacco in any form. . . . We cannot imagine our Lord reeking with the fumes of tobacco or putting into his mouth anything defiling.”

¹³ In 1935, *The Watchtower* called tobacco “the filthy weed” and noted that no one who chose to chew it or smoke it could remain a member of the Bethel family or serve as a representative of God’s organization in the pioneer work or the traveling ministry. In 1973 a further moral refinement came.

13. What moral refinement came in 1973?

The Watchtower of June 1 explained that no Witness of Jehovah could remain in good standing in the congregation while carrying on this death-dealing, defiling, and unloving practice. Those who refused to give up the misuse of tobacco were to be disfellowshipped.*^[3] Christ had taken another important step in refining his followers.

¹⁴ Misuse of blood. In Noah's day, God stated that it would be wrong to eat blood. He reaffirmed that position in the Law to the nation of Israel, and he similarly directed the Christian congregation to "abstain . . . from blood." (Acts 15:20, 29; Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:26) Not surprisingly, Satan found a way in modern times to cause many to disregard this divine standard. Doctors were experimenting with blood transfusion in the 19th century, but after blood types were discovered, the practice became more widespread. In 1937, blood began to be collected and stored in blood banks, and then World War II gave

*^[3] The misuse of tobacco includes smoking it, chewing it, or cultivating it for such uses.

14. What is God's standard regarding blood, and how did the practice of blood transfusion become commonplace?

the practice a big push. Soon, transfusions became commonplace around the world.

¹⁵ As early as 1944, *The Watchtower* indicated that receiving a blood transfusion was really another way of eating blood. The following year, that Scriptural position was strengthened and clarified. By 1951, a list of questions and answers was published to help God's people deal with medical professionals. Around the world, Christ's faithful followers were taking a courageous stand, often in the face of scorn, hostility, and even outright persecution. But Christ kept moving his organization to provide the needed support. Detailed and well-researched brochures and articles were published.

¹⁶ In 1979, some elders began to visit hospitals in order to help doctors to understand better our position, the Scriptural reasons for it, and the availability of alternatives to blood. In 1980, elders in 39 cities in the United States received specialized training in this work. In time, the Governing

15, 16. (a) Jehovah's Witnesses took what stand regarding blood transfusion? (b) What support has been provided to Christ's followers regarding transfusions and nonblood management, and with what result?

Body gave approval for the establishment of Hospital Liaison Committees all over the world. Have these efforts made any headway over the years? Today, many tens of thousands of medical professionals—including doctors, surgeons, and anesthesiologists—are cooperating with Witness patients, showing respect for our choice of nonblood management. More and more hospitals offer nonblood management, and some even regard it as the highest standard of medical care. Is it not thrilling to think of the ways Jesus has protected his followers from Satan’s efforts to pollute them?—**Read Ephesians 5: 25-27.**

¹⁷ We do well to ask ourselves, ‘Do we value the way Christ has been refining his followers, training us to adhere to Jehovah’s lofty moral standards?’ If so, then let us keep in mind that Satan is ever seeking to alienate us from Jehovah and Jesus by eroding our respect for godly morals. To counter that influence, Jehovah’s organization consistently provides loving warnings and reminders about the immoral

17. How may we show that we value the way that Christ has been refining his followers?

ways of this world. Let us remain alert, responsive, and obedient to such helpful counsel.—Prov. 19:20.

Protecting the Congregation From Moral Reproach

¹⁸ A second area of moral refinement involves the measures taken to keep the congregation clean. Sadly, not all who accept Jehovah’s standards of conduct and dedicate themselves to God loyally stick with their decision. Some eventually have a change of heart and willfully rebel against those standards. What is to be done about such ones? We may find one indication in Ezekiel’s vision of the spiritual temple discussed at the outset of this chapter. Remember those lofty gates. Within each entryway, there were guard chambers. Guards would protect the temple, evidently to prevent those who were “uncircumcised in heart” from entering. (Ezek. 44:9) That is a clear reminder that pure worship is a privilege accorded only to those who endeavor to live by Jehovah’s pure standards of conduct. In a similar way, the privilege of associating with fellow Christians in worship is not open to everyone today.

18. When it comes to those who willfully rebel against God’s standards, Ezekiel’s vision gives us what clear reminder?

¹⁹ Back in 1892, the *Watch Tower* commented that it is “our duty to *disfellowship* (as Christians) those who, either directly or indirectly, deny that Christ gave himself a ransom [a corresponding price] for all.” (**Read 2 John 10.**) In 1904, the book *The New Creation* acknowledged that those who persist in wrong conduct pose a real danger of demoralizing the congregation. Back then, the entire congregation would participate in “church trials” to examine cases of serious wrongdoing. However, such occasions were rare. In 1944, *The Watchtower* showed that only responsible brothers should handle such matters. In 1952 a Bible-based procedure for handling judicial matters was published in *The Watchtower*, highlighting a key reason for disfellowshipping unrepentant ones—to keep the congregation clean.

²⁰ In the decades since then, Christ has helped his followers to clarify and refine the handling of serious cases of wrongdoing. Christian elders are carefully trained to care for judicial matters in Jehovah’s way, with a proper balance of justice and mercy.

19, 20. (a) How has Christ gradually helped his followers to refine the way serious wrongdoing is handled? (b) What are three reasons for disfellowshipping unrepentant wrongdoers?

Today we see clearly at least three reasons for taking the action of disfellowshipping an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation: (1) to keep Jehovah's name free from reproach, (2) to protect the congregation from the contaminating effects of serious sin, and (3) to move a wrongdoer to repentance if that is possible.

²¹ Do you see how the arrangement of disfellowshipping has proved to be a blessing to Christ's followers today? In ancient Israel, wrongdoers often became a corrupting influence on the nation, at times even outnumbering those who loved Jehovah and sought to do what was right. Thus, the nation often brought reproach upon Jehovah's name and lost divine favor. (Jer. 7:23-28) But today, Jehovah is dealing with a community of spiritual men and women. Because hardened wrongdoers are removed from our midst, they are not allowed to become, in effect, weapons in Satan's hand to inflict further damage on the congregation and its clean standing. Rather, their influence is kept to a minimum. As a group, we are

21. In what way has the arrangement of disfellowshipping proved to be a blessing to God's people?

thus assured of keeping Jehovah's favor. Remember, Jehovah promised: "No weapon formed against you will have any success." (Isa. 54:17) Do we loyally support the elders, who bear the heavy load of handling judicial cases?

Glorifying the One to Whom Every Family Owes Its Name

²² A third area in which Christ's followers have benefited from continual refinement has to do with marriage and family life. Has our view of the family been refined over the years? Yes. For example, when we read of God's servants in the early part of the 20th century, we cannot help but be impressed and even amazed at their spirit of self-sacrifice. We are profoundly grateful for the way they put their sacred service above all else in life. At the same time, though, we can readily see that more balance was needed. How so?

²³ It was not uncommon for brothers to undertake assignments in the ministry or the traveling work **22, 23. Why are we grateful to our fellow Christians of the early 20th century, yet what evidence is there that more balance was needed in regard to the family?**

Oh, Walk With God!

(Micah 6:8)

1. Oh, walk with God in modesty;
 Show loyal love, and be true.
 Stay close to Jehovah, leaning on him,
 And let his strength sustain you.
 Keep holding tight to his faithful Word;
 You'll never drift away.
 So let God lead you by the hand
 As you listen and obey.
2. Oh, walk with God in holiness;
 Consider things that are pure.
 No matter how great temptations may be,
 He'll help you to endure them.
 Whatever praiseworthy things there are,
 Whatever things are true,
 Continue to consider them,
 And our God will be with you.
3. Oh, walk with God in happiness;
 Rejoice that he is your Friend.
 Be thankful for all the gifts that he gives
 And blessings that are endless.
 Oh, walk with God, let your heart be glad;
 Express your joy in song.
 Your joy will show, and all will know,
 To Jehovah you belong.

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.

POPULATION

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Scripture quotations are
from the modern-language
New World Translation
of the Holy Scriptures.

27 WEEK OF APRIL 17-23

Jehovah Leads His People

39 WEEK OF APRIL 24-30

Who Is Leading God's People Today?

For millenniums, Jehovah has directed men to take the lead. Why can we conclude that Jehovah has been supporting these men, and how do we know that he is backing the faithful and discreet slave today? These articles will consider three lines of evidence that have always identified God's representatives.

53 LIFE STORY

We Experienced God's Undeserved Kindness in Many Ways

3

Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

(Proverbs 14:26)

1. O Jehovah, you have given us
a hope that we hold dear.
It's a hope we find so thrilling
we want the world to hear.
But at times this life's anxieties
are the cause of fears within,
And the hope that burned so brightly
has suddenly grown dim.

(CHORUS)

*You're our strength, you're our hope,
you're our confidence.*

Whatever we lack, you supply.

*When we preach, when we teach,
we have confidence*

because it's on you we rely.

2. So Jehovah, please instill in us
a heart that won't forget,
For you've always been our comfort
when troubled times we've met.
And these thoughts that lift and strengthen us
can revive that dying flame,
For they fill our hearts with courage
to speak about your name.

(Chorus)



Jehovah Leads His People

“Jehovah will always lead you.”

—ISA. 58:11.

“WHO is your leader?” That is a question often put to Jehovah’s Witnesses. And no wonder! In many religions, one man or one woman acts as leader, or chief. In contrast, we are proud to tell

1, 2. (a) How do those taking the lead among Jehovah’s Witnesses differ from those doing so in other religions? (b) What will we consider in this article and the next?

SONGS:

3, 4

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How did the leaders of God’s ancient people and Jesus Christ give evidence that they were . . .

empowered by holy spirit?

assisted by angels?

guided by God’s Word?

those who inquire that our Leader is not an imperfect human. Rather, we follow the lead of the resurrected Christ, who in turn follows the lead of his Father, Jehovah.—Matt. 23:10.

² Nevertheless, there is a visible group of men, “the faithful and discreet slave,” who take the lead among God’s people today. (Matt. 24:45) So how do we know that it really is Jehovah who is leading us by means of his invisible Son? In this article and the next, we will examine how for millenniums Jehovah has directed certain humans to take the lead. Both articles will consider three lines of evidence that Jehovah has indeed been behind those men, proving that he was—and still is—the true Leader of his people.—Isa. 58:11.

EMPOWERED BY HOLY SPIRIT

³ *Holy spirit empowered God’s representatives.* Consider Moses, who was commissioned to be the leader of the Israelites. What equipped him to care for that weighty assignment? Jehovah “put within him His holy spirit.” (Read Isaiah 63:11-14.) By empowering Moses with holy spirit, Jehovah continued to lead His people.

3. What empowered Moses to lead Israel?

⁴ Since holy spirit is an invisible force, how could the Israelites discern that it was operating on Moses? Holy spirit enabled Moses to perform miracles and to declare God's name to Pharaoh. (Ex. 7:1-3) Holy spirit also produced in Moses beautiful qualities, such as love, meekness, and patience, that qualified him to lead the Israelites. What a contrast to the harsh and self-centered leaders of other lands! (Ex. 5:2, 6-9) The evidence was clear: Jehovah had selected Moses to be the leader of His people.

⁵ Later, Jehovah's holy spirit empowered other men whom he appointed to lead his people. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom." (Deut. 34:9) "Jehovah's spirit came upon Gideon." (Judg. 6:34) And "the spirit of Jehovah began to empower David." (1 Sam. 16:13) All those men relied on God's spirit to help them, and that spirit empowered them to perform feats that they could not have done in their own strength. (Josh. 11:16, 17; Judg. 7:7, 22; 1 Sam. 17:37, 50) As a result, Jehovah rightly received praise for those mighty acts.

4. How could the Israelites discern that Moses had God's spirit? (See opening image.)

5. Explain how Jehovah empowered other Israelite men to lead his people.

⁶ How should the Israelites have responded to clear evidence that those men were empowered by holy spirit? When the people complained about Moses' leadership, Jehovah asked: "How much longer will this people treat *me* without respect?" (Num. 14:2, 11) Indeed, *Jehovah* chose Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and David to represent him as Leader. When the people obeyed these men, they were actually following Jehovah as Leader.

ASSISTED BY ANGELS

⁷ *Angels assisted God's representatives.* (Read Hebrews 1:7, 14.) Jehovah employed angels to commission, equip, and guide Moses. God sent Moses "as both ruler and deliverer by means of the angel who appeared to him in the thornbush." (Acts 7:35) Jehovah "transmitted through angels" the Law, which Moses used to instruct the Israelites. (Gal. 3:19) And Jehovah told him: "Lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you. Look! My angel will go ahead of you." (Ex. 32:34) The Bible does not report that the Israelites saw a materialized angel perform those duties. However,

6. Why did God want his people to respect the leaders in Israel?

7. How did angels assist Moses?

the way Moses instructed and guided the people made it clear that he had superhuman help.

⁸ After Moses' time, his successor, Joshua, was strengthened by "the prince of Jehovah's army" to lead God's people into battle against the Canaanites; and the Israelites won the victory. (Josh. 5: 13-15; 6:2, 21) Later, King Hezekiah faced an overwhelming force of Assyrian soldiers who threatened to invade Jerusalem. In one night, "the angel of Jehovah went out and struck down 185,000 men."—2 Ki. 19:35.

⁹ Of course, while the angels are perfect, the men whom they assisted were not. Moses once failed to sanctify Jehovah. (Num. 20:12) Joshua neglected to seek God's guidance before concluding a covenant with the Gibeonites. (Josh. 9:14, 15) For a brief period, Hezekiah's "heart became haughty." (2 Chron. 32:25, 26) Nevertheless, despite the imperfections of these men, the Israelites were expected to follow their lead. Jehovah was supporting those men with his superhuman agents. Yes, Jehovah was leading his people.

8. What help did angels give to Joshua and Hezekiah?

9. Did the imperfections of God's representatives excuse the Israelites from following their lead? Explain.

GUIDED BY GOD'S WORD

¹⁰ *God's Word guided his representatives.* The Bible refers to the Law given to Israel as “the Law of Moses.” (1 Ki. 2:3) Nevertheless, the Scriptures identify Jehovah as the actual Lawgiver, and Moses himself was subject to that Law. (2 Chron. 34:14) After Jehovah had given instructions on how to set up the tabernacle, “Moses did according to all that Jehovah had commanded him. He did just so.”—Ex. 40:1-16.

¹¹ From the beginning of his leadership, Joshua had a written record of God's Word. “You must read it in an undertone day and night,” he was told, “in order to observe carefully all that is written in it.” (Josh. 1:8) Later, the kings who ruled God's people followed a similar routine. They were obligated to read the Law daily, write a copy of it, and “observe all the words of this Law and these regulations by carrying them out.”—Read Deuteronomy 17:18-20.

¹² What effect did God's Word have on the men who took the lead? Consider the example of

10. How was Moses guided by God's Law?

11, 12. (a) What were Joshua and the kings who ruled God's people required to do? (b) How did God's Word affect the leaders of God's people?

King Josiah. After a document containing the Mosaic Law was found, Josiah's secretary began to read it to him.* How did the king react? "As soon as the king heard the words of the book of the Law, he ripped his garments apart." But he did more. Guided by God's Word, Josiah began a vigorous campaign against idolatry and arranged an unprecedented celebration of the Passover. (2 Ki. 22: 11; 23:1-23) Because Josiah and other faithful leaders were guided by God's Word, they were willing to adjust and clarify the direction they gave to God's people. Those changes brought God's ancient people into harmony with his will.

¹³ How different those faithful kings were from the leaders of other nations, men who were guided by human wisdom and shortsighted strategy! Under Canaanite leadership, people did detestable things, which included incest, homosexuality, bestiality, child sacrifice, and gross idolatry. (Lev. 18: 6, 21-25) Moreover, Babylonian and Egyptian leaders did not follow the scientifically sound practices on hygiene that God gave to Israel. (Num. 19:13)

* This may have been the original document written by Moses.

13. What contrast existed between the leaders of God's people and those of pagan nations?

In contrast, God's ancient people saw how their faithful leaders promoted spiritual, moral, and physical cleanness. Clearly, Jehovah was leading them.

¹⁴ Not all the kings who ruled God's ancient people followed God's instructions. Those who did not obey Jehovah refused to accept the guidance of God's holy spirit, his angels, and his Word. In some cases, Jehovah disciplined or replaced those leaders. (1 Sam. 13:13, 14) In his own due time, he appointed someone who would be superior to any of the men he had used thus far.

JEHOVAH APPOINTS A PERFECT LEADER

¹⁵ For centuries, Jehovah prophesied that he would appoint a uniquely qualified leader for his people. "Jehovah your God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me," Moses told the Israelites. "You must listen to him." (Deut. 18:15) Isaiah foretold that this One would become "a leader and commander." (Isa. 55:4) And Daniel was inspired to write about the coming of "Messiah the Leader." (Dan. 9:25) Finally, Je-

14. Why did Jehovah discipline some of the leaders of his people?

15. (a) How did the prophets indicate that a unique leader was coming?
(b) Who was the prophesied leader?

Jesus Christ identified himself as “the Leader” of God’s people. (Read Matthew 23:10.) Jesus’ disciples followed him willingly, and they affirmed that he was Jehovah’s choice. (John 6:68, 69) What convinced them that Jesus Christ was the one through whom Jehovah was leading his people?

¹⁶ *Holy spirit empowered Jesus.* At Jesus’ baptism, John the Baptizer saw “the heavens being parted and, like a dove, the spirit coming down upon him.” Thereafter, “the spirit impelled him to go into the wilderness.” (Mark 1:10-12) For the rest of Jesus’ earthly ministry, God’s holy spirit empowered Jesus to perform miracles and to speak with divine authority. (Acts 10:38) In addition, holy spirit produced in Jesus perfect fruitage, including love, joy, and stalwart faith. (John 15:9; Heb. 12:2) No other leader provided such convincing evidence. Jesus was Jehovah’s choice.

¹⁷ *Angels assisted Jesus.* Shortly after Jesus was baptized, “angels came and began to minister to him.” (Matt. 4:11) Hours before his death, “an angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.” (Luke 22:43) Jesus was confident that

16. What proved that Jesus was empowered by holy spirit?

17. What did angels do to assist Jesus?

Jehovah would send angelic help whenever he needed it to accomplish God's will.—Matt. 26:53.

¹⁸ *God's Word guided Jesus.* From the beginning of his ministry, Jesus allowed the Scriptures to direct him. (Matt. 4:4) In fact, his obedience to God's Word went as far as submitting to death on a torture stake. Even his final words before he died included quotations of Messianic prophecies. (Matt. 27:46; Luke 23:46) In contrast, the religious leaders of that time disregarded God's Word whenever it contradicted their own traditions. Quoting Jehovah's words through the prophet Isaiah, Jesus said about them: "This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines." (Matt. 15:7-9) Could Jehovah really choose any of those men to lead his people?

¹⁹ Jesus allowed God's Word to guide not only his actions but also his teaching. When confronted with religious controversies, he appealed neither to his vast wisdom nor to his unparalleled experience. Instead, he held up the Scriptures as the final authority. (Matt. 22:33-40) And rather than regale

18, 19. How did God's Word guide Jesus' life and teaching?

How did angels assist Jesus shortly after his baptism?
(See paragraph 17)



his listeners with personal stories about life in heaven or the creation of the universe, “he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures.” (Luke 24:32, 45) Jesus loved God’s Word, and he was eager to share it with others.

²⁰ Although Jesus amazed his listeners with “gracious words,” he gave credit to *his* Teacher, Jehovah. (Luke 4:22) When a rich man tried to glorify Jesus with the title “Good Teacher,” Jesus modestly replied: “Why do you call me good? Nobody is good except one, God.” (Mark 10:17, 18) What a contrast to Herod Agrippa I, who became king, or leader, of Judea about eight years later! At a

20. (a) How did Jesus acknowledge his submission to God? (b) What does the contrast between Jesus and Herod Agrippa I teach us about Jehovah’s choice of a leader?

diplomatic function, Herod clothed himself “with royal raiment.” His adoring crowd shouted: “A god’s voice, and not a man’s!” Herod evidently basked in the praise. What happened next? “Instantly the angel of Jehovah struck him, because he did not give the glory to God, and he was eaten up with worms and died.” (Acts 12:21-23) Surely, no objective observer could conclude that Herod was chosen by Jehovah to be leader. Jesus, on the other hand, gave convincing evidence of being appointed by God, and he constantly glorified Jehovah as the Supreme Leader of his people.

²¹ Jesus’ leadership was not meant to last only a few years. “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth,” he declared after his resurrection. “And look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matt. 28:18-20) But as an invisible spirit in heaven, how would Jesus lead God’s people on earth? Whom would Jehovah use to work under Christ’s leadership and take the lead among His people? And how would Christians be able to recognize his representatives? The next article will consider the answers to those questions.

21. What will we discuss in the next article?

4 “Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

(Psalm 23)

1. Jehovah God is my Shepherd;
I'll follow where he will lead.
He knows my hopes and my heart's desire;
He knows what I truly need.
To watered pastures he leads me,
To places secure and blessed.
And he guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
He guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
2. Refreshing are all your pathways,
The ways of your righteousness.
For your name's sake never let me stray
From walking in faithfulness.
In valleys deep in the shadows,
Assured by your staff and rod,
I will fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
I fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
3. Jehovah, you are my Shepherd;
I follow where you will lead.
You strengthen me, and you give me rest;
You give all I truly need.
As you most surely are living,
So sure is my hope in you.
May your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.
Your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.

