

- Song 111 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Ezekiel Delighted to Declare God’s Message”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to Ezekiel*.]
Eze 2:9–3:2—Ezekiel ate the scroll of “dirges and mourning and wailing” (w08 7/15 8 ¶6-7; it-1 1214)
Eze 3:3—Ezekiel was grateful to serve Jehovah as a prophet (w07 7/1 12 ¶3)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Eze 1:20, 21, 26-28—What does the celestial chariot picture? (w07 7/1 11 ¶6)

Eze 4:1-7—Did Ezekiel really act out the scene depicting Jerusalem’s siege? (w07 7/1 12 ¶4)

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) Eze 1:1-14

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) T-32—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) T-32—Play the video *Your Family Can Be Happy—Introduction*, and offer the brochure.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) bh 143 ¶20-21—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 76
- **“Find Delight in Preaching the Good News”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Regain Joy Through Study and Meditation* (video category THE BIBLE).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) kr chap. 14 ¶1-7
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 122 and Prayer

EZEKIEL 1-5 | Ezekiel Delighted to Declare God’s Message

In a vision, Jehovah gave Ezekiel a scroll and told him to eat it. What was the significance of that?

2:9–3:2

- Ezekiel was to absorb fully God’s message. Meditating on the words in the scroll would affect Ezekiel’s deepest emotions and motivate him to speak

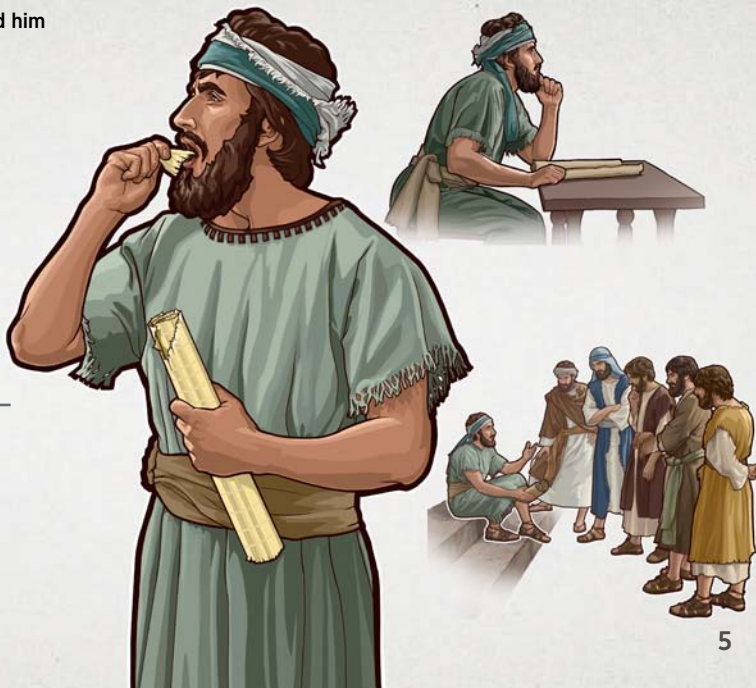
3:3

- The scroll tasted sweet because Ezekiel maintained a good attitude toward his assignment



How will prayerful Bible study and meditation affect me?

How can I cultivate a good attitude toward the preaching work?



Our Reasons for Joy

(Matthew 5:12)

B \flat Eb/B \flat F/B \flat B \flat Eb/B \flat B \flat

Our rea - sons for joy are a - bun - dant, Like rich - es in - creas - ing in
We glad - ly be - hold his pro - duc - tions, The heav - ens, the sea, and the

Fsus4 F B \flat Eb/B \flat F/B \flat B \flat B \flat /D Eb Cm7 B \flat /F F7

worth. Those pre - cious to God from all na - tions Are join - ing us in all the
land. We gaze at the book of cre - a - tion, Ap - plaud - ing the work of his

B \flat F/A Eb/G B \flat /F

earth. The joy in our heart is well - found - ed, With
hands. Tri - um - phant - ly we now bear wit - ness, Pro -

E \flat B \flat /D C7sus4 F B \flat F/A

roots reach - ing deep in God's Word. We dai - ly par - take of its
claim - ing the King - dom of God. The news of its birth and its

E \flat /G B \flat /F E \flat Cm7 B \flat /F F7 B \flat

teach - ings; Faith fol - lows the things we have heard. Our
bless - ings, We joy - ous - ly spread all a - broad. E -

Our Reasons for Joy

F7sus4 F7 Bb/F Gm6/E A7

caus - es for joy are deep - seat - ed, Like em - bers that burn in our
 ter - nal re - joic - ing ap - proach - es, Like day - light that fol - lows the

Dm Bbm6/Db F/C

hearts. Though trou - bles and tri - als be - set us, En -
 night. The prom - ised new earth and new heav - ens Will

Bb/C C7 F Chorus F/Eb Gm/D F7/C Bb F/A

dur - ance Je - ho - vah im - parts. Je - ho - vah our God is our
 bring ev - er - last - ing de - light.

Gm7 Bb/F Eb Bb/D C7sus4 F

joy, The work of his hands our de - light. How deep are his

Gm Cm7 Bb/D Eb Bb/F Cm/F F7 Bb

thoughts, how great are his works, A - bound - ing in good - ness and might!

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>People's contributions and the chieftain (13-25)</p> <p>46 Offerings on certain occasions (1-15)
Inheritance of the chieftain's property (16-18)
Places to boil offerings (19-24)</p> <p>47 The stream flowing from the temple (1-12)</p> | <p>Water gradually deepens (2-5)
Water of the Dead Sea healed (8-10)
Swampy places not healed (11)
Trees for food and healing (12)
Boundaries of the land (13-23)</p> <p>48 Division of the land (1-29)
The 12 gates of the city (30-35)
City named "Jehovah Is There" (35)</p> |
|--|---|

1 In the 30th year, on the fifth day of the fourth month, while I was among the exiled people^a by the river Che'bar,^b the heavens were opened and I began to see visions of God. **2** On the fifth day of the month—that is, in the fifth year of the exile of King Je-hoi'a-chin^c—**3** the word of Jehovah came to Ezekiel* son of Bu'zi the priest by the river Che'bar in the land of the Chal-de'ans.^d There the hand of Jehovah came upon him.^e

4 As I was looking, I saw a tempestuous wind^f coming from the north, and there was a huge cloud and flashing fire*^g surrounded by a bright light, and from the midst of the fire was something that looked like electrum.^h **5** Within it were what looked like four living creatures,ⁱ and the appearance of each one was like that of a human. **6** Each one had four faces and four wings.^j **7** Their feet were straight, and the soles of their feet were like those of a calf, and they were shining like the glow of burnished copper.^k **8** They had human hands under their wings on all four sides, and the four of them had faces and wings. **9** Their wings

1:3 *Meaning "God Strengthens." 1:4 *Or "and lightning." *A shining alloy of gold and silver.

CHAP. 1

a 2Ki 24:12, 14

b Eze 3:15

c 2Ch 36:9, 10

d Jer 22:25

e Eze 3:14

f 1Ki 19:11

g Ex 19:18
Ps 97:2, 3

h Eze 8:2

i Eze 10:9, 15
Re 4:6

j Isa 6:2
Eze 10:20, 21
Re 4:8

k Da 10:5, 6

Second Col.

a Eze 10:11, 15

b 2Sa 17:10
Pr 28:1

c Pr 14:4

d Job 39:27, 29

e Eze 10:14, 15
Re 4:7

f Isa 6:2

g Ps 103:20
Heb 1:7, 14

h Da 7:9, 10

i Eze 10:9-13
Re 4:7

were touching one another. They would not turn when they went; they would each go straight forward.^a

10 Their faces had this appearance: Each of the four had a man's face with a lion's^b face on the right, a bull's^c face on the left, and each of the four had an eagle's^d face.^e **11** That is how their faces were. Their wings were spread out above them. Each had two wings that were touching one another and two wings covering their bodies.^f

12 They would each go straight forward, going wherever the spirit would incline them to go.^g They would not turn as they went. **13** And the living creatures had the appearance of burning coals of fire, and something that looked like torches of bright fire was moving back and forth between the living creatures, and lightning was flashing out from the fire.^h **14** And when the living creatures would go forth and return, their movement had the appearance of flashes of lightning.

15 As I was watching the living creatures, I saw one wheel on the earth beside each of the living creatures with four faces.ⁱ

16 The wheels and their structure appeared to glow like chrys'o-lite, and the four of them looked alike. Their appearance and structure looked as

though a wheel were within a wheel.* **17** When they moved, they could go in any of the four directions without turning as they went. **18** Their rims were so high that they inspired awe, and the rims of all four were full of eyes all around.^a **19** Whenever the living creatures moved, the wheels would move along with them, and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels would also be lifted up.^b **20** They would go where the spirit inclined them to go, wherever the spirit went. The wheels would be lifted up together with them, for the spirit operating on the living creatures* was also in the wheels. **21** When they moved, these would move; and when they stood still, these would stand still; and when they were lifted up from the earth, the wheels would be lifted up together with them, for the spirit operating on the living creatures was also in the wheels.

22 Over the heads of the living creatures was the likeness of an expanse that sparkled like awesome ice, stretched out above their heads.^c **23** Under the expanse their wings were straight,* one to the other. Each one had two wings for covering one side of their bodies and two for covering the other side. **24** When I heard the sound of their wings, it was like a sound of rushing waters, like the sound of the Almighty.^d When they moved, it was like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they would let their wings down.

25 There was a voice above the expanse over their heads. (When they stood still, they

1:16 *Possibly centered at right angles on the same axis. **1:20** *Lit., "the spirit of the living creature." **1:23** *Or possibly, "extended out straight."

CHAP. 1

a Pr 15:3
Zec 4:10

b Eze 10:15-17

c Eze 10:1

d Ps 29:3
Eze 43:2
Re 14:2

Second Col.

a Ex 24:10
Ps 96:6
Eze 10:1

b 1Ki 22:19
Ps 99:1
Isa 6:1
Re 4:2

c Da 7:9

d Eze 8:2

e De 4:24
Ps 104:1, 2

f Re 4:3

g Ex 24:16, 17
Eze 8:4

CHAP. 2

h Da 10:11

i Eze 3:24

j 2Ch 36:15
Eze 33:7

k Isa 1:4
Jer 16:12

l De 9:24
Ps 78:8
Jer 3:25
Ac 7:51

m Eze 3:7

n Eze 12:2

o Eze 3:11
Eze 33:4, 15
Eze 33:33
Joh 15:22
Ac 20:26

p 2Ki 1:15
Lu 12:4

would let their wings down.) **26** Above the expanse that was over their heads was what looked like a sapphire stone,^a and it resembled a throne.^b Sitting on the throne up above was someone whose appearance resembled that of a human.^c **27** I saw something glowing like electrum^d that was like a fire radiating from what appeared to be his waist and upward; and from his waist down, I saw something that resembled fire.^e There was a brilliance all around him **28** like that of a rainbow^f in a cloud on a rainy day. That was how the surrounding brilliant light appeared. It was like the appearance of the glory of Jehovah.^g When I saw it, I fell facedown and began to hear the voice of someone speaking.

2 He then said to me: "Son of man,* stand up on your feet that I may speak with you."^h **2** When he spoke to me, spirit came into me and made me stand up on my feetⁱ so that I could hear the One speaking to me.

3 He went on to say to me: "Son of man, I am sending you to the people of Israel,^j to rebellious nations that have rebelled against me.^k They and their forefathers have transgressed against me down to this very day.^l **4** I am sending you to sons who are defiant* and hard-hearted,^m and you must say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says.' **5** As for them, whether they listen or refuse to listen—for they are a rebellious houseⁿ—they will certainly know that a prophet was among them.^o

6 "But you, son of man, do not be afraid of them,^p and do

2:1 *"Son of man"; the first of 93 occurrences of this expression in Ezekiel. **2:4** *Or "hard of face."

not be afraid of their words, although you are surrounded by briars and thorns*^a and are dwelling among scorpions. Do not be afraid of their words,^b and do not be terrified by their faces,^c for they are a rebellious house. **7** You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or not, for they are a rebellious people.^d

8 "But you, son of man, listen to what I am telling you. Do not become rebellious like this rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I am giving you."^e

9 When I looked, I saw a hand stretched out to me,^f and in it I saw a written scroll.*^g **10** When he spread it out before me, it had writing on both front and back,^h Dirges* and mourning and wailing were written on it.ⁱ

3 Then he said to me: "Son of man, eat what is before you.* Eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel."^j

2 So I opened my mouth, and he made me eat this scroll. **3** He went on to say to me: "Son of man, eat this scroll that I am giving you, and fill your stomach with it." So I began to eat it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth.^k

4 He said to me: "Son of man, go in among the house of Israel and speak my words to them. **5** For you are not being sent to a people who speak an unintelligible language or an unknown tongue, but to the house of Israel. **6** You are not being sent to many peoples speaking an unintelligible language or an unknown tongue, whose words you

2:6 *Or possibly, "although the people are obstinate and are like things pricking you." 2:9 *Or "a scroll of a book." 2:10 *Or "Songs of mourning." 3:1 *Lit., "eat what you find."

CHAP. 2

a Mic 7:4

b Isa 51:7

c Jer 1:8
Eze 3:9

d Jer 1:17

e Jer 15:16
Re 10:9,10

f Jer 1:9

g Eze 3:1

h Re 5:1

i Eze 19:1

CHAP. 3

j Re 10:9,10

k Ps 119:103
Jer 15:16
Re 10:9,10

Second Col.

a Jon 3:4, 5
Mt 11:21

b Lu 10:16

c Ex 34:9
Jer 3:3
Jer 5:3d Jer 1:18, 19
Jer 15:20
Mic 3:8

e Isa 50:7

f Jer 17:18

g 2Ki 24:12, 14

h Eze 2:5

i Eze 8:3

j Eze 1:24

k Eze 10:16

l Eze 1:3

m Jer 23:9

cannot understand. If I would send you to them, they would listen to you.^a **7** But the house of Israel will refuse to listen to you, for they do not want to listen to me.^b All those of the house of Israel are hardheaded and hardhearted.^c **8** Look! I have made your face exactly as hard as their faces and your forehead exactly as hard as their foreheads.^d **9** I have made your forehead like a diamond, harder than flint.^e Do not be afraid of them or be terrified by their faces,^f for they are a rebellious house.^g

10 He went on to say to me: "Son of man, take to heart and listen to all my words that I speak to you. **11** Go in among the exiles of your people*^g and speak to them. Tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says,' whether they listen or refuse to listen."^h

12 A spirit then carried me alongⁱ and I heard behind me a great rumbling sound that said: "May the glory of Jehovah be praised from his place."^j

13 There was the sound of the wings of the living creatures as they were brushing against one another,^k and the sound of the wheels next to them,^l and the sound of a great rumbling.

14 And the spirit carried me along and took me, and I went in bitterness and in the rage of my spirit, and the hand of Jehovah rested strongly on me. **15** So I went to the exiled people at Tel-a'bib, who were dwelling by the river Che'bar,^m and I stayed there where they were dwelling; and in a dazed condition,ⁿ I stayed among them for seven days.

16 At the end of seven days the word of Jehovah came to me:

17 "Son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman to

3:11 *Lit., "of the sons of your people."

the house of Israel;^a and when you hear a word from my mouth, you must warn them from me.^b

18 When I say to someone wicked, 'You will surely die,' but you do not warn him, and you fail to speak in order to warn the wicked one to turn from his wicked course so that he may stay alive,^c he will die for his error because he is wicked,^d but I will ask his blood back from you.^{*e}

19 But if you warn someone wicked and he does not turn back from his wickedness and from his wicked course, he will die for his error, but you will certainly save your own life.^{*f}

20 But when someone righteous abandons his righteousness and does what is wrong,^{*g} I will put a stumbling block before him and he will die.^g If you did not warn him, he will die for his sin and his righteous acts will not be remembered, but I will ask his blood back from you.^{*h} **21** But if you have warned the righteous one not to sin, and he does not sin, he will surely keep alive because he was warned,ⁱ and you will have saved your own life.^{**}

22 The hand of Jehovah came upon me there, and he said to me: "Get up, go to the valley plain, and I will speak with you there." **23** So I got up and went to the valley plain, and look! the glory of Jehovah was there,^j like the glory that I saw by the river Che'bar,^k and I fell facedown. **24** Then spirit entered into me and made me stand up on my feet,^l and he spoke to me and said:

"Go, shut yourself inside your house. **25** As for you, son of man, they will put ropes on you and tie you with them so that you cannot go out among them.

3:18, 20 *Or "I will hold you accountable for his blood." **3:19, 21** *Or "soul." **3:20** *Or "does injustice."

CHAP. 3

a Isa 21:8
Isa 62:6
Jer 6:17

b Isa 58:1
Eze 33:7

c Ac 2:40
1Ti 4:16

d Eze 33:4

e Eze 33:8

f Eze 33:9
Ac 18:6
Ac 20:26

g Eze 18:24, 26
Eze 33:12, 18

h Le 19:17
Eze 33:6
Heb 13:17

i Pr 17:10
Eze 33:14, 15
Jas 5:19, 20

j Eze 1:27, 28

k Eze 1:1

l Eze 2:2
Da 10:19

Second Col.

a Eze 24:27
Eze 33:22

b Mt 11:15

c Isa 30:9

CHAP. 4

d 2Ki 24:11
Jer 39:1

e 2Ki 25:1

f Jer 6:6
Jer 32:24

g Eze 21:22

h Eze 12:6
Eze 24:24

i 2Ki 17:21

j Nu 14:34
1Ki 12:19, 20

k 2Ki 23:27

l Jer 52:4

26 And I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth, and you will become mute, unable to reprove them, because they are a rebellious house. **27** But when I speak with you I will open your mouth, and you must say to them,^a 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says.' Let the one listening listen,^b and let the one refusing to listen refuse, because they are a rebellious house.^c

4 "And you, son of man, take a brick and put it in front of you. Engrave on it a city—Jerusalem. **2** Lay siege to it,^d build a siege wall against it,^e raise up a siege rampart against it,^f set up camps against it, and surround it with battering rams.^g **3** Take an iron griddle and place it as an iron wall between you and the city. Then set your face against it, and it will be under siege; you are to besiege it. This is a sign to the house of Israel.^h

4 "Then you should lie on your left side and lay the guilt of the house of Israel on yourself.^{*i} You will carry their guilt for the number of days that you lie on your side. **5** And I will impose on you 390 days, corresponding to the years of their guilt,^j and you will carry the guilt of the house of Israel. **6** And you must complete them.

"Then for a second time you will lie down, on your right side, and you will carry the guilt of the house of Judah^k for 40 days. A day for a year, a day for a year, is what I have given you. **7** And you will turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem^l with your arm bared, and you must prophesy against it.

8 "Look! I will tie you with ropes so that you cannot turn from your one side to your oth-

4:4 *Lit., "it," that is, Ezekiel's left side.

er side until you have completed the days of your siege.

9 “And you should take wheat, barley, broad beans, lentils, millet, and spelt and put them in one container and make them into bread for yourself. For the number of the days that you are lying on your side, 390 days, you will eat it.^a **10** You will weigh out and eat 20 shekels* of food per day. You will eat it at set times.

11 “And you will drink water by measure, a sixth of a hin.* You will drink it at set times.

12 “You will eat it as you would a round barley loaf; you will bake it before their eyes, using dried human excrement as fuel.” **13** Jehovah went on to say: “This is how the Israelites will eat their bread—unclean—among the nations where I will disperse them.”^b

14 I then said: “Not that, Sovereign Lord Jehovah! From my youth until now, I have* not been defiled by eating meat from an animal found dead or a torn animal,^c and no unclean[#] meat has entered my mouth.”^d

15 So he said to me: “All right, I will allow you to use cattle manure instead of human excrement, and you will bake your bread over it.” **16** He then said to me: “Son of man, here I am cutting off your food supply* in Jerusalem,^e and with great anxiety they will eat their bread ration by weight,^f and in horror they will drink their water ration by measure.^g **17** This will happen so that lacking bread and water, they may look in shock at

4:10 *About 230 g (7.3 oz t). See App. B14. 4:11 *About 0.6 L (1.3 pt). See App. B14. 4:14 *Or “my soul has.” #Or “foul.” 4:16 *Lit., “breaking your bread rods.” Possibly referring to rods used for storing bread.

CHAP. 4

a Eze 4:5

b Ho 9:3

c Ex 22:31

Le 7:24

Le 11:40

d De 14:3

Isa 65:4

Isa 66:17

e Le 26:26

Isa 3:1

Eze 5:16

f 2Ki 25:3

Jer 37:21

La 1:11

La 4:9

La 5:9,10

g Eze 12:18

Second Col.

CHAP. 5

a Jer 9:21

Eze 4:8

b Jer 15:2

c Le 26:33

Eze 5:12

d Jer 4:4

e Eze 16:46, 47

f 2Ki 21:9, 11

Jer 2:11

g Jer 21:5

Eze 15:7

h De 29:22, 24

1Ki 9:8

La 2:15

one another and waste away because of their error.

5 “As for you, son of man, take a sharp sword for yourself to use as a barber’s razor. Shave your head and your beard, and then take scales to weigh and divide the hair into portions. **2** You will burn a third of it in the fire inside the city when the days of the siege are completed.^a Then you will take another third and strike it with the sword all around the city,^{#b} and the last third you will scatter to the wind, and I will draw a sword to chase after them.^c

3 “You must also take a few strands of them and wrap them up in the folds* of your garment.

4 And take some more of them and throw them into the fire and incinerate them. From this a fire will spread to all the house of Israel.^d

5 “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘This is Jerusalem. I have set her in the middle of the nations, with lands all around her. **6** But she has rebelled against my judicial decisions and my statutes, acting more wickedly than the nations and the lands all around her.^e For they have rejected my judicial decisions, and they did not walk in my statutes.’

7 “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Because you were more troublesome than the nations all around you and you did not walk in my statutes or carry out my judicial decisions but, instead, you followed the judicial decisions of the nations all around you,^f **8** this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Here I am against you, O city,^g and I myself will execute judgment in your midst before the eyes of the nations.^h **9** I will do in you what

5:2 *Lit., “her.” 5:3 *Or “skirts.”

I have never done before, and the likes of which I will not do again, because of all your detestable practices.^a

10 ““So fathers among you will eat their sons,^b and sons will eat their fathers, and I will execute judgment among you and scatter all the rest of you in every direction.”^{*c}

11 ““Therefore as surely as I am alive,” declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, “because it was my sanctuary that you defiled with all your disgusting idols and with all your detestable practices,^d I will also reject* you; my eye will not feel sorry, and I will show no compassion.^e **12** A third of you will die by the pestilence^f or perish in your midst by famine. Another third will fall all around you by the sword.^f And I will scatter the last third in every direction,^{*} and I will draw a sword to chase after them.^g **13** Then my anger will come to an end, and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be satisfied.^h And they will have to know that I, Jehovah, have spoken in my insistence on exclusive devotion,ⁱ when I have finished unleashing my wrath against them.

14 ““I will make you a devastated place and an object of reproach among the surrounding nations and in the eyes of everyone passing by.^j **15** You will become an object of reproach and scorn,^k a warning example and a horror to the nations around you, when I execute judgment on you in anger and in wrath and with furious punishments. I, Jehovah, have spoken.

16 ““I will send against them the deadly arrows of famine to destroy them. The arrows that I send will bring you to ruin.^l I

5:10, 12 *Lit., “to every wind.” 5:11 *Or “diminish.” 5:12 *Or “disease.”

CHAP. 5

- a La 4:6
Da 9:12
b Le 26:29
Jer 19:9
La 4:10
c Le 26:33
De 28:64
d Le 20:3
2KI 21:1, 7
2Ch 36:14
Jer 32:34
e La 2:21
Eze 7:4
f Jer 14:12
Jer 15:2
Jer 21:9
g Le 26:33
Jer 9:16
Jer 42:16
h Eze 16:42
i Ex 20:3, 5
Ex 34:14
De 6:15
j De 28:37
1KI 9:7
Ne 2:17
k Ps 79:4
Jer 24:9
La 2:15
La 3:61, 62
l De 32:23

Second Col.

- a Le 26:26
Eze 4:16
b Le 26:22
De 32:24
Eze 14:21
Eze 33:27
c Eze 21:3

CHAP. 6

- d Isa 27:9
e Le 26:30
f Jer 8:1, 2
g Jer 2:15
Jer 32:29
Mic 3:12
h Eze 16:39
i Jer 14:18
j Eze 7:4
k Jer 30:10
Jer 44:28
Eze 14:22

will make the famine worse for you by cutting off your food supply.^{*a} **17** I will send against you famine and vicious wild beasts,^b and they will bereave you of children. Pestilence and bloodshed will overwhelm you, and I will bring a sword against you.^c I, Jehovah, have spoken.”

6 The word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: **2** “Son of man, turn your face toward the mountains of Israel and prophesy against them. **3** You must say, ‘O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah: This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says to the mountains, to the hills, to the streams, and to the valleys: “Look! I will bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. **4** Your altars will be demolished, your incense stands will be broken,^d and I will throw your slain ones down before your disgusting idols.^{*e} **5** I will throw the carcasses of the people of Israel before their disgusting idols, and I will scatter your bones all around your altars.^f **6** In all the places where you dwell, the cities will be devastated^g and the high places will be demolished and will lie devastated.^h Your altars will be demolished and shattered, your disgusting idols will perish, your incense stands will be cut down, and your works will be wiped out. **7** And those slain will fall in your midst,ⁱ and you will have to know that I am Jehovah.^j

8 ““But I will leave a remnant, for some of you will escape the sword among the nations when you are scattered throughout the lands.^k **9** And

5:16 *Lit., “breaking your bread rods.” Possibly referring to rods used for storing bread. 6:4 *The Hebrew term may be related to a word for “dung” and is used as an expression of contempt.

- Song 111 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Ezekiel Delighted to Declare God’s Message”:** (10 min.)
[Play the video *Introduction to Ezekiel*.]
Eze 2:9–3:2—Ezekiel ate the scroll of “dirges and mourning and wailing” (w08 7/15 8 ¶6-7; it-1 1214)
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- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Eze 1:1-14

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 76
- **“Find Delight in Preaching the Good News”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Regain Joy Through Study and Meditation* (video category THE BIBLE).
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- Song 122 and Prayer

EZEKIEL 1-5 | Ezekiel Delighted to Declare God’s Message

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2:9-3:2

- Ezekiel was to absorb fully God’s message. Meditating on the words in the scroll would affect Ezekiel’s deepest emotions and motivate him to speak

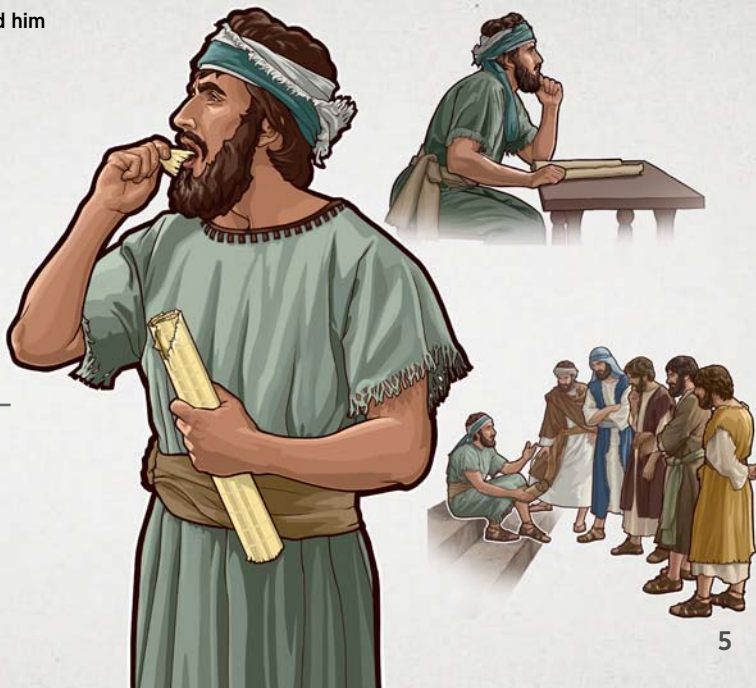
3:3

- The scroll tasted sweet because Ezekiel maintained a good attitude toward his assignment



How will prayerful Bible study and meditation affect me?

How can I cultivate a good attitude toward the preaching work?



June 19-25

Treasures From God's Word

Ezekiel 2:9–3:2—Ezekiel ate the scroll of “dirges and mourning and wailing”

Reference: *w08 7/15 8 paragraphs 6-7*

6 The book of Ezekiel reveals something else that can help us to speak with boldness. In a vision, Jehovah gave Ezekiel a scroll written on both sides with “dirges and moaning and wailing” and told him to eat it, saying: “Son of man, you should cause your own belly to eat, that you may fill your very intestines with this roll that I am giving you.” What did this vision mean? Ezekiel was to absorb fully the message he was to deliver. It was to become part of him, as it were, affecting his inmost feelings. The prophet goes on to relate: “I began to eat it, and it came to be in my mouth like honey for sweetness.” Declaring God’s message in public was a delight—like tasting honey—for Ezekiel. He felt highly privileged to represent Jehovah and to fulfill this God-given assignment, even though that meant delivering a strong message to an unreceptive people.—Read **Ezekiel 2:8–3:4, 7-9**.

7 This vision contains a valuable lesson for God’s servants today. We too have a strong message to deliver to people who are not always appreciative of our efforts. For us to continue to view the Christian ministry as a God-given privilege, we must be well-nourished spiritually. Superficial or haphazard study habits will not be sufficient for us to absorb God’s Word fully. Could you improve the quality or regularity of your personal Bible reading and Bible study? Could you more often meditate on what you read?—**Psalm 1:2, 3**.

Reference: *it-1 1214*

Intestines

Physical food is assimilated by the intestines. This fact was metaphorically used to represent mental or spiritual digestion when, in vision, Ezekiel was told to eat a scroll, filling his intestines (Hebrew, *me'im*) with it. Ezekiel was to gain spiritual strength by meditating upon and storing in his memory the words written in the scroll. He was thereby nourished spiritually and provided with a message to speak.—**Ezekiel 3:1-6**; compare **Revelation 10:8-10**.

Ezekiel 3:3—Ezekiel was grateful to serve Jehovah as a prophet

Reference: *w07 7/1 12 paragraph 3*

Why did the scroll of dirges and moaning taste sweet to Ezekiel? What made the scroll sweet-tasting to Ezekiel was his attitude toward his commission. Ezekiel was grateful to serve Jehovah as a prophet.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Ezekiel 1:20, 21, 26-28—What does the celestial chariot picture?

Reference: *w07 7/1 11* paragraph 6

The chariot represents the heavenly part of Jehovah's organization made up of faithful spirit creatures. Its source of power is Jehovah's holy spirit. The Rider of the chariot, who represents Jehovah, is indescribably glorious. His calmness is illustrated by a lovely rainbow.

Ezekiel 4:1-7—Did Ezekiel really act out the scene depicting Jerusalem's siege?

Reference: *w07 7/1 12* paragraph 4

Ezekiel's appeal for the change of cooking fuel and Jehovah's granting him his request indicate that the prophet actually acted out the scene. Lying on the left side was for the 390 years of error of the ten-tribe kingdom—from its beginning in 997 B.C.E. to the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. Lying on the right side was for Judah's 40 years of sin, spanning the period from Jeremiah's appointment as a prophet in 647 B.C.E. to 607 B.C.E. During the entire 430-day period, Ezekiel existed on a meager supply of food and water, prophetically indicating that there would be a famine during the siege of Jerusalem.

- Song 111 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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

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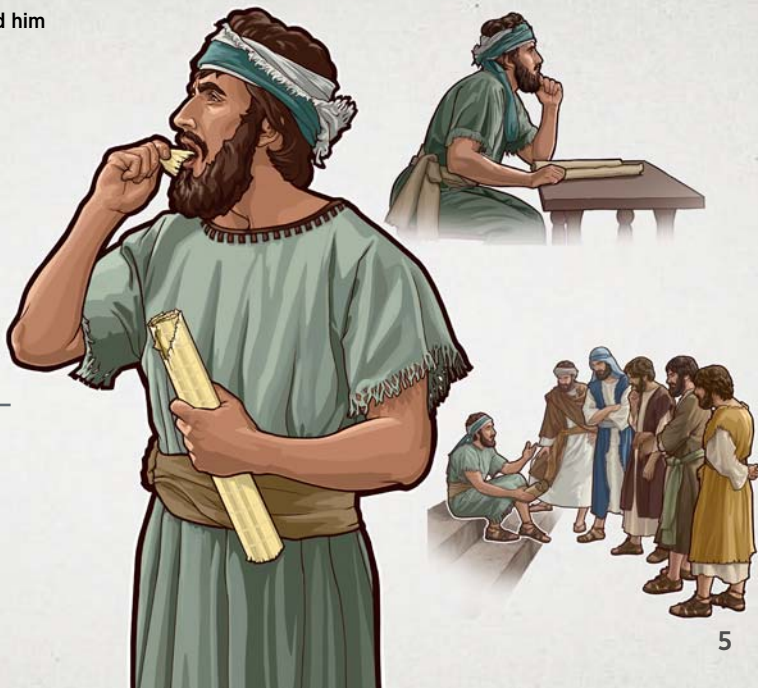
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- The scroll tasted sweet because Ezekiel maintained a good attitude toward his assignment

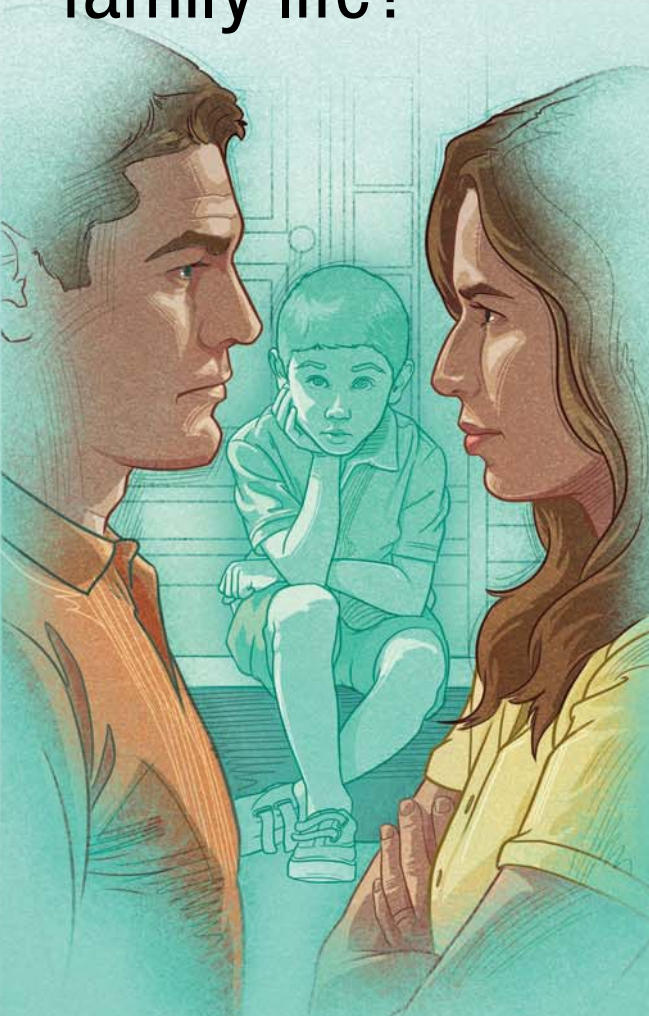


How will prayerful Bible study and meditation affect me?

How can I cultivate a good attitude toward the preaching work?



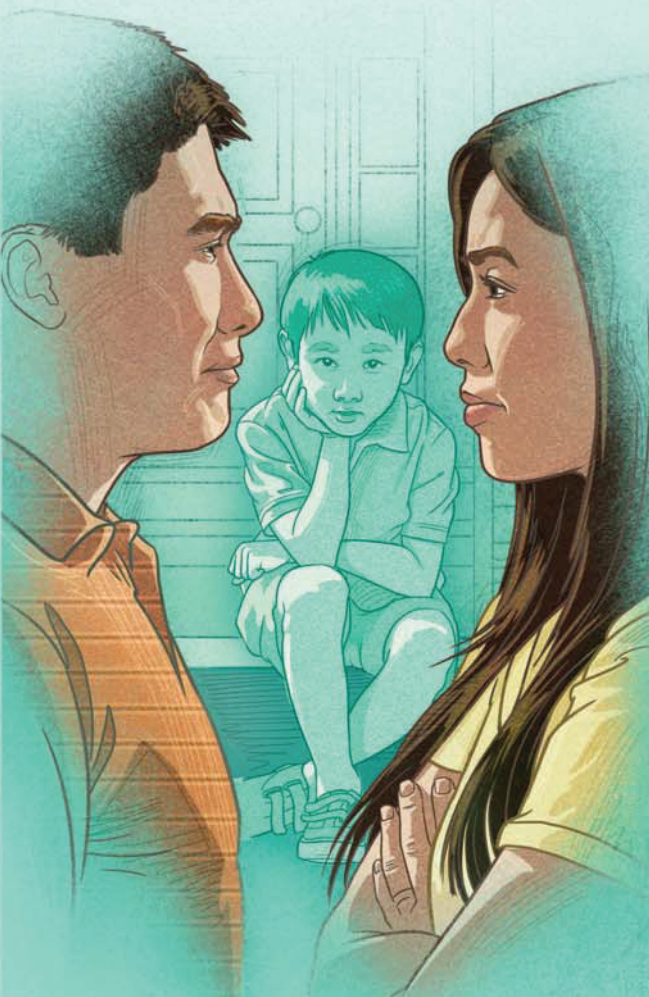
What is the key to happy family life?



Do you think it is . . .

- love?
- money?
- something else?

家庭幸福 主要靠什么？



你觉得要靠……

- 爱？
- 金钱？
- 其他？

Ni nini siri ya kuwa na familia yenye furaha?

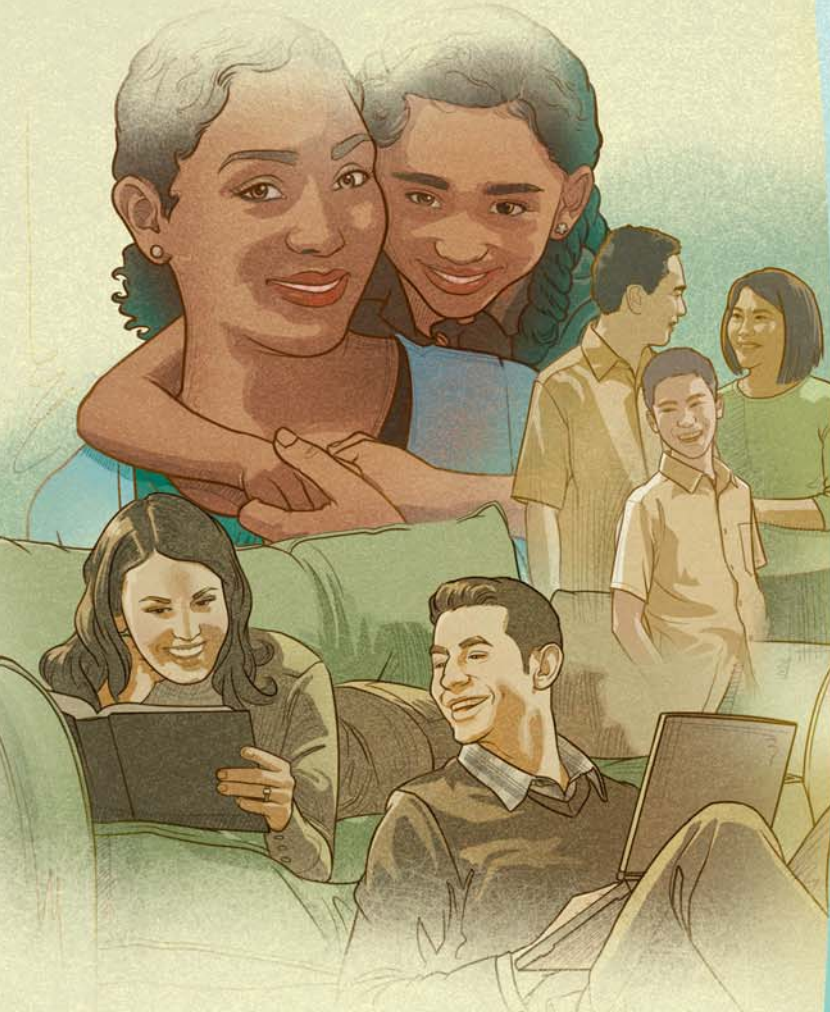


Je, unafikiri ni . . .

- upendo?
- pesa?
- jambo lingine?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

“Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!”—Luke 11:28, *New World Translation*.



WHAT THAT CAN MEAN FOR YOU

- Finding real love.—Ephesians 5:28, 29.
- Enjoying genuine respect.—Ephesians 5:33.
- Having true security.—Mark 10:6-9.

CAN WE REALLY BELIEVE WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS?

Yes, for at least two reasons:

- **God is the Originator of family life.** The Bible says that “every family . . . owes its name” to Jehovah God. (Ephesians 3:14, 15) In other words, the family unit exists because Jehovah created it. Why is that significant?

Consider: If you were enjoying a tasty meal and wanted to learn its ingredients, whom would you ask? Logically, the person who prepared it.

Likewise, to discover the ingredients for a happy family life, we do well to look to Jehovah, the Originator of the family arrangement.—Genesis 2:18-24.

- **God cares about you.** Families are wise to seek Jehovah’s advice, which he provides through his Word. Why? “Because he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:6, 7) Jehovah has your best interests at heart—and his counsel always works!—Proverbs 3:5, 6; Isaiah 48:17, 18.

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

TO THINK ABOUT

How can you be a good husband,
wife, or parent?

The Bible answers that question at
EPHESIANS 5:1, 2 and COLOSSIANS 3:18-21.



TO LEARN MORE WITHOUT COST

Read lesson 9 of this brochure.

Please send me this brochure.

.....
(Indicate which language.)

Discuss the Bible
with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Please send someone to visit me.

You can also request a visit or
download the brochure at www.jw.org.



Name

Address

City

Province/State Postal/ZIP Code

SEND YOUR REQUEST TO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES:

For a complete list of worldwide addresses, see www.jw.org/en/contact.

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Scan code to
watch the video
*Why Study
the Bible?*



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THE KEY TO FAMILY HAPPINESS

²⁰ Family problems are easier to cope with when Bible counsel is applied. In fact, applying such counsel is the key to family happiness. So husbands, love your wife, and treat her as Jesus treats his congregation. Wives, submit to the headship of your husband, and follow the example of the capable wife described at Proverbs 31:10-31. Parents, train your children. (Proverbs 22:6) Fathers, ‘preside over your household in a fine manner.’ (1 Timothy 3: 4, 5; 5:8) And children, obey your parents. (Colossians 3: 20) None in the family are perfect, for all make mistakes. So be humble, asking one another for forgiveness.

²¹ Truly, the Bible contains a wealth of valuable counsel and instruction regarding family life. Moreover, it teaches us about God’s new world and an earthly paradise filled with happy people who worship Jehovah. (Revelation 21: 3, 4) What wonderful prospects lie ahead! Even now, we can enjoy happy family life by applying God’s instructions found in his Word, the Bible.

20. To enjoy happy family life, what must each family member do?

21. What wonderful prospects lie ahead, and how can we enjoy happy family life now?

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

- Husbands need to love their wives as their own bodies.—Ephesians 5:25-29.
- Wives should love their family and respect their husbands.—Titus 2:4, 5.
- Parents need to love, teach, and protect their children.—Deuteronomy 6:4-9.
- Children need to obey their parents.—Ephesians 6:1-3.

How Does It Make You Feel?

(Hebrews 13:15)

E_b A_b B_b E_b A_b B_b

How does it make you feel when you preach and teach with zeal,
 How does it make you feel when the words you speak ap - peal
 How does it make you feel, know - ing God's sup - port is real,

E_b A_b E_b/A_b F_m

When you know you've done your part to reach an hon - est
 To the ones whose heart is right for ev - er - last - ing
 And that he's en - trust - ed you to do the work we

B_b F_m7 B_b E_b A_b B_b

heart?
 life?
 do? Know - ing you've done your best;
 Some peo - ple turn a - way,
 Proud - ly we preach and teach,

E_b A_b B_b

then our God will do the rest. Hon - est
 oth - ers might be led a - stray. Still we're
 us - ing bold but gra - cious speech, Search - ing

How Does It Make You Feel?

Eb
Ab
Eb/Ab
Fm
Gm/Bb
Bb7

hearts he sure - ly knows— all those to him dis -
 glad to bear his name and wit - ness just the
 out de - serv - ing ones; this work will soon be

Chorus

Eb
Ab
Eb
Eb/G
Ab
Bb

posed.
 same.
 done.

It makes us glad, and we re -

Eb
Eb/G
Ab
Cm7
Bbsus4
Bb
Eb
Eb/G

joyce to give our heart and mind and voice. So may our

Ab
Cm7
Bbsus4
Eb
Ab
Eb

sac - ri - fice of praise con - tin - ue all our days.

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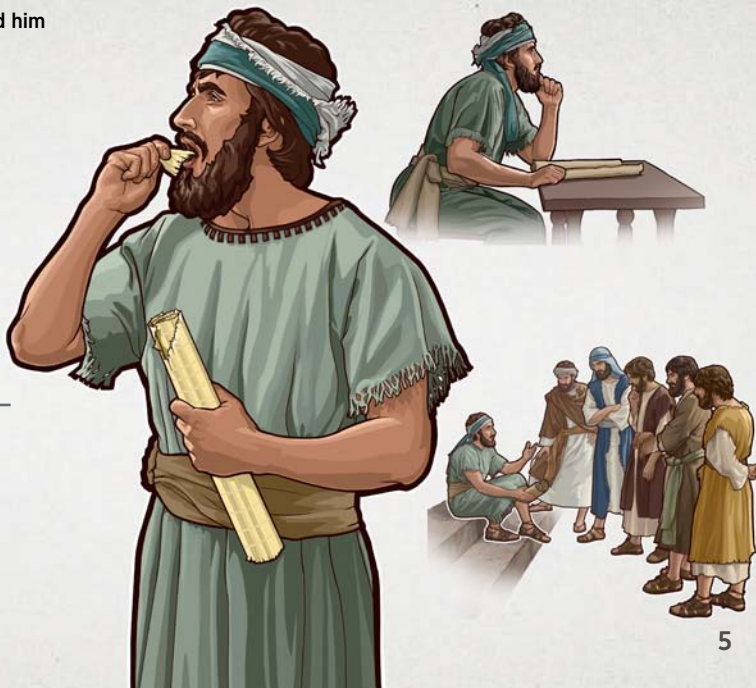
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How will prayerful Bible study and meditation affect me?

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Find Delight in Preaching the Good News



Which disposition would you like to have in the ministry?
How can you reflect joy?

Have you ever found it difficult to preach? Many of us would answer yes to that question. Why? Maybe we regularly face apathy or hostility in our territory or we fear talking to strangers. Certainly, these things can dampen our joy. Yet, we worship the happy God who wants us to serve him with rejoicing. (Ps 100:2; 1Ti 1:11) What are three good reasons to delight in preaching?

First, we declare a message of hope. Although hope is diminishing in society today, we can fill people’s hearts with “good news of something better.” (Isa 52:7) But the good news of God’s Kingdom can also fill us with joy. Before going out to preach, meditate on the blessings that God’s Kingdom will bring to the earth.

Second, the good news we preach benefits people physically and spiritually. They learn to abandon harmful practices and gain the prospect of everlasting life. (Isa 48:17, 18; Ro 1:16) We can imagine ourselves in a search-and-rescue work. Even though some people do not want to be rescued, we keep on searching for those who do.—Mt 10:11-14.

Third, and most important, our preaching honors Jehovah. He highly values our witnessing work. (Isa 43:10; Heb 6:10) Furthermore, he generously gives us his holy spirit to accomplish this work. Therefore, beg Jehovah for joy, a product of holy spirit. (Ga 5:22) With his help, we can overcome our anxieties and preach with boldness. (Ac 4:31) Then, regardless of the response in our territory, we will find delight in our assignment to preach.—Eze 3:3.

WATCH THE VIDEO *REGAIN JOY THROUGH STUDY AND MEDITATION*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Why must we give priority to our spiritual eating habits, even if we spend many hours preaching each month?

In what way should we imitate Mary?

When do you make time to meditate on God’s Word?

What brings you delight when preaching the good news?



14

Loyally Supporting God's Government and No Other

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Out of loyalty
to the Kingdom,
God's people remain
no part of the world

1, 2. (a) What principle has guided Jesus' followers down to our day? (b) How have enemies tried to conquer us, and with what result?

3, 4. (a) What events took place at the time of the Kingdom's birth? (b) Have God's people always fully understood the issue of neutrality? Explain.

JESUS stood before Pilate, the Jewish nation's most powerful secular judge, and stated a principle that has guided His genuine followers down to our day. "My Kingdom is no part of this world," he said. "If my Kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my Kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) Pilate had Jesus executed, but the victory was short-lived. Jesus was resurrected. Emperors of the mighty Roman Empire tried to crush Christ's followers, but their efforts were futile. Christians spread the Kingdom message throughout the ancient world.—Col. 1:23.

² After the Kingdom was established in 1914, some of the strongest military powers in history tried to wipe out God's people. But none have conquered us. Many governments and political factions tried to force us to take sides in their conflicts. They did not succeed in dividing us. Today, subjects of the Kingdom live in virtually every nation on earth. Even so, we are united in a genuine global brotherhood, remaining strictly neutral as to the world's political affairs. Our unity provides compelling evidence that God's Kingdom rules and that the King Jesus Christ continues to direct, refine, and protect his subjects. Consider how he has done so, and note just some of the faith-strengthening legal victories he has given us as we continue to remain "no part of the world."—John 17:14.

An Issue Thrust to the Fore

³ Following the Kingdom's birth, war raged in heaven, and then Satan was cast down to the earth. (**Read Revelation 12:7-10, 12.**) A war also raged on earth, one that tested the resolve of God's people. They were determined to follow Jesus' example and be no part of the world. But

at first they did not fully understand how much it would require of them to keep out of all political matters.

⁴ For example, Volume VI of the *Millennial Dawn* series,^[1] which was published in 1904, encouraged Christians to avoid participation in war. However, it reasoned that if a Christian was conscripted, he should strive to obtain some form of noncombatant service. If that failed and he was sent into combat, he should ensure that he did not commit murder. Commenting on the situation at that time, Herbert Senior, who lived in Britain and was baptized in 1905, said: “There was a lot of confusion among the brothers and no clear advice as to whether it would be right to join the army as a soldier but only for noncombatant work.”

⁵ However, *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, began to refine our understanding of this issue. Regarding the recommendations made in *Studies in the Scriptures*, it said: “We wonder if such a course would not mean compromise.” But what if a Christian were threatened with being shot for refusing a uniform and military service? The article reasoned: “Would it be any worse to be shot because of loyalty to the Prince of Peace and refusal to disobey His order than to be shot while under the banner of these earthly kings and apparently giving them support and, in appearance at least, compromising the teachings of our Heavenly King? Of the two deaths we would prefer the former—prefer to die because of faithfulness to our Heavenly King.” Despite that forceful statement, the article concluded: “We are not urging this course. We are merely suggesting it.”

⁶ Some brothers saw the issue clearly and met it head-on. Herbert Senior, quoted earlier, said: “To me, there was no difference in principle between unloading shells from a ship [noncombatant service] and putting those shells into a gun to be fired.” (Luke 16:10) As a result of his conscientious objection to military service, Brother Senior was sent to prison. He and 4 other brothers were among a group of 16 conscientious objectors, including men from other religious denominations, who served some of their time at Richmond prison in Britain and later became known as the Richmond 16. At one point, Herbert and others like him were secretly shipped to the front lines in France. There, they were sentenced to be shot. He and a number of others were lined up in front of a firing squad, but they were not killed. Instead, their sentence was commuted to ten years in prison.

5. How did *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, begin to refine our understanding?

6. What have you learned from the example of Brother Herbert Senior?



“I learned to appreciate that God’s people were to be at peace with everyone, even amid threats of war.”

—Simon Kraker
(See paragraph 7)

FOOTNOTE

[1] This volume is also known by the title *The New Creation*. Later, the *Millennial Dawn* volumes were called *Studies in the Scriptures*.

7. By the start of World War II, what had God's people come to see?

8, 9. How was the apostle John's prophecy fulfilled?

⁷ By the time World War II broke out, Jehovah's people as a whole had come to see more clearly what it meant to be neutral and what was required if they were to follow Jesus' example. (Matt. 26:51-53; John 17:14-16; 1 Pet. 2:21) For instance, the November 1, 1939, issue of *The Watchtower* carried the landmark article entitled "Neutrality," which stated: "The rule by which Jehovah's covenant people must now be governed is that of strict neutrality between the nations at war." Regarding that article, Simon Kraker, who later served at headquarters, in Brooklyn, New York, said: "I learned to appreciate that God's people were to be at peace with everyone, even amid threats of war." That spiritual food was provided at the proper time and helped to brace God's people for an unprecedented assault on their loyalty to the Kingdom.

Threatened by a "River" of Opposition

⁸ The apostle John prophesied that after the Kingdom's birth in 1914, the dragon, Satan the Devil, would attempt to wipe out the supporters of God's Kingdom by spewing

"HE DIED FOR GOD'S HONOR"

DURING the second world war, Jehovah's Witnesses were a small minority in Nazi Germany. Historian Detlef Garbe writes that in spite of that fact, "the majority of people who were condemned as conscientious objectors by the military courts . . . in the Third Reich were Jehovah's Witnesses." **Gerhard Steinacher**, of Austria, aged 19, was one of those. Just days after the start of World War II, Nazi authorities arrested him for refusing to join the German army.

In November 1939, Gerhard received the sentence of death. That month he wrote from prison: "I want nothing else but to honor God, to keep his commandments, and to ask him to receive us into his Kingdom, where eternal life and peace will be." On March 29, 1940, the day before his execution, Gerhard bid his parents farewell: "I am still a child. Only if the Lord gives me strength can I stand, and this is what I ask." Gerhard was executed at about six o'clock the next morning, likely by guillotine. His epitaph reads: "He died for God's honor."



Be Steadfast, Immovable!

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

Am Dm7 Dm6

Na - tions are trou - bled as nev - er be - fore.
Snares of the world and temp - ta - tions a - bound.
Give to God wor - ship that comes from the heart.

R.H.

E7sus4 E7 Bm/E E7 Am9 Am

Peo - ple are fear - ful of what lies in store.
We can re - sist if our think - ing is sound.
In the Lord's ser - vice may we have a part.

Am Dm9 Dm

Firm and im - mov - a - ble we need to be,
Hat - ing what's bad while we love what is true
Preach the good news, al - ways hold - ing it fast.

Am/E E7 D/F# E7/G# Am

Serv - ing our God faith - ful - ly.
Makes us im - mov - a - ble too.
Soon the last days will have passed.

Be Steadfast, Immovable!

Chorus

A F#m7 Bm7 E7 Bm7/F# E7/G#

Stead - fast we all need to be;

Bm7 E7 Asus4 A

Far from this world we keep free,

D6 Dma7 Bm7 A/E

Stand - ing firm to the end,

A C#m7/G# F#m7 E13sus4 E7 A

Un - end - ing life we'll see.

(See also Luke 21:9; 1 Pet. 4:7.)

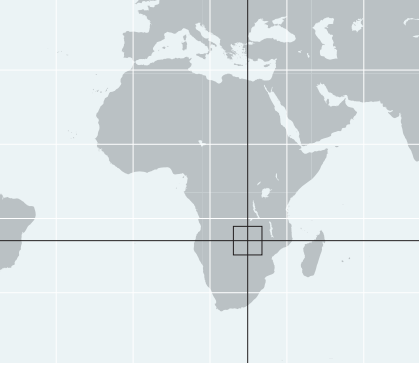
APRIL 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
MAY 29–JULY 2, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
ZAMBIA

An enthusiastic field service group leaving for witnessing activity in Lusaka, Zambia. The well-maintained Kingdom Hall serves as a powerful witness to Jehovah

PUBLISHERS
183,586

BIBLE STUDIES
415,706

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2016)
782,527

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How many vows have you made to Jehovah? One, two, or more? Do you feel that you are living up to them to the best of your ability? What about your dedication vow or your marriage vow? This article reminds us of the excellent examples that Jephthah and Hannah set for us as we faithfully strive to fulfill our vows to God.

9 WEEK OF JUNE 5-11 What Will Go When God’s Kingdom Comes?

We often think about what Jehovah will give us in Paradise, but in this article, we will focus on what he will take away. What will Jehovah remove in order to build a peaceful, happy world? Contemplating the answer will strengthen our faith and our determination to endure.

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23 WEEK OF JUNE 19-25 Do You Share Jehovah’s Sense of Justice?

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28 WEEK OF JUNE 26–JULY 2 May Your Volunteer Spirit Bring Praise to Jehovah!

Jehovah is complete in himself; yet he is pleased to note our intense interest in supporting his sovereignty. Judges chapters 4 and 5 indicate how Jehovah appreciates it when we willingly rally to carry out his clear direction.

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

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God's Wondrous Works

(Psalm 139)

D Em7 Dma7/F# G6 D/F#

O God, you know my rest and wak - ing, When I lie

Detailed description: This system contains the first two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

Em7 D/F# G6 A Asus4 A D/F#

down and when I rise a - new. You search my

Detailed description: This system contains the second two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the top staff. The label 'R.H.' is placed above the first note of the bottom staff.

G6 Gma7 Gm D/F# Bm A6 D/A

thoughts, my in - most in - cli - na - tion, The words I

Detailed description: This system contains the third two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

G D/F# Em7 A F#m/A

speak, the ways I walk, you know them too. You

Detailed description: This system contains the fourth two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

D Em7 Dma7/F# G6 D/F#

saw when I was made in se - cret, My ve - ry

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth two staves of music. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The music consists of chords and eighth notes. The lyrics are written below the top staff.

God's Wondrous Works

Em7 D/F# G6 A Asus4 A D/F#

bones not hid - den from your sight. You saw my

R.H.

G6 Gma7 Gm D/F# Bm A6 D/A

form; its parts were down in writ - ing. I love the

G D/F# Em7 G/A D A/C# D D/F#

won - der of your ways and praise your might. Your knowl - edge,

R.H.

G D/F# G D/F# D A D A/C# D D/F#

God, is won - drous, awe - in - spir - ing; Of this my

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

soul is ve - ry well - a - ware. If I should

God's Wondrous Works

G D/F# G D/F# D A Bm

fear that dark - ness might en - fold me, Your spir - it,

Em Bm/F# G6 Gma7 G6 F# F#/E D Em7 Dma7/F# G6

God, would find me, e - ven there. Where could I hide from you, Je -

D/F# Em7 D/F# G6

ho - vah, Or be con - cealed, be hid - den from your

A Asus4 A D/F# G6 Gma7 Gm

face? Not in the Grave nor in the high - est

D/F# Bm A6 D/A G D/F# Em7 G/A D

heav - en, Not in the dark nor in the sea; there is no place.



Do You Share Jehovah’s Sense of Justice?

“I will declare the name of Jehovah . . . , a God of faithfulness who is never unjust.”—DEUT. 32:3, 4.

IMAGINE the scene. A man is falsely accused of a capital offense. To the shock and dismay of his family and friends, he is convicted on the basis of false testimony presented by witnesses who are known to be good-for-nothing men. A sick feeling overwhelms lovers of justice as they witness the execution of that innocent man and his sons. This is not an imaginary account. This was the experience of a faithful servant of Jehovah named Naboth, who lived during the reign of King Ahab of Israel.—1 Ki. 21:11-13; 2 Ki. 9:26.

² In this article, we will consider not only Naboth’s experience but also that of a faithful elder in the first-century Christian congregation who made an error in judgment. In considering these Bible examples, we will learn that humility is essential if we are to demonstrate that we share Jehovah’s sense of justice. We will also learn how a willingness to forgive when we observe injustices in the congregation can reflect Jehovah’s view of justice.

1, 2. (a) What injustice did Naboth and his sons experience? (b) What two qualities will we consider in this article?

SONGS: 5, 46

HOW WILL REMEMBERING THESE VERSES HELP US IF WE EXPERIENCE INJUSTICE?

Deuteronomy 32:4

1 Peter 5:5

Matthew 6:14

A PERVERSION OF JUSTICE

³ Naboth was faithful to Jehovah at a time when most Israelites were following the bad example of King Ahab and his wife, wicked Queen Jezebel. Those Baal worshippers had no respect for Jehovah or appreciation for his standards. On the other hand, Naboth valued his relationship with Jehovah even more than life itself.

⁴ **Read 1 Kings 21:1-3.** When Ahab offered to purchase Naboth's vineyard or to give him a better vineyard in its place, Naboth refused. Why? He respectfully explained: "It is unthinkable, from Jehovah's standpoint, for me to give you the inheritance of my forefathers." Naboth's refusal was based on Jehovah's law to the nation of Israel that forbade the permanent sale of one's tribal inheritance. (Lev. 25:23; Num. 36:7) Clearly, Naboth had Jehovah's view of matters.

⁵ Sadly, Naboth's refusal triggered a series of reprehensible acts on the part of both King Ahab and his wife. In order to obtain the vineyard for her husband, Jezebel orchestrated the false accusation against Naboth, which resulted in the execution of both Naboth and his sons. How would Jehovah deal with this tragic injustice?

GOD'S RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT

⁶ Jehovah swiftly dispatched Elijah to confront Ahab. Elijah rightly judged

3, 4. What kind of man was Naboth, and why did he refuse to sell his vineyard to King Ahab?

5. What role did Jezebel play in Naboth's murder?

6, 7. How did Jehovah show that he is a lover of justice, and why would this have been of comfort to Naboth's relatives and friends?

Ahab as a murderer and a thief. What was Jehovah's verdict in this case? Ahab, his wife, and his sons would suffer the same fate as did Naboth and his sons.—1 Ki. 21:17-25.

⁷ Although Naboth's family and friends were saddened by Ahab's murderous actions, they no doubt found some measure of comfort in knowing that Jehovah was aware of the injustice and that he quickly addressed the wrongdoing. However, their humility and their trust in Jehovah were likely put to the test by an unexpected turn of events.

⁸ When Ahab learned of Jehovah's adverse judgment, "he ripped his garments apart and put sackcloth on his body; and he went on a fast and kept lying down in sackcloth and walking despondently." Ahab humbled himself! With what result? Jehovah told Elijah: "Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the calamity during his lifetime. I will bring the calamity upon his house in the days of his son." (1 Ki. 21:27-29; 2 Ki. 10:10, 11, 17) Jehovah, "the examiner of hearts," extended a measure of mercy to Ahab.—Prov. 17:3.

HUMILITY—A PROTECTION

⁹ How did this decision affect those who knew of Ahab's terrible crime? This seeming reversal may have tested the faith of Naboth's family and friends. If so, humility would have protected them, prompting them to contin-

8. How did Ahab respond to Jehovah's judgment message, and with what result?

9. Why would humility have been a protection to Naboth's family and friends?

ue faithful in their worship of Jehovah, confident that their God is incapable of injustice. **(Read Deuteronomy 32: 3, 4.)** Naboth, his sons, and their families will experience perfect justice when Jehovah resurrects the righteous ones. (Job 14:14, 15; John 5:28, 29) Furthermore, a humble person remembers that “the true God will judge every deed, including every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad.” (Eccl. 12: 14) Yes, when rendering judgment, Jehovah takes into consideration factors that are unknown to us. Thus, humility protects innocent ones from spiritual disaster.

¹⁰ How will you respond if the elders make a decision that you do not understand or perhaps do not agree with? For example, what will you do if you or someone you love loses a cherished privilege of service? What if your marriage mate, your son or daughter, or your close friend is disfellowshipped and you do not agree with the decision? What if you believe that mercy was mistakenly extended to a wrongdoer? Such situations can test our faith in Jehovah and in his organizational arrangement.

10, 11. (a) Under what circumstances might our personal sense of justice be tested? (b) In what ways will humility protect us?

How will you respond if the elders announce a decision that you do not agree with?
(See paragraphs 10, 11)



How will humility protect you if you face such a test? Consider two ways.

¹¹ First, humility will move us to acknowledge that we do not have all the facts. No matter how much we know of a situation, only Jehovah can read a person's figurative heart. (1 Sam. 16:7) Our awareness of this undeniable truth will prompt us to be humble, to recognize our limitations, and to adjust our view of the matter. Second, humility will help us to be submissive and patient as we wait on Jehovah to correct any true injustice. It is as the wise man wrote: "It will turn out well for those who fear the true God . . . , but it will not turn out well for the wicked one, nor will he prolong his days." (Eccl. 8:12, 13) Certainly, a humble response is in the best spiritual interests of all concerned.—**Read 1 Peter 5:5.**

A CASE OF HYPOCRISY

¹² The first-century Christians in Syrian Antioch faced a situation that tested not only their humility but also their willingness to forgive. Let us consider that account and see how it will help us to examine our attitude about forgiveness and deepen our understanding of how forgiveness relates to Jehovah's view of justice.

¹³ The apostle Peter was a well-known elder in the Christian congregation. He was a personal associate of Jesus and had been entrusted with significant responsibilities. (Matt. 16:19) For example, in 36 C.E., Peter had the privilege

12. What account will we now consider, and why?

13, 14. What privileges did the apostle Peter enjoy, and how did he demonstrate courage?

of sharing the good news with Cornelius and his household. This occasion was noteworthy, since Cornelius was an uncircumcised Gentile. When Cornelius and his household received holy spirit, Peter acknowledged: "Can anyone deny water to prevent these from being baptized who have received the holy spirit just as we have?"—Acts 10:47.

¹⁴ In 49 C.E., the apostles and the elders in Jerusalem met to consider whether circumcision would be required of Gentiles who converted to Christianity. At this meeting, Peter spoke boldly, reminding the brothers that some years earlier, uncircumcised Gentiles had received the gift of the holy spirit. Peter's eyewitness testimony was very helpful to the first-century governing body in making a decision. (Acts 15:6-11, 13, 14, 28, 29) Likely, both Jewish and Gentile Christians appreciated Peter's fearlessness in presenting the facts. How easy it must have been to have confidence in such a spiritually mature man!—Heb. 13:7.

¹⁵ Shortly after the meeting in 49 C.E., Peter visited Syrian Antioch. While there, he freely associated with his Gentile brothers. No doubt, they benefited from Peter's knowledge and experience. We can imagine their surprise and disappointment, though, when Peter suddenly stopped eating with them. Other Jewish members of the congregation, even Barnabas, were wrongly influenced by Peter to do the same. What prompted a mature Christian elder to make such an error in judgment—one that could have divided the congrega-

15. What error did Peter make while in Syrian Antioch? (See opening picture.)

gation? More important, what can we learn from Peter's error that will help us if we are hurt by the words or actions of an elder?

¹⁶ **Read Galatians 2:11-14.** Peter gave in to the snare of fear of man. (Prov. 29:25) Despite his firsthand knowledge of Jehovah's thinking on the matter, Peter feared the opinion of the circumcised Jewish members of the congregation in Jerusalem. The apostle Paul, who was also present at that meeting in Jerusalem in 49 C.E., confronted Peter in Antioch and exposed his hypocrisy. (Acts 15:12; Gal. 2:13, ftn.) How would the Gentile Christians who were personally affected by Peter's mistake respond to the injustice? Would they allow themselves to be stumbled? Would Peter lose precious privileges because of his mistake?

BE FORGIVING

¹⁷ Evidently, Peter humbly accepted Paul's corrective counsel. There is no indication in the Scriptures that he lost his privileges. In fact, he was later inspired to write two letters that became part of the Bible. Notably, in his second letter, Peter refers to Paul as "our beloved brother." (2 Pet. 3:15) Although Peter's error in judgment may have been painful for the Gentile members of the congregation, Jesus, who is head of the congregation, continued to use him. (Eph. 1:22) Members of the congregation thus had an opportunity to imitate Jesus and his Father by extending forgiveness. It is to be hoped

16. How was Peter corrected, and what questions arise?

17. How did Peter benefit from Jehovah's forgiveness?

that no one allowed himself to be stumbled by an imperfect man's mistake.

¹⁸ As was true in the first century, there are no perfect elders in the modern-day Christian congregation, "for we all make mistakes many times." (Jas. 3:2, ftn.) We may readily acknowledge this fact, but the challenge is when we are personally affected by the imperfections of a brother. In such a situation, will we reflect Jehovah's view of justice? For example, how will you respond if an elder makes a remark that hints at a degree of prejudice? Will you allow yourself to be stumbled if an elder thoughtlessly makes a statement that offends or hurts you? Rather than quickly concluding that the brother no longer qualifies as an elder, will you patiently wait on Jesus, the head of the congregation? Will you put forth the effort to see the bigger picture, perhaps reflecting on the brother's many years of faithful service? If a brother who sins against you continues to serve as an elder or even receives additional privileges, will you rejoice with him? Your willingness to forgive may well reflect Jehovah's view of justice.—**Read Matthew 6:14, 15.**

¹⁹ Lovers of justice long for the day when Jehovah will completely erase all the injustice inflicted on humans by Satan and his wicked system. (Isa. 65:17) Until then, may each of us be determined to reflect Jehovah's view of justice by humbly acknowledging our personal limitations and generously forgiving those who sin against us.

18. Under what circumstances may we need to reflect Jehovah's sense of justice?

19. What should be our determination?

We Thank You, Jehovah

(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

E♭ Cm Fm/A♭ B♭ E♭/G A♭ E♭/B♭ B♭/D E♭

We thank you, Je - ho - vah, each day and each night,
 We thank you, Je - ho - vah, for your lov - ing Son,
 We thank you, our God, for the hon - or to preach

Fm/D G7 G Cm Cm7 F7 F B♭/F F7sus4 F7 B♭

That you shed up - on us your pre - cious light.
 Who con - quered the world; by his faith he won.
 A - bout your great name and the truth to teach.

E♭ Cm Fm/A♭ B♭ E♭/G A♭ E♭/B♭ B♭ B♭7 E♭ G7/D Cm

We thank you that we have the priv - 'lege of prayer,
 We thank you for guid - ance in do - ing your will.
 We thank you that soon all earth's woes will be past,

E♭7/B♭ A♭ E♭/G B♭7/F E♭ A♭/C B7b5 E♭/B♭ B♭7 E♭

That we can ap - proach you with ev - 'ry care.
 You lov - ing - ly help us our vows ful - fill.
 While your King - dom bless - ings for - ev - er last.



