

- Song 118 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Prophecy Against Tyre Strengthens Confidence in Jehovah’s Word”: (10 min.)

Eze 26:3, 4—Over 250 years in advance, Jehovah foretold the destruction of Tyre (*si* 133 ¶4)

Eze 26:7-11—Ezekiel named the first nation and its leader to besiege Tyre (*ce* 216 ¶3)

Eze 26:4, 12—Ezekiel foretold that the walls, houses, and soil of Tyre would be thrown into the water (*it*-1 70)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Eze 24:6, 12—What does the rust of the cooking pot represent? (*w07* 7/1 14 ¶2)

Eze 24:16, 17—Why was Ezekiel to display no grief when his wife died? (*w88* 9/15 21 ¶24)

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 25:1-11

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY


- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) Any tract—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- Return Visit: (4 min. or less) Any tract—Introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video *What Happens at a Bible Study?*
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *bh* 23 ¶13-15—Invite the person to the meeting.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 139
- Faith in God’s Word Helps Us to Endure Trials: (15 min.) Discussion based on such scriptures as Isaiah 33:24; 65:21, 22; John 5:28, 29; and Revelation 21:4. Play the video *Appreciating the Benefits of Kingdom Rule* (video category THE BIBLE). Encourage all to imagine themselves in the new world, especially when discouraged by trials.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *kr* chap. 15 ¶29-36, review box on p. 167
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 134 and Prayer

EZEKIEL 24-27 | A Prophecy Against Tyre Strengthens Confidence in Jehovah’s Word

The book of Ezekiel foretold specific details regarding Tyre’s destruction.

 Write your answers in the spaces provided.



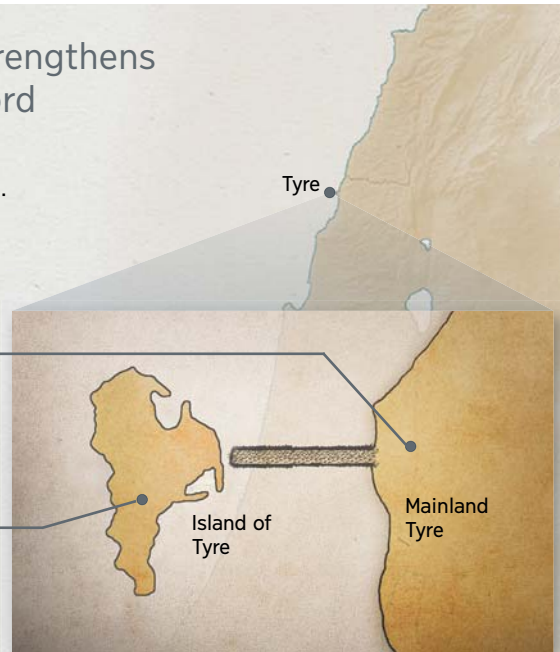
26:7-11

Sometime after 607 B.C.E., destroyed the mainland city of Tyre



26:4, 12

In 332 B.C.E., used the ruins of the mainland city to build a causeway and destroyed the island city of Tyre



What detailed prophecy are you looking forward to seeing fulfilled?

“Give Us More Faith”

(Luke 17:5)

1. Because we are imperfect, O Jehovah,
The inclination of our heart is flawed.
There is a sin that easily ensnares us—
A lack of faith in you, the living God.

(CHORUS)

*Give us more faith, we beg of you, Jehovah.
Please help us out according to our need.
Give us more faith, according to your mercy,
That we may honor you in word and deed.*

2. Apart from faith, no one can fully please you.
We must believe our faith will be repaid.
And as a shield, our faith provides a refuge.
We face the future firm and unafraid.

(Chorus)

Ezekiel 24-27

24 The word of Jehovah again came to me in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, saying: ² “Son of man, record this date, this very day. The king of Babylon has begun his attack against Jerusalem on this very day. ³ And relate a proverb concerning the rebellious house, and say concerning them:

“This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:
“Put the cooking pot on; put it on the fire and pour water into it.

⁴ Put pieces of meat into it, every good piece,
The thigh and the shoulder; fill it with the choicest bones.

⁵ Take the choicest sheep of the flock, and stack the logs all around under the pot.
Boil the pieces, and cook the bones inside it.”

⁶ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

‘Woe to the city of bloodshed, the rusty cooking pot, whose rust has not been removed!
Empty it piece by piece; do not cast lots for them.

⁷ For its blood is within it; she poured it out on the bare rock.

She did not pour it out on the earth, to cover it over with dust.

⁸ To stir up rage for executing vengeance,
I have put her blood on the shining, bare rock
So that it may not be covered over.'

⁹ "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

'Woe to the city of bloodshed!
I will pile the wood high.

¹⁰ Heap on the logs and kindle the fire,
Boil the flesh thoroughly, pour out the broth, and
let the bones be charred.

¹¹ Set the empty pot on the coals to make it hot
So that its copper will become red hot.
Its uncleanness will melt away within it, and its
rust will be consumed.

¹² It is frustrating and exhausting,
For the heavy rust will not come off.
Throw it into the fire with its rust!'

¹³ "Your uncleanness was due to your obscene conduct. I tried to cleanse you, but you would not become clean from your uncleanness. You will not become clean until my rage against you subsides. ¹⁴ I myself, Jehovah, have spoken. It will come to pass. I will act without holding back, without sorrow, without

regret. They will judge you according to your ways and your dealings,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."

¹⁵ And the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: ¹⁶ "Son of man, in a single blow I am about to take away your dear one from you. You should not mourn; nor should you weep or shed tears. ¹⁷ Groan in silence, and do not observe mourning rites for the dead. Bind on your turban, and put on your sandals. You should not cover over the mustache, and do not eat the bread brought to you by others."

¹⁸ And I spoke to the people in the morning, and my wife died in the evening. So I did in the morning just as I had been commanded. ¹⁹ The people were saying to me: "Will you not tell us what these things you are doing have to do with us?" ²⁰ I replied to them: "The word of Jehovah has come to me, saying, ²¹ 'Tell the house of Israel: "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says, 'I am about to profane my sanctuary, the source of your great pride, the thing dear to you and the desire of your heart. Your own sons and daughters whom you left behind will fall by the sword. ²² Then you will have to do just as I have done. You will not cover over your mustache, and you will not eat the bread brought to you by others. ²³ Your turbans will be on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn or weep. Instead, you will rot away in your

errors, and you will groan to one another. ²⁴ Ezekiel has become a sign for you. Just as he has done, you will do. When it happens, you will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.””””

²⁵ “And as for you, son of man, on the day that I take away from them their fortress—the beautiful object of their joy, the thing dear to them, their heart’s desire—along with their sons and daughters, ²⁶ it will be reported to you by one who has escaped. ²⁷ In that day you will open your mouth and speak to the one who escaped, and you will no longer be mute. You will become a sign to them, and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.”

25 The word of Jehovah again came to me, saying:
² “Son of man, turn your face toward the Am'mon-ites, and prophesy against them. ³ You must say concerning the Am'mon-ites, ‘Hear the word of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Because you said ‘Aha!’ against my sanctuary when it was profaned, and against the land of Israel when it was laid desolate, and against the house of Judah when they went into exile, ⁴ therefore I am giving you to the people of the East as a possession. They will set up their encampments within you and pitch their tents among you. They will eat your fruitage, and they will drink your milk. ⁵ I will make Rab'bah a pasture

ground for camels, and the land of the Am'mon-ites a resting-place for the flock; and you will have to know that I am Jehovah.”””

⁶ “For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Because you clapped your hands and stamped your feet and you rejoiced over the land of Israel with such utter scorn, ⁷ therefore I will stretch out my hand against you to give you to the nations as something to plunder. I will cut you off from the peoples and destroy you from the lands. I will annihilate you, and you will have to know that I am Jehovah.’

⁸ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Because Mo'ab and Se'ir have said, “Look! The house of Judah is like all the other nations,” ⁹ I am exposing Mo'ab's flank at his frontier cities, the beauty of his land, Beth-jesh'i-moth, Ba'al-me'on, and clear to Kir-i-a-tha'im. ¹⁰ I will give it along with the Am'mon-ites as a possession to the people of the East, so that the Am'mon-ites will not be remembered among the nations. ¹¹ And I will execute judgment in Mo'ab, and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.’

¹² “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘E'dom has acted vengefully against the house of Judah and has incurred great guilt in taking revenge on them; ¹³ therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “I will also stretch out my hand against

E'dom and cut off from it both man and livestock, and I will make it desolate. From Te'man clear to De'dan, they will fall by the sword. ¹⁴ 'I will take vengeance on E'dom by the hand of my people Israel. They will bring my anger and my wrath on E'dom, so that they experience my own vengeance,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

¹⁵ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Because of their unrelenting hostility, the Phi-lis'tines have maliciously sought to bring vengeance and destruction. ¹⁶ Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Here I am stretching out my hand against the Phi-lis'tines, and I will cut off the Cher'e-thites and will destroy the remaining inhabitants of the seacoast. ¹⁷ I will execute on them great acts of vengeance with furious punishments, and they will have to know that I am Jehovah when I bring my vengeance on them.”””

26 In the 11th year, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: ² “Son of man, because Tyre has said against Jerusalem, ‘Aha! The gateway of the peoples has been broken! Everything will come my way, and I will become rich now that she is devastated’; ³ therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Here I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, just as the

sea brings up its waves. ⁴ They will destroy the walls of Tyre and tear down her towers, and I will scrape away soil and make her a shining, bare rock. ⁵ She will become a drying yard for dragnets in the midst of the sea.'

“For I myself have spoken,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, ‘and she will become plunder for the nations. ⁶ And her settlements in the countryside will be slaughtered by the sword, and people will have to know that I am Jehovah.’

⁷ “For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Here I am bringing King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon against Tyre from the north; he is a king of kings, with horses, war chariots, cavalymen, and an army of many soldiers. ⁸ He will destroy your settlements in the countryside with the sword, and he will build a siege wall and throw up a siege rampart against you and raise up a great shield against you. ⁹ He will pound your walls with his battering ram, and with his axes he will pull down your towers. ¹⁰ His horses will be so many that they will cover you with dust, and the sound of the cavalry, the wheels, and the chariots will cause your walls to shake when he enters your gates, like men storming a city with broken walls. ¹¹ The hooves of his horses will trample down all your streets; he will kill your people with the sword, and your

mighty pillars will crash to the ground. ¹² They will loot your resources, plunder your merchandise, tear down your walls, and pull down your fine houses; then they will throw your stones and your woodwork and your soil into the water.’

¹³ “‘I will put an end to the noise of your songs, and the sound of your harps will be heard no more. ¹⁴ And I will make you a shining, bare rock, and you will become a drying yard for dragnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I myself, Jehovah, have spoken,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

¹⁵ “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says to Tyre: ‘At the sound of your downfall, when the dying ones are groaning, when a slaughter takes place in your midst, will the islands not shudder? ¹⁶ All the princes of the sea will come down from their thrones and remove their robes and strip off their embroidered garments, and they will be seized with trembling. They will sit on the ground and tremble constantly and stare at you in amazement. ¹⁷ And they will sing a dirge over you and say to you:

“How you have perished, you who were
inhabited from the seas, the praised city;
You and your inhabitants were mighty on the
sea,

Spreading terror to all the inhabitants of the earth!

¹⁸ The islands will tremble on the day of your downfall,
The islands of the sea will be disturbed when you are gone.”

¹⁹ “For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘When I devastate you like the cities that are not inhabited, when I overwhelm you with the surging waters and the mighty waters have covered you, ²⁰ I will bring you and those going down into the pit with you to the people of long ago; I will cause you to dwell in the lowest place, like the places of old that have been devastated, together with those going down into the pit, so that you may not be inhabited. Then I will glorify the land of the living.

²¹ “‘I will bring sudden terror upon you, and you will no longer be. They will search for you, but you will never again be found,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

27 The word of Jehovah again came to me, saying:
² “As for you, son of man, sing a dirge over Tyre, ³ and say to Tyre,
‘You who dwell at the gateways of the sea,
The merchant for the peoples of many islands,

This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:
“O Tyre, you yourself have said, ‘I am perfect in
beauty.’

- ⁴ Your territories are in the heart of the sea,
And your builders have perfected your beauty.
- ⁵ They made all your planks from the juniper trees of
Se'nir,
And they took a cedar from Leb'a-non to make a
mast for you.
- ⁶ They made your oars from oaks of Ba'shan,
And your prow was of cypress inlaid with ivory
from the islands of Kit'tim.
- ⁷ Colorful linen from Egypt served as cloth for your
sail,
And your deck awnings were of blue thread and
purple wool from the islands of E-li'shah.
- ⁸ The inhabitants of Si'don and of Ar'vad were your
rowers.
Your own skilled men, O Tyre, were your sailors.
- ⁹ The experienced and skilled men of Ge'bal caulked
your seams.
All the ships of the sea and their mariners came
to you to trade merchandise.
- ¹⁰ Men of Persia, Lud, and Put were in your army,
your men of war.

They hung their shields and helmets in you, and they brought you splendor.

¹¹ The men of Ar'vad in your army were stationed on your walls all around,
And brave men manned your towers.
They hung circular shields all around your walls
And perfected your beauty.

¹² “““Tar'shish did business with you because of your abundant wealth. They exchanged silver, iron, tin, and lead for your goods. ¹³ Ja'van, Tu'bal, and Me'shech traded with you, exchanging slaves and articles of copper for your merchandise. ¹⁴ The house of To-gar'mah exchanged horses and steeds and mules for your goods. ¹⁵ The people of De'dan traded with you; you employed merchants on many islands; they gave ivory tusks and ebony as your tribute. ¹⁶ E'dom did business with you because of the abundance of your products. They gave turquoise, purple wool, colorful embroidery, fine fabric, corals, and rubies in exchange for your goods.

¹⁷ “““Judah and the land of Israel traded with you, giving the wheat of Min'nith, choice foods, honey, oil, and balsam in exchange for your goods.

¹⁸ “““Damascus did business with you because of the abundance of your products and all your wealth,

trading the wine of Hel'bon and wool of Za'har.

¹⁹ Ve'dan and Ja'van from U'zal gave wrought iron, cassia, and cane in exchange for your goods.

²⁰ De'dan traded with you in saddlecloths for riding.

²¹ You employed the Arabs and all the chieftains of Ke'dar, who were merchants of lambs and rams and goats. ²² The merchants of She'ba and Ra'a-mah traded with you; they gave all sorts of the finest perfumes, precious stones, and gold in exchange for your goods. ²³ Ha'ran, Can'neh, E'den, the merchants of She'ba, As'shur, and Chil'mad traded with you. ²⁴ In your marketplace they traded beautiful garments, cloaks made of blue material and colorful embroidery, and multicolored carpets, all bound and secured with ropes.

²⁵ The ships of Tar'shish were the caravans for your merchandise,
So that you were filled and loaded down in the heart of the open sea.

²⁶ Your rowers have brought you into heavy seas;
The east wind has wrecked you in the heart of the open sea.

²⁷ Your wealth, your goods, your merchandise, your mariners, and your sailors,
Those caulking your seams, those trading your merchandise, and all the men of war

—The entire multitude within you—
They will all sink in the heart of the open sea on
the day of your downfall.

²⁸ When your sailors cry out, the coastlands will
shudder.

²⁹ All the oarsmen, the mariners, and the seamen
Will come down from their ships and stand on
the land.

³⁰ They will raise their voices and cry out bitterly over
you
As they throw dust on their heads and wallow in
ashes.

³¹ They will make themselves bald and put on
sackcloth;
They will weep bitterly over you with intense
wailing.

³² In their lamentation they will sing a dirge and chant
over you:
'Who is like Tyre, now silent in the midst of the
sea?

³³ When your goods came in from the open sea, you
satisfied many peoples.
Your abundant wealth and your merchandise
enriched earth's kings.

- 34 Now you have been wrecked in the open sea, in
the deep waters,
And all your merchandise and your people have
sunk with you.
- 35 All the inhabitants of the islands will stare at you in
amazement,
And their kings will shudder with horror—their
faces will be troubled.
- 36 The merchants among the nations will whistle over
what happened to you.
Your end will be sudden and terrible,
And you will cease to exist for all time.””””

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- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

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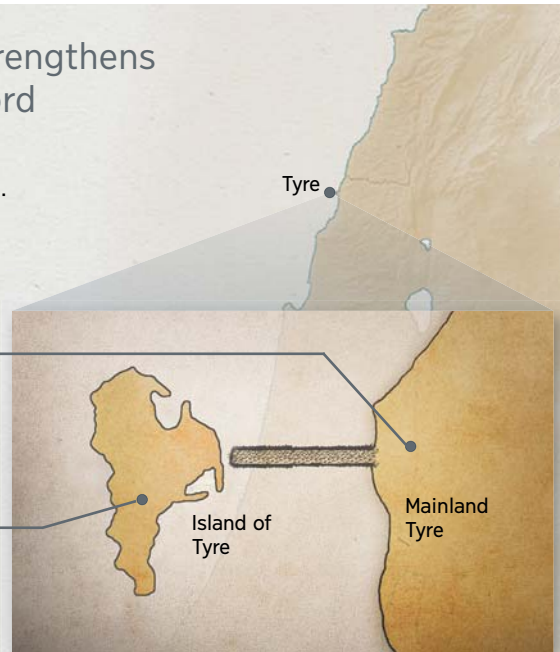
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What detailed prophecy are you looking forward to seeing fulfilled?

July 31–August 6

Treasures From God's Word

Ezekiel 26:3, 4—Over 250 years in advance, Jehovah foretold the destruction of Tyre

Reference: *si* 133 **paragraph 4**.

Further proof of authenticity is to be found in the dramatic fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecies against neighboring nations, such as Tyre, Egypt, and Edom. For example, Ezekiel prophesied that Tyre would be devastated, and this was partly fulfilled when Nebuchadnezzar took the city after a siege of 13 years. (**Ezekiel 26:2-21**) This conflict did not mean the complete end for Tyre. However, Jehovah's judgment was that it should be totally destroyed. He had foretold through Ezekiel: "I will scrape her dust away from her and make her a shining, bare surface of a crag. . . . Your stones and your woodwork and your dust they will place in the very midst of the water." (**26:4, 12**) This was all fulfilled more than 250 years later when Alexander the Great moved against the island city of Tyre. Alexander's soldiers scraped up all the debris of the ruined mainland city and threw it into the sea, making a half-mile [**800 meters**] causeway out to the island city. Then, with an intricate siegework, they scaled the 150-foot-high [**46 meters**] walls to take the city in 332 B.C.E. Thousands were killed, and many more were sold

into slavery. As Ezekiel had also predicted, Tyre became the 'bare surface of a crag and a drying yard for dragnets.' (26:14) On the other side of the Promised Land, the treacherous Edomites were also annihilated, in fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy. (25:12, 13; 35:2-9) And, of course, Ezekiel's prophecies about the destruction of Jerusalem and Israel's restoration also proved to be accurate.—17:12-21; 36:7-14.

Ezekiel 26:7-11—Ezekiel named the first nation and its leader to besiege Tyre

Reference: ce 216 **paragraph 3**.

Tyre was a prominent seaport of Phoenicia that had dealt treacherously with ancient Israel, her southern neighbor that worshiped Jehovah. Through a prophet named Ezekiel, Jehovah foretold its complete destruction over 250 years before it happened. Jehovah declared: "I will bring up against you many nations . . . And they will certainly bring the walls of Tyre to ruin and tear down her towers, and I will scrape her dust away from her and make her a shining, bare surface of a crag. A drying yard for dragnets is what she will become in the midst of the sea." Ezekiel also named in advance the first nation and its leader to besiege Tyre: "Here I am bringing against Tyre Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon."—**Ezekiel 26:3-5, 7**.

Ezekiel 26:4, 12—Ezekiel foretold that the walls, houses, and soil of Tyre would be thrown into the water

Reference: *it-1* 70.

Instead of pursuing the fleeing Persians after two decisive victories in Asia Minor (the first at the Granicus River; the second on the Plain of Issus, where a great Persian army estimated at half a million met utter defeat), Alexander turned his attention to the island city of Tyre. Centuries earlier it had been foretold that the walls, towers, houses, and the very dust of Tyre would be pitched into the sea. (**Ezekiel 26:4, 12**) It is, therefore, quite significant that Alexander took the rubble of the mainland city destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar some years before and built with it an 800-meter (0.5 miles) causeway out to the island city. The pounding by his navy and engines of war destroyed that proud mistress of the sea in July 332 B.C.E.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Ezekiel 24:6, 12—What does the rust of the cooking pot represent?

Reference: *w07* 7/1 14 **paragraph 2**.

Jerusalem under siege is likened to a widemouthed cooking

pot. Its rust represents the moral filth of the city—the uncleanness, loose conduct, and bloodshed for which she is responsible. So great is her uncleanness that even standing the pot empty upon its coals and making it very hot fails to remove the rust.

Ezekiel 24:16, 17—Why was Ezekiel to display no grief when his wife died?

Reference: w88 9/15 21 **paragraph 24**.

Next, Ezekiel was to act in an unusual way. (Read Ezekiel 24:15-18.) Why was the prophet to display no grief when his wife died? To show how stunned the Jews would be at the destruction of Jerusalem, her inhabitants, and the temple. Ezekiel had already said enough about such matters and would not speak God’s message again until Jerusalem’s downfall was reported to him. Similarly, Christendom and her hypocritical religionists will be stunned at the time of their destruction. And after the “great tribulation” begins, what the anointed watchman class had already said about her end will be enough. (Matthew 24:21) But when God’s “sword” descends upon Christendom, such stunned religionists and others ‘will have to know that he is Jehovah.’—Ezekiel 24:19-27.

the event and caused an accurate record thereof to be made. As God directed his work then, so he can direct it now. This would show to the Ezekiel class, namely, God's faithful witnesses, that Jehovah wants his people to note, mark and make a record of the time that he begins to express his wrath against antitypical Jerusalem, that is to say, against Christendom. This exact date is fixed by the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ to the temple of God for judgment, and which time the Scriptures clearly fix as in the spring of 1918, or three and one-half years after Jehovah installed his beloved Son as King.

At the time of the coming of Christ Jesus to the temple of God, and therefore at the beginning of the expression of Jehovah's wrath, Christendom or "organized Christianity" was rebellious, and there was rebellion on the part of others who had been calling themselves members of the house of God. Jehovah directed Ezekiel to speak a parable, which parable relates to his rebellious house: "And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, Set on a pot, set it on, and also pour water into it." (24:3-5) This parable was uttered as a further illustration of Jehovah's judgment against the rebellious people and of his purpose to execute it. It is a parable that possesses its own peculiar features, and is profitable now for study, admonition and application.

The "pot", mentioned in verses three to five of the prophecy, and by the *Revised Version* called a "caldron", is symbolic of the unfaithful organization, both the typical and the antitypical. The sixth verse describes the organization as a "bloody city": "Where-

fore thus saith the Lord God, Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum is therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it." The organization is found and pronounced guilty by the great Judge, and guilty of exploiting and making prey of the poor and weak and defenseless amongst the inhabitants.

As a pot is used to boil or roast flesh, so this fitly describes the bloody organization which has 'boiled' and 'roasted' the poor and defenseless. The rulers mentioned are the chief ones in Israel, and they did that very thing concerning the peoples of Israel. Concerning them the Lord said: "And I said, Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know judgment? Who hate the good, and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones: who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them; and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron." (Mic. 3:1-3) It appears to be a fixed habit of the unfaithful clergy at all times to do this very thing. Jesus said of them: "For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers." (Matt. 23:4) The cruel operations practiced by the leaders in Israel had greatly befouled their "pot", or organization, with scum and blood which testified against them. Silent witnesses they were, but such as stood firm without contradiction. There was no answer to their testimony. The scum and blood upon the sides of her "pot" Israel could not remove; that is to say, the wicked rulers in

Jerusalem could not wipe out or remove the evidence against them. God will remove it by his fiery judgments, however; therefore he said: "With fraud hath she wearied (the poor); therefore shall not go forth from her the greatness of her scum: through fire shall her scum (be removed)."—24:12, *Leeser*.

By following the direction which Jehovah gave, Eze-kiel performed the parable; and after making the pot boil he removed everything from it, leaving the pot entirely empty, except for its scum or rust remaining on the sides thereof. The evidence abundantly proves that the bloody city of Jerusalem was a type of the bloody organization of Christendom; and the physical facts that have come to pass stand boldly out as witnesses against Christendom at this time. A few of these facts are here considered.

OPPRESSIONS

The nation that is the head of the seventh world power, and therefore the head of so-called "Christendom", has at all times been a government of arrogance and oppression. Its princes and rulers have been haughty, austere, and holding themselves above the common people, and acting as oppressors of the common people. Because of its cruel oppression of its citizens, and because of the love of liberty by such citizens, many of them fled from England and took refuge in the wilds of the American continent. In the course of years these American colonies grew in number and wealth and power, but in all that time the few ruled and controlled. These princes or rulers reaped the fruits of the poor man's labor. Although they had fled from oppression, the rulers continued to practice

- Song 118 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Prophecy Against Tyre Strengthens Confidence in Jehovah’s Word”: (10 min.)

Eze 26:3, 4—Over 250 years in advance, Jehovah foretold the destruction of Tyre (*si* 133 ¶14)

Eze 26:7-11—Ezekiel named the first nation and its leader to besiege Tyre (*ce* 216 ¶3)

Eze 26:4, 12—Ezekiel foretold that the walls, houses, and soil of Tyre would be thrown into the water (*it*-1 70)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Eze 24:6, 12—What does the rust of the cooking pot represent? (*w07* 7/1 14 ¶2)

Eze 24:16, 17—Why was Ezekiel to display no grief when his wife died? (*w88* 9/15 21 ¶24)

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 25:1-11

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY


- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) Any tract—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- Return Visit: (4 min. or less) Any tract—Introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video *What Happens at a Bible Study?*
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *bh* 23 ¶13-15—Invite the person to the meeting.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 139
- Faith in God’s Word Helps Us to Endure Trials: (15 min.) Discussion based on such scriptures as Isaiah 33:24; 65:21, 22; John 5:28, 29; and Revelation 21:4. Play the video *Appreciating the Benefits of Kingdom Rule* (video category THE BIBLE). Encourage all to imagine themselves in the new world, especially when discouraged by trials.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *kr* chap. 15 ¶29-36, review box on p. 167
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 134 and Prayer

EZEKIEL 24-27 | A Prophecy Against Tyre Strengthens Confidence in Jehovah’s Word

The book of Ezekiel foretold specific details regarding Tyre’s destruction.

 Write your answers in the spaces provided.



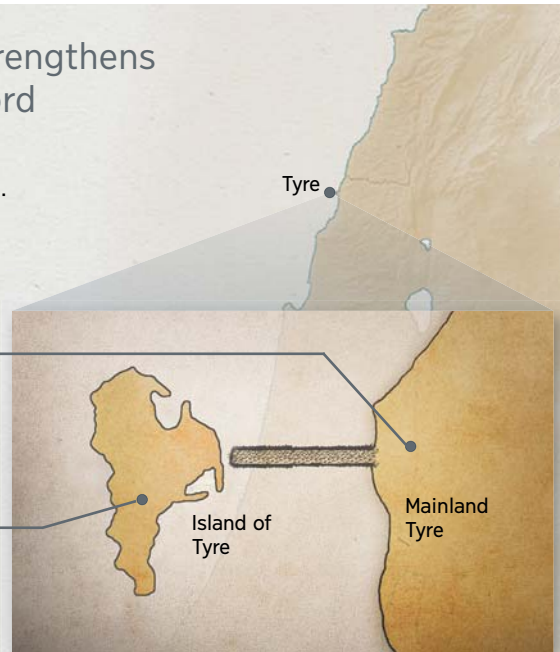
26:7-11

Sometime after 607 B.C.E., destroyed the mainland city of Tyre



26:4, 12

In 332 B.C.E., used the ruins of the mainland city to build a causeway and destroyed the island city of Tyre



What detailed prophecy are you looking forward to seeing fulfilled?

A BOOK OF PROPHECY

¹³ The Bible contains numerous prophecies, many of which have already been fulfilled. Consider an example. Through the prophet Isaiah, who lived in the eighth century B.C.E., Jehovah foretold that the city of Babylon would be destroyed. (Isaiah 13:19; 14:22, 23) Details were given to show just *how* the city would be conquered. Invading armies would dry up Babylon's river and march into the city without a battle. That is not all. Isaiah's prophecy even named the king who would conquer Babylon—Cyrus.—**Read Isaiah 44:27–45:2.**

¹⁴ Some 200 years later—on the night of October 5/6, 539 B.C.E.—an army encamped near Babylon. Who was its commander? A Persian king named Cyrus. The stage was thus set for the fulfillment of an amazing prophecy. But would the army of Cyrus invade Babylon without a battle, as foretold?

¹⁵ The Babylonians were holding a festival that night and felt secure behind their massive city walls. Meanwhile, Cyrus cleverly diverted the water of the river that flowed through the city. Soon the water was shallow enough for his men to cross the riverbed and approach the walls of the city. But how would Cyrus' army get past Babylon's walls? For some reason, on that night the doors to the city were carelessly left open!

139 *See Yourself When All Is New* (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. Just see yourself, just see me too;
 Just see us all in a world that is new.
Think how you'll feel, how it will be,
 To live in peace, to be truly free.
No evil one will then prevail;
 Rule by our God cannot ever fail.
The time will have come for a new earthly start,
 The song of our praises
 will pour out from our heart:

(CHORUS)

*"We thank you, our God, for all you have done.
All things are new by the rule of your Son.
The fullness of our heart overflows in our song;
All glory and honor and praise to you belong."*

2. Now see yourself, and see me too;
 And look ahead to a world that is new.
No sight we see, no sound we hear
 Will cause alarm or give rise to fear.
All has come true, just as he said;
 Now over mankind, his tent is spread.
He now will awaken those sleeping in death;
 Their voices will join ours with
 ev'ry grateful breath:

(Chorus)

(See also Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:17; John 5:28; 2 Pet. 3:13.)

- Song 118 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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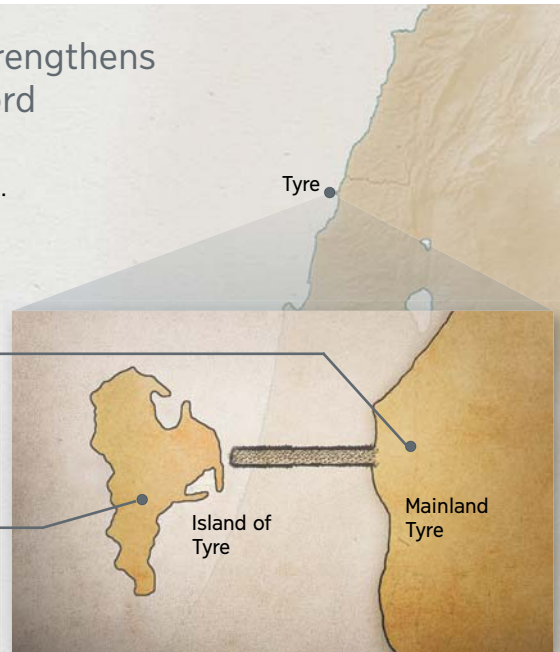
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What detailed prophecy are you looking forward to seeing fulfilled?

right there.” Her attorney, aided by Jehovah’s organization, appealed to the Supreme Court of Ohio.

²⁸ The court disagreed with the decision of the lower court, stating that “parents have a fundamental right to educate their children, including the right to communicate their moral and religious values.” The court stated that unless it could be shown that the religious values endorsed by Jehovah’s Witnesses would harm the physical and mental well-being of the child, the court had no right to restrict a parent’s custody rights on the basis of religion. The court found no proof that the Witnesses’ religious beliefs would adversely affect the mental or physical health of the child.

²⁹ **Denmark.** Anita Hansen found herself facing a similar challenge when her former husband petitioned a court to gain custody of seven-year-old Amanda. Although the district court granted custody to Sister Hansen in 2000, Amanda’s father appealed to the high court, which overturned the district court’s ruling and granted him custody. The

29-31. Why did a sister in Denmark lose custody of her daughter, and what did Denmark’s Supreme Court decide in the matter?

high court reasoned that because the parents had conflicting views of life based on their religious beliefs, the father would be in a better position to address those conflicts. Essentially, then, Sister Hansen lost custody of Amanda because of being one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

³⁰ Throughout this difficult ordeal, Sister Hansen was at times so distraught that she did not know what to pray for. "But," she relates, "the thoughts in Romans 8:26 and 27 were of great comfort. I always felt that Jehovah understood what I meant. He had his eye on me and was always there for me."—**Read Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 41:10.**

³¹ Sister Hansen appealed to the Supreme Court of Denmark. In its ruling, the Court stated: "The question about custody shall be decided on a concrete assessment of what will be in the best interests of the child." Further, the Court held that a decision about custody should rest on the way each parent handles conflicts, not on the basis of the "doctrines and positions" of Jehovah's Witnesses. To Sister Hansen's great relief, the Court recognized her fitness as a parent and returned the custody of Amanda to her.

³² **Various countries in Europe.** In some cases, legal controversies regarding custody of children have gone beyond the highest national courts. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has considered this issue as well. In two cases, the ECHR acknowledged that lower, national courts had treated Witness and non-Witness parents differently simply on the basis of religion. Calling such treatment discriminatory, the ECHR has ruled that “a distinction based essentially on a difference in religion alone is not acceptable.” One Witness mother who benefited from such a decision of the ECHR expressed relief and said, “It hurt so much to be accused of harming my children, when all I was trying to do was give them what I thought was best for them—a Christian upbringing.”

³³ Of course, Witness parents facing legal challenges to their right to instill Bible standards in their children’s hearts strive to show a spirit of reasonableness. **(Read Philippians 4:5.)** Just as they appreciate having the right to train their children in God’s

32. How has the European Court of Human Rights protected Witness parents against discrimination?

33. How might Witness parents apply the principle of Philippians 4:5?

way, so they acknowledge that the non-Witness parent, if he or she chooses, shares the parental responsibilities. How seriously does a Witness parent take the responsibility to train a child?

³⁴ An example from Nehemiah's day is instructive. The Jews worked hard to repair and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. They knew that doing so would protect them and their families from the enemy nations surrounding them. For that reason, Nehemiah urged them: "Fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes." (Neh. 4:14) For those Jews, the fight was worth every effort. Likewise today, parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses work hard to raise their children in the way of the truth. They know that their children are bombarded by unwholesome influences at school and in the neighborhood. Such influences may even creep into the home environment through the media. Parents, never forget that it is worth every effort to fight for your sons and daughters so as to provide a secure environment in which they will flourish spiritually.

34. How can Christian parents today benefit from the example of the Jews in Nehemiah's day?

Be Confident in Jehovah's Support of True Worship

³⁵ Jehovah has surely blessed the efforts of his modern-day organization in the fight for the right to worship freely. In pressing such legal issues, God's people have often been able to give a powerful witness in court and to the public at large. (Rom. 1:8) A side benefit of their many legal victories is that they have reinforced the civil rights of many non-Witnesses. However, as God's people, we are not social reformers; nor are we interested in self-vindication. Above all, Jehovah's Witnesses have pursued their legal rights in the courts in an effort to establish and advance pure worship.—**Read Philip-
pians 1:7.**

³⁶ May we never take for granted the lessons of faith we can learn from those who have fought for the freedom to worship Jehovah! Let us remain faithful as well, confident that Jehovah is supporting our work and continues to give us the strength to do his will.—Isa. 54:17.

35, 36. What benefits have come to Jehovah's Witnesses as a result of our fighting for our legal rights, and what is your determination?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How have some governments tried to limit basic Christian freedoms, and with what result?
- In what ways have Jehovah's Witnesses fought for the right to reject blood transfusions, and how has God blessed their efforts?
- What have opposers sometimes tried to do regarding the children of Witness parents in the wake of divorce?
- What leads you to believe that God's Kingdom is behind our record of legal victories?

134 *Children Are a Trust From God*

(Psalm 127:3-5)

1. When a man becomes a father

And a woman has a child of her own,
They share a trust, they must remember,
That is not theirs, not theirs alone.
The gift they share is from Jehovah;
Of life and love he is the one true Source.
To parents he gives sure direction
That they may follow the wisest course.

(CHORUS)

*A sacred trust you have been given;
A precious life is in your hands.
You can bestow the greatest favor;
Instruct your child in God's commands.*

2. All the words God has commanded—

They must always prove to be on your heart.
These words you'll speak to sons and daughters;
This is your trust, this is your part.
To them you'll speak along your roadway,
When you rise up and when you are at rest.
In years to come, may they remember,
May they be faithful, may they be blessed.

(Chorus)

JUNE 2017

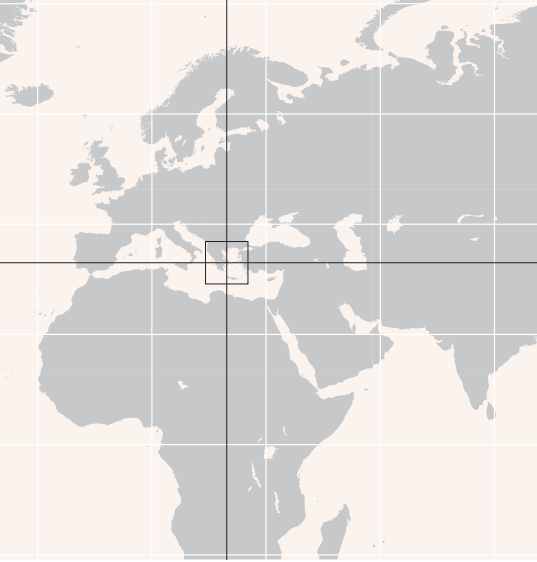
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 31–AUGUST 27, 2017

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

GREECE

Greek families in the Athens area practice Kingdom songs during a Christian gathering

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Though we all face trials and tribulations, Jehovah provides the comfort we need. This article reviews vital provisions that we can use to receive true comfort now and in the future.

16 WEEK OF AUGUST 7-13

Set Your Heart on Spiritual Treasures

This article will help us to apply a lesson that Jesus taught in the illustration about a merchant seeking pearls. It will also help us to analyze our personal view of the lifesaving ministry that Christians have been assigned and the truths that we have learned over the years.

33 *Throw Your Burden on Jehovah*

(Psalm 55)

1. "Listen to my prayer," Jehovah.
Let yourself be found by me.
Feel the anguish deep inside me;
Help me unafraid to be.

(CHORUS)

*Throw your burden on Jehovah;
Trust in him to sustain and save you.
He will always give protection.
He is loyal; he is true.*

2. Had I wings just as a dove has,
Far from danger I would fly,
Safe from those who seek to hurt me,
Sheltered from their hateful cry.

(Chorus)

3. Comfort from our God, Jehovah,
Always brings us peace of mind.
He will help us bear our burden.
He is loving; he is kind.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
33, 41

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

Why can we expect that marriage and family life will involve some trials?

How did prayer prove to be of comfort to some mentioned in the Bible?

What can you do to provide comfort to others?

Jehovah Provides Comfort in All Our Trials

“The God of all comfort . . . comforts us in all our trials.”—2 COR. 1:3, 4.

A **YOUNG** single brother, whom we will call Eduardo, spoke of his concerns with Stephen, an older married elder. Eduardo had been thinking about what we read at

1, 2. How does Jehovah comfort us in our trials, and what assurance does his Word provide?

1 Corinthians 7:28: “Those who [marry] will have tribulation in their flesh.” He asked, “What is this ‘tribulation,’ and how would I deal with it if I marry?” Before addressing that question, Stephen asked Eduardo to consider something else that the apostle Paul wrote, namely, that Jehovah is “the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials [“tribulation,” *ftn.*].”—2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

² Jehovah is indeed a loving Father, and he comforts us when we face difficulties. You may personally have had experiences in which God provided you with support and guidance, often through his Word. We can be sure that he wants the best for us, as he did for his servants in the past.—Read Jeremiah 29:11, 12.

³ Understandably, we are in a better position to cope if we can identify the causes of our problems or tribulations. And that is true of tribulation related to married life or to family life. What, then, are some of the realities that may bring on the ‘tribulation in the flesh’ that Paul mentioned? What examples from both Bible times and our time can help us to find the comfort we need? Knowing this will help us to cope.

3. What questions will we address?

TRIALS—‘TRIBULATION IN THE FLESH’

⁴ We can read what God said near the start of human history: “A man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Gen. 2:24) Jehovah said that when he performed the first human marriage. Yet, under imperfect conditions, getting married and setting up a new household can strain family relationships. (Rom. 3:23) Usually, parental authority is being replaced by the authority of the husband. God authorizes him to exercise headship over his wife. (1 Cor. 11:3) Some new husbands and wives do not find this to be easy. According to God’s Word, a wife is to accept that she will be directed by her husband rather than by her parents. Relationships with in-laws may become strained and cause tribulation for the newlyweds.

⁵ New anxieties often surface after a wife announces to her husband, “We are going to have a baby.” Usually, a couple’s joy over their prospective child is tinged with some apprehension about medical issues that may arise during the pregnancy or later. And there will be an economic impact to consider, both immediate and long-term. More adjust-

4, 5. What are some causes of ‘tribulation in the flesh’?

ments become necessary when the baby arrives. The new mother's time and attention may be focused on caring for her child. Many a husband has felt left out because his wife is occupied with her duties toward their baby. On the other hand, a new father has new responsibilities to shoulder. His duties increase because he has a new family member to care for and provide for.

⁶ A different sort of tribulation confronts some married couples. They desperately want children but remain childless. When the wife does not become pregnant, she may feel much emotional distress. Neither marriage nor childbearing guarantees freedom from cares, yet an unfulfilled desire for children is in its own way a 'tribulation in the flesh.' (Prov. 13:12) In Bible times, barrenness often carried a stigma. Rachel, Jacob's wife, expressed anguish at seeing her sister have children. (Gen. 30: 1, 2) Missionaries serving in lands where it is customary to have large families are often asked why they do not have children. Despite their logical and tactful explanation, the reaction may be, "Oh, we will pray for you!"

⁷ Or consider the case of a sister in England who very much wanted a child but whose hopes in that

6-8. How can an unfulfilled desire to have children cause distress?

regard had not been fulfilled. Then she entered the change of life. She admitted that she felt devastated, for she realized that her desire would not be satisfied in this system of things. She and her husband decided to adopt a child. Nonetheless, she said: “I still went through a sort of grieving process. I knew that adoption would not be exactly the same as giving birth to my own child.”

⁸ The Bible does mention a Christian woman’s being “kept safe through childbearing.” (1 Tim. 2:15) But this does not mean that giving birth or having children results in gaining everlasting life. Rather, it refers to the fact that a woman’s having children to tend to, along with the other aspects of caring for a household, may keep her from falling into a pattern of gossiping and meddling in others’ affairs. (1 Tim. 5:13) However, she may still face tribulations linked to marriage and family life.

⁹ When referring to tribulations associated with marriage, there is one that may not readily come to mind. The death of a loved one. Yes, a distinct trial that many have faced is that of losing a beloved marriage mate in death. This is a trial that the survivor may not have expected to face in this system of things. Christians firmly believe Jesus’ promise

9. How is losing a marriage mate in death a distinct trial?

of a coming resurrection. (John 5:28, 29) What does that prospect do for the surviving mate? It offers a considerable amount of comfort. This is another way that our loving Father, through his Word, offers support and comfort to those experiencing tribulation. Let us now consider how some servants of God have felt—and benefited from—the comfort that Jehovah provides.

COMFORT WHEN WE FACE TRIALS

¹⁰ Hannah, a beloved wife of Elkanah, faced a particular trial. She remained barren while Elkanah's other wife, Peninnah, produced offspring. (Read 1 Samuel 1:4-7.) Hannah was taunted by Peninnah "year after year." That caused Hannah great anguish and distress. She sought relief by taking the matter to Jehovah in prayer. Indeed, "she prayed for a long time before Jehovah." Did she expect Jehovah to grant her request? She must have hoped so. In any event, "her face was no longer downcast." (1 Sam. 1:12, 17, 18) She trusted that Jehovah would either put an end to her barrenness or fill the lack in some other way.

10. How did Hannah find relief from distress? (See opening picture.)

¹¹ Trials and tribulations will continue as long as we are imperfect and are in this system under Satan’s control. (1 John 5:19) How good it is to know, though, that Jehovah is “the God of all comfort”! One way that we can receive help to deal with our personal trials or tribulations is through prayer.

11. How can prayer provide us with comfort?

How can a person cope with
the loss of a loved one?
(See paragraphs 9, 12)



Hannah poured out her heart to Jehovah. Similarly, in the face of tribulation, we need to do more than simply *mention* to Jehovah how we feel. We need to *supplicate* him, yes, to convey our feelings by praying intensely from the heart.—Phil. 4:6, 7.

¹² Even if we feel a deep void in our life—whether

12. What helped the widow Anna to find joy?



from childlessness or from the death of a loved one—we can still gain comfort. In Jesus' day, the prophetess Anna lost her husband after only seven years of marriage. The Bible account makes no mention of any children. What was Anna still doing at 84 years of age? Luke 2:37 states: "She was never missing from the temple, rendering sacred service night and day with fasting and supplications." Yes, Anna found comfort as well as joy in worshipping Jehovah.

¹³ When we associate closely with our brothers and sisters, we find true friends and close companions. (Prov. 18:24) Paula recalls how sad she felt at the age of five when her mother fell away from the truth. Overcoming this trial was not easy. But she was greatly encouraged when Ann, a pioneer sister in the congregation, took a keen personal interest in her spiritual welfare. "Even though Ann was not related to me, I found her loving concern to be such a help," Paula explains. "It helped me to keep serving Jehovah." Paula continues to serve faithfully. She is also very happy to be once again serving alongside her mother in the congregation. Ann too

13. Give an example of how true friends can bring comfort even when close relatives fail to do so.

is happy, for she has been like a spiritual mother to Paula.

¹⁴ Interestingly, when we show loving personal interest in others, we may actually let go of some of our own negative feelings. Sisters, married or unmarried, know for a fact that they find great joy in sharing the good news as fellow workers with God. Their goal is to honor God by doing his will. Some even view their participation in the ministry as therapy. Certainly, all of us contribute to a close bond in the congregation when we show concern for others, those in our territory and those in the congregation. (Phil. 2:4) The apostle Paul was a fine example. He became like “a nursing mother” to those in the Thessalonian congregation; he was also like a spiritual father.—Read 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11, 12.

COMFORT IN THE FAMILY

¹⁵ One area that merits attention is the comfort and help we offer to families. On occasion, new ones ask mature publishers to help them teach their children the truth, even to conduct a Bible study with the youngsters. Scripturally, the primary

14. Those who give comfort can experience what blessings?

15. Who are primarily responsible for teaching young ones the truth?

responsibility to teach and train young ones lies with the parents. (Prov. 23:22; Eph. 6:1-4) In some cases help from others is needed and much appreciated. Yet, that does not negate the parents' responsibility. Their regular communication in the family is essential.

¹⁶ If a parent decides to have someone study with the children, the one who does so should not try to take over the role of the parents. There have been instances when a Witness was asked to study with children whose parents were not interested in the truth. The Witness needs to bear in mind, though, that in providing spiritual help, he or she does not become the children's parent. And if such a study is conducted, it would be wise to do so either in the children's home with the parents or another mature Witness around or in a suitable public area. Thus no one would have a basis to misconstrue what is occurring. It is to be hoped that the parents will, in time, fulfill their God-given responsibility to care spiritually for their children.

¹⁷ Young ones who learn to love the true God and to follow his counsel can become a source of comfort in a family. They can do so by showing respect

16. In helping children, what should be borne in mind?

17. How can children become a source of comfort?

for their parents and by helping in material ways. They can also make a valuable spiritual contribution. Before the Flood, Seth's descendant Lamech worshipped Jehovah. That family man said of his son Noah: "[He] will bring us comfort from our labor and from the painful toil of our hands because of the ground that Jehovah has cursed." That prophecy was fulfilled when the curse on the ground was lifted. (Gen. 5:29; 8:21) On a more personal level, children who pursue true worship can prove to be sources of comfort in their families, helping all to endure present trials and then to survive something greater than the Flood.

¹⁸ Prayer, meditation on examples found in the Bible, and close association with Jehovah's people are helping millions right now to gain comfort in all their trials. (Read Psalm 145:18, 19.) Knowing that Jehovah is the Source of lasting comfort will surely help us to endure courageously whatever tribulations we face—now and in the future.

18. What can help us to endure courageously despite any tribulations or trials we face?

Please Hear My Prayer

(Psalm 54)

1. Heavenly Father, please hear my song.
You are my God; to you I belong.
Great is your name, beyond all compare.

(CHORUS)

Gracious Jehovah, please hear my prayer.

2. Thank you, O God, for granting this day,
Giving me life, and showing the way.
How I delight in your tender care.

(Chorus)

3. Oh, how I long to do what is right!
Help me, O Lord, to walk in the light.
Give me the strength all burdens to bear.

(Chorus)

PARKS DEPT.

De Montfort Hall and Gardens

Hear JUDGE
RUTHERFORD

SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 6th at 3pm

**"COMFORT ALL
THAT MOURN"**

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7th at 11am

"CHILDREN OF THE KING"
FREE All Persons of Good-Will Welcome

Hear JUDGE
RUTHERFORD

SATURDAY SEPT. 6th 3pm

**"COMFORT ALL
THAT MOURN"**

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 7th 11am
"CHILDREN OF THE KING"
FREE All Persons of Good-Will Welcome

