

- Song 136 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Jehovah Rewarded a Pagan Nation”:** (10 min.)  
Eze 29:18—King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon obtained no reward for his difficult conquest of Tyre (*it-2* 1136 ¶4)  
Eze 29:19—King Nebuchadnezzar received Egypt as spoil in place of Tyre (*it-1* 698 ¶5)  
Eze 29:20—Jehovah rewarded the Babylonians because they had acted in his behalf (*g86* 11/8 27 ¶4-5)
  - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Eze 28:12-19—How did the course taken by Tyre’s rulers resemble that of Satan? (*it-2* 604 ¶4-5)
- Eze 30:13, 14—How was this prophecy fulfilled? (*w03* 7/1 32 ¶1-3)

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 29:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Encourage publishers to include current events in their presentations and to make good use of the video *Would You Like Good News?* when offering the *Good News* brochure.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 120
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb17* 35-36)
- **“Cultivate Godly Qualities—Humility”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Pride*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* pp. 168-169, chap. 16 ¶1-5, boxes on pp. 175-177
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 93 and Prayer

**Cultivate Godly Qualities—Humility**

**WHY IMPORTANT:**

- Humility leads to a close relationship with Jehovah.—Ps 138:6
- Humility promotes good relationships with others.—Php 2:3, 4
- Pride is destructive.—Pr 16:18; Eze 28:17

**HOW TO DO IT:**

- Ask for counsel and apply it.—Ps 141:5; Pr 19:20
- Readily perform menial tasks for others.—Mt 20:25-27
- Do not allow skills or privileges to inflate your ego.—Ro 12:3

In what ways can I show humility to a greater degree?



**WATCH THE VIDEO AVOID WHAT ERODES LOYALTY—PRIDE, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

What does our response to counsel reveal about our attitude?

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How does prayer help us to cultivate humility?

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What are some ways to demonstrate humility?

**BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION:** Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he humbly served others.—Mt 20:28; Joh 13:3-5, 14, 15.

**Ask yourself,** ‘How can I imitate Jesus’ humility?’

# 136 “A Perfect Wage” From Jehovah

(Ruth 2:12)

1. Jehovah is faithful and fully aware  
Of all those who serve him whole-souled.  
He knows there are times their devotion and zeal  
Result in their loss as foretold.  
If you have left houses or fam'ly or friends,  
Be sure that our God knows the sum.  
He makes it up now with our dear brotherhood  
And life in the new world to come.

*(CHORUS)*

*May Jehovah reward what you have done.  
May he provide a perfect wage for you.  
May you find refuge beneath his wings.  
Jehovah is faithful; Jehovah is true.*

2. At times we may feel that our lot in this life  
Has burdened us more than our share.  
And sometimes it seems that the cares of the day  
Are more than we're able to bear.  
The God of all comfort takes note of your need;  
You know he's the Hearer of prayer.  
His Word and his spirit and true, loving friends  
Will bring to you comfort and care.

*(Chorus)*

## Ezekiel 28-31

**28** The word of Jehovah again came to me, saying:  
<sup>2</sup> “Son of man, tell the leader of Tyre, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Because your heart has become haughty, you keep saying, ‘I am a god.

I sit on the throne of a god in the heart of the sea.’

But you are only a man, not a god,

Though in your heart you feel that you are a god.

<sup>3</sup> Look! You are wiser than Daniel.

No secrets have been hidden from you.

<sup>4</sup> You have made yourself wealthy by your wisdom and your discernment,

And you keep storing up gold and silver in your treasuries.

<sup>5</sup> Your skillful trading brought you great wealth,

And your heart grew haughty because of your wealth.”

<sup>6</sup> “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Because in your heart you feel that you are a god,

- <sup>7</sup> I am bringing foreigners against you, the most  
ruthless of the nations,  
And they will draw their swords against the  
beauty of your wisdom  
And defile your glorious splendor.
- <sup>8</sup> They will bring you down to the pit,  
And you will die a violent death in the heart of  
the open sea.
- <sup>9</sup> Will you still say, 'I am a god,' to the one killing  
you?  
You will be a mere man, not a god, in the hand  
of those defiling you.”
- <sup>10</sup> 'By the hand of foreigners, you will die the death of  
the uncircumcised ones,  
For I myself have spoken,' declares the  
Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”
- <sup>11</sup> And the word of Jehovah again came to me,  
saying: <sup>12</sup> “Son of man, sing a dirge concerning the  
king of Tyre, and tell him, 'This is what the Sovereign  
Lord Jehovah says:  
“You were the model of perfection,  
Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
- <sup>13</sup> You were in E'den, the garden of God.  
You were adorned with every precious stone

—Ruby, topaz, and jasper; chrys'olite, onyx, and jade; sapphire, turquoise, and emerald;  
And their settings and mountings were made of gold.

They were prepared on the day you were created.

<sup>14</sup> I assigned you as the anointed covering cherub.  
You were on the holy mountain of God, and you walked about among fiery stones.

<sup>15</sup> You were faultless in your ways from the day you were created  
Until unrighteousness was found in you.

<sup>16</sup> Because of your abundant trade,  
You became filled with violence, and you began to sin.  
So I will cast you out as profane from the mountain of God and destroy you,  
O covering cherub, away from the stones of fire.

<sup>17</sup> Your heart became haughty because of your beauty.  
You corrupted your wisdom because of your own glorious splendor.  
I will throw you down to the earth.  
I will make you a spectacle before kings.

<sup>18</sup> Because of your great guilt and your dishonest trading, you have profaned your sanctuaries. I will cause a fire to break out in your midst, and it will consume you. I will reduce you to ashes on the earth before all those looking at you.

<sup>19</sup> All who knew you among the peoples will stare at you in amazement. Your end will be sudden and terrible, And you will cease to exist for all time.”””

<sup>20</sup> And the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: <sup>21</sup> “Son of man, turn your face toward Si'don, and prophesy against her. <sup>22</sup> You should say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Here I am against you, O Si'don, and I will be glorified in your midst; And people will have to know that I am Jehovah when I execute judgment on her and I am sanctified in her.

<sup>23</sup> I will send pestilence into her and blood will flow in her streets. The slain will fall in her midst when the sword comes against her from all sides; And they will have to know that I am Jehovah.

<sup>24</sup> ““Then the house of Israel will no longer be surrounded by injurious briars and painful thorns, those who treat them with scorn; and people will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.””

<sup>25</sup> “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “When I regather the house of Israel from among the peoples where they were scattered, I will be sanctified among them in the eyes of the nations. And they will dwell on their land that I gave to my servant Jacob.

<sup>26</sup> They will dwell on it in security and build houses and plant vineyards, and they will dwell in security when I execute judgment on all those around them who treat them with scorn; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah their God.””

**29** In the tenth year, in the tenth month, on the 12th day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, turn your face toward Phar'aoh king of Egypt, and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. <sup>3</sup> Speak these words: ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Here I am against you, Phar'aoh king of Egypt,  
The great sea monster lying among the streams  
of his Nile,  
Who has said, ‘My Nile River belongs to me.  
I made it for myself.’

<sup>4</sup> But I will put hooks in your jaws and cause the fish of your Nile to cling to your scales.

I will bring you up out of your Nile along with all the fish of the Nile that cling to your scales.

<sup>5</sup> I will abandon you in the desert, you and all the fish of your Nile.

You will fall on the open field, and you will not be gathered up nor be collected together.

I will give you as food to the wild beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky.

<sup>6</sup> Then all the inhabitants of Egypt will have to know that I am Jehovah,

For they were no more support to the house of Israel than a piece of straw.

<sup>7</sup> When they grasped your hand, you were crushed, And you caused them to tear their shoulder.

When they supported themselves on you, you were broken,

And you caused their legs to wobble.”

<sup>8</sup> “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Here I am bringing a sword upon you, and I will cut off from you both man and beast. <sup>9</sup> The land of Egypt will become a desolate and devastated place; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah, for you have said, ‘The Nile River belongs to me; I am the one

who made it.’ <sup>10</sup> So I am against you and against your Nile, and I will make the land of Egypt devastated and dry, a desolate wasteland, from Mig'dol to Sy-e'ne to the boundary of E-thi-o'pi-a. <sup>11</sup> Neither man nor livestock will pass through it on foot, and it will not be inhabited for 40 years. <sup>12</sup> I will make the land of Egypt the most desolate of lands, and its cities will be the most desolate of cities for 40 years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands.”

<sup>13</sup> “For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “After 40 years I will gather back the Egyptians from the peoples where they were scattered; <sup>14</sup> I will bring the Egyptian captives back to the land of Path'ros, to the land of their origin, and there they will become an insignificant kingdom. <sup>15</sup> Egypt will become lower than the other kingdoms and will no longer dominate the other nations, and I will make them so small that they will not be able to subdue other nations. <sup>16</sup> It will never again be a source of confidence for the house of Israel, but it will only remind them of their error in turning to the Egyptians for help. And they will have to know that I am the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.””

<sup>17</sup> Now in the 27th year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me,

saying: <sup>18</sup> “Son of man, King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon made his army labor greatly against Tyre. Every head became bald, and every shoulder was rubbed bare. But he and his army received no wages for the labor he expended on Tyre.

<sup>19</sup> “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says, ‘Here I am giving the land of Egypt to King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon, and he will carry off its wealth and take much spoil and plunder from it; and it will become wages for his army.’

<sup>20</sup> “‘As compensation for his labor against her, I will give him the land of Egypt because they acted for me,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

<sup>21</sup> “In that day I will cause a horn to sprout for the house of Israel, and I will give you an opportunity to speak among them; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.”

**30** And the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, prophesy and say, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

“Wail, ‘Alas, the day is coming!’

<sup>3</sup> For the day is near, yes, a day of Jehovah is near. It will be a day of clouds, an appointed time of nations.

<sup>4</sup> A sword will come against Egypt, and panic will overtake E·thi·o'pi·a when the slain fall in Egypt;  
Its wealth is taken and its foundations are torn down.

<sup>5</sup> E·thi·o'pi·a, Put, Lud, and all the mixed populations,  
And Chub, along with the sons of the land of the covenant,  
By the sword they will all fall.”

<sup>6</sup> This is what Jehovah says:

‘The supporters of Egypt will also fall,  
And its arrogant power will be brought down.’

“From Mig'dol to Sy·e'ne they will fall by the sword in the land,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

<sup>7</sup> ‘They will be made the most desolate of lands, and its own cities will become the most devastated cities.

<sup>8</sup> And they will have to know that I am Jehovah when I set a fire in Egypt and all its allies are crushed. <sup>9</sup> In that day I will send messengers in ships to make self-confident E·thi·o'pi·a tremble; panic will seize them in the day that is coming upon Egypt, for it will surely come.’

<sup>10</sup> “This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘I will bring an end to Egypt’s hordes by the hand of King

Neb·u·chad·nez'zar of Babylon. <sup>11</sup> He and his troops, the most ruthless of the nations, will be brought in to destroy the land. They will draw their swords against Egypt and fill the land with the slain. <sup>12</sup> I will turn the canals of the Nile into dry ground and will sell the land into the hand of wicked men. I will make the land and everything in it desolate by the hand of foreigners. I myself, Jehovah, have spoken.'

<sup>13</sup> "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: 'I will also destroy the disgusting idols and bring an end to the worthless gods of Noph. There will no longer be a prince from the land of Egypt, and I will put fear in the land of Egypt. <sup>14</sup> I will desolate Path'ros and set a fire in Zo'an and execute judgment on No. <sup>15</sup> I will pour out my rage on Sin, the stronghold of Egypt, and destroy the population of No. <sup>16</sup> I will set a fire in Egypt; and Sin will be seized with terror and No will be broken through and Noph will face attack in broad daylight! <sup>17</sup> The young men of On and Pi-be'seth will fall by the sword, and the cities will go into captivity. <sup>18</sup> In Te·haph'ne·hes the day will grow dark when I break the yoke bars of Egypt there. Her arrogant power will come to an end, clouds will cover her, and her towns will go into captivity. <sup>19</sup> I will execute judgment on Egypt, and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.'"

<sup>20</sup> And in the 11th year, in the first month, on the seventh day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me, saying: <sup>21</sup> “Son of man, I have broken the arm of Phar'aoh king of Egypt; it will not be bound up to be healed or wrapped with a bandage to make it strong enough to take up the sword.”

<sup>22</sup> “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘Here I am against Phar'aoh king of Egypt, and I will break his arms, the strong one and the broken one, and I will make the sword fall from his hand. <sup>23</sup> Then I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands. <sup>24</sup> I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword into his hand, and I will break the arms of Phar'aoh, and he will groan loudly like a dying man before him. <sup>25</sup> I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Phar'aoh will fall limp; and they will have to know that I am Jehovah when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he wields it against the land of Egypt. <sup>26</sup> And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations and disperse them among the lands, and they will have to know that I am Jehovah.’”

**31** In the 11th year, in the third month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah again came to me,

saying: <sup>2</sup> “Son of man, say to Phar'aoh king of Egypt  
and to his hordes,

‘Whom are you like in your greatness?

<sup>3</sup> There was an As-syr'i-an, a cedar in Leb'a-non,  
With beautiful branches like a shady thicket, lofty  
in stature;

Its top was among the clouds.

<sup>4</sup> The waters made it grow big, the deep springs of  
water caused it to grow high.

Streams were all around where it was planted;  
Their channels watered all the trees of the field.

<sup>5</sup> That is why it grew taller than all the other trees of  
the field.

Its boughs multiplied, and its branches grew long  
Because of the abundant water in its streams.

<sup>6</sup> All the birds of the sky nested in its boughs,  
All the wild animals of the field gave birth under  
its branches,

And all the populous nations were dwelling in its  
shade.

<sup>7</sup> It became majestic in beauty and in the length of its  
branches,

For its roots went down into abundant waters.

<sup>8</sup> No other cedars in the garden of God could compare to it.

None of the juniper trees had boughs like it,  
And none of the plane trees could match its branches.

No other tree in the garden of God could rival its beauty.

<sup>9</sup> I made it beautiful, with abundant foliage,  
And all the other trees of E'den, the garden of the true God, envied it.'

<sup>10</sup> "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: 'Because it became so tall, lifting its top among the clouds, and its heart became arrogant because of its height, <sup>11</sup> I will hand it over to the mighty ruler of the nations. He will surely act against it, and I will reject it for its wickedness. <sup>12</sup> And foreigners, the most ruthless of the nations, will cut it down, and they will abandon it on the mountains, and its foliage will fall in all the valleys, and its branches will lie broken in all the streams of the land. All the peoples of the earth will depart from its shade and abandon it. <sup>13</sup> All the birds of the sky will live on its fallen trunk, and all the wild animals of the field on its branches. <sup>14</sup> This is so that no tree near the waters should grow so tall or lift up its top among the clouds and that no well-watered tree may

reach up to them in height. For they will all be given over to death, to the land down below, along with the sons of mankind, who are going down into the pit.'

<sup>15</sup> "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: 'On the day it goes down to the Grave, I will cause a mourning. Therefore, I will cover over the deep waters and hold back its streams so that the abundant waters are restrained. I will darken Leb'a-non because of it, and the trees of the field will all wither away. <sup>16</sup> At the sound of its downfall, I will cause nations to shudder when I bring it down to the Grave along with all those going down into the pit, and all the trees of E'den, the choicest and the best of Leb'a-non, all that are well-watered, will be comforted in the land down below.

<sup>17</sup> They have gone down to the Grave with him, to those slain by the sword, together with his supporters who lived in his shadow among the nations.'

<sup>18</sup> "'Which of the trees of E'den was like you in glory and greatness? But you will certainly be brought down with the trees of E'den to the land down below. You will lie down among the uncircumcised ones, with those slain by the sword. This will happen to Phar'aoh and all his hordes,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."

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- Humility leads to a close relationship with Jehovah.—Ps 138:6
- Humility promotes good relationships with others.—Php 2:3, 4
- Pride is destructive.—Pr 16:18; Eze 28:17

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In what ways can I show humility to a greater degree?



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What are some ways to demonstrate humility?

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**Ask yourself,** ‘How can I imitate Jesus’ humility?’

**BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION:** Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he humbly served others.—Mt 20:28; Joh 13:3-5, 14, 15.

# EZEKIEL 28-31 | Jehovah Rewarded a Pagan Nation

29:18-20

 If Jehovah rewarded a pagan nation for a service, how much more so will he show appreciation for the work of his loyal servants!

BABYLONIAN ACTION	MY ACTIONS
 <p data-bbox="221 703 356 749">Siege of Tyre</p>	<p data-bbox="497 434 772 494">What kind of spiritual warfare do I wage?</p>

BABYLONIAN SACRIFICES	MY SACRIFICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="127 859 463 946">  The costly siege of Tyre lasted 13 years                 </li> <li data-bbox="127 963 463 1050">  Babylonian soldiers suffered physically                 </li> <li data-bbox="127 1067 463 1154">  The Babylonians received no wages                 </li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="497 850 759 911">What sacrifices have I made in service to Jehovah?</p>

HOW JEHOVAH REWARDED BABYLON	MY REWARDS FROM JEHOVAH
 <p data-bbox="154 1536 423 1586">Jehovah gave Egypt as spoil</p>	<p data-bbox="497 1267 786 1302">How does Jehovah reward me?</p>

 Write the correct Bible text in the space provided for each quotation.

Ru 2:12

Mal 3:16

Heb 6:10

“God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.”

“May Jehovah reward you for what you have done, and may there be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah.”

“A book of remembrance was written before him for those fearing Jehovah and for those meditating on his name.”

August 7-13

## Treasures From God's Word

### Jehovah Rewarded a Pagan Nation

**Ezekiel 29:18**—King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon obtained no reward for his difficult conquest of Tyre

Reference: it-2 1136 **paragraph 4**.

**Destruction of City.** In the course of Nebuchadnezzar's long siege against Tyre, the heads of his soldiers were "made bald" from the chafing of their helmets, and their shoulders were "rubbed bare" from carrying materials used in the construction of siegeworks. Since Nebuchadnezzar received no "wages" for serving as His instrument in executing judgment upon Tyre, Jehovah promised to compensate him with the wealth of Egypt. (**Ezekiel 29:17-20**) According to the Jewish historian Josephus, the siege lasted 13 years (*Against Apion*, I, 156 [21]), and it cost the Babylonians a great deal. Secular history does not record exactly how thorough or effective Nebuchadnezzar's efforts were. But the loss in lives and property to the Tyrians must have been great.—**Ezekiel 26:7-12**.

**Ezekiel 29:19**—King Nebuchadnezzar received Egypt as spoil in place of Tyre

Reference: it-1 698 **paragraph 5**.

One Babylonian text, dated to Nebuchadnezzar's 37th year (588 B.C.E.), has been found that mentions a campaign against Egypt. Whether it relates to the original conquest or merely to a subsequent military action cannot be said. At any rate, Nebuchadnezzar received Egypt's wealth as his pay for military service rendered in Jehovah's execution of judgment against Tyre, an opposer of God's people.—**Ezekiel 29:18-20; 30:10-12**.

**Ezekiel 29:20**—Jehovah rewarded the Babylonians because they had acted in his behalf

Reference: g86 11/8 27 **paragraphs 4-5**.

To answer this, we might draw a parallel with the conduct of the Creator himself in paying a debt to a secular government for services rendered. Righteous indignation prompted Jehovah to decree the destruction of the ancient city of Tyre. In the accomplishment of this deed, God used the military might of Babylon under their emperor Nebuchadnezzar. Although Babylon was victorious, the engagement was costly. Jehovah thus felt that they should be paid for

services rendered. His words appear at **Ezekiel 29:18, 19**: “Son of man, Nebuchadrezzar himself, the king of Babylon, made his military force perform a great service against Tyre. . . . But as for wages, there proved to be none for him and his military force from Tyre for the service that he had performed against her. Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, ‘Here I am giving to Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon the land of Egypt, and he must carry off its wealth and make a big spoil of it and do a great deal of plundering of it; and it must become wages for his military force.’”

Bible students know that Nebuchadnezzar was a haughty, self-centered, pagan monarch. Babylon and its armies were known for their harsh treatment of captives. Jehovah did not approve of such conduct, yet to him a debt was a debt, and he paid in full.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**Ezekiel 28:12-19**—How did the course taken by Tyre’s rulers resemble that of Satan?

Reference: it-2 604 **paragraphs 4-5**.

**The first sinner and the king of Tyre.** Human sin and imperfection were, of course, preceded by sin and imperfection in the spirit realm, as Jesus’ words at

John 8:44 and the account in chapter 3 of Genesis reveal. The dirge recorded at Ezekiel 28:12-19, though directed to the human “king of Tyre,” evidently parallels the course taken by the spirit son of God who first sinned. The pride of “the king of Tyre,” his making himself ‘a god,’ his being called a “cherub,” and the reference to “Eden, the garden of God,” certainly correspond to Biblical information concerning Satan the Devil, who became puffed up with pride, is linked to the serpent in Eden, and is called “the god of this system of things.” — **1 Timothy 3:6; Genesis 3:1-5, 14, 15; Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4.**

The anonymous king of Tyre, residing in the city claiming to be “perfect in prettiness,” was himself “full of wisdom and perfect [adjective related to Heb. *ka-la*] in beauty,” and “faultless [**Hebrews**, *ta-mim*]” in his ways from his creation onward until unrighteousness was found in him. (**Ezekiel 27:3; 28:12, 15**) The first or direct application of the dirge in Ezekiel may be to the line of Tyrian rulers rather than to any one specific king. (Compare the prophecy directed against the anonymous “king of Babylon” at **Isaiah 14:4-20.**) In that case, the reference may be to the early course of friendship and cooperation followed by the Tyrian rulership during the reigns of Kings David and Solomon, when Tyre even contributed toward the building of

Jehovah's temple on Mount Moriah. At first, therefore, there was no fault to be found in the official Tyrian attitude toward Jehovah's people Israel. (**1 Kings 5:1-18; 9:10, 11, 14; 2 Chronicles 2:3-16**) Later kings, however, departed from this "faultless" course, and Tyre came in for condemnation by God's prophets Joel and Amos, as well as Ezekiel. (**Joel 3:4-8; Amos 1:9, 10**) Aside from the evident similarity of the course of "the king of Tyre" with that of God's principal Adversary, the prophecy illustrates again how "perfection" and "faultlessness" can be used in limited senses.

**Ezekiel 30:13, 14**—How was this prophecy fulfilled?

Reference: w03 7/1 32 **paragraphs 1-3.**

Noph and No are Biblical names for Egypt's once famous capitals of Memphis and Thebes. Noph (Memphis) was some 14 miles [**23 kilometers**] south of Cairo, on the west side of the Nile River. In time, however, Memphis lost its status as Egypt's capital. By the turn of the 15th century B.C.E., Egypt had a new capital, No (Thebes), located about 300 miles [**500 kilometers**] south of Memphis. Among the many temple ruins of Thebes is that of Karnak, considered to be the largest structure ever built with columns. Thebes and its Karnak temple were dedicated to the worship of

Amon, the chief god of the Egyptians.

What did Bible prophecy foretell regarding Memphis and Thebes? Judgment was pronounced against Egypt's Pharaoh and its gods, especially the chief god, "Amon from No." (**Jeremiah 46:25, 26**) The crowd of worshipers who flocked there would be "cut off." (**Ezekiel 30:14, 15**) And so it turned out. All that is left of Amon's worship are temple ruins. The modern town of Luxor is situated on part of the site of ancient Thebes, and other small villages exist among its ruins. As for Memphis, little remains except for its cemeteries. Bible scholar Louis Golding says: "For century upon century the Arab conquerors of Egypt used the titanic ruins of Memphis as a quarry for the building of their capital [Cairo] on the opposite side of the river. So well have the Nile and the Arab builders between them done their work that for miles upon miles within the circuit of the ancient city not a stone protrudes above the black soil." Truly, as foretold in the Bible, Memphis became "a mere object of astonishment . . . without an inhabitant."—Jeremiah 46:19.

against Tyre; hence it pleased God to not restrain Nebuchadnezzar, but to permit him to transfer his military operations against Egypt and thus fulfil God's judgment against that nation in a measure: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey; and it shall be the wages for his army." (29:19) God would not have permitted Nebuchadnezzar to subjugate Egypt if he had not served Jehovah's purpose. God did not bless Nebuchadnezzar in a spiritual way, but permitted him to be paid in his own kind or value, and such that he would appreciate, for the efforts he had expended against Tyre. Therefore the Lord's prophet was directed to say: "I have given him the land of Egypt for his labour wherewith he served against it, because they wrought for me, saith the Lord God."—29:20.

In his campaign against Egypt Nebuchadnezzar was further used as God's means of carrying out his purpose against Satan's organization. It is in this connection written in Ezekiel 30:10-12: "Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land: and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: I the Lord have spoken it."

Nebuchadnezzar was not a type of Christ; but he did serve Jehovah's purposes, and for that reason he

- Song 136 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Jehovah Rewarded a Pagan Nation”:** (10 min.)  
Eze 29:18—King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon obtained no reward for his difficult conquest of Tyre (*it-2* 1136 ¶4)  
Eze 29:19—King Nebuchadnezzar received Egypt as spoil in place of Tyre (*it-1* 698 ¶5)  
Eze 29:20—Jehovah rewarded the Babylonians because they had acted in his behalf (*g86* 11/8 27 ¶4-5)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Eze 28:12-19—How did the course taken by Tyre’s rulers resemble that of Satan? (*it-2* 604 ¶4-5)

Eze 30:13, 14—How was this prophecy fulfilled? (*w03* 7/1 32 ¶1-3)

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 29:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Encourage publishers to include current events in their presentations and to make good use of the video *Would You Like Good News?* when offering the *Good News* brochure.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 120
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb17* 35-36)
- **“Cultivate Godly Qualities—Humility”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Pride*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* pp. 168-169, chap. 16 ¶1-5, boxes on pp. 175-177
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 93 and Prayer

**Cultivate Godly Qualities—Humility**

**WHY IMPORTANT:**

- Humility leads to a close relationship with Jehovah.—Ps 138:6
- Humility promotes good relationships with others.—Php 2:3, 4
- Pride is destructive.—Pr 16:18; Eze 28:17

**HOW TO DO IT:**

- Ask for counsel and apply it.—Ps 141:5; Pr 19:20
- Readily perform menial tasks for others.—Mt 20:25-27
- Do not allow skills or privileges to inflate your ego.—Ro 12:3

In what ways can I show humility to a greater degree?



**WATCH THE VIDEO AVOID WHAT ERODES LOYALTY—PRIDE, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:**

What does our response to counsel reveal about our attitude?

\_\_\_\_\_

How does prayer help us to cultivate humility?

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some ways to demonstrate humility?

**BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION:** Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he humbly served others.—Mt 20:28; Joh 13:3-5, 14, 15.

**Ask yourself,** ‘How can I imitate Jesus’ humility?’



# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Presentations



#### **AWAKE!**

**Question:** How can we be balanced in our use of time?

**Scripture:** Ec 4:6

**Offer:** This issue of *Awake!* provides practical suggestions regarding priorities.



#### **TEACH THE TRUTH**

**Question:** Why are we here?

**Scripture:** Ps 37:29

**Truth:** God created humans to live forever on the earth.



#### **GOOD NEWS FROM GOD!**

**Question:** Where do you think we can turn to for good news? [Show the video *Would You Like Good News?*]

**Scripture:** Isa 52:7

**Offer:** This brochure offers “good news of something better” because it contains a message from the Bible.

#### **BUILD YOUR OWN PRESENTATION**

**Question:**

**Scripture:**

**Offer:**

1. The greatest of men was our Lord Jesus Christ;  
By pride or ambition, he was not enticed.  
God's purpose gave Jesus the prominent role;  
Yet, lowly in heart, he was always whole-souled.
2. To all who are toiling with troublesome cares,  
He offers to carry the burdens they bear.  
Refreshment they find as the Kingdom they seek.  
With kindness and mildness, he favors the meek.
3. 'We all are just brothers,' our Lord Jesus said.  
In humble submission, we look to our Head.  
The mild and the meek ones to God have great worth;  
He promises they will inherit the earth.

- Song 136 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Eze 29:1-12

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion based on “Sample Presentations.” Play each presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Encourage publishers to include current events in their presentations and to make good use of the video *Would You Like Good News?* when offering the *Good News* brochure.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 120
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.) As an option, discuss the lessons learned from the *Yearbook*. (*yb17* 35-36)
- **“Cultivate Godly Qualities—Humility”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Pride*.
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How does prayer help us to cultivate humility?

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What are some ways to demonstrate humility?

**BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION:** Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he humbly served others.—Mt 20:28; Joh 13:3-5, 14, 15.

**Ask yourself,** ‘How can I imitate Jesus’ humility?’

# RUSSIA'S ATTACK ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

## SINCE 2010:



**88 PUBLICATIONS BANNED**



**OFFICIAL WEBSITE BANNED**



- RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS AND PROPERTY CONFISCATED
- ALL RELIGIOUS LITERATURE DENIED ENTRY (IMPOUNDED)
- HUNDREDS OF DETAINMENTS/ARRESTS

## IN THE FIRST EIGHT MONTHS OF 2016:



**AUTHORITIES THREATEN TO CLOSE NATIONAL OFFICE**

**16 CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

**34 HOMES AND RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS SEARCHED**

**30 RAIDS**

**64 DETENTIONS/ARRESTS**



## RUSSIA | Freedom of Religion

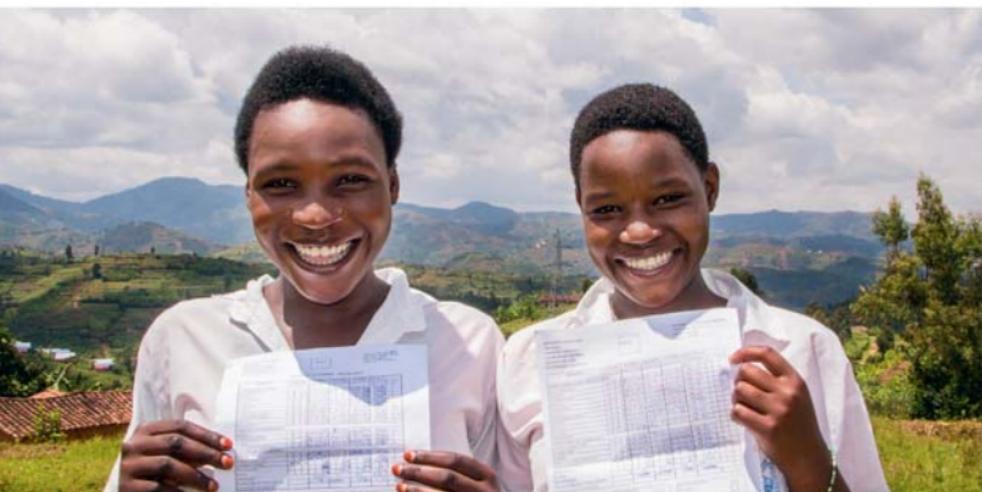
Despite strong objections from Russian human rights authorities, the Russian government continues its relentless attack against Jehovah's Witnesses and their religious activity. At last count, authorities have declared 88 of our publications to be "extremist" and have banned the official website of Jehovah's Witnesses, [jw.org](http://jw.org). In 2015, customs officials denied the importation of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, and a court in Vyborg is considering whether to declare this modern Bible translation to be "extremist." In March 2016, the Prosecutor General's Office took bold steps,

threatening to close down the central offices of Jehovah's Witnesses in Solnechnoye, outside St. Petersburg, for alleged "extremist activity."

Despite the aggressive state-sponsored campaign against Jehovah's Witnesses, there has been some good news. In October 2015, a prosecutor filed a claim to liquidate the Local Religious Organization (LRO) in Tyumen, located some 1,300 miles east of Moscow. Despite proof that police had fabricated evidence against the Witnesses, the Tyumen Regional Court found the Tyumen LRO guilty. However, on April 15, 2016, the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation reversed the lower court's decision, ruling that "there were **no grounds to liquidate** the LRO of Jehovah's Witnesses in the City of Tyumen." When the presiding judge read the verdict, the 60 brothers and sisters who had packed the courtroom erupted in a standing ovation.

Jehovah's people in Russia are determined to continue worshipping him despite any "weapon formed against [them]."—Isa. 54:17.

**Rwanda:** They returned to school



- Song 136 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

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**BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION:** Jesus was the greatest man who ever lived. Yet, he humbly served others.—Mt 20:28; Joh 13:3-5, 14, 15.

**Ask yourself,** ‘How can I imitate Jesus’ humility?’

# 16 Meeting Together for Worship

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## FOCUS OF CHAPTER

Tracing the development and importance of our meetings

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SHORTLY after Jesus' resurrection, the disciples gathered to encourage one another. However, they locked the doors out of fear of their enemies. How their fear must have dissipated when Jesus appeared in their midst and said: "Receive holy spirit"! (**Read John 20:19-22.**) Later, the disciples again gathered together, and Jehovah poured out holy spirit upon them. What strength they received for the preaching work that lay ahead!—Acts 2:1-7.

<sup>2</sup> We face challenges similar to those of our first-century brothers. (1 Pet. 5:9) At times, some of us may suffer from fear of man. And we need the strength that Jehovah gives if we are to endure in the preaching work. (Eph. 6:10) Jehovah provides

**1. When the disciples gathered together, what help did they receive, and why did they need it?**

**2. (a) How does Jehovah give us strength, and why do we need it?**

**(b) Why is the Family Worship arrangement so important? (See the footnote and the box "Family Worship," pages 317-318.)**

much of that strength through our meetings. We currently have the opportunity to attend two instructive weekly meetings—the Public Meeting and *Watchtower* Study and our midweek meeting called Our Christian Life and Ministry.\*<sup>[1]</sup> We also enjoy four annual events—a regional convention, two circuit assemblies, and the Memorial of Christ’s death. Why is it vital that we attend all those meetings? How did our modern-day meetings develop? And what does our attitude toward meetings reveal about us?

### **Why Meet Together?**

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah has long required that his people meet together to worship him. For example, in 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah gave his Law to the nation of Israel, and that Law included a weekly Sabbath so that each family could worship him and be instructed in the Law. (Deut. 5:12; 6:4-9) When the Israelites followed that command, families were strengthened and the nation as a whole remained spiritually clean

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\*<sup>[1]</sup> In addition to our weekly congregation meetings, each family or each individual is encouraged to put aside time for personal study or family worship.

**3, 4. What does Jehovah require of his people? Give examples.**

and strong. When the nation failed to apply the Law, neglecting such requirements as meeting regularly for worship of Jehovah, they lost God's favor.—Lev. 10:11; 26:31-35; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Consider, too, the example Jesus set. He had the custom of going to the synagogue each week on the Sabbath. (Luke 4:16) After Jesus' death and resurrection, his disciples continued the custom of meeting together regularly even though they were no longer under the Sabbath law. (Acts 1:6, 12-14; 2:1-4; Rom. 14:5; Col. 2:13, 14) At those meetings, first-century Christians not only received instruction and encouragement but also offered sacrifices of praise to God by means of their prayers, comments, and songs.—Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15.

<sup>5</sup> Likewise, when we attend our weekly meetings and annual assemblies and conventions, we show our support for God's Kingdom, receive strength from holy spirit, and encourage others by our expressions of faith. More important, we have the opportunity

**5. Why do we attend weekly meetings and annual assemblies and conventions? (See also the box "Annual Gatherings That Unite God's People," pages 320-322.)**

to worship Jehovah by means of our prayers, comments, and songs. The structure of our meetings may be different from that of those attended by the Israelites and the first-century Christians, but our gatherings are equally important. How did our modern-day meetings develop?

### **Weekly Meetings That Encourage “Love and Fine Works”**

<sup>6</sup> When Brother Charles Taze Russell began searching for the truth from God’s Word, he saw the need to meet with others who had the same goal. In 1879, Russell wrote: “I, in company with others in Pittsburgh, organized and maintained a bible class for the searching of the Scriptures, meeting every Sunday.” Readers of *Zion’s Watch Tower* were encouraged to meet together, and by 1881, meetings were being held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, every Sunday and Wednesday. The November 1895 issue of the *Watch Tower* said that the purpose of those meetings was to cultivate “Christian fellowship, love and communion” and to give the opportunity to those at-

**6, 7. (a) What is the purpose of our meetings? (b) How did meetings vary from one group to another?**

## FAMILY WORSHIP

AS THE last days have progressed, Jehovah's organization has increasingly focused attention on the need for each family to have its own Bible study program. (2 Tim. 3:1) For example, the booklet *Home and Happiness*, published in 1932, forthrightly said: "Let each family begin at once a study of the Bible at home." And the May 15, 1956, *Watchtower* urged all Christian families to have "a regular Bible study right in the home for the benefit of the entire family." Then it asked: "Does your family study *The Watchtower* together some evening before the meeting?"

In 2009, the organization emphasized the importance of family study by adjusting the schedule of midweek meetings; from that time forward, the Congregation Bible Study was to be held on the same night as the Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting. "One reason for this adjustment," stated the January 2011 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*, "was to give families an opportunity to fortify their spirituality by scheduling a specific evening each week for family worship." It then said: "Use this time for unhurried Bible discussion and study tailored to the needs of the family."\*[1]

\*[1] Some suggestions for material that could be used during family worship can be found in the January 2011 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*.

Why is the Family Worship arrangement so important—something that should not be missed? Because it affects the spiritual strength not only of the family but also of the congregation. To illustrate: The congregation could be likened to a house made of bricks. **(Read Hebrews 3:4-6.)**\*<sup>[2]</sup> The strength of a well-designed brick house is determined by two key components—the quality of its foundation and the durability of the individual bricks. If the foundation is flawed, the house will fall. But even a house with a solid foundation will become structurally unsound if the bricks crumble. The Christian congregation is built on the strongest foundation, the teachings of Christ. **(Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.)**#<sup>[3]</sup> Individuals and families in a congregation are like the bricks. Family Worship sessions provide a unique opportunity for each individual and each family to build and maintain strong, fire-resistant faith. And strong individuals and strong families result in strong congregations. Is prearranged family worship part of your weekly schedule?

\***[2]** Paul's words are directed to those who have "the heavenly calling." (Heb. 3:1) But in principle his counsel applies to all Christians.

#**[3]** For a more detailed discussion of this Bible passage, see the July 15, 1999, issue of *The Watchtower*, pages 12-14, paragraphs 15-20. Why not read this material and meditate on how it applies to your Family Worship sessions?

## ANNUAL GATHERINGS THAT UNITE GOD'S PEOPLE

JEHOVAH instructed all Israelite males to gather at Jerusalem three times a year. (Ex. 23:14-17; Lev. 23:34-36) Jesus' adoptive father, Joseph, took his whole family to Jerusalem on such occasions. Other Israelite men likely did the same. God's people today likewise gather three times each year for assemblies and conventions. Some of the conventions have marked outstanding milestones in the development of the earthly part of God's organization during the last days. Consider just some of these conventions and what made them memorable.

### **1919: Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A.**

This was the first major convention after World War I.

The preaching work was revitalized.

Production of the magazine *The Golden Age* (now called *Awake!*) was announced.

### **1922: Cedar Point, Ohio**

Impetus was given to the preaching work in the talk on the subject "The Kingdom." This talk introduced the rousing cry "Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his Kingdom"!

### **1931: Columbus, Ohio**

We adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

### **1935: Washington, D.C.**

For the first time, we understood that the "great

multitude,” mentioned at Revelation 7:9 in the *King James Version*, will live forever on earth.

**1942: New World Theocratic Assembly, held in 85 cities worldwide**

The discourse “Peace—Can it Last?” provided insight into the prophecy recorded in Revelation chapter 17, showing that after the end of World War II, there would be an opportunity to gather many more subjects of God’s Kingdom.

**1950: Theocracy’s Increase Assembly**

The *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released.

**1958: Divine Will International Assembly**

This was the largest international convention held in one city; more than 250,000 delegates from 123 lands assembled in New York.

**1961: United Worshipers Assembly**

The complete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was released in one volume.

**1992: “Light Bearers” Convention**

This was the first international convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses held in the former Soviet Union, in St. Petersburg, Russia.

**1993: “Divine Teaching” Convention, Kyiv, Ukraine**

This was the largest Christian baptism on record at a single convention—7,402 new ministers were baptized.

**2011: “Let God’s Kingdom Come!” Convention**

Our understanding of the prophetic image mentioned in Daniel chapter 2 was refined. We now understood that the feet of iron mixed with clay represent the Anglo-American World Power, the one that will still be dominant when God’s Kingdom crushes the entire symbolic image.

**2014: “Keep Seeking First God’s Kingdom!” Convention**

Marking the 100th anniversary of Christ’s Kingdom in heaven.

he felt when he first joined the school in 1943. “It was very difficult for me to give talks,” said Brother Woodworth. “My tongue seemed to grow long, my mouth went completely dry, and my voice became something between a roar and a squeak.” As Clayton’s abilities improved, however, he received many public speaking privileges. The school taught him much more than just technical skills. It taught him the value of humility and the importance of relying on Jehovah. “I came to realize,” he said, “that the

# 93      *Bless Our Meeting Together*

(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. Bless us as we meet together,  
    O Jehovah, we now pray.  
    We are thankful for our meetings;  
    May your spirit with us stay.
2. Help us, Lord, refine our worship;  
    With your Word, oh, do us fill.  
    Train our minds and tongues to witness;  
    Love within our hearts instill.
3. Loving Father, bless our meetings;  
    Grant us peace and unity.  
    May our words and may our actions  
    Magnify your Sov'reignty.

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

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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#### **4 WEEK OF JULY 31–AUGUST 6**

##### **Jehovah Provides Comfort in All Our Trials**

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.

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#### **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.

# 76      *How Does It Make You Feel?*

(Hebrews 13:15)

1. How does it make you feel  
    when you preach and teach with zeal,  
When you know you've done your part  
    to reach an honest heart?  
Knowing you've done your best;  
    then our God will do the rest.  
Honest hearts he surely knows—  
    all those to him disposed.

*(CHORUS)*

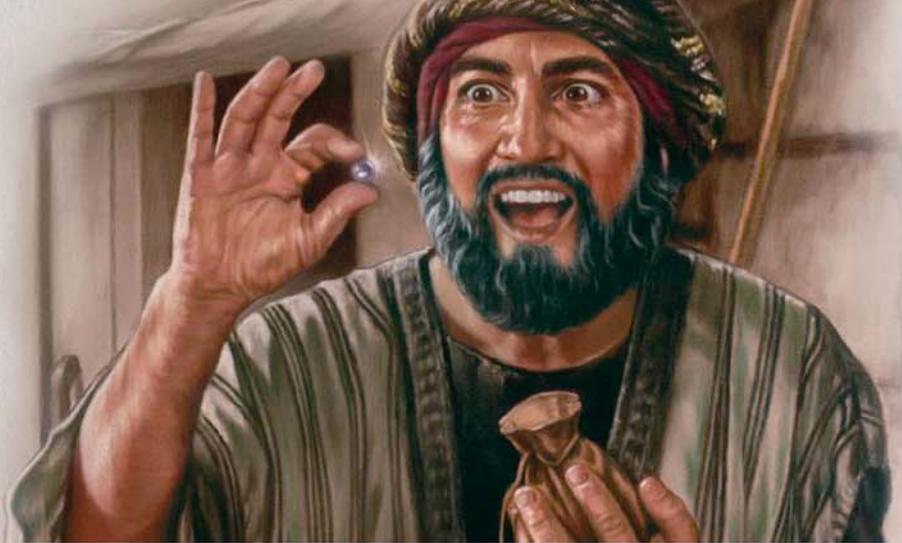
*It makes us glad, and we rejoice  
    to give our heart and mind and voice.  
So may our sacrifice of praise  
    continue all our days.*

2. How does it make you feel  
    when the words you speak appeal  
To the ones whose heart is right  
    for everlasting life?  
Some people turn away,  
    others might be led astray.  
Still we're glad to bear his name  
    and witness just the same.

*(Chorus)*

3. How does it make you feel,  
knowing God's support is real,  
And that he's entrusted you  
to do the work we do?  
Proudly we preach and teach,  
using bold but gracious speech,  
Searching out deserving ones;  
this work will soon be done.

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
76, 59

**HOW WOULD YOU  
ANSWER?**

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If we treasure God's Kingdom in our heart, what will we be motivated to do?

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What are you determined to do to show your love for our lifesaving ministry?

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How do we fill our treasure store with revealed truths, and what are the benefits of doing so?

## Set Your Heart on Spiritual Treasures

*“Where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.”—LUKE 12:34.*

**JEHOVAH** is the wealthiest Person in the universe. (1 Chron. 29: 11, 12) As a generous Father, he openhandedly shares his spiritual riches with all who discern their excellent value. How grateful we are that Jehovah has given us spiritual treasures, which include

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**1, 2.** (a) What are three spiritual treasures that Jehovah has given to us? (b) What will we consider in this article?

(1) God’s Kingdom, (2) our lifesaving ministry, and (3) the precious truths found in his Word! If we are not careful, though, we could lose appreciation for these treasures and, in effect, throw them away. To hold on to them, we must use them well and constantly renew our love for them. Jesus said: “Where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.” —Luke 12:34.

<sup>2</sup> Let us consider how we can develop and maintain our love and appreciation for the Kingdom, the ministry, and the truth. As we do so, meditate on how you personally can deepen your love for these spiritual treasures.

## **GOD’S KINGDOM—LIKE A PRICELESS PEARL**

<sup>3</sup> Read Matthew 13:45, 46. Jesus told an illustration about a merchant who was seeking pearls. Over the years, the merchant had no doubt bought and sold hundreds of pearls. Yet, now he had found the one pearl that was so magnificent that just seeing it made his heart rejoice. But to buy it would mean that he would have to sell everything else that he owned. Can you imagine how precious that pearl was to him?

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3. What was the merchant in Jesus’ illustration willing to do to gain the priceless pearl? (See opening picture.)

**4** What is the lesson for us? The truth of God's Kingdom is like that priceless pearl. If we love it as much as the merchant loved that pearl, we will be willing to give up everything in order to become and to remain one of the subjects of the Kingdom. (Read Mark 10:28-30.) Consider two individuals who did just that.

**5** Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector who had become rich by extorting money. (Luke 19:1-9) Yet, when that unrighteous man heard Jesus preach about the Kingdom, he recognized the excellent value of what he was hearing and took immediate action. He exclaimed: "Look! The half of my belongings, Lord, I am giving to the poor, and whatever I extorted from anyone, I am restoring four times over." He gladly gave up his ill-gotten riches and abandoned his greed for material things.

**6** Some years ago, when someone we will call Rose heard the Kingdom message, she was involved in a lesbian relationship. She was president of an organization fighting for the rights of homosexuals. As

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**4.** If we love God's Kingdom as much as the merchant loved the pearl, what will we do?

**5.** How did Zacchaeus show his determination to gain God's Kingdom?

**6.** What changes did Rose make to become a subject of God's Kingdom, and why did she do so?

Rose studied the Bible, however, she discerned the excelling value of the truth about God’s Kingdom. But she realized that she would have to make major adjustments. (1 Cor. 6:9, 10) Her heart moved her to resign from her position and to end her lesbian relationship. Rose was baptized in 2009, and the next year, she began to serve as a regular pioneer. Her love for Jehovah and his Kingdom was stronger than any fleshly desires.—Mark 12:29, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Granted, many of us have made life-transforming changes to become subjects of God’s Kingdom. (Rom. 12:2) Even so, our work is not finished. We must remain alert to things that actively compete for our affection, including the desire for material things and any immoral sexual desires. (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 5:27-29) To help us maintain our wholehearted love for God’s Kingdom, Jehovah has given us another priceless treasure.

## OUR LIFESAVING MINISTRY

<sup>8</sup> Recall that Jesus has assigned us to preach and teach the good news of God’s Kingdom. (Matt. 28:

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7. How can we maintain wholehearted love for God’s Kingdom?

8. (a) Why did the apostle Paul describe our ministry as a “treasure in earthen vessels”? (b) How did Paul demonstrate that he treasured his ministry?

19, 20) The apostle Paul recognized the high value of the ministry. He described the ministry of the new covenant as a “treasure in earthen vessels.” (2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Tim. 1:12) Although we are simply imperfect earthen vessels, the message we preach can bring everlasting life to us and to those who listen to us. Knowing this, Paul said: “I do all things for the sake of the good news, in order to share it with others.” (1 Cor. 9:23) Yes, Paul’s love for the ministry moved him to work hard at making disciples. (Read Romans 1:14, 15; 2 Timothy 4:2.) That helped him to endure severe opposition. (1 Thess. 2:2) How can we demonstrate such love for the ministry?

<sup>9</sup> One way that Paul demonstrated appreciation for the ministry was by being alert to opportunities to speak to others. Like the apostles and early Christians, we preach informally, publicly, and from house to house. (Acts 5:42; 20:20) As our circumstances allow, we look for ways to expand our ministry, perhaps by serving as an auxiliary or a regular pioneer. We might also learn another language, move to another area in our own country, or even move to another land.—Acts 16:9, 10.

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9. What are some ways that we can demonstrate our appreciation for the ministry?

<sup>10</sup> Consider the example of Irene, a single sister in the United States. She had a deep desire to preach to Russian-speaking immigrants. When she began doing so in 1993, there were only about 20 publishers in the Russian-language group in New York City. For some 20 years, Irene has worked hard in that language field. “I still do not speak Russian perfectly,” Irene admits. Yet, Jehovah has blessed her zealous spirit and that of others like her. Today, there are six Russian congregations in New York City. Fifteen of those with whom Irene studied got baptized. Some of them serve as Bethelites, pioneers, and elders. Irene says, “When I think of other goals I could have pursued, I can’t imagine one that would have brought me more joy.” Yes, she treasures her ministry!

<sup>11</sup> If we treasure our ministry, we will be like the apostle Paul, continuing to preach despite persecution. (Acts 14:19-22) During the 1930’s and early 1940’s, our brothers in the United States faced tremendous opposition. Yet, like Paul, they stood firm and continued preaching. To protect our right to do

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10. How was Irene blessed for her determination to share the good news?

11. What positive results come from continuing to preach despite persecution?



Do you view your ministry as a treasure and manifest that in your weekly schedule?

(See paragraphs 11, 12)

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that, the brothers fought many legal battles. In 1943, Brother Nathan H. Knorr, when commenting on one victory in the U.S. Supreme Court, stated: “The victories won are due to your fight. If the publisher had not kept on in the field, there would not be any cases in the Supreme Court; but it is because you, the publisher, the brothers all over the world, keep on and will not quit that the defeat of perse-

cution is brought about. It is this victory of the Lord's people standing firm that finally brings that decision." This same firm stand by brothers in other countries has led to similar victories. Yes, our love for the ministry can defeat persecution.

<sup>12</sup> When we view the ministry as a priceless treasure from Jehovah, we will never be content with simply "counting time." Rather, we will do everything in our power "to bear thorough witness to the good news." (Acts 20:24; 2 Tim. 4:5) But what will we teach to others? Consider another treasure from God.

## **OUR TREASURE STORE OF REVEALED TRUTHS**

<sup>13</sup> A third spiritual treasure is our repository of revealed truths. Jehovah is the God of truth. (2 Sam. 7:28; Ps. 31:5) As a generous Father, he shares divine truths with those who fear him. From the time that we first heard the truth, we have had the opportunity to collect truths from his Word, the Bible, from our Christian publications, and from our conventions, assemblies, and weekly meetings. Over time, we develop what Jesus

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12. What is your determination with regard to your ministry?

13, 14. What is the "treasure store" that Jesus referred to at Matthew 13:52, and how do we fill it?

described as a “treasure store” of old and new truths. (Read Matthew 13:52.) Jehovah will help us to collect precious new truths into our “treasure store” if we search for them as for hidden treasures. (Read Proverbs 2:4-7.) How do we do that?

<sup>14</sup> We must develop good personal study habits and do careful research in God’s Word and in our publications. This will help us to discover truths that may be “new” in the sense that we did not know them before. (Josh. 1:8, 9; Ps. 1:2, 3) The very first issue of this magazine, published in **July 1879**, stated: “Truth, like a modest little flower in the wilderness of life, is surrounded and *almost* choked by the luxuriant growth of the weeds of error. If you would find it you must be ever on the lookout. . . . If you would possess it you must stoop to get it. Be not content with *one* flower of truth. . . . Gather ever, seek for more.” Yes, we must be eager to enrich our own treasure store of divine truths.

<sup>15</sup> We discovered some priceless truths when we first began to associate with God’s people. These could well be described as “old,” in that we have known and appreciated them from the beginning of

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15. Why might we refer to some truths as “old,” and what are some that you especially treasure?

**He Seats Her on His Throne.**

"Leaning upon her Beloved."—*Sol. Songs*, viii. 5

Upon her loved One leaning;  
For thus the Bride appears,  
The wilderness behind her,  
With all its sighs and fears.

For Him in hope she waited  
And loving tears she wept,  
E'en in the darksome shadows,  
She watched while others slept.

She knew He would be faithful,  
And in His word she read,  
That He was coming quickly,  
She trusted what He said.

Ofttimes His precious promise  
She told to those around,  
To some it seemed good tidings,  
To others empty sound.

Now, as the King of Glory,  
He claims her as His own;  
With hand for her once pierced,  
He seats her on His throne.

M. R. J., Princeton, N. J.

**"WHAT IS TRUTH?"**

This question is one which every sincere Christian should ask and seek to answer. We should learn to love and value truth for its own sake; to respect and honor it by owning and acknowledging it wherever we find it and by whomsoever presented. A truth presented by Satan himself is just as true as a truth stated by God.

Perhaps no class of people are more apt to overlook this fact than the Christian. How often do they in controversy overlook and ignore truth presented by their opponents. This is particularly the case when arguing with an infidel. They feel at perfect liberty to dispute everything he says on religious subjects. This is not the correct principle. Many infidels are honest—as anxious to speak and believe the truth as are Christians—and if in converse with them we ignore truths which they may advance, we not only fail to convince them of our truths, but put an end to all hope of reaching them; for our failure to admit the evident truth which they advance begets in them contempt for the one who is not honest enough to admit one truth because he does not see how it can be reconciled to another. Accept truth wherever you find it, no matter what it contradicts, and rely for ability to afterwards harmonize it with others upon "The Spirit of truth, which shall guide you into all truth," as Jesus promised.

Truth, like a modest little flower in the wilderness of life, is surrounded and almost choked by the luxuriant growth of the weeds of error. If you would find it you must be ever on the lookout. If you would see its beauty you must brush aside the weeds of error and the brambles of bigotry. If you would possess it you must stoop to get it.

Be not content with one flower of truth. Had one been sufficient there would have been no more. Gather ever, seek for more.

Weave them together as a garland—"Bind them on thee as a bride doeth." "Bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man." Prov. iii. 3.

C. T. R.

**"GOD IS LOVE."**

This is the grand expression of the Bible—the key-note of Christianity. It is the foundation of the great plan of creation and redemption, and the underlying principle in the structure of the Word of God.

It is truth, the truth, as God is true, the embodiment of all other truths; so that whatever, rightly understood, is not in harmony with it must be false. "God is love," eternal and unchangeable. All that He has done or will do can but express His infinite fullness. All His attributes are moved and controlled by love.

"God is love." Many feel, as a result of education, that God hates them, but that Christ loves them; others believe that Christ purchased the Father's love. Both are answered by Christ's words: "God so loved the world that he gave his son," &c. John iii. 16. Christ's work is not to purchase the Father's love, but to manifest it. Practically, if not as theologians teach, Christ's words are true: "I and my Father are one"—one in purpose and in work.

Christ prayed to the Father that the disciples might be one, "even as we are one." "As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they may be one in us," &c. John xvii. 21. He could thus be called "Immanuel—God with us." "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii. 16. God gave his Son. The Son "gave himself for us." Truly they are in harmony. The love of the infinite God could neither be created nor purchased, but it could be shown. This is one part of the work of the Son of God—to reveal the Father. To reveal his love is to reveal himself, for "God is love." Without Christ or, out of Christ God cannot be known. The Father does not reveal the Son, but the Son reveals the Father, "For no man knoweth who the Son is but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." No theologian need attempt an explanation of the Divine Sonship of our Lord. "But it pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell,"—"All fullness of the Godhead bodily."—Col. i. 19, and ii. 9. He is the Word, the truth, the personal embodiment of all that is good and true, and emphatically the Revelation of God. "The Word was with God and the Word was God." "The Word was made flesh." He took our nature, the "form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of

men." Phil. ii. 7. He of whom it was said, "Let all the angels of God worship him," [that must include Michael,] and "Thy throne, Oh God! is forever and ever," (Heb. i. 6, 8); "Left the glory he had with the Father before the foundation of the world;" "made himself of no reputation;" "was made a little lower than the angels;" "for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." Heb. ii. 9.

Great condescension! Glorious love! Whose love? Both the Father's and the Son's, but primarily the Father's. "God so loved that he gave." The love caused the gift. "God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself, by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit: that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," &c. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. The hymn line, "My God is reconciled," has well been changed, "To God I'm reconciled." It is man that is out of order—away from home—and God is in Christ to win the wanderer back. God hates sin, but loves the man. One reason why he hates sin is because he loves the man, and sin destroys man's happiness and if persisted in will destroy the man himself. "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found," saith the Lord. "The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared." Grace is love and favor. God in Christ brings salvation to all men absolutely, so far as relates to the recovery of what was lost in Adam. "Who will have all men to be saved." "As in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive." Thus, "We trust in the living God, who is the Savior of ALL MEN, specially of them that believe." 1 Tim. iv. 10.

He has not only redeemed man from what was lost in Adam, but has made higher attainments possible, brought Salvation near, within reach of all men, and is the "author of eternal salvation to them that obey him." Heb. v. 9. He not only gave himself a ransom (to buy man back from death) for all, but it is "to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. ii. 6. He not only "will have all men to be saved" (from the Adamic penalty), but will also have them "come to the knowledge of the truth." Ver. 4. Thus, and in "due time," he is the "true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John i. 9. All who have died without the true light, will be enlightened in future, and the words of the angel will be verified: "Behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Luke ii. 10.

The salvation from death is secured to all by the Ransom; the salva-

tion from sin is made possible to all by the light, and all this is the Father's arrangement, through the Son, who is constituted Redeemer, and also the "Head"—"Firstborn" of a new race in a Spiritual and immortal life. He restores the old to all, and imparts the new to as many as receive and obey the truth.

How true it is, that: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." 1 John, iv. 8. "Love is of God." Ver. 1. "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him," (the Son.) (Ver. 9.) "Herein is love, \* \* that He loved us," &c. (Ver 10.) "We love him, because he first loved us." (Ver. 19.) In view of so much testimony, who can doubt the Father's love, or believe that it was purchased by Christ's death. Christ's death meets a necessity of man in relation to man's forfeited life; hence He purchased man, and not God. God arranged it as a grand exhibition of his love for man. "Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God," &c. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." We love the Giver and we love the Gift. "Whom having not seen, we love." Who can refrain from joining the grand chorus of the angels: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men." Luke, ii. 14.

J. H. P.

**CHRIST'S PERSONAL RETURN.**

BY A LUTHERAN MINISTER.

To attempt to prove that the Son of Man will really and personally come again to this world, may seem quite superfluous. It is a doctrine which orthodox Christians universally admit; and yet, perhaps, there is not another article of Christian faith so coldly and indefinitely apprehended. Few men embrace it as a reality. Few men lay hold of it as an efficacious truth. People deny it not, but neither do they feel it. They have so much preoccupied their minds with imaginary, figurative comings of the Saviour, in providence in His Spirit, in His Word, and in His Church, that His only real coming has well nigh become obsolete—a dead letter.

It no longer comes upon the heart and conscience with its awakening and commanding power. We recite it, and sing it; but we do not effectually receive it. It is in our creed, but it cannot be said to be of our faith. If we entertain it at all, it is at a great distance off. It cannot, therefore, be a matter of small importance for us to review our position and to endeavor to ascertain where we stand in regard to this great doctrine.

If we have been unconsciously saying to ourselves, "The Lord delayeth his coming," it is time that

our Christian course. What do such precious truths include? We learned that Jehovah is our Creator and Life-Giver and that he has a purpose for mankind. We also learned that God lovingly provided the ransom sacrifice of his Son so that we might be freed from sin and death. We further learned that his Kingdom will end all suffering and that we have the prospect of living forever in peace and happiness under Kingdom rule.—John 3:16; Rev. 4:11; 21:3, 4.

<sup>16</sup> From time to time, our understanding of a Bible prophecy or some Scriptural passage may be adjusted. When such new understandings are provided, we ought to take time to study the information carefully and meditate on it. (Acts 17:11; 1 Tim. 4:15) We seek to understand clearly not only the major adjustments but also the subtle differences between the old understanding and the new one. In this way, we are certain to place the new truth securely in our own treasure store. Why are such efforts worthwhile?

<sup>17</sup> Jesus taught that God's spirit can bring back to our mind things that we have learned. (John 14:25,

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16. What do we need to do when we receive an adjusted understanding of a truth?

17, 18. How can holy spirit help us?

26) How can this help us as public instructors of the good news? Consider the experience of a brother named Peter. In 1970 he was 19 years old and had recently begun serving at Bethel in Britain. While preaching from door to door, he met a bearded middle-aged man. Peter asked the man if he would like to understand the Bible. Somewhat shocked, the man responded that this was a house of Jewish rabbis. To test Peter, the rabbi asked, “So, my boy, what language was the book of Daniel written in?” Peter replied, “Part of it was written in Aramaic.” “The rabbi,” Peter recalls, “was surprised that I knew the answer—but not as surprised as I was! How did I know the answer? When I went home and checked the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines from the previous months, I found an article explaining that Daniel was written in Aramaic.” (Dan. 2:4, ftn.) Yes, the holy spirit can bring back to our mind thoughts we previously read and securely placed in our treasure store.—Luke 12:11, 12; 21:13-15.

<sup>18</sup> If we treasure the wisdom from Jehovah, our heart will motivate us to fill up our treasure store with truths—both new and old. As our love and appreciation for Jehovah’s wisdom continue to grow, we will be well-equipped as public instructors.

## SAFEGUARD YOUR TREASURES

<sup>19</sup> Satan and his world are constantly seeking to weaken or destroy our appreciation for the spiritual treasures we have discussed in this article. We are not immune to these tactics. We could easily be enticed by promises of a lucrative career, dreams of a lavish lifestyle, or the desire for a showy display of material riches. The apostle John reminds us that this world is passing away and so is its desire. (1 John 2:15-17) Therefore, we must work hard to safeguard our affections and protect our love and appreciation for spiritual riches.

<sup>20</sup> Be willing to give up anything that could replace your wholehearted love for God's Kingdom. Continue to preach zealously, never losing appreciation for our lifesaving ministry. Earnestly continue to search for divine truths. As you do this, you will build up "treasure in the heavens, where no thief gets near and no moth consumes. For where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also." —Luke 12:33, 34.

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19. Why must we safeguard our spiritual treasures?

20. What are you resolved to do to safeguard your spiritual riches?

1. Praise Jah with me;  
Come! Let us sing!  
He gives us life, breath, and ev'ry good thing.  
Each day and night,  
His name we bless,  
Praising his love and his almightiness.  
We sing his praise, and his name we confess.
2. Praise Jah with me;  
He satisfies.  
He hears our prayers as our needs he supplies.  
His mighty arm  
Strengthens the weak;  
His holy spirit sustains all the meek.  
His name we praise; Of his power we speak.
3. Praise Jah with me;  
Our God is just.  
He brings us comfort, in him we can trust.  
Wrongs he will right;  
Hearts he will heal.  
Rich Kingdom blessings all mankind will feel.  
Come let us praise him with joy and with zeal!

