

- Song 60 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “The Watchman’s Heavy Responsibility”: (10 min.)
Eze 33:7—Jehovah appointed Ezekiel as a watchman (it-2 1172 ¶12)
Eze 33:8, 9—The watchman avoided bloodguilt by sounding the warning (w88 1/1 28 ¶13)
Eze 33:11, 14-16—Jehovah will preserve alive those who heed the warning (w12 3/15 15 ¶3)
- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)
Eze 33:32, 33—Why should we persist in preaching despite apathy? (w91 3/15 17 ¶16-17)

Eze 34:23—How has this verse been fulfilled?
(w07 4/1 26 ¶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 32:1-16

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) g17.4 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- Return Visit: (4 min. or less) g17.4 cover—Invite the person to our meetings.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) fg lesson 2 ¶9-10—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 47
- “Cultivate Godly Qualities—Courage”: (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Fear of Man*.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) kr chap. 16 ¶6-17
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 86 and Prayer

Cultivate Godly Qualities—Courage

WHY IMPORTANT:

- Preaching requires courage.—Ac 5:27-29, 41, 42
- The great tribulation will test our courage.—Mt 24:15-21
- Fear of man leads to tragedy.—Jer 38:17-20; 39:4-7

HOW TO DO IT:

- Meditate on Jehovah’s saving acts.—Ex 14:13
- Pray for courage and boldness.—Ac 4:29, 31
- Put your trust in Jehovah.—Ps 118:6

What fears do I need to overcome in my ministry?



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

Why is courage essential in our ministry?

What contrast do we find at Proverbs 29:25?

Why must we develop godly courage now?

BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION: Ezekiel was told that his work as a prophet would be challenging.—Eze 2:3-7; 33:7-9.

Ask yourself, ‘How can I imitate Ezekiel’s courage?’

1. In this year of goodwill
by our God, all need to hear
That the day of his anger
will come, and it is near.

(CHORUS)

*It means their life, but not just theirs;
It means our own life as well.
It means their life if they obey,
So all the nations we must tell;
We must tell.*

2. There's a message to preach,
so we spread it all abroad.
We invite all to come and
be reconciled to God.

*(Chorus)**(BRIDGE)*

It's urgent, it's important,
That people listen, learn, and live.
We tell them, and we teach them;
Life-giving truth we freely give.

(Chorus)

Ezekiel 32-34

32 And in the 12th year, in the 12th month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah again came to me, saying: ² “Son of man, sing a dirge concerning Phar'aoth king of Egypt, and say to him,

‘You were like a strong young lion of the nations,
But you have been silenced.

You were like a sea monster, thrashing about in
your rivers,

Muddying the waters with your feet and fouling
the rivers.’

³ This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:

‘By means of an assembly of many nations I will
cast my net over you,

And they will haul you up in my dragnet.

⁴ I will abandon you on the land;

I will cast you onto the open field.

I will cause all the birds of the sky to settle on
you,

And I will satisfy the wild beasts of the whole
earth with you.

⁵ I will cast your flesh on the mountains

And fill the valleys with your remains.

⁶ I will drench the land with your gushing blood up to
the mountains,

And it will fill the streams.'

- ⁷ 'And when you are extinguished I will cover the heavens and darken their stars.
I will cover the sun with clouds,
And the moon will not give its light.
- ⁸ I will darken all the shining luminaries in the heavens because of you,
And I will cover your land with darkness,'
declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.
- ⁹ 'I will distress the hearts of many peoples when I lead your captives to other nations,
To lands that you have not known.
- ¹⁰ I will cause many peoples to be awestruck,
And their kings will shudder in horror over you when I brandish my sword before them.
They will tremble continually, each fearing for his life,
On the day of your downfall.'
- ¹¹ For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says:
'The sword of the king of Babylon will come upon you.
- ¹² I will cause your hordes to fall by the swords of mighty warriors,
The most ruthless of the nations, all of them.

They will bring down the pride of Egypt, and all her hordes will be annihilated.

¹³ I will destroy all her livestock beside her abundant waters,
And no foot of a human or hoof of the livestock will muddy them again.'

¹⁴ 'At that time I will clear up their waters,
And I will make their rivers flow like oil,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

¹⁵ 'When I make Egypt a desolate wasteland, a land stripped of all that filled it,
When I strike down all the inhabitants in it,
They will have to know that I am Jehovah.

¹⁶ This is a dirge, and people will certainly chant it;
The daughters of the nations will chant it.
They will chant it over Egypt and over all its hordes,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."

¹⁷ Then in the 12th year, on the 15th day of the month, the word of Jehovah came to me, saying:

¹⁸ "Son of man, wail over the hordes of Egypt and bring her down to the land below, her and the daughters of mighty nations, with those going down into the pit.

¹⁹ "'Whom do you surpass in beauty? Go down, and lie with the uncircumcised ones!'

²⁰ ““They will fall among those slain by the sword. She has been given to the sword; drag her away along with all her hordes.

²¹ ““From the depths of the Grave the mightiest warriors will speak to him and his helpers. They will certainly go down and will lie just like the uncircumcised, slain by the sword. ²² As-syr'i-a is there with all her assembly. Their graves are all around him, all of them fallen by the sword. ²³ Her graves are in the depths of the pit, and her assembly is all around her grave, all of them struck down by the sword, because they caused terror in the land of the living.

²⁴ ““E'lam is there with all her hordes around her grave, all of them fallen by the sword. They have gone down uncircumcised to the land below, those who caused terror in the land of the living. Now they will bear their shame with those going down into the pit.

²⁵ They have made a bed for her among the slain, along with all her hordes around her graves. All of them are uncircumcised, slain by the sword, because they caused terror in the land of the living; and they will bear their shame with those going down into the pit. He has been put among the slain.

²⁶ ““There is where Me'shech and Tu'bal and all their hordes are. Her graves are all around him. All of them are uncircumcised, pierced through by the sword,

because they caused terror in the land of the living.

²⁷ Will they not lie with mighty uncircumcised warriors who have fallen, who went down to the Grave with their weapons of war? And they will put their swords under their heads and their sins on their bones, because these mighty warriors terrorized the land of the living.

²⁸ But as for you, you will be crushed among the uncircumcised ones, and you will lie with those who were slain by the sword.

²⁹ “E'dom is there, her kings and all her chieftains, who despite their mightiness, were laid among those slain by the sword; they too will lie with the uncircumcised ones and with those going down into the pit.

³⁰ “There all the princes of the north are, along with all the Si-do'ni-ans, who have gone down in disgrace with the slain, despite the terror caused by their mightiness. They will lie uncircumcised with those who were slain by the sword and will bear their shame with those going down into the pit.

³¹ “Phar'aoh will see all of these, and he will be comforted over all that happened to his hordes; Phar'aoh and all his army will be slain by the sword,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.

³² “Because he caused terror in the land of the living, Phar'aoh and all his hordes will be laid to rest with the

uncircumcised, with those slain by the sword,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah."

33 And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying:
² "Son of man, speak to the sons of your people, and say to them,

"Suppose that I bring a sword upon a land, and all the people of that land take a man and make him their watchman, ³ and he sees the sword coming upon the land and blows the horn and warns the people. ⁴ If someone hears the sound of the horn but does not heed the warning and a sword comes and takes his life, his blood will be on his own head. ⁵ He heard the sound of the horn, but he did not heed the warning. His blood will be upon himself. If he had heeded the warning, his life would have been saved.

⁶ "But if the watchman sees the sword coming and he does not blow the horn and the people receive no warning and a sword comes and takes the life of one of them, that person will die for his own error, but I will ask his blood back from the watchman.'

⁷ "As for you, son of man, I have appointed you as a watchman to the house of Israel; and when you hear a word from my mouth you must warn them from me.

⁸ When I say to someone wicked, 'Wicked one, you will surely die!' but you do not speak out to warn the wicked one to change his course, he will die as a

wicked man because of his own error, but I will ask his blood back from you. ⁹ But if you warn someone wicked to turn back from his way and he refuses to change his course, he will die for his error, but you will certainly save your own life.

¹⁰ “And you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, ‘You have said: “Our revolts and our sins weigh heavily upon us, causing us to waste away; so how will we keep living?”’ ¹¹ Tell them, “As surely as I am alive,” declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, “I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that someone wicked changes his way and keeps living. Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why should you die, O house of Israel?””

¹² “And you, son of man, tell the sons of your people, ‘The righteousness of the righteous man will not save him when he revolts; nor will the wickedness of the wicked man make him stumble when he turns away from his wickedness; nor will anyone righteous be able to keep living because of his righteousness in the day that he sins. ¹³ When I say to the righteous one: “You will surely keep living,” and he trusts in his own righteousness and does what is wrong, none of his righteous acts will be remembered, but he will die for the wrong that he has done.

¹⁴ “And when I say to the wicked one: “You will surely die,” and he turns away from his sin and does what is just and righteous, ¹⁵ and the wicked one returns what was taken in pledge and pays back what was taken by robbery, and he walks in the statutes of life by not doing what is wrong, he will surely keep living. He will not die. ¹⁶ None of the sins he committed will be held against him. For doing what is just and righteous, he will surely keep living.’

¹⁷ “But your people have said, ‘The way of Jehovah is unjust,’ when it is actually their way that is unjust.

¹⁸ “When someone righteous abandons his righteousness and does what is wrong, he must die for it. ¹⁹ But when someone wicked turns away from his wickedness and does what is just and righteous, he will keep living for doing so.

²⁰ “But you have said, ‘The way of Jehovah is unjust.’ I will judge each of you according to his ways, O house of Israel.”

²¹ At length in the 12th year, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month of our exile, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said: “The city has been struck down!”

²² Now the evening before the escaped man came, the hand of Jehovah had come upon me, and he had

opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened, and I was no longer speechless.

²³ Then the word of Jehovah came to me, saying:

²⁴ “Son of man, the inhabitants of these ruins are saying concerning the land of Israel, ‘Abraham was just one man, and yet he took possession of the land. But we are many; surely the land has been given to us as a possession.’

²⁵ “Therefore say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “You are eating food with the blood, and you lift up your eyes to your disgusting idols, and you keep shedding blood. So why should you possess the land? ²⁶ You have relied on your sword, you engage in detestable practices, and each of you has defiled his neighbor’s wife. So why should you possess the land?”’

²⁷ “This is what you should say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “As surely as I am alive, those living in the ruins will fall by the sword; those in the open field, I will give as food to the wild beasts; and those in the strongholds and the caves will die by disease. ²⁸ I will make the land an utterly desolate wasteland, and its arrogant pride will be brought to an end, and the mountains of Israel will be desolated, with no one passing through. ²⁹ And they

will have to know that I am Jehovah when I make the land an utterly desolate wasteland because of all the detestable things that they have done.”

³⁰ “As for you, son of man, your people are speaking with one another about you beside the walls and in the doorways of the houses. They are saying to each other, each to his brother, ‘Come, and let us hear the word that comes from Jehovah.’ ³¹ They will crowd in to sit before you as my people; and they will hear your words, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they flatter you, but their heart is greedy for dishonest gain. ³² Look! You are to them like a romantic love song, sung with a beautiful voice and skillfully played on a stringed instrument. They will hear your words, but no one will act on them. ³³ And when it comes true—and it will come true—they will have to know that a prophet has been among them.”

34 The word of Jehovah again came to me, saying:
² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Prophesy, and say to the shepherds, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Is it not the flock that the shepherds should feed? ³ You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, and you slaughter the fattest animal, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴ You have not strengthened

the weak or healed the sick or bandaged the injured or brought back the strays or looked for the lost; rather, you have ruled them with harshness and tyranny. ⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; they were scattered and became food for every wild beast of the field. ⁶ My sheep were straying on all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the surface of the earth, with no one searching for them or seeking to find them.

⁷ ““Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah: ⁸ “As surely as I am alive,” declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, “because my sheep have become prey, food for every wild beast of the field, for there was no shepherd, and my shepherds did not search for my sheep; rather, they kept feeding themselves and did not feed my sheep,”” ⁹ therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah. ¹⁰ This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: ‘I am against the shepherds, and I will demand an accounting of them for my sheep, and I will dismiss them from feeding my sheep, and the shepherds will no longer feed themselves. I will rescue my sheep from their mouth, and they will no longer be food for them.’”

¹¹ ““For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: “Here I am, and I myself will search for my sheep, and I will care for them. ¹² I will care for my sheep like a

shepherd who has found his scattered sheep and is feeding them. I will rescue them from all the places where they were scattered in the day of clouds and thick gloom. ¹³ I will bring them out from the peoples and collect them together from the lands and bring them into their land and feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the streams and by all the dwelling places of the land. ¹⁴ In a good pasture I will feed them, and the land where they graze will be on Israel's high mountains. They will lie down there in a good grazing land, and they will feed on choice pastures on the mountains of Israel."

¹⁵ ""I myself will feed my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down," declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. ¹⁶ "The lost one I will search for, the stray I will bring back, the injured I will bandage, and the weak I will strengthen; but the fat one and the strong one I will annihilate. I will feed that one with judgment."

¹⁷ "As for you, my sheep, this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "I am about to judge between one sheep and another sheep, between the rams and the male goats. ¹⁸ Is it not enough for you to feed on the very best pastures? Must you also trample the rest of your pastures with your feet? And after drinking the clearest water, must you foul the water by stamping with your feet? ¹⁹ Should my sheep now feed on the

pasture trampled by your feet and drink the water befouled by the stamping of your feet?”

²⁰ “Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says to them: “Here I am, and I myself will judge between a fat sheep and a lean sheep, ²¹ for with your flank and shoulder you kept pushing, and with your horns you kept shoving all the sick ones until you had scattered them abroad. ²² And I will save my sheep, and they will no longer become something to prey upon; and I will judge between a sheep and a sheep. ²³ I will raise up one shepherd over them, my servant David, and he will feed them. He himself will feed them and become their shepherd. ²⁴ And I, Jehovah, will become their God, and my servant David a chieftain among them. I myself, Jehovah, have spoken.

²⁵ “““And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and I will rid the land of vicious wild beasts, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests. ²⁶ I will make them and the area around my hill a blessing, and I will cause the rain to fall at the proper time. Blessings will pour down like the rains. ²⁷ The trees of the field will yield their fruit, and the soil will give its produce, and they will dwell securely on the land. And they will have to know that I am Jehovah when I break their yoke bars and rescue them from

those who enslaved them. ²⁸ They will no longer become something for the nations to prey upon, and the wild beasts of the earth will not devour them, and they will dwell in security, with no one to make them afraid.

²⁹ ““I will establish for them a plantation of fame, and they will no longer die from famine in the land, and they will no longer be humiliated by the nations. ³⁰ ‘Then they will have to know that I, Jehovah their God, am with them and that they, the house of Israel, are my people,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.””

³¹ ““As for you, my sheep, the sheep that I care for, you are but men, and I am your God,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

- Song 60 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “The Watchman’s Heavy Responsibility”: (10 min.)
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Cultivate Godly Qualities—Courage

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Ask yourself, ‘How can I imitate Ezekiel’s courage?’

EZEKIEL 32-34 | The Watchman's Heavy Responsibility



Literal watchmen were often stationed on the city walls and towers to warn of approaching danger. Jehovah appointed Ezekiel as a figurative “watchman to the house of Israel.”



33:7

Ezekiel warned Israel that execution would come upon them if they did not turn away from their bad ways

What message from Jehovah do we proclaim today?



33:9, 14-16

By sounding the warning, Ezekiel could save his life and the lives of others

What should motivate us to proclaim the urgent message that Jehovah has entrusted to us?

This week I will try to preach to . . .

☐

a classmate

☐

a coworker

☐

an unbelieving family member

☐

other: _____

August 14-20

Treasures From God's Word

Ezekiel 33:7—Jehovah appointed Ezekiel as a watchman

Reference: it-2 1172 **paragraph 2**.

Figurative Use. Jehovah raised up prophets who served as figurative watchmen to the nation of Israel (**Jeremiah 6:17**), and they, in turn, sometimes spoke of watchmen in a symbolic way. (**Isaiah 21:6, 8**; 52:8; 62:6; **Hosea 9:8**) These prophet-watchmen had the responsibility to warn the wicked of impending destruction, and if they failed to do so, they were held accountable. Of course, if the people were unresponsive and failed to heed the warning, their blood was upon themselves. (**Ezekiel 3:17-21**; 33:1-9) An unfaithful prophet was about as worthless as a blind watchman or a voiceless dog.—**Isaiah 56:10**.

Ezekiel 33:8, 9—The watchman avoided bloodguilt by sounding the warning

Reference: w88 1/1 28 **paragraph 13**.

The responsibility of Jehovah's dedicated Witnesses to warn people of God's coming judgment can be compared to that of Ezekiel in his time. He was designated a watchman to the house of Israel. His

assignment was to warn the Israelites that execution was coming upon them if they did not turn away from their bad ways. If he as a watchman failed to sound the warning, execution would still come upon the wicked people, but their blood would be upon the head of the negligent watchman. In this Jehovah shows his attitude toward executing judgment: “I take delight, not in the death of the wicked one, but in that someone wicked turns back from his way and actually keeps living. Turn back, turn back from your bad ways, for why is it that you should die, O house of Israel?”—Ezekiel 33:1-11.

Watchman: it-2 pp. 1171-1172

One who guards against possible harm to persons or property, often during the night, and who may sound an alarm in the face of threatened danger. In military service a watchman is usually called a guard or sentry.—Jer 51:12, ftn; Ac 12:6; 28:16; see GUARD.

As a protection against thieves and vandals, persons often were stationed to watch over ripening vineyards or flocks of animals, positioning themselves perhaps in booths or elevated watchtowers built for that purpose. (2Ki 17:9; 2Ch 20:24; Job 27:18; Isa 1:8) Siege forces attacking fortified places had watchmen or sentries to give their commanders military intelligence. (Jer 51:12) When King Saul was in the field camp with his army he

also had personal watchmen whose responsibility was to look out for their king's welfare.—1Sa 14:16; 26:15, 16.

Watchmen were often stationed on the city walls and towers to observe those approaching before they got close. (2Sa 18:24-27; 2Ki 9:17-20) At times watchmen made their inspection rounds through the city streets as well. (Ca 3:3; 5:7) Fearful persons, awake during the dangerous hours of the night, might repeatedly inquire of the watchmen if all was well (Isa 21:11, 12), and it was only natural for watchmen themselves to long for the daylight to come. (Ps 130:6) Happy the city that, in addition to the watchmen, had Jehovah watching over it.—Ps 127:1.

Figurative Use. Jehovah raised up prophets who served as figurative watchmen to the nation of Israel (Jer 6:17), and they, in turn, sometimes spoke of watchmen in a symbolic way. (Isa 21:6, 8; 52:8; 62:6; Ho 9:8) These prophet-watchmen had the responsibility to warn the wicked of impending destruction, and if they failed to do so, they were held accountable. Of course, if the people were unresponsive and failed to heed the warning, their blood was upon themselves. (Eze 3:17-21; 33:1-9) An unfaithful prophet was about as worthless as a blind watchman or a voiceless dog.—Isa 56:10.

Watchman: w00 1/1 p. 8 par. 12

When “the time of the end” began, therefore, Jehovah again had a watchman on the scene, alerting people to events having to do with the fulfillment of His purposes. (Daniel 12:4; 2 Timothy 3:1) Until this day, that watchman class—anointed Christians, the Israel of God—has been acting in harmony with Isaiah’s description of the prophetic watchman: “He paid strict attention, with much attentiveness. And he proceeded to call out like a lion: ‘Upon the watchtower, O Jehovah, I am standing constantly by day, and at my guardpost I am stationed all the nights.’” (Isaiah 21:7, 8) This is a watchman who takes his task seriously!

Watchman: ip-2 chap. 13 p. 189 par. 17

In the modern-day fulfillment, the watchman class, “the faithful and discreet slave,” raises its voice not just to the ones who are already in God’s visible organization but also to outsiders. (Matthew 24:45-47)

Ezekiel 33:11, 14-16—Jehovah will preserve alive those who heed the warning

Reference: w12 3/15 15 **paragraph 3.**

When you consider what stands to be gained or lost as

a result of our preaching, you probably feel an urgent need to speak to others about the good news.

(**Romans 10:13, 14**) God's Word says: "When I say to the wicked one: 'You will positively die,' and he actually turns back from his sin and carries on justice and righteousness, . . . he will positively keep living. He will not die. None of his sins with which he has sinned will be remembered against him." (**Ezekiel 33:14-16**) Indeed, the Bible tells those who teach the Kingdom message: "You will save both yourself and those who listen to you."—**1 Timothy 4:16; Ezekiel 3:17-21.**

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Ezekiel 33:32, 33—Why should we persist in preaching despite apathy?

Reference: w91 3/15 17 **paragraphs 16-17.**

¹⁶ Ezekiel also set a fine example by being obedient and not allowing himself to be deterred by indifference or ridicule. Similarly, by keeping up with the development of the pure language, we are attuned to the direction taken by the royal Chariot Rider. Thus we are equipped to respond to his commands, strengthened to be undeterred by the indifference or ridicule of those to whom we speak Jehovah's judgment message. As with Ezekiel, God has

forewarned us that some people would actively oppose, being hardheaded and hardhearted. Others would not hear because they do not want to listen to Jehovah. (Ezekiel 3:7-9) Still others would be hypocrites, as **Ezekiel 33:31, 32** states: “They will come in to you, like the coming in of people, and sit before you as my people; and they will certainly hear your words but these they will not do, for with their mouth they are expressing lustful desires and after their unjust gain is where their heart is going. And, look! you are to them like a song of sensuous loves, like one with a pretty voice and playing a stringed instrument well. And they will certainly hear your words, but there are none doing them.”

¹⁷ What would be the outcome? Verse 33 adds: “And when it comes true—look! it must come true—they will also have to know that a prophet himself had proved to be in the midst of them.” Those words reveal that Ezekiel did not give up because of lack of response. The apathy of others did not make him apathetic. Whether people listened or not, he obeyed God and fulfilled his commission.

Ezekiel 34:23—How has this verse been fulfilled?

Reference: w07 4/1 26 paragraph 3.

The prophecy of **Isaiah 40:10, 11** emphasizes the tenderness with which Jehovah shepherds his people. (Psalm 23:1-6) During his earthly ministry, Jesus too showed tender concern for his disciples and for people in general. (Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 6:34) Both Jehovah and Jesus deplored the ruthlessness of the shepherds, or leaders, of Israel, who shamelessly neglected and exploited their flocks. (**Ezekiel 34:2-10; Matthew 23:3, 4, 15**) Jehovah promised: “I will save my sheep, and they will no longer become something for plunder; and I will judge between a sheep and a sheep. And I will raise up over them one shepherd, and he must feed them, even my servant David. He himself will feed them, and he himself will become their shepherd.” (**Ezekiel 34:22, 23**) In this time of the end, Jesus Christ, the Greater David, is the “one shepherd” whom Jehovah has appointed over all His servants on earth, both the spirit-anointed Christians and the “other sheep.”—John 10:16.

- Song 60 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “The Watchman’s Heavy Responsibility”: (10 min.)
Eze 33:7—Jehovah appointed Ezekiel as a watchman (it-2 1172 ¶12)
Eze 33:8, 9—The watchman avoided bloodguilt by sounding the warning (w88 1/1 28 ¶13)
Eze 33:11, 14-16—Jehovah will preserve alive those who heed the warning (w12 3/15 15 ¶3)
- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)
Eze 33:32, 33—Why should we persist in preaching despite apathy? (w91 3/15 17 ¶16-17)

Eze 34:23—How has this verse been fulfilled?
(w07 4/1 26 ¶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 32:1-16

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) g17.4 cover—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- Return Visit: (4 min. or less) g17.4 cover—Invite the person to our meetings.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) fg lesson 2 ¶9-10—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 47
- “Cultivate Godly Qualities—Courage”: (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Avoid What Erodes Loyalty—Fear of Man*.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) kr chap. 16 ¶6-17
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 86 and Prayer

Cultivate Godly Qualities—Courage

WHY IMPORTANT:

- Preaching requires courage.—Ac 5:27-29, 41, 42
- The great tribulation will test our courage.—Mt 24:15-21
- Fear of man leads to tragedy.—Jer 38:17-20; 39:4-7

HOW TO DO IT:

- Meditate on Jehovah’s saving acts.—Ex 14:13
- Pray for courage and boldness.—Ac 4:29, 31
- Put your trust in Jehovah.—Ps 118:6

What fears do I need to overcome in my ministry?



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

Why is courage essential in our ministry?

What contrast do we find at Proverbs 29:25?

Why must we develop godly courage now?

BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION: Ezekiel was told that his work as a prophet would be challenging.—Eze 2:3-7; 33:7-9.

Ask yourself, ‘How can I imitate Ezekiel’s courage?’



Are You Doing
Too Much?



3 COVER SUBJECT ARE YOU DOING TOO MUCH?

Today, many people are extremely busy, to the point that sometimes relationships are strained and families suffer.

How can we be balanced in our use of time?

A wise man once wrote: “Better is a handful of rest than two handfuls of hard work and chasing after the wind.”—Ecclesiastes 4:6.

This issue of “Awake!” provides practical suggestions on making wise use of our time, which includes setting practical priorities.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

8 The Amazing Arctic Tern

9 ‘A Good Name Is Better Than Great Wealth’

10 **HELP FOR THE FAMILY**

When the Children Are Gone

12 **INTERVIEW**

A Brain Pathologist Explains His Faith

14 **THE BIBLE’S VIEWPOINT**

Temptation

16 **WAS IT DESIGNED?**

The Brilliant Blue of the *Polilia* Berry



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BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED



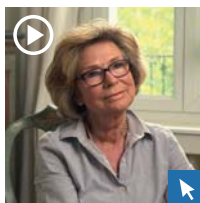
FAMILY

Can the Bible Help Me to Have a Happy Family?

Wise advice from the Bible has already helped millions of men and women to have happiness at home.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED)

VIDEOS



VIEWPOINTS ON THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

Monica Richardson: A Physician Explains Her Faith

What she learned about the miracle of childbirth changed her view on the origin of life.

(Look under PUBLICATIONS > VIDEOS, in the category “Interviews and Experiences”)



COVER SUBJECT

Are You Doing Too Much?

Do you feel you are too busy? If so, you are by no means alone. “Everybody, everywhere seems to be busy,” reports the magazine *The Economist*.

IN A 2015 survey of full-time workers in eight countries, many respondents said that they find it hard to meet the demands of both their work and their homelife. Causes included increased responsibilities at work or at home, rising expenses, and longer working hours. In the United States, for example, full-time employees report working an average of 47 hours a week. Nearly 1 in 5 claimed to work 60 hours or more!

In another survey, this one involving 36 countries, over one quarter of the re-

spondents said that they often felt rushed *even in their leisure time!* Children too can be affected if overloaded with tightly scheduled activities.

When we constantly try to do more than time may allow, we can become stressed—victims of what has been termed “time pressure.” But is it possible to live a more balanced life? What role do our beliefs, choices, and goals play? First, consider four reasons why some try to do too much.

1 THE DESIRE TO PROVIDE WELL FOR ONE'S FAMILY

"I was involved in my work seven days a week," says a father named Gary. "I did it because there was always something better that I wanted to give my kids. I wanted them to have the things I never had." Despite their good motives, parents need to examine their priorities. Some studies suggest that both adults and children who attach a lot of importance to money and material possessions tend to be less happy, less satisfied with life, and less healthy physically than those who are not materialistic.

In an effort to position their children for future success, some parents overschedule both their children and themselves with various activities. Such well-meaning parents, says the book *Putting Family First*, "are acting like recreation directors on a turbo-charged family cruise ship."

2 THE BELIEF THAT 'MORE IS BETTER'

Advertisers try to convince us that we are depriving ourselves if we don't buy their latest products. Says *The Economist*: "The explosion of available goods has only made time feel more crunched," as consumers "struggle to choose what to buy or watch or eat" in the limited time they have available.

In the year 1930, a leading economist predicted that technological advancements would give workers more leisure time. How wrong he was! "Instead of quitting [work] early," observed Eliza-



beth Kolbert, staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine, people "find new things to need"—and these things cost money and time.

3 TRYING TO SATISFY THE EXPECTATIONS OF OTHERS

Some employees work grueling hours to avoid displeasing their employer. Coworkers can also exert pressure by making others feel guilty if they do not stay late. And then there is economic uncertainty, which can make people more willing to work longer hours or to be constantly on call.

Similarly, parents can feel pressured to conform to the hectic pace of other fami-



Children who are raised with an emphasis on material things are actually less happy

lies. If they do not conform, they may feel guilty about “depriving” their children.

4 THE PURSUIT OF STATUS AND SELF-FULFILLMENT

Tim, who lives in the United States, says: “I loved my work, and I worked at full throttle all the time. I felt that I had to prove myself.”

Like Tim, many feel a strong connection between their self-image and their pace of life. The result? “Busyness has acquired social status,” says Elizabeth Kolbert, quoted earlier. She adds: “The busier you are the more important you seem.”

LEARN TO BE BALANCED

Diligence and hard work are encouraged in the Bible. (Proverbs 13:4) But so is balance. “Better is a handful of rest than two handfuls of hard work and chasing after the wind,” says Ecclesiastes 4:6.

Leading a balanced life is good for our mental and physical health. Is it really possible, though, to cut back or slow down? Yes. Consider four suggestions:



Technology and Time Pressure

Do smartphones and tablets increase time pressure or relieve it? The answer depends on how these tools are used.

At work: Mobile devices can give workers more flexibility in choosing when and where to work. But they can also make work more stressful by creating the expectation that workers will be available at almost any hour of the day or night.

At home: Cell phones may reduce time pressure by making it easier for families to coordinate their activities. However, these devices can also intrude on family time. Studies indicate that children who have to compete with devices for a parent's attention may become frustrated and prone to behavioral problems.

1 CLARIFY YOUR VALUES AND GOALS

It is normal to want a measure of financial security. But how much money is enough? What constitutes success? Is it measured merely by income or material assets? Conversely, having too much rest or recreation can also increase time pressure.

Tim, quoted earlier, says: "My wife and I took a hard look at our life and decided to simplify it. We made a chart that showed our current situation and our new goals. We discussed the effects of past decisions and what we would need to do to reach our goals."

2 REDUCE THE INFLUENCE OF CONSUMER CULTURE

The Bible advises us to control "the desire of the eyes." (1 John 2:15-17) Advertising can fuel such desires, pushing a person to work long hours or to indulge in excessive or costly recreation. True, you may not be able to avoid all ads. But you can limit your exposure to them. You can also carefully consider what you actually need.

Keep in mind, too, the power that your associates can have on you. If they avidly pursue material things or if they measure success in material terms, you may be wise to seek out friends who have better priorities. "The one walking with the wise will become wise," the Bible says.—Proverbs 13:20.

3 SET LIMITS ON WORK

Speak to your employer about your work and your priorities. And do not feel guilty about having a life away from your job. The book *Work to Live* says: "Those who put



Use mealtimes to talk as a family

up boundaries between the job and home or take vacations find one consistent revelation: There is no apocalypse while you're gone."

Gary, quoted earlier, was financially comfortable, so he decided to reduce his working hours. "I talked with my family and suggested that we simplify our lifestyle," he said. "Then we gradually took steps to do so. I also approached my employer with a proposal to work fewer days each week, and he agreed."

4 MAKE FAMILY TIME A HIGH PRIORITY

Husbands and wives need to spend time together, and children need time with their

parents. So avoid trying to match the pace of other families who are constantly on the go. "Declare some downtime," Gary suggests, "and drop things that have a lower priority."

When your family is together, do not let television, cell phones, or other devices isolate you from one another. Share at least one meal together each day, and use mealtimes to talk as a family. When parents heed that simple advice, their children enjoy greater well-being and do better at school.

In conclusion, ask yourself: 'What do I want out of life? What do I want for my family?' If you desire a happier and more meaningful life, set priorities that reflect the proven wisdom found in the Bible. ■

Jesus made God's name known when he taught people about God. 📖 *Read John 17:26.*

4. Does Jehovah care about us?

Does widespread suffering mean that Jehovah is a God who does not care about us? Some people claim that he makes us suffer to test us, but this is not true.

📖 *Read James 1:13.*

God has granted man the dignity of free will. Do we not appreciate our freedom to choose to serve God? (Joshua 24:15) But many choose to do bad things to others, so suffering abounds. It hurts Jehovah to see such injustice. 📖 *Read Genesis 6:5, 6.*

Jehovah is a God who cares about us. He wants us to enjoy life. Soon he will eliminate suffering and those who cause it. Meanwhile, he has good reason to allow suffering for a limited time. In Lesson 8, we will learn what that reason is. 📖 *Read 2 Peter 2:9; 3:7, 13.*

Like this loving father, God is acting for our long-term good



5. How can we draw closer to God?

Jehovah invites us to draw close to him by speaking to him in prayer. He is interested in us individually. (Psalm 65:2; 145:18) He is willing to forgive. He recognizes our efforts to please him, even if we sometimes fail. So despite our imperfection, we really can enjoy a close relationship with God.

📖 *Read Psalm 103:12-14; James 4:8.*

Since Jehovah has given us life, we should love him more than we love anyone else. (Mark 12:30) As you express your love for God by learning more about him and doing as he asks, you will draw ever closer to him.

📖 *Read 1 Timothy 2:4; 1 John 5:3.*



47 *Pray to Jehovah Each Day*

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

1. Pray to Jehovah, the Hearer of prayer.
 This is our priv'lege, for his name we bear.
 Open your heart as you would to a friend,
 Trust that on Him you can always depend.
 Pray to Jehovah each day.
2. Pray to Jehovah, give thanks that we live,
 Asking forgiveness as we do forgive.
 May we confess to our God whom we trust.
 He is our Maker and knows we are dust.
 Pray to Jehovah each day.
3. Pray to Jehovah when troubles appear.
 He is our Father and ever so near.
 Seek his protection, and look for his aid;
 He is our confidence; don't be afraid.
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- Song 60 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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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”

⁶ 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?

tending to encourage one another.—**Read Hebrews 10: 24, 25.**

⁷ For many years, the structure and frequency of the meetings varied from one group of Bible Students to another. For example, a letter from a group in the United States that was published in 1911 said: “We hold at least five meetings each week.” They held those meetings on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and twice on Sunday. Another letter, from a group in Africa, that was published in 1914 said: “We hold meetings twice a month, beginning on Friday and lasting over Sunday.” In time, however, the current format of our meetings emerged. Consider briefly the history of each meeting.

⁸ **Public Meeting.** In 1880, the year after Brother Russell began publishing *Zion’s Watch Tower*, he followed the example set by Jesus and embarked on a preaching tour. (Luke 4:43) In the process, Brother Russell set a pattern for what has become our current Public Meeting. Announcing the trip, the *Watch Tower* said that Russell “would be glad to address

8. What were some themes of early public lectures?

public meetings on ‘*Things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*’” In 1911, after classes, or congregations, had been set up in a number of countries, each class was encouraged to send out suitable speakers to surrounding areas to give a series of six lectures on topics such as judgment and the ransom. At the end of each talk, the name of the speaker and the theme of the talk for the following week were announced.

⁹ In 1945, *The Watchtower* announced the beginning of a global Public Meeting campaign involving a series of eight Bible lectures that dealt with “urgent problems of the times.” For many decades, assigned speakers not only used the topics supplied by the faithful slave but also delivered talks that they had developed themselves. In 1981, however, all speakers were directed to base their talks on the outlines supplied to the congregations.*^[2] Until 1990, some outlines for public discourses called for audience participation or demonstrations; but in that year the instructions were amended, and public dis-

*^[2] By 2013, more than 180 outlines for public talks were available.

9. How has the Public Meeting changed over the years, and how can you support this meeting?

courses were from then on delivered only as talks. A further adjustment came in January 2008 when public talks were reduced from 45 minutes to 30 minutes. Even though changes to the format have been made, well-prepared public talks continue to build faith in God's Word and to educate us about various aspects of the Kingdom of God. (1 Tim. 4:13, 16) Do you enthusiastically invite those on whom you make return visits and other non-Witnesses to hear those important Bible-based discourses?

¹⁰ ***Watchtower Study***. In 1922, brothers known as pilgrims—ministers sent by the Watch Tower Society to give talks to the congregations and take the lead in the preaching work—recommended that a regular meeting be devoted to a study of *The Watch Tower*. This suggestion was adopted, and at first, *Watch Tower* studies were held either midweek or on Sunday.

¹¹ The June 15, 1932, *Watchtower* provided further direction on how this meeting should be conducted. Using as a model the study that was conducted in the Bethel Home, the article stated that a brother

10-12. (a) What changes has the format of the *Watchtower Study* undergone? (b) What questions would you do well to ask?

should lead the meeting. Three brothers could sit at the front of the meeting place and take turns reading the paragraphs. Articles at that time did not include printed questions, so the conductor was told to ask the audience to raise questions on the material under consideration. After that, he would call on people in the audience to give answers to those questions. If further clarification was needed, the conductor was directed to offer a “brief and succinct” explanation.

¹² Initially, each congregation was permitted to select the issue of the magazine that the majority wanted to study. However, the April 15, 1933, *Watchtower* suggested that all congregations use the current issue. In 1937, direction was given that the study should be held on Sunday. Further refinements that restructured the meeting into the form we know today were published in the October 1, 1942, *Watchtower*. First, the magazine announced that questions would appear at the bottom of each page of the study articles and that those questions should be used. Then, it stated that the meeting should be one hour long. It also encouraged those who answered to

express themselves “in their own words” instead of reading portions of the paragraph. The *Watchtower* Study continues to be the primary meeting through which the faithful slave provides spiritual food at the proper time. (Matt. 24:45) Each of us does well to ask: ‘Do I prepare for the study of *The Watchtower* each week? And do I endeavor to comment if I am able?’

¹³ **Congregation Bible Study.** In the mid-1890’s, after a number of volumes of *Millennial Dawn* had been released, Brother H. N. Rahn, a Bible Student living in the city of Baltimore, Maryland, U.S.A., suggested holding “Dawn Circles” for Bible study. At first, these meetings, which were often held in private homes, were an experiment. By September 1895, however, Dawn Circles were being conducted with success in a score of cities in the United States. The *Watch Tower* of that month therefore suggested that all students of the truth hold those meetings. It directed that the one conducting should be a good reader. He was to read a sentence and then wait for

13, 14. What is the history of the Congregation Bible Study, and what do you enjoy about this meeting?

those present to comment. After reading each of the sentences in a paragraph and discussing them, he was to look up and read the cited scriptures. At the end of a chapter, each one in attendance was to give a brief review of the material.

¹⁴ The name of this meeting changed several times. It became known as Berean Circles for Bible Study, a reference to the first-century Bereans who carefully examined the Scriptures. (Acts 17:11) In time, the name was changed to Congregation Book Study. Now it is called Congregation Bible Study, and the entire congregation meets together at the Kingdom Hall rather than in groups in private homes. Over the decades, various books, brochures, and even *Watch Tower* articles have been used as a basis for study. From the early days, all who attended were encouraged to take part in the meeting. This meeting has done much to deepen our knowledge of the Bible. Do you regularly prepare for this meeting and participate in it to the best of your ability?

¹⁵ **Theocratic Ministry School.** “On Monday night, February 16, 1942,” recalled Carey Barber, who at

15. What was the Theocratic Ministry School designed to do?

that time was serving at the world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, “all the male members of the Brooklyn Bethel family were invited to enroll in what would later be known as the Theocratic Ministry School.” Brother Barber, who much later became a member of the Governing Body, described the school as “one of the most outstanding developments of Jehovah’s dealing with his people in modern times.” The course was such a success in helping brothers improve their teaching and preaching skills that beginning in 1943, the booklet *Course in Theocratic Ministry* was gradually made available to congregations worldwide. The June 1, 1943, *Watchtower* said that the Theocratic Ministry School was designed to help God’s people “train themselves to be better witnesses in the proclamation of the Kingdom.”—2 Tim. 2:15.

¹⁶ At first, many found it agonizing to talk in front of a large audience. Clayton Woodworth, Jr., whose father had been unjustly imprisoned with Brother Rutherford and others in 1918, recalled how

16, 17. Did the Theocratic Ministry School teach only technical skills? Explain.

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

speaker himself is not important. But if he prepares well and rests all his confidence in Jehovah, he will be heard with pleasure and the hearers will learn something.”

¹⁷ In 1959, sisters were invited to enroll in the school. Sister Edna Bauer recalls hearing the announcement at the assembly she attended. “I remember the excitement it caused among the sisters,” she said. “Now their opportunities were expanded.” Over the years, many brothers and sisters seized the opportunity to enroll in the Theocratic Ministry School and be taught by Jehovah. Today, we continue to receive such training at our midweek meeting. —**Read Isaiah 54:13.**

¹⁸ **Service Meeting.** As early as 1919, meetings were held to organize field service. At the time, not all in the congregation attended those meetings—only those who were directly engaged in distributing literature. For much of the year 1923, a Service Meeting was held once a month, and all in the class, or congregation, were to attend. By **18, 19.** (a) How do we now receive practical guidance for carrying out the ministry? (b) Why do we sing at our meetings? (See the box “The Singing of the Truth.”)

We Must Be Taught

(Isaiah 50:4; 54:13)

1. Come with rejoicing, and learn about Jehovah.
“Come drink life’s water,” the spirit has said.
Healthful instruction, God has provided.
All those who hunger for truth will be fed.
2. Never forsaking our gathering together,
We must be taught; we must learn what is right.
Here with God’s spirit, here with our brothers,
Here we are strengthened to walk in the light.
3. Lips that sing praise, how encouraging to hear them!
Tongues of the taught ones, how sweet is their sound!
Oh, may we always meet with God’s people!
Oh, may we always among them be found!

JUNE 2017

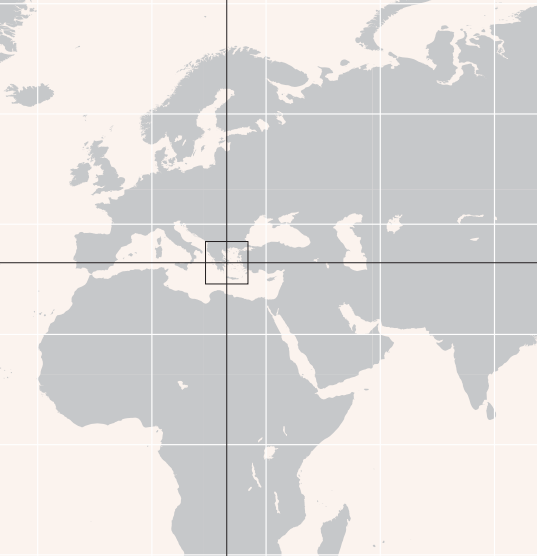
THE WATCHTOWER

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

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.

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.

PUBLISHERS

28,816

BIBLE STUDIES

13,237

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2016)

46,822

THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 2017

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

28 WEEK OF AUGUST 14-20

Keep Your Eyes on the Big Issue

40 WEEK OF AUGUST 21-27

Uphold Jehovah's Sovereignty!

In the rush of life, it is easy to lose sight of what is important. These articles will help us to appreciate the importance of Jehovah's sovereignty and to understand how we can uphold it.

52 Will You Resolve Conflicts and Promote Peace?

Jehovah Is Our King!

(Psalm 97:1)

1. Rejoice, give glory to Jehovah,
For the heavens proclaim all his righteousness.
Let us sing to our God joyful songs to his praise;
Let us speak to all of his great acts.

(CHORUS)

*Let the heavens rejoice, Let the earth joyful be,
For Jehovah has become our King!
Let the heavens rejoice, Let the earth joyful be,
For Jehovah has become our King!*

2. His glory tell among the nations;
For Jehovah to us is a God who saves.
Yes, Jehovah is King; he deserves all the praise.
So we bow before his mighty throne.

(Chorus)

3. His righteous rule is now established.
On his throne, he has placed his anointed Son.
Let the gods of this world
be brought down and be shamed,
For the praise belongs to God alone.

(Chorus)



SONGS:

9, 22

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

Why is the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty an important issue facing mankind?

How did Job's integrity under trial support Jehovah's sovereignty; yet, in what way did Job fall short?

What are some important ways that we show support for Jehovah's sovereignty?

Keep Your Eyes on the Big Issue

“May people know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth.”

—PS. 83:18.

FOR many people today, money is the big issue. They are focused on accumulating wealth or on holding on to what they have. Others consider their big issue to be family, health, or personal accomplishments.

1, 2. (a) What big issue faces all mankind? (b) How important is appreciation for that issue?

² However, a very big issue facing all of us is the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty. We need to guard against losing sight of this vital issue. How could that happen? We could become so absorbed in the demands of our day-to-day life that we forget just how important the vindication of God's sovereignty really is. Or we could allow the weight of our personal trials to eclipse that great issue. On the other hand, the keener our appreciation for the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty, the better equipped we are to meet challenges in our daily lives. And such appreciation will draw us closer to Jehovah.

WHY SO IMPORTANT?

³ The action of Satan the Devil has raised the question of the rightfulness of Jehovah's sovereignty. He contends that God's rulership is corrupt and that Jehovah withholds the best from his creatures. According to the Devil, humans would be far happier and better off ruling themselves. (Gen. 3:1-5) Satan has also implied that no human at heart is loyal to God—that under sufficient pressure, anyone will reject Jehovah's

3. What are Satan's claims with regard to God's rulership?

rulership. (Job 2:4, 5) In connection with the Devil's challenge, Jehovah is allowing time for human experience to reveal the unsavory truth about life outside of God's righteous rule.

⁴ Of course, Jehovah knows that the Devil's allegations are false. So why has God chosen to allow the issue to go on, giving Satan time to try to prove his point? The answer involves all intelligent creatures. (Read Psalm 83:18.) After all, the first human couple rejected Jehovah's rulership, and so have many others since then. This could lead some to wonder whether there might be validity to the Devil's claim. As long as the question remains unsettled in the minds of humans or angels, discord among nations, races, tribes, families, and individuals will exist. But after Jehovah's sovereignty is vindicated, all will submit everlastingly to his righteous rule. Universal peace will be restored.—Eph. 1:9, 10.

⁵ The rightfulness of God's sovereignty will be vindicated and rule by Satan and humans will utterly fail and be removed. Rule by God through his

4. Why must the issue of sovereignty be settled?

5. What is our role in supporting Jehovah's side of the issue of sovereignty?

Messianic Kingdom will succeed, and integrity-keepers will have proved that humans can take their stand for God's rulership. (Isa. 45:23, 24) Do you want to be among those who go on record as integrity-keeping supporters of Jehovah's sovereignty? No doubt you do. To be integrity-keepers, we need to fix our eyes on that big issue and comprehend how important it really is.

VINDICATION—MORE IMPORTANT THAN SALVATION

⁶ As stated, the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty is a vital issue involving mankind. It is more important than the personal happiness of any individual. Does that fact undermine the value of our salvation or imply that Jehovah does not really care for us? Not at all. Why not?

⁷ Jehovah deeply loves and values mankind. He was willing to use the blood of his Son to make possible our eternal salvation. (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9) Were Jehovah to fail to fulfill his promises, the Devil would have an excuse to call God a liar who withholds good and thus rules in an

6. How important is the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty?

7, 8. Why does the vindication of God's sovereignty include the fulfillment of his promises?

unfair way. It would also vindicate opposers who mockingly ask: “Where is this promised presence of his? Why, from the day our forefathers fell asleep in death, all things are continuing exactly as they were from creation’s beginning.” (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4) Hence, Jehovah will see to it that the vindication of his sovereignty includes the salvation of obedient humans! (Read Isaiah 55:10, 11.) Furthermore, Jehovah’s love characterizes his sovereignty. So we can be sure that he will always love, value, and appreciate his loyal servants.—Ex. 34:6.

⁸ In acknowledging the importance of Jehovah’s sovereignty, we are not belittling our salvation or our worth in his eyes. We are merely keeping sovereignty and salvation in proper perspective. That correct perspective is important if we are to keep our eyes on this big issue and take our stand for Jehovah’s righteous rule.

A LESSON IN PERSPECTIVE

⁹ The need for proper perspective is made quite clear in the book of Job, one of the earliest Bible books to be written. There we learn of Satan’s

9. What was Satan’s claim with regard to Job? (See opening picture.)

contention that if subjected to intense suffering, Job would reject God. Satan suggested that God personally afflict Job. Jehovah did not do that, but he allowed Satan to test Job, stating: “Everything that he has is in *your* hand.” (Read Job 1:7-12.) In a short time, Job lost his servants, his means of livelihood, and his ten beloved children. Satan accomplished this in a way that made it appear as if *God himself* had been the cause of Job’s troubles. (Job 1:13-19) Satan next afflicted Job with a painful and repulsive illness. (Job 2:7) His despair was deepened further by the disheartening words of his wife and of three companions who acted as if they were his friends.—Job 2:9; 3:11; 16:2.

¹⁰ The result? Satan’s claim was shown to be completely false. Job refused to turn his back on God. (Job 27:5) However, Job temporarily lost the proper perspective. He became absorbed in establishing his own righteousness, even demanding a reason for his suffering. (Job 7:20; 13:24) We might think that would be understandable in the light of all that he had suffered. Yet, God saw the

10. (a) What did Job do that showed his integrity to God? (b) In what way did he fall short?

need to correct Job's thinking. What did Jehovah tell him?

¹¹ God's words to Job fill four chapters in the book of Job—chapters 38 through 41. Nowhere do we read of God's telling Job specifically the reason behind his suffering. The main point of Jehovah's words was not to explain to Job *why* he was suffering, as if God had to justify himself. Rather, Jehovah wanted to help Job recognize his insignificance in comparison with God's greatness. And he helped Job to see that there were greater issues with which to be concerned. (Read Job 38:18-21.) This helped Job regain the proper perspective.

¹² Was Jehovah harsh in giving such straightforward counsel after Job had endured so severe a trial? God was not, and Job did not think so. Despite his ordeal, Job finally began to speak appreciatively. He even stated: "I take back what I said, and I repent in dust and ashes." Such was the effect of Jehovah's pointed but refreshing counsel. (Job 42:1-6) Earlier, Job had also received corrective counsel from young Elihu. (Job 32:5-10) Af-

11, 12. What did Jehovah help Job to appreciate, and how did Job respond?

ter Job responded to God's reproof and corrected his view, Jehovah expressed to others his approval of Job's faithfulness under trial.—Job 42:7, 8.

¹³ Jehovah's counsel would continue to benefit Job even after his trials were over. How so? Well, though "Jehovah blessed the last part of Job's life more than the beginning," restoration and recovery must have taken time. He later "came to have seven more sons and three more daughters." (Job 42:12-14) Surely Job missed his children who died earlier at Satan's hand. For some time, he likely experienced vivid memories of his suffering. Even if he eventually better understood the reason for his trials, he may on occasion have thought about why it was necessary for him to suffer to *such* an extent. Whatever his thoughts, he could reflect on God's counsel. Doing so would help him maintain the proper perspective and, in turn, provide comfort.—Ps. 94:19, ftn.

¹⁴ We too can acquire proper perspective and gain comfort from the account of Job. After all, Jehovah had it preserved "for *our* instruction, so that through *our* endurance and through the

13. How would Jehovah's counsel benefit Job long after his trials?

14. What can we learn from Job's experience?



comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4) What is the lesson for us? Primarily this: Let us not become so absorbed in our own lives that we lose sight of this big issue—the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty. And let us appreciate that our role in this vital issue entails remaining faithful even under difficult circumstances, as did Job.

¹⁵ Why is it comforting to reflect on the value of our faithfulness? Because it means that our trials serve a purpose. Far from indicating Jehovah’s displeasure, they provide for us a means to show that we support God’s sovereignty. (Prov. 27:11)

15. What does our faithfulness under trial accomplish?



Can we look past our own problems and see the real issue?
(See paragraph 14)

Our endurance produces “an approved condition” and strengthens our hope. (Read Romans 5:3-5.) The record of Job bears out that “Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful.” (Jas. 5:11) So we can be sure that he will reward us and all who uphold his sovereignty. Knowing this helps us “endure fully with patience and joy.”—Col. 1:11.

REMAINING FOCUSED

¹⁶ Granted, keeping our eyes on the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty can be challenging. Our problems may seem to overwhelm us at times. Even relatively minor ones can loom large in our

16. Why must we remind ourselves of the importance of the vindication of Jehovah’s sovereignty?

mind if we dwell on them. Therefore, we do well to remind ourselves regularly of the importance of supporting God's sovereignty when we face difficult circumstances.

¹⁷ Continuing to have a regular share in Jehovah's work can help us to stay focused on the big issue. For example, a Witness named Renee suffered a stroke and struggled with chronic pain and cancer. While being treated at medical facilities, she witnessed to hospital staff, patients, and visitors. At one facility, she spent 80 hours witnessing in just two and a half weeks. Even as she approached death, Renee never lost sight of Jehovah's sovereignty. That, in turn, mitigated some of her distress.

¹⁸ Of course, we want to stay focused on Jehovah's sovereignty also in the face of day-to-day pressures and inconveniences. Jennifer spent three days at an airport waiting for a flight home. One flight after another got canceled. Feeling alone and exhausted, she could easily have surrendered to self-pity. Instead, she prayed to see how

17. How can having a regular share in Jehovah's work help us remain focused on the big issue?

18. How did one sister's experience illustrate the benefit of upholding Jehovah's sovereignty?

she might be of spiritual help to others experiencing similar frustration. With what result? She witnessed to many people and placed much literature. She says, “I felt that Jehovah blessed me despite the trying experience and gave me enough strength to carry his name in a worthwhile way.” Indeed, she stayed focused on Jehovah’s purpose.

¹⁹ Appreciation for Jehovah’s sovereignty has distinguished true religion from false. God’s people have long upheld his sovereignty. As supporters of true worship, we individually should endeavor to maintain that same Scriptural perspective.

²⁰ Be assured that Jehovah treasures your efforts to uphold his sovereignty by your faithful service and endurance of trials. (Ps. 18:25) The next article will consider further why Jehovah’s sovereignty is deserving of your wholehearted support and how you can uphold it.

19. Where do Jehovah’s people stand regarding his sovereignty?

20. How does Jehovah feel about your efforts to uphold his sovereignty?

The Kingdom Is in Place —Let It Come!

(Revelation 11:15; 12:10)

1. Jehovah, you always have been,
And always you will be.
You've given the throne to your Son;
He rules by your decree.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

(CHORUS)

*For now have come to pass
Salvation and kingdom and might.
The Kingdom is in place.
We pray: "Let it come, Let it come!"*

2. The time for the Devil is short;
We know what this will mean.
Though living in times of distress,
We see the things unseen.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

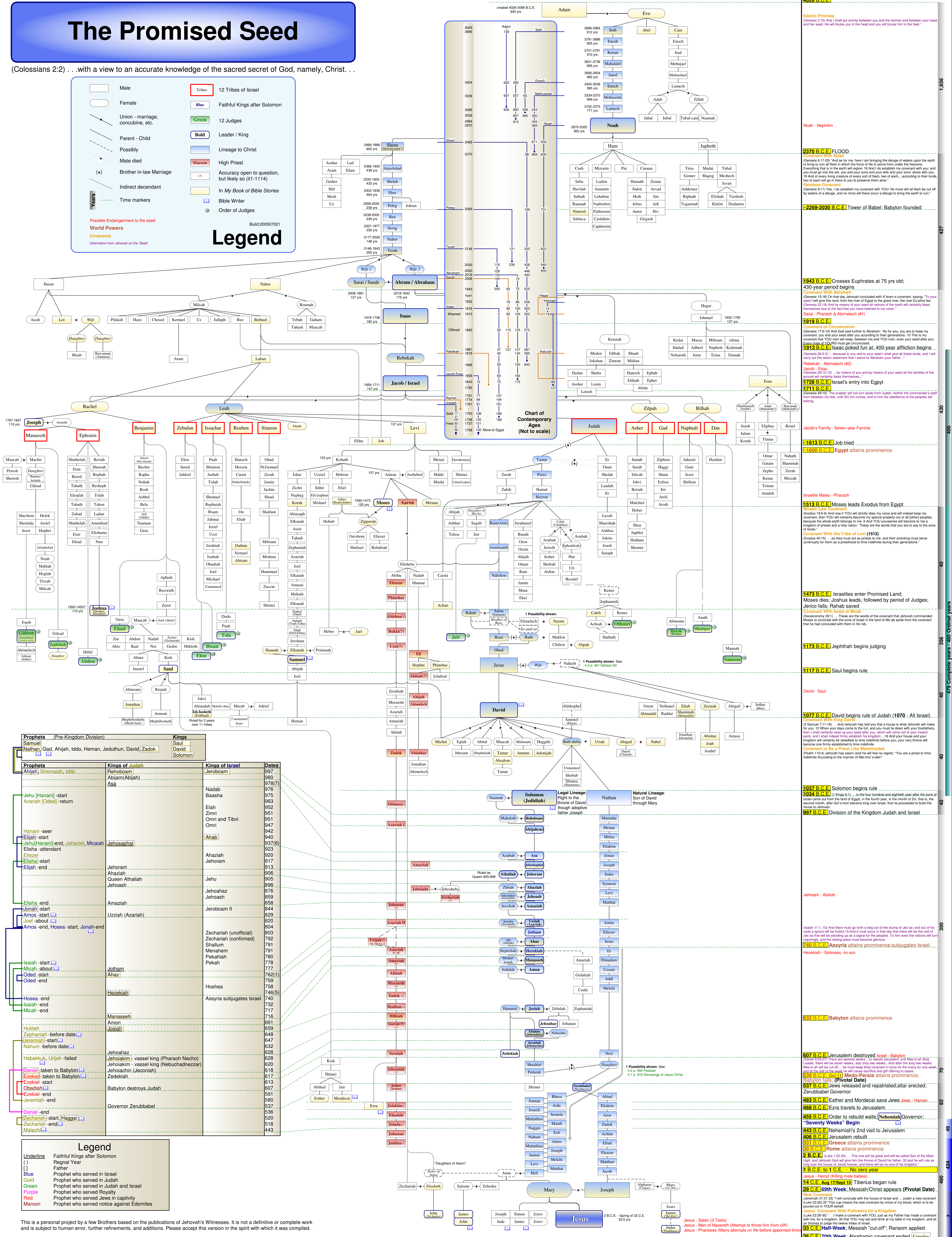
(Chorus)

3. The angels in heaven rejoice
And sing with joyful cries.
The heavens above are relieved
From Satan and his lies.
The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
His rulership will fill the earth.

(Chorus)

The Promised Seed

(Colossians 2:2) . . .with a view to an accurate knowledge of the sacred secret of God, namely, Christ. . .



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