

- Song 27 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Seek Jehovah Before His Day of Anger”:** (10 min.)  
[Play the video *Introduction to Zephaniah.*]  
Zep 2:2, 3—Seek Jehovah, seek righteousness, seek meekness (w01 2/15 18-19 ¶15-7)  
[Play the video *Introduction to Haggai.*]
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Zep 1:8—What warning do we find in this verse? (w07 11/15 11 ¶3)

Hag 2:9—In what ways was the glory of Zerubbabel’s temple greater than that of Solomon’s temple? (w07 12/1 9 ¶3)

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

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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

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kr chap. 22 ¶8-16
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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ZEPHANIAH 1-HAGGAI 2 | Seek Jehovah Before His Day of Anger



**Zep 2:2, 3**

In order for Jehovah to conceal us on the day of his anger, we must do more than dedicate ourselves to him. We must obey the direction that Zephaniah gave to the Israelites.

- **Seek Jehovah:** Maintain a warm personal relationship with Jehovah in association with his organization
- **Seek righteousness:** Uphold Jehovah’s righteous standards
- **Seek meekness:** Humbly submit to God’s will and accept his discipline

 How might I seek Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness to a greater degree?

# 27      *The Revealing of God's Sons* (Romans 8:19)

1. The time is near when God reveals  
    His faithful chosen ones.  
    In heaven they will rule with Christ  
    As mighty spirit sons.

*(CHORUS)*

*The sons of God will be revealed  
    Along with Christ, their Lord.  
They'll join him in his victory  
    And share in his reward.*

2. And soon the last remaining ones  
    Will hear his final call.  
    The King of kings and Lord of lords  
    Will then collect them all.

*(Chorus)*

*(BRIDGE)*

And then with Christ, these sons of God  
    Will wage the final war.  
The joyous marriage to the Lamb  
    Will last forevermore.

*(Chorus)*

# ZEPHANIAH

1 The word of Jehovah that came to Zeph·a·ni'ah son of Cush'i son of Ged·a·li'ah son of Am·a·ri'ah son of Hez·e·ki'ah in the days of Jo·si'ah son of A'mon the king of Judah:

2 “I will completely sweep away everything from the surface of the ground,” declares Jehovah.

3 “I will sweep away man and beast.

I will sweep away the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea,

And the stumbling blocks along with the wicked ones;

And I will remove mankind from the surface of the ground,” declares Jehovah.

4 “I will stretch out my hand against Judah

And against all the inhabitants of Jerusalem,

And I will wipe out from this place every vestige of Ba'al,

The name of the foreign-god priests along with the priests,

5 And those who bow down on the rooftops to the army of the heavens,

And those who bow down and pledge loyalty to Jehovah

While pledging loyalty to Mal'cam;

6 And those who turn away from following Jehovah

And who do not seek Jehovah or inquire of him.”

- <sup>7</sup> Be silent before the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, for the day of Jehovah is near.  
Jehovah has prepared a sacrifice; he has sanctified those he invited.
- <sup>8</sup> “On the day of Jehovah’s sacrifice I will call to account the princes,  
The sons of the king, and all those wearing foreign clothing.
- <sup>9</sup> I will call to account everyone who climbs onto the platform on that day,  
Those who fill their master’s house with violence and deception.
- <sup>10</sup> On that day,” declares Jehovah,  
“There will be the sound of an outcry from the Fish Gate,  
A wailing from the second quarter of the city,  
And a loud crash from the hills.
- <sup>11</sup> Wail, you inhabitants of Mak'tesh,  
For all the tradesmen have been done away with;  
All those weighing out silver have been destroyed.
- <sup>12</sup> At that time I will carefully search Jerusalem with lamps,

And I will call to account the complacent ones,  
who say in their heart,  
'Jehovah will not do good, and he will not do  
bad.'

<sup>13</sup> Their wealth will be plundered and their houses will  
be devastated.

They will build houses, but they will not occupy  
them;

And they will plant vineyards, but they will not  
drink wine from them.

<sup>14</sup> The great day of Jehovah is near!

It is near and it is approaching very quickly!

The sound of the day of Jehovah is bitter.

There a warrior cries out.

<sup>15</sup> That day is a day of fury,

A day of distress and anguish,

A day of storm and desolation,

A day of darkness and gloom,

A day of clouds and thick gloom,

<sup>16</sup> A day of the horn and of the battle cry,

Against the fortified cities and against the high  
corner towers.

<sup>17</sup> I will cause distress to mankind,

And they will walk like blind men,

Because it is against Jehovah they have sinned.

Their blood will be poured out like dust,

And their flesh like the dung.

<sup>18</sup> Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to  
save them in the day of Jehovah's fury;  
For by the fire of his zeal the whole earth will be  
consumed,  
Because he will make an extermination, indeed a  
terrible one, of all the inhabitants of the earth."

**2** Gather together, yes, gather yourselves,  
O nation that feels no shame.

<sup>2</sup> Before the decree takes effect,  
Before the day passes by like chaff,  
Before the burning anger of Jehovah comes  
upon you,  
Before the day of Jehovah's anger comes upon  
you,

<sup>3</sup> Seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth,  
Who observe his righteous decrees.  
Seek righteousness, seek meekness.  
Probably you will be concealed on the day of  
Jehovah's anger.

<sup>4</sup> For Gaz'a will be an abandoned city;  
And Ash'ke-lon will be desolated.  
Ash'dod will be driven away in broad daylight,  
And Ek'ron will be uprooted.

<sup>5</sup> "Woe to those who inhabit the seacoast, the nation  
of Cher'e-thites!

The word of Jehovah is against you.  
O Ca'naan, land of the Phi-lis'tines, I will destroy  
you,  
So that there will be no inhabitant left.

<sup>6</sup> And the seacoast will become pasture grounds,  
With wells for shepherds and stone pens for  
sheep.

<sup>7</sup> It will become a region for the remaining ones of  
the house of Judah;  
There they will feed.  
In the houses of Ash'ke-lon they will lie down in  
the evening.  
For Jehovah their God will turn his attention to  
them,  
And he will gather back their captives.”

<sup>8</sup> “I have heard the reproach by Mo'ab and the insults  
of the Am'mon-ites,  
Who have taunted my people and made boasts  
against their territory.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore as surely as I am alive,” declares  
Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel,  
“Mo'ab will become just like Sod'om,  
And the Am'mon-ites like Go-mor'rah,  
A place of nettles, a salt pit, and a permanent  
wasteland.

The remaining ones of my people will plunder them,  
And the remnant of my nation will dispossess them.

<sup>10</sup> This is what they will have instead of their pride,  
Because they taunted and exalted themselves  
against the people of Jehovah of armies.

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah will be awe-inspiring against them;  
For he will bring to nothing all the gods of the  
earth,  
And all the islands of the nations will bow down  
to him,  
Each one from its place.

<sup>12</sup> You E-thi-o'pi-ans will also be slain by my sword.

<sup>13</sup> He will stretch out his hand toward the north and  
destroy As-syr'i-a,  
And he will make Nin'e-veh desolate, as dry as a  
desert.

<sup>14</sup> Herds will lie down within her, all sorts of wild  
animals.

Both pelican and porcupine will spend the night  
among her pillar capitals.

A voice will sing in the window.

There will be devastation at the threshold;

For he will expose the cedar panels.

<sup>15</sup> This is the proud city that was sitting in security,



That was saying in her heart, 'I am the one, and there is nobody else.'

How she has become an object of horror,

A place for the wild animals to lie down!

Everyone passing by her will whistle and shake his fist."

**3** Woe to the rebellious, the polluted, the oppressive city!

<sup>2</sup> She has obeyed no voice; she has accepted no discipline.

In Jehovah she has not trusted; she has not drawn near to her God.

<sup>3</sup> Her princes within her are roaring lions.

Her judges are wolves in the night;

They do not leave even a bone to gnaw until morning.

<sup>4</sup> Her prophets are insolent, treacherous men.

Her priests defile what is holy;

They do violence to the law.

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah is righteous in her midst; he does no wrong.

Morning by morning he makes known his judgments,

As unfailing as the daylight.

But the unrighteous one knows no shame.

- <sup>6</sup> “I destroyed nations; their corner towers were left desolate.  
I devastated their streets, so that no one was passing through.  
Their cities were left in ruins, without a man, without an inhabitant.
- <sup>7</sup> I said, ‘Surely you will fear me and accept discipline,’  
So that her dwelling place might not be destroyed  
—I must call her to account for all these things.  
But they were all the more eager to act corruptly.
- <sup>8</sup> ‘So keep yourselves in expectation of me,’ declares Jehovah,  
‘Until the day when I rise up to take plunder,  
For my judicial decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms,  
To pour out on them my indignation, all my burning anger;  
For by the fire of my zeal the whole earth will be consumed.
- <sup>9</sup> For then I will change the language of the peoples to a pure language,  
So that all of them may call on the name of Jehovah,  
To serve him shoulder to shoulder.’

- <sup>10</sup> From the region of the rivers of E·thi·o'pi·a,  
Those entreating me, the daughter of my  
scattered ones, will bring a gift to me.
- <sup>11</sup> On that day you will not be put to shame  
Because of all your deeds with which you  
rebelled against me,  
For then I will remove the haughty boasters from  
among you;  
And you will never again be haughty in my holy  
mountain.
- <sup>12</sup> I will allow a humble and lowly people to remain in  
your midst,  
And they will take refuge in the name of  
Jehovah.
- <sup>13</sup> Those remaining of Israel will practice no  
unrighteousness;  
They will not speak a lie, nor will a deceitful  
tongue be found in their mouths;  
They will feed and lie down, and no one will  
make them afraid.”
- <sup>14</sup> Shout joyfully, O daughter of Zion!  
Shout in triumph, O Israel!  
Be joyful and rejoice with all your heart, O  
daughter of Jerusalem!
- <sup>15</sup> Jehovah has removed the judgments against you.  
He has turned away your enemy.

The King of Israel, Jehovah, is in your midst.  
You will fear calamity no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it will be said to Jerusalem:

“Do not be afraid, O Zion.

Do not let your hands drop down.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah your God is in your midst.

As a mighty One, he will save.

He will exult over you with great joy.

He will become silent in his love.

He will rejoice over you with shouts of joy.

<sup>18</sup> I will gather together those grieving over their  
absence from your festivals;

They were absent from you because of bearing  
reproach for her.

<sup>19</sup> Look! At that time I will act against all those  
oppressing you;

And I will save the one limping,

And I will gather together the dispersed.

I will make them an object of praise and fame

In all the land of their shame.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you in,

At the time I gather you together.

For I will make you an object of fame and praise  
among all the peoples of the earth,

When I gather back your captives before your  
eyes,” says Jehovah.

## HAGGAI

**1** In the second year of King Da-ri'us, in the sixth month, on the first day of the month, the word of Jehovah came through Hag'gai the prophet to Ze-rub'ba-bel son of She-al'ti-el, the governor of Judah, and to Joshua son of Je-hoz'a-dak, the high priest, saying:

**2** “This is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘These people say, “The time has not yet come for the house of Jehovah to be built.”’”

**3** And the word of Jehovah again came through Hag'gai the prophet, saying: **4** “Is it the time for you to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? **5** Now this is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘Set your heart on your ways. **6** You have sown much seed, but you harvest little. You eat, but it is not to satisfaction. You drink, but you do not drink your fill. You put on clothing, but no one gets warm. The one who hires himself out puts his wages in a bag full of holes.’”

**7** “This is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘Set your heart on your ways.’”

**8** ““Go up to the mountain and bring in lumber. And build the house, so that I may take pleasure in it and I may be glorified,’ Jehovah says.”

<sup>9</sup> “‘You were expecting much and receiving little; and when you brought it into the house, I blew it away. For what reason?’ declares Jehovah of armies. ‘Because my house is in ruins, while each of you runs around taking care of his own house. <sup>10</sup> So the heavens above you withheld their dew, and the earth withheld its produce. <sup>11</sup> And I kept calling for a drought on the earth, on the mountains, on the grain, on the new wine, on the oil, on what grows from the ground, on humans and livestock, and on all the labor of your hands.’”

<sup>12</sup> Ze·rub'ba·bel son of She·al'ti·el and Joshua son of Je·hoz'a·dak, the high priest, and all the rest of the people listened to the voice of Jehovah their God and to the words of Hag'gai the prophet, because Jehovah their God had sent him; and the people began to show fear because of Jehovah.

<sup>13</sup> Then Hag'gai, the messenger of Jehovah, gave this message to the people in harmony with his commission from Jehovah: “‘I am with you people,’ declares Jehovah.”

<sup>14</sup> So Jehovah stirred up the spirit of Ze·rub'ba·bel the son of She·al'ti·el, the governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Je·hoz'a·dak, the high priest, and the spirit of all the rest of the people; and they came and began to work on the house of Jehovah of armies, their God. <sup>15</sup> This was on the 24th day of the sixth month in the second year of King Da·ri'us.

**2** In the seventh month, on the 21st day of the month, the word of Jehovah came through Hag'gai the prophet, saying, <sup>2</sup> “Please ask Ze-rub'ba-bel son of She-al'ti-el, the governor of Judah, and Joshua son of Je-hoz'a-dak, the high priest, and the rest of the people: <sup>3</sup> ‘Who is left among you who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem like nothing in comparison?’

<sup>4</sup> “‘But now be strong, Ze-rub'ba-bel,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and be strong, Joshua son of Je-hoz'a-dak, the high priest.’

“‘And be strong, all you people of the land,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and work.’

“‘For I am with you,’ declares Jehovah of armies. <sup>5</sup> ‘Remember what I promised you when you came out of Egypt, and my spirit remains among you. Do not be afraid.’”

<sup>6</sup> “‘For this is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘Yet once more—in a little while—and I will shake the heavens and the earth and the sea and the dry land.’

<sup>7</sup> “‘And I will shake all the nations, and the precious things of all the nations will come in; and I will fill this house with glory,’ says Jehovah of armies.

<sup>8</sup> “‘The silver is mine, and the gold is mine,’ declares Jehovah of armies.

<sup>9</sup> “‘The future glory of this house will be greater than the former,’ says Jehovah of armies.

“‘And in this place I will grant peace,’ declares Jehovah of armies.”

<sup>10</sup> On the 24th day of the ninth month, in the second year of Da-ri'us, the word of Jehovah came to Hag'gai the prophet, saying: <sup>11</sup> “This is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘Ask, please, the priests about the law: <sup>12</sup> “If a man carries holy flesh in the fold of his clothing, and his clothing touches bread or stew or wine or oil or any sort of food, will it become holy?’””

The priests answered: “No!”

<sup>13</sup> Hag'gai then asked: “If someone who is unclean from contact with a dead body touches any of these things, will it become unclean?”

The priests answered: “It will become unclean.”

<sup>14</sup> So Hag'gai said: “‘That is how this people is, and that is how this nation is before me,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and that is how all the work of their hands is; whatever they present there is unclean.’”

<sup>15</sup> “‘But now, please, set your heart on this from this day forward: Before a stone was placed on a stone in the temple of Jehovah, <sup>16</sup> how was it then? When someone came to a heap of grain expecting 20 measures, there were only 10; and when someone



came to the vat to draw 50 measures from the wine trough, there were only 20; <sup>17</sup> I struck you—all the works of your hands—with scorching blight and mildew and hail, but not one of you turned to me,' declares Jehovah.

<sup>18</sup> “Please, set your heart on this from this day forward, from the 24th day of the ninth month, from the day that the foundation of the temple of Jehovah was laid; set your heart on this: <sup>19</sup> Is there seed yet in the storehouse? The vine, the fig, the pomegranate, and the olive tree—they have not yet borne fruit, have they? From this day I will send a blessing.”

<sup>20</sup> The word of Jehovah came a second time to Hag'gai on the 24th day of the month, saying: <sup>21</sup> “Say to Ze-rub'ba-bel, the governor of Judah, ‘I am going to shake the heavens and the earth. <sup>22</sup> I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms and annihilate the strength of the kingdoms of the nations; and I will overthrow the chariot and its riders, and the horses and their riders will fall, each one by the sword of his brother.’”

<sup>23</sup> “‘In that day,’ declares Jehovah of armies, ‘I will take you, my servant Ze-rub'ba-bel son of She-al'ti-el,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and I will make you like a seal ring, because you are the one whom I have chosen,’ declares Jehovah of armies.”

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- **Seek Jehovah:** Maintain a warm personal relationship with Jehovah in association with his organization
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 How might I seek Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness to a greater degree?

**December 4-10**

## **Treasures From God's Word**

**Zephaniah 2:2, 3**—Seek Jehovah, seek righteousness,  
seek meekness

Reference: *w01* 2/15 18-19 **paragraphs 5-7**.

5 You might say: 'I am a dedicated, baptized servant of God, one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Have I not already met those requirements?' Actually, more is involved than dedicating ourselves to Jehovah. Israel was a dedicated nation, but in Zephaniah's day the people of Judah were not living up to that dedication. As a result, the nation was eventually cast off. 'Seeking Jehovah' today involves developing and maintaining a warm personal relationship with him in association with his earthly organization. It means getting to know how God views matters and being attentive to his feelings. We seek Jehovah when we carefully study his Word, meditate upon it, and apply its counsel in life. As we also seek Jehovah's guidance in fervent prayer and follow the leading of his holy spirit, our relationship with him deepens and we are impelled to serve him 'with all our heart, soul, and vital force.' — **Deuteronomy 6:5; Galatians 5:22-25; Philippians 4:6, 7; Revelation 4:11**.

6 The second requirement mentioned at Zephaniah 2:3 is to "seek righteousness." Most of us made important changes

so that we could qualify for Christian baptism, but we must continue to uphold God's righteous standards throughout our life. Some who started out well in this respect have allowed themselves to be sullied by the world. It is not easy to seek righteousness, for we are surrounded by people who view sexual immorality, lying, and other sins as normal. Yet, a strong desire to please Jehovah can overpower any tendency to seek the world's approval by trying to blend in with it. Judah lost God's favor because of mimicking her ungodly neighboring nations. Instead of imitating the world, then, let us be "imitators of God," cultivating "the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty." —Ephesians 4:24; 5:1.

7 The third point made at Zephaniah 2:3 is that if we want to be hidden in the day of Jehovah's anger, we must "seek meekness." Each day, we rub shoulders with men, women, and young people who are anything but meek. To them, being mild-tempered is a flaw. Submissiveness is considered a serious weakness. They are demanding, selfish, and opinionated, believing that their personal "rights" and preferences must be accommodated at all costs. How sad it would be if some of those attitudes were to rub off on us! This is the time to "seek meekness." How? By being submissive to God, humbly accepting his discipline and conforming to his will.

## Digging for Spiritual Gems

**Zephaniah 1:8**—What warning do we find in this verse?

Reference: *w07 11/15 11 paragraph 3.*

Some in Zephaniah's day were apparently seeking the acceptance of surrounding nations by "wearing foreign attire." How foolish it would be for Jehovah's worshippers today to try to conform to the world by similar means!

**Haggai 2:9**—In what ways was the glory of Zerubbabel's temple greater than that of Solomon's temple?

Reference: *w07 12/1 9 paragraph 3.*

This was to be in at least three ways: the number of years the temple was in existence, who taught there, and who flocked there to worship Jehovah. Although Solomon's glorious temple stood for 420 years, from 1027 B.C.E. to 607 B.C.E., the "later house" was in use for over 580 years, from its completion in 515 B.C.E. to its destruction in 70 C.E. Moreover, the Messiah—Jesus Christ—taught in the "later house," and more people came to it than to "the former" in order to worship God.—Acts 2:1-11.

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- **Seek meekness:** Humbly submit to God’s will and accept his discipline

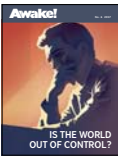
 How might I seek Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness to a greater degree?



# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Presentations



#### **AWAKE!**

**Question:** Why is the world spinning out of control?

**Scripture:** Jer 10:23

**Offer:** This magazine explains why millions of people believe in a bright future.

#### **AWAKE!**

**Question:** Does God have a name?

**Scripture:** Ps 83:18

**Offer:** This article discusses what God’s name means and why we should use that name. [Open to the article “The Bible’s Viewpoint—God’s Name.”]



#### **TEACH THE TRUTH**

**Question:** Will there ever be an end to the enemy death?

**Scripture:** 1Co 15:26

**Truth:** Jehovah will remove death permanently.

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

**Question:**

**Scripture:**

**Offer:**

Photo: Freetown, Sierra Leone—Offering the Themne-language brochure *Listen to God and Live Forever*

# Jehovah Begins His Rule

(Revelation 11:15)

1. God's Kingdom rules from above.

All praise his Son, the beloved.

Christ reigns in Zion, the chief cornerstone.

Let us all lift up our voice.

Sing to our God, and rejoice.

Christ, Lord and Savior,

has been placed upon His throne.

*(CHORUS)*

*What will you bring, Jehovah's Kingdom?*

*Triumph of truth and righteousness.*

*And bring what else, Jehovah's Kingdom?*

*Eternal life and happiness.*

*Praise the Universal Sov'reign*

*For his love and faithfulness.*

2. Christ now in power is here,

And Armageddon is near.

Satan's old system will soon pass away.

Now is the season to preach.

Many there are yet to reach;

Time for the meek

to take their stand for Him today.

*(Chorus)*



3. God's reigning Ruler we prize.

Wondrous he is in our eyes.

He comes in God's name; we bow to our King.

Enter the grand temple gate;

God's favor now supplicate.

Soon dawns that day

when he rules over ev'rything.

*(Chorus)*

- Song 27 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Seek Jehovah Before His Day of Anger”:** (10 min.)  
[Play the video *Introduction to Zephaniah.*]  
Zep 2:2, 3—Seek Jehovah, seek righteousness, seek meekness (w01 2/15 18-19 ¶15-7)  
[Play the video *Introduction to Haggai.*]
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Zep 1:8—What warning do we find in this verse? (w07 11/15 11 ¶3)

Hag 2:9—In what ways was the glory of Zerubbabel’s temple greater than that of Solomon’s temple? (w07 12/1 9 ¶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) Hag 2:1-14

**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 give wide distribution of *Awake!* No. 6 2017. However, because we desire to speak directly with people, we should not leave the current magazine at not-at-homes.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 23
- **Local Needs:** (5 min.)
- **The Pure Language Promotes Peace and Unity (Zep 3:9):** (10 min.) Discussion based on the August 15, 2012, *Watchtower*, page 12, paragraph 4. Play the video *Former Enemies Who Became Friends* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.)  
kr chap. 22 ¶8-16
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 22 and Prayer


ZEPHANIAH 1-HAGGAI 2 | Seek Jehovah Before His Day of Anger



**Zep 2:2, 3**

In order for Jehovah to conceal us on the day of his anger, we must do more than dedicate ourselves to him. We must obey the direction that Zephaniah gave to the Israelites.

- **Seek Jehovah:** Maintain a warm personal relationship with Jehovah in association with his organization
- **Seek righteousness:** Uphold Jehovah’s righteous standards
- **Seek meekness:** Humbly submit to God’s will and accept his discipline

 How might I seek Jehovah, righteousness, and meekness to a greater degree?

some similarities between the requirements for becoming a citizen of a human government and a citizen of God's Kingdom. We will then examine three things we must do if we are to retain the honor of being Kingdom citizens.

#### REQUIREMENTS FOR CITIZENSHIP

**4 Learn the language.** Some human governments require that those applying for citizenship speak the dominant language of the country. Even after being granted citizenship, people may strive for years to master the new language. They may quickly learn the rules of grammar but may take some time to learn to pronounce the words correctly. Similarly, God's Kingdom requires that its citizens learn what the Bible calls the "pure language." (*Read Zephaniah 3:9.*) What is that language? It is the truth about God and about his purposes as found in the Bible. We "speak" the pure language when our conduct is in accord with God's laws and principles. Citizens of God's Kingdom may learn basic Bible teachings quickly and get baptized. Even after their baptism, however, they must strive to "speak" the pure language better and better. In what way? Each of us needs to close the gap between what we know about Bible principles and what we practice.

**5 Study history.** A person desiring to become a citizen of a human government might have to learn something about that government's history. Likewise, those desiring to be Kingdom citizens do well to learn all they can about God's Kingdom. Consider the example

4. What is the pure language, and how do we "speak" it?

5. Why should we learn all we can about the history of Jehovah's organization?



Like the sons of Korah, do you find delight in pure worship and its history?

set by the sons of Korah, who served in ancient Israel. They took great delight in Jerusalem and its place of worship and in recounting the city's history. It was not the stones and mortar that impressed them most but what the city and that place of worship represented. Jerusalem was "the town of the grand King," Jehovah, for it was the center of pure worship. It was there that Jehovah's Law was taught. It was to the people ruled by the King of Jerusalem that Jehovah expressed his loving-kindness. (*Read Psalm 48:1, 2, 9, 12, 13.*) Like them, do you have a desire to study and recount the history of the earthly part of Jehovah's organization? The more you learn about God's organization and how Jehovah supports his people, the more real God's Kingdom will be to you. Your

who returned to their homeland were blessed with security, abundance, and spiritual health. For example, Jehovah protected them from neighboring peoples who were stronger and more numerous than they. Predators did not wipe out the Jews' livestock. True, those Jews saw only a limited fulfillment of the paradisaic prophecies that men such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel wrote down—but the fulfillment that God's people saw was thrilling and just what they needed at the time. As we reflect on what Jehovah did for his people back then, our faith will grow stronger. If the initial, limited fulfillment of those prophecies was exciting, what would the greater fulfillment be like? Consider what Jehovah has done for us today.

### **How Jehovah Has Started to Fulfill His Promises in Our Own Time**

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah's people do not now form a literal nation, nor do they occupy a single, physical land. Rather, anointed Christians make up a spiritual nation, "the Israel of God." (Gal. 6:16) Their companions of the "other sheep" join them in a spiritual

#### **8. God's people today enjoy what sort of "land"?**

“land,” a realm of activity in which they worship Jehovah God unitedly. That worship is their way of life. (John 10:16; Isa. 66:8) And what kind of a “land” has Jehovah given us? It is a spiritual paradise. Here God’s promises about Edenic conditions have seen a wonderful spiritual fulfillment. Consider some examples.

9 **Security.** In the prophecy recorded at Isaiah 11:6-9, we find a delightful picture of harmony and peace—between wild animals on the one hand and humans with their domestic animals on the other. Does that picture find a spiritual fulfillment today? Yes! In verse 9, we learn why it is that such creatures will cause neither harm nor ruin: “Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.” Does “knowledge of Jehovah” change the behavior of animals? No, it is people who are transformed by coming to know the Most High God and learning to imitate his peaceful ways. That is why in our spiritual paradise today, we can observe a heartwarming fulfillment of

**9, 10. (a) How is the prophecy of Isaiah 11:6-9 being fulfilled today? (b) What evidence of peace do we find among God’s people?**

that prophecy. Under Kingdom rule, Christ's followers are learning to put off their fierce, animalistic qualities and live in peace and harmony with their spiritual brothers and sisters.

<sup>10</sup> For example, in this publication we have discussed the matter of Christian neutrality—both the Scriptural basis for our understanding and the resulting persecution that God's people have faced for taking a neutral stand. Is it not remarkable that in this violent world, there is a sizable “nation” of people who refuse, even under threat of death, to take part in violence of any kind? What remarkable proof this is that the subjects of the Messianic King are indeed enjoying peace like that described by Isaiah! Jesus proclaimed that his followers would be known by the love they had among themselves. (John 13:34, 35) Within the congregation, Christ is patiently using his “faithful and discreet slave” to teach all true Christians to be peaceable, loving, and gentle.—Matt. 24:45-47.

<sup>11</sup> **Abundance.** The world suffers from spiritual famine. **11, 12. What kind of famine afflicts today's world, yet how has Jehovah provided abundantly for his people?**

ine. The Bible warned: “‘Look! The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, ‘when I will send a famine into the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah.’” (Amos 8:11) Do the citizens of God’s Kingdom suffer famine too? Jehovah foretold the following contrast between his people and his enemies: “My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. Look! My servants will drink, but you will go thirsty. Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame.” (Isa. 65:13) Have you observed the fulfillment of those words?

<sup>12</sup> Spiritual provisions flow to us like an ever-broadening and ever-deepening river. Our Bible-based publications—as well as recordings and videos, our meetings and conventions, and the material published on our Web site—together amount to an ongoing flood tide of spiritual sustenance in this spiritually starving world. (Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18) Are you not thrilled to see the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises of abundance in your daily life? Do you make sure that you feed regularly at Jehovah’s table?

**13 Spiritual health.** Spiritual blindness and deafness are pandemic today. (2 Cor. 4:4) Yet, Christ is curing infirmities and illnesses worldwide. Have you seen blind eyes opened and deaf ears unstopped? If you have seen people come to an accurate knowledge of the truth of God's Word, letting go of the religious lies that once made them blind and deaf to the truth, you have seen this promise fulfilled: "In that day the deaf will hear the words of the book, and out of the gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see." (Isa. 29:18) Around the world, hundreds of thousands of people every year are finding such spiritual cures. Each person who leaves Babylon the Great behind and joins us to worship in our spiritual paradise is living proof that Jehovah's promises have come true!

**14** Each chapter of this book contains powerful evidence that Christ has brought his followers into a genuine spiritual paradise in this time of the end. Let us keep meditating on the many ways in which we are being blessed in that paradise today. As we

**13. How have you seen fulfillment of Jehovah's promise about blind eyes being opened and deaf ears unstopped?**

**14. Meditating on what evidence will strengthen our faith?**



do, our faith in Jehovah's promises for the future will continue to grow stronger.

### **“Let Your Kingdom Come”**

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah's purpose has long been to make the earth a global paradise. He placed Adam and Eve in a paradise garden, and he gave them the command to fill the earth with their offspring and to take care of all of its creatures. (Gen. 1:28) Instead, Adam and Eve followed Satan into rebellion and plunged all their offspring into imperfection, sin, and death. Yet, God's purpose never changed. Once spoken, his words always find complete fulfillment. (**Read Isaiah 55:10, 11.**) We may be sure, then, that the descendants of Adam and Eve will fill this earth and subdue it, taking loving care of Jehovah's creation in a global paradise. At that time, the prophecies originally given to the Jewish exiles about life in paradisaic conditions will reach their ultimate fulfillment! Consider the following examples.

<sup>16</sup> **Security.** At long last, the heartwarming word picture painted at Isaiah 11:6-9 will see a complete

**15. Why may we be sure that the earth will become a paradise?**

**16. How does the Bible describe the security we will enjoy in Paradise?**

fulfillment even in a literal sense. Men, women, and children will be safe and secure wherever they go on earth. No creature, whether human or animal, will pose any threat. Imagine a time when you will see this entire planet as your home, where you can swim in the rivers, lakes, and seas; traverse the mountain ranges; and roam the grasslands in complete safety. And when night falls, you will not worry. The words of Ezekiel 34:25 will come true, so that it will even be possible for God's people to "dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests."

<sup>17</sup> **Abundance.** Picture a time when there will be no such thing as poverty, malnutrition, famine, or welfare systems. The spiritual plenty that God's people enjoy today is a guarantee that the Messianic King will feed his subjects in every respect. When Jesus was on the earth, he demonstrated on a small scale that he can fulfill such promises, for he fed thousands of hungry people with just a few loaves and fish. (Matt. 14:17, 18; 15:34-36; Mark 8:19, 20) When God's Kingdom is ruling over the whole earth,

**17. Why may we be sure that Jehovah will provide abundantly for our needs when the Kingdom is ruling over the whole earth?**

# *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)*

OCTOBER 2017

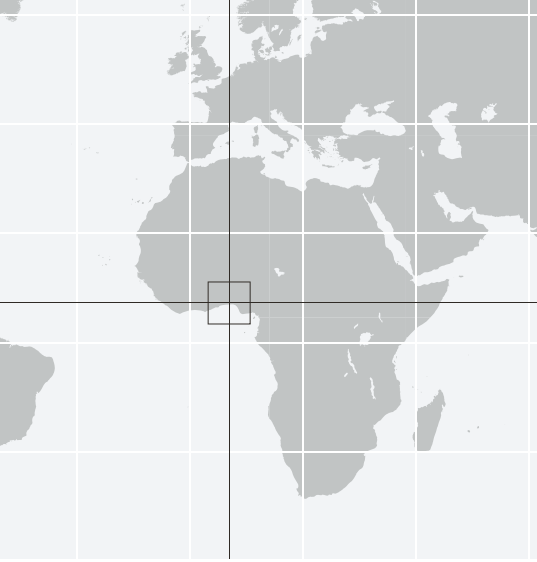
# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
NOVEMBER 27-DECEMBER 24, 2017

LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

# NIGERIA

One of the many metropolitan witnessing stands in Lagos, the most populous city in Africa. At this one location, an average of six Bible studies are requested every month

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### **4 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 27–DECEMBER 3**

#### **“Love . . . in Deed and Truth”**

Genuine love identifies true Christians. This article will consider nine ways that we can show love that is “free from hypocrisy.”—2 Cor. 6:6.

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### **16 WEEK OF DECEMBER 4-10**

#### **The Truth Brings, “Not Peace, But a Sword”**

The negative response of unbelieving relatives to the truth can make life difficult for Jehovah’s people. In this article, we will learn how we can successfully deal with the challenges of family opposition.

*Loyally Submitting  
to Theocratic Order*  
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

1. As Jehovah's people sound throughout the earth  
Truths about the Kingdom and its priceless worth,  
Theocratic order they must all obey  
And remain united, loyalty display.

*(CHORUS)*

*Loyal submission in recognition,  
This to our God we owe.  
He gives protection, tender affection,  
Loyalty to him we show.*

2. God provides his steward and his active force.  
These will ever guide us in our Christian course.  
So may we be steadfast, seeking God to please,  
Loyally proclaiming all his wise decrees!

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
123, 128

**HOW WOULD YOU  
ANSWER?**

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What is the “sword”  
that Jesus said he  
would bring?

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How can you  
maintain your  
loyalty to Jehovah  
if your relatives  
oppose true  
worship?

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What can help you  
to cope if a family  
member leaves  
Jehovah?

## The Truth Brings, “Not Peace, But a Sword”

*“Do not think I came to bring  
peace to the earth; I came to bring,  
not peace, but a sword.”—MATT. 10:34.*

**WE ALL** want peaceful lives, free  
from anxiety. How thankful we  
are that Jehovah grants us “the  
peace of God,” an inner calm  
that can protect us from disturb-

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**1, 2.** (a) What peace can we enjoy now?  
(b) What prevents us from finding complete  
peace at this time? (See opening image.)

ing thoughts and feelings! (Phil. 4:6, 7) Because of our dedication to Jehovah, we also enjoy “peace with God,” a good relationship with him.—Rom. 5:1.

<sup>2</sup> However, God’s time to bring about complete peace has not yet come. These critical last days are filled with conflict, and countless people have contentious attitudes. (2 Tim. 3:1-4) As Christians, we must wage a spiritual war against Satan and the false teachings that he promotes. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5) But the greatest threat to our peace may come from unbelieving relatives. Some might ridicule our beliefs, accuse us of dividing the family, or threaten to disown us unless we give up our faith. How should we view family opposition? How can we successfully deal with the challenges it brings?

## HOW TO VIEW FAMILY OPPOSITION

<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that his teachings would divide people and that those who follow him would need courage to do so in the face of opposition. This opposition could affect peaceful relations among family members. Jesus said: “Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth; I came to bring, not peace, but

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3, 4. (a) What effect do Jesus’ teachings have? (b) When would it be especially challenging to follow Jesus?



a sword. For I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. Indeed, a man's enemies will be those of his own household."—Matt. 10:34-36.

<sup>4</sup> In saying "*Do not think* I came to bring peace," Jesus meant that some of his listeners needed to think about the consequences of following him. His message could divide people. Of course, Jesus' motive was to proclaim God's message of truth, not to damage relationships. (John 18:37) Still, holding faithfully to Christ's teachings would be challenging if one's close friends or family members rejected the truth.

<sup>5</sup> Jesus included the pain of family opposition as part of the suffering that his followers must be willing to endure. (Matt. 10:38) In order to prove worthy of the Christ, his disciples have had to endure ridicule or even alienation from their families. Yet, they have gained far more than they have lost.—**Read Mark 10:29, 30.**

<sup>6</sup> Even when our relatives oppose our efforts to

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5. What have Jesus' followers experienced?

6. What must we remember if our relatives oppose our efforts to worship Jehovah?

worship Jehovah, we continue to love them, but we must remember that our love for God and Christ comes first. (Matt. 10:37) We must also realize that Satan will try to use our affection for our family to break our integrity. Let us consider some situations involving family opposition and see how we can successfully face the challenges that these bring.

## **AN UNBELIEVING MATE**

<sup>7</sup> The Bible warns that those who marry “will have tribulation in their flesh.” (1 Cor. 7:28) If you have an unbelieving mate, you may experience more than the usual stress and anxiety in your marriage. Nevertheless, it is important for you to view your situation as Jehovah does. Your mate’s present unwillingness to follow Christ is not in itself a valid reason for separation or divorce. (1 Cor. 7:12-16) Although an unbelieving husband may not take the lead in spiritual matters, he should be respected because of his position as the head of the family. Likewise, an unbelieving wife should be shown self-sacrificing love and tender affection by her Christian husband.—Eph. 5:22, 23, 28, 29.

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7. How should those with an unbelieving mate view their situation?

<sup>8</sup> What if your spouse tries to limit your worship? For example, one sister was told by her husband to share in the field ministry only on certain days of the week. If you face a similar situation, ask yourself: ‘Is my spouse demanding that I stop worshipping my God? If not, can I yield to the request?’ Being reasonable can help you to avoid needless marital conflict.—Phil. 4:5.

<sup>9</sup> Training children can be especially challenging if you have an unbelieving mate. For instance, you need to teach your children to obey the Bible’s command: “Honor your father and your mother.” (Eph. 6:1-3) But what if your mate does not follow the Bible’s high standard of conduct? Set the example by honoring your mate. Focus on his or her good qualities, and express appreciation for your mate. Avoid saying negative things about your mate in front of your children. Instead, explain to them that each person must choose whether to serve Jehovah. The children’s good conduct might help to draw the unbelieving parent to true worship.

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8. What questions can you ask yourself if your spouse tries to limit your worship?

9. How can Christians teach their children to honor an unbelieving parent?

**<sup>10</sup> At times, unbelieving mates will demand that children share in pagan celebrations or be taught false religious beliefs. Some husbands may forbid the Christian wife to teach the children from the Bible. Even so, a Christian wife does what she can to teach the children Bible truth. (Acts 16:1; 2 Tim.**

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**10.** How can Christian parents teach their children Bible truth in a religiously divided household?

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Teach your children Bible truth whenever possible  
(See paragraph 10)



3:14, 15) For example, the husband of a Witness wife might not allow her to conduct a formal Bible study with her minor children or to take them with her to Christian meetings. While respecting his decisions, she can still express her faith in the presence of her children as opportunities arise, thus giving them moral training and knowledge about Jehovah. (Acts 4:19, 20) Of course, her children must eventually make their own decision regarding worship.—Deut. 30:19, 20.\*

## RELATIVES WHO OPPOSE TRUE WORSHIP

<sup>11</sup> At first, we may not have told our family about our association with Jehovah’s Witnesses. As our faith grew, though, we saw the need to be open about our beliefs. (Mark 8:38) If your courageous stand has resulted in a problem between you and your non-Witness relatives, consider some steps to take to reduce conflict and still maintain integrity.

<sup>12</sup> *Have empathy for unbelieving relatives.* While we

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\* For more information on training children in a religiously divided household, see “Questions From Readers” in *The Watchtower*, August 15, 2002.

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**11.** What may cause a problem with non-Witness relatives?

**12.** Why may unbelieving relatives oppose us, but how can we show them empathy?

may be overjoyed about the Bible truths we have learned, our relatives may mistakenly believe that we have been tricked or have become part of a cult. They may think that we no longer love them because we do not celebrate holidays with them. They may even fear for our eternal welfare. We should show empathy by trying to see things from their viewpoint and by listening carefully to discern their real concerns. (Prov. 20:5) The apostle Paul endeavored to understand “people of all sorts” in order to share the good news with them, and a similar approach can help us as well.—1 Cor. 9: 19-23.

<sup>13</sup> *Speak with mildness.* “Let your words always be gracious,” says the Bible. (Col. 4:6) We can ask Jehovah for his holy spirit so that we can display its fruitage when speaking with our relatives. We should not try to argue about all their false religious ideas. If they hurt us by their speech or actions, we can imitate the example of the apostles. Paul wrote: “When insulted, we bless; when persecuted, we patiently endure; when slandered, we answer mildly.”—1 Cor. 4:12, 13.

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13. How should we speak with unbelieving relatives?

<sup>14</sup> *Maintain fine conduct.* Although mild speech is helpful in dealing with opposing relatives, our good conduct can speak even louder. (Read 1 Peter 3:1, 2, 16.) By your example, let your relatives see that Jehovah’s Witnesses enjoy happy marriages, look after their children, and live a clean, moral, and fulfilling life. Even if our relatives never accept the truth, we can have the joy that comes from pleasing Jehovah by our faithful course.

<sup>15</sup> *Plan ahead.* Think of situations that might lead to conflict, and determine how to handle them. (Prov. 12:16, 23) A sister from Australia relates: “My father-in-law strongly opposed the truth. Before calling to check on him, my husband and I would pray that Jehovah help us not to respond in kind to angry reactions. We would prepare topics to discuss so that we could keep the conversation friendly. To avoid long conversations that would usually lead to a heated discussion about religion, we set a time limit for the visit.”

<sup>16</sup> Of course, you cannot expect to avoid all dis-

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14. What are the benefits of maintaining fine conduct?

15. How can we plan ahead for situations that might lead to conflict?

16. How can you overcome feelings of guilt about displeasing your relatives?

agreements with your unbelieving relatives. Such conflict can make you feel guilty, especially because you love your relatives dearly and have always tried to please them. If you feel this way, strive to put your loyalty to Jehovah ahead of your love for your family. Such a stand may actually help your relatives to see that applying Bible truth is a life-and-death matter. In any case, remember that you cannot force others to accept the truth. Instead, let them see in you the benefits of following Jehovah's ways. Our loving God offers to them, just as he does to us, the opportunity to choose the course they will follow.—Isa. 48:17, 18.

### **IF A FAMILY MEMBER LEAVES JEHOVAH**

<sup>17</sup> When a family member is disfellowshipped or he disassociates himself from the congregation, it can feel like the stab of a sword. How can you cope with the pain that this brings?

<sup>18</sup> *Keep up your spiritual routine.* Build yourself up by regularly reading the Bible, preparing for and attending Christian meetings, sharing in the field ministry, and praying for the strength to endure.

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**17, 18.** What can help you to cope if a family member leaves Jehovah?



(Jude 20, 21) But what if you feel that your heart is not in your activity, that you are just going through the motions? Do not give up! A good spiritual routine can help you to gain control of your thoughts and feelings. Consider the experience of the writer of Psalm 73. He had developed a wrong viewpoint and had become greatly troubled, but he was able to correct his thinking when he entered God's place of worship. (Ps. 73:16, 17) Your faithfully worshipping Jehovah can help you to do the same.

<sup>19</sup> *Respect the discipline of Jehovah.* His arrangement can bring the best long-term outcome for all, including the wrongdoer, even though the immediate effect is painful. (Read Hebrews 12:11.) For example, Jehovah instructs us to “stop keeping company” with unrepentant wrongdoers. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) Despite our pain of heart, we must avoid normal contact with a disfellowshipped family member by telephone, text messages, letters, e-mails, or social media.

<sup>20</sup> *Maintain hope.* Love “hopes all things,” including that those who have left Jehovah will come

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19. How can you show respect for Jehovah's arrangement for discipline?

20. What hope can we maintain?

back to him. (1 Cor. 13:7) If you see evidence that a close family member is having a change of heart, you could pray that he or she gain strength from the Scriptures and respond to Jehovah's appeal: "Return to me."—Isa. 44:22.

<sup>21</sup> Jesus said that if we were to put any human before him, we would not be worthy of him. Yet, he was confident that his disciples would have the courage to maintain their loyalty to him despite family opposition. If following Jesus has brought "a sword" into your family, rely on Jehovah to help you deal with the challenges successfully. (Isa. 41:10, 13) Find joy in knowing that Jehovah and Jesus are pleased with you and that they will reward your faithful course.

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21. What should you do if you experience family division because you are following Jesus?

1. God's Word and all its promises  
Give reason to endure.  
The things you've learned and come to love  
Are all well-founded and sure.  
  
Be stabilized in holy faith,  
Keeping God's day close in mind.  
Stand firm in your integrity;  
By tests you will be refined.
2. Maintain the love you had at first,  
Which somehow could be lost.  
Despite the trials you will meet,  
Endure no matter the cost.  
  
Whatever test may come your way,  
Never yield to doubt or fear.  
Jehovah will provide escape,  
Our God ever will be near.
3. All those enduring to the end  
Are those who will be saved.  
The book of life will list their names,  
A record clearly engraved.  
  
So let endurance be your aim;  
Let it have its work complete.  
Jehovah's favor you will know;  
With joy you will be replete.



## September 19, 2016—Branch site

An aerial view shows the outline of the new traffic circle and access road to the branch property. To the left of the traffic circle, preparations are under way for a garden and a pond, with a viewing area for local residents and visitors.



## February 17, 2017—Branch site

An elevated view of the completed traffic circle on the busy road that passes the main entrance. At the top left, newly installed JW.ORG signs advertise the branch property. The attenuation pond and regional species garden, when finished, will complement the entryway.