

- Song 30 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Obey the Two Greatest Commandments”:** (10 min.)
 Mt 22:36-38—How do these verses explain what is involved in obeying the greatest and first commandment in the Law? (*nwtsty* study note on Mt 22:37)
 Mt 22:39—What is the second greatest commandment in the Law? (*nwtsty* study note)
 Mt 22:40—The entire Hebrew Scriptures are based on love (*nwtsty* study note)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Mt 22:21—What are “Caesar’s things,” and what are “God’s things”? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Mt 23:24—What do Jesus’ words mean? (*nwtsty* study note)

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) Mt 22:1-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs* 199 ¶8-9—Teacher encourages student to invite acquaintances to the Memorial.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 96
- **“Love for God and Neighbor—How to Cultivate It”:** (15 min.) Discussion. To illustrate the value of using our imagination to visualize Bible accounts, play the dramatic Bible reading *Jehovah Is the Only True God*—*Excerpt* as the audience follows along at 1 Kings 18:17-46.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 12
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 52 and Prayer

MATTHEW 22-23 | Obey the Two Greatest Commandments



22:36-39

Using Matthew 22:36-39, number in order of importance the following reasons for attending Christian meetings:

- ___ To be encouraged
- ___ To encourage our brothers
- ___ To worship and demonstrate our love for Jehovah

Why should we try to go to our meetings even when we are tired and feel that we will receive little personal benefit from attending?

What are other ways in which we can demonstrate our obedience to the two greatest commandments?

30 *My Father, My God and Friend* (Hebrews 6:10)

1. Life in this world can be hard.

Life in this world can bring tears and pain.
Still ev'ry day I will say,
"My life is not in vain."

(CHORUS)

*For God is not unrighteous,
And he remembers the love I've shown.
So he is ever near me;
With Jehovah, I'm not alone.
Yes, God is my provider
and my protector down to the end.
Yes, Jehovah is my Father,
My God and Friend.*

2. Gone are the days of my youth;
Days of calamity now are here.
Still through the eyes of my faith,
My hope is bright and clear.

(Chorus)

MATTHEW 21:33–22:11

fruits. **44** Also, the person falling on this stone will be shattered.^a As for anyone on whom it falls, it will crush him.”^b

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his illustrations, they knew that he was speaking about them.^c **46** Although they wanted to seize* him, they feared the crowds, because these regarded him as a prophet.^d

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them with illustrations, saying: **2** “The Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to a king who made a marriage feast^e for his son. **3** And he sent his slaves to call those invited to the marriage feast, but they were unwilling to come.^f **4** Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Look! I have prepared my dinner, my bulls and fattened animals are slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.”’ **5** But unconcerned they went off, one to his own field, another to his business;^g **6** but the rest, seizing his slaves, treated them insolently and killed them.

7 “The king grew wrathful and sent his armies and killed those murderers and burned their city.^h **8** Then he said to his slaves, ‘The marriage feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.’ⁱ **9** Therefore, go to the roads leading out of the city, and invite anyone you find to the marriage feast.’^j **10** Accordingly, those slaves went out to the roads and gathered all they found, both wicked and good; and the room for the wedding ceremonies was filled with those dining.*

11 “When the king came in to inspect the guests, he caught sight of a man not wearing

21:46 *Or “arrest.” 22:10 *Or “reclining at the table.”

MATTHEW 22:12-43

a marriage garment. **12** So he said to him, 'Fellow, how did you get in here without a marriage garment?' He was speechless. **13** Then the king said to his servants, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him into the darkness outside. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.'

14 "For there are many invited, but few chosen."

15 Then the Pharisees went and conspired together in order to trap him in his speech.^a

16 So they sent their disciples to him, together with party followers of Herod,^b saying: "Teacher, we know you are truthful and teach the way of God in truth, and you do not seek anyone's favor, for you do not look at the outward appearance of people.

17 Tell us, then, what do you think? Is it lawful* to pay head tax to Caesar or not?" **18** But Jesus, knowing their wickedness, said: "Why do you put me to the

test, hypocrites? **19** Show me the tax coin." They brought him a de-nar'i-us.* **20** He said to them:

"Whose image and inscription is this?" **21** They said: "Caesar's."

Then he said to them: "Pay back, therefore, Caesar's things to Caesar, but God's things to God."^c

22 When they heard that, they were amazed, and they left him and went away.

23 On that day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection,^d came and asked him:^e

24 "Teacher, Moses said: 'If any man dies without having children, his brother must marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.'^f **25** Now there were

seven brothers with us. The first married and died, and having no offspring, he left his wife for his

22:17 *Or "right." 22:19 *See App. B14.

brother. **26** The same thing happened with the second and the third, through all seven. **27** Last of all, the woman died. **28** So in the resurrection, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her as a wife."

29 In reply Jesus said to them: "You are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God;^a **30** for in the resurrection neither do men marry nor are women given in marriage, but they are as angels in heaven.^b **31** Regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, who said: **32** 'I am the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'?^c He is the God, not of the dead, but of the living."^d **33** On hearing that, the crowds were astounded at his teaching.^e

34 After the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they came together in one group. **35** And one of them, versed in the Law, tested him by asking: **36** "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"^f **37** He said to him: "'You must love Jehovah* your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul# and with your whole mind.'^g **38** This is the greatest and first commandment. **39** The second, like it, is this: 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'^h **40** On these two commandments the whole Law hangs, and the Prophets."ⁱ

41 Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them:^j **42** "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him: "David's."^k **43** He asked them: "How is it, then, that David under inspiration^l calls him Lord,

22:37 * See App. A5. # See Glossary.

saying, **44** ‘Jehovah* said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand until I put your enemies beneath your feet”’?^a **45** If, then, David calls him Lord, how is he his son?”^b **46** And nobody was able to say a word in reply to him, and from that day on, no one dared to question him any further.

23 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying: **2** “The scribes and the Pharisees have seated themselves in the seat of Moses. **3** Therefore, all the things they tell you, do and observe, but do not do according to their deeds, for they say but they do not practice what they say.^c **4** They bind up heavy loads and put them on the shoulders of men,^d but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger.^e **5** All the works they do, they do to be seen by men,^f for they broaden the scripture-containing cases that they wear as safeguards*^g and lengthen the fringes of their garments.^h **6** They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front* seats in the synagoguesⁱ **7** and the greetings in the marketplaces and to be called Rabbi* by men. **8** But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher,^j and all of you are brothers. **9** Moreover, do not call anyone your father on earth, for one is your Father,^k the heavenly One. **10** Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is one, the Christ. **11** But the greatest one among you must be your minister.^l **12** Whoever exalts himself will be humbled,^m and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.ⁿ

13 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because

22:44 *See App. A5. 23:5 *Or “broaden their phylacteries.” 23:6 *Or “best.” 23:7 *Or “Teacher.”

MATTHEW 22:44–23:25

you shut up the Kingdom of the heavens before men; for you yourselves do not go in, neither do you permit those on their way in to go in.^a **14** *—

15 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!^b because you travel over sea and dry land to make one proselyte,^{*} and when he becomes one, you make him a subject for Ge·hen’na[#] twice as much so as yourselves.

16 “Woe to you, blind guides,^c who say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it is nothing; but if anyone swears by the gold of the temple, he is under obligation.’^d

17 Fools and blind ones! Which, in fact, is greater, the gold or the temple that has sanctified the gold? **18** Moreover, ‘If any-

one swears by the altar, it is nothing; but if anyone swears by the gift on it, he is under obligation.’ **19** Blind ones! Which, in fact, is greater, the gift or

the altar that sanctifies the gift? **20** Therefore, whoever swears

by the altar is swearing by it and by all the things on it; **21** and

whoever swears by the temple is swearing by it and by the One inhabiting it;^e **22** and whoever

swears by heaven is swearing by the throne of God and by the One sitting on it.

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you give the tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin,^f but you have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice^g and mercy^h and faithfulness. These things it was necessary to do, yet not to disregard the other things.ⁱ **24** Blind guides,^j who strain out the gnat^k but gulp down the camel!^l

25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish,^m but inside

23:14 *See App. A3. **23:15** *Or “convert.” #See Glossary.

MATTHEW 23:26–24:9

they are full of greediness^{*a} and self-indulgence.^b **26** Blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may also become clean.

27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!^c because you resemble whitewashed graves,^d which outwardly indeed appear beautiful but inside are full of dead men’s bones and of every sort of uncleanness.

28 In the same way, on the outside you appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.^e

29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!^f because you build the graves of the prophets and decorate the tombs^{*} of the righteous ones,^g **30** and you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, we would not have shared with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’

31 Therefore, you are testifying against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.^h **32** Well, then, fill up the measure of your forefathers.

33 “Serpents, offspring of vipers,ⁱ how will you flee from the judgment of Ge·hen’na?^{*j}

34 For this reason, I am sending to you prophets^k and wise men and public instructors.^l Some of them you will kill^m and execute on stakes, and some of them you will scourgeⁿ in your synagogues and persecute^o from city to city, **35** so that there may come upon you all the righteous blood spilled on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel^p to the blood of Zech·a·ri’ah son of Bar·a·chi’ah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.^q **36** Truly I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation.

23:25 *Or “plunder.” **23:29** *Or “memorial tombs.” **23:33; 24:3** *See Glossary.

37 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent to her^a—how often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings! But you did not want it.^b **38** Look! Your house is abandoned to you.^{*c} **39** For I say to you, you will by no means see me from now until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in Jehovah’s* name!’”^d

24 Now as Jesus was departing from the temple, his disciples approached to show him the buildings of the temple. **2** In response he said to them: “Do you not see all these things? Truly I say to you, by no means will a stone be left here upon a stone and not be thrown down.”^e

3 While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence^{*f} and of the conclusion of the system of things?”^{#g}

4 In answer Jesus said to them: “Look out that nobody misleads you,^h **5** for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many.ⁱ **6** You are going to hear of wars and reports of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for these things must take place, but the end is not yet.^j

7 “For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom,^k and there will be food shortages^l and earthquakes in one place after another.^m **8** All these things are a beginning of pangs of distress.

9 “Then people will hand you over to tribulationⁿ and will kill

23:38 *Or possibly, “is left to you desolate.” **23:39** *See App. A5. **24:3** #Or “the age.” See Glossary.

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[Click to play CG video "The Front Seats in the Synagogue"](#)

MATTHEW 22-23 | Obey the Two Greatest Commandments



22:36-39

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MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 22

22:1

illustrations: Or “parables.” The Greek word *pa-ra-bo-le'*, which literally means “a placing beside (together),” may be in the form of a parable, a proverb, or an illustration. Jesus often explains a thing by ‘placing it beside,’ or comparing it with, another similar thing. (Mr 4:30) His illustrations were short and usually fictitious narratives from which a moral or spiritual truth could be drawn.

22:11

marriage garment: Since this was a royal wedding, it may be that a special garment was provided by the royal host for his guests. If so, failure to wear it would show great disrespect.

22:13

gnashing of his teeth: Or “grinding (clenching) their teeth.” The expression can include the idea of anguish, despair, and anger, possibly accompanied by bitter words and violent action.

22:15

to trap him: Lit., “to ensnare him,” like a bird in a net. (Compare Ec 9:12, where the *Septuagint* uses the same Greek hunting term to render a Hebrew word with the meaning “to catch with a snare; to ensnare.”) The Pharisees used flattery and insincere questions (Mt 22:16, 17) solely designed to elicit an answer they could use against Jesus.

22:16

party followers of Herod: Also known as Herodians. They were a party of nationalists who supported the political aims of the Herods in their rule under the Romans. Some of the Sadducees probably belonged to this party. The Herodians joined with the Pharisees to oppose Jesus.—Mr 3:6.

22:17

head tax: An annual tax, probably amounting to a denarius, or one day's wages, which the Romans levied on all those who had been registered by census.—Lu 2:1-3.

Caesar: Or “the Emperor.” The Roman emperor during Jesus' earthly ministry was Tiberius, but the term was not restricted to the ruling emperor. “Caesar” could refer to the Roman civil authority, or the State, and its duly appointed representatives, who are called “the superior authorities” by Paul, and “the king” and his “governors” by Peter.—Ro 13:1-7; 1Pe 2:13-17; Tit 3:1; see Glossary.

22:18

hypocrites: The Greek word *hy-po-kri-tes'* originally referred to Greek (and later Roman) stage actors who wore large masks designed to amplify the voice. The term came to be used in a metaphoric sense to apply to anyone hiding his real intentions or personality by playing false or putting on a pretense. Jesus here calls the Jewish religious leaders “hypocrites.”—Mt 6:5, 16.

22:19

denarius: This Roman silver coin with an inscription of Caesar was the “head tax” coin that the Romans exacted from the Jews. (Mt 22:17) In Jesus' day, agricultural laborers commonly received a denarius for a 12-hour workday, and the Christian Greek Scriptures often use the denarius as a basis for calculating other monetary values. (Mt 20:2; Mr 6:37; 14:5; Re 6:6) A variety of copper and silver coins were used in Israel, including silver coins minted in Tyre that were used for the temple tax. Yet, for paying taxes to Rome, people evidently used the silver denarius bearing the image of Caesar.—See Glossary and App. B14.

22:20

image and inscription: On the front side of a common denarius of this time, there was an image of the laurel-crowned head of Roman Emperor Tiberius, who reigned from 14 to 37 C.E., and the inscription in Latin, “Tiberius Caesar Augustus, son of the deified Augustus.”—See also App. B14.

22:21

Caesar’s things to Caesar: Jesus’ reply here, and in the parallel accounts at Mr 12:17 and Lu 20:25, is his only recorded reference to the Roman emperor. “Caesar’s things” include payment for services rendered by the secular government as well as the honor and relative subjection that is to be shown to such authorities.—Ro 13:1-7.

God’s things to God: This includes a person’s wholehearted worship, whole-souled love, and complete, loyal obedience.—Mt 4:10; 22:37, 38; Ac 5:29; Ro 14:8.

22:23

resurrection: The Greek word *a·na'sta·sis* literally means “raising up; standing up.” It is used about 40 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures with reference to the resurrection of the dead. (Mt 22:31; Ac 4:2; 24:15; 1Co 15:12, 13) In the *Septuagint* at Isa 26:19, the verb form of *a·na'sta·sis* is used to render the Hebrew verb “to live” in the expression “Your dead *will live.*”—See Glossary.

22:29

the Scriptures: An expression often used to refer to the inspired Hebrew writings as a whole.

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Christian Greek Scriptures with reference to the resurrection of the dead. (Mt 22:31; Ac 4:2; 24:15; 1Co 15:12, 13) In the *Septuagint* at Isa 26:19, the verb form of *a·na'sta·sis* is used to render the Hebrew verb “to live” in the expression “Your dead *will live.*”—See Glossary.

God, who said: Jesus here refers to a conversation between Moses and Jehovah that took place about 1514 B.C.E. (Ex 3:2, 6) At that time, Abraham had been dead for 329 years, Isaac for 224, and Jacob for 197. Yet, Jehovah did not say: ‘I was their God.’ He said: ‘I *am* their God.’—Mt 22:32.

22:32

He is the God, not of the dead: The earliest and most reliable manuscripts support this reading, but some manuscripts repeat the word “God” and could be rendered: “God is not the God of the dead.” This reading is reflected in some Bible translations. One translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J¹⁸ in App. C) uses the Tetragrammaton here and could be rendered: “Jehovah is not the God of the dead.”—Compare Ex 3:6, 15.

but of the living: According to the parallel account at Lu 20:38, Jesus includes the comment: “For they are all living to him [or, “from his standpoint”].” The Bible shows that living humans who are alienated from God are dead from his standpoint. (Eph 2:1; 1Ti 5:6) Likewise, approved servants of God who die are still living from Jehovah’s standpoint, since his purpose to resurrect them is so sure of fulfillment.—Ro 4:16, 17.

22:34

silenced: The Greek verb could also be rendered “to make speechless” (lit., “to muzzle”). This was a fitting expression in view of the hypocritical question. Jesus’ answer was so effective that the Sadducees were unable to respond.—1Pe 2:15, ftn.

22:37

Jehovah: In this quote from De 6:5, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

heart: When used in a figurative sense, this term generally refers to the total inner person. When mentioned together with “soul” and “mind,” however, it evidently takes on a more specific meaning and refers mainly to a person’s emotions, desires, and feelings. The three terms used here (heart, soul, and mind) are not mutually exclusive; they are used in an overlapping sense, emphasizing in the strongest possible way the need for complete and total love for God.

soul: Or “whole being.”—See Glossary.

mind: That is, intellectual faculties. A person must use his mental faculties to come to know God and grow in love for him. (Joh 17:3, ftn.; Ro 12:1) In this quote from De 6:5, the original Hebrew text uses three terms, ‘heart, soul, and strength.’ However, according to Matthew’s account as it appears in Greek, the term for “mind” is used instead of “strength.” There may be several reasons for this use of different terms. First, although ancient Hebrew did not have a specific word for “mind,” this concept was often included in the Hebrew word for “heart.” This term when used figuratively refers to the whole inner person, including a person’s thinking, feelings, attitudes, and motivations. (De 29:4; Ps 26:2; 64:6; see study note on **heart** in this verse.) For this reason, where the Hebrew text uses the word “heart,” the Greek *Septuagint* often uses the Greek equivalent for “mind.” (Ge 8:21; 17:17; Pr 2:10; Isa 14:13) Another reason why Matthew may have used the Greek word for “mind” instead of “strength” when quoting De 6:5 is that the Hebrew word rendered “strength [or, “vital force,” ftn.]” could include both physical strength and mental or intellectual ability. Whatever the case, this overlapping of ideas

between the Hebrew and Greek terms may help to explain why when quoting Deuteronomy the Gospel writers do not use the same exact wording.—See study notes on Mt 22:37; Lu 10:27.

22:39

The second: At Mt 22:37, Jesus' direct answer to the Pharisee is recorded, but Jesus now goes beyond the original question and quotes a second commandment (Le 19:18), teaching that the two commandments are inextricably linked and that the whole Law and the Prophets are summed up by them.—Mt 22:40.

neighbor: This Greek word for “neighbor” (lit., “the one near”) can include more than just those who live nearby. It can refer to anyone with whom a person interacts.—Lu 10:29-37; Ro 13:8-10; see study note on Mt 5:43.

22:40

the whole Law . . . and the Prophets: “The Law” refers to the Bible books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. “The Prophets” refers to the prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, when these terms are mentioned together, the expression could be understood to include the entire Hebrew Scriptures.—Mt 7:12; 22:40; Lu 16:16.

hangs: The Greek verb with the literal meaning “to hang on” is here used in the figurative sense “to be dependent on; be based on.” Jesus thus indicated that not just the Law with the Ten Commandments but the entire Hebrew Scriptures are based on love.—Ro 13:9.

22:42

the Christ: Or “the Messiah.”— This title is derived from the Greek word *Khri-stos'* and is equivalent to the title “Messiah” (from Hebrew *Ma-shi'ach*), both meaning “Anointed One.” In Bible times, rulers were ceremonially anointed with oil.

22:43

under inspiration: Lit., “in spirit.” That is, inspired by, or under the influence of, God’s spirit.—See Glossary, “Spirit.”

22:44

Jehovah: In this quote from Ps 110:1, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

beneath your feet: That is, under your authority.

MATTHEW Study Notes—Chapter 23

23:2

seated themselves in the seat of Moses: Or “appointed themselves to Moses’ place,” by presumptuously claiming his authority as interpreters of divine law.

23:4

heavy loads: Evidently referring to rules and oral traditions that were burdensome for people to keep.

budge them with their finger: This expression may refer to the unwillingness of the religious leaders to lift even one small regulation to make things easier for those on whom they imposed heavy loads.

23:5

the scripture-containing cases that they wear as safeguards: Or “their phylacteries.” These small leather cases containing four portions of the Law (Ex 13:1-10, 11-16; De 6:4-9; 11:13-21) were worn by Jewish men on their forehead and left arm. This practice had its origin in a literal interpretation of God’s direction to the Israelites at Ex 13:9, 16; De 6:8; 11:18. Jesus criticized the

religious leaders because they enlarged their scripture-containing cases in order to impress others and because they wrongly considered them to be charms, or amulets, that would protect them.

lengthen the fringes: At Nu 15:38-40, the Israelites were commanded to make fringes on their garments, but for show, the scribes and Pharisees make theirs longer than anyone else does.

23:6

front seats: Or “best seats.” Evidently, the presiding officers of the synagogue and distinguished guests sat near the Scripture rolls at the front of the synagogue, in full view of the congregation. These seats of honor were likely reserved for such prominent individuals.

23:7

marketplaces: Or “places of assembly.” The Greek word *a-go-ra'* is here used to refer to an open area that served as a center for buying and selling and as a place of public assembly in cities and towns of the ancient Near East and the Greek and Roman world.

Rabbi: Literally meaning “my great one,” from the Hebrew word *rav*, meaning “great.” In common usage, “Rabbi” meant “Teacher” (Joh 1:38), but it came to be used as an honorary title. Some learned men, scribes and teachers of the Law, demanded to be addressed by this title.

23:9

father: Jesus here prohibits the use of the term “father” as a formalistic or religious title of honor applied to men.

23:10

leaders: The Greek word is a synonym for “Teacher,” found in verse 8, and here it conveys the idea of those who provide guidance and instruction, spiritual leaders. It was likely used as a religious title.

Leader: Since no imperfect human can be the spiritual Leader of true Christians, Jesus is the only one rightly bearing this title.— See preceding study note on **leaders** in this verse.

the Christ: Here the title “Christ,” meaning “Anointed One,” is preceded by the definite article in Greek. This is a way of indicating that Jesus was the promised Messiah, the one who had been anointed in a special sense.—See study notes on Mt 1:1 and 2:4.

23:11

minister: Or “servant.” The Bible often uses the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* to refer to one who does not let up in humbly rendering service in behalf of others. The term is used to describe Christ (Ro 15:8), ministers or servants of Christ (1Co 3:5-7; Col 1:23), ministerial servants (Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8), as well as household servants (Joh 2:5, 9) and government officials (Ro 13:4).

23:13

Woe to you: This is the first in a series of seven woes pronounced on the religious leaders of Jesus’ day, in which Jesus identifies them as hypocrites and blind guides.

hypocrites: The Greek word *hy-po-kri-tes'* originally referred to Greek (and later Roman) stage actors who wore large masks designed to amplify the voice. The term came to be used in a metaphoric sense to apply to anyone hiding his real intentions or personality by playing false or putting on a pretense. Jesus here calls the Jewish religious leaders “hypocrites.”—Mt 6:5, 16.

shut up: Or “shut the door to,” that is, prevent people from entering.

23:14

A few manuscripts add the words: “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you devour widows’ houses and for a pretense offer long prayers; on this account you will receive judgment more abundantly.” However, the earliest and most important manuscripts do not include this verse. Similar words, though, can be found at Mr 12:40 and Lu 20:47 as part of the inspired text.—See App. A3.

23:15

proselyte: Or “convert.” The Greek word *pro-se'ly-tos* denotes a Gentile who has converted to Judaism, which included circumcision for male proselytes.

a subject for Gehenna: Lit., “a son of Gehenna,” that is, someone who is deserving of eternal destruction.—See Glossary, “Gehenna.”

23:17

Fools and blind ones!: Or “You blind fools!” In Biblical usage, the term “fool” generally refers to an individual who spurns reason and follows a morally insensible course that is out of harmony with God’s righteous standards.

23:23

tenth of the mint and the dill and the cumin: Under the Mosaic Law, the Israelites were to pay the tithe, or a tenth, of their crops. (Le 27:30; De 14:22) Although the Law did not explicitly command that they give a tenth of herbs like mint, dill, and cumin, Jesus did not contradict the tradition. Rather, he reproved the scribes and Pharisees for focusing on minor details of the

Law while failing to promote its underlying principles, such as justice and mercy and faithfulness.

23:24

who strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel: The gnat and the camel were among the smallest and the largest unclean creatures known to the Israelites. (Le 11:4, 21-24) Jesus uses hyperbole, combined with a degree of irony, in saying that the religious leaders filter their beverages so as not to be ceremonially defiled by a gnat, while they completely disregard the weightier matters of the Law, an action comparable to swallowing a camel.

23:27

whitewashed graves: It was a custom in Israel to whitewash graves as a warning so that those passing by would not accidentally become ceremonially defiled through contact with a burial place. (Nu 19:16) The Jewish Mishnah (*Shekalim* 1:1) says that this whitewashing was done annually, one month prior to the Passover. Jesus used this expression as a metaphor for hypocrisy.

23:28

lawlessness: The Greek word rendered “lawlessness” includes the idea of violation of and contempt for laws, people acting as if there were no laws. As used in the Bible, it suggests disregard for God’s laws.—Mt 7:23; 2Co 6:14; 2Th 2:3-7; 1Jo 3:4.

23:29

tombs: Or “memorial tombs.”— A burial place in which the remains of a deceased person were placed. This term renders the Greek word *mne·mei'on*, which comes from the verb “to remind,” suggesting that the person who has died is remembered.—Joh 5:28, 29.

23:32

fill up the measure of your forefathers: Or “finish off the works that your forefathers started.” The literal meaning of this idiomatic expression is “to fill up a measure that someone else has started to fill.” Jesus is not commanding the Jewish leaders to finish what their ancestors started. Rather, he is using irony in foretelling that they would kill him, as their ancestors killed God’s prophets of former times.

23:33

Serpents, offspring of vipers: Satan, “the original serpent” (Re 12:9), is in a spiritual sense the progenitor of opposers to true worship. Jesus, therefore, justly classified these religious leaders as “serpents, offspring of vipers.” (Joh 8:44; 1Jo 3:12) They caused deadly spiritual harm to those who were influenced by their wickedness. John the Baptist also used the expression “offspring of vipers.”—Mt 3:7.

Gehenna: This term comes from the Hebrew words *geh hin·nom'*, meaning “valley of Hinnom,” which lay to the W and S of ancient Jerusalem. (See App. B12, map “Jerusalem and Surrounding Area.”) By Jesus’ day, the valley had become a place for burning refuse, so the word “Gehenna” was a fitting symbol of complete destruction.—See Glossary.

23:34

public instructors: Or “learned persons.” The Greek word *gram·ma·teus'* is rendered “scribe” when referring to Jewish teachers of the Law, but Jesus is here speaking about his disciples who are to be sent out to teach others.

synagogues: A word meaning “a bringing together; an assembly,” but in most scriptures, the building or place where Jews assembled for Scripture reading, instruction, preaching, and prayer. In Jesus’ day, each sizable town in Israel had a

synagogue, and the larger cities had more than one.—Lu 4:16; Ac 13:14, 15.

23:35

from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah:

Jesus' statement embraced all the murdered witnesses of Jehovah mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, from Abel, listed in the first book (Ge 4:8), to Zechariah, mentioned at 2Ch 24:20, Chronicles being the last book in the traditional Jewish canon. So when Jesus said from "Abel to . . . Zechariah," he was saying "from the very first case to the last."

son of Barachiah: According to 2Ch 24:20, this Zechariah was "the son of Jehoiada the priest." It has been suggested that Jehoiada may have had two names, as is the case with others in the Bible (compare Mt 9:9 with Mr 2:14), or that Barachiah was Zechariah's grandfather or an earlier ancestor.

whom you murdered: While these Jewish religious leaders did not actually kill Zechariah, Jesus held them accountable because they had the same murderous disposition as their ancestors.—Re 18:24.

between the sanctuary and the altar: According to 2Ch 24:21, Zechariah was murdered "in the courtyard of Jehovah's house." The altar of burnt offering was in the inner courtyard, outside of and in front of the entrance to the sanctuary. (See App. B8.) This would correspond with the location Jesus mentioned for the incident.

23:36

Truly: Greek, *a·men'*, a transliteration of the Hebrew *'a·men'*, meaning "so be it," or "surely." Jesus frequently uses this expression to preface a statement, a promise, or a prophecy, thereby emphasizing its absolute truthfulness and reliability. Jesus' use of "truly," or amen, in this way is said to be unique in

sacred literature. When repeated in succession (*a·men' a·men'*), as is the case throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus' expression is translated "most truly."—Joh 1:51.

23:38

Look!: The Greek word *i·dou'*, here rendered "look!," is often used to focus attention on what follows, encouraging the reader to visualize the scene or to take note of a detail in a narrative. It is also used to add emphasis or to introduce something new or surprising. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the term occurs most frequently in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke and in the book of Revelation. A corresponding expression is often used in the Hebrew Scriptures.

house: That is, the temple.

is abandoned to you: Some ancient manuscripts add the word "desolate."

23:39

Jehovah's: In this quote from Ps 118:26, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

- Song 30 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Obey the Two Greatest Commandments”:** (10 min.)
 Mt 22:36-38—How do these verses explain what is involved in obeying the greatest and first commandment in the Law? (*nwtsty* study note on Mt 22:37)
 Mt 22:39—What is the second greatest commandment in the Law? (*nwtsty* study note)
 Mt 22:40—The entire Hebrew Scriptures are based on love (*nwtsty* study note)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Mt 22:21—What are “Caesar’s things,” and what are “God’s things”? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Mt 23:24—What do Jesus’ words mean? (*nwtsty* study note)

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) Mt 22:1-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs* 199 ¶8-9—Teacher encourages student to invite acquaintances to the Memorial.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 96
- **“Love for God and Neighbor—How to Cultivate It”:** (15 min.) Discussion. To illustrate the value of using our imagination to visualize Bible accounts, play the dramatic Bible reading *Jehovah Is the Only True God*—*Excerpt* as the audience follows along at 1 Kings 18:17-46.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 12
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 52 and Prayer

MATTHEW 22-23 | Obey the Two Greatest Commandments



22:36-39

Using Matthew 22:36-39, number in order of importance the following reasons for attending Christian meetings:

- ___ To be encouraged
- ___ To encourage our brothers
- ___ To worship and demonstrate our love for Jehovah

Why should we try to go to our meetings even when we are tired and feel that we will receive little personal benefit from attending?

What are other ways in which we can demonstrate our obedience to the two greatest commandments?



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

Inviting people to the Memorial in Slovenia

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Memorial Invitation Campaign (March 3-31): We want to invite you to a very important event. Here is your personal invitation. On Saturday, March 31, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. This invitation shows the time and location of the meeting being held in our area. We also invite you to a talk the week before entitled “Who Is Jesus Christ?”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: Why did Jesus die?

Scripture: Mt 20:28

Link: What does the ransom accomplish?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What does the ransom accomplish?

Scripture: Ro 6:23

Link: How can we show our appreciation for the ransom?

their whole heart, their whole soul, and their whole mind. (**Read Matthew 22:37.**) What does that mean?

8 Is it enough just to say that we love Jehovah? No. If we love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, and mind, we will show our love for him by our actions. (Matthew 7:16-20) The Bible clearly teaches that if we love God, we will obey his commandments. Is that difficult? No, because Jehovah's "commandments are not burdensome."—**Read 1 John 5:3.**

9 When we obey Jehovah, we have a happy and satisfying life. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) But what will help us to stay close to Jehovah? Let us see.

CONTINUE DRAWING CLOSER TO JEHOVAH

10 How did you become Jehovah's friend? Through your study of the Bible, you came to know Jehovah more and developed a friendship with him. This friendship is like a fire that you want to keep burning. Just as a fire needs fuel to burn, you need to continue learning about Jehovah to keep your friendship strong.—Proverbs 2:1-5.

11 As you continue to study the Bible, you will learn things that really touch your heart. Notice how two of Jesus' disciples felt as Jesus was explaining Bible prophecies to them. They said: "Were not our hearts burning within us as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up the Scriptures to us?"—Luke 24:32.

8, 9. How can we show Jehovah that we love him?

10. Why should you continue learning about Jehovah?

11. How will Bible teachings affect you?

96 *God's Own Book—A Treasure*

(Proverbs 2:1)

1. There is a book that by its many pages,
 Brings peace and joy and hope to humankind.
Its wondrous thoughts are charged with such great power;
 It brings life to the “dead,” sight to the “blind.”
That precious book is God's own Holy Bible.
 Its words were penned by men whom God inspired,
By men who truly loved their God Jehovah,
 And by his holy spirit they were fired.

2. They wrote a record true of God's creations,
 How by his might this universe appeared.
They also told how man at first was sinless
 But how his Paradise then disappeared.
They further told about a certain angel
 Who challenged God and spurned his sov'reignty.
That challenge led to sin and man's great sorrow,
 But soon will come Jehovah's victory.

3. The time has come with reason for rejoicing:
 Jehovah rules by his anointed King.
So now we preach the good news of the Kingdom
 And share the hope of blessings it will bring.
Within his book are found these cheerful tidings;
 A sacred banquet feast on which to feed.
It offers peace beyond all human thinking;
 This Living Treasure beckons all to read.

(See also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.)

- Song 30 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

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- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 22:1-22

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- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
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- Song 96
- **“Love for God and Neighbor—How to Cultivate It”:** (15 min.) Discussion. To illustrate the value of using our imagination to visualize Bible accounts, play the dramatic Bible reading *Jehovah Is the Only True God*—*Excerpt* as the audience follows along at 1 Kings 18:17-46.
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- Song 52 and Prayer

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22:36-39

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- ___ To be encouraged
- ___ To encourage our brothers
- ___ To worship and demonstrate our love for Jehovah

Why should we try to go to our meetings even when we are tired and feel that we will receive little personal benefit from attending?

What are other ways in which we can demonstrate our obedience to the two greatest commandments?

Love for God and Neighbor—How to Cultivate It

Although the Mosaic Law is not binding on Christians, its two greatest commandments—to love God and to love our neighbor—still summarize what Jehovah requires of us. (Mt 22:37-39) Such love is not inherited. It must be cultivated. How? One important way is by means of daily Bible reading. When we consider the various facets of God’s personality as revealed in the

Scriptures, we behold “the pleasantness of Jehovah.” (Ps 27:4) As a result, our love for him grows and our thinking becomes more like his. This motivates us to observe God’s commandments, including the command to demonstrate self-sacrificing love for others. (Joh 13:34, 35; 1Jo 5:3) Here are three suggestions to make Bible reading more enjoyable:

- **Use your imagination, and engage your senses.**

Imagine that you are there. What would you see, hear, and smell? What may be the feelings of those involved?



- **Vary your approach.** Here are some options: Read aloud, or follow along while listening to an audio recording. Read about a particular Bible character or subject instead of reading chapters in order. For example, use Appendix A7 or B12 in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* to read about Jesus. Read the entire chapter from which the daily text is taken. Read the Bible books in the order they were written.



- **Read to understand.** Reading even one chapter each day with understanding and meditating on it is far better than reading many chapters just for the sake of covering material. Consider the setting. Analyze the details. Make use of maps and marginal references. Research at least one point that you do not understand. If possible, spend about the same amount of time to meditate as you would to read.





SECTION

2

THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

'SEE, THE LAMB
OF GOD WHO
TAKES AWAY SIN.'

—JOHN 1:29

12

JESUS GETS BAPTIZED

MATTHEW 3:13-17 MARK 1:9-11 LUKE 3:21, 22
JOHN 1:32-34

- JESUS IS BAPTIZED AND ANOINTED
 - JEHOVAH DECLARES JESUS TO BE HIS SON
-

Some six months after John the Baptist begins preaching, Jesus, who is now about 30 years old, comes to him at the Jordan River. For what reason? It is not merely to pay a friendly visit. Nor does Jesus simply want to see how John's work is progressing. No, Jesus comes to ask John to baptize him.

Understandably, John objects: "I am the one who needs to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14) John knows that Jesus is God's special Son. Recall that while still in his mother's womb, John had jumped with gladness when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visited John's mother, Elizabeth. No doubt John's mother later told him about this. And he would also have learned about the angel's announcement of Jesus'

birth and about the angels who appeared to the shepherds on the night Jesus was born.

John understands that the baptism he is performing is for those repenting of their sins. Yet Jesus is without sin. Despite John's objection, Jesus insists: "Let it be this time, for in that way it is suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous."—Matthew 3:15.

Why is it suitable for Jesus to be baptized? Jesus is not being baptized in symbol of repentance for sins. His baptism shows that he is presenting himself to do the will of his Father. (Hebrews 10:5-7) Jesus has been a carpenter, but now it is time for him to begin the ministry that his heavenly Father sent him to earth to perform. Do you think that John expects anything unusual to happen when he baptizes Jesus?

Well, John later reports: "The very One who sent me to baptize in water said to me: 'Whoever it is upon whom you see the spirit coming down and remaining, this is the one who baptizes in holy spirit.'" (John 1:33) So John is expecting God's spirit to

come upon someone he baptizes. Accordingly, once Jesus comes up from the water, John may not be surprised to see “God’s spirit descending like a dove and coming upon [Jesus].”—Matthew 3:16.

But more than that happens at Jesus’ baptism. ‘The heavens are opened up’ to him. What does this mean? Likely it means that at the time of Jesus’ baptism, the memory of his prehuman life in heaven returns to him. Thus, Jesus now recalls his life as a spirit son of Jehovah, including truths that God taught him in heaven before he came to earth.

In addition, at Jesus’ baptism a voice from heaven proclaims: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.” (Matthew 3:17) Whose voice is that? It cannot be Jesus’ own voice; he is right there with John. That voice is God’s. Clearly, Jesus is God’s Son. He is not God himself.

It is noteworthy that Jesus is a human son of God, even as was the first man, Adam. The disciple Luke, after describing Jesus’ baptism, writes: “When Jesus began his work, he was about 30 years old, being the son, as the opinion was, of Joseph, son of

Heli, . . . son of David, . . . son of Abraham, . . . son of Noah, . . . son of Adam, son of God.”—Luke 3: 23-38.

Just as Adam was a human “son of God,” so is Jesus. At his baptism, Jesus enters into a new relationship with God, becoming God’s spiritual Son. Thus, Jesus is in a position to teach divine truth and to show the way to life. Jesus is starting on a course that will in time lead to his laying down his human life in sacrifice in behalf of sinful humankind.



- ◇ Why is Jesus no stranger to John?
- ◇ Jesus has committed no sins, so why is he baptized by John?
- ◇ Why might John not be surprised that God’s spirit comes upon Jesus?

1. Because Jehovah created
The universe so grand,
To him belong the earth and sky,
The works of his own hand.
The breath of life he has given
And to his creatures shown
That worthy is he to have the praise,
The worship of all his own.
2. In water Jesus was baptized
To righteousness fulfill.
In solemn prayer he said to God:
'I've come to do your will.'
When he came up from the Jordan
As God's anointed Son,
Obedient and loyal he would pray:
'My Father, your will be done.'
3. We come before you, Jehovah,
To praise your name so great.
Disowning self, with humble hearts,
Our lives we dedicate.
You gave your only begotten,
Who paid the price so high.
No longer as living for ourselves,
For you we will live or die.

JANUARY 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 1, 2018

**LARGE
PRINT
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

BOLIVIA

At Riberalta, Beni, two pioneer couples load literature onto an airplane. They are going to a remote area of the country to preach

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When we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, what can we do? This article discusses our yeartext for 2018 and shows why we need to give Jehovah the opportunity to strengthen us and how he will do so.

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Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

The annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2018. How can we prepare now for this occasion, how will we benefit from attending it, and how does that annual event contribute to the unity of God’s people everywhere? Find the answers in this article.

PUBLISHERS

26,081

BIBLE STUDIES

42,568

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2016)

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Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

All that we have comes from Jehovah. He still expects us, however, to use our finances to support the work of his organization today. This article will consider why and how we benefit from honoring Jehovah with our valuable things.

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What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

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See the Difference in People

The first of these articles discusses how true happiness comes from loving God and not from the counterfeit types of love so evident in “the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1) The second article describes how traits that characterize people of the last days stand in sharp contrast with the qualities found among God’s people.

*“Taste and See That
Jehovah Is Good”*
(Psalm 34:8)

1. Our service to God we cherish;
We value our priv’lege to preach.
We buy out the time and give God our best,
For many we still need to reach.

(CHORUS)

*God’s Word invites us: ‘Come taste and see—
See that Jehovah is good.’
Godly devotion brings greatest gain,
We know we’ve done all we could.*

2. For those in the full-time service,
Rich blessings and treasures abound.
By trusting in God to care for our needs,
In all things contentment is found.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
80, 50

**WHAT DO YOU
THINK?**

Why does Jehovah expect us to use our valuable things to give back to him?

How did faithful ones in the past support the activities of Jehovah's representatives financially?

How does the organization use the money that is donated today?

Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

“O our God, we thank you and praise your beautiful name.”—1 CHRON. 29:13.

JEHOVAH is a generous God. Everything we have is from him. Jehovah owns all the gold and silver along with all other natural resources of the earth, and he uses them to provide what is needed to sustain life. (Ps. 104:13-15; Hag. 2:8) The Bible

1, 2. How does Jehovah generously use his material resources?

contains numerous accounts of how Jehovah used his resources miraculously to provide for his people.

² For 40 years, Jehovah supplied manna and water for the nation of Israel while they were in the wilderness. (Ex. 16:35) As a result, “they lacked nothing.” (Neh. 9:20, 21) Through the prophet Elisha, Jehovah performed the miracle of multiplying the small quantity of oil for a faithful widow. God’s gift enabled her to pay off her debts and after that to have enough money for her and her sons to live on. (2 Ki. 4:1-7) With Jehovah’s support, Jesus miraculously provided food and even money when needed.—Matt. 15:35-38; 17:27.

³ Jehovah has access to unlimited resources that can sustain his earthly creation. However, he still invites his servants to use their material things to support the work of his organization. (Ex. 36:3-7; read **Proverbs 3:9.**) Why does Jehovah expect us to use our valuable things to give back to him? How did faithful ones in the past support the activities of Jehovah’s representatives financially? How does the organization use the money that is donated today? The answers to these questions will be discussed in this article.

3. What will we consider in this article?

WHY DO WE GIVE TO JEHOVAH?

⁴ We give to Jehovah because of our love and appreciation for him. We are overwhelmed when we consider all that Jehovah has done in our behalf. When explaining the needs of the upcoming project to build the temple, King David acknowledged that everything we receive comes from Jehovah and that whatever we give to Jehovah is from what he has already given us.—Read **1 Chronicles 29:11-14**.

⁵ Giving is also an expression of our worship of Jehovah. In vision, the apostle John heard Jehovah's servants in heaven say: "You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they came into existence and were created." (Rev. 4:11) Would you not agree that Jehovah is worthy of all the glory and honor that we can give him by offering the best that we have? Through Moses, Jehovah commanded the nation of Israel to appear before Jehovah at three annual festivals. As part of their worship at those festivals, the Israelites were not to "appear before Jehovah empty-handed." (Deut. 16:16) Likewise today, un-

4. What do we show Jehovah when we support his work?

5. How do the Scriptures show that unselfish giving is a fundamental aspect of true worship?

selfish giving in appreciation for and in support of the work of the earthly part of Jehovah's organization is a fundamental aspect of worship.

⁶ Giving is good for us. It is healthy for us to be generous givers and not just receivers. (Read Proverbs 29:21.) We may think of a child who gives a gift to his parents from the small allowance they have given him. How the parents appreciate this gift! A son or a daughter who may be pioneering and living at home may rightly give the parents some funds to assist with household expenses. Though the parents may not expect this, they may accept these gifts because it is a way for the child to show appreciation for all that they do for him. Likewise, Jehovah realizes that giving from our valuable things is good for us.

GIVING IN BIBLE TIMES

⁷ The aspect of giving from personal resources is well-established in the Scriptures. In some cases, Jehovah's people contributed for specific projects. For example, Moses called for donations for the

6. Why is giving good for us? (See opening picture.)

7, 8. How did Jehovah's people in Bible times set an example in contributing (a) for specific projects? (b) for the general support of the work?

construction of the tabernacle, as did King David for the building of the temple. (Ex. 35:5; 1 Chron. 29:5-9) During the time of King Jehoash, the priests used money that was collected to repair the house of Jehovah. (2 Ki. 12:4, 5) When the brothers in the early Christian congregation were made aware of the need that arose because of a famine, they “determined, each according to what he could afford, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.”—Acts 11:27-30.

⁸ In other cases, Jehovah’s people gave financial support to those taking the lead in the work. Under the Mosaic Law, the Levites did not receive an inheritance as the other tribes did. Rather, the Israelites gave them a tithe, or a tenth part, that allowed the Levites to focus on their work at the tabernacle. (Num. 18:21) Similarly, Jesus and his apostles later benefited from the generosity of the women “who were ministering to them from their belongings.”—Luke 8:1-3.

⁹ Of course, the sources of such donations varied. When contributing for the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, what the Israelites gave likely included what they had brought with them from Egypt. (Ex. 3:21, 22; 35:22-24) In the first century,

9. What were some sources of contributions in times past?

some Christians sold items that they owned, such as fields or houses, and brought the money to the apostles. The apostles distributed these funds to those in need. (Acts 4:34, 35) Others set aside money and gave regular donations to support the work. (1 Cor. 16:2) Thus, people of all walks of life—from the very wealthy to the very poor—had a share.—Luke 21: 1-4.

GIVING TODAY

¹⁰ Today, we too may be asked to make donations for a specific purpose. For example, are there plans to build a new Kingdom Hall that your congregation will use? Or is your current Kingdom Hall being renovated? We may be made aware of financial needs with regard to renovations to our local branch office, a convention we are attending, or assistance to our brothers after a natural disaster. We also donate to support those caring for the work at world headquarters and at branch offices around the earth. Our donations support missionaries, special pioneers, and those in the circuit work. Your congregation also no doubt has a standing resolution to assist financially with the worldwide program of building

10, 11. (a) How can we imitate the generous servants of Jehovah in Bible times? (b) How do you feel about the privilege you have to support the Kingdom work?

Assembly Halls and Kingdom Halls, which benefits our brothers throughout the earth.

¹¹ All of us can have a share in supporting the work that Jehovah is accomplishing in these last days. Most donations are anonymous. We discreetly place funds in the contribution boxes at the Kingdom Hall, or we may make donations online through jw.org. We may feel that our small donations do not mean much. Yet, the majority of donated funds today come from many small gifts rather than from a few large ones. Our brothers, even those who are in poor economic situations, are like the Macedonians who were in “deep poverty” and yet begged for the privilege to give and did so generously.—2 Cor. 8: 1-4.

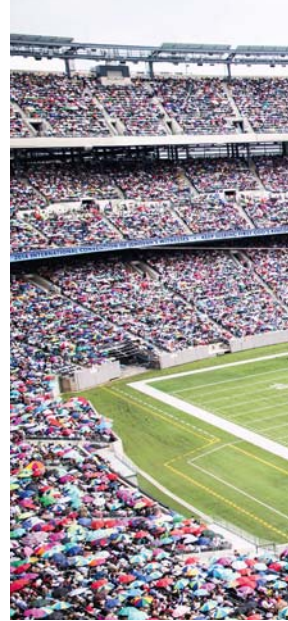
¹² With prayerful consideration, the Governing Body strives to be faithful and discreet with regard to how the organization’s funds are used. (Matt. 24:45) The funds that are received are budgeted and spent accordingly. (Luke 14:28) In Bible times, stewards of dedicated funds followed procedures to make sure that donations were used only for their intended purposes. For example, Ezra traveled back to Jerusalem with donated items from the Persian

12. How does the organization strive to make the best use of donated funds?

king—gold, silver, and other materials worth well over \$100 million (U.S.) in today’s values. Ezra considered these funds to be voluntary offerings to Jehovah and put detailed procedures in place to protect these treasures on the perilous journey through hostile territory. (Ezra 8:24-34) The apostle Paul collected funds as a relief ministration for the brothers in Judea. He took steps to ensure that those delivering the funds cared for “everything honestly, not only in the sight of Jehovah but also in the sight of men.” (Read 2 Corinthians 8:18-21.) Imitating the examples of Ezra and Paul, our organization today follows strict procedures when it comes to handling and spending donated funds.

¹³ A family may make adjustments as they seek to balance income with expenses or as they consider how to simplify their life and reduce expenses in order to do more for Jehovah. The same is true of Jehovah’s organization. In recent years, there have been many exciting new initiatives. At times, this resulted in more money going out than coming in for a period of time. Thus, the organization looks for ways to reduce expenses and simplify the work so as to be able to accomplish the most that it can with your generous donations.

13. How should we view recent simplifications in the organization?



BENEFITS FROM YOUR DONATIONS

¹⁴ Many longtime servants of Jehovah have been heard to say that they have never seen a time like this with so many spiritual provisions. Just think! In recent years, we have seen the start of jw.org and JW Broadcasting. The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is published in many more languages. In 2014/2015, some of the largest stadiums in 14 cities around the world became home for the three-day “Keep Seeking First God’s Kingdom!” International Conventions. Those who attended were thrilled to be present.

14-16. (a) What are some of the things being accomplished with your donations? (b) In what ways have you benefited from these provisions?



Your donations help
our worldwide work
(See paragraphs 14-16)

¹⁵ Many have expressed appreciation for the outstanding benefits they are receiving from Jehovah’s organization. For example, regarding the provision of JW Broadcasting, one couple serving in a country in Asia wrote: “Our assignment is in a small city. As a result, we sometimes feel isolated, and we easily forget the scope of Jehovah’s work. But as soon as we watch the various programs on JW Broadcasting, we remember that we are part of an international brotherhood. Our dear local brothers and sisters are very excited about JW Broadcasting. We often hear them say that after watching the monthly programs, they feel close to the members of the Governing Body. Now they are prouder than ever to be part of God’s organization.”

¹⁶ Worldwide, nearly 2,500 Kingdom Halls are currently in the process of being built or extensively renovated. After beginning to use their new Kingdom Hall, the members of one congregation in Honduras wrote: “We feel truly happy to be part of Jehovah’s universal family and to enjoy our wonderful worldwide brotherhood, both of which helped to make our dream of having a Kingdom Hall in our community a reality.” Many express similar appreciation after receiving the Bible and other publications translated into their own language, after benefiting from relief work, or after seeing the results of metropolitan and public witnessing in their communities.

¹⁷ Onlookers cannot understand how it is possible for us to do all this work using only voluntary donations. After touring one of our printing facilities, an executive from a large company was amazed that all the work was accomplished by volunteers, with voluntary donations, and without any sales or fund drives. He said that it should not be possible to do what we do. We agree! We know that it is possible only because Jehovah is backing the work.—Job 42:2.

17. How does the way the organization operates today give evidence of Jehovah’s backing?

BLESSINGS FOR GIVING BACK TO JEHOVAH

¹⁸ Jehovah dignifies us with the opportunity to support the grand work taking place today. He guarantees that we will receive blessings when we give in support of the Kingdom. (Mal. 3:10) Jehovah promises that the one who gives generously will prosper. (Read Proverbs 11:24, 25.) Giving also makes us happy, for “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” (Acts 20:35) By word and example, we have the privilege of training our children and new ones to appreciate how they can have a share and how they, as a result, can enjoy many blessings.

¹⁹ Everything we have is from Jehovah. Giving back to him shows that we love him and appreciate all that he has done in our behalf. (1 Chron. 29:17) When donating for the construction of the temple, “the people rejoiced over making these voluntary offerings, for they made the voluntary offerings to Jehovah with a complete heart.” (1 Chron. 29:9) May we likewise continue to find joy and satisfaction in giving back to Jehovah what has come to us from his own hand.

18. (a) What blessings do we receive when we give in support of the Kingdom? (b) How can we train our children and new ones to have a share?

19. How has this article encouraged you?

My Prayer of Dedication

(Matthew 22:37)

1. Take my heart and may it love
Truth and wisdom from above.
Take my voice and let it sing
Praises always to my King.
2. Take my feet and take my hands;
Let them serve your wise commands.
Take my silver and my gold.
Nothing, Lord, would I withhold.
3. Take my life and bring it, Lord,
With your will, in full accord.
Take myself, may all I do
Be well-pleasing, Jah, to you.

