

- Song 4 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 12:6—Even small birds are not forgotten by God (*nwtsty* study note)
 Lu 12:7—Jehovah’s intimate knowledge of us reveals his keen interest in us (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 12:7—Jehovah values each one of us (*cl* 241 ¶4-5)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 13:24—What does Jesus’ admonition mean? (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 13:33—Why did Jesus make this statement? (*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) Lu 12:22-40

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lvs* 214-215 ¶4-5

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 116
- **Isolated but Not Forgotten:** (15 min.) Play the video (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES). Afterward, discuss the following questions:
 What challenging situations have the three publishers experienced?

How has Jehovah demonstrated that he has not forgotten them?

How have the publishers continued to serve Jehovah despite their challenges, and how has this encouraged others?


How can you show love to those who are elderly or infirm in your congregation?

- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 30
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 5 and Prayer

LUKE 12-13 | “You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”

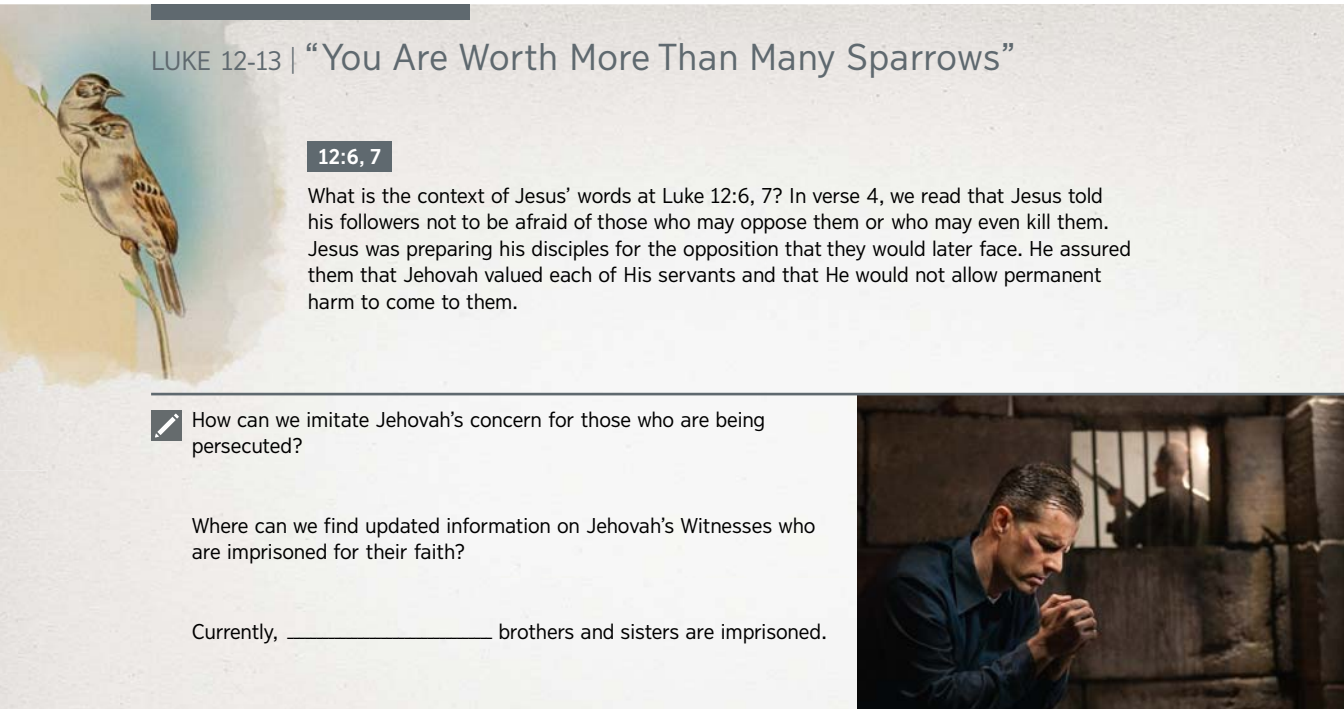
12:6, 7

What is the context of Jesus’ words at Luke 12:6, 7? In verse 4, we read that Jesus told his followers not to be afraid of those who may oppose them or who may even kill them. Jesus was preparing his disciples for the opposition that they would later face. He assured them that Jehovah valued each of His servants and that He would not allow permanent harm to come to them.

 How can we imitate Jehovah’s concern for those who are being persecuted?

Where can we find updated information on Jehovah’s Witnesses who are imprisoned for their faith?

Currently, _____ brothers and sisters are imprisoned.



4 “Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

(Psalm 23)

1. Jehovah God is my Shepherd;
I'll follow where he will lead.
He knows my hopes and my heart's desire;
He knows what I truly need.
To watered pastures he leads me,
To places secure and blessed.
And he guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
He guides me always with loyal love
To where I find peace and rest.
2. Refreshing are all your pathways,
The ways of your righteousness.
For your name's sake never let me stray
From walking in faithfulness.
In valleys deep in the shadows,
Assured by your staff and rod,
I will fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
I fear no danger of lasting harm,
For you are my Friend and God.
3. Jehovah, you are my Shepherd;
I follow where you will lead.
You strengthen me, and you give me rest;
You give all I truly need.
As you most surely are living,
So sure is my hope in you.
May your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.
Your loyal love and your care for me
Pursue me my whole life through.

LUKE 11:44-12:11

in wait for him to catch him in something he might say.^a

12 In the meantime, when a crowd of so many thousands had gathered together that they were stepping on one another, he started by saying first to his disciples: “Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.^b **2** But there is nothing carefully concealed that will not be revealed, and nothing secret that will not become known.^c **3** Therefore, whatever you say in the darkness will be heard in the light, and what you whisper in private rooms will be preached from the housetops. **4** Moreover, I say to you, my friends,^d do not fear those who kill the body and after this are not able to do anything more.^e **5** But I will show you whom to fear: Fear the One who after killing has authority to throw into Ge·hen’na.^{*f} Yes, I tell you, fear this One.^g **6** Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value,^{*} do they not? Yet not one of them is forgotten[#] by God.^h **7** But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.ⁱ Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.^j

8 “I say to you, everyone who acknowledges me before men,^k the Son of man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.^l **9** But whoever disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.^m **10** And everyone who says a word against the Son of man, it will be forgiven him, but whoever blasphemes against the holy spirit will not be forgiven.ⁿ **11** When they bring you in before public assemblies,^{*} government officials,

12:5 *See Glossary. **12:6** *Lit., “for two assarions.” See App. B14. #Or “overlooked.” **12:11** *Or “before synagogues.”

LUKE 12:12-37

and authorities, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak in defense or what you will say,^a **12** for the holy spirit will teach you in that very hour the things you should say.”^b

13 Then someone in the crowd said to him: “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” **14** He said to him: “Man, who appointed me judge or arbitrator between you two?” **15** Then he said to them: “Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of greed,^{*c} because even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses.”^d **16** With that he told them an illustration, saying: “The land of a rich man produced well. **17** So he began reasoning within himself, ‘What should I do now that I have nowhere to gather my crops?’ **18** Then he said, ‘I will do this:^e I will tear down my storehouses and build bigger ones, and there I will gather all my grain and all my goods, **19** and I will say to myself:^{*} “You[#] have many good things stored up for many years; take it easy, eat, drink, enjoy yourself.”’ **20** But God said to him, ‘Unreasonable one, this night they are demanding your life^{*} from you. Who, then, is to have the things you stored up?’^f **21** So it goes with the man who stores up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.”^g

22 Then he said to his disciples: “That is why I say to you, stop being anxious about your lives^{*} as to what you will eat or about your bodies as to what you will wear.^h **23** For the life^{*} is worth more than food and the body more than cloth-

12:15 *Or “covetousness.” **12:19** *Or “my soul.” #Or “Soul, you.” **12:20** *Or “soul.” **12:22** *Or “souls.” **12:23** *Or “the soul.”

ing. **24** Consider the ravens: They neither sow seed nor reap; they have neither barn nor storehouse; yet God feeds them.^a Are you not worth much more than birds?^b **25** Who of you by being anxious can add a cubit* to his life span? **26** If, therefore, you cannot do such a small thing, why be anxious about the remaining things?^c **27** Consider how the lilies grow: They neither toil nor spin; but I tell you that not even Sol'o-mon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.^d **28** Now if this is how God clothes the vegetation in the field that today exists and tomorrow is cast into an oven, how much more will he clothe you, you with little faith! **29** So stop seeking what you will eat and what you will drink, and stop being in anxious suspense;^e **30** for all these are the things the nations of the world are eagerly pursuing, but your Father knows you need these things.^f **31** Instead, keep seeking his Kingdom, and these things will be added to you.^g

32 "Have no fear, little flock,^h for your Father has approved of giving you the Kingdom.ⁱ **33** Sell your belongings and give gifts of mercy.^{*j} Make money pouches that do not wear out, a never-failing treasure in the heavens,^k where no thief gets near and no moth consumes. **34** For where your treasure is, there your hearts will be also.

35 "Be dressed and ready^{*l} and have your lamps burning,^m **36** and you should be like men waiting for their master to returnⁿ from the marriage,^o so when he comes and knocks, they may at once open to him. **37** Happy are those

12:25 *See App. B14. 12:33 *Or "gifts to the poor." See Glossary. 12:35 *Lit., "Let your loins be girded."

slaves whom the master on coming finds watching! Truly I say to you, he will dress* himself for service and have them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them.

38 And if he comes in the second watch,* even if in the third,# and finds them ready, happy are they! **39** But know this, if the householder had known at what hour the thief would come, he would not have let his house be broken into.^a **40** You also, keep ready, because at an hour that you do not think likely, the Son of man is coming.”^b

41 Then Peter said: “Lord, are you telling this illustration just to us or also to everyone?”

42 And the Lord said: “Who really is the faithful steward,* the discreet one,# whom his master will appoint over his body of attendants^Δ to keep giving them their measure of food supplies at the proper time?^c **43** Happy is that slave if his master on coming finds him doing so! **44** I tell you truthfully, he will appoint him over all his belongings.

45 But if ever that slave should say in his heart, ‘My master delays coming,’ and starts to beat the male and female servants and to eat and drink and get drunk,^d **46** the master of that slave will come on a day that he is not expecting him and at an hour that he does not know, and he will punish him with the greatest severity and assign him a part with the unfaithful ones.

47 Then that slave who understood the will of his master but did not get ready or do what he asked* will be beaten with

12:37 *Or “gird.” **12:38** *From about 9:00 p.m. to midnight. #From midnight to about 3:00 a.m. **12:42** *Or “house manager.” #Or “wise one.” ^ΔOr “household servants.” **12:47** *Or “do according to his will.”

LUKE 12:38-59

many strokes.^a **48** But the one who did not understand and yet did things deserving of strokes will be beaten with few. Indeed, everyone to whom much was given, much will be demanded of him, and the one who was put in charge of much will have more than usual demanded of him.^b

49 “I came to start a fire on the earth, and what more is there for me to wish if it has already been lit? **50** Indeed, I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and how I am distressed until it is finished!^c

51 Do you think I came to give peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.^d

52 For from now on there will be five in one house divided, three against two and two against three. **53** They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.”^e

54 Then he also said to the crowds: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, at once you say, ‘A storm is coming,’ and it happens. **55** And when you see that a south wind is blowing, you say, ‘There will be a heat wave,’ and it occurs. **56** Hypocrites, you know how to examine the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to examine this particular time?^f

57 Why do you not judge also for yourselves what is righteous?

58 For example, when you are going with your legal opponent to a ruler, while on the way, get to work to settle the dispute with him so that he may not summon you before the judge, and the judge deliver you to the court officer, and the court officer throw you into prison.^g **59** I tell you,

LUKE 13:1-24

you will certainly not get out of there until you pay over your last small coin.”*

13 At that time some who were present reported to him about the Gal·i·le’ans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. **2** In reply he said to them: “Do you think that those Gal·i·le’ans were worse sinners than all other Gal·i·le’ans because they have suffered these things? **3** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise be destroyed.^a **4** Or those 18 on whom the tower in Si·lo’am fell, killing them—do you think that they had greater guilt than all other men who live in Jerusalem? **5** No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all be destroyed, as they were.”

6 Then he went on to tell this illustration: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came looking for fruit on it but found none.^b **7** Then he said to the vinedresser, ‘Here it is three years that I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, but have found none. Cut it down! Why should it keep the ground useless?’ **8** In reply he said to him, ‘Master, leave it alone for one more year until I dig around it and put on manure. **9** If it produces fruit in the future, well and good; but if not, then cut it down.’”^c

10 Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. **11** And look! a woman was there who had had a spirit of weakness* for 18 years; and she was bent double and was unable to straighten up at all. **12** When he saw her, Jesus addressed her and said: “Woman, you are released from your weakness.”^d **13** And he laid his

12:59 *Lit., “the last lepton.” See App. B14. 13:11 *Or “a disabling spirit.”

hands on her, and instantly she straightened up and began to glorify God. **14** But in response the presiding officer of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus did the cure on the Sabbath, said to the crowd: "There are six days on which work ought to be done;^a so come and be cured on those days, and not on the Sabbath day."^b **15** However, the Lord answered him: "Hypocrites,^c does not each one of you on the Sabbath untie his bull or his donkey from the stall and lead it away to give it something to drink?^d **16** Should not this woman, who is a daughter of Abraham and whom Satan held bound for 18 years, be released from this bondage on the Sabbath day?" **17** Well, when he said these things, all his opposers began to feel shame, but the entire crowd began to rejoice at all the glorious things he did.^e

18 So he went on to say: "What is the Kingdom of God like, and with what can I compare it? **19** It is like a mustard grain that a man took and planted in his garden, and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of heaven nested in its branches."^f

20 And again he said: "With what can I compare the Kingdom of God? **21** It is like leaven that a woman took and mixed with three large measures* of flour until the whole mass was fermented."^g

22 And he traveled from city to city and from village to village, teaching and continuing on his journey to Jerusalem. **23** Now a man said to him: "Lord, are those being saved few?" He said to them: **24** "Exert yourselves vigorously to get

13:21 *Lit., "seah measures." A seah equaled 7.33 L (6.66 dry qt). See App. B14.

in through the narrow door,^a because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able. **25** When the householder gets up and locks the door, you will stand outside knocking at the door, saying, 'Lord, open to us.'^b But in answer he will say to you: 'I do not know where you are from.' **26** Then you will start saying, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our main streets.'^c **27** But he will say to you, 'I do not know where you are from. Get away from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!' **28** There is where your weeping and the gnashing of your teeth will be, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in the Kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown outside.^d **29** Furthermore, people will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the Kingdom of God. **30** And look! there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last."^e

31 In that very hour some of the Pharisees came up and told him: "Get out and go away from here, because Herod wants to kill you." **32** And he said to them: "Go and tell that fox, 'Look! I am casting out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will be finished.' **33** Nevertheless, I must go on today, tomorrow, and the following day, because it cannot be* that a prophet should be put to death outside of Jerusalem."^f **34** Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent to her^g—how often I wanted to gather your children together the way a hen gathers her brood of chicks under her wings! But

13:33 *Or "it is inconceivable."

LUKE 13:25-14:11

you did not want it.^a **35** Look! Your house is abandoned to you.^b I tell you, you will by no means see me until you say: ‘Blessed is the one who comes in Jehovah’s* name!’”^c

14 On another occasion he went to eat a meal in the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath, and they were closely watching him. **2** And look! a man who had dropsy* was in front of him. **3** So in response Jesus asked those versed in the Law and the Pharisees: “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath or not?”^d **4** But they kept silent. With that he took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away. **5** Then he said to them: “Who of you, if his son or bull falls into a well,^e will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?”^f **6** And they were not able to reply to this.

7 He then told the invited men an illustration when he noticed how they were choosing the most prominent places for themselves.^g He said to them: **8** “When you are invited by someone to a marriage feast, do not recline in the most prominent place.^h Perhaps someone more distinguished than you may also have been invited. **9** Then the one who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Let this man have your place.’ Then you will proceed with shame to take the lowest place. **10** But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when the man who invited you comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, go on up higher.’ Then you will have honor in front of all your fellow guests.”ⁱ **11** For

13:35 *See App. A5. 14:2 *Or “edema,” an excess buildup of fluid in the body.

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 12:6—Even small birds are not forgotten by God (*nwtsty* study note)
 Lu 12:7—Jehovah’s intimate knowledge of us reveals his keen interest in us (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 12:7—Jehovah values each one of us (*cl* 241 ¶4-5)

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Lu 13:33—Why did Jesus make this statement? (*nwtsty* study note)

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

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 What challenging situations have the three publishers experienced?

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LUKE 12-13 | “You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”

12:6, 7

What is the context of Jesus’ words at Luke 12:6, 7? In verse 4, we read that Jesus told his followers not to be afraid of those who may oppose them or who may even kill them. Jesus was preparing his disciples for the opposition that they would later face. He assured them that Jehovah valued each of His servants and that He would not allow permanent harm to come to them.

 How can we imitate Jehovah’s concern for those who are being persecuted?

Where can we find updated information on Jehovah’s Witnesses who are imprisoned for their faith?

Currently, _____ brothers and sisters are imprisoned.



July 23-29

Treasures From God's Word

Luke 12:6—Even small birds are not forgotten by God (“sparrows” study note on Luke 12:6, *nwtsty*)

Luke 12:6 Five sparrows sell for two coins of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

study note on Luke 12:6, *nwtsty*

sparrows: The Greek word *strouthi'on* is a diminutive form meaning any small bird, but it often referred to sparrows, the cheapest of all birds sold as food.

Luke 12:7—Jehovah's intimate knowledge of us reveals his keen interest in us (“even the hairs of your head are all numbered” study note on Luke 12:7, *nwtsty*)

Luke 12:7 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.

study note on Luke 12:7, *nwtsty*

even the hairs of your head are all numbered: The number of hairs on the human head is said to average more than 100,000. Jehovah's intimate knowledge of such minute details guarantees that he is keenly interested in each follower of Christ.

Luke 12:7—Jehovah values each one of us

Luke 12:7 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.

c/ 241 paragraphs 4-5

⁴ First, the Bible directly teaches that God sees worth in each of his servants. For example, Jesus said: “Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows.” (Matthew 10:29-31) Consider what those words meant to Jesus’ first-century listeners.

⁵ We may wonder why anyone would buy a sparrow. Well, in Jesus’ day the sparrow was the cheapest of the birds sold as food. Notice that for one coin of small value, a purchaser got two sparrows. But Jesus later stated that if a person was prepared to spend two coins, he got, not four sparrows, but *five*. The extra bird was added as though it had no value at all. Perhaps such creatures were worthless in the eyes of men, but how did the Creator view them? Said Jesus: “Not one of them [not even the one added in] goes forgotten before God.” (Luke 12:6, 7) Now we may begin to see Jesus’ point. If Jehovah places such value on a single sparrow, of how much greater worth is a human! As Jesus explained, Jehovah knows every detail about us. Why, the very hairs of our head are numbered!

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Luke 13:24—What does Jesus' admonition mean?

Luke 13:24 “Exert yourselves vigorously to get in through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will seek to get in but will not be able.

study note on Luke 13:24, *nwtsty*

Exert yourselves vigorously: Or “Keep on struggling.” Jesus' admonition emphasizes the need for taking whole-souled action in order to get in through the narrow door. For this context, various reference works have suggested such renderings as “Exert maximum effort; Make every effort.” The Greek verb *agonizomai* is related to the Greek noun *agon'*, which was often used to refer to athletic contests. At Hebrews 12:1, this noun is used figuratively for the Christian “race” for life. It is also used in the more general sense of a “struggle” (Philippians 1:30; Colossians 2:1) or a “fight” (1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 4:7). Forms of the Greek verb used at Luke 13:24 are rendered “competing in a contest” (1 Corinthians 9:25), “exerting [oneself]” (Colossians 1:29; 4:12; 1 Timothy 4:10), and “fight” (1 Timothy 6:12). Because the background of this expression is connected with competition in the athletic games, some have suggested that the effort Jesus encouraged may be compared to an athlete's exerting himself vigorously with all his power to win the prize, straining every nerve, as it were.

Luke 13:33—Why did Jesus make this statement?

Luke 13:33 Nevertheless, I must go on today, tomorrow, and the following day, because it cannot be that a prophet should be put to death outside of Jerusalem.

study note on Luke 13:33, *nwtsty*

it cannot be: Or “it is inconceivable (unthinkable).” While no Bible prophecy explicitly states that the Messiah would die in Jerusalem, this idea may be inferred from Daniel 9:24-26. Additionally, it would be expected that if the Jews were to kill a prophet, and especially the Messiah, it would be in that city. The 71-member Sanhedrin, the high court, met in Jerusalem, so those accused of being false prophets would be tried there. Jesus may also have had in mind that Jerusalem was where the regular sacrifices were offered to God and where the Passover lamb was slaughtered. As things worked out, Jesus’ words came true. He was brought before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and condemned. And it was in Jerusalem, just beyond the city walls, that he died as the “Passover lamb.”—1 Corinthians 5:7.

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 minutes or less) Luke 12:22-40

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 12

12:1

of so many thousands: Lit., “of the myriads.” The Greek word literally refers to a group of 10,000, a myriad, but it can also be used of a very large, unspecified number.

leaven: Or “yeast.” Often used in the Bible to denote corruption and sin, “leaven” here refers to corrupt teaching and influence.—Mt 16:6, 11, 12; 1Co 5:6-8.

12:3

in the light: That is, in public; openly.

12:5

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.

12:6

sparrows: The Greek word *strou-thi'on* is a diminutive form meaning any small bird, but it often referred to sparrows, the cheapest of all birds sold as food.

for two coins of small value: Lit., “for two assarions.” Earlier, during his third Galilean tour, Jesus said that two sparrows could be bought for one assarion. (Mt 10:29) An assarion was the wage a man earned for 45 minutes’ work. (See App. B14.) Now, likely about a year later during his ministry in Judea, Jesus makes the statement that Luke records, saying that **five** sparrows could be obtained for two assarions. Comparing these

accounts, we learn that sparrows were of such little value that merchants would include the fifth one free of charge.

12:7

even the hairs of your head are all numbered: The number of hairs on the human head is said to average more than 100,000. Jehovah's intimate knowledge of such minute details guarantees that he is keenly interested in each follower of Christ.

12:11

public assemblies: Or possibly, "synagogues." The Greek noun *sy-na-go-ge'* used here literally means "a bringing together; an assembly." In most occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures, it refers to the building or place where Jews assembled for Scripture reading, instruction, preaching, and prayer. (See Glossary, "Synagogue.") The word in this context could refer to "synagogues," to which local Jewish courts were attached (see study note on Mt 10:17), but it seems to be used here in a broader sense to refer to the type of gatherings that were accessible to the public, Jewish or non-Jewish. These assemblies were organized for the purpose of legally prosecuting a Christian and perhaps even rendering some kind of judicial decision against him because of his faith.

12:13

divide the inheritance with me: The Mosaic Law was quite clear on the matter of dividing an inheritance between siblings. The eldest son received a double portion, for he was to inherit the responsibilities of the family head. (De 21:17) The remainder of the inheritance was to be divided among the other heirs. It seems likely that the man referred to in this verse greedily wanted more than his legal share. This might explain his inappropriate behavior in interrupting Jesus' spiritual discussion

with a demand about this secular matter. Jesus wisely refused to get involved in the dispute, but he went on to warn against greed.

12:14

arbitrator: Or “divider; apportioner.” Jesus here acknowledges that there was no need for him to get involved in a matter that was clearly defined in the Mosaic Law. Further, that Law designated elders to arbitrate any monetary disputes. Jesus also understood that he was sent to the earth, not to get involved in secular matters, but to preach the good news of God’s Kingdom.

12:15

greed: Or “covetousness.” The Greek word *ple-o-ne-xi’a* literally means “having more” and denotes an insatiable desire to have more. This Greek term is also used at Eph 4:19; 5:3. After mentioning “greediness” at Col 3:5, Paul adds, “which is idolatry.”

12:19

myself: Or “my soul.” The Greek word *psy-khe’*, traditionally rendered “soul,” occurs three times in verses 19 and 20. The meaning of this term has to be determined by the context. (See Glossary, “Soul.”) Here it refers to the person himself—the material, visible, tangible person—and not to an invisible, untouchable substance inside the human body. Therefore, the expressions “my soul” and “myself” basically mean the same thing.—See study note on **You have** in this verse and study note on Lu 12:20.

You have: Or “Soul, you have.” The foolish man is here addressing himself. As explained in the note on **myself** in this verse, the Greek word *psy-khe’*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to the person himself.—See Glossary, “Soul.”

12:20

Unreasonable one: Or “You fool.” Rather than denote a person who is lacking in mental ability, such terms as “unreasonable” or “fool” as used in the Bible generally refer to an individual who rejects reason and follows a morally insensible course, one that is out of harmony with God’s righteous standards.

they are demanding your life from you: In this illustration, reference is not made to any group of humans or angels. The Greek verb for “to demand” is in the third person plural (“they”), simply indicating what was going to happen to the man. Jesus did not specify how the rich man in the illustration would die or who would take his life. The point was that by some means, the man was going to die that night. Therefore, the phrase could also be rendered “your life will be demanded from you.”

your life: Or “your soul.” As mentioned in the study note on Lu 12:19, the meaning of the Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” has to be determined by the context. Here it refers to the life that a person has.—See Glossary, “Soul.”

12:21

rich toward God: Or “rich in the eyes of God,” that is, rich in the things that are important from God’s perspective.

12:22

stop being anxious: Or “stop worrying.” The tense of the Greek verb *me·ri·mna'o* in this prohibition indicates to stop doing an action already in progress. The Greek term for “being anxious” can refer to worry that divides a person’s mind and distracts him, robbing him of joy. Luke uses the same Greek word at Lu 12:11, 25, 26. This verb is used by Paul at 1Co 7:32-34 and Php 4:6.— See study note on Mt 6:25.

your lives: Or “your souls.” The Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to a person’s life.—See Glossary, “Soul.”

12:23

the life: Or “the soul.” As in the preceding verse, the Greek word *psy·khe'* here refers to the life that a person has. In this context, the combination **life** (soul) and **body** represents the entire person.

12:24

ravens: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, this bird is mentioned only here. When Jesus gave similar admonition in the Sermon on the Mount, he did not refer to a specific bird. (Mt 6:26) Luke’s account has its setting during Jesus’ ministry in Judea, about 18 months after he delivered the Sermon on the Mount in Galilee. Here Jesus emphasizes the admonition by pointing to the raven, a bird that was unclean according to the Law covenant. (Le 11:13, 15) Evidently, the lesson is that since God provides for unclean ravens, we can be certain that he will never forsake people who trust in him.

12:25

a cubit: us here uses a word that refers to a short measure of distance (lit., “a forearm”), that is, about 44.5 cm (17.5 in.).—See Glossary, “Cubit,” and App. B14.

his life span: Jesus is evidently depicting life as a journey. His point is that by worrying, a person cannot add even a little to the length of his life.

12:26

such a small thing: Or “such a very little thing.” Lit., “the smallest thing.” This apparently refers to what is stated in the preceding verse about adding a cubit to one’s life span. If

humans cannot extend their life just a little, not even a cubit, why should they be so anxious and concerned about storing a great amount of wealth, food, and clothing and about having many homes and properties?

12:27

the lilies: Some identify this flower with the anemone, but it may have included a variety of lilylike flowers, such as tulips, hyacinths, irises, and gladiolus. Some suggest that Jesus referred simply to the many wildflowers growing in the area and therefore translate the Greek word using more general terms, such as “flowers” or “wildflowers.” This may be inferred, since this phrase is used in parallel with “vegetation in the field.”—Lu 12:28; Mt 6:28-30.

12:29

stop being in anxious suspense: Or “stop worrying.” The Greek word *me·te·o·ri'zo·mai* occurs only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In classical Greek, it had the meaning “to raise on high; to suspend”; it is even used in this sense with reference to ships being tossed at sea. In this context, however, it is used figuratively for being anxious or unsettled, as if tossed about or wavering because of doubt and anxiety.

12:33

gifts of mercy: The Greek word *e·le·e·mo·sy'ne*, traditionally rendered “alms,” is related to the Greek words for “mercy” and “to show mercy.” It refers to money or food freely given to relieve the poor.

12:35

Be dressed and ready: Lit., “having your loins girded around.” This idiom refers to binding up the ends of a long outer garment with a belt to facilitate physical work, running, and so forth. It

came to denote a state of readiness for any activity. Similar expressions occur many times in the Hebrew Scriptures. (For example: Ex 12:11, ftn.; 1Ki 18:46, ftn.; 2Ki 3:21, ftn.; 4:29; Pr 31:17, ftn.; Jer 1:17, ftn.) In this context, the form of the verb indicates a continuous state of readiness for spiritual activity on the part of God's servants. At Lu 12:37, the same Greek verb is rendered "dress himself for service." At 1Pe 1:13, the expression "brace up your minds for activity" literally means "gird up the loins of your mind."

12:37

he will dress himself for service: Lit., "he will gird himself."— See study notes on Lu 12:35; 17:8.

12:38

second watch: That is, from about 9:00 p.m. until midnight. This division is according to the Greek and Roman system of four night watches. The Hebrews formerly divided the night into three watches of about four hours each (Ex 14:24; Jg 7:19), but by the first century C.E., they had adopted the Roman system.—See study notes on Mt 14:25; Mr 13:35.

the third: That is, from midnight to about 3:00 a.m.—See study note on Mr 13:35.

12:42

steward: Or "house manager; house administrator." The Greek word *oi-ko-no'mos* refers to a person placed over servants, though he himself is a servant. In ancient times, such a position was often filled by a faithful slave who was placed in charge of his master's affairs. Therefore, it was a position of great trust. Abraham's servant "who was managing all [Abraham] had" was such a steward, or household manager. (Ge 24:2) This was also true of Joseph, as described at Ge 39:4. The "steward" in Jesus'

illustration is referred to in the singular, but this does not necessarily mean that the steward represented only one particular person. The Scriptures contain examples of a singular noun referring to a collective group, such as when Jehovah addressed the collective group of the Israelite nation and told them: “You are my witnesses [plural], . . . yes, my servant [singular] whom I have chosen.” (Isa 43:10) Similarly, this illustration refers to a composite steward. In the parallel illustration at Mt 24:45, this steward is called “the faithful and discreet slave.”

the discreet one: Or “the wise one.” The Greek adjective *phro'ni-mos* used here conveys the idea of understanding associated with insight, forethought, discernment, prudence, and wisdom in a practical sense. Luke uses a form of the same Greek word at Lu 16:8, where it is rendered “wiser in a practical way.” The same Greek word is used at Mt 7:24; 25:2, 4, 8, 9. The *Septuagint* uses this word at Ge 41:33, 39 regarding Joseph.

his body of attendants: Or “his household servants; his household staff.” Like the term “domestics” (Greek, *oi-ke-tei'a*), used at Mt 24:45, this term (Greek, *the-ra-pe'i'a*) refers to all individuals who serve in the master’s household. Luke uses a term common in classical Greek with the same general meaning as the term used by Matthew. Luke’s use of the term may reflect his education and background.

12:43

that slave: The steward mentioned in verse 42 is here referred to as a “slave.” (See study note on Lu 12:42.) If “that slave” is faithful, he will be rewarded. (Lu 12:44) In the parallel illustration at Mt 24:45-47, this steward is called “the faithful and discreet slave.”—See study note on Lu 12:45.

12:45

that slave: The slave mentioned here refers to the steward described at Lu 12:42. If “that slave” is faithful, he will be rewarded. (Lu 12:43, 44) On the other hand, if “that slave” is disloyal, he will be punished “with the greatest severity.” (Lu 12:46) Jesus’ words here are actually a warning directed to the faithful steward. Similarly, in the parallel illustration at Mt 24:45-51, when saying, “If ever that evil slave says in his heart,” Jesus is neither foretelling nor appointing an “evil slave” but is warning the faithful slave about what would happen if he were to start displaying the characteristics of an evil slave.

12:46

punish him with the greatest severity: Lit., “cut him in two.” This graphic expression is evidently not to be understood literally; rather, it conveys the idea of severe punishment.

12:49

to start a fire: Symbolically speaking, the coming of Jesus brought a fiery time to the Jews. Jesus started the fire by raising issues that caused heated controversy and resulted in the consuming of many false teachings and traditions. For example, contrary to the nationalistic expectations of the Jews, while the Messiah was on earth, he did not liberate literal Israel from Roman rule but he suffered a shameful death. By his zealous preaching, Jesus made God’s Kingdom the paramount issue before the people, thus sparking a heated controversy throughout the nation.—1Co 1:23.

12:59

your last small coin: Lit., “the last lepton.” The Greek word *le-pton* means something small and thin. A lepton was a coin that equaled 1/128 of a denarius and was apparently the smallest

copper or bronze coin used in Israel.—See Glossary, “Lepton,” and App. B14.

LUKE Study Notes—Chapter 13

13:4

on whom the tower in Siloam fell: To make his point, Jesus here draws from a recent tragedy or, at least, one that was still alive in common memory. The tower in Siloam was evidently near the pool of Siloam in the SE sector of Jerusalem.—See App. B12, map “Jerusalem and Surrounding Area.”

13:6

a fig tree planted in his vineyard: It was common to plant both fig and olive trees in vineyards. In that way, even if the vines suffered a bad year, the figs and olives might still yield some income.

13:7

three years: New trees grown from cuttings usually produce at least a few figs within two or three years. When Jesus gave this illustration, his ministry had lasted about three years, which is evidently parallel with the three years mentioned in the illustration. For some three years, Jesus had been trying to cultivate faith among the Jews. Yet, relatively few became disciples and could be considered the fruitage of his labor. Now, in the fourth year of his ministry, he intensifies his efforts. By preaching and teaching in Judea and Perea, it is as if Jesus were digging up the ground and putting fertilizer on the figurative fig tree, representing the Jewish nation. However, only a small number of Jews responded to his efforts, putting the nation as a whole in line for destruction.

13:11

a spirit of weakness: Or “a disabling spirit.” This evidently refers to a demon who was causing this woman’s disability. At Lu 13:16, Jesus speaks of her as being “held bound” by Satan.

13:19

mustard grain: Several kinds of mustard plants are found growing wild in Israel. Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*) is the variety commonly cultivated. The relatively small seed, 1 to 1.6 mm (0.039 to 0.063 in.) in diameter and weighing 1 mg (0.000035 oz), produces a treelike plant. Some varieties of the mustard plant attain a height of up to 4.5 m (15 ft). The mustard grain, called “the tiniest of all the seeds” at Mt 13:32 and Mr 4:31, was used in ancient Jewish writings as a figure of speech for the very smallest measure of size. Although there are smaller seeds known today, it was evidently the tiniest of seeds gathered and sown by Israelite farmers in Jesus’ day.

13:21

large measures: Or “seah measures.” A seah measure equaled 7.33 L (6.66 dry qt).—See Glossary, “Seah,” and App. B14.

13:23

are those being saved few?: One hotly debated topic among the Jewish religious leaders in ancient times was the number of those who would ultimately be saved. In later times, there even came to be some mystical sects who sought to determine the exact number by assigning numerical values to each letter in various sacred texts. While the question regarding God’s judgment is broad and speculative, Jesus’ answer pointed to the personal responsibility of each individual.

13:24

Exert yourselves vigorously: Or “Keep on struggling.” Jesus’ admonition emphasizes the need for taking whole-souled action in order to get in through the narrow door. For this context, various reference works have suggested such renderings as “Exert maximum effort; Make every effort.” The Greek verb *a-go-ni'zo-mai* is related to the Greek noun *a-gon'*, which was often used to refer to athletic contests. At Heb 12:1, this noun is used figuratively for the Christian “race” for life. It is also used in the more general sense of a “struggle” (Php 1:30; Col 2:1) or a “fight” (1Ti 6:12; 2Ti 4:7). Forms of the Greek verb used at Lu 13:24 are rendered “competing in a contest” (1Co 9:25), “exerting [oneself]” (Col 1:29; 4:12; 1Ti 4:10), and “fight” (1Ti 6:12). Because the background of this expression is connected with competition in the athletic games, some have suggested that the effort Jesus encouraged may be compared to an athlete’s exerting himself vigorously with all his power to win the prize, straining every nerve, as it were.

13:26

main streets: Or “broad streets.” The Greek term used here refers to the main streets of a city that broadened at central locations and that served as public squares. Such “main streets” were in contrast with the narrow and winding lanes that were typical of cities and towns in the first century.

13:28

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

13:29

from east and west and from north and south: By listing the four directions, Jesus embraces the whole earth. In other words, this privilege would be open to people from all nations.

recline at the table: Or “dine.” In Bible times, couches were often placed around a table at banquets or large meals. Those partaking of the meal reclined on a couch with their head toward the table, often resting their left elbow on a cushion. Food was usually taken with the right hand. To recline at a table with someone indicated close fellowship with that person. Jews at that time would normally never have done so with non-Jews.

13:31

Herod: That is, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great.—See Glossary.

13:32

that fox: This animal is well-known for its craftiness or slyness, and Jesus may have been alluding to those traits when he called Herod a fox. Some scholars feel that Jesus may have combined the concepts of slyness, weakness, and insignificance in calling Herod a fox. In Jewish literature, the fox was used metaphorically of relatively weak (compare Ne 4:3) but cunning and opportunistic men, in contrast with the powerful lion, which represented a confident ruler of power and greatness. (Compare Pr 28:1; Jer 50:17; Eze 32:2.) Such a view, if valid, would amount to calling Herod a cunning, self-important ruler who was insignificant in God’s eyes. Jesus was likely passing through Herod’s territory of Perea on his way to Jerusalem when the Pharisees told Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him. It may be that Herod started this rumor, slyly hoping to cause Jesus to flee out of the territory in fear. Herod seems to have been disturbed by Jesus and his ministry. Earlier, Herod had been manipulated by

his wife into executing John the Baptist, and he may have been afraid to kill another prophet of God.—Mt 14:1, 2; Mr 6:16.

today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will be finished:

Jesus' expression about time is not to be understood literally. Rather, he was indicating that little time remained before he would depart for Jerusalem, where he would die. His words may also show that the course of his Messianic ministry was set and would not be abbreviated, controlled, or altered by the political aims of any secular ruler.

13:33

it cannot be: Or "it is inconceivable (unthinkable)." While no Bible prophecy explicitly states that the Messiah would die in Jerusalem, this idea may be inferred from Da 9:24-26.

Additionally, it would be expected that if the Jews were to kill a prophet, and especially the Messiah, it would be in that city. The 71-member Sanhedrin, the high court, met in Jerusalem, so those accused of being false prophets would be tried there. Jesus may also have had in mind that Jerusalem was where the regular sacrifices were offered to God and where the Passover lamb was slaughtered. As things worked out, Jesus' words came true. He was brought before the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and condemned. And it was in Jerusalem, just beyond the city walls, that he died as the "Passover lamb."—1Co 5:7.

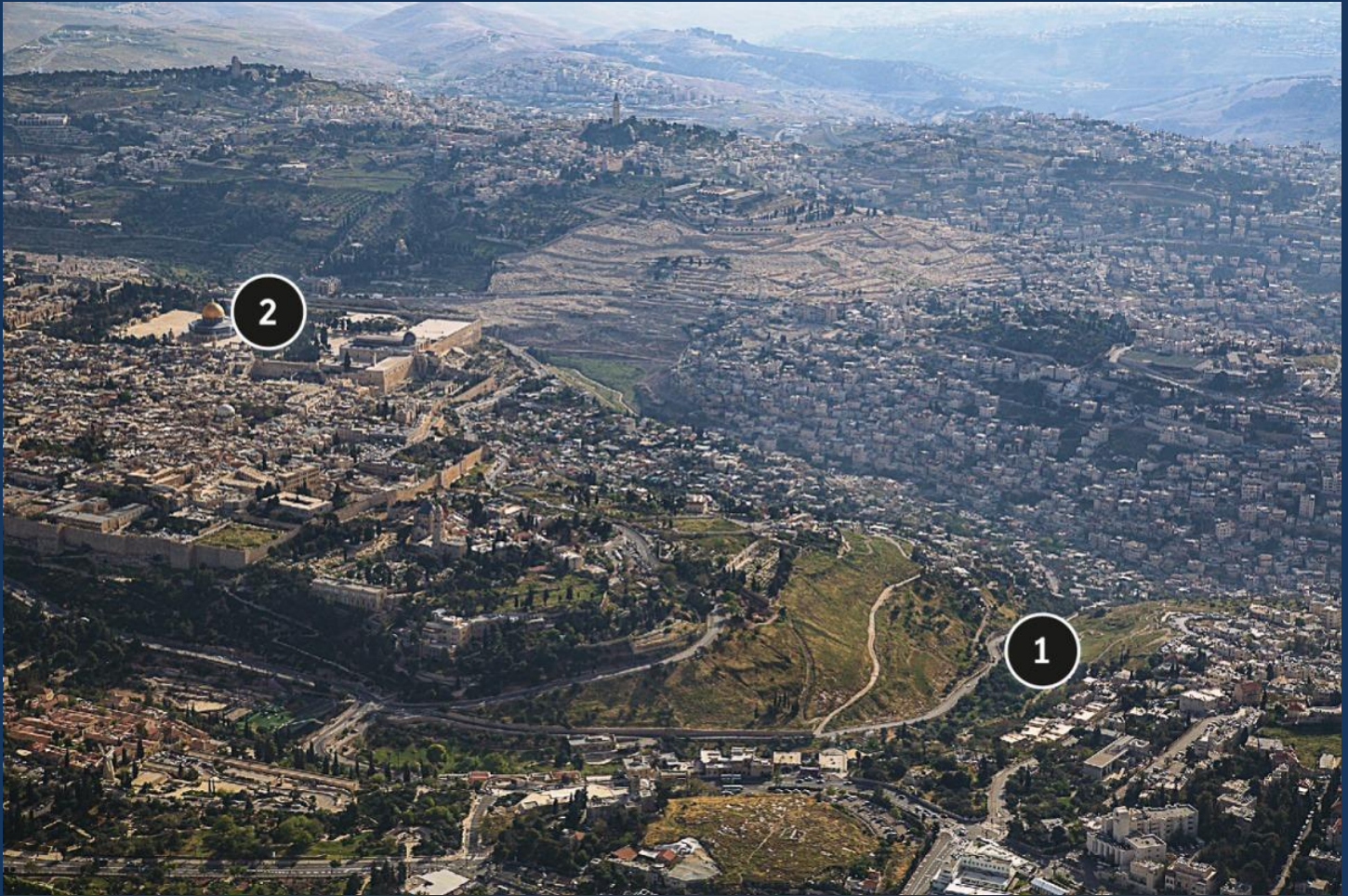
13:34

Jerusalem, Jerusalem: According to Mt 23:37, Jesus made a very similar statement in Jerusalem on Nisan 11 during the last week of his earthly ministry. Here, however, reference is made to an earlier occasion when Jesus was in Perea.—See App. A7.

13:35

house: That is, the temple.

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.



Modern-Day Valley of Hinnom

The Valley of Hinnom (1), called Gehenna in the Christian Greek Scriptures. The Temple Mount (2). The first-century Jewish temple complex was located here. The most prominent present-day structure on the temple mount is the Muslim shrine known as the Dome of the Rock.—See map in Appendix B-12.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 5:22; Mt 23:15; Mr 9:43; Lu 12:5



Raven

The raven is the first bird specifically named in the Bible. (Ge 8:7) It is a powerful flier and is considered to be one of the most adaptable and resourceful of all birds. When teaching Job a lesson regarding the wisdom reflected in creation, Jehovah said that He “prepares food for the raven.” (Job 38:41) The psalmist indicated that Jehovah kindly provides the food brought by parent ravens to quiet the cries of their hungry young. (Ps 147:9) Jesus referred to the ravens in a similar way to assure his followers that the One caring for such birds would surely provide for the needs of His human servants. According to the Law covenant, ravens were unclean, not fit to be eaten. (Le 11:13, 15) Since God provides for unclean ravens, we can be certain that he will never forsake people who trust in him.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 12:24



Lilies of the Field

Jesus encouraged his disciples to “consider how the lilies grow” and to “take a lesson” from them. The original-language word often rendered “lilies” in Bible translations may have embraced a great variety of flowers, such as tulips, anemones, hyacinths, irises, and gladiolus. Some scholars suggest that Jesus probably had the anemone in mind. However, Jesus may simply have been referring to lilylike flowers in general. Shown here are scarlet crown anemones (*Anemone coronaria*). These flowers are common in Israel and can also be found in blue, pink, purple, or white.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 6:28-30; Lu 12:27, 28



Coin Made by Herod Antipas

These photos show both sides of a copper alloy coin that was minted about the time that Jesus was engaged in his ministry. The coin was commissioned by Herod Antipas, who was tetrarch, or district ruler, of Galilee and Perea. Jesus was likely passing through Herod's territory of Perea on his way to Jerusalem when the Pharisees told Jesus that Herod wanted to kill him. Jesus responded by calling Herod "that fox." (See study note on Lu 13:32.) Since most of Herod's subjects were Jewish, the coins he made depicted such emblems as a palm branch (1) and a wreath (2), images that would not offend the Jews.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 14:3; Mr 8:15; Lu 3:1; Lu 9:7; Lu 13:31, 32



A Hen Gathering Her Chicks

Jesus painted a touching word picture, likening his concern for the people of Jerusalem to the protectiveness of a hen that is sheltering her young with her wings. This illustration, as well as Jesus' reference to a son who asks his father for an egg (Lu 11:11, 12), indicates that the domestic hen was common in first-century Israel. Though the Greek word *or'nis*, used at Mt 23:37 and Lu 13:34, could refer to any bird, wild or domesticated, in this context it is understood to refer to a hen, the most common and useful of the domestic fowl.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 23:37; Lu 13:34

- Song 4 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 12:6—Even small birds are not forgotten by God (*nwtsty* study note)
 Lu 12:7—Jehovah’s intimate knowledge of us reveals his keen interest in us (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 12:7—Jehovah values each one of us (*cl* 241 ¶4-5)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 13:24—What does Jesus’ admonition mean? (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 13:33—Why did Jesus make this statement? (*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) Lu 12:22-40

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *Jvs* 214-215 ¶4-5

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 116
- **Isolated but Not Forgotten:** (15 min.) Play the video (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES). Afterward, discuss the following questions:
 What challenging situations have the three publishers experienced?

How has Jehovah demonstrated that he has not forgotten them?

How have the publishers continued to serve Jehovah despite their challenges, and how has this encouraged others?


How can you show love to those who are elderly or infirm in your congregation?

- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 30
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 5 and Prayer

LUKE 12-13 | “You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”

12:6, 7

What is the context of Jesus’ words at Luke 12:6, 7? In verse 4, we read that Jesus told his followers not to be afraid of those who may oppose them or who may even kill them. Jesus was preparing his disciples for the opposition that they would later face. He assured them that Jehovah valued each of His servants and that He would not allow permanent harm to come to them.

 How can we imitate Jehovah’s concern for those who are being persecuted?

Where can we find updated information on Jehovah’s Witnesses who are imprisoned for their faith?

Currently, _____ brothers and sisters are imprisoned.





Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: How can couples build a strong marriage?

Scripture: Eph 5:33

Link: How can parents raise responsible children?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: How can parents raise responsible children?

Scripture: Pr 22:6

Link: How can young people avoid problems?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: How can young people avoid problems?

Scripture: Pr 4:5, 6

Link: Where can we find wisdom for everyday life?

Bible compares the Devil to “a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Peter 5:8) Satan wants to destroy our relationship with Jehovah.—Psalm 7:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:12.

4 But we do not need to be afraid of Satan and his demons. Jehovah has limited what they can do to us. Jehovah promises that “a great crowd” of true Christians will survive “the great tribulation.” (Rev-

4, 5. (a) What is Satan unable to do? (b) What does it mean to “oppose the Devil”?

Satan is angry when we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah



elation 7:9, 14) There is nothing the Devil can do to stop that from happening, because Jehovah is protecting His people.

⁵ If we stay close to Jehovah, Satan cannot break our relationship with Him. God's Word assures us: "Jehovah is with you as long as you remain with him." (2 Chronicles 15:2; **read 1 Corinthians 10:13.**) Many faithful men and women of old, such as Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, and Moses, opposed the Devil by staying close to Jehovah. (Hebrews 11:4-40) We can do the same. God's Word promises: "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." —James 4:7.

"WE HAVE A STRUGGLE"

⁶ Even though Satan knows that Jehovah has restricted what he can do to us, he will still try anything to weaken our relationship with God. Today, the Devil attacks in many different ways, and he uses strategies he has used for thousands of years. What are some of these?

⁷ The apostle John wrote: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Satan has this wicked world under his control and would like to control Jehovah's people too. (Micah 4:1; John 15:19; Revelation 12:12, 17) The Devil knows that he does not have much time left, so he is putting intense pressure on each one of us to be disloyal to God. Sometimes the Devil uses

6. How does Satan attack us?

7. Why is Satan attacking Jehovah's people?

1. We praise you, Jehovah, deep from our hearts,
For in your Word we find
Your power supreme, your wisdom so great,
And yet you are loving and kind.
2. Your Son still invites those bruised by the world
To leave their cares behind.
How kindly his yoke, how tender his heart,
He's always refreshing and kind.
3. We see in our God and Jesus our Lord,
The persons we should be.
The power of kindness we can possess.
With kindness, how strong we can be!

- Song 4 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”:** (10 min.)
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

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LUKE 12-13 | “You Are Worth More Than Many Sparrows”

12:6, 7

What is the context of Jesus’ words at Luke 12:6, 7? In verse 4, we read that Jesus told his followers not to be afraid of those who may oppose them or who may even kill them. Jesus was preparing his disciples for the opposition that they would later face. He assured them that Jehovah valued each of His servants and that He would not allow permanent harm to come to them.

 How can we imitate Jehovah’s concern for those who are being persecuted?

Where can we find updated information on Jehovah’s Witnesses who are imprisoned for their faith?

Currently, _____ brothers and sisters are imprisoned.



Isolated but Not Forgotten

Bro. Jackson: As Second Corinthians 6 verse 13 says it's good for us to "open our hearts wide" or widen out in our affections for our brothers and sisters. We really need one another, especially in these difficult times.

In no way do we want our love for our brothers to be restricted somehow. There are many ways that we can display this aspect of our Christian personality. One way is by assisting those in our congregations who perhaps are housebound.

The following experiences will highlight how being shown loving kindness has proven to some that, although they're isolated, they are not forgotten.

[Ambulance – Hospital]

[Music]

Fernando: My friends and I decided to go swimming in a lake. But when I dove in I ended up hitting my head at the bottom of the lake. I hurt my fourth and fifth vertebra and ended up becoming a tetraplegic.

[Marli at Home]

Marli: In July 1989 I suffered a stroke and my life changed completely. I was a normal person but with the stroke came its after-effects. I can't get around without help.

[Brother Saravalle in Hospital Bed at Home]

Daughter 1: In 2009 my dad started to notice muscle weakness. After going to a few orthopaedic doctors, because he thought it might be an orthopaedic issue, like a back problem or not walking correctly. He was finally referred to a neurologist. After two long years researching his illness the neurologist diagnosed him with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS.

Daughter 2: I found out about the diagnosis along with the rest of my family, and it was devastating to learn that his illness is progressive, degenerative and ultimately fatal.

[Music]

Isolated but Not Forgotten

Fernando: Jehovah doesn't forget what we do for him and I feel that Jehovah is always present in my life. Right now, I have some privileges in the congregation. I'm a ministerial servant and I've received a few assignments.

Brother: The brothers are really encouraged by Fernando because, even though he faces some difficulties, he makes an effort to attend the meetings and give talks. A brother made a stand for Fernando's computer so that even lying in his bed he can access jw.org. He can also do his research and various other jobs to fill his time. A tablet holder was also made for him to use with his wheelchair.

Fernando: So, I feel really grateful for the brothers help. They're always interested in knowing how I am. They're always trying to help me when I need it. They don't just say they'll help but they try to live up to their promises.

Marli: We start to feel Jehovah's presence and his help and it's really worth having this hope.

Brother: The various challenges and problems Marli faces in her life she has all the reasons in the world to feel sorry for herself but she doesn't she helps others in a practical way, especially the young ones.

Young Sister: I didn't know how to do telephone witnessing, I'd never done it before but Marli taught me how to witness over the phone. She was able to help me learn a new type of witnessing.

Marli: It was very difficult for me to attend the meetings. So, the congregation set up an internet connection, and it's been a gift from Jehovah. So, I'm able to watch the meetings at the computer.

Daughter 1: Jehovah is extremely good he really cares for us he is the God of all comfort and in all this time Jehovah has never stopped helping my family.

Brother: Bro. Miru is still an active publisher in the congregation. He continues to witness to his nurses. How does he do it? Every month his wife receives the publication's, shows him all the articles, and, then, during the week, he talks to the nurses. To be honest he listens to their problems. So how does he manage to witness to them? He blinks at his wife and he remembers the subject that he had discussed with the nurse and he blinks to point out which

Isolated but Not Forgotten

publication should be given to the nurse. At the end of the month his wife writes down how much time was spent talking and which publication was left. We've also made arrangements to record the meetings and take them to Miru.

Daughter 1: Jehovah gives us strength by means of our brothers and sisters, by means of friends who know about our struggles.

Daughter 2: The brothers in the congregation got together and did small repair jobs around the house so as to improve his quality of life. At that point he was still able to speak, and very lucid, and he was really grateful of her for these arrangements made by the brothers in the congregation. Loving brothers were willing to spend weeks helping out around the house.

[Music]

[Quote]: 1 John 3: 18 “Little children, we should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.”

Fernando: Sometimes I feel isolated, but not forgotten.

Daughter 1: It's worth putting up with everything we face.

Daughter 2: We have a wonderful hope which is something we should never forget, and we feel like Jehovah literally carries us in his arms.

[Music]

[Brother Saravalle fell asleep in death after this video was completed]

[Music]

30

JESUS' RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS FATHER

JOHN 5:17-47

- GOD IS JESUS' FATHER
 - RESURRECTION PROMISED
-

When some Jews accuse Jesus of breaking the Sabbath by healing a man, Jesus replies: “My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.” —John 5:17.

No, what Jesus is doing is not forbidden by God's law regarding the Sabbath. His work of preaching and healing is in imitation of God's good works. So Jesus keeps on doing good every day. His reply to his accusers, however, makes them even angrier than they were before, and they seek to kill Jesus. Why this reaction?

In addition to their having the mistaken view that Jesus is breaking the Sabbath by healing people, they take great offense at his saying that he is God's Son. They consider it blasphemy for him to view



God as his Father, as if Jesus' saying that Jehovah is his Father amounts to making himself equal to God. However, Jesus is unafraid and answers them further regarding his special relationship with God. "The Father has affection for the Son," he says, "and shows him all the things he himself does." —John 5:20.

The Father is the Life-Giver, and he has shown this in the past by empowering men to resurrect individuals. Jesus continues: "Just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive, so the Son also makes alive whomever he wants to." (John 5:21) What a meaningful statement, giving hope for the future! Even now, the Son is raising the dead in a spiritual sense. Hence, Jesus says: "Whoever hears my word and believes the One who sent me has everlasting life, and he does not come into judgment but has passed over from death to life." —John 5:24.

There is no record that Jesus has as yet raised anyone who was actually dead back to life, but he tells his accusers that such literal resurrections will occur. "The hour is coming," he says, "in which all

those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.”—John 5:28, 29.

As extraordinary as Jesus’ role is, he makes it clear that he is subordinate to God, stating: “I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative. . . . I seek, not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.” (John 5:30) However, Jesus describes his own vital role in God’s purpose, which he has not up to this time done in such a public way. But those accusing Jesus have more than his witness about these things. “You have sent men to John [the Baptist],” Jesus reminds them, “and he has borne witness to the truth.”—John 5:33.

Jesus’ accusers might well have heard that about two years earlier, John had told Jewish religious leaders about the One coming after him—who was termed “the Prophet” and “the Christ.” (John 1:20-25) Reminding his accusers of their once high regard for the now imprisoned John, Jesus says: “For a short time you were willing to rejoice greatly in his light.” (John 5:35) Yet he provides an even greater witness than John the Baptist.

“These works that I am doing [including the healing that he had just performed] bear witness that the Father sent me.” Besides that, Jesus continues: “The Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.” (John 5:36, 37) For example, God bore witness about Jesus at his baptism.—Matthew 3:17.

Really, those accusing Jesus have no excuse for rejecting him. The Scriptures that they claim to be searching testify about him. “If you believed Moses, you would believe me,” Jesus concludes, “for he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe what I say?”—John 5:46, 47.

- ◇ Why is it not a violation of the Sabbath for Jesus to do good works on that day?
- ◇ How does Jesus describe his vital role in God’s purpose?
- ◇ What witnesses provide proof that Jesus is God’s Son?

5

God's Wondrous Works

(Psalm 139)

1. O God, you know my rest and waking,
When I lie down and when I rise anew.
You search my thoughts, my inmost inclination,
The words I speak, the ways I walk,
you know them too.
You saw when I was made in secret,
My very bones not hidden from your sight.
You saw my form; its parts were down in writing.
I love the wonder of your ways
and praise your might.
Your knowledge, God, is wondrous, awe-inspiring;
Of this my soul is very well-aware.
If I should fear that darkness might enfold me,
Your spirit, God, would find me, even there.
Where could I hide from you, Jehovah,
Or be concealed, be hidden from your face?
Not in the Grave nor in the highest heaven,
Not in the dark nor in the sea;
there is no place.

MAY 2018

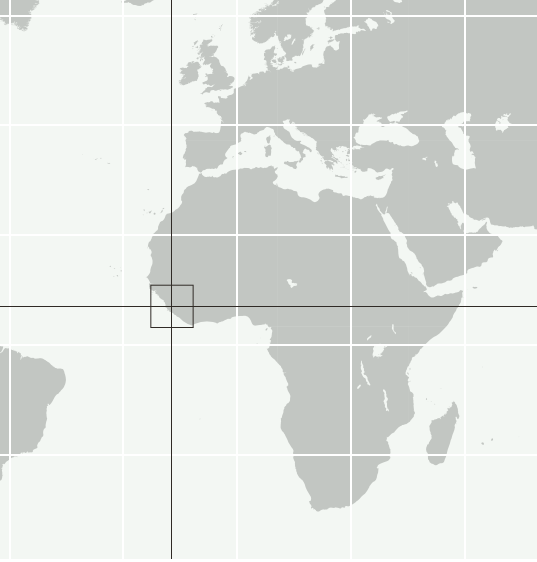
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 9–AUGUST 5, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

SIERRA LEONE

Two pioneers offer a tract to a passerby in the capital, Freetown, during the country's long rainy season

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50 LIFE STORY

A Poor Start—A Rich Ending

150 *Seek God for Your Deliverance*

(Zephaniah 2:3)

1. Nations align as one,
 Opposing Jehovah's Son.
Their time of human rulership
 By God's decree now is done.
Rulers have had their day;
 God's Kingdom is here to stay.
Soon Christ will crush earthly enemies.
 No more will there be delay.

(CHORUS)

*Seek God for your deliverance,
 Yes, look to him with confidence.
Seek his righteousness,
 Show your faithfulness,
For his sov'reignty, take your stand.
 Then see our God deliver you
By his mighty hand.*

2. People on earth now choose,
 Responding to this good news.
We offer to all men the choice
 To hear or proudly refuse.
Trials, although severe,
 Need not fill our hearts with fear.
Jehovah cares for his loyal ones;
 Our cries for help he will hear.

(Chorus)

(See also 1 Sam. 2:9; Ps. 2:2, 3, 9; Prov. 2:8; Matt. 6:33.)



Know Your Enemy

“We are not ignorant of [Satan’s] schemes.”—2 COR. 2:11, ftn.

ADAM no doubt knew that serpents cannot talk. So he may have surmised that a spirit creature had spoken with Eve through the serpent. (Gen. 3: 1-6) Adam and Eve knew virtually nothing about this spirit. Even so, Adam made a conscious choice to turn his back on his

1. In Eden, what did Jehovah reveal about our enemy?

SONGS:
150, 32

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is the extent of Satan’s influence?

How does Satan try to influence individuals?

What did you learn about our enemy?

loving heavenly Father and join this stranger in resisting God's will. (1 Tim. 2:14) Immediately, Jehovah began to reveal information about this enemy who had corrupted Adam and Eve, promising that this wicked one would eventually be destroyed. But Jehovah also warned that for a time, the spirit creature who spoke through the serpent would have the power to oppose those who love God. —Gen. 3:15.

² In his wisdom, Jehovah has never told us the personal name of the angelic son who rebelled against him.* And God chose not to reveal even the descriptive name of that enemy until some 2,500 years after the initial rebellion. (Job 1:6) In fact, only three books of the Hebrew Scriptures, 1 Chronicles, Job, and Zechariah, mention Satan, which means “Resister.” Why was little said about our enemy prior to the arrival of the Messiah?

³ Apparently, Jehovah did not want to give Satan

* The Bible reveals that at least some angels have personal names. (Judg. 13:18; Dan. 8:16; Luke 1:19; Rev. 12:7) Since Jehovah has named each of the stars (Ps. 147:4), it is reasonable to assume that all of his angelic sons, including the one who became Satan, also have personal names.

2, 3. Why, apparently, was little said about Satan before the Messiah arrived?

undue prominence by devoting large portions of the Hebrew Scriptures to discussing him and his activity. Jehovah's primary purpose for inspiring that section of the Scriptures was to identify the Messiah and lead God's people to him. (Luke 24:44; Gal. 3:24) When that was accomplished and the Messiah arrived, Jehovah used him and his disciples to reveal much of what we know about Satan and the angels who joined him.* That is fitting, since it is Jesus and his anointed co-rulers whom Jehovah will use to crush Satan and his followers.—Rom. 16:20; Rev. 17:14; 20:10.

⁴ The apostle Peter describes Satan the Devil as “a roaring lion,” and John calls him a “serpent” and a “dragon.” (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:9) But there is no need to be overly anxious about the Devil—his power is limited. (Read James 4:7.) We are backed by Jehovah, Jesus, and the faithful angels. With their help, we can resist our enemy. Still, we need to know the answers to three key questions: What is the extent of Satan's influence? How does he try to exert that influence on individuals? And what

* Satan is mentioned by that name only 18 times in the Hebrew Scriptures but more than 30 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures.

4. Why should we not be overly anxious about the Devil?

are the limits of his power? As we discuss these questions, we will also consider the lessons we can learn.

WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF SATAN'S INFLUENCE?

⁵ A significant number of angels joined Satan's rebellion. Prior to the Flood, Satan lured at least some of them into having immoral relations with the daughters of men. The Bible reveals this truth by symbolically portraying the dragon as dragging a third of the stars of heaven with him in his fall. (Gen. 6:1-4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:3, 4) When those angels abandoned God's family, they put themselves under Satan's control. These rebels, however, are not just a mob of troublemakers. Satan has set up an imitation of God's Kingdom, with himself as king. In the invisible realm, Satan has organized the demons into governments, given them authority, and made them world rulers.—Eph. 6:12.

⁶ By means of his spirit organization, Satan exerts authority over all human governments. That fact was made plain when Satan showed Jesus “all the kingdoms of the inhabited earth” and said: “I

5, 6. Why can human governments not bring about the changes mankind needs most?

will give you all this authority and their glory, because it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish.” (Luke 4:5, 6) Despite Satan’s evil influence, many governments do a measure of good for their citizens. And individual rulers may have noble intentions. But no human government or individual ruler is capable of bringing about the changes mankind needs most.—Ps. 146:3, 4; Rev. 12:12.

⁷ Satan and the demons use not only governments but also false religion and the commercial system to mislead “the *entire* inhabited earth.” (Rev. 12:9) Through false religion, Satan promotes lies about Jehovah. In addition, the Devil seems determined to make as many people as possible forget God’s name. (Jer. 23:26, 27) As a result, sincere individuals who think that they are worshipping God are deceived into worshipping demons. (1 Cor. 10:20; 2 Cor. 11:13-15) Satan also promotes lies through the commercial system. For example, this system often teaches people that the best way to be happy is to pursue money and gather many possessions. (Prov. 18:11) Those who believe this lie spend their lives serving “Riches”

7. How does Satan use not only governments but also false religion and the commercial system? (See opening picture.)

rather than God. (Matt. 6:24) Eventually, their love of material things can choke any love they had for God.—Matt. 13:22; 1 John 2:15, 16.

⁸ The examples of Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angels teach us at least two important lessons. First, there are only two sides, and we must choose one. Either we remain loyal to Jehovah or we place ourselves in Satan's camp. (Matt. 7:13) Second, those who join Satan receive only limited benefits. Adam and Eve got the opportunity to set their own standards of good and bad, and the demons attained a measure of influence over human governments. (Gen. 3:22) However, the costs *always* outweigh any seeming benefits that Satan may offer.—Job 21:7-17; Gal. 6:7, 8.

⁹ What advantage do we gain from knowing the extent of Satan's influence? It helps us keep a balanced view of secular authorities and motivates us in our witnessing work. We understand that Jehovah wants us to respect governmental authorities. (1 Pet. 2:17) And he expects us to obey the laws of human governments as long as those laws do not conflict with his standards. (Rom. 13:1-4) But we

8, 9. (a) What two lessons may we learn from the accounts about Adam, Eve, and the rebellious angels? (b) What advantage do we gain from knowing the extent of Satan's influence?

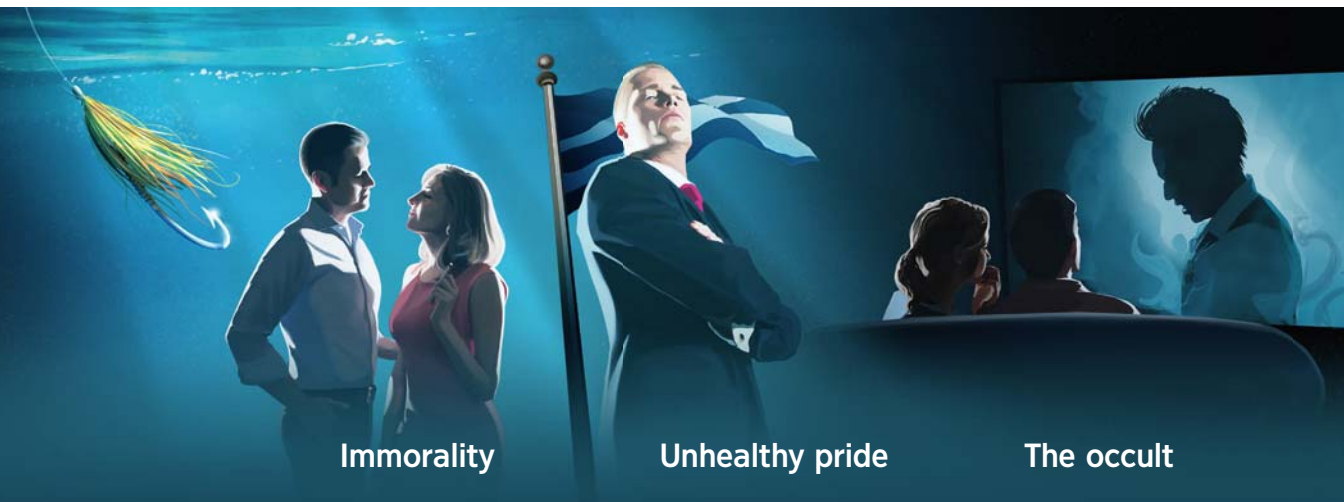
realize that we must remain neutral, never favoring one political party or human leader over another. (John 17:15, 16; 18:36) Because we see what Satan is trying to do to Jehovah's name and reputation, we feel more compelled to teach others the truth about our God. We proudly bear and use his name, knowing that loving him is far more rewarding than loving money or things.—Isa. 43:10; 1 Tim. 6:6-10.

HOW DOES SATAN TRY TO INFLUENCE INDIVIDUALS?

¹⁰ Satan uses effective methods to influence individuals. For example, he uses bait to lure them into doing things his way. Also, he attempts to bully them into submission.

¹¹ Consider how effective Satan was in using bait to trap a large number of his angelic brothers. He must have studied them for a considerable time before luring them into taking sides with him. When at least some of these angels took the bait and had immoral relations with women, they produced a hybrid race that dominated mankind. (Gen. 6:1-4) Perhaps Satan tempted the disloyal angels not only

10-12. (a) How may Satan have used bait to trap his angelic brothers? (b) What lessons do we learn from the fall of many angels?



SATAN TRIES TO LURE US

(See paragraphs 12, 13)

with the opportunity for immoral sex but also with the promise of seizing power over mankind. His purpose may have been to disrupt the arrival of the promised ‘offspring of the woman.’ (Gen. 3:15) In any case, Jehovah ended all such plots by bringing the Flood—a move that thwarted the efforts of Satan and the rebellious angels at that time.

¹² What lessons can we learn from this incident? Never underestimate the lure of immorality or the danger of egotism. For aeons, the angels who joined Satan served in the very presence of God. Yet, even in such a good environment, many allowed bad desires to take root and grow. Similarly,



Governmental
bans

Pressure from
schoolmates

Opposition from
family

SATAN TRIES TO BULLY US
(See paragraph 14)

we may have served for decades in the earthly part of God’s organization. Yet, even in this spiritually clean environment, unclean desires can take root. (1 Cor. 10:12) How important it is that we constantly search our heart, reject immoral thoughts, and suppress unhealthy pride!—Gal. 5:26; read **Colossians 3:5**.

¹³ Another effective bait that Satan uses is curiosity about the occult. Today, he promotes interest in the demons not only through false religion

13. What is another effective bait that Satan uses, and how can we avoid it?

but also through the entertainment industry. Movies, electronic games, and other media make spiritism seem exciting. How can we avoid being caught in this trap? We should not expect God's organization to supply a list of acceptable and unacceptable entertainment. Each of us needs to train his own conscience to be in harmony with God's standards. (Heb. 5:14) However, we will make wise choices if we apply the apostle Paul's inspired counsel to let our love for God "be without hypocrisy." (Rom. 12:9) We could ask ourselves: 'Will my choice of entertainment make me seem hypocritical? If my Bible students or return visits saw the entertainment I choose, would they think that I practice what I preach?' The more our speech and actions harmonize, the less likely we are to be caught in Satan's snares.—1 John 3:18.

¹⁴ In addition to offering bait, Satan tries to bully us into compromising our loyalty to Jehovah. For example, he can maneuver governments into banning our preaching work. Or he can prompt our associates at work or in school to mock us because of our desire to live by the Bible's moral standards. (1 Pet. 4:4) He might also influence

14. How might Satan try to bully us, and how can we cope?

well-meaning family members to discourage us from attending meetings. (Matt. 10:36) How can we cope? First, we must expect this kind of direct assault—Satan is at war with us. (Rev. 2:10; 12:17) Then, we need to see the bigger issue behind such incidents—Satan claims that we serve Jehovah only when it is convenient. He says that if we are pressured, we will turn our back on God. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4, 5) Finally, we have to rely on Jehovah for strength to face the issue. Remember, he will never abandon us.—Heb. 13:5.

WHAT ARE THE LIMITS OF SATAN'S POWER?

¹⁵ Satan cannot force people to act against their own will. (Jas. 1:14) Out of ignorance, many work in harmony with Satan's purpose. But after they learn the truth, each one makes a choice as to whom he or she will serve. (Acts 3:17; 17:30) If we are resolved to do God's will, there is nothing Satan can do to break our integrity.—Job 2:3; 27:5.

¹⁶ Satan and the demons have other limitations. For example, nowhere do the Scriptures indicate that they can read the mind or heart of an

15. Can Satan force us to act against our own will? Explain.

16, 17. (a) What other limitations do Satan and the demons have?
(b) Why should we not fear to pray out loud to Jehovah?

individual. Only Jehovah and Jesus are spoken of as having that ability. (1 Sam. 16:7; Mark 2:8) What, though, about speaking or praying out loud? Should we fear that the Devil or the demons might hear our prayers and interfere? The answer is no. Why not? We are not afraid to do good works in Jehovah's service just because the Devil might see us. Likewise, we should not be afraid to pray out loud just because the Devil might hear us. In fact, the Bible contains many examples of God's servants who prayed out loud, and there is no hint that these ones feared that the Devil would hear them. (1 Ki. 8:22, 23; John 11:41, 42; Acts 4:23, 24) If we do our best to speak and act in harmony with God's will, we can be confident that Jehovah will not allow the Devil to do us any lasting harm. —Read Psalm 34:7.

¹⁷ We need to know our enemy, but we do not need to be terrified by him. With Jehovah's backing, even imperfect humans can conquer Satan. (1 John 2:14) If we oppose him, he will flee from us. (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9) Young ones seem to be a special target for Satan. What, specifically, can they do to stand firm against the Devil? The next article considers that question.

Take Sides With Jehovah!

(Exodus 32:26)

1. Once with confusion our sad hearts were filled,
Drinking the cup false religion distilled;
But with what happiness our hearts were thrilled
When of God's Kingdom we heard.

(CHORUS)

*Take sides with Jehovah; Make him your delight.
He'll never forsake you; Walk on in his light.
Tell, tell the glad tidings Of freedom and peace.
His rule by Christ Jesus Will ever increase.*

2. Shoulder to shoulder we stand on God's side,
Preaching the news of his Kingdom earth wide.
Now is the time for each one to decide,
Time to take sides with our God.

(Chorus)

3. We will not fear what the Devil can do.
Trusting Jehovah will carry us through.
Though they are many and though we are few,
God is our strength and our might.

(Chorus)

