

- Song 132 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“A Wife for Isaac”:** (10 min.)
 Ge 24:2-4—Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac among those who worshipped Jehovah (wp16.3 14 ¶3)
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GENESIS 24 | A Wife for Isaac



24:2-4, 11-15, 58, 67

Abraham’s servant sought Jehovah’s direction when choosing a wife for Isaac. (Ge 24:42-44) We too should seek Jehovah’s direction before making major decisions. How?

- Pray
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- Seek help from spiritually mature Christians

1. This is at last bone of my bone,
Flesh of my flesh; now I'm not alone.
God has provided a partner,
Someone to call my own.

Now we are one; now there can be
Blessings to share for you and for me.
As man and woman together,
We are a family.

Ev'ry day we'll serve our God above.
As he shows the way,
Unfailing love we'll display.

As we have vowed, so may it be.
Seasons of joy, may we come to see.
Oh, may we honor Jehovah,
And may you always be my love.

Genesis 24

24 Abraham was now old, advanced in years, and Jehovah had blessed Abraham in everything. ² Abraham said to his servant, the oldest one of his household, who was managing all he had: “Please put your hand under my thigh, ³ and I will make you swear by Jehovah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Ca'naan-ites, among whom I am dwelling. ⁴ You must go instead to my country and to my relatives and take a wife for my son, for Isaac.”

⁵ However, the servant said to him: “What if the woman is not willing to come with me to this land? Must I then return your son to the land from which you came?” ⁶ At this Abraham said to him: “See that you do not take my son there. ⁷ Jehovah the God of the heavens, who took me from my father's house and from the land of my relatives and who spoke with me and swore to me: ‘To your offspring I am going to give this land,’ he will send his angel ahead of you, and you will certainly take a wife for my son from there. ⁸ But if the woman is unwilling to come with you, you will be free from this oath. But you must not take my son there.” ⁹ With that the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master and swore to him concerning this matter.

¹⁰ So the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, taking along all sorts of good things from his

master. Then he went on his way to Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a, to the city of Na'hor. ¹¹ He had the camels kneel down at a well of water outside the city. It was about evening, the time when the women would go out to draw water. ¹² Then he said: "Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success this day, and show your loyal love to my master Abraham. ¹³ Here I am standing at a spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. ¹⁴ May it happen that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your water jar so that I may take a drink,' and who replies, 'Take a drink, and I will also water your camels,' let this be the one you choose for your servant Isaac; and by this let me know that you have shown your loyal love to my master."

¹⁵ Even before he finished speaking, Re-bek'ah, who was the daughter of Be-thu'el the son of Mil'cah the wife of Na'hor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder. ¹⁶ Now the young woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had had sexual relations with her. She went down to the spring, filled her water jar, and then came back up. ¹⁷ At once the servant ran to meet her and said: "Please give me a little sip of water from your jar." ¹⁸ In turn she said: "Drink, my lord." With that she quickly lowered her jar upon her hand and gave him a drink. ¹⁹ When she finished giving him a drink, she said: "I will also draw water for your camels until they are done drinking." ²⁰ So she quickly emptied her jar into the drinking trough and ran again and again to the

well to draw water, and she kept drawing water for all his camels. ²¹ The whole time the man silently stared at her in amazement, wondering whether Jehovah had made his trip successful or not.

²² When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out for her a gold nose ring weighing a half shekel and two bracelets of gold weighing ten shekels, ²³ and he said: "Please tell me, whose daughter are you? Is there any room at your father's house for us to spend the night?" ²⁴ At that she said to him: "I am the daughter of Be-thu'el the son of Mil'cah, whom she bore to Na'hor." ²⁵ And she added: "We have both straw and much fodder and also a place to spend the night." ²⁶ Then the man bowed down and prostrated himself before Jehovah ²⁷ and said: "May Jehovah be praised, the God of my master Abraham, for he has not abandoned his loyal love and his faithfulness toward my master. Jehovah has guided me to the house of the brothers of my master."

²⁸ And the young woman ran to tell her mother's household about these things. ²⁹ Now Re-bek'ah had a brother whose name was La'ban. So La'ban ran to the man who was outside at the spring. ³⁰ When he saw the nose ring and the bracelets on the hands of his sister and heard the words of his sister Re-bek'ah, who was saying, "This is the way the man spoke to me," he came to meet the man, who was still there standing by the camels at the spring. ³¹ At once he said: "Come, you who are blessed by Jehovah. Why do you

keep standing out here? I have made the house ready and a place for the camels.”³² With that the man came into the house, and he unharnessed the camels and gave straw and fodder to the camels and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him.³³ However, when something to eat was set before him, he said: “I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say.” So La'ban said: “Speak!”

³⁴ Then he said: “I am Abraham’s servant.”³⁵ And Jehovah has blessed my master very much, and he has made him very wealthy by giving him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys.

³⁶ Further, Sarah the wife of my master bore a son to my master after she grew old, and he will give him everything he has.³⁷ So my master made me swear, saying: ‘You must not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Ca'naan-ites, in whose land I am dwelling.’³⁸ No, but you will go to the house of my father and to my family, and you must take a wife for my son.’³⁹ But I said to my master: ‘What if the woman is unwilling to come with me?’⁴⁰ He said to me: ‘Jehovah, before whom I have walked, will send his angel with you and will certainly give success to your journey, and you must take a wife for my son from my family and from the house of my father.’⁴¹ You will be released from your oath to me if you go to my family and they will not give her to you. This will release you from your oath.’

⁴² “When I got to the spring today, I said: ‘Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, if you will make my journey

successful, ⁴³ here I am standing at a spring. What must take place is that when a young woman comes out to draw water, I will say, "Please, let me drink a little water from your jar," ⁴⁴ and she will say to me, "You take a drink, and I will also draw water for your camels." Let that woman be the one whom Jehovah has chosen for the son of my master.'

⁴⁵ "Before I was finished speaking in my heart, there was Re-bek'ah coming out with her jar on her shoulder, and she made her way down to the spring and began to draw water. Then I said to her: 'Give me a drink, please.'⁴⁶ So she quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said: 'Take a drink, and I will also water your camels.' Then I took a drink, and she also watered the camels. ⁴⁷ After that I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?' to which she replied, 'The daughter of Be-thu'el the son of Na'hor, whom Mil'cah bore to him.' So I put the ring on her nose and the bracelets on her hands. ⁴⁸ And I bowed down and prostrated myself before Jehovah and praised Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right path to take the daughter of the brother of my master for his son. ⁴⁹ And now tell me if you wish to show loyal love and faithfulness toward my master; but if not, tell me, so that I may proceed one way or the other."

⁵⁰ Then La'ban and Be-thu'el answered: "This is from Jehovah. We are not able to say yes or no to you. ⁵¹ Here is Re-bek'ah before you. Take her and go, and let her become a wife to the son of your master, just as Jehovah has

spoken.”⁵² When Abraham’s servant heard their words, he at once bowed down on the ground before Jehovah.⁵³ And the servant began to bring out articles of silver and of gold and garments and to give them to Re-bek’ah, and he gave valuable things to her brother and to her mother.⁵⁴ After that he and the men with him ate and drank, and they spent the night there.

When he got up in the morning, he said: “Send me off to my master.”⁵⁵ To this her brother and her mother said: “Let the young woman stay with us at least ten days. Then she can go.”⁵⁶ But he said to them: “Do not detain me, seeing that Jehovah has made my journey successful. Send me off, in order that I may go to my master.”⁵⁷ So they said: “Let us call the young woman and inquire of her.”⁵⁸ They called Re-bek’ah and said to her: “Will you go with this man?” She replied: “I am willing to go.”

⁵⁹ So they sent off their sister Re-bek’ah and her nurse and Abraham’s servant and his men.⁶⁰ And they blessed Re-bek’ah and said to her: “Our sister, may you become thousands times ten thousand, and let your offspring take possession of the gate of those who hate them.”⁶¹ Then Re-bek’ah and her female attendants rose, got on the camels, and followed the man. So the servant took Re-bek’ah and went on his way.

⁶² Now Isaac had come from the direction of Be'er-la'hai-roi, for he was dwelling in the land of the Neg'eb.⁶³ And Isaac was out walking in the field about nightfall to meditate.

When he looked up, why, he saw that camels were coming!
⁶⁴ When Re-bek'ah looked up, she caught sight of Isaac, and she quickly got down from the camel. ⁶⁵ Then she asked the servant: "Who is that man there walking in the field to meet us?" And the servant said: "It is my master." So she took her veil to cover herself. ⁶⁶ And the servant told Isaac all the things he had done. ⁶⁷ After that Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. Thus he took Re-bek'ah as his wife; and he fell in love with her, and Isaac found comfort after the loss of his mother.

- Song 132 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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- Song 9 and Prayer

GENESIS 24 | A Wife for Isaac



24:2-4, 11-15, 58, 67

Abraham’s servant sought Jehovah’s direction when choosing a wife for Isaac. (Ge 24:42-44) We too should seek Jehovah’s direction before making major decisions. How?

- Pray
- Consult God’s Word and Christian publications
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March 9-15 / Genesis 24

- Song 132 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minutes)

Treasures From God's Word

"A Wife for Isaac": (10 minutes)

Genesis 24:2-4,11-15,58,67

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How?

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Genesis 24:2-4—Abraham sent his servant to find a wife for Isaac among those who worshipped Jehovah

Genesis 24:2-4: Abraham said to his servant, the oldest one of his household, who was managing all he had: "Please put your hand under my thigh, and I will make you swear by Jehovah, the God of the heavens and the God of the earth, that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am dwelling. You must go instead to my country and to my relatives and take a wife for my son, for Isaac."

***wp16.3* 14 paragraph 3**

Abraham made Eliezer take an oath that he would not select a wife for Isaac from among the women of Canaan. Why? Because the Canaanites neither respected nor worshipped Jehovah God. Abraham knew that Jehovah intended in due time to punish those people for their wicked practices. Abraham did not want his beloved son, Isaac, to be bound to those people and their immoral ways. He also knew that his son had a vital role to play in fulfilling God's promises.— Genesis 15:16; 17:19; 24:2-4.

Genesis 24:11-15—Abraham's servant met Rebekah at a well

Genesis 24:11-15: He had the camels kneel down at a well of water outside the city. It was about evening, the time when the women would go out to draw water. Then he said: "Jehovah the God of my master Abraham, please grant me success this day, and show your loyal love to my master Abraham. Here I am standing at a spring of water, and the daughters of the men of the city are coming out to draw water. May it happen that the young woman to whom I say, 'Please let down your water jar so that I may take a drink,' and who replies, 'Take a drink, and I will also water your camels,' let this be the one you choose for your servant Isaac; and by this let me know that you have shown your loyal love to my master." Even before he finished speaking, Rebekah, who was the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, came out with her water jar on her shoulder.

***wp16.3* 14 paragraph 4**

Eliezer went on to tell his hosts that when he arrived at the

well near Haran, he prayed to Jehovah God. He asked Jehovah, in effect, to choose the young woman for Isaac to marry. How? Eliezer asked God to ensure that the girl He wanted Isaac to wed would come to the well. When asked for a drink, she should volunteer not only to give Eliezer a drink but to water his camels as well. (Genesis 24:12-14) And who had come along and done precisely that? Rebekah! Imagine how she might have felt if she overheard the story Eliezer told her family members!

Genesis 24:58,67—Rebekah agreed to marry Isaac

Genesis 24:58: They called Rebekah and said to her: "Will you go with this man?" She replied: "I am willing to go."

Genesis 24:67: After that Isaac brought her into the tent of Sarah his mother. Thus he took Rebekah as his wife; and he fell in love with her, and Isaac found comfort after the loss of his mother.

***wp16.3* 14 paragraphs 6-7**

Weeks earlier, Eliezer had raised that very issue with Abraham, asking: "What if the woman is unwilling to come with me?" Abraham had responded: "This will release you from your oath." (Genesis 24:39,41) In the house of Bethuel too, the young woman's preferences mattered. Eliezer was so enthusiastic about the success of his mission that on the following morning, he asked if he could return to Canaan with Rebekah immediately. The family, however, wanted her to remain with them for at least another ten days. Finally, they resolved the matter this way: "Let us call the young woman and inquire of her."—Genesis 24:57.

Here, then, was a great crossroads in Rebekah's life. What would she say? Would she play on the sympathy of her father and brother, pleading for a release from this journey into the unknown? Or would she view it as a privilege to have a part in events that were clearly being guided by Jehovah? When she answered, she revealed how she felt about this sudden, perhaps daunting, change in her life. She simply said: "I am willing to go."—Genesis 24:58.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Genesis 24:19,20—What lessons can we learn from Rebekah's actions in these verses?

Genesis 24:19,20: When she finished giving him a drink, she said: "I will also draw water for your camels until they are done drinking." So she quickly emptied her jar into the drinking trough and ran again and again to the well to draw water, and she kept drawing water for all his camels.

***wp16.3* 12-13**

One evening, after she had filled her jar, an elderly man ran up to meet her. He said to her: "Please give me a little sip of water from your jar." It was such a modest request and so politely made! Rebekah could see that the man had traveled far. So she quickly swung her water jar from her shoulder and let the man drink, not a mere sip, but a real drink of the fresh, cool water. She noticed that he had a train of ten camels kneeling nearby and that the trough had not yet been filled to water them. She could see that his kind eyes were watching her attentively, and she wanted to be as

generous as she could. So she said: "I will also draw water for your camels until they are done drinking."—Genesis 24:17-19.

Note that Rebekah offered not merely to give the ten camels a drink but to water them until they were satisfied. If very thirsty, one camel might drink over 25 gallons (95 liters) of water! If all ten camels were that thirsty, Rebekah faced hours of hard work. As matters turned out, it seems unlikely that the camels were extremely thirsty.* But did Rebekah know that when she made her offer? No. She was willing, even eager, to work as hard as need be to show hospitality to this elderly stranger. He accepted her offer. Then he watched her intently as she ran back and forth, filling and refilling her jar and emptying it into the trough again and again.—Genesis 24:20,21.

*It was already evening. The account contains no indication that Rebekah was detained at the well for hours. It does not imply that her family was asleep by the time she finished or that anyone came to see why her errand was taking so long.

Genesis 24:65—Why did Rebekah cover her head, and what lesson does this teach?

Genesis 24:65: Then she asked the servant: “Who is that man there walking in the field to meet us?” And the servant said: “It is my master.” So she took her veil to cover herself.

***wp16.3 15* paragraph 3**

Finally, the day came that we described at the outset of this article. As the caravan traversed the Negeb and twilight began to fall over the land, Rebekah saw a man out walking in the fields. He looked thoughtful, contemplative. “She quickly got down from the camel,” we read—perhaps not even waiting for the beast to kneel down—and she asked her guide: “Who is that man there walking in the field to meet us?” When she learned that it was Isaac, she covered her head with her shawl. (Genesis 24:62-65) Why? Evidently the gesture was a sign of respect for her future husband. That kind of submission may strike some today as old-fashioned. Really, though, men as well as women may take a lesson from Rebekah’s humility, for who of us does not need more of that lovely quality?

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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

INITIAL CALL

- Question: Who was Jesus?
- Scripture: **Mt 16:16**
- Link: Why did Jesus die?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• *bhs* 41 ¶5

FIRST RETURN VISIT

- Question: Why did Jesus die?
- Scripture: **Mt 20:28**
- Link: How can we show our appreciation for Jesus' ransom sacrifice?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• *bhs* 52 ¶2

SECOND RETURN VISIT

- Question: How can we show our appreciation for Jesus' ransom sacrifice?
- Scripture: **Joh 17:3**
- Link: What happens at meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• *bhs* 58 ¶19

MEMORIAL INVITATION CAMPAIGN

(March 14–April 7):

“We’re here to invite you to a special event that will be attended by millions of people. It’s the anniversary of Jesus’ death.” Hand the person an invitation. “This invitation shows the time and location of the event in our area. We also invite you to a special talk the weekend before.”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?

A Special Possession

(1 Peter 2:9)

1. God has a new creation,
His spirit-anointed sons.
He has bought them from mankind;
His approval they've won.

(CHORUS)

*A special possession,
They're a people for your name.
They love you. They praise you.
As one they declare abroad your fame.*

2. They are a holy nation,
Who handle the truth aright.
God has called them from darkness
To his wonderful light.

(Chorus)

3. Faithful to their commission,
They gather the other sheep.
To the Lamb they are loyal.
His commandments they keep.

(Chorus)

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WHAT

A commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ.

WHY

To remember what he did in giving his life for us.

WHEN
AND
WHERE

See inside for the date, time, and location.

There is no admittance fee, and no collections will be taken.



Scan code or visit jw.org to watch the brief video *Why Did Jesus Die?*

(Look under ABOUT US > MEMORIAL)



**You Are
Welcome
to Attend!**



© 2020 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

On the night before he died, Jesus told his followers to commemorate his death. He said:

“Keep doing this in remembrance of me.”

—Luke 22:19.



In connection with this event, a special Bible talk will be given in thousands of locations around the world. The topic, date, time, and location will be:

Whose Leadership Can You Trust?

Please join us for the **annual commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ**. The date, time, and location will be:

Tuesday, April 7, 2020

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Whom Will I Invite?



Each year we make a special effort to invite people in the territory to join us in observing the Memorial. Most of them are strangers to us. We should also invite people whom we know. People who receive an invitation from an acquaintance are often more likely to attend. (yb08 11 ¶3; 14 ¶1) Who are some individuals whom you could invite?

- Relatives
- Workmates or schoolmates
- Neighbors
- Return visits and past and present Bible students

In addition, the elders will invite those who are inactive. What if an acquaintance does not live in your area? You can find out the time and location of the Memorial where he lives by clicking the ABOUT US tab at the top of the jw.org home page and selecting “Memorial.” As you prepare for this year’s observance, think about those you can invite, and then extend a personal invitation.



A KING CALLS THOSE INVITED TO A MARRIAGE FEAST

MATTHEW 22:1-14

- ILLUSTRATION OF THE MARRIAGE FEAST

As Jesus' ministry draws to an end, he continues to use illustrations to expose the scribes and the chief priests. Hence, they want to kill him. (Luke 20:19) But Jesus is not finished exposing them. He relates another illustration:

“The Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to a king who made a marriage feast for his son. And he sent his slaves to call those invited to the marriage feast, but they were unwilling to come.” (Matthew 22:2, 3) Jesus introduces his illustration by mentioning “the Kingdom of the heavens.” Logically, then, the “king” must be Jehovah God. What of the king's son and those invited to the marriage feast? Again, it is not difficult to identify the king's son as Jehovah's Son, who is there presenting the

illustration, and to grasp that those invited are the ones who will be with the Son in the Kingdom of the heavens.

Who are the first ones to be invited? Well, to whom have Jesus and the apostles been preaching about the Kingdom? It has been to the Jews. (Matthew 10:6, 7; 15:24) This nation accepted the Law covenant in 1513 B.C.E., thereby coming first in line to make up “a kingdom of priests.” (Exodus 19:5-8) But when would they actually be called to “the marriage feast”? Logically, that invitation went out in 29 C.E. when Jesus began preaching about the Kingdom of the heavens.

And how did most Israelites respond to the invitation? As Jesus said, “they were unwilling to come.” The majority of the religious leaders and the people did not accept him as the Messiah and as God’s designated King.

Jesus indicates, though, that the Jews were to have another opportunity: “Again [the king] sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Look! I have prepared my dinner, my bulls and fattened ani-

mals are slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.”’ But unconcerned they went off, one to his own field, another to his business; but the rest, seizing his slaves, treated them insolently and killed them.” (Matthew 22:4-6) That corresponds to what would occur once the Christian congregation was established. At that time, the Jews still had the opportunity to be in the Kingdom, yet most spurned this call, even abusing ‘the king’s slaves.’—Acts 4:13-18; 7:54, 58.

With what outcome for the nation? Jesus relates: “The king grew wrathful and sent his armies and killed those murderers and burned their city.” (Matthew 22:7) The Jews experienced that in 70 C.E. when the Romans destroyed “their city,” Jerusalem.

Does their refusing the king’s call mean that no one else would be invited? Not according to Jesus’ illustration. He goes on to say: “Then [the king] said to his slaves, ‘The marriage feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Therefore, go to the roads leading out of the city, and invite anyone you find to

the marriage feast.’ 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.”—Matthew 22:8-10.

Significantly, the apostle Peter would later begin helping Gentiles—ones who were not Jews by birth or conversion—to become true Christians. In 36 C.E., Roman army officer Cornelius and his family received God’s spirit, coming in line for a place in the Kingdom of the heavens that Jesus mentioned.—Acts 10:1, 34-48.

Jesus indicates that not all who come to the feast will finally prove acceptable to “the king.” He says: “When the king came in to inspect the guests, he caught sight of a man not wearing a marriage garment. So he said to him, ‘Fellow, how did you get in here without a marriage garment?’ He was speechless. 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.’ For there are many invited, but few chosen.”—Matthew 22:11-14.



The religious leaders hearing Jesus may not understand the meaning or implications of all that he is saying. Nevertheless, they are displeased and more determined than ever to rid themselves of the one causing them such embarrassment.

- ◇ In Jesus' illustration, who is "the king," who is "his son," and who are those first invited to the wedding feast?
- ◇ When is the call extended to the Jews, and who afterward are invited?
- ◇ What is indicated by the fact that many are called but few are chosen?

9

Jehovah Is Our King!

(Psalm 97:1)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

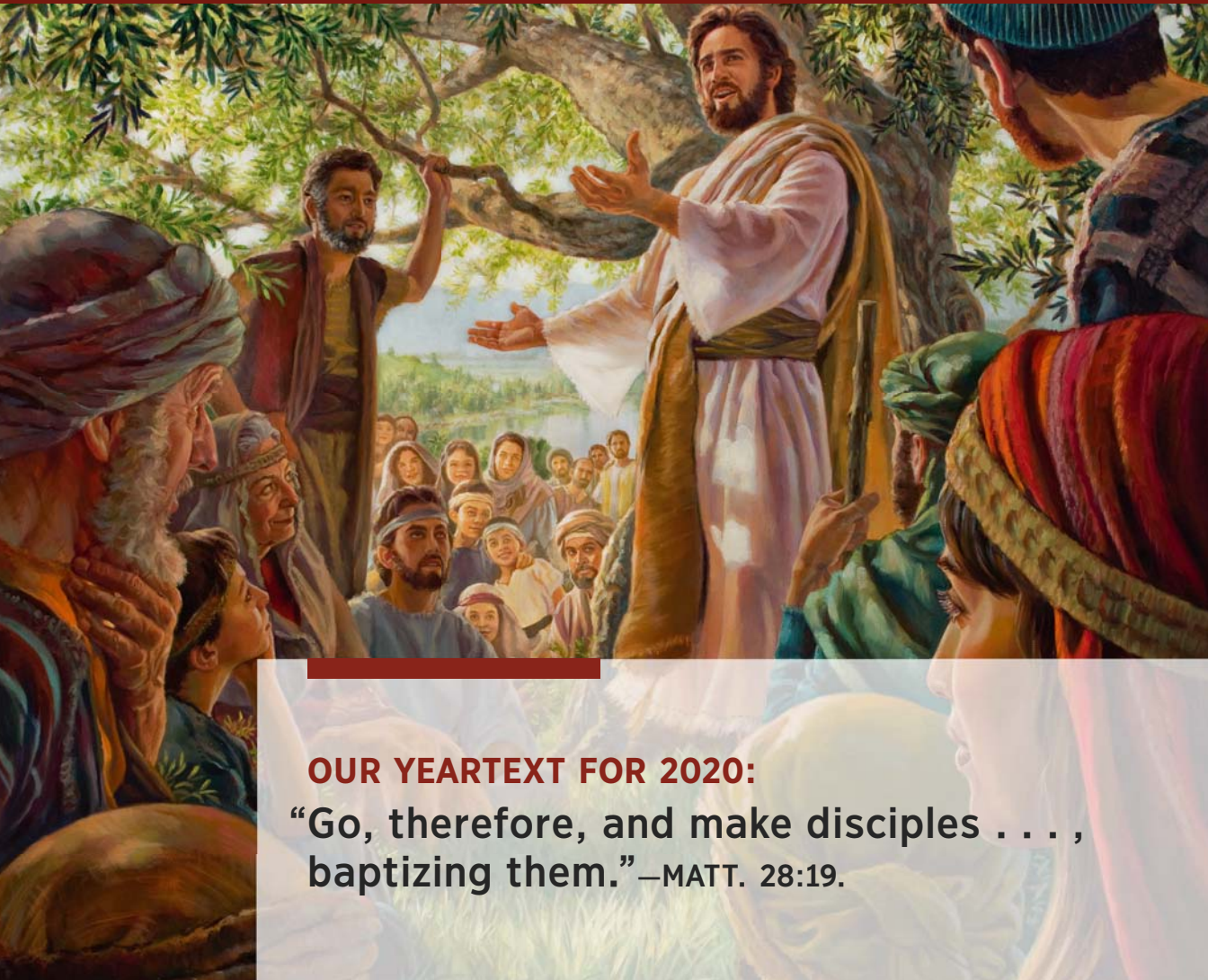
(Chorus)

JANUARY 2020

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



OUR YEARETEXT FOR 2020:

**“Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . ,
baptizing them.”—MATT. 28:19.**



**STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
MARCH 2–APRIL 5, 2020**

Study Article 1: March 2-8	2
“Go, Therefore, and Make Disciples”	
<hr/>	
Study Article 2: March 9-15	16
You Can Be “a Source of Great Comfort”	
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Study Article 3: March 16-22	28
Jehovah Your God Values You!	
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Study Article 4: March 23-29	40
“The Spirit Itself Bears Witness”	
<hr/>	
Study Article 5: March 30–April 5	52
We Will Go With You	

COVER PICTURE:

When Jesus met with the apostles and others in Galilee after his resurrection, he instructed them to “go . . . and make disciples” (See study article 1, paragraphs 3-4)

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Encourage One Another

(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. As we encourage one another
 To serve Jehovah faithfully,
We find the bonds of love are strengthened;
 Fine works bring peace and unity.
The love we find among God's people
 Gives each the courage to endure.
Our congregation is a refuge,
 A place where we can feel secure.

2. A word when spoken at the right time
 Is, oh, how comforting to hear!
We hear these words of consolation
 From friends so faithful and so dear.
How good it is to work together
 With those whose hopes and goals we share!
We seek to strengthen one another
 And help each one his burden bear.

3. As we with eyes of faith are seeing
 The nearness of Jehovah's day,
We need our gathering together
 To keep us walking in the way.
United with Jehovah's people,
 We hope to serve eternally.
So we encourage one another
 To hold to our integrity.

You Can Be “a Source of Great Comfort”

*“These are my fellow workers for the Kingdom of God,
and they have become a source of great comfort to me.”*

—COL. 4:11.

SONG 90

Encourage One Another

PREVIEW

The apostle Paul experienced many difficulties in his life. During hard times, certain fellow workers were of great comfort to him. We will identify three specific qualities that made these fellow workers so good at comforting others. We will also consider how we can follow their example in practical ways.

AROUND the world, many servants of Jehovah are facing stressful, even painful, situations. Have you noticed this in your congregation? Some Christians are dealing with a serious illness or with the death of a loved one. Others are enduring the intense pain of seeing a family member or close friend leave the truth. Still others are coping with the effects of natural disasters. All such brothers and sisters need comfort. How can we help them?

² The apostle Paul faced one life-threatening situation after another. (2 Cor. 11:23-28) He also had to endure “a thorn in the flesh,” possibly some sort of health problem. (2 Cor. 12:7) And he had to cope with disappointment when Demas, his onetime fellow worker, abandoned him “because [Demas] loved the present system of things.” (2 Tim. 4:10) Paul was a courageous spirit-anointed Christian who unselfishly helped others, but at times even he felt discouraged.—Rom. 9:1, 2.

³ Paul received the comfort and support he needed. How? Jehovah certainly used His holy spirit to strengthen him. (2 Cor. 4:7; Phil. 4:13) Jehovah also comforted him through fellow Christians. Paul

-
1. What stressful situations are many faithful servants of Jehovah facing?
 2. Why did the apostle Paul at times need to be comforted?
 3. From whom did Paul receive comfort and support?

described some of his fellow workers as “a source of great comfort.” (Col. 4:11) Among the ones he mentioned by name were Aristarchus, Tychicus, and Mark. They strengthened Paul, helping him to endure. What qualities allowed these three Christians to be so comforting? How can we follow their fine example as we try to comfort and encourage one another?

LOYAL LIKE ARISTARCHUS

⁴ Aristarchus, a Macedonian Christian from Thessalonica, proved to be a loyal friend to Paul. We first read about Aristarchus when Paul visited Ephesus on his third missionary tour. While accompanying Paul, Aristarchus was captured by a mob. (Acts 19:29) When he was finally set free, he did not seek his own safety but loyally stayed with Paul. Some months later, in Greece, Aristarchus was still at Paul’s side even though opposers continued to threaten Paul’s life. (Acts 20:2-4) In about 58 C.E. when Paul was sent to Rome as a prisoner, Aristarchus accompanied him on the long journey, and together they endured shipwreck along the way. (Acts 27:1, 2, 41) Once in Rome, he apparently spent some time in prison with Paul. (Col. 4:10) Little wonder that Paul felt encouraged and comforted by such a loyal companion!

4. How did Aristarchus prove to be a loyal friend to Paul?



Like Aristarchus, we can be a loyal friend by sticking to our brothers and sisters during “times of distress”

(See paragraphs 4-5)

⁵ Like Aristarchus, we can be a loyal friend by sticking to our brothers and sisters not only in good times but also during “times of distress.” (Read Proverbs 17:17.) Even after a trial ends, our brother or sister may still need to be comforted. Frances,* who lost both her parents to cancer within a three-month period, says: “I think that difficult trials affect us for a long time. And I appreciate loyal friends who remember that I am still in pain, even though some time has passed since my parents died.”

* Some of the names in this article have been changed.

5. According to Proverbs 17:17, how can we be a loyal friend?

⁶ Loyal friends make sacrifices in order to support their brothers and sisters. For example, a brother named Peter was diagnosed with a very aggressive terminal illness. His wife, Kathryn, says: “A couple in our congregation took us to the appointment where we found out about Peter’s illness. They decided then and there that they would not let us go on this painful journey alone, and they have been by our side whenever we have needed them.” How comforting it is to have true friends, who can help us to endure our trials!

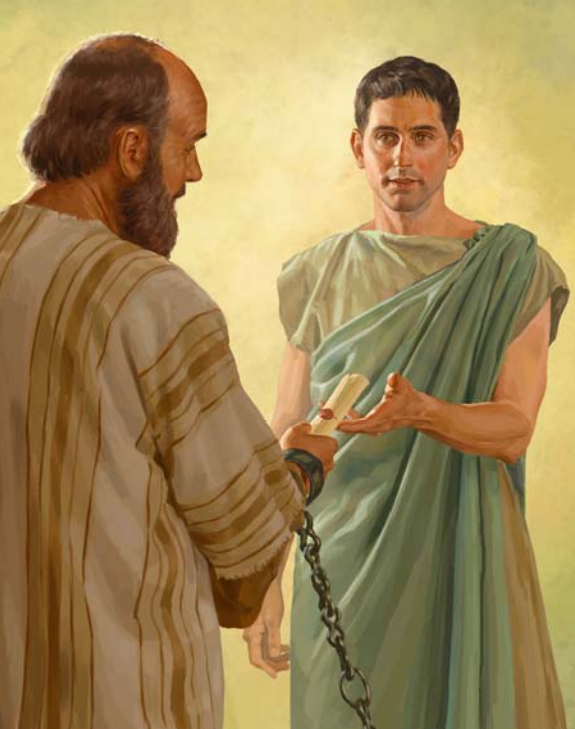
TRUSTWORTHY LIKE TYCHICUS

⁷ Tychicus, a Christian from the Roman district of Asia, stands out as a loyal companion to Paul. (Acts 20:4) About 55 C.E., Paul organized the collection of relief funds for Judean Christians, and he may have let Tychicus help with this important assignment. (2 Cor. 8:18-20) Later when Paul was imprisoned in Rome for the first time, Tychicus served as his personal messenger. He delivered Paul’s letters and messages of encouragement to the congregations in Asia.—Col. 4:7-9.

⁸ Tychicus remained Paul’s trustworthy friend. (Titus 3:12) Not all Christians back then were as de-

6. What will loyalty move us to do?

7-8. According to Colossians 4:7-9, how did Tychicus prove trustworthy?



Like Tychicus, we can be a trustworthy friend when others are struggling with problems
(See paragraphs 7-9)

pendable as Tychicus. About 65 C.E., during his second imprisonment, Paul wrote that many Christian men in the province of Asia avoided associating with him, possibly because they were afraid of opposers. (2 Tim. 1:15) In contrast, Paul could rely on Tychicus and gave him yet another assignment. (2 Tim. 4:12) Paul surely appreciated having a good friend like Tychicus.

⁹ We can imitate Tychicus by being a trustworthy friend. For example, we not only promise to help our brothers and sisters in need but also do practical things to assist them. (Matt. 5:37; Luke 16:10) When

9. How can we imitate Tychicus?

those who need help know that they can depend on us, they are genuinely comforted. One sister explains why. She says, “You do not have the added stress of wondering whether the person who offered to help will be there on time to do what he promised.”

¹⁰ Those coping with a trial or disappointment often find comfort by confiding in a trusted friend. (Read Proverbs 18:24.) After the disappointment of seeing his son disfellowshipped, Bijay said, “I needed to share my feelings with someone I could trust.” Carlos lost a cherished congregation privilege as the result of a personal failing. He says, “I needed a ‘safe place’ where I could freely express myself without fear of being judged.” Carlos found that safe place with the elders, who helped him get through his problem. He was also comforted in knowing that the elders were discreet and would keep what he said confidential.

¹¹ To be a trusted friend and confidant, we need to cultivate patience. When Zhanna’s husband left her, she found comfort in sharing her feelings with close friends. “They patiently listened to me,” she says, “although I probably said the same things over and over again.” You too can prove to be a good friend by being a good listener.

10. As stated at Proverbs 18:24, from whom can those coping with a trial or disappointment find comfort?

11. How can we be a trusted friend and confidant?

WILLING TO SERVE LIKE MARK

¹² Mark was a Jewish Christian from Jerusalem. His cousin Barnabas was a well-known missionary. (Col. 4:10) Mark's family appears to have been materially well-off, yet Mark did not put material things first in his life. Throughout his life, Mark showed a willing spirit. He was happy to serve others. For example, at various times he served alongside both the apostle Paul and the apostle Peter as they fulfilled their responsibilities, with Mark possibly attending to their physical needs. (Acts 13:2-5; 1 Pet. 5:13) Paul described Mark as one of his "fellow workers for the Kingdom of God" and as "a strengthening aid" to him. —Col. 4:10, 11, ftn.

¹³ Mark became one of Paul's close friends. For example, when Paul was imprisoned for the last time in Rome, about 65 C.E., he wrote his second letter to Timothy. In that letter, Paul asked Timothy to come to Rome and to bring Mark along. (2 Tim. 4:11) Paul no doubt appreciated Mark's past faithful service, so he asked for Mark's presence at that crucial time. Mark helped Paul in practical ways, perhaps supplying him with food or items for his writing. The support and

12. Who was Mark, and how did he show a willing spirit?

13. How does 2 Timothy 4:11 show that Paul appreciated Mark's faithful service?



Mark's acts of kindness helped Paul to endure, and we can help our brothers during times of tragedy (See paragraphs 12-14)

encouragement that Paul received likely helped him to endure the final days leading up to his execution.

14 Read Matthew 7:12. When we are going through a hard time, how we appreciate those who offer support in practical ways! “There are so many routine things that seem to be impossible to do when you are suffering,” says Ryan, whose father died unexpectedly in a tragic accident. “Practical assistance—even when it seems very little—goes a long way.”

15 By being attentive and observant, we can likely find practical ways to help others. For example, one sister took the initiative to help Peter and Kathryn,

14-15. What can Matthew 7:12 teach us about assisting others in practical ways?

mentioned earlier, get to all their medical appointments. Neither Peter nor Kathryn could drive anymore, so the sister made a schedule that enabled volunteers from the congregation to take turns providing transportation. Did this arrangement help? Kathryn says, “We felt as if a burden had been lifted off our shoulders.” Never underestimate how comforting your practical yet simple acts of kindness can be.

¹⁶ The first-century disciple Mark certainly was a busy Christian. He had weighty theocratic assignments, including writing the Gospel that bears his name. Yet, Mark made time to comfort Paul, and Paul felt free to ask for Mark’s assistance. Angela, who had to cope with the violent death of a family member, appreciated the similar willingness of those who comforted her. “When friends genuinely want to help, they are approachable,” she says. “They don’t seem reluctant or hesitant.” We can ask ourselves, ‘Am I known for being willing to comfort fellow worshippers in practical ways?’

DETERMINED TO COMFORT OTHERS

¹⁷ We do not have to look far to find brothers and

16. What important lesson about providing comfort do we learn from Mark’s example?

17. How can meditating on 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4 motivate us to offer comfort?

sisters who need comfort. We may even be able to share the same encouraging thoughts that others have used to comfort us. Nino, a sister who lost her grandmother in death, says: “Jehovah can comfort others through us if we allow ourselves to be used by him.” (Read 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.) Says Frances, quoted earlier: “There is real truth to 2 Corinthians 1:4. We can pass on to others the comfort we receive.”

¹⁸ We need to take the initiative to act despite our fears. For instance, we may fear not knowing what to say or what to do for someone who is in a distressing situation. An elder named Paul remembers the efforts some made after his father died. “I could tell that it was not easy for them to approach me,” he says. “They struggled with their words. But I still appreciated their desire to offer comfort and support.” Similarly, after experiencing a powerful earthquake, a brother named Tajon said: “I honestly don’t remember every message that people sent me in the days following the earthquake, but I do remember that they cared enough to check on me.” We can be effective comforters if we show that we care.

¹⁹ As we get closer to the end of this system of things, world conditions will deteriorate and life will

18. (a) Why may some be afraid to offer comfort? (b) How can we genuinely comfort others? Give an example.

19. Why are you determined to be “a source of great comfort”?

become more challenging. (2 Tim. 3:13) And the problems that we bring on ourselves because of inherited sin and imperfection mean that we will continue to need comfort. The apostle Paul was able to endure faithfully to the end of his life, thanks, in part, to the comfort he received from fellow Christians. May we be loyal like Aristarchus, trustworthy like Tychicus, and willing to serve like Mark. By doing so, we can help our brothers and sisters to remain firm in the faith.—1 Thess. 3:2, 3.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 19: Aristarchus and Paul endured a shipwreck together. Page 21: Tychicus was entrusted with delivering Paul's letters to the congregations. Page 24: Mark assisted Paul in practical ways.

HOW CAN YOU COMFORT OTHERS BY IMITATING . . .

- Aristarchus' loyalty?
- Tychicus' trustworthiness?
- Mark's willingness to help in practical ways?

Our Reasons for Joy

(Matthew 5:12)

1. Our reasons for joy are abundant,
Like riches increasing in worth.
Those precious to God from all nations
Are joining us in all the earth.
The joy in our heart is well-founded,
With roots reaching deep in God's Word.
We daily partake of its teachings;
Faith follows the things we have heard.
Our causes for joy are deep-seated,
Like embers that burn in our hearts.
Though troubles and trials beset us,
Endurance Jehovah imparts.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah our God is our joy,
The work of his hands our delight.
How deep are his thoughts, how great are his works,
Abounding in goodness and might!*

2. We gladly behold his productions,
The heavens, the sea, and the land.
We gaze at the book of creation,
Applauding the work of his hands.
Triumphantly we now bear witness,
Proclaiming the Kingdom of God.
The news of its birth and its blessings,
We joyously spread all abroad.
Eternal rejoicing approaches,
Like daylight that follows the night.
The promised new earth and new heavens
Will bring everlasting delight.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah our God is our joy,
The work of his hands our delight.
How deep are his thoughts, how great are his works,
Abounding in goodness and might!*