

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Esau Sells His Birthright”:** (10 min.)
Ge 25:27, 28—Twins Esau and Jacob differed in temperament and in their choice of activities (*it-1* 1242)
Ge 25:29, 30—Esau allowed hunger and exhaustion to control him
Ge 25:31-34—Ungrateful Esau rashly sold his birthright to Jacob for a meal (*w19.02* 16 ¶11; *it-1* 835)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)
Ge 25:31-34—Why does this account not prove that the line leading to the Messiah was tied to the right of firstborn? (*Heb* 12:16; *w17.12* 15 ¶5-7)

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What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 26:1-18 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video, and then ask the audience the following questions: How can we avoid embarrassing a householder if he does not know the answer to a question? How did the publisher reason effectively on Matthew 20:28?
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 78
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GENESIS 25-26 | Esau Sells His Birthright

25:27-34

Esau did “not appreciate sacred things.” (*Heb* 12:16) As a result, he sold his birthright. He also married two pagan women.—Ge 26:34, 35.

ASK YOURSELF: ‘How can I show greater appreciation for the following sacred things?’

- My relationship with Jehovah
- Holy spirit
- Bearing the holy name, Jehovah
- The field ministry
- Christian meetings
- Marriage



18

Grateful for the Ransom

(Luke 22:20)

1. Today, Jehovah God,
we stand before your throne,
For you showed the greatest love
that could ever be shown.
You gave the gift of your dear Son,
that we might live.
No greater sacrifice than this
could you ever give.

(CHORUS)

*He gave his life to set us free.
His precious blood provides the key.
With all our hearts,
we'll go on thanking you eternally.*

2. It was a willing sacrifice
that Jesus made.
Out of love, his perfect life
was the price that he paid.
We had no hope until he came
to save mankind.
But now our hope is finding life,
leaving death behind.

(Chorus)

Genesis 25-26

25 Now Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Ke-tu'rah. ² In time she bore him Zim'ran, Jok'shan, Me'dan, Mid'i-an, Ish'bak, and Shu'ah.

³ Jok'shan became father to She'ba and De'dan.

The sons of De'dan were As-shu'rim, Le-tu'shim, and Le-um'mim.

⁴ The sons of Mid'i-an were E'phah, E'pher, Ha'noch, A-bi'da, and El-da'ah.

All of these were the sons of Ke-tu'rah.

⁵ Later on Abraham gave everything he had to Isaac, ⁶ but Abraham gave gifts to his sons by his concubines. Then while he was still alive, he sent them eastward, away from Isaac his son, to the land of the East. ⁷ The years of Abraham's life were 175 years. ⁸ Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, old and satisfied, and was gathered to his people. ⁹ His sons Isaac and Ish'ma-el buried him in the cave of Mach-pe'lah in the field of E'phron the son of Zo'har the Hit'tite that is in front of Mam're, ¹⁰ the field that Abraham had purchased from the sons of Heth. There Abraham was buried, with his wife Sarah. ¹¹ After Abraham's death, God continued to bless his son Isaac, and Isaac was dwelling near Be'er-la'hai-roi.

¹² This is the history of Ish'ma-el the son of Abraham whom Ha'gar the Egyptian, the servant of Sarah, bore to Abraham.

¹³ Now these are the names of the sons of Ish'ma-el, by their names according to their family origins: Ish'ma-el's firstborn Ne-ba'ioth, then Ke'dar, Ad'be-el, Mib'sam, ¹⁴ Mish'ma, Du'mah, Mas'sa, ¹⁵ Ha'dad, Te'ma, Je'tur, Na'phish, and Ked'e-mah. ¹⁶ These are the sons of Ish'ma-el, and these are their names by their settlements and by their encampments, 12 chieftains according to their clans. ¹⁷ And Ish'ma-el lived for 137 years. Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people. ¹⁸ And they took up dwelling from Hav'i-lah near Shur, which is close to Egypt, as far as As-syr'i-a. He settled near all his brothers.

¹⁹ And this is the history of Isaac the son of Abraham.

Abraham became father to Isaac. ²⁰ Isaac was 40 years old when he married Re-bek'ah, the daughter of Be-thu'el the A-ra-mae'an of Pad'dan-a'ram, the sister of La'ban the A-ra-mae'an. ²¹ And Isaac kept pleading with Jehovah regarding his wife, because she was barren; so Jehovah responded to his plea, and his wife Re-bek'ah became pregnant. ²² And the sons within her began to struggle with each other, so that she said: "If this is the way it is, why should I go on living?" So she inquired of Jehovah. ²³ And Jehovah said to her: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples will be separated from within you; and the one nation will be stronger than the other nation, and the older will serve the younger."

²⁴ When the time came for her to give birth, look! twins were in her womb. ²⁵ Then the first came out red all over

and was like a garment of hair, so they named him E'sau. ²⁶ After that his brother came out and his hand was holding onto the heel of E'sau, so he named him Jacob. Isaac was 60 years old when she gave birth to them.

²⁷ As the boys got bigger, E'sau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a blameless man, dwelling in tents. ²⁸ And Isaac loved E'sau because it meant game in his mouth, whereas Re-bek'ah loved Jacob. ²⁹ On one occasion Jacob was boiling some stew when E'sau returned from the field exhausted. ³⁰ So E'sau said to Jacob: "Quick, please, give me some of the red stew that you have there, for I am exhausted!" That is why his name was E'dom. ³¹ To this Jacob said: "First sell me your right as firstborn!" ³² And E'sau continued: "Here I am about to die! What use is a birthright to me?" ³³ And Jacob added: "Swear to me first!" So he swore to him and sold his right as firstborn to Jacob. ³⁴ Then Jacob gave E'sau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and he got up and went away. Thus E'sau despised the birthright.

26 Now there was a famine in the land, in addition to the first famine that occurred in the days of Abraham, so that Isaac went to A-bim'e-lech king of the Phi-lis'tines, in Ge'rar. ² Then Jehovah appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt. Dwell in the land that I designate to you. ³ Reside as a foreigner in this land, and I will continue with you and bless you because to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will carry

out the oath that I swore to your father Abraham: ⁴ 'I will multiply your offspring like the stars of the heavens; and I will give to your offspring all these lands; and by means of your offspring, all nations of the earth will obtain a blessing for themselves,' ⁵ on account of the fact that Abraham listened to my voice and continued to keep my requirements, my commands, my statutes, and my laws." ⁶ So Isaac continued to dwell in Ge'rar.

⁷ When the men of the place kept asking about his wife, he would say: "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is my wife," for he said, "The men of the place might kill me because of Re-bek'ah," for she was beautiful in appearance. ⁸ After some time had passed, A-bim'e-lech king of the Phi-lis'tines was looking out of the window, and he saw Isaac displaying affection for Re-bek'ah his wife. ⁹ At once A-bim'e-lech called Isaac and said: "She is actually your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?" At this Isaac said to him: "I said it for fear I should die because of her." ¹⁰ But A-bim'e-lech continued: "What have you done to us? One of the people could easily have lain down with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us!" ¹¹ Then A-bim'e-lech commanded all the people, saying: "Anybody touching this man and his wife will surely be put to death!"

¹² And Isaac began to sow seed in that land, and in that year he reaped 100 times what he sowed, for Jehovah was blessing him. ¹³ The man became wealthy, and he continued to prosper until he became very

wealthy. ¹⁴ He acquired flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and a large body of servants, and the Phi-lis'tines began to envy him.

¹⁵ So the Phi-lis'tines took soil and stopped up all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham. ¹⁶ A-bim'e-lech then said to Isaac: "Move from our neighborhood, for you have grown far stronger than we are." ¹⁷ So Isaac moved from there and encamped in the valley of Ge'rar and began dwelling there. ¹⁸ And Isaac again dug the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham but that the Phi-lis'tines had stopped up after Abraham's death, and he called them by the names that his father had given them.

¹⁹ When the servants of Isaac were digging in the valley, they found a well of fresh water. ²⁰ And the shepherds of Ge'rar began quarreling with the shepherds of Isaac, saying: "The water is ours!" So he named the well E'sek, because they had quarreled with him. ²¹ And they started digging another well, and they began quarreling over it also. So he named it Sit'nah. ²² Later he moved away from there and dug another well, but they did not quarrel over it. So he named it Re-ho'both and said: "It is because now Jehovah has given us ample room and has made us fruitful in the land."

²³ Then he went up from there to Be'er-she'ba. ²⁴ That night Jehovah appeared to him and said: "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with

you, and I will bless you and multiply your offspring on account of Abraham my servant.”²⁵ So he built an altar there and called on the name of Jehovah. And Isaac pitched his tent there, and his servants dug a well there.

²⁶ Later A-bim'e-lech came to him from Ge'rar with A-huz'zath his personal adviser and Phi'col the chief of his army.²⁷ At this Isaac said to them: “Why have you come to me, seeing that you hated me and sent me away from your neighborhood?”²⁸ To this they said: “We have clearly seen that Jehovah has been with you. So we said, ‘Let there, please, be an oath of obligation between us and you, and let us make a covenant with you²⁹ that you will do nothing bad to us just as we have not harmed you, seeing that we have done only good to you in that we sent you away in peace. You now are the blessed of Jehovah.’”³⁰ Then he made a feast for them, and they ate and drank.³¹ In the morning they got up early and swore an oath to each other. After that Isaac sent them away, and they went from him in peace.

³² On that day the servants of Isaac came and reported to him about the well that they had dug, and they told him: “We have found water!”³³ So he named it Shi'bah. That is why the name of the city is Be'er-she'ba to this day.

³⁴ When E'sau was 40 years old, he took as wife Ju'dith the daughter of Be-e'ri the Hit'tite and also Bas'e-math the daughter of E'lon the Hit'tite.³⁵ They were a source of great grief to Isaac and Re-bek'ah.

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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GENESIS 25-26 | Esau Sells His Birthright

25:27-34

Esau did “not appreciate sacred things.” (*Heb* 12:16) As a result, he sold his birthright. He also married two pagan women.—Ge 26:34, 35.

ASK YOURSELF: ‘How can I show greater appreciation for the following sacred things?’

- My relationship with Jehovah
- Holy spirit
- Bearing the holy name, Jehovah
- The field ministry
- Christian meetings
- Marriage



March 16-22 / Genesis 25-26

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minutes)

Treasures From God's Word

"Esau Sells His Birthright": (10 minutes)

Genesis 25:27-34

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Genesis 25:27,28—Twins Esau and Jacob differed in temperament and in their choice of activities

Genesis 25:27,28: As the boys got bigger, Esau became a skilled hunter, a man of the field, but Jacob was a blameless man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau because it meant game in his mouth, whereas Rebekah loved Jacob.

***it-1* 1242**

In contrast to his father's favorite son Esau, who was a wild, restless, wandering type of huntsman, Jacob is described as "a blameless [Hebrew, *tam*] man, dwelling in tents," one who led a quiet pastoral life and was dependable to look after domestic affairs, one who was especially loved by his mother. (Genesis 25:27,28) This Hebrew word *tam* is used elsewhere to describe those approved of God. For example, "bloodthirsty men hate anyone blameless," yet Jehovah gives assurance that "the future of [the blameless] man will be peaceful." (Proverbs 29:10; Psalm 37:37) The integrity keeper Job "proved to be blameless [Hebrew, *tam*] and upright."— Job 1:1,8; 2:3.

Genesis 25:29,30—Esau allowed hunger and exhaustion to control him

Genesis 25:29,30: On one occasion Jacob was boiling some stew when Esau returned from the field exhausted. So Esau said to Jacob: "Quick, please, give me some of the red stew that you have there, for I am exhausted!" That is why his name was Edom.

Genesis 25:31-34—Ungrateful Esau rashly sold his birthright to Jacob for a meal

Genesis 25:31-34: To this Jacob said: "First sell me your right as firstborn!" And Esau continued: "Here I am about to die! What use is a birthright to me?" And Jacob added: "Swear to me first!" So he swore to him and sold his right as firstborn to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and he got up and went away. Thus Esau despised the birthright.

w19.02 16 paragraph 11

Sadly, some Bible characters displayed a lack of appreciation.

For example, although **Esau** was raised by parents who loved and respected Jehovah, he lacked appreciation for sacred things. (Read Hebrews 12:16.) How did his ungrateful attitude become evident? Esau rashly sold his birthright to his younger brother, Jacob, for a mere bowl of stew. (Genesis 25:30-34) Later, Esau bitterly regretted the choice he had made. But he had been ungrateful for what he had, so he had no basis for complaining when he did not receive the birthright blessing.

***it-1* 835**

From earliest times the firstborn son held an honored position in the family and was the one who succeeded to the headship of the household. He inherited a double portion of the father's property. (Deuteronomy 21:17) Reuben was seated by Joseph at a meal according to his right as firstborn. (Genesis 43:33) But the Bible does not always honor the firstborn by listing sons according to birth. The first place is often given to the most prominent or faithful of the sons rather than to the firstborn.—Genesis 6:10; 1 Chronicles 1:28; compare Genesis 11:26,32; 12:4; see BIRTHRIGHT; INHERITANCE.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Genesis 25:31-34—Why does this account not prove that the line leading to the Messiah was tied to the right of firstborn?

Genesis 25:31-34: To this Jacob said: "First sell me your right as firstborn!" And Esau continued: "Here I am about to die! What use is a birthright to me?" And Jacob added: "Swear to me first!" So he swore to him and sold his right as firstborn to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and he got up and went away. Thus Esau despised the birthright.

Hebrews 12:16

and watch that among you there is no one who is sexually immoral nor anyone who does not appreciate sacred things, like Esau, who gave up his rights as firstborn in exchange for one meal.

w17.12 15 paragraphs 5-7

Now let us return to Hebrews 12:16, which reads: "Watch that among you there is no one who is sexually immoral nor

anyone who does not appreciate sacred things, like Esau, who gave up his rights as firstborn in exchange for one meal." What point was being made?

The apostle Paul was not here discussing the ancestry of the Messiah. He had just urged Christians to 'make straight paths for their feet.' Thus they would not 'fail to obtain the undeserved kindness of God,' which sadly could happen if they engaged in sexual immorality. (Hebrews 12:12-16) If they did that, they would be like Esau. He failed to "appreciate sacred things," and he literally gave in to what was profane.

Esau lived in patriarchal times, and he may even occasionally have had the privilege of offering sacrifices. (Genesis 8:20,21; 12:7,8; Job 1:4,5) But with his fleshly bent of mind, Esau gave away all such privileges for a bowl of stew. He may have wanted to avoid the suffering foretold to come on Abraham's offspring. (Genesis 15:13) Esau also showed himself inclined toward the profane, lacking appreciation for sacred things, by marrying two pagan women, to his parents' grief. (Genesis 26:34,35) What a contrast he was to Jacob, who made sure to marry a worshipper of the true God!—Genesis 28:6,7; 29:10-12,18.

Genesis 26:7—Why did Isaac not tell the whole truth in this instance?

Genesis 26:7: When the men of the place kept asking about his wife, he would say: "She is my sister." He was afraid to say, "She is my wife," for he said, "The men of the place might kill me because of Rebekah," for she was beautiful in appearance.

***it-2* 245 paragraph 6**

While malicious lying is definitely condemned in the Bible, this does not mean that a person is under obligation to divulge truthful information to people who are not entitled to it. Jesus Christ counseled: "Do not give what is holy to dogs, neither throw your pearls before swine, that they may never trample them under their feet and turn around and rip you open." (Matthew 7:6) That is why Jesus on certain occasions refrained from giving full information or direct answers to certain questions when doing so could have brought unnecessary harm. (Matthew 15:1-6; 21:23-27; John 7:3-10) Evidently the course of Abraham, Isaac, Rahab, and Elisha in misdirecting or in withholding full facts from

nonworshippers of Jehovah must be viewed in the same light.—Genesis 12:10-19; chap 20; 26:1-10; Joshua 2:1-6; James 2:25; 2 Kings 6:11-23.

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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?

78 *“Teaching the Word of God”*

(Acts 18:11)

1. For those who teach the Word of God,
 There is a joyful share.
The benefits that we receive
 Are far beyond compare.
We imitate the Son of God
 And how he taught with love.
And as we teach, the ones we're helping
 Draw close to God above.
2. As teachers of Jehovah's Word,
 We strive to do what's right,
So all may see sincerity
 As we reflect God's light.
With diligence we search God's Word,
 For it has news to tell.
So we can share our heart's good treasure
 And teach ourselves as well.
3. Jehovah gives us all we need
 To teach his precious Word.
So if we pray to ask for help,
 We know that we'll be heard.
We love what's in the Word of God;
 What's more, we know it's true.
And as we love the ones we're teaching,
 They'll soon be teachers too!

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What is the Condition of the Dead?

Nearly all religions teach that part of a person survives death. But what does the Bible teach?

God created the first man, Adam, from the dust. He had the opportunity to live forever. But when he deliberately disobeyed God, he was told that he would return to the dust—ceasing to exist.

What about others who died after Adam?

When Jesus was told that his friend Lazarus died, Jesus did not say that Lazarus had gone to heaven. Rather, he said: “Our friend has fallen asleep.”

What did he mean?

Just as someone in a deep sleep is inactive and unaware of his surroundings, the dead are not conscious of anything at all. Further, just as a person can be awakened from a deep sleep, the Bible shows that it is possible to be awakened from death.

Jesus did just that for his friend Lazarus. Lazarus had been dead for four days.

If some part of Lazarus had survived his death and gone to heaven, would Jesus take him out of heaven and force him to live on earth again? No. Lazarus was

asleep in the grave. Jesus gave him back his life and reunited him with his family.

The Bible promises a time when many people will be resurrected from the dead, just as Lazarus was.

Jesus spoke of this wonderful hope when he said: “The one who exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life.”

You may wonder: ‘Who will return to life? And what does the resurrection tell us about Jehovah God?’ Those questions are answered in lesson 6 of the brochure Good News from God! You can download a copy from jw.org.

Jehovah’s Witnesses would be happy to study the Bible with you.

Fill in the online request for a Bible study, and a Witness in your area will call to discuss the Bible at a time and place convenient for you.

Why Does God Allow Suffering?

(video transcript)

Why does God allow suffering?

Jehovah God didn't intend for humans to suffer. On the contrary, He gave the first human couple a wonderful start.

But Satan, a rebel angel, called God a liar and influenced the first humans to reject God's Authority.

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they chose to follow Satan. They rebelled against Jehovah and decided for themselves what was right and wrong.

Was Satan correct? Could humans rule themselves successfully without help from God? Time would be needed to settle the crucial issues raised by the rebels.

To illustrate: A rebellious student claims that the teachers method of instruction is wrong. He insists that he knows a much better way. Some students think that he is right, and they also become rebellious.

What should the teacher do? He has the authority to reprimand the rebellious students, but what effect would that choice have on the other students? They may lose respect for the teacher, thinking that he is afraid of being proved wrong.

But suppose the teacher allows the student to show the class his method. Then it would be proved to all present who is qualified to teach.

Jehovah has done something similar to what the teacher does. When Satan challenged Jehovah, millions of angels were watching. How Jehovah handled the rebellion would greatly affect all those angels, and eventually all intelligent creation.

Knowing this, Jehovah allowed Satan to rule this world for a time. Satan's rule has caused untold pain and suffering. However, once Jehovah's right and ability to rule is established beyond any doubt, Jehovah will undo all the damage caused by Satan's rebellion.

At that time, only people who choose to follow God's standards will inhabit the earth. Until then, what does God's patience allow us to do? And how can we show that we choose God as our ruler?

Those questions and others are answered in lesson 8 of the brochure *Good News From God!*

You can download a copy from jw.org. Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to study the Bible with you. Fill in the online request for a Bible study, and a witness in your area will call to discuss the Bible at a time and place convenient for you.

JESUS THWARTS ATTEMPTS TO ENTRAP HIM

MATTHEW 22:15-40 MARK 12:13-34
LUKE 20:20-40

- CAESAR'S THINGS TO CAESAR
 - MARRIAGE IN THE RESURRECTION?
 - THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS
-

Jesus' religious enemies are upset. He has just related illustrations that expose their wickedness. The Pharisees now conspire to ensnare him. They try to get him to say something for which he can be turned over to the Roman governor, and they pay some of their disciples to entrap him.—Luke 6:7.

“Teacher,” these say, “we know you speak and teach correctly and show no partiality, but you teach the way of God in line with truth: Is it lawful for us to pay head tax to Caesar or not?” (Luke 20:21, 22) Jesus is not fooled by their flattery, for behind it is hypocrisy and cunning. If he says, ‘No, it is not right to pay this tax,’ he can be accused of



sedition against Rome. But if he says, ‘Yes, pay this tax,’ the people, chafing at being subject to Rome, may misunderstand and turn on him. So how does he answer?

Jesus responds: “Why do you put me to the test, hypocrites? Show me the tax coin.” They bring a denarius, whereupon he asks: “Whose image and inscription is this?” “Caesar’s,” they reply. Then Jesus gives the masterful direction: “Pay back, therefore, Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.” —Matthew 22:18-21.

The men are amazed at Jesus’ words. Silenced by his skillful reply, they leave. But the day is not over, nor are the efforts to entrap him. After the Pharisees’ failed attempt, leaders of another religious group approach Jesus.

Sadducees, who say that there is no resurrection, bring up a question involving the resurrection and brother-in-law marriage. They ask: “Teacher, Moses said: ‘If any man dies without having children, his brother must marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother.’ Now there were seven brothers with us. The first married and died, and having no

offspring, he left his wife for his brother. The same thing happened with the second and the third, through all seven. Last of all, the woman died. So in the resurrection, of the seven, whose wife will she be? For they all had her as a wife.”—Matthew 22:24-28.

Drawing on the writings of Moses, which the Sadducees accept, Jesus replies: “Is not this why you are mistaken, because you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, neither do men marry nor are women given in marriage, but they are as angels in the heavens. But concerning the dead being raised up, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account about the thornbush, that God said to him: ‘I am the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob’? He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living. You are very much mistaken.” (Mark 12: 24-27; Exodus 3:1-6) The crowds are astounded by that answer.

Jesus has silenced both the Pharisees and the Sadducees, so now a coalition of these religious op-

posers comes to test him further. One scribe asks: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”—Matthew 22:36.

Jesus answers: “The first is, ‘Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah, and you must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.’ The second is this, ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”—Mark 12:29-31.

At hearing the answer, the scribe responds: “Teacher, you spoke well, in line with truth, ‘He is One, and there is no other besides him’; and to love him with one’s whole heart, with one’s whole understanding, and with one’s whole strength and to love one’s neighbor as oneself is worth far more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Seeing that the scribe has answered intelligently, Jesus tells him: “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.”—Mark 12:32-34.

For three days (Nisan 9, 10, and 11) Jesus has been teaching in the temple. Some people, such as

this scribe, have listened to him with pleasure. But not the religious leaders, who now lack “the courage to question him anymore.”

- ◇ The Pharisees make what attempt to entrap Jesus, and with what result?
- ◇ When the Sadducees try to ensnare him, how does Jesus foil their attempt?
- ◇ In answering a scribe’s question, what does Jesus stress as very important?

107 *The Divine Pattern of Love*

(1 John 4:19)

1. The pattern of love, we learn from Jehovah
Shows the way, guides our way.
In all he has done, his dealings have shown us
How to display his loving way.
He gave us his Son, his dearest possession
To cover our sin, forgiving transgression.
What proof of his love—its greatest expression!
His way is love, Yes, God’s way is love.
2. When we walk his way, our love for each other
Will be true, warm and true,
Will move us to care for all of our brothers,
Old ones and new, not just a few.
True love for our God and love for our brother,
We can’t have the one and not have the other.
The faults of our friends, we readily cover,
Proving our love, Our brotherly love.
3. The pattern of love, the bond that unites us
Lets us be family.
Our Father above now warmly invites us:
“Come taste and see real unity.”
Come share in the love and joy that define us;
God’s spirit and Word, he gives to refine us.
Our brothers and friends are here to remind us,
God’s way is love. Jehovah is love.

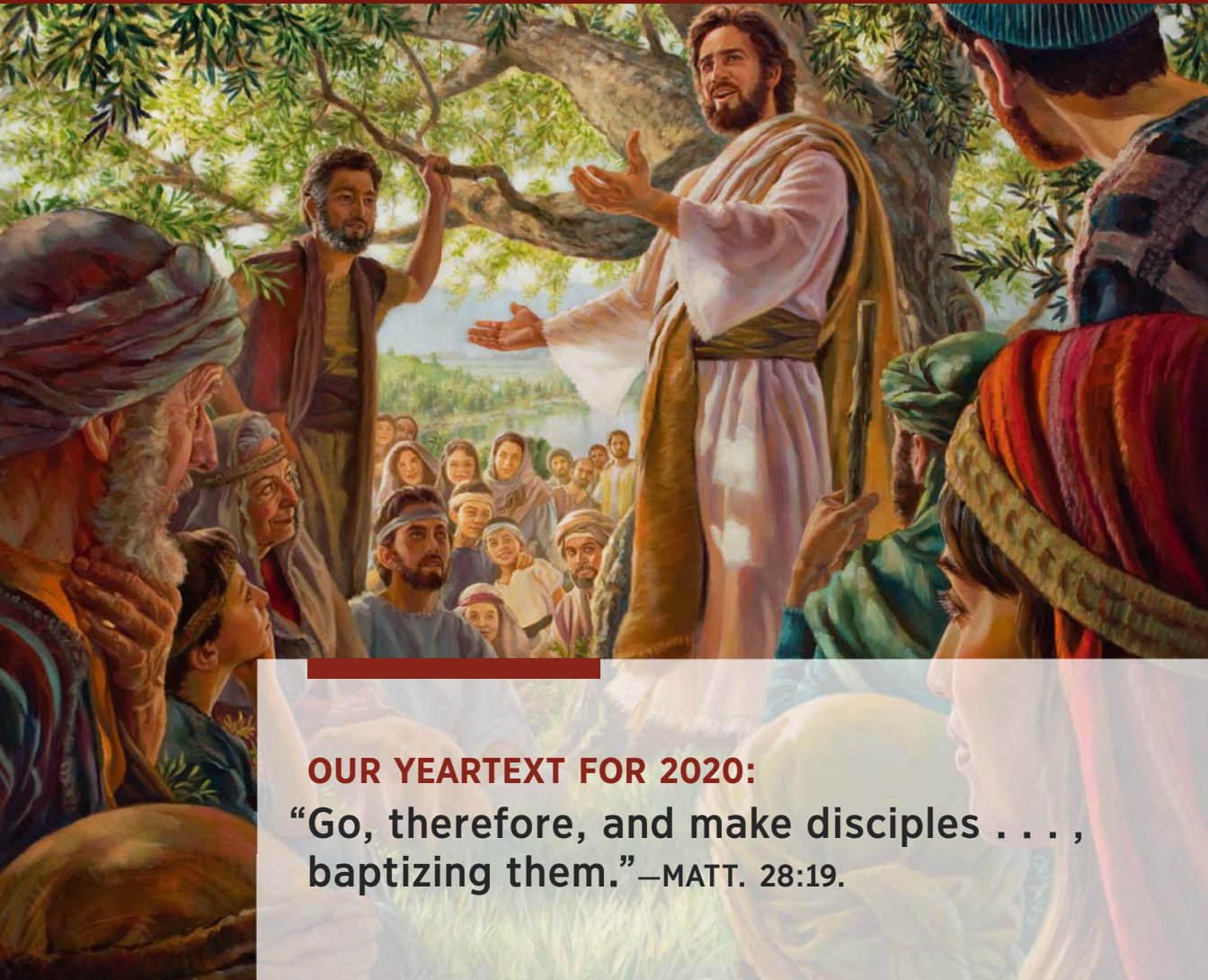
(See also Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:3; 2 Pet. 1:7.)

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**

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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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33 *Throw Your Burden on Jehovah*

(Psalm 55)

1. "Listen to my prayer," Jehovah.
Let yourself be found by me.
Feel the anguish deep inside me;
Help me unafraid to be.

(CHORUS)

*Throw your burden on Jehovah;
Trust in him to sustain and save you.
He will always give protection.
He is loyal; he is true.*

2. Had I wings just as a dove has,
Far from danger I would fly,
Safe from those who seek to hurt me,
Sheltered from their hateful cry.

(Chorus)

3. Comfort from our God, Jehovah,
Always brings us peace of mind.
He will help us bear our burden.
He is loving; he is kind.

(Chorus)

Jehovah Your God Values You!

“He remembered us when we were low.”—PS. 136:23.

SONG 33

Throw Your Burden on Jehovah

PREVIEW

Have you faced situations that made you feel worthless? This article will remind you of just how much Jehovah values you. It will discuss how you can keep your self-respect no matter what happens in your life.

CONSIDER the following three scenarios: A young brother is diagnosed with a debilitating disease. A hardworking middle-aged brother loses his job and, despite his earnest efforts, cannot find another. A faithful elderly sister becomes increasingly limited in what she is able to do in Jehovah's service.

² If you are experiencing something like one of the scenarios just described, you may feel that you are not useful anymore. Those situations can rob you of joy, destroy your self-respect, and interfere with your relationships with other people.

³ This world reflects Satan's view of human life. Satan has always treated humans as if they were of little value. He heartlessly offered Eve a path to freedom, knowing full well that the penalty for disobeying God was death. Satan has always controlled the commercial, political, and religious systems of this world. So it is not surprising that many businessmen, politicians, and religious leaders reflect his lack of respect for human life and dignity.

⁴ Jehovah, on the other hand, wants us to feel good about ourselves, and he supports us when we

1-2. What situations do many of Jehovah's people face, and what effect could that have on them?

3. How do Satan and those influenced by him regard human life?

4. What will we discuss in this article?

face situations that could make us feel worthless. (Ps. 136:23; Rom. 12:3) This article will discuss how Jehovah helps us in the following situations: (1) When we suffer illness, (2) when we experience economic hardship, and (3) when old age makes us feel as though we had nothing useful to offer in Jehovah's service. First, however, let us see why we can be confident that each of us is valuable to Jehovah.

JEHOVAH VALUES US

⁵ Even though we are made from the dust of the earth, we are worth far more than a handful of dirt. (Gen. 2:7) Consider just some of the reasons why we know that we are valuable to Jehovah. He created humans with the ability to reflect his qualities. (Gen. 1:27) In doing so, he elevated us above the rest of physical creation, putting us in charge of the earth and the animals.—Ps. 8:4-8.

⁶ Even after Adam sinned, Jehovah continued to value humans. He values us so highly that he gave his beloved Son, Jesus, as a ransom for our sins. (1 John 4:9, 10) Applying the benefits of the ransom, Jehovah will resurrect those who have died as a re-

5. What proves to you that humans are valuable to Jehovah?

6. What other proof do we have that Jehovah values imperfect humans?

sult of Adam’s sin, “both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Acts 24:15) His Word shows that we are precious to him no matter what our health condition, financial situation, or age may be.—Acts 10:34, 35.

⁷ We have added reasons for believing that Jehovah values us. He has drawn us to him and taken notice of how we responded to the good news. (John 6:44) As we began to draw close to Jehovah, he drew closer to us. (Jas. 4:8) Jehovah also invests time and effort in educating us, showing that we are precious to him. He knows the kind of individuals we are now and the kind we can become. And he disciplines us because he loves us. (Prov. 3:11, 12) What powerful evidence that Jehovah values us!

⁸ Some considered King David to be worthless, but he knew that Jehovah loved and supported him. That thought affected David’s view of his situation. (2 Sam. 16:5-7) When we feel low or face challenges, Jehovah can help us see things differently and he can help us climb over any obstacle. (Read Psalm 18:27-29.) When we have Jehovah’s backing, nothing can stop us from serving him with joy. (Rom. 8:31) Let

7. What added reasons do God’s servants have for believing that Jehovah values them?

8. How can the words recorded at Psalm 18:27-29 affect the way we view our challenges?

us now consider those three specific situations when we especially need to remember that Jehovah loves and values us.

WHEN DEALING WITH ILLNESS

⁹ Illness can take an emotional toll on us, making us feel as if we were no longer useful to anyone. We may feel embarrassed when people notice our limitations or when we must rely on others for help. Even when others are not aware of our illness, we may fight feelings of shame because of how limited we have become. At such distressing times, Jehovah lifts us up. How?

¹⁰ When we are sick, “a good word” can lift our spirits. (Read Proverbs 12:25.) In the Bible, Jehovah has stored up good words that remind us that we matter to him despite our sickness. (Ps. 31:19; 41:3) If we read and even reread those inspired words, Jehovah will help us to deal with the negative emotions that our illness brings.

¹¹ Consider Jorge’s experience. As a young man, Jorge contracted a debilitating disease that pro-

9. How might illness affect the way we view ourselves?

10. According to Proverbs 12:25, what can help us when we are sick?

11. How did one brother experience Jehovah’s help?



Reading Jehovah's inspired words will help us
deal with the negative emotions that an illness brings
(See paragraphs 9-12)

gressed rapidly and made him feel worthless. “I was not prepared for how my illness made me feel or the shame I felt because of the attention it attracted,” says Jorge. “As my condition declined, I thought of how my life would change. I was devastated, and I pleaded with Jehovah for help.” How did Jehovah sustain him? “Because I had trouble concentrating, I was encouraged to read short passages from Psalms that express Jehovah’s care for his servants. I reread

those few scriptures each day, and I found them to be comforting and reassuring. In time, other people began to see that I was smiling more. They even said that my positive attitude encouraged them. I realized that Jehovah had answered my prayers! He had helped me to change the way I looked at myself. I began to focus on what his Word says about how he views me despite my illness.”

¹² If you are dealing with an illness, be assured that Jehovah knows what you are going through. Beg him for help so that you can develop a wholesome view of your situation. Then use the Bible to retrieve the good words Jehovah has stored up for you. Focus on passages that show how much Jehovah values his servants. As you do, you will see that Jehovah is good to all those who serve him faithfully.—Ps. 84:11.

WHEN DEALING WITH ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

¹³ Every family head wants to be able to provide the necessities of life for his family. But suppose that, through no fault of his own, a brother loses his job. He diligently tries to find another one but has

12. When dealing with an illness, how can you experience Jehovah’s support?

13. How could the loss of a job make a family head feel?

no success. Faced with those circumstances, he may feel worthless. How can focusing on Jehovah's promises help him?

¹⁴ Jehovah always keeps his promises. (Josh. 21:45; 23:14) He does so for a number of reasons. First, his name, or reputation, is at stake. Jehovah has given his word that he will care for his loyal servants, and he feels obligated to fulfill that promise. (Ps. 31:1-3) In addition, Jehovah knows that we would be devastated if he did not care for those who are part of his family. He promises to provide for us both materially and spiritually, and nothing will stop him from fulfilling that promise!—Matt. 6:30-33; 24:45.

¹⁵ When we remember why Jehovah keeps his promises, we can face economic challenges with confidence. Consider the example of the first-century Christians. When great persecution arose against the congregation in Jerusalem, “all except the apostles were scattered.” (Acts 8:1) Think what that would have meant. Economic hardship! Christians likely lost their homes and businesses. Yet, Jehovah did not abandon them; neither did they lose their joy. (Acts 8:4; Heb. 13:5, 6; Jas. 1:2, 3) Jehovah

14. For what reasons does Jehovah keep his promises?

15. (a) What challenge did the first-century Christians face?
(b) What confidence does Psalm 37:18, 19 provide?

supported those faithful Christians, and he will support us.—Read Psalm 37:18, 19.

WHEN COPING WITH THE LIMITATIONS OF OLD AGE

¹⁶ As we get older, we might begin to feel that we have little to give to Jehovah. King David may have been plagued by similar feelings as he grew older. (Ps. 71:9) How can Jehovah help us?

¹⁷ Consider the experience of a sister named Jheri. She was invited to attend a maintenance training session at the Kingdom Hall, but she did not want to go. She said: “I’m old, I’m a widow, and I don’t have a single skill Jehovah can use. I’m useless.” The night before the training session, she poured her heart out to Jehovah in prayer. When she arrived at the Kingdom Hall the next day, she still wondered whether she should really be there. During the program, one of the speakers emphasized that our most important skill is our willingness to be taught by Jehovah. Jheri recalls: “I thought, ‘I have that skill!’ I started crying as I realized that Jehovah was answering my prayer. He was assuring me that I do have something

16. What circumstance could make us wonder if Jehovah values our worship?

17. What can we learn from the experience of a sister named Jheri?



Remembering that Jehovah promises to provide for us
will help us when we have difficulty finding a job
(See paragraphs 13-15)

of value to give and that he was willing to teach me!”
Looking back, Jheri says: “I walked into that session
feeling nervous, discouraged, and low. But I walked
out of it feeling confident, encouraged, and valued!”

¹⁸ As we get older, we can be certain that Jehovah

18. How does the Bible show that Jehovah continues to value our
worship as we get older?



**Focusing on what we can do, even in old age, will assure us
that Jehovah values us and our faithful service**
(See paragraphs 16-18)

still has work for us to do. (Ps. 92:12-15) Jesus taught us that no matter how limited our abilities or how small our efforts seem to us, Jehovah treasures whatever we can do in his service. (Luke 21:2-4) So focus on what you can do. You can, for example, speak about Jehovah, pray for your brothers, and encourage others to stay faithful. Jehovah considers you to be his fellow worker, not because of what you

accomplish, but because of your willing obedience to him.—1 Cor. 3:5-9.

¹⁹ How grateful we are to worship Jehovah, a God who truly values those who serve him! He created us to do his will, and it is true worship that adds real meaning to our lives. (Rev. 4:11) Though the world may view us as worthless, Jehovah is not ashamed of us. (Heb. 11:16, 38) When we feel weighed down by illness, economic hardship, or old age, let us remember that nothing can separate us from the love of our heavenly Father.—**Read Romans 8:38, 39.**

19. What assurance does Romans 8:38, 39 give us?

HOW DOES JEHOVAH SHOW THAT HE VALUES US WHEN WE . . .

- deal with illness?
- endure economic hardship?
- feel limited by old age?

SONG 30

My Father, My God and Friend

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

1. Life in this world can be hard.

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)