

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?”:** (10 min.)  
Ge 32:24—Jacob wrestled with an angel (*w03 8/15 25 ¶13*)  
Ge 32:25, 26—Jacob refused to give up until he received a blessing (*it-2 190*)  
Ge 32:27, 28—Jacob was blessed for his perseverance (*it-1 1228*)
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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 35
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GENESIS 32-33 | Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?

**32:24-28**

To receive Jehovah's blessing, we must exert ourselves to keep Kingdom interests first in our life. (1Co 9:26, 27) Aged Jacob demonstrated the spirit with which we should fulfill our Christian responsibilities. We show that we earnestly seek Jehovah's blessing by . . .

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No matter how difficult your circumstances may be, pray constantly for Jehovah's help and seek his blessing on your diligent efforts to serve him.

# 21 *Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom*

(Matthew 6:33)

1. Something precious to Jehovah,  
Bringing him such keen delight,  
Is his Kingdom by Christ Jesus,  
Which will set all matters right.

*(CHORUS)*

*Keep on seeking first the Kingdom  
And Jehovah's righteousness.  
Sing his praise among the nations,  
Serving him in faithfulness.*

2. Why be anxious for tomorrow,  
'Will we hunger, will we thirst?'  
For our God will make provision  
If we seek his Kingdom first.

*(Chorus)*

3. So declare the Kingdom good news;  
Help deserving ones to see  
That their hope is in Jehovah  
And in his Theocracy.

*(Chorus)*

## Genesis 32-33

**32** Jacob then went on his way, and the angels of God met up with him. <sup>2</sup> As soon as he saw them, Jacob said: "This is the camp of God!" So he named that place Ma-ha-na'im.

<sup>3</sup> Then Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother E'sau in the land of Se'ir, the territory of E'dom, <sup>4</sup> and he commanded them: "This is what you will say to my lord, to E'sau, 'This is what your servant Jacob says: "I have resided with La'ban for a long time until now. <sup>5</sup> And I have acquired bulls, donkeys, sheep, and male and female servants, and I send this message to inform my lord, in order to find favor in your eyes.'""

<sup>6</sup> In time the messengers returned to Jacob, saying: "We met your brother E'sau, and he is now on his way to meet you, and there are 400 men with him." <sup>7</sup> And Jacob became very frightened and anxious. So he divided the people who were with him, as well as the flocks, the cattle, and the camels, into two camps. <sup>8</sup> He said: "If E'sau attacks the one camp, then the other camp will be able to escape."

<sup>9</sup> After that Jacob said: "O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, you who are saying to me, 'Return to your land and to your relatives, and I will deal well with you,' <sup>10</sup> I am unworthy of all the loyal love and of all the faithfulness that you have shown toward your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan and now I have become two camps. <sup>11</sup> Save me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother E'sau, for I am afraid of him that he may come

and attack me, as well as the mothers and their children.

<sup>12</sup> And you have said: 'I will certainly deal well with you, and I will make your offspring like the grains of sand of the sea, which are too numerous to count.'

<sup>13</sup> And he spent the night there. Then he took some of his possessions as a gift for E'sau his brother: <sup>14</sup> 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 female sheep, 20 rams, <sup>15</sup> 30 camels nursing their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 full-grown male donkeys.

<sup>16</sup> He handed them over to his servants, one drove after another, and he said to his servants: "Cross over ahead of me, and you are to set a space between one drove and the next." <sup>17</sup> He also commanded the first one: "In case E'sau my brother should meet you and ask, 'To whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these ahead of you belong?' <sup>18</sup> then you should say, 'To your servant Jacob. It is a gift sent to my lord, to E'sau, and look! he himself is also behind us.'" <sup>19</sup> And he commanded also the second, the third, and all those following the droves: "According to this word, you are to speak to E'sau when you meet him. <sup>20</sup> And you should also say, 'Here is your servant Jacob behind us.'" For he said to himself: 'If I appease him by sending a gift ahead of me, then afterward when I see him, he may give me a kindly reception.' <sup>21</sup> So the gift crossed over ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

<sup>22</sup> Later during that night, he rose and took his two wives and his two female servants and his 11 young sons and crossed over the ford of Jab'bok. <sup>23</sup> So he took them and

brought them across the stream, and he brought over everything else he had.

<sup>24</sup> Finally Jacob was left by himself. Then a man began to wrestle with him until the dawn broke. <sup>25</sup> When he saw that he had not prevailed over him, he touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated during his wrestling with him. <sup>26</sup> After that he said: "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." To this he said: "I am not going to let you go until you bless me." <sup>27</sup> So he said to him: "What is your name?" to which he said: "Jacob." <sup>28</sup> Then he said: "Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, for you have contended with God and with men and you have at last prevailed." <sup>29</sup> In turn Jacob inquired: "Tell me, please, your name." However, he said: "Why is it that you ask my name?" With that he blessed him there. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob named the place Pe-ni'el, for he said, "I have seen God face-to-face, yet my life was preserved."

<sup>31</sup> And the sun rose upon him as soon as he passed by Pe-nu'el, but he was limping because of his hip. <sup>32</sup> That is why to this day the sons of Israel are not accustomed to eat the thigh sinew, which is on the socket of the hip joint, because he touched the socket of Jacob's hip joint by the thigh sinew.

**33** Now Jacob raised his eyes and saw E'sau coming, and 400 men were with him. So he divided the children among Le'ah, Rachel, and the two female servants. <sup>2</sup> He put the female servants and their children in front, Le'ah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them.

<sup>3</sup> Then he himself went ahead of them and bowed down to the earth seven times as he came near to his brother.

<sup>4</sup> But E'sau ran to meet him, and he embraced him and kissed him, and they burst into tears. <sup>5</sup> When he raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, he said: "Who are these with you?" to which he said: "The children with whom God has favored your servant." <sup>6</sup> At that the female servants came forward with their children and bowed down, <sup>7</sup> and Le'ah too came forward with her children, and they bowed down. Then Joseph came forward with Rachel, and they bowed down.

<sup>8</sup> E'sau said: "What is the purpose of all this camp of travelers that I have met?" He replied: "In order to find favor in the eyes of my lord." <sup>9</sup> Then E'sau said: "I have a great many possessions, my brother. Keep what is yours."

<sup>10</sup> However, Jacob said: "No, please. If I have found favor in your eyes, you must take my gift from my hand, because I brought it so that I could see your face. And I have seen your face as though seeing God's face, in that you received me with pleasure. <sup>11</sup> Take, please, the gift conveying my blessing that was brought to you, for God has favored me and I have everything I need." And he continued to urge him, so that he took it.

<sup>12</sup> Later E'sau said: "Let us move out and go, and let me go in advance of you." <sup>13</sup> But he said to him: "My lord is aware that the children are delicate and that in my care are sheep and cattle nursing their young. If they are driven too quickly for one day, then the whole flock will die. <sup>14</sup> Let my lord,

please, go on ahead of his servant, but I will continue the journey more slowly at the pace of my livestock and of the children until I come to my lord at Se'ir.”<sup>15</sup> Then E'sau said: “Please, let me leave some of my people with you.” To this he said: “Why do this? Just let me find favor in the eyes of my lord.”<sup>16</sup> So that day E'sau went on his way back to Se'ir.

<sup>17</sup> And Jacob journeyed to Suc'coth, and he built a house for himself and he made shelters for his herd. That was why he named the place Suc'coth.

<sup>18</sup> After journeying from Pad'dan-a'ram, Jacob arrived safely at the city of She'chem in the land of Ca'naan, and he set up his camp near the city.<sup>19</sup> Then he acquired a portion of the field where he pitched his tent from the sons of Ha'mor, the father of She'chem, for 100 pieces of money.<sup>20</sup> There he set up an altar and called it God, the God of Israel.

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?”:** (10 min.)  
Ge 32:24—Jacob wrestled with an angel (w03 8/15 25 ¶13)  
Ge 32:25, 26—Jacob refused to give up until he received a blessing (it-2 190)  
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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?

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GENESIS 32-33 | Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?

**32:24-28**

To receive Jehovah’s blessing, we must exert ourselves to keep Kingdom interests first in our life. (1Co 9:26, 27) Aged Jacob demonstrated the spirit with which we should fulfill our Christian responsibilities. We show that we earnestly seek Jehovah’s blessing by . . .

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- Participating regularly in the ministry
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 **ASK YOURSELF,** ‘In what areas of my life can I put forth greater effort to obtain Jehovah’s blessing?’



**No matter how difficult your circumstances may be, pray constantly for Jehovah’s help and seek his blessing on your diligent efforts to serve him.**



## **April 20-26**

Genesis 32-33

- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minute)

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

**"Are You Wrestling for a Blessing?":** (10 minutes)

Genesis 32:24-28

To receive Jehovah's blessing, we must exert ourselves to keep Kingdom interests first in our life. (1 Corinthians 9:26,27) Aged Jacob demonstrated the spirit with which we should fulfill our Christian responsibilities. We show that we earnestly seek Jehovah's blessing by ...

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No matter how difficult your circumstances may be, pray constantly for Jehovah's help and seek his blessing on your

diligent efforts to serve him.

Ask yourself, 'In what areas of my life can I put forth greater effort to obtain Jehovah's blessing?'

### **Genesis 32:24—Jacob wrestled with an angel**

**Genesis 32:24:** Finally Jacob was left by himself. Then a man began to wrestle with him until the dawn broke.

### **w03 8/15 25 paragraph 3**

The Scriptures abound with examples of those who put forth concerted efforts in seeking Jehovah. One such person was Jacob, who strenuously grappled with God's materialized angel till dawn. As a result, Jacob was given the name Israel (Contender with God) because he "contended," or "persisted," "exerted [himself]," "persevered," with God. The angel blessed him for his earnest endeavor.—Genesis 32:24-30, footnote.

## **Genesis 32:25,26—Jacob refused to give up until he received a blessing**

**Genesis 32:25,26:** When he saw that he had not prevailed over him, he touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob's hip was dislocated during his wrestling with him. After that he said: "Let me go, for the dawn is breaking." To this he said: "I am not going to let you go until you bless me."

### ***it-2* 190**

Jacob's Lameness. When Jacob was about 97 years old, he had the experience of grappling all night with a materialized angel of God. He prevailed in detaining the angel until the angel gave him a blessing. During the contest, the angel touched the socket of Jacob's thigh joint, throwing it out of place. The result was that Jacob walked with a limp. (Genesis 32:24-32; Hosea 12:2-4) Jacob thereafter had a reminder that, although he had "contended with God [God's angel] and with men so that [he] at last prevailed," as the angel said, he did not in reality defeat a powerful angel of God. It was only by God's purpose and permission that Jacob was

allowed to contend with the angel, so as to provide proof of Jacob's great appreciation of the need of God's blessing.

### **Genesis 32:27,28—Jacob was blessed for his perseverance**

**Genesis 32:27,28:** So he said to him: "What is your name?" to which he said: "Jacob." Then he said: "Your name will no longer be Jacob but Israel, for you have contended with God and with men and you have at last prevailed."

#### ***it-1* 1228**

The name God gave to Jacob when he was about 97 years old. It was during the night that Jacob crossed the torrent valley of Jabbok on his way to meet his brother Esau that he began struggling with what turned out to be an angel. Because of Jacob's perseverance in the struggle, his name was changed to Israel as a token of God's blessing. In commemoration of these events, Jacob named the place Peniel or Penuel. (Genesis 32:22-31; see JACOB Number 1.) Later, at Bethel the change in name was confirmed by God, and from then on to the end of his life Jacob was frequently

called Israel. (Genesis 35:10,15; 50:2; 1 Chronicles 1:34) Many of the more than 2,500 occurrences of the name Israel, however, are in reference to Jacob's descendants as a nation.—Exodus 5:1,2.

## **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

### **Genesis 32:11,13-15—How can we imitate Jacob's diligent efforts to make peace?**

**Genesis 32:11:** Save me, I pray you, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid of him that he may come and attack me, as well as the mothers and their children.

**Genesis 32:13-15:** And he spent the night there. Then he took some of his possessions as a gift for Esau his brother: 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 female sheep, 20 rams, 30 camels nursing their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys and 10 full-grown male donkeys.

### **w10 6/15 22 paragraphs 10-11**

10 Gracious speech and good communication help to establish and sustain peaceful relationships. In fact, doing what we can to improve our relationships with others can

improve our communication with them. Reaching out to others with sincere, kind acts—finding opportunities to help, giving a gift from the heart, extending hospitality—can contribute to open communication. It can even “heap fiery coals” on a person and may bring out good qualities, making it easier to talk things out.—Romans 12:20,21.

11 The patriarch Jacob understood this. His twin brother, Esau, was so angry with him that Jacob fled for fear Esau would kill him. After many years, Jacob returned. Esau came out to meet him, along with 400 men. Jacob prayed for Jehovah’s help. Then he sent ahead to Esau a large gift of livestock. The gift achieved its purpose. When they met, Esau’s heart had softened, and he ran and embraced Jacob.—Genesis 27:41-44; 32:6,11,13-15; 33:4,10.

### **Genesis 33:20—Why did Jacob name an altar “God, the God of Israel”?**

**Genesis 33:20:** There he set up an altar and called it God, the God of Israel

## ***it-1 980***

As a result of his encounter at Peniel with the angel of Jehovah, Jacob was given the name Israel, and after a peaceable meeting with his brother Esau, he dwelt at Succoth and then Shechem. Here he acquired a tract of land from the sons of Hamor and pitched his tent upon it.

(Genesis 32:24-30; 33:1-4,17-19) "After that he set up there an altar and called it God the God of Israel," or "God Is the God of Israel." (Genesis 33:20) In identifying himself by his newly given name Israel with the name of the altar, Jacob indicated his acceptance and appreciation of that name and of God's guiding him safely back into the Promised Land. The expression occurs only once in the Scriptures.

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

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- Song 21 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations

#### INITIAL CALL

**Question:** What is God's purpose for humans?

**Scripture:** **Ge 1:28**

**Link:** How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• *bhs* 29 ¶1



#### FIRST RETURN VISIT

**Question:** How do we know that God will accomplish his purpose for humans?

**Scripture:** **Isa 55:11**

**Link:** What will life be like when God fulfills his purpose?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• *bhs* 29 ¶2



#### SECOND RETURN VISIT

**Question:** What will life be like when God fulfills his purpose?

**Scripture:** **Ps 37:10, 11**

**Link:** What must we do to benefit from God's promises?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• *bhs* 35 ¶17



#### 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?

*“Make Sure of the  
More Important Things”*  
(Philippians 1:10)

1. How great our need today for discernment,  
To know the things that are true,  
To know which things have greater importance,  
To know which things we must do!

*(CHORUS)*

*Love what is good; Hate what is bad.  
Make God’s heart glad;  
Oh, what rich blessings it brings when we learn,  
When we discern,  
And when we do the important things!*

2. And what could be of greater importance  
Than sharing Kingdom good news,  
To search for those who hunger for truth  
And to help them God’s way to choose?

*(Chorus)*

3. If we take care to do what’s important,  
Then true contentment we’ll find.  
The peace surpassing all understanding  
Will guard our heart and our mind.

*(Chorus)*

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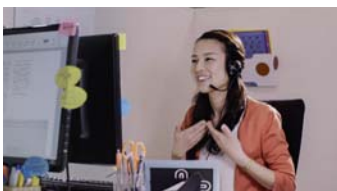
No matter how difficult your circumstances may be, pray constantly for Jehovah's help and seek his blessing on your diligent efforts to serve him.

## What Is Most Important to Me?

Jacob wrestled with an angel for something very important—Jehovah’s blessing. (Ge 32:24-31; Ho 12:3, 4) What about us? Are we willing to put forth earnest effort to obey Jehovah and obtain his blessing? For instance, if we must choose between attending a congregation meeting and working secularly for a few extra hours, what choice will we make? When we give Jehovah the best of our time, energy, and resources, he pours out on us “a blessing until there is nothing lacking.” (Mal 3:10) He will guide and protect us and care for our needs.—Mt 6:33; Heb 13:5.



WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION *STAY FOCUSED ON SPIRITUAL GOALS*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

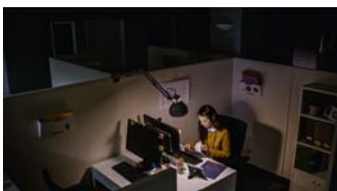


- How was the sister tested by something she loved?

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- How could our employment be a test for us?

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- Why did Timothy need to keep setting goals even when he was a grown spiritual man?—1Ti 4:16

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- How do we show what our “number one job” is?

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What is most important in your life?



# THE APOSTLES ASK FOR A SIGN

MATTHEW 24:3-51    MARK 13:3-37  
LUKE 21:7-38

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- FOUR DISCIPLES ASK FOR A SIGN
  - FULFILLMENTS IN THE FIRST CENTURY AND BEYOND
  - WE MUST KEEP ALERT
- 

## CONFIDENCE DURING THE FORETOLD DAYS

Jesus' discussion with his apostles regarding the sign of his presence in Kingdom power and of the end of the system of things is far from over. He now warns them about chasing after "false Christs and false prophets." Attempts will be made, he says, "to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones." (Matthew 24:24) But these chosen ones will not be misled. False

Christs can make only a visible appearance. In contrast, Jesus' presence will not be visible.

Referring to a larger tribulation that would break out at the end of the present system of things, Jesus says: "The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." (Matthew 24:29) The apostles hearing those chilling words do not know exactly what will occur, but it certainly will be awesome.

How will these shocking events affect mankind? Jesus says: "People will become faint out of fear and expectation of the things coming upon the inhabited earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken." (Luke 21:26) Indeed, Jesus is describing what will be the darkest period of human existence.

Encouragingly, Jesus makes it clear to the apostles that not all will be lamenting when 'the Son of man comes with power and great glory.' (Matthew 24:30) He had already indicated that God will intervene "on account of the chosen ones." (Matthew 24:22) So how should such faithful disciples react to the



shocking developments that Jesus is outlining? Jesus encourages his followers: “As these things start to occur, stand up straight and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is getting near.”—Luke 21:28.

How, though, would Jesus’ disciples who are living during this foretold period be able to determine the nearness of the end? Jesus gives an illustration about a fig tree: “Just as soon as its young branch grows tender and sprouts its leaves, you know that summer is near. Likewise also you, when you see all these things, know that he is near at the doors. Truly I say to you that this generation will by no means pass away until all these things happen.”—Matthew 24: 32-34.

Thus, when his disciples see the many different features of the sign being fulfilled, they should realize that the end is near. Admonishing the disciples who will be alive during that momentous period, Jesus says:

“Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father. For just as the days of Noah were, so the



presence of the Son of man will be. For as they were in those days before the Flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they took no note until the Flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be.” (Matthew 24:36-39) The event that Jesus uses as a parallel—the historic Flood of Noah’s day—had a global impact.

The apostles listening to Jesus on the Mount of Olives must undoubtedly recognize the need to keep alert. Jesus says: “Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come upon all those dwelling on the face of the whole earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that must occur and in standing before the Son of man.”—Luke 21:34-36.

Jesus is once again showing that what he is foretelling is not of limited scope. He is not prophesying

about events that would occur in a few decades and that would affect only the city of Jerusalem or the Jewish nation. No, he is pointing to developments that “will come upon all those dwelling on the face of the whole earth.”

He says that his disciples will need to keep alert, to be on the watch, and to be ready. Jesus underscores this warning with another illustration: “Know one thing: If the householder had known in what watch the thief was coming, he would have kept awake and not allowed his house to be broken into. On this account, you too prove yourselves ready, because the Son of man is coming at an hour that you do not think to be it.”—Matthew 24:43, 44.

Jesus goes on to give his disciples reason for optimism. He assures them that when his prophecy is being fulfilled, there will be a “slave” who is alert and active. Jesus draws on a situation that the apostles can readily picture: “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on coming

finds him doing so! Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings.” If, though, the “slave” develops an evil attitude and mistreats others, the master will “punish him with the greatest severity.” —Matthew 24:45-51; compare Luke 12:45, 46.

However, Jesus is not saying that a group of his followers will develop an evil disposition. What, then, is the lesson that Jesus wants to impress upon his disciples? He wants them to stay alert and active, as he makes clear in yet another illustration.

◇

- ◇ How will people react when they witness the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy?
- ◇ Jesus gives what illustration to help his disciples discern when the end is near?
- ◇ What indicates that the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy is global?
- ◇ What admonition does Jesus provide for his disciples living near the end of the system of things?

# 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.)

FEBRUARY 2020

THE  **WATCHTOWER**  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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APRIL 6–MAY 3, 2020

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### COVER PICTURE:

A young Israelite runs to Moses and Joshua to report that two men in the camp are behaving like prophets. Joshua asks Moses to restrain the men, but Moses refuses. Instead, he tells Joshua that he is happy that Jehovah put His spirit on the two men (See study article 8, paragraph 10)

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) February 2020 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2019 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

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# 113      *Our Possession of Peace*

(John 14:27)

1. Praise Jehovah, God of peace,  
    God of unity.  
    He will make all wars to cease,  
    Bring in harmony.  
Prince of Peace is Christ his Son,  
    Tender, calm, and kind.  
When the fight for right he's won,  
    Perfect peace we'll find.
2. We have left off angry words,  
    Making quarrels cease.  
    We have made from spears and swords,  
    Implements of peace.  
If this peace we want to keep,  
    Then we must forgive.  
    Peacefully as Jesus' sheep,  
    May we learn and live.
3. Peace from God gives proof to all;  
    He has blessed our way.  
    His commands we gladly keep,  
    Ready to obey.  
We would recommend our way,  
    Show our peaceful care  
    Till the Kingdom's perfect day  
    Brings peace ev'rywhere.

# Pursue Peace by Fighting Envy

*“Let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.”—ROM. 14:19.*

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## **SONG 113**

Our Possession of Peace

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## **PREVIEW**

Jehovah’s organization is peaceful. But this peace can be disturbed if we allow feelings of envy to grow. In this article, we will identify what causes envy. We will also discuss how to fight this harmful trait and how to promote peace.



JACOB loved all his sons, but he had special affection for 17-year-old Joseph. How did Joseph's brothers react? They became envious of him, and that envy made them bitter. Joseph had done nothing to deserve the hatred his brothers felt toward him. Even so, they sold Joseph into slavery and lied to their father, saying that a wild animal had killed his favorite son. Envy caused them to disrupt the peace of the family and to break their father's heart.—Gen. 37:3, 4, 27-34.

<sup>2</sup> In the Scriptures, envy\* is listed among the death-dealing “works of the flesh” that can disqualify a person from inheriting God's Kingdom. (Read **Galatians 5:19-21**.) Envy is often the root cause of such poisonous fruits as hostility, strife, and fits of anger.

<sup>3</sup> The example of Joseph's brothers shows how envy can damage relationships and disturb the peace that once existed in a family. Although we would never do what Joseph's brothers did, we all

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** As described in the Bible, **envy** can cause a person not only to want something others have but also to deprive them of what they have.

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1. How did envy affect Joseph's family?
  2. According to Galatians 5:19-21, why is envy so dangerous?
  3. What will we discuss in this article?

have an imperfect and treacherous heart. (Jer. 17:9) Little wonder, then, that we may at times struggle with feelings of envy. Let us review some warning examples in the Bible that help us identify reasons why feelings of envy may take root in our heart. We will then consider some practical ways to fight envy and promote peace.

### WHAT CAN CAUSE ENVY?

<sup>4</sup> *Material prosperity.* Isaac was a wealthy man, and the Philistines envied Isaac's prosperity. (Gen. 26:12-14) They even stopped up the wells that Isaac depended on in order to water his flocks and herds. (Gen. 26:15, 16, 27) Like the Philistines, some people today become envious of those who have more material possessions than they do. They not only want the things others have but also want to deprive them of what they have.

<sup>5</sup> *Being appreciated.* The Jewish religious leaders envied Jesus because he was much appreciated by the common people. (Matt. 7:28, 29) Jesus was God's representative, and he was teaching the truth. Even so, these religious leaders spread wicked lies and slander to ruin Jesus' good name. (Mark

---

4. Why did the Philistines envy Isaac?

5. Why did the religious leaders envy Jesus?

15:10; John 11:47, 48; 12:12, 13, 19) What warning lesson can we learn from this account? We must fight any tendency to envy those who have qualities that endear them to the congregation. Instead, we should try to imitate their loving ways.—1 Cor. 11:1; 3 John 11.

<sup>6</sup> *Theocratic privileges.* In the first century, Diotrephes envied those who took the lead in the Christian congregation. He wanted “to have the first place” among congregation members, so he spread malicious talk to discredit the apostle John and other responsible brothers. (3 John 9, 10) Although not going as far as Diotrephes, we too could begin to envy a fellow Christian who receives an assignment that we had hoped to get—especially if we feel that we are just as qualified as he is to care for that responsibility.

<sup>7</sup> Envy is like a poisonous weed. Once the seed of envy takes root in our heart, it can be difficult to destroy. Envy feeds on other negative feelings, such as improper jealousy, pride, and selfishness. Envy can choke the development of good qualities, such as love, compassion, and kindness. As soon as we

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6. How did Diotrephes show envy?

7. What effect can envy have on us?

see envy starting to sprout, we need to uproot it from our heart. How can we fight envy?

## **CULTIVATE HUMILITY AND CONTENTMENT**

**<sup>8</sup> We can fight envy by cultivating humility and contentment. When our heart is full of these good qualities, envy will have no room to grow. Humility will help us not to think too highly of ourselves. A humble person does not feel that he deserves more than everyone else. (Gal. 6:3, 4) Someone who is content is satisfied with what he has and does not compare himself with others. (1 Tim. 6:7, 8) When a person who is humble and content sees someone receive something good, he is happy for him.**

**<sup>9</sup> We need the help of God's holy spirit if we are to avoid the fleshly trait of envy and instead cultivate humility and contentment. (Read Galatians 5:16; Philippians 2:3, 4.) Jehovah's holy spirit can help us to examine our innermost thoughts and motives. With God's help, we can replace harmful thoughts and feelings with upbuilding ones. (Ps. 26:2; 51:10) Consider the examples of Moses and Paul, men who successfully fought the tendency to envy.**

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**8. What qualities can help us to fight envy?**

**9. According to Galatians 5:16 and Philippians 2:3, 4, what will holy spirit help us to do?**

Our heart is like soil,  
and our good qualities  
are like beautiful  
flowers. But envy is  
like a poisonous weed.



Envy can choke the  
development of good  
qualities, such as love,  
compassion, and kindness  
(See paragraph 7)

How can we fight weedlike  
envy? With the help of God's  
holy spirit, we can uproot  
envy and replace it with  
humility and contentment  
(See paragraphs 8-9)

<sup>10</sup> *Moses* had a lot of authority over God's people, but he did not jealously guard that privilege. For example, on one occasion, Jehovah took away some of his holy spirit from Moses and gave it to a group of Israelite elders who were standing near the tent of meeting. Shortly thereafter, Moses heard that two elders who had not gone out to the tent of meeting had also received holy spirit and had begun to behave as prophets. How did he react when Joshua asked him to restrain the two elders? Moses did not become envious of the attention these two men were getting from Jehovah. Instead, he humbly rejoiced with them in their privilege. (Num. 11:24-29) What lesson can we learn from Moses?

<sup>11</sup> If you are an elder, have you ever been asked to train someone else to care for a privilege in the congregation that you truly love? For example, you might love the privilege of conducting the *Watchtower* Study each week. But if you are humble like Moses, you will not feel threatened if you are asked to train another brother so that, in time, he will be able to handle this privilege. Instead, you will be happy to help your brother.

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10. What situation could have tested Moses? (See cover picture.)

11. How can elders imitate Moses?



How can Christian elders imitate the humble disposition of Moses?  
(See paragraphs 11-12)

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**12** Consider another situation that many older brothers are facing. For several decades, they have served as coordinators of the bodies of elders. But when they turn 80, they willingly give up their assignment. Circuit overseers who reach 70 years of age humbly give up that privilege and accept their

**12.** How are many Christians today showing contentment and humility?

reassignment to a different form of service. And in recent years, many Bethel family members around the world have begun new assignments in the field. These faithful brothers and sisters do not resent those who may now care for the assignments that they once had.

<sup>13</sup> *The apostle Paul* is another good example of someone who cultivated contentment and humility. Paul did not allow envy to develop. He worked hard in the ministry, but he humbly said: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle.” (1 Cor. 15:9, 10) The 12 apostles followed Jesus during his earthly ministry, but Paul did not become a Christian until after Jesus’ death and resurrection. Although he was eventually appointed to be “an apostle to the nations,” Paul did not qualify for the special privilege of becoming one of the 12 apostles. (Rom. 11:13; Acts 1:21-26) Rather than envying those 12 men and the close association they had enjoyed with Jesus, Paul remained content with what he had.

<sup>14</sup> If we are content and humble, we will be like Paul and show respect for the authority that

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13. Why might Paul have been tempted to envy the 12 apostles?

14. What will we do if we are content and humble?



Jehovah has given to others. (Acts 21:20-26) He has arranged for appointed men to take the lead in the Christian congregation. Despite their imperfections, Jehovah considers them “gifts in men.” (Eph. 4:8, 11) When we respect these appointed men and humbly follow their direction, we stay close to Jehovah and enjoy peace with our fellow Christians.

### **“PURSUE THE THINGS MAKING FOR PEACE”**

<sup>15</sup> Peace cannot survive if envy is allowed to thrive. We need to weed out envy from our own heart and avoid planting feelings of envy in others. We must take these important steps if we are to obey Jehovah’s command to “pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.” (Rom. 14:19) What specifically can we do to help others fight envy, and how can we promote peace?

<sup>16</sup> Our attitude and actions can have a big influence on others. The world wants us to make a “showy display” of the things we own. (1 John 2:16) But that attitude promotes envy. We can avoid nurturing envy in others if we choose not to talk constantly about the things we own or plan to buy. An-

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15. What do we need to do?

16. How can we help others to fight envy?

other way we can avoid promoting envy is by being modest about the privileges we have in the congregation. If we draw attention to the privileges that we have, we create fertile ground in which envy can grow. By contrast, when we show genuine personal interest in others and acknowledge the good that they do, we help them feel content and we promote unity and peace in the congregation.

<sup>17</sup> We can win the battle against envy! Consider again the example of Joseph's brothers. Years after they had mistreated Joseph, they met him in Egypt. Before Joseph revealed his real identity to his brothers, he tested them to find out if they had changed. He arranged a meal at which he gave the youngest brother, Benjamin, significantly more attention than he gave the others. (Gen. 43:33, 34) Yet, there is no indication that his brothers became envious of Benjamin. Instead, they showed genuine concern for their brother and for their father, Jacob. (Gen. 44:30-34) Because Joseph's brothers had let go of envy, they were able to help restore peace in their family. (Gen. 45:4, 15) Similarly, if we uproot any feelings of envy, we will help to keep our family and our congregation peaceful.

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17. What were Joseph's brothers able to do, and why?

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah wants us to fight envy and to pursue peace. We must work hard to do both of those things. As discussed in this article, we have a tendency to envy. (Jas. 4:5) And we are surrounded by a world that promotes envy. But if we cultivate humility, contentment, and appreciation, we will leave no room for envy. Instead, we will help to create a peaceful environment in which righteous fruit can grow.—Read James 3:17, 18.

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18. According to James 3:17, 18, what will happen if we help to create a peaceful environment?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 32:** During a meeting of the body of elders, an older brother who conducts the *Watchtower* Study in the congregation is asked to train a younger elder to care for this privilege. Though the older brother loves his assignment, he wholeheartedly supports the elders' decision by giving the younger brother practical suggestions and heartfelt commendation.

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### TO FIGHT ENVY, . . .

- how can holy spirit help us?
- how can contentment and humility help us?
- how can our having the right attitude help others?

**SONG 130**  
Be Forgiving

## 1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son  
For our sins to be forgiven  
And for death to be undone.

If we truly are repentant,

His forgiveness we can claim  
On the basis of Christ's ransom,  
Asking pardon in his name.

## 2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above  
And forgive each other freely,  
Showing empathy and love.

Putting up with one another,

Putting hurtfulness away;  
Showing honor to our brother,  
Showing love's surpassing way.

## 3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.

It will keep us from resentment,  
From the bitterness of hate.

When we imitate Jehovah,

Who is unsurpassed in love,  
We will truly be forgiving;  
We will be like God above.