



**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

“The Jubilee Year and Future Liberty”:
(10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Le 24:20—Does God’s Word promote personal revenge? (w09 9/1 22 ¶4)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Le 24:1-23 (10)



**APPLY YOURSELF
TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (16)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Give the householder a meeting invitation, and introduce (but do not play) the video *What Happens at a Kingdom Hall?* (11)

Bible Study: (5 min.) fg lesson 12 ¶6-7 (14)



**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS**

Song 139

Local Needs: (5 min.)

“Future Liberty—Thanks to God and Christ”:
(10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *As the Storm Approaches, Maintain Your Focus on Jesus!—Future Kingdom Blessings* (video category THE BIBLE).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
rr chap. 3 ¶21-30



The Jubilee Year and Future Liberty

The Jubilee year helped to prevent endless debt and poverty in Israel (Le 25:10; *it-1* 871; see cover picture)

The sale of land was essentially a lease based on the value of crops the land would produce (Le 25:15; *it-1* 1200 ¶2)

Jehovah blessed his people when they obeyed the law of the Jubilee year (Le 25:18-22; *it-2* 122-123)

In the near future, faithful humans will enjoy the full benefits of the symbolic Jubilee when they are completely liberated from sin and death.—Ro 8:21.



What must each of us do to receive the freedom that Jehovah has promised?

144 *Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!*

(2 Corinthians 4:18)

1. When the eyes of blind ones see again
And the ears of deaf ones hear again,
When the songs of children fill the air
And joy and peace are ev'rywhere,
When our loved ones will return to life,
To an earth that's free from sin and strife,

(CHORUS)

*You will see how God these things supplies,
If you keep your eyes on the prize.*

2. When the wolves and lambs will feed as one,
When the bears and calves bask in the sun,
Then a mere young boy will lead them all,
And they will heed his childish call.
When our tears belong to yesterday,
When our fears and pain have passed away,

(Chorus)

Leviticus 24-25

24 Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying:

² “Command the Israelites to bring to you pure, beaten olive oil for the lights, to keep the lamps lit constantly. ³ Outside the curtain of the Testimony in the tent of meeting, Aaron should arrange to keep the lamps lit from evening to morning before Jehovah constantly. It is a permanent statute for all your generations. ⁴ He should set the lamps in order on the lampstand of pure gold before Jehovah constantly.

⁵ “You will take fine flour and bake it into 12 ring-shaped loaves. Two tenths of an e'phah should go into each loaf. ⁶ You will place them in two sets of layers, six to the layer set, on the table of pure gold before Jehovah. ⁷ You should put pure frankincense on each layer set, and it will serve as the bread for a token offering made by fire to Jehovah. ⁸ On each Sabbath day, he should regularly arrange it before Jehovah. It is a lasting covenant with the Israelites. ⁹ It will become Aaron's and his sons', and they will eat it in a holy place, because it is something most holy for him from Jehovah's offerings made by fire, as a lasting regulation.”

¹⁰ Now among the Israelites was a son of an Israelite woman and an Egyptian man, and a fight broke out between him and an Israelite man in the camp. ¹¹ The son of the Israelite woman began to abuse the Name and to curse it. So they brought him to Moses. Incidentally, his mother was She-lo'mith, the daughter of Dib'ri of the tribe of Dan. ¹² They placed him in custody until Jehovah's decision was made clear to them.

¹³ Then Jehovah said to Moses: ¹⁴ “Bring the one who cursed to the outside of the camp, and all those who heard him must lay their hands on his head, and then the entire assembly must stone him. ¹⁵ And you should tell the Israelites, ‘If any man curses his God, he will answer for his sin. ¹⁶ So the abuser of Jehovah’s name should be put to death without fail. The entire assembly should stone him without fail. The foreign resident should be put to death the same as the native for his abusing the Name.

¹⁷ “If a man takes a human life, he should be put to death without fail. ¹⁸ Anyone who strikes and kills a domestic animal should make compensation for it, life for life. ¹⁹ If a man injures his fellow man, then what he has done should be done to him. ²⁰ Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, the same sort of injury he inflicted should be inflicted on him. ²¹ The man who strikes and kills an animal should make compensation for it, but the one who strikes and kills a man should be put to death.

²² “One judicial decision will apply for you, whether a foreign resident or a native, because I am Jehovah your God.”

²³ Moses then spoke to the Israelites, and they brought the one who uttered the curse to the outside of the camp, and they stoned him. Thus the Israelites did just as Jehovah had commanded Moses.

25 Jehovah spoke further to Moses on Mount Si'nai, saying: ² “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘When you eventually come into the land that I am giving you, then the

land will observe a sabbath to Jehovah. ³ Six years you should sow your field with seed, and six years you should prune your vineyard, and you will gather the land's produce. ⁴ But in the seventh year, there should be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath to Jehovah. You should not sow your field with seed or prune your vineyard. ⁵ You must not reap what grows on its own from the grain left after the harvest, and the grapes of your unpruned vine you must not gather. There should be a year of complete rest for the land. ⁶ However, you may eat the food that grows in the land during its sabbath; you, your male and female slaves, your hired worker, and the foreign settlers who are residing with you may eat it, ⁷ as well as the domestic and the wild animals in your land. Everything the land produces may be eaten.

⁸ “You will count off seven sabbath years, seven times seven years, and the days of the seven sabbath years will amount to 49 years. ⁹ You will then sound the horn loudly in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month; on the Day of Atonement, you should cause the sound of the horn to be heard in all your land. ¹⁰ You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return to his property and each of you should return to his family. ¹¹ A Jubilee is what that 50th year will become for you. You will not sow seed or reap what grew on its own from leftover grain nor gather the grapes of unpruned vines. ¹² For it is a Jubilee. It is to be holy to you. You may eat only what the land produces by itself.

¹³ “In this year of the Jubilee, each of you should return to his property. ¹⁴ If you sell anything to your fellow man or if you buy from him, do not exploit one another. ¹⁵ You should buy from your fellow man, taking into account the number of the years after the Jubilee, and he should sell to you according to the remaining years for crops. ¹⁶ If there are many years remaining, he may increase its purchase price, and when there are few years left, he should reduce its purchase price, because he is selling you the number of crops to be produced. ¹⁷ No one among you should exploit his fellow man, and you must be in fear of your God, for I am Jehovah your God. ¹⁸ By your carrying out my statutes and keeping my judicial decisions, you will dwell in security in the land. ¹⁹ The land will give its fruitage, and you will eat to satisfaction and dwell there in security.

²⁰ “But if you should say: “What will we eat in the seventh year if we may not sow seed or gather our crops?” ²¹ I will command my blessing for you in the sixth year, and the land will yield a crop sufficient for three years. ²² Then you will sow seed in the eighth year and eat from the old crop until the ninth year. Until its crop arrives, you will eat from the old.

²³ “The land should not be sold on a permanent basis, because the land is mine. For you are foreign residents and settlers from my standpoint. ²⁴ Throughout the land of your possession, you should grant the right of buying back the land.

²⁵ “If your brother becomes poor and has to sell some of his property, a repurchaser who is closely related to him

must come and buy back what his brother sold. ²⁶ If anyone has no repurchaser but he becomes prosperous and finds the means to repurchase it, ²⁷ he should calculate its value for the years since he sold it and refund the difference to the man whom he sold it to. Then he may return to his property.

²⁸ ““But if he does not find the means to get it back from him, what he sold will remain with the purchaser until the Jubilee year; and it will revert to him in the Jubilee, and he will return to his property.

²⁹ ““Now if a man should sell a home in a walled city, his right of repurchase will also continue until the end of the year from the time of his completing the sale; his right of repurchase will be valid a whole year. ³⁰ But if it is not bought back by the end of one full year, the house within the walled city will become the permanent property of its purchaser throughout his generations. It should not be released in the Jubilee. ³¹ However, the houses of settlements with no surrounding wall should be considered to be part of the field of the countryside. The right of repurchase should continue for it, and it should be released in the Jubilee.

³² ““As for the houses of the Levites within their cities, the Levites will have the permanent right to repurchase them.

³³ When the property of the Levites is not bought back, the house sold in the city belonging to them will also be released in the Jubilee, because the houses of the cities of the Levites are their property among the Israelites. ³⁴ Moreover, the field of pasture ground surrounding their cities may not be sold, for it is their permanent possession.

³⁵ “If your brother who is nearby becomes poor and cannot support himself, you must sustain him as you would a foreign resident and a settler, so that he may keep alive with you. ³⁶ Do not take interest or make a profit from him. You must be in fear of your God, and your brother will keep alive with you. ³⁷ You must not lend him your money on interest or give out your food for profit. ³⁸ I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to give you the land of Ca'naan, to prove myself your God.

³⁹ “If your brother who lives nearby becomes poor and he has to sell himself to you, you must not force him to do slave labor. ⁴⁰ He should be treated like a hired worker, like a settler. He should serve with you until the Jubilee year. ⁴¹ Then he will leave you, he and his children with him, and return to his family. He should return to the property of his forefathers. ⁴² For they are my slaves whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. They should not sell themselves the way a slave is sold. ⁴³ You must not treat him cruelly, and you must be in fear of your God. ⁴⁴ Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you, from them you may buy a male or a female slave. ⁴⁵ Also from the sons of the foreign settlers who are residing with you, from them and from their families that are born to them in your land you may buy slaves, and they will become your possession. ⁴⁶ You may pass them on as an inheritance to your sons after you to inherit as a permanent possession. You may use them as workers, but you must not subject your Israelite brothers to cruel treatment.

⁴⁷ ““But if a foreign resident or a settler among you becomes wealthy and your brother has become poor alongside him and must sell himself to the foreign resident or the settler who lives among you, or to a member of the family of the foreign resident, ⁴⁸ he will continue to have the right of repurchase after he has sold himself. One of his brothers may buy him back, ⁴⁹ or his uncle or the son of his uncle may buy him back, or any close relative, one of his family, may buy him back.

““Or if he himself has become wealthy, he may also buy himself back. ⁵⁰ He should calculate with his purchaser the time from the year he sold himself to him until the Jubilee year, and the money of his sale will correspond to the number of years. His workdays during that time will be assessed at the rate of a hired worker. ⁵¹ If there are many years remaining, he should pay his repurchase price in proportion to the years that are left. ⁵² But if only a few years remain until the Jubilee year, he should then calculate for himself and pay his repurchase price in proportion to the years remaining. ⁵³ He should continue to serve him year by year as a hired worker; and you should see to it that he does not treat him cruelly. ⁵⁴ However, if he cannot buy himself back on these terms, he will then go free in the year of Jubilee, he and his children with him.

⁵⁵ ““For the Israelites are my own slaves. They are my slaves whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God.



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(10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Le 24:20—Does God’s Word promote personal revenge? (w09 9/1 22 ¶4)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Le 24:1-23 (10)



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Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (16)

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Song 139

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“Future Liberty—Thanks to God and Christ”:
(10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *As the Storm Approaches, Maintain Your Focus on Jesus!—Future Kingdom Blessings* (video category THE BIBLE).

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rr chap. 3 ¶21-30



The Jubilee Year and Future Liberty

The Jubilee year helped to prevent endless debt and poverty in Israel (Le 25:10; *it-1* 871; see cover picture)

The sale of land was essentially a lease based on the value of crops the land would produce (Le 25:15; *it-1* 1200 ¶2)

Jehovah blessed his people when they obeyed the law of the Jubilee year (Le 25:18-22; *it-2* 122-123)

In the near future, faithful humans will enjoy the full benefits of the symbolic Jubilee when they are completely liberated from sin and death.—Ro 8:21.



What must each of us do to receive the freedom that Jehovah has promised?

January 25-31 / Leviticus 24-25

Song 144 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"The Jubilee Year and Future Liberty": (10 minutes)

The Jubilee year helped to prevent endless debt and poverty in Israel

Leviticus 25:10 You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return to his property and each of you should return to his family.

it-1 871

The God of Freedom. Jehovah is the God of freedom. He freed the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt. He told them that as long as they obeyed his commandments they would have freedom from want. (Deuteronomy 15:4, 5) David spoke of "freedom from care" within the dwelling towers of Jerusalem. (Psalm 122:6, 7) However, the Law provided that in case a man became poor he could sell himself into slavery so as to provide

the necessities for himself and his family. But freedom was granted by the Law to this Hebrew in the seventh year of his servitude. (Exodus 21:2) In the Jubilee (occurring every 50th year), liberty was proclaimed in the land to all its inhabitants. Every Hebrew slave was freed, and each man was returned to his land inheritance.—Leviticus 25:10-19.

See cover picture

[Cover Image:] Israelite slaves joyfully greeting their families as they return home during the Jubilee.

Caption: Israelite slaves return to their family and land during the Jubilee

The sale of land was essentially a lease based on the value of crops the land would produce

Leviticus 25:15 You should buy from your fellow man, taking into account the number of the years after the Jubilee, and he should sell to you according to the remaining years for crops.

***it-1* 1200 paragraph 2**

Since land was kept in the possession of the same family from

generation to generation, it could not be sold in perpetuity. The sale of land was, in effect, only the leasing of it for the value of crops it would produce, the purchase price being on a graduated scale according to the number of years until the next Jubilee, at which time all land possession would revert to the original owner if it had not been repurchased or redeemed prior to the Jubilee. (Leviticus 25:13, 15, 23, 24) This regulation included houses in unwalled cities, which were regarded as part of the open field. As for a house in a walled city, the right of repurchase remained only for one year from the time of sale, at which time it became the property of the buyer. In the case of houses in Levite cities, the right of repurchase continued to time indefinite because the Levites had no inheritance of land.—Leviticus 25:29-34.

Jehovah blessed his people when they obeyed the law of the Jubilee year

Leviticus 25:18-22: By your carrying out my statutes and keeping my judicial decisions, you will dwell in security in the land. The land will give its fruitage, and you will eat to satisfaction and dwell there in security. ""But if you should say:

“What will we eat in the seventh year if we may not sow seed or gather our crops?” I will command my blessing for you in the sixth year, and the land will yield a crop sufficient for three years. Then you will sow seed in the eighth year and eat from the old crop until the ninth year. Until its crop arrives, you will eat from the old.

it-2 122-123

The Jubilee law, when obeyed, preserved the nation from gravitating to the sad state that we observe today in many lands, where there are virtually only two classes, the extremely rich and the extremely poor. The benefits to the individual strengthened the nation, for none would be underprivileged and crushed into unproductiveness by a bad economic situation, but all could contribute their talents and abilities to the national welfare. With Jehovah providing blessings of the yield of the ground and with the education that was provided, Israel, while obedient, would enjoy the perfect government and prosperity that only the true theocracy could provide.—Isaiah 33:22.

In the near future, faithful humans will enjoy the full benefits

of the symbolic Jubilee when they are completely liberated from sin and death.—Romans 8:21.

[Image:] Collage: People transforming the earth into a paradise. 1. Cleaning up debris. 2. Building houses and walkways. 3. Cultivating gardens.

What must each of us do to receive the freedom that Jehovah has promised?

Spiritual Gems

Leviticus 24:20—Does God’s Word promote personal revenge?

Leviticus 24:20: Fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, the same sort of injury he inflicted should be inflicted on him.

w09 9/1 22 paragraph 4

If an Israelite assaulted a fellow Israelite and put out his eye, the Law allowed for just punishment. However, it was not up to the victim to take punitive action against the assailant or

one of his family members. The Law required that he take the matter to the established authorities—the appointed judges—for proper disposition. The knowledge that the willful perpetrator of criminal or violent acts against another could be punished in kind served as a powerful deterrent. But there is more to the matter.

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

Bible Reading: (4 minutes) Leviticus 24:1-23 (*th* study 10)

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2021

Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK



Song 144 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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Will You Serve as an Auxiliary Pioneer in March or April?

Would you like to do more in Jehovah’s service during the Memorial season? (2Co 5:14, 15) During March and April, auxiliary pioneers may choose a 30- or 50-hour requirement. If you are able to participate in this special activity, submit an application to the Congregation Service Committee. Each month, the names of those approved to serve as auxiliary pioneers will be announced to the congregation. In this way, the congregation can support the pioneers in the ministry. May all of us take full advantage of opportunities during the Memorial season to sharpen our preaching skills and to encourage one another.—1Th 5:11.



**“The love the Christ has compels us.”
—2Co 5:14**



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

Question: Does God listen to prayers?

Scripture: Ps 65:2

Link: What can we pray about?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• wp21.1 5

Return Visit

Question: What can we pray about?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:14

Link: How does God answer our prayers?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• wp21.1 10

Memorial Invitation Campaign (February 27–March 27)

“We’re here [or calling or writing] to invite you to a special event that will be attended by millions of people. It’s the anniversary of Jesus’ death.” Hand [or text or mail] the person an invitation. “This invitation shows the time and location of the event in our area [or how you can attend online]. We also invite you to a special talk the weekend before.”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?



mw21.01-E
200901

Bible Study: (5 min.) *fg* lesson 12 ¶6-7 (*th* study 14)

4. How can you draw close to God?

You can draw close to Jehovah by meditating on what you have learned from his Word. Contemplate his activities, his advice, and his promises. Prayerful meditation builds appreciation in our heart for God's love and wisdom.—*Read Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:1-3.*

You can be close to God only if you trust in him, if you have faith in him. But faith is like a living thing that needs feeding. You must constantly feed your faith by reviewing the basis for your beliefs.—*Read Matthew 4:4; Hebrews 11:1, 6.*

139 *See Yourself When All Is New* (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. Just see yourself, just see me too;
 Just see us all in a world that is new.
Think how you'll feel, how it will be,
 To live in peace, to be truly free.
No evil one will then prevail;
 Rule by our God cannot ever fail.
The time will have come for a new earthly start,
 The song of our praises
 will pour out from our heart:

(CHORUS)

*"We thank you, our God, for all you have done.
All things are new by the rule of your Son.
The fullness of our heart overflows in our song;
All glory and honor and praise to you belong."*

2. Now see yourself, and see me too;
 And look ahead to a world that is new.
No sight we see, no sound we hear
 Will cause alarm or give rise to fear.
All has come true, just as he said;
 Now over mankind, his tent is spread.
He now will awaken those sleeping in death;
 Their voices will join ours with
 ev'ry grateful breath:

(Chorus)

Song 144 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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Future Liberty—Thanks to God and Christ

What are your daily struggles? Are you a family head juggling many responsibilities? Are you a single parent trying hard to make ends meet? Are you a young one in school who faces harassment from peers? Are you dealing with poor health or the effects of advanced age? Everyone is dealing with something. Many Christians are dealing with multiple trials at the same time. Yet, we know that we will soon be liberated from these trials.—2Co 4:16-18.

Until then, we find comfort in knowing that Jehovah understands our struggles, appreciates our loyalty and endurance, and has grand blessings in store for us. (Jer 29:11, 12) Jesus too is personally interested in us. As we fulfill



our Christian obligations, we have his assurance: “I am with you.” (Mt 28:20) When we stop and meditate on future liberty under God’s Kingdom, we strengthen our hope and our determination to endure present trials.—Ro 8:19-21.

WATCH THE VIDEO AS *THE STORM APPROACHES*, MAINTAIN YOUR FOCUS ON JESUS!—FUTURE KINGDOM BLESSINGS, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did mankind become alienated from God, and with what result?

- What future awaits those who are faithful to Jehovah?

- How is this wonderful future possible?

- What blessings of the promised new world do you anticipate?



See yourself in
the new world



**As the Storm Approaches,
Maintain Your Focus on Jesus!
Future Kingdom Blessings**

Raw transcript

With one act of defiance, mankind became lost, “alienated from the life that belongs to God.” Sin and death have become inescapable for every human born on earth, with the exception of one—Jesus Christ. He used his God-given powers to heal sicknesses, feed thousands—he even resurrected people back to life. Jesus performed many miracles while on earth. But are they simply a collection of stories from the past or clues to something far grander—a glimpse into a wondrous future, a future where God will “satisfy the desire of every living thing,” the “real life” that God promises to each of his faithful servants? But how can this beautiful future be possible? Because of what Jesus did for us. He came to earth for a purpose. He gave his life for those he loved. The curse of inherited sin and death could now be lifted from each one of us. If we look intently to Jesus, we will no longer be lost. He will show us the way “to the Father.”

restores even the most brokenhearted of repentant sinners.—Ps. 30:5; Isa. 66:13.

²⁰ Ezekiel's vision, at this point, may move us to ask ourselves, 'Am I really in awe of Jehovah's chariot?' We need to remember that the chariot represents a reality that exists right now. Never should we imagine that Jehovah, his Son, and all the angels might be blind to some problem that discourages us. Nor should we worry that our God will be late in responding to our needs or that his organization will fail to adapt to some new challenge arising in the volatile world around us. We do well to remember that Jehovah's organization is active, ever on the move. In fact, Ezekiel heard a heavenly voice crying out: "Wheel-work!"—evidently a command for the wheels to set themselves in motion. (Ezek. 10:13) Is it not awesome to contemplate the way Jehovah moves his organization? Our greatest awe, though, we reserve for Jehovah himself.

The One in Control

²¹ Ezekiel's attention was drawn from those wheels

20. Why should we be in awe of Jehovah's chariot?

21, 22. How might we explain what holds the chariot's parts in place?

upward, where he saw “the likeness of an expanse that sparkled like awesome ice.” (Ezek. 1:22) Far above the heads of the cherubs, the expanse stretched out, glistening in translucent glory. At this point, though, the mechanically inclined reader might be full of questions about the vehicle. For example, some might wonder: ‘What holds that platform up above the wheels? And how can the wheels function without axles to join them together?’ Keep in mind that this vehicle is not bound by physical laws, for it is symbolic, a depiction of a reality in the spirit realm. Note, too, these key words: “The spirit operating on the living creatures was also in the wheels.” (Ezek. 1: 20, 21) What spirit was operative on those cherubs and on the wheels?

²² Without question, it was Jehovah’s holy spirit, the most powerful force in the universe. That active force holds this vehicle together, empowers it, and governs its perfectly synchronized movements. With that in mind, let us follow Ezekiel’s gaze as it turns to the One in control of the chariot.

²³ **Read Ezekiel 1:26-28.** Throughout his description

23. What type of expressions does Ezekiel use to try to describe Jehovah, and why?

of this vision, Ezekiel often uses such expressions as “appearance,” “appeared to be,” “resembled,” and “something like.” But in these verses, that tendency intensifies. He seems to be trying to find words for sights that were almost beyond description. He saw “what looked like a sapphire stone, and it resembled a throne.” Can you imagine a throne carved from one huge, deep-blue sapphire? And there, seated on it, was a Personage. His “appearance resembled that of a human.”

²⁴ The majestic figure was discernible only in a general way, for Jehovah radiated flames of glory from the waist down and from the waist up. We may well imagine the prophet’s needing to squint and to shade his eyes as he gazed at the glorious form. Finally, Ezekiel noted this crowning touch to the vision: “There was a brilliance all around him like that of a rainbow in a cloud on a rainy day.” Have you ever felt your spirits lift when you caught sight of a rainbow? What a vivid reminder of the glory of our Creator! That colorful, serene arch in the sky may also remind us of

24, 25. (a) Of what does the rainbow surrounding Jehovah’s throne remind us? (b) How have such visions sometimes affected men of faith?

Jehovah's covenant of peace after the Deluge. (Gen. 9:11-16) Powerful though he is, the Almighty is a God of peace. (Heb. 13:20) Peace reigns in his heart and spreads to all those who worship him faithfully.

²⁵ What was the effect of seeing a depiction of the glory of Jehovah God? Ezekiel recorded what happened: "When I saw it, I fell facedown." Overcome with awe and godly fear, Ezekiel dropped to the ground. Other prophets had similar reactions on receiving visions from Jehovah; the experience must be deeply humbling, even overwhelming. (Isa. 6:1-5; Dan. 10:8, 9; Rev. 1:12-17) In time, though, such men were greatly strengthened by what Jehovah revealed to them. Ezekiel surely was. How, then, should we be affected when reading Scriptural accounts such as these?

²⁶ If Ezekiel was troubled by any doubts or misgivings about the situation of God's people there in Babylon, that vision must have strengthened him. Clearly, it did not matter whether God's faithful people were in Jerusalem or in Babylon or anywhere else. They would never be outside the reach of Jehovah's

26. How must Ezekiel's vision have strengthened him?

magnificent chariot! What satanic power could ever stand up against the God who is in control of such a glorious celestial organization? (**Read Psalm 118:6.**) Ezekiel saw, too, that the heavenly vehicle was not far removed from mankind. Why, its wheels touched the very earth! (Ezek. 1:19) So Jehovah was keenly interested in his faithful people there in exile. They would always be within the reach of their Father's loving care!

The Chariot and You

²⁷ Does Ezekiel's vision have meaning for us today? Without question! Remember, Satan is mounting ever greater attacks on the pure worship of Jehovah. He would love to convince us that we are alone, isolated, beyond the reach of our heavenly Father and his organization. Never give such lies a foothold in your mind or heart! (Ps. 139:7-12) Like Ezekiel, we have every reason to be filled with awe. We may not fall facedown as he did. However, should we not marvel and feel awestruck by the power, the speed, the maneuverability, the adaptability, and the sheer glory of

27. What meaning does Ezekiel's vision have for us today?

the heavenly part of Jehovah's universal organization?

²⁸ Remember, too, that Jehovah's organization has an earthly component. Granted, the earthly part is composed of imperfect humans. But think of what Jehovah has accomplished here on earth! All over the world, Jehovah has moved mere humans to do what they could never have done on their own. (John 14: 12) Just leafing through the pages of the book *God's Kingdom Rules!* may remind us of the amazing scope of the preaching work over the course of the past century. We may also call to mind the strides that Jehovah's organization has made in educating true Christians, in securing legal victories, and even in using the latest technology to carry out God's will!

²⁹ When we consider all that has been done regarding the restoration of pure worship during the last days of this corrupt system of things, it becomes ever clearer that Jehovah's chariot has been on the move. What an awesome privilege we have to be associated

28, 29. What shows that Jehovah's chariot has been on the move during the past century?

with this organization and to serve such a Sovereign!
—Ps. 84:10.

³⁰ Ezekiel’s vision has more to teach us, though. In the following chapter, we will take a closer look at those four remarkable “living creatures,” or cherubs. What can they teach us about our glorious Sovereign, Jehovah God?

30. What will we consider in the next chapter?

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1** What does the chariot that Ezekiel saw represent, and how do we know that?
- 2** What can we learn from the chariot’s wheels and the way the vehicle moved?
- 3** How was Ezekiel affected by his vision, and how does meditating on it affect you?
- 4** How can we show that we are awed by the privilege of serving Jehovah along with his organization today?

104 *God's Gift of Holy Spirit*

(Luke 11:13)

1. Sov'reign, Jehovah, merciful Father,
 Greater you are than our sinful hearts.
 Lighten our burden, soften our anguish,
 Give us the comfort your spirit imparts.
2. Father, we all fall short of your glory;
 Times there have been when we've lost our way.
 God, we implore you: Hear our petition.
 Give us your spirit to guide us each day.
3. When we are weary, weak, or discouraged,
 Your active force will our hearts renew.
 Give us the strength to soar like the eagles;
 May we receive holy spirit from you.

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ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

During a heavy storm at sea, an angel assures Paul that everyone aboard the ship will survive the perilous journey (See study article 46, paragraph 5)

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Light in a Darkened World

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. In these days, dark and lawless days,
Shines a light we can see.
Like the dawn of another day
That will soon come to be.

(CHORUS)

*Shining through the darkness,
Ours is a message so bright.
It offers hope and light—
Sparkling like the daylight,
Bringing tomorrow in sight—
So ends the night.*

2. Those who sleep need awakening
As the time ebbs away.
We give hope and encouragement.
For their future we'll pray.

(Chorus)

“Look Straight Ahead” to the Future

*“Your eyes should look straight ahead, yes,
fix your gaze straight ahead of you.”—PROV. 4:25.*

SONG 77

Light in a Darkened World

PREVIEW

It can be good to remember our past. But we do not want to become so focused on our past that we fail to make the most of the present or forget what will happen in the future. This article discusses three traps that could cause us to live in the past. We will consider Bible principles and modern-day examples that can help us to avoid all these traps.

IMAGINE the following scenarios. An elderly Christian sister reflects on good times from her past. Even though her life is more challenging now, she continues to do all she can for Jehovah. (1 Cor. 15:58) Every day she imagines herself and her loved ones living together in the promised new world. Another sister remembers that she was hurt by a fellow believer, but she chooses to let go of her resentment. (Col. 3:13) A brother is keenly aware of his past mistakes but focuses on staying faithful from now on.—Ps. 51:10.

² What do these three Christians have in common? All of them remember what happened in their past, but they are not living in it. Rather, they “look straight ahead” to the future.—Read Proverbs 4:25.

³ Why is it important to “look straight ahead” to the future? Just as a person cannot walk in a straight line if he is constantly looking back, we cannot move forward in our service to Jehovah if we are constantly looking back on our past.—Luke 9:62.

1-2. How can we follow the advice found at Proverbs 4:25? Give an example.

3. Why do we need to “look straight ahead” to the future?

⁴ In this article, we will discuss three traps that could cause us to live in the past.* They are: (1) nostalgia, (2) resentment, and (3) excessive guilt. In each case, we will see how Bible principles can help us, not to dwell on “the things behind,” but to stretch forward to “the things ahead.”—Phil. 3:13.

THE TRAP OF NOSTALGIA

⁵ **Read Ecclesiastes 7:10.** Notice that this verse does not say that it is wrong to ask: “Why were the former days *good*?” Good memories are a gift from Jehovah. Rather, the verse reads: “Do not say, ‘Why were the former days *better* than these?’” In other words, the trap lies in comparing our earlier circumstances with our present circumstances and concluding that everything is worse now. Another Bible translation renders this verse: “Never ask, ‘Oh, why were things so much better in the old days?’ It’s not an intelligent question.”

⁶ Why is it unwise to keep thinking that our life was

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** In this article, “to live in the past” means to keep thinking about our past—talking about it constantly, reliving it, or thinking that our life was better then.

4. What will we discuss in this article?
5. What trap does Ecclesiastes 7:10 warn us against?
6. Why is it unwise to keep thinking that our life was better in the past? Give an example.

better in the past? Nostalgia can cause us to remember only good things from our past. Or it can cause us to minimize the hardships we used to face. Consider, for example, the ancient Israelites. After leaving Egypt, they quickly forgot how hard their life had been there. Instead, they focused on the good food they had enjoyed. They said: “How fondly we remember the fish that we used to eat without cost in Egypt, also the cucumbers, the watermelons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic!” (Num. 11:5) But was it really “without cost” that they ate that food? No. The Israelites paid a heavy price; at the time, they were being severely oppressed as slaves in Egypt. (Ex. 1:13, 14; 3:6-9) Yet, they later forgot about those hardships

After leaving Egypt, what mistake did the Israelites make?

(See paragraph 6)



and longed for the past. They chose to focus on “the good old days” instead of focusing on the positive things that Jehovah had just done for them. Jehovah was not pleased with their attitude.—Num. 11:10.

⁷ How can we avoid the trap of nostalgia? Consider the example of a sister who began serving at Brooklyn Bethel in 1945. Some years later, she married a fellow Bethelite, and they served there together for many years. However, in the mid-1970’s, her husband became ill. She said that when he realized that his death was near, he gave her some good advice to help her cope with widowhood. He said to her: “We’ve had a happy marriage. Many people never experience that.” But he also urged her: “Don’t live in the past—although your memories will continue. Time will help you to heal. Don’t become bitter and feel sorry for yourself. Be glad you had these joys and blessings. . . . Memories are God’s gift to us.” Do you not agree that this was good advice?

⁸ Our sister took those words to heart. She served Jehovah faithfully until her death at the age of 92. Some years earlier, she said: “Looking back over 63 years in the full-time service of Jehovah, I can say that mine has truly been a satisfying life.” Why? She

7. What helped one sister to avoid the trap of nostalgia?

8. How did our sister benefit from not living in the past?

explained: “What really makes life satisfying is our wonderful brotherhood and the hope of living with our brothers and sisters on a paradise earth, serving our Grand Creator, the only true God, Jehovah, for all eternity.”* What an excellent example of someone who looked straight ahead to the future!

THE TRAP OF RESENTMENT

⁹ Read **Leviticus 19:18**. We often find it hard to let go of resentment if the person who treated us wrongly is a fellow believer, a close friend, or a relative. For example, a sister was wrongly accused by a fellow believer of stealing money from her. Later, the accusing sister apologized, but the sister who had been wrongly accused continued to focus on what had happened. Have you ever felt like that? Even if we have not faced that same situation, most of us have likely felt resentful and have believed that we could never let go of our resentment.

¹⁰ What can help us when we feel resentful? For one thing, remember that Jehovah sees everything. He is aware of all that we go through, including any

* See *The Watchtower*, July 1, 2004, pp. 23-29.

9. As referred to at Leviticus 19:18, when may we especially find it hard to let go of resentment?

10. What can help us when we feel resentful?

injustices we experience. (Heb. 4:13) He feels for us when we suffer. (Isa. 63:9) And he promises that he will eventually undo any harm that resulted from injustices we suffered.—Rev. 21:3, 4.

¹¹ We also want to remember that when we let go of resentment, we benefit ourselves. That is what the wrongly accused sister came to realize. In time, she was able to let go of her resentment. She recognized that when we forgive others, Jehovah forgives us. (Matt. 6:14) She did not minimize or excuse what her fellow believer had done, but she chose to let go of resentment. As a result, our sister was happier and was able to focus on her service to Jehovah.

THE TRAP OF EXCESSIVE GUILT

¹² Read 1 John 3:19, 20. Feelings of guilt are not unusual. For example, some feel guilty because of things they did before they learned the truth. Others feel guilty because of mistakes they made after baptism. Such feelings are common. (Rom. 3:23) Of course, we want to do what is right. But “we all stumble many times.” (Jas. 3:2; Rom. 7:21-23) Although we do not enjoy feeling guilty, it can do us some good. Why? Because feelings of guilt can move us to

11. How do we benefit ourselves when we let go of resentment?

12. What does 1 John 3:19, 20 acknowledge?



What can hinder us from looking straight ahead to the future?
(See paragraphs 5, 9, 13)

correct our course and to be determined not to repeat our mistakes.—Heb. 12:12, 13.

¹³ On the other hand, it is possible to feel *excessive* guilt—that is, to continue to feel guilty even after we have repented and Jehovah has shown that he has forgiven us. That type of guilt can be harmful. (Ps. 31:10; 38:3, 4) How so? Consider the example of one sister who struggled with guilt over her past sins. She said: “I felt that I might as well not exert myself in Jehovah’s service because it’s probably too late for me anyway.” Many of us can relate to this sister’s feelings. It is vital that we guard against the trap of

13. Why do we need to guard against excessive guilt?

excessive guilt. After all, just think how happy it would make Satan if we were to give up on ourselves—even though Jehovah has not given up on us!—Compare 2 Corinthians 2:5-7, 11.

¹⁴ Still, we may wonder, ‘How can I know for sure that Jehovah has not given up on me?’ In a sense, by asking that question, we also answer it. Decades ago, *The Watchtower* stated: “We [may] find ourselves stumbling and falling many times over some bad habit that has bitten more deeply into our former pattern of life than we had realized. . . . Do not despair. Do not conclude you have committed the unforgivable sin. That is just how Satan would like you to reason. The fact that you feel grieved and vexed with yourself is proof in itself that you have not gone too far. Never weary of turning humbly and earnestly to God, seeking his forgiveness and cleansing and help. Go to him as a child goes to his father when in trouble, no matter how often on the same weakness, and Jehovah will graciously give you the help because of his undeserved kindness.”*

¹⁵ Many of Jehovah’s people have found comfort in

* See *The Watchtower*, February 15, 1954, p. 123.

14. How can we be sure that Jehovah has not given up on us?

15-16. How have some felt when they realized that Jehovah had not given up on them?

realizing that Jehovah had not given up on them. For example, some years ago, one brother was moved by an experience published in the series “The Bible Changes Lives.” In the article, a sister acknowledged that because of her past experiences, it was difficult for her to believe that Jehovah could love her. She struggled with those feelings even years after she got baptized. However, as she meditated on the ransom, she began to see things differently.*

¹⁶ How did her experience affect the brother? He wrote: “When I was young, I fought an addiction to pornography. Recently, I suffered a relapse. I’ve sought the help of Christian elders, and I’ve made progress in overcoming my problem. The elders have assured me of God’s love and mercy. Yet, at times, I still feel worthless, as if Jehovah couldn’t possibly love me. Reading [this sister’s] experience really helped. I now realize that when I think God couldn’t possibly forgive me, in essence I’m saying that his Son’s sacrifice is not enough to cover my sins. I’ve clipped out this article so that I can read and meditate on it whenever feelings of worthlessness well up within me.”

¹⁷ Experiences like these remind us of the apostle Paul. Before becoming a Christian, he committed a

* See *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2011, pp. 20-21.

17. How did the apostle Paul avoid the trap of excessive guilt?

number of serious sins. Paul remembered what he had done, but he did not dwell on it. (1 Tim. 1:12-15) He viewed the ransom as a personal gift to him. (Gal. 2:20) Paul thus avoided the trap of excessive guilt and focused on giving Jehovah his best from that point forward.

LIVE FOR THE FUTURE!

¹⁸ What have we learned from examining the traps discussed in this article? (1) Good memories are a blessing from Jehovah; but no matter how good our life was in the past, our future in the new world will be better. (2) Others may hurt us, but when we choose to forgive, we are able to move forward.

18. What have we learned in this article?

Let us be determined
to live for the future
(See paragraphs 18-19)



(3) Excessive guilt can prevent us from serving Jehovah with joy. So, like Paul, we need to believe that Jehovah has forgiven us.

¹⁹ We have the prospect of living forever. And in God's new world, we will not be plagued with regrets about the past. Regarding that time, the Bible says: "The former things will not be called to mind." (Isa. 65:17) Just think: Some of us have grown old in Jehovah's service, but in the new world, we will be young again. (Job 33:25) Let us, therefore, be determined not to live in the past. Rather, let us look to the future and live for what is ahead!

19. How do we know that in the new world we will not be plagued with regrets about the past?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 49: Feelings of nostalgia, resentment, and excessive guilt are like heavy burdens that we drag along and that hinder us from walking forward on the road to life. **Page 52:** After we let go of these burdensome feelings, we feel relieved and happy, and we have renewed strength. Then we will be able to look ahead.

WHAT CAN HELP US TO AVOID THE TRAP OF . . .

■ nostalgia?

■ resentment?

■ excessive guilt?

SONG 142

Holding Fast to Our Hope

142 *Holding Fast to Our Hope*

(Hebrews 6:18, 19)

1. Mankind has stumbled for centuries in darkness.
Vain is their quest as they try to catch the wind.
Man's tragic flaw is revealed in its starkness;
None can they save, for they all have sinned.

(CHORUS)

*Sing with good cheer, for God's Kingdom is here!
His Son's mighty reign brings us freedom from fear.
Through him, at last, evil soon will be past;
This hope, like an anchor, is holding us fast.*

2. "God's day is near!" rings the Kingdom proclamation;
Men will no longer cry out to God: "How long?"
Soon he will free all his groaning creation.
Praise God Almighty, and join our song.

(Chorus)