

Song 8 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Nu 22:20-22—Why did Jehovah’s anger blaze against Balaam? (w04 8/1 27 ¶2)

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.) Nu 23:11-26 (2)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Use God’s Word”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Experience the Joy of Disciple-Making—Improve Your Skills—Unleashing the Power of God’s Word*.

Bible Study: (5 min.) fg lesson 5 ¶3-4 (6)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 38

“Jehovah Turns Persecution Into a Witness”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Interview With Brother Dmitriy Mikhaylov* (video category OUR ORGANIZATION).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 7 ¶24-30, box 7B

 Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing

The Moabites sought to harm the Israelites (Nu 22:3-6)

Jehovah acted in behalf of his people (Nu 22:12, 34, 35; 23:11, 12)

No one can successfully oppose Jehovah (Nu 24:12, 13; bt 53 ¶5; it-2 291)

Nothing, including persecution or disasters, can prevent the good news from being preached according to God’s will. When we experience personal hardships, do we rely on our heavenly Father and keep his worship our priority?



Jehovah Is Our Refuge

(Psalm 91)

C7 F F/A Dm

Je - ho - vah is our ref - uge, Our
 Though thou - sands will have fall - en And
 He'll keep us and pro - tect us From

Bb C7/G Gm C C7 F F/A

God in whom we trust. His shad - ow is our
 man - y at our side, The righ - teous and the
 snares a - long our way, From ter - rors in the

Dm Gm/Bb Gm D/A Gm/Bb C7 C13

shel - ter; Re - main in it we must. His
 meek ones Will nev - er be de - nied. So
 night - time, And ar - rows by the day. Yes,

F F/A Ab°

faith - ful ones he will de - fend, On
 in our hearts we need not fear; Ca -
 there will be no cause for dread, No

Jehovah Is Our Refuge

Gm D7/A Gm/Bb G7/B C G C7

this we know we can de - pend. Je -
lam - i - ty we will not come near. From
place where we will fear to tread. Je -

F Dm Gm/Bb D/A

ho - vah is a strong - hold, Ev - er
dan - ger he will shield us, For be -
ho - vah is our ref - uge, Ev - er

Gm Eb7/G C7/G Am/C C7 F

faith - ful, loy - al, and just.
neath God's wings - we'll re - side.
guard - ing us on our way.

king of the Am'or-ites, who lived in Hesh'bon."^a **35** So they kept striking him down, along with his sons and all his people, until none of his people survived,^b and they took possession of his land.^c

22 Then the Israelites departed and camped on the desert plains of Mo'ab across the Jordan from Jer'i-cho.^d **2** Now Ba'lak^e the son of Zip'por saw all that Israel had done to the Am'or-ites, **3** and Mo'ab became very frightened of the people, because they were so many; indeed, Mo'ab felt sick with fear because of the Israelites.^f **4** So Mo'ab said to the elders of Mid'i-an:^g "Now this congregation will devour all our surroundings, just as a bull devours the grass in the field."

Ba'lak the son of Zip'por was king of Mo'ab at that time. **5** He sent messengers to Ba'laam the son of Be'or at Pe'thor,^h which is by the River* in his native land. He summoned him, saying: "Look! A people has come out of Egypt. Look! They have covered the face[#] of the earth,^Δ and they are dwelling right in front of me. **6** Now, please, come and curse this people for me,ⁱ for they are mightier than I am. Perhaps I can defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I well know that the one whom you bless is blessed and the one whom you curse is cursed."

7 So the elders of Mo'ab and the elders of Mid'i-an traveled with the fee for divination in their hands and went to Ba'laam^k and conveyed to him Ba'lak's message. **8** At that he said to them: "Spend the night here, and I will bring back to you whatever word Jehovah speaks to me." So

22:5 *Evidently, the Euphrates. 22:5, 11 #Lit., "eye." 22:5, 11 ΔOr "land."

CHAP. 21

a De 3:2
Ps 135:10, 11

b De 3:3

c Jos 12:4-6

CHAP. 22

d Nu 33:48

e Jos 24:9
Jg 11:25

f Ex 15:15
De 2:25

g Nu 31:7, 8
Jos 13:15, 21

h De 23:3, 4
Jos 13:22
2Pe 2:15

i Ge 13:14, 16

j Nu 23:7
Jos 24:9
Ne 13:1, 2

k 2Pe 2:15
Jude 11

Second Col.

a Nu 22:20

b Nu 22:5, 6
Nu 23:7, 11
Nu 24:10

c Ge 12:1-3
Ge 22:15, 17
De 33:29

d Nu 24:13

e Nu 22:8

f Nu 22:35
Nu 23:11, 12

the princes of Mo'ab stayed with Ba'laam.

9 Then God came to Ba'laam and said:^a "Who are these men with you?" **10** Ba'laam said to the true God: "Ba'lak the son of Zip'por, the king of Mo'ab, has sent me a message, saying, **11** 'Look! The people who are coming out of Egypt are covering the face[#] of the earth.^Δ Now come and put a curse on them for me.^b Perhaps I may be able to fight against them and drive them out.'" **12** But God said to Ba'laam: "You must not go with them. You must not curse the people, for they are blessed."^c

13 Ba'laam got up in the morning and said to the princes of Ba'lak: "Go to your land, for Jehovah has refused to let me go with you." **14** So the princes of Mo'ab departed and returned to Ba'lak and said: "Ba'laam has refused to come with us."

15 However, Ba'lak again sent princes, more numerous and more distinguished than the first group. **16** They came to Ba'laam and said to him: "This is what Ba'lak the son of Zip'por has said, 'Please do not let anything hinder you from coming to me, **17** for I will honor you greatly and I will do anything you tell me to do. So come, please, and curse this people for me.'" **18** But Ba'laam answered the servants of Ba'lak: "If Ba'lak were to give me his own house full of silver and gold, I could not do anything beyond the order of Jehovah my God, whether small or great.^d **19** But please stay here tonight also, so that I may learn what else Jehovah will tell me."^e

20 Then God came to Ba'laam by night and said to him: "If these men have come to summon you, go along with them. But you may speak only the words that I tell you to say."^f

21 So Ba'laam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey* and went with the princes of Mo'ab.^a

22 But God's anger blazed because he was going, and Jehovah's angel stationed himself in the road to resist him. Now Ba'laam was riding on his donkey, and two of his attendants were with him. **23** And when the donkey saw Jehovah's angel standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it tried to turn off the road into the field. But Ba'laam began to beat the donkey to make it return to the road. **24** Then Jehovah's angel stood in a narrow path between two vineyards, with stone walls on both sides. **25** When the donkey saw Jehovah's angel, it began to squeeze itself against the wall and it jammed Ba'laam's foot against the wall, and Ba'laam began beating it again.

26 Jehovah's angel now passed by again and stood in a narrow place where there was no way to turn to the right or to the left. **27** When the donkey saw Jehovah's angel, it lay down under Ba'laam, so Ba'laam became furious and kept beating the donkey with his staff. **28** Finally Jehovah caused the donkey to speak,^b and it said to Ba'laam: "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?"^c **29** Ba'laam replied to the donkey: "It is because you have made a fool of me. If only I had a sword in my hand, I would kill you!" **30** Then the donkey said to Ba'laam: "Am I not your donkey that you have ridden on all your life until today? Have I ever treated you this way before?" He replied: "No!" **31** Then Jehovah

22:21 *Lit., "female donkey." **22:28** *Lit., "opened the mouth of the female donkey."

CHAP. 22

a 2Pe 2:15

Jude 11

b 2Pe 2:15, 16

c Nu 22:32

Second Col.

a 2Ki 6:17

b Nu 22:12

2Pe 2:15, 16

c Nu 22:23

Nu 22:25

Nu 22:27

d Nu 22:16, 17

Nu 24:10, 11

e Nu 23:26

Nu 24:13

f Nu 23:13, 14

uncovered Ba'laam's eyes,^a and he saw Jehovah's angel standing in the road with a drawn sword in his hand. At once he bowed low and prostrated himself on his face.

32 Then Jehovah's angel said to him: "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? Look! I myself came out to offer resistance, because your way is in defiance of my will."^b **33** The donkey saw me and tried to turn away from me these three times.^c Supposing it had not turned away from me! By now I would have killed you and let the donkey live." **34** Ba'laam said to Jehovah's angel: "I have sinned, because I did not know that it was you standing in the road to meet me. And now if it is bad in your eyes, I will go back." **35** But Jehovah's angel said to Ba'laam: "Go with the men, but you may speak only the words that I tell you." So Ba'laam continued going with the princes of Ba'lak.

36 When Ba'lak heard that Ba'laam had come, he immediately went out to meet him at the city of Mo'ab, which is on the bank of the Ar'non on the border of the territory. **37** Ba'lak said to Ba'laam: "Did I not send for you? Why did you not come to me? Did you think I am not able to honor you greatly?"^d **38** Ba'laam replied to Ba'lak: "Well, I have come to you now. But will I be allowed to say anything? I can only speak words that God puts in my mouth."^e

39 So Ba'laam went with Ba'lak, and they came to Kir'ia-th-hu'zoth. **40** Ba'lak sacrificed cattle and sheep and sent some to Ba'laam and the princes who were with him. **41** In the morning Ba'lak took Ba'laam and brought him up to Ba'moth-ba'al; from there he could see all the people.^f

23 Then Ba'laam said to Ba'lak: "Build on this spot seven altars,^a and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me."

2 Ba'lak immediately did just as Ba'laam had said. And Ba'lak and Ba'laam offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.^b **3** Ba'laam then said to Ba'lak: "Stay here by your burnt offering, and I will go. Perhaps Jehovah will get in touch with me. Whatever he reveals to me, I will tell you." So he went to a barren hill.

4 Then God got in touch with Ba'laam,^c who said to Him: "I set the seven altars in rows, and I offered up a bull and a ram on each altar." **5** Jehovah put this word in the mouth of Ba'laam:^d "Return to Ba'lak, and this is what you are to say." **6** So he returned and saw that Ba'lak and all the princes of Mo'ab were standing by his burnt offering. **7** Then he spoke this proverbial saying:^e

"Ba'lak the king of Mo'ab has brought me from A'ram,^f From the mountains of the east:

'Do come to curse Jacob for me.

Yes, come to denounce Israel.^g

8 How could I put a curse on those whom God has not cursed?

And how could I denounce those whom Jehovah has not denounced?^h

9 From the top of the rocks I see them,
And from the hills I see them.

As a people they dwell there alone;ⁱ

They do not count themselves among the nations.^j

10 Who can number the dust particles of Jacob^k
Or count even the fourth part of Israel?

CHAP. 23

a Nu 22:41

b Nu 23:13, 14
Nu 23:28-30

c Nu 22:20

d Nu 22:35

e Nu 23:18
Nu 24:3

f Ge 10:22
Nu 22:5
De 23:3, 4

g Nu 22:6

h Nu 22:12

i 1Ki 8:53

j Ex 33:16

k Ge 13:14, 16
Ge 22:17
Ex 1:7

Second Col.

a Nu 24:10
Jos 24:10
Ne 13:1, 2

b Nu 22:38
Nu 24:13

c Nu 22:11

d De 34:1

e Nu 22:41
Nu 23:1
Nu 23:28, 29

f Nu 22:35
Nu 23:5

g Nu 23:7
Nu 24:3

h Ps 89:35
Tit 1:2

i 1Sa 15:29

j Isa 14:24
Isa 46:10
Mic 7:20

Let me* die the death of the upright,
And let my end be like theirs."

11 Ba'lak then said to Ba'laam: "What have you done to me? I brought you to put a curse on my enemies, and here you have done nothing but bless them."^a **12** He answered: "Must I not speak whatever Jehovah puts in my mouth?"^b

13 Ba'lak said to him: "Please come with me to another place from which you can see them. You will see only a part of them; you will not see them all. Put a curse on them for me from there."^c **14** So he took him to the field of Zo'phim, to the top of Pis'gah,^d and built seven altars and offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.^e **15** So Ba'laam said to Ba'lak: "Stay here by your burnt offering while I get in touch with Him over there." **16** And Jehovah got in touch with Ba'laam and put this word in his mouth:^f "Return to Ba'lak, and this is what you are to say." **17** So he came to him and saw that he was waiting by his burnt offering, and the princes of Mo'ab were with him. Ba'lak asked him: "What has Jehovah said?" **18** Then he spoke this proverbial saying:^g

"Get up, Ba'lak, and listen.

Hear me, O son of Zip'por.

19 God is not a mere man who tells lies,^h

Nor a son of man who changes his mind.ⁱ

When he says something, will he not do it?

When he speaks, will he not carry it out?^j

20 Look! I have been taken to
bless;

23:10 *Or "my soul." **23:19** *Or "who feels regret."

Now He has blessed,^a and
I cannot reverse it.^b

- 21** He does not tolerate any magical power against Jacob,
And he does not allow any trouble against Israel.
Jehovah his God is with them,^c
And he is loudly hailed as king among them.
- 22** God is bringing them out of Egypt.^d
He is like the horns of a wild bull for them.^e
- 23** For there are no omens of doom against Jacob,^f
Nor any divination against Israel.^g
At this time it may be said about Jacob and Israel:
'Look at what God has done!'
- 24** Here is a people who will rise up like a lion,
And like the lion, it will raise itself up.^h
It will not lie down until it eats prey
And drinks the blood of the slain ones."

25 Ba'lak then said to Ba'laam: "If on the one hand you cannot put any curse on him, then on the other hand you should not bless him either."
26 Ba'laam answered Ba'lak: "Did I not say to you, 'I will do all that Jehovah says?'"ⁱ

27 Ba'lak said to Ba'laam: "Please come and let me take you to yet another place. Perhaps it will be right in the eyes of the true God for you to put a curse on him for me from there."^j **28** So Ba'lak took Ba'laam to the top of Pe'or, which looks toward Je-shi'mon.^{*k} **29** Then Ba'laam said to Ba'lak: "Build seven altars on this spot, and prepare seven

23:28 *Or possibly, "the desert; the wilderness."

CHAP. 23

a Ge 12:1, 2
Ge 22:15,17
Nu 22:12

b Nu 22:18

c Ex 13:21
Ex 23:20
Ex 29:45
Isa 8:10

d Ex 20:2

e Nu 24:8

f Ge 12:1, 3

g Nu 22:7

h Nu 24:9

i Nu 22:38
Nu 23:12

j Nu 23:13

k Nu 21:20

Second Col.

a Nu 22:41
Nu 23:1,14

CHAP. 24

b Nu 23:3, 15
Nu 23:23

c Nu 2:2
Nu 23:9

d 1Sa 19:20

e Nu 23:7, 18

f Nu 24:16

g Nu 1:52
Nu 2:2

h Nu 22:11

i De 8:7

j Ge 49:10
Ps 2:6
Joh 1:49

k Nu 24:20

l 1Ch 14:2
Da 2:44
Re 11:15

bulls and seven rams for me."^a

30 So Ba'lak did just as Ba'laam had said, and he offered up a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 When Ba'laam saw that it pleased* Jehovah to bless Israel, he did not go away again to search for omens of doom,^b but he turned his face to the wilderness. **2** When Ba'laam raised his eyes and saw Israel encamped by his tribes,^c then the spirit of God came upon him.^d **3** He then spoke this proverbial saying:^e

"The saying of Ba'laam the son of Be'or,
And the saying of a man whose eyes have been opened,

4 The saying of the one hearing the word of God,
Who saw a vision of the Almighty,
Who has bowed down with his eyes uncovered:^f

5 How beautiful are your tents, O Jacob,
Your tabernacles,
O Israel!^g

6 Like the valleys* they have extended a long way,^h
Like gardens by the river,
Like aloes that Jehovah has planted,
Like cedars by the waters.

7 Water keeps trickling from his two leather buckets,
And his seed* is sown by many waters.ⁱ
His king^j also will be greater than A'gag,^k
And his kingdom will be exalted.^l

8 God is bringing him out of Egypt;
He is like the horns of a wild bull for them.

24:1 *Lit., "was good in the eyes of."
24:6 *Or "wadis." 24:7 *Or "offspring."

He will consume the nations,
his oppressors,^a

And their bones he will
gnaw, and he will shatter
them with his arrows.

- 9** He has crouched down, he
has lain down like the lion,
And like a lion, who dares
rouse him?

Those blessing you are
blessed,

And those cursing you are
cursed.”^b

10 Then Ba’lak became furi-
ous with Ba’laam. Ba’lak scorn-
fully clapped his hands together
and said to Ba’laam: “It was to
put a curse on my enemies that
I called you,^c but now you have
done nothing but bless them
these three times. **11** Now go
home immediately. I intended to
honor you greatly,^d but look! Je-
hovah has deprived you of hon-
or.”

12 Ba’laam replied to Ba’lak:
“Did I not say to the messengers
you sent, **13** ‘If Ba’lak were to
give me his house full of silver
and gold, I could not of my own
will* do anything beyond the or-
der of Jehovah, whether good
or bad. I will only speak what
Jehovah will tell me?’^e **14** And
now I am going away to my peo-
ple. Come and let me advise you
what this people will do to your
people in the future.”* **15** So
he spoke this proverbial saying:^f

“The saying of Ba’laam
the son of Be’or,

And the saying of a man
whose eyes have been
opened,^g

- 16** The saying of the one hear-
ing the word of God,
And the one having the
knowledge of the Most
High,

24:13 *Lit., “from my heart.” 24:14
*Or “in the end of the days.”

CHAP. 24

a Ex 23:27
De 9:5

b Ge 12:1-3
Ge 27:29

c Nu 22:10, 11
Nu 23:11
Ne 13:1, 2

d Nu 22:16, 17

e Nu 22:18, 38

f Nu 23:7

g Nu 24:3, 4

Second Col.

a Re 22:16

b Ps 110:2
Heb 1:8

c 2Sa 7:16, 17
Isa 9:7

d 2Sa 8:2
1Ch 18:2
Ps 108:9

e Ge 27:37
2Sa 8:14
Am 9:11, 12

f Ge 36:8
Jos 24:4

g 1Ch 4:42, 43
Eze 25:14

h Ge 49:10
Ps 2:9
Ps 72:11
Re 6:2
Re 19:15

i Ex 17:8, 14

j De 25:19
1Sa 15:3
1Ch 4:43

k Ge 15:18, 19
Jg 1:16

l Ge 10:2, 4
Eze 27:6

m Na 3:18

A vision of the Almighty
he saw

While bowing down with his
eyes uncovered:

- 17** I will see him, but not now;
I will behold him, but not
soon.

A star^a will come out of
Jacob,

And a scepter^b will rise out
of Israel.^c

And he will certainly break
apart the forehead of
Mo’ab^{*d}

And the skull of all the sons
of tumult.

- 18** And E’dom will become
a possession,^e
Yes, Se’ir^f the possession
of his enemies,^g

While Israel is displaying
his courage.

- 19** And out of Jacob one will
be subduing,^h

And he will destroy any
survivor from the city.”

- 20** When he saw Am’a-lek, he
continued his proverbial saying:

“Am’a-lek was the first of the
nations,ⁱ

But in the end he will
perish.”^j

- 21** When he saw the Ken’ites,^k
he continued his proverbial say-
ing:

“Secure is your dwelling,
and set on the crag is
your abode.

- 22** But someone will burn Ka’in
down.

How long before As-syr’i-a
carries you away captive?”

- 23** And he continued his pro-
verbial saying:

“Woe! Who will survive when
God does this?

- 24** Ships will come from the
coast of Kit’tim,^l

And they will afflict
As-syr’i-a,^m

24:17 *Or “the temples of Moab’s head.”

And they will afflict E'ber.
But he too will utterly perish."

25 Then Ba'laam^a got up and went and returned to his place. Ba'lak also went his own way.

25 When Israel was dwelling in Shit'tim,^b the people started to commit sexual immorality with the daughters of Mo'ab.^c 2 The women invited the people to the sacrifices of their gods,^d and the people began to eat and to bow down to their gods.^e 3 So Israel joined in worship of* the Ba'al of Pe'or,^f and Jehovah became enraged with Israel. 4 Jehovah said to Moses: "Take all the leaders* of these people and hang them up before Jehovah in broad daylight,^g that the burning anger of Jehovah may turn back from Israel." 5 Then Moses said to the judges of Israel:^g "Each one of you should kill his men who joined in worship of* the Ba'al of Pe'or."^h

6 But just then, there came one of the Israelites bringing near to his brothers a Mid'i-an-ite womanⁱ before the eyes of Moses and of all the assembly of the Israelites, while they were weeping at the entrance of the tent of meeting. 7 When Phin'e-has^j the son of El-e-a'zar the son of Aaron the priest saw it, he immediately rose up from the midst of the assembly and took a spear* in his hand. 8 Then he went after the man of Israel into the tent and pierced both of them through, the man of Israel and the woman through her genital parts. At that the scourge on the Israelites was halted.^k 9 Those who died from the scourge amounted to 24,000.^l

25:3 *Or "attached itself to." 25:4 *Lit., "heads." ^aLit., "in front of the sun." 25:5 *Or "attached themselves to." 25:7 *Or "lance."

CHAP. 24
a Nu 31:7, 8

CHAP. 25

b Jos 2:1
Mic 6:5
c Nu 31:16
1Co 10:8
Re 2:14
d Ex 34:15
1Co 10:20
e Ex 20:5
f De 4:3
Jos 22:17
Ps 106:28, 29
Ho 9:10
g Ex 18:21
h Ex 22:20
Ex 32:25, 27
De 13:6-9
i Nu 25:14, 15
j Ex 6:25
Jos 22:30
k Ps 106:30
l Nu 25:4
De 4:3
1Co 10:8

Second Col.

a Nu 25:7
b Ps 106:30, 31
c Ex 20:5
Ex 34:14
De 4:24
d 1Ch 6:4
Ezr 7:1, 5
Ezr 8:1, 2
e 1Ki 19:10
f Nu 31:7, 8
Jos 13:21
g 1Ch 1:32, 33
h Nu 31:1, 2
i Nu 25:3
Nu 31:16
j Nu 25:8, 15
k Nu 25:9

CHAP. 26

l Nu 25:7, 8
m Ex 30:12
Ex 38:26
Nu 1:2
n Nu 20:26
o Nu 22:1
Nu 33:48
p Jos 6:1

10 Then Jehovah said to Moses: 11 "Phin'e-has^a the son of El-e-a'zar the son of Aaron the priest has turned my wrath away from the people of Israel because he tolerated no rivalry at all toward me among them.^b So I have not exterminated the Israelites in my insistence on exclusive devotion.^c 12 Therefore, say, 'I am giving him my covenant of peace. 13 And it will serve as the covenant of a lasting priesthood for him and his offspring after him,^d because he tolerated no rivalry toward his God^e and he made atonement for the people of Israel.'"

14 Incidentally, the name of the Israelite man who was put to death along with the Mid'i-an-ite was Zim'ri the son of Sa'lu, a chieftain of a paternal house of the Sim'e-on-ites. 15 The name of the Mid'i-an-ite woman who was put to death was Coz'bi the daughter of Zur;^f he was a leader of the clans of a paternal house in Mid'i-an.^g

16 Jehovah later said to Moses: 17 "Harass the Mid'i-an-ites and strike them down,^h 18 because they have been harassing you with their cunning dealings against you in the affair of Pe'orⁱ and of Coz'bi the daughter of a chieftain of Mid'i-an, their sister who was put to death^j in the day of the scourge over the affair of Pe'or."^k

26 After the scourge,^l Jehovah said to Moses and El-e-a'zar the son of Aaron the priest: 2 "Take a census of the whole assembly of the Israelites from 20 years of age and up, by their paternal houses, counting all those who can serve in the army in Israel."^m 3 So Moses and El-e-a'zarⁿ the priest spoke with them in the desert plains of Mo'ab^o by the Jordan at Jer'i-cho,^p saying: 4 "Take a census of them from the age of 20 years

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Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Nu 22:20-22—Why did Jehovah’s anger blaze against Balaam? (w04 8/1 27 ¶2)

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

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 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Use God’s Word”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Experience the Joy of Disciple-Making—Improve Your Skills—Unleashing the Power of God’s Word*.

Bible Study: (5 min.) fg lesson 5 ¶3-4 (6)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 38

“Jehovah Turns Persecution Into a Witness”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Interview With Brother Dmitriy Mikhaylov* (video category OUR ORGANIZATION).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 7 ¶24-30, box 7B

 Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing

The Moabites sought to harm the Israelites (Nu 22:3-6)

Jehovah acted in behalf of his people (Nu 22:12, 34, 35; 23:11, 12)

No one can successfully oppose Jehovah (Nu 24:12, 13; bt 53 ¶5; it-2 291)

Nothing, including persecution or disasters, can prevent the good news from being preached according to God’s will. When we experience personal hardships, do we rely on our heavenly Father and keep his worship our priority?



April 19-25 / Numbers 22-24

Treasures From God's Word

“Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing”: (10 minutes)

The Moabites sought to harm the Israelites

Numbers 22:3-6: and Moab became very frightened of the people, because they were so many; indeed, Moab felt sick with fear because of the Israelites. So Moab said to the elders of Midian: “Now this congregation will devour all our surroundings, just as a bull devours the grass in the field.” Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. He sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor at Pethor, which is by the River in his native land. He summoned him, saying: “Look! A people has come out of Egypt. Look! They have covered the face of the earth, and they are dwelling right in front of me. Now, please, come and curse this people for me, for they are mightier than I am. Perhaps I can defeat them and drive them out of the land, for I well know that the one whom you bless is blessed and the one whom you curse is cursed.”

Jehovah acted in behalf of his people

Numbers 22:12: But God said to Balaam: “You must not go with them. You must not curse the people, for they are blessed.”

Numbers 22:34, 35: Balaam said to Jehovah's angel: “I have sinned, because I did not know that it was you standing in the road to meet me. And now if it is bad in your eyes, I will go back.” But Jehovah's angel said to Balaam: “Go with the men, but you may speak only the words that I tell you.” So Balaam continued going with the princes of Balak.

Numbers 23:11, 12: Balak then said to Balaam: “What have you done to me? I brought you to put a curse on my enemies, and here you have done nothing but bless them.” He answered: “Must I not speak whatever Jehovah puts in my mouth?”

No one can successfully oppose Jehovah

Numbers 24:12, 13: Balaam replied to Balak: “Did I not say to the messengers you sent, ‘If Balak were to give me his house full of silver and gold, I could not of my own will do anything beyond the order of Jehovah, whether good or bad. I will only speak what Jehovah will tell me’?”

bt 53 paragraph 5

Today, as in the first century, persecution of God's people has not silenced their preaching. Time and again, forcing Christians to move from one place to another—either prison or another land—has only

helped to introduce the Kingdom message to people in the new location. For instance, during World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses were able to give an outstanding witness in Nazi concentration camps. A Jew who encountered the Witnesses there relates: "The fortitude of prisoners who were Jehovah's Witnesses convinced me that their faith was based on the Scriptures—and I became a Witness myself."

it-2 291

Madness of Opposition to Jehovah. The prophet Balaam foolishly wanted to prophesy against Israel in order to receive money from King Balak of the Moabites, but Jehovah overruled and prevented his efforts. The apostle Peter wrote about Balaam that "a voiceless beast of burden, making utterance with the voice of a man, hindered the prophet's mad course." For Balaam's madness the apostle used the Greek word *paraphroni'a*, which has the thought of "being beside one's mind."—2 Pe 2:15, 16; Numbers 22:26-31.

Nothing, including persecution or disasters, can prevent the good news from being preached according to God's will. When we experience personal hardships, do we rely on our heavenly Father and keep his worship our priority?

[Image:] Two sisters preaching to a woman who is cleaning up her debris-filled home after a natural disaster.

Spiritual Gems

Numbers 22:20-22—Why did Jehovah's anger blaze against Balaam?

Numbers 22:20-22: Then God came to Balaam by night and said to him: "If these men have come to summon you, go along with them. But you may speak only the words that I tell you to say." So Balaam got up in the morning and saddled his donkey and went with the princes of Moab. But God's anger blazed because he was going, and Jehovah's angel stationed himself in the road to resist him. Now Balaam was riding on his donkey, and two of his attendants were with him.

w04 8/1 27 paragraph 2

Jehovah had told the prophet Balaam that he should not curse the Israelites. (Numbers 22:12) However, the prophet went with Balak's men with the full intention of cursing Israel. Balaam wanted to please the Moabite king and receive a reward from him. (2 Peter 2:15, 16; Jude 11) Even when Balaam was forced to bless rather than curse Israel, he sought the king's favor by suggesting that Baal-worshiping women be used to seduce Israelite men. (Numbers 31:15, 16) Thus, the reason for God's anger against Balaam was the prophet's unscrupulous greed.

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) Numbers 23:11-26 (*th* study 2)

Song 8 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

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“Jehovah Turns a Curse Into a Blessing”: (10 min.)

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 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

“Increase Your Joy in the Ministry—Use God’s Word”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Experience the Joy of Disciple-Making—Improve Your Skills—Unleashing the Power of God’s Word*.

Bible Study: (5 min.) fg lesson 5 ¶3-4 (6)

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INCREASE YOUR JOY IN THE MINISTRY

Use God's Word

God's Word has power! (Heb 4:12) It can even touch the hearts of those who do not know God. (1Th 1:9; 2:13) We receive great joy when someone demonstrates appreciation for a new Bible truth that we have shown him.

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF DISCIPLE-MAKING—IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS—UNLEASHING THE POWER OF GOD'S WORD, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did Neeta unleash the power of God's Word by helping Jade to see why it makes sense to consult God's Word?

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Often, the aim of persecutors is to stop our preaching work. However, our integrity under such difficult circumstances gives a powerful witness.

WATCH THE VIDEO INTERVIEW WITH BROTHER DMITRIY MIKHAYLOV, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What persecution did Brother Mikhaylov experience?

- How did Jehovah help Brother Mikhaylov to endure?

- How did Jehovah use the persecution of Brother Mikhaylov to give a witness to other prisoners?



5

What Is God's Purpose for the Earth?



1. Why did God create the earth?

Jehovah gave the earth to men and women. It is our home. Therefore, the first human couple, Adam and Eve, were not created to populate the heavens—God had already created angels to live in heaven. (Job 38:4, 7) Rather, God took the first man and settled him in a delightful paradise called the garden of Eden. (Genesis 2:15-17) Jehovah gave him and his future offspring the prospect of enjoying life without end on earth. *Read Psalm 37:29; 115:16.*

Originally, only the garden of Eden was a paradise. The first human couple were to fill the earth with their offspring. In time, they were to subdue the entire globe and make it a paradise. (Genesis 1:28) The earth will never be destroyed. It will always be mankind's home.

Read Psalm 104:5.

2. Why is the earth not a paradise now?

Adam and Eve disobeyed God, so Jehovah put them out of the garden. Paradise was lost, and no man has succeeded in restoring it. The Bible says: “Earth itself has been given into the hand of the wicked one.”—Job 9:24.

Read Genesis 3:23, 24.

Has Jehovah abandoned his original purpose for mankind? No! He is almighty. He cannot fail. (Isaiah 45:18) He will restore the human race to the way he meant it to be. *Read Psalm 37:11, 34.*

3. How will Paradise be restored?

Paradise will be restored on earth during Jesus' rule as God's King. In a battle called Armageddon, Jesus will lead

He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

D Bm G A D

There was a rea - son why God brought the truth to you And
God gave his own be - lov - ed Son in your be - half; On

G A Bm Em7 Asus4 A

called you from the dark - ness to the light. With - in your
this ac - count, He wants you to suc - ceed. If He did

D Bm G Em/G F#sus4 F#

heart, he saw the long - ing that you had To
not with - hold the gift of His dear Son, Then

Bm9 Bm Bm9/A Bm/A G

search for him and prac - tice what is right. You
nev - er doubt He'll give the strength you need. He

He Will Make You Strong

G D/F# Em Em/D

prom - ised him in prayer to do his will; He
won't for - get the faith and love you've shown; He

Em/C# F#7+5 Bm D/A G Dma7/F# Em11 A7sus4 *Chorus*

helped you then, and he will help you still. With
will not fail to care for all His own.

D Em11 D/F# G D/F#

Je - sus' blood He bought you, to God you now be - long. So

Em/C# F#7 Bm D/E E7 G/A A7

he will make you firm, and he will make you strong. He'll

He Will Make You Strong

D A/C# Bm7 D/A A/G G Dadd9/F#

guide you and pro - tect you, as he has all a - long. Yes,

Gadd9/B Gm/Bb D/A A7sus4 A7

he will make you firm, and he will make you

D

strong.

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Interview With Brother Dmitriy Mikhaylov

Raw transcript

I work as a street cleaner; either that or I do some other kind of work, like decorating or system administration. On April 20, they came to search the home of my wife and me. I was interrogated. And after a month, a court ruled to put me in pretrial detention. When they lead me out of the courtroom in handcuffs and put me into the vehicle, Yelena (my wife) was at the exit. From her words, I could sense that she felt as though she was losing me. They took me to the detention center in the city of Ivanovo. They moved me from cell to cell. And then they put me into what is known as the pressure cell. They told me I had to admit my guilt and tell them about my fellow worshippers—give them names, addresses, what they do, etcetera. For me, that would mean losing my loyalty to God. And the second thing was that it involved my loyalty to my fellow worshippers. In essence, it was about showing love. I said that for me, loyalty to Jehovah is above everything else, so whatever happens, I will remain loyal to God. I told them openly, directly. They pressured me physically and emotionally for several months. They brought me a Bible from the detention center's library. Thanks to fervent prayers, I felt how Jehovah gave me internal peace and calm. It proves that Jehovah doesn't just exist, but he thinks about us; he cares for us. Jehovah supported me through a letter from my dear wife. In it was the thought that trusting in Jehovah means seeing things the way he sees them. The prisoners who put pressure on me also expressed interest in spiritual things and started asking questions relating to my beliefs. Someone told me that if I am really a believer, I should have objects to prove it, such as a cross, which all believers wear. I told him that I could show him the Bible's viewpoint. From what I read, he made his own conclusions. And after some time, this prisoner came up to me and showed me that he wasn't wearing a cross anymore. When you are in prison, the ministry isn't just about opportunities to tell people about the truth from the Bible. It is more about Jehovah using it to help you keep a positive outlook and maintain joy. The more we concentrate on what we had before, the more we suffer. The quicker we accept the new circumstances, the quicker our joy returns to us along with the opportunity to make good use of the new circumstances. The appeal instance court ruled to release me. It was, of course, quite an unexpected decision. At the exit, my dear wife and other fellow worshippers (brothers and sisters) not just from my hometown but from other cities too met me. Yelena and I thought it would be good to collect some essentials, so we bought some things and went to the detention center. And afterward, one of the prisoners wrote me a letter of thanks: "I heard how everyone came to meet you. "I tried to imagine how cool it is "to be loved, valued, and missed. "For some, there's not enough of that in life. Take care of yourself, Dima!" The letters from my wife were such a big support for me at that time. To be honest, I saw her letters as if it were Jehovah using her to speak to me. "Nobody loves us as strongly as God. "You can't right now feel my love to the full extent "or the love of your family and friends. "But the main thing is that you are in God's hands, "and that is what's more important. "He loves you in a special way right now "and very gently looks after you and cares for your feelings. "By trusting in God, "we can get a feeling of security, stability, and calmness. "Our connection with God must be unbreakable. "If our strength is in God, "then we will overcome everything. "Our suffering is just temporary, and God will richly reward all who are loyal to him."

video source: <https://www.jw.org/en/news/jw/region/russia/video-interview-dmitriy-mikhaylov>

**KEY
STATEMENTS
IN THE BOOK
OF EZEKIEL**

“Son of Man”

MORE THAN 90 OCCURRENCES

More than 90 times, Ezekiel is referred to as “son of man.” (Ezek. 2:1) Jehovah thus reminds him that even though he has received great privileges, he is only an earthling man. Significantly, in the Gospel accounts, Jesus is referred to as “Son of man” some 80 times, showing that he became completely human and was not an angel merely materializing in human form.—Matt. 8:20.

16, 17. What lessons can we learn from Israel’s dealings with the Philistines?

18. What kind of empire did Tyre control?

¹⁶ What *lessons* can we learn from Israel’s dealings with the Philistines? Jehovah’s modern-day people have faced opposition from some of the most powerful nations ever to dominate mankind. Unlike Israel, we have maintained a record of steadfast loyalty to Jehovah. Even so, the enemies of pure worship may at times seem to prevail. For instance, at the beginning of the 20th century, the government of the United States attempted to stop the work of Jehovah’s people by sentencing those who took the lead in the organization to decades in prison. During the second world war, the Nazi party in Germany tried to wipe out God’s people, imprisoning thousands and killing hundreds. After that war, the Soviet Union waged a sustained campaign against Jehovah’s Witnesses, sending our brothers to labor camps or exiling them to remote regions of the land.

¹⁷ Governments may continue to ban the preaching work, imprison God’s people, and even execute some of us. Should these events cause us to give in to fear or to lose faith? No! Jehovah will preserve his loyal people. (**Read Matthew 10: 28-31.**) We have already seen powerful, repressive governments disappear, while Jehovah’s people have continued to flourish. Soon, all human governments will share an outcome similar to that of the Philistines—they will be forced to know Jehovah. And like the Philistines, they will cease to exist!

“Abundant Wealth” Gave No Lasting Protection

¹⁸ The ancient city of *Tyre*^[2] sat at the center of one of the great commercial empires in the ancient world. To the west, her ships spun a web of trade routes that stretched across the

FOOTNOTE

[2] The original city of Tyre seems to have been built on a rocky outcrop located just off the coast, about 30 miles north of Mount Carmel. Later, an extension of the city was constructed on the mainland. The Semitic name for the city, Sur, means “Rock.”

“. . . Will Have to Know That I Am Jehovah”

MORE THAN 50 OCCURRENCES

More than 50 times, Ezekiel records God’s statement that people “will have to know that I am Jehovah,” emphasizing that Jehovah is the only one worthy of receiving pure worship.—Ezek. 6:7.

“Sovereign Lord Jehovah”

217 OCCURRENCES

The expression “Sovereign Lord Jehovah” appears 217 times, giving the divine name the prominence it deserves and stressing that all creation is subordinate to Jehovah.—Ezek. 2:4.

Mediterranean Sea. To the east, Tyre’s web extended along the overland routes that linked her to distant empires. For centuries, she added to her vast stockpile of wealth from these far-flung locations. Her merchants and tradesmen became so rich that they viewed themselves as princes.—Isa. 23:8.

¹⁹ Under Kings David and Solomon, Israel had close ties with the inhabitants of Tyre, who supplied material and craftsmen to help build David’s palace and later Solomon’s temple. (2 Chron. 2:1, 3, 7-16) Tyre saw the nation of Israel at its best. (1 Ki. 3:10-12; 10:4-9) Just think of the opportunity that thousands of Tyrians had to learn about pure worship, to get to know Jehovah, and to observe firsthand the benefits that come from serving the true God!

²⁰ Despite that opportunity, however, the inhabitants of Tyre remained steadfastly materialistic in their outlook. They did not follow the example of the powerful Canaanite city of Gibeon, whose inhabitants merely heard about Jehovah’s great works and were moved to become his servants. (Josh. 9:2, 3, 22-10:2) In fact, the inhabitants of Tyre ended up opposing God’s people and even sold some of them into slavery.—Ps. 83:2, 7; Joel 3:4, 6; Amos 1:9.

²¹ Through Ezekiel, Jehovah said to those opposers: “Here I am against you, O Tyre, and I will bring up many nations against you, just as the sea brings up its waves. They will destroy the walls of Tyre and tear down her towers, and I will scrape away soil and make her a shining, bare rock.” (Ezek. 26:1-5) For protection, the inhabitants of Tyre trusted in their riches, which they felt provided them with the same

19, 20. What contrast is there between the inhabitants of Tyre and those of Gibeon?

21, 22. What happened to Tyre, and why?

23. What lesson can we learn from the inhabitants of Tyre?

24-26. (a) Why did Jehovah call Egypt “a piece of straw”?
(b) How did King Zedekiah ignore Jehovah’s direction, and with what result?

Never would we
want to view
material things as
a protective wall

security as the island-city’s 150-foot-high walls. They would have done well to pay attention to Solomon’s warning: “The wealth of the rich is his fortified city; it is like a protective wall in his imagination.”—Prov. 18:11.

²² When the Babylonians and then the Greeks fulfilled Ezekiel’s prophecy, the inhabitants of Tyre discovered that the security offered both by the city’s wealth and by her literal walls was imaginary. After destroying Jerusalem, the Babylonians waged a campaign against Tyre for 13 years. (Ezek. 29:17, 18) Then, in 332 B.C.E., Alexander the Great fulfilled a remarkable aspect of prophecies conveyed by Ezekiel.^[3] His army scraped together the ruins of the mainland city of Tyre and threw the stones, woodwork, and soil into the water, building a path to reach the island-city. (Ezek. 26:4, 12) Alexander breached the walls, plundered the city, killed thousands of soldiers and citizens, and sold tens of thousands more into slavery. The inhabitants of Tyre were forced to know Jehovah when they learned the hard way that “abundant wealth” gives no lasting protection.—Ezek. 27:33, 34.

²³ What *lesson* can we learn from the inhabitants of Tyre? Never would we want to allow “the deceptive power of riches” to cause us to trust in material things, viewing them as a protective wall. (Matt. 13:22) We cannot “slave for God and for Riches.” (Read Matthew 6:24.) Only those who serve Jehovah whole-souled are truly secure. (Matt. 6:31-33; John 10:27-29) Prophecies about the end of this present system will be fulfilled in every detail just as surely as the prophecies against Tyre came true. At that time, those who trust in wealth will be forced to know Jehovah when he destroys this world’s greedy, self-centered commercial system.

Political Power Was “a Piece of Straw”

²⁴ From before the days of Joseph to the time when the Babylonians marched on Jerusalem, *Egypt* wielded considerable political influence in the region of the Promised Land. Her ancient roots may have made her appear to be stable, like an old-growth tree. But when compared with Jehovah, she was feeble—no stronger than “a piece of straw.”—Ezek. 29:6.

²⁵ Apostate King Zedekiah did not recognize that about Egypt. Through the prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah had urged Zedekiah to submit to the king of Babylon. (Jer. 27:12)

FOOTNOTE

[3] Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Amos, and Zechariah also uttered prophecies against Tyre that were fulfilled in every detail.—Isa. 23:1-8; Jer. 25:15, 22, 27; Joel 3:4; Amos 1:10; Zech. 9:3, 4.



Despite seeming entirely secure, Tyre was destroyed, just as Ezekiel had foretold
SEE PARAGRAPH 22



Even in private, we must avoid taking sides in this world's politics

SEE PARAGRAPH 27

27. What can we learn from Israel's interaction with Egypt?

Zedekiah even took an oath in Jehovah's name not to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. But then he ignored Jehovah's direction, broke his oath to Nebuchadnezzar, and appealed to Egypt for help in his fight against the Babylonians. (2 Chron. 36:13; Ezek. 17:12-20) However, the Israelites who relied on the political might of Egypt brought great harm to themselves. (Ezek. 29:7) As for Egypt, she may have appeared to be as formidable as a "great sea monster." (Ezek. 29:3, 4) But Jehovah said he would deal with her in the same way that hunters capture Nile crocodiles—he would put hooks in her jaws and draw her toward destruction. He did so when he sent the Babylonians to conquer that ancient land.—Ezek. 29:9-12, 19.

²⁶ What became of unfaithful Zedekiah? Because he rebelled against Jehovah, Ezekiel foretold that this "wicked chieftain" would lose his crown and that his rulership would end in ruin. But Ezekiel also gave hope. (Ezek. 21:25-27) Jehovah had him foretell that a king in the royal line, one who had "the legal right," would claim the throne. In the next chapter of this publication, we will see who this proved to be.

²⁷ What *lesson* can we learn from Israel's interaction with Egypt? Jehovah's people today need to avoid putting their trust in political powers, thinking that such powers will pro-

vide lasting security. Even in our thoughts, we need to remain “no part of the world.” (John 15:19; Jas. 4:4) The political system may seem strong, but like ancient Egypt, it is as fragile as a piece of straw. How shortsighted it would be to invest our hope in mortal humans rather than in the almighty Sovereign of the universe!—Read Psalm 146:3-6.

The Nations “Will Have to Know”

²⁸ Several times in the book of Ezekiel, Jehovah states that the nations “will have to know that I am Jehovah.” (Ezek. 25:17) Those words certainly came true in ancient times when Jehovah executed judgment on the enemies of his people. But they will have a greater fulfillment in our day. In what way?

²⁹ Like God’s people in ancient times, we are surrounded by nations that consider us to be as defenseless as a lone sheep. (Ezek. 38:10-13) As will be discussed in Chapters 17 and 18 of this publication, the nations will soon launch a vicious, all-out attack on God’s people. But when they do, they will be taught the meaning of real power. They will be forced to know Jehovah—to recognize his sovereignty—when he destroys them at the battle of Armageddon.—Rev. 16:16; 19:17-21.

³⁰ By contrast, Jehovah will keep us safe, and he will bless us. Why? Because we have taken the opportunity now to prove that we know Jehovah by trusting in him, by obeying him, and by giving him the pure worship he deserves.—Read Ezekiel 28:26.

28-30. What is the difference between the way that the nations “will have to know” Jehovah and the way that we know Jehovah?

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1 Why should it not surprise us if family members oppose our worship of Jehovah?
- 2 About what should we remain confident even if powerful governments persecute us?
- 3 What lesson did you learn from the inhabitants of Tyre?
- 4 How can you show that you know Jehovah?

21

Keep On Seeking First the Kingdom

(Matthew 6:33)

F B♭ B♭/A Cm/G F7 B♭ Eb/F F7 B♭ B♭/A B♭add9/G B♭/F

Some-thing pre - cious to Je - ho - vah, Bring - ing him such keen de -
 Why be anx - ious for to - mor - row, 'Will we hun - ger, will we
 So de - clare the King - dom good news; Help de - serv - ing ones to

E♭ G/D Cm G7 Cm Cm7 Gm7 C7

light, Is his King - dom by Christ Je - sus, Which will set all mat - ters
 thirst?' For our God will make pro - vi - sion If we seek his King - dom
 see That their hope is in Je - ho - vah And in his The - oc - ra -

F7sus4 F7 *Chorus* B♭ Dm7/A Gm B♭ma7/F F/E♭ E♭ G7 Cm7 F7

right.
 first. Keep on seek - ing first the King - dom And Je - ho - vah's righ - teous -
 cy.

F/B♭ B♭ F7 B♭ B♭/D D° Cm/E♭ E° B♭/F Cm7 F B♭

ness. Sing his praise a - mong the na - tions, Serv - ing him in faith - ful - ness.

FEBRUARY 2021

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
APRIL 5–MAY 2, 2021

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After sending food to David and his men, Abigail approaches David. Then she bows down to the ground and urges him not to bring bloodguilt on himself by taking revenge (See study article 6, paragraph 16)

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Faithful Women, Christian Sisters

(Romans 16:2)

D A/C# G/B D/A G

Sa - rah and Es - ther, Mar - y, Ruth, and oth - ers—
 Good - ness and cour - age, loy - al love and kind - ness—
 Moth - ers and daugh - ters, sis - ters, wives, and wid - ows,

Em D/F# Em/G

All these were ca - pa - ble wom - en, loy - al
 Lov - a - ble qual - i - ties in all hu - man -
 Will - ing - ly la - bor - ing, glad to do your

A D A/C#

wives.
 kind,
 part.

God - ly de - vo - tion was
 Vir - tues these ex - cel - lent
 Mod - est your bear - ing, sub -

Bm D/A G

fore - most in their lives. They were
 wom - en bring to mind. They were
 mis - sive is your heart, Hav - ing

SONG 137

Faithful Women,
Christian Sisters

PREVIEW

What is the role of sisters in the congregation? Is every brother the head of every sister? Do elders and family heads have the same type of authority? In this article, we will consider these questions in the light of examples found in God's Word.

Understanding Headship in the Congregation

“The Christ is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body.”—EPH. 5:23.

WE LOVE being part of Jehovah's family. Why is our family so peaceful and united? One reason is that all of us do our best to respect the headship arrangement that Jehovah has put in place. In fact, the better we understand the headship arrangement, the more united we become.

² In this article, we will consider the subject of headship as it applies to the congregation. Among other things, we will answer the following questions: What is the role of sisters? Is it true that every brother is the head of every sister? Do elders have the same type of authority over brothers and sisters as a family head has over his wife and children? First, let us consider how we should view sisters.

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW SISTERS?

³ We appreciate our sisters who work hard to care for their family, to preach the good news, and to support the congregation. We can deepen our appreciation for them by considering the way that Jehovah and Jesus view them. We will also benefit from considering how the apostle Paul treated women.

1. What is one reason why Jehovah's family is united?
2. What questions will we answer in this article?
3. How can we deepen our appreciation for the work that our sisters accomplish?

⁴ **The Bible indicates that Jehovah values women as well as men.** For instance, it reveals that in the first century, Jehovah gave holy spirit to women as well as to men and empowered them to perform miraculous works, such as speaking in different languages. (Acts 2:1-4, 15-18) They both have been anointed by holy spirit with the prospect of ruling with Christ. (Gal. 3:26-29) Women as well as men will receive the reward of everlasting life on earth. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-15) And both men and women are assigned to preach and teach the good news. (Matt. 28:19, 20) In fact, the book of Acts recognizes the work of a sister named Priscilla who, along with her husband, Aquila, helped to explain the truth more correctly to the well-educated man Apollos.—Acts 18:24-26.

⁵ **Jesus gave women honor and respect.** He did not follow the custom of the Pharisees, who looked down on women and who would not even speak to them in public, let alone discuss the Scriptures with them. Instead, he included women in the deep spiritual discussions that he had with his other disciples.* **(Read Luke 10:38, 39, 42.)** He also allowed women to accompany him on his preaching tours. (Luke 8:1-3) And Jesus gave them the privilege of announcing to the apostles that he had been raised from the dead.—John 20:16-18.

* See paragraph 6 of the article “Give Christian Women Your Support,” published in the September 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

4. How does the Bible indicate that Jehovah values women as well as men?
5. What does Luke 10:38, 39, 42 reveal about Jesus’ attitude toward women?

⁶ **The apostle Paul specifically reminded Timothy to honor women.** Paul told him to treat “older women as mothers” and to view “younger women as sisters.” (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Paul did much to help Timothy become a mature Christian, but he acknowledged that it was Timothy’s mother and grandmother who had first taught Timothy “the holy writings.” (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) Paul specifically greeted sisters by name in his letter to the Romans. He not only noticed the work sisters did but also expressed appreciation for them as Christian ministers.—Rom. 16:1-4, 6, 12; Phil. 4:3.

⁷ As the preceding paragraphs show, there is no Scriptural basis for thinking that sisters are inferior to brothers. Our loving and generous sisters are a real asset, and the elders rely on their help to promote peace and unity in the congregation. But some questions need answering. For instance: Why does Jehovah require a sister to wear a head covering on certain occasions? Since only brothers are appointed as elders and ministerial servants, does this imply that every brother is the head of every sister in the congregation?

IS EVERY BROTHER THE HEAD OF EVERY SISTER?

⁸ The short answer is no! A brother is not the head of all sisters in the congregation; Christ is. **(Read Ephesians 5:23.)** In the family, the husband has authority over his wife. A baptized son is

6. How did the apostle Paul show that he respected women?
7. What questions will we now consider?
8. According to Ephesians 5:23, is every brother the head of every sister? Explain.



When Should a Sister Wear a Head Covering?

To know if she should wear a head covering, a sister would need to answer these three questions:

- 1 Does the activity require that a sister pray publicly or teach from the Bible while a baptized brother is present?—1 Cor. 11: 4, 5.
- 2 Even if a baptized male is not present, would this assignment normally be done by a baptized brother?—1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Heb. 13:17.
- 3 If the sister is married, is her husband present while she publicly prays for others or teaches them from the Bible?—1 Cor. 11:3.

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then a sister should wear a head covering. If the answer to all those questions is no, then she does not need to wear a head covering.*

* For a detailed discussion of this topic, see the book *“Keep Yourselves in God’s Love,”* pp. 209-212.

not the head of his mother. (Eph. 6:1, 2) And in the congregation, the elders have only limited authority over sisters and brothers. (1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17) Single women who no longer live with their father and mother continue to respect their parents and the elders. However, like the men in the congregation, they have only one head, Jesus.

⁹ It is true, however, that Jehovah has appointed men to take the lead in teaching and worship in the congregation, and he has not given women that same authority. (1 Tim. 2:12) Why? For the same reason that he has appointed Jesus as head of the man—to keep good order in his family. If because of circumstances a sister must fill a role that is normally cared for by a brother, then Jehovah requires that she wear a head covering.* (1 Cor. 11:4-7) Jehovah asks this of sisters, not to demean them, but to give them a way to show respect for the headship principle that he has put in place. With those facts in mind, let us now answer the question: How much authority do family heads and elders have?

THE ROLES OF FAMILY HEADS AND ELDERS

¹⁰ Elders love Christ, and they love the “sheep” whom Jehovah and Jesus have placed under their care. (John 21:15-17) With good intentions, an elder might think of himself as a fatherlike head in

* See the box “When Should a Sister Wear a Head Covering?”

9. Why do sisters at times need to wear a head covering?

10. Why might an elder be inclined to make rules for the congregation?



**Jesus, under Jehovah's headship,
gives direction to the Christian congregation**

(See paragraph 14)



Elders care for the spiritual and emotional needs of the congregation. Jehovah has given them the responsibility to keep the congregation morally clean

(See paragraphs 11-12)



Family heads have been given authority by Jehovah to take the lead in their family. Before making decisions, a loving family head will consult with his wife

(See paragraph 13)



Single ones who no longer live with their parents are under Jesus' headship

(See paragraph 8)

the congregation. He may reason that if a family head has the right to make rules to protect his family, an elder can make rules that he hopes will protect God's sheep. And some brothers and sisters may encourage elders to act as their spiritual head by asking them to make decisions for them. But do elders in the congregation and family heads have the same authority?

¹¹ The apostle Paul implied that there are some *similarities* between the role of a family head and that of an el-

11. How are the roles of family heads and elders similar?

der. (1 Tim. 3:4, 5) For example, Jehovah wants family members to obey the head of the family. (Col. 3:20) And he wants those in the congregation to obey the elders. Jehovah expects both family heads and elders to make sure that those under their care are spiritually healthy. Both also care for the emotional needs of those under their authority. And like good family heads, elders make sure that those under their care receive help in times of crisis. (Jas. 2:15-17) In addition, Jehovah expects elders and family heads to promote his standards and not to "go beyond the

things that are written” in the Bible.—1 Cor. 4:6.

¹² However, there are also significant *differences* between the role of an elder and the role of a family head. For instance, Jehovah has assigned the elders to act as judges, and he has given them the responsibility of removing unrepentant sinners from the congregation.—1 Cor. 5:11-13.

¹³ On the other hand, Jehovah has given family heads some authority that he has not given to elders. For instance, he has authorized a family head both to make and to enforce rules for his family. **(Read Romans 7:2.)** For example, a family head has the right to decide at what time his children should arrive home at night. He also has the authority to discipline his children if they fail to obey that rule. (Eph. 6:1) Of course, a loving family head consults with his wife before making rules in the household; after all, the two of them are “one flesh.”*—Matt. 19:6.

RESPECT CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE CONGREGATION

¹⁴ By means of the ransom, Jehovah purchased the lives of each individual in the congregation and, potential-

* For a discussion of who should decide in which congregation a family will serve, see paragraphs 17-19 of the article “Respect the Place of Others in Jehovah’s Congregation,” published in the August 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

12-13. As indicated at Romans 7:2, how are the roles of family heads and elders different?

14. (a) In light of what is said at Mark 10:45, why is it fitting that Jehovah has appointed Jesus as head of the congregation? (b) What is the role of the Governing Body? (See the box “The Role of the Governing Body.”)



The Role of the Governing Body

The members of the Governing Body are not masters over the faith of their brothers and sisters. (2 Cor. 1:24) They recognize Jesus Christ as the head of the Christian congregation, and they agree wholeheartedly with the Lord’s admonition to his disciples: “All of you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8) At the same time, they love their brothers and sisters very much and do their best to care for their needs. Under the headship of Christ Jesus, the members of the Governing Body provide helpful direction to organize Jehovah’s people worldwide. They appoint Branch Committee members and circuit overseers. (Eph. 4:7-13) In turn, circuit overseers appoint congregation elders. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) The Governing Body also takes very seriously its responsibility to provide spiritual food and instruction from God’s Word. The Governing Body does so through letters, printed guidelines and publications, JW Broadcasting® programs as well as through schools, meetings, conventions, and assemblies. (Acts 15:22-35) And when a natural disaster or some other calamity strikes, the members of the Governing Body, moved by heartfelt love for their brothers and sisters, immediately take action to ensure that practical help will be provided.*

* For a full discussion of the role of the Governing Body, see the July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 20-25.

ly, of all humankind. (Read Mark 10: 45; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22) So it is fitting that he appointed Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom, as head of the congregation. As our head, Jesus has the authority to make and to enforce rules that govern the conduct of individuals, of families, and of the entire congregation. (Gal. 6:2) But Jesus does more than just make rules. He feeds and cherishes each one of us.—Eph. 5:29.

¹⁵ Sisters show that they respect Christ by following the direction given by the men he has appointed to take care of them. A sister named Marley, who lives in the United States, sums up the view of many sisters. She says: “I really value my place as a wife and as a sister in the congregation. I constantly have to cultivate the right attitude toward Je-

15-16. What do you learn from the comments made by a sister named Marley and a brother named Benjamin?

hovah’s headship arrangement. But my husband and the brothers in the congregation have made that easier for me because they respect me and express their appreciation for the work I do.”

¹⁶ Brothers show that they understand the headship arrangement by respecting and honoring sisters. Benjamin, a brother who lives in England, says: “I have learned so much from sisters’ comments at the meetings and from their tips on how to study and how to be effective in the ministry. I think the work that they do is very valuable.”

¹⁷ When all in the congregation—men, women, family heads, and elders—understand and respect the principle of headship, the congregation enjoys peace. And more important, we bring praise to our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 150:6.

17. Why should we respect the headship principle?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How should we view sisters in the congregation?
- Is every brother the head of every sister? Explain.
- How are the roles of family heads and elders different?

123 *Loyally Submitting to Theocratic Order*

(1 Corinthians 14:33)

C Fma7 F6 Dm7 G9 Em7 C/E

As Je - ho - vah's peo - ple sound through - out the earth
God pro - vides his stew - ard and his ac - tive force.

Am Am7/G F Dm7 C/E Fma7 G9sus4 G

Truths a - bout the King - dom and its price - less worth,
These will ev - er guide us in our Chris - tian course.

C Fma7 F6 Dm7 G9 Em7 C/E

The - o - crat - ic or - der they must all o - bey
So may we be stead - fast, seek - ing God to please,

F/A G/B Em7 Am Dm7 G7 G7sus4 C C/B

And re - main u - nit - ed, loy - al - ty dis - play.
Loy - al - ly pro - claim - ing all his wise de - crees!

Loyally Submitting to Theocratic Order

Chorus

Am Cma7/G G/F F Em7 Cma7/E C/E Fma7 F6

Loy - al sub - mis - sion in rec - og - ni - tion,

Dm9 Dm7 G7sus4 G7 Cma7 E7sus4 E7

This to our God we owe.

Am Cma7/G G/F F Em7 Cma7/E C/E Fma7 F6

He gives pro - tec - tion, ten - der af - fec - tion,

Dm7 F/G G7 C

Loy - al - ty to him we show.