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SONG 15

Praise Jehovah's
Firstborn!

PREVIEW

We are living in exciting times! Prophecies found in the book of Revelation are being fulfilled today. How do those prophecies affect us? This article and the two articles that follow will give us an overview of the book of Revelation. They will show us how we can keep our worship acceptable to Jehovah God by observing the things that are written in that book.

Revelation—What It Means for You Today

“Happy is the one who reads aloud . . . the words of this prophecy.”—REV. 1:3.

HAVE you ever been invited to look through a photo album belonging to someone else? As you glance at the photos, you see mostly unfamiliar faces. One particular photo, however, catches your attention. Why? Because you are in that photo. As you study it, you try to remember when the picture was taken and where. You also try to identify everyone else in the photo. That photo is especially meaningful to you.

² The book of Revelation is like that photograph. Why? For at least two reasons. First, this Bible book was written for us. In the very first verse, we read: “A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, *to show his slaves* the things that must shortly take place.” (Rev. 1:1) So, what is written in this book is not for people in general but for us, God’s dedicated servants. As God’s people, we should not be surprised to discover that we are sharing in the fulfillment of the prophecies found in this fascinating book. In other words, we find ourselves “in the photo.”

³ The second reason involves the time when these prophecies are to be fulfilled. The aged apostle John identified that time when he said: “By inspiration I came to be *in the Lord’s day*.” (Rev. 1:10) When John wrote those words in about 96 C.E., “the Lord’s day” was still

1-2. What is one reason why we should be interested in the book of Revelation?

3-4. According to the book of Revelation, when would its prophecies be fulfilled, and what effect should that have on each one of us?

far off. (Matt. 25:14, 19; Luke 19:12) But according to Bible prophecy, that day started in 1914 when Jesus was enthroned as King in heaven. From that year onward, the prophecies of Revelation, which involve God's people, started to undergo fulfillment. Yes, we are now living in "the Lord's day"!

⁴ Because we are living in this thrilling time, we are the ones who need to pay special attention to the loving counsel recorded at Revelation 1:3: "Happy is the one who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy and who observe the things written in it, for the appointed time is near." Indeed, we need to 'read aloud,' to "hear the words of this prophecy," and to "observe" them. What are some of these words that we need to observe?

MAKE SURE THAT YOUR WORSHIP IS ACCEPTABLE

⁵ Right from the first chapter of Revelation, we learn that Jesus is fully aware of what is happening in the congregations of his people. (Rev. 1:12-16, 20; 2:1) Jesus demonstrated such awareness in the messages he sent to seven congregations in Asia Minor. In those messages, he gave specific direction to help first-century Christians make sure that their worship was acceptable to Jehovah. Moreover, what is said in those messages applies to all of God's people today. What is the lesson for us? Our Leader, Christ Jesus, is well-aware of our spiritual condition. We are un-

der Jesus' protective oversight; nothing escapes his eyes. He knows what we need to do in order to continue enjoying Jehovah's approval. What direction did he give that we need to observe today?

⁶ **Read Revelation 2:3, 4. *We must not lose our first love for Jehovah.*** Jesus' message to those in the congregation in Ephesus indicated that they had shown endurance and that they had continued without letup to serve Jehovah in spite of various challenges. Even so, they had lost the love they had at first. They needed to rekindle that love—otherwise, their worship would not be acceptable. Likewise today, we need to do more than endure. We need to endure for the right reasons. Our God is interested in not only *what* we do but also *why* we do it. Our motives are important to him because he expects our worship to be based on our deep love and appreciation for him.—Prov. 16:2; Mark 12:29, 30.

⁷ **Read Revelation 3:1-3. *We must continue to remain awake and alert.*** The members of the congregation in Sardis had a different problem. Even though they had been spiritually active in the past, they were becoming lax in their service to God. Jesus therefore told them to "wake up." What is the warning lesson for us? Of course, Jehovah will

5. How does the book of Revelation emphasize the need to make sure that our worship is acceptable to Jehovah?

6. (a) As highlighted at Revelation 2:3, 4, what fundamental problem was revealed in Jesus' message to the congregation in Ephesus? (b) What lesson do we learn from this?

7. (a) As shown at Revelation 3:1-3, what problem did Jesus see with regard to those in Sardis? (b) What do we need to do?



After Satan was cast out of heaven, how has he attacked God's people? (See paragraphs 12-16)

not forget our work. (Heb. 6:10) Still, we cannot rely merely on what we have done in the past in Jehovah's service. Though we may have more limitations than before, we need to keep busy in "the work of the Lord," remaining awake and alert right to the end.—1 Cor. 15:58; Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:33.

⁸ Read Revelation 3:15-17. We must be zealous and wholehearted in our worship. Jesus' message to those in Laodicea highlighted yet a different problem. They were "lukewarm" in their worship. Because of their apathy, Jesus told them that they were in a "miserable and pitiful" state. They needed to display fiery zeal for Jehovah and his worship. (Rev. 3:19) What is the lesson for us? If we have lost a measure of our zeal, we must stir up our appreciation for the spiritual riches we have. (Rev. 3:18) Never would we want to allow the pursuit of a comfortable lifestyle to distract us, causing us to relegate spiritual activities to second place.

8. What lesson do we learn from the words that were directed to the brothers in Laodicea, as found at Revelation 3:15-17?

⁹ We must reject the teachings of apostates. Jesus reproved some in Pergamum for promoting divisions and sects. (Rev. 2:14-16) He commended those in Thyatira who had steered clear of the "deep things of Satan," and he urged them to "hold fast" to the truth. (Rev. 2:24-26) Weak Christians there who had allowed themselves to be seduced by false teachings needed to repent. What about us today? We must reject any teaching that is opposed to Jehovah's thinking. Apostates may have "an appearance of godliness," but they prove "false to its power." (2 Tim. 3:5) It is easier to identify and reject false teachings when we are diligent students of God's Word.—2 Tim. 3:14-17; Jude 3, 4.

¹⁰ We must not engage in, tolerate, or condone any form of immorality. There was yet another problem in Pergamum and Thyatira. Jesus condemned some

9. As indicated in Jesus' messages to Christians in Pergamum and Thyatira, what danger do we need to avoid?

10. What further lesson can we learn from what Jesus said to the congregations in Pergamum and Thyatira?

in those congregations for not rejecting immorality. (Rev. 2:14, 20) What is the lesson for us? We cannot expect Jehovah to excuse any immoral activity on our part, even if we have served him for many years and presently enjoy a number of privileges. (1 Sam. 15:22; 1 Pet. 2:16) He expects us to maintain his high moral standards no matter how much the world's standards plummet.—Eph. 6:11-13.

¹¹ How can we summarize what we have learned so far? We have seen the need to make sure that our worship is acceptable to Jehovah. If we are doing something that could make our worship unacceptable, we need to take immediate action to make things right. (Rev. 2:5, 16; 3:3, 16) Jesus, however, highlighted something else in his messages to the congregations. What is it?

BE WILLING TO ENDURE PERSECUTION

¹² Let us now consider Jesus' messages to the congregations in Smyrna and Philadelphia. He told Christians there not to be afraid to suffer persecution, since their faithfulness would be rewarded. (**Read Revelation 2:10; 3:10**) What is the lesson for us today? We must expect persecution and be willing to endure it. (Matt. 24:9, 13; 2 Cor. 12:10) Why is this reminder important?

¹³ The book of Revelation informs us

11. What have we learned so far? (See also the box "Lessons for Us Today.")

12. What did Jesus say to the brothers in Smyrna and Philadelphia that should be of interest to us today? (Revelation 2:10)

13-14. How are God's people affected by the events described in Revelation chapter 12?

that God's people would be persecuted in our day—"the Lord's day." Revelation chapter 12 mentions that war breaks out in heaven immediately following the birth of God's Kingdom. Michael—the glorified Jesus Christ—and his armies fight against Satan and the demons. (Rev. 12:7, 8) As a result, those enemies of God are defeated and cast down to the vicinity of the earth, bringing untold suffering to the earth and its inhabitants. (Rev. 12:9, 12) But how does this development affect God's people?

¹⁴ Revelation next tells us how Satan reacts. He no longer has access to the heavenly realm, so he focuses his anger on the remnant of anointed ones, who are the earthly representatives of God's Kingdom and who "have the work of bearing witness concerning Jesus." (Rev. 12:17; 2 Cor. 5:20; Eph. 6:19, 20) How has this prophecy been fulfilled?

Lessons for Us Today

- Do not lose your first love for Jehovah
- Remain awake and alert
- Be zealous and wholehearted in your worship
- Reject all apostate teachings
- Do not engage in, tolerate, or condone any form of immorality



What twofold message is being declared by God's people? (See paragraphs 18-19)

¹⁵ Satan instigated an attack on the anointed brothers who were taking the lead in the Kingdom-preaching work. Prominent ones among them were the figurative “two witnesses” spoken of as being killed.* (Rev. 11:3, 7-11) In 1918, eight of the responsible brothers were convicted on false charges, and each was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. From a human standpoint, it appeared as if the work of these anointed ones had been “killed.”

¹⁶ The prophecy in Revelation chapter 11 also stated that the “two witnesses” would be brought back to life after a short period of time. In the fulfillment, something surprising happened in the very next year of their imprisonment. Early in 1919 those anointed brothers were released from prison, and later the

* See “Questions From Readers” in *The Watchtower*, November 15, 2014, p. 30.

15. Who are represented by the “two witnesses” mentioned in Revelation chapter 11, and what happened to them?

16. What surprising development took place in 1919, but what has Satan continued to do since that time?

charges were dropped. The brothers immediately got back to work—Kingdom work. But that did not stop Satan’s attacks on God’s people. Since that time, Satan has directed “a river” of persecution against all of God’s people. (Rev. 12:15) Truly, “this is where it calls for endurance and faith” on the part of each one of us.—Rev. 13:10.

BE FULLY INVOLVED IN THE WORK JEHOVAH HAS GIVEN US

¹⁷ Revelation chapter 12 then indicates that God’s people would receive some help from an unexpected source. It would be as if “the earth” swallowed up “the river” of persecution. (Rev. 12:16) This is exactly what has happened. At times, the more stable elements of Satan’s world, such as certain judicial systems, have come to the rescue of God’s people. Time and again, Jehovah’s servants have won court cases that have allowed them a certain measure of freedom. How have they used this freedom?

17. What unexpected help have God’s people received, even though they have been the target of Satan’s attacks?

They have made full use of any opportunities to do the work Jehovah has given them. (1 Cor. 16:9) What does this work include?

¹⁸ Jesus prophesied that his people would declare the “good news of [God’s] Kingdom” throughout the earth before the end would come. (Matt. 24:14) In so doing, they benefit from the support of an angel, or a group of angels, described as having “everlasting good news to declare to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people.”—Rev. 14:6.

¹⁹ The good news of the Kingdom is not the only message that God’s people are to declare. They also need to support the work of the angels who are described in Revelation chapters 8 through 10. These angels announce a series of woes for those who reject God’s Kingdom. Thus, Jehovah’s Witnesses have been declaring a judgment message, likened to “hail and fire,” reveal-

18. What is our primary work during these last days?

19. What other message must be preached by those who love Jehovah?

ing God’s judgments on the various elements of Satan’s wicked world. (Rev. 8: 7, 13) People need to know that the end is near so that they can make drastic changes in their lives and survive Jehovah’s day of anger. (Zeph. 2:2, 3) But this message is not popular. Declaring it calls for courage on our part. During the great tribulation, the final judgment message will become more hard-hitting. —Rev. 16:21.

OBSERVE THE WORDS OF THE PROPHECY

²⁰ We truly need to observe “the words of this prophecy” because we are included in the fulfillment of what we read in the book of Revelation. (Rev. 1:3) But how can we faithfully endure persecution and continue to do our part in boldly declaring these messages? We will be strengthened by two things: first, by what the book of Revelation reveals about God’s enemies and, second, by the future blessings we will receive if we remain faithful. We will consider those subjects in the next two articles.

20. What will we consider in the next two articles?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What lessons do we learn from Jesus’ messages to the seven congregations?

■ Why must we be prepared for persecution?

■ What work needs to be done by God’s people in this time of the end?

SONG 150

Seek God for Your
Deliverance

PREVIEW

The book of Revelation uses signs to identify God's enemies. The book of Daniel helps us understand what those signs mean. In this article, we will compare some of the prophecies in Daniel with similar prophecies in Revelation. In this way, we will be able to identify God's enemies. Then we will consider what will happen to them.

Revelation—What It Means for God's Enemies

"They gathered them together to the place that is called in Hebrew Armageddon."—REV. 16:16.

THE book of Revelation reveals that God's heavenly Kingdom has been established and that Satan has been expelled from heaven. (Rev. 12:1-9) That expulsion brings relief to the heavens, but it creates challenges for us. Why? Because Satan's anger is focused on those who faithfully serve Jehovah here on earth.—Rev. 12:12, 15, 17.

² How can we remain steadfast in the face of Satan's attacks? (Rev. 13:10) One thing that will help us is to know what the future holds. For example, in Revelation, the apostle John describes some of the blessings that we will soon enjoy. Among those blessings will be the elimination of God's enemies. Let us now examine how Revelation describes these enemies and what will happen to them.

GOD'S ENEMIES DESCRIBED "IN SIGNS"

³ In the very first verse, Revelation tells us that the information we are about to read is being presented "in signs," that is, in symbolic language. (Rev. 1:1) God's enemies are described symbolically. We see a number of wild beasts. For example, there is "a wild beast ascending out of the sea." It has "ten horns and seven heads." (Rev. 13:1) That beast is followed by "another wild beast ascending out of the earth." That beast speaks like a dragon and makes "fire come down out of heaven." (Rev. 13:11-13) Then we see a different beast, "a scarlet-colored wild beast," which is being ridden by a prosti-

1. What does the book of Revelation reveal concerning God's people?
2. What will help us remain steadfast?
3. What are some of the signs portrayed in Revelation?

tute. These three wild beasts represent long-standing enemies of Jehovah God and his Kingdom. Therefore, it is important that we identify them.—Rev. 17:1, 3.

⁴ Before we can learn who these enemies are, we need to understand what this symbolic language means. The key to understanding it is to allow the Bible to explain itself. Many of the symbols found in Revelation are already explained in other books of the Bible. For example, the prophet Daniel had a dream in which “four huge beasts came out of the sea.” (Dan. 7:1-3) Daniel records their significance. These huge beasts represent four “kings,” or governments. **(Read Daniel 7:15-17.)** That clear explanation helps us understand that the beasts described in Revelation must also refer to political powers.

⁵ Let us now examine some of the signs described in Revelation. As we do, we will see how the Bible helps us identify what these signs mean. We will start with the series of wild beasts. First, we will identify whom they represent. Then, we will see what happens to these beasts. Finally, we will consider what these events mean for us.

THE IDENTITY OF GOD’S ENEMIES REVEALED

⁶ ***What is the seven-headed wild beast?*** **(Read Revelation 13:1-4.)** We notice that this beast has the general appearance of a leopard but the feet of a

4-5. How does what is stated at Daniel 7:15-17 help us understand the meaning of these signs?

6. What is the meaning of the seven-headed wild beast mentioned at Revelation 13:1-4?

bear and the mouth of a lion, and it has ten horns. All of these are also features of the four beasts mentioned in Daniel chapter 7. Yet, here in the book of Revelation, these characteristics are combined into one beast, not four separate beasts. This wild beast does not represent just one government or world empire. It is spoken of as ruling “over every tribe and people and tongue and nation.” So it must be greater than any single national government. (Rev. 13:7) This wild beast, then, must represent all the political powers that have dominated humankind down through history.* —Eccl. 8:9.

⁷ ***What do each of the seven heads represent?*** A clue is found in Revelation chapter 17, which describes an image of the beast mentioned in Revelation chapter 13. At Revelation 17:10, we are told: “There are seven kings: Five have fallen, one is, and the other has not yet arrived; but when he does arrive, he must remain a short while.” Of all the political powers that Satan has used, seven have stood out prominently as “heads.” These are the world empires that have had a considerable impact on God’s people. By the apostle John’s day, five of these had already appeared on the world scene: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, and Greece. The sixth world power, Rome, was still ruling when John received the revelation. What would prove

* Another indication that the seven-headed beast represents all the political powers is that it has “ten horns.” The number ten is often used in the Bible to denote completeness.

7. What do each of the seven heads of the wild beast represent?

to be the seventh and final world power, or head?

⁸ As we will see, the prophecies in the book of Daniel help us identify the seventh and final head of the wild beast. What world power has been ruling during this time of the end, during “the Lord’s day”? (Rev. 1:10) It is the combination of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, in other words, the Anglo-American World Power. We may therefore conclude that it is the seventh head of the wild beast mentioned at Revelation 13:1-4.

⁹ Revelation chapter 13 goes on to tell us that this seventh head, the Anglo-American World Power, also acts as a wild beast with “two horns like a lamb, but it began speaking like a dragon.” This beast “performs great signs, even making fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the sight of mankind.” (Rev. 13:11-15) Revelation chapters 16 and 19 describe this wild beast as “the false prophet.” (Rev. 16:13; 19:20) Daniel mentions something similar, namely, that the Anglo-American World Power would “bring terrible destruction.” (Dan. 8:19, 23, 24, ftn.) That is exactly what happened during World War II. The two atomic bombs that played a decisive role in ending that war in the Pacific were the results of a joint effort by British and American scientists. The Anglo-American World Power, in effect, made “fire come down out of heaven to the earth.”

8. Whom does the seventh head of the wild beast represent?

9. What is represented by the wild beast with “two horns like a lamb”?

¹⁰ Next we see another wild beast. This one looks almost the same as the seven-headed wild beast with the exception that it is scarlet-colored. It is called “the image of the wild beast” and is described as “an eighth king.”* (**Read Revelation 13: 14, 15; 17:3, 8, 11.**) This “king” is spoken of as coming into existence, then going out of existence, and later reappearing. How well this description fits the United Nations organization, which promotes the interests of the worldwide political system! It existed first as the League of Nations. Then it went out of existence during World War II. It later emerged again in its present-day form.

¹¹ By means of their propaganda, the political beasts stir up opposition to Jehovah and his people. Symbolically, they gather “the kings of the entire inhabited earth” together to the war of Armageddon, which is “the great day of God the Almighty.” (Rev. 16:13, 14, 16) But we will have nothing to fear. Our great God, Jehovah, will react swiftly to save all those who support his rulership.—Ezek. 38:21-23.

¹² *What happens to all the beasts?* Revelation 19:20 answers: “The wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received

* Unlike the first wild beast, the image does not have crowns, or “diadems,” on its horns. (Rev. 13:1) This is because it “springs from the seven” other kings and is dependent on them for its authority.—See the Web article on jw.org “What Is the Scarlet-Colored Beast of Revelation Chapter 17?”

10. What does “the image of the wild beast” represent? (Revelation 13:14, 15; 17:3, 8, 11)

11. What do the political beasts stir up, and why do we have nothing to fear from them?

12. What will happen to all the beasts?

the mark of the wild beast and those who worship its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulfur.” So while they are still functioning, these political enemies of God will be destroyed forever.

¹³ **What does this mean for us?** As Christians, we must be loyal to God and his Kingdom. (John 18:36) To do so, we need to remain neutral with regard to this world’s political affairs. Such neutrality can be extremely difficult, though, because the world’s governments demand our full support, both in word and in deed. Those who succumb to their pressure receive the mark of the wild beast. (Rev. 13:16, 17) Any who receive that mark, however, will incur Jehovah’s disapproval and lose out on everlasting life. (Rev. 14:9, 10; 20:4) How important it is, then, for each one of us to maintain strict neutrality, no matter what pressure is put on us to do otherwise!

AN INGLORIOUS END FOR THE GREAT PROSTITUTE

¹⁴ The apostle John mentions that he “was greatly amazed” by something else he saw. What was it? A woman riding one of these ferocious beasts. (Rev. 17: 1, 2, 6) She is portrayed as a “great prostitute” and is called “Babylon the Great.” She commits “sexual immorality” with “the kings of the earth.”—**Read Revelation 17:3-5.**

¹⁵ **Who is “Babylon the Great”?** This

13. What challenge confronts Christians because of the world’s governments?

14. What surprising thing does the apostle John next see, as described at Revelation 17:3-5?

15-16. Who is “Babylon the Great,” and how do we know?

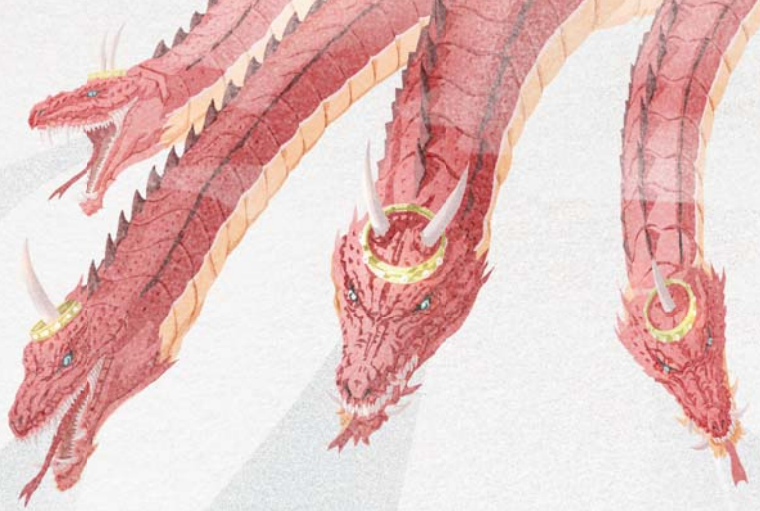
woman cannot represent a political organization because she is spoken of as committing immorality with the world’s political leaders. (Rev. 18:9) In fact, she endeavors to control these rulers, symbolically riding them. Additionally, she cannot represent the greedy commercial elements of Satan’s world. These are portrayed separately as “the merchants of the earth.”—Rev. 18:11, 15, 16.

¹⁶ In the Scriptures, the term “prostitute” can refer to those who claim to serve God but engage in some form of idolatry or in some other way become friends of the world. (1 Chron. 5:25; Jas. 4:4) By contrast, those who faithfully worship God are referred to as being “chaste” or as “virgins.” (2 Cor. 11:2; Rev. 14:4) Ancient Babylon was a center of false worship. So, then, Babylon the Great must represent all forms of false worship. In fact, she is the world empire of false religion.—Rev. 17:5, 18; see the Web article on jw.org “What Is Babylon the Great?”

¹⁷ **What will happen to Babylon the Great?** Revelation 17:16, 17 answers that question this way: “The ten horns that you saw and the wild beast, these will hate the prostitute and will make her devastated and naked, and they will eat up her flesh and completely burn her with fire. For God put it into their hearts to carry out his thought.” Yes, Jehovah will motivate the nations to use the scarlet-colored wild beast, that is, the United Nations, to turn on the world empire of false religion and completely destroy it.—Rev. 18:21-24.

17. What will happen to Babylon the Great?

The Wild Beasts of Daniel and Revelation



FOUR HUGE BEASTS

(paragraphs 4, 7)

They come “out of the sea.”
(Dan. 7:1-8, 15-17)

They symbolize world powers that had significant dealings with God’s people starting in Daniel’s time.



BABYLON



MEDO-PERSIA



GREECE



ROME

THE SEVEN-HEADED WILD BEAST

(paragraphs 6-8)

It ascends “out of the sea” and has seven heads, ten horns, and ten diadems.
(Rev. 13:1-4)

It symbolizes all political powers that have dominated mankind throughout history. The seven heads symbolize seven world powers that have had significant dealings with God’s people.



THE FIERY-COLORED DRAGON

(paragraphs 19-20)

Satan gives authority to the wild beast.

(Rev. 12:3, 9, 13; 13:4; 20:2, 10)

As Jehovah's greatest enemy, Satan will be abyssed for 1,000 years. After that, Satan will be hurled into "the lake of fire and sulfur."

A WILD BEAST WITH TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB

(paragraph 9)

It ascends "out of the earth" and speaks "like a dragon." It makes "fire come down out of heaven" and performs signs as "the false prophet." (Rev. 13:11-15; 16:13; 19:20)

As a two-horned beast and a false prophet, Anglo-America misleads earth's inhabitants and tells them to "make an image" of "the wild beast" that has seven heads and ten horns.

A SCARLET-COLORED WILD BEAST

(paragraphs 10, 14-17)

It is being ridden by a prostitute, Babylon the Great. The beast is described as an eighth king. (Rev. 17:3-6, 8, 11)

At first the prostitute controls the wild beast, but later she is destroyed by it. The prostitute represents the world empire of false religion. The beast today represents the United Nations, which promotes the interests of the worldwide political system.



¹⁸ *What does this mean for us?* We need to maintain “the form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God.” (Jas. 1:27) Never would we want to allow ourselves to be influenced by the false teachings, the pagan celebrations, the lax moral standards, and the spiritistic practices of Babylon the Great! And we would continually call out to people to “get out of her,” so that they can avoid sharing in her guilt before God.—Rev. 18:4.

THE JUDGMENT ON GOD’S GREATEST ENEMY

¹⁹ The book of Revelation also describes “a great fiery-colored dragon.” (Rev. 12:3) This dragon fights against Jesus and his angels. (Rev. 12:7-9) It attacks God’s people, and it gives power to the political beasts. (Rev. 12:17; 13:4) Who is this dragon? It is “the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan.” (Rev. 12:9; 20:2) He is the one behind all the other enemies of Jehovah.

18. How can we make sure that we have nothing to do with Babylon the Great?

19. Who is the “great fiery-colored dragon”?

²⁰ *What happens to the dragon?* Revelation 20:1-3 explains that an angel will hurl Satan into an abyss, which represents a prisonlike confinement. During that confinement, Satan will “not mislead the nations anymore until the 1,000 years [have] ended.” Finally, Satan and his demons will be destroyed once and for all, represented by their being hurled into “the lake of fire and sulfur.” (Rev. 20:10) Just imagine a world without Satan and his demons. What a wonderful time that will be!

²¹ How encouraging it is to understand the meaning of these signs that are recorded in the book of Revelation! Not only have we been able to identify the enemies of Jehovah but we have also seen what will happen to them. Yes, “happy is the one who reads aloud and those who hear the words of this prophecy”! (Rev. 1:3) But once God’s enemies have been removed, what blessings will faithful mankind enjoy? We will discuss that in the final article of this series.

20. What will happen to the dragon?

21. Why can we be happy about what we have read in the book of Revelation?

DO YOU REMEMBER?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ■ How can we understand the meaning of the signs in the book of Revelation? | ■ Why must we remain neutral with regard to political issues? | ■ How can we make sure that we are not influenced by “Babylon the Great”? |
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SONG 142

Holding Fast to Our Hope

PREVIEW

This is the final article in the series on the book of Revelation. As we will see in this article, those who remain faithful to Jehovah will have a bright future, but those who oppose God's rulership will come to a humiliating end.

Revelation—What It Means for Your Future

“Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.”—REV. 22:20.

PEOPLE today have an important decision to make. Will they support Jehovah God as the rightful Ruler of the universe, or will they stand behind his vicious enemy, Satan the Devil? There is no middle ground. Whatever decision they make will affect their everlasting future. (Matt. 25:31-33, 46) During “the great tribulation,” they will be marked either for survival or for destruction.—Rev. 7:14; 14:9-11; Ezek. 9:4, 6.

² **Read Hebrews 10:35-39.** If you have chosen to support Jehovah's rulership, you have made a wise decision. Now you are eager to help others make the right choice. To that end, you can use the information in the book of Revelation to help them. That remarkable book reveals what will happen to those who oppose Jehovah, but it also highlights the blessings that come to those who loyally support his rulership. We do well to consider such vital truths. Doing so will strengthen our resolve to keep on serving Jehovah. In addition, we can use what we have learned to help others make the right decision and stick to it.

³ In this article, we will consider these questions: What is in store for those who support God's rulership? On the other hand, what will happen to those who choose to support the scarlet-colored wild beast, portrayed in the pages of the book of Revelation?

1. What important decision do all humans need to make?
2. (a) What does Hebrews 10:35-39 encourage us to do? (b) How can the book of Revelation help us?
3. What will we consider in this article?

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR FAITHFUL ONES

⁴ In a vision, the apostle John sees two groups who support Jehovah's rulership and receive the blessings of everlasting life. The first group numbers 144,000. (Rev. 7:4) They are taken from the earth to form a government, or Kingdom, with Jesus in heaven. Along with him, they rule over the earth. (Rev. 5: 9, 10; 14:3, 4) In the vision, John sees them standing with Jesus on heavenly Mount Zion.—Rev. 14:1.

⁵ Down through the centuries, thousands have been selected to be part of the 144,000. (Luke 12:32; Rom. 8: 17) John, however, is told that only a remnant, or a small number, would be alive on earth during the last days. These "remaining ones" will receive their final "seal" of Jehovah's approval before the outbreak of the great tribulation. (Rev. 7:2, 3; 12:17) Then sometime during the great tribulation, this remnant will be taken to heaven to join the rest of the 144,000, who have already died faithful. There they will become corulers with Jesus in God's Kingdom.—Matt. 24:31; Rev. 5:9, 10.

⁶ After seeing the heavenly group, John sees "a great crowd." Unlike the 144,000, this group cannot be numbered. (Rev. 7:9, 10) What do we learn about them? John is told: "These are the

ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14) Upon surviving the great tribulation, this "great crowd" will live here on earth and enjoy amazing blessings.—Ps. 37:9-11, 27-29; Prov. 2: 21, 22; Rev. 7:16, 17.

⁷ Whether we have been selected to go to heaven or will remain here on earth, do we see ourselves in this description recorded in Revelation chapter 7? We should. What an exciting time that will be for both groups of God's servants! We will be overjoyed that we chose to support Jehovah's rulership. What else does the book of Revelation tell us about the great tribulation?—Matt. 24:21.

WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THOSE WHO OPPOSE GOD

⁸ As mentioned in the preceding article, the political elements of this world will soon turn on Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. (Rev. 17: 16, 17) This action will mark the beginning of the great tribulation. Will this result in a flood of new ones deciding to turn to the worship of Jehovah? No. To the contrary, Revelation chapter 6 shows that at that critical time, people who are not serving Jehovah will seek protection from the political and commercial systems of this world, which are compared to mountains. Since those people will not take a stand in favor of God's Kingdom, Jehovah will consider them to be opposers.—Luke 11:23; Rev. 6:15-17.

8. How will the great tribulation start, and how will most people be affected?

4. What group does the apostle John see with Jesus in heaven?

5. What will soon happen to the remaining ones of the 144,000?

6-7. (a) What group does John next see, and what do we learn about them? (b) Why should Revelation chapter 7 be of interest to both the remnant and the "great crowd"?

⁹ Truly, Jehovah's faithful servants will stand out as different during that desperate time of tribulation. They will still be the only group of people on earth serving Jehovah God and refusing to give their support to "the wild beast." (Rev. 13:14-17) Their firm stand will provoke the rage of those who oppose Jehovah. As a result, a coalition of nations will attack God's people all over the earth. This act of mad aggression is described prophetically as the attack of Gog of Magog.—Ezek. 38:14-16.

¹⁰ How will Jehovah react to this vicious attack? He tells us: "My great rage will flare up." (Ezek. 38:18, 21-23) Revelation chapter 19 describes what happens next. Jehovah sends forth His Son to defend His people and to defeat their enemies. Jesus will be joined in this counterattack by "the armies in heaven"—the faithful angels together with the 144,000. (Rev. 17:14; 19:11-15) What is the outcome of this war? The total annihilation of all humans and organizations opposing Jehovah!—**Read Revelation 19:19-21.**

AFTER THE WAR, A WEDDING

¹¹ Just imagine how faithful ones on earth will feel to survive the total destruction of God's enemies! What a time of rejoicing that will be! Although there will be a great shout of joy in heaven when Babylon the Great is destroyed,

there is something else that will bring greater joy. (Rev. 19:1-3) It is, in fact, the climax of the book of Revelation—"the marriage of the Lamb."—Rev. 19:6-9.

¹² When does the marriage take place? All the 144,000 will be in heaven just before the war of Armageddon is fought. However, that will not be the time for the marriage of the Lamb. (**Read Revelation 21:1, 2.**) The marriage of the Lamb takes place *after* the war of Armageddon has been fought and all of God's enemies have been removed.—Ps. 45:3, 4, 13-17.

¹³ What does the marriage of the Lamb really mean for those involved? Well, just as a marriage joins a man and a woman together, so this symbolic marriage unites the King, Jesus Christ, with his "bride," the 144,000. That climactic event inaugurates the new government that will rule the earth for 1,000 years.—Rev. 20:6.

A GLORIOUS CITY AND YOUR FUTURE

¹⁴ Next, Revelation chapter 21 compares the 144,000 to an extremely beautiful city called "New Jerusalem." (Rev. 21:2, 9) This city is based on 12 foundation stones that have written on them "the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb." Why would this fact capture John's interest? Because he saw his name written on one of those stones.

9. How will Jehovah's people stand out as different during the great tribulation, and with what result?

10. As described at Revelation 19:19-21, how will Jehovah react to this attack on his people?

11. What special event takes place as the climax of the book of Revelation?

12. As indicated at Revelation 21:1, 2, when will the marriage of the Lamb take place?

13. What does the marriage of the Lamb really mean for those involved?

14-15. To what does Revelation chapter 21 compare the 144,000? (See cover picture.)

Who will benefit from the provisions represented by “a river” and by “trees”?

(See paragraphs 16-17)



What a grand privilege!—Rev. 21:10-14; Eph. 2:20.

¹⁵ This symbolic city looks like no other. It has a main street of pure gold, 12 gates of pearl, walls and foundations adorned with precious stones—and with perfectly balanced measurements. (Rev. 21:15-21) Still, something seems to be missing! Notice what John next tells us: “I did not see a temple in it, for Jehovah God the Almighty is its temple, also the Lamb is. And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb.” (Rev. 21:22, 23) Those who make up the New Jerusalem will have direct access to Jehovah. (Heb. 7:27; Rev. 22:3, 4) Thus, Jehovah and Jesus are the temple in that city.

¹⁶ It is thrilling for the anointed to contemplate this city. But those who cherish the earthly hope also have reason to be interested in it. During the Thousand Year Reign of God’s Kingdom, the New

Jerusalem will bring countless blessings. John sees these blessings flowing forth as “a river of water of life.” And on both sides of the river are “trees of life” that produce leaves “for the healing of the nations.” (Rev. 22:1, 2) All humans then living will have an opportunity to benefit from those provisions. Gradually, all obedient humankind will be brought to perfection. There will be no more sickness, no more pain, and no more tears of sorrow.—Rev. 21:3-5.

¹⁷ Who will benefit from these wonderful provisions? First of all, the great crowd of Armageddon survivors, along with any children who may be born in the new world. But Revelation chapter 20 also promises that the dead will be resurrected. **(Read Revelation 20:11-13.)** Faithful “righteous” ones who died in the past along with “unrighteous” ones—who did not receive an adequate opportunity to learn about Jehovah—will all come back to life here

16. What will mankind experience during the Thousand Year Reign of God’s Kingdom?

17. As Revelation 20:11-13 shows, who will benefit from the Thousand Year Reign?

on the earth. (Acts 24:15; John 5:28, 29) Does this mean that everyone will be resurrected to life on earth during the Thousand Year Reign? No. Those who wickedly rejected the opportunity to serve Jehovah before their death will not be raised to life. They had their chance and proved that they were not worthy of life on the Paradise earth.—Matt. 25:46; 2 Thess. 1:9; Rev. 17:8; 20:15.

THE FINAL OUTCOME

¹⁸ By the end of the 1,000 years, all those living on earth will have been restored to perfect life. No longer will anyone living be affected by the sin that was originally inherited from Adam. (Rom. 5:12) The curse of Adamic sin will have been completely removed. In that way, those on earth will “come to life” as perfect humans at the end of the 1,000 years.—Rev. 20:5.

¹⁹ We know that Jesus resisted Satan’s efforts to make him compromise his in-

18. What will be the situation on earth by the end of the 1,000 years?

19. Why is there a need for a final test?

tegrity. He remained faithful under test. But will all perfect humans be willing to do so when Satan is given an opportunity to test them? Each one will be able to answer this question for himself when Satan is released from the abyss at the end of the 1,000 years. (Rev. 20:7) Those who prove faithful during this final test will receive everlasting life and finally enjoy true freedom. (Rom. 8:21) Those who rebel will be destroyed forever, along with the Devil and his demons.—Rev. 20:8-10.

²⁰ How do you feel after considering this brief overview of the book of Revelation? Is it not exciting to see yourself in these amazing prophecies? Does it not make you want to invite others to join us in the pure worship of our God? (Rev. 22:17) As our minds and hearts are stirred by these intriguing future events, we are certainly motivated to echo the words of the apostle John, who said: “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.”—Rev. 22:20.

20. How do you feel about the thrilling prophecies found in the book of Revelation?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What decision do we need to make now?

■ What is “the marriage of the Lamb”?

■ What blessings await faithful servants of Jehovah?

SONG 89

Listen, Obey, and
Be Blessed

PREVIEW

Solomon and Jesus possessed great wisdom. The Source of that wisdom was Jehovah God. In this article, we will see what we can learn from the inspired counsel of both Solomon and Jesus about having a balanced view of money, of secular work, and of ourselves. We will also see how some of our fellow believers have benefited from wisely applying Bible-based counsel in those areas.

Wisdom to Guide Our Lives

“Jehovah himself gives wisdom.”—PROV. 2:6.

IF YOU have ever had to make an important decision, no doubt you prayed for wisdom—and for good reason. (Jas. 1:5) King Solomon wrote: “Wisdom is the most important thing.” **(Read Proverbs 4:7.)** Of course, Solomon was not talking about just any sort of wisdom. He was referring to the wisdom that comes from Jehovah God. (Prov. 2:6) But can godly wisdom help us deal with the kinds of problems we face today? Yes, it can, as we will see in this article.

² One way that we can become truly wise is by studying and applying the teachings of two men who are widely respected for their wisdom. First, we will consider Solomon. The Bible says that “God gave Solomon wisdom and discernment in very great measure.” (1 Ki. 4:29) Second, we will consider Jesus, whose wisdom was unparalleled. (Matt. 12:42) Of Jesus, it was prophesied: “The spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding.”—Isa. 11:2.

³ Using their God-given wisdom, both Solomon and Jesus gave practical advice on matters that are of interest to all of us. In this article, we will consider three of them: The need to have a balanced view of money, of secular work, and of ourselves.

1. Why do we all need godly wisdom? (Proverbs 4:7)
2. What is one way that we can become truly wise?
3. What will we discuss in this article?



Does our view of material things hinder us from putting Kingdom interests first in our life?

(See paragraphs 6-7)

A BALANCED VIEW OF MONEY

⁴ Solomon was fabulously wealthy, and he lived in luxury. (1 Ki. 10:7, 14, 15) Jesus, on the other hand, had few possessions and no permanent home. (Matt. 8:20) Yet, both men had a balanced view of material things because their wisdom came from the same Source—Jehovah God.

⁵ Solomon acknowledged that money is “a protection.” (Eccl. 7:12) With money, we are able to obtain life’s necessities and perhaps a few wants. Yet, as wealthy as he was, Solomon realized that there are more important things than money. For example, he wrote: “A good name [or, “a good reputation,” ftn.] is to be chosen rather than great wealth.” (Prov. 22:1) Solomon also observed

4. How did the economic situation of Solomon differ from that of Jesus?

5. What balanced view of money did Solomon have?

that people who love money are seldom happy with what they have. (Eccl. 5:10, 12) And he warned against putting all our trust in money, since whatever money we have can quickly disappear.—Prov. 23:4, 5.

⁶ Jesus had a balanced view of material things. He enjoyed food and drink. (Luke 19:2, 6, 7) On one occasion, he made wine of the finest quality—the first of his miracles. (John 2:10, 11) And on the day he died, he was wearing an expensive garment. (John 19:23, 24) But Jesus did not allow material things to become the focus of his life. He told his followers: “No one can slave for two masters . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” (Matt. 6:24) Jesus taught that if we seek the Kingdom first, Jehovah will make sure that we have what we need.—**Read Matthew 6:31-33.**

6. What balanced view did Jesus have of material things? (Matthew 6:31-33)

⁷ Many of our brothers and sisters have benefited from applying divine wisdom when it comes to money. Consider the example of a single brother named Daniel. He says: “In my teenage years, I decided that I would make spiritual activities the most important thing in my life.” Because he has kept his life simple, Daniel has been able to use his time and skills on many theocratic projects. He adds: “I can honestly say that I have never regretted the path I chose. Sure, I could have earned a lot of money if I had made that the most important thing in my life. But how could money replace the friendships I’ve cultivated? How could it replace the satisfaction I have from knowing that I’m putting the Kingdom first? There’s no amount of money that could equal the blessings Jehovah has given me.” Clearly, we benefit when we focus, not on money, but on spiritual things.

A BALANCED VIEW OF SECULAR WORK

⁸ Solomon called the enjoyment that we can derive from our hard work “the gift of God.” (**Read Ecclesiastes 5:18, 19.**) He wrote: “There is benefit in every kind of hard work.” (Prov. 14:23) Solomon knew what he was talking about. He was a worker! He built houses, planted vineyards, and made gardens and pools. He also built cities. (1 Ki. 9:19; Eccl. 2:4-6) That was hard work, and no doubt it gave him a measure of satis-

faction. But Solomon did not rely on those activities alone to bring him happiness. He also engaged in spiritual pursuits. For example, he supervised the construction of a glorious temple for Jehovah’s worship—a seven-year building project! (1 Ki. 6:38; 9:1) After sharing in all sorts of activities, both secular and spiritual, Solomon realized that spiritual activities are far more important than secular pursuits. He wrote: “The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments.”—Eccl. 12:13.

⁹ Jesus was a hard worker. In his early years on earth, he worked as a carpenter. (Mark 6:3) No doubt his parents appreciated his help as they tried hard to provide for the needs of their large family. And as a carpenter, the perfect man Jesus must have been in high demand! Jesus very likely enjoyed his work. Yet, even while he was applying himself to his secular work, Jesus set aside time for spiritual activities. (John 7:15) Later, as a full-time minister, he advised his listeners: “Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for everlasting life.” (John 6:27) And in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: “Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.”—Matt. 6:20.

¹⁰ Godly wisdom helps us to have a balanced view of our secular work. As Christians, we are taught to do “hard work . . . , good work.” (Eph. 4:28)

7. How did one brother benefit from having a balanced view of money?

8. How do we know that Solomon had a balanced view of work? (Ecclesiastes 5:18, 19)

9. How did Jesus keep his secular work in its place?

10. What challenge may some face in their secular work?



How can we maintain our balance between secular work and theocratic activities?

(See paragraphs 10-11)

Employers often notice our honesty and our industriousness, and they may tell us how much they value our work ethic. With the best of motives, we could begin to work longer hours, hoping to give our employer an even more favorable impression of Jehovah's Witnesses. Soon, though, we might realize that we are starting to neglect our family responsibilities and theocratic activities. We need to make a change—to find our balance.

¹¹ A young brother named William has observed firsthand the value of keeping secular work in its place. Regarding an elder who formerly employed him, William says: "[This brother] is a great example of someone with a balanced work ethic. He works hard, and he has a good rapport with his clients because of the quality of his work. But at the end of the

day, when the job is done, he knows how to leave his work behind and focus on his family and his worship. And you know what? He's one of the happiest people I know!"*

A BALANCED VIEW OF OURSELVES

¹² When he was a faithful worshipper of Jehovah, Solomon had a balanced view of himself. As a young man, he modestly acknowledged his limitations and asked for Jehovah's guidance. (1 Ki. 3:7-9) Early in his reign, Solomon was also aware of the danger of becoming prideful. He wrote: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." (Prov. 16:18) Sadly, Solomon later failed to apply his own advice. Some time into his kingship, he

* See the article "How to Enjoy Hard Work" in *The Watchtower* of February 1, 2015.

11. What did one brother learn about having a balanced view of work?

12. How did Solomon demonstrate that he had a balanced view of himself, but how did he lose it?



Having an unbalanced view of ourselves may rob us of what opportunities and blessings?
(See paragraph 15)

proudly began to ignore God’s requirements. For example, one of the laws stated that a Hebrew king should not “take many wives for himself, so that his heart may not go astray.” (Deut. 17:17) Solomon disregarded that law and acquired 700 wives and 300 concubines, many of whom were pagan! (1 Ki. 11:1-3) Perhaps Solomon felt that he had “everything under control.” Whatever the case, in time, Solomon suffered the consequences of his drawing away from Jehovah.—1 Ki. 11:9-13.

¹³ Jesus maintained a balanced and humble view of himself. In his prehuman existence, Jesus built up a marvelous record in Jehovah’s service. By means of Jesus, “all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth.” (Col. 1:16) At his baptism, Jesus evidently recalled things he had accomplished when he was with his Father. (Matt. 3:16; John

17:5) But that knowledge did not cause Jesus to become prideful. On the contrary, he never exalted himself above anyone. He told his disciples that he had come to the earth, “not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matt. 20:28) He also admitted modestly that he could not do a single thing of his own initiative. (John 5:19) What humility Jesus displayed! Jesus provided an excellent example for us to follow.

¹⁴ Jesus taught his followers to have a proper view of themselves. On one occasion, Jesus assured them: “The hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matt. 10:30) That statement is very comforting to us, especially if we tend to have a negative view of ourselves. It means that our heavenly Father is deeply interested in us—that we have value in his eyes. We would never want to call into ques-

13. What can we learn from meditating on Jesus’ humble attitude?

14. What can we learn from Jesus about having a proper view of ourselves?

tion Jehovah's judgment by concluding that we are unworthy of being his worshippers and of receiving life in his new world.

¹⁵ Some 15 years ago, *The Watchtower* recommended that we develop this balanced view of ourselves: "Certainly, we would not want to think too highly of ourselves to the point of becoming conceited; nor would we want to go to the other extreme and think nothing of ourselves. Rather, our aim should be to cultivate a reasonable view of ourselves, one that takes into consideration our strengths as well as our limitations. A Christian woman put it this way: 'I'm not the epitome of evil; nor am I God's gift to others. I have both good points and bad points, and so does everyone else.'"^{*} Can you see how beneficial it would be for us to cultivate a balanced view of ourselves?

^{*} See the article "The Bible Can Help You Find Joy" in *The Watchtower* of August 1, 2005.

15. (a) What balanced view of ourselves did *The Watchtower* recommend that we develop? (b) As shown in the pictures on page 24, if we are too focused on ourselves, what blessings are we missing out on?

¹⁶ Through his Word, Jehovah gives us wise guidance. He loves us, and he wants us to be happy. (Isa. 48:17, 18) The wise course—the course that brings the greatest happiness—is to put Jehovah's interests first in our life. When we do, we will avoid many of the problems experienced by those who focus too much on money, secular work, or themselves. May each of us be determined to be wise and make Jehovah's heart rejoice!—Prov. 23:15.

16. Why does Jehovah give us wise guidance?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 21:** John and Tom are two young brothers who are in the same congregation. John spends much time caring for his car. Tom uses his car to assist others to share in the ministry and to attend congregation meetings. **Page 23:** John is working overtime. He does not want to disappoint his boss. So whenever his boss asks him to work late, John agrees. That same evening, Tom, who is a ministerial servant, accompanies an elder on a shepherding visit. In the past, Tom explained to his boss that he reserves several evenings in the week for activities related to his worship of Jehovah. **Page 24:** John is focused on himself. Tom, who puts spiritual pursuits ahead of his own interests, widens out his circle of friends as he helps in renovating an Assembly Hall.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE INSPIRED COUNSEL OF BOTH SOLOMON AND JESUS ABOUT HOW WE SHOULD VIEW . . .

■ money?

■ secular work?

■ ourselves?

SONG 134

Children Are a Trust
From God

PREVIEW

Christian parents love their children very much. They work hard to care for their children's physical and emotional needs. More important, those parents do their best to instill in their young ones a deep love for Jehovah. This article will discuss four Bible principles that can help parents to achieve that goal.

Parents—Help Your Children to Love Jehovah

“You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.”—MATT. 22:37.

ON THEIR wedding day, the handsome groom and his beautiful bride listen closely as a Bible-based talk is delivered on the subject of marriage. The principles being discussed in that talk are not new to them. But from this day forward, the information will take on greater meaning. Why? Because they will be applying it as a married couple.

² It is similar when a Christian couple become parents. Over the years, they may have heard a number of talks on the subject of raising children. But now those principles will take on new meaning for them. They are going to have a child of their own to bring up. What an awesome responsibility! Certainly, new circumstances can change our perspective on well-known Bible principles. This is one reason why Jehovah's worshippers read the Scriptures and, as Israel's kings were told to do, meditate on them *“all the days”* of their life.—Deut. 17:19.

³ Parents, you have one of the greatest privileges a Christian can have, namely, to teach your children about Jehovah. But you want to do more than merely impart information about our God. You want to help your children to love him dearly. What can you do to instill love for Jehovah in your children? In this article, we will dis-

1-2. Explain how Bible principles may well take on greater meaning for us when our circumstances change.

3. What will we discuss in this article?

cuss four Bible principles that can help you as parents. (2 Tim. 3:16) We will also see how some Christian parents have benefited from applying the Bible's counsel.

FOUR PRINCIPLES THAT CAN HELP PARENTS

4 Principle 1: Seek Jehovah's guidance. Ask Jehovah to give you the wisdom you need to help your children develop love for him. **(Read James 1:5.)** He is the most qualified Person to give advice. There are a number of reasons why. Consider two. First, Jehovah has the most experience at being a parent. (Ps. 36:9) And second, the wise advice he gives always brings benefits.—Isa. 48:17.

5 By means of his Word and his organization, Jehovah provides an abundance

4. What is one principle that can help parents instill love for Jehovah in their children's heart? (James 1:5)

5. (a) What does Jehovah's organization provide to help parents? (b) As shown in the video, what did you learn from the way Brother and Sister Amorim raised their children?

of Bible-based spiritual food that can help you raise your children to love Jehovah. (Matt. 24:45) For example, you can find much practical advice in the article series "Help for the Family," which appeared in print for a number of years in the *Awake!* magazine and is now available on our website. Also, many videos published on jw.org feature interviews and dramatizations that can help parents apply Jehovah's counsel as they raise their children.*—Prov. 2:4-6.

6 Many parents have expressed appreciation for the help that Jehovah has provided through his organization. A father named Joe admits: "Raising three children in the truth is no easy task. My wife and I always pray for Jehovah to help us. And we have often felt that an article or a video came out at just the right time to help us deal with a situation

* See on jw.org the video *Taught by Jehovah to Raise Our Family*.

6. How does one father feel about the guidance he and his wife receive from Jehovah's organization?



What good effect will it have on your children if you always seek Jehovah's guidance and set a good example?
(See paragraphs 4, 8)

we were facing. Seeking Jehovah's guidance has been our lifeline." Joe and his wife have found that such provisions are helping their children draw close to Jehovah.

⁷ **Principle 2: Teach by example.** Children watch their parents closely and often imitate them. Of course, no parent is perfect. (Rom. 3:23) Even so, wise parents do their very best to set a good example for their children. **(Read Romans 2:21.)** Speaking of children, one father said: "They are like sponges that absorb everything." He adds: "They will tell us when our example isn't consistent with what we try to teach them." So if we want our children to love Jehovah, our own love for him needs to be strong and evident.

⁸ There are many ways that parents can teach their children to love Jehovah. Note what a 17-year-old brother named Andrew says: "My parents have always emphasized the importance of prayer. Every night, Dad would pray with me, even if I had already said my own prayer. My parents would always remind us: 'You can talk to Jehovah as many times as you want.' That emphasis on prayer affected me deeply, and now I am very comfortable praying to Jehovah and viewing him as a loving Father." Parents, never underestimate how much your own love for Jehovah can influence your children.

⁹ Consider also the example of Emma.

7. Why is it important for parents to be conscious of the example they set? (Romans 2:21)

8-9. What did you learn from the comments made by Andrew and by Emma?

When her father abandoned the family, he left her mother with massive debts. Emma says: "There were many times when Mom struggled financially, but she always talked about how Jehovah cares and provides for his servants. I could see by the way she lived her life that she really believed it. Mom practiced what she preached." The lesson? Parents can teach by example even in difficult situations.—Gal. 6:9.

¹⁰ **Principle 3: Talk with your children regularly.** Jehovah instructed the ancient Israelites to teach their children about him regularly. **(Read Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.)** Those parents had many opportunities throughout the day to talk with their children and instill love for Jehovah in their heart. For instance, a young Israelite boy might spend hours helping his father plant the crops or bring in the harvest. His sister might spend much of the day helping her mother with sewing, weaving, and other household chores. As parents and children worked together, they could talk about many important topics. For example, they could discuss Jehovah's quality of goodness and consider how he was helping the family.

¹¹ Times have changed. In many lands, parents and children cannot spend time together throughout the day. The parents may be at work, and the children may be in school. As a result, parents must look for occasions when they

10. What opportunities did many Israelite parents have to communicate with their children? (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7)

11. What is one opportunity that Christian parents have to talk with their children?



How can parents use creation to teach their children about Jehovah's qualities? (See paragraph 13)

can talk with their children. (Eph. 5: 15, 16; Phil. 1:10) Family worship offers one such opportunity. A young brother named Alexander says: “My father always makes arrangements for family worship, and he allows nothing to crowd out this time together. After the study, we just talk.”

¹² If you are a family head, what can you do to make family worship enjoyable for your children? Why not study with your children our fine new publication *Enjoy Life Forever!* That study would provide an excellent opportunity for lively conversations. You want your children to open up about their feelings and concerns, so do not use the time reserved for family worship to lecture or scold them. And try not to overreact if your children express a viewpoint that is not in harmony with Scriptural principles. Rather, be grateful that they are being honest about their feelings, and

12. What should the family head keep in mind during family worship?

encourage them to express themselves freely. You can best help your children only when you know how they really feel.

¹³ Parents, look for opportunities throughout the day to help your children draw close to Jehovah. You do not have to wait for a formal Bible study session to teach them about our loving God. Note what a mother named Lisa says: “We helped our children make the connection between Jehovah and creation. For example, when our dog’s antics would make the kids laugh, we would point out how this illustrates that our Creator has a sense of humor and loves life, just as we do.”

¹⁴ **Principle 4: Help your children develop wholesome friendships.** God’s Word makes it clear that our friendships have an influence on us—either for good

13. What other opportunities do parents have to help their children draw close to Jehovah?

14. Why is it important for parents to help their children choose friends wisely? (Proverbs 13:20)

or for bad. **(Read Proverbs 13:20.)** Parents, do you know your children's friends? Have you met them and spent some time with them? What can you do to help your children make friends with those who love Jehovah? (1 Cor. 15:33) You can help them make wise choices by inviting some who are doing well spiritually to join you in your family activities. —Ps. 119:63.

¹⁵ Consider the experience of a father named Tony. He explains what he and his wife have done to help their children form healthy friendships: “Over the years, my wife and I have invited to our home brothers and sisters of different ages and backgrounds. They share a meal with us and join in our family worship. This is a great way to get to know those who love and serve Jehovah with joy. We have been blessed to have circuit overseers, missionaries, and others stay in our home. Their experiences,

15. What can parents do to help their children develop wholesome friendships?

zeal, and self-sacrificing spirit have had a tremendous impact on our children and have helped them draw close to Jehovah.” Parents, be determined to help your children have good association.

DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE!

¹⁶ What if, in spite of your best efforts, one of your children says that he does not want to serve Jehovah? Do not conclude that you have failed as a parent. Jehovah has given all of us—including your child—the gift of free will, the ability to choose whether we will serve God or not. If your child has decided to leave Jehovah, do not give up hope that one day he will return. Remember the illustration of the lost son. (Luke 15:11-19, 22-24) That young man strayed far off the path of righteousness, but in the end, he returned. “That was an illustration,” some may say. “Can it happen in real life?” Indeed, it can! In fact,

16. What if a child says that he does not want to serve Jehovah?

Parents, do you know
your children's friends?
(See paragraph 14)



that was the experience of a young man named Elie.

¹⁷ Regarding his parents, Elie says: “They did their best to instill in me a love for Jehovah and his Word, the Bible. In my teen years, however, I began to rebel.” Elie started living a double life, and he rejected all his parents’ efforts to help him spiritually. After he left home, he got involved in wrong conduct. Even so, at times he had Bible discussions with one of his friends. Elie notes: “The more I spoke about Jehovah to my friend, the more I found myself thinking about Jehovah. Slowly but surely, the seeds of Bible truth that were dormant in my heart—seeds that my parents had tried hard to plant—began to grow.” In time, Elie came back to the truth.* Imagine how glad his par-

* See the article “The Bible Changes Lives” in *The Watchtower* of April 1, 2012.

17. How does Elie’s experience encourage you?

ents were that they had tried to teach him from an early age to love Jehovah! —2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

¹⁸ Parents, you have been granted a wonderful privilege, namely, to raise a new generation of worshippers of Jehovah. (Ps. 78:4-6) That is no small task, and we commend you most sincerely for your tireless efforts to help your children! If you continue to do your best to help your children to love Jehovah and to bring them up in his discipline and admonition, you can be sure that our loving heavenly Father will be pleased. —Eph. 6:4.

18. How do you feel about parents who work hard to teach their children to love Jehovah?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 30: In an effort to get to know his child’s friends, a father plays basketball with his son and his son’s friend.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ■ Why is it good for new parents to review familiar Bible principles? | ■ What are four principles that can help parents instill love for God in their children? | ■ Why should you not give up hope if one of your children stops serving Jehovah? |
|---|--|--|

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Parents—Help Your Children to Love Jehovah

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COVER PICTURE:

Revelation chapter 21 depicts the symbolic city of New Jerusalem as “coming down out of heaven from God.” During the Millennium, it will bring countless blessings to obedient mankind (See study article 21, paragraphs 14-16)

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