

- Song 148 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

"How Our Opposers Try to Weaken Us": (10 min.)

Our opposers try to discourage us by lying about those taking the lead (2Ki 18:19-21; w05 8/1 11 ¶5)

(2 Kings 18:19-21) So the Rab'sha-keh said to them: "Please, say to Hez·e·ki'ah, 'This is what the great king, the king of As-syr'i-a, says: "What is the basis for your confidence?"²⁰ You are saying, 'I have a strategy and the power to wage war,' but these are empty words. In whom have you put your trust, so that you dare to rebel against me?'²¹ Look! You trust in the support of this crushed reed, Egypt, which if a man should lean on it would enter into his palm and pierce it. That is the way Phar'aoh king of Egypt is to all those who trust in him.

*** w05 8/1 p. 11 par. 5 Highlights From the Book of Second Kings ***

18:19-21, 25—Had Hezekiah made an alliance with Egypt? No. Rabshakeh's accusation was false, as was his claim to have come with "authorization from Jehovah." Faithful King Hezekiah relied solely on Jehovah.

They try to mislead us by misrepresenting Jehovah or the organization (2Ki 18:22, 25; w10 7/15 13 ¶3)

(2 Kings 18:22) And if you should say to me, 'We trust in Jehovah our God,' is he not the one whose high places and altars Hez·e·ki'ah has removed, while he says to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You should bow down before this altar in Jerusalem'?"

(2 Kings 18:25) Now is it without authorization from Jehovah that I have come up against this place to destroy it? Jehovah himself said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'

*** w10 7/15 p. 13 "Do Not Be Afraid. I Myself Will Help You" ***

Rabshakeh used cunning reasoning in an effort to plant doubts. He said: "Is [Jehovah] not the one whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has removed? . . . Jehovah himself said to me, 'Go up against this land, and you must bring it to ruin.'" (2 Ki. 18:22, 25) Thus Rabshakeh argued that Jehovah would not fight for His people because He was displeased with them. But the opposite was true. Jehovah was pleased with Hezekiah and the Jews who had returned to true worship.—2 Ki. 18:3-7.

- (2 Kings 18:22) And if you should say to me, 'We trust in Jehovah our God,' is he not the one whose high places and altars Hez·e·ki'ah has removed, while he says to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You should bow down before this altar in Jerusalem'?"
- (2 Kings 18:25) Now is it without authorization from Jehovah that I have come up against this place to destroy it? Jehovah himself said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'
- (2 Kings 18:3-7) He kept doing what was right in Jehovah's eyes, just as David his forefather had done. 4 He was the one who removed the high places, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the sacred pole. He also crushed the copper serpent that Moses had made; for down to that time the people of Israel had been making sacrificial smoke to it and it used to be called the copper serpent-idol. 5 He trusted in Jehovah the God of Israel; there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah after him nor among those prior to him. 6 He held fast to Jehovah. He did not turn away from following him; he continued to keep the commandments that Jehovah had given to Moses. 7 And Jehovah was with him. Wherever he went, he acted wisely. He rebelled

against the king of As-syr'i-a and refused to serve him.

**They try to tempt us by making false promises
(2Ki 18:31, 32; w13 11/15 19 ¶14; yb74 177 ¶1)**

(2 Kings 18:31, 32) Do not listen to Hez·e·ki'ah, for this is what the king of As-syr'i-a says: "Make peace with me and surrender, and each of you will eat from his own vine and from his own fig tree and will drink the water of his own cistern, ³² until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Then you will live and not die. Do not listen to Hez·e·ki'ah, for he misleads you by saying, 'Jehovah will rescue us.'

*** w13 11/15 p. 19 par. 14 Seven Shepherds, Eight Dukes—What They Mean for Us Today

14 The king of Assyria set up camp at Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem. From there, through three envoys, he ordered the city to surrender. His spokesman, whose official title was Rabshakeh, used a variety of tactics. Speaking in Hebrew, he urged the people to betray the king and to submit to the Assyrians, falsely promising to relocate them to a land where they could enjoy a comfortable life. (Read 2 Kings 18:31, 32.) Then Rabshakeh asserted that just as the gods of the nations had been unable to protect their worshippers, so Jehovah would be unable to deliver the Jews out of the Assyrians' clutches. Wisely, the people did not try to respond to the slanderous propaganda, a course often followed by Jehovah's servants in our day.—Read 2 Kings 18:35, 36.

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tree and will drink the water of his own cistern, 32 until I come and take you to a land like your own land, a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Then you will live and not die. Do not listen to Hez·e·ki'ah, for he misleads you by saying, 'Jehovah will rescue us.'

- (2 Kings 18:35, 36) Who among all the gods of the lands have rescued their land out of my hand, so that Jehovah should rescue Jerusalem out of my hand?" 36 But the people kept silent and did not say a word to him in reply, for the order of the king was, "You must not answer him."

*** yb74 p. 177 Part 2—Germany ***

It is interesting that the SS, who often used the dirtiest tricks to try to get someone to sign the declaration, frequently turned against them once they had actually signed and harassed them more afterward than they had before. Karl Kirscht confirms this: "More than anyone else Jehovah's witnesses were the victims of chicanery in the concentration camps. It was thought that in this way they could be persuaded to sign the declaration. We were repeatedly asked to do so. Some did sign, but, in most cases, they had to wait more than a year before they were released. During this time they were often publicly reviled by the SS as being hypocrites and cowards and were forced to take a so-called 'honor walk' around their brothers before being permitted to leave the camp."

ASK YOURSELF, 'What steps can I take now to strengthen myself for persecution?'

Spiritual Gems:

2Ki 19:37—How does this verse illustrate the importance of carefully weighing the reliability of archaeological discoveries? (it-1 155 ¶4)

(2 Kings 19:37) 37 And as he was bowing down at the house of his god Nis'roch, his own sons A-dram'me-lech and Shar'e-zer struck him down with the sword and then escaped to the land of Ar'a-rat. And his son E'sar-had'don became king in his place.

*** it-1 p. 155 Archaeology ***

As an illustration, the Bible record states that King Sennacherib of Assyria was killed by his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, and was succeeded to the throne by another son, Esar-haddon. (2Ki 19:36, 37) Yet, a Babylonian chronicle stated that, on the 20th of Tebeth, Sennacherib was killed by his son in a revolt. Both Berossus, Babylonian priest of the third century B.C.E., and Nabonidus, Babylonian king of the sixth century B.C.E., gave the same account, to the effect that Sennacherib was assassinated by only one of his sons. However, in a more recently discovered fragment of the Prism of Esar-haddon, the son who succeeded Sennacherib, Esar-haddon clearly states that his brothers (plural) revolted and killed their father and then took flight. Commenting on this, Philip Biberfeld, in *Universal Jewish History* (1948, Vol. I, p. 27), says: "The Babylonian Chronicle, Nabonid, and Berossus were mistaken; only the Biblical account proved to be correct. It was confirmed in all the minor details by the inscription of Esarhaddon and proved to be more accurate regarding this event of Babylonian-Assyrian history than the Babylonian sources themselves. This is a fact of utmost importance for the evaluation of even contemporary sources not in accord with Biblical tradition."

- (2 Kings 19:36, 37) 36 So King Sen-nach'er-ib of As-syr'i-a departed and returned to Nin'e-veh and stayed

there. 37 And as he was bowing down at the house of his god Nis'roch, his own sons A-dram'me-lech and Shar'e-zer struck him down with the sword and then escaped to the land of Ar'a-rat. And his son E'sar-had'don became king in his place.

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.)
2Ki 18:1-12 (th study 5)**

(2 Kings 18:1-12) 18 In the third year of Ho-she'a the son of E'lah the king of Israel, Hez'e-ki'ah the son of King A'haz of Judah became king. 2 He was 25 years old when he became king, and he reigned for 29 years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was A'bi the daughter of Zech'a-ri'ah. 3 He kept doing what was right in Jehovah's eyes, just as David his forefather had done. 4 He was the one who removed the high places, smashed the sacred pillars, and cut down the sacred pole. He also crushed the copper serpent that Moses had made; for down to that time the people of Israel had been making sacrificial smoke to it and it used to be called the copper serpent-idol. 5 He trusted in Jehovah the God of Israel; there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah after him nor among those prior to him. 6 He held fast to Jehovah. He did not turn away from following him; he continued to keep the commandments that Jehovah had given to Moses. 7 And Jehovah was with him. Wherever he went, he acted wisely. He rebelled against the king of As-syr'i-a and refused to serve him. 8 He also defeated the Phi-lis'tines clear to Gaz'a and its territories, from watchtower to

fortified city. 9 In the fourth year of King Hez·e·ki'ah, that is, the seventh year of Ho·she'a the son of E'lah the king of Israel, King Shal·man·e'ser of As·syr'i·a came up against Sa·mar'i·a and began to lay siege to it. 10 They captured it at the end of three years; in the sixth year of Hez·e·ki'ah, which was the ninth year of King Ho·she'a of Israel, Sa·mar'i·a was captured. 11 Then the king of As·syr'i·a took Israel into exile in As·syr'i·a and settled them in Ha'lah and in Ha'bor at the river Go'zan and in the cities of the Medes. 12 This was because they had not listened to the voice of Jehovah their God but kept violating his covenant, all that Moses the servant of Jehovah had commanded. They neither listened nor obeyed.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation topic. Invite the person to a meeting, and introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video What Happens at a Kingdom Hall? (th study 1)

Initial Call

Question: Is an end to violence and war realistic?

Scripture: Ps 37:10, 11

- (Psalm 37:10, 11) 10 Just a little while longer, and the wicked will be no more; You will look at where they were, And they will not be there. 11 But the meek will possess the earth, And they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.

Link: What Bible promise gives us hope?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- T-31; T-34

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation topic. Tell the person about our free Bible course, and leave a Bible course contact card. (th study 2)

Return Visit

Question: What Bible promise gives us hope?

Scripture: Re 21:3, 4

- (Revelation 21:3, 4) 3 With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. 4 And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

Link: How can we understand the Bible?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- Iffi lesson 02 point 2; g22.1 15

Talk: (5 min.) w20.11 15 ¶14—Theme: Pray for Those Persecuted—How? (th study 14)

*** w20 November p. 15 par. 14 Take Courage—Jehovah Is Your Helper ***

14 What can we do? We can pray “concerning kings and all those who are in positions of authority” when these individuals are called on to make decisions that affect our Christian life and ministry. (1 Tim. 2:1, 2, ftn.; Neh. 1:11) As the first-century Christians did, we too pray intensely to God for our brothers and sisters who are in prison. (Read Acts 12:5; Heb. 13:3) Further, we can pray concerning prison guards who are in charge of our brothers and sisters. We can beg Jehovah to influence the thoughts of such individuals so that they may be moved to act like Julius and treat our imprisoned fellow believers “with human kindness.”—See study note on Acts 27:3.

- (1 Timothy 2:1, 2) First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made concerning all sorts of men, 2 concerning kings and all those who are in high positions, so that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with complete godly devotion and seriousness.
- (Nehemiah 1:11) O Jehovah, please, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take delight in fearing your name, and please, grant success to your servant today, and may this man show me compassion.” Now I was cupbearer to the king.
- (Acts 12:5) So Peter was being kept in the prison, but the congregation was intensely praying to God for him.
- (Hebrews 13:3) Keep in mind those in prison, as though you were imprisoned

with them, and those being mistreated, since you yourselves also are in the body.

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- ***Study notes on Acts 27:3
- (Acts 27:3) 3 The next day we landed at Si'don, and Julius treated Paul with kindness and permitted him to go to his friends and enjoy their care.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 128

“Rejoice When Being Persecuted”: (8 min.) Discussion. Play the video *We Can Rejoice Despite Persecution*.

Christians can expect to be persecuted. (Joh 15:20) Although persecution brings a measure of anxiety and sometimes pain, we can find joy when we endure it.—Mt 5:10-12; 1Pe 2:19, 20.

WATCH THE VIDEO WE CAN REJOICE DESPITE PERSECUTION, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

What did you learn from Brother Bazhenov's experience about the value of

- reading the Bible daily?

December 19-25, 2022
Our Christian Life and Ministry MEETING WORKBOOK and CBS
Assigned chapters: 2 KINGS 18-19

- receiving support from fellow Christians?

- praying frequently?

- singing Kingdom songs?

- talking about our faith?

[Footnote]

We can pray for imprisoned Christians, even doing so by name. However, it is not possible for the branch office to forward personal letters to them.

- (John 15:20) Keep in mind the word I said to you: A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have observed my word, they will also observe yours.
- (Matthew 5:10-12) "Happy are those who have been persecuted for

righteousness' sake, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. 11 "Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. 12 Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.

- (1 Peter 2:19, 20) For it is agreeable when someone endures hardship and suffers unjustly because of conscience toward God. 20 For what merit is there if you are beaten for sinning and you endure it? But if you endure suffering because of doing good, this is an agreeable thing to God.

Local Needs: (7 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Iff lesson 32 points 1-4 and the chart "How the Tree Dream Relates to God's Kingdom"

(Daniel 4:16, 17) Let its heart be changed from that of a human, and let it be given the heart of a beast, and let seven times pass over it. 17 This is by the decree of watchers, and the request is by the word of the holy ones, so that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he gives it to whomever he wants, and he sets up over it even the lowliest of men."

(Luke 21:24) And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.

(Matthew 24:3) While he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples approached him privately, saying: "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"

(Matthew 24:7) "For nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be food shortages and earthquakes in one place after another.

(2 Timothy 3:1-5) But know this, that in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here. 2 For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, 3 having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, 4 betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God, 5 having an appearance of godliness but proving false to its power; and from these turn away.

(Revelation 12:9) So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.

(Revelation 12:12) On this account be glad, you heavens and you who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time."

(Daniel 4:17) This is by the decree of watchers, and the request is by the word of the holy ones, so that people living may know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he gives it to whomever he wants, and he sets up over it even the lowliest of men."

(Daniel 4:20-26) "The tree that you saw that grew great and became strong, whose top reached the heavens and was visible to all the earth, 21 which had beautiful foliage, abundant fruit, and food for all, beneath which the beasts of the field would dwell and on whose branches the birds of the heavens would reside, 22 it is you, O king, because you have grown great and become strong, and your grandeur has grown and reached to the heavens, and your rulership to the ends of the earth. 23 "And the king saw a watcher, a holy one, coming down from the heavens, who was saying: "Chop down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump with its roots in the ground, with a banding of iron and of copper, among the grass of the field. And let the dew of the heavens make it wet, and let its portion be with the beasts of the field until seven times pass over it." 24 This is the interpretation, O king; it is the decree of the Most High that must befall my lord the king. 25 You will be driven away from among men, and your dwelling will be with the beasts of the field, and you will be given vegetation to eat just like bulls; and you will become wet with the dew of the heavens, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he grants it to

whomever he wants. 26 “But because they said to leave the stump of the tree with its roots, your kingdom will be yours again after you come to know that the heavens are ruling.

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from among men, and your dwelling will be with the beasts of the field, and you will be given vegetation to eat just like bulls; and you will become wet with the dew of the heavens, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he grants it to whomever he wants. 26 “But because they said to leave the stump of the tree with its roots, your kingdom will be yours again after you come to know that the heavens are ruling. 27 Therefore, O king, may my counsel be acceptable to you. Turn away from your sins by doing what is right, and from your iniquity by showing mercy to the poor. It may be that your prosperity will be extended.” 28 All of this befell King Neb·u·chad·nez·zar. 29 Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king was saying: “Is this not Babylon the Great that I myself have built for the royal house by my own strength and might and for the glory of my majesty?” 31 While the word was yet in the king’s mouth, a voice came down from the heavens: “To you it is being said, O King Neb·u·chad·nez·zar, ‘The kingdom has gone away from you, 32 and from mankind you are being driven away. With the beasts of the field your dwelling will be, and you will be given vegetation to eat just like bulls, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he grants it to whomever he wants.’” 33 At that moment the word was fulfilled on Neb·u·chad·nez·zar. He was driven away from mankind, and he began to eat vegetation just like bulls, and his body became wet with the dew of the heavens, until his hair grew long just like eagles’ feathers and his nails were like birds’ claws. 34 “At the end of that time I, Neb·u·chad·nez·zar, looked up to the heavens, and my understanding returned to me; and I praised the Most High, and to the One living forever I gave praise and glory, because his rulership is an everlasting rulership and his kingdom is for generation after generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing, and he does according to his own will among the army of

the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. And there is no one who can hinder him or say to him, 'What have you done?' 36 "At that time my understanding returned to me, and the glory of my kingdom, my majesty, and my splendor returned to me. My high officials and nobles eagerly sought me out, and I was restored to my kingdom, and even more greatness was added to me.

(Daniel 4:22) it is you, O king, because you have grown great and become strong, and your grandeur has grown and reached to the heavens, and your rulership to the ends of the earth.

(Daniel 4:29-33) Twelve months later he was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. 30 The king was saying: "Is this not Babylon the Great that I myself have built for the royal house by my own strength and might and for the glory of my majesty?" 31 While the word was yet in the king's mouth, a voice came down from the heavens: "To you it is being said, O King Neb·u·chad·nez'zar, 'The kingdom has gone away from you, 32 and from mankind you are being driven away. With the beasts of the field your dwelling will be, and you will be given vegetation to eat just like bulls, and seven times will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind and that he grants it to whomever he wants.'" 33 At that moment the word was fulfilled on Neb·u·chad·nez'zar. He was driven away from mankind, and he began to eat vegetation just like bulls, and his body became wet with the dew of the heavens, until his hair grew long just like eagles' feathers and his nails were like birds' claws.

(Daniel 4:34-36) "At the end of that time I, Neb·u·chad·nez'zar, looked up to the heavens, and my understanding returned to me; and I praised the Most High, and to the One living forever I gave praise and glory, because his rulership is an everlasting rulership and his kingdom is for generation after generation. 35 All the inhabitants of the earth are regarded as nothing, and he does according to his own

will among the army of the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. And there is no one who can hinder him or say to him, 'What have you done?' 36 "At that time my understanding returned to me, and the glory of my kingdom, my majesty, and my splendor returned to me. My high officials and nobles eagerly sought me out, and I was restored to my kingdom, and even more greatness was added to me.

(1 Chronicles 29:23) And Sol'o-mon sat on Jehovah's throne as king in place of David his father, and he was successful, and all the Israelites were obedient to him.

(Luke 21:24) And they will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations; and Jerusalem will be trampled on by the nations until the appointed times of the nations are fulfilled.

(Revelation 12:6) And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God and where they would feed her for 1,260 days.

(Revelation 12:14) But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she might fly into the wilderness to her place, where she is to be fed for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent.

(Ezekiel 4:6) And you must complete them. "Then for a second time you will lie down, on your right side, and you will carry the guilt of the house of Judah for 40 days. A day for a year, a day for a year, is what I have given you.

- Concluding Comments (3 min.)

- Song 22 and Prayer