

- Song 139 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

1. Picture Yourself in God's Peaceful New World (10 min.)

Social disorder breeds the violence we see today (Ps 11:2, 3; w06 5/15 18 ¶3)

(Psalm 11:2, 3) See how the wicked bend the bow; They set their arrow on the bowstring, To shoot from the darkness those upright in heart. 3 When the foundations are torn down, What can the righteous do?"

*** w06 5/15 p. 18 par. 3 Highlights From Book One of Psalms ***

11:3—What foundations are torn down? These are the very foundations on which human society rests—law, order, and justice. When these are in disarray, social disorder prevails and there is no justice. Under such conditions, “anyone righteous” must fully trust in God.—Psalm 11:4-7.

- (Psalm 11:3) When the foundations are torn down, What can the righteous do?"
- (Psalm 11:4-7) Jehovah is in his holy temple. Jehovah's throne is in the heavens. His own eyes see, his watchful eyes examine the sons of men. 5 Jehovah examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one; He hates anyone who loves violence. 6 Upon the wicked, he will rain down snares; Fire and sulfur and a scorching wind will be the portion of their cup. 7 For Jehovah is righteous; he loves righteous acts. The upright will see his face.

We can trust that Jehovah will soon put an end to violence (Ps 11:5; wp16.4 11)

(Psalm 11:5) Jehovah examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one; He hates anyone who loves violence.

*** wp16 No. 4 p. 11 Is a World Free of Violence Possible? ***

The Bible promises that God will soon cleanse this earth of violence. Today's violent world is facing God's "day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly people." (2 Peter 3:5-7) No more will violent people make others suffer. How can we be sure that God wants to intervene and eradicate violence?

God "hates anyone who loves violence," says the Bible. (Psalm 11:5) The Creator loves peace and justice. (Psalm 33:5; 37:28) That is why he will not tolerate violent people forever.

- (2 Peter 3:5-7) For they deliberately ignore this fact, that long ago there were heavens and an earth standing firmly out of water and in the midst of water by the word of God; 6 and that by those means the world of that time suffered destruction when it was flooded with water. 7 But by the same word the heavens and the earth that now exist are reserved for fire and are being kept until the day of judgment and of destruction of the ungodly people.
- (Psalm 11:5) Jehovah examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one; He hates anyone who loves violence.
- (Psalm 33:5) He loves righteousness and justice. The earth is filled with Jehovah's loyal love.
- (Psalm 37:28) For Jehovah loves justice, And he will not abandon his loyal ones. They will always be guarded; But the descendants of the wicked will be done away with.

Reflecting on Jehovah's promise of salvation can help us to wait patiently for our deliverance (Ps 13:5, 6; w17.08 6 ¶15)

(Psalm 13:5, 6) As for me, I trust in your loyal love; My heart will rejoice in your acts of salvation. 6 I will sing to Jehovah, for he has richly rewarded me.

*** w17 August pp. 6-7 par. 15 Are You Willing to Wait Patiently? ***

15 Why was David willing to wait patiently? He gives us the answer in the very psalm in which he four times asked: "How long?" This is what he says: "As for me, I trust in your loyal love; my heart will rejoice in your acts of salvation. I will sing to Jehovah, for he has richly rewarded me." (Ps. 13:5, 6) David trusted in Jehovah's loyal love. He joyfully looked forward to deliverance, and he reflected on how Jehovah had dealt rewardingly with him. Yes, David felt that the wait would be worth it.

TRY THIS: Read Ezekiel 34:25, and take a moment to picture yourself in the peaceful setting described there.—kr 236 ¶16.

- (Ezekiel 34:25) "“And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and I will rid the land of vicious wild beasts, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests.

*** kr chap. 22 p. 236 par. 16 The Kingdom Carries Out God's Will on Earth ***

16 Security. At long last, the heartwarming word picture painted at Isaiah 11:6-9 will see a complete fulfillment even in a literal sense. Men, women, and children will be safe and secure wherever they go on earth. No creature, whether human or animal, will pose any threat. Imagine a time when you will see this entire planet as your home, where you can swim in the rivers, lakes, and seas; traverse the mountain ranges; and roam the grasslands in complete safety. And when night falls, you will

not worry. The words of Ezekiel 34:25 will come true, so that it will even be possible for God's people to "dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests."

- (Isaiah 11:6-9) The wolf will reside for a while with the lamb, And with the young goat the leopard will lie down, And the calf and the lion and the fattened animal will all be together; And a little boy will lead them. 7 The cow and the bear will feed together, And their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the bull. 8 The nursing child will play over the lair of a cobra, And a weaned child will put his hand over the den of a poisonous snake. 9 They will not cause any harm Or any ruin in all my holy mountain, Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah As the waters cover the sea.
- (Ezekiel 34:25) "“And I will make a covenant of peace with them, and I will rid the land of vicious wild beasts, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the forests.

2. Spiritual Gems:

Ps 14:1—How might this text indicate a threat even for Christians? (w13 9/15 19 ¶12)

(Psalm 14:1) The foolish one says in his heart: "There is no Jehovah." Their actions are corrupt, and their dealings are detestable; No one is doing good.

*** w13 9/15 pp. 19-20 par. 12 Have You Been Transformed? ***

12 Sadly, we are surrounded by people in the world who fit Paul's description. They likely think that it is old-fashioned or intolerant to insist on standards and principles. Many teachers and parents take a permissive approach and promote a "liberal" way of thinking. To them, everything is relative; nothing is absolute. Even many who claim to be religious feel that they are at liberty to do what they think is right, without any obligation to obey God and his commandments. (Ps. 14:1) This attitude may pose a real threat to true Christians. The unwary may adopt the same view of theocratic arrangements. They may be unwilling to go along with congregation procedures and may even complain about anything not to their liking. Or they may have reservations about Bible-based counsel on entertainment, use of the Internet, and the pursuit of higher education.

- (Psalm 14:1) 14 The foolish one says in his heart: "There is no Jehovah." Their actions are corrupt, and their dealings are detestable; No one is doing good.

What spiritual gems from this week's Bible reading would you like to share?

Jehovah my God. Give light to my eyes, so that I may not fall asleep in death, 4 So that my enemy will not say: "I have defeated him!" Do not let my opponents rejoice over my downfall. 5 As for me, I trust in your loyal love; My heart will rejoice in your acts of salvation. 6 I will sing to Jehovah, for he has richly rewarded me. To the director. Of David. 14 The foolish one says in his heart: "There is no Jehovah." Their actions are corrupt, and their dealings are detestable; No one is doing good. 2 But Jehovah looks down from heaven on the sons of men To see whether anyone has insight, whether anyone is seeking Jehovah. 3 They have all turned aside; They are all alike corrupt. No one is doing good, Not even one. 4 Do none of the wrongdoers understand? They devour my people as if they were eating bread. They do not call on Jehovah. 5 But they will be filled with great terror, For Jehovah is with the generation of the righteous. 6 You wrongdoers try to frustrate the plans of the lowly one, But Jehovah is his refuge. 7 O that Israel's salvation may come from Zion! When Jehovah gathers back his captive people, Let Jacob be joyful, let Israel rejoice.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

4. Starting a Conversation
(2 min.) INFORMAL WITNESSING. Invite the person to the Memorial. (1md lesson 5 point 3)

3. Bible Reading:) (4 min.)

Ps 13:1–14:7 (th study 2)

(Psalms 13:1-14:7) 13 How long, O Jehovah, will you forget me? Forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long will I have anxious concern, With grief in my heart each day? How long will my enemy triumph over me? 3 Look upon me and answer me, O

5. Starting a Conversation

(1 min.) HOUSE TO HOUSE. Invite the person to the Memorial. (1md lesson 3 point 4)

6. Starting a Conversation

(3 min.) HOUSE TO HOUSE. A person shows interest in the Memorial invitation. (1md lesson 7 point 4)

7. Making Disciples

(5 min.) Iff lesson 13 summary, review, and goal. Use an article from the “Explore” section to help your student understand God’s feelings toward false religion. (th study 12)

SUMMARY

False religion has misrepresented God by means of its false teachings and terrible practices. God will destroy false religion.

Review

- How do you feel about what false religion has taught and how it has acted?
- How does Jehovah feel about false religion?

- What will God do to false religion?

Lesson completed on: _____

Goal

- At the next congregation meeting, ask someone, “Why did you become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?”
- Other: _____

EXPLORE

Learn about two ways that most religions displease God.

“Are All Religions the Same? Do They All Lead to God?” (Web article)

Why does Jehovah want us to worship him along with others?

“Is It Necessary to Belong to an Organized Religion?” (Web article)

A priest was troubled by his religion. But this did not stop him from learning the truth about God.

“Why a Priest Left His Church” (Awake!, February 2015)

For generations, religions have told lies that make God seem distant and cruel. Learn the truth about three of those lies.

“Lies That Make God Seem Unlovable” (The Watchtower, November 1, 2013)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 8

8. "Wisdom Is Better Than Weapons of War"

(10 min.) Discussion.

Acts of violence are increasing throughout the world. Jehovah knows that the violence we see and experience can cause us much anxiety. He also understands our need for protection. One way that he protects us is through his Word, the Bible.—Ps 12:5-7.

- (Psalm 12:5-7) "Because the afflicted are oppressed, Because of the sighing of the poor, I will rise up to act," says Jehovah. "I will save them from those who treat them with contempt." 6 The sayings of Jehovah are pure; They are like silver refined in an earthen furnace, purified seven times. 7 You will guard them, O Jehovah; You will protect each one of them from this generation forever.

The Bible contains wisdom that is "better than weapons of war." (Ec 9:18) Consider how the following Bible principles can help protect us from becoming victims of violence.

- (Ecclesiastes 9:18) Wisdom is better than weapons of war, but just one sinner can destroy much good.
- Ec 4:9, 10—Avoid being alone in unsafe areas and situations
 - (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10) Two are better than one because they have a good reward for their hard work. 10 For if one of them falls, the other can help his partner up. But what will happen to the one who falls with no one to help him up?

• Pr 22:3—Remain aware of your surroundings when in public

- (Proverbs 22:3) The shrewd one sees the danger and conceals himself, But the inexperienced keep right on going and suffer the consequences.

• Pr 26:17—Do not get involved in arguments that do not concern you

- (Proverbs 26:17) Like someone grabbing hold of a dog's ears Is the one passing by who becomes furious about a quarrel that is not his.

• Pr 17:14—Leave the area if violence seems imminent. And stay away from crowds that assemble to protest

- (Proverbs 17:14) Beginning a fight is like opening a floodgate; Before the quarrel breaks out, take your leave.

• Lu 12:15—Never risk your life to protect your possessions

- (Luke 12:15) Then he said to them: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of greed, because even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses."

Play the VIDEO Imitate the Faithful, Not the Faithless—Enoch, Not Lamech. Then ask the audience:

How did Enoch's example affect the father's decisions and conduct in the face of violence?—Heb 11:5

- (Hebrews 11:5) By faith Enoch was transferred so as not to see death, and he was nowhere to be found because God had transferred him; for before he

was transferred he received the witness that he had pleased God well.

In some situations, a Christian may feel the need to take reasonable measures to defend himself or his property. If so, he would do everything in his power to avoid taking a human life and becoming bloodguilty.—Ps 51:14; see “Questions From Readers” in the July 2017 issue of The Watchtower.

- (Psalm 51:14) Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God of my salvation, So that my tongue may joyfully declare your righteousness.

*** w17 July p. 31-p. 32 Questions From Readers ***

Questions From Readers

Would it be fitting for a Christian to keep a firearm, such as a handgun or a rifle, for protection against other humans?

- While Christians may take reasonable steps to ensure their personal security, they do so within the framework of Bible principles. These advise against the use of carnal weapons, such as handguns, rifles, or other firearms, for protection against other humans. Consider the following:

In Jehovah’s eyes, life—especially human life—is sacred. The psalmist David knew that Jehovah “is the source of life.” (Ps. 36:9) Hence, if a Christian chooses to take reasonable measures to defend himself or his property, he would do everything in his power to avoid taking a human life and becoming bloodguilty.—Deut. 22:8; Ps. 51:14.

Although using any number of objects could lead to incurring bloodguilt, guns make it easier to kill someone—accidentally or deliberately. Moreover, if an attacker—who may already be tense—sees that the other person has a firearm, the situation is very likely to escalate and a death might result.

When Jesus told his followers to equip themselves with swords on the final night of his life on earth, he did not have protection in mind. (Luke 22:36, 38) Rather, Jesus had them bring a sword for an object lesson to teach them not to resort to violence, even when confronted by an armed crowd. (Luke 22:52) After Peter wielded one of the swords against the high priest’s slave, Jesus commanded Peter: “Return your sword to its place.” Then Jesus stated a fundamental truth, a principle that guides his followers to this day: “All those who take up the sword will perish by the sword.”—Matt. 26:51, 52.

In harmony with Micah 4:3, God’s people “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears.” This identifying trait of true Christians harmonizes with the apostle Paul’s inspired exhortation: “Return evil for evil to no one. . . . If possible, as far as it depends on you, be peaceable with all men.” (Rom. 12:17, 18) Despite the many troubles that Paul experienced, including “dangers from robbers,” he lived by his words, never putting personal security above Scriptural principles. (2 Cor. 11:26) Instead, he trusted in God and in the wisdom found in His Word—wisdom that “is better than weapons of war.”—Eccl. 9:18.

Christians consider life to be far more valuable than material things. “Life does not result from the things [a man] possesses.” (Luke 12:15) Thus, if a mild tongue fails to stop an armed robber, wise Christians heed the principle embodied in Jesus’ words: “Do not resist the one who is wicked.” It may even require that we give up our inner and outer garments, so to speak. (Matt. 5:39, 40; Luke 6:29) The best strategy, of course, is

prevention. If we shun “the showy display of [our] means of life” and are known by our neighbors as peace-loving Witnesses of Jehovah, we may avoid being targeted by violent criminals.—1 John 2:16; Prov. 18:10.

Christians respect others’ consciences. (Rom. 14:21) If it became known that a member of the congregation kept a gun for protection against humans, some fellow believers might be shocked, even stumbled. Love moves us to put others’ interests ahead of our own, even when that means putting aside what we may feel is a legal right.—1 Cor. 10:32, 33; 13:4, 5.

Christians strive to be exemplary. (2 Cor. 4:2; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) After receiving Scriptural counsel, a Christian who continues to keep a gun for protection against other humans could not be considered exemplary. He would therefore not qualify for responsibilities or special privileges in the congregation. The same applies to a Christian who continues to carry a firearm as part of his secular work. How much better to seek other employment!

How a Christian chooses to protect himself, his family, or his possessions is, of course, largely a personal matter, as is his choice of employment. That said, Bible principles reflect God’s wisdom and his love for us. Out of regard for those principles, spiritually mature Christians choose not to keep a firearm for protection against other humans. They know that true and lasting security comes to those who demonstrate trust in God by living in harmony with Bible principles.—Ps. 97:10; Prov. 1:33; 2:6, 7.

9. Memorial Campaign to Begin Saturday, March 2
(5 min.) Talk by an elder. Outline local arrangements for the campaign, special talk, and Memorial. Remind publishers that they may choose to auxiliary pioneer with a 15-hour requirement during the months of March and April.

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
bt chap. 6 ¶9-17

Paragraph 9
(Acts 7:1) But the high priest said: “Are these things so?”

Paragraph 10
(1 Peter 3:15) But sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone who demands of you a reason for the hope you have, but doing so with a mild temper and deep respect.

Paragraph 11
(Acts 7:1-16) But the high priest said: “Are these things so?” 2 Stephen replied: “Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mes·o·po·ta·mi·a, before he took up residence in Ha’ran, 3 and he said to him: ‘Go out from your land and from your relatives and come into the land that I will show you.’ 4 Then

he went out of the land of the Chal-de'ans and took up residence in Ha'ran. And from there, after his father died, God caused him to resettle in this land where you now dwell. 5 And yet, he did not give him any inheritance in it, no, not even enough to put his foot on; but he promised to give it to him as a possession and after him to his offspring, though as yet he had no child. 6 Moreover, God told him that his offspring would be foreigners in a land not theirs and that the people would enslave them and afflict them for 400 years. 7 'And that nation for which they will slave I will judge,' God said, 'and after these things they will come out and will offer sacred service to me in this place.' 8 'He also gave him a covenant of circumcision, and he became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the 12 family heads. 9 And the family heads became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. But God was with him, 10 and he rescued him out of all his tribulations and gave him favor and wisdom before Phar'aoh king of Egypt. And he appointed him to govern Egypt and his whole house. 11 But a famine came on all of Egypt and Ca'naan, yes, a great tribulation, and our forefathers could not find anything to eat. 12 But Jacob heard that there were food supplies in Egypt, and he sent our forefathers out the first time. 13 During the second time, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and the family of Joseph became known to Phar'aoh. 14 So Joseph sent a message and called his father Jacob and all his relatives from that place, 75 persons in all. 15 So Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died there, and so did our forefathers. 16 They were carried to She'chem and were laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver money from the sons of Ha'mor in She'chem.

(Acts 7:2) Stephen replied: "Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mes·o·po·ta·mi·a, before he took up residence in Ha'ran,

Paragraph 13

(Acts 7:17-43) "Just as the time was approaching to fulfill the promise that God had announced to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, 18 until there rose a different king over Egypt, one who did not know of Joseph. 19 This one dealt cunningly with our race and wrongfully forced the fathers to abandon their infants so that they would not be kept alive. 20 At that time Moses was born, and he was divinely beautiful. And he was nursed for three months in his father's home. 21 But when he was abandoned, the daughter of Phar'aoh took him and brought him up as her own son. 22 So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. In fact, he was powerful in his words and deeds. 23 "Now when he reached the age of 40, it came into his heart to make a visit on his brothers, the sons of Israel. 24 When he caught sight of one of them being unjustly treated, he defended him and avenged the one being abused by striking down the Egyptian. 25 He thought that his brothers would grasp that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not grasp it. 26 The next day he appeared to them as they were fighting, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying: 'Men, you are brothers. Why do you mistreat each other?' 27 But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed him away, saying: 'Who appointed you ruler and judge over us? 28 You do not want to do away with me the way you did away with the Egyptian yesterday, do you?' 29 On hearing this, Moses fled and lived as a foreigner in the land of Mid'i-an, where he became the father of two sons. 30 "After 40 years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Si'nai in the flame of a burning thornbush. 31 When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. But as he was approaching to investigate, Jehovah's voice was heard: 32 'I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.' Moses started trembling and did not dare to investigate further. 33 Jehovah said to him: 'Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy

ground. 34 I have certainly seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Now come, I will send you off to Egypt.' 35 This same Moses whom they had disowned, saying: 'Who appointed you ruler and judge?' is the very one God sent as both ruler and deliverer by means of the angel who appeared to him in the thornbush. 36 This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for 40 years. 37 "This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel: 'God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me.' 38 This is the one who came to be among the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Si'nai and with our forefathers, and he received living sacred pronouncements to give us. 39 Our forefathers refused to obey him, but they pushed him aside and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, 40 saying to Aaron: 'Make gods for us to go ahead of us. For we do not know what has happened to this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt.' 41 So they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol and began to enjoy themselves in the works of their hands. 42 So God turned away from them and handed them over to offer sacred service to the army of heaven, just as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'It was not to me that you made offerings and sacrifices for 40 years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel? 43 But it was the tent of Mo'loch and the star of the god Re'phan that you took up, the images that you made to worship them. So I will deport you beyond Babylon.'

(Acts 7:38) This is the one who came to be among the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Si'nai and with our forefathers, and he received living sacred pronouncements to give us.

Paragraph 15

(Acts 7:44-50) "Our forefathers had the tent of the witness in the wilderness, just as He gave

orders when speaking to Moses to make it according to the pattern he had seen. 45 And our forefathers received possession of it and brought it in with Joshua into the land possessed by the nations, whom God drove out from before our forefathers. Here it remained until the days of David. 46 He found favor in the sight of God and asked for the privilege of providing a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. 47 But it was Sol'o-mon who built a house for him. 48 However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands, just as the prophet says: 49 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What sort of house will you build for me? Jehovah says. Or where is my resting-place? 50 My hand made all these things, did it not?'

Paragraph 16

(Acts 7:48) However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands, just as the prophet says:

(2 Chronicles 6:18) "But will God really dwell with mankind on the earth? Look! The heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens, cannot contain you; how much less, then, this house that I have built!

(Acts 7:49, 50) 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What sort of house will you build for me? Jehovah says. Or where is my resting-place? 50 My hand made all these things, did it not?'

(Isaiah 66:1, 2) This is what Jehovah says: "The heavens are my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Where, then, is the house that you could build for me, And where is my resting-place?" 2 "My own hand has made all these things, And this is how they all came to be," declares Jehovah. "To this one, then, I will look, To the one humble and broken in spirit who trembles at my word.

- Concluding Comments (3 min.)

- Song 40 and Prayer