

# Congregation Bible Study / Theocratic Ministry School / Service Meeting

Week of February 22, 2010 – WBR: Judges 19 – 21

## Song 64– Make the Truth Your Own

(Proverbs 3:1, 2)

### CONGREGATION BIBLE STUDY

#### “Building Up Yourselves on Your Most Holy Faith”

(Iv chap. 17 ¶11-22)

*But YOU, beloved ones, by building up yourselves on YOUR most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit,<sup>21</sup> keep yourselves in God’s love, while YOU are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view. (Jude 20-21)*

#### Para 11

(Hebrews 5:14) But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.

#### Paragraph 12

(1 Timothy 4:8) For bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come.

#### Paragraph 13

(Proverbs 3:5-6) Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding.<sup>6</sup> In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.

(James 1:5) So, if any one of YOU is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him.

#### Paragraph 14

(Proverbs 4:5-7) Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding. Do not forget, and do not turn aside from the sayings of my mouth.<sup>6</sup> Do not leave it, and it will keep you. Love it, and it will safeguard you.<sup>7</sup> Wisdom is the prime thing. Acquire wisdom; and with all that you acquire, acquire understanding.

(1 Peter 2:2) [and,] as newborn infants, form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word, that through it YOU may grow to salvation,

(2 Corinthians 13:5) Keep testing whether YOU are in the faith, keep proving what YOU yourselves are. Or do

YOU not recognize that Jesus Christ is in union with YOU? Unless YOU are disapproved.

#### Paragraph 15

(1 Corinthians 13:1-3) If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become a sounding [piece of] brass or a clashing cymbal.<sup>2</sup> And if I have the gift of prophesying and am acquainted with all the sacred secrets and all knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to transplant mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.<sup>3</sup> And if I give all my belongings to feed others, and if I hand over my body, that I may boast, but do not have love, I am not profited at all.

#### Keep Your Mind Focused on the Hope Jehovah Provides

#### Paragraph 16

(Ephesians 2:2) in which YOU at one time walked according to the system of things of this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience.

#### Paragraph 17

(1 Thessalonians 5:8) But as for us who belong to the day, let us keep our senses and have on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation;

#### Paragraph 18

(Hebrews 12:2) as we look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus. For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

#### Paragraph 20

(Isaiah 30:18) And therefore Jehovah will keep in expectation of showing YOU favor, and therefore he will rise up to show YOU mercy. For Jehovah is a God of judgment. Happy are all those keeping in expectation of him.

(Malachi 3:10) Bring all the tenth parts into the storehouse, that there may come to be food in my house; and test me out, please, in this respect,” Jehovah of armies has said, “whether I shall not open to YOU people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon YOU a blessing until there is no more want.”

(Psalm 37:4) Also take exquisite delight in Jehovah, And he will give you the requests of your heart.



## Theocratic Ministry School Review

**1. What factors may have caused some Israelites to delay in taking possession of the Promised Land, and what lesson can we learn from this? (Josh. 18:2,3) [it-1 p. 359 par. 5]**

*(Joshua 18:2-3) But there were still left among the sons of Israel those whose inheritance they had not apportioned out, namely, seven tribes.*

<sup>3</sup> So Joshua said to the sons of Israel: “How long are YOU going to be delinquent about going in to take possession of the land that Jehovah the God of YOUR forefathers has given YOU?”

The account of the division of the territory W of the Jordan shows that first the lots for Judah (Jos 15:1-63), Joseph (Ephraim) (Jos 16:1-10), and the half tribe of Manasseh settling W of the Jordan (Jos 17:1-13) were determined, their boundaries and cities being enumerated. After this, there appears to have been an interruption of the dividing of the land, since the camp of Israel is shown to have moved from Gilgal to Shiloh. (Jos 14:6; 18:1) The length of time involved is not stated, but Joshua eventually reprimanded the remaining seven tribes for their dilatory attitude as to settling the rest of the land. (Jos 18:2, 3) Various explanations have been offered as to the cause of this attitude on the part of the seven tribes, some commentators reasoning that the abundance of spoil obtained during the conquest and the relative freedom from any immediate threat of attack by the Canaanites may have caused these tribes to feel no particular urgency about taking possession of the remaining portion of the territory. A reluctance to face up to the problem of dealing with the pockets of strong enemy resistance there may have contributed to this tardiness. (Jos 13:1-7) Also, their knowledge of this portion of the Promised Land may have been considerably more limited than of those sections already allotted.

**2. What undoubtedly moved Joshua to say what he did at Joshua 24:14, 15, and how should this affect us? [w08 5/15 pp. 17-18 pars. 4-6]**

*(Joshua 24:14-15) “And now fear Jehovah and serve him in faultlessness and in truth, and remove the gods that YOUR forefathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt, and serve Jehovah.*

<sup>15</sup> Now if it is bad in YOUR eyes to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom YOU will serve, whether the gods that YOUR forefathers who were on the other side of the River served or the gods of the Am'or-ites in whose land YOU are dwelling. But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah.”

<sup>4</sup> Another reason to serve Jehovah is found in the words of the Israelite leader Joshua. Near the end of his life, Joshua told God's people: “You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out

of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you.” Why could Joshua say this?—Josh. 23:14.

<sup>5</sup> As a child growing up in Egypt, Joshua must have come to know of Jehovah's promise to give the Israelites a land of their own. (Gen. 12:7; 50:24, 25; Ex. 3:8) Then Joshua watched as Jehovah began to fulfill that promise by bringing the Ten Plagues upon Egypt and forcing obstinate Pharaoh to let the sons of Israel go. Joshua was among those who were delivered through the Red Sea, and then he watched as that sea swallowed up Pharaoh and his army. During a long journey through “the great and fear-inspiring wilderness” of the Sinai Desert, Joshua saw how Jehovah provided everything the Israelites needed. Not a single one died of thirst or hunger. (Deut. 8:3-5, 14-16; Josh. 24:5-7) When the time came for the Israelites to conquer mighty Canaanite nations and take possession of the Promised Land, Joshua saw how the God whom he and the other Israelites worshipped backed them in this work.—Josh. 10:14, 42.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua knew that Jehovah had kept His promises. Hence, Joshua declared: “As for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah.” (Josh. 24:15) What about you? When you think of the promises that the true God has already fulfilled and those that he will yet fulfill, do you desire to serve him as did Joshua?

**3. What is one way that Baal worshippers and their form of worship became snares and lures to the Israelites? (Judges 2:3) [w08 2/15 p. 27 pars. 2-3]**

*(Judges 2:3) So I, in turn, have said, ‘I shall not drive them away from before YOU, and they must become snares to YOU, and their gods will serve as a lure to YOU.’”*

In taking possession of the Promised Land, the Israelites won early victories over its inhabitants. However, the sons of Israel failed to obey God's commands fully. They did not drive out the enemy. (Judg. 1:1–2:10) On the contrary, as the Israelites took up dwelling among the “seven nations” who populated the land, regular contact with the people of those nations led to friendships with them. (Deut. 7:1) How did this affect the Israelites? The Bible states: “They proceeded to take their daughters as wives for themselves, and their own daughters they gave to their sons, and they took up serving their gods. So the sons of Israel did what was bad in Jehovah's eyes, and they were forgetful of Jehovah their God and went serving the Baals and the sacred poles.” (Judg. 3:5-7) For the people of Israel, fraternizing with the inhabitants of the land led to intermarriage and idolatry.

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Once marriage alliances were formed, the likelihood of Israel's driving the pagans away from the land dwindled. True worship was corrupted, and the Israelites themselves took up serving false gods.

As their friends, the inhabitants of the Promised Land presented a greater spiritual danger to the Israelites than they had as their foes. Consider another way in which religious corruption might have occurred.

## 4. What lesson can we learn from Ehud's courageous use of the sword? (Judges 3:16, 21)

[w97 3/15 p. 31 par. 4]

*(Judges 3:16) Meanwhile E'hud made a sword for himself, and it had two edges, its length being a cubit. Then he girded it underneath his garment upon his right thigh.*

*(Judges 3:21) Then E'hud thrust in his left hand and took the sword off his right thigh and plunged it into his belly.*

Courage was one of Ehud's qualities. He had to be courageous to wield a literal sword with telling effect. As God's present-day servants, we do not take up such a sword. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 26:52) Yet, we do make use of "the sword of the spirit," God's Word. (Ephesians 6:17) Ehud was proficient in the use of his weapon. We too need to be skillful in using God's Word as we preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) Personal study of the Bible, regular presence at Christian meetings, zealous participation in the ministry, and prayerful reliance on our heavenly Father will help us to imitate the qualities displayed by Ehud, truly a man of faith and courage.

## 5. What encouragement do we receive when we study the manner in which Jehovah delivered Gideon and his 300 men? (Judges 7:19-22) [w05 7/15 p. 16 par. 8]

*(Judges 7:19-22) In time Gid'e-on came with the hundred men who were with him to the edge of the camp at the start of the middle night watch. They had just got through posting the sentries. And they proceeded to blow the horns, and there was a dashing to pieces of the large water jars that were in their hands. <sup>20</sup> At that the three bands blew the horns and shattered the large jars and took fresh hold on the torches with their left hand and with their right hand on the horns to blow them, and they began calling out: "Jehovah's sword and Gid'e-on's!" <sup>21</sup> All the while they kept standing each one in his place all around the camp, and the whole camp got on the run and broke out into shouting and went fleeing. <sup>22</sup> And the three hundred continued to blow the horns, and Jehovah proceeded to set the sword of each one against the other in all the camp; and the camp kept up their flight as far as Beth-shit'tah, on to Zer'e-rah, as far as the outskirts of A'bel-me-ho'lah by Tab'bath.*

We can draw encouragement from the account about Gideon, for it proves that Jehovah can deliver his people from any menace, even by using those who appear weak or helpless. That Gideon and his 300 men were able to vanquish 135,000 Midianites attests to God's infinite power. We may find ourselves in desperate straits and may seem to be hopelessly outnumbered by our enemies. Yet, the Bible account involving Gideon encourages us to trust in Jehovah, who will bless and deliver all of those exercising faith in Him.

## 6. In what way did Jehovah's soul become "impatient because of the trouble of Israel"? (Judges 10:16) [cl pp. 254-255 pars. 10-11]

*(Judges 10:16) And they began to remove the foreign gods from their midst and to serve Jehovah, so that his soul became impatient because of the trouble of Israel.*

<sup>10</sup> Consider what happened in the days of Jephthah. Since the Israelites had turned to serving false gods, Jehovah allowed them to be oppressed by the Ammonites for 18 years. Finally, the Israelites repented. The Bible tells us: "They began to remove the foreign gods from their midst and to serve Jehovah, so that his soul became impatient because of the trouble of Israel." (Judges 10:6-16) Once his people manifested genuine repentance, Jehovah could no longer bear to see them suffer. So the God of tender compassion empowered Jephthah to deliver the Israelites out of the hands of their enemies.—Judges 11:30-33.

<sup>11</sup> What do Jehovah's dealings with the nation of Israel teach us about tender compassion? For one thing, we see that it is more than just a sympathetic awareness of the adversities that people experience. Recall the example of a mother whose compassion moves her to respond to the crying of her baby. Similarly, Jehovah is not deaf to the outcries of his people. His tender compassion moves him to relieve their suffering. In addition, the way Jehovah dealt with the Israelites teaches us that compassion is by no means a weakness, for this tender quality moved him to take strong, decisive action in behalf of his people.

## 7. Did Jephthah have in mind making a human sacrifice when he made his vow? (Judges 11:30, 31)

[w05 1/15 p. 26 par. 1]

*(Judges 11:30-31) Then Jeph'thah made a vow to Jehovah and said: "If you without fail give the sons of Am'mon into my hand, <sup>31</sup> it must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Am'mon, must also become Jehovah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering."*

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Such a thought would be far from Jephthah's mind, for the Law stipulated: "There should not be found in you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire." (Deuteronomy 18:10) However, Jephthah did have in mind a person and not an animal. Animals suitable for sacrifice were not likely kept in Israelite homes. And the offering of an animal would be nothing outstanding. Jephthah was aware that the one coming out of his house to meet him might well be his daughter. This one was to be offered up "as a burnt offering" in that the person would be devoted to Jehovah's exclusive service in connection with the sanctuary.

## 8. Was Samson's power literally in his hair? (Judges 16:18-20) [w05 3/15 p. 28 pars. 5-6]

*(Judges 16:18-20) When De-li'l'ah got to see that he had disclosed to her all his heart, she immediately sent and called the Phi-lis'tine axis lords, saying: "Come up this time, for he has disclosed to me all his heart." And the Phi-lis'tine axis lords came up to her that they might bring up the money in their hand. <sup>19</sup> And she proceeded to make him sleep upon her knees. Then she called the man and had him shave off the seven braids of his head, after which she started to show the mastery of him, and his power kept departing from upon him. <sup>20</sup> Now she said: "The Phi-lis'tines are upon you, Samson!" At that he woke up from his sleep and said: "I shall go out as at other times and shake myself free." And he himself did not know that it was Jehovah that had departed from him.*

Delilah maneuvered him into a situation to have his head shaved. Samson's power, however, was not literally in his hair. His hair merely represented his special relationship with God as a Nazirite. When Samson allowed himself to get into a situation that affected his Naziritiship because of the shaving of his head, 'Jehovah departed from him.' Philistines now overpowered Samson, blinded him, and put him in prison.—Judges 16:18-21.

What a powerful lesson this teaches us! Should we not value our relationship with Jehovah as something very precious? If we compromise our Christian dedication in any way, how can we expect God to go on blessing us?

## 9. How can we be helped by understanding Samson's amazing deed described at Judges 16:3? [w04 10/15 pp. 15-16 pars. 7-8]

*(Judges 16:3) However, Samson kept lying till midnight and then rose at midnight and grabbed hold of the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar and put them upon his shoulders and went carrying them up to the top of the mountain that is in front of He'bron.*

<sup>7</sup> At Judges 16:2, you can read about Judge Samson's being in Gaza. The name Gaza appears often in modern news reports, so you may have a general idea of where Samson was, in Philistine territory near the Mediterranean

Coast. [11] Now note Judges 16:3: "Samson kept lying till midnight and then rose at midnight and grabbed hold of the doors of the city gate and the two side posts and pulled them out along with the bar and put them upon his shoulders and went carrying them up to the top of the mountain that is in front of Hebron."

<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, the gates and side posts of a stronghold like Gaza were large and heavy. Imagine trying to carry them! Samson did, but *where* did he carry them, and what sort of trip did he have to make? Well, Gaza is on the coast at about sea level. [15] However, Hebron is to the east at an altitude of 3,000 feet [900 m]—a real climb! We cannot fix the exact location of "the mountain that is in front of Hebron," but the city is some 37 miles [60 km] from Gaza—uphill at that! Knowing the distance involved makes Samson's feat take on new dimensions, does it not? And recall why Samson could perform such deeds—"Jehovah's spirit became operative upon him." (Judges 14:6, 19; 15:14) As Christians today, we do not expect God's spirit to give us exceptional muscular strength. Yet, the same powerful spirit can increase our comprehension of deep spiritual matters and make us mighty according to the man we are inside. (1 Corinthians 2:10-16; 13:8; Ephesians 3:16; Colossians 1:9, 10) Yes, understanding the account about Samson underscores the fact that God's spirit can help us.

## 10. Concerning the human soul, what can be learned from the statement found at Judges 16:30? [w90 9/1 p. 5 par. 5; sp pp. 13-14]

*(Judges 16:30) And Samson proceeded to say: "Let my soul die with the Phi-lis'tines." Then he bent himself with power, and the house went falling upon the axis lords and upon all the people that were in it, so that the dead that he put to death in his own death came to be more than those he had put to death during his lifetime.*

At Judges 16:30 we read: "And Samson proceeded to say: 'Let my soul die with the Philistines.'" Other scriptures show that souls can be cut off (Genesis 17:14), slain by the sword (Joshua 10:37), suffocated (Job 7:15), and drowned (Jonah 2:5). A deceased soul, or a dead soul, is a dead person.—Leviticus 19:28; 21:1, 11.

What, then, is the condition of dead souls? Simply stated, death is the opposite of life. All our senses are linked to our physical bodies. Our ability to see, hear, and think depends on the proper functioning of our eyes, ears, and brain. Without eyes we cannot see. Without ears we cannot hear. Without a brain we cannot do anything. When a person dies, all these physical organs cease to function. We cease to exist.

The Bible shows that the soul is the person, not something inside a person.

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**SERVICE MEETING**

**Song 20 – Bless Our Meeting Together**

*(Hebrews 10:24, 25)*

**5 Min: Announcements.**

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**10 Min: The Offer for March.**

Offer: *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

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**10 Min: A Reasoning Manner Encourages People to Listen. (Talk) [be, pp 251-253 par. 2]**

WE ARE grateful for the changes that God’s Word has brought about in our lives, and we want others to benefit as well. Furthermore, we realize that how people respond to the good news will affect their future prospects. (Matt. 7:13, 14; John 12:48) We earnestly want them to accept the truth. However, our strong convictions and zeal need to be coupled with discernment in order to accomplish the most good.

A blunt statement of truth that exposes as false a cherished belief of another person, even when buttressed with the recitation of a long list of Scripture texts, is

generally not well received. For example, if popular celebrations are simply denounced as being of pagan origin, this may not change how other people feel about them. A reasoning approach is usually more successful. What is involved in being reasonable?

The Scriptures tell us that “the wisdom from above is . . . peaceable, reasonable.” (Jas. 3:17) The Greek word here rendered “reasonable” literally means “yielding.” Some translations render it “considerate,” “gentle,” or “forbearing.” Notice that reasonableness is associated with peaceableness. At Titus 3:2, it is mentioned along with mildness and is contrasted with belligerence. Philippians 4:5 urges us to be known for our “reasonableness.” A person who is reasonable takes into account the background, circumstances, and feelings of the one to whom he is talking. He is willing to yield when it is appropriate to do so. Dealing with others in such a way helps to open their minds and hearts so that they are more receptive when we reason with them from the Scriptures.

**Where to Begin.** The historian Luke reports that when the apostle Paul was in Thessalonica, he used the Scriptures, “explaining and proving by references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead.” (Acts 17:2, 3) It is noteworthy that Paul did this in a Jewish synagogue. Those to whom he was speaking recognized the Hebrew Scriptures as an authority. It was appropriate to start with something that they accepted.

When Paul was speaking to Greeks at the Areopagus in Athens, he did not begin with references to the Scriptures. Instead, he started with things that they knew and accepted, and he used these to lead them to a consideration of the Creator and His purposes.—Acts 17:22-31.

In modern times, there are billions who do not recognize the Bible as an authority in their lives. But the life of nearly everyone is affected by harsh situations in the present system of things. People long for something better. If you first show concern for what disturbs them and then show how the Bible explains it, such a reasonable approach might move them to listen to what the Bible says about God’s purpose for humankind.

It may be that the heritage passed on to a Bible student by his parents included certain religious beliefs and customs. Now, the student learns that those beliefs and customs are not pleasing to God, and he rejects them in favor of what is taught in the Bible. How can the student explain that decision to his parents? They may feel that by rejecting the religious heritage they gave him, he is rejecting them. The Bible student may conclude that

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before trying to explain from the Bible the basis for his decision, he will need to reassure his parents of his love and respect for them.

**When to Yield.** Jehovah himself, though having full authority to command, shows outstanding reasonableness. When rescuing Lot and his family from Sodom, Jehovah’s angels urged: “Escape to the mountainous region for fear you may be swept away!” Yet, Lot pleaded: “Not that, please, Jehovah!” He begged to be permitted to flee to Zoar. Jehovah showed consideration for Lot by allowing him to do that; so when other cities were destroyed, Zoar was spared. Later, however, Lot followed Jehovah’s original direction and moved to the mountainous region. (Gen. 19:17-30) Jehovah knew that his way was right, but he patiently showed consideration while Lot came to appreciate it.

In order to deal successfully with others, we too need to be reasonable. We may be convinced that the other person is wrong, and we may have in mind powerful arguments that would prove it. But at times it is better not to press the matter. Reasonableness does not mean compromising Jehovah’s standards. It may simply be better to thank the other person for expressing himself or to let some wrong statements pass unchallenged so that you can focus the discussion on something that will accomplish more good. Even if he condemns what you believe, do not overreact. You might ask him why he feels as he does. Listen carefully to his reply. This will give you insight into his thinking. It may also lay the groundwork for constructive conversation at a future time.—Prov. 16:23; 19:11.

Jehovah has endowed humans with the ability to choose. He allows them to use that ability, even though they may not use it wisely. As Jehovah’s spokesman, Joshua recounted God’s dealings with Israel. But then he said: “Now if it is bad in your eyes to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, whether the gods that your forefathers who were on the other side of the River served or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are dwelling. But as for me and my household, we shall serve Jehovah.” (Josh. 24:15) Our assignment today is to give “a witness,” and we speak with conviction, but we do not try to pressure others to believe. (Matt. 24:14) They must choose, and we do not deny them that right.

**10 Min: Directing Interested Ones to Jehovah’s Organization.** (*Audience discussion*) [or p. 99 subheading]

*(John 13:35) By this all will know that YOU are my disciples, if YOU have love among yourselves.”*

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**Song 122 – Myriads of Brothers**  
*(Revelation 7:9,10)*

1. Myriads on myriads of brothers,  
Millions for all to see,  
Each one a faithful witness,  
Firm in integrity.  
Myriads we are on myriads,  
Growing, a mighty crowd,  
From ev’ry nation and tribe and tongue,  
We praise our God aloud.
2. Myriads on myriads of brothers,  
We preach both far and near  
“Good news of something better,”  
Which millions long to hear.  
And as we keep on preaching,  
Though we at times are stressed,  
Jesus refreshes the weary souls;  
He gives us peace and rest.
3. Myriads on myriads of brothers,  
God keeps us in his sight,  
Safe in his earthly courtyards,  
Serving him day and night.  
Myriads we are on myriads,  
With Kingdom news we go,  
God’s fellow workers we have become,  
Serving him here below.