

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JANUARY 4-10

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LEVITICUS 18-19

"Maintain Moral Purity"

w19.06 28 ¶1

Finding Sure Protection From a Satanic Trap

In listing the perversions of nearby nations, Jehovah told the Israelites: "You must not do what they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. . . . The land is unclean, and I will bring punishment on it for its error." To the holy God of Israel, the Canaanites' lifestyle was so foul that the land they lived in had become unclean, contaminated.—Lev. 18:3, 25.

w17.02 20 ¶13

Jehovah Leads His People

¹³ How different those faithful kings were from the leaders of other nations, men who were guided by human wisdom and shortsighted strategy! Under Canaanite leadership, people did detestable things, which included incest, homosexuality, bestiality, child sacrifice, and gross idolatry. (Lev. 18:6, 21-25) Moreover, Babylonian and Egyptian leaders did not follow the scientifically sound practices on hygiene that God gave to Israel. (Num. 19:13) In contrast, God's ancient people saw how their faithful leaders promoted spiritual, moral, and physical cleanness. Clearly, Jehovah was leading them.

w14 7/1 7 ¶2

What God Will Do About Badness

What about those who stubbornly refuse to change their ways and who insist on doing bad things? Reflect on this straightforward

promise: "Only the upright will reside in the earth, and the blameless will remain in it. As for the wicked, they will be cut off from the earth, and the treacherous will be torn away from it." (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Gone will be the influence of wicked humans. Under such peaceful conditions, obedient humans will gradually be set free from inherited imperfection.—Romans 6:17, 18; 8:21.

Spiritual Gems

w06 6/15 22 ¶11

"How I Do Love Your Law!"

¹¹ A second aspect of the Mosaic Law that reflected God's concern for his people's welfare was the right to glean. Jehovah ordered that when an Israelite farmer reaped the fruits of his field, the needy should be allowed to collect what harvest workers left behind. Farmers were not to reap the edges of their fields completely, nor were they to gather the leftover grapes or olives. Sheaves of grain inadvertently left in the fields should not be retrieved. This was a loving arrangement in behalf of the poor, the alien residents, the orphans, and the widows. Granted, gleaning required hard work on their part, yet by means of it, they could avoid having to beg.—Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Psalm 37:25.

JANUARY 11-17

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LEVITICUS 20-21

"Jehovah Sets His People Apart"

w04 10/15 11 ¶12

Paradise—For You?

¹² Still, there is something that we must not overlook. God told the Israelites: "You must

keep the whole commandment that I am commanding you today, in order that you may grow strong and may indeed enter in and take possession of the land.” (Deuteronomy 11:8) At Leviticus 20:22, 24, that same land is mentioned: “You people must keep all my statutes and all my judicial decisions and do them, that the land to which I am bringing you to dwell in it may not vomit you out. Hence I said to you: ‘You, for your part, will take possession of their ground, and I, for my part, shall give it to you to take possession of it, a land flowing with milk and honey.’” Yes, possession of the Promised Land depended on a good relationship with Jehovah God. It was because the Israelites failed to obey him that God allowed the Babylonians to conquer them and remove them from their place of dwelling.

it-1 1199

Inheritance

Any property passing at the owner’s death to the heir or to those entitled to succeed; anything received from progenitors or predecessors as if by succession. The principal Hebrew verb used is *na-chal’* (noun, *na-chalah’*). It involves getting or giving an inheritance or hereditary possession, usually as a result of succession. (Nu 26:55; Eze 46:18) The verb *ya-rash’* is used at times in the sense “succeed as heir,” but more often, “take possession” apart from succession. (Ge 15:3; Le 20:24) It also has the meaning “dispossess; drive away,” involving military action. (De 2:12; 31:3) The Greek words having to do with inheritance are related to *kle’ros*, which originally meant “lot” but came to mean “share” and finally “inheritance.”—Mt 27:35; Ac 1:17; 26:18.

it-1 317 ¶2

Birds

Following the global Flood, Noah offered up “clean flying creatures” along with animals as a sacrifice. (Ge 8:18-20) Birds were thereafter made allowable by God for inclusion in man’s diet, as long as the blood was not eaten. (Ge 9:1-4; compare Le 7:26; 17:13.) The ‘cleanness’ of certain birds at that time therefore evidently relates to some divine indication of acceptableness for sacrifice; the Biblical record shows that, as regards their being used as food, none of the birds were designated as “unclean” until the introduction of the Mosaic Law. (Le 11:13-19, 46, 47; 20:25; De 14:11-20) The factors determining which birds were designated ceremonially “unclean” are not expressly stated in the Bible. Thus, while most of those so designated were birds of prey or scavengers, not all of them were. (See HOOPOE.) This prohibition was lifted following the establishment of the new covenant, as God made evident to Peter by a vision.—Ac 10:9-15.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 563

Cuttings

God’s Law specifically forbade the making of cuttings upon the flesh for the dead. (Le 19:28; 21:5; De 14:1) The reason for this was that Israel was a holy people to Jehovah, a special property. (De 14:2) As such, Israel was to remain free from all idolatrous practices. Then, too, such extreme displays of mourning accompanied by self-inflicted lacerations upon the flesh were most inappropriate for a people who were fully aware of the actual condition of the dead as well as the resurrection hope. (Da 12:13;

Heb 11:19) Also, the prohibition against self-mutilation would have impressed upon the Israelites proper respect for God's creation, the human body.

JANUARY 18-24

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LEVITICUS 22-23

"Seasonal Festivals With Meaning for Us"

it-1 826-827

Festival of Unfermented Cakes

The first day of the Festival of Unfermented Cakes was a solemn assembly, also a sabbath. On the second day, Nisan 16, a sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest, the first crop to ripen in Palestine, was brought to the priest. Prior to this festival no new grain, bread, or roasted grain from the new harvest could be eaten. The priest offered such firstfruits to Jehovah symbolically by waving a sheaf of the grain to and fro, while a sound ram in its first year was offered as a burnt offering along with a grain offering moistened with oil and a drink offering. (Le 23:6-14) There was no command to burn any of the grain or its flour on the altar, as was practiced later by the priests. Not only was there a public or national firstfruit offering but provision was also made for each family and every individual who had a possession in Israel to offer thanksgiving sacrifices during this festive occasion.—Ex 23:19; De 26:1, 2; see FIRSTFRUITS.

Significance. The eating of unfermented cakes at this time was in harmony with the instructions Moses received from Jehovah, as recorded at Exodus 12:14-20, which

includes the strict injunction, at verse 19: "Seven days no sourdough is to be found in your houses." In Deuteronomy 16:3 the unfermented cakes are called "the bread of affliction," and they were a yearly reminder to the Jews of their hurried departure from the land of Egypt (when they did not have time to leaven their dough [Ex 12:34]). They thus recalled the state of affliction and bondage from which Israel had been delivered, even as Jehovah himself said, "that you may remember the day of your coming out of the land of Egypt all the days of your life." The realization of their present freedom as a nation and their acknowledgment of Jehovah as their Deliverer set a fitting background for the first of the three great annual festivals of the Israelites.—De 16:16.

it-2 598 ¶2

Pentecost

The firstfruits of the wheat harvest were to be treated differently from the barley firstfruits. Two tenths of an ephah of fine wheat flour (4.4 L; 4 dry qt) along with leaven was to be baked into two loaves. They were to be "out of your dwelling places," which meant that they were to be loaves like those made for the daily use of the household and not expressly for holy purposes. (Le 23:17) Burnt offerings and a sin offering went along with this, and as a communion offering two male lambs. The priest waved the loaves and the lambs before Jehovah by putting his hands underneath the loaves and the pieces of the lambs and waving them back and forth, signifying that they were presented before Jehovah. After the loaves and the lambs were offered, they became the priest's for him to eat as a communion offering.—Le 23:18-20.

w14 5/15 29 ¶11

Are You Moving Ahead With Jehovah's Organization?

¹¹ Jehovah's organization is acting in our best interests when it urges us to heed the apostle Paul's counsel: "Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near." (Heb. 10:24, 25) Annual festivals and other gatherings for worship built the Israelites up spiritually. Moreover, such events as the special Festival of Booths in Nehemiah's day were joyful occasions. (Ex. 23:15, 16; Neh. 8:9-18) We derive similar benefits from our meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Let us take full advantage of these provisions for our spiritual health and happiness.—Titus 2:2.

Spiritual Gems

w19.02 3 ¶3

Keep Your Integrity!

³ When applied to us as servants of God, integrity means wholehearted love for and unbreakable devotion to Jehovah as a Person, so that his will comes first in all our decisions. Consider some background. One basic meaning of the Bible word for "integrity" is this: complete, sound, or whole. For example, the Israelites offered up animals in sacrifice to Jehovah, and the Law said that the animals had to be sound. (Lev. 22: 21, 22) God's people were not allowed to offer up an animal that was missing a leg, an ear, or an eye; nor could they offer one full of disease. It was important to Jehovah that the animal be complete, sound, or whole. (Mal. 1:6-9) We can understand why Jehovah cares about soundness

or completeness. When we purchase something, whether a piece of fruit, a book, or a tool, we do not want one that has gaping holes or parts missing. We want one that is complete, sound, or whole. Jehovah feels similarly when it comes to our love for him, our loyalty. It must be complete, sound, or whole.

JANUARY 25-31

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | LEVITICUS 24-25

"The Jubilee Year and Future Liberty"

it-1 871

Freedom

The God of Freedom. Jehovah is the God of freedom. He freed the nation of Israel from bondage in Egypt. He told them that as long as they obeyed his commandments they would have freedom from want. (De 15:4, 5) David spoke of "freedom from care" within the dwelling towers of Jerusalem. (Ps 122:6, 7) However, the Law provided that in case a man became poor he could sell himself into slavery so as to provide the necessities for himself and his family. But freedom was granted by the Law to this Hebrew in the seventh year of his servitude. (Ex 21:2) In the Jubilee (occurring every 50th year), liberty was proclaimed in the land to all its inhabitants. Every Hebrew slave was freed, and each man was returned to his land inheritance. —Le 25:10-19.

it-1 1200 ¶2

Inheritance

Since land was kept in the possession of the same family from generation to generation, it could not be sold in perpetuity. The sale of land was, in effect, only the leasing of it

for the value of crops it would produce, the purchase price being on a graduated scale according to the number of years until the next Jubilee, at which time all land possession would revert to the original owner if it had not been repurchased or redeemed prior to the Jubilee. (Le 25:13, 15, 23, 24) This regulation included houses in unwalled cities, which were regarded as part of the open field. As for a house in a walled city, the right of repurchase remained only for one year from the time of sale, at which time it became the property of the buyer. In the case of houses in Levite cities, the right of repurchase continued to time indefinite because the Levites had no inheritance of land.—Le 25:29-34.

it-2 122-123

Jubilee

The Jubilee law, when obeyed, preserved the nation from gravitating to the sad state that we observe today in many lands, where there are virtually only two classes, the extremely rich and the extremely poor. The benefits to the individual strengthened the nation, for none would be underprivileged and crushed into unproductiveness by a bad economic situation, but all could contribute their talents and abilities to the national welfare. With Jehovah providing blessings of the yield of the ground and with the education that was provided, Israel, while obedient, would enjoy the perfect government and prosperity that only the true theocracy could provide.—Isa 33:22.

Spiritual Gems

w09 9/1 22 ¶4

When You Are Offended

If an Israelite assaulted a fellow Israelite and put out his eye, the Law allowed for just

punishment. However, it was not up to the victim to take punitive action against the assailant or one of his family members. The Law required that he take the matter to the established authorities—the appointed judges—for proper disposition. The knowledge that the willful perpetrator of criminal or violent acts against another could be punished in kind served as a powerful deterrent. But there is more to the matter.

FEBRUARY 1-7

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | LEVITICUS 26-27

“How to Receive Jehovah’s Blessing”

w08 4/15 4 ¶8

Repudiate “Valueless Things”

⁸ How can “Riches” become like a god? Well, as an example, think of a stone lying in a field in ancient Israel. Such a stone could be useful for the construction of a house or a wall. On the other hand, if it was set up as “a sacred pillar” or as “a showpiece,” it became a stumbling block to Jehovah’s people. (Lev. 26:1) Similarly, money has its place. We need it just to survive, and we can use it well in Jehovah’s service. (Eccl. 7:12; Luke 16:9) But if we place the pursuit of money ahead of our Christian service, money becomes, in effect, a god to us. (*Read 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.*) In this world, where the pursuit of financial gain is so important to people, we have to make sure that we keep a balanced view in this matter.—1 Tim. 6:17-19.

it-1 223 ¶3

Awe

Because of the manner in which Jehovah used Moses and dealt with him, Moses

exercised great awesomeness (Heb., *moh-ra*”) before the eyes of God’s people. (De 34:10, 12; Ex 19:9) Those with faith had a wholesome fear of Moses’ authority. They realized that God spoke by means of him. Regarding Jehovah’s sanctuary, too, the Israelites were to be in awe. (Le 19:30; 26:2) This meant that they were to manifest a reverent regard for the sanctuary, carrying out worship in the manner that Jehovah directed and conducting themselves in harmony with all of his commands.

w91 3/1 17 ¶10

Let “the Peace of God” Guard Your Heart

¹⁰ Jehovah told the nation: “If you continue walking in my statutes and keeping my commandments and you do carry them out, I shall also certainly give your showers of rain at their proper time, and the land will indeed give its yield, and the tree of the field will give its fruit. And I will put peace in the land, and you will indeed lie down, with no one making you tremble; and I will make the injurious wild beast cease out of the land, and a sword will not pass through your land. And I shall indeed walk in the midst of you and prove myself your God, and you, on your part, will prove yourselves my people.” (Leviticus 26:3, 4, 6, 12) Israel could enjoy peace in that they had security from their enemies, material abundance, and a close relationship with Jehovah. But this would depend on their adhering to Jehovah’s Law.—Psalm 119:165.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 617

Pestilence

Brought by Abandonment of God’s Law.

The nation of Israel was warned that refus-

al to keep God’s covenant with them would result in his ‘sending pestilence into their midst.’ (Le 26:14-16, 23-25; De 28:15, 21, 22) Throughout the Scriptures, health, either in a physical or in a spiritual sense, is associated with God’s blessing (De 7:12, 15; Ps 103:1-3; Pr 3:1, 2, 7, 8; 4:21, 22; Re 21:1-4), whereas disease is associated with sin and imperfection. (Ex 15:26; De 28:58-61; Isa 53:4, 5; Mt 9:2-6, 12; Joh 5:14) So, while it is true that in certain cases Jehovah God directly and instantaneously brought some affliction on persons, such as the leprosy of Miriam, of Uzziah, and of Gehazi (Nu 12:10; 2Ch 26:16-21; 2Ki 5:25-27), it appears that in many cases the diseases and pestilence that came were the natural and inexorable results of the sinful course followed by persons or nations. They simply reaped what they had sown; their fleshly bodies suffered the effects of their wrong ways. (Ga 6:7, 8) Concerning those who turned to obscene sexual immorality, the apostle says that God “gave them up to uncleanness, that their bodies might be dishonored among them . . . receiving in themselves the full recompense, which was due for their error.”—Ro 1:24-27.

FEBRUARY 8-14

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | NUMBERS 1-2

“Jehovah Organizes His People”

w94 12/1 9 ¶4

The Rightful Place of Jehovah’s Worship in Our Lives

⁴ If you had had a bird’s-eye view of Israel encamped in the wilderness, what would you have seen? A vast, but orderly, array of tents housing possibly three million or more

people, grouped according to three-tribe divisions to the north, south, east, and west. Peering closer, you would also have noticed another grouping nearer the middle of the camp. These four smaller clusters of tents housed the families of the tribe of Levi. At the very center of the camp, in an area cordoned off by a cloth wall, was a unique structure. This was the “tent of meeting,” or tabernacle, which “wise-hearted” Israelites had built according to Jehovah’s plan.—Numbers 1:52, 53; 2:3, 10, 17, 18, 25; Exodus 35:10.

it-1 397 ¶4 **Camp**

The size of this camp of Israel was very great. The above register figures total 603,550 fighting men, in addition to women and children, old folks and handicapped, 22,000 Levites, and “a vast mixed company” of aliens—perhaps all together 3,000,000 or more. (Ex 12:38, 44; Nu 3:21-34, 39) How much area such an encampment would cover is not certain; estimates vary greatly. When the camp was pitched opposite Jericho on the Plains of Moab, it is described as extending “from Beth-jeshimoth to Abel-shittim.”—Nu 33:49.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 764 **Registration**

An enrollment, usually by name and lineage according to tribe and household. It involved more than a simple census or count of heads. The national registrations referred to in the Bible served various purposes, such as taxation, assignments of military service, or (for those Levites included) appointments to duties at the sanctuary.

FEBRUARY 15-21

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | NUMBERS 3-4

“The Service of the Levites”

it-2 683 ¶3 **Priest**

Under the Law Covenant. When the Israelites were in slavery in Egypt, Jehovah sanctified to himself every firstborn son of Israel at the time that he destroyed Egypt’s firstborn in the tenth plague. (Ex 12:29; Nu 3:13) These firstborn ones accordingly belonged to Jehovah, to be used exclusively in special service to him. God could have designated all of these firstborn males of Israel as the priests and caretakers of the sanctuary. Instead, it suited his purpose to take male members of the tribe of Levi for this service. For this reason he permitted the nation to substitute the Levite males for the firstborn males of the other 12 tribes (the offspring of Joseph’s sons Ephraim and Manasseh being counted as two tribes). In a census there proved to be 273 more firstborn non-Levite sons from a month old and upward than there were Levite males, so God required a ransom price of five shekels (\$11) for each of the 273, the money being turned over to Aaron and his sons. (Nu 3:11-16, 40-51) Prior to this transaction Jehovah had already set apart the male members of the family of Aaron of the tribe of Levi as constituting the priesthood of Israel.—Nu 1:1; 3:6-10.

it-2 241 **Levites**

Duties. The Levites were made up of three families, from Levi’s sons Gershon (Gershon), Kohath, and Merari. (Ge 46:11; 1Ch

6:1, 16) Each of these families was assigned a place near the tabernacle in the wilderness. The Kohathite family of Aaron camped in front of the tabernacle to the east. The other Kohathites camped on the south side, the Gershonites on the west, and the Merarites on the north. (Nu 3:23, 29, 35, 38) Setting up, dismantling, and carrying the tabernacle was the work of the Levites. When it was time to move, Aaron and his sons took down the curtain dividing the Holy from the Most Holy and covered the ark of the testimony, the altars, and other sacred furniture and utensils. The Kohathites then carried these things. The Gershonites transported the tent cloths, coverings, screens, courtyard hangings, and tent cords (evidently the cords of the tabernacle itself), and the Merarites took care of the panel frames, pillars, socket pedestals, tent pins and cords (cords of the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle).—Nu 1:50, 51; 3:25, 26, 30, 31, 36, 37; 4:4-33; 7:5-9.

it-2 241

Levites

In Moses' day it was at 30 years of age that a Levite assumed his full duties, such as bearing the tabernacle and its articles when it was being moved. (Nu 4:46-49) Some duties could be performed from the age of 25, but apparently not the laborious service, such as transporting the tabernacle. (Nu 8:24) In King David's time the age was reduced to 20 years. The reason David gave was that the tabernacle (now to be replaced by the temple) would no longer have to be carried about. Assignments of obligatory service terminated at the age of 50 years. (Nu 8:25, 26; 1Ch 23:24-26; see AGE.) The Levites needed to be well versed in the Law, often being called upon to read it in public

and to teach it to the common people.—1Ch 15:27; 2Ch 5:12; 17:7-9; Ne 8:7-9.

Spiritual Gems

w06 8/1 23 ¶13

Be Wise—Fear God!

¹³ Experiencing Jehovah's help during distress deepened David's fear of God and strengthened his confidence in him. (Psalm 31:22-24) On three notable occasions, however, David's fear of God lapsed, which led to serious consequences. The first involved his arranging for the ark of Jehovah's covenant to be transported to Jerusalem on a wagon rather than on the shoulders of the Levites, as God's Law directed. When Uzzah, who was leading the wagon, grabbed hold of the Ark to steady it, he died on the spot for his "irreverent act." Yes, Uzzah sinned seriously, yet ultimately, it was David's failure to maintain proper respect for God's Law that brought about that tragic outcome. Fearing God means doing things according to his arrangement.—2 Samuel 6:2-9; Numbers 4:15; 7:9.

FEBRUARY 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | NUMBERS 5-6

"How Can You Imitate the Nazirites?"

it-2 477

Nazirite

There were three principal restrictions resting on those taking the Nazirite vow: (1) They were to drink no intoxicating beverage; neither were they to eat any product of the grapevine, whether unripe, ripe, or dried, nor drink any of its juice, whether in the fresh, fermented, or vinegar state. (2) They were not to cut the hair of their

heads. (3) They were not to touch a dead body, even that of the closest relative—father, mother, brother, or sister.—Nu 6:1-7.

Special Vows. The person taking this special vow was “to live as a Nazirite [that is, dedicated, separated] to Jehovah” and not for the plaudits of men due to a showy display of fanatical asceticism. Rather, “all the days of his Naziriteship he is holy to Jehovah.”—Nu 6:2, 8; compare Ge 49:26, *ftn.*

The requirements laid on Nazirites, therefore, had special significance and meaning in the worship of Jehovah. Like the high priest who, because of his holy office, was to touch no dead body, not even that of one of his closest relatives, so too the Nazirite. The high priest and the underpriests, because of the serious responsibility of their offices, were forbidden to drink wine or intoxicating liquor when performing their sacred duties before Jehovah.—Le 10:8-11; 21:10, 11.

Furthermore, the Nazirite (Heb., *na-zir'*) “should prove holy by letting the locks of the hair of his head grow,” such serving as a crowning sign by which all could quickly recognize his holy Naziriteship. (Nu 6:5) The same Hebrew word *na-zir'* was used in regard to the “unpruned” vines during the sacred Sabbath and Jubilee years. (Le 25:5, 11) Interesting too is the fact that the gold plate on the front of the turban of the high priest, engraved with the words “Holiness belongs to Jehovah,” was called “the holy sign of dedication [Heb., *ne'zer*, from the same root as *na-zir'*].” (Ex 39:30, 31) Likewise, the official headpiece, or diadem, worn by Israel’s anointed kings was also called a *ne'zer*. (2Sa 1:10; 2Ki 11:12; see CROWN; DEDICATION.) In the Christian congregation the apostle says that a

woman’s long hair is given to her instead of a headdress. It is a natural reminder to her that she is in a position different from the man; she should be mindful of her submissive position under God’s arrangement. So such requirements—uncut hair (unnatural for the man), total abstinence from wine as well as the need to be clean and undefiled—impressed on the dedicated Nazirite the importance of self-denial and complete submission to the will of Jehovah.—1Co 11:2-16; see HAIR; HEAD COVERING; NATURE.

Spiritual Gems

w05 1/15 30 ¶2

Questions From Readers

Samson, though, was a Nazirite in a different sense. Before Samson’s birth, Jehovah’s angel told his mother: “Look! you will be pregnant, and you will certainly give birth to a son, and no razor should come upon his head, because a Nazirite of God is what the child will become on leaving the belly; and he it is who will take the lead in saving Israel out of the hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13:5) Samson took no vow of Naziriteship. He was a Nazirite by divine appointment, and his Naziriteship was for life. The restriction against touching a corpse could not apply in his case. If it did and he accidentally touched a dead body, how could he start over a lifelong Naziriteship that began with his birth? Evidently, then, the requirements for lifetime Nazirites differed in some ways from those for voluntary Nazirites.