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Whose Side Are You On?

Key References: Joshua 23; 24; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 49, pp. 521-524; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 3, pp. 102-104; Our Beliefs nos. 19, 12, 22



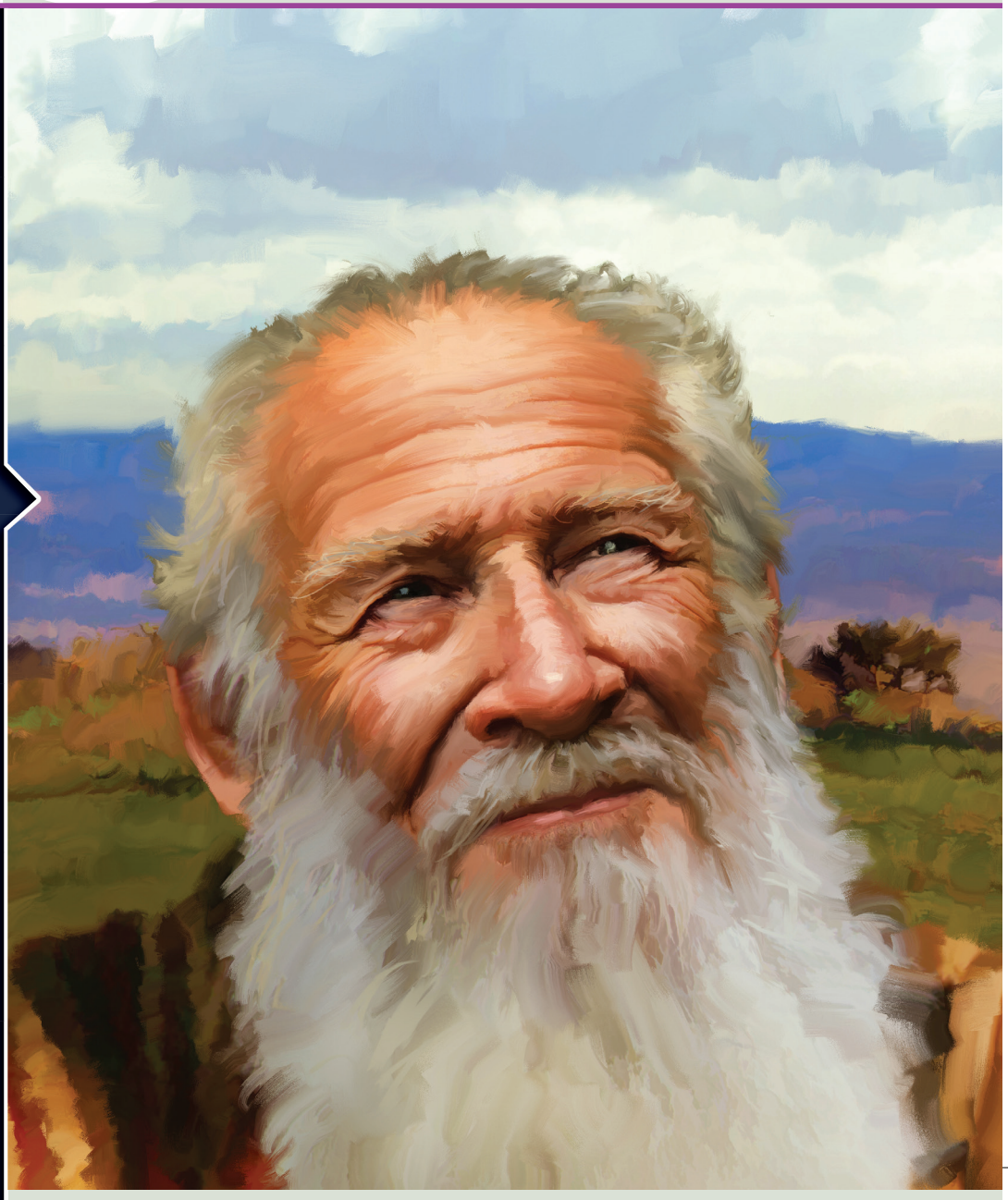












powertext

"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 102.

powerpoint

We respond to God's grace by choosing to obey Him every day.

It is always fun to be on the winning team. Often it is the team captain who gets to choose the team. There are always a few people whom everybody wants, and a few people nobody wants. How would it feel to be able to pick which side you were going to be on?

The Israelites were getting settled in their new homes in the Promised Land. Their beloved leader, Joshua, had served faithfully under Moses through all the years in the wilderness. Then he had been given directions from God to help them get settled in the new land.

Joshua was one of only two adults who had been on the entire exodus from Egypt to the Promised Land. Now he was about to die. He wanted to talk to the people one last time.

On the appointed day people began arriving in Shechem from everywhere. Respectfully they gathered, waiting for the final words of their 110-year-old leader. Slowly Joshua stood to speak. His voice was filled with kindness and authority. He began to tell them their own history, beginning with Terah, the father of Abraham. Carefully he outlined how God had chosen and led Abraham and his descendants until that very day.

As Joshua started telling the events of the exodus from Egypt, a hush fell over the crowd. These were stories all of them had heard from their parents and grandparents. These were stories that Joshua had lived himself. One by one he reminded them of all the days of God's leading. But he also reminded them of all the times they and their parents had grumbled, complained, or outright rebelled against God's simple instructions.

Finally Joshua reminded them that they were now living in cities that they had not had to build. They were eating olives and grapes from groves and vineyards they had not had to plant. What a wonderful way God had fulfilled all His promises to them.

"Now," Joshua was nearing the end of his long speech to his people, "fear the Lord and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the

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Sunday

READ Read Joshua 24:1-4 and this week's story, "Whose Side Are You On?"

THINK What are some modern-day gods? Which of these gods have you been tempted to serve? How are you able to resist their attraction?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you put Him first this week.

Monday

READ Read Joshua 24:5-10.

LIST List two other people in the Bible (other than Joshua) who chose to serve God and who challenged others to make a similar choice.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you choose Him today.

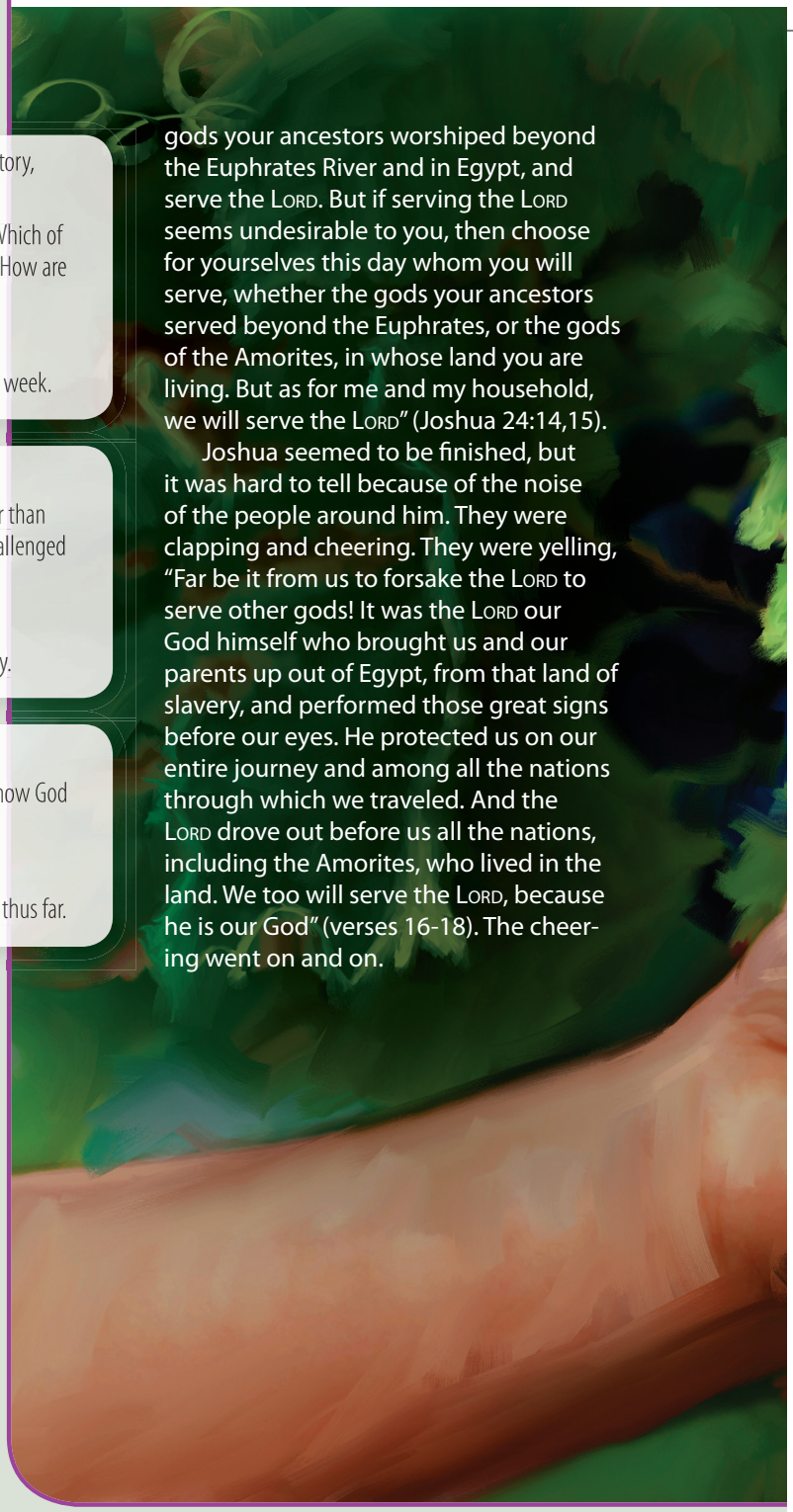
Tuesday

READ Read Joshua 24:11-13.

RECORD Record in your Bible study journal how God has guided you in the past.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His guidance in your life thus far.



gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:14,15).

Joshua seemed to be finished, but it was hard to tell because of the noise of the people around him. They were clapping and cheering. They were yelling, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God" (verses 16-18). The cheering went on and on.



Joshua looked at the people with love and pity. It was true: they had done pretty well at honoring God while Joshua had been their leader. But now that he was about to leave them, he was concerned. It was easy for people to say that they would honor and obey God. It was a harder thing to choose every day, in every little choice they

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Wednesday

READ Read Joshua 24:14-22.

INTERPRET What does Joshua's statement "as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" say to you about your role in the spiritual life of your family?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write ways that you can be a positive influence on your family.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for your family members and ask Him to help you to encourage them to serve the Lord.

Thursday

READ Read Deuteronomy 6:3.

RESEARCH Find three promises God makes to those who obey Him. (Deuteronomy 6:3; Ephesians 6:2, 3; John 14:23) and copy them into your Bible study journal.

SHARE Share one of the promises with someone to encourage them.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Claim God's promises as you pray for others.

Friday

READ Read Joshua 24:28-33.

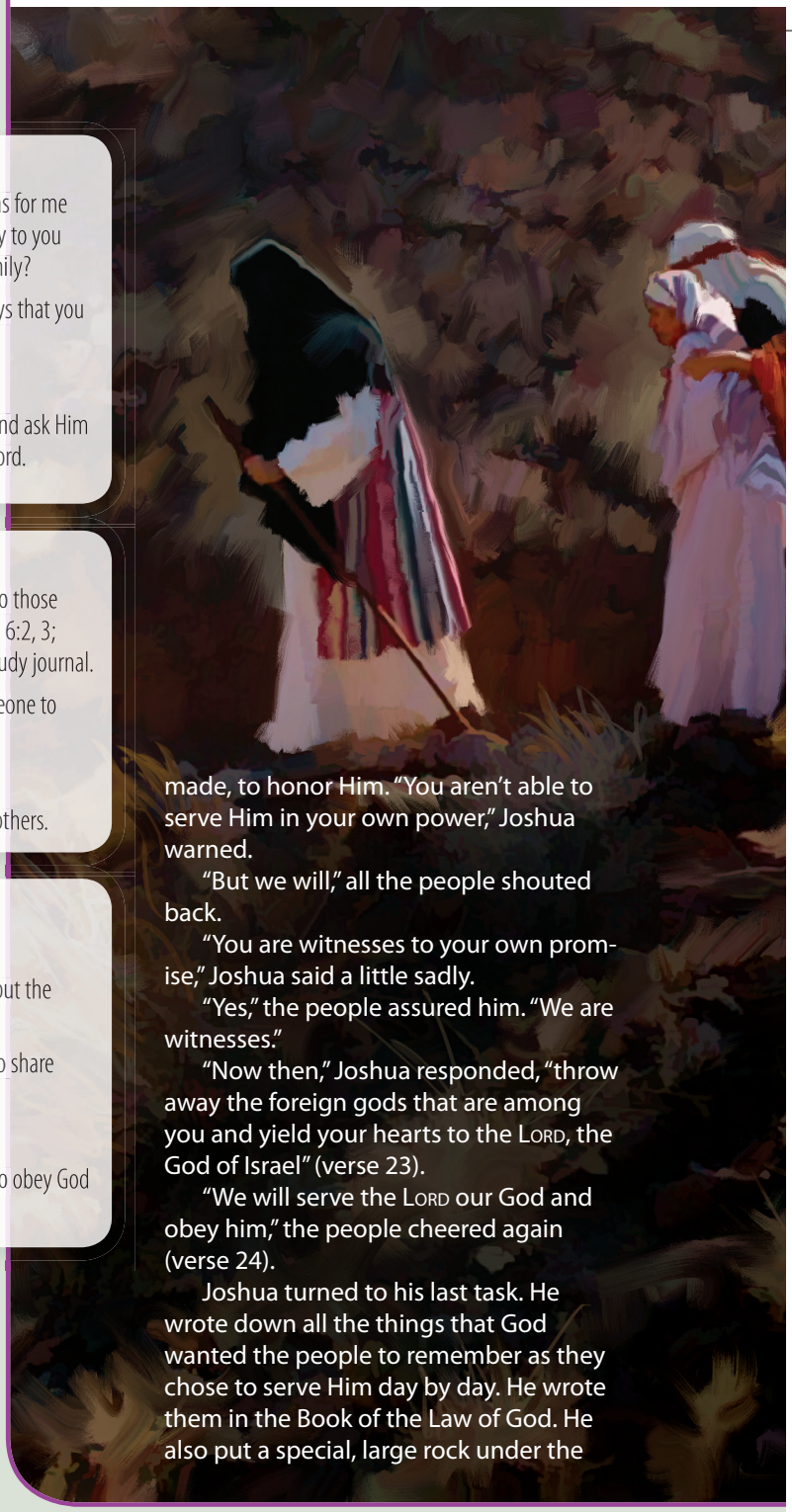
PLAN Plan worship with your entire family.

DISCUSS Talk with your family members about the inheritance God has planned for you.

SHARE Give each family member a chance to share what God has done in their lives.

SAY Share the power text with your family.

PRAY Pray that as a family you will choose to obey God daily.



made, to honor Him. "You aren't able to serve Him in your own power," Joshua warned.

"But we will," all the people shouted back.

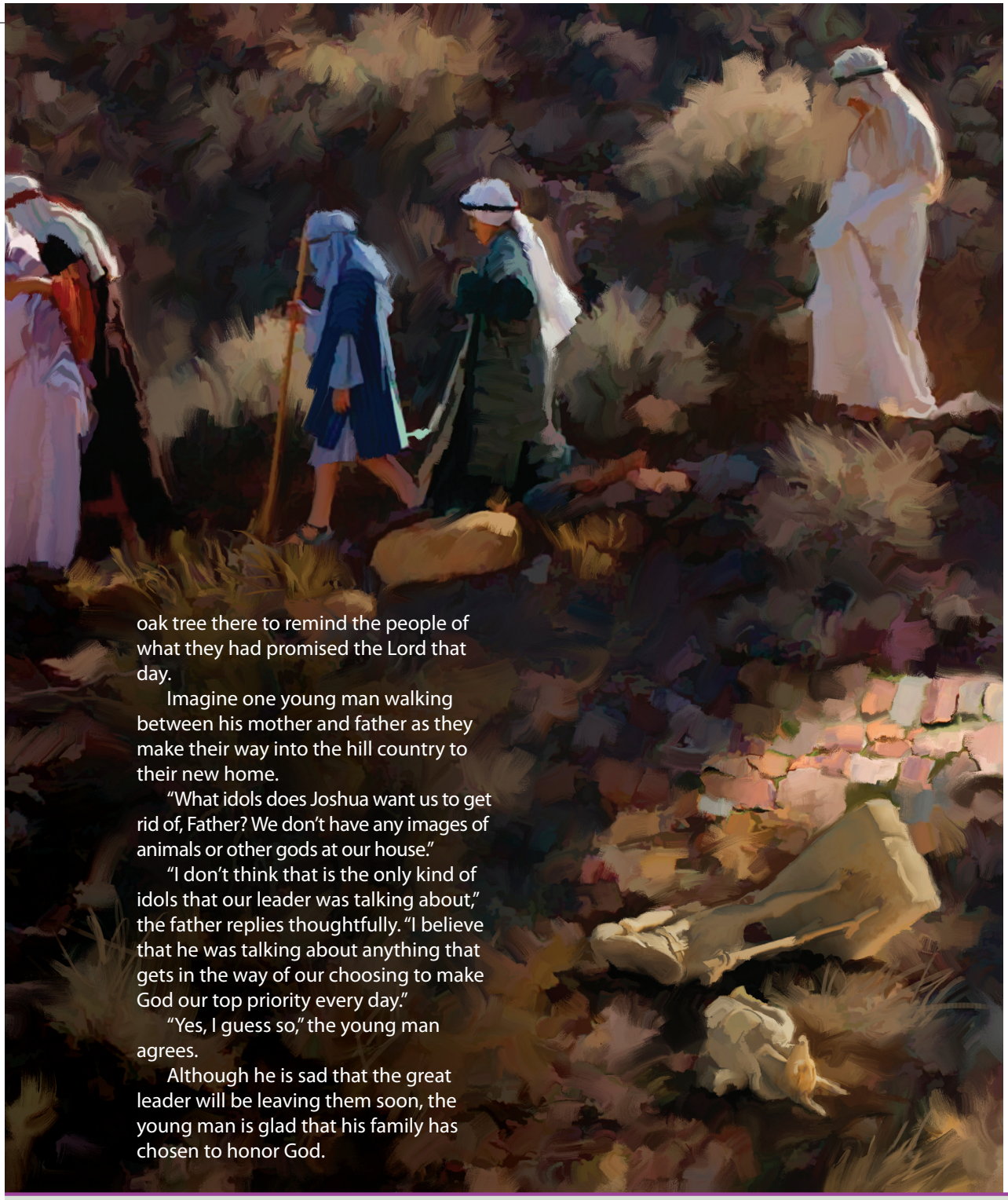
"You are witnesses to your own promise," Joshua said a little sadly.

"Yes," the people assured him. "We are witnesses."

"Now then," Joshua responded, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel" (verse 23).

"We will serve the LORD our God and obey him," the people cheered again (verse 24).

Joshua turned to his last task. He wrote down all the things that God wanted the people to remember as they chose to serve Him day by day. He wrote them in the Book of the Law of God. He also put a special, large rock under the



oak tree there to remind the people of what they had promised the Lord that day.

Imagine one young man walking between his mother and father as they make their way into the hill country to their new home.

"What idols does Joshua want us to get rid of, Father? We don't have any images of animals or other gods at our house."

"I don't think that is the only kind of idols that our leader was talking about," the father replies thoughtfully. "I believe that he was talking about anything that gets in the way of our choosing to make God our top priority every day."

"Yes, I guess so," the young man agrees.

Although he is sad that the great leader will be leaving them soon, the young man is glad that his family has chosen to honor God.

PUZZLE

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CHOOSING RIGHT

Cryptogram: Find the letter that goes with each number to spell out the verse (a=1 and z=26).

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y

“12 10 17   6 8 19   14 22 21 21   12 20 12 22 10   5 26 26   1 4 26

17 22 5 1 22 10 7 1 22 8 10   9 26 1 14 26 26 10   1 4 26

24 22 20 4 1 26 8 19 5   12 10 17   1 4 26   14 22 7 11 26 17,

9 26 1 14 26 26 10   1 4 8 5 26   14 4 8   5 26 24 25 26   20 8 17

12 10 17   1 4 8 5 26   14 4 8   17 8   10 8 1” (Malachi 3:18, NIV).

Letter Tile: Rearrange the tile of letters to find the hidden verse.

TO J	A ‘	E LO	HIM	SERV
BEY	AID	UR G	LES	THE
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___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___,   ‘___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___

___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___’”
(Joshua 24:24, NIV).