



MID-WEEK MEETING FILE

JUNE 24-28, 2013

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WEEK STARTING JUNE 24

Song 123 and Prayer

❑ Congregation Bible Study:

jr chap. 11 ¶1-8 (30 min.)

❑ Theocratic Ministry School:

Bible reading: Acts 8-10 (10 min.)

Theocratic Ministry School Review (20 min.)

❑ Service Meeting:

Song 93

10 min: "Feature One Topic, but Leave Both Magazines." Talk. Following the talk, demonstrate how a study may be started on the first Saturday in July, using the sample presentation on page 4.

10 min: Our Work Is Not in Vain. (Heb. 6:10) Discussion based on the *2013 Yearbook*, pages 113-115. Invite audience to comment on the lessons learned.

10 min: The Literature Offer for July and August. Discussion. Briefly consider features of the brochures that will be offered. Demonstrate how two of them may be presented. One presentation should be of the *Good News* brochure, using the sample on page 4 or one of the sample presentations in the March 2013 *Our Kingdom Ministry*.
Song 129 and Prayer

Feature One Topic, but Leave Both Magazines

Each set of our magazines contains a variety of interesting topics. Rather than trying to feature several subjects at each door, it is generally better to discuss only one. If we are observant and familiar with the contents of the magazines, we can choose something from either *The Watchtower* or *Awake!* that will interest the householder. For example, if we see children's toys in or around the home, we may choose to highlight an article on family life. If a man comes to the door, we might decide to feature a subject that many men are interested in, such as good government. Although we may discuss only one topic, we should usually leave both magazines with the householder if he shows interest.

Theocratic Ministry School Review

The following questions will be considered at the Theocratic Ministry School during the week beginning June 24, 2013. The date when each point is scheduled for discussion is included so that research can be done when preparing for the school each week.

1. What did Jesus mean by his statement recorded at John 3:14, 15: "Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up"? [May 6, *it-1* p. 505]
2. When do Christ's followers receive life in themselves, or enter into the fullness of life? (John 6:53) [May 13, *w03* 9/15 p. 31 par. 3]
3. Illustrate how Jesus revealed his Father to imperfect humans. (John 8:28) [May 20, *w11* 4/1 p. 7 par. 3]
4. What do we learn from Jesus' 'giving way to tears' upon the death of his friend Lazarus? (John 11:35) [May 20, *w08* 5/1 p. 24 pars. 3-5]
5. What powerful lesson did Jesus teach by washing the feet of his disciples? (John 13:4, 5) [May 27, *w99* 3/1 p. 31 par. 1]
6. How can God's spirit serve as a sure guide for us? (John 14:26) [May 27, *w11* 12/15 pp. 14-15 par. 9]
7. At John 21:15, to what does "these" refer, and what lesson can we learn? [June 3, *w08* 4/15 p. 32 par. 11]
8. According to Acts 2:44-47 and Acts 4:34, 35, what spirit do Christians do well to imitate? [June 10, *w08* 5/15 p. 30 par. 5]
9. Was Stephen praying to Jesus in the account found at Acts 7:59? [June 17, *w08* 5/15 p. 31 par. 2]
10. How can we imitate the good example of Barnabas, and what benefits will we enjoy from doing so? (Acts 9:26, 27) [June 24, *bt* p. 65 par. 19]

123 *Shepherds—Gifts in Men* (Ephesians 4:8)

1. Help in our lives, Jehovah provides,
 Shepherds to tend his flock.
 By their example they serve as guides,
 Showing us how to walk.

(CHORUS)

*God gives us men who have earned our trust,
 Men who are loyal and true.*

*They show concern for his precious flock;
 Love them for all that they do.*

2. Shepherds who love us care how we feel;
 Gently they guide the way.
 When we are hurt, they help us to heal,
 Kind in the words they say.

(Chorus)

3. Godly advice and counsel they give,
 That we may never stray.
 Thus they assist us, God's way to live,
 Serving him ev'ry day.

(Chorus)

“SHEPHERDS IN AGREEMENT WITH MY HEART”

HIROYASU was a small boy in Japan when his mother bought a ram and a ewe. He looked after them, and the ewe produced two lambs a year, so the flock began to grow. By the time he was 12, there were 12 or 13 sheep. “Early one morning while I was still in bed,” he recalls, “I heard them bleating. I didn’t go out at once. When I finally did, I saw a pack of wild dogs running away from my lambs, which had their bellies ripped open. Frantically, I searched for the mother sheep. I found her, still breathing, in a pool of blood. Only the ram survived. I was heartbroken. I should have gone to check on the flock when I first heard them. They were defenseless against the dogs.”

² In Bible times, almost everyone was familiar with the work of a shepherd. His job was to lead his flock to pastures and ensure that the animals in his care were well-fed. He also protected them against predators and searched for strays. (1 Sam. 17:34-36) The shepherd had his flock lie down to rest, undisturbed. He also assisted in the birth of lambs and then looked after these. Many Bible writers, including Jeremiah, used the figure of a shepherd as a metaphor for a man charged with the care of people, either as their ruler or as their spiritual overseer.

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- 1, 2. (a) What can happen if a flock of sheep is not protected?
(b) The work of a shepherd in Bible times consisted of what?

³ Some in the Christian congregation may think of the elders as shepherds only when these men visit their brothers to help and encourage them. However, from the way Jeremiah used the terms "shepherd" and "shepherding," we can see that he applied them to all aspects of the relationship between Judah's overseers and the people. God often condemned the princes, prophets, and priests in Judah as bad shepherds because they were not seeking the best interests of the common people. (Jer. 2:8) They mistreated, misled, and neglected their "sheep" while selfishly pursuing their own interests. God's people were left in a shocking state of spiritual neglect. Jehovah pronounced "woe" on those false shepherds, and he assured his people that he would give them caring, attentive shepherds who would really protect the flock.—*Read Jeremiah 3:15; 23:1-4.*

⁴ God's promise had a major fulfillment in the Chief Shepherd of Jehovah's sheep, Jesus, who became the Head of the Christian congregation. He called himself "the fine shepherd," one who showed real compassion for those whom he led. (John 10:11-15) Today, Jehovah is using undershepherds to care for his earthly flock, both anointed brothers of the faithful and discreet slave class as well as conscientious elders of the "great crowd." (Rev. 7:9) These shepherds strive to reflect Jesus' self-sacrificing spirit. They want to feed and cherish the congregation, in imitation of Christ. Woe to any who neglect or lord it over their brothers or who adopt a harsh or arrogant attitude toward them! (Matt. 20:25-27; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3) What is Jehovah looking for in Christian

3. To what was Jeremiah referring when he used the terms "shepherd" and "shepherding"?

4. Who is caring for God's flock today, and with what spirit?

shepherds today? What can we learn from Jeremiah's writings about appropriate attitudes and motives for elders to have as they care for their responsibilities? Let us examine their roles as providers of help and protective care, as teachers inside and outside the congregation, and as judges.

PROVIDING PROTECTIVE CARE

⁵ The apostle Peter called Jehovah "the shepherd and overseer of [our] souls." (1 Pet. 2:25) What attitude does God display toward his "sheep"? We find an answer by looking back to Jeremiah's day. After criticizing the bad shepherds, who scattered and neglected the flock, Jehovah said that he would "collect" his sheep, bringing them back to their pasture ground. He promised to appoint over them good shepherds, 'who would actually shepherd them' and see to it that his people were protect-

5-7. (a) Jehovah expects his sheep to be cared for in what way, and why? (b) How can elders show real love for their brothers, including those who have strayed?



ed from rapacious enemies. (Jer. 23:3, 4) Yes, Jehovah’s sheep were precious to him. His sheep today are precious too. He has paid a high price in behalf of their everlasting welfare.—1 Pet. 1:18, 19.

⁶ Like literal shepherds, Christian overseers should not be negligent in caring for the congregation. If you serve as an elder, are you striving to be alert to any sign of suffering on the part of your brothers, and are you willing to assist them promptly? Wise King Solomon wrote: “You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock. Set your heart to your droves.” (Prov. 27:23) That verse extols the industriousness of literal shepherds; yet, in principle it may be applied to the care provided by spiritual shepherds in the congregation. If you serve as an elder, are you consciously fighting against any tendency to dominate others? The very fact that Peter mentioned “lording it over those who are God’s inheritance” proves that it is distinctly possible for an elder to do so. How can you help to accomplish what is described at Jeremiah 33:12? (*Read.*) Single parents, widows, stepfamilies, the elderly, and youngsters may have special need of attention and help.

⁷ As a shepherd may do with literal sheep, a congregation shepherd sometimes needs to search out and help individuals who, for one reason or another, have strayed from the flock. His doing so will call for self-sacrifice and humility. He patiently spends time caring for the needs of those entrusted to his oversight. Congregation elders would do well to ask themselves frankly: “To what extent am I striving to encourage and upbuild rather than condemn or criticize? Do I honestly want to do better?” Repeated efforts may sometimes be required to help one see things from God’s perspective. If a brother or a sister

hesitates to accept Scriptural counsel (not just a personal opinion), remember the Supreme Shepherd and Overseer, Jehovah. He patiently “kept speaking” to and striving to help his wayward people. (Jer. 25:3-6) Most of God’s people today do not practice bad things, but when counsel is required, an elder must offer it as did Jehovah.

⁸ While there was still hope that fellow Jews might return to Jehovah, Jeremiah prayed for them. He said to God: “Remember my standing before you to speak good even concerning them, to turn back your rage from them.” (Jer. 18:20) You can see from these words that Jeremiah was looking for the good in his brothers, not thinking ill of them. Today, Christian overseers should imitate Jeremiah’s attitude until there is clear evidence that a person has unrepentantly set his heart to do what is bad. A positive step is to commend others for the good they are doing and to pray for them and with them. —Matt. 25:21.

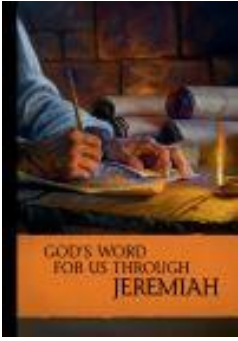
8. How may spiritual shepherds imitate Jeremiah’s example?

What promise did God make through Jeremiah regarding spiritual shepherds? How can Christian overseers provide protective care?

“THEY WILL CERTAINLY FEED YOU”

⁹ In harmony with what we read at Jeremiah 3:15, Christian shepherds are to “feed [others] with knowledge and insight,” that is, to serve as teachers. (1 Tim. 3:2; 5:17) Jehovah promised his people that the good shepherds would do that. And he encouraged the Jews to ac-

9, 10. Why does being a good shepherd (congregation elder) mean being a teacher?



Paragraph 2

(1 Samuel 17:34-36) And David went on to say to Saul: “Your servant became a shepherd of his father among the flock, and there came a lion, and also a bear, and [each] carried off a sheep from the drove. ³⁵ And I went out after it and struck it down and made the rescue from its mouth. When it began rising against me, I grabbed hold of its beard and struck it down and put it to death. ³⁶ Both the lion and the bear your servant struck down; and this uncircumcised Phi-lis’tine must become like one of them, for he has taunted the battle lines of the living God.”

Paragraph 3

(Jeremiah 2:8) The priests themselves did not say, ‘Where is Jehovah?’ And the very ones handling the law did not know me; and the shepherds themselves transgressed against me, and even the prophets prophesied by Ba’al, and after those who could bring no benefit they walked.

(Jeremiah 3:15) And I will give YOU shepherds in agreement with my heart, and they will certainly feed YOU with knowledge and insight.

(Jeremiah 23:1-4) “Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasturage!” is the utterance of Jehovah. ² Therefore this is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said against the shepherds who are shepherding my people: “YOU yourselves have scattered my sheep; and YOU kept dispersing them, and YOU have not turned your attention to them.” “Here I am turning my attention upon YOU for the badness of YOUR dealings,” is the utterance of Jehovah. ³ “And I myself shall collect together the remnant of my sheep out of all the lands to which I had dispersed them, and I will bring them back to their pasture ground, and they will certainly be fruitful and become many. ⁴ And I will raise up over them shepherds who will actually shepherd them; and they will be afraid no more, neither will they be struck with any terror, and none will be missing,” is the utterance of Jehovah.

Paragraph 4

(John 10:11-15) I am the fine shepherd; the fine shepherd surrenders his soul in behalf of the sheep. ¹² The hired man, who is no shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong as his own, beholds the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees—and the wolf snatches them and scatters them— ¹³ because he is a hired man and does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the fine shepherd, and I know my sheep and my sheep know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I surrender my soul in behalf of the sheep.

(Revelation 7:9) After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands.

(Matthew 20:25-27) But Jesus, calling them to him, said: “YOU know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. ²⁶ This is not the way among YOU; but whoever wants to become great among YOU must be YOUR minister, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among YOU must be YOUR slave.

(1 Peter 5:2, 3) Shepherd the flock of God in YOUR care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; ³ neither as lording it over those who are God’s inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock.

Paragraph 5

(1 Peter 2:25) For YOU were like sheep, going astray; but now YOU have returned to the shepherd and overseer of YOUR souls.

(Jeremiah 23:3, 4) “And I myself shall collect together the remnant of my sheep out of all the lands to which I had dispersed them, and I will bring them back to their pasture ground, and they will certainly be fruitful and become many. ⁴ And I will raise up over them shepherds who will actually shepherd them; and they will be afraid no more, neither will they be struck with any terror, and none will be missing,” is the utterance of Jehovah.

(1 Peter 1:18, 19) For YOU know that it was not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, that YOU were delivered from YOUR fruitless form of conduct received by tradition from YOUR forefathers. ¹⁹ But it was with precious blood, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb, even Christ’s.

Paragraph 6

(Proverbs 27:23) You ought to know positively the appearance of your flock. Set your heart to your droves;

(Jeremiah 33:12) “This is what Jehovah of armies has said, ‘In this waste place without man and even domestic animal and in all its cities there will yet come to be the pasture ground of the shepherds who are making the flock lie down.’

Paragraph 7

(Jeremiah 25:3-6) “From the thirteenth year of Jo-si’ah the son of A’mon, the king of Judah, and down to this day, these twenty-three years the word of Jehovah has occurred to me, and I kept speaking to YOU people, rising up early and speaking, but YOU did not listen. ⁴ And Jehovah sent to YOU all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending [them], but YOU did not listen, neither did YOU incline YOUR ear to listen, ⁵ they saying, ‘Turn back, please, every one from his bad way and from the badness of YOUR dealings, and continue dwelling upon the ground that Jehovah gave to YOU and to YOUR forefathers from long ago and to a long time to come. ⁶ And do not walk after other gods in order to serve them and to bow down to them, that YOU may not offend me with the work of YOUR hands, and that I may not cause calamity to YOU.’

Paragraph 8

(Jeremiah 18:20) Should bad be repaid for good? For they have excavated a pit for my soul. Remember my standing before you to speak good even concerning them, to turn back your rage from them.

(Matthew 25:21) His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave! You were faithful over a few things. I will appoint you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master.’

whom God thrust out from before our forefathers.^a Here it remained until the days of David. **46** He found favor^b in the sight of God and asked for the privilege of providing a habitation^c for the God of Jacob. **47** However, Sol'o-mon built a house for him.^d **48** Nevertheless, the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands;^e just as the prophet says, **49** "The heaven is my throne,^f and the earth is my footstool.^g What sort of house will you build for me? Jehovah says. Or what is the place for my resting?"^h **50** My hand made all these things, did it not?"ⁱ

51 "Obstinate men and uncircumcised in hearts^j and ears, you are always resisting the holy spirit; as YOUR forefathers did, so you do.^k **52** Which one of the prophets did YOUR forefathers not persecute?^l Yes, they killed^m those who made announcement in advance concerning the coming of the righteous One,ⁿ whose betrayers and murderers you have now become,^o **53** you who received the Law as transmitted by angels^p but have not kept it."

54 Well, at hearing these things they felt cut to their hearts^q and began to gnash^r their teeth at him. **55** But he, being full of holy spirit, gazed into heaven and caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand,^s **56** and he said: "Look! I behold the heavens opened^t up and the Son of man^u standing at God's right hand."^v **57** At this they cried out at the top of the voice and put their hands over their ears^w and rushed upon him with one accord. **58** And after throwing him outside the city,^x they began casting stones at him.^y And the witnesses^z laid down their outer garments at the feet of a young man called Saul.^a **59** And they went on casting stones at Stephen as he made appeal and said:

CHAP. 7

a Jos 23:9
 Jos 24:18
 b Ps 89:20
 c 2Sa 7:2
 1Ch 22:7
 Ps 132:5
 d 1Ki 6:1
 1Ch 17:12
 2Ch 3:1
 e Isa 66:1
 Ac 17:24
 f Ps 11:4
 Mt 5:34
 g Mt 5:35
 h Isa 66:1
 i Heb 3:4
 j Le 26:41
 De 10:16
 k Isa 1:4
 Isa 63:10
 Jer 6:10
 l 2Ch 36:16
 m Mt 23:31
 n Ac 3:14
 1Jo 2:1
 o Isa 53:8
 p Ac 7:38
 Ga 3:19
 Heb 2:2
 q Ac 5:33
 r Ps 35:16
 Ps 112:10
 s Ps 110:1
 Mt 26:64
 t Eze 1:1
 Mt 3:16
 Joh 1:51
 u Da 7:13
 v Ro 8:34
 Eph 1:20
 Col 3:1
 w Zec 7:11
 Lu 16:24
 x 1Ki 21:13
 Heb 13:12
 y Le 24:16
 Mt 23:37
 z De 17:7
 Joh 16:2
 a Ac 8:1
 Ac 22:20

Second Col.

a Ps 31:5
 b Mt 5:44

CHAP. 8

c Ac 7:58
 d Ac 11:19
 e Mt 10:23
 f Mt 14:12
 g Ge 50:10
 h Ac 9:1
 Ac 22:4
 Ac 26:10
 1Co 15:9
 Ga 1:13
 Php 3:6
 i Isa 52:7
 Ac 11:19
 j Ac 1:8
 k Mt 10:1
 Mr 6:7
 l Ac 9:33
 m Joh 4:42
 n Ac 13:6
 o Ac 5:36

"Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."^a **60** Then, bending his knees, he cried out with a strong voice: "Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them."^b And after saying this he fell asleep in death.

8 Saul, for his part, was approving of the murder of him.^c

On that day great persecution^d arose against the congregation that was in Jerusalem; all except the apostles were scattered^e throughout the regions of Ju-de'a and Sa-mar'i-a. **2** But reverent men carried Stephen to the burial,^f and they made a great lamentation^g over him. **3** Saul, though, began to deal outrageously with the congregation. Invading one house after another and, dragging out both men and women, he would turn them over to prison.^h

4 However, those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word.ⁱ **5** Philip, for one, went down to the city of Sa-mar'i-a^j and began to preach the Christ to them. **6** With one accord the crowds were paying attention to the things said by Philip while they listened and looked at the signs he was performing. **7** For there were many that had unclean spirits,^k and these would cry out with a loud voice and come out. Moreover, many that were paralyzed^l and lame were cured. **8** So there came to be a great deal of joy in that city.^m

9 Now in the city there was a certain man named Simon, who, prior to this, had been practicing magical artsⁿ and amazing the nation of Sa-mar'i-a, saying he himself was somebody great.^o **10** And all of them, from the least to the greatest, would pay attention to him and say: "This man is the Power of God, which can be called Great." **11** So they would pay attention to him

because of his having amazed them for quite a while by his magical arts. **12** But when they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the kingdom of God^a and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to be baptized, both men and women.^b **13** Simon himself also became a believer, and, after being baptized, he was in constant attendance upon Philip;^c and he was amazed at beholding signs and great powerful works taking place.

14 When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Sa-mar'i-a had accepted the word of God,^d they dispatched Peter and John to them; **15** and these went down and prayed for them to get holy spirit.^e **16** For it had not yet fallen upon any one of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.^f **17** Then they went laying their hands upon them,^g and they began to receive holy spirit.

18 Now when Simon saw that through the laying on of the hands of the apostles the spirit was given, he offered them money,^h **19** saying: "Give me also this authority, that anyone upon whom I lay my hands may receive holy spirit." **20** But Peter said to him: "May your silver perish with you, because you thought through money to get possession of the free gift of God.ⁱ **21** You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not straight in the sight of God.^j **22** Repent, therefore, of this badness of yours, and supplicate Jehovah^k that, if possible, the device of your heart may be forgiven you; **23** for I see you are a poisonous gall^l and a bond of unrighteousness."^m **24** In answer Simon said: "You men, make supplication for meⁿ to Jehovah that none of the things you have said may come upon me."

CHAP. 8

- a Lu 8:1
- b Mt 28:19
Ac 18:8
- c Ac 6:5
- d Ac 11:1
- e Mt 16:19
- f Ac 10:48
Ac 19:2
- g Ac 6:6
Ac 19:6
2Ti 1:6
- h Mic 3:11
1Ti 6:5
- i Mt 10:8
Ac 10:45
- j Ps 78:37
Eph 5:5
- k Isa 55:7
Da 4:27
- l De 29:18
- m Heb 12:15
- n Ex 8:8
Nu 21:7
1Ki 13:6
Jas 5:16

Second Col.

- a Mt 9:35
Ac 1:8
- b Ps 34:7
Heb 1:14
Re 14:6
- c Jer 13:23
Zep 3:10
- d Isa 56:4
- e 2Ch 6:32
Joh 12:20
- f Ac 17:11
- g Ac 10:19
- h Isa 53:7
1Pe 2:23
- i Mt 26:59
- j Isa 53:8
Da 9:26
Php 2:8
- k Mt 13:52
- l Ac 18:28
2Ti 3:16

25 Therefore, when they had given the witness thoroughly and had spoken the word of Jehovah, they turned back to Jerusalem, and they went declaring the good news to many villages of the Sa-mar'i-tans.^a

26 However, Jehovah's angel^b spoke to Philip, saying: "Rise and go to the south to the road that runs down from Jerusalem to Ga'za." (This is a desert road.) **27** With that he rose and went, and, look! an E-thi-o-pi-an^c eunuch,^d a man in power under Can-da'ce queen of the E-thi-o-pi-ans, and who was over all her treasure. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship,^e **28** but he was returning and was sitting in his chariot and reading aloud the prophet Isaiah.^f **29** So the spirit said^g to Philip: "Approach and join yourself to this chariot." **30** Philip ran alongside and heard him reading aloud Isaiah the prophet, and he said: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" **31** He said: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" And he entreated Philip to get on and sit down with him. **32** Now the passage of Scripture that he was reading aloud was this: "As a sheep he was brought to the slaughter, and as a lamb that is voiceless before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.^h **33** During his humiliation the judgment was taken away from him.ⁱ Who will tell the details of his generation? Because his life is taken away from the earth."^j

34 In answer the eunuch said to Philip: "I beg you, About whom does the prophet say this? About himself or about some other man?" **35** Philip opened his mouth^k and, starting with this Scripture,^l he declared to him the good news about Jesus. **36** Now as they were going over the road, they came to a certain

body of water, and the eunuch said: "Look! A body of water; what prevents me from getting baptized?"^a **37** — **38** With that he commanded the chariot to halt, and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. **39** When they had come up out of the water, Jehovah's spirit quickly led Philip away,^b and the eunuch did not see him anymore, for he kept going on his way rejoicing. **40** But Philip was found to be in Ash'dod, and he went through the territory and kept on declaring^c the good news to all the cities until he got to Caes-a-re'a.^d

9 But Saul, still breathing threat and murder^e against the disciples^f of the Lord, went to the high priest **2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, in order that he might bring bound to Jerusalem any whom he found who belonged to The Way,^g both men and women.

3 Now as he was traveling he approached Damascus, when suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him,^h **4** and he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"ⁱ **5** He said: "Who are you, Lord?" He said: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting."^j **6** Nevertheless, rise^k and enter into the city, and what you must do will be told you." **7** Now the men that were journeying with him^l were standing speechless,^m hearing, indeed, the sound of a voice,ⁿ but not beholding any man. **8** But Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were opened he was seeing nothing.^o So they led him by the hand and conducted him into Damascus. **9** And for three days he did not see anything,^p and he neither ate nor drank.

CHAP. 8

- a Ac 10:47
- b 1Ki 18:12
- c Lu 9:6
- d Ac 21:8

CHAP. 9

- e Ac 22:4
Ac 26:11
- f Ac 8:3
Ga 1:13
1Ti 1:13
- g Ac 9:14
Ac 11:26
Ac 22:4
Ac 24:14
- h Ac 22:6
- i 1Co 15:8
- j Mt 25:40
- k Ac 9:11
- l Ac 22:9
Ac 26:13
- m Da 10:7
- n Ac 22:9
- o Ac 22:11
- p Ac 13:11

Second Col.

- a Ac 22:12
- b Ac 11:25
Ac 21:39
Ac 22:3
- c Ac 9:17
- d 1Co 1:2
2Ti 2:22
- e Ac 13:2
Ro 1:1
1Ti 1:12
- f Ro 1:5
Ga 2:7
1Ti 2:7
- g Ac 25:22
Ac 26:1
Ac 27:24
- h Ac 20:23
Ac 21:11
2Co 11:23
Col 1:24
2Ti 1:12
- i Ac 13:52
Ac 22:13
- j Ps 104:15
- k Ac 26:20
- l Ga 1:16
- m Ac 8:3
Ga 1:13
Ga 1:23

10 There was in Damascus a certain disciple named An-a-ni'-as,^a and the Lord said to him in a vision: "An-a-ni'as!" He said: "Here I am, Lord." **11** The Lord said to him: "Rise, go to the street called Straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man named Saul, from Tarsus."^b For, look! he is praying, **12** and in a vision he has seen a man named An-a-ni'as come in and lay his hands upon him that he might recover sight."^c **13** But An-a-ni'as answered: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how many injurious things he did to your holy ones in Jerusalem. **14** And here he has authority from the chief priests to put in bonds all those calling upon your name."^d **15** But the Lord said to him: "Be on your way, because this man is a chosen vessel^e to me to bear my name to the nations^f as well as to kings^g and the sons of Israel. **16** For I shall show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name."^h

17 So An-a-ni'as went off and entered into the house, and he laid his hands upon him and said: "Saul, brother, the Lord, the Jesus that appeared to you on the road over which you were coming, has sent me forth, in order that you may recover sight and be filled with holy spirit."ⁱ **18** And immediately there fell from his eyes what looked like scales, and he recovered sight; and he rose and was baptized, **19** and he took food and gained strength.^j

He got to be for some days with the disciples in Damascus,^k **20** and immediately in the synagogues he began to preach Jesus,^l that this One is the Son of God. **21** But all those hearing him gave way to astonishment and would say: "Is this not the man that ravaged^m those

in Jerusalem who call upon this name, and that had come here for this very purpose, that he might lead them bound to the chief priests?"^a **22** But Saul kept on acquiring power all the more and was confounding the Jews that dwelt in Damascus as he proved logically that this is the Christ.^b

23 Now when a good many days were coming to a close, the Jews took counsel together to do away with him.^c **24** However, their plot against him became known to Saul. But they were closely watching also the gates both day and night in order to do away with him.^d **25** So his disciples took him and let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.^e

26 On arriving in Jerusalem^f he made efforts to join himself to the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, because they did not believe he was a disciple. **27** So Bar'na-bas came to his aid^g and led him to the apostles, and he told them in detail how on the road he had seen the Lord^h and that he had spoken to him,ⁱ and how in Damascus^j he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus. **28** And he continued with them, walking in and out at Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord;^k **29** and he was talking and disputing with the Greek-speaking Jews. But these made attempts to do away with him.^l **30** When the brothers detected this, they brought him down to Caes-a-re'a and sent him off to Tarsus.^m

31 Then, indeed, the congregationⁿ throughout the whole of Ju-de'a and Gal'i-lee and Samar'i-a entered into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walked in the fear of Jehovah^o and in the comfort of the holy spirit^p it kept on multiplying.

CHAP. 9

- a Ac 9:2
- b Ac 17:3
Ac 18:28
- c Ac 20:3
Ac 23:12
2Co 11:23
- d 2Co 11:32
- e Jos 2:15
1Sa 19:12
2Co 11:33
- f Ga 1:18
- g Ac 4:36
- h 1Co 9:1
- i Ac 9:4
Ac 22:7
- j Ac 9:20
- k Ac 4:29
- l 2Co 11:26
- m Ac 11:25
Ga 1:21
- n Ac 8:1
- o Ps 86:11
- p Joh 14:16

Second Col.

- a Ac 9:38
- b Mt 10:8
- c Ac 3:6
Ac 4:10
- d 1Ch 5:16
- e Ac 11:21
- f 2Ch 2:16
- g 1Ti 2:10
- h Ac 9:32
- i Mt 5:40
- j Isa 32:8
- k Mr 5:40
Lu 8:51
- l Mt 9:25
Lu 7:15
Joh 11:43
- m Ac 3:7
- n 1Ki 17:23
- o Joh 11:45
- p Mr 6:10
- q Ac 10:6
Ac 10:32

32 Now as Peter was going through all parts he came down also to the holy ones that dwelt in Lyd'da.^a **33** There he found a certain man named Ae-ne'as, who had been lying flat on his cot for eight years, as he was paralyzed. **34** And Peter said to him:^b "Ae-ne'as, Jesus Christ heals you.^c Rise and make up your bed." And he rose immediately. **35** And all those who inhabited Lyd'da and the plain of Shar'on^d saw him, and these turned to the Lord.^e

36 But in Jop'pa^f there was a certain disciple named Tab'i-tha, which, when translated, means Dor'cas. She abounded in good deeds^g and gifts of mercy that she was rendering. **37** But in those days she happened to fall sick and die. So they bathed her and laid her in an upper chamber. **38** Now as Lyd'da was near Jop'pa,^h when the disciples heard that Peter was in this city they dispatched two men to him to entreat him: "Please do not hesitate to come on as far as us." **39** At that Peter rose and went with them. And when he arrived, they led him up into the upper chamber; and all the widows presented themselves to him weeping and exhibiting many inner garments and outer garmentsⁱ that Dor'cas used to make while she was with them.^j **40** But Peter put everybody outside^k and, bending his knees, he prayed, and, turning to the body, he said: "Tab'i-tha, rise!" She opened her eyes and, as she caught sight of Peter, she sat up.^l **41** Giving her his hand, he raised her up,^m and he called the holy ones and the widows and presented her alive.ⁿ **42** This became known throughout all Jop'pa, and many became believers on the Lord.^o **43** For quite a few days he remained in Jop'pa^p with a certain Simon, a tanner.^q

10 Now in Caes·a·re'a there was a certain man named Cornelius, an army officer^a of the Italian band,^b as it was called, **2** a devout man^c and one fearing^d God together with all his household, and he made many gifts of mercy to the people^e and made supplication to God continually.^f **3** Just about the ninth hour^g of the day he saw plainly in a vision^h an angelⁱ of God come in to him and say to him: "Cornelius!" **4** The man gazed at him and, becoming frightened, said: "What is it, Lord?" He said to him: "Your prayers^j and gifts of mercy have ascended as a remembrance before God.^k **5** So now send men to Jop'pa and summon a certain Simon who is surnamed Peter. **6** This man is being entertained by a certain Simon, a tanner, who has a house by the sea."^l **7** As soon as the angel that spoke to him had left, he called two of his house servants and a devout soldier from among those who were in constant attendance upon him,^m **8** and he related everything to them and dispatched them to Jop'pa.ⁿ

9 The next day as they were pursuing their journey and were approaching the city, Peter went up to the housetop^o about the sixth hour to pray.^p **10** But he became very hungry and wanted to eat. While they were preparing, he fell into a trance^q **11** and beheld heaven opened^r and some sort of vessel descending like a great linen sheet being let down by its four extremities upon the earth; **12** and in it there were all sorts of four-footed creatures and creeping things of the earth and birds of heaven.^s **13** And a voice came to him: "Rise, Peter, slaughter and eat!"^t **14** But Peter said: "Not at all, Lord, because never have I eaten anything defiled and unclean."^u **15** And the voice

CHAP. 10

a Mt 8:5

b Ac 27:1

c Ac 8:2
Ac 22:12

d Pr 14:2

e Lu 7:5
Ac 8:21

f Mt 7:7

g Ac 3:1

h Ac 9:10

i Lu 1:11

j Ps 65:2
Pr 15:8k Pr 15:29
Da 10:12
Joh 9:31
1Pe 3:12l Ac 9:43
Ac 10:32

m Mt 8:9

n Ac 11:13

o De 22:8

p Da 6:10
1Th 5:17q Ac 11:5
Ac 22:17r Eze 1:1
Ac 7:56
Re 19:11

s Ac 11:6

t Ac 11:7

u Le 11:4
Le 11:13
Le 20:25
De 14:3
De 14:19
Eze 4:14

Second Col.

a Mt 15:11
Ac 10:28
Ro 14:14
1Ti 4:4
Tit 1:15

b Ac 11:10

c Ac 11:11

d Ac 13:2
Ac 15:28
Ac 16:6
Ac 20:23

e Ac 11:12

f Ac 10:1

g Ac 22:12

h Lu 4:8
Ac 14:15
Re 19:10
Re 22:9

spoke again to him, the second time: "You stop calling defiled^a the things God has cleansed." **16** This occurred a third time, and immediately the vessel was taken up into heaven.^b

17 Now while Peter was in great perplexity inwardly over what the vision he had seen might mean, look! the men dispatched by Cornelius had made inquiries for Simon's house and stood there at the gate.^c

18 And they called out and inquired whether Simon who was surnamed Peter was being entertained there. **19** As Peter was going over in his mind about the vision, the spirit^d said: "Look! Three men are seeking you. **20** However, rise, go downstairs and be on your way with them, not doubting at all, because I have dispatched them."^e **21** So Peter went downstairs to the men and said: "Look! I am the one you are seeking. What is the cause for which you are present?" **22** They said: "Cornelius, an army officer, a man righteous and fearing God^f and well reported^g by the whole nation of the Jews, was given divine instructions by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear the things you have to say." **23** Therefore he invited them in and entertained them.

The next day he rose and went off with them, and some of the brothers that were from Jop'pa went with him. **24** On the day after that he entered into Caes·a·re'a. Cornelius, of course, was expecting them and had called together his relatives and intimate friends. **25** As Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet and did obeisance to him. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying: "Rise; I myself am also a man."^h **27** And as he conversed with him he went in and found many people assembled, **28** and he said to them:

“You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to join himself to or approach a man of another race,^a and yet God has shown me I should call no man defiled or unclean.^b **29** Hence I came, really without objection, when I was sent for. Therefore I inquire the reason that you have sent for me.”

30 Accordingly Cornelius said: “Four days ago counting from this hour I was praying in my house at the ninth hour,^c when, look! a man in bright raiment^d stood before me **31** and said, ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been favorably heard and your gifts of mercy have been remembered before God.^e **32** Send, therefore, to Jop’pa and call for Simon, who is surnamed Peter.^f This man is being entertained in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’^g **33** Therefore I at once sent to you, and you did well in coming here. And so at this time we are all present before God to hear all the things you have been commanded by Jehovah to say.”^h

34 At this Peter opened his mouth and said: “For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial,ⁱ **35** but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.^j **36** He sent out the word^k to the sons of Israel to declare to them the good news of peace^l through Jesus Christ: this One is Lord of all others.^m **37** You know the subject that was talked about throughout the whole of Ju-de’a, starting from Gal’i-lee after the baptism that John preached,ⁿ **38** namely, Jesus who was from Naz’a-reth, how God anointed him with holy spirit^o and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil;^p because God was with him.^q **39** And we are witnesses of all the things he did both in

CHAP. 10

- a Joh 4:9
- Joh 18:28
- b Ac 10:45
- Ac 15:8
- Eph 3:6
- c Ac 11:13
- d Mt 28:3
- Ac 1:10
- e Da 10:12
- Heb 6:10
- f Ac 10:18
- g Ac 9:43
- h Ac 10:42
- i De 10:17
- 2Ch 19:7
- Job 34:19
- Ro 2:11
- Ga 2:6
- j Ro 2:13
- 1Co 12:13
- Ga 3:28
- k Ps 107:20
- Ps 147:18
- l Isa 52:7
- Na 1:15
- m Da 7:14
- Mt 28:18
- Ro 14:9
- Eph 1:20
- Re 19:16
- n Lu 4:14
- o Isa 11:2
- Isa 42:1
- Isa 61:1
- Mt 3:16
- Heb 1:9
- p Lu 13:16
- q Joh 3:2

Second Col.

- a Ac 2:23
- Ga 3:13
- b Jon 1:17
- Jon 2:10
- Ac 2:24
- 1Co 15:4
- c Joh 14:22
- d Lu 24:30
- Joh 21:13
- e Mt 28:19
- Ac 1:8
- f Joh 5:22
- Ac 17:31
- Ro 14:9
- 2Co 5:10
- 2Ti 4:1
- 1Pe 4:5
- g Isa 53:11
- Jer 31:34
- Eze 34:23
- Da 9:24
- Lu 24:27
- Re 19:10
- h Ro 10:11
- Ga 3:22
- i Ac 4:31
- Ac 8:15
- j Ga 3:14
- k Ac 2:4
- Ac 19:6
- l Mt 3:11
- Ac 8:36
- Ac 11:17
- m Mt 16:19
- Ac 2:38
- Ac 19:5

CHAP. 11

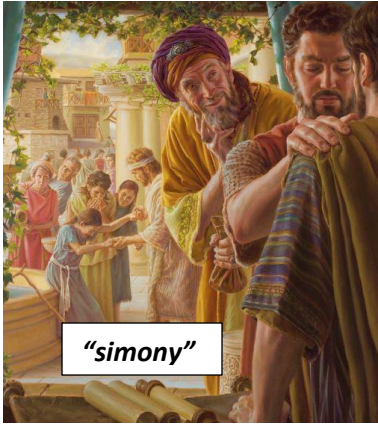
- n Zec 2:11
- Lu 2:32
- Ac 14:27

the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; but they also did away with him by hanging him on a stake.^a **40** God raised this One up on the third day and granted him to become manifest,^b **41** not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God,^c to us, who ate and drank with him^d after his rising from the dead. **42** Also, he ordered us to preach^e to the people and to give a thorough witness that this is the One decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.^f **43** To him all the prophets bear witness,^g that everyone putting faith in him gets forgiveness of sins through his name.”^h

44 While Peter was yet speaking about these matters the holy spirit fell upon all those hearing the word.ⁱ **45** And the faithful ones that had come with Peter who were of those circumcised were amazed, because the free gift of the holy spirit was being poured out also upon people of the nations.^j **46** For they heard them speaking with tongues and magnifying God.^k Then Peter responded: **47** “Can anyone forbid water so that these might not be baptized^l who have received the holy spirit even as we have?” **48** With that he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.^m Then they requested him to remain for some days.

11 Now the apostles and the brothers that were in Jude’a heard that people of the nationsⁿ had also received the word of God. **2** So when Peter came up to Jerusalem, the supporters of circumcision^o began to contend with him, **3** saying he had gone into the house of men that were not circumcised and had eaten with them. **4** At this Pe-

o Ac 10:45; Ga 2:12.



*** w08 5/15 p. 30-p. 31 Highlights From the Book of Acts *** Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Upon hearing that Samaria has accepted the word of God, the apostles in Jerusalem dispatch Peter and John to them. By opening up the Kingdom opportunity to the Samaritans, Peter uses the second key. (Acts 8:14-17) Perhaps within a year of Jesus' resurrection, an amazing transformation takes place in Saul of Tarsus. In 36 C.E., Peter uses the third key, and the free gift of the holy spirit is poured out upon uncircumcised people of the nations.—Acts 10:45.

Lessons for Us:

9:23-25. To elude our enemies in order to continue preaching is not cowardly.

9:28-30. If witnessing in certain neighborhoods or to some individuals becomes physically, morally, or spiritually hazardous, we need to be prudent and selective about where and when we preach.

9:31. During relatively peaceful times, we should strive to fortify our faith through study and meditation. This will help us to walk in the fear of Jehovah by applying what we learn and to be zealous in the ministry.

*** w12 3/15 pp. 13-14 pars. 19-20 Help People to "Awake From Sleep" ***

¹⁹ Naturally, we would like to help our relatives to accept the good news. (Josh. 2:13; Acts 10:24, 48; 16:31, 32) If our initial effort is rebuffed, that could dampen our enthusiasm for trying again. We might imagine that there is little we can do or say that will change their attitude. Still, events may cause a change in your relatives' life or viewpoint. Or you may have improved in your ability to explain the truth, so that you might now have a different result.

²⁰ We should avoid being insensitive to our relatives' feelings. (Rom. 2:4) Should we not speak as kindly to them as we do to those we meet in the preaching work? Speak with mildness and respect. Without being preachy, give evidence of how the truth has affected you for the good. (Eph. 4:23, 24) Make plain how Jehovah has enriched your life, "teaching you to benefit yourself." (Isa. 48:17) Let your relatives see in you an example of Christian living.

*** w12 4/1 p. 16 Why Are Christians Baptized? ***

1. What does Christian baptism mean?

Baptism is a request for a good relationship with God. So, a Christian should be baptized, not when a baby, but when he or she is old enough to learn about God and become a disciple of Jesus. (Acts 8:12; 1 Peter 3:21) We become a disciple of Jesus when we learn and do the things that he commanded.—Read Matthew 28:19, 20.

In the days of Jesus' apostles, many people took action without delay to learn about God and Jesus. For example, when one man learned that Jesus' death had opened the way to salvation, he immediately became a disciple. Today, many sincere people have chosen to become Jesus' followers.—Read Acts 8:26-31, 35-38.

*** w12 5/15 p. 23 par. 2 Are You Reflecting the Glory of Jehovah? ***

² Before Adam and Eve were created, God was confident that humans would be able to carry out his will for them, reflect his qualities, and bring him glory. (**Read Genesis 1:26, 27.**) In practicing godly devotion, we should display the qualities of the One who made us. If we do so, we have the blessed privilege of reflecting God's glory regardless of our culture, our education, or our ethnic background. Why? Because "God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—**Acts 10:34, 35.**

*** w12 6/15 pp. 22-23 pars. 10-11 Why Put Jehovah's Service First? ***



¹⁰ Finally, let us consider the example of Paul. Before his conversion to Christianity, he had what seemed to be a promising future. He had studied Jewish law with one of the most famous teachers of his day. He had received authority from the Jewish high priest. And he was making greater progress in Judaism than were many of his contemporaries. (**Acts 9:1, 2; 22:3; 26:10; Gal. 1:13, 14**) Yet, all of that changed when Paul realized that Jehovah was no longer blessing the Jews as a nation.



¹¹ Paul recognized that a career in the Jewish system had no value from Jehovah's point of view; it had no future. (Matt. 24:2) This former Pharisee went so far as to say that compared with his new, enlightened understanding of God's purposes and the privilege of the Christian ministry, what he once thought was important he now considered to be "a lot of refuse." Paul abandoned his pursuits in Judaism and dedicated the rest of his days on earth to preaching the good news.—**Read Philippians 3:4-8, 15; Acts 9:15...** At the end of each day, it gives a dedicated Christian great satisfaction to be able to say, "Jehovah, I did everything I could in your service."

*** w12 12/15 p. 24 par. 2 "Temporary Residents" United in True Worship ***

² Of course, no matter where we reside, foreigners live among us. That was also the case with the ancient Israelites, who by means of the Law covenant were in a special relationship with Jehovah God. The rights of non-Israelites were somewhat limited, yet the Israelites were required to treat them respectfully and fairly. What a fine example for us to follow! There is no room for partiality or prejudice among true Christians. Why? The apostle Peter said: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him."—**Acts 10:34, 35.**

*** w11 1/15 p. 20 par. 13 Make the Most of Your Singleness ***



¹³ A woman named Dorcas, or Tabitha, lived in Joppa, an ancient seaport northwest of Jerusalem. Since the Bible mentions no husband, she was likely unmarried at the time. Dorcas "abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy." She evidently made many garments for needy widows and others, and this greatly endeared her to them. So when she suddenly fell ill and died, the whole congregation sent for Peter to implore him to resurrect their dear sister. As news of her resurrection spread throughout Joppa, many became believers. (**Acts 9:36-42**) Through her extraordinary kindness, Dorcas herself may have had a share in helping some of them.

¹⁸ All unmarried Christians who are doing their best to serve Jehovah deserve our genuine commendation and encouragement. We love them for who they are and for the significant contribution they make to the congregation. They will never have to feel lonely if we truly become their spiritual "brothers and sisters and mothers and children."—**Read Mark 10:28-30.**

TMS REVIEW:

10. How can we imitate the good example of Barnabas, and what benefits will we enjoy from doing so? (Acts 9:26, 27)
 [June 24, bt p. 65 par. 19]

*** bt chap. 8 p. 65 par. 19 **The Congregation “Entered Into a Period of Peace”** ***



¹⁹ Notice that Barnabas took the initiative to assist Saul. No doubt this

kind act helped to foster the warm friendship that developed between these zealous servants of Jehovah. Do you, like Barnabas, willingly assist new ones in the congregation, working with them in the field service and helping them to progress spiritually? You will be richly rewarded if you do. If you are a new publisher of the good news, do you, like Saul, accept the help that is offered to you? By working along with more experienced publishers, you will improve in your skill in the ministry, your joy will increase, and you will form bonds of friendship that can last a lifetime.



*** w10 2/15 p. 29 **“The Child’s Right to Spiritual Development”** ***

Granted, it is a fine thing to encourage Bible reading. However, are children really capable of carrying on “private reflection and meditation” on what they read from the Scriptures and of drawing correct conclusions?

Even adults need to have Scriptural passages explained to them. For example, the Bible tells us about a man who was unable to find true spirituality through “private reflection and meditation.” That man was an Ethiopian official. He was reading the prophecy of Isaiah but did not grasp its meaning. Since he wanted to understand the message of the prophet,

he welcomed the explanation offered to him by the disciple Philip. (Acts 8:26-40) That Ethiopian is no exception. All of us—especially children—need to have Scriptural passages expounded.

The Bible warns us: “Foolishness is tied up with the heart of a boy.” (Prov. 22:15) Children need guidance and direction, and their parents have the responsibility to give them moral and spiritual education based on the Bible and on what is taught in the Christian congregation. Children have the right to such training. From an early age, they need help to build a firm Biblical foundation for spiritual development so that they may become “mature people . . . who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.”—Heb. 5:14.

*** bt chap. 7 p. 58 **Declaring “the Good News About Jesus”** *** **BAPTISM IN “A BODY OF WATER”**

How is Christian baptism performed? Some believe that it is sufficient to pour or sprinkle water on a person’s head. However, the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized in “a body of water.” The account says: “They both *went down into* the water, both Philip and the eunuch.” (Acts 8:36, 38) If pouring or sprinkling water was all that was needed, it would not have been necessary for the eunuch to halt his chariot at a body of water. Even a minimal amount of water, such as that contained in a skin bottle, would have been enough. In fact, he probably had such a bottle because he was traveling on “a desert road.”—Acts 8:26.

*** bt chap. 9 p. 71 pars. 9-10 **“God Is Not Partial”** ***

⁹ Learning that Cornelius had been divinely instructed to send for him, Peter invited the Gentile messengers into the house “and entertained them.” (Acts 10:23a) The obedient apostle was already adjusting to new developments in the outworking of God’s will.

¹⁰ To this day, Jehovah leads his people progressively. (Prov. 4:18) By means of his holy spirit, he is guiding “the faithful and discreet slave” and its Governing Body. (Matt. 24:45) At times, we may receive clarifications in our understanding of God’s Word or changes in certain organizational procedures. We do well to ask ourselves: ‘How do I respond to such refinements? Do I submit to the leadings of God’s spirit in these matters?’

*** bt chap. 7 p. 57 pars. 11-13 Declaring “the Good News About Jesus” ***

—Acts 8:20-24.

¹² The rebuke that Peter gave Simon stands as a warning to Christians today. In fact, the English word “simony” was coined as a result of this incident. “Simony” refers to the buying or selling of positions, specifically in a religious context. The history of apostate Christendom is rife with examples of this practice. Indeed, the ninth edition of *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (1878) noted: “A study of the history of the Papal conclaves leaves the student with the conviction that no election untainted by simony has ever yet been made, while in a great number of instances the simony practised in the conclave has been of the grossest, most shameless, and most overt kind.”

¹³ Christians must guard against the sin of simony. For instance, they should not try to gain favors by showering generous gifts or excessive praise on those who appear able to grant individuals added privileges in the congregation. On the other hand, those who are thought to be in a position to grant favors should be on guard against showing favoritism toward wealthy ones. Both situations involve simony. Really, all of God’s servants should conduct themselves as ‘lesser ones,’ waiting on Jehovah’s spirit to make appointments to privileges of service. (Luke 9:48) There is no place in God’s organization for those who try to “search out their own glory.”—Prov. 25:27.

*** bt chap. 8 pp. 60-61 The Congregation “Entered Into a Period of Peace” ***

“Why Are You Persecuting Me?” (Acts 9:1-5)

⁵ When Jesus stopped Saul on the road to Damascus, He did not ask: “Why are you persecuting my disciples?” As noted above, he said: “Why are you persecuting *me*?” (Acts 9:4) Yes, Jesus personally feels the trials experienced by his followers.—Matt. 25:34-40, 45.

⁶ If you are being oppressed because of your faith in Christ, be assured that both Jehovah and Jesus are aware of your situation. (Matt. 10:22, 28-31) At present, the trial may not be removed. Remember, Jesus watched Saul’s involvement in Stephen’s death, and He saw Saul drag faithful disciples from their homes in Jerusalem. (Acts 8:3) Yet, Jesus did not intervene at that time. Even so, Jehovah, through Christ, gave Stephen and the other disciples the strength they needed to remain faithful.

⁷ You too can endure persecution if you do the following: **(1)** Resolve to remain loyal, come what may. **(2)** Ask for Jehovah’s help. (Phil. 4:6, 7) **(3)** Leave vengeance in Jehovah’s hands. (Rom. 12:17-21) **(4)** Trust that Jehovah will provide you with the strength to endure until he sees fit to remove the trial.—Phil. 4:12, 13.

*** bt chap. 8 p. 67 The Congregation “Entered Into a Period of Peace” ***

DORCAS—“SHE ABOUNDED IN GOOD DEEDS”



Dorcas was a member of the Christian congregation in the seaport town of Joppa. Her fellow believers loved her because “she abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy.” (Acts 9:36)

(Acts 9:39) Among the factors that endeared Dorcas to the members of her congregation was that she was in the habit of sewing for them. She made tunics, worn next to the body, and cloaks or robes, which were worn over the tunic. Whether Dorcas paid for all the material herself or just provided her labor is not stated. In any case, she was loved for her kindness and “gifts of mercy.”

What joy there must have been among the Christians in Joppa when Peter was then able to present to the holy ones and the widows their beloved Dorcas—alive!—Acts 9:40-42.

How can you imitate Dorcas?

Theocratic Ministry School Review

The following questions will be considered at the Theocratic Ministry School during the week beginning June 24, 2013.

1. What did Jesus mean by his statement recorded at John 3:14, 15: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up”?

[*it-1* p. 505] Jesus Christ made clear the prophetic meaning of the wilderness event involving the copper serpent when he told Nicodemus: “Moreover, no man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so the Son of man must be lifted up, that everyone believing in him may have everlasting life.” (Joh 3:13-15) Like the copper serpent that Moses placed on a pole in the wilderness, the Son of God was impaled or fastened on a stake, thus appearing to many as an evildoer and a sinner, like a snake, being in the position of one cursed. (De 21:22, 23; Ga 3:13; 1Pe 2:24) In the wilderness a person who had been bitten by one of the poisonous serpents that Jehovah sent among the Israelites evidently had to gaze at the copper serpent in faith. Similarly, to gain everlasting life through Christ, it is necessary to exercise faith in him.

2. When do Christ’s followers receive life in themselves, or enter into the fullness of life? (John 6:53)

[*w03 9/15* p. 31 par. 3] When do Christ’s followers receive life in themselves, or enter into the fullness of life? For the anointed Kingdom heirs, this happens at their resurrection to heavenly life as immortal spirit creatures. (1 Corinthians 15:52, 53; 1 John 3:2) Jesus’ “other sheep” experience entry into the fullness of life after the end of his Thousand Year Reign. By then, they will have been tested, found faithful, and declared righteous for everlasting life in the Paradise earth.—John 10:16; Revelation 20:5, 7-10.

3. Illustrate how Jesus revealed his Father to imperfect humans. (John 8:28)

[*w11 4/1* p. 7 par. 3] What Jesus did in revealing his Father might be illustrated by what an electric transformer does. Such a device can take in electricity of high voltage and change it into lower voltage, thus making it suitable for use by the average consumer. When on earth, Jesus took what he had learned in the heavens about his Father and transmitted it in ways that lowly humans on earth could readily grasp and easily apply.

4. What do we learn from Jesus’ ‘giving way to tears’ upon the death of his friend Lazarus? (John 11:35)

[*w08 5/1* p. 24 pars. 3-5] Look again at the above-quoted words. Notice that when Jesus saw Mary and those with her weeping, he “groaned” and “became troubled.” The original-language words used here indicate intense emotions. Jesus was deeply moved by what he saw. The surge of strong emotions within him was evident as his eyes brimmed with tears. Clearly, Jesus’ heart was touched by the pain of others. Have you ever been moved to tears because someone you care about was weeping?—Romans 12:15.

Jesus’ empathy gives us valuable insight into the qualities and ways of his Father, Jehovah. Recall that Jesus so perfectly reflected his Father’s qualities that he could say: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.” (John 14:9) So when we read that “Jesus gave way to tears,” we can be sure that Jehovah personally feels the pain of his worshippers. Indeed, other Bible writers confirm this fact. (Isaiah 63:9; Zechariah 2:8) What a tender God Jehovah is!

Empathy attracts. When we are discouraged or depressed, we are drawn to a fellow human who can comprehend our circumstances and share our pain. How much more we are drawn to Jehovah, a compassionate God who feels our pain and understands the reason for our tears!—Psalm 56:8.

5. What powerful lesson did Jesus teach by washing the feet of his disciples? (John 13:4, 5)

[w99 3/1 p. 31 par. 1] By washing the feet of his disciples, Jesus provided a powerful lesson in humility. Indeed, Christians should not think that they are so important that others should always serve them, nor should they aspire to positions of honor and prestige. Instead, they should follow the pattern set by Jesus, who “came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many.” (Matthew 20:28) Yes, followers of Jesus should be willing to perform the humblest services for one another.

6. How can God’s spirit serve as a sure guide for us? (John 14:26)

[w11 12/15 pp. 14-15 par. 9]⁹ If we are humble and willing to depend on Jehovah, he will impart to us his holy spirit as a sure guide for our steps. How will that active force help us? Jesus explained to his disciples: “The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you.” (John 14:26) As we regularly and prayerfully study God’s Word, including all the sayings of Christ, holy spirit will increase our comprehension of Jehovah’s deep wisdom, so that we can follow his will closely. (1 Cor. 2:10) Additionally, at any unexpected turn in the road to life, the spirit will show us the way to go. It will bring to mind Bible principles that we have already learned and help us to grasp how they apply in directing our next step.

7. At John 21:15, to what does “these” refer, and what lesson can we learn?

[w08 4/15 p. 32 par. 11] Peter was asked if he loved Jesus more than “these,” that is, the fish that were before them. Jesus thus stressed the need for Peter to choose to follow him full-time instead of pursuing a fishing career. After considering the Gospel accounts, may we be strengthened in our resolve to love Jesus more than any other things that might attract us. Yes, let us wholeheartedly continue following him.

8. According to Acts 2:44-47 and Acts 4:34, 35, what spirit do Christians do well to imitate?

[w08 5/15 p. 30 par. 5] *Why did believers sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds?* Many who became believers had come from faraway places and were without enough provisions to extend their stay in Jerusalem. Nevertheless, they desired to remain there longer in order to learn more about their new faith and to bear witness to others. To help such ones, some Christians sold their property, and the funds were distributed to the needy.

9. Was Stephen praying to Jesus in the account found at Acts 7:59?

[w08 5/15 p. 31 par. 2] *Was Stephen praying to Jesus?* No, he was not. One’s worship—and therefore one’s prayers—should go only to Jehovah God. (Luke 4:8; 6:12) Under normal circumstances, Stephen would have appealed to Jehovah in the name of Jesus. (John 15:16) In this instance, though, Stephen had a vision of “the Son of man standing at God’s right hand.” (Acts 7:56) Fully aware that Jesus had been given the power to resurrect the dead, Stephen spoke, but did not pray, directly to Jesus, asking Him to safeguard his spirit.—John 5:27-29.

10. How can we imitate the good example of Barnabas, and what benefits will we enjoy from doing so? (Acts 9:26, 27)

[bt p. 65 par. 19]¹⁹ Notice that Barnabas took the initiative to assist Saul. No doubt this kind act helped to foster the warm friendship that developed between these zealous servants of Jehovah. Do you, like Barnabas, willingly assist new ones in the congregation, working with them in the field service and helping them to progress spiritually? You will be richly rewarded if you do. If you are a new publisher of the good news, do you, like Saul, accept the help that is offered to you? By working along with more experienced publishers, you will improve in your skill in the ministry, your joy will increase, and you will form bonds of friendship that can last a lifetime.

“Let Your Light Shine”

(Matthew 5:16)

1. Jesus has commanded
That we shine our light,
Like the sun, impartial,
That all might gain sight.
Through God’s Holy Scriptures,
Words of wisdom shine.
May we now reflect his light
By our deeds so fine.
2. With God’s Kingdom message
Light on hearts is shed,
Comfort brought to mourners,
Hope for those now dead.
Light from Scripture guides us
As we do His will;
Gracious words, well-seasoned too,
Make it brighter still.
3. Light from fine works gleaming,
Brightens up this world,
To our words adds luster,
Like a priceless pearl.
May our light keep shining
As we do what’s right,
Then our works will always be
Pleasing in God’s sight.

(See also Ps. 119:130; Matt. 5:14, 15, 45; Col. 4:6.)

‘Walking Up Mountains’

Chin State lies 3,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level with some peaks soaring up to 10,000 feet. Many mountains are covered with dense forests filled with towering teaks, stately conifers, colorful rhododendrons, and exquisite orchids. The terrain is wild and majestic and makes for rough travel. Towns in the region are linked by winding dirt roads that are barely passable when wet and often severed by landslides. Many remote villages are accessible only on foot. These obstacles, however, have not deterred Jehovah’s servants, who are determined to reach as many people as possible with the good news.

Aye Aye Thit, who served with her husband in the circuit work in Chin State, relates: “I grew up in the flat Ayeyarwady Delta and was awestruck by the beautiful Chin Hills. I hiked up my first mountain with gusto, only to collapse out of breath at the top of the hill. Several hills later, I was so exhausted that I thought I would die. Eventually, I learned how to walk up mountains—by taking my time and conserving my strength. Soon I could walk up to 20 miles a day on journeys lasting six days or more.”

Over the years, the brothers in Chin State have used various forms of transport, including mule, horse, bicycle and, only recently, motorbike, passenger truck, and four-wheel-drive vehicle. But mostly, they walk. To reach the villages surrounding Matupi, for example, special pioneers Kyaw Win and David Zama trudged countless miles up and down mountains. In order to attend Christian conventions in Hakha, over 170 miles away, the Matupi



Congregation walked for six to eight days going there and six to eight days coming back. Along the way, they sang Kingdom songs that echoed through the picturesque hills.

Those grueling journeys exposed the brothers not only to harsh mountain weather but to swarms of mosquitoes and all kinds of creepy-crawlies, especially during the rainy season. “While walking through the forest, I saw leeches crawling up my legs,” relates Myint Lwin, a circuit overseer. “When I tore them off, two more climbed up. I jumped onto a fallen tree, but swarms of leeches started crawling up the log. Terrified, I sprinted through the forest. When I finally reached the road, I was covered with leeches.”

Left: Members of the Matupi Congregation walked 170 miles to attend Christian conventions in Hakha

Right: District overseer Gumja Naw and his wife, Nan Lu, hiked between congregations in Chin State



However, travelers in Chin State braved more than leeches. Myanmar also has wild boars, bears, leopards, tigers and, according to some sources, a greater variety of venomous snakes than any other country in the world. When hiking between congregations in Chin State, district overseer Gumja Naw and his wife, Nan Lu, built a ring of fires at night to keep wild animals at bay!

Those tireless evangelizers left a lasting legacy. “They served Jehovah with all of their strength,” says Maurice Raj. “Even after they left Chin State, they were willing to return. Their efforts truly glorified Jehovah!” Today, despite being one of the most sparsely populated regions in the country, Chin State has seven congregations and several isolated groups.

WEEK STARTING MARCH 25

Song 76 and Prayer

☐ Congregation Bible Study:

jr chap. 7 ¶1-6 (30 min.)

☐ Theocratic Ministry School:

Bible reading: Luke 4-6 (10 min.)

No. 1: Luke 4:22-39 (4 min. or less)

No. 2: From Where Did the Various Races Come?—*rs* p. 301 ¶1-4 (5 min.)

No. 3: What Proof Is There That Jesus Was Resurrected?—1 Cor. 15:3-7 (5 min.)

☐ Service Meeting:

Song 111

5 min: Start a Bible Study on the First Saturday. Using the sample presentation on page 8, demonstrate how a study may be started on the first Saturday in April. Encourage all to have a share.

25 min: “How to Use *Good News From God!*” Questions and answers. When considering paragraph 6, have two demonstrations.

Song 97 and Prayer

How to Use *Good News From God!*

New Brochure Designed to Help Us Make Return Visits and Start Bible Studies

¹ During the “Safeguard Your Heart!” District Convention, we were excited to receive a new brochure to help us make return visits and start Bible studies. *Good News From God!* is similar to the *Require* brochure, which it replaces, in that the lessons are concise. This lends itself to using the brochure for door-step Bible studies. However, while the *Require* brochure discussed Christian requirements, which can be challenging for new students to accept, this new brochure focuses on the good news found in the Bible.—Acts 15:35.

² Why was it produced? Brothers around the world have been asking for something simple that would attract people to the truth and lead into the

1. What new brochure released at the “Safeguard Your Heart!” District Convention is designed to help us make return visits and start Bible studies?

2. Why was the *Good News* brochure produced?



Bible Teach book, our primary tool for Bible studies. People who are intimidated by a book are often more willing to study the Bible using a brochure. In addition, a brochure is more easily translated into a large number of languages.

³ **How It Is Designed:** Many of our study publications are written so that a

3. How is this brochure different from other study publications?

person can read it and understand the truth, even without help. This publication is different. It is written as a guide for Bible study *with an instructor*. Therefore, when offering it to someone, it is best to *discuss* a paragraph or two. The paragraphs are short, so they can even be considered at a person's doorstep or his place of business. While lesson 1 is a good place to begin, we can start a study almost anywhere in the brochure.

⁴ In many of our publications, the answers to the printed questions can be found in the paragraphs. However, in this publication, the answers are found mainly in the Bible. Most people want to learn from the Bible rather than from our literature. Therefore, almost none of the cited scriptures are quoted. They are to be read from the Bible itself. This helps students realize that what they are learning comes from God.—Isa. 54:13.

⁵ The brochure does not explain all the scriptures. Why? It is designed to encourage the student to ask questions and to allow the instructor to use his teaching ability. Therefore, it is important to be well-prepared for each study period. A word of caution: Do not talk too much. We love to explain the Scriptures. But we often accomplish more by inviting the student to explain what he thinks the scripture means. By using questions tactfully, we can help him to reason out the meaning of each text.—Acts 17:2.

4. How does the brochure help us to teach directly from the Bible?
5. Why is it important for the conductor to be well-prepared for each study period?

⁶ Like other publications for conducting studies, this brochure can be offered at any time, regardless of what is being featured for the month. Many will enjoy using it with the direct approach to start doorstep studies. In addition, as mentioned at the district convention, using it when calling back on those who showed interest “can *really* make the return visit work exciting!”—See the boxes on pages 5-7.

⁷ **How to Conduct the Study:** We could begin the discussion by reading the numbered question in bold print. Next, read the paragraph and the scripture(s) in italics. Use tactful questions to help the householder understand what the scriptures mean. Then, before moving on to the next section,

6. How can we use the brochure (a) where people are skeptical about God and the Bible? (b) when going from house to house? (c) when using the direct approach to start Bible studies? (d) when making return visits?
7. How might you conduct a Bible study using the brochure?

Where People Are Skeptical About God and the Bible:

● In some areas, publishers find that the words “God” and “Bible” are conversation stoppers. In that case, on the initial visit, it may be best to discuss topics that are of local concern, such as the need for good government, where to get practical help for families, and what the future holds. Perhaps the *Good News* brochure can be introduced after we have had several conversations considering how we know that God exists and why the Bible is trustworthy.

ask the householder to answer the question in bold print, to make sure he understands. For the first few visits, it may be best to consider just one of the questions in bold print. In time, we may be able to lengthen the discussions to include an entire lesson.

⁸ Scripture citations that are preceded by the word “read” are the ones that most directly answer the question in bold print. When introducing a scripture, avoid saying, “The apostle Paul

8. How should we introduce scriptures, and why?

When Going From House to House:

● “I’m calling to show you how easy it can be to find out what God has in mind for mankind’s future. Have you ever wondered whether God will relieve us of suffering? [Allow for response.] This brochure shows where in the Bible you can find the answer to that question. [Hand him a brochure, and read the first paragraph in lesson 1, as well as Jeremiah 29: 11.] From this, does it seem reasonable to you that God wants us to have a better future? [Allow for response.] If you like, you may keep this copy. Next time, we can consider the second paragraph to find the Bible’s answer to this question, ‘How will God relieve mankind of the causes of suffering?’” If the householder seems to have more time on the initial visit, you may be able to read and discuss the second paragraph and its three Bible texts. Arrange to return to discuss the second question in that lesson.

● “Many people like to pray, especially when they have problems. Do you pray sometimes? [Allow for response.] Do

wrote” or, “Notice what Jeremiah foretold.” The householder might think that we are reading the words of mere humans. It would be better to say, “The Word of God says” or, “Notice what the Bible foretold.”

⁹ Should we read *all* the cited scriptures or *only* the “read” scriptures? Be guided by the circumstances. None of the cited texts are there simply to show where a thought is found in the Bible. Each one contains information that is

9. Should all the cited scriptures be read during the study?

you think that God listens to *all* prayers, or could it be that some prayers do not please him? [Allow for response.] I have here a brochure that shows how to find the Bible’s answer to those questions. [Hand him a copy, and consider together the first paragraph of lesson 12 and the “read” scriptures.] Isn’t it marvelous that God is willing to listen to us? But to benefit fully from prayer, we need to know God well. [Turn to lesson 2 and point out the subheadings.] If you wish, I can leave this brochure with you, and at another time, we can read the Bible’s answers to these fascinating questions.”

● “I’m here because people are concerned about where this world is heading. Do you think conditions will ever improve? [Allow for response.] Many people are surprised to learn that the Bible contains good news that can give us hope. Here are some of the questions that the Bible answers.” Hand him a brochure, and invite him to choose a question from the back cover that interests him the most. Then go to the lesson, and demonstrate the study. Make arrangements to return and to consider the next question in that lesson.

worth discussing. But in some cases, the student's lack of time, interest, or reading ability may suggest that we look up only the "read" scriptures.

¹⁰ **When to Switch to the *Bible Teach* Book:** After several discussions and once we have established a good routine, we can either switch to the *Bible Teach* book or continue in the *Good News* brochure until we have completed it. Publishers can use their judgment to decide when to switch. Once we switch to the *Bible Teach* book, must we start from the beginning? There are no rules on this. Each person is different. However, most students will benefit by going over the same subjects again in more detail in the *Bible Teach* book.

10. At what point can we switch the study to the *Bible Teach* book?

Try the Direct Approach:

● "I stopped by to tell you about a new Bible study course. This brochure has 15 lessons that show where in your Bible you can find answers to vital questions. [Show him the front and back covers.] Have you ever tried to understand the Bible? [Allow for response.] Let me show you how easy the lessons are. [Consider the first paragraph of question 3 in lesson 3, and read Revelation 21:4, 5. If appropriate, consider the next paragraph and the "read" scriptures.] If you wish, I can leave this brochure with you. We recommend that you try studying the Bible at least once. If you like it, you can continue. Next time, we can consider the first lesson. Notice that it is only one page long."

Introduce It on a Return Visit:

● When returning to visit someone who has shown interest, we might say: "It's nice to see you again. I brought you this brochure that gives the Bible's answer to many interesting questions. [Hand him a brochure, and invite him to look at the back cover.] Which of these topics interests you the most? [Allow for response. Then turn to the lesson he chose.] Let me show you how this brochure can be used to find the Bible's answer." Demonstrate the study by discussing a paragraph or two and the "read" scriptures. You have just started a Bible study! Leave the brochure with the householder, and make arrangements to return. When you complete the lesson, you can discuss another lesson chosen by the householder or start at the beginning of the brochure.

¹¹ In a world where good news is scarce, we have the grand privilege of declaring the best news possible—that God's Kingdom rules and that it will soon usher in a new world where righteousness is to dwell! (Matt. 24:14; 2 Pet. 3:13) We are confident that many who hear this message will echo these inspired words: "How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation, the one saying to Zion: 'Your God has become king!'" (Isa. 52:7) May we use this new brochure to bring good news from God to thirsting ones in our territory!

11. Why should we make good use of this new brochure?

129 *Holding Fast to Our Hope* (Hebrews 6:18, 19)

1. Men have been groping for centuries in darkness.
Vain is their quest as they try to catch the wind.
Man's tragic flaw is revealed in its starkness:
None can they save, for they all have sinned.

(CHORUS)

*Sing with good cheer, for God's Kingdom is here!
His Son's mighty reign brings us
freedom from fear.
Through him, at last, evil soon will be past;
This hope, like an anchor, is holding us fast.*

2. "God's day is near!" rings the Kingdom proclamation;
Men will no longer cry out to God: "How long?"
Soon he will free all his groaning creation.
Praise God Almighty, and join our song.

(Chorus)