

- Song 10 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- “Jehovah Wants Willing Servants”: (10 min.)

Ezr 7:10—Ezra prepared his heart

Ezr 7:12-28—Ezra made preparations to return to Jerusalem

Ezr 8:21-23—Ezra trusted in Jehovah to protect His servants

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Ezr 9:1, 2—How serious a threat was intermarriage with “the peoples of the lands”? (w06 1/15 20 ¶1)

Ezr 10:3—Why were the children sent away along with the wives? (w06 1/15 20 ¶2)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- Bible Reading: Ezr 7:18-28 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Present the *Good News* brochure, and discuss lesson 8, question 1, paragraph 1. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Demonstrate how to make a return visit on someone who accepted the *Good News* brochure. Discuss lesson 8, question 1, paragraph 2. Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Demonstrate a Bible study, using the *Good News* brochure, lesson 8, question 2.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 138
- “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit”: (7 min.) Discussion. Demonstrate the main points by playing the *January Skills* video, which shows publishers laying the groundwork for a return visit after placing *The Watchtower* and after placing the *Good News* brochure.
- Local needs: (8 min.)
- Congregation Bible Study: *ia* chap. 7 ¶15-27, review on p. 66 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 120 and Prayer

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit

WHY IMPORTANT:

We want to water the seeds of truth that we plant. (1Co 3:6) When we find someone who shows interest, it is good to leave a question that we can discuss when we return. This will build his anticipation and simplify our preparation for the return visit. When we return, we can tell him that we are there to answer the question we raised the last time we visited.



HOW TO DO IT:

- When preparing your house-to-house presentation, include a follow-up question to be answered on the next visit. It could be something that is answered in the literature you are offering. Or it could be a question that is answered in one of our study publications that you plan to introduce when you return.
- When concluding your conversation with someone who shows interest, let him know of your desire to talk to him again and then share the follow-up question you prepared. Obtain contact information if possible.
- If you tell him that you will return at a specific time, keep your appointment. —Mt 5:37.

(Isaiah 6:8)

1. Today men heap reproach and shame,
In many ways on God’s fair name.
Some show God weak; some paint him cruel.
“There is no God!” so shouts the fool.
Who’ll go the name of God to clear?
Who’ll sing his praise for all to hear?
“Lord, here I am! Send me, send me.
I’ll sing your praises faithfully.

(CHORUS)

*No greater honor could there be, Lord.
Here I am! Send me, send me.”*

2. Men make the taunt that God is slow;
The fear of God they do not know.
Some worship idols made of stone;
Some would put Caesar on God’s throne.
Who’ll tell the wicked what’s in store?
Who’ll warn of God’s great final war?
“Lord, here I am! Send me, send me.
I’ll sound the warning fearlessly.

(Chorus)

3. Today the meek ones mourn and sigh
Because the evils multiply.
With honest hearts they seek to find
The truth that gives real peace of mind.
Who'll go with comfort to the meek?
Who'll help them righteousness to seek?
"Lord, here I am! Send me, send me.
I'll teach such meek ones patiently.

(Chorus)

(See also Ps. 10:4; Ezek. 9:4.)

Jerusalem;^a and let the decision of the king concerning this be sent to us.”

6 It was then that King Dar-i-us issued an order, and they made an investigation in the archives* where the treasures were deposited in Babylon. **2** And a scroll was found in the citadel at Ec-bat'a-na, in the province* of Me'di-a, and the following memorandum was written on it:

3 “In the first year of King Cyrus, King Cyrus issued an order concerning the house of God in Jerusalem:^b ‘Let the house be rebuilt as the place where they are to offer sacrifices, and its foundations are to be set in place; its height is to be 60 cubits,* its width 60 cubits,^c **4** with three layers of large stones rolled into place and one layer of timbers;^d and let the expense be paid from the king's house.^e **5** Also, let the gold and silver vessels of the house of God that Neb-u-chad-nez'zar took out of the temple that was in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon^f be returned, so that they may be put in their place in the temple in Jerusalem and be deposited in the house of God.’^g

6 “So now Tat'te-nai the governor of the region Beyond the River,* She'thar-boz'e-nai, and your colleagues, the lesser governors of the region Beyond the River^h—stay away from there. **7** Do not interfere with the work on that house of God. The governor of the Jews and the elders of the Jews will rebuild that house of God in its former place. **8** Furthermore, I am issuing an order as to what you are to do for these elders of the

6:1 *Lit., “the house of the records.”
6:2 *Or “jurisdictional district.” **6:3** *About 26.7 m (87.6 ft). See App. B14.
6:6 *Or “of Trans-Euphrates.”

CHAP. 5

a 2Ch 36:22, 23
Ezr 6:3, 4

CHAP. 6

b 2Ch 36:22, 23
Ezr 1:1-3

c 1Ki 6:2

d Ezr 3:7
Ezr 5:8

e Ezr 7:20
Isa 49:23

f 2Ki 25:13-15
2Ch 36:7, 18
Da 1:1, 2
Da 5:2

g Ezr 1:8, 11

h Ezr 5:3, 6

Second Col.

a Ezr 7:20
Hag 2:7, 8

b Ezr 5:5

c Le 1:3, 5

d Le 1:10

e Nu 28:3

f Le 2:1

g Le 2:13

h Nu 15:5

i Ex 27:20
Le 2:4

j Ezr 7:23

k De 12:5, 6
2Ch 7:16

l Ezr 5:6

m Ezr 3:8

n Ezr 4:3

o Hag 1:12

p Ezr 5:1, 2
Zec 1:1, 7
Zec 6:15

q Hag 1:8

r 2Ch 36:23
Ezr 1:2, 3
Isa 44:28

s Ezr 6:12

t Ezr 7:12, 13

Jews for rebuilding that house of God: From the royal treasury,^a from the tax collected in the region Beyond the River, the expenses are to be promptly given to these men to continue without interruption.^b **9** And whatever is needed—**young bulls^c** as well as **rams^d** and **lambs^e** for the burnt offerings to the God of heaven, **wheat,^f salt,^g wine,^h and oil,ⁱ** just as the priests who are in Jerusalem say—is to be given them continually day by day without fail, **10** so that they may continually present offerings that please the God of the heavens and pray for the life of the king and his sons.^j **11** I have also issued an order that if anyone violates this decree, a timber will be pulled out of his house and he will be lifted up and fastened to it,* and his house will be turned into a public latrine^k for this offense. **12** And may the God who has caused his name to reside there^k overthrow any king and people who lift a hand to violate this order and destroy that house of God, which is in Jerusalem. I, Da-ri-us, issue this order. Let it be done promptly.”

13 Then Tat'te-nai the governor of the region Beyond the River, She'thar-boz'e-nai,^l and their colleagues promptly carried out everything that King Da-ri-us had ordered. **14** And the elders of the Jews continued building and making progress,^m urged on by the prophesying of Hag-gaiⁿ the prophet and Zech-a-ri-ah^o the grandson of Id'do; they finished building it by the order of the God of Israel^p and by the order of Cyrus^q and Da-ri-us^r and King Ar-ta-xer-x'es^s of Persia. **15** They completed the house by the third day of the month of

6:11 *Or “and he will be impaled on it.” *Or possibly, “a garbage dump; a dunghill.”

A'dar,* in the sixth year of the reign of King Da-ri'us.

16 Then the Israelites, the priests, the Levites,^a and the rest of the former exiles held the inauguration* of this house of God with joy. **17** And they presented for the inauguration of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel.^b **18** And they appointed the priests in their groups and the Levites in their divisions for the service of God in Jerusalem,^c according to what is written in the book of Moses.^d

19 And the former exiles held the Passover on the 14th day of the first month.^e **20** The priests and the Levites, without exception, had cleansed themselves,^f so they were all clean; they slaughtered the Passover sacrifice for all the former exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. **21** Then the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate of it, along with everyone who had joined them and had separated himself from the uncleanness of the nations of the land to worship* Jehovah the God of Israel.^g **22** They also joyfully held the Festival of Unleavened Bread^h for seven days, for Jehovah caused them to rejoice and he had made the heart of the king of As-syr'i'a favorable toward them,ⁱ so that he supported them* in the work of the house of the true God, the God of Israel.

7 After these things, during the reign of King Ar-ta-xer-x'es^j of Persia, Ez'ra*^k returned. He was the son of Se-rai'ah,^l son

6:15 *See App. B15. 6:16 *Or "dedication." 6:21 *Lit., "search for." 6:22 *Lit., "strengthened their hands." 7:1 *Meaning "Help."

CHAP. 6

- a 1Ch 9:2
Ne 7:73
b 2Ch 7:5
c 1Ch 23:6
d Nu 3:6
e Ex 12:2, 14
Le 23:5
De 16:1
Es 3:7
f Ex 30:19, 20
Le 21:8
Le 22:2, 3
g Ex 12:48
Nu 9:14
h Ex 12:17
Le 23:6
i Ezr 7:27
Pr 21:1

CHAP. 7

- j Ne 2:1
k Ne 8:2
Ne 12:26
l 1Ch 6:14

Second Col.

- a 2Ki 22:8
b 2Ch 31:10
c Nu 25:11
Jg 20:28
d Ex 6:23, 25
Nu 3:32
De 10:6
e Ex 7:1
Ex 28:1
f Ne 8:1, 4
g Ezr 8:18, 19
h 1Ch 6:31, 32
i 1Ch 9:22-27
j 1Ch 9:2
Ezr 8:20
k Ezr 8:22

- l De 5:1
De 17:10
m De 33:8, 10
Mal 2:7
n Ezr 6:14
Ne 2:1

of Az-a-ri'ah, son of Hil-ki'ah,^a **2** son of Shal'lum, son of Za-dok, son of A-hi'tub, **3** son of Am-a-ri'ah, son of Az-a-ri'ah,^b **4** son of Me-ra'ioth, **5** son of Zer-a-hi'ah, son of Uz'zi, son of Buk'ki, **5** son of Ab-i-shu'a, son of Phin'e-has,^c son of El-e-a'zar,^d son of Aaron^e the chief priest. **6** This Ez'ra came up from Babylon. He was a copyist* who was well-versed in^o the Law of Moses,^f which Jehovah the God of Israel had given. The king granted everything he requested, for the hand of Jehovah his God was upon him.

7 Some of the Israelites, the priests, the Levites,^g the singers,^h the gatekeepers,ⁱ and the temple servants,^o went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Ar-ta-xer-x'es. **8** And Ez'ra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, in the seventh year of the king. **9** On the first day of the first month, he began the journey from Babylon, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the good hand of his God was upon him.^k **10** Ez'ra had prepared his heart* to consult the Law of Jehovah and to practice it,^l and to teach its regulations and judgments in Israel.^m

11 This is a copy of the letter that King Ar-ta-xer-x'es gave to Ez'ra the priest and copyist,* an expert in the studyⁿ of the commandments of Jehovah and of his regulations to Israel:

12 "Ar-ta-xer-x'es,ⁿ the king of kings, to Ez'ra the priest, the copyist* of the Law of the God of the heavens: May you have perfect peace. And

7:6, 11, 12 *Or "scribe." 7:6 *Or "He was a skilled copyist of." 7:7 *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones." 7:10 *Or "had determined in his heart." 7:11 *Or "a copyist of the words." 7:12 *Ezr 7:12 through 7:26 was originally written in Aramaic.

now **13** I have issued an order that everyone in my realm of the people of Israel and their priests and Levites who is willing to go with you to Jerusalem should go.^a **14** For you are sent by the king and his seven advisers to investigate whether the Law of your God, which is with you,^{*} is being applied in Judah and Jerusalem, **15** and to take the silver and the gold that the king and his advisers have voluntarily given to the God of Israel, whose residence is in Jerusalem, **16** with all the silver and the gold that you receive^{*} in all the province[#] of Babylon, along with the gift that the people and the priests voluntarily give to the house of their God, which is in Jerusalem.^b **17** And you are to buy promptly with this money bulls,^c rams,^d lambs,^e along with their grain offerings^f and their drink offerings,^g and you are to present them on the altar of the house of your God in Jerusalem.

18 "And whatever seems good to you and to your brothers to do, you may do with the rest of the silver and the gold, according to the will of your God. **19** And all the vessels that are given to you for the service of the house of your God, you are to deliver before God at Jerusalem.^h **20** And the rest of the necessities of the house of your God that you are required to give, you will give out of the royal treasury.ⁱ

21 "I, King Ar-ta-xerx'es, have issued an order to all the treasurers in the region Beyond the River,^{*} that everything that Ez'ra' the priest, the copyist[#] of the Law of the God of the heavens,

7:14 *Lit., "in your hand." 7:16 *Lit., "find." #Or "jurisdictional district." 7:21 *Or "in Trans-Euphrates." #Or "scribe."

CHAP. 7

a Ezr 1:2, 3

b Ezr 1:5, 6
Ezr 8:25

c Le 1:3

d Le 1:10

e Nu 28:3

f Nu 15:4

g Nu 15:5

h Ezr 8:30

i Ezr 6:3, 4
Ezr 6:8

j Ezr 7:6
Ne 8:2

Second Col.

a Nu 15:5

b Ex 27:20
Le 2:1

c Le 2:13

d Ezr 1:2

e Ezr 6:9, 10

f Ne 5:4

g 1Ch 15:16

h 1Ch 9:2

i Ne 8:2, 3

j Ezr 6:22
Pr 21:1
Isa 60:13

k Ezr 9:9
Ne 1:11

l Ezr 7:14

requests of you is to be done promptly, **22** up to 100 talents^{*} of silver, 100 cor measures[#] of wheat, 100 bath measures^a of wine,^a 100 bath measures of oil,^b and salt^c without limit. **23** Let everything that is ordered by the God of the heavens be done with zeal for the house of the God of the heavens,^d so that there may be no wrath against the king's realm and his sons.^e **24** And you are further advised that it is not permitted to impose any tax, tribute,^f or toll on any of the priests and Levites, musicians,^g doorkeepers, temple servants,^h and workers of this house of God.

25 "And you, Ez'ra, according to the wisdom that you possess from your God,^{*} appoint magistrates and judges to judge all the people in the region Beyond the River, all those who know the laws of your God; and you should instruct anyone who does not know them.ⁱ **26** And everyone who does not observe the Law of your God and the law of the king should have judgment executed on him promptly, whether it is death, banishment, a fine, or imprisonment."

27 May Jehovah the God of our forefathers be praised, who put it into the heart of the king to beautify the house of Jehovah in Jerusalem!^j **28** And he has shown me loyal love before the king^k and his advisers^l and all the mighty princes of the king. So I took courage^{*} because the hand of Jehovah my God

7:22 *A talent equaled 34.2 kg (1,101 oz t). See App. B14. #A cor equaled 220 L (200 dry qt). See App. B14. ^aA bath equaled 22 L (5.81 gal). See App. B14. 7:24 *Or "Nethinim." Lit., "given ones." 7:25 *Lit., "according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand." 7:28 *Or "strengthened myself."

was upon me, and I gathered out of Israel leading men* to go up with me.

8 Now these were the heads of their paternal houses and the genealogical enrollment of those who went up with me out of Babylon during the reign of King Ar-ta-xerxes:^a **2** of the sons of Phin'e-has,^b Ger'shom; of the sons of Ith'a-mar,^c Daniel; of the sons of David, Hat'tush; **3** of the sons of Shec'ani'ah, of the sons of Pa'rosh, Zech-a-ri'ah, and with him there was an enrollment of 150 males; **4** of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab,^d El'ie-ho-e'nai the son of Zer-ahi'ah, and with him 200 males; **5** of the sons of Zat'tu,^e Shec'ani'ah the son of Ja-ha-zi'el, and with him 300 males; **6** of the sons of A'din,^f E'bed the son of Jon'a-than, and with him 50 males; **7** of the sons of E'lam,^g Je-sha'iah the son of Ath-a-li'ah, and with him 70 males; **8** of the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah,^h Zeb-a-di'ah the son of Mi'cha-el, and with him 80 males; **9** of the sons of Jo'ab, O-ba-di'ah the son of Jehi'el, and with him 218 males; **10** of the sons of Ba'ni, She-lo'mith the son of Jo-si-phi'ah, and with him 160 males; **11** of the sons of Be'bai,ⁱ Zech-a-ri'ah the son of Be'bai, and with him 28 males; **12** of the sons of Az'gad,^j Jo-ha'nan the son of Hak'ka-tan, and with him 110 males; **13** of the sons of Ad-oni'kam,^k those who were the last, and these were their names: E-liph'e-let, Je-i'el, and She-mai'ah, and with them 60 males; **14** and of the sons of Big'vai,^l U'thai and Zab'bud, and with them 70 males.

15 I assembled them at the river that comes to A-ha'va,^m and we camped there for three

CHAP. 8

a Ezr 7:7

b 1Ch 6:3, 4

c Ex 6:23

d Ezr 2:1, 6

e Ezr 2:1, 8
Ezr 10:27, 44

f Ezr 2:1, 15

g Ezr 2:1, 7

h Ezr 2:1, 4

i Ezr 2:1, 11
Ezr 10:28, 44

j Ezr 2:1, 12

k Ne 7:6, 18

l Ezr 2:1, 14

m Ezr 8:31

Second Col.

a Nu 3:20

b Ezr 8:24, 25

c 1Ch 6:16

d 2Ch 16:9
Ezr 7:6
Ezr 7:28
Zec 4:6

e 2Ch 15:2

f 2Ch 7:14
Jer 29:10, 12
Jer 50:4, 5

days. But when I examined the people and the priests, I did not find any of the Levites there.

16 So I sent for E-li-e'zer, Ar'i-el, She-mai'ah, El-na'than, Ja'rib, El-na'than, Nathan, Zech-a-ri'ah, and Me-shul'lam, who were leading men, and for Joi'a-rib and El-na'than, who were instructors.

17 Then I gave them a command concerning Id'do the leader in the place called Ca-si-phi'a. I told them to tell Id'do and his brothers, the temple servants* who were in Ca-si-phi'a, to bring to us ministers for the house of our God. **18** Since the good hand of our God was upon us, they brought a discreet man from the sons of Mah'li^a the grandson of Le'vi the son of Israel, namely, She-re-bi'ah,^b and his sons and his brothers, 18 men; **19** and Hash-a-bi'ah, and with him Je-sha'iah from the Me-rar'ites,^c his brothers and their sons, 20 men. **20** And there were 220 of the temple servants,* whom David and the princes gave to the service of the Levites, all of whom had been designated by name.

21 Then I proclaimed a fast there at the river A-ha'va, to humble ourselves before our God, to seek guidance from him for our journey, for us and for our children and for all our goods. **22** I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us against the enemies along the way, because we had said to the king: "The good hand of our God is over all those seeking him,^d but his strength and his anger are against all those abandoning him."^e **23** So we fasted and made request of our God concerning this, and he listened to our entreaty.^f

24 I now set apart 12 of the chiefs of the priests, namely,

8:17, 20 *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones."

She-re-bi'ah and Hash-a-bi'ah,^a along with ten of their brothers.

25 Then I weighed out to them the silver and the gold and the utensils, the contribution that the king and his advisers and his princes and all the Israelites who were present there had made to the house of our God.^b **26** Thus I weighed out into their hand 650 talents* of silver, 100 silver utensils worth 2 talents, 100 talents of gold, **27** 20 small gold bowls worth 1,000 darics,* and 2 utensils of fine copper, gleaming red, as desirable as gold.

28 Then I said to them: "You are holy to Jehovah,^c and the utensils are holy, and the silver and the gold are a voluntary offering to Jehovah the God of your forefathers. **29** Guard them carefully until you weigh them out before the chiefs of the priests and the Levites and the princes of the paternal houses of Israel in Jerusalem,^d in the chambers* of the house of Jehovah." **30** And the priests and the Levites took the silver and the gold and the utensils that had been weighed out to them, in order to bring them to Jerusalem to the house of our God.

31 Finally we pulled away from the river A-ha'va^e on the 12th day of the first month^f to go to Jerusalem, and the hand of our God was over us, and he rescued us from the hand of the enemy and from ambush along the way. **32** So we came to Jerusalem^g and stayed there for three days. **33** And on the fourth day, we weighed out the silver and the gold and the utensils in the house of our God^h and handed them over to Mer'e-mothⁱ son of U-ri'jah the

8:26 *A talent equaled 34.2 kg (1,101 oz t). See App. B14. **8:27** *A daric was a Persian gold coin. See App. B14. **8:29** *Or "dining halls."

CHAP. 8

a Ezr 8:18, 19

b Ezr 7:14-16
Ezr 7:19

c Le 21:6-8
Isa 52:11

d Ezr 7:19
Ezr 8:33

e Ezr 8:15, 21

f Es 3:7

g Ezr 7:8

h Ezr 7:19
Ezr 8:29

i Ne 3:4, 21

Second Col.

a Ne 8:7

b Ne 12:1, 8

c Le 1:3

d Le 1:10

e Le 22:18, 19

f Ezr 7:17

g Ezr 7:21

h Ge 15:18

i Ezr 6:13

CHAP. 9

j Le 20:23
De 12:29, 30

k Le 18:3

l Ge 15:16

m Ex 34:15, 16
Ezr 10:44

n Ex 19:5, 6

o Ne 13:1, 3

priest, and with him was El-e-a'-zar son of Phin'e-has, and with them were the Levites Jo'za-bad^a son of Jesh'u-a and No-a-di'ah son of Bin'nu-i.^b **34** Everything was numbered and weighed, and all the weight was recorded. **35** Those coming out of the captivity, the former exiles, presented burnt sacrifices to the God of Israel, 12 bulls^c for all Israel, 96 rams,^d 77 male lambs, and 12 male goats^e as a sin offering; all of this was a burnt offering to Jehovah.^f

36 Then we gave the decrees of the king^g to the satraps* of the king and the governors of the region Beyond the River,^h and they supported the people and the house of the true God.ⁱ

9 And as soon as these things had been done, the princes approached me and said: "The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands and their detestable practices,^j those of the Ca'naan-ites, the Hit'tites, the Per'iz-zites, the Jeb'u-sites, the Am'mon-ites, the Mo'ab-ites, the Egyptians,^k and the Am'or-ites.^l **2** They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons.^m Now they, the holy offspring,ⁿ have become mingled with the peoples of the lands.^o The princes and the deputy rulers have been the foremost offenders in this unfaithfulness."

3 Now as soon as I heard of this, I ripped apart my garment and my sleeveless coat and pulled out some of the hair of my head and my beard, and I sat

8:36 *Title meaning "protectors of the realm," here applied to governors of provinces in the Persian Empire. ^aOr "of Trans-Euphrates." **9:2** *Lit., "seed."

down in shock. **4** Then everyone who had reverence for* the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of the unfaithfulness of the exiled people, while I was sitting in shock until the evening grain offering.^a

5 And at the time of the evening grain offering,^b I stood up from my humiliation, with my garment and my sleeveless coat torn apart, and I got down on my knees and spread out my hands to Jehovah my God. **6** And I said: "O my God, I feel ashamed and embarrassed to raise my face to you, O my God, for our errors have multiplied over our heads and our guilt has mounted up to the heavens.^c **7** From the days of our forefathers until this day our guilt has been great;^d and because of our errors, we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword,^e to captivity,^f to plunder,^g and to disgrace, as is the case today.^h **8** But now for a brief moment, favor has come from Jehovah our God by letting a remnant escape and by giving us a secure position* in his holy place,ⁱ to make our eyes shine, O our God, and to revive us a little in our slavery. **9** For although we are slaves,^j our God has not abandoned us in our slavery; but he has extended his loyal love toward us before the kings of Persia,^k to revive us so as to raise up the house of our God^l and to restore its ruins and to give us a stone wall* in Judah and in Jerusalem.

10 "But now what can we say, O our God, after this? For we have left your commandments, **11** which you gave us through your servants the prophets, saying: "The land that you are going

9:4 *Lit., "who trembled at." 9:8 *Lit., "a peg." 9:9 *Or "a wall of protection."

CHAP. 9

- a Ex 29:41
b Nu 28:4, 5
c Da 9:7
d Nu 32:14
2Ch 29:6
e 2Ki 10:32
2Ch 36:17
f 2Ki 17:22, 23
2Ki 25:6, 7
g 2Ki 17:20
h Ne 9:32
i Ne 9:31
Ps 138:7
j Ne 9:36, 37
k Ezr 1:1-3
l Ezr 6:14
Zec 4:9

Second Col.

- a Le 18:24
De 12:30, 31
De 18:9-11
b Ex 23:32
Ex 34:15, 16
De 7:3, 4
Jos 23:12, 13
c De 23:3, 6
d Ps 103:8, 10
La 3:22
e Ps 106:46
f Ezr 9:1
Ne 13:23
g Ne 9:33
Da 9:7
h Ps 130:3
Ps 143:2

CHAP. 10

- i Ezr 9:5, 6
j Ezr 10:26, 44
k Ezr 2:1, 7
l Ezr 9:2

to take possession of is an impure land because of the impurity of the peoples of the lands, because of their detestable practices with which they have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness.^a **12** Therefore, do not give your daughters to their sons, neither accept their daughters for your sons;^b and you must never seek their peace and their prosperity,^c so that you may grow strong and eat the good of the land and take possession of it for your sons forever.^d **13** And after all that has come upon us for our bad deeds and our great guilt—for you, O our God, have not dealt with us according to our error,^d and you have allowed those of us here to escape^e—**14** are we to break your commandments again and form marriage alliances* with the peoples who practice these detestable things?^f Would you not become so angry with us that you would completely destroy us, leaving no remnant or survivor? **15** O Jehovah the God of Israel, you are righteous,^g for we have survived as a remnant to this day. Here we are before you in our guilt, for it is impossible to stand before you because of this."^h

10 While Ez'ra was prayingⁱ and making confession, weeping and lying prostrate before the house of the true God, a large crowd of men, women, and children of Israel gathered around him, for the people were weeping profusely. **2** Then Shec'a-ni'ah the son of Je-hi'el^j of the sons of E'lam^k said to Ez'ra: "We have acted unfaithfully against our God by marrying* foreign women from the peoples of the land.^l Despite

9:14 *Or "and intermarry." 10:2 *Or "by taking into our houses."

this, there is still hope for Israel. **3** Now let us make a covenant with our God^a to send away all the wives and those born from them, in harmony with the direction of Jehovah and of those who have reverence for* the commandment of our God.^b Let us act according to the Law. **4** Get up, for this matter is your responsibility, and we are with you. Be strong and take action."

5 At that Ez'ra rose and had the chiefs of the priests, the Levites, and all Israel take an oath to do what had been said.^c So they took an oath. **6** Ez'ra now got up from before the house of the true God and went to the chamber* of Je-ho-ha'nan the son of E-li'a-shib. Although he went there, he ate no food and drank no water, for he was in mourning because of the unfaithfulness of the exiled people.^d

7 Then they made a proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the former exiles gather together at Jerusalem; **8** and according to the decision of the princes and the elders, anyone who did not come within three days' time would have all his goods confiscated,* and he would be banished from the congregation of the exiled people.^e **9** So all the men of Judah and Benjamin gathered together at Jerusalem within three days, that is, in the ninth month, on the 20th day of the month. All the people were sitting in a courtyard of the house of the true God, shivering because of the matter at hand and because of the heavy rain.

10 Then Ez'ra the priest rose and said to them: "You have acted unfaithfully by marrying for-

10:3 *Lit., "who tremble at." 10:6 *Or "dining hall." 10:8 *Or "put under ban."

CHAP. 10

a 2Kl 11:17
2Ch 29:10
2Ch 34:31

b Ezr 9:4

c Ne 10:28-30

d Ezr 9:3, 4
Da 9:3-5

e Ezr 7:26

Second Col.

a Ne 13:23

b De 7:3, 4
Ne 13:3
2Co 6:17

c Ezr 9:1

d Ne 8:7
Ne 11:16

e Ezr 9:1, 2
Ne 13:28
Eze 44:22
Mal 2:7, 8

f Ezr 2:1, 2
Ezr 3:2
Zec 6:11

eign women,^a and so you have added to the guilt of Israel.

11 Now make confession to Jehovah the God of your forefathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from these foreign wives."^b **12** To this the whole congregation answered with a loud voice: "It is our duty to do exactly as you say. **13** However, there are many people, and it is the rainy season. It is not possible to stand outside, and the matter will not take just one or two days, for we have rebelled extensively in this matter. **14** So, please, let our princes represent the entire congregation;^c and let all those in our cities who have married foreign women come at an appointed time, along with the elders and judges of each city, until we turn back the burning anger of our God from us concerning this matter."

15 However, Jon'a-than the son of As'a-hel and Jah-zei'ah the son of Tik'vah objected to this, and the Levites Me-shul'-lam and Shab'be-thai^d supported them. **16** But the former exiles did what was agreed on; and Ez'ra the priest and the family heads of their paternal houses, all designated by name, convened separately on the first day of the tenth month to look into the matter; **17** and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women. **18** And it was discovered that some of the sons of the priests had married foreign women:^e of the sons of Jesh'u'a^f the son of Je-hoz'a-dak and his brothers, Ma-a-sei'ah, E-li-e'zer, Ja'rib, and Ged-a-li'ah. **19** But they promised* to send their wives away, and since they were guilty, they

10:19 *Lit., "they gave their hands."

would offer a ram of the flock for their guilt.^a

20 Of the sons of Im'mer,^b there were Ha-na'ni and Zeb-a-di'ah; **21** and of the sons of Ha'rim,^c Ma-a-sei'ah, E-li'jah, She-mai'ah, Je-hi'el, and Uz-zi'-ah; **22** and of the sons of Pash'hur,^d Eli-o-e'nai, Ma-a-sei'-ah, Ish'ma-el, Ne-than'el, Jo'za-bad and El-e-a'sah. **23** And of the Levites, there were Jo'za-bad, Shim'e-i, Ke-lai'ah (that is, Ke-li'ta), Peth-a-hi'ah, Judah, and E-li-e'zer; **24** and of the singers, E-li'a-shib; and of the gatekeepers, Shal'lum, Te'lem, and U'ri.

25 And of Israel, of the sons of Pa'rosh,^e there were Rami'ah, Iz-zi'ah, Mal-chi'jah, Mij'-a-min, El-e-a'zar, Mal-chi'jah, and Be-na'i'ah; **26** and of the sons of E'lam,^f Mat-ta-ni'ah, Zech-a-ri'-ah, Je-hi'el,^g Ab'di, Jer'e-moth, and E-li'jah; **27** and of the sons of Zat'tu,^h Eli-o-e'nai, E-li'a-shib, Mat-ta-ni'ah, Jer'e-moth, Za'-bad, and A-zi'za; **28** and of the sons of Be'bai,ⁱ Je-ho-ha'nan, Han-a-ni'ah, Zab'bai, and Ath'lai; **29** and of the sons of Ba'ni, Meshul'lam, Mal'luch, A-dai'ah, Ja'-

CHAP. 10

a Le 5:17, 18

b 1Ch 24:3, 14
Ezr 2:1, 37

c 1Ch 24:3, 8
Ezr 2:1, 39

d Ezr 2:1, 38

e Ezr 2:1, 3
Ne 3:25

f Ezr 2:1, 7
Ezr 8:1, 7

g Ezr 10:2

h Ezr 2:1, 8

i Ezr 2:1, 11
Ezr 8:1, 11

Second Col.

a Ezr 2:1, 6

b Ezr 2:1, 32

c Ne 3:11

d Ezr 2:1, 19
Ne 8:4

e De 7:3, 4

f Ezr 10:16, 17

shub, She'al, and Jer'e-moth; **30** and of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab,^a Ad'na, Che'lal, Be-na'i'ah, Ma-a-sei'ah, Mat-ta-ni'ah, Bez'al-el, Bin'nu-i, and Ma-nas'seh; **31** and of the sons of Ha'rim,^b E-li-e'zer, Is-shi'jah, Mal-chi'jah,^c She-mai'ah, Shim'e-on, **32** Benjamin, Mal'luch, and Shem-a-ri'-ah; **33** of the sons of Ha'-shum,^d Mat-te'nai, Mat'tat-tah, Za'bad, E-liph'e-let, Jer'e-mai, Ma-nas'seh, and Shim'e-i; **34** of the sons of Ba'ni, Ma-a-da'i, Am'ram, U'el, **35** Be-na'i'ah, Bede'i'ah, Chel'u-hi, **36** Va-ni'ah, Mer'e-moth, E-li'a-shib, **37** Mat-ta-ni'ah, Mat-te'nai, and Ja'a-su; **38** and of the sons of Bin'nu-i, Shim'e-i, **39** Shel-e-mi'ah, Nathan, A-dai'ah, **40** Mach-nad'e-bai, Sha'shai, Sha'rai, **41** Az'-ar-el, Shel-e-mi'ah, Shem-a-ri'ah, **42** Shal'lum, Am-a-ri'ah, and Joseph; **43** and of the sons of Ne'-bo, Je'i-el, Mat-ti-thi'ah, Za'bad, Ze-bi'na, Jad'dai, Joel, and Be-na'ah. **44** All of these had taken foreign wives,^e and they sent their wives away, along with their sons.^f

NEHEMIAH

OUTLINE OF CONTENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 News from Jerusalem (1-3)
Nehemiah's prayer (4-11)</p> <p>2 Nehemiah sent to Jerusalem (1-10)
Nehemiah inspects the city walls (11-20)</p> <p>3 Rebuilding the walls (1-32)</p> <p>4 Work progresses despite opposition (1-14)
Construction continues with workers armed (15-23)</p> <p>5 Nehemiah stops exploitation (1-13)
Nehemiah's unselfishness (14-19)</p> | <p>6 Opposition to the rebuilding continues (1-14)
Wall completed in 52 days (15-19)</p> <p>7 City gates and gatekeepers (1-4)
List of exiles who returned (5-69)
Temple servants (46-56)
Sons of the servants of Solomon (57-60)
Contributions for the work (70-73)</p> <p>8 The Law is read and explained to the people (1-12)
Festival of Booths observed (13-18)</p> |
|--|--|

- Song 10 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Jehovah Wants Willing Servants”: (10 min.)

Ezr 7:10—Ezra prepared his heart

Ezr 7:12-28—Ezra made preparations to return to Jerusalem

Ezr 8:21-23—Ezra trusted in Jehovah to protect His servants

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Ezr 9:1, 2—How serious a threat was intermarriage with “the peoples of the lands”? (w06 1/15 20 ¶1)

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What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- Bible Reading: Ezr 7:18-28 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Present the *Good News* brochure, and discuss lesson 8, question 1, paragraph 1. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Demonstrate how to make a return visit on someone who accepted the *Good News* brochure. Discuss lesson 8, question 1, paragraph 2. Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Demonstrate a Bible study, using the *Good News* brochure, lesson 8, question 2.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 138
- “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit”: (7 min.) Discussion. Demonstrate the main points by playing the *January Skills* video, which shows publishers laying the groundwork for a return visit after placing *The Watchtower* and after placing the *Good News* brochure.
- Local needs: (8 min.)
- Congregation Bible Study: *ia* chap. 7 ¶15-27, review on p. 66 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 120 and Prayer

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit

WHY IMPORTANT:

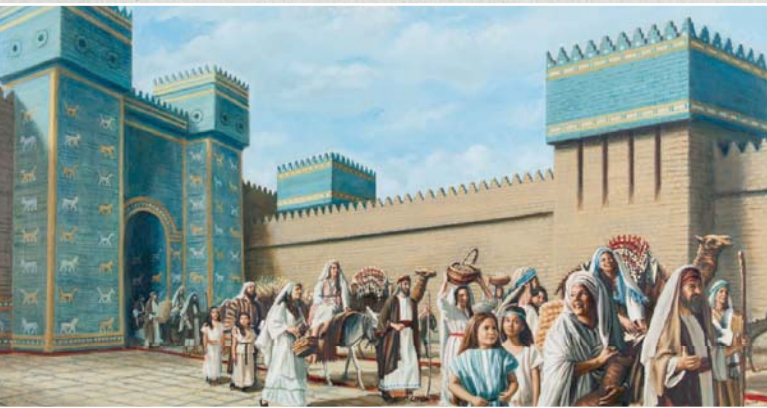
We want to water the seeds of truth that we plant. (1Co 3:6) When we find someone who shows interest, it is good to leave a question that we can discuss when we return. This will build his anticipation and simplify our preparation for the return visit. When we return, we can tell him that we are there to answer the question we raised the last time we visited.



HOW TO DO IT:

- When preparing your house-to-house presentation, include a follow-up question to be answered on the next visit. It could be something that is answered in the literature you are offering. Or it could be a question that is answered in one of our study publications that you plan to introduce when you return.
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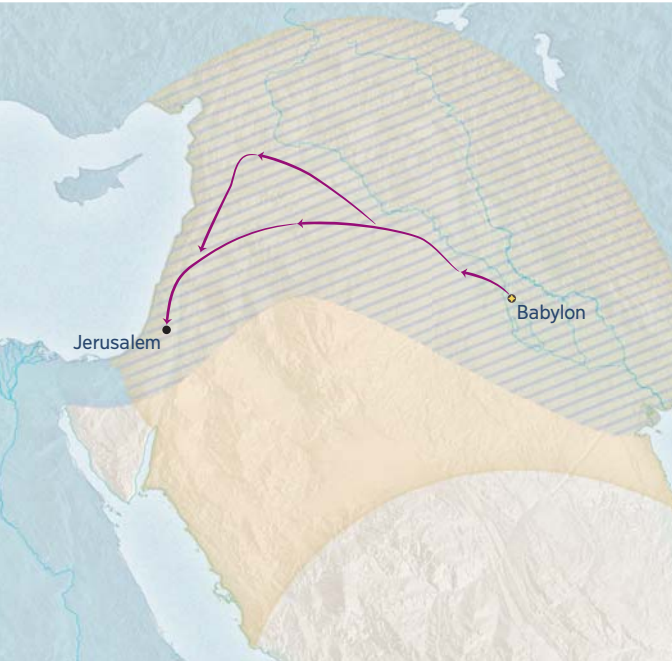
EZRA 6-10 | Jehovah Wants Willing Servants



7:6, 22; 8:26, 27

Ezra made preparations to return to Jerusalem

- Ezra receives permission from King Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem to advance worship of Jehovah there
- The king grants Ezra “everything he requested” for Jehovah’s house—gold, silver, wheat, wine, oil, and salt, all worth well over \$100,000,000 (U.S.) at modern values



- Possible route
- Babylonian Empire
- Medo-Persian Empire

7:13; 8:21-23

Ezra trusted in Jehovah to protect His servants

- The return to Jerusalem would be difficult
- The possible route was nearly 1,000 miles (1,600 km) through dangerous territory
- The journey took about 4 months
- Those who returned needed strong faith, zeal for true worship, and courage

EZRA TRAVELED WITH . . .

Gold and silver weighing over 750 talents

OR

About the weight of 3 full-grown male African elephants!

CHALLENGES FACED BY RETURNEES . . .

Marauder bands, desert terrain, dangerous wildlife



Ezr 9:1, 2—How serious a threat was intermarriage with “the peoples of the lands”? (w06 1/15 20 1)

9:1, 2—How serious a threat was intermarriage with the people of the land? The restored nation was to be the guardian of Jehovah’s worship until the coming of the Messiah. Intermarriage with other inhabitants was a real threat to true worship. Because some had formed marriage alliances with the idol-worshipping people, the entire nation might eventually be assimilated into the pagan nations. Pure worship could have vanished from the face of the earth. To whom, then, would the Messiah come? No wonder Ezra was stunned at seeing what had taken place!

Ezr 10:3—Why were the children sent away along with the wives? (w06 1/15 20 2)

10:3, 44—Why were the children put away along with the wives? If the children had stayed behind, the likelihood that the dismissed wives would return on account of them would have increased. Moreover, little children generally require the care of their mother.

- Song 10 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

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IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Presentations



THE WATCHTOWER

Question: Do you think that the world would be a better place if everyone lived by this principle?

Scripture: Heb 13:18

Offer: The Bible encourages us to be honest in all things. So honesty touches every aspect of our life. That's the topic of this issue of *The Watchtower*.



GOOD NEWS FROM GOD!

Offer: I stopped by to tell you about our free Bible study course. This brochure shows where in your Bible you can find answers to important questions.

Question: Have you ever read the Bible? Let me show you how easy the lessons are in this brochure. [Consider question 1 in lesson 2.]

Scripture: Re 4:11

THE WATCHTOWER (back page)

Question: I'd like to hear your opinion on this question. [Read the first question.] Some people believe that after we die we live on in another form, while others feel that death is the end of everything. What do you believe?

Scripture: Ec 9:5

Offer: This article explains more about what the Bible says on this topic. Why not read it over? Then we can discuss this at another time.

BUILD YOUR OWN PRESENTATION

Question:

Scripture:

Offer:




**GOOD NEWS
FROM GOD!**


Initial Call: (2 min. or less) Present the *Good News* brochure, and discuss lesson 8, question 1, paragraph 1. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.

8

Why Does God Allow Evil and Suffering?


1. How did evil begin?

Evil began on earth when Satan told the first lie. Satan was originally a perfect angel, but “he did not stand fast in the truth.” (John 8:44) He developed a desire for worship that rightly belongs only to God. Satan lied to the first woman, Eve, and persuaded her to obey him instead of God. Adam joined Eve in disobeying God. Adam’s decision led to suffering and death.  Read *Genesis 3:1-6, 19*.

When Satan suggested that Eve disobey God, he was starting a rebellion against God’s sovereignty, or position as Most High. The majority of mankind have joined Satan in rejecting God as their Ruler. Thus, Satan has become “the ruler of the world.”  Read *John 14:30; 1 John 5:19*.

2. Was God’s creation defective?

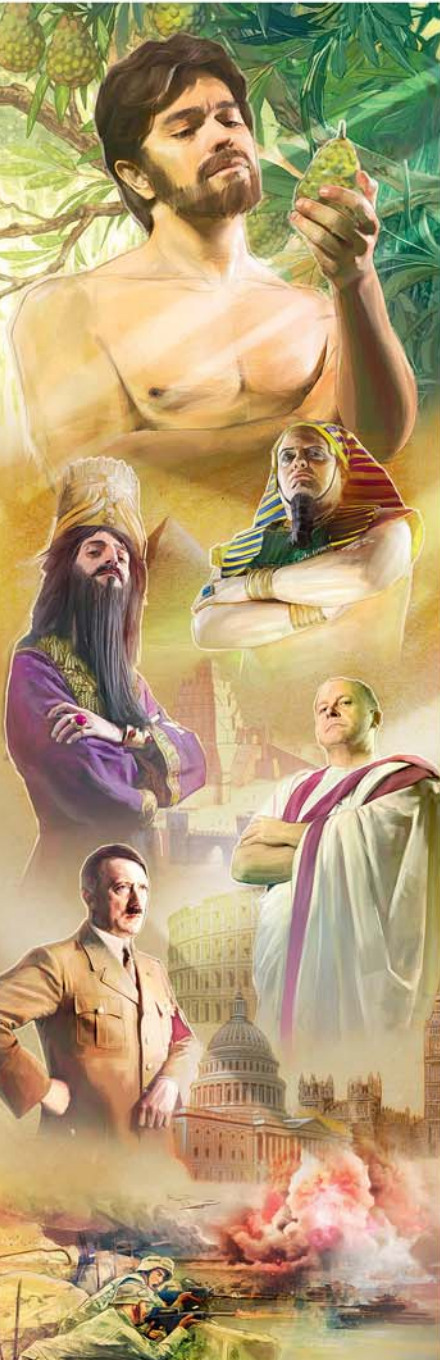
All of God’s works are perfect. The humans and angels whom God created were capable of obeying God perfectly. (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5) God created us with the freedom to choose between doing good and doing evil. That freedom gives us a way to express love for God.

 Read *James 1:13-15; 1 John 5:3*.

3. Why has God allowed suffering until now?

For a limited time, Jehovah has allowed rebellion against his sovereignty. Why? To show that no effort to rule without him benefits people. (Ecclesiastes 7:29; 8:9) After 6,000 years of human history, the evidence is clear.

God has allowed men to rule for long enough to demonstrate that they cannot resolve mankind’s problems





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See next page




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How to Conduct a Study Using the *Good News Brochure*

- 1 Read the numbered question in bold print to help the householder focus on the main point.
- 2 Read the paragraph that follows.
- 3 Read the italicized scriptures, and use tactful questions to help the householder see how the scriptures answer the numbered question.
- 4 If there is another paragraph under the question, repeat steps 2 and 3. If there is a video on jw.org that corresponds with the numbered question, play it at some point during your discussion.
- 5 To make sure that the householder understands the main point, ask him to answer the numbered question.

2

Who Is God?



1. Why should we worship God?

The true God is the Creator of all things. He had no beginning and will never have an end. (Psalm 90:2) He is the Source of the good news found in the Bible. (1 Timothy 1:11) Since God gave us life, we should worship only him. [Read Revelation 4:11.](#)

2. What is God like?

No human has ever seen God because he is a Spirit, which means that he is a higher form of life than the physical creatures who live on earth. (John 1:18; 4:24) Nevertheless, we can discern God's personality from the things he has made. For instance, the variety of fruits and flowers tells us of his love and wisdom. The size of the universe tells us of his power. [Read Romans 1:20.](#)

We can learn even more about God's personality by reading the Bible. For example, it tells us what God likes and what he does not like, how he treats people, and how he reacts in different situations. [Read Psalm 103:7-10.](#)

3. Does God have a name?

Jesus said: "Our Father in the heavens, let your *name* be sanctified." (Matthew 6:9) Although God has many titles, he has only one name. In each language, it is pronounced differently. In English it is usually pronounced "Jehovah." But some people pronounce it "Yahweh." [Read Psalm 83:18.](#)

God's name has been taken out of many Bibles and replaced with the titles Lord or God. But when the Bible was written, it contained God's name some 7,000 times.

4



1. The living and true God—
 The God of all creation
 In ev'ry generation—
 Jehovah is your name.
 We're honored and we're proud
 To be your congregation.
 In ev'ry tribe and nation,
 Your glory we proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, Jehovah,
 There is no God like you.
 There's no other in the heavens
 Or on the earth below.
 You alone are God Almighty,
 And this all men must know.
 Jehovah, Jehovah,
 We have no other God but you.*

2. You cause us to become
 Whatever you desire,
 To do as you require—
 Jehovah is your name.
 And Witnesses for you
 Is what you've kindly named us.
 We're honored you have claimed us—
 A people for your name.

(Chorus)

- Song 10 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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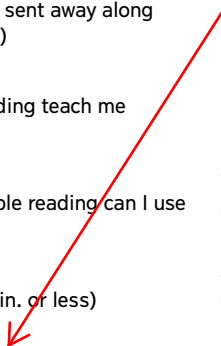
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 138
- “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit”: (7 min.) Discussion. Demonstrate the main points by playing the *January Skills* video, which shows publishers laying the groundwork for a return visit after placing *The Watchtower* and after placing the *Good News* brochure.
- **Local needs:** (8 min.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** ia chap. 7 ¶15-27, review on p. 66 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 120 and Prayer



IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Laying the Groundwork for a Return Visit

WHY IMPORTANT:

We want to water the seeds of truth that we plant. (1Co 3:6) When we find someone who shows interest, it is good to leave a question that we can discuss when we return. This will build his anticipation and simplify our preparation for the return visit. When we return, we can tell him that we are there to answer the question we raised the last time we visited.



HOW TO DO IT:

- When preparing your house-to-house presentation, include a follow-up question to be answered on the next visit. It could be something that is answered in the literature you are offering. Or it could be a question that is answered in one of our study publications that you plan to introduce when you return.
- When concluding your conversation with someone who shows interest, let him know of your desire to talk to him again and then share the follow-up question you prepared. Obtain contact information if possible.
- If you tell him that you will return at a specific time, keep your appointment. —Mt 5:37.

**Congregation Bible Study: ia chap. 7 pars.15-27,
and review box (30 min.)**

as such gross abuses went on uncorrected. How many people did he see—including poor, humble, downtrodden folk—approaching that sacred tabernacle in hopes of finding some spiritual comfort and strength, only to leave disappointed, hurt, or humiliated? And how did he feel when he learned that Hophni and Phinehas also disregarded Jehovah’s laws on sexual morality, as they had relations with some of the women who were serving there at the tabernacle? (1 Sam. 2:22) Perhaps he looked hopefully to Eli to do something about it.

¹⁴ Eli was in the best position to address the growing disaster. As high priest, he was responsible for what took place at the tabernacle. As a father, he had an obligation to correct his sons. After all, they were hurting themselves as well as countless others in the land. However, Eli failed on both counts, as a father and as high priest. He offered his sons only a bland, weak scolding. (*Read 1 Samuel 2:23-25.*) But his sons needed far stronger discipline. They were committing sins worthy of death!

¹⁵ Matters reached such a point that Jehovah sent

15. Jehovah sent what strong message to Eli, and how did Eli’s family respond to the warning?

“a man of God,” an unnamed prophet, to Eli with a strong message of judgment. Jehovah told Eli: “You keep honoring your sons more than me.” God thus foretold that Eli’s wicked sons would die on the same day and that Eli’s family would suffer greatly, even losing its privileged position in the priestly class. Did this powerful warning bring about a change in that family? The record reveals no such change of heart.—1 Sam. 2:27–3:1.

¹⁶ How did all this corruption affect young Samuel? From time to time in this dark account, we find bright rays of light, good news about Samuel’s growth and progress. Recall that at 1 Samuel 2:18, we read that Samuel was faithfully “ministering before Jehovah, as a boy.” Even at that early age, Samuel centered his life on his service to God. In verse 21 of the same chapter, we read something even more heartwarming: “The boy Samuel continued growing up with Jehovah.” As he grew, his bond with his heavenly Father got stronger. Such a close

16. (a) What reports do we read regarding young Samuel’s progress? (b) Do you find those reports heartwarming? Explain.

personal relationship with Jehovah is the surest protection against any form of corruption.

¹⁷ It would have been easy for Samuel to reason that if the high priest and his sons can give in to sin, he might as well do whatever he wished. But the corruption of others, including those in positions of authority, is never an excuse to sin. Today, many Christian youths follow Samuel's example and keep "growing up with Jehovah"—even when some around them fail to set a good example.

¹⁸ How did such a course work out for Samuel? We read: "All the while the boy Samuel was growing bigger and more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men." (1 Sam. 2:26) So Samuel was well-liked, at least by those whose opinions mattered. Jehovah himself cherished this boy for his faithful course. And Samuel surely knew that his God would act against all the badness going on in Shiloh, but perhaps he wondered when. One night, such questions met an answer.

17, 18. (a) How might Christian youths imitate Samuel's example when faced with corruption? (b) What shows that Samuel chose the right course?

“Speak, for Your Servant Is Listening”

¹⁹ It was nearing morning but still dark; the flickering light of the tent’s great lamp was still burning. In the stillness, Samuel heard a voice calling his name. He thought it was Eli, who was now very old and nearly blind. Samuel got up and “went running” to the old man. Can you see the boy in your mind’s eye, hurrying barefoot to see what Eli needed? It is touching to note that Samuel treated Eli with respect and kindness. In spite of all his sins, Eli was still Jehovah’s high priest.—1 Sam. 3:2-5.

²⁰ Samuel woke Eli, saying: “Here I am, for you called me.” But Eli said that he had not called and sent the boy back to bed. Well, the same thing happened again and then again! Finally, Eli realized what was going on. It had become rare for Jehovah to send a vision or a prophetic message to his people, and it is not hard to see why. But Eli knew that Jehovah was speaking again—now to this boy! Eli told Samuel to go back to bed and instructed him

19, 20. (a) Describe what happened to Samuel late one night at the tabernacle. (b) How did Samuel learn the source of the message, and how did he treat Eli?

on how to answer properly. Samuel obeyed. Soon he heard the voice calling: “Samuel, Samuel!” The boy answered: “Speak, for your servant is listening.” —1 Sam. 3:1, 5-10.

²¹ Jehovah did, at last, have a servant in Shiloh who was listening. That became Samuel’s life pattern. Is it yours? We do not have to wait for a supernatural voice in the night to speak to us. Today, God’s voice is always there for us in a sense. It is there in his completed Word, the Bible. The more we listen to God and respond, the more our faith will grow. So it was with Samuel.

²² That night in Shiloh was a milestone in Samuel’s life, for then he began to know Jehovah in a special sense, becoming God’s own prophet and spokesman. At first, the boy was afraid to deliver Jehovah’s message to Eli, for it was a final pronouncement that the prophecy against that family was soon to come true. But Samuel mustered the courage—and Eli

21. How can we listen to Jehovah today, and why is it worthwhile to do so?

22, 23. (a) How did the message that Samuel at first feared to deliver come true? (b) How did Samuel’s reputation continue to grow?

humbly acquiesced to the divine judgment. Before long, everything Jehovah had said was fulfilled: Israel went to war with the Philistines, Hophni and Phinehas were both killed on the same day, and Eli himself died on learning that Jehovah's sacred Ark had been captured.—1 Sam. 3:10-18; 4:1-18.

²³ However, Samuel's reputation as a faithful prophet only grew. "Jehovah himself proved to be with him," the account says, adding that Jehovah let none of Samuel's prophecies fail.—*Read 1 Samuel 3:19.*

“Samuel Called to Jehovah”

²⁴ Did the Israelites follow Samuel's lead and become spiritual, faithful people? No. In time, they decided that they did not want a mere prophet to judge them. They wanted to be like other nations and have a human king rule over them. At Jehovah's direction, Samuel complied. But he had to convey to Israel the magnitude of their sin. They were rejecting, not a mere man, but Jehovah himself! So he summoned the people to Gilgal.

24. In time, what decision did the Israelites make, and why was that a serious sin?

²⁵ Let us rejoin him in that tense moment of addressing Israel at Gilgal. There, elderly Samuel reminded Israel of his faithful record of integrity. Then, we read: “Samuel called to Jehovah.” He asked Jehovah for a thunderstorm.—1 Sam. 12: 17, 18.

²⁶ A thunderstorm? In the dry season? Why, such a thing was unheard of! If there was even a trace of skepticism or scoffing among the people, it did not last long. The sky suddenly darkened with clouds. The winds battered the wheat in the fields. The thunder let out its booming, deafening roars. And the rain fell. The response? “The people were greatly in fear of Jehovah and of Samuel.” At last, they saw how seriously they had sinned.—1 Sam. 12: 18, 19.

²⁷ Not Samuel, but his God, Jehovah, had reached their rebellious hearts. From his youth to his old age, Samuel put faith in his God. And Jehovah re-

25, 26. At Gilgal, how did elderly Samuel finally help his people to see the seriousness of their sin against Jehovah?

27. How does Jehovah feel about those who imitate the faith of Samuel?

warded him. To this day, Jehovah has not changed. He still supports those who imitate the faith of Samuel.

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

- What helped Samuel's faith to grow during his youth?
- How did Samuel's faith enable him to resist bad influences?
- How did Samuel's faith help him to overcome fear?
- What are some ways that you would like to imitate the faith of Samuel?

Despite his fear, Samuel faithfully relayed Jehovah's judgment message to Eli

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Samuel prayed in faith, and Jehovah answered with a thunderstorm

- Song 126 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Nehemiah Loved True Worship”:** (10 min.)
[Play *Introduction to Nehemiah* video.]
Ne 1:11–2:3—Nehemiah’s joy came from the advancement of true worship (w06 2/1 9 ¶7)
Ne 4:14—Nehemiah overcame opposition to true worship by focusing on Jehovah (w06 2/1 10 ¶3)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Ne 1:1; 2:1—Why can we conclude that “the 20th year” mentioned at Nehemiah 1:1 and 2:1 is counted from the same starting point? (w06 2/1 8 ¶5)

Ne 4:17, 18—How could a man do the work of rebuilding with just one hand? (w06 2/1 9 ¶1)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?
- **Bible Reading:** Ne 3:1-14 (4 min. or less)

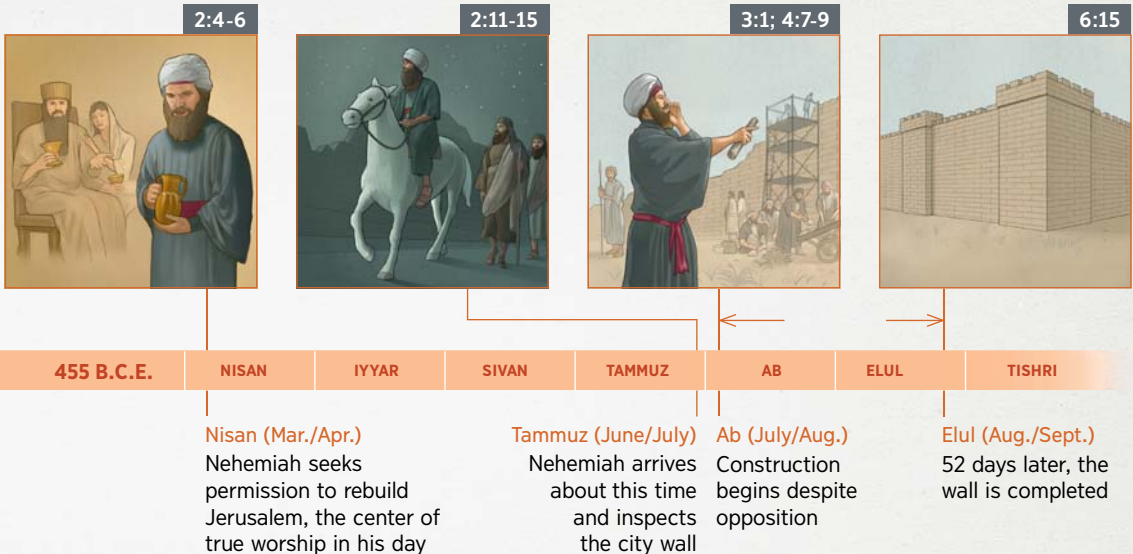
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play each sample presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Emphasize how the publisher laid the groundwork for a return visit. Encourage publishers to build their own presentation.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 103
- **Plan Now to Serve as an Auxiliary Pioneer During March or April:** (15 min.) Discussion. Consider pertinent points from the article “Make This Memorial Season a Joyful One!” (km 2/14 2) Emphasize the need to plan ahead. (Pr 21:5) Interview two publishers who have served as auxiliary pioneers in the past. What obstacles did they have to overcome? What joys did they experience?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** ia chap. 8 ¶1-16 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 135 and Prayer

NEHEMIAH 1-4 | Nehemiah Loved True Worship



120 *Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed*

(Luke 11:28)

1. If we have listened to Christ, will we show it?
His teaching shines as it shows us the way.
It makes us happy to hear and to know it,
But we'll be blessed if we know and obey.

(CHORUS)

Listen, obey, and be blessed
When you hear God's will expressed.
If you'd be happy and enter his rest,
Listen, obey, and be blessed.

2. Our way of life, like a house, gives protection
When it is built on the rock, not on sand.
If we apply Jesus' loving direction,
We'll build a life which on bedrock will stand.

(Chorus)

3. Just as a tree rooted deep by the waters
Gives of its fruit when each season arrives,
If we obey as God's own sons and daughters,
We'll all be blessed and enjoy endless lives.

(Chorus)

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES

DECEMBER 28–JANUARY 3

Train Your Child
to Serve Jehovah

PAGE 3

JANUARY 4-10

Train Your Teenager
to Serve Jehovah

PAGE 8

JANUARY 11-17

Jehovah Is
the God of Love

PAGE 16

JANUARY 18-24

Do You “Love
Your Neighbor
as Yourself”?

PAGE 21

JANUARY 25-31

One Hundred Years
Under Kingdom
Rulership!

PAGE 26



136 *The Kingdom Is in Place* *—Let It Come!* (Revelation 11:15; 12:10)

1. Jehovah, you always have been,
 And always you will be.
 You've given the throne to your Son;
 He rules by your decree.
 The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
 His rulership will fill the earth.

(CHORUS)

*For now have come to pass
 Salvation and kingdom and might.
 The Kingdom is in place.
 We pray: "Let it come, Let it come!"*

2. The time for the Devil is short;
 We know what this will mean.
 Though living in times of distress,
 We see the things unseen.
 The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
 His rulership will fill the earth.

(Chorus)

3. The angels in heaven rejoice
 And sing with joyful cries.
 The heavens above are relieved
 Of Satan and his lies.
 The Kingdom has been brought to birth;
 His rulership will fill the earth.

(Chorus)



One Hundred Years Under Kingdom Rulership!

“May the God of peace . . . equip you with every good thing to do his will.”—HEB. 13:20, 21.

SONGS: 136, 14

DURING THE PAST 100 YEARS . . .

what tools have been used effectively to spread the Kingdom message?

what innovative methods have been introduced?

what training has been given to Kingdom publishers?

JESUS loved to talk about God’s Kingdom. According to the Bible record, he spoke more about the Kingdom than about any other subject—referring to it more than 100 times during his ministry. The Kingdom was truly dear to his heart.—**Read Matthew 12:34.**

² Shortly after his resurrection, Jesus met with more than 500 prospective Kingdom proclaimers. (1 Cor. 15:6) Perhaps it was on that occasion that he gave the command to take the Kingdom message to “people of all the nations”—a daunting task back then!* This great work, Jesus foretold, would be carried on right up to “the conclusion of the system of things,” and that has proved to be the case. Quite likely you

* There is reason to believe that most of those present on that occasion became Christians. Paul refers to them as “500 brothers” in his letter to the Corinthians. Significantly, he adds: “Most of [them] are still with us, though some have fallen asleep in death.” So it seems that Paul and other first-century Christians were acquainted with many who had heard that command firsthand.

1. How important was the preaching work to Jesus? Explain.
2. How many may have been present when the commission at Matthew 28:19, 20 was given, and why can we draw that conclusion?

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This great work, Jesus foretold, would be carried on right up to “the conclusion of the system of things,” and that has proved to be the case. Quite likely you are having a share in the fulfillment of that commission and prophecy.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

3 After giving the commission to preach, Jesus promised his followers: “I am with you.” (Matt. 28:20) So this vast preaching work would be carried out under his direction. And our God has equipped us with “every good thing” to help us fulfill that commission. (Heb. 13:20, 21) In this article, we will consider three of these good things: (1) the tools we have been given, (2) the methods we have used, and (3) the training we have received. First, consider some of the *tools* we have used during the past 100 years.

THE KING EQUIPS HIS SERVANTS TO PREACH

4 Jesus compared “the word of the Kingdom” to seed that is sown on various types of soil. (Matt. 13:18, 19) A garden-

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3. In what three areas have we been well-equipped to carry out the commission to preach the good news?

4. Why have we used a variety of tools in our preaching work?

er may use a variety of tools to prepare his garden to receive seed. Similarly, over the years our King has given us tools to use to help prepare the hearts of millions to receive the Kingdom message. Some tools were useful for perhaps a decade or so, while others have proved to be of timeless value. But all these tools have allowed us to develop our skills as evangelizers in some way.

5 One tool that helped many get started in the ministry was the *testimony card*, which Kingdom publishers began using in 1933. The card was about three by five inches (7.6 by 12.7 cm) in size and contained a brief Bible message. From time to time, a new card containing a new message was issued. The presentation was simple! C. W. Erlenmeyer was about ten years old when he first engaged in this form of witnessing. He explained: “The standard introduction was, ‘Would you please read this card?’ After the householder read the card, we would present the literature and be on our way.”

6 The testimony card was helpful in more ways than one. Although having a strong desire to share in the preaching work, some publishers were shy and did not know what to say. Others had plenty to say. They would tell the household-
er everything they knew in just a few minutes, but their

5. What was a testimony card, and how was it used?

6. What practical purpose did the testimony card serve?

presentation was not always tactful! In contrast, in a few concise, well-chosen words, the testimony card “did the talking” for the publisher.

7 There were challenges, of course. Grace A. Estep, a longtime Witness, recalled: “At times, we would be asked, ‘Well, what does it say? Can’t you just tell me about it?’” Moreover, some householders could not read what was on the card. Still others, thinking that the card was theirs to keep, accepted it from the publisher and closed the door. If the householder was very opposed, he might tear the card to pieces. Nevertheless, our brothers were learning to meet the public and to identify themselves openly as representatives of the Kingdom.

8 Another tool that was used in the 1930’s and early 1940’s was the *portable phonograph*, which some brothers nicknamed Aaron because the machine did most of the talking for them. (Read Exodus 4:14-16.) With the householder’s permission, the publisher would play a four-and-one-half-minute Bible lecture, and then he would offer some literature. At times, entire families gathered to listen to a recorded message from the Bible! In 1934 the Watch Tower Society began producing portable phonographs especially de-

7. What challenges did some face in using the card?

8. Explain how the portable phonograph was used. (See opening image of the standard edition.)

signed to be used in the ministry. Eventually, recordings covering 92 different subjects were made available.

9 On hearing one of the recorded Bible talks, a householder named Hillary Goslin obtained the publisher's permission to borrow the phonograph for a week in order to acquaint his neighbors with the Kingdom message. When the publisher returned, he found several newly interested ones waiting for him. In time, a number of these dedicated themselves to Jehovah, and Hillary's two daughters eventually attended Gilead School and received a foreign assignment. Like the testimony card, the phonograph helped many to get started in the preaching work. Later, the King would put words in their mouths by means of the Theocratic Ministry School.

USING EVERY POSSIBLE METHOD TO REACH PEOPLE

10 Under the King's direction, God's people have used a variety of *methods* in order to reach as many as possible with the good news. This was especially important when 'the workers were few.' (Read Matthew 9:37.) In the early 20th century, *newspapers* were used to reach large audiences in areas where Jehovah's people were few in number. Each

9. How effective was the use of the phonograph?

10, 11. How were newspapers and the radio used in spreading Bible truth, and why were these methods effective?

week, Charles Taze Russell would telegraph a sermon to a newspaper syndicate. In turn, the syndicate retelegraphed the sermon to newspapers in the United States, Canada, and Europe. It is estimated that by 1913, Brother Russell's sermons were reaching 15,000,000 readers by means of 2,000 newspapers!

11 After Brother Russell died, another effective method of spreading the good news began to be used. On April 16, 1922, Joseph F. Rutherford made one of his first *radio broadcasts*, speaking to an estimated 50,000 people. Then, on February 24, 1924, the organization's first radio station, WBBR, began broadcasting. Regarding this new method of reaching people, *The Watch Tower* of December 1, 1924, observed: "We believe that the radio is the most economical and effective way of spreading the message of the truth that has yet been used." Like the newspaper, the radio was useful for reaching large audiences in areas where few Kingdom publishers lived.

12 Increased emphasis is now being placed on *public witnessing*: at bus stops, train stations, parking lots, in public squares, and markets. If engaging in some of these features of service makes you nervous, why not give prayerful

12. (a) What features of public witnessing do you enjoy most? (b) What can help us to overcome any fears we might have about engaging in public witnessing?

thought to this comment of longtime traveling overseer Angelo Manera, Jr.: “We looked at each new feature of service as another way to serve Jehovah, as another way to prove our loyalty to him, as another test of our integrity, and we were eager to prove ourselves willing to serve him in any way he asked.” Engaging in a new feature of the work, perhaps one outside our comfort zone, helps us to build trust and faith in Jehovah, leading to greater spirituality.—Read 2 Corinthians 12:9, 10.

13 Many publishers have enjoyed directing people to our *website*, jw.org, where they can read and download Bible-based literature in over 700 languages. Each day, over 1.6 million people visit our website. As the radio did in the past, our website today is reaching people with the good news, even in remote areas.

TRAINING MINISTERS OF THE GOOD NEWS

14 We have considered a few of the tools and methods that have been used to spread the good news. However, what of the *training* we have received? Suppose the householder objected to what he heard on a phonograph recording or expressed interest in what he read on the testimony

13. What need is being filled by our website, jw.org, and what experiences have you had in directing people to it?

14. What training did Kingdom publishers need, and what school has helped them to become effective teachers?



card. Publishers needed to know how to overcome objections tactfully and how to teach honesthearted ones skillfully. Doubtless moved by God's spirit, Nathan H. Knorr saw the need to train publishers to use the gift of speech in the ministry. The solution? The *Theocratic Ministry School*, which was first organized in congregations in 1943. That school has helped us to become effective teachers.

15 For many, it took time to get used to speaking before an audience. Julio S. Ramu recalled his first talk in the school back in 1944. The subject? Doeg, a man mentioned in only five verses of the Bible! "My knees were knocking together, my hands were shaking, and my teeth were chattering," Julio said, adding that he had to build the entire talk around those five scriptures. "I gave my talk in three minutes. That was my first experience in platform speaking, but I did not quit." Children too joined the school, although it was not necessarily easy for some to present a talk to the congregation. Angelo Manera, mentioned earlier, remembered a first student talk given by a young lad who had just started public school. "He was so nervous that when he started his talk, he began to sob. But determined to give it, he sobbed his way through the entire talk." Have you held back

15. (a) What have some experienced when handling a part on the Theocratic Ministry School? (b) How has Jehovah's promise recorded at Psalm 32:8 proved true in your case?

from commenting or participating in meetings in other ways because of shyness or some limitation? Ask Jehovah to help you overcome your fears. You may find that he will help you just as he helped those early Theocratic Ministry School students.—Read Psalm 32:8.

16 The training available to Jehovah’s people is not limited to the Theocratic Ministry School. Missionaries and others have greatly benefited from attending *Gilead School*. According to one instructor, an objective of the school is “to instill in the students a more intense desire to share in the evangelizing work.” Gilead was inaugurated in 1943, and since then over 8,500 have been trained. Gilead-trained missionaries have served in some 170 lands. Since 2011, enrollment is limited to those who are already in special full-time service—special pioneers, traveling overseers, Bethelites, or field missionaries who have not attended Gilead.

17 How effective has this extra training been? Consider an example. In August 1949, there were fewer than ten local publishers in Japan. By the end of that year, 13 Gilead-trained missionaries were busy preaching there. Today, there are some 216,000 publishers in Japan, and nearly 42 percent of them serve as pioneers!

16. What purpose has been served by Gilead School (a) in the past and (b) since 2011?

17. How effective has training at Gilead proved to be?

18 Other schools, such as the Kingdom Ministry School, the Pioneer Service School, the School for Kingdom Evangelizers, the School for Circuit Overseers and Their Wives, and the School for Branch Committee Members and Their Wives, have contributed immeasurably to increased spirituality and the effectiveness of Jehovah’s people. Without a doubt, the King is continuing to train his subjects!

19 More than 100 years have elapsed since the birth of God’s Kingdom. Our King, Jesus Christ, continues to train us. Shortly before his death in 1916, Charles Taze Russell showed remarkable foresight regarding the extent to which the preaching work would be accomplished. He told a close associate: “The work is increasing rapidly, and it will continue to increase, for there is a world-wide work to be done in preaching the ‘gospel of the kingdom.’” (*Faith on the March*, by A. H. Macmillan, p. 69) How right he was! And how grateful we are that the God of peace continues to equip us for this most enjoyable work! Indeed, he gives us “every good thing” we need to do his will!

18. Name some of the other schools that have helped qualified Witnesses to grow spiritually.

19. What perceptive comment did Charles Taze Russell make about the preaching work, and how has this proved to be true?

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scan code 



All Things Made New (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. “The signs of the times” prove God’s rule has begun.
In glory enthroned sits Jehovah’s Son.
The battle in heaven he’s fought and won,
And soon on the earth shall God’s will be done.

(CHORUS)

*Rejoice! For God’s tent is with men,
And he himself resides with them.
No more will there be pain or crying,
No sorrowing nor any dying;
For God has said: ‘I’m making all things new.’
These words faithful are and true.*

2. Let all men the chaste New Jerusalem see,
The bride of the Lamb shining radiantly.
Adorned now with most precious gems is she,
And only Jehovah her light will be.

(Chorus)

3. This city so fair will be all men’s delight.
Its gates will be open both day and night.
All nations will walk in her glory bright;
O servants of God, now reflect that light.

(Chorus)