

- 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)

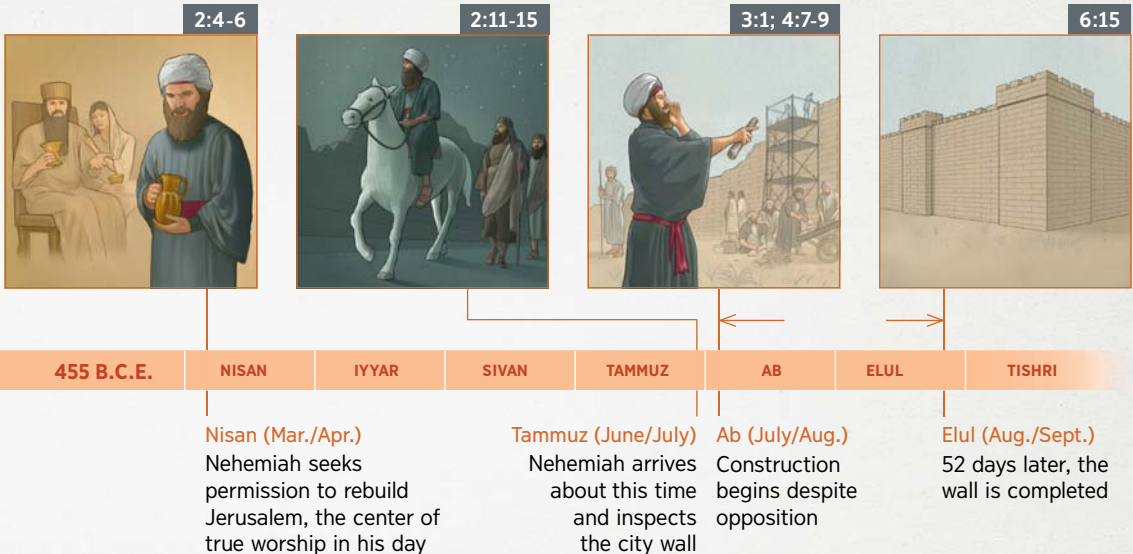
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **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



1. Jehovah, this is the day;

Now from our hearts, we want to pray.
How you have honored us, favored us,
More than words can say!

Upon our labor of love,
We've seen your blessing from above.
And now a building stands, by our hands,
As the proof thereof.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah God, it was a priv'lege
For us to build this place for you.
May we continue in your service throughout our days
And bring you praise in all we do.*

2. What happy faces we see,

And what good friends we've come to be!
And how we'll cherish these memories
For eternity!

We saw your spirit, O Lord,
In how we worked with one accord.
And how we've added fame to your name;
What a grand reward!

(Chorus)

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

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1 The words of Ne-he-mi'ah*^a the son of Hac-a-li'ah: Now in the month of Chis'lev,[#] in the 20th year, I was in Shu'shan^{Ab} the citadel.⁸ **2** At that time Hana'ni,^c one of my brothers, arrived with other men from Judah, and I asked them about the remaining Jews who had escaped the captivity,^d and also about Jerusalem. **3** They replied: "Those remaining there in the province* who have survived the captivity are in a terrible situation and in disgrace.^e The walls of Jerusalem are broken down,^f and its gates have been burned with fire."^g

4 As soon as I heard these words, I sat down and began to weep and mourn for days, and I kept fasting^h and praying before the God of the heavens. **5** I said: "O Jehovah, the God of the heavens, the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his covenant and shows loyal love to those who love him and keep his commandments,ⁱ **6** please, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to listen to the prayer of your servant that I am praying to you today, day and night,^j concerning your servants the Israelites, all the while confessing the sins that the people of Israel have committed against you.

1:1 *Meaning "Jah Comforts." 1:1; 2:1 #See App. B15. 1:1 ^aOr "Susa." ^bOr "palace; fortress." 1:3 *Or "jurisdictional district."

CHAP. 1

- a Ne 1:11
- Ne 5:14
- Ne 10:1
- b Es 1:2
- Es 3:15
- Da 8:2
- c Ne 7:2
- d Jer 52:30
- e 1Ki 9:7
- Ne 9:36, 37
- Ps 79:4
- f 2Ki 25:10
- g Ne 2:17
- La 1:4
- h 2Ch 20:3
- Ezr 8:21
- i De 7:9
- Da 9:4
- j Ps 88:1
- Lu 18:7

Second Col.

- a 2Ch 29:6
- Ezr 9:6
- b Ps 106:6
- c Le 27:34
- Nu 36:13
- De 12:1
- Ne 9:34
- d Le 26:33
- De 4:27
- De 28:64
- e De 30:1-4
- f De 12:5
- Ps 132:13
- g Le 25:42
- De 5:15
- De 9:26, 29
- h 1Ki 8:49, 50
- Ezr 7:6
- Ps 106:46
- Pr 21:1
- i Ne 2:1

CHAP. 2

- j Ne 1:1
- k Ezr 7:1
- Ne 13:6
- l Ne 1:11

We have sinned, both I and the house of my father.^a **7** We have certainly acted corruptly against you^b by not keeping the commandments, regulations, and judicial decisions that you gave to your servant Moses.^c

8 "Remember, please, the word that you commanded* your servant Moses: 'If you act unfaithfully, I will scatter you among the peoples.'^d **9** But if you return to me and observe my commandments and obey them, though your dispersed people should be at the end of the heavens, I will gather them^e from there and bring them to the place that I have chosen to have my name reside.'^f **10** They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great power and by your mighty hand.^g **11** O Jehovah, please, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who take delight in fearing your name, and please, grant success to your servant today, and may this man show me compassion."^h

Now I was cupbearer to the king.ⁱ

2 In the month of Ni'san,[#] in the 20th year^j of King Artaxerxes,^k wine was set before him, and as usual I took up the wine and gave it to the king.^l But I had never been gloomy in his presence. **2** So the king said to

1:8 *Or "the warning you gave to."

me: "Why do you look so gloomy when you are not sick? This can be nothing but gloominess of heart." At this I became very frightened.

3 Then I said to the king: "Long live the king! Why should I not look gloomy when the city, the place where my forefathers are buried, lies in ruins, and its gates have been consumed by fire?"^a **4** The king then said to me: "What is it that you are seeking?" At once I prayed to the God of the heavens.^b **5** I then said to the king: "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor with you, send me to Judah, to the city where my forefathers are buried, so that I may rebuild it."^c **6** Then the king, with his royal consort* sitting beside him, said to me: "How long will your journey be, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me,^d and I gave him a set time.^e

7 Then I said to the king: "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me for the governors of the region Beyond the River,^f granting me safe passage until I reach Judah, **8** as well as a letter to A'saph the keeper of the Royal Park,^g so that he may give me timber for beams for the gates of the Fortress^h of the Houseⁱ and for the walls of the city^j and for the house where I will go." So the king gave them to me,^k for the good hand of my God was upon me.^l

9 Eventually I came to the governors of the region Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. The king also sent with me army chiefs and horsemen. **10** When San-bal'lat^k the Hor'o-nite and To-bi'ah^l the Am'mon-ite^m official* heard about it,

2:6 *Or "his queen." 2:7 *Or "of Trans-Euphrates." 2:8 *Or "the king's forest." #Or "Temple." 2:10 *Lit., "servant."

CHAP. 2

a Ne 1:2, 3

b 1Sa 1:13

c Da 9:25

d Ne 1:11

e Ne 5:14
Ne 13:6

f Jos 1:4
Ezr 5:3

g Ne 7:2

h Ne 1:3

i Ezr 7:21

j Ezr 7:6

k Ne 4:1
Ne 6:2

l Ne 2:19
Ne 4:3
Ne 6:14
Ne 13:7

m Ne 13:1

Second Col.

a 2Ch 26:9

b Ne 3:13

c Ne 1:3
La 1:4
La 2:9

d Ne 3:15
Ne 12:37

e 2Sa 15:23
Joh 18:1

f Ne 4:14

g Ezr 7:6, 28
Ne 2:7, 8

h Da 9:25

i Hag 1:14

they were very displeased that someone had come to do something good for the people of Israel.

11 At length I came to Jerusalem, and I stayed there for three days. **12** I rose up by night, I and a few men with me, and I did not tell anyone what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the one I was riding. **13** And I went out at night through the Valley Gate,^a passing in front of the Fountain of the Big Snake to the Gate of the Ash Heaps,^b and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been consumed by fire.^c **14** And I passed along to the Fountain Gate^d and to the King's Pool, and there was not enough space for the animal I was riding to pass. **15** But I continued up the valley^e by night, and I kept inspecting the wall, after which I came back and entered through the Valley Gate, and then I returned.

16 The deputy rulers^f did not know where I had gone and what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the deputy rulers, and the rest of the workers. **17** Finally I said to them: "You can see what a terrible situation we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, so that this disgrace will not continue." **18** Then I told them of how the good hand of my God was upon me^g and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.^h At this they said: "Let us get up and build." So they strengthened themselves* for the good work.ⁱ

2:15 *Or "wadi." 2:18 *Lit., "their hands."

19 Now when San-bal'lat the Hor'o-nite, To-bi'ah^a the Am-mon-ite^b official,* and Ge'shem the Arabian^c heard of it, they began to mock us^d and show us their contempt and say: "What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"^e **20** However, I replied: "The God of the heavens is the One who will grant us success,^f and we his servants will get up and build; but you have neither share nor claim nor memorial* in Jerusalem."^g

3 Eli'a-shib^h the high priest and his brothers the priests got up to build the Sheep Gate.ⁱ They sanctified* it^j and set up its doors; they sanctified it as far as the Tower of Me'ah,^k as far as the Tower of Ha-nan'el.^l **2** And next to them the men of Jer'i-cho^m were building; and next to them Zac'cur the son of Im'ri was building.

3 The sons of Has-se-na'ah built the Fish Gate;ⁿ they timbered it^o and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

4 And next to them Mer'e-moth^p the son of U-ri'jah the son of Hak'koz did repair work, and next to them Me-shul'lam^q the son of Ber-e-chi'ah the son of Me-shez'a-bel did repair work, and next to them Za'dok the son of Ba'a-na did repair work.

5 And next to them the Te-ko-ites^r did repair work, but their prominent men would not lower themselves to share in* the service of their masters.

6 Joi'a-da the son of Pa-se'-ah and Me-shul'lam the son of Bes-o-dei'ah repaired the Gate of the Old City;^s they timbered it and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars. **7** Next to them Mel-a-ti'ah the Gib'e-on-ite^t and Ja'don the Me-ron'o-thite

2:19 *Lit., "servant." 2:20 *Or "entitlement." 3:1 *Or "dedicated." 3:5 *Lit., "not bring their neck into."

CHAP. 2

- a Ne 6:14
- b Ne 13:1, 2
- c Ne 4:7
Ne 6:1, 2
- d Ps 79:4
- e Ne 6:6
- f Ps 127:1
- g Ezr 4:1-3

CHAP. 3

- h Ne 12:10
Ne 13:4, 28
- i Joh 5:2
- j Ne 12:30
- k Ne 12:38, 39
- l Jer 31:38
Zec 14:10
- m Ezr 2:1, 34
- n 2Ch 33:1, 14
Zep 1:10
- o Ne 2:7, 8
- p Ezr 8:33
Ne 3:21
- q Ne 3:30
Ne 6:17, 18
- r Ne 3:27
Am 1:1
- s Ne 12:38, 39
- t 2Sa 21:2

Second Col.

- a Jos 18:21, 26
2Ch 16:6
Jer 40:6
- b Ge 15:18
- c Ne 12:38
- d Ezr 2:1, 32
- e Ezr 2:1, 6
- f Ne 12:38
- g Jos 15:20, 34
Ne 11:25, 30
- h 2Ch 26:9
- i Ne 2:13
- j Jer 6:1
- k Jos 18:21, 26
- l Ne 2:14
Ne 12:37

did repair work, men of Gib'e-on and Miz'pah^a who were under the authority of* the governor of the region Beyond the River.^{#b} **8** Next to them Uz'ziel the son of Har-hai'ah, one of the goldsmiths, did repair work, and next to him Han-a-ni'ah, one of the ointment mixers,* did repair work; and they paved[#] Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall.^c **9** And next to them Re-pha'iah the son of Hur, a prince of half the district of Jerusalem, did repair work. **10** And next to them Je-da'iah the son of Ha-ru'maph did repair work in front of his own house, and next to him Hat'-tush the son of Hash-ab-nei'ah did repair work.

11 Mal-chi'jah the son of Ha'-rim^d and Has'shub the son of Pa'hath-mo'ab^e repaired another section,* as well as the Tower of the Ovens.^f **12** And next to them Shal'lum the son of Hal-lo'-hesh, a prince of half the district of Jerusalem, did repair work, along with his daughters.

13 Ha'nun and the inhabitants of Za-no'ah^g repaired the Valley Gate;^h they built it and then set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and they repaired 1,000 cubits* of the wall as far as the Gate of the Ash Heaps.ⁱ

14 Mal-chi'jah the son of Re'-chab, a prince of the district of Beth-hac-che'rem,^j repaired the Gate of the Ash Heaps; he built it and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

15 Shal'lun the son of Col-ho'-zeh, a prince of the district of Miz'pah,^k repaired the Fountain Gate;^l he built it and its roof, set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and also repaired the wall

3:7 *Lit., "belonging to the throne of." #Or "of Trans-Euphrates." 3:8 *Or "the perfume makers." #Or "paved with flagstone." 3:11 *Or "measured section." 3:13 *About 445 m (1,460 ft). See App. B14.

of the Pool^a of the Canal to the King's Garden^b and as far as the Stairway^c that goes down from the City of David.^d

16 After him Ne-he-mi'ah the son of Az'buk, a prince of half the district of Beth-zur,^e did repair work from in front of the Burial Places of David^f as far as the pool^g that had been built and as far as the House of the Mighty Ones.

17 After him the Levites did repair work: Re'hum the son of Ba'ni; and next to him Hash-a-bi'ah, a prince of half the district of Kei'lah,^h did repair work for his district. **18** After him their brothers did repair work: Bav'vai the son of Hen'a-dad, a prince of half the district of Kei'lah.

19 And next to him E'zer the son of Jesh'u-a,ⁱ a prince of Miz'pah, was repairing another section in front of the ascent to the Armory at the Buttress.^j

20 After him Bar'uch the son of Zab'bai^k worked with fervor and repaired another section, from the Buttress as far as the entrance of the house of E-li'a-shib^l the high priest.

21 After him Mer'e-moth^m the son of U-ri'jah the son of Hak'koz repaired another section, from the entrance of the house of E-li'a-shib as far as the end of E-li'a-shib's house.

22 And after him the priests, men of the district of the Jordan,ⁿ did repair work. **23** After them Benjamin and Has'shub did repair work in front of their own house. After them Az-a-ri'ah the son of Ma-a-sei'ah the son of A-nani'ah did repair work near his own house. **24** After him Bin'nu-i the son of Hen'a-dad repaired another section, from the house of Az-a-ri'ah as far as the Buttress^o and as far as the corner.

3:22 *Or possibly, "the nearby district."

CHAP. 3

- a Isa 22:9
b Jer 39:4
c Ne 12:37
d 2Sa 5:7
e Jos 15:20, 58
2Ch 11:5-7
f 1Ki 2:10
2Ch 16:13, 14
g Ne 2:14
h Jos 15:20, 44
i Eze 2:1, 40
j 2Ch 26:9
Ne 3:24
k Eze 10:28, 44
l Ne 3:1
Ne 13:4
m Eze 8:33
n Ge 13:10
o Ne 3:19

Second Col.

- a 2Sa 5:11
Ne 12:37
b Jer 37:21
c Eze 2:1, 3
d Jos 9:3, 27
1Ch 9:2
Eze 2:43-54
Eze 8:17, 20
e 2Ch 27:1, 3
2Ch 33:1, 14
Ne 11:21
f Ne 8:1
Ne 12:37
g Ne 3:5
h Jer 31:40
i Ne 13:13
j 1Ch 9:17, 18
k Ne 6:17, 18
l Ne 3:26
m Ne 3:1
Joh 5:2

CHAP. 4

- n Ne 2:10
Ne 6:1, 2
Ne 13:28

25 After him Pa'lal the son of U'zai did repair work in front of the Buttress and the tower that goes out from the King's House,^{*a} the upper one that belongs to the Courtyard of the Guard.^b After him there was Pe-dai'ah the son of Pa'rosh.^c

26 And the temple servants^{*d} who lived in O'phel^e did repair work as far as in front of the Water Gate^f on the east and the protruding tower.

27 After them the Te-ko'ites^g repaired another section, from in front of the great protruding tower as far as the wall of O'phel.

28 The priests did repair work above the Horse Gate,^h each in front of his own house.

29 After them Za'dokⁱ the son of Im'mer did repair work in front of his own house.

And after him She-mai'ah the son of Shec-a-ni'ah, the keeper of the East Gate,^j did repair work.

30 After him Han-a-ni'ah the son of Shel-e-mi'ah and Ha'nun the sixth son of Za'laph repaired another section.

After him Me-shul'lam^k the son of Ber-e-chi'ah did repair work in front of his own hall.

31 After him Mal-chi'jah, a member of the goldsmith guild, did repair work as far as the house of the temple servants^{*l} and the traders, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the roof chamber of the corner.

32 And between the roof chamber of the corner and the Sheep Gate,^m the goldsmiths and the traders did repair work.

4 Now as soon as San-bal'latⁿ heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and very upset,^{*} and he

3:25 *Or "Palace." 3:26, 31 *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones." 4:1 *Or "offended."

kept mocking the Jews. **2** And in the presence of his brothers and the army of Sa-mar'i-a, he said: "What are the feeble Jews doing? Will they do this by themselves? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish up in a day? Will they bring the charred stones to life out of the heaps of dusty rubble?"^a

3 Now To-bi'ah^b the Am'mon-ite,^c who was standing beside him, said: "If even a fox would climb up on what they are building, it would knock down their stone wall."

4 Hear, O our God, for we are being treated with contempt,^d and make their reproach return on their own heads,^e and give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. **5** And do not cover over their guilt or let their sin be erased from before you,^f for they have insulted the builders.

6 So we kept building the wall, and the entire wall was joined together and rebuilt up to half its height, and the people continued to put their heart into the work.

7 Now as soon as San-bal-lat, To-bi'ah,^g the Arabians,^h the Am'mon-ites, and the Ash'dod-itesⁱ heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was progressing and that the gaps were being filled in, they became very angry. **8** They conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to create a disturbance in it. **9** But we prayed to our God and kept a guard posted against them day and night.

10 However, people of Judah were saying: "The strength of the laborers* has failed, and there is so much rubble; we will never be able to build the wall."

11 And our enemies kept saying: "Before they know it or see

4:10 *Or "burden bearers."

CHAP. 4

a Ne 4:10

b Ne 2:19

c Ne 13:1, 2

d Ps 123:3

e Ps 79:12

f Jer 18:23

g Ne 4:3

h Ne 2:19

i Jos 13:2, 3
Ne 13:23

Second Col.

a Ne 13:17

b Nu 14:9
De 20:3
Jos 1:9

c De 7:21
De 10:17

d Ne 5:16

e Ne 11:1

f Nu 10:9
2Ch 13:12

g De 1:30
Jos 23:10

us, we will come right in among them and kill them and stop the work."

12 Whenever the Jews living near them came in, they told us again and again:^{*} "They will come at us from all directions."

13 So I kept men posted at the lowest parts of the space behind the wall at the exposed places, and I posted them by families with their swords, their lances, and their bows.

14 When I saw their fear, I immediately rose and said to the nobles^a and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people: "Do not be afraid of them.^b Remember Jehovah, who is great and awe-inspiring;^c and fight for your brothers, your sons and daughters, your wives and homes."

15 Now after our enemies heard that what they were doing had become known to us and that the true God had frustrated their plan, we all went back to work on the wall. **16** From that day forward, half of my men would do the work^d and half of them would hold the lances, the shields, the bows, and the coats of mail. And the princes^e stood behind the whole house of Judah **17** who were building the wall. Those who were carrying the loads did the work with one hand while holding a weapon^{*} in the other hand. **18** And each of the builders had a sword strapped to his hip while building, and the one to blow the horn^f stood beside me.

19 I then said to the nobles and the deputy rulers and the rest of the people: "The work is large and extensive, and we are spread out on the wall far apart from one another. **20** When you hear the sound of the horn, gather together to where we are. Our God will fight for us."^g

4:12 *Lit., "ten times." 4:17 *Or "missile."

21 So we kept working while the other half were holding the lances, from the break of dawn until the stars came out. 22 At that time I said to the people: "Let the men, each along with his attendant, spend the night inside Jerusalem, and they will guard us by night and work during the day." 23 So neither I nor my brothers, my attendants,^a and the guards who followed me ever took off our garments, and each of us kept his weapon in his right hand.

5 However, there was a great outcry from the people and their wives against their Jewish brothers.^b 2 Some were saying: "We are many with our sons and our daughters. We must get grain in order to eat and stay alive." 3 Others were saying: "We are giving our fields and our vineyards and our houses as security to get grain during the food shortage." 4 Still others were saying: "We have borrowed money on our fields and our vineyards for the king's tribute.^c 5 Now we are of the same flesh and blood as our brothers,^{*} and our children are just like their children; yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery, and some of our daughters are already in slavery.^d But we are powerless to stop this, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others."

6 I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. 7 So I considered these things in my heart, and I took issue with the nobles and the deputy rulers and said to them: "Each one of you is demanding interest^{*} from your own brother."^e

Further, I arranged for a great assembly because of them.

5:5 *Lit., "like the flesh of our brothers is our flesh." 5:7 *Or "usury."

CHAP. 4
a Ne 13:19

CHAP. 5
b De 15:9

c De 28:15, 33
Ne 9:36, 37

d Ex 21:7
De 15:12

e Ex 22:25
De 23:19
Ps 15:5
Eze 22:12

Second Col.

a Le 25:35
De 15:7, 8
Jer 34:8, 9

b Le 25:36
Ne 5:15

c Eze 18:5, 8

d Ne 5:3

e Ne 10:1

f Ne 2:1

g Ne 13:6

h Ezr 8:1

i 1Co 9:14, 15
2Th 3:8

8 And I said to them: "To the extent possible, we have bought back our own Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; but will you now sell your own brothers,^a and are they to be sold back to us?" At this they became speechless, and they could find nothing to say. 9 Then I said: "What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God^b so that the nations, our enemies, cannot reproach us? 10 Moreover, I, my brothers, and my attendants are lending them money and grain. Let us, please, stop this lending on interest.^c 11 Please, restore to them on this very day their fields,^d their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, as well as the hundredth^{*} of the money, the grain, the new wine, and the oil that you are demanding as interest from them."

12 To this they said: "We will restore these things to them and ask nothing back. We will do precisely as you say." So I called the priests and made those men swear to keep this promise. 13 Also, I shook out the folds of my garment^{*} and said: "In this manner may the true God shake out from his house and from his possessions every man who does not carry out this promise, and in this manner may he be shaken out and emptied." To this all the congregation said: "Amen!"[#] And they praised Jehovah, and the people did as they promised.

14 Moreover, from the day that he commissioned me to become their governor^e in the land of Judah, from the 20th year^f to the 32nd year^g of King Artaxerxes,^h 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance due the governor.ⁱ 15 But

5:11 *Or "1 percent," that is, monthly. 5:13 *Lit., "shook out my bosom." [#]Or "So be it!"

- 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)

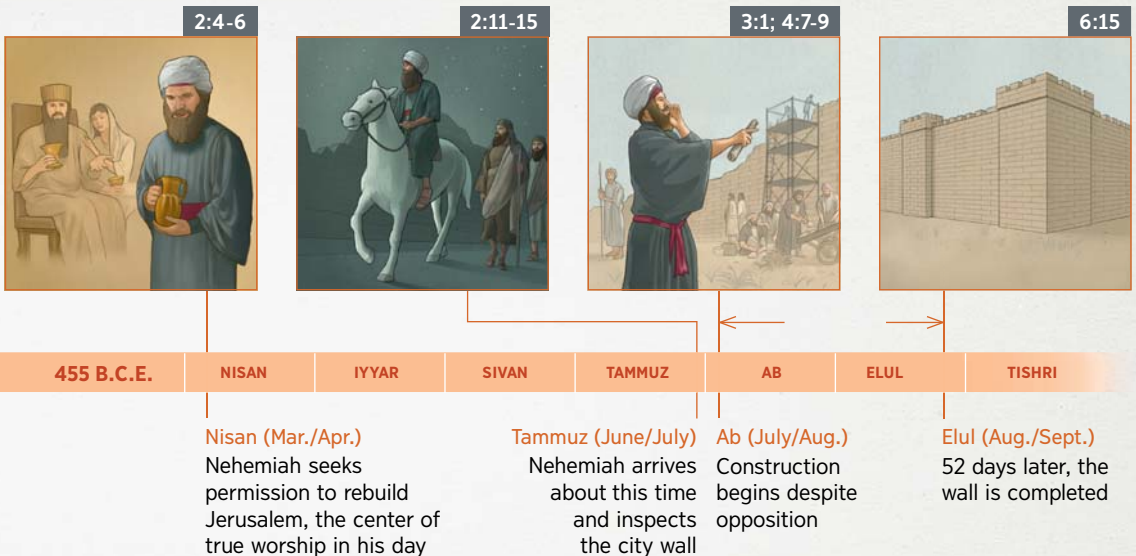
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **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



Ne 1:11–2:3—Nehemiah’s joy came from the advancement of true worship (w06 2/1 9 7)

1:11–2:3. Nehemiah’s main source of joy was not his prestigious position as a cupbearer. It was the advancement of true worship. Should not Jehovah’s worship and all that promotes it be our main concern and chief source of joy?

Ne 4:14—Nehemiah overcame opposition to true worship by focusing on Jehovah (w06 2/1 10 3)

4:14. When faced with opposition, we too can overcome fear by keeping in our mind “the great and the fear-inspiring One.”

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)

1:1; 2:1—Is “the twentieth year” mentioned in these two verses counted from the same reference point?

Yes, the 20th year is that of the reign of Artaxerxes the king. However, the method of counting used in these verses is different. Historical evidence points to 475 B.C.E. as the year of Artaxerxes’ ascension to the throne. Since the Babylonian scribes customarily counted the years of the Persian kings’ reign from Nisan (March/April) to Nisan, Artaxerxes’ first regnal year

began in Nisan of 474 B.C.E. Hence, the 20th year of rulership mentioned at Nehemiah 2:1 began in Nisan of 455 B.C.E. The month of Chislev (November/December) mentioned at Nehemiah 1:1 logically was the Chislev of the preceding year—456 B.C.E. Nehemiah refers to that month as also falling in the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign. Perhaps in this case, he was counting the years from the accession date of the monarch. It could also be that Nehemiah was counting time by what the Jews today call a civil year, which begins in the month of Tishri, corresponding to September/October. In any case, the year in which the word went out to restore Jerusalem was 455 B.C.E.

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

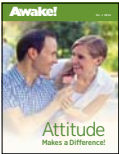
4:17, 18—How could a man do the work of rebuilding with just one hand? For burden bearers this would not be a problem. Once the load was placed on their head or shoulders, they could easily balance it with one hand “while the other hand was holding the missile.” The builders who needed both hands to do their work “were girded, each one with his sword upon his hip, while building.” They were ready to go into action in case of an enemy attack.



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Presentations



AWAKE!

Question: Here is your copy of the latest *Awake!* Notice the question here on page 2. May I ask your opinion?

Scripture: Pr 24:10

Offer: This article discusses additional principles along this line.

AWAKE!

Question: Would you agree that it's important to choose the right kind of friends?

Scripture: Pr 13:20

Offer: This issue of *Awake!* has some practical information about how to make good friends. [Highlight the article on pages 10-11.]



LISTEN TO GOD

Question: Would you like to live in a world that looks like this? [Show pages 2-3, and allow for response.]

Scripture: Jer 29:11

Offer: This brochure shows how we can listen to God and thus enjoy the future he has in mind for us. [Consider pages 4-5.]

BUILD YOUR OWN PRESENTATION

Question:

Scripture:

Offer:

1. From house to house, from door to door,
Jehovah’s word we spread.
From town to town, from farm to farm,
Jehovah’s sheep are fed.
This good news that God’s Kingdom rules,
As Jesus Christ foretold,
Is being preached throughout the earth
By Christians young and old.
2. From house to house, from door to door,
Salvation we proclaim.
It comes to those who choose to call
Upon Jehovah’s name.
But how can they call on the name
Of One they do not know?
So to their houses and their doors,
The sacred name must go.
3. So let us go from door to door
To spread the Kingdom news.
And whether it’s embraced or not,
We’ll let the people choose.
At least we’ll name Jehovah’s name,
His glorious truth declare.
And as we go from door to door,
We’ll find his sheep are there.

WEEK STARTING FEBRUARY 17

Song 15 and Prayer

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?

15 min: “Make This Memorial Season a Joyful One!” Questions and answers. Invite those planning to auxiliary pioneer despite health challenges or a full schedule to relate the adjustments they will make in order to expand their ministry. When considering paragraph 3, invite the service overseer to outline local arrangements for meetings for field service during March, April, and May.

Song 8 and Prayer

Make This Memorial Season a Joyful One!

¹ Would you like to increase your joy during March, April, and May? One way to do that is to expand your ministry and, if possible, auxiliary pioneer. How will this add to your joy?

² **Increase Your Joy:** Jehovah created us with the capacity to experience joy and satisfac-

1. What is one way to increase our joy during this Memorial season?
2. How will expanding our ministry result in increased joy?

tion from worshipping him as we fulfill our inborn spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) He also designed us in such a way that we can gain happiness from giving to others. (Acts 20:35) The ministry allows us to do both—to worship God and to help people. It stands to reason that having an increased share in the ministry results in even greater joy. In addition, the more we preach, the more skillful we may become. As we gain skill, we build our confidence and minimize our nervousness. We will have more opportunities to give a witness and to start Bible studies. All of this makes the ministry more enjoyable.

³ March and April will be especially good months to auxiliary pioneer because we can choose either a 30- or a 50-hour requirement. In addition, beginning Saturday, March 22, and continuing until the Memorial on Monday, April 14, we will participate in an enjoyable campaign to invite others to attend the Memorial. Congregations will be abuzz with excitement, as many will be working “shoulder to shoulder” to cover as much of the territory as possible in the allotted time.—Zeph. 3:9.

⁴ **Prepare Now:** If you have not already done so, take time to review your schedule and see what adjustments you can make to expand your ministry during one or more months. Make it a matter of prayer. (Jas. 1:5) Talk about it with your family and others in the congregation. (Prov. 15:22) You may find that despite health challenges or a full work schedule, you too can experience the joy that comes from auxiliary pioneering.

⁵ Jehovah wants his servants to be joyful. (Ps. 32:11) By exerting ourselves to expand our ministry this Memorial season, not only will it increase our joy but it will also bring joy to our heavenly Father.—Prov. 23:24; 27:11.

3. Why will March and April be especially good months to auxiliary pioneer?
4. If we want to auxiliary pioneer, what should we do?
5. What will result if we expand our ministry this Memorial season?

CHAPTER EIGHT

He Endured Despite Disappointments

SAMUEL could feel the grief in Shiloh. It almost seemed that the town was awash in tears. From how many houses did the cries of women and children emanate, the sounds of grieving over the news about fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers who would not be coming home? We know only that Israel had lost some 30,000 soldiers in a terrible defeat at the hands of the Philistines not long after the loss of 4,000 in another battle.—1 Sam. 4:1, 2, 10.

² That was just part of a string of tragedies. High Priest Eli's two wicked sons, Hophni and Phinehas, had marched out of Shiloh with the sacred ark of the covenant. Usually housed in the holy compartment of the tabernacle—a tentlike temple—this precious chest was a symbol of God's presence. The people then took the Ark into battle, foolishly thinking that it would act as a talisman and give them victory. But

1. Why was Shiloh full of grief and mourning?

2, 3. What string of tragedies had brought shame and loss of glory to Shiloh?



How could Samuel help his people cope with terrible loss and disappointment?

the Philistines captured the Ark, killing Hophni and Phinehas.—1 Sam. 4:3-11.

³ The tabernacle in Shiloh had been honored with the presence of the Ark for centuries. Now it was gone. Upon hearing this news, 98-year-old Eli fell backward from his seat and died. His daughter-in-law, widowed that very day, died in childbirth. Before expiring, she said: “Glory has gone away from Israel into exile.” Indeed, Shiloh would never be the same.—1 Sam. 4:12-22.

⁴ How would Samuel cope with these profound disappointments? Would his faith stand up to the challenge of helping a people who had lost Jehovah’s protection and favor? All of us today may, at times, face hardships and disappointments that challenge our faith, so let us see what more we can learn from Samuel.

He “Effected Righteousness”

⁵ The Bible record turns away from Samuel at this point and follows the sacred Ark, showing us how

4. What will we discuss in this chapter?

5, 6. What does the Bible record focus on regarding a 20-year period, and how was Samuel occupied during that time?

the Philistines suffered for taking it and were forced to return it. When we again come upon Samuel, some 20 years have passed. (1 Sam. 7:2) How was he occupied during those years? We need not guess.

⁶ We learn that before this period began, “the word of Samuel *continued* to come to all Israel.” (1 Sam. 4:1) The record reveals that after the period was over, Samuel made a custom of visiting three cities in Israel, making a circuit each year, handling disputes and resolving questions. Then he would return to his hometown of Ramah. (1 Sam. 7:15-17) Clearly, Samuel always kept busy, and during that 20-year interval, he had much to do.

⁷ The immorality and corruption of Eli’s sons had eroded the people’s faith. Many, it seems, turned to idolatry as a result. After two decades of hard work, though, Samuel delivered this message to the people: “If it is with all your heart you are returning to Jehovah, put away the foreign gods from your midst and also the Ashtoreth images, and direct your heart

7, 8. (a) What message did Samuel deliver to the people after two decades of hard work? (b) How did the people respond to Samuel’s assurance?

unswervingly to Jehovah and serve him alone, and he will deliver you from the hand of the Philistines.” —1 Sam. 7:3.

⁸ “The hand of the Philistines” had grown heavy on the people. With Israel’s army effectively smashed, the Philistines felt that they could oppress God’s people with impunity. But Samuel assured the people that things would change if only they returned to Jehovah. Were they willing? To Samuel’s delight, they put away their idols and “began serving Jehovah alone.” Samuel convened an assembly at Mizpah, a town in the mountainous country north of Jerusalem. The people gathered, fasted, and repented for their many sins of idolatry.—*Read 1 Samuel 7:4-6.*

⁹ However, the Philistines learned of this great gathering and saw an opportunity. They sent their army to Mizpah to crush those worshippers of Jehovah. The Israelites heard news of the approaching danger. Terrified, they asked Samuel to pray for them. He did so, offering a sacrifice as well. During that sacred ceremony, the Philistine army came

9. The Philistines saw what opportunity, and how did God’s people respond to the danger?

up against Mizpah. Jehovah then answered Samuel's prayer. In effect, Jehovah let out a roar of indignation. He "caused it to thunder with a loud noise on that day against the Philistines."—1 Sam. 7:7-10.

¹⁰ Now, should we imagine that those Philistines were like little children who scurry in fear to hide behind their mothers when they hear a thunderclap? No, these were tough, battle-hardened soldiers. This thunder, then, must have been unlike anything they knew. Was it the sheer volume of this "loud noise"? Did it come out of a clear blue sky, or did it echo bafflingly from the hillsides? At any rate, it shook those Philistines to the core. In utter confusion, they changed quickly from bullies to targets. The men of Israel poured forth from Mizpah, defeated them, and chased them for miles, to a place southwest of Jerusalem.—1 Sam. 7:11.

¹¹ That battle was a turning point. The Philistines kept retreating during the rest of Samuel's days as judge. City after city returned to the control of God's people.—1 Sam. 7:13, 14.

10, 11. (a) Why must there have been something unusual about the thunder that Jehovah directed against the Philistine army? (b) What resulted from the battle that began at Mizpah?

¹² Many centuries later, the apostle Paul listed Samuel among the faithful judges and prophets who “effected righteousness.” (Heb. 11:32, 33) Samuel did indeed help to bring about what was good and right in God’s eyes. He remained effective because he waited patiently on Jehovah, faithfully keeping at his work in spite of disappointments. He also showed an appreciative spirit. After the victory at Mizpah, Samuel had a monument erected to commemorate the way that Jehovah had helped his people.—1 Sam. 7:12.

¹³ Do you want to ‘effect righteousness’? If so, you do well to learn from Samuel’s patience and his humble, appreciative spirit. (*Read 1 Peter 5:6.*) Who of us does not need those qualities? It was good for Samuel to acquire and display such traits when relatively young, for he faced deeper disappointments in his later years.

12. What does it mean that Samuel “effected righteousness,” and what qualities helped him to remain effective?

13. (a) What qualities do we need if we are to imitate Samuel? (b) When do you think is a good time to develop traits like those of Samuel?

“Your Own Sons Have Not Walked in Your Ways”

¹⁴ The next time we see Samuel, he “had grown old.” Samuel had two adult sons by this time, Joel and Abijah, and he entrusted them with the responsibility of helping him in the work of judging. Sadly, though, his trust was misplaced. Honest and righteous though Samuel was, his sons used their positions for selfish ends, perverting justice and taking bribes.—1 Sam. 8:1-3.

¹⁵ One day, the older men of Israel approached the elderly prophet to complain. “Your own sons have not walked in your ways,” they said. (1 Sam. 8:4, 5) Was Samuel aware of the problem? The account does not say. Unlike Eli, however, Samuel was surely not a reprehensible father. Jehovah had rebuked and punished Eli for failing to correct his sons’ wickedness, for honoring his sons more than God. (1 Sam. 2:27-29) Jehovah never found such fault with Samuel.

¹⁶ The account does not reveal Samuel’s agonizing

14, 15. (a) What severe disappointment did Samuel face after he “had grown old”? (b) Was Samuel a reprehensible father in the manner of Eli? Explain.

16. What feelings afflict parents of rebellious children, and how might parents find a measure of comfort and guidance in Samuel’s example?

shame, anxiety, or disappointment once he learned of his sons' wicked conduct. Many parents, however, can imagine his feelings only too well. In today's dark times, rebellion against parental authority and discipline is pandemic. (*Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5.*) Parents who are dealing with that kind of pain may find a measure of comfort and guidance in Samuel's example. He did not let his sons' faithless ways alter his own course one bit. Remember, even after words and discipline fail to reach hardened hearts, parental example remains a powerful teacher. And parents always have the opportunity to make their own Father, Jehovah God, proud—as did Samuel.

“Do Appoint for Us a King”

¹⁷ Samuel's sons could not have imagined how far the effects of their greed and selfishness would reach. The older men of Israel went on to say to Samuel: “Now do appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” Did that demand feel like a rejection to Samuel? After all, he had been judging those people on Jehovah's behalf for decades. Now they wanted, **17. What did the older men of Israel demand of Samuel, and how did he react?**

- Song 123 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Nehemiah Was an Outstanding Overseer”:** (10 min.)
 Ne 5:1-7—Nehemiah listened to the people and took action (w06 2/1 9 ¶2)
 Ne 5:14-19—Nehemiah showed humility, unselfishness, and discretion (w06 2/1 10 ¶4)
 Ne 8:8-12—Nehemiah participated in providing spiritual instruction to the people (w06 2/1 11 ¶4)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ne 6:5—Why did Sanballat send “an open letter” to Nehemiah? (w06 2/1 9 ¶3)

Ne 6:10-13—Why did Nehemiah not accept Shemaiah’s recommendation? (w07 7/1 30 ¶15)

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 6:14–7:7a (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Present the current *Awake!* by featuring the cover subject. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Demonstrate how to make a return visit on someone who showed interest in the cover subject of the current *Awake!* Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Demonstrate a Bible study. (bh 28-29 ¶4-5)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 62
- **Are You “Reaching Out”?:** (15 min.) Talk by an elder based on the *Watchtower* of September 15, 2014, pages 3-6. Play the video entitled *Brothers—Reach Out for a Fine Work*, which appeared on JW Broadcasting in December 2015. Emphasize the proper reasons for reaching out, and explain how a brother can do so. Kindly encourage brothers to reach out to qualify to serve as ministerial servants and elders.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** ia chap. 8 ¶17-27, review on p. 75 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 125 and Prayer

NEHEMIAH 5-8 | Nehemiah Was an Outstanding Overseer

Tishri 455 B.C.E.

- 1 Likely on this occasion, Nehemiah directed the people to assemble for true worship
- 2 Great rejoicing resulted
- 3 Family heads gathered to see how they could follow God’s Law more closely
- 4 The people prepared to celebrate the joyous Festival of Booths

8:1-18



1. God's Word and all its promises
Give reason to endure.
The things you've learned and come to love
Are all well-founded and sure.
Be stabilized in holy faith,
Keeping God's day close in mind.
Stand firm in your integrity;
By tests you will be refined.
2. Maintain the love you had at first,
Which somehow could be lost.
Despite the trials you will meet,
Endure no matter the cost.
Whatever test may come your way,
Never yield to doubt or fear.
Jehovah will provide escape,
Our God ever will be near.
3. All those enduring to the end
Are those who will be saved.
The book of life will list their names,
A record clearly engraved.
So let endurance be your aim;
Let it have its work complete.
Jehovah's favor you will know;
With joy you will be replete.

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES

FEBRUARY 1-7

Jehovah, the God
of Communication

PAGE 4

FEBRUARY 8-14

A Living
Translation
of God's Word

PAGE 9

FEBRUARY 15-21

Use the Power
of Your Tongue
for Good

PAGE 18

FEBRUARY 22-28

Jehovah Will
Sustain You

PAGE 23

Grateful for God's Word
(Philippians 2:16)

1. Jehovah, our Father, we want to express
 How grateful we are that your Word we possess!
 Its writers you inspired to tell your very thought.
 By Scripture we're guided; by you we are taught.
2. Endowed are its pages with human appeal.
 Your prophets were like us; they felt what we feel.
 We gather faith and courage
 by learning of their lives.
 Our heart it refreshes; our soul it revives.
3. Your word has such power to reach deep inside,
 Yes, even the spirit and soul to divide.
 It searches our intentions and motives of our hearts.
 It offers correction and wisdom imparts.

Jehovah, the God of Communication

“Please listen, and I will speak.”

—JOB 42:4.

SONGS: 113, 114

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why does God simplify how he expresses his thoughts to humans?

Why has the use of different human languages not hindered God’s communication with man?

What was the goal of Jehovah’s organization in connection with the *New World Translation*?

THE eternal God created intelligent beings with whom to share life and happiness. (Ps. 36:9; 1 Tim. 1:11) The apostle John referred to God’s first companion as “the Word” and “the beginning of the creation by God.” (John 1:1; Rev. 3:

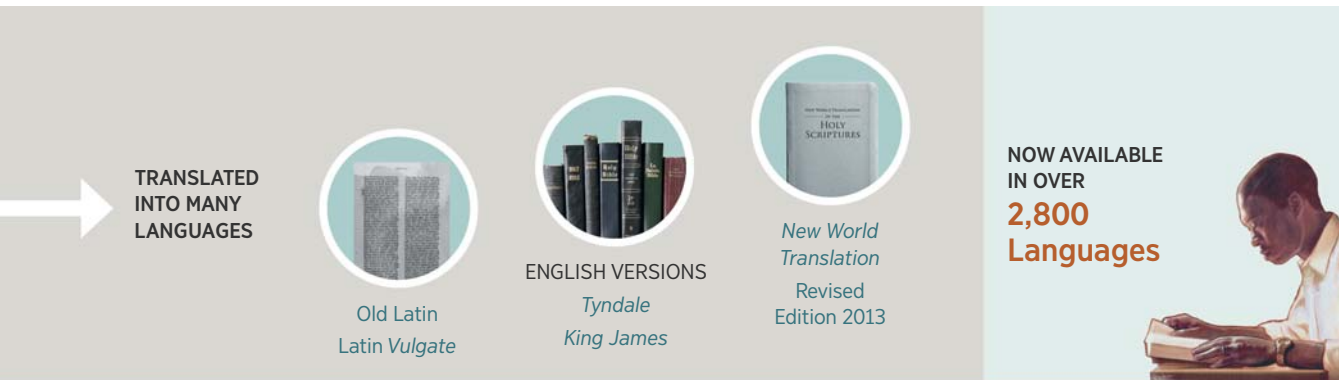
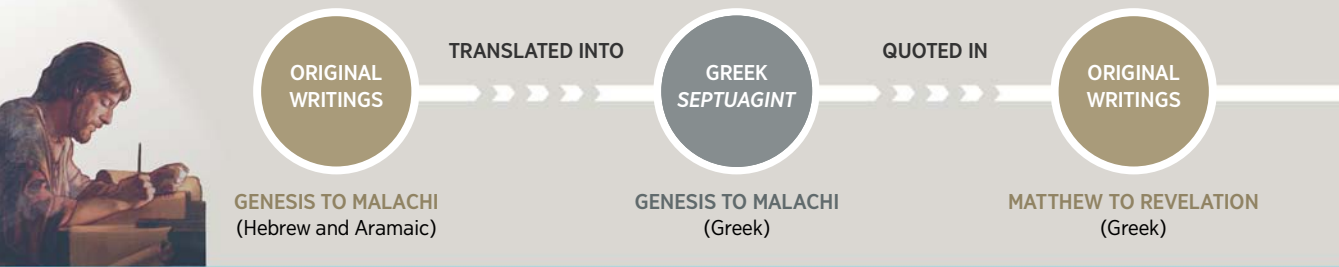
1-3. (a) Why are God’s language and communication superior to those of man? (b) What will we consider in this article?

14) Jehovah God communicated his thoughts and feelings to this firstborn Son. (John 1:14, 17; Col. 1:15) The apostle Paul speaks of ‘the tongues of angels,’ a heavenly form of communication superior to human language.—1 Cor. 13:1.

2 Jehovah has intimate knowledge of billions of intelligent creatures, earthly and heavenly. At any given moment, countless individuals may be praying to him in many languages. Not only does he listen to those prayers but he simultaneously gives direction to and communicates with heavenly beings. To accomplish this, his thoughts, language, and communication must be vastly superior to those of humans. (Read Isaiah 55:8, 9.) Clearly, when Jehovah communicates with humans, he simplifies how he expresses his thoughts so that man can understand them.



COMMUNICATION AND TRANSLATION OF GOD'S WORD



3 We will now consider how this all-wise God has taken steps to ensure clear communication with his people throughout history. We will also see how he adapts the means of communication according to the need and circumstances.

GOD'S WORD TO HUMANS

4 Jehovah communicated with Adam in the garden of Eden, using human language. God likely did so in an ancient form of Hebrew. He later made his thoughts known to Hebrew-speaking Bible writers, such as Moses, Samuel, and David, and they expressed these thoughts in their own words and style. Besides recording direct statements from God, they told of his dealings with his people, including accounts of their faith and love as well as those that revealed their

4. (a) What language did Jehovah use to communicate with Moses, Samuel, and David? (b) What does the Bible contain?

failings and unfaithfulness. All this information is of great value today.—Rom. 15:4.

5 As circumstances changed, God did not restrict his communication with humans to Hebrew. After the Babylonian exile, Aramaic became the everyday language of some of God's people. Perhaps to indicate what was to come, Jehovah inspired the prophets Daniel and Jeremiah and the priest Ezra to record portions of their Bible books in Aramaic.—See the footnotes to Ezra 4:8; 7:12; Jeremiah 10:11; and Daniel 2:4.

6 Alexander the Great later conquered much of the ancient world, and common, or Koine, Greek became an international language. Many Jews began to speak that language, leading to

5. Did Jehovah insist that his people use only Hebrew? Explain.

6. How did God's Word become available in languages other than Hebrew?

the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. This translation, thought to have been done by 72 translators, became known as the *Septuagint*. It was the first translation of the Bible and one of the most important.* The work of so many translators resulted in varied translation styles, from literal to rather free. Nevertheless, the *Septuagint* was viewed as God's Word by Greek-speaking Jews and later by Christians.

7 When God's firstborn came to earth, he likely spoke and taught in what the Bible calls Hebrew. (John 19:20; 20:16; Acts 26:14) First-century Hebrew was evidently influenced by

* *Septuagint* means "Seventy." Translation reportedly began in Egypt in the third century B.C.E. and may have been finished by 150 B.C.E. This translation is still important, as it gives scholars insight into the meaning of certain obscure Hebrew words and passages.

7. What language did Jesus likely use to teach his disciples?

Aramaic, so Jesus may have used some Aramaic expressions. However, he also knew the ancient Hebrew of Moses and the prophets, which was read each week in the synagogues. (Luke 4: 17-19; 24:44, 45; Acts 15:21) In addition, Greek and Latin were spoken in Israel. The Scriptures are silent about whether Jesus also spoke those languages.

8 Jesus' early followers knew Hebrew, but after his death, his disciples spoke other languages. (Read Acts 6:1.) As Christianity spread, much communication among Christians was in Greek. In fact, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which contain inspired records of what Jesus taught and did, were widely distributed in Greek. Thus, the language of many

8, 9. As Christianity spread, why was Greek the primary language used among God's people, and what does this indicate about Jehovah?

disciples was Greek rather than Hebrew.* The letters of the apostle Paul and the other inspired books were also distributed in Greek.

9 It is noteworthy that when writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures, they usually did so from the *Septuagint*. These quotations, which at times vary somewhat from the exact Hebrew wording, are now part of the inspired Scriptures. Thus, the work of imperfect human translators became part of the inspired Word of God, a God who does not favor one culture or language over another.—Read Acts 10:34.

10 Our brief review of God's communication with humans teaches us that Jehovah

* Some feel that Matthew wrote his Gospel in Hebrew and that it was then translated into Greek, perhaps by Matthew himself.

10. What can we conclude about Jehovah's making his Word available to people?

communicates according to need and circumstances. He does not insist that we learn a specific language in order for us to get to know him or his purposes. (Read Zechariah 8:23; Revelation 7:9, 10.) Jehovah directed the inspiration of the Bible, but he allowed it to be presented in different styles.

PRESERVATION OF GOD'S MESSAGE

11 Has God's communication with humans been hindered by the use of different languages and minor variations in translation? No. For example, we may be aware of only a few of the original-language words that Jesus used. (Matt. 27:46; Mark 5:41; 7:34; 14:36) However, Jehovah made sure that Jesus' message was transmitted in Greek and, in time, in other languages. Later, Bible manuscripts were copied

11. Why have language differences not hindered God's communication with people?

again and again by Jews and Christians, preserving the holy writings. These were translated into many more languages. John Chrysostom of the fourth/fifth century C.E. said that by his day, Jesus' teachings had been translated into the languages of the Syrians, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Ethiopians, and innumerable other peoples.

12 Producing the Bible in many languages thwarted the efforts of such men as Roman Emperor Diocletian, who in 303 C.E. ordered that all copies of the Scriptures be destroyed. There were countless attacks on God's Word and on those who translated and distributed it. In the 16th century, William Tyndale set out to translate the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into English, declaring to a well-educated man: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a

12. How was the transmission of the Bible opposed?

boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest.” Tyndale had to flee from England to the European continent to translate and print his translation. Despite a campaign by the clergy to burn publicly all the Bibles that they could find, copies began to circulate in great numbers. Eventually, Tyndale was betrayed and was strangled and burned at the stake, but his Bible translation lived on. It was consulted extensively in the preparation of the widely distributed King James version of the Bible.—Read 2 Timothy 2:9.

13 Granted, some surviving ancient copies of the Bible contain minor mistakes and discrepancies. However, thousands of fragments, manuscripts, and ancient translations have been compared and painstakingly studied by Bible scholars. This study validated the contents of the

13. What has the study of ancient manuscripts shown?

vast majority of Bible passages. The few verses about which there is a degree of uncertainty do not change the overall message. A study of ancient manuscripts convinces sincere Bible students that they have what Jehovah originally inspired Bible writers to record.—Isa. 40:8.*

14 Despite fierce opposition from enemies, Jehovah has seen to it that his Word is the most widely translated book in the history of mankind. Even at a time when many have little or no faith in God, the Bible remains a best seller and is now available, in whole or in part, in over 2,800 languages. No other work comes close to the Bible in breadth of distribution and availability. Some Bible translations are not as clear or

* See Appendix A3 in the revised *New World Translation*; also *A Book for All People*, pp. 7-9, “How Did the Book Survive?”

14. To what extent has the Bible’s message become available?

as reliable as others. Still, it is possible to learn the Bible's basic message of hope and salvation from nearly all translations.

NEED FOR A NEW BIBLE TRANSLATION

15 When early in the last century a small group of diligent Bible students was appointed as “the faithful and discreet slave,” much of their communication with the “domestics” was in English. (Matt. 24:45) That “slave” has put forth great effort to make spiritual food available in more and more languages; the number has now risen to over 700. Like Koine Greek in the first century, English has been a practical base language for translation because it is widely used as a language of commerce and education.

15. (a) How have present-day language barriers been overcome? (b) How has English proved to be a practical language for the dispensing of spiritual food?

16 The basis of the spiritual food is the Bible. In the mid-20th century, the *King James Version* of 1611 was the most widely used English Bible. However, the language in it was largely outdated. And God's name appeared only a few times in the text, whereas ancient Bible manuscripts contained the divine name thousands of times. That version contained some translation errors as well as spurious verses that were not found in authoritative ancient manuscripts. Other available English Bible translations likewise had shortcomings.

17 There was a need for a Bible that would accurately convey in modern speech the intent of the original writings. The New World Bible Translation Committee was formed, and over a

16, 17. (a) What need was felt by God's people? (b) How was this need filled? (c) What hope regarding the *New World Translation* was expressed back in 1950?

ten-year period from 1950 to 1960, their translation was released in six volumes. When releasing the first volume on August 2, 1950, Brother N. H. Knorr told a convention audience: “More and more the need has been felt for a translation in modern speech, in harmony with revealed truth, and yet furnishing us the basis for gaining further truth by faithfully presenting the sense of the original writings; a translation just as understandable to modern readers as the original writings of Christ’s disciples were understandable to the simple, plain, common, lowly readers of their day.” He expressed the hope that this translation would spread its spiritual help to millions of people.

18 That hope was realized in a significant way by 1963 when the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was produced in

18. What decisions have sped up Bible translation?

six more languages—Dutch, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish. In 1989 the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses put in place a department at headquarters to facilitate Bible translation. Then in 2005, Bible translation was made a priority for the languages in which this journal is produced. As a result, the *New World Translation* is now available in whole or in part in over 130 languages.

19 As time passed, it became evident that the English edition of the *New World Translation* needed to be updated to reflect changes in the English language. On the weekend of October 5 and 6, 2013, an audience of 1,413,676 in 31 countries attended or were tied in to the 129th annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. All were thrilled

19. What historic event took place in 2013, and what will the following article discuss?

to hear a member of the Governing Body announce the release of the revised *New World Translation* in English. Many were moved to tears as the attendants passed out copies of the revised Bible. As the verses were read from the revised text, the audience discovered that the rendering of God's Word into English had never been better. The following article will discuss details about this revision, as well as its translation into other languages.

114 *God's Own Book—A Treasure*

(Proverbs 2:1)

1. There is a book that by its many pages,
 Brings peace and joy and hope to humankind.
 Its wondrous thoughts
 are charged with such great power;
 It brings life to the “dead,” sight to the “blind.”
That precious book is God’s own Holy Bible.
 Its words were penned
 by men whom God inspired,
 By men who truly loved their God Jehovah,
 And by his holy spirit they were fired.
2. They wrote a record true of God’s creations,
 How by his might this universe appeared.
 They also told how man at first was sinless
 But how his Paradise then disappeared.
They further told about a certain angel
 Who challenged God and spurned his sov’reignty.
 That challenge led to sin and man’s great sorrow,
 But soon will come Jehovah’s victory.
3. Today we live in times of joy unbounded.
 God’s Kingdom now is here with Christ as Lord.
 This is the day Jehovah grants salvation
 To all who come to him in full accord.
Within his book are found these cheerful tidings;
 A sacred banquet feast on which to feed.
 It offers peace beyond all human thinking;
 This Living Treasure beckons all to read.