

- 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



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

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

(CHORUS)

*God gives us men who have earned our trust,
Men who are loyal and true.
They show concern for his precious flock;
Love them for all that they do.*

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

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!"

the former governors who were before me had burdened the people and had been taking from them 40 silver shekels* for bread and wine each day. Also, their attendants had oppressed the people. But I did not do that^a because of the fear of God.^b

16 Furthermore, I took a hand in the work on this wall, and not a field did we acquire;^c all my attendants were gathered there for the work. **17** There were 150 Jews and deputy rulers dining at my table, as well as those who came to us from the nations. **18** Every day one bull, six choice sheep, and birds were prepared for me,^{*} and once every ten days we had all sorts of wine in abundance. Despite all this I did not demand the food allowance due the governor, because the people were already bearing their burden of service. **19** Do remember me favorably,^{*} O my God, for all that I have done in behalf of this people.^d

6 Now as soon as San-bal'lat, To-bi'ah,^e Ge'shem the Arabian,^f and the rest of our enemies were told that I had rebuilt the wall^g and that there were no gaps left in it (although up to that time I had not set up the doors in the gates),^h **2** San-bal'lat and Ge'shem immediately sent this message to me: "Come, and let us set a time to meet together in the villages of the Valley Plain of O'no."ⁱ But they were scheming to harm me. **3** So I sent messengers to them, saying: "I am engaged in a great work, and I am not able to go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it to come to you?" **4** They sent me the same message four times, and I gave them the same reply each time.

5:15 *A shekel equaled 11.4 g (0.367 oz t). See App. B14. 5:18 *Or "at my expense." 5:19 *Or "for good."

CHAP. 5

a 2Co 11:9
2Co 12:14

b Ne 5:9

c Ac 20:33
2Co 12:17

d Ne 13:14
Ps 18:24
Isa 38:3
Mal 3:16

CHAP. 6

e Ne 2:10
Ne 4:3

f Ne 2:19
Ne 4:7

g Da 9:25

h Ne 3:1, 3

i 1Ch 8:12
Ne 11:31, 35

Second Col.

a Ne 2:19

b Ezz 4:14, 15

c Ezz 4:4

d Ps 68:35
Ps 138:3
Isa 41:10

e Nu 1:51
Nu 18:7
2Ch 26:18, 19

f Ne 2:10

g Ne 4:3, 4

5 Then San-bal'lat sent his attendant to me with the same message a fifth time, with an open letter in his hand.

6 There it was written: "Among the nations it has been heard, and Ge'shem^a is also saying it, that you and the Jews are scheming to rebel.^b That is why you are building the wall; and according to these reports you are to become their king. **7** Also, you have appointed prophets to proclaim about you throughout Jerusalem, 'There is a king in Judah!' And now these things will be told to the king. So come, and let us discuss this together."

8 However, I sent him this reply: "None of the things you are saying have taken place; you are making them up out of your own imagination."^{*} **9** For they were all trying to frighten us, saying: "Their hands will slacken in the work, and it will not be done."^c Now, I pray, strengthen my hands.^d

10 Then I went to the house of She-mai'ah the son of De-la'iah the son of Me-het'a-bel while he was confined there. He said: "Let us set a time to meet at the house of the true God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple, for they are coming to kill you. They are coming to kill you by night." **11** But I said: "Should a man like me run away? Can a man like me go into the temple and live?^e I will not go in!"

12 Then I realized that God had not sent him, but that To-bi'ah and San-bal'lat^f had hired him to speak this prophecy against me. **13** He had been hired to frighten me and to cause me to sin, so that they would have grounds to damage my reputation in order to reproach me.

14 Do remember, O my God, To-bi'ah^g and San-bal'lat and

6:8 *Lit., "from your heart."

these deeds, and also No-a-di'ah the prophetess and the rest of the prophets who were constantly trying to frighten me.

15 So the wall was completed on the 25th day of E'lul,* in 52 days.

16 As soon as all our enemies heard of it and all the surrounding nations saw it, they became greatly ashamed,*^a and they realized that it was with our God's help that this work had been done. 17 In those days the nobles^b of Judah were sending many letters to To-bi'ah, and To-bi'ah would reply to them. 18 Many in Judah swore allegiance to him, for he was a son-in-law of Shec-a-ni'ah the son of A'rah,^c and his son Je-ho-ha'nan had married the daughter of Meshul'lam^d the son of Ber-e-chi'ah. 19 Also, they would constantly tell me good things about him and then report to him what I said. Then To-bi'ah would send letters to frighten me.^e

7 As soon as the wall had been rebuilt^f I set up the doors;^g then the gatekeepers,^h the singers,ⁱ and the Levites^j were appointed. 2 I then put my brother Ha-na'ni^k in charge of Jerusalem, along with Han-a-ni'ah the chief of the Fortress,^l for he was a most trustworthy man and feared the true God^m more than many others. 3 So I said to them: "The gates of Jerusalem should not be opened until the heat of the day, and while they are standing guard, they should shut the doors and bolt them. And assign the inhabitants of Jerusalem as guards, each to his assigned guardpost and each in front of his own house." 4 Now the city was spacious and large, and there were few people inside it,ⁿ and the houses had not been rebuilt.

6:15 *See App. B15. 6:16 *Lit., "they fell greatly in their own eyes."

CHAP. 6

- a Ne 4:7
Ps 129:5
b Ne 5:7
c Ezz 2:1, 5
d Ne 3:4
e Ne 6:9
Ne 6:10, 13

CHAP. 7

- f Ne 2:17
Ne 6:15
Da 9:25
g Ne 3:1, 6, 13
h 1Ch 26:1
Ezz 2:1, 42
i 1Ch 9:33
Ezz 2:1, 41
j Ezz 3:8
k Ne 1:2
l Ne 2:8
m Ne 5:15
n Ne 11:1

Second Col.

- a 1Ch 9:1
Ezz 2:59, 62
b 2Ki 25:1
Da 3:1
c 2Ki 24:12, 14
2Ch 36:17, 20
Jer 39:9
Jer 52:15, 28
d Ezz 2:1
e Ezz 1:8, 11
Zec 4:9
Mt 1:12
f Ezz 3:8
Ezz 5:2
Hag 1:14
Zec 3:1
g Ezz 2:2-35
h Ne 6:17, 18
i Ezz 10:30, 44
j Ezz 8:1, 9
k Ezz 10:26, 44
l Jos 11:19
2Sa 21:2
Ne 3:7
m Jos 21:8, 18
Jer 1:1
n 1Sa 7:2
o Jos 18:25, 28
p Jos 18:21, 24
q 1Sa 13:5
r 1Ki 12:32
s Jos 7:2

5 But my God put it into my heart to gather together the nobles and the deputy rulers and the people to be enrolled genealogically.^a Then I found the book of genealogical enrollment of those who first came up, and I found written in it:

6 And these were the people of the province* who came up out of the captivity of the exiles, those whom King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar^b of Babylon had exiled^c and who later returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own city,^d 7 those who came with Ze-rub'ba-bel,^e Jesh'u-a,^f Ne-he-mi'ah, Az-a-ri'ah, Ra-a-mi'ah, Na-ham'a-ni, Mor'de-cai, Bil'shan, Mis'pe-reth, Big'vai, Ne'-hum, and Ba'a-nah.

The number of the Israelite men included:^g 8 the sons of Pa'rosh, 2,172; 9 the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah, 372; 10 the sons of A'rah,^h 652; 11 the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab,ⁱ of the sons of Jesh'u-a and Jo'ab,^j 2,818; 12 the sons of E'lam,^k 1,254; 13 the sons of Zac'cai, 760; 15 the sons of Bin'nu-i, 648; 16 the sons of Be'-bai, 628; 17 the sons of Az'gad, 2,322; 18 the sons of Ad-o-ni'-kam, 667; 19 the sons of Big'vai, 2,067; 20 the sons of A'din, 655; 21 the sons of A'ter, of Hez-e-ki'-ah, 98; 22 the sons of Ha'-shum, 328; 23 the sons of Be'-zai, 324; 24 the sons of Ha'riph, 112; 25 the sons of Gib'e-on,^l 95; 26 the men of Beth'le-hem and Ne-to'phah, 188; 27 the men of An'a-thoth,^m 128; 28 the men of Beth-az'ma-veth, 42; 29 the men of Kir'i-ath-je'a-rim,ⁿ Che-phi'-rah, and Be-er'oth,^o 743; 30 the men of Ra'mah and Ge'ba,^p 621; 31 the men of Mich'mas,^q 122; 32 the men of Beth'el^r and A'i,^s 123; 33 the men of the other Ne'-bo, 52; 34 the sons of the other

7:6 *Or "jurisdictional district."

E'lam, 1,254; **35** the sons of Ha'rim, 320; **36** the sons of Jer'icho, 345; **37** the sons of Lod, Ha'did, and O'no,^a 721; **38** the sons of Se-na'ah, 3,930.

39 The priests:^b the sons of Je-da'iah of the house of Jesh'u-a, 973; **40** the sons of Im'mer, 1,052; **41** the sons of Pash'hur,^c 1,247; **42** the sons of Ha'rim,^d 1,017.

43 The Levites:^e the sons of Jesh'u-a, of Kad'mi-el,^f of the sons of Ho'de-vah, 74. **44** The singers:^g the sons of A'saph,^h 148. **45** The gatekeepers:ⁱ the sons of Shal'lum, the sons of A'ter, the sons of Tal'mon, the sons of Ak'kub,^j the sons of Hat'i'ta, the sons of Sho'bai, 138.

46 The temple servants:^{*k} the sons of Zi'ha, the sons of Ha-su'pha, the sons of Tab'ba'oth, **47** the sons of Ke'ros, the sons of Si'a, the sons of Pa'don, **48** the sons of Le-ba'nah, the sons of Hag'a-bah, the sons of Sal'mai, **49** the sons of Ha'nan, the sons of Gid'del, the sons of Ga'har, **50** the sons of Re'a'iah, the sons of Re'zin, the sons of Ne-ko'da, **51** the sons of Gaz-zam, the sons of Uz'za, the sons of Pa-se'ah, **52** the sons of Be'sai, the sons of Me-u'nim, the sons of Ne-phush'e-sim, **53** the sons of Bak'buk, the sons of Ha-ku'pha, the sons of Har'hur, **54** the sons of Baz'lith, the sons of Me-hi'da, the sons of Har'sha, **55** the sons of Bar'kos, the sons of Sis'e-ra, the sons of Te'mah, **56** the sons of Ne-zi'ah, the sons of Ha-ti'pha.

57 The sons of the servants of Sol'o-mon:^l the sons of So'tai, the sons of So-ph'e'reth, the sons of Pe-ri'da, **58** the sons of Ja'a-la, the sons of Dar'kon, the sons of Gid'del, **59** the sons of Sheph-a-ti'ah, the sons of

7:46 *Or "The Nethinim." Lit., "The given ones."

CHAP. 7

- a Ne 6:2
Ne 11:31, 35
- b Ezz 2:36-39
- c Ezz 10:22, 44
- d 1Ch 24:3, 8
- e Ezz 2:40
- f Ezz 3:9
- g 1Ch 25:7
Ezz 2:41
- h 1Ch 6:31, 39
- i Ezz 2:42
Ne 7:1
- j 1Ch 9:2, 17
Ne 11:19
Ne 12:25
- k Jos 9:3, 27
1Ch 9:2
Ezz 2:43-54
Ezz 2:58
- l Ezz 2:55-58
Ne 11:3

Second Col.

- a Jos 9:3, 27
Ne 3:26
- b Ezz 2:59-63
- c 1Ch 24:3, 10
Ne 3:21
- d 2Sa 17:27-29
2Sa 19:31
1Ki 2:7
- e Nu 18:7
- f Ne 8:9
Ne 10:1
- g Le 2:3
Nu 18:8, 9
- h Ex 28:30
1Sa 28:6
- i Ezz 2:64-67
- j Le 25:44
- k Ex 15:21
1Sa 18:6
- l Ezz 2:68, 69

Hat'til, the sons of Po'che-reth-haz-ze-ba'im, the sons of A'mon. **60** All the temple servants^{*a} and the sons of the servants of Sol'o-mon were 392.

61 And these went up from Tel-me'lah, Tel-har'sha, Che'rub, Ad'don, and Im'mer, but they were unable to verify their paternal house and their origin, as to whether they were Israelites:^b **62** the sons of De-la'iah, the sons of To-bi'ah, the sons of Ne-ko'da, 642. **63** And of the priests: the sons of Ha-bai'ah, the sons of Hak'koz,^c the sons of Bar-zil'lai, who took a wife from the daughters of Bar-zil'lai^d the Gil'e-ad-ite and was called by their name. **64** These looked for their records to establish their genealogy, but they could not be found, so they were disqualified from the priesthood.^{*e} **65** The governor^{*f} told them that they should not eat from the most holy things^g until there was a priest who could consult the U'rim and Thum'mim.^h

66 The total number of the entire congregation was 42,360,ⁱ **67** apart from their male and female slaves,^j who were 7,337; they also had 245 male and female singers.^k **68** Their horses were 736, their mules 245, **69** their camels 435, their donkeys 6,720.

70 Some of the heads of the paternal houses contributed to the work.^l The governor^{*m} gave to the treasury 1,000 gold drachmas,ⁿ 50 bowls, and 530 priests' robes.^m **71** And some of the

7:60 *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones." 7:64 *Or "were excluded from the priesthood as unclean." 7:65 *Or "the Tirshatha," a Persian title for a governor of a province. 7:70 *Or "The Tirshatha," a Persian title for a governor of a province. ⁿGenerally equated with the Persian gold daric that weighed 8.4 g (0.27 oz t). Not the drachma of the Greek Scriptures. See App. B14.

heads of the paternal houses gave to the project treasury 20,000 gold drachmas and 2,200 silver mi'nas.* **72** And the rest of the people gave 20,000 gold drachmas, 2,000 silver mi'nas, and 67 priests' robes.

73 And the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers,^a some of the people, the temple servants,* and all the rest of Israel[#] settled in their cities.^b When the seventh month arrived,^c the Israelites had settled in their cities.^d

8 All the people then gathered with one accord at the public square in front of the Water Gate,^e and they told Ez'ra^f the copyist* to bring the book of the Law of Moses,^g which Jehovah had commanded Israel.^h **2** So Ez'ra the priest brought the Law before the congregationⁱ of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.^j **3** And he read aloud from it^k before the public square in front of the Water Gate, from daybreak until midday, to the men, the women, and all who could understand; and the people listened attentively^l to the book of the Law. **4** And Ez'ra the copyist* was standing on a wooden podium made for the occasion; and standing alongside him on his right were Mat-ti-thi'ah, She'ma, A-na'i-ah, U-ri'ah, Hil-ki'ah, and Ma-a-sei'ah; and on his left were Pe-dai'ah, Mish'a-el, Mal-chi'jah,^m Ha'shum, Hash-bad'da-nah, Zech-a-ri'ah, and Me-shul'lam.

5 Ez'ra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people. As he opened it, all the people

7:71 *A mina in the Hebrew Scriptures equaled 570 g (18.35 oz t). See App. B14. **7:73** *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones." [#]Lit., "all Israel." **8:1, 4, 9** *Or "scribe."

CHAP. 7

a Ne 7:1

b Ne 11:20

c Le 23:24, 27
1Ki 8:2
Ezr 3:1

d Ezr 2:70

CHAP. 8

e Ne 3:26
Ne 12:37

f Ezr 7:6

g De 31:9
Jos 1:8

h Le 27:34

i De 31:12
2Ch 17:8, 9
Mal 2:7

j Le 23:24
1Ki 8:2

k Ac 13:15
Ac 15:21

l Ac 16:14
Ac 17:11

m Ne 12:40, 42

Second Col.

a De 27:26

b Ne 9:4

c Ezr 8:33
Ne 11:16

d De 33:8, 10

e Lu 24:27
Ac 8:30, 31

f Ezr 7:11

g Le 23:24

h Es 9:19

i Ps 126:1-3

j Ne 8:8

stood up. **6** Then Ez'ra praised Jehovah the true God, the great One, at which all the people answered, "Amen! Amen!"^a and lifted up their hands. They then bowed low and prostrated themselves to Jehovah with their faces to the ground. **7** And Jesh'u-a, Ba'ni, She-re-bi'ah,^b Ja'min, Ak'kub, Shab'be-thai, Ho-di'ah, Ma'a-sei'ah, Ke-li'ta, Az-a-ri'ah, Jo'za-bad,^c Ha'nan, and Pe-la'iah, who were Levites, were explaining the Law to the people,^d while the people remained standing. **8** And they continued reading aloud from the book, from the Law of the true God, clearly explaining it and putting meaning into it; so they helped the people to understand what was being read.^e

9 And Ne-he-mi'ah, who was then the governor,^f Ez'ra^f the priest and copyist,* and the Levites who were instructing the people said to all the people: "This day is holy to Jehovah your God.^g Do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping as they heard the words of the Law. **10** He said to them: "Go, eat the choice things* and drink what is sweet, and send portions of food^h to those who have nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel sad, for the joy of Jehovah is your stronghold."[#] **11** And the Levites were calming all the people, saying: "Be quiet! for this day is holy, and do not feel sad." **12** So all the people went away to eat and to drink and to send out portions of food and to carry on a great rejoicing,ⁱ for they understood the words that had been made known to them.^j

8:6 *Or "So be it!" **8:8** *Or "they gave understanding in the reading." **8:9** *Or "the Tirshatha," a Persian title for a governor of a province. **8:10** *Lit., "fatty things." [#]Or "strength."

13 And on the second day, the heads of the paternal houses of all the people, the priests, and the Levites gathered around Ez'ra the copyist* to gain further insight into the words of the Law. 14 Then they found written in the Law that Jehovah had commanded through Moses that the Israelites should dwell in booths* during the festival in the seventh month,^a 15 and that they should make proclamation^b and announce throughout all their cities and throughout Jerusalem, saying: "Go out to the mountainous region and bring in leafy branches from olive trees, oil trees, myrtle and palm trees, and the leafy branches of other trees to make booths, according to what is written."

16 So the people went out and brought them in to make booths for themselves, each one on his roof, as well as in their courtyards, in the courtyards of the house of the true God,^c in the public square of the Water Gate,^d and in the public square of the Gate of E'phra-im.^e 17 Thus all those of the congregation who had come back from the captivity made booths and were dwelling in the booths, for the Israelites had not done it this way from the days of Joshua^f the son of Nun until that day, so that there was very great rejoicing.^g 18 And day by day there was a reading from the book of the Law of the true God,^h from the first day until the last day. And they held the festival for seven days, and there was a solemn assembly on the eighth day, as was required.ⁱ

9 On the 24th day of this month the Israelites assembled; they were fasting with sackcloth and dust on them-

8:13 *Or "scribe." 8:14 *Or "temporary shelters."

CHAP. 8

a Le 23:34, 42
De 16:13, 16
Joh 7:2

b Le 23:4

c 1Ki 6:36
1Ki 7:12
2Ch 4:9
2Ch 20:5

d Ne 3:26
Ne 8:1, 3

e 2Ki 14:13
Ne 12:38, 39

f Jos 1:1

g De 16:14, 15

h De 31:10-12

i Le 23:34, 36

Second Col.

CHAP. 9

a Jos 7:6
Jon 3:5, 6

b Ezz 9:1, 2
Ne 13:3

c Le 26:40
Ezz 9:6
Ps 106:6
Da 9:8

d Ne 8:3, 8

e Ne 8:7

f Ne 8:4

g Jer 33:10, 11

h De 6:4

i Ge 12:1, 2

j Ge 11:31

k Ge 17:5

l Ge 22:10-12

m Ge 15:18

elves.^a 2 Those of Israelite descent then separated themselves from all the foreigners,^b and they stood and confessed their own sins and the errors of their fathers.^c 3 Then they stood up at their place and read aloud from the book of the Law^d of Jehovah their God for a fourth of the day;^e and for another fourth of it they were confessing and bowing down to Jehovah their God.

4 Jesh'u-a, Ba'ni, Kad'mi-el, Sheb-a-ni'ah, Bun'ni, She-re-bi'ah,^e Ba'ni, and Che-na'ni stood on the raised platform^f of the Levites, and they cried out with a loud voice to Jehovah their God. 5 And the Levites Jesh'u-a, Kad'mi-el, Ba'ni, Hash-ab-neh'ah, She-re-bi'ah, Ho-di'ah, Sheb-a-ni'ah, and Peth-a-hi'ah said: "Stand up and praise Jehovah your God throughout all eternity."^g And let them praise your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

6 "You alone are Jehovah;^h you made the heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens and all their army, the earth and all that is on it, the sea and all that is in them. And you preserve all of them alive, and the army of the heavens are bowing down to you. 7 You are Jehovah the true God, who chose A'bramⁱ and brought him out of Ur^j of the Chal-de'ans and gave him the name Abraham.^k 8 You found his heart faithful before you,^l so you made a covenant with him to give him the land of the Ca'-naan-ites, the Hit'tites, the Am'-or-ites, the Per'iz-zites, the Jeb'-u-sites, and the Gir'ga-shites, to give it to his offspring;^m and you kept your promises, because you are righteous.

9:3 *Or "for three hours." 9:5 *Or "from eternity to eternity." 9:8 *Lit., "seed."

- 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



Ne 5:1-7—Nehemiah listened to the people and took action (w06 2/1 9 ¶2)

5:7—In what sense did Nehemiah begin “finding fault with the nobles and the deputy rulers”? These men were exacting usury from their fellow Jews in violation of the Mosaic Law. (Leviticus 25:36; Deuteronomy 23:19) Moreover, the interest the lenders were demanding was high. If demanded monthly, “the hundredth” would be equivalent to 12 percent a year. (Nehemiah 5:11) It was cruel to impose this on people already heavily burdened with taxes and a food shortage. Nehemiah found fault with the rich in that, using God’s Law, he reproved and rebuked them and thus exposed their wrongdoing.

Ne 5:14-19—Nehemiah showed humility, unselfishness, and discretion (w06 2/1 10 ¶4)

5:14-19. For Christian overseers, Governor Nehemiah is a splendid example of humility, unselfishness, and discretion. Though zealous in enforcing God’s Law, he did not domineer over others for selfish gain. Rather, he showed concern for the oppressed and the poor. In displaying generosity, Nehemiah set an outstanding example for all of God’s servants.

Ne 8:8-12—Nehemiah participated in providing spiritual instruction to the people (w06 2/1 11 ¶4)

8:8. As teachers of God’s Word, we ‘put meaning into it’ by using good enunciation and oral emphasis and by expounding on the Scriptures correctly, making clear their application.

Ne 6:5—Why did Sanballat send “an open letter” to Nehemiah? (w06 2/1 9 ¶3)

6:5—Since confidential letters were usually placed in a sealed bag, why did Sanballat send “an open letter” to Nehemiah? Sanballat may have intended to make public the false charges brought forth by sending them in an open letter. Perhaps he hoped that this would anger Nehemiah so much that he would leave the building work and come to defend himself. Or Sanballat may have thought that the contents of the letter would cause such alarm among the Jews that they would stop their work altogether. Nehemiah refused to be intimidated and calmly continued in his God-assigned work.

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

¹⁵ Third, Nehemiah’s enemies used a traitor, the Israelite Shemaiah, to try to make Nehemiah break God’s Law. Shemaiah said to Nehemiah: “Let us meet by appointment at the house of the true God, within the temple, and let us close the doors of the temple; for they are coming in to kill you.” Shemaiah said that Nehemiah was about to be assassinated but that he could save his life by hiding in the temple. However, Nehemiah was not a priest. He would commit a sin by hiding in the house of God. Would he break God’s Law in an attempt to save his life? Nehemiah responded: “Who is there like me that could enter into the temple and live? I shall not enter!” Why did Nehemiah not fall into the trap that had been set for him? Because he knew that although Shemaiah was a fellow Israelite, “it was not God that had sent him.” After all, a true prophet would never advise him to break God’s Law. Again, Nehemiah did not let himself be conquered by evil opposers. Shortly thereafter he could report: “At length the wall came to completion on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.”—Nehemiah 6:10-15; Numbers 1:51; 18:7.

THE ORIGIN OF AN ENEMY

⁴ The first book of the Bible tells of an opposer of God who showed up in the garden of Eden. He is described as “the serpent,” but he was not a mere animal. The last book of the Bible identifies him as “the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth.” He is also called “the *original* serpent.” (Genesis 3:1; Revelation 12:9) This powerful angel, or invisible spirit creature, used a serpent to speak to Eve, even as a skilled person can make it seem that his voice is coming from a nearby doll or dummy. That spirit person had no doubt been present when God prepared the earth for humans.—Job 38:4, 7.

⁵ Since all of Jehovah’s creations are perfect, however, who made this “Devil,” this “Satan”? Put simply, *one of the powerful spirit sons of God turned himself into the Devil*. How was this possible? Well, today a person who was once decent and honest may become a thief. How does that happen? The 4, 5. (a) Who actually spoke to Eve by means of a serpent? (b) How might a formerly decent, honest person become a thief?

person may allow a wrong desire to develop in his heart. If he *keeps thinking about it*, that wrong desire may become very strong. Then if the opportunity presents itself, he may act upon the bad desire that he has been thinking about.—James 1:13-15.

⁶ This happened in the case of Satan the Devil. He apparently heard God tell Adam and Eve to have children and to fill the earth with their offspring. (Genesis 1:27, 28) ‘Why, all these humans could worship me rather than God!’ Satan evidently thought. So a wrong desire built up in his heart. Eventually, he took action to deceive Eve by telling her lies about God. (Genesis 3:1-5) He thus became a “Devil,” which means “Slanderer.” At the same time, he became “Satan,” which means “Opposer.”

⁷ By using lies and trickery, Satan the Devil caused Adam and Eve to disobey God. (Genesis 2:17; 3:6) As a result, they eventually died, as God had said they would if they disobeyed. (Genesis 3:17-19) Since Adam became imperfect when he

6. How did a powerful spirit son of God become Satan the Devil?

7. (a) Why did Adam and Eve die? (b) Why do all of Adam’s offspring grow old and die?

62 *To Whom Do We Belong?* (Romans 14:8)

1. To whom do you belong?

Which god do you now obey?

Your master is he to whom you bow.

He is your god; you serve him now.

You cannot serve two gods;

Both masters can never share

The love of your heart in its ev'ry part.

To neither you would be fair.

2. To whom do you belong?

Which god will you now obey?

For one god is false and one is true,

So make your choice; it's up to you.

Shall Caesar of this world

Possess your allegiance still?

Or will you obey the true God today

By always doing his will?

3. To whom do I belong?

Jehovah I will obey.

My Father in heaven I shall serve;

I'll pay my vows without reserve.

He bought me at great cost;

Devoted to him I'll stay.

The death of his Son my ransom has won;

His name I'll honor each day.

(See also Josh. 24:15; Ps. 116:14, 18; 2 Tim. 2:19.)

- 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



Are You “Reaching Out”?

FERNANDO* was nervous. Two elders had asked to speak with him in private. After a number of recent visits of the circuit overseer, the elders had explained to him what he needed to do in order to qualify for additional privileges in the congregation. As time went on, Fernando began wondering if he would ever be appointed an elder. Now the circuit overseer had recently visited the congregation again. What would the elders say this time?

Fernando listened as one of the elders spoke to him. The brother alluded to 1 Timothy 3:1 and said that the congregation elders had received word that he had been appointed an elder. Fernando sat up straight and asked, “What did you say?” The brother repeated what he had said, and a smile appeared on Fernando’s face. Thereafter, when his appointment was announced to the

congregation, there were smiles on the faces of all.

Is it wrong to desire privileges in the congregation? Not at all. According to 1 Timothy 3:1, “if a man is reaching out to be an overseer, he is desirous of a fine work.” Many Christian men apply that encouragement and make spiritual progress to qualify for privileges in the congregation. The result is that God’s people are blessed with tens of thousands of capable elders and ministerial servants. But because of the increase seen in the congregations, there is a need for more brothers to reach out. What is the proper way to do so? And should those aspiring to be an overseer worry about the matter, as Fernando did?

WHAT DOES “REACHING OUT” MEAN?

The Bible phrase “reaching out” translates a Greek verb that has the sense of desiring earnestly, stretching out. That may make you think of a

* Names in this article have been changed.



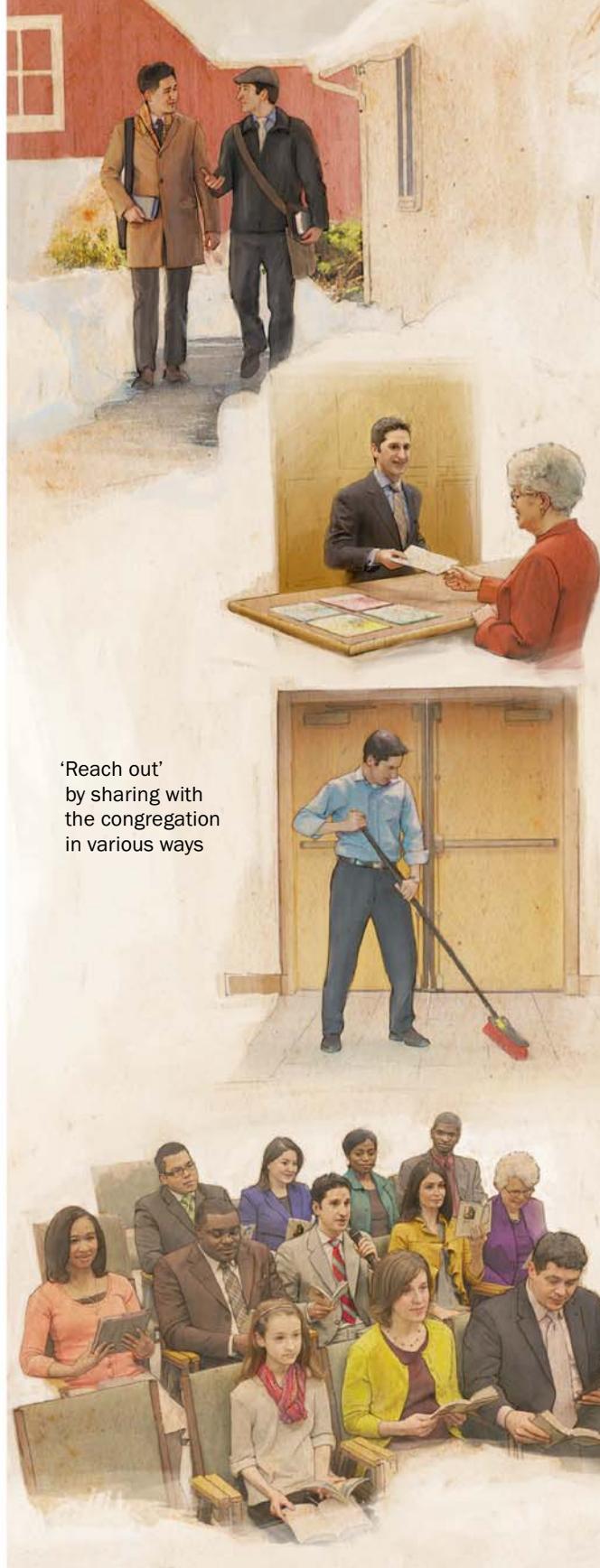
person straining to grasp an attractive piece of fruit hanging from a tree. But reaching out does not mean grasping greedily at the privilege “to be an overseer.” Why not? Because the goal of those sincerely interested in serving as elders should be to do “a fine work” rather than to attain a position.

Many of the requirements related to this fine work are listed at 1 Timothy 3:2-7 and Titus 1:5-9. Regarding those high standards, a longtime elder named Raymond explains: “To me, what matters most is what we are. Speaking and teaching are important, but those abilities do not override the need to be irreprehensible, moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, hospitable, and reasonable.”

A brother who is truly reaching out shows himself to be irreprehensible by avoiding every sort of dishonesty and uncleanness. He is moderate in habits, sound in mind, orderly, and reasonable; hence, his fellow worshippers trust him to take the lead and help them with their problems. In being hospitable, he is a source of encouragement to young ones and those new in the truth. He brings comfort and assistance to the sick and the elderly because he is a lover of goodness. He develops these qualities to benefit others, not to advance his prospects of being appointed.*

The body of elders is happy to give counsel and encouragement, but satisfying the Scriptural requirements falls primarily on the individual who is reaching out. Henry, an experienced overseer, says: “If you are reaching out, work hard to prove that you are qualified.” Referring to Ecclesiastes 9: 10, he explains: “‘Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might.’ Whatever assignment the elders give you, do your best. Love all the work you are given to do in the congregation, including sweeping the floor. In time, your work and efforts will be recognized.” If you wish to serve as an elder some day, be hardworking and trustworthy in all aspects of sacred service. Hu-

* The principles stated in this article also apply to those desirous of serving as ministerial servants. The requirements that they must meet are found at 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12, 13.



‘Reach out’ by sharing with the congregation in various ways

mility, not prideful ambition, should characterize your life.—Matt. 23:8-12.

REJECT INCORRECT THINKING AND ACTIONS

Some who are desirous of privileges in the congregation may be tempted to drop hints or may try to influence the body of elders. Others show displeasure when the elders offer them counsel. Such ones should ask themselves, ‘Do I want to further my own interests, or do I want humbly to care for Jehovah’s sheep?’

Those reaching out should not forget another requirement for elders, that of “becoming examples to the flock.” (1 Pet. 5:1-3) He who is an example to the congregation avoids devious thinking and actions. He cultivates patient endurance whether he is presently appointed or not. Becoming an elder does not miraculously free a man of human defects. (Num. 12:3; Ps. 106:32, 33) Also, a brother may not be ‘conscious of anything against himself,’ but others may have some reason to hold a less than favorable opinion of him. (1 Cor. 4:4) Hence, if the elders offer you sincere, Bible-based counsel, strive to listen without irritation. Then work at putting their counsel into practice.

WHAT IF THE WAIT IS LONG?

A number of brothers wait what seems to them to be a long time before they are appointed. If you have been “reaching out to be an overseer” for a number of years, do you sometimes get anxious? If so, note these inspired words: “Expectation postponed makes the heart sick, but a desire realized is a tree of life.”—Prov. 13:12.

A person may feel heartsick when a cherished goal seems to be unattainable. Abraham felt that way. Jehovah promised him a son, but years passed during which he and Sarah had no children. (Gen. 12:1-3, 7) In his advancing age, Abraham cried out: “Sovereign Lord Jehovah, what will you give me, seeing that I continue childless . . . You have given me no offspring.” Jehovah reassured him that His promise regarding a son would come true. But at least 14 more

years passed before God carried out his word.—Gen. 15:2-4; 16:16; 21:5.

While he was waiting, did Abraham lose his joy in serving Jehovah? No. He never doubted God’s promise. He continued to look forward to a good outcome. The apostle Paul wrote: “After Abraham had shown patience, he obtained this promise.” (Heb. 6:15) In the end, Almighty God blessed that faithful man far beyond his expectations. What can you learn from Abraham?

If you would like to serve as an elder but that has not happened despite the passing of years, continue to trust in Jehovah. Do not lose your joy in his service. Warren, who has helped many brothers to make spiritual progress, explains why: “The process of qualifying for an appointment follows a progression. Over time, a

The Value of Good Communication

A brother who is “reaching out to be an overseer” or to have other privileges in Jehovah’s organization appreciates words of commendation. (1 Tim. 3:1) When loving elders offer clear, kind counsel and correction, their words can make the brother’s “heart rejoice.” The one receiving attention in that way usually detects ‘sweetness’ in such helpful expressions. He will feel a strong inclination to accept spiritual help and put it into practice.—Prov. 27:9.

At times, however, a person’s attitude may make others hesitate to offer him Scriptural advice. Philip recalls that for several years his actions showed the congregation that he did not want more responsibility. When his thinking changed, he ‘sought to find knowledge’ and asked the elders for direction. He reports, “The brothers gave me helpful, practical counsel.” Philip put that counsel into practice. He now serves as an elder.—Prov. 18:15.

brother's abilities and his attitude are revealed little by little in the way he handles himself and takes care of his assignments. Some believe that they are successful only if they get this privilege or that appointment. Such thinking is erroneous and can turn into an obsession. If you serve Jehovah faithfully wherever you are and whatever you do, you are a success."

One brother had waited for over a decade when he was appointed an elder. Referring to a well-known description in the book of Ezekiel, chapter 1, he relates the lesson he learned: "Jehovah drives his chariot, his organization, at the speed he chooses. What is important is not our time but Jehovah's time. In the matter of wanting to serve as an elder, it's not about me—what I want or what I wish I could be. What I want may not be what Jehovah knows I need."

If you hope to do the fine work of a Christian overseer some day, reach out by contributing to the happiness of the congregation. If time seems to pass slowly, fight anxiety and impatience. Raymond, mentioned earlier, states: "Ambition is an enemy of contentment. Those who are always anxious miss the rich joy that comes from serving

Jehovah." Cultivate more fully the fruitage of God's spirit, especially patience. Strive to improve your spirituality through your study of the Scriptures. Expand your share in preaching the good news and studying the Bible with interested ones. Lead your family in spiritual activities and in family worship. Enjoy each opportunity you have to be with your brothers and sisters. As you move forward toward your goal, you will enjoy the journey.

Working to qualify for privileges in the congregation is a blessed opportunity from Jehovah; neither he nor his organization desires that those reaching out become frustrated and unhappy in his service. God supports and blesses all who serve him with pure motives. As is true of all his blessings, "he adds no pain with it."—Prov. 10:22.

Even if you have been reaching out for quite some time, you can still make excellent spiritual progress. As you strive to develop the needed qualities and work hard in the congregation while not neglecting your family, you will establish a record of service that will not be forgotten. May serving Jehovah always be a delight for you, whatever assignments you receive.



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?

not some mere prophet like Samuel, but a king to be their judge. The nations round about had kings, and the Israelites wanted one too! How did Samuel react? We read that “the thing was bad in the eyes of Samuel.”—1 Sam. 8:5, 6.

¹⁸ Note how Jehovah responded when Samuel took the matter to him in prayer: “Listen to the voice of the people as respects all that they say to you; for it is not you whom they have rejected, but it is I whom they have rejected from being king over them.” How comforting for Samuel, yet how awful an insult those people had flung at Almighty God! Jehovah told his prophet to warn the Israelites of the high price they would pay for having a human king. When Samuel complied, they insisted: “No, but a king is what will come to be over us.” Ever obedient to his God, Samuel went and anointed the king whom Jehovah chose.—1 Sam. 8:7-19.

¹⁹ How, though, did Samuel obey? In a resentful, **18. How did Jehovah comfort Samuel and yet reveal the seriousness of Israel’s sin?**
19, 20. (a) In what ways did Samuel obey Jehovah’s direction to anoint Saul as king of Israel? (b) How did Samuel continue to help Jehovah’s people?

perfunctory way? Did he allow disappointment to poison his heart, letting bitterness take root? Many a man might respond that way in such a situation, but not Samuel. He anointed Saul and acknowledged that the man was Jehovah's own choice. He kissed Saul, a sign of welcome and submission to the new king. And he said to the people: "Have you seen the one whom Jehovah has chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?"—1 Sam. 10:1, 24.

²⁰ Samuel focused, not on faults, but on the good in the man whom Jehovah had chosen. As for himself, he focused on his own record of integrity to God rather than on the approval of fickle people. (1 Sam. 12:1-4) He also worked faithfully at his own assignment, counseling God's people about the spiritual dangers they faced and encouraging them to remain faithful to Jehovah. His counsel reached their hearts, and the people begged Samuel to pray in their behalf. He gave them this beautiful reply: "It is unthinkable, on my part, to sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray in your behalf; and I must instruct you in the good and right way."—1 Sam. 12:21-24.

²¹ Have you ever felt disappointed when someone else was chosen for a certain position or privilege? Samuel's example is a powerful reminder that we must never let jealousy or bitterness take root in our heart. (*Read Proverbs 14:30.*) God has plenty of rewarding, fulfilling work for each of his faithful servants.

“For How Long Will You Be Mourning for Saul?”

²² Samuel was right to see good in Saul; this was a remarkable man. Tall and impressive in appearance, he was courageous and resourceful yet initially modest and unassuming. (1 Sam. 10:22, 23, 27) In addition to such gifts, he had a precious one—free will, the ability to choose his life course and make his own decisions. (Deut. 30:19) Did he use that gift well?

²³ Sadly, when a man basks in the warm glow of newly acquired power, modesty is often the first quality to melt away. Before long, Saul began to turn

21. How might Samuel's example prove helpful if you ever feel disappointed when someone else receives a position or privilege?

22. Why was Samuel right to see good in Saul initially?

23. What precious quality did Saul lose first, and how did he show his growing arrogance?

arrogant. He chose to disobey Jehovah's orders that Samuel transmitted to him. Once, Saul grew impatient and offered up a sacrifice that Samuel intended to offer. Samuel had to give him strong correction and foretold that the kingship would not remain in Saul's family. Instead of being chastened by the discipline, Saul went on to commit worse acts of disobedience.—1 Sam. 13:8, 9, 13, 14.

²⁴ Through Samuel, Jehovah told Saul to wage war against the Amalekites. Jehovah's instructions included an order to execute their wicked king, Agag. However, Saul spared Agag as well as the best of the spoil, which was to be destroyed. When Samuel came to correct him, Saul revealed how much he had changed. Instead of modestly accepting correction, he rationalized, excused himself, justified his actions, sidestepped the issue, and tried to shift the blame to the people. When Saul tried to deflect the discipline by claiming that some of the spoil was intended for a sacrifice to Jehovah, Samuel uttered the

24. (a) How did Saul disobey Jehovah in the war against the Amalekites? (b) How did Saul respond to correction, and what was Jehovah's decision?

famous words: “Look! To obey is better than a sacrifice.” Courageously, Samuel rebuked the man and revealed Jehovah’s decision: The kingship would be ripped away from Saul and given to another—a better man.*—1 Sam. 15:1-33.

²⁵ Samuel was deeply upset over Saul’s failings. He spent the night crying out to Jehovah about the matter. He even went into mourning for the man. Samuel had seen so much potential in Saul, so much good, and now such hopes were shattered. The man he once knew had changed—he had lost his best qualities and turned against Jehovah. Samuel refused to see Saul ever again. In time, though, Jehovah offered Samuel this gentle reproof: “For how long will you be mourning for Saul, while I, on the other hand, have rejected him from ruling as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go. I shall

* Samuel himself executed Agag. Neither that wicked king nor his family deserved leniency. Centuries later, Agag’s descendants evidently included “Haman the Agagite,” who attempted to wipe out all of God’s people.—Esther 8:3; see Chapters 15 and 16 of this publication.

25, 26. (a) Why did Samuel mourn for Saul, and how did Jehovah gently reprove His prophet? (b) What lesson did Samuel learn when he went to the house of Jesse?

send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, because I have provided among his sons a king for myself.”—1 Sam. 15:34, 35; 16:1.

²⁶ Jehovah’s purpose does not depend on the wavering loyalties of imperfect humans. If one man turns unfaithful, Jehovah will find another to carry out His will. So aged Samuel let go of his grief over Saul. At Jehovah’s direction, Samuel went to the home of Jesse in Bethlehem, where he met a number of Jesse’s impressive-looking sons. Yet, from the first, Jehovah reminded Samuel to look beyond mere physical attributes. (*Read 1 Samuel 16:7.*) Finally, Samuel met the youngest son, and here was Jehovah’s choice—David!

²⁷ In his final years, Samuel got to see ever more clearly the rightness of Jehovah’s decision to replace Saul with David. Saul descended into murderous jealousy and apostasy. David, however, showed beautiful qualities—courage, integrity, faith, and loyalty. As Samuel’s life drew to a close, his faith grew ever stronger. He saw that no disappointment is too great

27. (a) What helped Samuel’s faith to keep growing stronger? (b) How do you feel about the example that Samuel set?

for Jehovah to heal, to resolve, or even to turn into a blessing. Finally, Samuel died, leaving behind the record of a remarkable life that spanned the better part of a century. All of Israel mourned the loss of that faithful man—and no wonder! To this day, servants of Jehovah do well to ask, ‘Will I imitate the faith of Samuel?’

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

- How did Samuel cope with the tragedies that befell Shiloh?
- What enabled Samuel to endure despite the rebellion of his sons?
- How did Samuel recover from disappointments regarding King Saul?
- In what ways would you like to imitate the faith of Samuel?

*Loyally Submitting
to Theocratic Order*
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

1. As Jehovah's people sound throughout the earth
Truths about the Kingdom and its priceless worth,
Theocratic order they must all obey
And remain united, loyalty display.

(CHORUS)

*Loyal submission in recognition,
This to our God we owe.
He gives protection, tender affection,
Loyalty to him we show.*

2. God provides his steward and his active force.
These will ever guide us in our Christian course.
So may we be steadfast, seeking God to please,
Loyally proclaiming all his wise decrees!

(Chorus)

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

37 *The Scriptures—Inspired of God* (2 Timothy 3:16, 17)

1. God's Word is a shining light,
 Guides our feet through earth's dark night.
If we follow it faithfully,
 Surely its truth will set us free.

2. That divine Word is inspired,
 Teaches us what is required.
Help it gives, setting all things straight,
 And for God's discipline to wait.

3. By these Scriptures from above,
 We have come to know God's love.
Reading daily will make us wise,
 Showing us how to gain life's prize.

A Living Translation of God's Word

“The word of God is alive.”—HEB. 4:12.

SONGS: 37, 116

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why should a Bible translation include God's name?

Why was the *New World Translation* revised?

How have God's people benefited from the
New World Translation?

JEHOVAH GOD endowed his creatures with the gift of communication. After settling Adam into his garden home, God gave him an assignment that involved language; he was to name the animals. Adam used his creativity and intellect to give each an appropriate name. (Gen. 2:19, 20) Since then, God's people have continued to

1. (a) What kind of assignment did God give to Adam?
(b) How have God's people used their language abilities since then?

use their ability to speak—to use language—to praise Jehovah and to make his will known to others. In recent times, a significant way to promote pure worship by the use of language has been through Bible translation.

2 There are thousands of Bible translations, but they vary in how faithfully they convey the message from the original texts. In the 1940's, the New World Bible Translation Committee established principles of translation that have been followed in over 130 languages. These are: (1) Sanctify God's name by restoring it to its rightful place in the Scriptures. (Read Matthew 6:9.) (2) Translate the original inspired message *literally* where possible, but convey the correct *sense* when a word-for-word rendering

2. (a) The New World Bible Translation Committee followed what principles in doing its work? (b) What will we consider in this article?

would distort the meaning. (3) Use easy-to-understand language that encourages reading.* (Read Nehemiah 8:8, 12.) Let us see how these principles have been applied in the *New World Translation*, the 2013 revision as well as the non-English editions.

HONORING THE NAME OF GOD

3 Those who study ancient Hebrew Bible manuscripts, such as the Dead Sea Scrolls, are struck by the many occurrences of the Tetragrammaton—the four Hebrew letters that represent God’s name. The divine name appears not only in those ancient Hebrew manuscripts but also in some copies of the Greek *Septuagint*

* See Appendix A1 of the revised *New World Translation* and the article “How Can You Choose a Good Bible Translation?” in *The Watchtower* of May 1, 2008.

3, 4. (a) What ancient manuscripts contain the Tetragrammaton? (b) What have many Bible translations done regarding God’s name?

from the second century B.C.E. through the first century C.E.

4 Despite the clear evidence that the personal name of God belongs in the Bible, many translations completely omit the sacred name of God. In fact, just two years after the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* was released in 1950, the *Revised Standard Version* was published. That version omitted the name, reversing the policy of the editors of the *American Standard Version* of 1901. Why? The preface says: “The use of any proper name for the one and only God . . . is entirely inappropriate for the universal faith of the Christian Church.” That set a pattern for many subsequent translations, English and non-English.

5 Why is the inclusion or omission of God’s name significant? A skilled translator knows the

5. Why is it important to retain God’s name in the Bible?

importance of understanding the intent of an author; such knowledge affects many translation decisions. Countless Bible verses show the importance of God's name and its sanctification. (Ex. 3:15; Ps. 83:18; 148:13; Isa. 42:8; 43:10; John 17:6, 26; Acts 15:14) Jehovah God—the Author of the Bible—inspired its writers to use his name freely. (Read Ezekiel 38:23.) Omitting the name, found thousands of times in ancient manuscripts, shows disrespect for the Author.

6 The evidence for retaining God's name in the Bible has not diminished but grown. The 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* includes the name 7,216 times, which is 6 more than the 1984 edition. Five of the additional instances are found at 1 Samuel 2:25; 6:3; 10:26; 23:14, 16. These were restored primarily because

6. Why does the revised *New World Translation* have six additional occurrences of the divine name?

the Dead Sea Scrolls, which predate the Hebrew Masoretic text by over 1,000 years, contain the name in these verses. Also, one occurrence at Judges 19:18 was restored as a result of further study of ancient manuscripts.

7 For true Christians, Jehovah's name has great significance. The appendix of the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation* contains updated information on this matter. The New World Bible Translation Committee understands that the name reflects the causative form of the Hebrew verb *ha·wah,*' meaning "He Causes to Become."^{*} Our publications had previously connected this meaning with Exodus 3:14, which says: "I Will Become What I Choose to Become." This led to the view expressed in the 1984

^{*} Some reference works present this understanding, though not all scholars agree.

7, 8. What is the significance of the name meaning "He Causes to Become"?

edition that the name means He “causes *himself* to become the Fulfiller of promises.”* However, Appendix A4 of the revised edition of 2013 explains: “While the name Jehovah may include this idea, it is not limited to what he himself chooses to become. It also includes what he causes to happen with regard to his creation and the accomplishment of his purpose.”

8 Jehovah causes his creation to become whatever he chooses. In line with the meaning of his name, God caused Noah to be an ark builder, Bezalel to be a master craftsman, Gideon to be a victorious warrior, and Paul to be an apostle to the nations. Yes, God’s name has great meaning to his people. And the New World Bible Translation Committee would never undermine the name’s significance by omitting it from the Bible.

* See the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, Appendix 1A “The Divine Name in the Hebrew Scriptures,” p. 1561.

9 Over 130 language editions of the *New World Translation* honor God’s name by including it where it belongs in the sacred text. (Read Malachi 3:16.) In contrast, the current trend in Bible translation is to omit the divine name, substituting a title such as “Lord” or the name of a local god. This is a prime reason why the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses has given priority to making available to as many people as possible a Bible that honors God’s name.

CLEAR, ACCURATE TRANSLATION

10 The process of rendering the sacred text into scores of languages presented many translation problems. For example, in the past, the English *New World Translation* followed the

9. What is one reason why priority has been given to translating the Bible into other languages?

10, 11. What were certain challenges facing the translators of some non-English editions of the *New World Translation*?

pattern of some other English Bibles that use the Hebrew expression “Sheol” in verses such as Ecclesiastes 9:10. That verse used to read: “There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in She’ol, the place to which you are going.” Translators of many non-English editions faced this problem: The term “Sheol” is unknown to most of their readers, it is not found in their dictionaries, and it sounds like some geographic location. Accordingly, approval was given to make the meaning of “Sheol” and the corresponding Greek term “Hades” clear by translating them accurately as “the Grave.”

11 In some languages, translating the Hebrew word *ne’phesh* and the Greek *psy·khe’* consistently with a term similar to the English “soul” created some confusion. Why? Because the equivalent terms could give the impression that the “soul” is an immaterial part of man.

That could reflect the mistaken view that it is something like a ghost and not man himself. Hence, approval was given to render “soul” as indicated by the context, in line with the meanings already provided in the appendixes of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures —With References*. Yes, priority was given to making the text immediately understood, and helpful renderings were often put in footnotes.

12 Questions from translators raised awareness that similar misunderstandings were possible. So in September 2007, the Governing Body gave approval to revise the English text. Thousands of questions from Bible translators were reviewed during the revision process. Obsolete English expressions were replaced, and

12. What are some changes that were made in the 2013 revision of the *New World Translation*? (See also the article “The 2013 Revision of the *New World Translation*,” found in the standard edition of this issue.)

a concerted effort was put forth to make the text clear and easy to understand without sacrificing accuracy. Applying what had been done in other languages sharpened the English text. —Prov. 27:17.

GREAT APPRECIATION

13 What has been the effect of this revised English *New World Translation*? Thousands of letters of appreciation have been received at the Brooklyn headquarters of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The comments of one sister reflect the feelings of many: “The Bible is a treasure chest brimming over with valuable jewels. To read Jehovah’s words clearly by using the 2013 revision can be compared to examining each jewel, admiring its many facets, clarity, color, and beauty. The Scriptures conveyed in simple language have helped me to become better acquainted

13. What has been the response to the 2013 revision?

with Jehovah, who is like a father with his arms around me while he reads his soothing words to me.”

14 It is not just the revised English *New World Translation* that has had an impact. An elderly man from Sofia, Bulgaria, commented about the Bulgarian edition: “I have read the Bible for many years, but I have never read a translation that is easier to understand and that goes right to the heart.” Likewise, after receiving her copy of the complete *New World Translation*, an Albanian sister commented: “How beautiful God’s Word sounds in Albanian! What a privilege to have Jehovah speak to us in our own language!”

15 In many lands, Bibles are expensive and not readily available, so just receiving a Bible is a great blessing. A report from Rwanda stated:

14, 15. How has the *New World Translation* made a positive impact in languages other than English?

“For a long time, many people with whom the brothers were studying had not progressed because they had no Bibles. They could not afford to purchase the local church edition. And they often could not clearly understand the meaning of certain verses, which hindered their progress.” Things changed when the *New World Translation* in their language became available. A Rwandan family with four teenagers said: “We really thank Jehovah and the faithful and discreet slave for giving us this Bible. We are very poor and had no money to purchase Bibles for every member of the family. But now each of us has his own Bible. To show our gratitude to Jehovah, we read the Bible as a family every day.”

16 In time, the revised *New World Translation* will be made available in more languages.

16, 17. (a) What does Jehovah want for his people?
(b) What should be our determination?

Satan tries to block such efforts, but we trust that Jehovah wants to have all his people listen as he speaks to them in clear, understandable language. (Read Isaiah 30:21.) The time will come when “the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:9.

17 May we be determined to take advantage of every gift from Jehovah, including this translation that honors his name. Let him speak with you every day through his Word. His limitless abilities allow him to listen attentively to our prayers. This communication will help us to come to know Jehovah ever more intimately as our love for him keeps growing.—John 17:3.

Visit www.jw.org, or
scan code 



W1015 12/15-E-1
150813

1. The prophets of old sought to learn of the Christ,
The hope of all groaning creation.
God's spirit revealed that Messiah would come,
Providing the means of salvation.
The time has arrived, the Messiah now reigns,
The proof of his presence is clear.
How great is the favor of learning such things;
Into these even angels would peer!

(CHORUS)

*Our path now becomes ever brighter;
We walk in the full light of day.
Behold what our God is revealing;
He guides us each step of the way.*

2. Our Lord has appointed a trustworthy slave,
Through whom He gives food in due season.
The light of the truth has grown brighter with time,
Appealing to heart and to reason.
Our path ever clearer, our steps ever firm,
We walk in the brightness of day.
All thanks to Jehovah, the Source of all truth,
We most gratefully walk in his way.

(Chorus)