

- Song 106 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Practical Lessons From Nehemiah”:** (10 min.)
 Ne 13:4-9—Avoid bad associations (w13 8/15 4 ¶5-8)
 Ne 13:15-21—Put spiritual things first (w13 8/15 5-6 ¶13-15)
 Ne 13:23-27—Preserve your Christian identity (w13 8/15 6-7 ¶16-18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ne 12:31—What could have been the effect of having two choirs? (it-2 454 ¶1)

Ne 13:31b—What was Nehemiah asking Jehovah to do? (w11 2/1 14 ¶3-5)

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 12:1-26 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Offer the Memorial invitation to someone who shows little interest.
- **Initial Call:** (4 min. or less) Offer the Memorial invitation and *The Watchtower* to someone who shows genuine interest. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Explain the Memorial to a Bible student, using the *Bible Teach* book, pages 206-208. Offer practical assistance to help the student attend.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 5
- **“Invite Everyone in Your Territory to the Memorial”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Explain how the congregation will cover its territory. When reviewing “Steps to Consider,” play the Memorial video. Encourage all to participate fully in the campaign and to cultivate any interest they find. Include a demonstration.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** *ia* chap. 9 ¶14-24, review on p. 82 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 39 and Prayer

NEHEMIAH 12-13 | Practical Lessons From Nehemiah

13:4-9, 15-21, 23-27

Nehemiah zealously defended true worship

- High Priest Eliashib allowed Tobiah, who was an unbeliever and an opposer, to influence him
- Eliashib gave Tobiah a space in a temple dining hall
- Nehemiah threw all of Tobiah’s furniture out, cleansed the room, and returned it to its proper use
- Nehemiah continued to remove all uncleanness from Jerusalem



106 *Gaining Jehovah's Friendship*

(Psalm 15)

1. Who is your friend, O God?

Who in your tent may dwell?

Who gains your friendship? Who gains your trust?

Who really knows you well?

All who embrace your Word,

All who have faith in you,

All who are loyal, all who are just,

Living the truth for you.

2. Who is your friend, O God?

Who may approach your throne?

Who brings delight and Makes you rejoice?

Whose name to you is known?

All who exalt your name,

All who your Word obey,

All who are faithful, honest in heart,

Truthful in all they say.

3. Rolling our cares on you,

Baring our hearts in prayer,

Drawing us closer, bonding in love,

Feeling your daily care,

We yearn to be your friend.

Long may our friendship grow.

No greater Friend could we ever gain,

No greater Friend we'll know.

(See also Ps. 139:1; 1 Pet. 5:6, 7.)

overseer was Zab'di-el, a member of a prominent family.

15 And of the Levites: She-mai'ah^a son of Has'shub son of Az-ri'kam son of Hash-a-bi'ah son of Bun'ni, **16** and Shab'be-thai^b and Jo'za-bad,^c of the heads of the Levites, who were in charge of the outside business of the house of the true God; **17** and Mat-ta-ni'ah,^d son of Mi'cah son of Zab'di son of A'saph,^e the conductor of the singing, who led the praises during prayer,^f and Bak-bu-ki'ah, the second of his brothers, and Ab'da son of Sham-mu'a son of Ga'lal son of Je-du'thun.^g **18** All the Levites in the holy city were 284.

19 And the gatekeepers were Ak'kub, Tal'mon,^h and their brothers who kept guard in the gates, 172.

20 The rest of Israel, the priests, and the Levites were in all the other cities of Judah, each in his own inherited property.* **21** The temple servantsⁱ were living in O'phel,^j and Zi'ha and Gish'pa were in charge of the temple servants.*

22 The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uz'zi son of Ba'ni son of Hash-a-bi'ah son of Mat-ta-ni'ah^k son of Mi'ca, of the sons of A'saph, the singers; he was in charge of the work of the house of the true God. **23** For there was a royal order in their behalf,^l and there was a fixed provision for the singers as each day required. **24** And Peth-ah-i'ah son of Me-shez'a-bel of the sons of Ze'rah son of Judah was the king's adviser* for every matter of the people.

25 Regarding the settlements with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in

11:20 *Or "his own inheritance." 11:21 *Or "the Nethinim." Lit., "the given ones." 11:24 *Lit., "was at the king's hand."

CHAP. 11

- a 1Ch 9:2, 14
b Ezr 10:14, 15
c Ezr 8:33
Ne 8:7
d Ne 11:22
Ne 12:25
e Ne 7:6, 44
f 1Ch 16:4
2Ch 5:13
g 1Ch 16:41, 42
2Ch 35:15
h 1Ch 9:2, 17
Ezr 2:1, 42
Ne 12:25
i Ezr 2:1, 58
j 2Ch 27:1, 3
Ne 3:26
k 1Ch 9:2, 15
l Ezr 6:3, 9
Ezr 7:21-24

Second Col.

- a Ge 23:2
Jos 14:15
b Jos 15:21
2Sa 23:20
c Jos 15:21, 26
Jos 19:1, 2
d Jos 15:21, 27
e Jos 19:1, 3
f Jos 15:21, 31
Jos 19:1, 5
1Sa 27:5, 6
g Jos 15:21, 32
h Jos 15:20, 33
Jos 19:40, 41
i Jos 15:20, 34
Ne 3:13
j Jos 15:20, 39
Isa 37:8
k Jos 15:20, 35
l Jos 15:8, 12
2Ki 23:10
m Jos 18:21, 24
n Ge 28:19
Jos 18:11, 13
o Jos 21:8, 18
p 1Sa 21:1
q Jos 18:21, 25
r 1Ch 8:12
Ezr 2:1, 33

CHAP. 12

- s Ezr 1:8, 11
t Mt 1:12
u Zec 3:1
v Ezr 2:1, 40
Ezr 3:9
w 1Ch 9:2, 15
Ne 11:17
Ne 12:25

Kir'i-ath-ar'ba^a and its dependent* towns, in Di'bon and its dependent towns, in Je-kab'ze-el^b and its settlements, **26** in Jesh'u-a, in Mo-la'dah,^c in Beth-pel'et,^d **27** in Ha'zar-shu'al,^e in Be'er-she'ba and its dependent* towns, **28** in Zik'lag,^f in Me-co-nah and its dependent* towns, **29** in En-rim'mon,^g in Zo'rah,^h and in Jar'muth, **30** in Za-no'-ah,ⁱ in A-du'l'am and their settlements, in La'chish^j and its fields, and in A-ze'kah^k and its dependent* towns. They settled[#] from Be'er-she'ba clear to the Valley of Hin'nom.^l

31 And the people of Benjamin were in Ge'ba,^m Mich'mash, Ai'ja, Beth'elⁿ and its dependent* towns, **32** An'a-thoth,^o Nob,^p A-na-ri'ah, **33** Ha'zor, Ra'mah,^q Git'ta-im, **34** Ha'did, Ze-bo'im, Ne-bal'lat, **35** Lod, and O'no,^r the valley of the craftsmen. **36** And some divisions of the Levites from Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

12 These were the priests and the Levites who went up with Ze-rub'ba-bel^s the son of She-al'ti-el,^t and Jesh'u-a:^u Se-rai'ah, Jeremiah, Ez'ra, **2** Ama-ri'ah, Mal'luch, Hat-tush, **3** Shec-a-ni'ah, Re'hum, Mer'e-moth, **4** Id'do, Gin'ne-thoi, A-bi'jah, **5** Mij'a-min, Ma-a-di'-ah, Bil'gah, **6** She-mai'ah, Joi-a-rib, Je-da'iah, **7** Sal'lu, A'mok, Hil-ki'ah, and Je-da'iah. These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the days of Jesh'u-a.

8 The Levites were Jesh'u-a, Bin'nu-i, Kad'mi-el,^v She-re-bi'ah, Judah, and Mat-ta-ni'ah,^w who led the songs of thanksgiving along with his brothers. **9** And Bak-bu-ki'ah and Un'ni their brothers stood opposite them for guard duties.* **10** Jesh'u-a

11:25, 27, 28, 30, 31 *Or "surrounding." 11:30 *Or "camped." 12:9 *Or possibly, "during the service."

became father to Joi'a-kim, and Joi'a-kim became father to E-li'a-shib,^e and E-li'a-shib to Joi'a-da.^b **11** And Joi'a-da became father to Jon'a-than, and Jon'a-than became father to Jad'du-a.

12 In the days of Joi'a-kim, these were the priests, the heads of the paternal houses: for Se-rai'ah,^c Me-rai'ah; for Jeremiah, Han-a-ni'ah; **13** for Ez'ra,^d Me-shul'lam; for Am-a-ri'ah, Je-ho-ha'nan; **14** for Mal'lu-chi, Jon'a-than; for Sheb-a-ni'ah, Joseph; **15** for Ha'rim,^e Ad'na; for Me-ra'ioth, Hel'kai; **16** for Id-do, Zech-a-ri'ah; for Gin'ne-thon, Me-shul'lam; **17** for A-bi'jah,^f Zich'ri; for Mi-ni'a-min, . . . ;^{*} for Mo-a-di'ah, Pil'tai; **18** for Bil'gah,^g Sham-mu'a; for She-mai'ah, Je-hon'a-than; **19** for Joi'a-rib, Mat-te'nai; for Je-da'iah,^h Uz'zi; **20** for Sal-la'i, Kal'lai; for A'mok, E'ber; **21** for Hil-ki'ah, Hash-a-bi'ah; for Je-da'iah, Ne-than'el.

22 The heads of the paternal houses of the Levites in the days of E-li'a-shib, Joi'a-da, Jo-ha'nan, and Jad'du-aⁱ were recorded, as were the priests, down to the kingship of Da-ri'us the Persian.

23 The Levites who were heads of the paternal houses were recorded in the book of the history of the times, down to the days of Jo-ha'nan the son of E-li'a-shib. **24** The heads of the Levites were Hash-a-bi'ah, She-re-bi'ah, and Jesh'u-a^j the son of Kad'mi-el,^k and their brothers stood opposite them to offer praise and give thanks according to the instructions of David^l the man of the true God, guard group corresponding to guard group. **25** Mat-ta-ni'ah,^m Bak-bu-ki'ah, O-ba-di'ah, Me-shul'lam, Tal'mon, and Ak'kubⁿ were standing guard as gatekeepers,^o guarding the store-

12:17 *The Hebrew text evidently omits a name here.

CHAP. 12

- a Ne 3:1
- b Ne 13:28
- c Ne 11:3,11
- d Ne 12:1
- e Ezr 2:1, 39
- f Ne 12:1, 4
- g Ne 12:1, 5
- h Ne 12:1, 6
- i Ne 12:10, 11
- j Ne 8:7
- k Ezr 2:1, 40
- l 1Ch 16:4
1Ch 23:28, 30
- m 1Ch 9:2, 15
- n 1Ch 9:17
Ezr 2:1, 42
Ne 11:1, 19
- o 1Ch 9:22-27

Second Col.

- a Ezr 3:2, 8
- b Ezr 7:1, 6
- c 2Ch 5:13
2Ch 7:6
- d 1Ch 2:54
1Ch 9:2, 16
Ne 7:6, 26
- e Jos 15:7, 12
- f Jos 21:8, 17
Ne 11:31
- g Ezr 2:1, 24
- h Ex 19:10
- i Ne 7:1
- j Ne 6:15
- k Ne 2:13
Ne 3:13
- l Nu 10:2
2Ch 5:12
- m 1Ch 25:1, 2
- n 1Ch 23:5

rooms by the gates. **26** These served in the days of Joi'a-kim the son of Jesh'u-a^a the son of Jo'za-dak and in the days of Ne-he-mi'ah the governor and Ez'ra^b the priest and copyist.*

27 At the inauguration of the walls of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites and brought them to Jerusalem from all the places they lived to celebrate the inauguration with rejoicing, with songs of thanksgiving,^c and with cymbals, stringed instruments, and harps. **28** And the sons of the singers* gathered together from the district,[#] from all around Jerusalem, from the settlements of the Ne-toph'a-thites,^d **29** from Beth-gil'gal,^e and from the fields of Ge'ba^f and Az'maveth,^g for the singers had built settlements for themselves all around Jerusalem. **30** And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people,^h the gates,ⁱ and the wall.^j

31 Then I brought the princes of Judah up on top of the wall. Further, I appointed two large thanksgiving choirs and processions, and the one walked to the right on the wall toward the Gate of the Ash Heaps.^k **32** Hoshai'ah and half of the princes of Judah walked behind them, **33** along with Az-a-ri'ah, Ez'ra, Me-shul'lam, **34** Judah, Benjamin, She-mai'ah, and Jeremiah. **35** With them were some of the sons of the priests with the trumpets:^l Zech-a-ri'ah son of Jon'a-than son of She-mai'ah son of Mat-ta-ni'ah son of Mi-cai'ah son of Zac'cur son of A'saph,^m **36** and his brothers She-mai'ah, Az'ar-el, Mil'a-lai, Gil'a-lai, Ma'ai, Ne-than'el, Judah, and Ha-na'ni, with the musical instruments of Davidⁿ the

12:26 *Or "scribe." 12:28 *Or "And the trained singers." #That is, the district around the Jordan.

man of the true God; and Ezra^a the copyist* went before them. **37** At the Fountain Gate^b they went straight ahead up the Stairway^c of the City of David^d by the ascent of the wall above the House of David and on to the Water Gate^e to the east.

38 The other thanksgiving choir walked in the opposite direction,* and I followed it with half of the people, on the wall up over the Tower of the Ovens^f and on to the Broad Wall^g **39** and up over the Gate of E'phra-im^h and on to the Gate of the Old Cityⁱ and on to the Fish Gate,^j the Tower of Ha-nan'el,^k the Tower of Me'ah, and on to the Sheep Gate;^l and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard.

40 At length the two thanksgiving choirs stood before the house of the true God; so did I and half of the deputy rulers with me, **41** and the priests E-li'a-kim, Ma-a-sei'ah, Mi-ni'am-in, Mi-cai'ah, Eli-o-e'nai, Zech-a-ri'ah, and Han-a-ni'ah, with the trumpets, **42** and Ma-a-sei'ah, She-mai'ah, El-e-a'zar, Uz'zi, Je-ho-ha'nan, Mal-chi'jah, E'l'am, and E'zer. And the singers sang loudly under the oversight of Iz-ra-hi'ah.

43 On that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced,^m for the true God made them rejoice with great joy. The women and the children also rejoiced,ⁿ so that the rejoicing of Jerusalem could be heard far away.^o

44 On that day men were appointed over the storehouses^p for the contributions,^q the first-fruits,^r and the tenths.^s Into them they were to gather from the fields of the cities the portions required by the Law^t for the priests and the Levites,^u for there was rejoicing in Ju-

12:36 *Or "scribe." 12:38 *Or "in front." 12:44 *Or "tithes."

CHAP. 12

a Ne 8:4
b Ne 2:14
c Ne 3:15
d 2Sa 5:7,9
e Ne 3:26
Ne 8:1
f Ne 3:11
g Ne 3:8
h 2Kj 14:13
Ne 8:16
i Ne 3:6
j 2Ch 33:14
Ne 3:3
k Jer 31:38
Zec 14:10
l Ne 3:1
Joh 5:2
m Ezz 6:16,17
n Jer 31:13
o Ezz 3:10,13
p 2Ch 31:11
q Ne 10:39
r Ne 10:35-37
s Ne 10:38
Ne 13:12,13
t Ex 34:26
Nu 15:18,19
De 26:2
u Nu 18:21

Second Col.

a 1Ch 25:1,6
b Ezz 3:2
Hag 1:12
Lu 3:23,27
c Ne 11:23
d Ne 10:39
e Nu 18:21

CHAP. 13

f De 31:11
Ne 8:2,3
Ac 15:21
g Ge 19:36-38
h De 23:3,6
i Nu 22:4-6
j Nu 23:8
Nu 24:10
k Ezz 10:10,11
Ne 9:1,2
l Ne 10:37,38
m Ne 3:1
n Ne 2:10
o De 18:3,4
p Nu 18:24

dah because of the priests and the Levites who were ministering. **45** And they began taking care of the duties of their God and the obligation of the purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the instructions of David and his son Sol'o-mon. **46** For long ago in the days of David and A'saph, there were directors* for the singers and for the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God.^a **47** And during the days of Zerub'ba-bel^b and during the days of Ne-he-mi'ah, all Israel gave portions to the singers^c and the gatekeepers,^d according to the daily need. They also set aside the portion for the Levites,^e and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.

13 On that day the book of Moses was read in the hearing of the people,^f and it was found written that no Am'monite or Mo'ab-ite^g should ever enter the congregation of the true God,^h **2** for they had not met the Israelites with bread and water, but instead they had hired Ba'laam against them to curse them.ⁱ However, our God had changed the curse into a blessing.^j **3** As soon as they heard the Law, they began to separate from Israel all those of foreign descent.^{*k}

4 Now before this, the priest in charge of the storerooms* of the house[#] of our God^l was E-li-a-shib,^m a relative of To-bi'ah.ⁿ **5** He had made available for him a large storeroom,^{*} where previously they used to put the grain offering, the frankincense, and the utensils and the tenth[#] of the grain, the new wine, and the oil,^o to which the Levites,^p

12:46 *Lit., "heads." 13:3 *Or "mixed descent." 13:4 *Or "dining halls." #Or "temple." 13:5 *Or "dining hall." #Or "tithe."

the singers, and the gatekeepers are entitled, along with the contribution for the priests.^a

6 And during all this time I was not in Jerusalem, for I went to the king in the 32nd year^b of King Ar-ta-xerx'es^c of Babylon; and sometime later I asked the king for a leave of absence.

7 Then I came to Jerusalem and noticed the terrible thing that E-li'a-shib^d had done in behalf of To-bi'ah,^e making a storeroom available for him in the courtyard of the house of the true God. **8** This was very displeasing to me, so I threw all of To-bi'ah's household furniture out of the storeroom.* **9** After that I gave orders, and they cleansed the storerooms;* and I put back there the utensils of the house of the true God,^f with the grain offering and the frankincense.^g

10 I also found out that the portions of the Levites^h had not been given them,ⁱ so that the Levites and the singers who did the work had gone off, each to his own field.^j **11** So I reprimanded the deputy rulers^k and said: "Why has the house of the true God been neglected?"^l Then I gathered them together and assigned them back to their posts. **12** And all Judah brought in the tenth^m of the grain, the new wine, and the oil to the storerooms.ⁿ **13** Then I put Shel-e-mi'ah the priest, Za-dok the copyist,* and Pe-dai'ah of the Levites in charge of the storerooms, and Ha'nan the son of Zac'cur the son of Mat-ta-ni'ah was their assistant, for these men were considered reliable. It was their responsibility to make the distribution to their brothers.

14 Do remember me,^o O my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my acts of loyal love

13:8 *Or "dining hall." 13:9 *Or "dining halls." 13:13 *Or "scribe."

CHAP. 13

a Ne 12:44

b Ne 5:14

c Ezr 7:1
Ne 2:1

d Ne 12:10

e Ne 4:7

f Ne 10:39

g Le 2:14, 15

h Ne 10:37
Ne 12:47

i Mal 3:8

j Nu 35:2

k Ezr 9:2

l Ne 10:39

m Le 27:30
Nu 18:21

n Ne 10:38, 39
Mal 3:10

o Ne 5:19

Second Col.

a Heb 6:10

b Ex 20:10
Ex 34:21
Ex 35:2

c Jer 17:21, 27

d Ne 10:31

e Ex 20:8-10

that I have done for the house of my God and its services.*^a

15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath,^b bringing in heaps of grain and loading them on donkeys, and bringing wine, grapes, figs, and every sort of load into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day.^c So I warned them against selling provisions on that day.* **16** And the Tyr'i-ans who lived in the city were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise, selling them to the people of Judah and in Jerusalem on the Sabbath.^d **17** So I reprimanded the nobles of Judah and said to them: "What is this evil thing that you are doing, even profaning the Sabbath day? **18** Was not this what your forefathers did, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and also on this city? Now you are adding to the burning anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath."^e

19 So as soon as the shadows began to fall on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered that the doors be closed. I also said that they should not open them until after the Sabbath, and I stationed some of my own attendants at the gates so that no loads would be brought in on the Sabbath day. **20** So the traders and the sellers of all kinds of merchandise spent the night outside Jerusalem once or twice. **21** Then I warned them and said to them: "Why are you spending the night in front of the wall? If you do it again, I will use force against you." From that time on they did not come on the Sabbath.

22 And I told the Levites that they should regularly purify

13:14 *Or "guardianship." 13:15 *Or possibly, "warned them on that day not to sell provisions."

themselves and come and guard the gates to keep the Sabbath day holy.^a This, also, do remember to my credit, O my God, and show me pity according to your abundant loyal love.^b

23 In those days I also saw Jews who had married* Ash'dod-ite,^c Am'mon-ite, and Mo'ab-ite^d women.^e **24** Half of their sons were speaking Ash'dod-ite and the language of the different peoples, but none of them knew how to speak the language of the Jews. **25** So I reprimanded them and called down a curse on them and struck some of the men^f and pulled out their hair and made them swear by God: "You should not give your daughters to their sons, and you should not accept any of their daughters for your sons or yourselves.^g **26** Was it not because of these that King Sol'o-mon of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him;^h and he was loved by his

13:23 *Or "had taken into their houses."

CHAP. 13

- a De 5:12
- b Ne 5:19
- Ne 13:14
- Ne 13:30, 31
- c Jos 13:2, 3
- d De 23:3, 4
- e Ezr 9:1, 2
- Ezr 10:10
- 2Co 6:14
- f De 25:2
- Ezr 7:26
- g De 7:3, 4
- Ne 10:30
- h 1Ki 3:12, 13
- 2Ch 9:22

Second Col.

- a 2Sa 12:24
- b 1Ki 11:1-5
- c Ezr 10:2
- d Ne 12:10
- e Ne 3:1
- Ne 13:4
- f Ne 2:10
- Ne 6:14
- g Ex 40:15
- Nu 25:11-13
- h Mal 2:4
- i 1Ch 23:6
- 1Ch 25:1
- j Ne 10:34
- k Ne 5:19

God,^a so that God made him king over all Israel. But the foreign wives caused even him to sin.^b **27** Is it not something unheard of for you to commit this great evil in acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?"^c

28 One of the sons of Joi'ada^d the son of E-li'a-shib^e the high priest had become a son-in-law of San-bal'lat^f the Hor'o-nite. So I drove him away from me.

29 Do remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood and the covenant of the priesthood^g and the Levites.^h

30 And I purified them from every foreign defilement, and I assigned duties to the priests and to the Levites, each to his own service,ⁱ **31** and arranged for the supply of the wood^j at appointed times and for the first ripe fruits.

Do remember me favorably,* O my God.^k

13:31 *Or "for good."

ESTHER

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** Ne 12:1-26 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Offer the Memorial invitation to someone who shows little interest.
- **Initial Call:** (4 min. or less) Offer the Memorial invitation and *The Watchtower* to someone who shows genuine interest. Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Explain the Memorial to a Bible student, using the *Bible Teach* book, pages 206-208. Offer practical assistance to help the student attend.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 5
- **“Invite Everyone in Your Territory to the Memorial”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Explain how the congregation will cover its territory. When reviewing “Steps to Consider,” play the Memorial video. Encourage all to participate fully in the campaign and to cultivate any interest they find. Include a demonstration.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** *ia* chap. 9 ¶14-24, review on p. 82 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 39 and Prayer

NEHEMIAH 12-13 | Practical Lessons From Nehemiah

13:4-9, 15-21, 23-27

Nehemiah zealously defended true worship

- High Priest Eliashib allowed Tobiah, who was an unbeliever and an opposer, to influence him
- Eliashib gave Tobiah a space in a temple dining hall
- Nehemiah threw all of Tobiah’s furniture out, cleansed the room, and returned it to its proper use
- Nehemiah continued to remove all uncleanness from Jerusalem



AVOID BAD ASSOCIATIONS

⁵ **Read Nehemiah 13:4-9.** We are surrounded by unclean influences, so it is not easy for us to remain holy. Consider Eliashib and Tobiah. Eliashib was the high priest, and Tobiah was an Ammonite and likely a petty official in the Persian administration of Judea. Tobiah and his associates had opposed Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild Jerusalem's walls. (Neh. 2:10) Ammonites were forbidden to come onto the temple grounds. (Deut. 23:3) So why would the high priest provide space in a temple dining hall for such a man as Tobiah?

⁶ Tobiah had become a close associate of Eliashib. Tobiah and his son Jehohanan had married Jewish women, and many Jews spoke highly of Tobiah. (Neh. 6:17-19) One of Eliashib's grandsons was married to the daughter of Sanballat, governor of Samaria, who was one of Tobiah's closest associates. (Neh. 13:28) These ties may explain why High Priest Eliashib allowed an unbeliever and opposer to influence him. But Nehemiah showed loyalty to Jehovah by throwing all of Tobiah's furniture outside the dining hall.

⁷ As a people dedicated to God, our first loyalty must always be to Jehovah. Unless we adhere to his righteous standards, we will not remain sanctified before him. We must not let family ties overshadow Bible principles. Christian elders are guided by Jehovah's thinking, not by their own opinions or feelings. (1 Tim. 5:21) The elders carefully avoid doing anything that might compromise their standing with God.—1 Tim. 2:8.

⁸ We do well to remember that “bad associations spoil useful habits.” (1 Cor. 15:33) Some of our relatives might not be a positive influence in our lives. Eliashib had set a good example for the people by fully supporting Nehemiah in the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. (Neh. 3:1) In time, however, the unwholesome influence of Tobiah and others apparently led Eliashib to do things

that left him defiled before Jehovah. Good associates encourage us to engage in useful Christian pursuits, such as reading the Bible, attending Christian meetings, and sharing in the field service. Family members who influence us to do what is right are especially loved and appreciated.

Ne 13:15-21—Put spiritual things first (w13 8/15 5-6 ¶13-15)

PUT SPIRITUAL THINGS FIRST

¹³ **Read Nehemiah 13:15-21.** If we allow ourselves to become preoccupied with material things, our spirituality can gradually be lost. According to Exodus 31:13, the weekly Sabbath was to remind the Israelites that they were a sanctified people. The Sabbath day was to be set aside for family worship, prayer, and meditation on God's Law. For some of Nehemiah's contemporaries, though, the Sabbath had become just another day—business as usual. Worship was being pushed into the background. Seeing what was happening, Nehemiah had the city gates closed at dusk on the sixth day, chasing the foreign merchants away before the Sabbath began.

¹⁴ What can we learn from Nehemiah's example? One lesson is that we should limit our commercial interests. Otherwise, we might easily become distracted—or even divided in our affections—especially if we enjoy our secular work. Remember Jesus' warning about slaving for two masters. (**Read Matthew 6:24.**) Nehemiah had financial resources, but how did he use his time in Jerusalem? (Neh. 5:14-18) Instead of pursuing business contacts with the Tyrians or others, he devoted himself to helping his brothers and doing things that contributed to the sanctification of Jehovah's name. Likewise today, Christian elders and ministerial servants focus on doing things for the benefit of the congregation, and their fellow believers love them for this spirit. As a result, there is love, peace, and security among God's people.—Ezek. 34:25, 28.

¹⁵ Although Christians are not required to observe a weekly Sabbath, Paul tells us that “there remains a sabbath resting for the people of God.” He added: “The man that has entered into God’s rest has also himself rested from his own works, just as God did from his own.” (Heb. 4:9, 10) As Christians, we can enter into God’s rest by obediently working in harmony with his advancing purpose. Are you and your loved ones giving family worship, meeting attendance, and the field ministry first place in your lives? We may have to be resolute with our employer or business associates, especially if they do not respect our theocratic priorities. In effect, we may need ‘to close the gates to the city and chase the Tyrians away’ in order to give priority and proper attention to sacred things. Because we have been sanctified, we do well to ask ourselves, ‘Does the way I live demonstrate that I have been set apart for Jehovah’s service?’—Matt. 6:33.

**Ne 13:23-27—Preserve your Christian identity
(w13 8/15 6-7 ¶16-18)**

PRESERVE YOUR CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

¹⁶ ***Read Nehemiah 13:23-27.*** In Nehemiah’s day, Israelite men were marrying foreign women. During his first visit to Jerusalem, Nehemiah had all the older men sign a written agreement pledging that they would not marry pagans. (Neh. 9:38; 10:30) A few years later, however, he found that not only had Jewish men taken foreign wives but they were about to lose their very identity as God’s sanctified people! The children of these foreign women could not read or speak Hebrew. When they got older, would they identify themselves as Israelites? Or would they rather think of themselves as Ashdodites, Ammonites, or Moabites? Without knowing the Hebrew language, was it likely that they would be able to understand God’s Law? How could they get to know Jehovah and choose to serve him instead of the false gods their mothers

worshipped? Swift and decisive action was needed, and Nehemiah took such action.—Neh. 13:28.

¹⁷ Today, we need to take positive action in order to help our children acquire a Christian identity. Parents, ask yourselves, ‘How well do my children speak the “pure language” of Scriptural truth? (Zeph. 3:9) Does my children’s conversation reflect the influence of God’s spirit or that of the world?’ Do not quickly become discouraged if you see room for improvement. It takes time to learn a language, especially when we are surrounded by distractions. Your children are facing tremendous pressures to compromise. Therefore, patiently use your Family Worship sessions and other opportunities to help your children to develop a close relationship with Jehovah. (Deut. 6:6-9) Highlight the benefits of being different from Satan’s world. (John 17:15-17) And work to reach the heart.

¹⁸ Ultimately, each child will make his or her own decision about serving God. Yet, there is much that parents can do. This includes setting a proper example, specifying clear boundaries, and discussing with your children the consequences of decisions. Parents, no one is in a better position than you are to prepare your children for making a dedication to Jehovah. They need your help to acquire and preserve their Christian identity. Of course, all of us need to be on guard so that we do not lose our figurative “outer garments”—the qualities and standards that identify us as Christ’s followers.—Rev. 3:4, 5; 16:15.

**Ne 12:31—What could have been the effect of having two choirs?
(it-2 454 ¶1)**

Much of the group singing in Israel appears to have been antiphonal, either two half choruses alternating in singing parallel lines, or a soloist and an answering chorus alternating. In the Scriptures this apparently is referred to as “responding.” (Ex 15:21; 1Sa 18:6, 7) This type of singing is indicated by the very way some

of the psalms are written, such as Psalm 136. The description of the two large thanksgiving choirs in Nehemiah's time and of their part in the inauguration of the wall of Jerusalem implies that they sang in this style.—Ne 12:31, 38, 40-42; see SONG.

Ne 13:31b—What was Nehemiah asking Jehovah to do? (w11 2/1 14 ¶3-5)

Nehemiah prays: “Do remember me, O my God, for good.” Is Nehemiah afraid that his good deeds have gone unnoticed by God or that God will forget about him? No. Nehemiah is no doubt aware of what earlier Bible writers have said about Jehovah's keen interest in his faithful worshippers and their good deeds. (Exodus 32:32, 33; Psalm 56:8) What, then, is he asking God to do? One reference work notes that the Hebrew term translated “remember” implies “the affection of the mind and the action which accompanies recollection.” With full faith in the power of prayer, Nehemiah is asking God to remember him with affection and to bless him.—Nehemiah 2:4.

Will Jehovah answer Nehemiah's prayer for remembrance? In one respect, he already has. The very fact that Jehovah saw fit to have a permanent record made of Nehemiah's prayer, making it part of the inspired Scriptures, assures us that he remembers Nehemiah with affection. But the “Hearer of prayer” will do more to answer Nehemiah's heartfelt request.—Psalm 65:2.

God will yet reward Nehemiah for all the good that he did for pure worship. (Hebrews 11:6) In the coming righteous new world that Jehovah has promised, he will bless Nehemiah by resurrecting him from the dead. (2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:3, 4) There, with the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth, Nehemiah will see that Jehovah has, indeed, remembered him for good.

tures also forbid all forms of idolatry. (Exodus 20:4, 5; 1 Corinthians 10:14) With very good reason, therefore, true Christians do not use the cross in worship.*

* For a more detailed discussion of the cross, see pages 89-93 of the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Lord's Evening Meal **—An Observance That Honors God**

CHRISTIANS are commanded to observe the Memorial of Christ's death. This observance is also called "the Lord's Evening Meal." (1 Corinthians 11:20) What is so significant about it? When and how should it be observed?

Jesus Christ instituted this observance on the night of the Jewish Passover in 33 C.E. The Passover was a celebration held just once a year, on the 14th day of the Jewish month Nisan. To calculate that date, the Jews evidently waited for the spring equinox. This is the day when there are approximately 12 hours of daylight and 12 hours of darkness. The first observable new moon nearest to the spring equinox marked the first day of Nisan. Passover began 13 days later.

Jesus celebrated the Passover with his apostles, dismissed Judas Iscariot, and then instituted the Lord's

Evening Meal. This meal replaced the Jewish Passover and therefore should be observed only once a year.

The Gospel of Matthew reports: “Jesus took a loaf, and after saying a blessing, he broke it, and giving it to the disciples, he said: ‘Take, eat. This means my body.’ And taking a cup, he offered thanks and gave it to them, saying: ‘Drink out of it, all of you, for this means my “blood of the covenant,” which is to be poured out in behalf of many for forgiveness of sins.’”—Matthew 26:26-28.

Some believe that Jesus turned the bread into his literal flesh and the wine into his blood. However, Jesus’ fleshly body was still intact when he offered this bread. Were Jesus’ apostles really eating his literal flesh and drinking his blood? No, for that would have been cannibalism and a violation of God’s law. (Genesis 9:3, 4; Leviticus 17:10) According to Luke 22:20, Jesus said: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.” Did that cup literally become “the new covenant”? That would be impossible, since a covenant is an agreement, not a tangible object.

Hence, both the bread and the wine are only symbols. The bread symbolizes Christ’s perfect body. Jesus used a loaf of bread left over from the Passover meal. The loaf was made without any leaven, or yeast. (Exodus 12:8) The Bible often uses leaven as a symbol of sin or corruption.

The bread therefore represents the perfect body that Jesus sacrificed. It was free of sin.—Matthew 16:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 5:6, 7; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 2:1, 2.

The red wine represents Jesus' blood. That blood makes valid the new covenant. Jesus said that his blood was poured out "for forgiveness of sins." Humans can thus become clean in God's eyes and can enter into the new covenant with Jehovah. (Hebrews 9:14; 10:16, 17) This covenant, or contract, makes it possible for 144,000 faithful Christians to go to heaven. There they will serve as kings and priests for the blessing of all mankind.—Genesis 22:18; Jeremiah 31:31-33; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1-3.

Who should partake of these Memorial emblems? Logically, only those in the new covenant—that is, those who have the hope of going to heaven—should partake of the bread and the wine. God's holy spirit convinces such ones that they have been selected to be heavenly kings. (Romans 8:16) They are also in the Kingdom covenant with Jesus.—Luke 22:29.

What about those who have the hope of living forever in Paradise on earth? They obey Jesus' command and attend the Lord's Evening Meal, but they come as respectful observers, not partakers. Once a year after sundown on Nisan 14, Jehovah's Witnesses observe the Lord's Evening Meal. Although only a few thousand worldwide profess to

have the heavenly hope, this observance is precious to all Christians. It is an occasion when all can reflect on the superlative love of Jehovah God and Jesus Christ.—John 3:16.

“Soul” and “Spirit” **—What Do These Terms Really Mean?**

WHEN you hear the terms “soul” and “spirit,” what comes to your mind? Many believe that these words mean something invisible and immortal that exists inside us. They think that at death this invisible part of a human leaves the body and lives on. Since this belief is so widespread, many are surprised to learn that it is not at all what the Bible teaches. What, then, is the soul, and what is the spirit, according to God’s Word?

“SOUL” AS USED IN THE BIBLE

First, consider the soul. You may remember that the Bible was originally written mainly in Hebrew and Greek. When writing about the soul, the Bible writers used the Hebrew word *ne’phesh* or the Greek word *psy-khe’*. These two words occur well over 800 times in the Scriptures, and the *New World Translation* renders them “soul,” either in the main text or in footnotes. When you examine the way “soul” or “souls” is used in the Bible, it becomes evident

5 *Christ, Our Exemplar* (Romans 5:8)

1. What love Jehovah showed,
 What blessings from him flowed,
 When for all mankind he gave his dear Son.
Christ then became our bread,
 That we might all be fed,
 And life eternal in peace might be won.
2. Christ taught us ev'ry day
 For God's great name to pray,
 The name Jehovah to be sanctified.
Pray that his Kingdom come
 And that his will be done.
Pray that he daily our bread will provide.
3. God's truth Christ Jesus taught
 And tender comfort brought
 To those who followed as his faithful sheep.
May seeds of Kingdom praise
 Be sown through all our days.
Then satisfaction and joy we will reap.

- Song 106 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Practical Lessons From Nehemiah”:** (10 min.)
 Ne 13:4-9—Avoid bad associations (w13 8/15 4 ¶5-8)
 Ne 13:15-21—Put spiritual things first (w13 8/15 5-6 ¶13-15)
 Ne 13:23-27—Preserve your Christian identity (w13 8/15 6-7 ¶16-18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ne 12:31—What could have been the effect of having two choirs? (it-2 454 ¶1)

Ne 13:31b—What was Nehemiah asking Jehovah to do? (w11 2/1 14 ¶3-5)

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 12:1-26 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

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- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) Explain the Memorial to a Bible student, using the *Bible Teach* book, pages 206-208. Offer practical assistance to help the student attend.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 5
- **“Invite Everyone in Your Territory to the Memorial”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Explain how the congregation will cover its territory. When reviewing “Steps to Consider,” play the Memorial video. Encourage all to participate fully in the campaign and to cultivate any interest they find. Include a demonstration.
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NEHEMIAH 12-13 | Practical Lessons From Nehemiah

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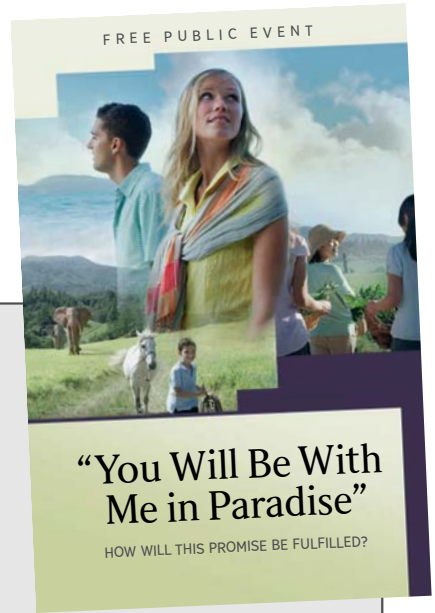
Invite Everyone in Your Territory to the Memorial!

During the campaign that begins on February 27, we will invite as many as possible in our community to observe the Memorial of Christ's death with us. We should also pay careful attention to any interest shown in order to cultivate it.

STEPS TO CONSIDER

GIVE YOUR PRESENTATION

"We are distributing this invitation to a very important event. On March 23, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and to hear a free Bible discourse about how his death benefits us. This invitation shows the time and location of the meeting being held in our community. Please come if you can."



If the individual shows interest . . .

OFFER THE WATCHTOWER

Lay the groundwork for a return visit.



SHOW THE MEMORIAL VIDEO

Lay the groundwork for a return visit.



When you return, you can . . .



SHOW WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

Then offer a Bible study aid.

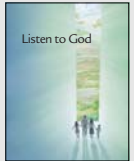
OFFER WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY TEACH?

Share more information about the Memorial, using pages 206-208. Then offer the book.



OFFER LISTEN TO GOD

Discuss the meaning of Christ's death, using pages 18-19. Then offer the brochure.



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¹³ When the emissaries reported back to David, he became furious. “Gird on every one his sword!” he commanded. Arming himself, David led 400 of his men to attack. He vowed to wipe out every male in Nabal’s household. (1 Sam. 25:12, 13, 21, 22) David’s ire was understandable, but his way of expressing it was wrong. The Bible says: “Man’s wrath does not work out God’s righteousness.” (Jas. 1:20) How, though, could Abigail save her household?

“Blessed Be Your Sensibleness”

¹⁴ In a way, we have already seen Abigail take the first step toward righting this terrible wrong. Unlike her husband, Nabal, she proved willing to listen. As for bringing the matter to Nabal, the young servant said of him: “He is too much of a good-for-nothing fellow to speak to him.”* (1 Sam. 25:17) Tragically,

* The phrase the young man used literally means “a son of belial (worthlessness).” Other Bible renderings of this sentence include a description of Nabal as a man “who won’t listen to anyone” and the conclusion, “it is no good talking to him.”

13. (a) How did David initially respond to Nabal’s insult? (b) What light does the principle recorded at James 1:20 shed on David’s reaction?

14. (a) In what way did Abigail take the first step toward righting the wrong that Nabal had committed? (b) What practical lesson might we learn from the contrast between Nabal and Abigail? (See also footnote.)

Nabal's view of his own importance rendered him unwilling to listen. Such arrogance is all too common even to this day. But the young man knew Abigail to be different, which is no doubt why he approached her with this problem.

¹⁵ Abigail thought and acted quickly. "At once Abigail hastened," we read. Four times in this one account we find the same verb, "to hasten," used regarding this woman. She prepared a generous gift for David and his men. It included bread, wine, sheep, roasted grain, cakes of raisins, and cakes of figs. Clearly, Abigail knew well what she had and was thoroughly in charge of her household responsibilities, much like the capable wife later described in the book of Proverbs. (Prov. 31:10-31) She sent the provisions ahead with some of her servants, then followed alone. "But," we read, "to her husband Nabal she told nothing."—1 Sam. 25:18, 19.

¹⁶ Does this mean that Abigail was rebelling against her husband's rightful headship? No; keep in **15, 16. (a) How did Abigail show that she was like the capable wife described in the book of Proverbs? (b) Why was Abigail's course not a case of rebelling against her husband's rightful headship?**

mind that Nabal had acted wickedly against an anointed servant of Jehovah, an action that could well result in death for many innocent members of Nabal's household. If Abigail failed to act, might she become a sharer in her husband's guilt? In this case, she had to put submission to her God ahead of submission to her husband.

¹⁷ Before long, Abigail met up with David and his men. Again she hastened, this time to descend from her donkey and humble herself before David. (1 Sam. 25:20, 23) Then she poured out her heart at length, making a powerful plea for mercy in behalf of her husband and her household. What made her words effective?

¹⁸ She took responsibility for the problem and asked David to forgive her personally. She realistically acknowledged that her husband was as senseless as his name implied, perhaps suggesting that it would be beneath David's dignity to chastise such a man. She expressed her trust in David as Jehovah's

17, 18. How did Abigail approach David, what did she say, and what made her words effective?

representative, recognizing that he was fighting “the wars of Jehovah.” She also indicated that she knew of Jehovah’s promise regarding David and the kingship, for she said: “Jehovah . . . certainly will commission you as leader over Israel.” Further, she urged David not to take any action that might bring bloodguilt upon him or that might later become “a cause for staggering”—evidently referring to a troubled conscience. (*Read 1 Samuel 25:24-31.*) Kind, moving words!

¹⁹ And how did David respond? He accepted what Abigail had brought and said: “Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! And blessed be your sensibleness, and blessed be you who have restrained me this day from entering into bloodguilt.” David praised her for bravely hastening to meet him, and he acknowledged that she had restrained him from incurring bloodguilt. “Go up in peace to your house,” he told her, and he humbly added: “I have listened to your voice.” —1 Sam. 25:32-35.

19. How did David respond to Abigail’s words, and why did he praise her?



“Please, let your slave girl speak in your ears”

“Here Is Your Slave Girl”

²⁰ After she took her leave, Abigail could not help thinking about that meeting; nor could she have failed to notice the contrast between that faithful, kind man and the brute to whom she was married. But she did not dwell on such thoughts. We read: “Later Abigail came in to Nabal.” Yes, she returned to her husband as determined as ever to carry out her role as his wife to the best of her ability. She had to tell him of the gift she had given to David and his men. He had a right to know. She also had to tell him—before he learned of it elsewhere, to his even greater shame—about the danger that had been averted. She could not tell him now though. He was feasting like a king and was as drunk as could be.—1 Sam. 25:36.

²¹ Again showing both courage and discretion, she waited until the next morning when the influence of the wine had ebbed. He would be sober enough to understand her, yet possibly more dangerous in his

20, 21. (a) What do you find admirable about Abigail’s willingness to return to her husband? (b) How did Abigail show courage and discretion in choosing the time to talk to Nabal?

temper as well. Still, she approached and told him the whole story. No doubt she expected him to explode in fury, perhaps violence. Instead, he just sat there, not moving.—1 Sam. 25:37.

²² What was wrong with the man? “His heart came to be dead inside him, and he himself became as a stone.” Perhaps he had suffered some form of stroke. However, about ten days later, his end came—and not strictly for medical reasons. The account tells us: “Jehovah struck Nabal, so that he died.” (1 Sam. 25:38) With that righteous execution, Abigail’s long nightmare of a marriage was over. While Jehovah does not step in with miraculous executions today, this account is a fitting reminder that no case of domestic tyranny or abuse escapes his notice. In his own time, he will always bring about justice.—*Read Luke 8:17.*

²³ Besides the release from a bad marriage, Abigail had another blessing in store. When he learned of the death of Nabal, David sent messengers to pro-

22. What happened to Nabal, and what can we learn about all cases of domestic tyranny or abuse?

23. What further blessing came to Abigail, and how did she show that her new prospects did not change her?



**Abigail
courageously
told Nabal
what she had
done to save
his life**

pose marriage. “Here is your slave girl,” she responded, “as a maidservant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.” Clearly, she was not changed by the prospect of becoming David’s wife; she even offered to be a servant to his servants! Then we read again of her hastening, this time to ready herself to go to David.—1 Sam. 25:39-42.

²⁴ This was no fairy-tale ending; Abigail’s life with David would not always be easy. David was already married to Ahinoam, and though God permitted polygamy, it surely presented special challenges to faithful women back then. And David was not yet king; there would be obstacles and hardships to surmount before he served Jehovah in that way. But as Abigail helped and supported David along life’s road, eventually bearing him a son, she learned that she had a husband who valued her and protected her. On one occasion he even rescued her from kidnapers! (1 Sam. 30:1-19) David thus imitated Jehovah God, who loves and values such discreet, courageous, and faithful women.

24. Abigail faced what challenges in her new life, but how did her husband and her God view her?

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

- What can we learn from Abigail's difficult marital situation?
- How did Abigail show courage and discretion in dealing with her husband's insult of David?
- How did Abigail speak sensibly and persuasively to David?
- In what ways would you like to imitate the faith of Abigail?

1. Praise Jehovah, God of peace,
God of unity.
He will make all wars to cease,
Bring in harmony.
Prince of Peace is Christ his Son,
Tender, calm, and kind.
When the fight for right he's won,
Perfect peace we'll find.
2. We have left off angry words,
Making quarrels cease.
We have made from spears and swords,
Implements of peace.
If this peace we want to keep,
Then we must forgive.
Peacefully as Jesus' sheep,
May we learn and live.
3. As a fruit of righteousness,
Peace we all must bear,
Proof of wisdom from above,
Gained through heartfelt prayer.
We would recommend our way,
Show our peaceful care
Till the Kingdom's perfect day
Brings peace ev'rywhere.

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES

FEBRUARY 1-7

Jehovah, the God
of Communication

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A Living
Translation
of God's Word

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FEBRUARY 15-21

Use the Power
of Your Tongue
for Good

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FEBRUARY 22-28

Jehovah Will
Sustain You

PAGE 23

Jehovah, Our Strength

(Isaiah 12:2)

1. Gracious Jehovah, our strength and our might,
You are our Savior, in you we delight.
We are your Witnesses bearing your news,
Whether men hear or they proudly refuse.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, our Rock, our strength and our might,
Your name we make known both day and night.
Glorious Jehovah, Almighty in pow'r,
You are our hiding place; You are our Tow'r.*

2. We who now serve you rejoice in your light;
With opened eyes, we now see truth and right.
Searching the Scriptures, we hear your command;
Making our choice, for your Kingdom we stand.

(Chorus)

3. Gladly, O God, we keep doing your will.
Though Satan mocks us, we're trusting you still.
Though he may slay us, oh, help us to be
Firm to the end for your grand Sov'reignty.

(Chorus)



Jehovah Will Sustain You

“Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed.”—PS. 41:3.

HAVE you ever wondered: ‘Will I recover from this sickness?’ Or you may have wondered if a beloved family member or friend will recover from an illness. It is a normal concern when someone faces serious health problems. Similar concern was expressed by two kings in the days of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. King Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, had a bad fall, so he asked: ‘Will I recover from this injury?’ Later, King Benhadad of Syria was very ill, and he asked: “Will I recover from this sickness?”—2 Ki. 1:2; 8:7, 8.

² We hope, of course, that there will be a good outcome for us and for those whom we care about. Still, many have wondered what God will do to help. During the lives of those kings, God occasionally performed miracles involving the life and health of humans. By means of his prophets, Jehovah even performed resurrections. (1 Ki. 17:17-24; 2 Ki. 4:17-20, 32-35) Is there reason to expect that he might do something similar in our time?

³ There is no doubt that God has the power to affect

1, 2. What may we at times wonder, and what examples in the Bible come to mind?

3-5. What power do God and Jesus have, leading to what questions?

SONGS: 23, 138

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

When we are sick, what encouragement can we draw from Psalm 41:3?

Why do we not expect miraculous cures at this time?

What caution is appropriate in regard to recommendations about health issues?

someone's health. The Bible confirms that. At times, he punished individuals with sickness, such as the Pharaoh in Abraham's day and later Moses' sister, Miriam. (Gen. 12:17; Num. 12:9, 10; 2 Sam. 24:15) God warned that if the Israelites proved unfaithful, he would afflict them with "every sickness or plague." (Deut. 28:58-61) On the other hand, Jehovah could remove diseases or prevent sickness. (Ex. 23:25; Deut. 7:15) Also, he could heal people. After Job had been so sick that he longed to die, God healed him!—Job 2:7; 3:11-13; 42:10, 16.

⁴ Yes, God definitely has the power to intervene and heal a sick person. It is similar with his Son. We read that Jesus miraculously cured lepers, epileptics, and blind or paralyzed ones. (**Read Matthew 4:23, 24; John 9:1-7**) How strengthening it is to think that the healings Jesus performed are a foregleam of what he will do on a grand scale in the new world. Then "no resident will say: 'I am sick.'"—Isa. 33:24.

⁵ But should we look to God or Jesus for a miraculous cure now? How should we view grave illnesses or infirmities, and what should we do about them?

SUSTAINED ON A SICKBED

⁶ We know from the Bible that in the first century, God enabled some anointed Christians to work miracles. (Acts 3:2-7; 9:36-42) Among the "different gifts" of the spirit were "gifts of healing." (1 Cor. 12:4-11) But those and other gifts, such as speaking in tongues and prophesying, would soon come to an end. (1 Cor. 13:8) They are not available today. Thus, we have no basis for expecting God to per-

6. What do we know about the "gifts of healing" that some early Christians had?

form miraculous healings for us or our loved ones.

⁷ Still, if we are ill, we can look to God for comfort, wisdom, and support, as did true worshippers in the past. King David wrote: "Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one; Jehovah will rescue him in the day of calamity. Jehovah will guard him and keep him alive." (Ps. 41:1, 2) We know that an individual living in David's day who showed consideration to a lowly one did not keep living without end. Hence, David could not have meant that such a considerate individual would be kept alive miraculously, thus gaining everlasting life. We can take those inspired words to mean that God would help the loyal considerate one. How? David explained: "Jehovah will sustain him on his sickbed; during his sickness you will completely change his bed." (Ps. 41:3) Yes, an individual who showed consideration to a lowly one could be certain that God was aware of him and his faithful course. And the recuperative power of his God-given body might help him to get better, to recover from his sickness.

⁸ David spoke from experience: "I said: 'O Jehovah, show me favor. Heal me, for I have sinned against you.'" (Ps. 41:4) He may have written that regarding the time when Absalom tried to usurp the throne while David was ill and unable to handle the situation. Despite having received God's forgiveness, David did not forget his own sin with Bath-sheba and its consequences. (2 Sam. 12:7-14) Still, the king was sure that God would sustain him

7. Psalm 41:3 provides what encouraging assurance?

8. According to Psalm 41:4, what did David seek from Jehovah?

on his sickbed. But was David asking for a miraculous healing and an extension of life?

⁹ Years later, God chose to heal King Hezekiah, who “became sick and was at the point of death.” In that unusual case, God intervened. Hezekiah recovered and lived on for 15 years. (2 Ki. 20: 1-6) David, on the other hand, did not pray for God to heal him miraculously. The context suggests that David asked Jehovah to help him in the same way that He would help an individual who showed consideration to a lowly one. That included being sustained “on his sickbed.” Because David’s sin had been forgiven, he could ask that God would comfort and support him and that the physical resources of his body might enable him to recover. (Ps. 103:3) We can do likewise.

¹⁰ Just as David did not receive a miraculous cure and a greatly extended life, neither did Trophimus, one of the apostle Paul’s coworkers. We know that Paul was on occasion empowered to heal the sick. (**Read Acts 14:8-10.**) He did so for “the father of Publius [who] was lying in bed sick with fever and dysentery.” Paul “prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him.” (Acts 28:8) Yet, Paul did not do the same for Trophimus, who had traveled with him on a missionary journey. (Acts 20:3-5, 22; 21:29) When Trophimus fell ill and could not continue on with Paul, the apostle did not heal him; he left him at Miletus to recover. (2 Tim. 4:20) Similarly, when Epaphroditus fell “sick nearly to the point of

9. (a) How did David’s case differ from that of King Hezekiah? (b) What could David expect from Jehovah?

10. What can we conclude from the experiences of Trophimus and Epaphroditus?

death,” there is no indication that Paul used some miraculous power to heal his good friend.—Phil. 2:25-27, 30.

TAKE REASONABLE STEPS

¹¹ “Luke, the beloved physician,” writer of the book of Acts, also traveled with Paul. (Col. 4:14; Acts 16:10-12; 20:5, 6) It is reasonable to believe that Luke gave Paul medical advice and rendered medical services to him and to others in his missionary group. Why would Luke need to do that? Because even Paul got sick while traveling. (Gal. 4:13) Luke could provide medical help that was in line with what Jesus had said: “Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but those who are ill do.”—Luke 5:31.

¹² The Bible does not indicate where or when Luke received his medical training. It has been suggested that Paul mentioned to Christians in Colossae the role of Luke as a physician because they knew him. Interestingly, there was a medical school in nearby Laodicea. In any event, Luke was not some untrained layman spouting health recommendations; he was a physician. That is evident both from the specific medical language that Luke used in his Gospel and in the book of Acts and from the way he focused on Jesus’ healings of others.

¹³ We do not live at a time when a fellow Christian can use “gifts of healing” to cure us. But some well-intentioned brothers give unsolicited health recommendations. Granted, someone might simply offer general, practical suggestions. Paul

11, 12. Why was Luke able to be of genuine help to Paul, and what can we say about Luke’s qualifications?

13. What balanced view of health recommendations is advisable?

did so when Timothy was experiencing stomach problems, perhaps because the local water was polluted.* (**Read 1 Timothy 5:23.**) That, however, is quite different from trying to persuade a fellow Witness to use some herb, remedy, or diet that may not be effective or in some cases may even be harmful. At times, some have tried to persuade others with an explanation: ‘My relative had a similar disease, and he took . . . Then he got well.’ No matter how sincere the suggestion, we do well to keep in mind that there may be risks even with widely used medications and treatments.—**Read Proverbs 27:12.**

THE WISDOM OF CAUTION

14 We Christians have a normal desire to be healthy so that we can enjoy life and share fully in God’s service. Nonetheless, we have inherited imperfection, as shown by our being subject to illnesses. When we get sick, there might be various approaches or treatments. Each person has the right to choose which to accept or employ. Sadly, in this greedy world, there are those who seize on people’s illness as an opportunity to make money. Some sell “treatments” or “cures” backed with false claims or supposed testimonials. Other individuals or companies stress the use of products that are high-priced in order to make large profits. To a sick person who desperately seeks relief or a way to stay alive longer,

* The book *The Origins and Ancient History of Wine* reports: “It has been shown experimentally that living typhoid and other dangerous microbes rapidly die when mixed with wine.”

14, 15. (a) Some people view the sickness of others as an opportunity to do what? (b) How is Proverbs 14:15 helpful when it comes to health recommendations?

these “cures” may seem appealing. Let us not forget, however, that God’s Word advises us: “The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders each step.”—Prov. 14:15.

15 “The shrewd one” will be particularly cautious if the “word,” or recommendation, comes from someone whose qualifications are questionable. “The shrewd one” might reason: ‘He says that this vitamin, herb, or diet supposedly helped someone, but are there adequate witnesses to establish the matter? People differ. Is there valid reason to trust that it will help me? Should I do more research or even consult with some who are known to be trained or qualified in this field?’—Deut. 17:6.

16 God’s Word admonishes us “to live with soundness of mind . . . amid this present system of things.” (Titus 2:12) Having “soundness of mind,” or being sober-minded, should certainly come into play when the explanation of a diagnostic method or therapy seems strange or mysterious. Can the practitioner or the one promoting it explain *satisfactorily* how it works? Is it in accord with known facts, and do numerous qualified people view it as credible? (Prov. 22:29) Or is the main appeal to the emotions? Perhaps the claim is that it was discovered or used in a distant or remote place, as if hidden from modern research. Does such a claim prove anything or even seem reasonable? Some diagnostic devices or forms of treatment are described as using a ‘secret substance’ or ‘body force.’ That warrants serious caution because God warned against “the use of magical pow-

16. Considering what questions could help us to demonstrate “soundness of mind” regarding health recommendations?



We want to prosper and be strong as we serve God
(See paragraph 17)

er” and spirit mediums.—Isa. 1:13; Deut. 18:10-12.

“GOOD HEALTH TO YOU!”

¹⁷ The first-century governing body sent an important letter to the congregations. After listing things that Christians must avoid, the letter concluded: “If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!” (Acts 15:29) The final words, a type of complimentary close, can also be rendered “be strong.” We definitely want to prosper in “good health” and be strong as we serve our great God.

¹⁸ As long as the present system of things remains and we are imperfect, sickness is a fact that we must face.

17. We should have what reasonable desire?

18, 19. What can we look forward to in the new world?

We cannot expect now to be cured miraculously. However, Revelation 22:1, 2 points to the time when we will be healed completely. The apostle John saw in vision “a river of water of life” and “trees of life” with leaves “for the healing of the nations.” This does not refer to any herbal remedy now or in the future. Rather, it points to Jehovah’s provision through Jesus for giving everlasting life to obedient mankind—truly something we can look forward to.—Isa. 35:5, 6.

¹⁹ As we await that glorious future, we know that Jehovah is interested in each of us personally, even when we are ill. We can be confident, just as David was, that our God will sustain us during any time of sickness. And with David we can say: “As for me, you uphold me because of my integrity; you will keep me in your presence forever.”—Ps. 41:12.

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)