

- Song 131 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Esther Acted Unselfishly for Jehovah and for His People”:** (10 min.)
 Es 8:3, 4—Although Esther was safe, she risked her life for others (*ia* 143 ¶24-25)
 Es 8:5—Esther was tactful with Ahasuerus (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶8)
 Es 8:17—Many people became Jewish proselytes (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶3)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Es 8:1, 2—How was Jacob’s deathbed prophecy fulfilled regarding Benjamin’s ‘dividing spoil in the evening’? (*ia* 142, box)
- Es 9:10, 15, 16—Even though the decree authorized plundering of the spoil, why did the Jews refrain from doing so? (*w06* 3/1 11 ¶4)

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:** Es 8:1-9 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play each sample presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Afterward, discuss the article “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Building Your Own Magazine Presentation.”

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 118
- **“Welcome Our Guests”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Invite publishers to relate good experiences that resulted from taking the initiative to welcome visitors attending a past Memorial. Have a reenactment of an outstanding experience.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** *ia* chap. 10 ¶12-21, review on p. 91 (30 min.)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 69 and Prayer

Welcome Our Guests

On March 23, some 12 million or more visitors are expected to attend the Memorial as our guests. What an outstanding witness they will receive as the speaker discusses Jehovah’s gift of the ransom and some of the future blessings that will result to mankind! (Isa 11:6-9; 35:5, 6; 65:21-23; Joh 3:16) However, the speaker is not the only one who will give a witness on this special occasion. All of us can have a share by warmly welcoming our guests. (Ro 15:7) Here are some suggestions.



- Instead of going to your seat and waiting for the program to begin, welcome visitors and inactive ones with a warm smile and a friendly greeting
- While giving special attention to acquaintances that you personally invited, be alert for others who may be there as a result of the invitation campaign. Invite new ones to sit with you. Share your Bible and songbook with them
- After the talk, make yourself available to answer questions. If time is limited because your congregation must leave to make room for another congregation, make arrangements to visit the person within a few days. If you do not have his or her contact information, you might say: “I’d like to hear what you thought of the program. Is there a way that I can contact you?”

131 *Jehovah Provides Escape* (2 Samuel 22:1-8)

1. The living God, Jehovah, you have proved to be;
Your mighty works abound
in earth and sky and sea.
No rival god can equal what you have done
—there is none.
Our foes will be consumed.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah provides escape for the loyal.
His servants will see what a mighty Crag is he.
So with courage and faith in our God,
we spread the fame
Of Jehovah, our Source of escape,
and praise his name.*

2. Though ropes of death encircle me, I call to you,
“Jehovah, give me strength,
and give me courage too.”
From your own temple dwelling, you hear my plea,
“Shelter me;
Rescue me, O my God.”

(Chorus)

3. From heaven you will thunder
and give forth your voice.
Your enemies will quake;
your servants will rejoice.
You prove to be whatever you need to be;
all will see
How you provide escape.

(Chorus)

was in his hand. Esther then approached and touched the top of the scepter.

3 The king asked her: "What is the matter, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even to* the half of my kingdom, it will be granted you!" **4** Esther replied: "If it pleases the king, let the king along with Ha'man^a come today to the banquet that I have prepared for him." **5** So the king said to his men: "Tell Ha'man to come quickly, as Esther requests." So the king and Ha'man went to the banquet that Esther had prepared.

6 During the banquet of wine, the king said to Esther: "What is your petition? It will be granted you! And what is your request? Even to* the half of my kingdom, it will be done!"^b **7** Esther answered: "My petition and my request is, **8** If I have found favor with the king and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and to act on my request, let the king and Ha'man come to the banquet that I will hold for them tomorrow; and tomorrow I will do as the king says."

9 On that day Ha'man went out joyful and with a cheerful heart. But when Ha'man saw Mor'de-cai in the king's gate and noticed that he did not rise and tremble in his presence, Ha'man was filled with rage against Mor'de-cai.^c **10** However, Ha'man restrained himself and went to his house. Then he sent for his friends and Ze'resh^d his wife. **11** Ha'man boasted about his glorious wealth, his many sons,^e and how the king had promoted him and had exalted him over the princes and the servants of the king.^f

12 Ha'man added: "What is more, Queen Esther invited no

5:3, 6 *Or "for."

CHAP. 5

a Es 3:1, 10

b Es 7:2

c Es 3:2-5

d Es 5:14
Es 6:13

e Es 9:7-10

f Es 3:1

Second Col.

a Es 5:5

b Es 5:8

c Es 6:4
Es 7:9

CHAP. 6

d Es 10:2

e Es 2:21, 23

f Es 4:11

g Es 5:14

h Es 3:1

one else but me to accompany the king to the banquet she prepared.^a I am also invited tomorrow to be with her and the king.^b **13** But all of this fails to satisfy me as long as I see Mor'de-cai the Jew sitting in the king's gate." **14** So Ze'resh his wife and all his friends said to him: "Have a stake put up, 50 cubits* high. And in the morning tell the king that Mor'de-cai should be hanged on it.^c Then go with the king to enjoy yourself at the banquet." This suggestion seemed good to Ha'man, so he had the stake put up.

6 That night the king could not sleep.* So he said to bring the book of the historical records of the times,^d and it was read to the king. **2** There it was found written that Mor'de-cai had reported concerning Bigtha'na and Te'resh, two court officials of the king, doorkeepers, who had plotted to do away with* King A-has-u-e'rus.^e **3** The king asked: "What honor and recognition has been given to Mor'de-cai for this?" To this the king's personal attendants said: "Nothing has been done for him."

4 Later the king said: "Who is in the courtyard?" Now Ha'man had come into the outer courtyard^f of the king's house* to speak to the king about having Mor'de-cai hanged on the stake that he had prepared for him.^g **5** The king's attendants said to him: "It is Ha'man^h standing in the courtyard." So the king said: "Have him come in."

6 When Ha'man came in, the king said to him: "What should be done for the man whom the king wishes to honor?" Ha'man

5:14 *About 22.3 m (73 ft). See App. B14. 6:1 *Lit., "the king's sleep fled." 6:2 *Lit., "to lay hand on." 6:4 *Or "palace."

said in his heart: "Whom would the king wish to honor more than me?"^a **7** So Ha'man said to the king: "For the man whom the king wishes to honor, **8** let them bring royal attire^b that the king wears and a horse on which the king rides, with the royal headdress on its head. **9** Then let the attire and the horse be put into the charge of one of the king's noble princes, and they should clothe the man whom the king wishes to honor and have him ride on the horse in the public square of the city. They should call out before him: 'This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!'"^c **10** At once the king said to Ha'man: "Quick! Take the attire and the horse, and do what you just said for Mor'de-cai the Jew who is sitting in the king's gate. Do not leave out anything that you have said."

11 So Ha'man took the attire and the horse, and he clothed Mor'de-cai^d and made him ride in the public square of the city and called out before him: "This is what is done for the man whom the king wishes to honor!" **12** Afterward Mor'de-cai returned to the king's gate, but Ha'man hurried to his house, mourning with his head covered. **13** When Ha'man related to his wife Ze'resh^e and to all his friends everything that had happened to him, his wise men and his wife Ze'resh said to him: "If Mor'de-cai, before whom you have started to fall, is of Jewish descent,^{*} you will not prevail against him; you will surely fall before him."

14 While they were still speaking with him, the king's court officials arrived and quickly took Ha'man to the banquet that Esther had made.^f

CHAP. 6

a Es 3:2
Es 5:11

b Es 8:15

c Ge 41:42, 43

d Es 2:5, 6

e Es 5:10, 14

f Es 5:8

Second Col.

CHAP. 7

a Es 3:1

b Es 5:3, 6

c Es 2:5, 7

d Es 3:8, 9

e Es 3:13
Es 4:7, 8

f Es 1:10

g Es 5:14

h Es 6:2

7 So the king and Ha'man^a came in to Queen Esther's banquet. **2** The king said to Esther again on the second day during the banquet of wine: "What is your petition, Queen Esther? It will be granted you. And what is your request? Even to^{*} the half of my kingdom, it will be done!"^b **3** Queen Esther answered: "If I have found favor with you, O king, and if it pleases the king, let my life^{*} be granted as my petition, and my people^c as my request. **4** For we have been sold,^d I and my people, to be annihilated, killed, and destroyed.^e If we had simply been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept silent. But the distress is not proper, for it will be damaging to the king."

5 King A-has-u-e'rus then said to Queen Esther: "Who is this, and where is the man who has dared to do such a thing?" **6** Esther said: "The adversary and enemy is this evil Ha'man."

Ha'man became terrified because of the king and the queen. **7** The king rose up in a rage from the banquet of wine and went into the palace garden, but Ha'man stood up to plead with Queen Esther for his life,^{*} for he realized that the king was determined to punish him. **8** The king returned from the palace garden to the house of the wine banquet and saw that Ha'man had thrown himself on the couch where Esther was. The king exclaimed: "Is he also going to rape the queen in my own house?" As soon as these words left the king's mouth, they covered Ha'man's face. **9** Har-bo'na,^f one of the king's court officials, now said: "Ha'man also prepared a stake for Mor'de-cai,^g whose report saved the king.^h It is standing at Ha'man's house,

6:13 *Lit., "from the seed of the Jews."

7:2 *Or "for." 7:3, 7 *Or "soul."

50 cubits* high." At that the king said: "Hang him on it." **10** So they hanged Ha'man on the stake that he had prepared for Mor'de-cai, and the king's rage subsided.

8 On that day King A-has-u-e'-rus gave the house of Ha'man,^a the enemy of the Jews,^b to Queen Esther; and Mor'de-cai came in before the king, because Esther had revealed how he was related to her.^c **2** Then the king removed his signet ring^d that he had taken away from Ha'man and gave it to Mor'de-cai. And Esther put Mor'de-cai in charge of the house of Ha'man.^e

3 Moreover, Esther spoke again to the king. She fell down at his feet and wept and pleaded with him to undo the harm done by Ha'man the Ag'ag-ite and his scheme against the Jews.^f **4** The king held the golden scepter out to Esther,^g at which Esther rose and stood before the king. **5** She said: "If it pleases the king and if I have his favor, and if it seems proper to the king and I am pleasing in his eyes, let an order be written to annul the documents of that schemer Ha'man^h the son of Ham-me-da'tha the Ag'ag-ite,ⁱ which he wrote to destroy the Jews in all the king's provinces.* **6** For how can I bear to look upon the disaster that will come upon my people, and how can I bear to see the destruction of my relatives?"

7 So King A-has-u-e'-rus said to Queen Esther and to Mor'de-cai the Jew: "Look! I have given the house of Ha'man to Esther^j and have had him hanged on the stake,^k because of his plot to attack* the Jews. **8** You may now write in the king's name what-

7:9 *About 22.3 m (73 ft). See App. B14. 8:5, 9, 12, 13 *Or "jurisdictional districts." 8:7 *Lit., "because he thrust out his hand against."

CHAP. 8

a Es 5:11

b Es 3:8
Es 9:24

c Es 2:5, 7

d Ge 41:41, 42
Es 3:10
Da 6:17

e Da 2:48

f Es 3:9
Es 7:4
Es 9:24, 25

g Es 4:11

h Es 3:12, 14

i Ex 17:16
Nu 24:7
De 25:19
1Sa 15:8, 33

j Es 8:1

k Es 7:10

Second Col.

a Da 6:8, 15

b Da 6:1

c Es 9:3

d Es 8:2

e Es 9:5-10

f Es 3:13
Es 9:1, 2
Es 9:16, 17

g Ps 149:6, 7

ever you see fit in behalf of the Jews and seal it with the king's signet ring, for a decree that is written in the king's name and sealed with the king's signet ring cannot be revoked."^a

9 So the secretaries of the king were summoned at that time in the third month, that is, the month of Si'van,^b on the 23rd day, and they wrote all that Mor'de-cai commanded to the Jews, as well as to the satraps,^b the governors, and the princes of the provinces*^c from In'di-a to E-thi-o'pi-a, 127 provinces,* to each province^d in its own script[®] and to each people in its own language and to the Jews in their own script[®] and language.

10 He wrote it in the name of King A-has-u-e'-rus and sealed it with the king's signet ring^d and sent the written documents by the hand of couriers on horses; they rode on swift post-horses, bred for royal service. **11** In these documents the king granted permission to the Jews in all the different cities to gather together and defend their lives* and to annihilate, kill, and destroy any forces of any people or province^e that might attack them, including women and children, and to seize their possessions.^e **12** This was to occur on the same day in all the provinces* of King A-has-u-e'-rus, on the 13th day of the 12th month, that is, the month of A'dar.^{ff} **13** The text^g of the document was to be issued as law throughout all the provinces.* It was to be proclaimed to all the peoples, so that the Jews would be ready on that day to take vengeance on their enemies.^g **14** The couriers riding the post-horses used in the royal service went out

8:9, 12 *See App. B15. 8:9, 11 [△]Or "jurisdictional district." 8:9 [®]Or "style of writing." 8:11 *Or "souls." 8:13 *Or "copy."

urgently and speedily at the king's order. The law was also issued in Shu'shan*^a the citadel.[#]

15 Now Mor'de-cai left the king's presence in royal apparel of blue and linen, wearing a great golden crown and a fine-fabric cloak of purple wool.^b And the city of Shu'shan* shouted for joy. **16** For the Jews there was relief* and rejoicing and exultation and honor. **17** And in all the provinces[^] and all the cities, wherever the decree of the king and his law reached, the Jews were rejoicing and exulting, holding banquets and celebrations. Many of the peoples of the land were declaring themselves Jews,^c for the dread of the Jews had fallen upon them.

9 On the 13th day of the 12th month, that is, the month of A'dar,*^d when the king's word and his law were to be carried out,^e on the day when the enemies of the Jews hoped to overpower them, the opposite happened, and the Jews defeated those who hated them.^f **2** The Jews gathered together in their cities in all the provinces[^] of King A-has-u-e'rus^g to lay hands on those seeking to harm them, and not a man could stand against them, for the dread of them had fallen upon all the peoples.^h **3** And all the princes of the provinces,[^] the satraps,ⁱ the governors, and those handling the business of the king were supporting the Jews, for they were in fear of Mor'de-cai. **4** Mor'de-cai had become powerful^j in the king's house,[#] and his fame was spreading throughout all the provinces,[^] because Mor'de-cai was steadily growing more powerful.

8:14, 15; 9:6, 11-15 *Or "Susa." 8:14; 9:6, 11, 12 #Or "palace; fortress." 8:16 *Lit., "light." 8:17; 9:2-4, 12, 16 ^Or "jurisdictional districts." 9:1 *See App. B15. 9:4 #Or "palace."

CHAP. 8

a Ezz 4:9
Ne 1:1
Es 1:2
Da 8:2

b Es 6:7, 8

c Zec 8:23

CHAP. 9

d Es 3:7
Es 8:11, 12

e Es 3:13

f De 32:36
2Sa 22:41

g Es 1:1

h Es 8:17

i Da 6:1

j Es 8:15

Second Col.

a Es 8:11

b Ezz 4:9
Ne 1:1
Es 1:2
Da 8:2

c Es 3:8, 10
Es 7:4-6

d Es 8:11
Es 9:16

e Es 9:16

f Es 5:8
Es 7:3
Es 8:5

g Es 8:11

h Es 7:10

i Es 9:21, 22

j Es 7:3

k Es 8:13
Ps 149:6, 7

5 The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them; they did whatever they wanted to those hating them.^a **6** In Shu'shan*^b the citadel[#] the Jews killed and destroyed 500 men. **7** Also, they killed Par-shan-da'tha, Dal'phon, As-pa'tha, **8** Por-ra'tha, A-da'li-a, A-ri-da'tha, **9** Par-mash'ta, Ar'i-sai, Ar'i-dai, and Vai-za'tha, **10** the ten sons of Ha'man the son of Ham-meda'tha, the enemy of the Jews.^c But after they killed them, they did not seize any plunder.^d

11 On that day the number of those killed in Shu'shan* the citadel[#] was reported to the king.

12 The king said to Queen Esther: "In Shu'shan* the citadel[#] the Jews have killed and destroyed 500 men and the ten sons of Ha'man. What, then, have they done in the rest of the king's provinces?^{^a} What is your petition now? It will be granted you. And what is your further request? It will be done." **13** Esther replied: "If it pleases the king,^f let the Jews who are in Shu'shan* be permitted to act tomorrow also according to today's law;^g and let the ten sons of Ha'man be hanged on the stake."^h **14** So the king gave orders for that to be done. A law was issued in Shu'shan,* and the ten sons of Ha'man were hanged.

15 The Jews in Shu'shan* gathered together again on the 14th day of the month of A'darⁱ and killed 300 men in Shu'shan,* but they did not seize any plunder.

16 The rest of the Jews in the provinces[^] of the king also gathered together and defended their lives.^j They got rid of their enemies,^k killing 75,000 of those who hated them; but they did not seize any plunder. **17** That was on the 13th day of the month

9:16 *Or "stood up for their souls."

of A'dar, and they rested on the 14th day and made it a day of feasting and of rejoicing.

18 The Jews in Shu'shan* gathered together on the 13th day^a and on the 14th day,^b and they rested on the 15th day and made it a day of feasting and rejoicing. **19** That is why the rural Jews inhabiting the cities of the outlying districts made the 14th day of the month of A'dar a day of rejoicing and feasting, a day of celebration,^c and a time to send portions of food to one another.^d

20 Mor'de-cai^e recorded these events and sent official letters to all the Jews in all the provinces* of King A-has-u-e'rus, both near and far. **21** He instructed them to observe the 14th day of the month of A'dar, as well as the 15th day, each and every year, **22** because on those days the Jews rested from their enemies and in that month their grief was changed to rejoicing and their mourning^f to a day of celebration. They were to observe them as days of feasting and rejoicing and as a time to send portions of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 And the Jews agreed to continue the celebration that they had started and to do what Mor'de-cai wrote to them. **24** For Ha'man^g the son of Hamme-da'tha the Ag'ag-ite,^h the enemy of all the Jews, had schemed against the Jews to destroy them,ⁱ and he had cast Pur,^j that is, the Lot, to throw them into a panic and to destroy them. **25** But when Esther came in before the king, he gave orders in writing:^k "Let his evil scheme against the Jews^l come back on his own head"; and they hanged him and his sons on the stake.^m

9:18 *Or "Susa." 9:20, 30 *Or "jurisdictional districts."

CHAP. 9

a Es 9:1, 2

b Es 9:13, 15

c Ps 124:2, 6

d Ne 8:10

e Es 2:5, 6

f Es 4:1-3

g Es 3:1

h Ex 17:16
Nu 24:7
De 25:19
1Sa 15:8, 33

i Es 3:8, 9

j Es 3:7

k Es 8:10

l Es 8:3

m Es 5:14
Es 7:10
Es 9:14

Second Col.

a Es 3:7

b Le 24:22
Es 8:17

c Es 8:9

d Es 1:1

e Es 9:20, 21

f Es 9:27

g 2Ch 20:3

h Es 4:1

i Es 9:26

26 That is why they called these days Pu'rim, after the name of the Pur.^{*a} Therefore, because of all that was written in this letter and what they saw concerning this matter and what had come upon them, **27** the Jews obligated themselves and their descendants and all those joining them^b to celebrate these two days without fail and to carry out what was written concerning them at the appointed time each and every year. **28** These days were to be remembered and observed in every generation, by each family, each province,^{*} and each city; and these days of Pu'rim should not cease among the Jews, and their commemoration should not come to an end among their descendants.

29 Then Queen Esther, the daughter of Ab'i-ha-il, and Mor'de-cai the Jew wrote with full authority to confirm a second letter about Pu'rim. **30** He sent official letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces,^{*c} the realm of A-has-u-e'rus,^d in words of peace and truth **31** to confirm the observance of the days of Pu'rim at their appointed times, just as Mor'de-cai the Jew and Queen Esther had instructed them to do^e and just as they had obligated themselves* and their descendants to carry out,^f including the fasting^g and supplication.^h **32** And the command of Esther confirmed these matters concerning Pu'rim,ⁱ and it was recorded in a book.

10 King A-has-u-e'rus imposed forced labor on the land and the islands of the sea.

9:26 *"Pur," meaning "Lot." The plural form "Purim" came to designate the Jewish festival celebrated in the 12th month of the sacred calendar. See App. B15. 9:28 *Or "jurisdictional district." 9:31 *Or "had imposed upon their soul."

2 And all his powerful and mighty accomplishments, as well as the detailed account of Mor'de-cai's^a greatness to which the king exalted him,^b are they not written in the book of the history of the times^c of the kings of Me'di-a and Persia?^d 3 For Mor'de-cai the Jew was second only to

CHAP. 10

a Es 2:5, 6

b Es 8:15

Da 2:48

c Ezr 4:15

Es 6:1

d Es 1:3

Da 6:15

King A-has-u-e'rus. He was great* among the Jews and respected by the multitude of his brothers, working for the good of his people and advocating the welfare of[#] all their descendants.

10:3 *Or "highly regarded." [#]Lit., "and speaking peace for."

JOB

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ESTHER 6-10 | Esther Acted Unselfishly for Jehovah and for His People

8:3-5, 9

Esther was brave and selfless in defending Jehovah and his people

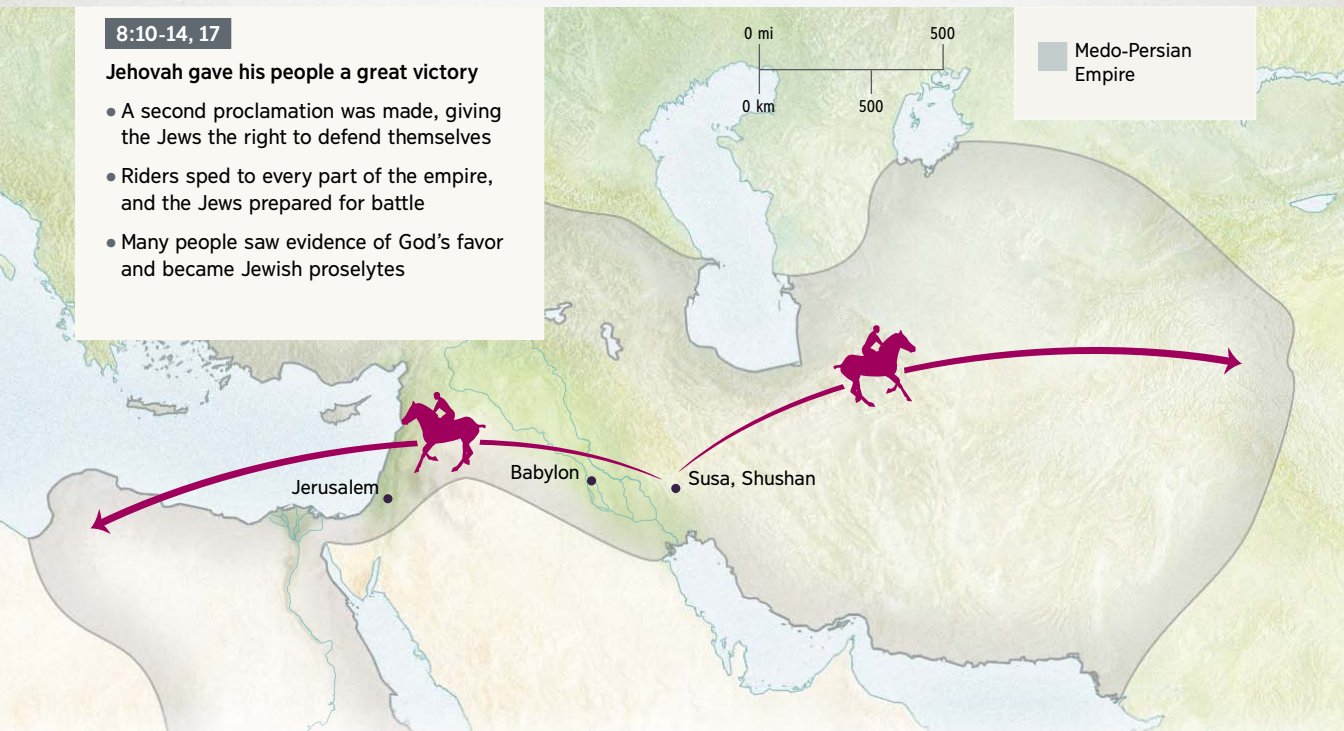
- Esther and Mordecai were safe. But Haman's decree to kill all the Jews was making its way to every corner of the empire
- Esther risked her life again, appearing uninvited before the king. She wept for her people and asked the king to revoke the terrible edict
- Laws passed in the king's name could not be revoked. So the king empowered Esther and Mordecai to enact a new law



8:10-14, 17

Jehovah gave his people a great victory

- A second proclamation was made, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves
- Riders sped to every part of the empire, and the Jews prepared for battle
- Many people saw evidence of God's favor and became Jewish proselytes



Es 8:3, 4—Although Esther was safe, she risked her life for others (*ia* 143 ¶24-25)

²⁴ Now that Esther and Mordecai were safe, could the queen relax? Only if she were selfish. At that moment, Haman's decree to kill all the Jews was making its way to every corner of the empire. Haman had cast lots, or *Pur*—evidently a form of spiritism—to determine the opportune time to carry out this vicious attack. (Esther 9:24-26) The day was yet months away, but it was fast approaching. Could disaster still be averted?

²⁵ Esther unselfishly risked her life again, appearing before the king once more without an official invitation. This time, she wept for her people, pleading with her husband to revoke the terrible edict. But laws passed in the Persian monarch's name could not be revoked. (Dan. 6:12, 15) So the king empowered Esther and Mordecai to enact a new law. A second proclamation was sent out, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves. Riders sped to every part of the empire, taking this good news to the Jews. Hope was kindled anew in many hearts. (Esther 8:3-16) We may imagine the Jews throughout that vast empire arming themselves and preparing for battle, which they could never have done without that new edict. More important, though, would "Jehovah of armies" be with his people?—1 Sam. 17:45.

Es 8:5—Esther was tactful with Ahasuerus
(w06 3/1 11 ¶8)

Esther tactfully did not mention the king's responsibility in the decree designed to annihilate her people. Similarly, we need to be tactful when giving a witness to high officials.

Es 8:17—Many people became Jewish proselytes
(w06 3/1 11 ¶3)

In what way were ‘many of the peoples of the land declaring themselves Jews’? Many of the Persians evidently became Jewish proselytes, thinking that the counterdecree was an indication of God's favor upon the Jews. The same principle is in operation in the fulfillment of a prophecy found in the book of Zechariah. It states: “Ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will actually take hold of the skirt of a man who is a Jew, saying: ‘We will go with you people, for we have heard that God is with you people.’” —Zechariah 8:23.

Es 8:1, 2—How was Jacob’s deathbed prophecy fulfilled regarding Benjamin’s ‘dividing spoil in the evening’? (*ia 142, box*)

A Prophecy Fulfilled

In fighting for God’s people, Esther and Mordecai fulfilled an ancient Bible prophecy. Over a dozen centuries earlier, Jehovah inspired the patriarch Jacob to foretell regarding one of his sons: “Benjamin will keep on tearing like a wolf. In the morning he will eat the animal seized and at evening he will divide spoil.” (Gen. 49:27) In “the morning” of Israel’s kingly history, Benjamin’s descendants included King Saul and other mighty warriors for Jehovah’s people. In the “evening” of that royal history, after the sun had set on Israel’s kingly line, Esther and Mordecai, both of the tribe of Benjamin, warred effectively against Jehovah’s enemies. In a sense, they also divided spoil, in that Haman’s vast estate went to them.

Es 9:10, 15, 16—Even though the decree authorized plundering of the spoil, why did the Jews refrain from doing so? (w06 3/1 11 ¶4)

Even though the decree authorized plundering of the spoil, why did the Jews refrain from doing so?
Their refusal left no doubt that their purpose was self-preservation, not self-enrichment.

- Song 131 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Esther Acted Unselfishly for Jehovah and for His People”:** (10 min.)
 Es 8:3, 4—Although Esther was safe, she risked her life for others (*ia* 143 ¶24-25)
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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:** Es 8:1-9 (4 min. or less)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Prepare This Month’s Presentations:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play each sample presentation video, and then discuss the highlights. Afterward, discuss the article “Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Building Your Own Magazine Presentation.”

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 118
- **“Welcome Our Guests”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Invite publishers to relate good experiences that resulted from taking the initiative to welcome visitors attending a past Memorial. Have a reenactment of an outstanding experience.
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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Presentations



THE WATCHTOWER

Question: Are you familiar with these famous words?

Scripture: Joh 3:16

Offer: This issue of *The Watchtower* explains how Jesus' suffering and death can benefit you.



MEMORIAL INVITATION

Offer: We're distributing this invitation to a very important event. [Give the householder an invitation.] 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 area. Please come if you can.

THE WATCHTOWER (back page)

Question: Notice this question and some common answers. [Read the first question along with the listed options.] How would you answer?

Scripture: Mt 4:1-4

Offer: Since the Devil conversed with Jesus and tempted him, the Devil must be more than merely a symbol of evil. What else does the Bible say about the Devil? This article explains more.

BUILD YOUR OWN PRESENTATION

Question:

Scripture:

Offer:

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS IN THE MINISTRY

Building Your Own Magazine Presentation

WHY IMPORTANT: Although the sample presentations that appear in the meeting workbook provide helpful ideas, these are simply outlines. You should use your own words. You may prefer a different approach or feel that another subject would have more appeal locally. If so, after you have read the magazine, considered the sample presentations, and seen the video demonstrations, you can use the following suggestions to build a personal presentation.

HOW TO DO IT:

Ask yourself, 'Do I want to use one of the sample presentations?'

**YES**

- Prepare your opening words. After giving a customary greeting, state concisely the reason for your visit. (Example: "I am here because . . .")
- Consider how you will transition between the question, the scripture, and the offer. (Example: To introduce a scripture, you might say: "A satisfying answer to that question can be found right here.")

- Prepare a follow-up question to answer on the return visit
- Make notes to help you remember what you want to say next time

NO

- Choose a subject from the magazine that interests you and will have appeal in your territory
- Decide on a viewpoint question to ask that will stimulate thought and conversation but not put the householder on the spot. (Example: The questions that appear on page 2 of the magazines.)
- Choose a scripture to read. (If you are featuring *Awake!* reading a scripture is optional, since this magazine is designed for those who have little knowledge of the Bible and may even distrust religion.)
- Formulate a sentence or two that explains how the householder will benefit from reading the article



1. Welcome to all who gather here this day
To hear God's Word and to learn his way.
Life-giving truth he offers to us all;
With thankfulness of heart, we respond to his call.
2. Thanks to our God for brothers such as these,
Who welcome us and who seek to please.
May we keep holding men of that sort dear,
And now we welcome others
who meet with us here.
3. God's invitation reaches all mankind,
That all sincere ones the truth may find.
God by his Son has drawn us to His side.
So welcome one another with hearts opened wide.

- Song 131 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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“baals” to creep into their life and push aside the worship of God. Heeding Elijah’s clarion call to stop limping can help us to reexamine our own priorities and worship.

A Climactic Test

¹² Elijah next proposed a test. It was simplicity itself. The Baal priests were to set up an altar and lay out a sacrifice on it; then they were to pray to their god to light the fire. Elijah would do the same. He said that the “God that answers by fire is the true God.” Elijah well knew who was the true God. So strong was his faith that he did not hesitate to give his opponents every advantage. He let those Baal prophets go first. So they chose their bull for sacrifice and approached Baal.*—1 Ki. 18:24, 25.

¹³ We do not live in an age of miracles. However, Jehovah has not changed. We can be just as confident in him as Elijah was. For instance, when others

* Notably, Elijah told them: “You must not put fire to” the sacrifice. Some scholars say that such idolaters sometimes used altars with a secret cavity beneath so that a fire could appear to be lit supernaturally.

12, 13. (a) What test did Elijah propose? (b) How might we show that we are just as confident as Elijah was?

disagree with what the Bible teaches, we need not fear to let them go ahead and have their say. Like Elijah, we can look to the true God to settle the matter. We do that by relying, not on ourselves, but on his inspired Word, which is designed “for setting things straight.”—2 Tim. 3:16.

¹⁴ The Baal prophets proceeded to set up their sacrifice and call on their god. “O Baal, answer us!” they cried again and again. They kept at it as the minutes and then the hours passed by. “But there was no voice, and there was no one answering,” the Bible says. At noon Elijah began to mock them, asserting sarcastically that Baal must be too busy to answer them, that he was relieving himself in the privy, or that he was napping and someone needed to wake him up. “Call at the top of your voice,” Elijah urged those charlatans. Clearly, he saw this Baal worship as ridiculous fakery, and he wanted God’s people to see it for the fraud that it was.—1 Ki. 18:26, 27.

¹⁵ In response, the Baal priests became even more

14. In what way did Elijah mock the Baal prophets, and why?

15. How does the case of the Baal priests show the folly of choosing any master other than Jehovah?

frenzied, “calling at the top of their voice and cutting themselves according to their custom with daggers and with lances, until they caused blood to flow out upon them.” All to no avail! “There was no voice, and there was no one answering, and there was no paying of attention.” (1 Ki. 18:28, 29) Indeed, there was no Baal. He was an invention designed by Satan to lure people away from Jehovah. The truth is, choosing any master other than Jehovah leads to disappointment, even shame.—*Read Psalm 25:3; 115:4-8.*

The Answer

¹⁶ Late in the afternoon came Elijah’s turn to offer a sacrifice. He repaired an altar to Jehovah that had been torn down, no doubt by enemies of pure worship. He used 12 stones, perhaps reminding many in the 10-tribe nation of Israel that the Law given to all 12 tribes was still binding on them. Then he laid out his sacrifice and had everything doused with water, possibly obtained from the Mediterranean Sea nearby. He even had a trench dug around the altar and

16. (a) Elijah’s repair of the altar to Jehovah on Mount Carmel may have reminded the people of what? (b) How did Elijah further show his confidence in his God?



“At that the fire of Jehovah came falling”

filled it with water. Just as he had given the prophets of Baal every advantage, he gave Jehovah every disadvantage—such was his confidence in his God.—1 Ki. 18:30-35.

¹⁷ When everything was ready, Elijah said a prayer. Eloquent in its simplicity, the prayer showed clearly where Elijah's priorities lay. First and foremost, he wanted it known that Jehovah, not this Baal, was "God in Israel." Second, he wanted everyone to know that his own role was that of Jehovah's servant; all glory and credit should go to God. Finally, he showed that he still cared about his people, for he was eager to see Jehovah turn "their heart back." (1 Ki. 18:36, 37) Despite all the misery that they had caused by their faithlessness, Elijah still loved them. In our own prayers to God, can we manifest similar humility, concern for God's name, and compassion for others who need help?

¹⁸ Before Elijah's prayer, the crowds there might

17. How did Elijah's prayer reveal his priorities, and how can we imitate his example in our own prayers?

18, 19. (a) How did Jehovah answer Elijah's prayer? (b) What did Elijah order the people to do, and why did the Baal priests deserve no mercy?

have wondered if Jehovah would turn out to be an empty lie, as Baal had proved to be. After the prayer, though, there was no time for wondering. The account says: “At that the fire of Jehovah came falling and went eating up the burnt offering and the pieces of wood and the stones and the dust, and the water that was in the trench it licked up.” (1 Ki. 18:38) What a spectacular answer! And how did the people respond?

¹⁹ “Jehovah is the true God! Jehovah is the true God!” they cried out, all of them. (1 Ki. 18:39) At last they saw the truth. However, they had not as yet shown any faith. Frankly, to admit that Jehovah is the true God after seeing fire fall from heaven in response to a prayer is not an impressive demonstration of faith. So Elijah asked more of them. He asked them to do what they should have done many years earlier—obey the Law of Jehovah. God’s Law said that false prophets and idolaters should be put to death. (Deut. 13:5-9) These Baal priests were committed enemies of Jehovah God, and they deliberately worked against his purposes. Did they deserve mercy? Well, what mercy had they ever granted to all

those innocent children who were burned alive as sacrifices to Baal? (*Read Proverbs 21:13; Jer. 19:5*) Those men were well beyond the reach of mercy! So Elijah ordered that they be executed, and executed they were.—1 Ki. 18:40.

²⁰ Modern-day critics may decry the conclusion to this test on Mount Carmel. Some people may worry lest religious zealots use it to justify violent acts of religious intolerance. And sadly, there are many violent religious fanatics today. However, Elijah was no fanatic. He was acting on Jehovah's behalf in a just execution. Furthermore, genuine Christians know that they cannot follow Elijah's course in taking a sword to the wicked. Rather, they follow the standard for all disciples of Jesus as found in Christ's words to Peter: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52) Jehovah will use his Son to carry out divine justice in the future.

²¹ The responsibility of a true Christian is to lead

20. Why are the concerns of modern-day critics about Elijah's execution of the Baal priests unfounded?

21. How is Elijah's example a fitting one for true Christians today?

a life of faith. (John 3:16) One way to do so is to imitate faithful men like Elijah. He worshipped Jehovah exclusively and urged others to do the same. He boldly exposed as fraudulent a religion that Satan used to lure people away from Jehovah. And he trusted Jehovah to settle matters instead of relying on his own abilities and will. Elijah stood up for pure worship. May all of us imitate his faith!

TO THINK ABOUT . . .

- What can we learn from Elijah about worshipping Jehovah exclusively?
- How can we imitate Elijah when dealing with those who disagree with what the Bible teaches?
- What can we learn from Elijah's prayer on Mount Carmel?
- In what ways would you like to imitate the faith of Elijah?

69 *Make Me Know Your Ways*

(Psalm 25:4)

1. We're gathered together Jehovah, our God,
 Accepting your warm invitation.
Your Word is a lamp that lights up our roadway,
 The source of divine education.

(CHORUS)

*Teach me your ways, and make me understand;
 Incline my ear to hear your wise command.
Cause me to walk in ways of truth and right,
 And make your law my principal delight.*

2. Unreachably high is your wisdom, O God;
 Your judgments we find reassuring.
Your Word is a source of unending wonder;
 Your sayings of truth are enduring.

(Chorus)

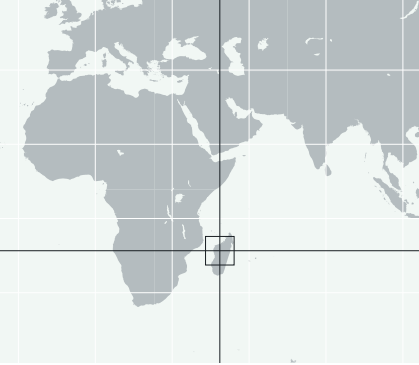
JANUARY 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 29–APRIL 3, 2016



COVER IMAGE:
MADAGASCAR

A pioneer shares a Bible passage with an oxcart driver on the Alley of the Baobabs in Morondava, Madagascar

PUBLISHERS
29,963

BIBLE STUDIES
77,984

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
135,122

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 THEY OFFERED THEMSELVES WILLINGLY —In Oceania

7 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 29–MARCH 6 Be Determined to “Let Your Brotherly Love Continue”!

What is our yeartext for 2016? What should we think of when we look at it throughout the year? This article will show us how to gain the most benefit from our yeartext.

12 WEEK OF MARCH 7-13 Be Compelled by God’s “Indescribable Free Gift”

Jehovah has given us what the apostle Paul called God’s “indescribable free gift.” (2 Cor. 9:15) What is that gift? How does it compel us to walk in the footsteps of Christ Jesus, to love our brothers, and to forgive others from the heart? We will answer these questions and consider practical things we can do during the Memorial season.

17 WEEK OF MARCH 14-20 The Spirit Bears Witness With Our Spirit

22 WEEK OF MARCH 21-27 “We Want to Go With You”

These two articles will explain how someone knows that he or she has received the heavenly calling and what it means for that person to be one of the anointed. Additionally, we will consider how anointed ones should view themselves and how we should react to any increase in the number of partakers worldwide.

28 WEEK OF MARCH 28–APRIL 3 Working Together With God —A Cause for Rejoicing

From earliest times, Jehovah has invited others to work with him to accomplish his purpose. It is his purpose that a global witness be given, and he has invited us to share in that work. This article considers the blessings we receive by being God’s fellow workers.

121 *Encourage One Another* (Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. As we encourage one another
 To serve Jehovah faithfully,
We find the bonds of love are strengthened;
 Fine works bring peace and unity.
 The love we find among God's people
 Gives each the courage to endure.
Our congregation is a refuge,
 A place where we can feel secure.
2. A word when spoken at the right time
 Is, oh, how comforting to hear!
We hear these words of consolation
 From friends so faithful and so dear.
 How good it is to work together
 With those whose hopes and goals we share!
We seek to strengthen one another
 And help each one his burden bear.
3. As we with eyes of faith are seeing
 The nearness of Jehovah's day,
We need our gathering together
 To keep us walking in the way.
 United with Jehovah's people,
 We hope to serve eternally.
So we encourage one another
 To hold to our integrity.

(See also Luke 22:32; Acts 14:21, 22; Gal. 6:2; 1 Thess. 5:14.)

Be Compelled by God's “Indescribable Free Gift”

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable free gift.”
—2 COR. 9:15.

SONGS: 121, 63

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What does Christ's love motivate us to do?

How does God's love motivate us to love our brothers?

Why should God's forgiveness motivate us to forgive our brothers?

WHEN Jehovah sent his only-begotten Son to this earth, He gave what would become the greatest possible gift of love! (John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10) The apostle Paul called it God's “indescribable free gift.” (2 Cor. 9:15) Why did he use that expression?

2 Paul knew that all the magnificent promises of God were guaranteed through the perfect sacrifice of Christ. (Read 2 Corinthians 1:20.) Thus, that “indescribable free gift” would include all the goodness and loyal love that Jehovah would extend to us through Jesus. Indeed, that gift is so awe-inspiring that it

1, 2. (a) What does God's “indescribable free gift” include? (b) What questions will we consider in this article?



Can you help an older brother or sister in the ministry?
(See paragraph 14)



cannot be fully described in human terms. How should receiving such an extraordinary gift affect us? And in what practical ways should this gift motivate us as we prepare to observe the Memorial of Christ's death on Wednesday, March 23, 2016?

GOD'S SPECIAL GIFT

3 When you receive a gift, you are no doubt filled with a range of emotions. However, some gifts may be so special or meaningful that they are truly life-changing. For example, imagine that you were facing execution because you had been implicated in a crime. Suddenly, a person whom you do not know steps out of the crowd and volunteers to accept the penalty for you. He is actually willing to die instead of you! What effect would such an outstanding gift have on you?

4 Receiving such an unselfish expression of love would no doubt compel you to reconsider your actions and even change the way you had been living your life. It would likely move you to be more generous and loving toward others and even to forgive any who had wronged you. For the rest of your life, you would feel indebted to the person who willingly took your place.

5 Yet, what Jehovah has given us through Christ is far greater than the gift described in this example. (1 Pet. 3:18) Consider why. Because of inherited sin, we are all facing the death

3, 4. (a) How do you feel when someone gives you a gift? (b) How might a special gift change your life?

5. How is God's gift of the ransom much greater than any other gift?

penalty. (Rom. 5:12) Lovingly, Jehovah arranged for Jesus to come to the earth and “taste death for everyone.” (Heb. 2:9) Not only did Jehovah save our present life but he laid the basis for wiping out the cause of death forever. (Isa. 25:7, 8; 1 Cor. 15:22, 26) All who exercise faith in Jesus will receive everlasting life in peace and happiness as earthly subjects of God’s Kingdom by Christ or, for the anointed, as corulers in that Kingdom. (Rom. 6:23; Rev. 5:9, 10) What other blessings are included in this gift from Jehovah?

6 Jehovah’s gift includes the curing of all our sicknesses, the transformation of our earth into a paradise, and the resurrection of the dead. (Isa. 33:24; 35:5, 6; John 5:28, 29) We surely love Jehovah and his dear Son for giving us what is an “in-describable free gift.” Yet, the question remains, What will God’s love move us to do? Let us consider how God’s love moves us (1) to follow the steps of Christ Jesus closely, (2) to express love for our brothers, and (3) to forgive others from the heart.

“THE LOVE THE CHRIST HAS COMPELS US”

7 First, we must be compelled to live our lives for Christ Jesus. The apostle Paul stated: “The love the Christ has compels us.” (Read **2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.**) Paul realized that we

6. (a) What blessings of Jehovah’s gift do you look forward to?
(b) Name three things God’s gift will motivate us to do.

7, 8. How should we feel about the love of Christ, and what should it motivate us to do?

could not accept the extraordinary love of Christ without being compelled, or moved, to live for him. When our minds fully comprehend what Jehovah has done for us and our hearts are moved by his love, we desire to live our lives whole-souled for Christ Jesus. How do we show that desire?

8 Those who love Jehovah are compelled to imitate Christ's example, walking as he walked and following his steps closely. (1 Pet. 2:21; 1 John 2:6) Through our obedience, we prove our love for God and Christ. Jesus said: "Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. In turn, whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will clearly show myself to him."—John 14:21; 1 John 5:3.

9 During the Memorial season, we do well to meditate on our life course. Ask yourself: 'In what areas am I doing well in following in the steps of Christ Jesus? In what areas could I improve?' This self-examination is vital, as we are constantly being pressured to follow the ways of this world. (Rom. 12:2) If we are not careful, we could become disciples of this world's philosophers or even of its celebrities and sports heroes. (Col. 2:8; 1 John 2:15-17) How can we resist those pressures?

10 We can use the Memorial season as an opportunity to

9. What pressures do we have?

10. What questions can we ask ourselves during this Memorial season, and what may the answers motivate us to do? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

look through our wardrobe, our movie and music collections, perhaps even the material stored on our computers, smart-phones, and tablets. As you look through your wardrobe, ask yourself: ‘If I were going to a place where Jesus would be present, would I feel uncomfortable wearing this clothing?’ (Read 1 Timothy 2:9, 10.) ‘If I did wear it, would it be obvious to all that I am a follower of Christ Jesus?’ We could ask ourselves similar questions about our choice of movies and music. ‘Would Jesus be entertained by watching this movie or by listening to this music? If he borrowed my cell phone or tablet, would I be embarrassed by what he saw there?’ As you consider the subject matter of a video game, ask yourself: ‘Would I find it difficult to explain to Jesus why I enjoy playing it?’ Our love for Jehovah should compel us to get rid of anything that would be inappropriate for a disciple of Christ, regardless of the cost involved. (Acts 19:19, 20) We promised at the time of our dedication that we would live no longer for ourselves but for Christ. Therefore, we should not cling to anything that could hinder us from following Christ’s steps closely.—Matt. 5:29, 30; Phil. 4:8.

11 Our love for Jesus also moves us to work whole-souled in the preaching and disciple-making work. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 4:43) During the Memorial season, we will have the opportunity to serve as an auxiliary pioneer and spend 30 or 50 hours

11. (a) How does our love for Jehovah and Jesus motivate us in the preaching work? (b) How can our love motivate us to help others in the congregation?

in the preaching work. Could you arrange your circumstances to do so? One 84-year-old widower did not feel that he could auxiliary pioneer because of his age and poor health. Nonetheless, the pioneers in his area rallied to his aid. They provided transportation and carefully chose territory that he could work, so that he could meet his 30-hour goal. Could you reach out and help someone in your congregation so that he or she could share in the joy of auxiliary pioneering during the Memorial season? Of course, not all of us may be able to auxiliary pioneer. Even so, we can use whatever time and energy we have to increase our sacrifice of praise to Jehovah. By doing this, we show that we, like Paul, are motivated by the love of Christ. What else will God's love move us to do?

WE ARE OBLIGATED TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER

12 Second, God's love would compel us to express love for our brothers. The apostle John recognized this. He wrote: "Beloved ones, if this is how God loved us, then we are also under obligation to love one another." (1 John 4:7-11) Yes, we cannot properly accept God's love without recognizing our obligation to love our brothers. (1 John 3:16) How can we demonstrate our love in practical ways?

13 Consider the example of Jesus. During his earthly ministry, he gave special attention to lowly ones. He reached out to

12. God's love motivates us to do what?

13. What example did Jesus set in loving others?

those with physical infirmities—the lame, the blind, the deaf, and the speechless. (Matt. 11:4, 5) Jesus took pleasure in teaching spiritually hungry ones, those who were viewed by the Jewish religious leaders as “accursed people.” (John 7:49) He loved these lowly ones and worked hard to minister to them.—Matt. 20:28.

14 The Memorial season provides an opportunity to imitate Jesus by taking time to consider the brothers and sisters in your own congregation. As you do so, you will no doubt see some who could benefit from your love. Perhaps there are elderly brothers and sisters who need help. Could you visit these dear ones? Could you bring them a meal, help them with a household chore, offer them a ride to the meeting, or invite them to share with you in the ministry? (Read Luke 14:12-14.) We must let God’s love move us to reach out and express our love for our brothers.

SHOW MERCY TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS

15 Third, Jehovah’s love must compel us to forgive our brothers and sisters. As children of the first man, Adam, we have all inherited sin and its penalty, death. Not one of us can say, “I do not need the ransom.” Even the most faithful servant of God is completely dependent on Jehovah’s undeserved kindness through Christ. Each of us must recognize that we have been

14. What can you do to show love for your brothers?

15. What must we recognize?

forgiven an enormous debt. Why is this important? The answer is found in one of Jesus' parables.

16 Jesus related how a king had forgiven his slave a huge debt of 10,000 talents, or 60,000,000 denarii. Yet, that slave who was forgiven so much was not willing to forgive the much smaller debt of his fellow slave, 100 denarii. The king was furious when he learned of the hardheartedness of the slave he had mercifully forgiven. The king said: "Wicked slave, I canceled all that debt for you when you pleaded with me. Should you not also have shown mercy to your fellow slave as I showed mercy to you?" (Matt. 18:23-35, ftn.) Yes, the extraordinary mercy of the king should have compelled that slave to forgive his fellow slave. Similarly, what should Jehovah's love and mercy compel us to do?

17 The Memorial season provides us with an opportunity to consider if we are harboring some resentment against any of our brothers or sisters. If so, what a fine time this would be to imitate Jehovah, who is "ready to forgive." (Neh. 9:17; Ps. 86:5) If we appreciate what Jehovah has done for us in canceling our own enormous debt, then we will want to forgive others from our heart. We simply cannot receive the love and forgiveness of God unless we love and forgive others. (Matt. 6:14, 15) While it is true that forgiving will not change the past, it will certainly change our future for the good.

16, 17. (a) What should we learn from Jesus' illustration of the king and the slaves? (b) After meditating on Jesus' illustration, what are you determined to do?

18 For many of us, daily “putting up with” our brothers and sisters may be a challenge. (Read Colossians 3:13, 14; Ephesians 4:32.) For example, Lily is a single sister in the congregation who willingly helped a widow named Carol.[1] Lily provided Carol with transportation, ran errands for her, and demonstrated kindness in many other practical ways. In spite of all that Lily did, Carol was consistently critical and hard to deal with. Nonetheless, Lily focused on Carol’s good qualities. She continued to assist her for several years until Carol became seriously ill and died. “Even so,” Lily says, “I look forward to seeing Carol in the resurrection. I want to know her when she is perfect.” Yes, God’s love can compel us to put up with our brothers and sisters and to look forward to the time when human imperfection will be gone forever.

19 We have truly received an “indescribable free gift” from Jehovah. May we never take this precious gift for granted. Instead, especially during this Memorial season, may we meditate appreciatively on all that Jehovah and Jesus have done for us. Yes, may their love compel us to follow the steps of Jesus closely, to reach out and express our love for our brothers, and to forgive our brothers from the heart.

18. How did God’s love help one sister to put up with the imperfections of another sister?

19. How will God’s “indescribable free gift” motivate you?

ENDNOTE:

[1] (paragraph 18) Some names in this article have been changed.

Ever Loyal
(Psalm 18:25)

1. Ever loyal to Jehovah,
Loyal love we wish to show.
As a people, dedicated,
His commands we want to know.
His advice will never fail us,
And his counsel we obey.
He is loyal; we can trust him.
From his side we'll never stray.
2. Ever loyal to our brothers,
Sticking close in times of need.
Ever caring, always trusting,
Ever kind in word and deed.
We show honor to our brothers
And respect them from the heart.
Let the Bible draw us closer;
From their side we'll never part.
3. Ever loyal to their guidance
When our brothers take the lead.
When they give us clear direction,
May our mind and heart give heed.
Then the blessing from Jehovah
Will be ours to make us strong.
When we're loyal, ever faithful,
To Jehovah we'll belong.