

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Knowledge of Jehovah Will Fill the Earth”:** (10 min.)
Isa 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever (*jp-1* 160-161 ¶9-11)
Isa 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals (*w12* 9/15 9-10 ¶8-9)
Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways (*w16.06* 8 ¶9; *w13* 6/1 7)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶6)

Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? (*w06* 12/1 10 ¶10)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 13:17–14:8

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Job 34:10
—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Ec 8:9; 1Jo 5:19
—Teach the Truth.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 54 ¶9
—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 24
- **“Divine Education Conquers Prejudice”:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Johnny and Gideon: Once Enemies, Now Brothers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶18-25, box on p. 57
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 151 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

Divine Education Conquers Prejudice

Jehovah is not partial. (Ac 10:34, 35) He accepts people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Re 7:9) Thus, there is no place in the Christian congregation for prejudice or favoritism. (Jas 2: 1-4) Thanks to divine education, we enjoy a spiritual paradise in which we have seen the transformation of human personalities. (Isa 11:6-9) As we work diligently to root out of our heart any traces of prejudice, we prove ourselves imitators of God.—Eph 5:1, 2.



WATCH THE VIDEO *JOHNNY AND GIDEON: ONCE ENEMIES, NOW BROTHERS*. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is divine education superior to human efforts in eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- What impresses you about our international brotherhood?
- How is Jehovah glorified when we maintain Christian unity?

143 *Light in a Darkened World* (2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. In these days, dark and lawless days,
 Shines a light we can see.
 Like the dawn of another day
 That will soon come to be.

(CHORUS)

*Shining through the darkness,
 Ours is a message so bright.
 It offers hope and light—
Sparkling like the daylight,
 Bringing tomorrow in sight—
 So ends the night.*

2. Those who sleep need awakening
 As the time ebbs away.
 We give hope and encouragement.
 For their future we'll pray.

(Chorus)

Isaiah 11-16

- 11 A twig will grow out of the stump of Jes'se,
And a sprout from his roots will bear fruit.
- ² And the spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
The spirit of counsel and of mightiness,
The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of
Jehovah.
- ³ And he will find delight in the fear of Jehovah.
He will not judge by what appears to his eyes,
Nor reprove simply according to what his ears
hear.
- ⁴ He will judge the lowly with fairness,
And with uprightness he will give reproof in
behalf of the meek ones of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth
And put the wicked to death with the breath of
his lips.
- ⁵ Righteousness will be the belt around his waist,
And faithfulness the belt of his hips.
- ⁶ The wolf will reside for a while with the lamb,
And with the young goat the leopard will lie
down,
And the calf and the lion and the fattened animal
will all be together;

And a little boy will lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear will feed together,
And their young will lie down together.
The lion will eat straw like the bull.

⁸ The nursing child will play over the lair of a cobra,
And a weaned child will put his hand over the
den of a poisonous snake.

⁹ They will not cause any harm
Or any ruin in all my holy mountain,
Because the earth will certainly be filled with the
knowledge of Jehovah
As the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jes'se will stand up as a
signal for the peoples.
To him the nations will turn for guidance,
And his resting-place will become glorious.

¹¹ In that day Jehovah will again offer his hand, a
second time, to reclaim the remnant of his people who
are left from As-syr'i-a, from Egypt, from Path'ros, from
Cush, from E'lam, from Shi'nar, from Ha'math, and
from the islands of the sea. ¹² He will raise up a signal
for the nations and gather the dispersed ones of Israel,
and he will gather together the scattered ones of Judah
from the four corners of the earth.

¹³ The jealousy of E'phra·im will be gone,

And those who show hostility to Judah will be
done away with.

E'phra-im will not be jealous of Judah,

Nor will Judah show hostility toward E'phra-im.

14 And they will swoop down on the slopes of the
Phi-lis'tines to the west;

Together they will plunder the people of the
East.

They will thrust out their hand against E'dom
and Mo'ab,

And the Am'mon-ites will become their subjects.

15 Jehovah will divide the gulf of the Egyptian sea
And wave his hand over the River.

With his scorching breath he will strike it in its
seven torrents,

And he will cause people to walk across in their
sandals.

16 And there will be a highway out of As-syr'i-a for the
remnant of his people who are left,
As there was for Israel in the day he came out of
the land of Egypt.

12 In that day you will certainly say:

“I thank you, O Jehovah,

For although you were angry with me,

Your anger gradually subsided, and you
comforted me.

² Look! God is my salvation.
I will trust and feel no dread;
For Jah Jehovah is my strength and my might,
And he has become my salvation.”

³ With rejoicing you will draw water
From the springs of salvation.

⁴ And in that day you will say:
“Give thanks to Jehovah, call on his name,
Make his deeds known among the peoples!
Declare that his name is exalted.

⁵ Sing praises to Jehovah, for he has done
magnificent things.
Let this be made known in all the earth.

⁶ Cry out and shout for joy, you inhabitant of Zion,
For great in your midst is the Holy One of
Israel.”

13 A pronouncement against Babylon that Isaiah the
son of A'moz saw in vision:

² “Raise up a signal on a mountain of bare rocks.
Call out to them, wave your hand,
So that they may come into the entrances of the
nobles.

³ I have issued the command to those whom I have
appointed.

I have summoned my warriors to express my
anger,
My proudly exultant ones.

⁴ Listen! A crowd in the mountains;
It sounds like a numerous people!
Listen! The uproar of kingdoms,
Of nations gathered together!
Jehovah of armies is mustering the army for
war.

⁵ They are coming from a distant land,
From the extremity of the heavens,
Jehovah and the weapons of his wrath,
To bring ruin to all the earth.

⁶ Wail, for the day of Jehovah is near!
It will come as a destruction from the Almighty.

⁷ That is why all hands will go limp,
And every man's heart will melt with fear.

⁸ The people are panic-stricken.
They are seized with convulsions and pain,
Like a woman in labor.
They look at one another in horror,
With faces inflamed by anguish.

⁹ Look! The day of Jehovah is coming,
Cruel both with fury and with burning anger,
To make the land an object of horror,

And to annihilate the land's sinners from it.

¹⁰ For the stars of the heavens and their
constellations

Will not give off their light;

The sun will be dark when it rises,

And the moon will not shed its light.

¹¹ I will call the inhabited earth to account for its
badness,

And the wicked for their error.

I will put an end to the pride of the
presumptuous,

And I will humble the haughtiness of tyrants.

¹² I will make mortal man scarcer than refined gold,
And humans scarcer than the gold of O'phir.

¹³ That is why I will make the heavens tremble,
And the earth will be shaken out of its place
At the fury of Jehovah of armies in the day of his
burning anger.

¹⁴ Like a hunted gazelle and like a flock with no one
to gather them,

Each will return to his own people;

Each will flee to his own land.

¹⁵ Whoever is found will be pierced through,
And whoever is caught will fall by the sword.

- 16 Their children will be dashed to pieces before their eyes,
Their houses will be looted,
And their wives will be raped.
- 17 Here I am raising up against them the Medes,
Who regard silver as nothing
And who take no delight in gold.
- 18 Their bows will shatter young men;
They will show no pity on the fruit of the womb
Nor mercy to children.
- 19 And Babylon, the most glorious of kingdoms,
The beauty and the pride of the Chal-de'ans,
Will be like Sod'om and Go-mor'rah when God
overthrew them.
- 20 She will never be inhabited,
Nor will she be a place to reside in throughout
all generations.
No Arab will pitch his tent there,
And no shepherds will rest their flocks there.
- 21 The desert creatures will lie down there;
Their houses will be filled with eagle owls.
The ostriches will reside there,
And wild goats will skip about there.
- 22 Howling creatures will cry out in her towers,
And jackals in her luxurious palaces.

Her time is near, and her days will not be prolonged.”

14 For Jehovah will show mercy to Jacob, and he will again choose Israel. He will settle them in their land, and the foreign residents will join them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob. ² And peoples will take them and bring them to their own place, and the house of Israel will possess them as male and female servants in Jehovah’s land; and they will be the captors of those who held them captive, and they will have in subjection those who were forcing them to work.

³ In the day when Jehovah gives you rest from your pain and from your turmoil and from the hard slavery imposed on you, ⁴ you will recite this proverb against the king of Babylon:

“How the one forcing others to work has met his end!

How the oppression has ended!

⁵ Jehovah has broken the rod of the wicked,
The staff of the rulers,

⁶ The one furiously striking peoples with unceasing blows,
The one angrily subduing nations with relentless persecution.

⁷ The whole earth now rests, free of disturbance.
People cry out for joy.

- ⁸ Even the juniper trees rejoice over you,
Along with the cedars of Leb'a-non.
They say, 'Ever since you have fallen,
No woodcutter comes up against us.'
- ⁹ Even the Grave underneath is stirred up
To meet you when you come.
Because of you, it awakens those powerless in
death,
All the oppressive leaders of the earth.
It makes all the kings of the nations rise from
their thrones.
- ¹⁰ All of them speak up and say to you,
'Have you also become weak like us?
Have you become like us?'
- ¹¹ Down to the Grave your pride has been brought,
The sound of your stringed instruments.
Maggots are spread beneath you as a bed,
And worms are your covering.'
- ¹² How you have fallen from heaven,
O shining one, son of the dawn!
How you have been cut down to the earth,
You who vanquished nations!
- ¹³ You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to the
heavens.
Above the stars of God I will lift up my throne,
And I will sit down on the mountain of meeting,

In the remotest parts of the north.

¹⁴ I will go up above the tops of the clouds;
I will make myself resemble the Most High.'

¹⁵ Instead, you will be brought down to the Grave,
To the remotest parts of the pit.

¹⁶ Those seeing you will stare at you;
They will closely examine you, saying,
'Is this the man who was shaking the earth,
Who made kingdoms tremble,

¹⁷ Who made the inhabited earth like the wilderness
And overthrew its cities,
Who refused to let his prisoners go home?'

¹⁸ All other kings of the nations,
Yes, all of them, lie down in glory,
Each one in his own tomb.

¹⁹ But you are discarded without a grave,
Like a detested sprout,
Clothed with the slain who were stabbed with
the sword,
Who go down to the stones of a pit,
Like a carcass trampled underfoot.

²⁰ You will not join them in a grave,
For you destroyed your own land,
You killed your own people.

The offspring of evildoers will never again be named.

²¹ Prepare a slaughtering block for his sons
Because of the guilt of their forefathers,
So that they will not rise up and take over the
earth
And fill the land with their cities.”

²² “I will rise up against them,” declares Jehovah of armies.

“And I will wipe out from Babylon name and remnant and descendants and posterity,” declares Jehovah.

²³ “And I will make her a possession of porcupines and a region of marshes, and I will sweep her with the broom of annihilation,” declares Jehovah of armies.

²⁴ Jehovah of armies has sworn:
“Just as I have intended, so it will occur,
And just as I have decided, that is what will
come true.

²⁵ I will crush the As-syr'i-an in my land,
And I will trample him on my mountains.
His yoke will be removed from them,
And his load will be removed from their
shoulder.”

²⁶ This is what has been decided against all the
earth,

And this is the hand that is stretched out against
all the nations.

²⁷ For Jehovah of armies has decided,
And who can thwart it?
His hand is stretched out,
And who can turn it back?

²⁸ In the year that King A'haz died, this
pronouncement was made:

²⁹ “Do not rejoice, Phi-lis'ti-a, any of you,
Just because the staff of the one striking you
has been broken.
For from the root of the serpent will come a
poisonous snake,
And its offspring will be a flying fiery snake.

³⁰ While the firstborn of the lowly feed
And the poor lie down in security,
I will put your root to death with famine,
And what is left of you will be killed.

³¹ Wail, O gate! Cry out, O city!
All of you will lose heart, O Phi-lis'ti-a!
For a smoke is coming from the north,
And there are no stragglers in his ranks.”

³² How should they answer the messengers of the
nation?
That Jehovah has laid the foundation of Zion,

And that the lowly ones of his people will take
refuge in her.

15 A pronouncement against Mo'ab:

Because it has been devastated in a night,
Ar of Mo'ab has been silenced.

Because it has been devastated in a night,
Kir of Mo'ab has been silenced.

² He has gone up to the House and to Di'bon,
To the high places to weep.
Mo'ab wails over Ne'bo and over Med'e-ba.
Every head is shaved bald, every beard is
clipped.

³ In its streets they have put on sackcloth.
On their roofs and in their public squares they all
wail;
They go down weeping.

⁴ Hesh'bon and E-le-a'leh cry out;
Their voice is heard as far as Ja'haz.
That is why the armed men of Mo'ab keep
shouting.
He is trembling.

⁵ My heart cries out over Mo'ab.
Its fugitives have fled as far as Zo'ar and
Eg'lath-she-li'shi-yah.
On the ascent of Lu'hith they weep as they go
up;

On the way to Hor·o·na'im they cry out over the catastrophe.

⁶ For the waters of Nim'rim are desolate;
The green grass has dried up,
The grass is gone and nothing green is left.

⁷ That is why they are carrying away what is left of
their stores and their riches;
They are crossing the valley of poplars.

⁸ For the outcry echoes throughout the territory of
Mo'ab.
The wailing reaches to Eg·la'im;
The wailing reaches to Be'er-e'lim.

⁹ For the waters of Di'mon are full of blood,
And I have more in store for Di'mon:
A lion for those of Mo'ab who escape
And for those remaining in the land.

16 Send a ram to the ruler of the land,
From Se'la through the wilderness
To the mountain of the daughter of Zion.

² Like a bird chased away from its nest,
So the daughters of Mo'ab will be at the fords of
Ar'non.

³ “Offer counsel, carry out the decision.
Make your shadow at high noon like the night.

Conceal the dispersed and do not betray those fleeing.

⁴ May my dispersed ones reside in you, O Mo'ab.
Become a place of concealment to them
because of the destroyer.

The oppressor will reach his end,
The destruction will come to an end,
And those trampling others down will perish
from the earth.

⁵ Then a throne will be firmly established in loyal
love.

The one who sits on it in the tent of David will be
faithful;
He will judge fairly and will swiftly execute
righteousness.”

⁶ We have heard about the pride of Mo'ab—he is
very proud—

His haughtiness and his pride and his fury;
But his empty talk will come to nothing.

⁷ So Mo'ab will wail for Mo'ab;
They will all wail.

Those who are stricken will moan for the raisin
cakes of Kir-har'e-seth.

⁸ For the terraces of Hesh'bon have withered,
The vine of Sib'mah,

The rulers of the nations have trampled its
bright-red branches;
They had reached as far as Ja'zer;
They had extended into the wilderness.
Its shoots had spread out and gone as far as the
sea.

⁹ That is why I will weep over the vine of Sib'mah as
I weep for Ja'zer.
With my tears I will drench you, O Hesh'bon and
E-le-a'leh,
Because the shouting over your summer fruit
and your harvest has ended.

¹⁰ Rejoicing and joyfulness have been taken away
from the orchard,
And there are no songs of joy or shouting in the
vineyards.
The treader no longer treads out wine in the
presses,
For I have caused the shouting to cease.

¹¹ That is why deep within me I am boisterous over
Mo'ab,
Like the strumming of a harp,
And my innermost being over Kir-har'e-seth.

¹² Even when Mo'ab wears himself out on the high
place and goes to pray in his sanctuary, he will
accomplish nothing.

¹³ This is the word that Jehovah previously spoke concerning Mo'ab. ¹⁴ And now Jehovah says: “Within three years, like the years of a hired worker, the glory of Mo'ab will be disgraced with much tumult of every sort, and those who remain will be very few and insignificant.”

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Knowledge of Jehovah Will Fill the Earth”:** (10 min.)
Isa 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever (*jp-1* 160-161 ¶9-11)
Isa 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals (*w12* 9/15 9-10 ¶8-9)
Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways (*w16.06* 8 ¶9; *w13* 6/1 7)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶6)

Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? (*w06* 12/1 10 ¶10)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 13:17–14:8

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Job 34:10
—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Ec 8:9; 1Jo 5:19
—Teach the Truth.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 54 ¶9
—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 24
- **“Divine Education Conquers Prejudice”:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Johny and Gideon: Once Enemies, Now Brothers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶18-25, box on p. 57
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 151 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

Divine Education Conquers Prejudice

Jehovah is not partial. (Ac 10:34, 35) He accepts people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Re 7:9) Thus, there is no place in the Christian congregation for prejudice or favoritism. (Jas 2: 1-4) Thanks to divine education, we enjoy a spiritual paradise in which we have seen the transformation of human personalities. (Isa 11:6-9) As we work diligently to root out of our heart any traces of prejudice, we prove ourselves imitators of God.—Eph 5:1, 2.



WATCH THE VIDEO *JOHNY AND GIDEON: ONCE ENEMIES, NOW BROTHERS*. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is divine education superior to human efforts in eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- What impresses you about our international brotherhood?
- How is Jehovah glorified when we maintain Christian unity?

December 19-25

Treasures From God's Word

Isaiah 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever

Reference: *ip-1* 160-161 **paragraphs 9-11**.

A Righteous and Merciful Judge

9 Isaiah foretells more of the Messiah's characteristics: "He will not judge by any mere appearance to his eyes, nor reprove simply according to the thing heard by his ears." (*Isaiah 11:3b*) If you had to stand before a court of law, would you not be grateful for a judge like that? In his capacity as Judge of all mankind, the Messiah is not swayed by false arguments, clever courtroom tactics, rumors, or superficial factors, such as wealth. He sees through deception and looks beyond unflattering outward appearances, discerning "the secret person of the heart," "the hidden man." (1 Peter 3:4, footnote) Jesus' superlative example serves as the model for all who are called upon to judge matters in the Christian congregation.—1 Corinthians 6:1-4.

10 How will the Messiah's superlative qualities influence his judicial decisions? Isaiah explains: "With righteousness he must judge the lowly ones, and with uprightness he must give reproof in behalf of the meek ones of the earth. And he must strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the spirit of his lips he will put the wicked one to death. And righteousness must

prove to be the belt of his hips, and faithfulness the belt of his loins.”—*Isaiah 11:4, 5*.

11 When his followers need correction, Jesus delivers it in the way that benefits them most—an excellent example for Christian elders. On the other hand, those who practice wickedness can expect judgment of a severe sort. When God calls this system of things to account, the Messiah will “strike the earth” with his authoritative voice, issuing a judgment of destruction for all the wicked. (Psalm 2:9; compare Revelation 19:15.) Eventually, there will be no wicked people left to disturb the peace of mankind. (*Psalm 37:10, 11*) Jesus, with his hips and loins girded with righteousness and faithfulness, has the power to accomplish this.—Psalm 45:3-7.

Isaiah 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals

Reference: w12 9/15 9-10 *paragraphs 8-9*.

8 Is it really possible for humans to have all the animals in subjection and to be at peace with them? Many people are very close to their pets, such as dogs and cats. What about wild animals, though? One report says: “Scientists who have lived closely with beasts and studied them have found that all mammals are emotional.” Of course, we see animals become frightened or ferocious when they are threatened, but

are they capable of what some might describe as tender feelings? The report continues: “It is in the raising of their young that mammals reveal their greatest attribute—their tremendous capacity for warm affection.”

9 So we should not be surprised when we read in the Bible that peace will come to prevail between humans and animals. (*Read Isaiah 11:6-9; 65:25.*) Why not? Recall that when Noah and his family emerged from the ark after the Flood, Jehovah told them: “A fear of you and a terror of you will continue upon every living creature of the earth.” That was for the animals’ self-preservation. (**Genesis 9:2, 3**) Could not Jehovah remove a measure of that fear and terror, so that his original mandate would be fulfilled? (**Hosea 2:18**) What an enjoyable time awaits all who will survive to live on earth then!

Isaiah 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways

Reference: w16.06 8 **paragraph 9.**

In the new world, we will experience to the full the blessings of the spiritual paradise. Then, our spiritual paradise will have its perfect counterpart—a literal paradise under the rulership of God’s Kingdom. During that time of global restoration, Jehovah will continue to mold earth’s inhabitants, educating them to a degree that we might now find hard to imagine. (**Isaiah 11:9**)

Furthermore, God will make our minds and bodies perfect, so that we will be able to absorb his teaching and do his will flawlessly. So let us be determined to continue submitting to Jehovah, showing him that we view his molding as an expression of his love for us.—**Proverbs 3:11, 12.**

Reference: w13 6/1 7.

God's Kingdom Will End All Prejudice

While Bible knowledge can help to control and root out strong emotions, there are two other elements that must be dealt with before prejudice can be completely eliminated. First, there is sin and human imperfection. The Bible plainly states: “There is no man that does not sin.” (1 Kings 8:46) So no matter how hard we try, we face the same internal struggle as the apostle Paul, who wrote: “When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.” (Romans 7:21) Thus, from time to time, our imperfect heart will resort to “injurious reasonings” that can lead to prejudice.—Mark 7:21.

Second, there is the influence of Satan the Devil. The Bible describes him as “a manslayer” and says that he “is misleading the entire inhabited earth.” (John 8:44; Revelation 12:9) That explains why prejudice is so prevalent and why mankind seems so helpless in the face of bigotry, discrimination, genocide, and other forms of racial, religious, and social intolerance.

Hence, before there can be the total elimination of prejudice, there must be the removal of human sin, imperfection, and the influence of Satan the Devil. The Bible shows that God's Kingdom will accomplish just that.

Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray to God in these words: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) God's Kingdom is the means by which all injustices—including all forms of intolerance and prejudice—will be done away with.

When God's Kingdom comes and takes control over earth's affairs, Satan will be "bound," or completely restrained, so that "he might not mislead the nations." (**Revelation 20:2, 3**) There will then be a "new earth," or human society, in which "righteousness is to dwell."—2 Peter 3:13.

Those living in that righteous human society will be brought to perfection, free from sin. (Romans 8:21) As subjects of God's Kingdom, "they will not do any harm or cause any ruin." Why? "Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah." (Isaiah 11:9) At that time, all mankind will learn Jehovah God's ways and imitate his loving personality. This will indeed mean the end of all prejudice, "for there is no partiality with God."—Romans 2:11.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Isaiah 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”?

Reference: w06 12/1 9 **paragraph 6**.

Jesus was “out of the stump of Jesse” in a fleshly way. He was a descendant of Jesse through Jesse’s son David. (Matthew 1:1-6; Luke 3:23-32) However, the receiving of the kingly power affects Jesus’ relationship with his ancestors. By virtue of his having been given power and authority to grant obedient mankind everlasting life on earth, Jesus becomes their “Eternal Father.” (Isaiah 9:6) Hence, he is also “the root” of his ancestors, including Jesse.

Isaiah 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold?

Reference: w06 12/1 10 **paragraph 10**.

The Medes and the Persians regarded the glory resulting from a conquest more highly than the spoils of war. This proved true in the case of Cyrus, who gave the returning exiles the gold and silver utensils that Nebuchadnezzar had looted from Jehovah’s temple.

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Knowledge of Jehovah Will Fill the Earth”:** (10 min.)
Isa 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever (*jp-1* 160-161 ¶9-11)
Isa 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals (*w12* 9/15 9-10 ¶8-9)
Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways (*w16.06* 8 ¶9; *w13* 6/1 7)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶6)

Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? (*w06* 12/1 10 ¶10)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 13:17–14:8

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Job 34:10
—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Ec 8:9; 1Jo 5:19
—Teach the Truth.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 54 ¶9
—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 24
- **“Divine Education Conquers Prejudice”:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Johnny and Gideon: Once Enemies, Now Brothers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶18-25, box on p. 57
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 151 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

Divine Education Conquers Prejudice

Jehovah is not partial. (Ac 10:34, 35) He accepts people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Re 7:9) Thus, there is no place in the Christian congregation for prejudice or favoritism. (Jas 2: 1-4) Thanks to divine education, we enjoy a spiritual paradise in which we have seen the transformation of human personalities. (Isa 11:6-9) As we work diligently to root out of our heart any traces of prejudice, we prove ourselves imitators of God.—Eph 5:1, 2.



WATCH THE VIDEO *JOHNNY AND GIDEON: ONCE ENEMIES, NOW BROTHERS*. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is divine education superior to human efforts in eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- What impresses you about our international brotherhood?
- How is Jehovah glorified when we maintain Christian unity?

ambition, and the spirit of moral independence and rebellion.* Simply put, the spirit of the world progressively causes the traits of the Devil to grow in the heart of a man.—John 8:44; Acts 13:10; 1 John 3:8, 10.

⁹ Can the spirit of the world take root in your mind and heart? Yes, but only if you let it do so by lowering

* See *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pages 389-93, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

9. In what ways can the world's spirit enter our mind and heart?

AM I REMAINING NEUTRAL?

Principle: “My kingdom is no part of this world.”—John 18:36.

Some questions to ask yourself

- How would I explain why saluting the flag is a form of idol worship?—Exodus 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21.
- When explaining my nonparticipation in certain national ceremonies, how would I show my deep respect for those who do not share my beliefs?—1 Peter 3:15.
- What are my reasons for not supporting any political parties or performing any type of military service?—John 13:34; 1 John 3:10-12.

* See the Appendix, pages 273-7.

your guard. (Proverbs 4:23) Its influence often begins subtly, perhaps by way of associates who may appear to be good people but, in fact, have no love for Jehovah. (Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33) You can also absorb that evil spirit through objectionable literature, pornographic or apostate Internet sites, unwholesome entertainment, and highly competitive sports—really, through anyone or anything that conveys the thinking of Satan or his system.

¹⁰ How can we resist the insidious spirit of the world and keep ourselves in God’s love? Only by taking full advantage of Jehovah’s spiritual provisions and by praying constantly for holy spirit. Jehovah is far greater than the Devil or the wicked world under satanic control. (1 John 4:4) How important, then, that we stay close to Jehovah in prayer!

BEING MODEST IN OUR DRESS AND GROOMING

¹¹ An outward indication of the spirit that impels a person is his dress, grooming, and hygiene. In many lands, standards of dress have fallen so low that one

10. How can we resist the spirit of the world?

11. How has the world’s spirit influenced standards of dress?

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Knowledge of Jehovah Will Fill the Earth”:** (10 min.)
Isa 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever (*jp-1* 160-161 ¶9-11)
Isa 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals (*w12* 9/15 9-10 ¶8-9)
Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways (*w16.06* 8 ¶9; *w13* 6/1 7)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶6)

Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? (*w06* 12/1 10 ¶10)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 13:17–14:8

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Job 34:10
—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Ec 8:9; 1Jo 5:19
—Teach the Truth.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 54 ¶9
—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 24
- **“Divine Education Conquers Prejudice”:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Johnny and Gideon: Once Enemies, Now Brothers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶18-25, box on p. 57
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 151 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

Divine Education Conquers Prejudice

Jehovah is not partial. (Ac 10:34, 35) He accepts people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Re 7:9) Thus, there is no place in the Christian congregation for prejudice or favoritism. (Jas 2: 1-4) Thanks to divine education, we enjoy a spiritual paradise in which we have seen the transformation of human personalities. (Isa 11:6-9) As we work diligently to root out of our heart any traces of prejudice, we prove ourselves imitators of God.—Eph 5:1, 2.



WATCH THE VIDEO *JOHNNY AND GIDEON: ONCE ENEMIES, NOW BROTHERS*. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is divine education superior to human efforts in eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- What impresses you about our international brotherhood?
- How is Jehovah glorified when we maintain Christian unity?

24 *Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!*

(2 Corinthians 4:18)

1. When eyes of blind ones see again
 And ears of deaf ones hear again,
When deserts blossom as the rose
 And from parched ground fresh water flows,
When lame ones leap just like the hart,
 When loved ones never have to part,
Such blessed times you'll realize,
 If you keep your eyes on the prize.
2. When tongues of mute ones speak again,
 When old ones will be young again,
When earth will yield her rich increase
 And all good things will never cease,
When songs of children fill the air,
 When joy and peace are ev'rywhere,
Then, too, you'll see the dead arise,
 If you keep your eyes on the prize.
3. When wolves and lambs will feed as one,
 When bears and calves bask in the sun,
A mere young boy will lead them all,
 And they will heed his childish call.
When tears belong to yesterday,
 When fears and pain have passed away,
You'll see how God these things supplies,
 If you keep your eyes on the prize.

(See also Isa. 11:6-9; 35:5-7; John 11:24.)

- Song 143 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Knowledge of Jehovah Will Fill the Earth”:** (10 min.)
Isa 11:3-5—Righteousness will prevail forever (*jp-1* 160-161 ¶9-11)
Isa 11:6-8—Peace will exist between humans and animals (*w12* 9/15 9-10 ¶8-9)
Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah’s ways (*w16.06* 8 ¶9; *w13* 6/1 7)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 11:1, 10—How can Jesus Christ be “the root of Jesse” as well as a twig that grew “out of the stump of Jesse”? (*w06* 12/1 9 ¶6)

Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? (*w06* 12/1 10 ¶10)

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:** (4 min. or less) Isa 13:17–14:8

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Job 34:10
—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Ec 8:9; 1Jo 5:19
—Teach the Truth.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 54 ¶9
—Show how to reach the heart.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 24
- **“Divine Education Conquers Prejudice”:** (15 min.)
Discussion. Play the video *Johnny and Gideon: Once Enemies, Now Brothers* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 5 ¶18-25, box on p. 57
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 151 and Prayer
Reminder: Play the new song through once before singing.

Divine Education Conquers Prejudice

Jehovah is not partial. (Ac 10:34, 35) He accepts people “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Re 7:9) Thus, there is no place in the Christian congregation for prejudice or favoritism. (Jas 2: 1-4) Thanks to divine education, we enjoy a spiritual paradise in which we have seen the transformation of human personalities. (Isa 11:6-9) As we work diligently to root out of our heart any traces of prejudice, we prove ourselves imitators of God.—Eph 5:1, 2.



WATCH THE VIDEO *JOHNNY AND GIDEON: ONCE ENEMIES, NOW BROTHERS*. THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why is divine education superior to human efforts in eliminating discrimination and prejudice?
- What impresses you about our international brotherhood?
- How is Jehovah glorified when we maintain Christian unity?

great multitude was thought to be. A great sigh of relief was voiced by many, and as this new truth sank in, a new sense of zeal took hold of those who now understood where they stood before Jehovah.”—Herman L. Philbrick.

■ “This assembly gave us much to rejoice over. We could freely offer people a hope of everlasting life on earth. Many who had partaken of the Memorial [emblems] could see where they stood and no longer [partook].”—John C. Booth.

same as the sheep in Jesus’ parable of the sheep and the goats. (Matt. 25:33-40) The great multitude would be among the “other sheep,” of whom Jesus said: “Those too I must bring in.” (John 10:16) When the speaker, J. F. Rutherford, asked: “Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?” more than half the audience rose to their feet! “Behold!” he declared. “The great multitude!” Many were deeply moved to understand at last their hope for the future.

¹⁸ Ever since then, Christ has guided his people to

18. How have Christ’s followers focused their efforts in the ministry, and with what result?

focus their efforts on gathering the prospective members of this great crowd that will emerge, alive and safe, from the great tribulation. At first, the ingathering did not seem impressive. Brother Rutherford once even commented: “It looks as if the ‘great multitude’ is not going to be so great after all.” Of course, we now know how greatly Jehovah has blessed the harvest since then! Under the guidance of Jesus and the holy spirit, both the anointed and their companions of the “other sheep” have become just what Jesus foretold—“one flock” serving together under “one shepherd.”

¹⁹ The vast majority of faithful people will live forever in an earthly paradise, governed by Christ and his 144,000 corulers. Is it not a pleasure to contemplate the way Christ has guided God’s people to such a clear Scriptural hope for the future? What a privilege we have to share that hope with those we meet in the ministry! Let us be as active as our circumstances will allow so that the great crowd will continue to swell in numbers, raising an ever greater shout of praise to Jehovah’s name!—**Read Luke 10:2.**

19. How can we have a part in enlarging the great crowd?



Brother Rutherford
could not foresee how
numerous the great
crowd would become

From left to right:
Nathan H. Knorr,
Joseph F. Rutherford,
and Hayden C. Covington



The great crowd is constantly growing in number

What Loyalty to the Kingdom Requires

²⁰ As God's people continued to learn about the Kingdom, they also needed to grasp fully what it means to be loyal to that heavenly government. In this regard, in 1922, *The Watch Tower* pointed out that there are two organizations at work, Jehovah's and Satan's, with Satan's being made up of commercial, religious, and political elements. Those who are loyal to God's Kingdom under Christ must not compromise their loyalty through improper involvement with any aspect of Satan's organization. (2 Cor. 6: 17) What does that mean?

²¹ The spiritual food from the faithful slave has consistently exposed the corruption of big business and has warned God's people not to give in to its rampant materialism. (Matt. 6:24) Likewise, our publications have kept the spotlight focused on the religious part of Satan's organization. In 1963, *The Watchtower* clearly showed that "Babylon the

20. Satan's organization is composed of what elements, and how is Christian loyalty involved?

21. (a) How has the faithful slave warned God's people about big business? (b) In 1963, what did *The Watchtower* reveal about "Babylon the Great"?

Great” represented not only Christendom but also the whole world empire of false religion. Thus, as we will see more fully in Chapter 10 of this book, God’s people in every land and culture have been helped to “get out of her,” cleansing themselves of all false religious practices.—Rev. 18:2, 4.

²² What, though, about the political part of Satan’s organization? Could true Christians take part in the wars and conflicts of the nations? During World War I, the Bible Students generally understood that Christ’s followers should have no share in killing their fellow humans. (Matt. 26:52) However, for many, the exhortation found at Romans 13:1 to be obedient to “the superior authorities” meant that they should join the army, wear soldiers’ uniforms, and even bear arms; however, when asked to kill the enemy, they should shoot into the air.

²³ Just as World War II was erupting in 1939, *The Watchtower* featured an in-depth discussion of neutrality. The article showed clearly that Christians

22. During World War I, how did many of God’s people understand the exhortation of Romans 13:1?

23, 24. What was our understanding of Romans 13:1 during World War II, and to what more accurate view were Christ’s followers guided?

would have no part at all in the wars and conflicts of the nations of Satan's world. What timely guidance! Christ's followers were thus protected from the horrific bloodguilt that clung to the nations in that war. Beginning in 1929, however, our publications had also reasoned that the superior authorities of Romans 13:1 were not the secular rulers at all, but Jehovah and Jesus. A more accurate understanding was still needed.

²⁴ The holy spirit guided Christ's followers to just such a view in 1962, when landmark articles on Romans 13:1-7 were published in the November 15 and December 1 issues of *The Watchtower*. Finally, God's people grasped the principle of relative subjection that Jesus had revealed in his famous words: "Pay back Caesar's things to Caesar but God's things to God." (Luke 20:25) True Christians now understand that the superior authorities are the secular powers of this world and that Christians must be subject to them. However, such subjection is relative. When the secular authorities ask us to disobey Jehovah God, then we answer as did the apostles of old: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) In

Chapters 13 and 14 of this book, we will learn more about how God's people have put the principle of Christian neutrality into action.

²⁵ Think of all that Christ's followers have been taught about the Kingdom over this past century. We have learned when God's Kingdom was established in heaven and how important it is. We have a clear picture of the two hopes offered to faithful people, the heavenly hope and the earthly hope. And we know how to demonstrate our loyalty to God's Kingdom while being in relative subjection to worldly authorities. Ask yourself, 'Would I know any of those precious truths if Jesus Christ had not guided his faithful slave on earth to grasp them and then to teach them?' What a blessing to have Christ and the holy spirit guiding us!

25. Why do you appreciate the guidance of the holy spirit in understanding God's Kingdom?

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How have true Christians come to understand the truth about the year 1914 and the importance of God's Kingdom?
- What moves you to help others become earthly subjects of the Kingdom?
- What balanced view do we now have regarding loyalty to the Kingdom and subjection to the superior authorities?
- What convinces you that Christ has been using holy spirit to guide his people in their understanding of God's Kingdom?

151 *The Revealing of God's Sons* **(Romans 8:19)**

- 1. The time is near when God reveals
His faithful chosen ones.
In heaven they will rule with Christ
As mighty spirit sons.**

(CHORUS)

***The sons of God will be revealed
Along with Christ, their Lord.
They'll join him in his victory
And share in his reward.***

- 2. And soon the last remaining ones
Will hear his final call.
The King of kings and Lord of lords
Will then collect them all.**

(Chorus)

(BRIDGE)

**And then with Christ, these sons of God
Will wage the final war.
The joyous marriage to the Lamb
Will last forevermore.**

(Chorus)

OCTOBER 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 25, 2016



COVER IMAGE:
LUXEMBOURG

Brothers working business territory witness to a mechanic in an auto repair garage. They use the tract *How Do You View the Bible?* to draw his attention to God's Word

POPULATION
562,958

PUBLISHERS
2,058

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
3,895

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 LIFE STORY
Endeavoring to Mirror Fine Examples

8 WEEK OF **NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 4**
“Do Not Forget Kindness to Strangers”

13 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 5-11**
**Maintain Your Spiritual Health
While Serving in a Foreign Field**

In recent years, the makeup of our congregations has become more diverse and international. The first article helps us to show genuine concern for those from a foreign background who attend meetings in our congregation. The second article discusses how those serving in a foreign field can maintain their spiritual health.

18 Do You “Safeguard Practical Wisdom”?

21 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 12-18**
**Strengthen Your Faith
in What You Hope For**

26 WEEK OF **DECEMBER 19-25**
**Exercise Your Faith
in Jehovah’s Promises**

These articles examine the two aspects of faith that are described at Hebrews 11:1. The first article shows how our faith can grow and remain strong. The second article shows how true faith is much more than just a mental understanding of the blessings that Jehovah has in store for us.

31 DID YOU KNOW?

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.



Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 15 October 2016 is published monthly with an additional issue published in January, March, May, July, September, and November by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2016 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

October 2016
Vol. 137, No. 15 ENGLISH

1. On many occasions God spoke to men
By means of his prophets of old.
Today he has said, 'Let all men repent,'
By God's own Son we are told.

(CHORUS)

*Do we have the faith that is sure?
We must build such faith to survive.
Is our faith proved true by our works?
This kind of faith preserves our souls alive.*

2. We gladly obey Christ Jesus' command
To share Kingdom truth far and wide.
We carefully guard our freeness of speech;
This truth we never will hide.

(Chorus)

3. Our faith is an anchor firm and secure;
We never will shrink back in fear.
Though enemies will against us arise,
We know salvation is near.

(Chorus)

Exercise Your Faith in Jehovah's Promises

“Faith is . . . the convincing evidence of realities that are not seen.”—HEB. 11:1, ftn.

SONGS: 54, 125

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How does Noah's example help us to understand what it means to have faith?

In what ways must we exercise our faith?

Why are both faith and love important?

CHRISTIAN faith is a precious quality. Not all humans possess it. (2 Thess. 3:2) However, Jehovah has given to each one of his worshippers “a measure of faith.” (Rom. 12:3; Gal. 5:22) All who have it should be deeply grateful.

2 Jesus Christ said that his heavenly Fa-

1. How should we view Christian faith?

2, 3. (a) What blessings are possible for someone who has faith? (b) What questions will we now consider?



Exercise Your Faith in Jehovah's Promises

Exercise your faith by sharing the good news at every opportunity
(See paragraph 12)



ther draws people to himself through His Son. (John 6:44, 65) Acquiring faith in Jesus, in turn, makes it possible for an individual to gain forgiveness of sins. That, then, opens up the prospect of enjoying an everlasting relationship with Jehovah. (Rom. 6:23) What did we do to deserve such a wonderful blessing? As sinners, the only thing we deserve is death. (Ps. 103:10) But Jehovah saw a potential for good in us. Out of his undeserved kindness, he opened our heart to the good news. So we began to exercise faith in Jesus with everlasting life in view.—Read 1 John 4: 9, 10.

3 But what exactly is faith? Is it limited to a mental grasp of the blessings that God has in store for us? And more important, in what ways must we exercise our faith?

“EXERCISE FAITH IN YOUR HEART”

4 Faith involves much more than a mental understanding of God’s purpose. It is a powerful motivating force that impels a person to act in harmony with God’s will. Faith in God’s means of salvation moves a believer to share the good news with others. The apostle Paul explained: “If you publicly declare with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith *in your heart* that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For *with the heart* one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation.”—Rom. 10:9, 10; 2 Cor. 4:13.

5 Clearly, our prospect of enjoying eternal life in God’s new world depends on our having

4. Explain why faith is more than just a mental process.
5. Why is faith so important, and how can we keep it strong? Illustrate.

faith and keeping it strong. The need to keep our faith healthy can be likened to a plant's need for water. Unlike an artificial plant, a living plant keeps changing. A live plant either withers because of a lack of water or continues to thrive with a regular supply of moisture. If deprived of sufficient water, a once healthy plant will eventually die. So, too, our faith. It will wither and die if neglected. (Luke 22:32; Heb. 3:12) But if we give it due attention, our faith will stay alive and keep "growing," and we will be "healthy in faith."—2 Thess. 1:3; Titus 2:2.

THE BIBLE'S DESCRIPTION OF FAITH

6 The Bible's description of faith is found at Hebrews 11:1. (Read.) Faith focuses on two kinds of things that are not visible to us:

6. In what two ways does Hebrews 11:1 describe faith?

(1) “What is hoped for”—this may include future events that have been promised to happen but that have not yet occurred, such as the end of all wickedness and the coming new world.

(2) “Realities that are not seen.” In this context, the Greek word translated “evident demonstration” refers to “convincing evidence” of an invisible reality, such as the existence of Jehovah God, Jesus Christ, the angels, and the activities of the heavenly Kingdom. (Heb. 11:3) How do we prove that our hope is alive and that we believe in the unseen things spoken of in God’s Word? By our words and deeds—without which our faith would be incomplete.

7 Hebrews 11:7 highlights the faith of Noah

7. How does Noah’s example help us to understand what it means to have faith? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

who, “after receiving divine warning of *things not yet seen*, showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household.” Noah exercised his faith by building the gigantic ark. Without doubt, his neighbors must have asked him why he was building such a colossal structure. Did Noah keep quiet or tell them to mind their own business? By no means! His faith moved him to witness boldly and to warn his contemporaries of God’s coming judgment. Quite likely, Noah repeated to the people the exact words that Jehovah had spoken to him: “I have decided to put an end to all flesh, because the earth is full of violence on account of them . . . I am going to bring floodwaters upon the earth to destroy from under the heavens all flesh that has the breath of life. Everything on the earth will

perish.” Also, Noah no doubt explained to the people the only means of escape, repeating God’s command: “You must go into the ark.” Thus, Noah further exercised his faith by being “a preacher of righteousness.”—Gen. 6:13, 17, 18; 2 Pet. 2:5.

8 The letter of James was likely written shortly after the apostle Paul wrote his inspired description of faith. Like Paul, James explained that true Christian faith is not just a matter of believing; action is involved. “Show me your faith without the works,” wrote James, “and I will show you my faith by my works.” (Jas. 2: 18) James goes on to show the clear difference between mere belief and the exercising of one’s faith. The demons believe that God exists, but

8. What was the disciple James inspired to explain regarding the meaning of true Christian faith?

they have no true faith. Rather, they faithlessly work against the fulfillment of God's purposes. (Jas. 2:19, 20) By contrast, referring to another ancient man of faith, James asks: "Was not Abraham our father declared righteous by works after he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? You see that his faith was active along with his works and his faith was perfected by his works." Then to drive home the point that faith must be shown by works, James adds: "Just as the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."—Jas. 2: 21-23, 26.

9 Over three decades later, the apostle John wrote his Gospel and three letters. Did he appreciate the depth of meaning that other Bible writers had been inspired to explain respecting

9, 10. How does the apostle John help us to understand the importance of exercising our faith?

true Christian faith? More than any other Bible writer, John used the Greek verb that is sometimes translated “exercise faith.”

10 For example, John explained: “The one who exercises faith in the Son has everlasting life; the one who disobeys the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God remains upon him.” (John 3:36) Christian faith includes a demonstration of obedience to Jesus’ commands. John often quoted Jesus’ words that show that exercising faith is an ongoing process.—John 3:16; 6:29, 40; 11:25, 26; 14:1, 12.

11 How grateful we should be that Jehovah used his holy spirit to reveal the truth to us and to enable us to exercise faith in the good news! (Read Luke 10:21.) We should never cease thanking Jehovah for drawing us to himself

11. How can we show appreciation for knowing the truth?

through his Son, “the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith.” (Heb. 12:2) To show our appreciation for such undeserved kindness, we should keep strengthening our faith through prayer and study of God’s Word.—Eph. 6:18; 1 Pet. 2:2.

12 We should keep exercising our faith in Jehovah’s promises. We must do this in ways that are clearly evident to others. For example, we keep on preaching about God’s Kingdom and sharing in the work of making disciples. We also keep working “what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith.” (Gal. 6:10) And we work hard to “strip off the old personality with its practices,” guarding against anything that could weaken us spiritually.—Col. 3:5, 8-10.

12. In what ways should we exercise our faith?

FAITH IN GOD IS PART OF OUR FOUNDATION

13 “Without faith,” the Bible states, “it is impossible to please God well, for whoever approaches God must believe that he exists and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.” (Heb. 11:6, ftn.) God’s Word describes “faith in God” as part of the “foundation” that is needed for anyone to become and remain a true Christian. (Heb. 6:1) On that foundation, Christians must “supply to [their] faith” other important qualities “in order to keep [themselves] in God’s love.”—Read 2 Peter 1:5-7; Jude 20, 21.

14 The Christian Bible writers emphasized the importance of faith by referring to it hun-

13. How important is “faith in God,” and to what is it likened, and why?

14, 15. Compared with love, how important is faith?

dreds of times. No other Christian quality is mentioned as often. Does this mean that faith is the most important Christian quality?

15 Comparing faith with love, Paul wrote: “If I have all the faith so as to move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.” (1 Cor. 13:2) Jesus emphasized the all-important quality of love for God when he answered the question: “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” (Matt. 22:35-40) Love embraces many essential Christian qualities, including faith. “Love,” the Bible states, “believes all things.” It has faith in the things God has said in his Word of truth.—1 Cor. 13: 4, 7.

16 Because of the importance of faith and love, Christian Bible writers highlighted these

16, 17. How are faith and love highlighted together in the Scriptures, but which is the greatest, and why?

qualities together multiple times, often in the same sentence or phrase. Paul urged his brothers to “put on the breastplate of *faith* and *love*.” (1 Thess. 5:8) Peter wrote: “Though you never saw [Jesus], you *love* him. Though you do not see him now, yet you exercise *faith* in him.” (1 Pet. 1:8) James asked his anointed brothers: “Did not God choose those who are poor from the world’s standpoint to be rich in *faith* and heirs of the Kingdom, which he promised to those who *love* him?” (Jas. 2:5) John wrote: “This is [God’s] commandment: that we have *faith* in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and *love* one another.”—1 John 3:23.

17 Although faith is essential, aspects of this quality will pass away when we see the fulfillment of God’s promises and experience the

reality of our Christian hope. But the need to grow in love for God and for our neighbor will never cease. Thus, Paul could write: “Now, however, these three remain: faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.”—1 Cor. 13:13.

A POWERFUL DEMONSTRATION OF FAITH

18 In our present day, Jehovah’s people have been exercising their faith in God’s established Kingdom. This has resulted in the development of a worldwide spiritual paradise that has over eight million inhabitants. It is a place that abounds with the fruitage of God’s spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) What a powerful demonstration of true Christian faith and love!

19 No human can take credit for this. It has

18, 19. What powerful demonstration of faith do we see today, and who deserves the credit for this?

been accomplished by our God. This wonderful work is bringing “fame to Jehovah, an everlasting sign that will never perish.” (Isa. 55:13) Indeed, it is “God’s gift” that we be “saved through faith.” (Eph. 2:8) Our spiritual paradise will continue to grow and to flourish until the whole earth is filled with perfect, righteous, and happy humans to the eternal praise of Jehovah’s name. May we keep on exercising our faith in Jehovah’s promises!

Visit www.jw.org, or
scan code 



wj16.10-E-2
160608

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

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)