- 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 (ip-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? ($w06\ 12/1\ 10\ \P10$)

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?

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



used to strike you with the rod[®] and to lift up his staff against you as Egypt did.[®] 25 For in a very little while the denunciation will come to an end; my anger will be directed to their destruction.[©] 26 Jehovah of armies will brandish a whip against him, [®] as when he defeated Mid'ian by the rock O'reb.[®] And his staff will be over the sea, and he will raise it as he did with Egypt.^f

27 In that day his load will depart from on your shoulder,⁹

And his yoke from on your neck,^h

And the yoke will be broken because of the oil."

28 He has come to Ai'ath; He has passed through Mig'ron;

At Mich'mash^k he deposits his baggage.

29 They have passed over the ford;

They spend the night at Ge'ba;

Ra'mah trembles, Gib'e·ah^m of Saul has fled.ⁿ

30 Cry out and scream, O daughter of Gal'lim! Pay attention, O La'i-shah! O poor An'a-thoth!

31 Mad·me'nah has run away. The inhabitants of Ge'bim have sought shelter.

32 This very day he will halt in Nob.^p

He shakes his fist at the mountain of the daughter of Zion,

The hill of Jerusalem.

33 Look! The true Lord, Jehovah of armies,

Is chopping off branches with a terrible crash;^q
The tallest trees are being

cut down,

And the lofty are brought low.

CHAP. 10

a 2Ki 18:13 Isa 10:5 b Ex 14:3, 9 c 2Ki 19:35 d 2Ch 32:21 Isa 30:32 Na 3:7

e Jg 7:25 Jg 8:21 Ps 83:11 f Ex 14:21, 27

g Isa 9:4 Na 1:13 h Isa 14:25

i 2Ki 19:35 Isa 37:35, 36 j Jos 7:2 k 1Sa 13:2

1Sa 14:31 I Jos 21:8, 17 2Ch 16:6 m Jg 20:13

n Ho 5:8 o Jos 21:8, 18 Jer 1:1

p 1Sa 22:18, 19 q 2Ch 32:21 lsa 37:36

Second Col.

CHAP. 11 a Ps 132:11 lsa 53:2

Re 5:5 Re 22:16 b Ru 4:17 1Sa 17:58 Mt 1:1, 6 Lu 3:23, 32

Ac 13:22, 23 Ro 15:12 C Jer 23:5 Jer 33:15

Zec 3:8 Zec 6:12 d Isa 42:1 Joh 1:32

Joh 1:32 Ac 10:38 e Lu 2:52

f Isa 9:6 g Heb 5:7 h Joh 7:24

Joh 8:16 i Ps 2:9 Ps 110:2 Re 19:11, 15

j 2Th 2:8 k Re 3:14 l Isa 65:25

I Isa 65:25 m Fze 34:25 **34** He strikes down the thickets of the forest with an iron tool,*

And Leb'a·non will fall by a mighty one.

11 A twig^a will grow out of the stump of Jes'se,^b

And a sprout from his roots will bear fruit.

2 And the spirit of Jehovah will settle upon him,^a

The spirit of wisdom^e and of understanding, The spirit of counsel

and of mightiness,^f
The spirit of knowledge
and of the fear of Jehovah.

3 And he will find delight in the fear of Jehovah.⁹ 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.^J

5 Righteousness will be the belt around his waist, And faithfulness the belt

of his hips.^k

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;#m

And a little boy will lead them.

10:34 *Or "an ax." 11:4 *Or "righteousness." "Or "spirit." 11:6 *Or "the maned young lion." "Or possibly, "And the calf and the lion will feed together."

7 The cow and the bear will feed together,

And their young will lie down together.

The lion will eat straw like the bull.^a

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^b

Or any ruin in all my holy mountain,^c

Because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah

As the waters cover the sea.^d

10 In that day the root of Jes'se^e

will stand up as a signal* for the peoples.⁷ To him the nations will turn

for guidance,#g

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 Assyr'i·a,^h from Egypt,^l from E'lam,^l from Shi'nar,* from E'lam,^l from the islands of the sea.^m 12 He will raise up a signal* for the nations and gather the dispersed ones of Israel,ⁿ and he will gather together the scattered ones of Judah from the four corners of the earth.^o

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

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.^q

11:10, 12 *Or "signal pole." 11:10 *Or "The nations will search for him." 11:11 *That is, Babylonia.

CHAP. 11

a Ho 2:18 b Isa 2:4 Isa 35:9 Isa 60:18 Mic 4:4 c Isa 51:3

Isa 56:7 Isa 65:25 d Ps 22:27 Hab 2:14

e Ro 15:12 Re 22:16 f Ge 49:10 Isa 49:22

Isa 62:10 g Ac 11:18 Ac 28:28 h Isa 11:16

i Isa 27:13 Jer 44:28 Mic 7:12 i Jer 44:15

k Zep 3:10 I Da 8:2 m Isa 66:19 n Err 1:2 3

Isa 49:22 Isa 62:10 o Ps 147:2 Isa 66:20

p 2Ch 30:1, 10 Jer 31:6 q Jer 3:18

Eze 37:16, 19 Ho 1:11 Second Col.

Oh 18

b Isa 25:10

c Jer 49:2

d Ex 14:22 e Ge 15:18 f Isa 19:23 Isa 27:13 Isa 35:8 Isa 40:3 Isa 57:14 Jer 31:21

g Ezr 1:2, 3

CHAP. 12 h De 30:3 Ps 30:5 Ps 85:1 Ps 126:1

Isa 40:2 Isa 66:13 i Isa 45:17 j Isa 26:4 k Ps 118:14

k Ps 118:14 Ho 1:7 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

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

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

15 Jehovah will divide* the gulf# of the Egyptian sea^d And wave his hand over

the River. Act With his scorehing broad

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^f out of As-syr'i-a for the remnant of his people who are left,^g

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.h

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."k

3 With rejoicing you will draw water

From the springs of salvation.

4 And in that day you will say:

11:14 *Lit., "shoulder." "Or "extend their power over." 11:15 *Or possibly, "dry up." "Lit., "tongue." ^That is, the Euphrates. *Or "spirit." "Or possibly, "strike it into." 12:2 *"Jah" is a shortened form of the name Jehovah.

"Give thanks to Jehovah,

Make his deeds known among the peoples!

Declare that his name is exalted.^b

5 Sing praises* to Jehovah,^c for he has done magnificent things.^d
Let this be made known in

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^e that Isaiah^f the son of A'moz saw in vision:

2 "Raise up a signal*g 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.k

From the extremity of the heavens,

Jehovah and the weapons of his wrath.

12:5 *Or "Make music." 12:6 *Lit., "inhabitress," referring to the population collectively as a woman. 13:2 *Or "signal pole." 13:3 *Lit., "to my sanctified ones."

CHAP. 12 a 1Ch 16:8 Ps 105:1, 2

b Ex 15:2

d Ps 98:1

CHAP. 13

e Jer 25:12 Jer 50:1-3 Re 18:2

f Isa 1:1

g Jer 51:12 Jer 51:27, 28

h Isa 45:1

i Da 5:28

k Jer 50:9 Jer 51:28

Second Col. a Jer 51:11

b Isa 13:18 Jer 50:13

d Da 5:6

f Job 9:9 Job 38:31 Am 5:8

g Ps 137:8 Jer 51:37 Re 18:2

h Jer 50:29 Da 5:22, 23

i Jer 50:30 Jer 51:3, 4 To bring ruin to all the

earth.^a

6 Wail, for the day of Jehovah is near!

It will come as a destruction from the Almighty.^b

7 That is why all hands will go limp,

And every man's heart will melt with fear.

8 The people are panicstricken.^d

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, e

And to annihilate the land's

10 For the stars of the heavens and their constellations*f Will not give off their light; The sun will be dark when it rises.

sinners from it.

And the moon will not shed its light.

11 I will call the inhabited earth to account for its badness,^g 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,¹ And humans scarcer than the gold of O'phir.¹

13 That is why I will make the heavens tremble,

13:10 *Lit., "and their Kesils," perhaps referring to Orion and surrounding constellations.

And the earth will be shaken out of its place^a

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.^b

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, ^a

Their houses will be looted, And their wives will be raped.

17 Here I am raising up against them the Medes,^e 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,^g
The beauty and the pride of the Chal-de'ans.^h

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.

their flocks there.

21 The desert creatures will lie down there:

Their houses will be filled with eagle owls.

13:19 *Or "the decoration."

CHAP. 13 a Jer 51:29 b Jer 50:16

c Jer 51:3, 4

d Ps 137:8, 9

e Isa 21:2 Jer 50:9 Jer 51:11 Da 5:30, 31

f Jer 50:14 a Isa 47:5

Da 4:30

i Ge 19:24, 25 Jer 50:40

j Jer 50:3, 13 Jer 51:29, 37 Re 18:21

Second Col. a Re 18:2

b Jer 51:33

CHAP. 14 c Le 26:42

d Zec 1:17

e De 30:1-3 Isa 66:20 Jer 24:6 Eze 36:24

f Isa 56:6, 7 Isa 60:3 Zec 8:22, 23

g Isa 61:5 Zec 2:8, 9

h Ezr 3:1 Ezr 9:8 Jer 30:10

i Jer 50:23

k 2Ch 36:17 Jer 50:17

/ Hab 1:6 Zec 1:15 The ostriches will reside there.^a

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."^b

▲ For Jehovah will show mercy to Jacob, and he will again choose Israel.d He will settle them* in their land.6 and the foreign residents will ioin them and attach themselves to the house of Jacob.f 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 servantsg 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, ^h **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, k

The one angrily subduing nations with relentless persecution.

^{13:21 *}Or possibly, "And goatlike demons." 14:1 *Or "give them rest." 14:2 *Or "their taskmasters." 14:4 *Or "taunt." "Or "the taskmaster."

ISAIAH 14:7-21			956
7 The whole earth now rests, free of disturbance.	CHAP. 14 a Ps 126:2 lsa 49:13		In the remotest parts of the north. ^a
People cry out for joy. ^a 8 Even the juniper trees rejoice over you,	Jer 51:48 Re 18:20	14	I will go up above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself resemble
Along with the cedars of Leb'a·non.		15	the Most High.' Instead, you will be brought
They say, 'Ever since you have fallen,			down to the Grave,* To the remotest parts
No woodcutter comes up against us.'	b Re 18:22	16	of the pit. Those seeing you will stare
9 Even the Grave* underneath is stirred up			at you; They will closely examine
To meet you when you come. Because of you, it awakens those powerless in death,	c 2Ch 36:17		you, saying, 'Is this the man who was shaking the earth,
All the oppressive leaders# of the earth.	Jer 51:7 Eze 29:19 Da 5:18, 19		Who made kingdoms tremble, b
It makes all the kings of the nations rise from their		17	Who made the inhabited earth like the wilderness And overthrew its cities, ^c
thrones. 10 All of them speak up and say to you,			Who refused to let his prisoners go home?'d
'Have you also become weak like us?	d Isa 47:7 Da 4:30	18	All other kings of the nations,
Have you become like us? 11 Down to the Grave* your pride has been brought,			Yes, all of them, lie down in glory, Each one in his own tomb.*
The sound of your stringed instruments. ^b	e Da 5:22, 23	19	But you are discarded without a grave,
Maggots are spread beneath you as a bed,	Second Col.		Like a detested sprout,* Clothed with the slain who
And worms are your covering.'	a Ps 48:1, 2		were stabbed with the sword,
12 How you have fallen from heaven,			Who go down to the stones of a pit, Like a carcass trampled
O shining one, son of the dawn!	b Jer 51:25	20	underfoot. You will not join them in
How you have been cut down to the earth, You who vanguished		20	a grave, For you destroyed your own
nations! ^c 13 You said in your heart, 'I will			land, You killed your own people.
ascend to the heavens. ^d Above the stars of God	c 2Ki 25:21		The offspring of evildoers will never again be named.
I will lift up my throne, ^e And I will sit down on the	Isa 64:10	21	Prepare a slaughtering block for his sons
mountain of meeting,			Because of the guilt of their forefathers,
14:9, 11, 15 * Or "Sheol," that is, the common grave of mankind. See Glossary. 14:9 "Lit., "the he-goats."	d 2Ki 24:12,14 2Ki 25:11		18 *Lit., "house." 14:19 *Or anch."

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," a declares Jehovah of armies.
"And I will wipe out from

"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," c 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.^d His yoke will be removed

from them,
And his load will be removed
from their shoulder."e

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?^f His hand is stretched out, And who can turn it back?^g

- 28 In the year that King A'haz died, h 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.

14:26 *Lit., "the counsel that is counseled." "Or "is ready to strike."

CHAP. 14 a Isa 43:14 Jer 50:25

Jer 51:56 b Jer 51:62

c Isa 13:1, 21 Jer 50:35, 39 Re 18:2

d 2Ch 32:21, 22 Isa 30:31 Isa 31:8 Isa 37:36, 37

e Isa 10:24

f Ps 33:11 Pr 19:21 Pr 21:30 Isa 46:11

g 2Ch 20:5, 6 Isa 43:13

h 2Ki 16:20 2Ch 28:27

Second Col. a 2Ch 26:3, 6

b 2Ki 18:1, 8

C Jer 47:1 Eze 25:16 Joe 3:4 Am 1:6-8 Zep 2:4 Zec 9:5

d Ps 48:1-3 Ps 87:1, 2 Ps 132:13, 14

CHAP. 15 e Jer 9:25, 26

Eze 25:11 f Nu 21:28

De 2:9 g 2Ki 3:24, 25

Jer 48:31

h Jer 48:18

j Nu 21:30

Jos 13:15-17

k De 14:1

/ Jer 48:36, 37

m Jer 48:38

For from the root of the serpent^a will come a poisonous snake,^b 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,^d
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^f of Mo'ab has been silenced.

Because it has been devastated in a night, Kir⁹ of Mo'ab has been silenced.

2 He has gone up to the House* and to Di'bon, h To the high places to weep.

Mo'ab wails over Ne'bo' and over Med'e·ba.^j Every head is shaved bald,^k every beard is clipped.^j

3 In its streets they have put on sackcloth.

On their roofs and in their public squares they all wail;

They go down weeping.^m

^{14:29 *}Or "a darting poisonous snake." 15:2 *Or "the Temple."

ISAIAH 15:4-16:8

ISAIAH 15:4-16:8		958
4 Hesh'bon and E·le·a'leha	CHAP. 15	So the daughters of Mo'ab
cry out;	a Nu 32:37	will be at the fords of
Their voice is heard as far	Isa 16:9	Ar'non.a
as Ja'haz.b		3 "Offer counsel, carry out
That is why the armed men	b Jq 11:20	the decision.
of Mo'ab keep shouting.	D 39 11.20	Make your shadow at high
He* is trembling.		noon like the night.
5 My heart cries out over	c Ge 13:10	Conceal the dispersed and
Mo'ab.		do not betray those fleeing.
Its fugitives have fled as	d Jer 48:34	4 May my dispersed ones
far as Zo'arc and Eg'lath-		reside in you, O Mo'ab.
she·li'shi·yah.d	e Jer 48:3. 5	Become a place of conceal-
On the ascent of Lu'hith they	e Jer 46.5, 5	ment to them because of
weep as they go up;		the destroyer.
On the way to Hor·o·na'im	f Jer 48:20	The oppressor will reach
they cry out over the		his end,
catastrophe.e	g 2Ki 17:25, 26	The destruction will come to an end,
6 For the waters of Nim'rim		And those trampling others
are desolate;	CHAP. 16	down will perish from the
The green grass has	h Jer 48:19	earth.
dried up,		5 Then a throne will be firmly
The grass is gone and nothing green is left.	Second Col.	established in loyal love.
7 That is why they are carrying	a Nu 21:13	The one who sits on it in the
away what is left of their		tent of David will be faith-
stores and their riches:	b Jer 48:8, 42	ful; ^c
They are crossing the valley*		He will judge fairly and will
of poplars.	c 2Sa 7:16, 17	swiftly execute righteous-
8 For the outcry echoes	,	ness."d
throughout the territory	d Ps 45:6	6 We have heard about the
of Mo'ab.	Ps 72:1, 2	pride of Mo'ab—he is very proude—
The wailing reaches	Isa 9:6, 7	His haughtiness and his
to Eg·la′im;	Isa 32:1 Jer 23:5	pride and his fury;
The wailing reaches		But his empty talk will come
to Be'er-e'lim.	e Jer 48:26, 29	to nothing.
9 For the waters of Di'mon	Zep 2:9, 10	7 So Mo'ab will wail for Mo'ab;
are full of blood,		They will all wail.g
And I have more in store for Di'mon:	f Am 2:1	Those who are stricken will
A lion for those of Mo'ab	7 AIII 2.1	moan for the raisin cakes
who escape		of Kir-har'e·seth. ^h
And for those remaining	g Isa 15:2 Jer 48:20	8 For the terraces of Hesh'bon'
in the land o	50. 10.20	have withered,
16 Send a ram to the ruler of the land,	h 2Ki 3:24, 25	The vine of Sib'mah,
of the land.	// ZKI 3:24, 25	The rulers of the nations have trampled its bright-
From Se'la through the		red branches;*
wilderness	i Jos 13:15, 17	They had reached as far as
To the mountain of the		Ja'zer;k
daughter of Zion.	j Nu 32:37, 38	They had extended into the
2 Like a bird chased away	Jos 13:15, 19	wilderness.
from its nest, ^h		
15.4 *Or "His coul" 15.7 *O. " 1."	k Jos 13:24, 25	16:8 *Or "its branches laden with red
15:4 *Or "His soul." 15:7 *Or "wadi."	Jer 48:32	grapes."

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.a

Because the shouting over vour summer fruit and vour 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 vinevards.b

The treader no longer treads out wine in the presses. For I have caused the shouting to cease.c

11 That is why deep within me I am boisterous over Mo'ab.d

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."g

7 A pronouncement against Damascus:h

"Look! Damascus will cease to be a city.

And it will become a heap of ruins.

16:9 *Or possibly, "Because the battle cry has descended on your summer fruit and your harvest." 16:14 *Or "counted as carefully as a hired worker does": that is, in exactly three years.

CHAP. 16 a Isa 15:4 Jer 48:34

h ler 48-33

c Zep 2:9

d Isa 15:5 Jer 48:36

e Isa 15:1 f Jer 48:7, 35

g Isa 25:10 Jer 48:46, 47 7ep 2:9

CHAP. 17 h Jer 49:23 7ec 9·1

i 2Ki 16:8.9 Isa 8:4 Am 1.5

Second Col. a Nu 32:34 Jos 13:15, 16 2Ki 10:32.33

b 2Ki 17:6 Isa 7:8 Isa 28:1, 2 Ho 5:14

c 2Ki 16:8.9

d Jos 15:8, 12 Jos 18:11.16

e De 4:27 De 24:20

f 2Ch 31:1 a Ho 8:6, 11

h Ho 10:14 Am 3:11

2 The cities of A·ro'era will be abandoned:

They will become places for flocks to lie down

With no one to make them afraid.

3 Fortified cities will disappear from E'phra·im,b

And the kingdom from Damascus:c

And those remaining of Syria Will be like the glory of the Israelites,"* declares Jehovah of armies.

- 4 "In that day the glory of Jacob will diminish. And his healthy body* will grow thin.
- 5 It will be as when the harvester is gathering the standing grain

And his arm harvests the ears of grain.

Like when one gleans grain in the Valley* of Reph'a·im.d

6 Only gleanings will be left, As when an olive tree is

Only two or three ripe olives remain on the highest branch,

Only four or five on its fruit-bearing branches."e declares Jehovah the God of Israel.

7 In that day man will look up to his Maker, and his eyes will gaze at the Holy One of Israel. 8 He will not look to the altars. the work of his hands:9 and he will not gaze at what his fingers have made, either the sacred poles* or the incense stands.

9 In that day his fortress cities will become like an abandoned site in the woodland.h

17:3 *Lit., "sons of Israel," 17:4 *Lit., "the fat of his flesh." 17:5 *Or "Low Plain." 17:8 *See Glossary.

- 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 (ip-1 160-161 ¶9-11)

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Isa 11:9—All mankind will learn Jehovah's ways (w16.06 8 ¶9; w13 6/1 7)

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Isa 13:17—In what sense did the Medes regard silver as nothing and take no delight in gold? ($w06\ 12/1\ 10\ \P10$)

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).
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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

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spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God," wrote Paul. (1 Corinthians 2:12) To the Ephesians, he said: "You at one time walked according to . . . this world, according to the ruler of the authority of the air, the spirit that now operates in the sons of disobedience."—Ephesians 2:2, 3.

⁸ The world's "air," or spirit, is an invisible, impelling force that incites disobedience to God and fosters "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes." (1 John 2: 16; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) The "authority" of this spirit lies in its appeal to the sinful flesh, its subtlety, its relentlessness and, like air, its pervasiveness. Moreover, it "operates" in a person by gradually nurturing in him ungodly traits, such as selfishness, haughtiness, greedy 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 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.

^{*} 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?

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Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!



Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!



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- **18.** How have Christ's followers focused their efforts in the ministry, and with what result?
- **19.** How can we have a part in enlarging the great crowd?
- 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"?

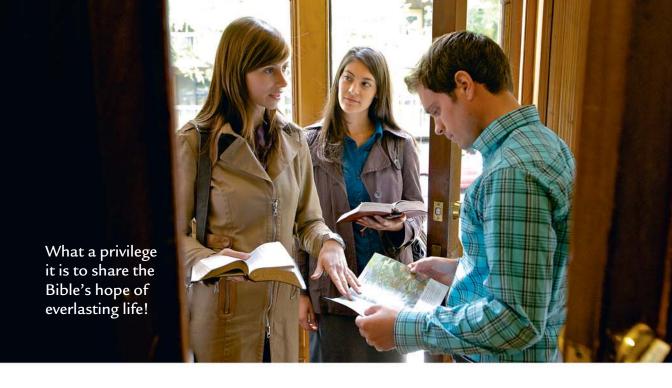
- When the speaker, J. F. Rutherford, asked: "Will all those who have the hope of living forever on the earth please stand?" more than half the audience rose to their feet! "Behold!" he declared. "The great multitude!" Many were deeply moved to understand at last their hope for the future.
- their efforts 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.**

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 Great" represented not only Christendom but also the whole world empire of false religion. Thus, as we will see

54 GOD'S KINGDOM RULES!





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?

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.

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 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.

56 GOD'S KINGDOM RULES!

- 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!

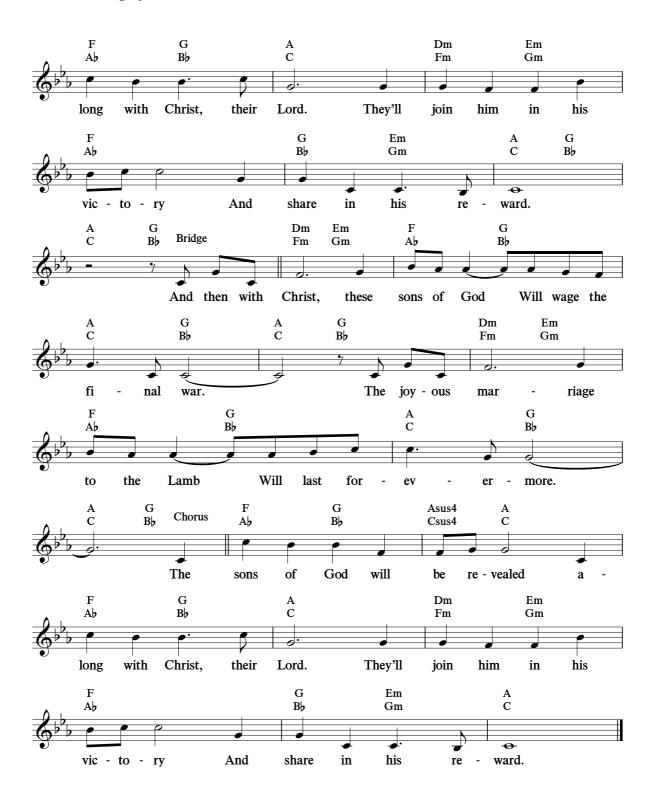
25. Why do you appreciate the guidance of the holy spirit in understanding God's Kingdom?

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?

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













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

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 "Do Not Forget Kindness to Strangers"
- 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?

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October 2016 Vol. 137, No. 15 ENGLISH

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.

We Must Have the Faith







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 Father 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

^{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?

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 vour 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 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: (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 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

^{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.

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

^{7.} How does Noah's example help us to understand what it means to have faith? (See opening picture.)

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

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



^{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 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 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.

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

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

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

^{12.} In what ways should we exercise our faith? 13. How important is "faith in God," and to what is it likened, and why?

[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 hundreds 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 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 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!

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

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

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

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