

- Song 57 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Proclaim the Year of Jehovah’s Goodwill”:** (10 min.)
Isa 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill” (*ip-2* 322 ¶4)
Isa 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work (*ip-2* 326-327 ¶13-15)
Isa 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time (*w12* 12/15 25 ¶5-6)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days? (*w15* 7/15 9-10 ¶14-17)

Isa 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”? (*w07* 1/15 11 ¶5)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Isa 62:1-12

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 16 ¶19—If available, have a mother study with her minor daughter.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 66
- **Use Videos in Your Ministry:** (6 min.) Talk. Play the video *What Is God’s Kingdom?* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY) Encourage all to use the video in connection with the literature offer for March and April on an initial call or on a return visit.
- **“Make Wise Use of Bible Literature”:** (9 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Distributing Bible Literature in Congo* (video category ACTIVITIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 8 ¶14-18, box on p. 85, review box on p. 86
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 96 and Prayer

Make Wise Use of Bible Literature

Jesus taught: “You received free, give free.” (Mt 10:8) We adhere to that clear direction by not charging people for a copy of the Bible or our Bible-based literature. (2Co 2:17) Nevertheless, these publications contain precious truths from God’s Word. Great effort and expense are involved in printing literature and shipping it to congregations around the world. Therefore, we should take only what we need.

Use discernment when giving literature to others, even at public witnessing locations. (Mt 7:6) Instead of simply handing out literature to passersby, make an effort to converse with them to determine their interest. Can you answer yes to at least one of the questions in the accompanying box? If you are unable to determine someone’s interest, it is best to give him a tract. Of course, if he asks for a magazine or another publication, we will gladly give him a copy.—Pr 3:27, 28.



DOES THE PERSON . . .

- listen attentively when we speak?
- participate in the conversation?
- agree to read the literature?
- offer a contribution?
- respond appreciatively to what he hears from God’s Word?

57 *Preaching to All Sorts of People*

(1 Timothy 2:4)

1. We really want to imitate our God,
To be impartial, as we know he is.
To save all sorts of people is his will;
He welcomes all to come and to be his.

(CHORUS)

It's the person, not the place;

It's the heart and not the face.

God's message to all people we extend.

So because we really care,

We keep preaching ev'rywhere:

"All sorts of people can become God's friend."

2. It doesn't matter where they may be found
Or what at first they might appear to be.
What really counts is what they are at heart—
The inner self, the one Jehovah sees.

(Chorus)

3. Jehovah welcomes all who make the choice
To leave the world and all its ways behind.
This we have learned, and this we want to share,
And so we preach to people of all kinds.

(Chorus)

Isaiah 58-62

58 “Call out full-throated; do not hold back!

Raise your voice like a horn.

Proclaim to my people their revolt,

To the house of Jacob their sins.

² They seek me day after day,
And they express delight to know my ways,
As if they were a nation that had practiced
righteousness

And had not abandoned the justice of their God.

They ask me for righteous judgments,

Delighting to draw close to God:

³ ‘Why do you not see when we fast?

And why do you not notice when we afflict
ourselves?’

Because on the day of your fast, you pursue
your own interests,

And you oppress your laborers.

⁴ Your fasting ends in quarrels and fights,

And you strike with the fist of wickedness.

You cannot fast as you do today and have your
voice heard in heaven.

⁵ Should the fast that I choose be like this,

As a day for someone to afflict himself,

To bow down his head like a rush,
To make his bed on sackcloth and ashes?
Is this what you call a fast and a day pleasing to
Jehovah?

⁶ No, this is the fast that I choose:

To remove the fetters of wickedness,
To untie the bands of the yoke bar,
To let the oppressed go free,
And to break in half every yoke bar;

⁷ It is to share your bread with the hungry,
To bring the poor and homeless into your house,
To clothe someone naked when you see him,
And not to turn your back on your own flesh.

⁸ Then your light will shine through like the dawn,
And your healing will spring up quickly.
Your righteousness will go before you,
And the glory of Jehovah will be your rear guard.

⁹ Then you will call, and Jehovah will answer;
You will cry for help, and he will say, 'Here I am!'
If you remove from among you the yoke bar
And stop pointing your finger and speaking
maliciously,

¹⁰ If you grant to the hungry what you yourself desire
And satisfy those who are afflicted,
Then your light will shine even in the darkness,

And your gloom will be like midday.

- ¹¹ Jehovah will always lead you
And satisfy you even in a parched land;
He will invigorate your bones,
And you will become like a well-watered garden,
Like a spring whose waters never fail.
- ¹² They will rebuild ancient ruins on your account,
And you will restore the foundations of past
generations.
You will be called the repairer of the broken
walls,
The restorer of roadways by which to dwell.
- ¹³ If because of the Sabbath you refrain from
pursuing your own interests on my holy day
And you call the Sabbath an exquisite delight, a
holy day of Jehovah, a day to be glorified,
And you glorify it rather than pursuing your own
interests and speaking idle words,
- ¹⁴ Then you will find your exquisite delight in
Jehovah,
And I will make you ride on the high places of the
earth.
I will cause you to eat from the inheritance of
Jacob your forefather,
For the mouth of Jehovah has spoken.”

59 Look! The hand of Jehovah is not too short to
save,
Nor is his ear too dull to hear.

² No, your own errors have separated you from your
God.

Your sins have made him hide his face from you,
And he refuses to hear you.

³ For your palms are polluted with blood
And your fingers with error.

Your lips speak lies, and your tongue mutters
unrighteousness.

⁴ No one calls out for righteousness,
And no one goes to court in truthfulness.
They trust in unreality and speak what is
worthless.

They conceive trouble and give birth to what is
harmful.

⁵ They hatch the eggs of a poisonous snake,
And they weave the cobweb of a spider.
Anyone who eats their eggs would die,
And the egg that is crushed hatches a viper.

⁶ Their cobweb will not serve as a garment,
Nor will they cover themselves with what they
make.

Their works are harmful,

And deeds of violence are in their hands.

- ⁷ Their feet run to do evil,
And they hurry to shed innocent blood.
Their thoughts are harmful thoughts;
Ruin and misery are in their ways.
- ⁸ They have not known the way of peace,
And there is no justice in their tracks.
They make their roadways crooked;
No one treading on them will know peace.
- ⁹ That is why justice is far away from us,
And righteousness does not overtake us.
We keep hoping for light, but look! there is
darkness;
For brightness, but we keep walking in gloom.
- ¹⁰ We grope for the wall like blind men;
Like those without eyes we keep groping.
We stumble at high noon as in evening
darkness;
Among the strong we are just like the dead.
- ¹¹ We all keep growling like bears
And cooing mournfully like doves.
We hope for justice, but there is none;
For salvation, but it is far away from us.
- ¹² For our revolts are many before you;

Each of our sins testifies against us.
For our revolts are with us;
We well know our errors.

¹³ We have transgressed and denied Jehovah;
We have turned our backs on our God.
We have spoken of oppression and revolt;
We have conceived lies and muttered false
words from the heart.

¹⁴ Justice is driven back,
And righteousness stands far off;
For truth has stumbled in the public square,
And what is upright is unable to enter.

¹⁵ Truth has vanished,
And anyone who turns away from bad is
plundered.
Jehovah saw this and was displeased,
For there was no justice.

¹⁶ He saw that there was no man,
And he was astonished that no one interceded,
So his own arm brought about salvation,
And his own righteousness supported him.

¹⁷ Then he put on righteousness like a coat of mail
And the helmet of salvation on his head.
He put on the garments of vengeance as his
clothing

And wrapped himself with zeal like a coat.

¹⁸ He will reward them for what they have done:
Wrath to his adversaries, retribution to his
enemies.

And to the islands he will repay their due.

¹⁹ From the sunset they will fear the name of Jehovah
And from the sunrise his glory,
For he will come in like a rushing river,
Which the spirit of Jehovah drives along.

²⁰ “To Zion the Repurchaser will come,
To those in Jacob who turn from transgression,”
declares Jehovah.

²¹ “As for me, this is my covenant with them,” says
Jehovah. “My spirit that is on you and my words that I
have placed in your mouth—they will not be removed
from your mouth, from the mouth of your children, or
from the mouth of your grandchildren,” says Jehovah,
“from now on and forever.”

60 “Arise, O woman, shed light, for your light has
come.

The glory of Jehovah shines on you.

² For look! darkness will cover the earth
And thick gloom the nations;
But on you Jehovah will shine,

And on you his glory will be seen.

³ Nations will go to your light
And kings to your shining splendor.

⁴ Raise your eyes and look all around you!
They have all been assembled; they are coming
to you.

From far away your sons keep coming,
And your daughters being supported on the hip.

⁵ At that time you will see and become radiant,
And your heart will throb and overflow,
Because the wealth of the sea will be directed to
you;

The resources of the nations will come to you.

⁶ Throngs of camels will cover your land,
Young male camels of Mid'i-an and E'phah.
All those from She'ba—they will come;
Gold and frankincense they will carry.
They will proclaim the praises of Jehovah.

⁷ All the flocks of Ke'dar will be gathered to you.
The rams of Ne-ba'ioth will serve you.
They will come on my altar with approval,
And I will beautify my glorious house.

⁸ Who are these that fly along like clouds,
Like doves to their dovecotes?

- ⁹ For in me the islands will hope;
The ships of Tar'shish are in the lead,
To bring your sons from far away,
Along with their silver and their gold,
To the name of Jehovah your God and to the
Holy One of Israel,
For he will glorify you.
- ¹⁰ Foreigners will build your walls,
And their kings will minister to you,
For in my indignation I struck you,
But in my favor I will have mercy on you.
- ¹¹ Your gates will be kept open constantly;
They will not be closed by day or by night,
To bring to you the resources of the nations,
And their kings will take the lead.
- ¹² For any nation and any kingdom that will not serve
you will perish,
And the nations will be utterly devastated.
- ¹³ To you the glory of Leb'a-non will come,
The juniper tree, the ash tree, and the cypress
together,
To beautify the place of my sanctuary;
I will glorify the place for my feet.
- ¹⁴ The sons of those who oppressed you will come
and bow down before you;

All those treating you disrespectfully must bow
down at your feet,
And they will have to call you the city of Jehovah,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵ Instead of your being abandoned and hated, with
nobody passing through,
I will make you a source of everlasting pride,
A cause for rejoicing throughout all generations.

¹⁶ And you will actually drink the milk of nations,
At the breast of kings you will nurse;
And you will certainly know that I, Jehovah, am
your Savior,
And the Powerful One of Jacob is your
Repurchaser.

¹⁷ Instead of the copper I will bring in gold,
And instead of the iron I will bring in silver,
Instead of the wood, copper,
And instead of the stones, iron;
And I will appoint peace as your overseers
And righteousness as your task assigners.

¹⁸ No more will violence be heard in your land
Or destruction and ruin within your boundaries.
And you will call your walls Salvation and your
gates Praise.

¹⁹ For you the sun will no longer be a light by day,

Nor will the shining of the moon give you light,
For Jehovah will become to you an eternal light,
And your God will be your beauty.

²⁰ No more will your sun set,
Nor will your moon wane,
For Jehovah will become for you an eternal light,
And the days of your mourning will have ended.

²¹ And all your people will be righteous;
They will possess the land forever.
They are the sprout that I planted,
The work of my hands, for me to be beautified.

²² The little one will become a thousand
And the small one a mighty nation.
I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own
time.”

61 The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon
me,
Because Jehovah anointed me to declare good
news to the meek.
He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And the wide opening of the eyes to the
prisoners,

² To proclaim the year of Jehovah's goodwill
And the day of vengeance of our God,

To comfort all who mourn,

³ To provide for those mourning over Zion,
To give them a headdress instead of ashes,
The oil of exultation instead of mourning,
The garment of praise instead of a despondent
spirit.

And they will be called big trees of
righteousness,

The planting of Jehovah, in order to glorify him.

⁴ They will rebuild the ancient ruins;
They will raise up the desolated places of the
past,
And they will restore the devastated cities,
The places that lay desolate for generation after
generation.

⁵ “Strangers will stand and shepherd your flocks,
And foreigners will be your farmers and your
vinedressers.

⁶ As for you, you will be called the priests of
Jehovah;
They will call you the ministers of our God.
You will eat the resources of the nations,
And about their glory you will boast.

⁷ Instead of shame you will have a double portion,

And instead of humiliation they will shout joyfully
over their share.

Yes, they will possess a double portion in their
land.

Everlasting rejoicing will be theirs.

⁸ For I, Jehovah, love justice;
I hate robbery and unrighteousness.
I will faithfully give them their wages,
And I will make an everlasting covenant with
them.

⁹ Their offspring will be known among the nations
And their descendants among the peoples.
All who see them will recognize them,
That they are the offspring whom Jehovah has
blessed.”

¹⁰ I will greatly exult in Jehovah.
My whole being will rejoice in my God.
For he has clothed me with the garments of
salvation;
He has wrapped me with the robe of
righteousness,
Just like a bridegroom who wears a turban like
that of a priest,
And like a bride who adorns herself with her
ornaments.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its sprouts
And as the garden makes what is sown in it
sprout,
So will the Sovereign Lord Jehovah
Cause righteousness and praise to sprout before
all the nations.

62 For the sake of Zion I will not keep silent,
And for the sake of Jerusalem I will not keep still
Until her righteousness shines like a bright light
And her salvation burns like a torch.

² “The nations will see your righteousness, O
woman,
And all kings your glory.
And you will be called by a new name,
Which Jehovah’s own mouth will designate.

³ You will become a crown of beauty in the hand of
Jehovah,
A royal turban in the palm of your God.

⁴ No more will you be called an abandoned woman,
And your land will no longer be called desolate.
But you will be called My Delight Is in Her,
And your land will be called the Married One.
For Jehovah will take delight in you,
And your land will be as one married.

⁵ For just as a young man marries a virgin,

Your sons will marry you.

With the rejoicing of a bridegroom over a bride,
Your God will rejoice over you.

⁶ Upon your walls, O Jerusalem, I have
commissioned watchmen.

Continuously, all day long and all night long, they
should not be silent.

You who make mention of Jehovah,
Do not rest,

⁷ And do not give him any rest until he firmly
establishes Jerusalem,

Yes, until he makes her the praise of the earth.”

⁸ Jehovah has sworn an oath with his right hand,
with his strong arm:

“I will no longer give your grain as food to your
enemies,

Nor will foreigners drink your new wine, for which
you have toiled.

⁹ But those gathering it will eat it and they will praise
Jehovah;

And those collecting it will drink it in my holy
courtyards.”

¹⁰ Pass through, pass through the gates.

Clear the way for the people.

Build up, build up the highway.

Rid it of stones.

Raise up a signal for the peoples.

¹¹ Look! Jehovah has proclaimed to the ends of the earth:

“Say to the daughter of Zion,

‘Look! Your salvation is coming.

Look! His reward is with him,

And the wage he pays is before him.”

¹² They will be called the holy people, those repurchased by Jehovah,

And you will be called Sought After, a City Not Abandoned.

- Song 57 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Proclaim the Year of Jehovah’s Goodwill”:** (10 min.)

Isa 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill” (*ip-2* 322 ¶4)

Isa 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work (*ip-2* 326-327 ¶13-15)

Isa 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time (*w12* 12/15 25 ¶5-6)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Isa 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days? (*w15* 7/15 9-10 ¶14-17)

Isa 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”? (*w07* 1/15 11 ¶5)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Isa 62:1-12

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 16 ¶19—If available, have a mother study with her minor daughter.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 66
- **Use Videos in Your Ministry:** (6 min.) Talk. Play the video *What Is God’s Kingdom?* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY) Encourage all to use the video in connection with the literature offer for March and April on an initial call or on a return visit.
- **“Make Wise Use of Bible Literature”:** (9 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Distributing Bible Literature in Congo* (video category ACTIVITIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 8 ¶14-18, box on p. 85, review box on p. 86
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 96 and Prayer

Make Wise Use of Bible Literature

Jesus taught: “You received free, give free.” (Mt 10:8) We adhere to that clear direction by not charging people for a copy of the Bible or our Bible-based literature. (2Co 2:17) Nevertheless, these publications contain precious truths from God’s Word. Great effort and expense are involved in printing literature and shipping it to congregations around the world. Therefore, we should take only what we need.

Use discernment when giving literature to others, even at public witnessing locations. (Mt 7:6) Instead of simply handing out literature to passersby, make an effort to converse with them to determine their interest. Can you answer yes to at least one of the questions in the accompanying box? If you are unable to determine someone’s interest, it is best to give him a tract. Of course, if he asks for a magazine or another publication, we will gladly give him a copy.—Pr 3:27, 28.



DOES THE PERSON . . .

- listen attentively when we speak?
- participate in the conversation?
- agree to read the literature?
- offer a contribution?
- respond appreciatively to what he hears from God’s Word?

February 20-26

Treasures From God's Word

Isaiah 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill”

Reference: ip-2 322 **paragraph 4.**

Isaiah writes: “The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners.” (Isaiah 61:1) Who is the one commissioned to tell good news?

Likely, in the first instance it is Isaiah, who is inspired by God to record good news for the captives in Babylon.

However, Jesus pointed to the most important fulfillment when he applied Isaiah’s words to himself. (Luke 4:16-21)

Yes, Jesus was sent forth to tell good news to the meek, and to this end he was anointed with holy spirit at his baptism.—

Matthew 3:16, 17.

Isaiah 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work

Reference: ip-2 326-327 **paragraphs 13-15.**

13 From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, God planted similar “big

trees of righteousness”—courageous anointed Christians—in the spiritual estate of his new nation, “the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16) Over the centuries, these “trees” have come to number 144,000, producing righteous fruitage to beautify, or bring glory to, Jehovah God. (Revelation 14:3) The final ones of these stately “trees” have flourished in the years since 1919, when Jehovah revived the remaining ones of the Israel of God from their temporary state of inactivity. By supplying them with an abundant supply of spiritual waters, Jehovah has produced a virtual forest of righteous, fruit-bearing trees.—Isaiah 27:6.

14 Highlighting the work of these “trees,” Isaiah continues: “They must rebuild the long-standing devastated places; they will raise up even the desolated places of former times, and they will certainly make anew the devastated cities, the places desolate for generation after generation.” (Isaiah 61:4) Under the decree of King Cyrus of Persia, faithful Jews who returned from Babylon rebuilt Jerusalem and its temple, which had been left in a devastated condition for so long. Restoration projects would also mark the years following 33 C.E. and 1919.

15 In 33 C.E., Jesus’ disciples were greatly saddened by his arrest, trial, and death. (Matthew 26:31) However, their outlook changed when he appeared to them after his resurrection. And once holy spirit was poured out on them, they got busy with the work of preaching the good news,

“both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) Thus they began to restore pure worship. In a similar way, from 1919 onward Jesus Christ caused the remnant of his anointed brothers to rebuild “places desolate for generation after generation.” For centuries the clergy of Christendom had failed to impart the knowledge of Jehovah, replacing it with man-made traditions and unscriptural doctrines. The anointed Christians cleaned out of their congregations practices that were tainted by false religion so that the restoration of true worship could go forward. And they began what would prove to be the greatest witnessing campaign that the world has ever known.—Mark 13:10.

Isaiah 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time

Reference: *w12* 12/15 25 **paragraphs 5-6.**

5 On the other hand, someone may point to chapter 61 of the book of Isaiah, which contains a prophecy finding fulfillment in the Christian congregation. Verse 6 of that chapter mentions those who will serve as “priests of Jehovah.” Verse 5, though, mentions “foreigners” who would cooperate with and work with those “priests.” How is this to be understood?

6 We understand those “priests of Jehovah” to be anointed Christians who have a share “in the first resurrection” and who “will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years.” (**Revelation 20:6**) In addition, there are many loyal Christians who have an earthly hope. These, though working with and associating closely with those who will serve in heaven, are foreigners, figuratively speaking. They happily support and work along with “the priests of Jehovah,” serving as their “farmers” and “vinedressers,” as it were. Yes, they help cultivate spiritual fruitage to God’s glory, nurturing and harvesting people. Indeed, both the anointed and the “other sheep” find and then lovingly shepherd honest individuals who are desirous of serving God forever.—John 10:16.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Isaiah 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days?

Reference: *w15* 7/15 9-10 **paragraphs 14-17**.

14 Over the years, the older ones in our midst have personally experienced some of the organizational adjustments that have increased the beauty of the earthly part of Jehovah’s organization. They remember when congregations had a congregation servant rather than a body of elders, when countries had a branch servant rather than a

Branch Committee, and when direction was given by the president of the Watch Tower Society rather than by a clearly established Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although all these devoted brothers were supported by faithful assistants, one person was basically responsible for making decisions in the congregations, at the branch offices, and at world headquarters. During the 1970's, adjustments were made to put the responsibility for oversight on groups of elders rather than on individuals.

15 Have these adjustments proved beneficial? Yes, and logically so. Why? Because the adjustments were based on increased knowledge about the pattern set in the Scriptures. Instead of having the influence of one individual dominate, the composite good qualities of *all* the "gifts in men" whom Jehovah has provided benefit the organization.—**Ephesians 4:8; Proverbs 24:6.**

16 Think, too, of more recent adjustments, such as the changes in appearance, contents, and methods of distribution of our publications. What a pleasure it is to offer practical, appealing, and attractive literature in the ministry! And when we use the latest technology to spread the truth, such as by means of the jw.org website, we reflect Jehovah's interest in providing people everywhere with the guidance most of them lack but so desperately need.

17 Not to be overlooked is the wisdom behind the

adjustment that allowed us to have a Family Worship evening or more time for personal study. We also appreciate advances made in assembly and convention programs. We often say that they get better every year! And we certainly rejoice over the increased training being provided by our many theocratic schools. In all these adjustments, Jehovah's hand is clearly seen. He progressively enhances the beauty of his organization and of the spiritual paradise that we enjoy even now!

Isaiah 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”?

Reference: w07 1/15 11 **paragraph 5**.

This is the new covenant that Jehovah has concluded with anointed Christians. The “offspring” are the “other sheep”—the millions who respond to their message.—John 10:16.

- Song 57 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Proclaim the Year of Jehovah’s Goodwill”:** (10 min.)

Isa 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill” (*ip-2* 322 ¶4)

Isa 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work (*ip-2* 326-327 ¶13-15)

Isa 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time (*w12* 12/15 25 ¶5-6)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Isa 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days? (*w15* 7/15 9-10 ¶14-17)

Isa 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”? (*w07* 1/15 11 ¶5)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Isa 62:1-12

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 16 ¶19—If available, have a mother study with her minor daughter.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 66
- **Use Videos in Your Ministry:** (6 min.) Talk. Play the video *What Is God’s Kingdom?* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY) Encourage all to use the video in connection with the literature offer for March and April on an initial call or on a return visit.
- **“Make Wise Use of Bible Literature”:** (9 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Distributing Bible Literature in Congo* (video category ACTIVITIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 8 ¶14-18, box on p. 85, review box on p. 86
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 96 and Prayer

Make Wise Use of Bible Literature

Jesus taught: “You received free, give free.” (Mt 10:8) We adhere to that clear direction by not charging people for a copy of the Bible or our Bible-based literature. (2Co 2:17) Nevertheless, these publications contain precious truths from God’s Word. Great effort and expense are involved in printing literature and shipping it to congregations around the world. Therefore, we should take only what we need.

Use discernment when giving literature to others, even at public witnessing locations. (Mt 7:6) Instead of simply handing out literature to passersby, make an effort to converse with them to determine their interest. Can you answer yes to at least one of the questions in the accompanying box? If you are unable to determine someone’s interest, it is best to give him a tract. Of course, if he asks for a magazine or another publication, we will gladly give him a copy.—Pr 3:27, 28.



DOES THE PERSON . . .

- listen attentively when we speak?
- participate in the conversation?
- agree to read the literature?
- offer a contribution?
- respond appreciatively to what he hears from God’s Word?



TEEN DEPRESSION

Why? What can help?



3 COVER SUBJECT TEEN DEPRESSION —Why? What Can Help?

According to reports, the number of teens being diagnosed with depression is increasing at an alarming rate.

What can be done about the problem?

This issue of “Awake!” discusses some suggestions for teens who suffer from depression and for their parents as well, to help them offer their children comfort and support.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

8 Your Smile—A Gift to Share

10 THE BIBLE'S VIEWPOINT
Abortion

12 “We Were Touched to See Such Love”

14 HELP FOR THE FAMILY
How to Show Appreciation

16 WAS IT DESIGNED?
The Compound Heat Shield
of the Saharan Silver Ant



MORE ONLINE

ARTICLES

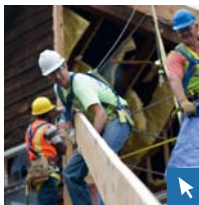


YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

How Can I Deal With Anxiety?

The tips in this article can help you make anxiety work for you rather than against you.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS, or use the Search function)



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do Jehovah's Witnesses Assist With Disaster Relief?

Learn how Jehovah's Witnesses provide practical assistance to fellow believers and others.

(Look under ABOUT US > FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

¹⁹ How can you draw close to God? To begin with, continue doing what you are doing now—learning about God. Jesus said: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3) Yes, the Bible teaches that learning about Jehovah and Jesus leads to “everlasting life”! As already noted, “God is love.” (1 John 4:16) Jehovah also has many other beautiful and appealing qualities. For example, the Bible says that Jehovah is “a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth.” (Exodus 34:6) He is “good and ready to forgive.” (Psalm 86:5) God is patient. (2 Peter 3:9) He is loyal. (Revelation 15:4) As you read more in the Bible, you will see how Jehovah has shown that he has these and many other appealing qualities.

²⁰ True, you cannot see God because he is an invisible spirit. (John 1:18; 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17) By

19. (a) How can we begin to draw close to God, and with what benefit? (b) What qualities of God are most appealing to you?

20-22. (a) Does our inability to see God prevent us from getting close to him? Explain. (b) What may some well-meaning people urge you to do, but what should you do?

- Song 57 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Proclaim the Year of Jehovah’s Goodwill”:** (10 min.)
Isa 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill” (*ip-2* 322 ¶4)
Isa 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work (*ip-2* 326-327 ¶13-15)
Isa 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time (*w12* 12/15 25 ¶5-6)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days? (*w15* 7/15 9-10 ¶14-17)

Isa 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”? (*w07* 1/15 11 ¶5)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Isa 62:1-12

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 16 ¶19—If available, have a mother study with her minor daughter.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 66
- **Use Videos in Your Ministry:** (6 min.) Talk. Play the video *What Is God’s Kingdom?* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY) Encourage all to use the video in connection with the literature offer for March and April on an initial call or on a return visit.
- **“Make Wise Use of Bible Literature”:** (9 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Distributing Bible Literature in Congo* (video category ACTIVITIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 8 ¶14-18, box on p. 85, review box on p. 86
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 96 and Prayer

Make Wise Use of Bible Literature

Jesus taught: “You received free, give free.” (Mt 10:8) We adhere to that clear direction by not charging people for a copy of the Bible or our Bible-based literature. (2Co 2:17) Nevertheless, these publications contain precious truths from God’s Word. Great effort and expense are involved in printing literature and shipping it to congregations around the world. Therefore, we should take only what we need.

Use discernment when giving literature to others, even at public witnessing locations. (Mt 7:6) Instead of simply handing out literature to passersby, make an effort to converse with them to determine their interest. Can you answer yes to at least one of the questions in the accompanying box? If you are unable to determine someone’s interest, it is best to give him a tract. Of course, if he asks for a magazine or another publication, we will gladly give him a copy.—Pr 3:27, 28.



DOES THE PERSON . . .

- listen attentively when we speak?
- participate in the conversation?
- agree to read the literature?
- offer a contribution?
- respond appreciatively to what he hears from God’s Word?

Declare the Good News

(Revelation 14:6, 7)

1. The fullness of the Kingdom truth was long concealed.
The truth about the promised King is now revealed.
Jehovah in his mercy and his love of right
Considered man's condition in his sinful plight.
He formed his purpose that his Son should rule the earth;
In God's due time the Kingdom rule
would be brought to birth.
And that he might arrange to bring his Son a bride,
A little flock of chosen ones is glorified.
2. The good news that we now declare was long foreknown.
Jehovah wills that in this time it would be shown.
Along with us, his angels take delight to share,
To aid us as the Kingdom truth we now declare.
We have the duty and the honor in these days
To sanctify his name
and give him his rightful praise.
We're honored as his Witnesses that name to bear
With everlasting good news that we now declare.

- Song 57 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Proclaim the Year of Jehovah’s Goodwill”:** (10 min.)
Isa 61:1, 2—Jesus was anointed “to proclaim the year of Jehovah’s goodwill” (*ip-2* 322 ¶4)
Isa 61:3, 4—Jehovah provides “big trees of righteousness” to support his work (*ip-2* 326-327 ¶13-15)
Isa 61:5, 6—“Foreigners” cooperate with “the priests of Jehovah” in the greatest witnessing campaign of all time (*w12* 12/15 25 ¶5-6)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Isa 60:17—What are some ways that Jehovah has fulfilled this promise in the last days? (*w15* 7/15 9-10 ¶14-17)

Isa 61:8, 9—What is the “everlasting covenant,” and who are the “offspring”? (*w07* 1/15 11 ¶5)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Isa 62:1-12

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *g17.1* cover
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bh* 16 ¶19—If available, have a mother study with her minor daughter.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 66
- **Use Videos in Your Ministry:** (6 min.) Talk. Play the video *What Is God’s Kingdom?* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY) Encourage all to use the video in connection with the literature offer for March and April on an initial call or on a return visit.
- **“Make Wise Use of Bible Literature”:** (9 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Distributing Bible Literature in Congo* (video category ACTIVITIES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 8 ¶14-18, box on p. 85, review box on p. 86
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 96 and Prayer

Make Wise Use of Bible Literature

Jesus taught: “You received free, give free.” (Mt 10:8) We adhere to that clear direction by not charging people for a copy of the Bible or our Bible-based literature. (2Co 2:17) Nevertheless, these publications contain precious truths from God’s Word. Great effort and expense are involved in printing literature and shipping it to congregations around the world. Therefore, we should take only what we need.

Use discernment when giving literature to others, even at public witnessing locations. (Mt 7:6) Instead of simply handing out literature to passersby, make an effort to converse with them to determine their interest. Can you answer yes to at least one of the questions in the accompanying box? If you are unable to determine someone’s interest, it is best to give him a tract. Of course, if he asks for a magazine or another publication, we will gladly give him a copy.—Pr 3:27, 28.



DOES THE PERSON . . .

- listen attentively when we speak?
- participate in the conversation?
- agree to read the literature?
- offer a contribution?
- respond appreciatively to what he hears from God’s Word?

earth! As remarkable as those achievements are, they should not surprise us. These magazines contain the message that Jesus said would be preached in all the inhabited earth.—Matt. 24:14.

14 The Bible. In 1896, Brother Russell and his associates changed the name of the corporation they used to publish literature so that it included the word Bible; it became known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society. That change was appropriate because the Bible has always been the primary tool for spreading the good news about the Kingdom. (Luke 24:27) In harmony with the legal corporation's name, God's servants have zealously promoted the distribution and reading of the Bible. For example, in 1926, we printed on our own presses *The Emphatic Diaglott*, a translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures produced by Benjamin Wilson. Beginning in 1942, we printed and distributed some 700,000 copies of the entire *King James Version*. Just two years later, we began printing the *American Standard Version*, which uses Jehovah's name in 6,823 places. By 1950, we had distributed over 250,000 copies.

14. What have we zealously promoted, and why?

15 The year 1950 saw the release of the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. The com-

15, 16. (a) What do you appreciate about the *New World Translation*? (Discuss the box “Speeding Up Bible Translation.”) (b) How can you allow Jehovah to touch your heart?

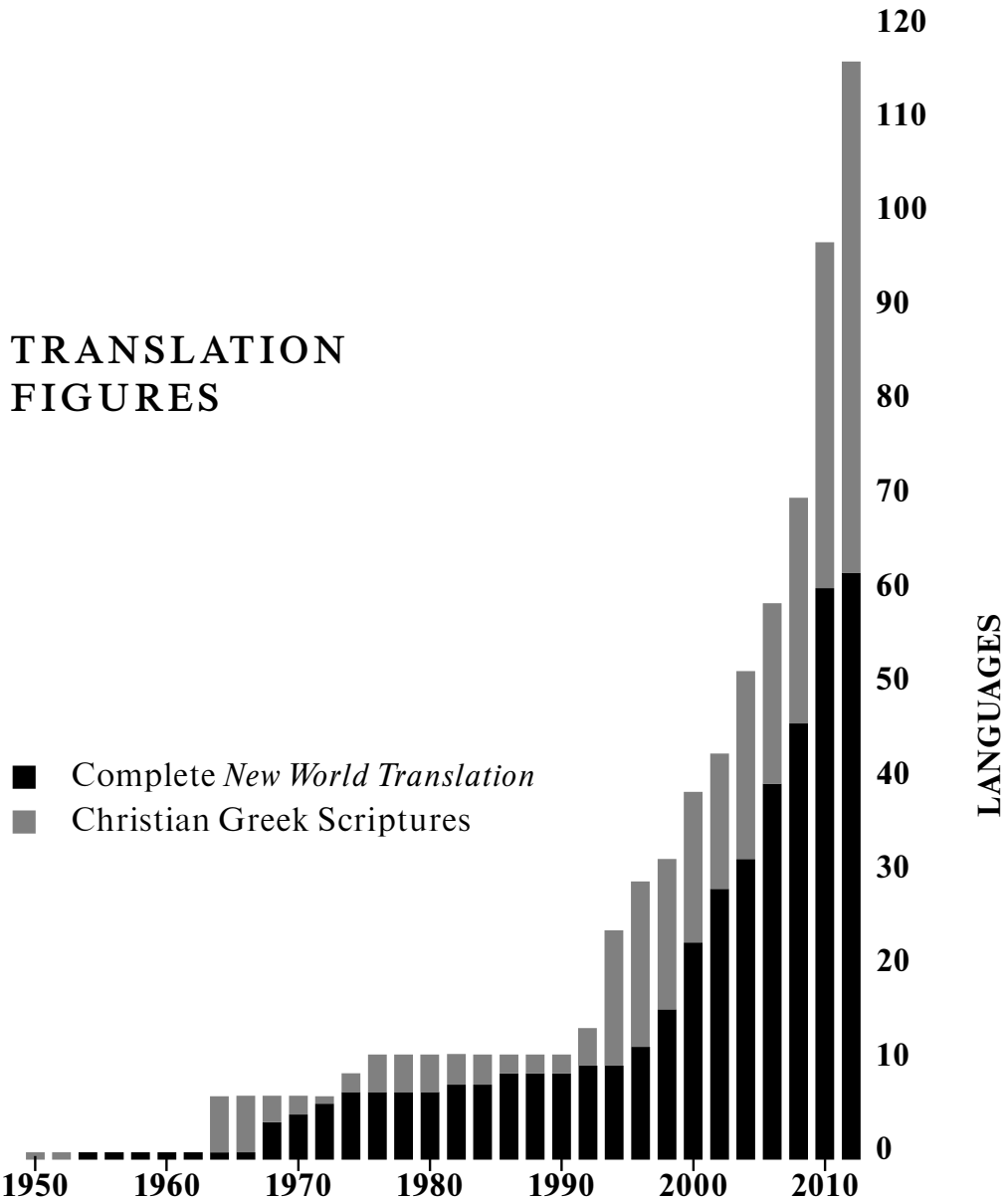
SPEEDING UP BIBLE TRANSLATION

BY 1989, the *New World Translation* had been published, in whole or in part, in 11 languages. To help fill the growing need for the *New World Translation*, the Writing Committee of the Governing Body arranged for training courses to help translators approach the work systematically and efficiently. The MEPS Programming department developed a computer program called the Bible Translation System.*^[4] This program does not translate the text, but it does help translators to organize their work and easily access reference material. Devoted translators, trainers, and support personnel have worked hard to help produce Bibles in language after language.

As a result of those efforts, by 2004 the *New World Translation* was available in over 50 languages! Just nine years later, in 2013, there were 121 language editions of the *New World Translation* available, and the number continues to grow.

***[4]** The Bible Translation System is now part of a program called Watchtower Translation System, which is used worldwide by thousands of translators.

plete *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* was released in one volume in 1961. This translation honors Jehovah by restoring his name to the locations where it appeared in the original Hebrew text. The



divine name also appears 237 times in the main text of the Christian Greek Scriptures. To ensure that it is as accurate and readable as possible, the *New World Translation* has been revised several times, most recently in 2013. As of 2013, more than 201 million copies of the *New World Translation* have been published in whole or in part in 121 languages.

¹⁶ How have some responded to reading the *New World Translation* in their own language? A Nepali man said: “For many, the old Nepalese translation that we had was difficult to understand, since it used classical language. But now we can understand the Bible so much better, as it uses the language of everyday life.” When a woman in the Central African Republic began reading the Sango translation, she started to cry and said, “This is the language of my heart.” Like that woman, each of us can allow Jehovah to touch our heart by reading his Word every day.—Ps. 1:2; Matt. 22:36, 37.

Grateful for the Tools and Training

¹⁷ Do you appreciate the tools and progressive

17. How can you show that you appreciate the tools and training that you receive, and what will be the result if you do so?

training that the King Jesus Christ has given us? Do you make time to read the literature God's organization produces, and do you use it to help others? If so, you will relate to the comments of Sister Opal Betler, who was baptized on October 4, 1914. Opal said: "Through the years, my husband [Edward] and I used the phonograph and the testimony cards. We witnessed from house to house with books, booklets, and magazines. We went on campaigns and marches and distributed printed proclamations. Later we were trained to make back-calls [now referred to as return visits] and hold Bible studies in the homes of interested persons. It has been a busy and happy life." Jesus promised that his subjects would be busy sowing, reaping, and rejoicing together. Millions like Opal can testify to the truthfulness of that promise. —**Read John 4:35, 36.**

¹⁸ Many who are not yet servants of the King might consider God's people to be "uneducated and ordinary." (Acts 4:13) But just think! The King has caused his ordinary people to become a publishing powerhouse, producing some of the most widely

18. What privilege do we have?

translated and distributed publications in history! More important, he has trained and motivated us to use these tools to spread the good news to people of all nations. What a privilege we have to work with Christ in planting seeds of truth and harvesting disciples!

How Real Is the Kingdom to You?

- How does our translation work prove that we have the King's backing?
- What facts about our publications prove to you that the Kingdom is real?
- What can you do to show appreciation for the tools that the King provides?

96 *God's Own Book—A Treasure*

(Proverbs 2:1)

1. There is a book that by its many pages,
 Brings peace and joy and hope to humankind.
Its wondrous thoughts are charged with such great power;
 It brings life to the “dead,” sight to the “blind.”
That precious book is God's own Holy Bible.
 Its words were penned by men whom God inspired,
By men who truly loved their God Jehovah,
 And by his holy spirit they were fired.
2. They wrote a record true of God's creations,
 How by his might this universe appeared.
They also told how man at first was sinless
 But how his Paradise then disappeared.
They further told about a certain angel
 Who challenged God and spurned his sov'reignty.
That challenge led to sin and man's great sorrow,
 But soon will come Jehovah's victory.
3. The time has come with reason for rejoicing:
 Jehovah rules by his anointed King.
So now we preach the good news of the Kingdom
 And share the hope of blessings it will bring.
Within his book are found these cheerful tidings;
 A sacred banquet feast on which to feed.
It offers peace beyond all human thinking;
 This Living Treasure beckons all to read.

(See also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.)

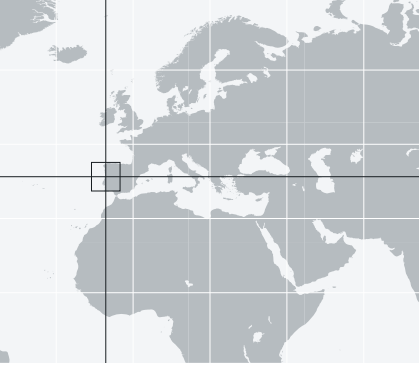
DECEMBER 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 26, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
PORTUGAL

Many tourists come to the city of Aveiro in northern Portugal to see the interesting salt evaporation ponds. Local Witnesses make sure to offer the good news to those who sell the locally produced salt

PUBLISHERS
48,840

BIBLE STUDIES
28,687

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
91,472

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 LIFE STORY
Becoming “All Things
to People of All Sorts”

8 WEEK OF **JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 5**
By Undeserved Kindness
You Were Set Free

13 WEEK OF **FEBRUARY 6-12**
‘Setting Your Mind on the Spirit
Means Life and Peace’

In Romans chapters 6 and 8, we find vital information related to our life as Christians. Studying that material can help us to benefit from God’s undeserved kindness and to maintain our focus on what will result in our everlasting good.

18 DO YOU REMEMBER?

19 WEEK OF **FEBRUARY 13-19**
Throw All Your Anxiety on Jehovah

24 WEEK OF **FEBRUARY 20-26**
Jehovah Rewards Those
Who Earnestly Seek Him

The first of these two articles discusses how we can throw all our anxiety on God. The second article explains how we can strengthen our faith by being firmly convinced that God rewards those who earnestly seek him. It also shows how the hope of a reward benefits us.

29 A Mild Temper—The Way of Wisdom

32 SUBJECT INDEX
FOR *THE WATCHTOWER* 2016

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.


THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 18 December 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.

December 2016
Vol. 137, No. 18 ENGLISH

136 “A Perfect Wage” From Jehovah

(Ruth 2:12)

1. Jehovah is faithful and fully aware
Of all those who serve him whole-souled.
He knows there are times their devotion and zeal
Result in their loss as foretold.
If you have left houses or fam'ly or friends,
Be sure that our God knows the sum.
He makes it up now with our dear brotherhood
And life in the new world to come.

(CHORUS)

*May Jehovah reward what you have done.
May he provide a perfect wage for you.
May you find refuge beneath his wings.
Jehovah is faithful; Jehovah is true.*

2. At times we may feel that our lot in this life
Has burdened us more than our share.
And sometimes it seems that the cares of the day
Are more than we're able to bear.
The God of all comfort takes note of your need;
You know he's the Hearer of prayer.
His Word and his spirit and true, loving friends
Will bring to you comfort and care.

(Chorus)

Jehovah Rewards Those Who Earnestly Seek Him

“Whoever approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.”—HEB. 11:6.

SONGS: 136, 139

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How can we be sure that Jehovah rewards his servants?

How did Jehovah bless his servants in the past?

What rewards do we receive from Jehovah?

WE LOVE Jehovah “because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) As one expression of his tender love, Jehovah has taken the initiative to bless his loyal servants. The more we love our God, the stronger our faith becomes, not only that he exists, but that he unfailingly rewards those whom he loves.—Read Hebrews 11:6.

1, 2. (a) How are love and faith connected? (b) What questions will we consider?



Jehovah Rewards Those Who Earnestly Seek Him

“Whoever approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.”—HEB. 11:6.

Jesus showed that his disciples would be rewarded for their sacrifices
(See paragraph 5)



2 Being a rewarder is an integral part of who Jehovah is and what he does. Our faith is not complete unless we are firmly convinced that God will reward those who earnestly seek him, for “faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for.” (Heb. 11:1) Yes, faith involves the certain expectation of God’s promised blessings. How, though, does the hope of a reward benefit us? How has Jehovah rewarded his servants, both in the past and in the present? Let us see.

JEHOVAH PROMISES TO BLESS HIS SERVANTS

3 Jehovah God has obligated himself to reward his faithful servants, so he invites us to reach out for his blessing. We read: “‘Test me out, please, . . .’ Jehovah of armies says, ‘to see whether I will not open to you the floodgates of the heavens and pour out on you a blessing until there is nothing

3. What promise is found at Malachi 3:10?

lacking.’” (Mal. 3:10) We show our deep appreciation and gratitude when we accept Jehovah’s generous offer.

4 Jesus assured his disciples that if they would put the Kingdom first, God would support them. (Read Matthew 6:33.) The certainty of Jesus’ promise was based on Jehovah’s perfect record of trustworthiness. Jesus knew that God’s promises never fail. (Isa. 55:11) We, in turn, can be certain that if we manifest heartfelt faith in Jehovah, he will keep his promise: “I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.” (Heb. 13:5) We can link that inspired statement with what Jesus said about seeking first the Kingdom and God’s righteousness.

5 The apostle Peter once asked Jesus: “We have left all things and followed you; what, then,

4. Why can we have confidence in Jesus’ assurance recorded at Matthew 6:33?

5. Why is Jesus’ reply to Peter faith-strengthening?

will there be for us?” (Matt. 19:27) Instead of rebuking Peter for asking that question, Jesus told his disciples that they would be rewarded for their sacrifices. The faithful apostles and others will rule with him in heaven. But even now there are rewards. Jesus said: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:29) His disciples would gain blessings far in excess of any personal sacrifices they might make. Are not spiritual fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children much more valuable than anything we have renounced or given up for the sake of the Kingdom?

“AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL”

6 By promising his worshippers a reward, Jehovah helps to sustain them during tests of in-

6. Why does Jehovah promise his worshippers a reward?

tegrity. Besides enjoying rich spiritual blessings now, Jehovah God's faithful servants eagerly look forward to even greater blessings in the future. (1 Tim. 4:8) Yes, our being firmly convinced that Jehovah "becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him" will help us to stand firm in the faith.—Heb. 11:6.

7 In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you." (Matt. 5:12) Aside from those who will receive a reward in heaven, the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth is indeed reason to "rejoice and be overjoyed." (Ps. 37:11; Luke 18:30) Whether heavenly or earthly, our hope can serve as "an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." (Heb. 6:17-20) Just as an anchor keeps a ship steady during a storm, the sure hope of a reward can help us

7. How does hope serve as an anchor?

to maintain our emotional, mental, and spiritual stability. It can help us to have the strength to endure hardships.

8 Our Bible-based hope has the power to reduce present anxiety. God’s promises act like spiritual balm that soothes our anxious heart. How comforting it is for us to ‘throw our burden on Jehovah,’ knowing that ‘he will sustain us’! (Ps. 55:22) We can have full confidence that God can do “more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” (Eph. 3:20) Imagine that—not just abundantly and not superabundantly but “more than superabundantly”!

9 To receive the reward, we need to exercise full faith in Jehovah and be obedient to his directions. Moses told the nation of Israel: “Jehovah will surely bless you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, but

8. How does hope have the power to reduce anxiety?

9. How sure can we be of Jehovah’s blessing?

only if you strictly obey the voice of Jehovah your God and carefully observe all this commandment that I am giving you today. For Jehovah your God will bless you just as he has promised you.” (Deut. 15:4-6) Do you have full confidence that Jehovah will bless you if you continue to serve him faithfully? You certainly have good reason for such confidence.

JEHOVAH WAS THEIR REWARDER

10 The Bible was recorded for our benefit. It contains many accounts of how God did indeed reward faithful servants. (Rom. 15:4) Joseph was an outstanding example. As a result of a conspiracy by his brothers and the later treachery of his master’s wife, he found himself in an Egyptian prison. Was he cut off from his God? Not at all! “Jehovah continued with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him . . . Jehovah was with Joseph

10, 11. How did Jehovah reward Joseph?

and Jehovah made whatever he did successful.” (Gen. 39:21-23) Joseph, through those trialsome times, waited patiently on his God.

11 Years later, Pharaoh released Joseph from prison and made this humble slave second ruler in Egypt. (Gen. 41:1, 37-43) When his wife bore him two sons, “Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, for he said, ‘God has made me forget all my trouble and all the house of my father.’ And he named the second one Ephraim, for he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.’” (Gen. 41:51, 52) Because Joseph remained loyal to God, he was rewarded with blessings that resulted in the preservation of life both for the Israelites and for the Egyptians. The point is, Joseph recognized that it was Jehovah who had rewarded him and blessed him.—Gen. 45:5-9.

12 Jesus Christ likewise remained obedient to God through various tests of his faith, and he was

12. How did Jesus remain faithful when under trial?

rewarded. What helped him to cope? God’s Word explains: “For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame.” (Heb. 12:2) Jesus certainly found joy in being able to sanctify God’s name. Furthermore, he was rewarded with his Father’s approval and many wonderful privileges. The Bible reports that he “has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” And elsewhere we read: “God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name.”—Phil. 2:9.

JEHOVAH DOES NOT FORGET WHAT WE DO

13 We can be sure that Jehovah appreciates every effort that we make to serve him. He understands any insecurities or self-doubts that we may have. He shows us compassion if financial burdens weigh us down or our health or emotions tend to

13, 14. How does Jehovah feel about what we do for him?

limit our sacred service. And we can have full confidence in Jehovah's tender regard for what his servants do to stay faithful to him.—Read Hebrews 6:10, 11.

14 Bear in mind, too, that we can approach the “Hearer of prayer” with the confidence that he will give attention to our concerns. (Ps. 65:2) “The Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort” will unstintingly give us the emotional and spiritual support that we need, perhaps doing so by means of our fellow worshippers. (2 Cor. 1:3) It touches Jehovah's heart when we show compassion toward others. “The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does.” (Prov. 19:17; Matt. 6:3, 4) Hence, when we unselfishly help those who are in difficulty, Jehovah views our good deed as a loan made to Him. And he promises to reward that kindness.

REWARDS NOW AND FOREVER

15 Spirit-anointed Christians are sustained by the prospect of receiving “the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give . . . as a reward in that day.” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) You will, however, not be shortchanged if God has given you a different prospect. Millions of Jesus’ “other sheep” eagerly anticipate the future reward of everlasting life on a paradise earth. There “they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—John 10:16; Ps. 37:11.

16 At times, we may feel that we are accomplishing little, or we might wonder whether Jehovah is pleased with our efforts. We may even doubt that we qualify to receive any kind of reward. Let us never forget, though, that “God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.” (Read **1 John 3:19**,

15. What rewards do you look forward to? (See opening picture of the standard edition.)

16. What comfort do we find at **1 John 3:19, 20**?

20.) He rewards every expression of sacred service that springs from a heart motivated by faith and love, no matter how insignificant it might seem to the giver of the sacrifice.—Mark 12:41-44.

17 Even in these dark last days of Satan's wicked system of things, Jehovah is blessing his people. He makes sure that true worshippers flourish in their spiritual estate, which is unprecedented in its spiritual abundance. (Isa. 54:13) As Jesus promised, Jehovah rewards us *now* by letting us be part of a loving family of spiritual brothers and sisters, a family that is international in scope. (Mark 10:29, 30) Furthermore, those who earnestly seek God are rewarded with the incomparable blessings of peace of mind, contentment, and happiness.—Phil. 4:4-7.

18 Jehovah's servants around the world can tes-

17. What are some of the rewards that we enjoy now?

18, 19. How do Jehovah's servants feel about the rewards they receive?

tify to the wonderful rewards they receive from him. For example, Bianca from Germany says: “I cannot thank Jehovah enough for helping me with my worries and for being at my side each day. The world out there is chaotic and bleak. But as I work closely with Jehovah, I feel secure in his arms. Whenever I make personal sacrifices for him, he gives me back a hundredfold in blessings.”

19 Or consider 70-year-old Paula in Canada who is severely restricted by spina bifida. “Reduced mobility does not necessarily mean a reduced ministry,” she says. “I take advantage of different forms of service, such as telephone and informal witnessing. For my own encouragement, I keep a notebook with scriptures and thoughts from our publications that I can consult from time to time. I call it ‘My Survival Notebook.’ Discouragement is temporary if we focus on Jehovah’s promises. Jehovah is always

there to help us, regardless of our circumstances.” Your situation may be quite different from that of Bianca or of Paula. Yet, you can likely think of ways in which Jehovah has rewarded you and those around you. How good it is to reflect on how Jehovah is rewarding you at this time and how he will reward you in the future!

20 Never forget that your heartfelt prayers and freeness of speech with God “will be richly rewarded.” You can be certain that “after you have done the will of God, you [will] receive the fulfillment of the promise.” (Heb. 10:35, 36) So let us now continue to strengthen our faith and to work whole-souled as to Jehovah. We can do this, knowing that it is from Jehovah that we will receive the due reward.—Read Colossians 3:23, 24.

20. What can we look forward to if we continue to serve Jehovah whole-souled?

Visit www.jw.org, or
scan code 



w16.16.12-E-2
160808

139 *See Yourself When All Is New* (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. Just see yourself, just see me too;
 Just see us all in a world that is new.
Think how you'll feel, how it will be,
 To live in peace, to be truly free.
No evil one will then prevail;
 Rule by our God cannot ever fail.
The time will have come for a new earthly start,
 The song of our praises
 will pour out from our heart:

(CHORUS)

*"We thank you, our God, for all you have done.
All things are new by the rule of your Son.
The fullness of our heart overflows in our song;
All glory and honor and praise to you belong."*

2. Now see yourself, and see me too;
 And look ahead to a world that is new.
No sight we see, no sound we hear
 Will cause alarm or give rise to fear.
All has come true, just as he said;
 Now over mankind, his tent is spread.
He now will awaken those sleeping in death;
 Their voices will join ours with
 ev'ry grateful breath:

(Chorus)

(See also Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:17; John 5:28; 2 Pet. 3:13.)