

- Song 86 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Relief From Famine”:** (10 min.)  
Ge 47:13—A severe famine afflicted Egypt and Canaan (w87 5/1 15 ¶2)  
Ge 47:16, 19, 20—The Egyptians had to make sacrifices in order to preserve their lives  
Ge 47:23-25—Effort is required to benefit from the abundant spiritual food available today (kr 234-235 ¶11-12)
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What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

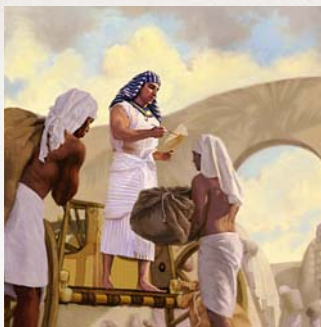
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GENESIS 46-47 | Relief From Famine

**47:13, 16, 19, 20, 23-25**

The world today suffers from spiritual famine. (Am 8:11) By means of Christ Jesus, Jehovah provides an abundance of nourishing spiritual food.

- Bible-based publications
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 **What sacrifices am I making to feed regularly at Jehovah’s table?**

## *We Must Be Taught*

(Isaiah 50:4; 54:13)

1. Come with rejoicing, and learn about Jehovah.  
“Come drink life’s water,” the spirit has said.  
Healthful instruction, God has provided.  
All those who hunger for truth will be fed.
2. Never forsaking our gathering together,  
We must be taught; we must learn what is right.  
Here with God’s spirit, here with our brothers,  
Here we are strengthened to walk in the light.
3. Lips that sing praise, how encouraging to hear them!  
Tongues of the taught ones, how sweet is their sound!  
Oh, may we always meet with God’s people!  
Oh, may we always among them be found!

## Genesis 46-47

**46** So Israel took all that he had and departed. When he arrived at Be'er-she'ba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. <sup>2</sup> Then God spoke to Israel in a vision by night and said: "Jacob, Jacob!" to which he said: "Here I am!" <sup>3</sup> He said: "I am the true God, the God of your father. Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for there I will make you into a great nation. <sup>4</sup> I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will also bring you back from there, and Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes."

<sup>5</sup> After that Jacob departed from Be'er-she'ba, and the sons of Israel transported Jacob their father and their children and their wives in the wagons that Phar'aoh had sent to transport him. <sup>6</sup> They took along their herds and their goods, which they had accumulated in the land of Ca'naan. And so they came into Egypt, Jacob and all his offspring with him. <sup>7</sup> He brought with him into Egypt his sons and his grandsons, his daughters and his granddaughters—all his offspring.

<sup>8</sup> Now these are the names of Israel's sons who came into Egypt, Jacob and his sons: Jacob's firstborn was Reu'ben.

<sup>9</sup> The sons of Reu'ben were Ha'noch, Pal'lu, Hez'ron, and Car'mi.

<sup>10</sup> The sons of Sim'e-on were Jem-u'el, Ja'min, O'had, Ja'chin, Zo'har, and Sha'ul the son of a Ca'naan-ite woman.

<sup>11</sup> The sons of Le'vi were Ger'shon, Ko'hath, and Me-rar'i.

<sup>12</sup> The sons of Judah were Er, O'nan, She'lah, Pe'rez, and Ze'rah. However, Er and O'nan died in the land of Ca'naan.

The sons of Pe'rez came to be Hez'ron and Ha'mul.

<sup>13</sup> The sons of Is'sa-char were To'la, Pu'vah, Iob, and Shim'ron.

<sup>14</sup> The sons of Zeb'u-lun were Se'red, E'lon, and Jah'le-el.

<sup>15</sup> These are the sons of Le'ah, whom she bore to Jacob in Pad'dan-a'ram, together with his daughter Di'nah. All his sons and his daughters numbered 33.

<sup>16</sup> The sons of Gad were Ziph'i-on, Hag'gi, Shu'ni, Ez'bon, E'ri, Ar-o'di, and A-re'li.

<sup>17</sup> The sons of Ash'er were Im'nah, Ish'vah, Ish'vi, and Be-ri'ah, and their sister was Se'rah.

The sons of Be-ri'ah were He'ber and Mal'chi-el.

<sup>18</sup> These are the sons of Zil'pah, whom La'ban gave to his daughter Le'ah. She bore these to Jacob: 16 persons in all.

<sup>19</sup> The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel were Joseph and Benjamin.

<sup>20</sup> There were born to Joseph in the land of Egypt Ma-nas'seh and E'phra-im, whom As'e-nath the daughter of Pot-i'phe-ra the priest of On bore to him.

<sup>21</sup> The sons of Benjamin were Be'la, Be'cher, Ash'bel, Ge'ra, Na'a-man, E'hi, Rosh, Mup'pim, Hup'pim, and Ard.

<sup>22</sup> These are the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob: 14 persons in all.

<sup>23</sup> The son of Dan was Hu'shim.

<sup>24</sup> The sons of Naph'ta-li were Jah'ze-el, Gu'ni, Je'zer, and Shil'lem.

<sup>25</sup> These are the sons of Bil'hah, whom La'ban gave to his daughter Rachel. She bore these to Jacob: seven persons in all.

<sup>26</sup> All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him, aside from the wives of Jacob's sons, were 66. <sup>27</sup> Joseph's sons who were born to him in Egypt were two. All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70.

<sup>28</sup> Jacob sent Judah ahead to tell Joseph that he was on the way to Go'shen. When they came into the land of Go'shen, <sup>29</sup> Joseph had his chariot prepared and went up to meet Israel his father at Go'shen. When he presented himself to him, he at once embraced him and wept for some time. <sup>30</sup> Then Israel said to Joseph: "Now I am ready to die; I have seen your face and know that you are still alive."

<sup>31</sup> Joseph then said to his brothers and to his father's household: "Let me go up and report to Phar'aoh and tell him, 'My brothers and my father's household who were in the land of Ca'naan have come here to me. <sup>32</sup> The men are shepherds, and they raise livestock, and they have brought their flocks and their herds and all that they have.' <sup>33</sup> When Phar'aoh calls you and asks, 'What is your occupation?' <sup>34</sup> you must say, 'Your servants have raised livestock from our youth until now, both we and our forefathers,' so that you

may dwell in the land of Go'shen, for every herder of sheep is detestable to the Egyptians.”

**47** So Joseph went and reported to Phar'aoh: “My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they possess have come from the land of Ca'naan, and they are in the land of Go'shen.” <sup>2</sup> He took five of his brothers and presented them to Phar'aoh.

<sup>3</sup> Phar'aoh said to his brothers: “What is your occupation?” They replied to Phar'aoh: “Your servants are herders of sheep, both we and our forefathers.” <sup>4</sup> Then they said to Phar'aoh: “We have come to reside as foreigners in the land because there are no pastures for the flock of your servants, for the famine is severe in the land of Ca'naan. So please let your servants dwell in the land of Go'shen.” <sup>5</sup> At that Phar'aoh said to Joseph: “Your father and your brothers have come here to you. <sup>6</sup> The land of Egypt is at your disposal. Have your father and your brothers dwell in the very best part of the land. Let them dwell in the land of Go'shen, and if you know of any capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock.”

<sup>7</sup> Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and presented him to Phar'aoh, and Jacob blessed Phar'aoh. <sup>8</sup> Phar'aoh asked Jacob: “How old are you?” <sup>9</sup> Jacob said to Phar'aoh: “The years of my wanderings are 130. Few and distressing the years of my life have been, and they are not as long as the years of the lives of my forefathers during their wanderings.” <sup>10</sup> After that Jacob blessed Phar'aoh and went out from before him.

<sup>11</sup> So Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and he gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the very best part of the land, in the land of Ram'e-ses, just as Phar'aoh had commanded. <sup>12</sup> And Joseph kept supplying his father and his brothers and the entire household of his father with food according to the number of their children.

<sup>13</sup> Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, and the land of Egypt and the land of Ca'naan became exhausted as a result of the famine.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph was collecting all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Ca'naan for the grain that people were buying, and Joseph kept bringing the money into Phar'aoh's house. <sup>15</sup> In time the money from the land of Egypt and the land of Ca'naan was spent, and all the Egyptians began coming to Joseph, saying: "Give us food! Why should we die before your very eyes because our money has run out?" <sup>16</sup> Then Joseph said: "If your money has run out, hand over your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." <sup>17</sup> So they began bringing their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph kept giving them food in exchange for their horses, the livestock of the flock and of the herd, and the donkeys, and he kept providing them with food in exchange for all their livestock during that year.

<sup>18</sup> When that year came to its close, they began coming to him the next year and saying: "We will not hide from my lord that the money and the stock of domestic animals have already been given to my lord. We have nothing left for my

lord but our bodies and our land. <sup>19</sup> Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we together with our land will become slaves to Phar'aoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die and that our land may not become desolate.”

<sup>20</sup> Joseph then bought all the land of the Egyptians for Phar'aoh because every Egyptian sold his field, for the famine was very severe; and the land became Phar'aoh's.

<sup>21</sup> Then he moved the people into cities, from one end of the territory of Egypt to its other end. <sup>22</sup> Only the land of the priests he did not buy, because the rations for the priests were from Phar'aoh and they lived on their rations that Phar'aoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.

<sup>23</sup> Then Joseph said to the people: “See, I have today bought you and your land for Phar'aoh. Here is seed for you, and you must sow the land with it. <sup>24</sup> When it produces, give a fifth to Phar'aoh, but four parts will be yours as seed for the field and as food for you and for those in your houses and for your children to eat.” <sup>25</sup> So they said: “You have preserved our lives. Let us find favor in the eyes of my lord, and we will become slaves to Phar'aoh.” <sup>26</sup> Then Joseph made it a decree, which is valid until today over the land of Egypt, that a fifth belongs to Phar'aoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Phar'aoh's.

<sup>27</sup> Israel continued to dwell in the land of Egypt, in the land of Go'shen, and they settled in it and were fruitful and increased greatly. <sup>28</sup> And Jacob lived on in the land of Egypt



for 17 years, so that the days of Jacob's life came to be 147 years.

<sup>29</sup> The time was approaching for Israel to die, so he called his son Joseph and said: "If, now, I have found favor in your eyes, place your hand, please, under my thigh, and show loyal love and faithfulness to me. Please, do not bury me in Egypt. <sup>30</sup> When I die, you must carry me out of Egypt and bury me in the grave of my forefathers." Accordingly, he said: "I will do just as you say." <sup>31</sup> Then he said: "Swear to me." So he swore to him. At that Israel bowed down at the head of his bed.

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- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

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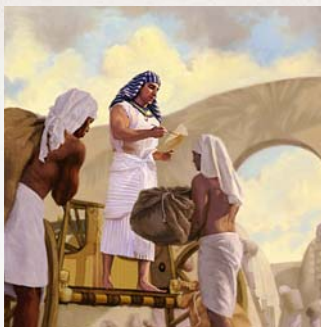
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GENESIS 46-47 | Relief From Famine

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 **What sacrifices am I making to feed regularly at Jehovah’s table?**

## **June 8-14 /Genesis 46-47**

- Song 86 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minute)

### **Treasures From God's Word**

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What sacrifices am I making to feed regularly at Jehovah's table?

Picture: Joseph working as the food administrator in Egypt. Men bring sacks of grain to him.

Picture: A brother conducting the *Watchtower* Study. Brothers and sisters in the audience raise their hand to give a comment.

## **Genesis 47:13—A severe famine afflicted Egypt and Canaan**

**Genesis 47:13:** Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, and the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan became exhausted as a result of the famine.

### **w87 5/1 15 paragraph 2**

The seven years of plenty ended, and the famine began as Jehovah had foretold—a famine not just in Egypt but “over all the surface of the earth.” When the famished people in

Egypt began to cry out to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh told them: "Go to Joseph. Whatever he says to you, you are to do." Joseph sold grain to the Egyptians until their money ran out. Then he accepted their livestock in payment. Finally, the people came to Joseph, saying: "Buy us and our land for bread, and we together with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh." So Joseph bought all the land of the Egyptians for Pharaoh.—Genesis 41:53-57; 47:13-20.

### **Genesis 47:16, 19, 20—The Egyptians had to make sacrifices in order to preserve their lives**

**Genesis 47:16:** Then Joseph said: "If your money has run out, hand over your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock."

**Genesis 47:19, 20:** Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we together with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die and that our land may not become desolate." Joseph then

bought all the land of the Egyptians for Pharaoh because every Egyptian sold his field, for the famine was very severe; and the land became Pharaoh's.

### **Genesis 47:23-25—Effort is required to benefit from the abundant spiritual food available today**

**Genesis 47:23-25:** Then Joseph said to the people: "See, I have today bought you and your land for Pharaoh. Here is seed for you, and you must sow the land with it. When it produces, give a fifth to Pharaoh, but four parts will be yours as seed for the field and as food for you and for those in your houses and for your children to eat." So they said: "You have preserved our lives. Let us find favor in the eyes of my lord, and we will become slaves to Pharaoh."

### **kr 234-235 paragraphs 11-12**

*11 Abundance.* The world suffers from spiritual famine. The Bible warned: "'Look! The days are coming,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, 'when I will send a famine into the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but for

hearing the words of Jehovah.” (Amos 8:11) Do the citizens of God’s Kingdom suffer famine too? Jehovah foretold the following contrast between his people and his enemies: “My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. Look! My servants will drink, but you will go thirsty. Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame.” (Isaiah 65:13) Have you observed the fulfillment of those words?

12 Spiritual provisions flow to us like an ever-broadening and ever-deepening river. Our Bible-based publications—as well as recordings and videos, our meetings and conventions, and the material published on our Web site—together amount to an ongoing flood tide of spiritual sustenance in this spiritually starving world. (Ezekiel 47:1-12; Joel 3:18) Are you not thrilled to see the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises of abundance in your daily life? Do you make sure that you feed regularly at Jehovah’s table?

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**Genesis 46:4—What did it mean for Joseph to “lay his hand” on Jacob’s eyes?**

**Genesis 46:4:** I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will also bring you back from there, and Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes.”

### **it-1 220 paragraph 1**

*Laying hand on eyes of deceased.* Jehovah’s expression to Jacob, “Joseph will lay his hand upon your eyes” (Genesis 46:4), was a way of saying that Joseph would close Jacob’s eyes after his death, which was ordinarily a duty of the firstborn son. So it seems that Jehovah here indicated to Jacob that the right of firstborn should go to Joseph.—1 Chronicles 5:2.

### **Genesis 46:26, 27—How many people of Jacob’s house entered into Egypt?**

**Genesis 46:26, 27:** All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him, aside from the wives of Jacob’s sons, were 66. Joseph’s sons who were born to him in Egypt were two. All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70.



## **“75 persons in all” study note on Acts 7:14, nwtsty**

*75 persons in all:* Stephen may not be quoting a particular verse from the Hebrew Scriptures when he gives the total number of Jacob’s family in Egypt as 75. This figure is not found in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Genesis 46:26 says: “All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him, aside from the wives of Jacob’s sons, were 66.” Verse 27 continues: “All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70.” Here the people are counted in two different ways, the first figure apparently including only his natural descendants and the second figure giving the total of those who came into Egypt. The number of Jacob’s descendants is also mentioned at Exodus 1:5 and Deuteronomy 10:22, where the figure “70” is given. Stephen apparently gives a third figure that includes more of Jacob’s extended family. Some suggest that it includes sons and grandsons of Joseph’s sons Manasseh and Ephraim, who are mentioned in the *Septuagint* translation of Genesis 46:20. Others suggest that it includes the wives of Jacob’s sons, who are specifically excluded from the figure

given at Genesis 46:26. So the figure "75" may be a grand total. This figure, though, may have a basis in copies of the Hebrew Scriptures circulating in the first century C.E. For years, scholars have known that "75" was the figure given at Genesis 46:27 and Exodus 1:5 in the Greek *Septuagint*. Additionally, in the 20th century, two Dead Sea Scroll fragments of Exodus 1:5 in Hebrew were discovered, and they also use the figure "75." Stephen's figure may be based on one of those ancient texts. Regardless of which idea is correct, Stephen's figure simply reflects a different way of counting the total number of Jacob's descendants.

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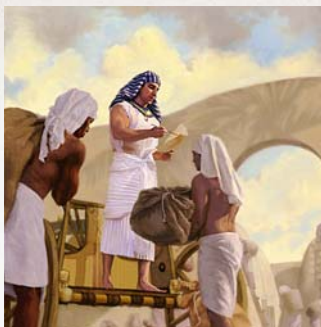
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GENESIS 46-47 | Relief From Famine

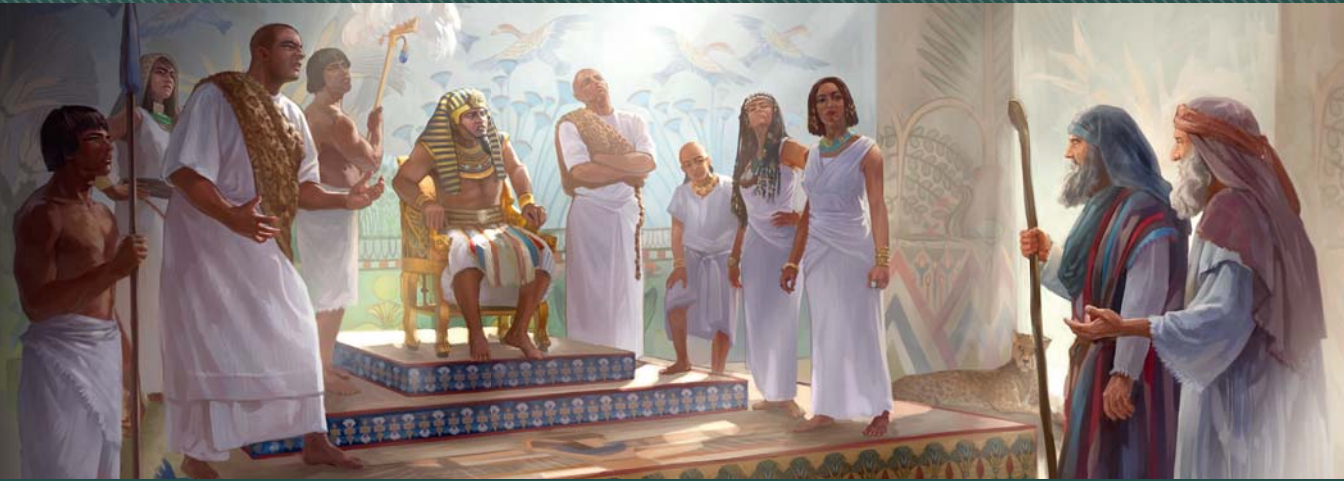
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# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations\*

▲ Moses and Aaron appear before Pharaoh

#### INITIAL CALL

**Question:** Are we living in the last days?

**Scripture:** 2Ti 3:1-5

**Link:** What will happen after the last days?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• *bhs* 98 ¶10



#### RETURN VISIT

**Question:** What will happen after the last days?

**Scripture:** Re 21:3, 4

**Link:** How can we enjoy the life God has promised?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

• *bhs* 100 ¶15



\* Beginning this month, the sample conversations will include only the initial call and return visit.

## IS THE END OF THE WORLD NEAR?

HAVE you ever watched the news and thought, ‘Can things get any worse?’ There is so much tragedy and cruelty that some people believe we must be close to the end of the world. Is that true? Is there a way to know what will happen in the future? Yes. Although humans cannot predict what will happen, Jehovah God can. He tells us in the Bible about our future and the earth’s future.—Isaiah 46:10; James 4:14.

<sup>2</sup> When we read in the Bible about the end of the world, it means, not the end of planet Earth, but the end of wickedness. Jesus taught people that the Kingdom of God would rule over the earth. (Luke 4:43) His disciples wanted to know when God’s Kingdom would come, and they asked Jesus: “When will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?” (Matthew 24:3) Jesus did not give them the exact date, but he told them what would happen just before the end of this world. What Jesus said would happen is happening right now.

<sup>3</sup> In this chapter we will discuss evidence that we are living in the time just before the end of the world. First, we need to learn about a war that took

- 
1. Where can we learn about the future?
  - 2, 3. What did Jesus’ disciples want to know, and how did Jesus answer them?

place in heaven so that we can understand why things are so bad here on earth.

### A WAR IN HEAVEN

**4** In Chapter 8 we learned that Jesus became King in heaven in 1914. (Daniel 7:13, 14) The book of Revelation tells us what happened: “War broke out in heaven: Michael [meaning, Jesus] and his angels battled with the dragon [Satan], and the dragon and its angels battled.”\* Satan and his demons lost the war and were thrown down to the earth. Imagine the joy that the angels felt! But what about the people on earth? The Bible says that it would be a time of trouble for mankind. Why? Because the Devil is very angry, “knowing that he has a short period of time.”—Revelation 12:7, 9, 12.

**5** The Devil is causing as much trouble as he can on earth. He’s furious because he has a short time left before God removes him. Let us examine what Jesus said would happen during the last days.—See Endnote 24.

### THE LAST DAYS

**6 War.** Jesus said: “Nation will rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom.” (Matthew 24:7)

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\* Michael is another name for Jesus Christ. For more information, please see Endnote 23.

4, 5. (a) What happened in heaven soon after Jesus became King?  
 (b) According to Revelation 12:12, what would happen on earth after Satan was thrown down?

6, 7. What can be said about war and hunger today?

More people have been killed in wars in our time than at any other time in history. One report from the Worldwatch Institute shows that since 1914, wars have killed more than 100 million people. More than three times as many people were killed in wars during the 100 years between 1900 and 2000 as were killed during the previous 1,900 years. Just imagine the misery and pain that millions of people have felt because of war!

**7 Hunger.** Jesus said: "There will be food shortages." (Matthew 24:7) Even though more food is produced now than ever before, many people never have enough to eat. Why? Because they don't have enough money to buy food or land on which to grow it. More than a billion people have less than one dollar a day to live on. The World Health Organization says that millions of children die each year, mainly because they don't have enough food to keep them healthy.





**8 Earthquakes.** Jesus prophesied: “There will be great earthquakes.” (Luke 21:11) Many powerful earthquakes are now expected every year. Since the year 1900, over two million people have died because of earthquakes. And although technology has helped to detect earthquakes earlier than before, many people still die.

**9 Disease.** Jesus foretold that there would be “pestilences.” Dangerous diseases would spread quickly and kill many. (Luke 21:11) Even though doctors have learned how to treat many sicknesses, there are still sicknesses that cannot be cured. In fact, one report explains that each year, millions of people die from diseases, such as tuberculosis, malaria, and cholera. Not only that, but doctors have found 30 new diseases, and some of them have no cure.

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8, 9. What shows that Jesus’ prophecies about earthquakes and disease have come true?



## WHAT PEOPLE WOULD BE LIKE IN THE LAST DAYS

<sup>10</sup> At 2 Timothy 3:1-5, the Bible says: “In the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here.” The apostle Paul described how many people would behave during the last days. He said people would

- be selfish
- love money
- disobey their parents
- not be loyal
- lack affection for their family
- have no self-control
- be violent and aggressive
- love pleasures more than God
- pretend to love God but refuse to obey him

<sup>11</sup> Do many people behave like this where you live? All over the world, many do. But God will soon do something about it. He promises: “When the wicked sprout like weeds and all the wrongdoers flourish, it is that

10. How is 2 Timothy 3:1-5 coming true today?

11. According to Psalm 92:7, what will happen to wicked people?



they may be annihilated [or, destroyed] forever.”  
—Psalm 92:7.

### GOOD NEWS IN THE LAST DAYS

**12** The Bible foretold that during the last days, the world would be full of pain and suffering. But the Bible also says that good things will happen.

**13 Understanding the Bible.** The prophet Daniel wrote about the last days. He said: “The true knowledge will become abundant.” (Daniel 12:4) God would give his people the ability to understand the Bible more clearly than ever before. Jehovah has done this especially since 1914. For example, he has taught us the importance of his name and his purpose for the earth as well as the truth about the ransom, what happens when we die, and the resurrection. We have learned that only God’s Kingdom can solve all our problems. We have also learned how to be happy and how to live in a way that pleases God. But what do God’s servants do with what they’ve learned? Another prophecy gives us the answer.—See Endnotes 21 and 25.

**14 The global preaching work.** Speaking about the last days, Jesus said: “This good news of the Kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth.” (Matthew 24:3, 14) The good news of the Kingdom is being preached in over 230 lands and in more than 700 languages. Yes, all over the earth, Jehovah’s Witnesses from “all nations and tribes” are helping

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12, 13. What has Jehovah taught us during the last days?

14. Where is the good news of the Kingdom being preached, and who are preaching it?

people to understand what the Kingdom is and what it will do for mankind. (Revelation 7:9) And they do this free of charge. Although they are hated and persecuted by many, nothing can stop the preaching work, just as Jesus prophesied.—Luke 21:17.

### WHAT WILL YOU DO?

**15** Do you believe that we are living in the last days? Many Bible prophecies about the last days are coming true. Soon Jehovah will decide to stop the preaching of the good news and “the end” will come. (Matthew 24:14) What is the end? It is Armageddon, when God will remove all wickedness. Jehovah will use Jesus and his powerful angels to destroy anyone who refuses to obey Him and his Son. (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9) After that, Satan and his demons will not mislead people. And all those who want to obey God and accept his Kingdom will see every promise of God come true.—Revelation 20:1-3; 21:3-5.

**16** This world ruled by Satan will soon come to its end. So it is very important that we ask ourselves, ‘What do I need to do?’ Jehovah wants you to learn as much as you can from the Bible. You need to take your study seriously. (John 17:3) Jehovah’s Witnesses have meetings every week to help people understand the Bible. Try to attend those meetings regularly. (**Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.**) If you learn that you need to make changes, don’t be afraid to make them.

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15. (a) Do you believe that we are living in the last days, and why?  
(b) What will happen to those who obey Jehovah and to those who don’t?

16. Since the end is so close, what do you need to do?

"This good news  
of the Kingdom will  
be preached in all  
the inhabited earth."  
—Matthew 24:14



As you make them, your friendship with Jehovah will become stronger.—James 4:8.

**17** The apostle Paul explained that the destruction of the wicked will come when most people don't expect it, "as a thief in the night." (1 Thessalonians 5:2) Jesus prophesied that many would choose to ignore the evidence that we're living in the last days. He said: "Just as the days of Noah were, so the presence of the Son of man [or, the last days] will be. For as they were in those days before the Flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they took no note until the Flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the Son of man will be."—Matthew 24:37-39.

**18** Jesus warned that we should not become distracted "with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life." He said that the end will come suddenly, "as a snare." He also said that it "will come upon all those dwelling on the face of the whole earth." Then he added: "Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication [or, praying very sincerely] that you may succeed in escaping all these things that must occur and in standing before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36) Why is it so important to listen to Jesus' warning? Because very soon Satan's wicked world will be destroyed. Only those who are approved by Jehovah and Jesus will survive the end and live forever in the new world.—John 3:16; 2 Peter 3:13.

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17. Why will most people be surprised when the end comes?

18. What warning did Jesus give us?

## SUMMARY

### TRUTH 1

## JEHOVAH REVEALS THE FUTURE TO US

“From the beginning I foretell the outcome, and from long ago the things that have not yet been done.”—Isaiah 46:10

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What do we know about the time of the end?

**Daniel 7:13, 14**

Jesus became King in heaven in 1914.

**Matthew 24:3-14**

Jesus foretold critical times for humans.

**Revelation 12:7-9, 12**

Shortly after Jesus became King, he threw Satan out of the heavens to the earth. Satan is furious because he has “a short period of time” left before God removes him.

### TRUTH 2

## WE ARE LIVING IN THE TIME OF THE END

“What will be the sign . . . of the conclusion of the system of things?”—Matthew 24:3

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Have you seen the fulfillment of Bible prophecies?

**Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11**

More than ever before, we see wars, hunger, earthquakes, and disease.

**2 Timothy 3:1-5**

The apostle Paul described how people would behave during the last days.

**Daniel 12:4**

God is helping his people to understand the Bible more clearly than ever before.

**Matthew 24:14**

The good news of the Kingdom is being preached all over the earth.

**TRUTH 3****TAKE ACTION NOW  
TO PLEASE JEHOVAH**

“Jehovah’s day is coming exactly as a thief in the night.”—1 Thessalonians 5:2

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Since the end is so close, what do you need to do?

**John 17:3**

Take your study of the Bible seriously.

**Hebrews 10:24, 25**

Learn more by attending the meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

**James 4:8**

Make needed changes in your life so that you can draw closer to God.

**Luke 21:34-36**

Avoid distractions, and focus your life on worshipping Jehovah.

# 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.)



- Song 86 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Relief From Famine”:** (10 min.)  
 Ge 47:13—A severe famine afflicted Egypt and Canaan (w87 5/1 15 ¶2)  
 Ge 47:16, 19, 20—The Egyptians had to make sacrifices in order to preserve their lives  
 Ge 47:23-25—Effort is required to benefit from the abundant spiritual food available today (kr 234-235 ¶11-12)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)  
 Ge 46:4—What did it mean for Joseph to “lay his hand” on Jacob’s eyes? (it-1 220 ¶1)

Ge 46:26, 27—How many people of Jacob’s house entered into Egypt? (nwtsty study note on Ac 7:14)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 47:1-17 (10)

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Discussion. Play the video. Then ask the audience the following questions: How did the publisher use questions effectively? How did he make the scripture application clear?
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer a publication from the Teaching Toolbox. (3)
- **Initial Call:** (5 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer the *Teach Us* book, and start a Bible study in chapter 9. (14)

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

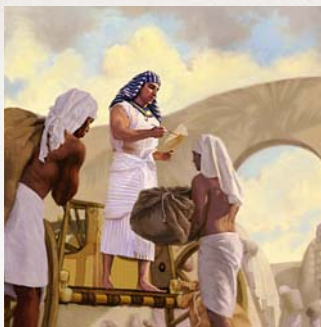
- Song 96
- **Keep Feeding on Jehovah’s Reminders:** (15 min.)  
 Play the video *Treasure Jehovah’s Reminders* (video category JW BROADCASTING). Encourage all to continue feeding on God’s Word and the spiritual food available to us.—Isa 25:6; 55:1; 65:13; Mt 24:45.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 118
- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 109 and Prayer


GENESIS 46-47 | Relief From Famine

**47:13, 16, 19, 20, 23-25**

The world today suffers from spiritual famine. (Am 8:11) By means of Christ Jesus, Jehovah provides an abundance of nourishing spiritual food.

- Bible-based publications
- Congregation meetings
- Assemblies and conventions
- Audio recordings
- Videos
- JW.ORG
- JW Broadcasting



 **What sacrifices am I making to feed regularly at Jehovah’s table?**

## Geoffrey W. Jackson: Treasure Jehovah's Reminders

(Raw Transcript)

The theme for our program this month is "Treasure Jehovah's Reminders." And it's based on Psalm 19:7, where we're told: "The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise."

In the original language, the word here translated as "reminder" comes from a root word meaning "to go over again, to repeat."

Reminders have always been an essential part of Jehovah's teaching. In ancient Israel, God's people continually received commandments, regulations, and reminders. In fact, Jehovah tells us that he sent his prophets "again and again" to repeatedly remind his people of their responsibilities.

The apostle Peter felt the need to give reminders even to those who were "well-established in the truth." Notice how he describes this at 2 Peter 1:12, 13:

"For this reason I intend always "to remind you of these things, "although you know them and are well-established "in the truth that is present in you. "But I consider it right, "as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you with reminders." In verse 15, he goes on to give the reason why he felt the need to give the brothers reminders. He says: "I will always do my utmost so that after my departure, you may be able to recall these things for yourselves."

So Peter was determined to help the brothers and sisters in his day to remember, or recall, the teachings they had already learned. It shouldn't come as a surprise, then, if today a lot of our teaching involves reminders. It follows the pattern set by Jehovah in ancient Israel and with the first-century Christians. But why do we need reminders? Let's consider three reasons. First, let's look at Psalm 103:2.

There it says: "Let me praise Jehovah; may I never forget all that he has done." Why, then, do we need reminders? Simply put, because we forget. If we had perfect memories, we wouldn't need so many reminders. Even in everyday life, many of us use little notes to remind ourselves of what we need to do. And who of us hasn't seen the need for a list of reminders when going shopping, only to realize when we returned that we forgot to get one of the important items we needed to purchase? If reminders are important in everyday life, how much more so in matters that involve our relationship with Jehovah. Let's read Luke 10:39, 40.

Speaking of Martha, we are told: "She also had a sister called Mary, "who sat down at the feet of the Lord "and kept listening to what he was saying. "Martha, on the other hand, was distracted with attending to many duties."

What was Martha's problem? She was distracted. So the second reason why we need reminders is that, like Martha, at times we too become distracted. Although we may already know a vital fact, that fact might get put into the back of our mind, figuratively speaking, because other matters are demanding our attention. Satan is the great Distracter. He tries to turn our attention away from the true issues of our day. People in general have become more and more distracted by entertainment and other nonessential matters. No wonder that Satan has succeeded in misleading so many.

They don't even realize what has happened. Reason number three is alluded to at Matthew 24:45: "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"

Notice that the spiritual food is given to us "at the proper time." Our circumstances in life are continually changing. How often do we hear, "That was just what I needed?" We've all experienced that, haven't we? So, what are three of the reasons why we need reminders? One, because we tend to forget things. Two, we often become distracted. Three, our changed circumstances may require a reminder of something we already knew but didn't fully need at that time. So that brings us to the next question: What will help us to remember? It's interesting to note that Jehovah has used many ways

to remind his people of what they should do. At Numbers 10:10, we're told that the various festivals were given as reminders, especially the celebration of the Passover. That means that every time the Israelites prepared and celebrated one of these festivals, they were reminded of important matters, such as how Jehovah provides for his people and how he has saved them in the past. Something similar happens today at the commemoration of the Lord's Evening Meal. Not only do we hear the reminders from God's Word but the act of passing the bread and wine also serves as an action that reminds us of what Jesus did in our behalf. But what do we need to do in order for those reminders to have a beneficial impact on our lives? Notice what Psalm 119:99 says.

It tells us: "I have more insight than all my teachers, because I ponder over your reminders."

Yes, we need to ponder over these reminders. That means not just listening to or reading them, but it involves thinking deeply about them—meditating on their value. Just to listen or read without meditating is like looking through the lens of a movie camera without pressing the record button. We see things and hear things, but nothing is recorded. So we need to meditate, visualize, and review these reminders. This will help us to remember what we learn. But, figuratively speaking, there is something else that we can do to press the record button. That means we don't have to wait for someone else to give us a reminder. We can make our own reminder. How can we do so? The answer to that question is highlighted in Jehovah's instructions to Moses as found at Exodus 17:14: "Jehovah now said to Moses: "Write this as a memorial "[or the footnote says: "reminder"] in the book and repeat it to Joshua." What's the point? Write down new things we want to remember.

Some brothers use a notebook, or exercise book, to write down a list of interesting points that they want to remember. Then they look through the book from time to time to remind themselves of those points. Many of us do this with our notes from conventions and assemblies.

Of course, to do that successfully, you need to remember where you put the notebook. Additionally, we have to be careful that we don't write down every little fact. Otherwise, we may become overwhelmed with all the information.

We can make these notes either on paper or electronically using computers or electronic devices.

Whatever system we use, let's make lists of things that we want to remember. Many brothers have found it good to have two separate lists.

One list could be subjects—perhaps points that we want to use in the ministry or in our own lives. Another, scriptures—explanations that clarify the meaning of certain verses.

With regard to notes on scriptures, let's ask a very important question: Do you have a study Bible? What is a study Bible? Perhaps it's a separate Bible to the one you take in the ministry. It's a Bible for you to write in so that you're reminded of things that you've learned. These are some of the things we can do with a study Bible:

Highlight or underline some words or verses. That will make it easier to find them again. But remember not to make too many highlights or marks; otherwise, nothing will stand out. Write a summary of points and scriptures you want to remember on the blank pages in the front or the back of your Bible.

Write notes in the margin—that's what Gilead students often do. Of course, you need the right type of pen or pencil that won't bleed through to the other side of the page. What type of things could you write in the margin? Perhaps new points that you learn while reading magazines or attending meetings and assemblies. If you learn a new point, ask yourself, 'What verse is being explained?' And then write a brief comment in the margin next to that verse.

Let's take an example. Perhaps you are reading the Sermon on the Mount and you get to Matthew 7:24-27.

That's the illustration about the two men who built houses—one on sand and the other on rock. As you research this in Watchtower Library or the Research Guide, you come across the article "Are You Building on Sand or on Rock?" in the November 1, 2008, Watchtower. What points could you write in the margin to help you remember the explanation? Well, perhaps you could write: Sand equals build on the surface.

Rock equals dig down deep.

Digging equals doing and applying.

You might even put Luke 6:46-48 there.

Now, if you still have room and your writing is small, you could add something like this: Not hearers only, but doers. Both houses in same location, same tests, foundations different. Now every time you

read those verses, you will be reminded of what they mean. Perhaps like me, you've had several study Bibles over the years. I think back to the first one I used. It was like this big green Bible. Then, later that was replaced by another Bible—this black covered Bible. And then, further still, we had another Bible—the Reference Bible. And, of course, now for most of us, we have the large-print Bible. This does, however, highlight a challenge we might experience. It can be frustrating when a new edition of the Bible comes out. How do you transfer all your study notes over to the new Bible? Additionally, our beloved study Bible may wear out

or, worse still, be lost, stolen, burned, ruined, run over, blown away.

So that's the advantage of using an electronic list; it doesn't matter what type of file you use. It can be updated very easily, and you can even make copies—not like the printed copy that already has the old idea written in the margin. Even now in English, we have the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke in our electronic study Bible on [jw.org](http://jw.org) and WOL. Later in the program, we have some exciting news about how JW Library will help us in this regard. But I'll leave that for later. Really, having a study Bible is not only helpful but it also makes our personal study far more interesting.

How so? Every time we read or study a publication, we'll find ourselves searching for new points that we can write in our study Bible. This way, we'll be doing what the psalmist expressed at Psalm 119:111: 'We will take Jehovah's reminders 'as our permanent possession (or heritage), for his reminders are the joy of our hearts!'

video source: [https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioTalks/pub-jwb\\_201705\\_2\\_VIDEO](https://www.jw.org/en/library/videos/#en/mediaitems/StudioTalks/pub-jwb_201705_2_VIDEO)

## A DISPUTE OVER GREATNESS

MATTHEW 26:31-35    MARK 14:27-31  
LUKE 22:24-38    JOHN 13:31-38

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- JESUS GIVES COUNSEL ABOUT POSITION
  - PETER'S DENIAL FORETOLD
  - LOVE IDENTIFIES JESUS' FOLLOWERS
- 

During his last evening with his apostles, Jesus has provided them with a fine lesson in humble service by washing their feet. Why is that fitting? Because of a weakness they have shown. They are devoted to God, yet they still are concerned about which of them is greatest. (Mark 9:33, 34; 10:35-37) That weakness resurfaces this evening.

The apostles become involved in “a heated dispute among them over which one of them was considered to be the greatest.” (Luke 22:24) How saddened Jesus must be to see them bickering again! What does he do?

Rather than scolding the apostles for their attitude and behavior, Jesus patiently reasons with



them: “The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. You, though, are not to be that way. . . . For which one is greater, the one dining or the one serving?” Then, reminding them of the example that he has constantly set for them, Jesus says: “But I am among you as the one serving.”—Luke 22: 25-27.

Despite their imperfections, the apostles have stuck with Jesus through many challenging situations. So he says: “I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom.” (Luke 22:29) These men are Jesus’ loyal followers. He assures them that by means of a covenant between him and them, they will be in the Kingdom and share in his royal dominion.

Although the apostles have this marvelous prospect, they are still in the flesh and are still imperfect. Jesus tells them: “Satan has demanded to have all of you to sift you as wheat,” which scatters as it is sifted. (Luke 22:31) He also warns: “All of you will be stumbled in connection with me on this



night, for it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered about.’” —Matthew 26:31; Zechariah 13:7.

Peter confidently objects: “Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, I will never be stumbled!” (Matthew 26:33) Jesus tells Peter that before a rooster crows twice that night, Peter will disown him. However, Jesus adds: “I have made supplication for you that your faith may not give out; and you, once you have returned, strengthen your brothers.” (Luke 22:32) Yet Peter boldly affirms: “Even if I should have to die with you, I will by no means disown you.” (Matthew 26:35) The other apostles say the same thing.

Jesus tells his disciples: “I am with you a little longer. You will look for me; and just as I said to the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ I now say it also to you.” Then he adds: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:33-35.

At hearing Jesus say that he is to be with them just a little longer, Peter asks: “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replies: “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow later.” Puzzled, Peter says: “Lord, why is it I cannot follow you now? I will surrender my life in your behalf.” —John 13:36, 37.

Jesus now refers to the time when he sent the apostles out on a preaching tour of Galilee without a money bag or a food pouch. (Matthew 10:5, 9, 10) He asks: “You did not lack anything, did you?” They reply: “No!” But what should they do in the days ahead? Jesus directs them: “Let the one who has a money bag take it, likewise a food pouch, and let the one who has no sword sell his outer garment and buy one. For I tell you that what is written must be accomplished in me, namely, ‘He was counted with lawless ones.’ For this is being fulfilled concerning me.”—Luke 22:35-37.

Jesus is pointing to the time when he will be nailed to a stake alongside evildoers, or lawless ones. Thereafter his followers will face severe per-

secution. They feel that they are prepared and say: “Lord, look! here are two swords.” He answers: “It is enough.” (Luke 22:38) That they have two swords with them will soon afford Jesus an opportunity to teach another important lesson.

- ◇ Why are the apostles arguing, and how does Jesus deal with the situation?
- ◇ What is to be accomplished by the covenant that Jesus makes with his faithful disciples?
- ◇ How does Jesus respond to Peter’s display of confidence?

# **109**    *Love Intensely From the Heart*

(1 Peter 1:22)

1. When our love is pure and intense,

    We make Jehovah's heart rejoice.

Love is his greatest quality,

    Something that we hold dear.

Warm affection glows in our hearts,

    Making a loyal friendship grow.

Love always acts unselfishly,

    Proving our love sincere.

When we see a friend in need,

    We'll be there to lend a helping hand.

Truly we can be a friend,

    Someone who can understand.

Jesus showed what love really means,

    Helping us see Jehovah's love,

Touching our hearts and moving us.

    Tender feelings are a start.

Love intensely from the heart.

APRIL 2020

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
JUNE 1–JULY 5, 2020

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<b>“Run the Race to the Finish”</b>	

### COVER PICTURE:

Brother J. F. Rutherford and other anointed servants who took the lead boldly proclaimed God’s judgments against this wicked system of things (See study article 14, paragraph 8)

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or scan code



# 64 *Sharing Joyfully in the Harvest* (Matthew 13:1-23)

1. We live in the time of the harvest,  
A priv'lege beyond all compare.  
The wheat fields stand ready before us,  
And eagerly we have a share.  
With Jesus, our finest example,  
Directing our work in the field,  
How happy and honored we feel each day.  
We joyfully share in the yield.
2. True love for our God and our neighbor  
Now moves us to speed up our pace.  
Both preaching and teaching are urgent,  
For shortly the end we will face.  
The joy we receive is a blessing,  
A gift that Jehovah provides.  
By faith we endure till this work is done  
And joyfully share at his side.

# How Do You View the Fields?

*“Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting.”—JOHN 4:35.*

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## SONG 64

Sharing Joyfully in the Harvest

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## PREVIEW

How does the way we view our territory affect the way we preach and teach? This article examines how Jesus and the apostle Paul viewed their listeners and how we can imitate them by considering the beliefs, interests, and potential of those we meet.



JESUS had been traveling through fields, likely of young green barley. (John 4:3-6) This crop would be ready to be harvested in about four months' time. Jesus said something that must have sounded unusual: "Lift up your eyes and view the fields, that they are white for harvesting." (Read John 4:35, 36.) What did he mean?

<sup>2</sup> Jesus was apparently referring to a figurative harvest of people. Consider what had just happened. Although Jews usually had no dealings with Samaritans, Jesus had preached to a Samaritan woman—and she had listened! In fact, while Jesus was speaking about fields that were "white for harvesting," a crowd of Samaritans who had heard about Jesus from the woman were on their way to learn more from him. (John 4:9, 39-42) One Bible commentary says about this account: "The eagerness of the people . . . showed that they were like grain ready for harvesting."

<sup>3</sup> What about the people to whom you preach the good news? Do you view them as being like grain that is ripe for harvesting? If so, three things will prove true. First, you will preach with more urgency. A harvest period is limited; there is no time to waste. Second, you will be happy as you see people respond to the good news. The Bible says: "People rejoice in the

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1-2. Why might Jesus have said the words found at John 4:35, 36?

3. If you view people as Jesus did, how will your preaching benefit?

harvesttime.” (Isa. 9:3) And third, you will see each person as a potential disciple, so you will adapt your approach to appeal to his or her interests.

<sup>4</sup> Jesus did not write off the Samaritans, as his followers may have done. Instead, he saw them as potential disciples. We too need to see the people in our territory as potential disciples of Christ. The apostle Paul set an outstanding example for us to follow. What can we learn from him? In this article, we will discuss how he (1) knew something about the beliefs of those to whom he preached, (2) discerned their interests, and (3) saw them as potential disciples of Jesus.

## WHAT DO THEY BELIEVE?

<sup>5</sup> Paul preached often in Jewish synagogues. In the synagogue in Thessalonica, for example, “for three sabbaths he reasoned with [the Jews] from the Scriptures.” (Acts 17:1, 2) Paul likely felt comfortable in the synagogue. He was raised as a Jew. (Acts 26:4, 5) Paul could relate to the Jews, so he was able to preach to them with confidence.—Phil. 3:4, 5.

<sup>6</sup> After Paul was forced by persecutors to flee Thessalonica and then Beroea, he arrived in Athens. Once

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4. What will we learn from the apostle Paul in this article?
  5. Why could Paul relate to his audience in the synagogue?
  6. How were the people in the Athenian marketplace different from those to whom Paul preached in the synagogue?

again, “he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshipped God.” (Acts 17:17) While preaching in the marketplace, however, Paul now had a different audience. Among his listeners were philosophers and other Gentiles who viewed Paul’s message as a “new teaching.” They said to him: “You are introducing some things that are strange to our ears.”—Acts 17:18-20.

<sup>7</sup> Read Acts 17:22, 23. Paul did not present his message to the Gentiles in Athens in the same way that he presented it to the Jews in the synagogue. Paul likely asked himself, ‘What do these people in Athens believe?’ He carefully observed his surroundings and took note of people’s religious customs. Next, Paul searched for common ground between their form of

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7. According to Acts 17:22, 23, how did Paul adjust his approach?

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What should we do if we feel that our fields are “white for harvesting”?

(See paragraph 3)



worship and the truth in the Scriptures. “As a Jewish Christian, he realizes that pagan Greeks do not worship the ‘true’ God of Jews and Christians,” says one Bible commentator, “but he tries to show that the God whom he proclaims is in reality no stranger to the Athenians.” So Paul was willing to adapt his approach. He told the Athenians that his message came from the “Unknown God,” whom they had been trying to worship. Although the Gentiles were not familiar with the Scriptures, Paul did not give up on them. Instead, he viewed them as being like grain that is ripe for harvesting, and he adjusted his presentation of the good news.

<sup>8</sup> Like Paul, *be observant*. Look for signs that indicate what beliefs people in your territory have. How has the householder decorated his home or vehicle? Does his name, dress, grooming, or even his vocabulary indicate what his religion is? Perhaps he has told you directly that he has his own religion. When that happens to a special pioneer named Flutura, she replies, “I’m here, not to impose my beliefs on you, but to talk to you about this subject . . .”

<sup>9</sup> What subjects might you discuss with a religious person? Try to find common ground. He may worship

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8. (a) How can you discern the religious beliefs of people in your territory? (b) If someone says that he has his own religion, how might you respond?

9. What common ground can you find with a religious person?

only one God, he may recognize Jesus as the Savior of humankind, or he may believe that we are living in a time of wickedness that will soon end. Based on beliefs you have in common, present the Bible's message in a way that is appealing to that person.

<sup>10</sup> Keep in mind that people may not believe everything that their religion teaches. So even after you discern a person's religion, try to find out what he personally believes. "Many now mix philosophy with their religious beliefs," says David, a special pioneer in Australia. Donalta, in Albania, says, "Some we meet say that they belong to a religion, but later they admit that they do not really believe in God." And a missionary brother in Argentina notes that some people say that they believe in the Trinity, but they may not actually believe that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit are one God. "Knowing that makes it much easier to find common ground with the person," he says. So try to find out what people really believe. Then, like Paul, you can "become all things to people of all sorts."—1 Cor. 9:19-23.

## WHAT ARE THEIR INTERESTS?

<sup>11</sup> Read Acts 14:14-17. Paul discerned the interests of

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10. What should we try to do, and why?

11. As recorded at Acts 14:14-17, how did Paul in an appealing way present his message to the people who lived in Lystra?

his audience, and then he adapted his presentation. For example, the crowd he spoke to in Lystra had little or no knowledge of the Scriptures. So Paul used arguments that they could relate to. He spoke of fruitful harvests and the ability to enjoy life. He used words and examples that his listeners could readily understand.

<sup>12</sup> Use insight to discern the interests of people in your territory and *adapt your presentation*. How can you find out what a person is interested in as you approach him or his home? Once again, be observant. Perhaps he is gardening, reading a book, repairing a vehicle, or engaging in some other activity. If appropriate, why not use what he is doing to engage him in conversation? (John 4:7) Even a person's clothing may say something about him—perhaps it indicates his nationality, occupation, or favorite sports team. “I started a conversation with a 19-year-old man whose T-shirt depicted a famous singer,” says Gustavo. “I asked him about it, and the man told me why he identified with the singer. That conversation led to a Bible study, and now he is one of our brothers.”

<sup>13</sup> When you offer to study the Bible with someone, make it appealing to him; show him how a study will

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12. How can you discern a person's interests and adapt your presentation?

13. How might you offer a Bible study in an appealing way?

Following the apostle Paul's example, be observant, adapt your presentation, and see people's potential  
(See paragraphs 8, 12, 18)

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fill his needs. (John 4:13-15) A sister named Poppy, for example, was invited inside the home of a woman who showed interest. When Poppy saw a certificate on the wall indicating that the woman was a professor who had studied education, she stressed that we too educate people by means of our Bible study program and our meetings. The woman accepted a study, went to a meeting the next day, and attended a circuit assembly soon thereafter. One year later, she got baptized. Ask yourself: ‘What are my return visits interested in? Can I describe our Bible study program in a way that they would find appealing?’

<sup>14</sup> After you start a Bible study, prepare separately

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14. How can you tailor a Bible study to each student?



for each study you conduct, having in mind the background and interests of your student. As you prepare, decide what scriptures you will read, what videos you will show, and what illustrations you will use to explain Bible truths. Ask yourself, ‘What will especially appeal to and reach the heart of this student?’ (Prov. 16:23) In Albania, a woman who was studying with a pioneer named Flora stated firmly, “I cannot accept the teaching of the resurrection.” Flora did not force the issue. She relates, “I thought that she must first get to know the God who promises the resurrection.” From that point on, at each study, Flora emphasized Jehovah’s love, wisdom, and power. Later, her student readily put faith in the resurrection. She is now a zealous Witness of Jehovah.



## SEE THEM AS POTENTIAL DISCIPLES

<sup>15</sup> **Read Acts 17:16-18.** Paul did not give up on the Athenians, even though their city was filled with idolatry, sexual immorality, and pagan philosophy; nor did he let their insults discourage him. Paul himself became a Christian, although he had been “a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man.” (1 Tim. 1:13) Just as Jesus saw the potential in Paul, so Paul saw the potential in the Athenians. And his confidence was not misplaced.—Acts 9:13-15; 17:34.

<sup>16</sup> In the first century, people of all backgrounds became Jesus’ disciples. When Paul wrote to Christians living in the Grecian city of Corinth, he said that some members of that congregation had at one time been criminals or had lived shockingly immoral lifestyles. And then he added: “That is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean.” (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Would you have seen that those people had the potential to change and become disciples?

<sup>17</sup> Today, many are willing to make the changes needed to become disciples of Jesus. In Australia, for example, a special pioneer named Yukina learned that all

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**15.** According to Acts 17:16-18, what behaviors in ancient Greece troubled Paul, but why did he not give up on the Athenians?

**16-17.** What shows that people of all backgrounds can become disciples of Christ? Give an example.

sorts of people can respond to the Bible's message. Once, at a real estate office, she noticed a tattooed young woman wearing baggy clothes. "I hesitated for a moment," says Yukina, "but then I started talking to her. I discovered that she was so interested in the Bible that some of her tattoos were verses from the Psalms!" The woman began studying and attending the meetings.\*

<sup>18</sup> Did Jesus view the fields as being ripe for harvesting because he expected that most people would follow him? Not at all. The Scriptures had foretold that relatively few would put faith in him. (John 12:37, 38) And Jesus had the miraculous ability to read hearts. (Matt. 9:4) Still, he focused on those few who would believe, and he zealously preached to everyone. How much more so should we, who cannot read hearts, resist the tendency to judge a territory or an individual! Instead, *see people's potential*. Marc, a missionary in Burkina Faso, puts it this way: "The people I think will make progress often stop studying. But the people I think won't go far progress very well. So I have learned that it is better to let Jehovah's spirit lead us."

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\* The series "The Bible Changes Lives" provides more examples of how people can change. This series appeared in *The Watchtower* until 2017. It now continues to be published on [jw.org](http://jw.org)<sup>®</sup>. Look under ABOUT US > EXPERIENCES.

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**18.** Why should we not judge people?

<sup>19</sup> At first glance, it may appear that there are not many in the territory who are like grain that is ripe for harvesting. But remember what Jesus said to his disciples. The fields are white, that is, they are ready to be harvested. People can change and become disciples of Christ. Jehovah views these potential disciples as “precious things.” (Hag. 2:7) If we see people as Jehovah and Jesus do, we will learn about their backgrounds and interests. We will view them, not as strangers, but as potential brothers and sisters.

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19. How should we view people in our territory?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Pages 22-23:** As a couple work from door to door in the ministry, they observe (1) a well-kept home, decorated with flowers; (2) a home where a young family lives; (3) a home that is unkempt inside and out; and (4) a religious household. Where will you find the person with the most potential?

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#### HOW CAN YOU IMITATE THE WAY PAUL . . .

- adapted his message to the religious beliefs of his listeners?
- appealed to the interests of his listeners?
- saw the potential in those to whom he preached?

#### SONG 57

Preaching to All Sorts of People

# 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)*