

Song 122 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“Maintain Moral Purity”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Le 19:9, 10—How did God’s Law show consideration for the poor? (w06 6/15 22 ¶11)

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

Bible Reading: (4 min.) Le 18:1-15 (5)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Initial Call: Prayer—Ps 65:2* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the questions that appear in the video.

Initial Call: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (3)

Talk: (5 min.) w02 2/1 29—Theme: To What Extent Do the Limits on Marriage Between Relatives Set Out in the Mosaic Law Apply to Christians Today? (7)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 134

Become Jehovah’s Friend—Protect Your Children: (5 min.) Talk by an elder. Play the video (video category CHILDREN). Then highlight the lessons learned.—Pr 22:3.

“Parents, Equip Your Children With Knowledge”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Build a House That Will Endure—Safeguard Your Children From “What Is Evil”* (video category FAMILY).

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Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 2 ¶28-31, boxes 2A and 2B

 Maintain Moral Purity

Jehovah expects us to behave differently from people in the world (Le 18:3; w19.06 28 ¶1)

Jehovah forbids such sins as incest, homosexuality, and bestiality (Le 18:6, 22, 23; w17.02 20 ¶13)

Jehovah will destroy the unclean world around us (Le 18:24, 25; Pr 2:22; w14 7/1 7 ¶2)

Satan does not want us to enter God’s new world. But Jehovah’s principles can protect us from any satanic trap.



How can we show Jehovah that we hate immorality?

1. Nations are troubled as never before.
People are fearful of what lies in store.
Firm and immovable we need to be,
Serving our God faithfully.

(CHORUS)

*Steadfast we all need to be;
Far from this world we keep free,
Standing firm to the end,
Unending life we'll see.*

2. Snares of the world and temptations abound.
We can resist if our thinking is sound.
Hating what's bad while we love what is true
Makes us immovable too.

(Chorus)

3. Give to God worship that comes from the heart.
In the Lord's service may we have a part.
Preach the good news, always holding it fast.
Soon the last days will have passed.

(Chorus)

Leviticus 18-19

18 Jehovah continued to speak to Moses, saying: ² “Speak to the Israelites and say to them, ‘I am Jehovah your God. ³ You must not behave as they do in the land of Egypt, where you were dwelling, and you must not do what they do in the land of Ca'naan, where I am bringing you. And you must not walk in their statutes. ⁴ You should carry out my judicial decisions, and you should keep my statutes and walk in them. I am Jehovah your God. ⁵ You must keep my statutes and my judicial decisions; anyone who does so will live by means of them. I am Jehovah.

⁶ “No man among you should approach any of his close relatives to have sexual relations. I am Jehovah. ⁷ You must not have sexual relations with your father, and you must not have sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother, and you must not have sexual relations with her.

⁸ “You must not have sexual relations with your father’s wife. It is exposing your father to shame.

⁹ “You must not have sexual relations with your sister, either the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother, whether she is born in the same household or born outside of it.

¹⁰ “You must not have sexual relations with the daughter of your son or the daughter of your daughter, because they are your own nakedness.

¹¹ ““You must not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, the offspring of your father, because she is your sister.

¹² ““You must not have sexual relations with your father’s sister. She is your father’s blood relative.

¹³ ““You must not have sexual relations with your mother’s sister, because she is your mother’s blood relative.

¹⁴ ““You must not expose your father’s brother to shame by having sexual relations with his wife. She is your aunt.

¹⁵ ““You must not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son’s wife, and you must not have relations with her.

¹⁶ ““You must not have sexual relations with your brother’s wife, because it is exposing your brother to shame.

¹⁷ ““You must not have sexual relations with a woman and her daughter. You must not take the daughter of her son and the daughter of her daughter in order to have relations. They are her close relatives; it is an obscene act.

¹⁸ ““You must not take a woman in addition to her sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while her sister is alive.

¹⁹ ““You must not approach a woman during her menstrual impurity to have sexual relations with her.

²⁰ ““You must not have sexual intercourse with the wife of your fellow man, making yourself unclean.

²¹ “You must not allow any of your offspring to be offered to Mo'lech. You must not profane the name of your God in that way. I am Jehovah.

²² “You must not lie down with a male in the same way that you lie down with a woman. It is a detestable act.

²³ “A man must not have sexual intercourse with an animal to become unclean by it; nor should a woman offer herself to an animal to have intercourse with it. It is a violation of what is natural.

²⁴ “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for it is by all these things that the nations that I am driving out from before you have made themselves unclean.

²⁵ Therefore, the land is unclean, and I will bring punishment on it for its error, and the land will vomit its inhabitants out.

²⁶ But you yourselves must keep my statutes and my judicial decisions, and you must not do any of these detestable things, whether a native or a foreigner who is residing among you. ²⁷ For all these detestable things were done by

the men who lived in the land before you, and now the land is unclean. ²⁸ Then the land will not have to vomit you out for defiling it in the same way that it will vomit out the nations that were before you. ²⁹ If anyone does any of these

detestable things, all those doing them must be cut off from among their people. ³⁰ You must keep your obligation to me by not practicing any of the detestable customs that were carried on before you, so that you do not make yourselves unclean by them. I am Jehovah your God.”

19 Jehovah spoke further to Moses, saying: ² “Speak to the entire assembly of the Israelites and tell them, ‘You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.

³ “Each of you should respect his mother and his father, and you should keep my sabbaths. I am Jehovah your God. ⁴ Do not turn to worthless gods or make for yourselves gods of cast metal. I am Jehovah your God.

⁵ “Now if you offer a communion sacrifice to Jehovah, you should sacrifice it in such a way that you gain approval for yourselves. ⁶ It should be eaten on the day of your sacrifice and on the next day, but what is left over until the third day should be burned in the fire. ⁷ If, though, any of it is eaten on the third day, it is an offensive thing that will not be accepted with approval. ⁸ The one eating it will answer for his error because he has profaned a holy thing of Jehovah, and that person must be cut off from his people.

⁹ “When you reap the harvest of your land, you must not reap the edge of your field completely and you must not pick up the gleanings of your harvest. ¹⁰ Also, you must not gather the leftovers of your vineyard or pick up the scattered grapes of your vineyard. You should leave them for the poor and the foreign resident. I am Jehovah your God.

¹¹ “You must not steal, you must not deceive, and you must not deal falsely with one another. ¹² You must not swear to a lie in my name and thus profane the name of your God. I am Jehovah. ¹³ You must not defraud your fellow

man, and you must not rob. You should not withhold the wages of a hired worker all night until morning.

¹⁴ ““You must not curse a deaf man or put an obstacle before a blind man, and you must be in fear of your God. I am Jehovah.

¹⁵ ““You must not be unjust in your judgment. You must not show partiality to the poor or show preference to the rich. With justice you should judge your fellow man.

¹⁶ ““You must not go around spreading slander among your people. You must not stand up against the life of your fellow man. I am Jehovah.

¹⁷ ““You must not hate your brother in your heart. You should by all means reprove your fellow man, so that you will not bear sin along with him.

¹⁸ ““You must not take vengeance nor hold a grudge against the sons of your people, and you must love your fellow man as yourself. I am Jehovah.

¹⁹ ““You should keep my statutes: You must not interbreed two sorts of your domestic animals. You must not sow your field with two sorts of seed, and you must not wear a garment made with two sorts of thread mixed together.

²⁰ ““Now if a man lies down with a woman and has intercourse with her and she is a servant who is designated for another man, but she has not been redeemed or given her freedom, there should be a punishment. However, they should not be put to death, for she was not yet set free. ²¹ He

should bring his guilt offering to Jehovah to the entrance of the tent of meeting, a ram of guilt offering. ²² The priest will make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering before Jehovah for the sin that he committed, and he will be forgiven for the sin that he committed.

²³ “When you come into the land and you plant any tree for food, you must consider its fruitage impure and forbidden. For three years it will be forbidden to you. It must not be eaten. ²⁴ But in the fourth year, all its fruit will be holy for rejoicing before Jehovah. ²⁵ Then in the fifth year, you may eat its fruit in order to add its produce to your harvest. I am Jehovah your God.

²⁶ “You must eat nothing containing blood.

“You must not look for omens or practice magic.

²⁷ “You must not shave the hair on the side of your head or disfigure the edges of your beard.

²⁸ “You must not make cuts in your flesh for a dead person, and you must not make tattoo markings on yourselves. I am Jehovah.

²⁹ “Do not dishonor your daughter by making her a prostitute, so that the land may not commit prostitution and be filled with loose morals.

³⁰ “You must keep my sabbaths, and you must show reverence for my sanctuary. I am Jehovah.

³¹ “Do not turn to the spirit mediums, and do not consult fortune-tellers so as to become unclean by them. I am Jehovah your God.

³² “Before gray hair you should rise up, and you must show honor to an older man, and you must be in fear of your God. I am Jehovah.

³³ “If a foreigner resides with you in your land, you must not mistreat him. ³⁴ The foreigner who resides with you should become to you like a native among you; and you must love him as yourself, for you were foreign residents in the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God.

³⁵ “You must not use dishonest standards in measuring length, weight, or volume. ³⁶ You should use accurate scales, accurate weights, an accurate dry measure, and an accurate liquid measure. I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt. ³⁷ So you must keep all my statutes and all my judicial decisions, and you must follow them. I am Jehovah.”

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“Maintain Moral Purity”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Le 19:9, 10—How did God’s Law show consideration for the poor? (w06 6/15 22 ¶11)

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

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“Parents, Equip Your Children With Knowledge”: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Build a House That Will Endure—Safeguard Your Children From “What Is Evil”* (video category FAMILY).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 2 ¶28-31, boxes 2A and 2B

 Maintain Moral Purity

Jehovah expects us to behave differently from people in the world (Le 18:3; w19.06 28 ¶1)

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How can we show Jehovah that we hate immorality?

January 4-10 / Leviticus 18-19

Song 122 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Maintain Moral Purity": (10 minutes)

Jehovah expects us to behave differently from people in the world

Leviticus 18:3: You must not behave as they do in the land of Egypt, where you were dwelling, and you must not do what they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. And you must not walk in their statutes.

w19.06 28 paragraph 1

In listing the perversions of nearby nations, Jehovah told the Israelites: "You must not do what they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. . . . The land is unclean, and I will bring punishment on it for its error." To the holy God of Israel, the Canaanites' lifestyle was so foul that the land they lived in had become unclean, contaminated.— Leviticus 18:3, 25.

Jehovah forbids such sins as incest, homosexuality, and bestiality

Leviticus 18:6: “No man among you should approach any of his close relatives to have sexual relations. I am Jehovah.

Leviticus 18:22, 23: “You must not lie down with a male in the same way that you lie down with a woman. It is a detestable act. “A man must not have sexual intercourse with an animal to become unclean by it; nor should a woman offer herself to an animal to have intercourse with it. It is a violation of what is natural.

w17.02 20 paragraph 13

How different those faithful kings were from the leaders of other nations, men who were guided by human wisdom and shortsighted strategy! Under Canaanite leadership, people did detestable things, which included incest, homosexuality, bestiality, child sacrifice, and gross idolatry. (Leviticus 18:6, 21-25) Moreover, Babylonian and Egyptian leaders did not follow the scientifically sound practices on hygiene that God gave to Israel. (Numbers 19:13) In contrast, God’s ancient people saw how their faithful leaders promoted spiritual,

moral, and physical cleanness. Clearly, Jehovah was leading them.

Jehovah will destroy the unclean world around us

Leviticus 18:24, 25: “Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for it is by all these things that the nations that I am driving out from before you have made themselves unclean. Therefore, the land is unclean, and I will bring punishment on it for its error, and the land will vomit its inhabitants out.

Proverbs 2:22: As for the wicked, they will be cut off from the earth, And the treacherous will be torn away from it.

w14 7/1 7 paragraph 2

What about those who stubbornly refuse to change their ways and who insist on doing bad things? Reflect on this straightforward promise: “Only the upright will reside in the earth, and the blameless will remain in it. As for the wicked, they will be cut off from the earth, and the treacherous will be torn away from it.” (Proverbs 2:21, 22) Gone will be the

influence of wicked humans. Under such peaceful conditions, obedient humans will gradually be set free from inherited imperfection.—Romans 6:17, 18; 8:21.

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[Image:] A husband and father turning away in disgust from his laptop computer and quickly closing it.

Spiritual Gems

Leviticus 19:9, 10—How did God's Law show consideration for the poor?

Leviticus 19:9, 10: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you must not reap the edge of your field completely and you must not pick up the gleaning of your harvest. Also, you must not gather the leftovers of your vineyard or pick up the scattered grapes of your vineyard. You should leave them for the poor and the foreign resident. I am Jehovah your God.

w06 6/15 22 paragraph 11

A second aspect of the Mosaic Law that reflected God's concern for his people's welfare was the right to glean. Jehovah ordered that when an Israelite farmer reaped the fruits of his field, the needy should be allowed to collect what harvest workers left behind. Farmers were not to reap the edges of their fields completely, nor were they to gather the leftover grapes or olives. Sheaves of grain inadvertently left in the fields should not be retrieved. This was a loving arrangement in behalf of the poor, the alien residents, the orphans, and the widows. Granted, gleaning required hard work on their part, yet by means of it, they could avoid having to beg.—Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Psalm 37:25.

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Bible Reading: (4 minutes) Leviticus 18:1-15 (*th* study 5)

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Will You Serve as an Auxiliary Pioneer in March or April?

Would you like to do more in Jehovah’s service during the Memorial season? (2Co 5:14, 15) During March and April, auxiliary pioneers may choose a 30- or 50-hour requirement. If you are able to participate in this special activity, submit an application to the Congregation Service Committee. Each month, the names of those approved to serve as auxiliary pioneers will be announced to the congregation. In this way, the congregation can support the pioneers in the ministry. May all of us take full advantage of opportunities during the Memorial season to sharpen our preaching skills and to encourage one another.—1Th 5:11.



**“The love the Christ has compels us.”
—2Co 5:14**



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

Question: Does God listen to prayers?

Scripture: Ps 65:2

Link: What can we pray about?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• wp21.1 5

Return Visit

Question: What can we pray about?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:14

Link: How does God answer our prayers?

▶ FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• wp21.1 10

Memorial Invitation Campaign (February 27–March 27)

“We’re here [or calling or writing] to invite you to a special event that will be attended by millions of people. It’s the anniversary of Jesus’ death.” Hand [or text or mail] the person an invitation. “This invitation shows the time and location of the event in our area [or how you can attend online]. We also invite you to a special talk the weekend before.”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?



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Questions From Readers

To what extent do the limits on marriage between relatives set out in the Mosaic Law apply to Christians today?

The Law given by Jehovah to the nation of Israel has little to say about wedding ceremonies and procedures. It does, however, set out prohibitions against certain marriage relationships. For example, at Leviticus 18:6-20, we find a list of prohibited relations involving a “close fleshly relative.” That passage goes into considerable detail outlining which fleshly relatives must not enter into sexual relations with each other. Of course, Christians are not under the Mosaic Law or bound by its decrees. (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14) Even so, this does not mean that Christians can simply ignore this matter when choosing whom to marry. There are a number of reasons why this is the case.

To begin with, there are secular laws that regulate marriage between close relatives, and Christians are basically obligated to obey the laws of the land in which they live. (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1) Such laws, of course, vary from place to place. Most modern laws of this type are based primarily on genetic considerations. It is a known fact that marriage between close fleshly relatives is more likely to expose any offspring to genetic defects and diseases. For this reason and because of their “subjection to the superior authorities,” Christians entering into marriage abide by the local marriage laws.

Then there is the matter of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable in the community in which one lives. Almost every culture has rules and customs that censure marriage between people who are closely related by blood, often viewing such unions as incestuous and hence taboo. Even though the specific relationships proscribed may vary greatly in different cultures, “generally speaking, the closer the genetic relationship between two people, the stronger and more highly charged is the taboo prohibiting or discouraging sexual relations between them,” says *The Encyclopædia Britannica*. Thus, even where no incestuous relationships are involved, Christians do not want to act with total disregard for established customs or the legitimate sensibilities of the community, so as not to bring reproach on the Christian congregation or on God’s name.—
2 Corinthians 6:3.

Not to be overlooked is our God-given conscience. All people are born with a sense of right and wrong, good and bad. (Romans 2:15) Their conscience tells them what is normal and proper and what is unnatural and offensive, unless it has been distorted or deadened by perverted practices. Jehovah alluded to this fact when he gave the Israelites his law against marriage between close fleshly relatives. We read: “The way the land of Egypt does, in which you dwelt, you must not do; and the way the land of Canaan does, into which I am bringing you, you must not do; and in their statutes you must not walk.” (Leviticus 18:3) Christians treasure their Bible-based conscience and do not

allow it to be corrupted by the twisted sense of right and wrong of the nations.—Ephesians 4:17-19.

What, then, can we conclude? While Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, their conscience tells them clearly that marriage between close fleshly relatives—such as father and daughter, mother and son, brother and sister—is totally unacceptable in the Christian community. As the circle of kinship expands, Christians recognize that there are laws and statutes that govern legal marriage and that there are standards that are socially and culturally acceptable. These must be taken into careful consideration so that we can comply with the Scriptural injunction: “Let marriage be honorable among all.”—Hebrews 13:4.

[Footnote]

For a detailed discussion of the subject, please see the article “Incestuous Marriages—How Should Christians View Them?” in *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1978, pages 25-6.

134 *Children Are a Trust From God*

(Psalm 127:3-5)

1. When a man becomes a father

And a woman has a child of her own,
They share a trust, they must remember,
That is not theirs, not theirs alone.
The gift they share is from Jehovah;
Of life and love he is the one true Source.
To parents he gives sure direction
That they may follow the wisest course.

(CHORUS)

*A sacred trust you have been given;
A precious life is in your hands.
You can bestow the greatest favor;
Instruct your child in God's commands.*

2. All the words God has commanded—

They must always prove to be on your heart.
These words you'll speak to sons and daughters;
This is your trust, this is your part.
To them you'll speak along your roadway,
When you rise up and when you are at rest.
In years to come, may they remember,
May they be faithful, may they be blessed.

(Chorus)

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Become Jehovah's Friend

Lesson 17: Protect Your Children

Raw Transcript

Children, Jehovah wants you to be happy and keep you safe, but some people want to do bad things to you. So Jehovah gives you a conscience. It's like an alarm system that helps you to know right from wrong. It will protect you from danger. So Mommy and I will help you test your alarm system. Ready? What if someone tells you something that makes you feel uncomfortable or scares you? What do you do? I'm not sure, but that's weird. "Stop!" Very good. Tell them to stop it, and you tell Mommy and Daddy. No matter what someone tells you, never keep a secret from us. What if they ask you to do something that makes you feel uncomfortable? I would say, "No!" You're right, you should say, "No!" and walk away. What if they try to touch you where they shouldn't? I wouldn't let them! I'd get out of there! Good, Caleb. Even if it's an adult you know and trust, you should say, "No!" and run away. And you should yell, "Stop doing that! I'm gonna tell on you." Stop doing that! I'm gonna tell on you. The world can be a scary place, but you are never alone. Remember, you have your conscience, your mom and dad who love you, and you have Jehovah.



Parents, Equip Your Children With Knowledge

We live in a world that presents good as bad and bad as good. (Isa 5:20) Sadly, some people do things that Jehovah hates, including improper conduct between those of the same sex. Peers at school or others may try to entice our precious young ones to follow their lead. How can you prepare your children to face this and similar tests successfully?

Equip your children with knowledge of Jehovah’s standards. (Le 18:3) Progressively share age-appropriate information with them about what the Bible says is proper sexual conduct. (De 6:7) Ask yourself: ‘Have I taught my children about proper displays of affection, the importance of wearing modest clothing, and the need for others to respect their privacy? Would my children know what to do if someone tried to show them pornography or asked them to do something Jehovah says is wrong?’ Advance knowledge can help them to avoid calamity. (Pr 27:12; Ec 7:12) By educating your children, you show love for your precious inheritance from Jehovah.—Ps 127:3.



WATCH THE VIDEO *BUILD A HOUSE THAT WILL ENDURE—SAFEGUARD YOUR CHILDREN FROM “WHAT IS EVIL,”* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why do some hesitate to teach their children about sex?

- Why must parents train their children in “the discipline and admonition of Jehovah”?—Eph 6:4

- What has Jehovah’s organization provided to help parents teach their children about sex?—w19.05 12, box

- Why should you communicate regularly with your children before problems arise?



Knowledge is a protection

with Jehovah our God by walking in his regulations and by keeping his commandments as on this day.” —1 Ki. 8:57-61.

²⁷ Unfortunately, the Israelites did not continue to follow the king’s wise counsel. They failed to fulfill one or more of the key aspects of pure worship. The kings of Israel and their subjects allowed their hearts to be corrupted, they lost faith in Jehovah, and they abandoned his righteous standards. Time and again, Jehovah lovingly sent prophets to correct them and to warn them of the consequences of their actions. (Jer. 7:13-15, 23-26) Noteworthy among those prophets was the faithful man Ezekiel. He lived at a critical time in the history of pure worship.

Ezekiel Sees Pure Worship Corrupted

²⁸ Ezekiel was intimately acquainted with worship at the temple built by Solomon. His father was a priest and would have taken his turn serving at the temple. (Ezek. 1:3) Ezekiel’s early years likely were happy. His father no doubt taught him about Jehovah

27. What did the kings of Israel and their subjects do, and how did Jehovah respond?

28, 29. What do we know about Ezekiel? (See the box “Ezekiel—His Life and Times.”)

and the Law. In fact, about the time that Ezekiel was born, “the book of the Law” was found in the temple.*^[5] The reigning monarch, good King Josiah, was so moved by what he heard that he increased his efforts to promote pure worship.—2 Ki. 22:8-13.

²⁹ Like the faithful men before him, Ezekiel fulfilled the four requirements of pure worship. As a consideration of the book of Ezekiel shows, he served Jehovah exclusively, gave his best continually, and obediently did what Jehovah asked of him and in the manner He required. Ezekiel did all of this because he was motivated by heartfelt faith. The same could not be said of the majority of his contemporaries. Ezekiel had grown up listening to the prophecies of Jeremiah, who began his work in 647 B.C.E. and who zealously warned of Jehovah’s coming judgment.

³⁰ Ezekiel’s inspired writings reveal how far God’s

*^[5] It seems that Ezekiel was 30 years old when he began prophesying in the year 613 B.C.E. So apparently he was born about the year 643 B.C.E. (Ezek. 1:1) Josiah began his reign in 659 B.C.E., and the book of the Law, likely the original, was found sometime near the 18th year of his kingship, or about the year 642-641 B.C.E.

30. (a) What do the prophecies recorded by Ezekiel reveal? (b) What is prophecy, and how should those conveyed by Ezekiel be understood? (See the box “Understanding Ezekiel’s Prophecies.”)

people had strayed from serving Him. (**Read Ezekiel 8:6.**) When Jehovah began to discipline Judah, Ezekiel was among those taken captive to Babylon. (2 Ki. 24:11-17) Although taken prisoner, Ezekiel was not being punished. Jehovah had work for him to do among His exiled people. The stunning visions and prophecies recorded by Ezekiel outline how pure worship would be restored in Jerusalem. But they also do much more—they give insight into how pure worship will eventually be completely restored for all who love Jehovah.

³¹ In the sections of this publication that follow, we will gain a glimpse into the realm where Jehovah resides, discover just how completely pure worship was defiled, learn how Jehovah restores and defends his people, and peer into the future when every living human will worship Jehovah. In the following chapter, we will consider the first vision Ezekiel recorded. It impresses on our imagination a picture of Jehovah and the heavenly part of his organization, emphasizing why he alone is worthy of exclusive, pure worship.

31. What will this publication help us to do?

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1** Why did Jehovah reject worship from Cain but accept it from Abel?
- 2** What did you learn about pure worship from the examples of the patriarchs?
- 3** Which section of this publication are you especially looking forward to studying?

UNDERSTANDING EZEKIEL'S PROPHECIES

DEFINITION—WHAT IS PROPHECY?

In the Bible, the Hebrew verb *na·va*”, rendered “prophecy,” refers primarily to declaring an inspired message, judgment, moral teaching, or command from God. It can also refer to making a divine declaration of something to come. Ezekiel’s prophecies include all those types of divine revelations.—Ezek. 3:10, 11; 11:4-8; 14:6, 7; 37:9, 10; 38:1-4.

METHODS OF DELIVERY

The book of Ezekiel contains visions, illustrations, parables, and enactments of prophetic messages.

FULFILLMENTS

Prophecies related by Ezekiel sometimes have more than one fulfillment. For example, the prophecies of restoration had a limited fulfillment when God’s people returned to the Promised Land. But as discussed in Chapter 9 of this publication, many of those restoration prophecies have a fulfillment today and will again be fulfilled in the future.

In the past, we have viewed a number of elements in Ezekiel’s prophecies as the basis for a type-antitype fulfillment. This publication, however, refrains from describing any person, object, place, or event as a prophetic type that has a modern antitype unless there is a clear basis in

Scripture for doing so.*^[a] Rather, it will point to the greater fulfillment of many of Ezekiel’s prophecies. It will also examine the lessons we can learn from Ezekiel’s message, as well as from the people, places, and events mentioned by him.

*^[a] For a discussion of types and antitypes, see *The Watchtower*, March 15, 2015, pp. 9-11, pars. 7-12; and “Questions From Readers,” pp. 17-18 of that same issue.



EZEKIEL

HIS LIFE AND TIMES

Ezekiel means “God Strengthens.” While the prophecies he relates contain many warnings, the overall message is in harmony with the meaning of his name and strengthens the faith of those who want to give God pure worship.

CONTEMPORARY PROPHETS

JEREMIAH,

from a priestly family, served mostly in Jerusalem (647-580 B.C.E.)

HULDAH

served when the book of the Law was discovered in the temple about 642 B.C.E.

DANIEL,

part of the royal tribe of Judah, was taken to Babylon in 617 B.C.E.

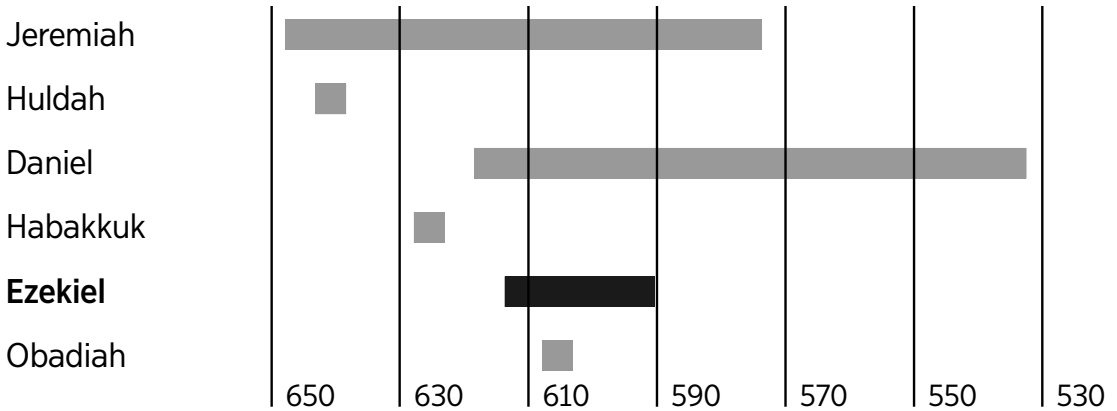
HABAKKUK

likely served in Judah early in Jehoiakim’s reign

OBADIAH

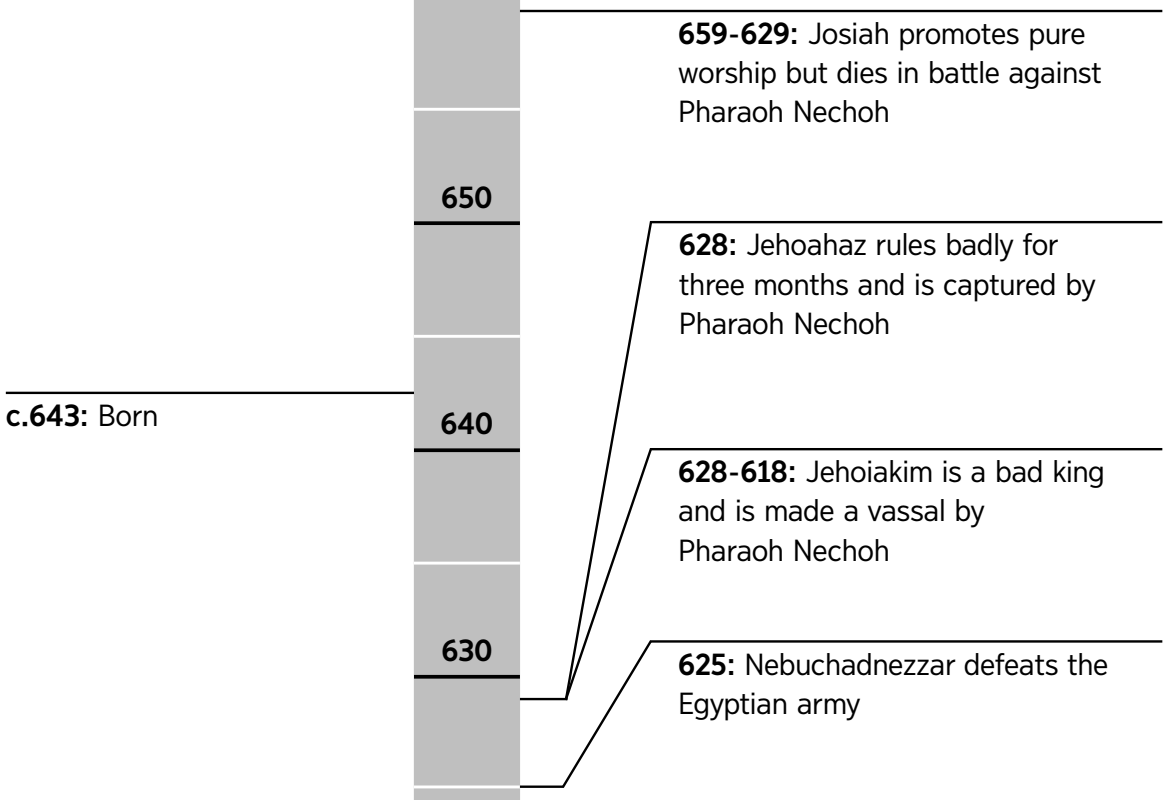
prophesied against Edom, likely at the time of Jerusalem’s destruction

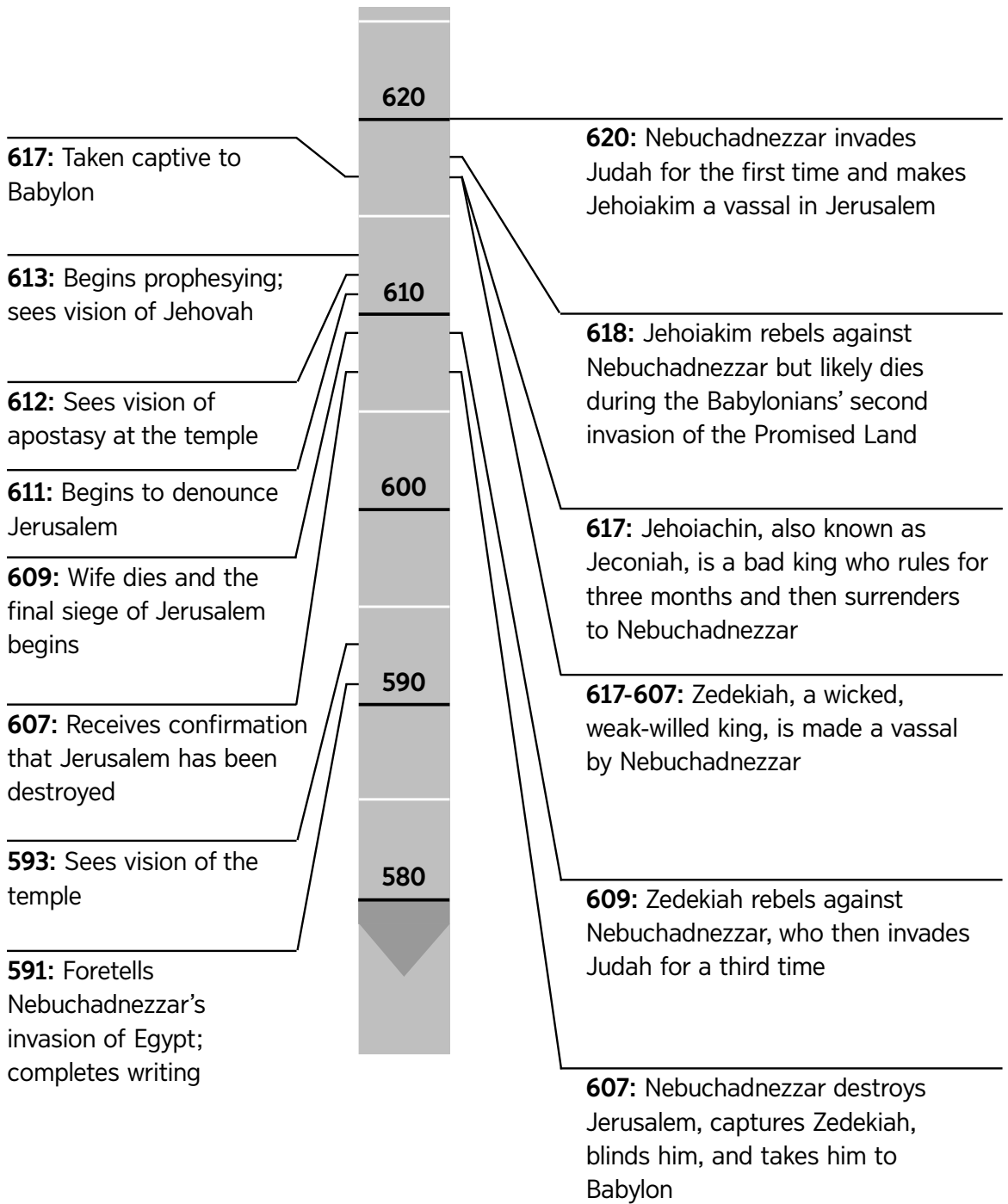
WHEN DID THEY PROPHESEY? (ALL DATES B.C.E.)



KEY EVENTS SURROUNDING EZEKIEL'S LIFETIME (ALL DATES B.C.E.)

KINGS OF JUDAH AND BABYLON





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.)

NOVEMBER 2020

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

During a heavy storm at sea, an angel assures Paul that everyone aboard the ship will survive the perilous journey (See study article 46, paragraph 5)

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89 *Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed*

(Luke 11:28)

1. If we have listened to Christ, will we show it?
His teaching shines as it shows us the way.
It makes us happy to hear and to know it,
But we'll be blessed if we know and obey.

(CHORUS)

*Listen, obey, and be blessed
When you hear God's will expressed.
If you'd be happy and enter his rest,
Listen, obey, and be blessed.*

2. Our way of life, like a house, gives protection
When it is built on the rock, not on sand.
If we apply Jesus' loving direction,
We'll build a life which on bedrock will stand.

(Chorus)

3. Just as a tree rooted deep by the waters
Gives of its fruit when each season arrives,
If we obey as God's own sons and daughters,
We'll all be blessed and enjoy endless lives.

(Chorus)

How to Help Others to Observe Christ's Commands

“Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”

—MATT. 28:19, 20.

SONG 89

Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed

PREVIEW

Jesus instructed his followers to make disciples and to teach them to **observe** all the things he had commanded them. This article considers how we can follow Jesus' instructions. The information is based in part on an article that was published in *The Watchtower* of July 1, 2004, pages 14-19.

AFTER Jesus was raised from the dead, he appeared to his disciples who were gathered in Galilee. He had something important to tell them. What was it? His words are found at **Matthew 28:18-20**.—**Read**.

² Jesus' command to make disciples also applies to each one of God's servants today. Therefore, let us consider three questions related to the assignment that Jesus has given us. First, in addition to teaching God's requirements to new disciples, what should we do? Second, how can all publishers in the congregation contribute to the spiritual growth of Bible students? Third, how can we help inactive fellow believers to share once again in the work of making disciples?

TEACH THEM TO OBSERVE

³ Jesus' instructions are clear. We must teach people the things that he commanded. However, we should not overlook an important detail. Jesus did not say: 'Teach them all the things I have commanded you.' Instead, he said: Teach them "to *observe* all the things I have commanded you." To apply that specific instruction when teaching a Bible student,

-
1. According to Matthew 28:18-20, what command did Jesus give?
 2. What questions will we consider?
 3. What specific instructions did Jesus include in his command?

we need to be not only teachers but also guides. (Acts 8:31) Why is that the case?

⁴ To “observe” a command means to obey it. To illustrate how we can teach someone to observe, or obey, the things that Christ commanded, think of this example. How does a driving instructor teach his students to observe the traffic laws? The instructor may first cover the rules of the road in a classroom setting. However, to teach his students how to obey those rules, he has to take another step. He has to accompany the students and guide them as they actually drive in traffic and try to put into practice what they have learned. What can we learn from that example?

⁵ When we study the Bible with others, we teach them what God requires of us. But we must do more. We must teach our Bible students to apply in their daily life what they learn. (Read John 14:15; 1 John 2:3.) By example, we can show our students how they can apply basic Scriptural principles at school, at work, or during recreation. We can relate an instance from our life to show them how applying the

4. What does it mean to observe a command? Illustrate.

5. (a) According to John 14:15 and 1 John 2:3, what do we need to teach our Bible students to do? (b) Give examples of how we can guide our students.

Bible's direction protected us from harm or how it helped us to make a wise decision. In the presence of our students, we can pray to Jehovah that the holy spirit guide them.—John 16:13.

⁶ What is included in teaching others to observe Jesus' commandments? We need to help our Bible students develop the desire to make disciples. For some students, the idea of sharing in the preaching work may be intimidating. So we need to be patient as we give them the sort of instruction that gradually deepens their understanding, touches their heart, and moves them to action. What approach could we take to help students to develop the desire to share the good news with others?

⁷ We might ask our Bible student such questions as these: "How has accepting the Kingdom message changed your life for the better? Do you think that others need to hear this message? What can you do to help them?" (Prov. 3:27; Matt. 9:37, 38) Show the student the tracts that are part of our Teaching Toolbox and let him choose which ones he thinks would appeal to his relatives, friends, or

6. What is included in teaching others to observe Jesus' commandments?

7. How can we help a student to develop the desire to share the good news with others?

coworkers.* Give the student a number of these tracts. Have a practice session to teach him how to offer a tract in a tactful way. Of course, after our student is approved as an unbaptized publisher, we will want to be at his side to guide him.—Eccl. 4:9, 10; Luke 6:40.

HOW THE CONGREGATION HELPS BIBLE STUDENTS TO PROGRESS

⁸ Keep in mind that Jesus instructed us to teach others “to observe *all* the things” he commanded. That certainly includes the two greatest commands—to love God and to love neighbor—both of which are closely connected to the preaching and disciple-making work. (Matt. 22:37-39) What is the connection? A principal motive for sharing in the preaching work is love—our love for God and our love for neighbor. Understandably for some Bible students, the thought of sharing in the preaching work may cause fear. But we can assure such students that with Jehovah’s help they will gradually be able to overcome the fear of man. (Ps. 18:1-3; Prov. 29:25) The

* For simplicity we here refer to the student in the masculine gender.

8. Why is it important that our students develop strong love for God and for neighbor? (See also the box “How to Deepen Our Bible Students’ Love for God.”)

box that accompanies this article describes what steps we can take to help our student to grow in his love for God. In addition, what can the congregation do to help new disciples to grow in showing love?

⁹ Think again of the illustration of the student driver. As he moves through traffic with the instructor at his side, in what ways is the student learning? By listening to his instructor and by observing other careful drivers. For instance, the instructor may point out a driver who kindly allows another to merge in front of him into traffic. Or he may call attention to a driver who courteously dims his car's bright headlights so as not to blind other drivers. Such examples teach the student valuable lessons that he can apply when he is driving.

¹⁰ Similarly, a Bible student who begins to travel on the road to life learns not only from his teacher but also from the fine examples of other servants of Jehovah. Therefore, what will greatly help Bible students to make spiritual progress? Attending our Christian meetings. Why so? The Scriptural instruction given at the meetings will deepen their knowledge, strengthen their faith, and help

9. In the illustration of the student driver, in what ways is the student learning valuable lessons?

10. What will help a Bible student to make spiritual progress?

HOW TO DEEPEN OUR BIBLE STUDENTS’ LOVE FOR GOD



ENCOURAGE THEM TO READ

Encourage Bible students to *read* the Bible even if only for a few minutes every day. Give them a copy of a Bible reading schedule. (See the printable “Bible Reading Schedule.” On jw.org, go to BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE STUDY TOOLS.) Encourage them to *watch* the introductory videos for Bible books, and show them where the videos are found on our website.



HELP THEM TO MEDITATE

Help Bible students to *meditate* on God’s Word. Using “An Introduction to God’s Word,” in the front of the *New World Translation*, show them question 20, “How can you get the



most out of your Bible reading?” Explain how the four questions listed there can help them to meditate. To demonstrate this method, read a portion of the Bible together and then answer the four questions. By teaching this method, we enable students to find Bible gems on their own, which will give them joy and will draw them closer to Jehovah.

TEACH THEM TO PRAY

Teach Bible students to *pray* to Jehovah, and help them to understand what can be included in their prayers. Use such scriptures as Psalm 25:4, 5 and 1 John 5:14, 15 to explain why praying to Jehovah is so important. When you pray before and after the Bible study, be specific. Express thoughts that reflect your sincere interest in the student. When our heartfelt prayers reveal our love for Jehovah, our student will be moved to offer his own heartfelt prayers to God. Such prayers will help him to develop the desire to obey Jehovah and follow Christ’s commandments.



them to grow in their love for God. (Acts 15:30-32) Furthermore, at the meetings the Bible teacher can introduce the student to brothers and sisters with whom he may have much in common. What examples of Christian love in action may the student see in the congregation? Consider the following scenarios.

¹¹ A Bible student who is a single parent observes a Christian sister who is in a similar situation. It touches the student's heart to see how much effort the sister makes to come to the Kingdom Hall with her small children. A student who struggles to quit smoking gets acquainted with a publisher who had a similar struggle but was able to overcome it. The publisher tells the student how his own growing love for Jehovah moved him to obey God's commandments. (2 Cor. 7:1; Phil. 4:13) After listening to the publisher's personal story, the student feels more confident when the brother assures him, "You can quit too." A young woman who is a Bible student notices a young sister who clearly enjoys her life as a Witness. What the Bible student notices about the young sister's joyful disposition makes her want to learn more about why the sister always seems to be happy.

11. What examples may a student notice in the congregation, and what effect may they have on a student?

¹² When Bible students get to know a variety of faithful publishers, the students learn from their examples what it means to observe Christ’s command to love God and neighbor. (John 13:35; 1 Tim. 4:12) Moreover, as previously noted, a Bible student can learn from publishers who deal with challenges that are similar to the ones the student faces. The student learns from such examples that the changes he needs to make to become a disciple of Christ are within reach. (Deut. 30:11) Each one in the congregation can contribute in various ways to the spiritual progress of Bible students. (Matt. 5:16) What efforts do you personally make to encourage Bible students who come to the meetings?

HELP INACTIVE ONES TO SHARE ONCE AGAIN

¹³ We want to help our inactive brothers and sisters to share once again in fulfilling Christ’s commission to make disciples. The way Jesus treated his downhearted apostles shows what we may do today.

¹⁴ At the end of Jesus’ ministry on earth when his death was imminent, the apostles “all abandoned

12. Why can we say that each one in the congregation has a role in helping Bible students?

13-14. How did Jesus treat his downhearted apostles?

him and fled.” (Mark 14:50; John 16:32) How did Jesus treat his apostles when they were temporarily in a weakened condition? Shortly after his resurrection, Jesus told some of his followers: “Have no fear! Go, report to my brothers [that I was raised].” (Matt. 28:10a) Jesus did not give up on his apostles. Even though they had abandoned him, he still called them “my brothers.” Like Jehovah, Jesus was merciful and forgiving.—2 Ki. 13:23.

¹⁵ Likewise, we have deep concern for those who have stopped sharing in the ministry. They are our brothers and sisters, and we love them! We still remember the labors of love that those fellow believers performed in the past—some perhaps for decades. (Heb. 6:10) We truly miss them! (Luke 15: 4-7) In imitation of Jesus, in what ways may we express our concern for them?

¹⁶ *Give a warm invitation.* One way that Jesus encouraged his downhearted apostles was by inviting them to a meeting. (Matt. 28:10b; 1 Cor. 15:6) Similarly today, we can encourage inactive ones to attend the congregation meetings if they are not al-

15. How do we feel about those who have stopped sharing in the ministry?

16. How can we express our concern for our inactive brothers and sisters?

ready doing so. We realize that we may need to invite them several times before they respond. Jesus no doubt was delighted that his disciples responded to his invitation.—Compare Matthew 28:16 and Luke 15:6.

¹⁷ *Give a heartfelt welcome.* Jesus made his disciples feel welcome when they met with him; he took the initiative to speak to them. (Matt. 28:18) How will we react when an inactive one arrives at the Kingdom Hall? We should take the initiative by warmly welcoming him. At first, we may worry that we will not know what to say. But without making him feel uncomfortable, we can simply tell him how happy we are to see him.

¹⁸ *Give sincere reassurance.* Jesus' disciples probably felt overwhelmed by the commission to preach in all the world. Jesus reassured his followers by saying: "I am with you all the days." (Matt. 28:20) Was his approach effective? Yes. Before long, they were busy "teaching and declaring the good news." (Acts 5:42) Inactive publishers also need reassurance. They may feel overwhelmed by the thought of preaching again. We can reassure them

17. How should we react when an inactive one attends a meeting?

18. How can we reassure inactive publishers?

that they will not have to preach alone. When they are ready, we can accompany them in the ministry. They will no doubt appreciate our support as they begin preaching the good news once again. When we view and treat inactive ones as our brothers and sisters, we may see heartwarming results in our congregation.

WE WANT TO FINISH THE WORK ENTRUSTED TO US

¹⁹ Until when should we continue with disciple making? Throughout the conclusion of this system of things. (Matt. 28:20; see Glossary, “Conclusion of the system of things.”) Will we be able to fulfill this aspect of Jesus’ commission? We are determined to do so! We gladly give of our time, energy, and resources to find those who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life.” (Acts 13:48) When we do this, we follow Jesus’ example. He stated: “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to *finish* his work.” (John 4:34; 17:4) That is also our heartfelt desire. We want to finish the work that has been entrusted to us. (John 20:21) And we want others, including inactive ones, to endure in this work with us.—Matt. 24:13.

19. What is our heartfelt desire, and why?

²⁰ Granted, fulfilling Jesus' great commission is a challenge. However, we are not facing this task alone. Jesus promised that he would be with us. We carry out the assignment to make disciples as "God's fellow workers" and "in company with Christ." (1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 2:17) Therefore, we *can* accomplish it. What a privilege and pleasure it is to carry out this assignment and help others to do so as well!—Read **Philippians 4:13**.

20. According to Philippians 4:13, why can we accomplish the work that Jesus commanded us to do?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 8-9: The sister conducting the Bible study explains what steps the student needs to take to deepen her love for God. Later, the student applies the three suggestions that she received from her Bible teacher.

HOW CAN WE . . .

- help our Bible students to observe Jesus' commands?
- encourage Bible students who attend meetings?
- help inactive ones to start preaching once again?

SONG 79

Teach Them to Stand Firm

79 *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

1. What a joy to teach Jehovah's sheep
And to see how they have grown.
We have seen how he has guided them
As they've made the truth their own.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, may you hear our prayer
And keep them in your watchful care.
In Jesus' name, for them we plead: May they succeed;
May ev'ry one of them stand firm.*

2. Ev'ry day we said a prayer for them,
As their faith was under test.
We made time to teach and care for them;
They've grown strong, and they've been blessed.

(Chorus)

3. May they all maintain their confidence,
Trust in God and in his Son.
Through endurance and obedience,
May their race for life be won.

(Chorus)