

Song 81 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“How Can You Imitate the Nazirites?”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

Nu 6:6, 7—How could Samson touch dead bodies that he had slain and still remain a Nazirite? (w05 1/15 30 ¶2)

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.) Nu 5:1-18 (10)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Initial Call: (3 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Who Are We?* (1)

Return Visit: (4 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer a publication from our Teaching Toolbox. (3)

Talk: (5 min.) w06 1/15 32—Theme: A Spectacular Discovery That Testifies to the Historicity of the Bible. (13)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 76

“Will You Serve as an Auxiliary Pioneer in March or April?”: (5 min.) Discussion.

Memorial Campaign to Begin Saturday, February 27: (10 min.) Discussion. Give everyone a copy of the invitation, and briefly review it. Outline local arrangements for covering the territory. Play the sample presentation video. Then ask the audience: When should the video *Remember Jesus’ Death* be played? What are some ways that a householder might show interest?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 5 ¶9-16

 How Can You Imitate the Nazirites?

Nazirites practiced self-denial (Nu 6:2-4; it-2 477)

Nazirites were submissive to Jehovah’s will (Nu 6:5)

Nazirites remained clean before Jehovah (Nu 6:6, 7)

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The Life of a Pioneer

(Ecclesiastes 11:6)

1. At the start of the day, with the sun yet to rise,
We are making our way
with the sleep in our eyes, and we pray.
We are there with a smile for the people we meet.
Some may stop for a while,
some pass by on the street, but we stay.

(CHORUS)

It's the life that we choose;

For Jehovah we live.

And whatever he asks, we will do.

In the work we endure,

Whether sunshine or rain.

It's a way we can say ev'ry day: "I love you."

2. At the end of the day, with the sun sinking low,
Feeling happy and tired,
in our heart there's a glow, and we pray.
It's a life that we love, always giving our best.
And Jehovah we thank,
for by him we are blessed ev'ry day.

(Chorus)

Numbers 5-6

⁵ Jehovah spoke further to Moses, saying: ² “Command the Israelites to send out of the camp every leprous person and everyone having a discharge and everyone unclean by a dead person. ³ Whether a male or a female, you should send them out. You should send them outside the camp, so that they may not contaminate the camps of those in whose midst I am dwelling.” ⁴ Therefore, the Israelites did so and sent them outside the camp. Just as Jehovah told Moses, so the Israelites did.

⁵ Jehovah continued speaking to Moses, saying: ⁶ “Tell the Israelites, ‘If a man or a woman commits any of the sins of mankind and acts unfaithfully toward Jehovah, that person has become guilty. ⁷ He must confess the sin that he has committed and return the full amount as compensation for his guilt and also add a fifth of its value; he is to give it to the one he wronged. ⁸ But if the victim does not have a close relative to receive the compensation, it should be returned to Jehovah and will belong to the priest, apart from the ram of atonement with which he will make atonement for him.

⁹ “Every holy contribution from the Israelites that is presented to the priest should become his. ¹⁰ The holy things of each person will remain his own. Whatever each one gives to the priest, that will belong to the priest.”

¹¹ Jehovah went on to speak to Moses, saying: ¹² “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘This is what should be done if a man’s wife goes astray and is unfaithful to him ¹³ and

another man has sexual relations with her, but it was unknown to her husband and remains undiscovered, so that she has defiled herself but there is no witness against her and she has not been caught: ¹⁴ Whether the husband becomes jealous and suspicious of his wife's faithfulness when she has defiled herself, or whether he is jealous and suspicious of his wife's faithfulness when she has not defiled herself, ¹⁵ the man must bring his wife to the priest, along with an offering for her, a tenth of an e'phah of barley flour. He must not pour oil on it nor put frankincense on it, because it is a grain offering of jealousy, a grain offering bringing guilt to mind.

¹⁶ “The priest will bring her forward and make her stand before Jehovah. ¹⁷ The priest will take holy water in an earthenware vessel, and the priest will take some of the dust from the floor of the tabernacle and put it in the water. ¹⁸ And the priest will make the woman stand before Jehovah and unbind the woman's hair and put in her palms the grain offering for a reminder, that is, the grain offering of jealousy, and the priest will have in his hand the bitter water that brings a curse.

¹⁹ “The priest will then make her swear, saying to the woman: “If no other man had sexual relations with you while you were under your husband's authority and you have not gone astray and become defiled, may you be free of the effect of this bitter water that brings a curse. ²⁰ But if you have gone astray while under your husband's authority by defiling yourself, and you have had sexual relations with

another man besides your husband—”²¹ The priest will then make the woman swear an oath that includes a curse, and the priest will say to the woman: “May Jehovah make you an object for cursing and for an oath among your people, as Jehovah makes your thigh fall away and causes your abdomen to swell.”²² This water that brings a curse will enter into your intestines to cause your abdomen to swell and make your thigh fall away.” To this the woman should say: “Amen! Amen!”

²³ “Then the priest should write these curses in the book and wash them off into the bitter water.”²⁴ He will then make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and the water that brings a curse will enter into her and produce bitterness.²⁵ And the priest should take the grain offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand and wave the grain offering back and forth before Jehovah, and he will bring it near the altar.²⁶ The priest will take a handful of the grain offering as a token offering and make it smoke on the altar, and afterward he will make the woman drink the water.²⁷ When he makes her drink the water, if she has defiled herself and committed an act of unfaithfulness toward her husband, the water that brings a curse will then enter into her and become something bitter, and her abdomen will swell, and her thigh will fall away, and the woman will become an object of cursing among her people.²⁸ However, if the woman has not defiled herself and is clean, she will then be free from such punishment, and she will be able to conceive and produce offspring.

²⁹ “This is the law about jealousy, when a woman may go astray and defile herself while under her husband’s authority,
³⁰ or in the case of a man who becomes jealous and suspects his wife of unfaithfulness; he should make his wife stand before Jehovah, and the priest must carry out toward her all this law. ³¹ The man will be free from guilt, but his wife will answer for her guilt.”

6 Jehovah spoke further to Moses and said: ² “Speak to the Israelites and tell them, ‘If a man or a woman takes a special vow to live as a Naz’i-rite to Jehovah, ³ he should keep away from wine and other alcoholic beverages. He should not drink the vinegar of wine or the vinegar of anything alcoholic. He should not drink any liquid made from grapes, nor eat grapes, whether fresh or dried. ⁴ All the days of his Naziriteship he should not eat anything made from the grapevine, from the unripe grapes to the skins.

⁵ “All the days of the vow of his Naziriteship no razor should pass over his head. He is to remain holy by letting the hair of his head grow until the days of his being set apart to Jehovah are completed. ⁶ He should not approach a dead person during all the days he remains separated to Jehovah. ⁷ Even if his father or his mother or his brother or his sister should die, he may not defile himself, because the sign of his Naziriteship to his God is upon his head.

⁸ “He is holy to Jehovah all the days of his Naziriteship. ⁹ But if someone should suddenly die alongside him and he defiles the hair symbolizing his separation to God, he must shave his head on the day he establishes his purification. He

should shave it on the seventh day. ¹⁰ And on the eighth day, he should bring two turtledoves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹¹ The priest will prepare one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering and make atonement for him for his sin in connection with the dead person. Then he must sanctify his head on that day. ¹² And he must separate himself again to Jehovah for the days of his Naziriteship, and he will bring a young ram in its first year as a guilt offering. However, the former days will go uncounted because he defiled his Naziriteship.

¹³ “Now this is the law about the Naz'i-rite: When he completes the days of his Naziriteship, he will be brought to the entrance of the tent of meeting. ¹⁴ There he must present his offering to Jehovah: one sound young ram in its first year as a burnt offering, one sound female lamb in its first year as a sin offering, one sound ram as a communion sacrifice, ¹⁵ a basket of unleavened ring-shaped loaves of fine flour mixed with oil, unleavened wafers smeared with oil, and their grain offering and their drink offerings. ¹⁶ The priest will present them before Jehovah and will offer up his sin offering and his burnt offering. ¹⁷ He will offer the ram as a communion sacrifice to Jehovah along with the basket of unleavened loaves, and the priest will present its grain offering and its drink offering.

¹⁸ “The Naz'i-rite must then shave the uncut hair of his head at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and he will take the hair of his head grown during his Naziriteship and put it

on the fire that is under the communion sacrifice. ¹⁹ And the priest must take a boiled shoulder from the ram, one unleavened ring-shaped loaf from the basket, and one unleavened wafer, and put them on the palms of the Naz'i-rite after he has had the sign of his Naziriteship shaved off. ²⁰ And the priest must wave them back and forth as a wave offering before Jehovah. It is something holy for the priest, along with the breast of the wave offering and the leg of the contribution. Afterward, the Naz'i-rite may drink wine.

²¹ “This is the law about the Naz'i-rite who makes a vow: If he vows and can afford to make an offering to Jehovah that is beyond the requirements of his Naziriteship, he must then carry out his vow out of regard for the law of his Naziriteship.”

²² Then Jehovah said to Moses: ²³ “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is the way you should bless the people of Israel. Say to them:

²⁴ “May Jehovah bless you and safeguard you.

²⁵ May Jehovah make his face shine upon you, and may he favor you.

²⁶ May Jehovah lift up his face toward you and grant you peace.”

²⁷ And they must place my name upon the people of Israel, that I may bless them.”

Song 81 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 min.)



**TREASURES
FROM GOD'S WORD**

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(10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

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**LIVING
AS CHRISTIANS**

Song 76

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Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)
rr chap. 5 ¶9-16



How Can You Imitate the Nazirites?

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February 22-28 / Numbers 5-6

Song 81 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"How Can You Imitate the Nazirites?": (10 minutes)

Nazirites practiced self-denial

Numbers 6:2-4: "Speak to the Israelites and tell them, 'If a man or a woman takes a special vow to live as a Nazirite to Jehovah, he should keep away from wine and other alcoholic beverages. He should not drink the vinegar of wine or the vinegar of anything alcoholic. He should not drink any liquid made from grapes, nor eat grapes, whether fresh or dried. All the days of his Naziriteship he should not eat anything made from the grapevine, from the unripe grapes to the skins.

it-2 477

There were three principal restrictions resting on those taking the Nazirite vow: (1) They were to drink no intoxicating beverage; neither were they to eat any product

of the grapevine, whether unripe, ripe, or dried, nor drink any of its juice, whether in the fresh, fermented, or vinegar state. (2) They were not to cut the hair of their heads. (3) They were not to touch a dead body, even that of the closest relative—father, mother, brother, or sister.—Numbers 6:1-7.

Special Vows. The person taking this special vow was “to live as a Nazirite [that is, dedicated, separated] to Jehovah” and not for the plaudits of men due to a showy display of fanatical asceticism. Rather, “all the days of his Naziriteship he is holy to Jehovah.”—Numbers 6:2, 8; compare Genesis 49:26, footnote.

The requirements laid on Nazirites, therefore, had special significance and meaning in the worship of Jehovah. Like the high priest who, because of his holy office, was to touch no dead body, not even that of one of his closest relatives, so too the Nazirite. The high priest and the underpriests, because of the serious responsibility of their offices, were forbidden to drink wine or intoxicating liquor when performing their sacred duties before Jehovah.—Leviticus 10:8-11; 21:10, 11.

Furthermore, the Nazirite (Hebrew, *nazir'*) "should prove holy by letting the locks of the hair of his head grow," such serving as a crowning sign by which all could quickly recognize his holy Naziriteship. (Numbers 6:5) The same Hebrew word *nazir'* was used in regard to the "unpruned" vines during the sacred Sabbath and Jubilee years. (Leviticus 25:5, 11) Interesting too is the fact that the gold plate on the front of the turban of the high priest, engraved with the words "Holiness belongs to Jehovah," was called "the holy sign of dedication [Hebrew, *ne'zer*, from the same root as *nazir'*]." (Exodus 39:30, 31) Likewise, the official headpiece, or diadem, worn by Israel's anointed kings was also called a *ne'zer*. (2 Samuel 1:10; 2 Kings 11:12; see CROWN; DEDICATION.) In the Christian congregation the apostle says that a woman's long hair is given to her instead of a headdress. It is a natural reminder to her that she is in a position different from the man; she should be mindful of her submissive position under God's arrangement. So such requirements—uncut hair (unnatural for the man), total abstinence from wine as well as the need to be clean and undefiled—impressed on the dedicated Nazirite the

importance of self-denial and complete submission to the will of Jehovah.—1 Corinthians 11:2-16; see HAIR; HEAD COVERING; NATURE.

Nazirites were submissive to Jehovah's will

Numbers 6:5: "All the days of the vow of his Naziriteship no razor should pass over his head. He is to remain holy by letting the hair of his head grow until the days of his being set apart to Jehovah are completed.

Nazirites remained clean before Jehovah

Numbers 6:6, 7: He should not approach a dead person during all the days he remains separated to Jehovah. Even if his father or his mother or his brother or his sister should die, he may not defile himself, because the sign of his Naziriteship to his God is upon his head.

Full-time servants today show a spirit of self-sacrifice and

submission to Jehovah and his arrangements.

[Image:] Collage: Brothers and sisters in the full-time service.

1. Two pioneer brothers preach to a man on a donkey. 2. A brother and sister perform construction work.

Spiritual Gems

Numbers 6:6, 7—How could Samson touch dead bodies that he had slain and still remain a Nazirite?

Numbers 6:6, 7: He should not approach a dead person during all the days he remains separated to Jehovah. Even if his father or his mother or his brother or his sister should die, he may not defile himself, because the sign of his Naziriteship to his God is upon his head.

***w05* 1/15 30 paragraph 2**

Samson, though, was a Nazirite in a different sense. Before Samson's birth, Jehovah's angel told his mother: "Look! you will be pregnant, and you will certainly give birth to a son, and no razor should come upon his head, because a Nazirite of God is what the child will become on leaving the belly; and he it is who will take the lead in saving Israel out of the

hand of the Philistines.” (Judges 13:5) Samson took no vow of Naziriteship. He was a Nazirite by divine appointment, and his Naziriteship was for life. The restriction against touching a corpse could not apply in his case. If it did and he accidentally touched a dead body, how could he start over a lifelong Naziriteship that began with his birth? Evidently, then, the requirements for lifetime Nazirites differed in some ways from those for voluntary Nazirites.

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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?



mw21.01-E
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“The Earliest Known Citations of Biblical Texts”

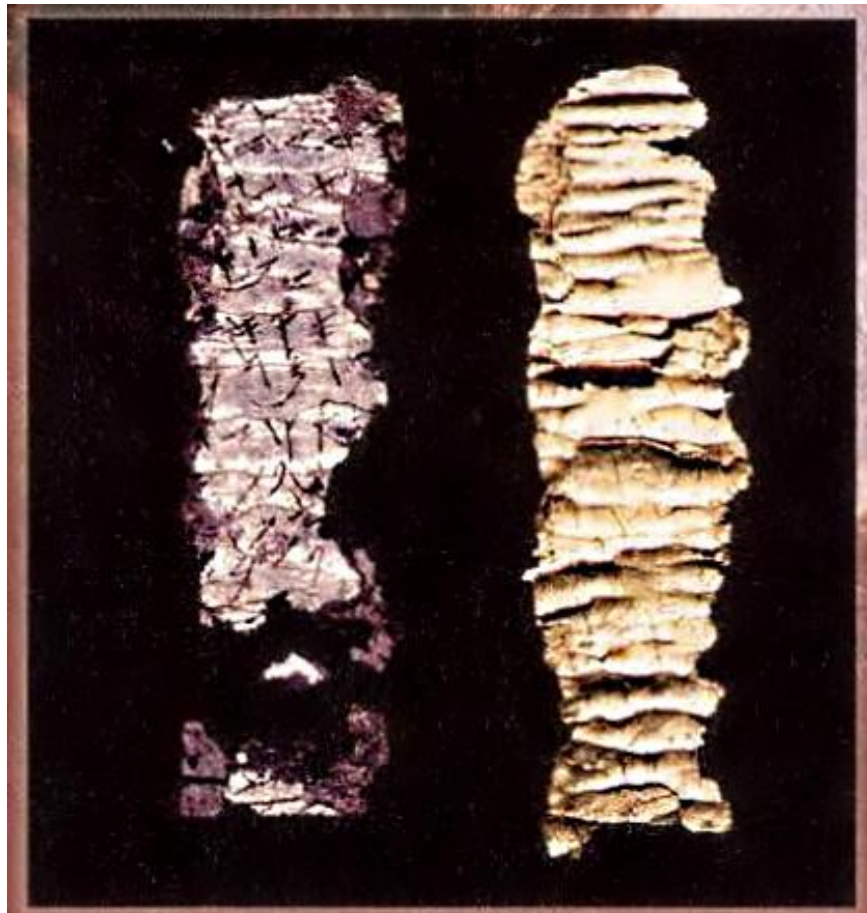
TWENTY-FIVE years ago, Israeli archaeologists made a spectacular discovery. In a burial cave on the slopes of the Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem, they found two small silver scrolls with Biblical texts recorded on them. The scrolls dated back to the time before the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E. The texts quoted part of the blessings recorded at Numbers 6:24-26. God’s personal name, Jehovah, appeared several times on both scrolls. The inscriptions have been described as “the earliest known artifacts from the ancient world that document passages from the Hebrew Bible.”

Some scholars, however, contested the dating and argued that the scrolls were written in the second century B.C.E. One reason for this disagreement was that the quality of the original photographs of these very small scrolls did not allow for a close enough examination of the details. To solve the dating problem, a team of scholars undertook a new study. They used the latest photographic and computer-imaging technology to produce high-resolution digital images of the scrolls. The results of the new analyses were recently published. What conclusions did the team of scholars reach?

First of all, the scholars emphasize that the *archaeological* data support a date before the Babylonian exile. The *paleographic* observations—the dating of scripts from the shape, form, stance, stroke order, and direction—point to the same time period, that is, to the end of the seventh

century B.C.E. And finally, when considering the *orthography*, the science of spelling, this team concludes: “The orthographic data in the plaques [scrolls] is consistent with the archaeological and palaeographical evidence in terms of the dating of the inscriptions.”

The journal *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* sums up the study of the silver scrolls, also known as the Ketef Hinnom inscriptions, as follows: “We can thus reassert the conclusion reached by most scholars that the inscriptions found on these plaques preserve the earliest known citations of biblical texts.”



[Picture Credit Lines on page 32] Cave: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.; inscriptions: Photograph © Israel Museum, Jerusalem; courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

76 *How Does It Make You Feel?*

(Hebrews 13:15)

1. How does it make you feel
 when you preach and teach with zeal,
When you know you've done your part
 to reach an honest heart?
Knowing you've done your best;
 then our God will do the rest.
Honest hearts he surely knows—
 all those to him disposed.

(CHORUS)

*It makes us glad, and we rejoice
 to give our heart and mind and voice.
So may our sacrifice of praise
 continue all our days.*

2. How does it make you feel
 when the words you speak appeal
To the ones whose heart is right
 for everlasting life?
Some people turn away,
 others might be led astray.
Still we're glad to bear his name
 and witness just the same.

(Chorus)

3. How does it make you feel,
knowing God's support is real,
And that he's entrusted you
to do the work we do?
Proudly we preach and teach,
using bold but gracious speech,
Searching out deserving ones;
this work will soon be done.

(CHORUS)

*It makes us glad, and we rejoice
to give our heart and mind and voice.
So may our sacrifice of praise
continue all our days.*

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WHAT

A commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ.

WHY

To remember what he did in giving his life for us.

WHEN
AND
WHERE

See inside for the date, time, and location.

There is no admittance fee, and no collections will be taken.



Scan code or visit jw.org to watch the brief video *Why Did Jesus Die?*

(Look under ABOUT US > MEMORIAL)



**You Are
Welcome
to Attend!**



© 2021 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania

On the night before he died, Jesus told his followers to commemorate his death. He said:

“Keep doing this in remembrance of me.”

—Luke 22:19.



In connection with this event, a special Bible talk will be given in thousands of locations around the world. The topic, date, time, and location will be:

Have You Found a “Pearl of High Value”?

This event will be held virtually.
To learn more, ask one of Jehovah’s Witnesses
or visit www.jw.org.

Please join us for the **annual commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ**. The date, time, and location will be:

Saturday, March 27, 2021

This event will be held virtually.
To learn more, ask one of Jehovah’s Witnesses
or visit www.jw.org.

Scan code for
additional locations



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think: For over 400 years, the temple sanctuary had been associated with Jehovah's presence. (1 Ki. 8:10-13) But now, by bringing idolatry right into the temple area, those idolaters made Jehovah "go far away from [his] sanctuary."

⁸ What meaning does Ezekiel's vision of the symbol of jealousy have for our day? Apostate Judah certainly reminds us of Christendom. Idolatry is widespread in the churches of Christendom, which makes invalid any devotion that the people claim to give to God. Since Jehovah does not change, we can be sure that Christendom, like apostate Judah, has provoked his righteous anger. (Jas. 1:17) Surely, Jehovah is far away from this distorted form of Christianity!

⁹ What warning lesson can we learn from those idolaters in the temple? To render exclusive devotion to Jehovah, we must "flee from idolatry." (1 Cor. 10:14) We might think, 'I would never use images or symbols in my worship of Jehovah!' But

8. What meaning does Ezekiel's vision of the symbol of jealousy have for our day?

9, 10. What warning lesson can we learn from the idolaters in the temple?

idolatry comes in various forms, some more subtle than others. One Bible reference work puts it this way: “One may think of idolatry as a metaphor for other goods—anything of value, worth, or power that becomes our ultimate concern to the exclusion of God.” Idolatry, then, can include material possessions, money, sex, entertainment—really, anything that could take first place in our lives and thus replace the exclusive devotion that is due Jehovah. (Matt. 6:19-21, 24; Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5) We must guard against every form of idolatry because Jehovah has exclusive claim to our hearts—and our worship! —1 John 5:21.

¹⁰ The first scene that Jehovah showed Ezekiel involved “terrible, detestable things.” Yet, Jehovah told his faithful prophet: “You will see detestable things that are even more terrible.” What could be more terrible than the worship of that idolatrous symbol of jealousy in the temple area?

Second Scene: 70 Elders Offering Incense to False Gods

¹¹ **Read Ezekiel 8:7-12.** Boring through a wall and

11. What disturbing things did Ezekiel see after entering the inner courtyard near the temple altar?



entering the inner courtyard near the temple altar, Ezekiel now saw disturbing wall carvings of “creeping things and loathsome beasts and all the disgusting idols.”*^[3] Those wall carvings represented false gods. Even more disturbing is what Ezekiel saw next: “70 of the elders of the house of Israel” were standing “in the darkness” and offering incense to the false gods. Under the Law, the burning of sweet-smelling incense represented the acceptable prayers offered up by faithful worshippers. (Ps. 141:2) However, the incense that those 70 elders offered up to false gods was an unholy stench to Jehovah. Their prayers were like an offensive odor to him. (Prov. 15:8) Those elders fooled themselves into thinking: “Jehovah is not seeing us.” But Jehovah did see them, and he showed Ezekiel exactly what they were doing in His temple!

¹² What can we learn from Ezekiel’s account of those 70 Israelite elders who offered incense to false

*^[3] The Hebrew term rendered “disgusting idols” may be related to a Hebrew word for “dung” and is used as an expression of contempt.

12. Why must we remain faithful even “in the darkness,” and who especially should set a good example in this regard?

gods? For our prayers to be heard by God—and to keep our worship pure in his eyes—we must remain faithful even “in the darkness.” (Prov. 15:29) Let us keep in mind that Jehovah’s all-seeing eyes are ever upon us. If Jehovah is real to us, we will not do anything in private that we know is displeasing to him. (Heb. 4:13) Especially must congregation elders set a good example in Christian living. (1 Pet. 5:2, 3) Those in the congregation rightly expect that an elder who stands before them and leads them in worship at a meeting is living by Bible principles even “in the darkness,” that is, when others may not see him.—Ps. 101: 2, 3.

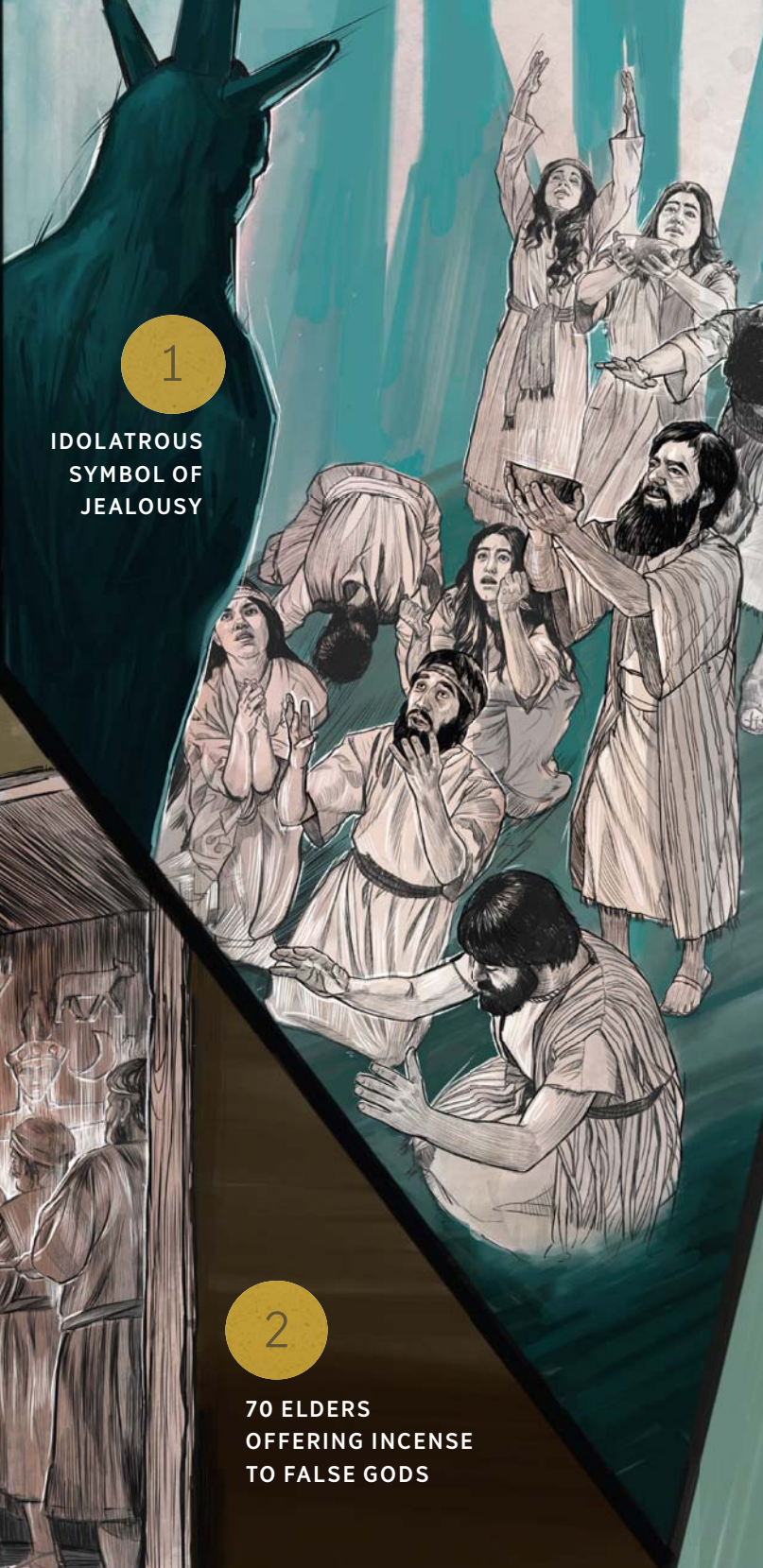
Third Scene: “Women . . . Weeping Over the God Tammuz”

¹³ Read Ezekiel 8:13, 14. Following the first two scenes of detestable practices, Jehovah again told Ezekiel: “You will see detestable things that are even more terrible than they are doing.” What, then, did the prophet see next? At “the entrance of the north gate of the house of Jehovah,” he saw “women sitting and **13. What did Ezekiel see apostate women doing at one of the temple gates?**

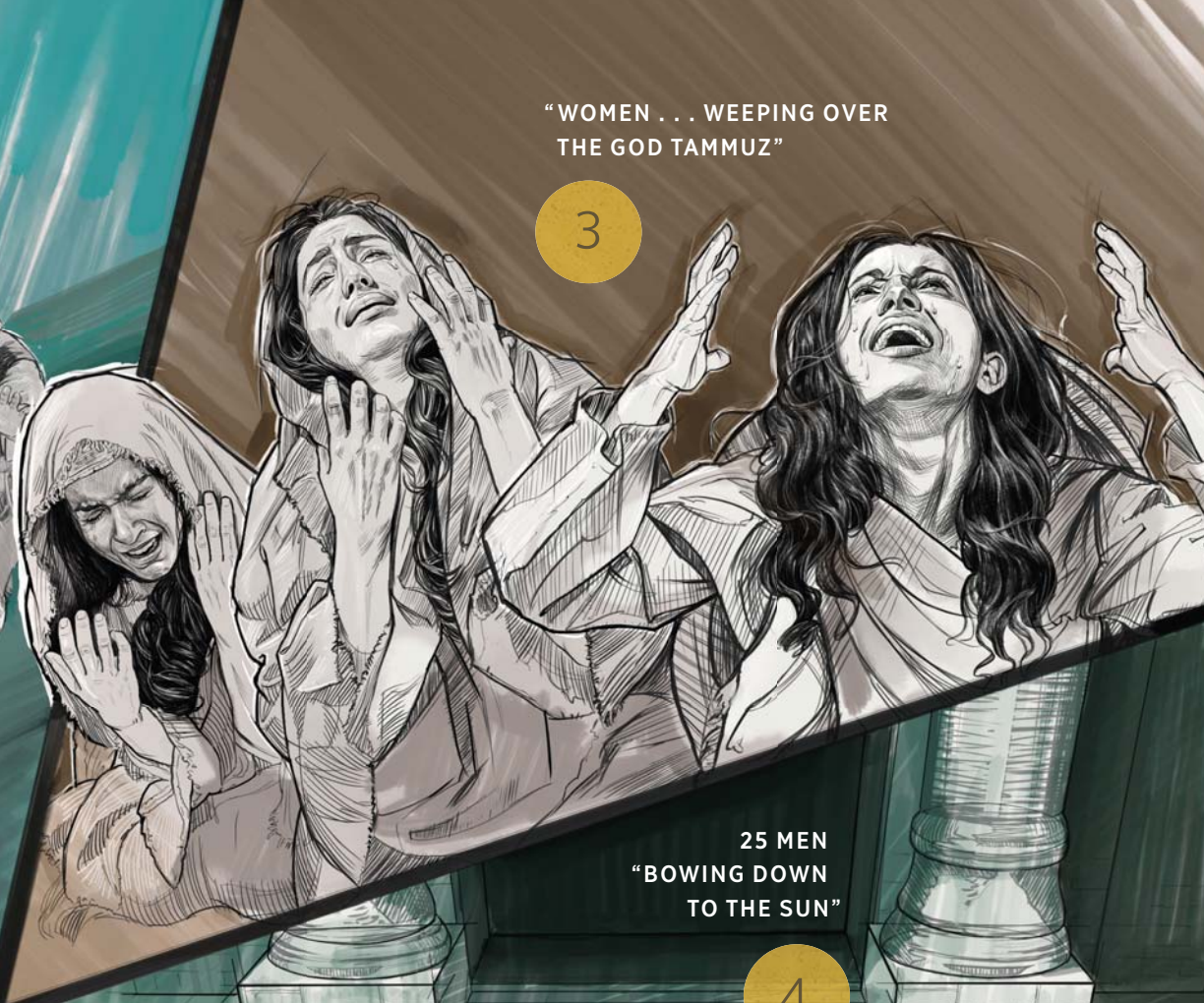
“SON OF MAN, DO YOU SEE THIS?”

SEE PARAGRAPHS 7-18

The four disgusting things that Ezekiel saw in the courtyard and the temple. (Ezek. 8:5-16)



1
IDOLATROUS
SYMBOL OF
JEALOUSY



“WOMEN . . . WEEPING OVER
THE GOD TAMMUZ”

3



2

**70 ELDERS
OFFERING INCENSE
TO FALSE GODS**



**25 MEN
“BOWING DOWN
TO THE SUN”**

4

weeping over the god Tammuz.” A deity of Mesopotamia, Tammuz is called Dumuzi in Sumerian texts and is thought to have been the consort of the fertility goddess Ishtar.*^[4] The Israelite women were evidently weeping as part of some religious ritual connected with the death of Tammuz. By weeping over Tammuz in Jehovah’s temple, those women were carrying out a pagan ritual in a center for pure worship. But a false religious observance was not sanctified by being carried out in God’s temple. Why, from Jehovah’s standpoint, those apostate women were doing “detestable things”!

¹⁴ What lesson can we learn from Jehovah’s view of what those women were doing? To keep our worship pure, we must never mix it with unclean pagan practices. Hence, we must have nothing to do with observances that have pagan religious origins. Does origin really matter? Yes! Today the practices associated with certain observances, such as Christmas

*^[4] There is no factual basis for the claim that Tammuz is another name for Nimrod.

14. What lesson can we learn from Jehovah’s view of what the apostate women were doing?

and Easter, may seem harmless. But let us not forget that Jehovah saw firsthand the pagan religious practices that eventually have become modern-day observances. In Jehovah's view, pagan practices do not become less detestable with the passage of time or through efforts to mix them with pure worship.—2 Cor. 6:17; Rev. 18:2, 4.

Fourth Scene: 25 Men “Bowing Down to the Sun”

¹⁵ **Read Ezekiel 8:15-18.** Jehovah introduced the fourth and final scene with the now familiar words: “You will see detestable things that are even more terrible than these.” Perhaps the prophet wondered: “What could be more terrible than the things I have already seen?” Ezekiel was now in the inner courtyard of the temple. There, at the entrance of the temple, he saw 25 men bowing down to worship “the sun in the east.” Those men could hardly have found a way to offend Jehovah more deeply. How so?

¹⁶ Picture the scene: God's temple was built with the entrance facing east. Worshippers entering the 15, 16. **What were 25 men doing in the inner courtyard of the temple, and why did their actions deeply offend Jehovah?**

temple would be facing west, with their backs to the rising sun in the east. But the 25 men in the vision turned their “backs to the temple” and faced east so that they could worship the sun. In so doing, they turned their backs on Jehovah, for that temple was “the house of Jehovah.” (1 Ki. 8:10-13) Those 25 men were apostates. They ignored Jehovah, and they violated the command recorded at Deuteronomy 4:15-19. How they offended the God who rightly deserves exclusive devotion!

¹⁷ What can we learn from the account of those sun worshippers? To keep our worship pure, we must look to Jehovah for spiritual enlightenment. Remember, “Jehovah God is a sun,” and his Word is “a light” for our path. (Ps. 84:11; 119:105) Through his Word and Bible-based publications from his organization, he illuminates our hearts and minds, showing us how to follow a course that leads to a satisfying life now and to everlasting life in the future. If we were to look instead to this world for enlightenment on how to

17, 18. (a) What lesson can we learn from the account of the sun worshippers in the temple? (b) The apostate Israelites damaged what relationships, and how?

1. We guard our hearts, it means our life;
 We shun the path of sin.
 God reads the heart, and there he finds
 The person deep within.
 Sometimes the heart deceives the mind,
 And we begin to stray.
 So may our mind direct our heart
 And keep Jehovah's way.
2. Prepared in heart, we search for God
 By means of earnest prayer.
 Each day we give him praise and thanks,
 Revealing ev'ry care.
 The things Jehovah teaches us,
 We gladly will obey.
 We cultivate a loyal heart,
 To please him ev'ry day.
3. Our hearts we shield from harmful thoughts,
 We dwell on what is true.
 We love God's Word to touch our hearts,
 To strengthen and renew.
 Jehovah loves his loyal ones;
 On this we can depend.
 We'll worship him wholeheartedly
 Forever as his friend.

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COVER PICTURE:

A family who live where our Christian work is restricted persevere in their worship with full faith that God has good things in store for them (See study article 50, paragraph 4)

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33 *Throw Your Burden on Jehovah*

(Psalm 55)

1. "Listen to my prayer," Jehovah.
Let yourself be found by me.
Feel the anguish deep inside me;
Help me unafraid to be.

(CHORUS)

*Throw your burden on Jehovah;
Trust in him to sustain and save you.
He will always give protection.
He is loyal; he is true.*

2. Had I wings just as a dove has,
Far from danger I would fly,
Safe from those who seek to hurt me,
Sheltered from their hateful cry.

(Chorus)

3. Comfort from our God, Jehovah,
Always brings us peace of mind.
He will help us bear our burden.
He is loving; he is kind.

(Chorus)

How You Can Fight Discouragement

“Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you.”

—PS. 55:22.

SONG 33

Throw Your Burden on Jehovah

PREVIEW

We all get discouraged at times. In this article, we will discuss some specific things we can do when we feel downhearted. As we will see, with Jehovah’s help we can win the fight against discouragement.

EACH day we face problems and deal with them as best we can. But would you not agree that we handle our problems much better when we are not discouraged? So we need to view discouragement as an unwelcome visitor that can rob us of confidence, courage, and joy. Proverbs 24:10 and footnote says: “If you become discouraged in times of trouble, your strength will be meager.” Yes, discouragement can drain us of the energy we need to cope with life’s problems successfully.

² We can become discouraged by many things—some internal, some external. The causes may include imperfections, weaknesses, and ill health. They may also include our not receiving a desired assignment in Jehovah’s service or our having to witness in a territory that seems unresponsive. In this article, we will consider some things we can do to deal with discouragement.

WHEN DEALING WITH IMPERFECTIONS AND WEAKNESSES

³ It would be easy for us to develop an unbalanced

-
1. How might discouragement affect us?
 2. What can cause us to feel discouraged, and what will we consider in this article?
 3. What can help us to have a balanced view of our imperfections?

view of our imperfections and weaknesses. As a result, we might believe that because of our failings, Jehovah would never welcome us into his new world. Such an attitude can be harmful. How should we look at our imperfections? The Bible reveals that, with the exception of Jesus Christ, all humans “have sinned.” (Rom. 3:23) But the Bible’s Author is not a faultfinder or perfectionist. Rather, he is a loving Father who wants to help us. He is also patient. He sees how we struggle to fight our weaknesses and overcome an unbalanced view of ourselves, and he is ready to help us.—Rom. 7:18, 19.

⁴ Consider the examples of Deborah and Maria.* As a child, Deborah was often treated in ways that made her feel humiliated. She was rarely commended. She thus developed a negative view of herself. When she made small mistakes, she felt that she was a complete failure. Maria had a similar problem. Her relatives humiliated her. As a result, she struggled with feelings of worthlessness. After coming into the truth, she even felt unworthy to bear God’s name!

* Some names have been changed.

4-5. In line with 1 John 3:19, 20, why did two sisters not give in to discouragement?



Jehovah knows both the good we did in the past
and the good we are doing now
(See paragraph 5)

⁵ Yet, these two sisters did not stop serving Jehovah. Why? For one thing, they threw their burden on Jehovah by means of fervent prayer. (Ps. 55:22) They came to accept that our loving heavenly Father knows how our past experiences and our negative thinking have affected us. But he also sees the good in our heart—qualities that we may not see in ourselves.—Read 1 John 3:19, 20.

⁶ Someone who is struggling to overcome a deep-seated bad habit might have a setback and feel

6. How might someone react if he experiences a setback?

disappointed in himself. Of course, it is normal to feel a measure of guilt when we sin. (2 Cor. 7:10) However, we should not go to extremes and condemn ourselves, thinking: ‘I’m a complete failure. How can Jehovah ever forgive me?’ Such negative thinking is not based on the truth and could cause us to stop serving Jehovah. Remember what we read at Proverbs 24:10—our strength will be meager when we are discouraged. Instead, “set matters straight” with Jehovah by going to him in prayer and seeking his mercy. (Isa. 1:18) Considering your sincere repentance, he will forgive you. In addition, approach the elders. They will patiently help you to become spiritually well again.—Jas. 5:14, 15.

⁷ Jean-Luc, an elder in France, says to those struggling with a weakness: “A righteous person in Jehovah’s eyes is, not someone who never errs, but someone who is sorry for his mistakes and always repents.” (Rom. 7:21-25) So do not condemn yourself if you are struggling with a weakness. Remember that none of us can earn a righteous standing before God. We all need God’s undeserved kindness by means of the ransom.—Eph. 1:7; 1 John 4:10.

7. Why should we not feel discouraged if we are struggling to do what is right?

⁸ We can turn to our brothers and sisters—our spiritual family—for encouragement! They may provide a listening ear when we need to talk and offer reassuring words that can cheer us up. (Prov. 12:25; 1 Thess. 5:14) Joy, a sister in Nigeria who has battled with discouragement, says: “Where would I be without the brotherhood? My brothers and sisters are proof that Jehovah answers my prayers. I have even learned from them how to encourage others who are downhearted.” We need to keep in mind, though, that our brothers and sisters may not always know when we need encouragement. So we may need to take the initiative to approach a mature fellow believer and open up about our need for help.

WHEN DEALING WITH ILL HEALTH

⁹ Turn to Jehovah for support. When we are not feeling well and especially if we are dealing with a chronic illness, we may find it hard to think positively. While Jehovah does not cure us miraculously now, he does comfort us and can give us the strength we need so as to endure. (Read Psalm 41:3; 94:19.) For example, he may move fellow Christians to come to our aid when we need help

8. When we feel down, to whom can we turn for help?

9. How do Psalm 41:3 and 94:19 encourage us?

with chores or shopping. He may move our brothers to pray with us. Or he may bring back to our mind comforting thoughts found in his Word, such as the wonderful hope of perfect life without sickness and pain in the coming new world.—Rom. 15:4.

¹⁰ Isang, who lives in Nigeria, had an accident that left him paralyzed. His doctor told him that he would never walk again. “I was heartbroken and crushed in spirit,” Isang said. But did he stay crushed? No! What helped him? “My wife and I never stopped praying to Jehovah and studying his Word,” Isang explains. “We were also determined to count our blessings, including our hope of life in God’s new world.”

¹¹ Cindy, who lives in Mexico, was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease. How did she cope? When she was receiving treatment, she made it her goal to give a witness every day. She writes: “Doing so, I was able to focus on others instead of on the surgery, the pain, or how awful I felt. My approach was this: During a conversation with doctors or nurses, I would ask about their families. Then I would ask why they chose such a demanding occupation. After

10. Why did Isang not remain downhearted after his accident?

11. How did Cindy find joy during a health crisis?

that, it was easy to see which topics might touch their heart. Several mentioned that it was rare for a patient to ask them, ‘How are you doing?’ And many thanked me for caring. Some even gave me their contact information. So during this difficult time in my life, Jehovah gave me a deep inner joy that surprised even me!”—Prov. 15:15.

¹² Sick or infirm ones may feel discouraged because they are limited in what they can do in the ministry. Still, many have been able to give a fine witness. In the United States, a sister named Laurel

12-13. How have some sick or infirm ones been able to share in the ministry, and with what results?

Even those who are physically limited can have a productive, rewarding share in the ministry

(See paragraphs 11-13)



was confined to an iron lung for 37 years! She endured cancer, major surgeries, and chronic skin disorders. But even these extraordinary challenges did not silence her. She witnessed to nurses and attendants who came to her home. The result? She helped at least 17 people come to an accurate knowledge of the Bible!*

¹³ Richard, an elder in France, has a practical suggestion for those who are confined to their home or to a nursing facility. “I recommend that they have a small literature display. The display arouses curiosity and leads to conversations. This can encourage our dear brothers and sisters who can no longer go from house to house.” Those who are housebound can also share in the ministry by means of letter writing and telephone witnessing.

WHEN WE DO NOT RECEIVE A PRIVILEGE

¹⁴ Because of the limitations of age, health, or other factors, we may not be eligible to receive a certain assignment or privilege in the congregation

* Read Laurel Nisbet’s life story in the January 22, 1993, issue of *Awake!*

14. What outstanding example did King David set?

or circuit. In that connection, we can learn from the example of King David. When told that he had not been chosen to build God’s temple—something that David had dearly hoped to do—he gave full support to the one whom God had selected for the assignment. David even contributed generously toward the project. What an outstanding example to follow! —2 Sam. 7:12, 13; 1 Chron. 29:1, 3-5.

¹⁵ Because of health problems, Hugues, a brother in France, stopped serving as an elder, and he could not even care for simple tasks around the home. He writes: “At first, I felt worthless and deeply discouraged. But in time, I saw the importance of accepting my limitations, and I found joy in serving Jehovah within those limits. I am determined not to give up. Like Gideon and his three hundred men—all of whom were tired—I will keep up the fight!”—Judg. 8:4.

¹⁶ The faithful angels are a fine example. During King Ahab’s reign, Jehovah invited the angels to suggest ways to fool the wicked king. A number of angels responded by offering ideas. But God chose one angel and told him that his suggestion would succeed. (1 Ki. 22:19-22) Did the other faithful angels become discouraged, perhaps thinking, ‘Why

15. How did Hugues overcome discouragement?

16. What can we learn from the example of the angels?

did I bother?’ We have no reason to believe that they did. The angels are truly humble and want all honor to go to Jehovah.—Judg. 13:16-18; Rev. 19:10.

¹⁷ Fix in mind the privilege we have to bear God’s name and to announce his Kingdom. Assignments may come and go, but they are not what make us precious to God. It is when we are modest and humble that we become truly lovable to Jehovah and to our brothers and sisters. So beg Jehovah to help you remain modest and humble. Reflect on the many fine examples of modesty and humility that are recorded in his Word. Willingly serve your brothers in any way you can.—Ps. 138:6; 1 Pet. 5:5.

WHEN YOUR TERRITORY SEEMS UNPRODUCTIVE

¹⁸ Have you at some point felt discouraged because your territory seems to be unproductive or because few people are found at home? In such a situation, what can be done to maintain or increase our joy? Some practical suggestions are listed in the box “Ways to Enrich Your Ministry.” It is also

17. What should we do if we feel down because we do not have certain privileges of service?

18-19. How can you have joy in your ministry even when your territory seems to be unproductive?

Ways to Enrich Your Ministry

- 1 Call when people are more likely to be at home.
- 2 Go where people can be found, such as at markets, in parks, and at transit stops.
- 3 Consider different forms of witnessing, such as letter writing, street work, and other forms of public witnessing.
- 4 Cultivate the art of conversation.
- 5 Learn to use our digital tools well.
- 6 If a magazine or a brochure is designed for a certain group of people, search for such ones in your territory.
- 7 Step over into territory that is worked less or is more productive, perhaps by learning another language.

important to have the right view of the ministry. What does that involve?

¹⁹ *Keep your focus on proclaiming God's name and Kingdom.* Jesus made it plain that relatively few will find the path to life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) When we are in the ministry, we have the honor of working with Jehovah, Jesus, and the angels. (Matt. 28:19, 20; 1 Cor. 3:9; Rev. 14:6, 7) Jehovah draws those who are deserving. (John 6:44) So if a person does not respond well to our message this time, he may listen the next time we call.

²⁰ We can learn much from the prophet Jeremiah. He was assigned a territory that was extremely difficult. The people insulted and jeered him “all day long.” (Read Jeremiah 20:8, 9.) He became so discouraged at one point that he felt like giving up. But he did not. Why not? “The word of Jehovah” was like a fire inside Jeremiah, and he could not hold it in! The same is true of us when we fill our mind and heart with God's Word. That is an added reason for us to study the Bible daily and meditate on it. As a result, our joy can continue to increase, and our ministry may become more productive.—Jer. 15:16.

20. What can Jeremiah 20:8, 9 teach us about fighting discouragement?

²¹ “Discouragement can be a formidable weapon used by Satan,” notes Deborah, quoted earlier. But Satan’s weapons are no match for Jehovah God. So when you feel discouraged for whatever reason, supplicate Jehovah for his support. He will help you to deal with your imperfections and weaknesses. He will support you through illness. He will help you to keep a balanced view of assignments of service. And he will help you to have a positive view of your ministry. Moreover, pour out your concerns to your heavenly Father. With his help, you can win the fight against discouragement.

21. How can we win the fight against discouragement, whatever its cause?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 43: A sister was discouraged for a time, but she reflects on her past service and prays to Jehovah. She is sure that he remembers what she did and is doing.

HOW CAN THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES HELP US TO FIGHT DISCOURAGEMENT?

■ 1 John 3:19, 20

■ Psalm 41:3

■ Jeremiah 20:8, 9

SONG 41

Please Hear My Prayer

Please Hear My Prayer

(Psalm 54)

1. Heavenly Father, please hear my song.
You are my God; to you I belong.
Great is your name, beyond all compare.

(CHORUS)

Gracious Jehovah, please hear my prayer.

2. Thank you, O God, for granting this day,
Giving me life, and showing the way.
How I delight in your tender care.

(Chorus)

3. Oh, how I long to do what is right!
Help me, O Lord, to walk in the light.
Give me the strength all burdens to bear.

(Chorus)