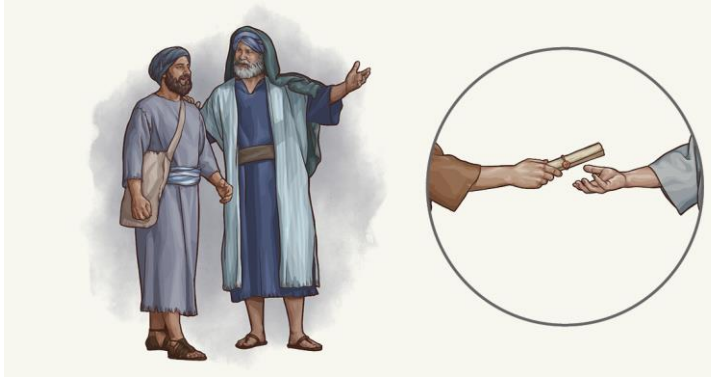


- Song 38 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

"How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah's Concern for the Poor": (10 min.)



The poor and those who had no inheritance received help from the nation of Israel (De 14:28, 29; it-2 1110 ¶3)

(Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) 28 "At the end of every three years, you should bring out the entire tenth part of your produce for that year and deposit it inside your cities. 29 Then the Levite, who has no share or inheritance with you, the foreign resident, the fatherless child, and the widow who are in your cities will come and eat their fill, so that Jehovah your God may bless you in all that you do.

*** it-2 p. 1110 Tithe ***

It seems there was an additional tithe, a second tenth, set aside each year for purposes other than the direct support of the Levitical priesthood, though the Levites shared in it. Normally it was used and enjoyed in large measure by the Israelite family when assembling together at the national festivals. In cases where the distance to Jerusalem was too great for the convenient transport of this tithe, then the produce was converted into money and this, in turn, was used in Jerusalem for the household's sustenance and enjoyment during the holy convention there. (De 12:4-7, 11, 17, 18; 14:22-27) Then, at the end of every

third and sixth years of the seven-year sabbatical cycle, this tithe, instead of being used to defray expenses at the national assemblies, was set aside for the Levites, alien residents, widows, and fatherless boys in the local community.—De 14:28, 29; 26:12.

- (Deuteronomy 12:4-7) "You must not worship Jehovah your God in that way. 5 Rather, seek Jehovah your God wherever he chooses to establish his name and his place of residence among all your tribes, and go there. 6 That is where you are to bring your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution from your hand, your vow offerings, your voluntary offerings, and the firstborn of your herd and flock. 7 You and your households must eat there before Jehovah your God and rejoice in all your undertakings, because Jehovah your God has blessed you.
- (Deuteronomy 12:11) You will bring all that I am commanding you to the place that Jehovah your God chooses to have his name reside—your burnt offerings, your sacrifices, your tithes, the contribution from your hand, and every vow offering that you vow to Jehovah.
- (Deuteronomy 12:17, 18) You will not be allowed to eat within your cities the tenth part of your grain, your new wine, your oil, the firstborn of your herd and flock, any of your vow offerings that you vow, your voluntary offerings, or the contribution from your hand. 18 These you are to eat before Jehovah your God in the place Jehovah your God will choose—you and your son, your daughter, your male and female servant, and the Levite inside your cities; and you will rejoice before Jehovah your God in all your undertakings.
- (Deuteronomy 14:22-27) "You must without fail give a tenth of everything your seed produces in the field year by

year. 23 You will eat the tenth part of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock before Jehovah your God in the place that he chooses to have his name reside, so that you may learn to fear Jehovah your God always. 24 "But if the journey should be too long for you and you are not able to carry it to the place that Jehovah your God chooses as the place for his name because it is far away from you (because Jehovah your God will bless you), 25 you may then convert it into money, and with your money in hand, travel to the place that Jehovah your God will choose. 26 You may then spend the money on whatever you desire—cattle, sheep, goats, wine and other alcoholic beverages, and anything you please; and you will eat there before Jehovah your God and rejoice, you and your household. 27 And do not neglect the Levite who is inside your cities, for he has no share or inheritance with you.

- (Deuteronomy 14:28, 29) "At the end of every three years, you should bring out the entire tenth part of your produce for that year and deposit it inside your cities. 29 Then the Levite, who has no share or inheritance with you, the foreign resident, the fatherless child, and the widow who are in your cities will come and eat their fill, so that Jehovah your God may bless you in all that you do.
- (Deuteronomy 26:12) "When you finish tithing the entire tenth of your produce in the third year, the year of the tenth, you will give it to the Levite, the foreign resident, the fatherless child, and the widow, and they will eat their fill within your cities.

During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted "a release" from their debt (De 15:1-3; it-2 833)

(Deuteronomy 15:1-3) 15 "At the end of every seven years, you should grant a release. 2 This is the nature of the release: Every creditor will release his neighbor from the debt he incurred. He should not demand payment from his neighbor or his brother, for it will be proclaimed a release to Jehovah. 3 You may demand payment from the foreigner, but you should release your claim on whatever your brother owes you.

*** it-2 p. 833 Sabbath Year ***

The Sabbath year was called "the year of the release [hash-shemit-tah]." (De 15:9; 31:10) During that year the land enjoyed a complete rest, or release, lying uncultivated. (Ex 23:11) There was also to be a rest, or a release, on debts incurred. It was "a release to Jehovah," in honor of him. Though others view it differently, some commentators hold that the debts were not actually canceled, but, rather, that a creditor was not to press a fellow Hebrew for payment of a debt, for there would be no income for the farmer during that year; though the lender could press a foreigner for payment. (De 15:1-3) Some rabbis hold the view that debts for loans of charity to help a poor brother were canceled, but that debts incurred in business dealings were in a different category. It is said by them that, in the first century of the Common Era, Hillel instituted a procedure whereby the lender could go before the court and secure his debt against forfeiture by making a certain declaration.—The Pentateuch and Haftorahs, edited by J. Hertz, London, 1972, pp. 811, 812.

- (Deuteronomy 15:9) Be careful not to harbor this evil idea in your heart, 'The seventh year, the year of the release, has approached,' and hold back your generosity toward your poor brother and

give him nothing. If he calls out to Jehovah against you, it will be a sin on your part.

- (Deuteronomy 31:10) Moses commanded them, saying: "At the end of every seven years, at the appointed time in the year of the release, during the Festival of Booths,
- (Exodus 23:11) But the seventh year you should leave it uncultivated and let it lie fallow, and the poor among your people will eat of it, and what they leave, the wild animals of the field will eat. That is what you should do with your vineyard and your olive grove.
- (Deuteronomy 15:1-3) "At the end of every seven years, you should grant a release. 2 This is the nature of the release: Every creditor will release his neighbor from the debt he incurred. He should not demand payment from his neighbor or his brother, for it will be proclaimed a release to Jehovah. 3 You may demand payment from the foreigner, but you should release your claim on whatever your brother owes you.

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master (De 15:12-14; it-2 978 ¶6)

(Deuteronomy 15:12-14) 12 "If one of your brothers, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you and has served you for six years, then in the seventh year you should set him free. 13 And if you should set him free, do not send him away empty-handed. 14 You should supply him generously with something from your flock, your threshing floor, and your press for oil and wine. Just as Jehovah your God has blessed you, you should give to him.

*** it-2 p. 978 Slave ***

Laws governing slave-master relationships. Among the Israelites the status of the Hebrew slave differed from that of a slave who was a foreigner, alien resident, or settler. Whereas the non-Hebrew remained the property of the owner and could be passed on from father to son (Le 25:44-46), the Hebrew slave was to be released in the seventh year of his servitude or in the Jubilee year, depending upon which came first. During the time of his servitude the Hebrew slave was to be treated as a hired laborer. (Ex 21:2; Le 25:10; De 15:12) A Hebrew who sold himself into slavery to an alien resident, to a member of an alien resident's family, or to a settler could be repurchased at any time, either by himself or by one having the right of repurchase. The redemption price was based on the number of years remaining until the Jubilee year or until the seventh year of servitude. (Le 25:47-52; De 15:12) When granting a Hebrew slave his freedom, the master was to give him a gift to assist him in getting a good start as a freedman. (De 15:13-15) If a slave had come in with a wife, the wife went out with him. However, if the master had given him a wife (evidently a foreign woman who would not be entitled to freedom in the seventh year of servitude), she and any children by her remained the property of the master. In such a case the Hebrew slave could choose to remain with his master. His ear would then be pierced with an awl to indicate that he would continue in servitude to time indefinite.—Ex 21:2-6; De 15:16, 17.

- (Leviticus 25:44-46) Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you, from them you may buy a male or a female slave. 45 Also from the sons of the foreign settlers who are residing with you, from them and from their families that are born to them in your land you may buy slaves, and they will become your possession. 46 You may pass them on as an inheritance to your sons after you to

inherit as a permanent possession. You may use them as workers, but you must not subject your Israelite brothers to cruel treatment.

- (Exodus 21:2) "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve as a slave for six years, but in the seventh year, he will be set free without paying anything.
- (Leviticus 25:10) You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will return to his property and each of you should return to his family.
- (Deuteronomy 15:12) "If one of your brothers, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you and has served you for six years, then in the seventh year you should set him free.
- (Leviticus 25:47-52) "But if a foreign resident or a settler among you becomes wealthy and your brother has become poor alongside him and must sell himself to the foreign resident or the settler who lives among you, or to a member of the family of the foreign resident, 48 he will continue to have the right of repurchase after he has sold himself. One of his brothers may buy him back, 49 or his uncle or the son of his uncle may buy him back, or any close relative, one of his family, may buy him back. "Or if he himself has become wealthy, he may also buy himself back. 50 He should calculate with his purchaser the time from the year he sold himself to him until the Jubilee year, and the money of his sale will correspond to the number of years. His workdays during that time will be assessed at the rate of a hired worker. 51 If there are many years remaining, he should pay his repurchase price in proportion to the years that are left. 52 But if only a few years remain until the Jubilee year, he

should then calculate for himself and pay his repurchase price in proportion to the years remaining.

- (Deuteronomy 15:12) "If one of your brothers, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you and has served you for six years, then in the seventh year you should set him free.
- (Deuteronomy 15:13-15) And if you should set him free, do not send him away empty-handed. 14 You should supply him generously with something from your flock, your threshing floor, and your press for oil and wine. Just as Jehovah your God has blessed you, you should give to him. 15 Remember that you became a slave in the land of Egypt and that Jehovah your God redeemed you. That is why I am commanding you to do this today.
- (Exodus 21:2-6) "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he will serve as a slave for six years, but in the seventh year, he will be set free without paying anything. 3 If he came by himself, he will go out by himself. If he is the husband of a wife, then his wife must go out with him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children will become her master's, and he will go out by himself. 5 But if the slave should insist and say, 'I love my master, my wife, and my sons; I do not want to be set free,' 6 his master must bring him before the true God. Then he will bring him up against the door or the doorpost, and his master will pierce his ear through with an awl, and he will be his slave for life.
- (Deuteronomy 15:16, 17) "But if he says to you, 'I will not go out from your company!' because he loves you and your household, since he has been happy while with you, 17 you should then take an awl and put it through his

ear into the door, and he will become your slave for life. You should do the same with your slave girl.

ASK YOURSELF, 'In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?'

Digging for Spiritual Gems:

De 14:21—What can we learn from the prohibition in the Law not to boil a young goat in its mother's milk? (w06 4/1 31)

Deuteronomy 14:21) 21 "You must not eat any animal that was found dead. You may give it to the foreign resident who is inside your cities, and he may eat it, or it may be sold to a foreigner. For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God.

"You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

*** w06 4/1 p. 31 Questions From Readers ***

Questions From Readers

What can we learn from the prohibition found at Exodus 23:19: "You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk"?

This directive of the Mosaic Law, which appears three times in the Bible, can help us appreciate Jehovah's sense of propriety, his compassion, and his tenderness. It also highlights his abhorrence of false worship.—Exodus 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21.

To boil a young goat or other animal in its mother's milk would be contrary to Jehovah's natural arrangement of things. God provided the mother's milk to nourish the kid and help it grow. Cooking the kid in the milk of its own mother would, in the words of one scholar, display "a contempt of the relation which God

has established and sanctified between parent and young."

Further, some suggest that boiling a kid in its mother's milk may have been a pagan ritual performed to produce rain. If that was the case, the prohibition would have served to protect the Israelites from the senseless and heartless religious practices of the nations surrounding them. The Mosaic Law specifically forbade the Israelites to walk in the statutes of those nations.—Leviticus 20:23.

Finally, we see in this particular law Jehovah's tender compassion. Actually, the Law contained a number of similar injunctions against cruelty to animals and safeguards against working contrary to the natural order of things. For instance, the Law included commands that prohibited sacrificing an animal unless it had been with its mother for at least seven days, slaughtering both an animal and its offspring on the same day, and taking from a nest both a mother and her eggs or offspring.—Leviticus 22:27, 28; Deuteronomy 22:6, 7.

Clearly, the Law was not just a complex set of commands and prohibitions. Among other things, its principles help instill in us an elevated moral sensibility that truly reflects Jehovah's marvelous qualities.—Psalm 19:7-11.

- (Exodus 23:19) "You are to bring the best of the first ripe fruits of your ground to the house of Jehovah your God. "You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.
- (Exodus 34:26) "The best of the first ripe fruits of your soil you are to bring to the house of Jehovah your God. "You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk."
- (Deuteronomy 14:21) "You must not eat any animal that was found dead. You may give it to the foreign resident who is inside your cities, and he may eat it, or it

may be sold to a foreigner. For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God. "You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

- (Leviticus 20:23) You must not walk in the statutes of the nations that I am driving out from before you; for they have done all these things and I abhor them.
- (Leviticus 22:27, 28) "When a bull or a young ram or a goat is born, it will continue with its mother for seven days, but from the eighth day forward it will be accepted with approval as an offering, an offering made by fire to Jehovah. 28 As for a bull or a sheep, you must not slaughter it and its young on the same day.
- (Deuteronomy 22:6, 7) "If you happen upon a bird's nest along the road with young ones or eggs, whether in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young ones or the eggs, you must not take the mother together with her young. 7 Be sure to send the mother away, but you may take the young for yourself. Do this so that it may go well with you and you may live long.
- (Psalm 19:7-11) The law of Jehovah is perfect, restoring strength. The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the inexperienced one wise. 8 The orders from Jehovah are righteous, causing the heart to rejoice; The commandment of Jehovah is clean, making the eyes shine. 9 The fear of Jehovah is pure, lasting forever. The judgments of Jehovah are true, altogether righteous. 10 They are more desirable than gold, Than much fine gold, And sweeter than honey, the honey that drips from the combs. 11 By them your servant has been warned; In keeping them, there is a large reward.

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.)

De 13:1-18 (th study 5)

(Deuteronomy 13:1-18) 13 "In case a prophet or one who foretells by dreams arises in your midst and gives you a sign or a portent, 2 and the sign or the portent about which he spoke to you comes true while he is saying, 'Let us walk after other gods, gods that you have not known, and let us serve them,' 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer, for Jehovah your God is testing you to know whether you love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul. 4 After Jehovah your God you should walk, him you should fear, his commandments you should keep, to his voice you should listen; he is the one you should serve, and to him you should hold fast. 5 But that prophet or that dreamer should be put to death, because he encouraged rebellion against Jehovah your God—who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery—to turn you from the way in which Jehovah your God has commanded you to walk. And you must remove what is evil from your midst. 6 "If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or your cherished wife or your closest companion should try to entice you in secrecy, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' gods that neither you nor your forefathers have known, 7 from the gods of the

peoples all around you, whether near you or those far away from you, from one end of the land to the other end of the land, 8 you must not give in to him or listen to him, nor should you show pity or feel compassion or protect him; 9 instead, you should kill him without fail. Your hand should be the first to come upon him to put him to death, and the hand of all the people afterward. 10 And you must stone him to death, because he has sought to turn you away from Jehovah your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 11 Then all Israel will hear and become afraid, and they will never again do anything bad like this among you. 12 "In case you hear it said in one of your cities that Jehovah your God is giving you to occupy, 13 'Good-for-nothing men have gone out among you to turn away the inhabitants of their city, saying: "Let us go and serve other gods," gods that you have not known,' 14 you should look into the matter, making a thorough investigation and inquiry; and if it is confirmed to be true that this detestable thing has been done among you, 15 you should without fail strike down the inhabitants of that city with the sword. Devote it and everything that is in it, including its livestock, to destruction by the sword. 16 You should then collect all its spoil into the middle of its public square and burn the city with fire, and its spoil will serve as a whole offering to Jehovah your God. It will become a permanent heap of ruins. It should never be rebuilt. 17 Your hand should take nothing that was set apart for destruction, so that Jehovah may turn away from his burning anger and show you mercy and compassion and multiply you, just as he has sworn to your forefathers. 18 For you should obey Jehovah your God by keeping all his commandments that I am commanding you today, thus doing what is right in the eyes of Jehovah your God.

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion.
Play the video Return Visit: Suffering—1Jo 5:19. Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (th study 6)

Return Visit

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:19

- (1 John 5:19) 19 We know that we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- bhs 117 ¶7

Return Visit: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer a publication from the Teaching Toolbox. (th study 11)

Return Visit

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:19

- (1 John 5:19) 19 We know that we originate with God, but the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one.

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:

- bhs 117 ¶7

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 7

“Never Be Anxious”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video Love Never Fails Despite . . . Poverty—Congo.



Jehovah helped the poor in ancient Israel. What are some ways that he helps the poor among his servants today?

- He has taught them to have a balanced view of money.—Lu 12:15; 1Ti 6:6-8
- (Luke 12:15) Then he said to them: “Keep your eyes open and guard

against every sort of greed, because even when a person has an abundance, his life does not result from the things he possesses.”

- (1 Timothy 6:6-8) To be sure, there is great gain in godly devotion along with contentment. 7 For we have brought nothing into the world, and neither can we carry anything out. 8 So, having food and clothing, we will be content with these things.
- He has helped them to have self-respect.—Job 34:19
- (Job 34:19) There is One who does not show partiality to princes And who does not favor the rich over the poor, For they are all the work of his hands.
- He has taught them to work hard and avoid harmful habits.—Pr 14:23; 20:1; 2Co 7:1
- (Proverbs 14:23) There is benefit in every kind of hard work, But mere talk leads to want.
- (Proverbs 20:1) Wine is a ridiculer, alcohol is unruly; Whoever goes astray by them is not wise.
- (2 Corinthians 7:1) Therefore, since we have these promises, beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- He has brought them into a loving Christian brotherhood.—Joh 13:35; 1Jo 3:17, 18
- (John 13:35) By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”
- (1 John 3:17, 18) But whoever has the material possessions of this world and sees his brother in need and yet refuses to show him compassion, in what way does the love of God remain in him? 18 Little children, we should love, not in

word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.

- He gives them hope.—Ps 9:18; Isa 65:21-23
 - (Psalm 9:18) But the poor will not always be forgotten; Nor will the hope of the meek ever perish.
 - (Isaiah 65:21-23) They will build houses and live in them, And they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. 22 They will not build for someone else to inhabit, Nor will they plant for others to eat. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, And the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full. 23 They will not toil for nothing, Nor will they bear children for distress, Because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, And their descendants with them.

No matter how desperate our situation may become, we do not need to be anxious. (Isa 30:15) Jehovah will care for our material needs as long as we keep on seeking first his Kingdom.—Mt 6:31-33.

- (Isaiah 30:15) For this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, says: “By returning to me and resting, you will be saved; Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.” But you were unwilling.
- (Matthew 6:31-33) So never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to wear?’ 32 For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 “Keep on, then, seeking first the Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you.

WATCH THE VIDEO LOVE NEVER FAILS DESPITE . . . POVERTY—CONGO, AND

THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- How have the brothers who live near regional convention locations shown loving hospitality to those who must travel to the convention?



- What does the video teach about Jehovah’s love for the poor?



- How can we imitate Jehovah regardless of how much we have materially?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min. or less) rr chap. 2 ¶10-18

Paragraph 13

(Ezra 1:1-4) In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order that Jehovah's word spoken by Jeremiah would be fulfilled, Jehovah stirred the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his kingdom, which he also put in writing, saying: 2 "This is what King Cyrus of Persia says, 'Jehovah the God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has commissioned me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3 Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel—he is the true God—whose house was in Jerusalem. 4 Anyone who is residing as a

foreigner, wherever he may be, let him be helped by his neighbors by their giving him silver and gold, goods and livestock, along with the voluntary offering for the house of the true God, which was in Jerusalem.'"

(Ezra 2:64, 65) The total number of the entire congregation was 42,360, 65 apart from their male and female slaves, who were 7,337; they also had 200 male and female singers.

(Ezekiel 37:14) 'I will put my spirit in you and you will come to life, and I will settle you on your land; and you will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have spoken and I have done it,' declares Jehovah."

(Ezra 8:1-20) Now these were the heads of their paternal houses and the genealogical enrollment of those who went up with me out of Babylon during the reign of King Ar-ta-xerx'es: 2 of the sons of Phin'e-has, Ger'shom; of the sons of Ith'a-mar, Daniel; of the sons of David, Hat'tush; 3 of the sons of Shec'a-ni'ah, of the sons of Pa'rosh, Zech'a-ri'ah, and with him there was an enrollment of 150 males; 4 of the sons of Pa'hath-mo'ab, El'ie-ho-e'nai the son of Zer'a-hi'ah, and with him 200 males; 5 of the sons of Zat'tu, Shec'a-ni'ah the son of Ja-ha-zi'el, and with him 300 males; 6 of the sons of A'din, E'bed the son of Jon'a-than, and with him 50 males; 7 of the sons of E'lam, Je-sha'iah the son of Ath'a-li'ah, and with him 70 males; 8 of the sons of Sheph'a-ti'ah, Zeb'a-di'ah the son of Mi'cha-el, and with him 80 males; 9 of the sons of Jo'ab, O-ba-di'ah the son of Je-hi'el, and with him 218 males; 10 of the sons of Ba'ni, She-lo'mith the son of Jo-si-phi'ah, and with him 160 males; 11 of the sons of Be'bai, Zech'a-ri'ah the son of Be'bai, and with him 28 males; 12 of the sons of Az'gad, Jo-ha'n'an the son of Hak'ka-tan, and with him 110 males; 13 of the sons of Ad-o-ni'kam, those who were the last, and these were their names: E-liph'e-let, Je-i'el, and She-mai'ah, and with them 60 males; 14 and of the sons of Big'vai, U'thai and Zab'bud, and with them 70 males. 15 I assembled them at the river that comes to

A·ha'va, and we camped there for three days. But when I examined the people and the priests, I did not find any of the Levites there. 16 So I sent for E·li·e'zer, Ar'i·el, She·mai'ah, El·na'than, Ja'rib, El·na'than, Nathan, Zech·a·ri'ah, and Me·shul'lam, who were leading men, and for Joi'a·rib and El·na'than, who were instructors. 17 Then I gave them a command concerning Id'do the leader in the place called Ca·si·phi'a. I told them to tell Id'do and his brothers, the temple servants who were in Ca·si·phi'a, to bring to us ministers for the house of our God. 18 Since the good hand of our God was upon us, they brought a discreet man from the sons of Mah'li the grandson of Le'vi the son of Israel, namely, She·re·bi'ah, and his sons and his brothers, 18 men; 19 and Hash·a·bi'ah, and with him Je·sha'iah from the Me·rar'ites, his brothers and their sons, 20 men. 20 And there were 220 of the temple servants, whom David and the princes gave to the service of the Levites, all of whom had been designated by name.

(Ezekiel 37:10) So I prophesied just as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they began to live and to stand on their feet, an extremely large army.

(1 Chronicles 9:3) And some of the descendants of Judah, of Benjamin, of E'phra·im, and of Ma·nas'sseh settled in Jerusalem:

(Ezra 6:17) And they presented for the inauguration of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel 12 male goats, corresponding to the number of the tribes of Israel.

(Jeremiah 33:7) And I will bring back the captives of Judah and the captives of Israel, and I will build them up as I did at the start.

(Ezekiel 36:10) I will multiply your people—the whole house of Israel, all of it—and the cities will be inhabited and the ruins will be rebuilt.

Paragraph 14

(Ezekiel 37:24) ““My servant David will be their king, and they will all have one shepherd. They will walk in my judicial decisions and carefully observe my statutes.

(Isaiah 66:8) Who has ever heard of such a thing? Who has seen such things? Will a land be brought to birth in one day? Or will a nation be born all at once? Yet, as soon as Zion went into labor, she gave birth to her sons.

Paragraph 15

(Zechariah 8:20-23) “This is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘It will yet come to pass that peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will come; 21 and the inhabitants of one city will go to those of another and say: “Let us earnestly go to beg for the favor of Jehovah and to seek Jehovah of armies. I am also going.” 22 And many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek Jehovah of armies in Jerusalem and to beg for the favor of Jehovah.’ 23 “This is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘In those days ten men out of all the languages of the nations will take hold, yes, they will take firm hold of the robe of a Jew, saying: “We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.””

Paragraph 16

(Ezekiel 37:10) So I prophesied just as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they began to live and to stand on their feet, an extremely large army.

(Psalm 37:29) The righteous will possess the earth, And they will live forever on it.

(Ezekiel 37:24) ““My servant David will be their king, and they will all have one shepherd. They will walk in my judicial decisions and carefully observe my statutes.

(Philippians 2:25) But for now I consider it necessary to send to you E·paph·ro·di'tus, my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier,

and your envoy and personal servant for my need,

(1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17) because the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. 17 Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we will always be with the Lord.

TEACHING BOX 10B

"Dry Bones" and "Two Witnesses"—How Do They Relate?

THE year 1919 saw the fulfillment of two related prophecies: one regarding "dry bones," the other about "two witnesses." The vision of "dry bones" foretells a very long period (which turned out to be many centuries) that ends with the coming to life of a large group of God's people. (Ezek. 37:2-4; Rev. 11:1-3, 7-13) The prophecy about the "two witnesses" describes a short period (fulfilled from late 1914 to early 1919) that ends with the coming to life of a small group of God's servants. Both prophecies depicted a symbolic resurrection, and both prophecies saw a modern-day fulfillment in 1919 when Jehovah caused his anointed servants "to stand on their feet," leave their captivity to Babylon the Great, and be gathered in the restored congregation.—Ezek. 37:10.

Note, though, that the fulfillment of these two prophecies differs in an important way. The prophecy of the "dry bones" foretells the coming to life of all members of the anointed remnant. However, the prophecy of the "two witnesses" foretells the coming to life of some members of God's anointed remnant—those who were taking the lead in the organization and who were appointed as "the faithful and discreet slave."—Matt. 24:45; Rev. 11:6.

"The Valley Plain . . . Full of Bones"—Ezek. 37:1

AFTER 100 C.E.

From the second century C.E. onward when the anointed Christian congregation was killed symbolically, "the valley plain" was filled with "bones"

EARLY 1919

1919: The "dry bones" came to life when Jehovah caused all anointed ones to leave Babylon the Great and be gathered in the restored congregation

"Two Witnesses"—Rev. 11:3

LATE 1914

preaching "in sackcloth"

1914: The "two witnesses" preached "in sackcloth" for three and a half years. At the end of that period, they were symbolically killed

symbolic death

EARLY 1919

1919: The "two witnesses" came to life when a small group of anointed brothers who were taking the lead in the organization were appointed to serve as "the faithful and discreet slave"

(Ezekiel 37:2-4) He had me pass all around them, and I saw that there were very many bones lying in the valley plain, and they were very dry. 3 He asked me: "Son of man, can these bones come to life?" To that I said: "Sovereign Lord Jehovah, you are the one who knows." 4 So he said to me: "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'You dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah:

(Revelation 11:1-3) And a reed like a rod was given to me as he said: "Get up and measure the temple

sanctuary of God and the altar and those worshipping in it. 2 But as for the courtyard that is outside the temple sanctuary, leave it out and do not measure it, because it has been given to the nations, and they will trample the holy city underfoot for 42 months. 3 I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days dressed in sackcloth."

(Revelation 11:7-13) When they have finished their witnessing, the wild beast that ascends out of the abyss will wage war with them and conquer them and kill them. 8 And their corpses will be on the main street of the great city that is in a spiritual sense called Sod'om and Egypt, where their Lord was also executed on the stake. 9 And those of the peoples and tribes and tongues and nations will look at their corpses for three and a half days, and they do not allow their corpses to be laid in a tomb. 10 And those dwelling on the earth rejoice over them and celebrate, and they will send gifts to one another, because these two prophets tormented those dwelling on the earth. 11 After the three and a half days, spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood on their feet, and great fear fell upon those who saw them. 12 And they heard a loud voice from heaven say to them: "Come up here." And they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies saw them. 13 In that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and 7,000 persons were killed by the earthquake, and the rest became frightened and gave glory to the God of heaven.

(Ezekiel 37:10) So I prophesied just as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they began to

live and to stand on their feet, an extremely large army.

(Matthew 24:45) "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?

(Revelation 11:6) These have the authority to shut up the sky so that no rain may fall during the days of their prophesying, and they have authority over the waters to turn them into blood and to strike the earth with every sort of plague as often as they wish.

(Ezekiel 37:1) The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and by his spirit Jehovah took me and set me down in the middle of the valley plain, and it was full of bones.

(Revelation 11:3) I will cause my two witnesses to prophesy for 1,260 days dressed in sackcloth."

TEACHING BOX 10C

Help to Get Back on Our Feet

WE CAN be strengthened by reflecting on the lesson from this impressive vision recorded at Ezekiel 37:1-14, a lesson that we can apply to our personal circumstances. What is it?

At times, we may feel so overwhelmed by pressures and trials in our life that we are worn out, and we struggle to go on. However, at such moments, we may be fortified if we reflect on the vivid description in Ezekiel's restoration vision. Why? We can learn from this prophecy that a God who has the power to breathe life into dead bones can surely give us the strength we need to overcome obstacles—even those

that, humanly speaking, are insurmountable.—
Read Psalm 18:29; Phil. 4:13.

We may be reminded that many centuries before Ezekiel's day, the prophet Moses stated that Jehovah has not only the power but also the desire to use his strength in behalf of his people. Moses wrote: "God is a refuge from ancient times, his everlasting arms are beneath you." (Deut. 33:27) Yes, we can be sure that if we turn to our God in times of distress, Jehovah will put his caring arms beneath us, gently lift us up, and help us to get back on our feet.—Ezek. 37:10.

- (Ezekiel 37:1-14) The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and by his spirit Jehovah took me and set me down in the middle of the valley plain, and it was full of bones. 2 He had me pass all around them, and I saw that there were very many bones lying in the valley plain, and they were very dry. 3 He asked me: "Son of man, can these bones come to life?" To that I said: "Sovereign Lord Jehovah, you are the one who knows." 4 So he said to me: "Prophecy over these bones, and say to them, 'You dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah: 5 "This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says to these bones: "I will cause breath to enter you, and you will come to life. 6 I will put sinews and flesh on you, and I will cover you with skin and put breath in you, and you will come to life; and you will have to know that I am Jehovah."'" 7 Then I prophesied just as I had been commanded. As soon as I prophesied, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones began to come together, bone to bone. 8 Then I saw sinews and flesh come on them, and skin covered over them. But there was still no breath in them. 9 He then said to me: "Prophecy to the wind. Prophecy, son of man, and say to the wind, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "From the four winds come in, O wind, and blow upon these people who were killed, so that they may come to life."'" 10 So I prophesied just as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they began to live and to stand on their feet, an extremely large army. 11 Then he said

to me: "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Here they are saying, 'Our bones are dry, and our hope has perished. We are completely cut off.' 12 So prophesy and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah says: "I will open your graves and raise you up from your graves, my people, and bring you to the land of Israel. 13 And you will have to know that I am Jehovah when I open your graves and when I raise you up out of your graves, O my people." 14 'I will put my spirit in you and you will come to life, and I will settle you on your land; and you will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have spoken and I have done it,' declares Jehovah."

(Psalm 18:29) With your help I can charge against a marauder band; By God's power I can scale a wall.

(Philippians 4:13) For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power.

(Deuteronomy 33:27) God is a refuge from ancient times, His everlasting arms are beneath you. And he will drive away the enemy from before you, And he will say, 'Annihilate them!'

(Ezekiel 37:10) So I prophesied just as he commanded me, and breath came into them, and they began to live and to stand on their feet, an extremely large army.

- Concluding Comments (3 min.)
- Song 71 and Prayer