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“Do Not Be Anxious, for I Am Your God”

“Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.”—ISA. 41:10.

SONG 7

Jehovah, Our Strength

PREVIEW

The yeartext selected for 2019 gives us three reasons why we can remain calm even when bad things happen in the world or in our personal life. This article will examine those reasons and help us to feel less anxious and more inclined to trust in Jehovah. Meditate on the yeartext. Memorize it if you can. It will strengthen you for the challenges that lie ahead.

A FAITHFUL Christian sister named Yoshiko received bad news. Her doctor said that she had only a few months to live. How did she react? Yoshiko recalled a favorite Bible verse, **Isaiah 41:10. (Read.)** She then calmly told her doctor that she was not afraid, because Jehovah was grasping her hand.* The comforting message found in that verse helped our dear sister to trust in Jehovah completely. That same verse can help us remain calm when dealing with severe trials. To understand how it can do so, first let us examine why God gave that message to Isaiah.

² Initially, Jehovah had Isaiah record those words to comfort the Jews who would later be taken to Babylon as exiles. However, Jehovah had that message preserved for the benefit of not only the Jewish exiles but also all his people since that time. (Isa. 40:8; Rom. 15:4) Today, we live in “critical times hard to deal with,” and more than ever, we need the encouragement found in the book of Isaiah.—2 Tim. 3:1.

³ In this article, we will focus on three of Jehovah’s

* See *The Watchtower*, July 2016, p. 18.

1-2. (a) How did the message recorded at Isaiah 41:10 affect a sister named Yoshiko? (b) Jehovah had that message preserved for whose benefit?

3. (a) What promises are found at Isaiah 41:10, the yeartext selected for 2019? (b) Why do we need the assurances that these promises give us?

faith-building promises recorded at Isaiah 41:10: (1) Jehovah will be with us, (2) he is our God, and (3) he will help us. We need these assurances* because, like Yoshiko, we face trials in life. We must also deal with pressures from world conditions. Some of us are even enduring persecution from powerful governments. Let us consider the three assurances one at a time.

“I AM WITH YOU”

⁴ Jehovah first assures us with the words: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you.”[#] Jehovah shows that he is with us by giving us his full attention and his warm affection. Note how he expresses his tender and deep feelings for us. “You became *precious* in my eyes,” says Jehovah. “You were *honored*, and I have *loved* you.” (Isa. 43:4) No force in the universe can make Jehovah

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** An **assurance** is a truthful statement or a promise that something is definitely going to happen. The **assurances** that Jehovah gives us can make us feel less worried about the problems that may arise in our lives.

[#] **FOOTNOTE:** The expression “Do not be afraid” is mentioned three times, at Isaiah 41:10, 13, and 14. The same verses frequently mention the word “I” (referring to Jehovah). Why did Jehovah inspire Isaiah to use “I” so frequently? To highlight an important fact—we can calm our fears only by trusting in Jehovah.

4. (a) What is the first assurance we will consider? (See also footnote.) (b) In what ways does Jehovah express his feelings for us? (c) How do God’s expressions affect you?



With Jehovah's help, we can pass through any
floodlike and flamelike trials that we face
(See paragraphs 5-6)

abandon his love for those who serve him; his loyalty to us is unshakable. (Isa. 54:10) His love and friendship fill us with courage. He will protect us today, just as he protected Abram (Abraham) his friend. Jehovah said to him: "Do not fear, Abram. I am a shield for you."—Gen. 15:1.

⁵ We know that Jehovah is interested in helping us with our personal trials because he promises his people: "When you pass through the waters, *I will be with*

5-6. (a) How do we know that Jehovah is interested in helping us with our personal trials? (b) What lesson can we learn from Yoshiko's example?

you, and through the rivers, they will not flood over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be scorched, nor will the flame singe you.” (Isa. 43:2) What do these words mean?

⁶ Jehovah does not promise to remove the challenges that make life difficult, but he will not allow “the rivers” of problems to drown us or “the flame” of trials to do us any permanent damage. He guarantees that he will be with us, helping us to “pass through” those challenges. What will Jehovah do? He will help quiet our fears so that we can maintain our integrity to him, even if we face death. (Isa. 41:13) Yoshiko, mentioned earlier, found that to be true. Her daughter says: “We were impressed with how calm Mom was. We truly saw that Jehovah gave her inner peace. Until the day she died, Mom spoke to nurses and patients about Jehovah and his promises.” What do we learn from Yoshiko’s example? When we trust in God’s promise “I will be with you,” we too will be courageous and strong as we endure trials.

“I AM YOUR GOD”

⁷ Note the second assurance recorded by Isaiah: “Do

7-8. (a) What is the second assurance we will consider, and what does it mean? (b) Why did Jehovah say to the Jewish exiles: “Do not be anxious”? (c) What words found at Isaiah 46:3, 4 must have calmed the hearts of God’s people?

not be anxious, for I am your God.” What does this statement about anxiety mean? In this verse the original-language word for “be anxious” has the idea of having “to look over your shoulder in anticipation of an unknown threat” or “to look about as one does in a state of alarm.”

⁸ Why did Jehovah tell the Jews who would be exiles in Babylon not to “be anxious”? Because he knew that the inhabitants of that land would become afraid. What would cause that fear? Toward the end of the 70-year period of the Jewish exile, Babylon would be attacked by the mighty armies of Medo-Persia. Jehovah would use this army to free his people from captivity to Babylon. (Isa. 41:2-4) When the Babylonians and people of other nations living at the time knew that their enemy was approaching, they tried to maintain their courage by saying to one another: “Be strong.” They also made more idol gods, hoping that these would protect them. (Isa. 41:5-7) Meanwhile, Jehovah calmed the hearts of the Jewish exiles by saying: “You, O Israel, [unlike your neighbors] are my servant . . . Do not be anxious, for I am your God.” (Isa. 41:8-10) Note that Jehovah said: “*I am your God.*” With those words, Jehovah reassured his loyal worshippers that he had not forgotten them—he was still their God, and they were still his people. He told them: “I will carry you . . . and rescue you.” Those reassuring words no doubt strengthened the Jewish exiles.—Read Isaiah 46:3, 4.

⁹ Now more than ever, people around us are anxious about worsening world conditions. Of course, we too are affected by those same problems. But there is no need for us to become afraid. Jehovah tells us: “I am your God.” Why is that statement a powerful reason for remaining calm?

¹⁰ Consider this illustration: Two passengers, Jim and Ben, are on an airplane that is being rocked by strong winds. As the plane lurches up and down, a voice comes over the loudspeaker: “Keep your seat belts fastened. We will be flying through turbulence for some time.” Jim becomes very worried. But then the pilot adds: “Do not be anxious. This is your pilot speaking.” At that point, Jim shakes his head, saying, “What kind of assurance is that?” He notices, though, that Ben does not look anxious at all. Jim asks him: “Why are you so calm?” Ben smiles and says: “Because I know this pilot very well. He is my father!” Then Ben says: “Let me tell you about my father. I’m sure that when you know him and his abilities, you too will be calm.”

¹¹ What lessons can we learn from this illustration? Like Ben, we are calm because we know our heavenly Father, Jehovah, very well. We know that he will guide

9-10. Why is there no need for us to become afraid? Illustrate.

11. What lessons can we learn from the illustration about the two passengers?

us safely through the stormlike problems we face during the last days of this system. (Isa. 35:4) We trust in Jehovah, so we can remain calm while the rest of the world is gripped by fear. (Isa. 30:15) We also act like Ben when we share with our neighbors reasons for having confidence in God. Then they too can be sure that no matter what challenges they face, Jehovah will support them.

“I WILL FORTIFY YOU [AND] HELP YOU”

¹² Consider the third assurance that Isaiah recorded: “I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.” Isaiah had already described how Jehovah would fortify, or strengthen, his people, saying: “Jehovah will come with power, and *his arm* will rule for him.” (Isa. 40:10) The Bible often uses the word “arm” symbolically to signify power. So the statement that Jehovah’s “arm will rule” reminds us that Jehovah is a powerful King. He used his unbeatable strength to support and defend his servants in the past, and he continues to strengthen and protect those who trust in him today.—Deut. 1: 30, 31; Isa. 43:10, fn.

¹³ Especially when enemies persecute us, Jehovah

12. (a) What is the third assurance we will consider? (b) The reference to Jehovah’s “arm” reminds us of what fact?

13. (a) When especially does Jehovah keep his promise to fortify us? (b) What guarantee fills us with strength and confidence?



**No weapon will be successful against
Jehovah's strong arm of protection**
(See paragraphs 12-16)

keeps his promise: “I will fortify you.” In some parts of the world today, our enemies are trying hard to stop our preaching work or ban our organization. Even so, we are not overly anxious about such attacks. Jehovah has given us a guarantee that fills us with strength and confidence. He promises us: “No weapon formed against you will have any success.” (Isa. 54:17) That statement reminds us of three important facts.

¹⁴ First, as Christ’s followers, we expect to be hated. (Matt. 10:22) Jesus foretold that his disciples would be

14. Why are we not surprised that enemies of God attack us?

severely persecuted during the last days. (Matt. 24:9; John 15:20) Second, Isaiah's prophecy forewarns us that our enemies will do more than hate us; they will use various weapons against us. Those weapons have included subtle deception, blatant lies, and brutal persecution. (Matt. 5:11) Jehovah will not stop our enemies from using these weapons to wage war against us. (Eph. 6:12; Rev. 12:17) But we do not need to be afraid. Why not?

¹⁵ Consider the third fact we need to remember. Jehovah said that “no weapon” used against us would “have *any* success.” Just as a wall protects us from the force of a destructive rainstorm, so Jehovah protects us against “the blast of the tyrants.” (Read Isaiah 25: 4, 5.) Our enemies will never succeed in causing us any lasting harm.—Isa. 65:17.

¹⁶ Jehovah further fortifies our trust in him by describing in detail the outcome waiting for those who are “getting enraged against” us. (Read Isaiah 41:11, 12.) No matter how hard our enemies fight against us or how intense the war becomes, the outcome is the same: All enemies of God's people “will be brought to nothing and perish.”

15-16. (a) What is the third fact we need to remember, and how does Isaiah 25:4, 5 support this? (b) How does Isaiah 41:11, 12 describe the outcome for those who fight against us?



We can deepen our trust in Jehovah by regularly
reading about him in the Bible
(See paragraphs 17-18)

HOW WE DEEPEN OUR TRUST IN JEHOVAH

¹⁷ We deepen our trust in Jehovah by getting to know him better. And the only way we can really know God well is by reading the Bible carefully and then meditating on what we read. The Bible contains a reliable record of how Jehovah protected his people in the past. That record gives us confidence that he will care for us now.

17-18. (a) How can reading the Bible deepen our trust in God? Give an example. (b) How can meditating on the yeartext selected for 2019 help us?

¹⁸ Consider an example of the beautiful word picture Isaiah uses to illustrate how Jehovah protects us. He refers to Jehovah as a shepherd and to God's servants as lambs. Isaiah says of Jehovah: "With his arm he will gather together the lambs, and in his bosom he will carry them." (Isa. 40:11) When we sense Jehovah's strong arms wrapped around us, we feel protected and calm. To help us remain calm despite the problems we face, the faithful and discreet slave has selected Isaiah 41:10 as the yeartext for 2019, "*Do not be anxious, for I am your God.*" Meditate on those reassuring words. They will strengthen you as you face the challenges that lie ahead.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 5:** Members of a family face trials at work, with their health, in the ministry, and at school. **Page 10:** A meeting of Witnesses held in a private home is raided by the police, but the brothers and sisters do not panic. **Page 12:** Regular Family Worship sessions strengthen us to endure.

HOW DO THESE ASSURANCES FROM JEHOVAH STRENGTHEN YOU?

- "I am with you."
- "I am your God."
- "I will fortify you [and] help you."

Praise Jehovah in the Congregation

*“In the midst of the congregation
I will praise you.”—PS. 22:22.*

SONG 59

Praise Jah With Me

PREVIEW

Like the psalmist David, all of us love Jehovah and enjoy praising him. We have a special opportunity to express our love for God when we meet with our congregation for worship. Some of us, however, find it difficult to comment at our meetings. If you face that challenge, this article can help you identify your fears and work on overcoming them.

KING DAVID wrote: “Jehovah is great and most worthy of praise.” (Ps. 145:3) He loved Jehovah, and that love moved him to praise God “in the midst of the congregation.” (Ps. 22:22; 40:5) No doubt, you love Jehovah and agree with David’s words: “May you be praised, O Jehovah the God of Israel our father, throughout all eternity.”—1 Chron. 29:10-13.

² Today, one way we praise Jehovah is by commenting during Christian meetings. However, a number of our brothers and sisters face a real challenge. They want to participate in the meetings, but fear prevents them. How can they cope with that fear? And what practical tips can help all of us to give encouraging comments? Before we answer those questions, let us first review four basic reasons why we comment at meetings.

WHY WE COMMENT AT MEETINGS

³ **Jehovah has given all of us the privilege to praise him.** (Ps. 119:108) Our comments at meetings

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1. How did David feel about Jehovah, and what did this motivate him to do?
 2. (a) How can we praise Jehovah? (b) What challenges do some face, and what will we review?
 - 3-5. (a) As explained at Hebrews 13:15, why do we comment at meetings? (b) Must we all give the same type of comment? Explain.

are part of our “sacrifice of praise,” and no one can offer that sacrifice for us. (Read Hebrews 13:15.) Does Jehovah demand the same type of sacrifice, or comment, from each of us? No, he does not!

⁴ Jehovah knows that we have different abilities and circumstances, and he deeply appreciates the sacrifices we are able to offer to him. Think of the type of sacrifices that he accepted from the Israelites. Some Israelites were able to offer a lamb or a goat. But a poor Israelite might offer “two turtle-

Commenting benefits us and those who listen
(See paragraphs 6-7)



doves or two young pigeons.” And if an Israelite could not afford two birds, Jehovah accepted “a tenth of an ephah of fine flour.” (Lev. 5:7, 11) Flour was less expensive, but Jehovah still appreciated that sacrifice, as long as it was “fine flour.”

⁵ Our kind God feels the same way today. When we give comments, he does not demand that all of us be as eloquent as Apollos or as persuasive as Paul. (Acts 18:24; 26:28) All Jehovah wants is that we give the best comments we can—within our limits. Remember the widow who offered the two small coins. She was precious to Jehovah because she gave the best she could.—Luke 21:1-4.

⁶ We encourage one another by our comments. (Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.) All of us appreciate hearing a variety of comments at our meetings. We enjoy the simple, sincere words of a young child. We are inspired by the excitement in the voice of someone who is commenting about a truth that he or she has just discovered. And we admire those who “mustered up courage” to give a comment, even though they are shy or are only beginning to learn our language. (1 Thess. 2:2; ftn.) How can we show

6. (a) According to Hebrews 10:24, 25, how may the comments that we hear affect us? (b) How can you show appreciation for the answers that encourage you?

appreciation for their effort? We can thank them for their encouraging comment after the meeting. Another way is by giving a comment ourselves. Then not only do we receive encouragement at our meetings but we also give it.—Rom. 1:11, 12.

⁷ We benefit ourselves when we comment. (Isa. 48:17) How so? First, if we plan to give a comment, we are especially motivated to prepare well for the meeting. When we prepare well, we gain a deeper understanding of God's Word. And the deeper our understanding, the better we can apply the things we learn. Second, we will likely enjoy the meeting more because we are involved in the discussion. Third, because it takes effort to comment, we often remember the points we spoke about long after the meeting ends.

⁸ We please Jehovah when we express our faith. We can be sure that Jehovah listens to us and deeply appreciates the effort we make to comment at meetings. (Read Malachi 3:16.) He shows his appreciation by blessing us when we try hard to please him.—Mal. 3:10.

7. How do we benefit when we comment?

8-9. (a) As revealed at Malachi 3:16, how do you think Jehovah feels about our comments? (b) What challenge might some still face?

⁹ Clearly, we have good reasons to comment at meetings. Still, some may be afraid to raise their hand. If that is how you feel, do not be discouraged. Let us consider some Bible principles, a few examples, and some practical tips that can help all of us to try to comment more at meetings.

COPING WITH FEAR

¹⁰ Do you get a knot in your stomach each time you even think of raising your hand to comment? If so, you are not alone. The truth is that most of us feel some fear when we comment. Before you can cope with this crippling feeling, you need to identify the cause of your fear. Are you afraid that you will forget what you want to say or that you will say the wrong thing? Do you worry that your comment will not be as good as the comments of others? Actually, those fears can be a good sign. They indicate that you are humble and view others as superior to you. Jehovah loves that quality. (Ps. 138:6; Phil. 2:3) But Jehovah also wants you to praise him and to encourage your brothers and sisters at the meetings. (1 Thess. 5:11) He loves you and will give you the courage you need.

10. (a) What fear do many of us have? (b) Why might having a fear of answering be a good sign?

¹¹ Consider some Scriptural reminders. The Bible says that all of us make mistakes in what we say and how we say it. (Jas. 3:2) Jehovah does not expect us to be perfect, and neither do our brothers and sisters. (Ps. 103:12-14) They are our spiritual family, and they love us. (Mark 10:29, 30; John 13:35) They understand that our comments at times do not come out exactly right.

¹² Think about some Bible examples that can help you to cope with your fears. Remember Nehemiah. He served in the court of a powerful king. Nehemiah was gloomy because he had heard that the walls and gates of Jerusalem were in ruins. (Neh. 1:1-4) Imagine the knot he might have had in his stomach when the king asked him to explain why he was looking so unhappy! Nehemiah quickly prayed and then gave his answer. In response, the king did much to help God's people. (Neh. 2:1-8) Think, too, of Jonah. When Jehovah asked him to speak to the inhabitants of Nineveh, Jonah was so scared that he ran in the opposite direction. (Jonah 1:1-3) But with Jehovah's help, Jonah carried out his assignment. And the words he spoke did much good for those in Nineveh.

11. What Scriptural reminders can help us?

12-13. What do we learn from the examples of Nehemiah and Jonah?

(Jonah 3:5-10) From Nehemiah we learn the importance of praying before we answer. And from Jonah we learn that Jehovah can help us to serve him despite our greatest fears. Realistically, is any congregation going to be as intimidating as the Ninevites?

¹³ What practical tips can help you to give encouraging comments at the meetings? Let us consider a few suggestions.

¹⁴ **Prepare for each meeting.** When you plan ahead and prepare well, you will feel more confident about commenting. (Prov. 21:5) Of course, we do not all have the same routine. Eloise, a widow in her 80's, begins preparing for the *Watchtower* Study early in the week. She says, "I enjoy the meetings more if I study in advance." Joy, who works secularly full-time, sets aside time on Saturday to study her *Watchtower*. "I like to have the material fresh in mind," she says. Ike, a busy elder who is also a pioneer, says, "I find that it is best for me to study for short periods of time throughout the week rather than in one large chunk of time."

¹⁵ What is involved in preparing well for the meeting? Begin each study session by asking Jehovah to

14. Why should we prepare well for our meetings, and when might we do so?

15. How can you prepare well for a meeting?

give you holy spirit. (Luke 11:13; 1 John 5:14) Then take a few minutes to look over the lesson. Analyze the title, subheadings, illustrations, and teaching boxes. As you now study each paragraph, read as many of the cited scriptures as you can. Meditate on the information, giving special attention to points you wish to comment on. The better you prepare, the more you will benefit and the easier it may be for you to comment.—2 Cor. 9:6.

¹⁶ If possible for you, use the digital tools provided in a language you know. Jehovah, through his organization, has given us electronic tools to help us prepare for the meetings. The *JW Library*® app enables us to download study publications onto a mobile device. Then we can study—or at least read or listen to the material—anytime and anywhere. Some use this tool to study during a lunch break at work or at school or while traveling. The *Watchtower Library* and the *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*™ make it very easy to research points in the lesson that we wish to explore more thoroughly.

¹⁷ If possible, prepare several comments for

16. What tools are available to you, and how do you use them?

17. (a) Why is it good to prepare several comments? (b) What did you learn from the video *Become Jehovah's Friend—Prepare Your Comment*?



When do you schedule time to prepare for meetings?
(See paragraphs 14-16)

each lesson. Why? Because you may not always be called on when you raise your hand. Others will likely raise their hand at the same time, and the conductor might choose one of them. In order to keep the meeting on schedule, the conductor may have to limit the number of comments on any given point. So do not be offended or discouraged if he does not call on you early in the study. If you prepare several comments, you will have more opportunities to share in the discussion. One of the comments you

What Can I Comment On?

- ▶ The direct answer to the question
- ▶ A secondary point in the paragraph
- ▶ What a cited scripture teaches
- ▶ How the information can be applied
- ▶ A brief experience that highlights a key point
- ▶ What the artwork teaches
- ▶ The review questions

prepare could involve reading a scripture. But if you can, also prepare to give a comment, using your own words.*

18 Give brief comments. Often, the most encouraging comments are short and simple. So aim at keeping your answers brief. Try limiting them to about 30 seconds. (Prov. 10:19; 15:23) If you have been answering at meetings for many years, you have an important role to play—setting a good example by keeping your comments brief. If you give

* On jw.org, watch the video *Become Jehovah's Friend—Prepare Your Comment*. Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN.

18. Why give brief comments?

complex comments that last several minutes, others may feel intimidated, thinking that they will not be able to match your ability at answering. Also, brief comments allow time for more people to participate in the meeting. Especially if you are called on first, give a simple, direct answer to the question. Do not try to cover all the points in a paragraph. After the main idea of the paragraph has been discussed, you may comment on supplementary points.—See the box “What Can I Comment On?”

¹⁹ Let the conductor know that you would like to comment on a specific paragraph. If you choose to do this, you should approach the conductor well before the meeting begins. When it is time to comment on that paragraph, put your hand up quickly and high enough so that the conductor can see it.

²⁰ View the congregation meetings like a meal shared with good friends. Imagine that some friends in the congregation planned a barbecue and asked you to prepare some small item of food. How would you respond? You might feel a little anxious, but you would likely do your best to bring something that everyone could enjoy. Jehovah, our Host, has provided a table full of good things for us at our

19. How can the conductor help you, but what will you have to do?

20. How is a congregation meeting like a meal shared with friends?

meetings. (Ps. 23:5; Matt. 24:45) And he is pleased when we bring a simple gift, the best that we can give. So prepare well and participate as freely as you can. Then you will not only feed at Jehovah's table but also bring a gift to share with the congregation.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 16:** Members of a congregation are joyfully sharing in a discussion of *The Watchtower*. **Page 23:** Some members of the congregation who were shown earlier participating in the *Watchtower* Study. Even though each of them has different circumstances, they all set aside time to study the lesson for the meeting.

CAN YOU ANSWER?

- What are some reasons why we comment at meetings?
- How can we cope with our fear of commenting?
- What are some tips to help us give encouraging comments?

How Can You Safeguard Your Heart?

“Above all the things that you guard, safeguard your heart.”—PROV. 4:23.

SONG 36

We Guard Our Hearts

PREVIEW

Will we remain faithful to Jehovah, or will we allow Satan to lure us away from our God? The answer depends, not on how severely we are tested, but on how well we safeguard our heart. What is meant by the word “heart”? How does Satan try to corrupt our heart? And how can we safeguard it? This article will answer those important questions.

SOLOMON became king of Israel when he was just a young man. In the early part of his reign, Jehovah appeared to him in a dream and said: “Ask what you would like me to give you.” Solomon replied: “I am just a youth and I am inexperienced. . . . So grant your servant an obedient heart to judge your people.” (1 Ki. 3: 5-10) “An obedient heart”—what a modest request that was! No wonder Jehovah loved Solomon! (2 Sam. 12: 24) Our God was so pleased with the young king’s answer that he gave Solomon “a wise and understanding heart.”—1 Ki. 3:12.

² As long as he was faithful, Solomon enjoyed many blessings. He had the honor of building a temple “for the name of Jehovah the God of Israel.” (1 Ki. 8:20) He became famous for his God-given wisdom. And the things he said when he was inspired by God are recorded in three books of the Bible. One of these is the book of Proverbs.

³ The heart is mentioned about a hundred times in the book of Proverbs. For example, at Proverbs 4:23, we read: “Above all the things that you guard, safeguard your heart.” In this verse, what does the word “heart” refer to? We will answer that question in this article. We will also consider the answers to two other questions: How does Satan try to infect, or corrupt,

1-3. (a) Why did Jehovah love Solomon, and what blessings did Solomon receive? (b) What questions will we answer in this article?

our heart? And what can we do to safeguard our heart? To remain faithful to God, we need to understand the answers to those important questions.

“YOUR HEART”—WHAT IS IT?

⁴ At Proverbs 4:23, the term “heart” is used to refer to “the inner person” or “secret self.” (Read Psalm 51:6 and footnote.) In other words, “heart” refers to our private thoughts, feelings, motives, and desires. It is who we really are on the inside, not just who we appear to be on the outside.

⁵ Consider how our physical health illustrates the importance of who we are on the inside. First, to keep ourselves in good condition on the inside, we must choose a healthy diet, and we need to exercise regularly. Likewise, to keep ourselves in good spiritual condition, we must choose a healthy diet of spiritual food and regularly exercise our faith in Jehovah. That form of exercise involves applying what we learn and speaking about our faith. (Rom. 10:8-10; Jas. 2:26) Second, based on outward appearance, we might think that we are healthy even though we are actually diseased on the inside. In a similar way, based on our theocratic routine, we may think that our faith is strong, but wrong

4-5. (a) How does Psalm 51:6 help us to understand what the word “heart” refers to? (b) How does our physical health illustrate the importance of who we are on the inside?

desires could be growing in us. (1 Cor. 10:12; Jas. 1:14, 15) We must remember that Satan would like to infect us with his thinking. How, specifically, might he try to do that? And how can we protect ourselves?

HOW SATAN TRIES TO INFECT OUR HEART

⁶ Satan wants us to become like him—a rebel who ignores Jehovah’s standards and is motivated by selfishness. Satan cannot force us to reason and act as he does. So he tries to achieve his goal in other ways. For example, he surrounds us with people who are already corrupted by him. (1 John 5:19) He hopes that we will choose to spend time with them, even though we know that bad associations will “spoil” or “corrupt” the way we think and act. (1 Cor. 15:33; ftn.) That tactic worked with King Solomon. He married many pagan women, and they eventually “had a powerful influence over him” and “gradually inclined his heart” away from Jehovah.—1 Ki. 11:3; ftn.

⁷ Satan uses movies and television shows to spread his way of thinking. He understands that storytelling does much more than entertain us; it teaches us how to think, feel, and act. Jesus made good use of this method of teaching. Take, for example, his parables of the

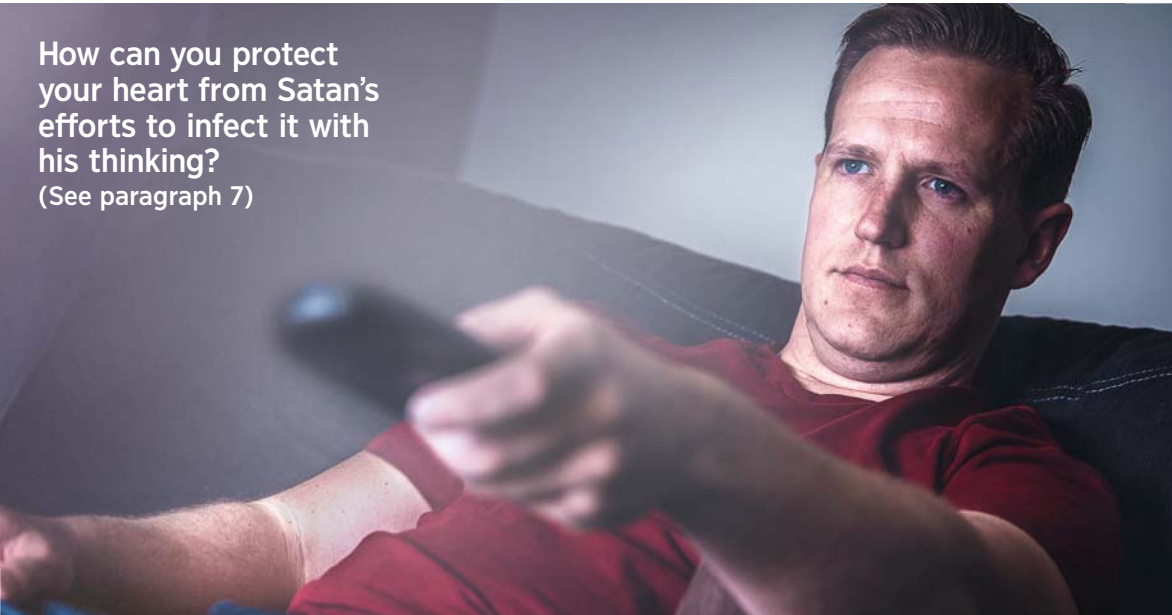
6. What is Satan’s goal, and how does he try to achieve it?

7. What else does Satan use to spread his way of thinking, and why do we need to be cautious about it?

neighborly Samaritan and of the son who left home and wasted his inheritance. (Matt. 13:34; Luke 10:29-37; 15:11-32) However, those who are infected with Satan's thinking can use storytelling to corrupt us. We need to be balanced. Movies and TV shows can entertain and educate us without contaminating our thinking. But we must be cautious. When choosing entertainment, we do well to ask ourselves, 'Is this movie or TV show teaching me that it is all right to give in to my fleshly desires?' (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 2:1-3) What should you do if you detect that a program is promoting satanic thinking? Avoid it as you would a contagious disease!

⁸ Parents, you have a special responsibility to safeguard your children from Satan's efforts to infect their heart. You no doubt do all you can to protect your

8. How can parents help their children to safeguard their heart?



How can you protect
your heart from Satan's
efforts to infect it with
his thinking?
(See paragraph 7)

children from literal diseases. You keep your home clean, and you throw out anything that might cause you or your children to get sick. In the same way, you need to protect your children from movies, TV shows, electronic games, and websites that are likely to infect them with Satan's thinking. Jehovah has given you the authority to care for the spiritual health of your children. (Prov. 1:8; Eph. 6:1, 4) So do not be afraid to set household rules that are based on Bible standards. Tell your young children what they can and cannot watch, and help them to understand the reasons for your decisions. (Matt. 5:37) As your children get older, train them to discern for themselves what is right and what is wrong according to Jehovah's standards. (Heb. 5:14) And remember, your children will learn a lot from what you say but even more from what you do.—Deut. 6:6, 7; Rom. 2:21.

⁹ Satan also tries to infect our heart by getting us to trust human wisdom rather than Jehovah's thinking. (Col. 2:8) Consider just one idea promoted by Satan—that getting rich should be a primary goal in life. Those who think this way might become wealthy, or they might not. Either way, they are in danger. Why? Because they may become so focused on making money that they will sacrifice their health, their family relationships, and even their friendship with God just to

9. What is one idea promoted by Satan, and why is it dangerous?

reach their goal. (1 Tim. 6:10) We can be grateful that our wise heavenly Father helps us to have a balanced view of money.—Eccl. 7:12; Luke 12:15.

HOW CAN WE SAFEGUARD OUR HEART?

¹⁰ If we are to succeed in safeguarding our heart, we must be able to identify dangers and react quickly to protect ourselves. The word translated “safeguard” at Proverbs 4:23 reminds us of the work done by a watchman. In King Solomon’s day, watchmen stood guard on the walls of a city and sounded an alarm if they saw danger approaching. That mental picture helps us understand what we must do to stop Satan from corrupting our thinking.

¹¹ In ancient times, watchmen worked closely with city gatekeepers. (2 Sam. 18:24-26) Together, they helped protect the city by making sure that the gates were closed whenever an enemy came near. (Neh. 7:1-3) Our Bible-trained conscience* can act as our

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** Jehovah gave us the ability to examine our own thoughts, feelings, and actions and then to judge ourselves. The Bible calls that ability the conscience. (Rom. 2:15; 9:1) A **Bible-trained conscience** is one that uses Jehovah’s standards, as explained in the Bible, to judge if what we think, do, or say is good or bad.

10-11. (a) What must we be able to do to protect ourselves? (b) What did watchmen do in ancient times, and how can our conscience act as our watchman?

watchman and warn us when Satan tries to invade our heart—in other words, when he tries to influence our thoughts, feelings, motives, or desires. Whenever our conscience sounds the alarm, we need to listen and shut the gate, so to speak.

¹² Consider an example of how we can protect ourselves from being influenced by Satan’s thinking. Jehovah has taught us that “sexual immorality and every sort of uncleanness [should] not even be men-

12-13. What might we be tempted to do, but how should we react?

Like watchmen and gatekeepers of old, stay alert and act so that corrupting influences do not enter into your heart
(See paragraphs 10-11)



tioned among [us].” (Eph. 5:3) But what will we do if peers at work or at school start talking about sexually immoral topics? We know that we should “reject ungodliness and worldly desires.” (Titus 2:12) The watchman, our conscience, might sound an alarm. (Rom. 2:15) But will we listen to it? We might be tempted, instead, to listen to our peers or to look at pictures they might be sharing. But this is the time to close the city gates, so to speak, by changing the conversation or by walking away.

¹³ It takes courage to resist pressure from our peers to think about or to do wrong things. We can be sure that Jehovah sees the effort we make, and he will give us the strength and wisdom we need to resist satanic thinking. (2 Chron. 16:9; Isa. 40:29; Jas. 1:5) How, though, can we continue to do our part in safeguarding our heart?

STAY ON GUARD

¹⁴ To safeguard our heart, we must not only close it to wrong influences but also open it to positive influences. Think again about the illustration of a walled city. A gatekeeper closed the gates of the city to stop an enemy invasion, but at other times he opened the

14-15. (a) To what do we need to open our heart, and how can we do so? (b) How does Proverbs 4:20-22 help us to get the most out of our Bible reading? (See also the box “How to Meditate.”)

How to Meditate

Answer these questions as you read your Bible:

- ▶ What does this tell me about Jehovah God?
- ▶ How does this section of the Scriptures contribute to the Bible's message?
- ▶ How can I apply this in my life?
- ▶ How can I use these verses to help others?

gates to allow food and other supplies to be brought in. If the gates were never open, the inhabitants of the city would starve. Similarly, we need to open our heart regularly to the influence of God's thinking.

¹⁵ The Bible contains Jehovah's thinking, so each time we read it, we allow Jehovah's thoughts to affect the way we think, feel, and act. How can we get the most from our Bible reading? Prayer is vital. One Christian sister says: "Before I read the Bible, I pray to Jehovah, asking that he help me 'see clearly the wonderful things' in his Word." (Ps. 119:18) We also need to meditate on what we read. When we pray, read, and meditate, God's Word reaches "deep within [our] heart," and we come to love Jehovah's thinking.—Read Proverbs 4:20-22; Ps. 119:97.

¹⁶ Another way we allow God's thinking to influence us is by watching the material available on JW Broadcasting®. One couple says: "The monthly programs have truly been an answer to our prayers! They have strengthened us and lifted us up when we feel sad or lonely. And the original songs are a constant feature in our house. We play them while cooking, cleaning, or just having tea." These programs help us to safeguard our heart. They teach us to think the way Jehovah does and to resist the pressure to adopt Satan's thinking.

¹⁷ Each time we see the benefits of doing what is right, our faith grows stronger. (Jas. 1:2, 3) We feel good because we have made Jehovah proud to call us one of his children, and our desire to please him becomes stronger. (Prov. 27:11) Each test becomes an opportunity to show that we are not halfhearted about serving our caring Father. (Ps. 119:113) Instead, we prove that we love Jehovah with a complete heart, one that is fully resolved to obey his commandments and to do his will.—Read 1 Kings 8:61.

¹⁸ Will we make mistakes? Yes; we are imperfect. If we do stumble, remember King Hezekiah's example. He

16. How have many benefited from viewing JW Broadcasting?

17-18. (a) What happens when we apply what we learn from Jehovah, as shown at 1 Kings 8:61? (b) What can we learn from King Hezekiah's example? (c) In harmony with David's prayer found at Psalm 139:23, 24, for what can we pray?

made mistakes. But he repented and kept on serving Jehovah “with a complete heart.” (Isa. 38:3-6; 2 Chron. 29:1, 2; 32:25, 26) Let us, then, reject Satan’s attempts to infect us with his thinking. Let us pray that we develop “an obedient heart.” (1 Ki. 3:9; read Psalm 139:23, 24.) We can remain faithful to Jehovah if, above all else, we safeguard our heart.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 31: A baptized brother is watching television and an immoral scene comes on the screen. He must decide what to do next. **Page 34:** A watchman in ancient times sees danger outside the city. He calls out to the gatekeepers below, and they respond immediately by closing the city gates and locking them from the inside.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| ■ What can the term “heart” mean? | ■ How does Satan try to infect our heart? | ■ To safeguard our heart, to what should we close it and to what should we open it? |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|

What a Simple Meal Teaches Us About a Heavenly King

“This means my body. . . . This means my ‘blood of the covenant.’”—MATT. 26:26-28.

SONG 16

Praise Jah for His Son, the Anointed

PREVIEW

We will soon be attending the Lord’s Evening Meal to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. This simple meal teaches us much about Jesus’ humility, courage, and love. In this article, we will discuss how we can imitate the precious qualities he displayed.

CAN you describe what takes place at the annual Memorial of Christ's death? No doubt most of us can recall the basic details of the Lord's Evening Meal. Why? Because the meal is so uncomplicated. However, this is a significant event. So we might ask, 'Why is the meal so simple?'

² During his earthly ministry, Jesus was known for teaching important truths in a way that was simple, clear, and easy to understand. (Matt. 7:28, 29) In the same way, he provided us with a simple yet meaningful way to commemorate* his death. Let us consider closely this Memorial meal and some of the things Jesus said and did. We will appreciate even more just how humble, courageous, and loving Jesus really is, and we will learn how we can imitate him more closely.

JESUS IS HUMBLE

³ Jesus introduced the Memorial of his death in the

* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** To **commemorate** means to do something special in order to remember and honor an important event or person.

1-2. (a) Why can we expect that Jesus would provide us with a simple way to commemorate his death? (b) What qualities of Jesus will we consider?

3. As reported at Matthew 26:26-28, how simple was the Memorial meal that Jesus introduced, and what did the two basic items symbolize?



The Memorial emblems of bread and wine remind us that Jesus gave his life for us and that he is now our reigning King in heaven
(See paragraphs 3-5)

presence of his 11 faithful apostles. He took what was at hand from the Passover meal and made this simple commemoration. **(Read Matthew 26:26-28.)** He used only the unleavened bread and the wine that were already on hand. Jesus told his apostles that those two basic items symbolized his perfect body and blood, which he would soon offer up in their behalf. The apostles may not have been surprised at the simplicity of this important new meal. Why not?

⁴ Consider what happened months earlier, during the third year of Jesus' ministry, when he visited the home of his close friends—Lazarus, Martha, and

4. How does the advice that Jesus gave earlier to Martha help us to understand why Jesus kept the Memorial meal simple?

Mary. In that relaxed setting, Jesus began teaching. Martha was present, but she was distracted with preparing a large meal for her honored guest. Observing this, Jesus kindly corrected Martha, helping her to see that an elaborate meal was not always necessary. (Luke 10:40-42) Later, with just hours remaining before his sacrificial death, Jesus applied his own counsel. He kept the Memorial meal simple. What does this tell us about Jesus?

⁵ In everything that Jesus said and did, he was humble. So it is not surprising that he showed great humility on that last night of his life on earth. (Matt. 11:29) He knew that he was about to offer the greatest sacrifice in human history and that Jehovah would resurrect him to a glorious position in heaven. Even so, he did not draw undue attention to himself by requiring an elaborate observance of his death. Instead, he told his disciples that once a year they should remember him by means of this simple meal. (John 13:15; 1 Cor. 11:23-25) The simple but appropriate meal shows that Jesus was not a proud person. We can be happy that humility is one of the outstanding qualities of our heavenly King.—Read Philippians 2:5-8.

⁶ How can we imitate Jesus' humility? By putting

5. What does the simplicity of this meal show about Jesus, and how does this harmonize with Philippians 2:5-8?

6. How can we imitate Jesus' humility when we face trials?

the interests of others ahead of our own. (Phil. 2:3, 4) Think back to the final night of Jesus' earthly life. Jesus knew that he would soon experience a painful death; yet, he was deeply concerned about his faithful apostles, who would soon be grieving for him. So he spent the last night instructing, encouraging, and reassuring them. (John 14:25-31) Jesus humbly showed more concern for the welfare of others than for himself. What an excellent example he set for us!

JESUS IS COURAGEOUS

⁷ Just after Jesus introduced the Lord's Evening Meal, he demonstrated tremendous courage. How so? Jesus accepted his Father's will for him, even though he knew that doing so meant that he would be executed for the shameful crime of blasphemy. (Matt. 26:65, 66; Luke 22:41, 42) Jesus maintained perfect integrity so as to honor Jehovah's name, uphold God's sovereignty, and open the way to endless life for repentant humans. At the same time, Jesus prepared his followers for what they would soon face.

⁸ Jesus also showed courage by setting aside any

7. How did Jesus show great courage just after he introduced the Lord's Evening Meal?

8. (a) What did Jesus tell his faithful apostles? (b) In the years following his death, how did Jesus' disciples follow his example of courage?

anxiety he may have had and by focusing attention on the needs of his faithful apostles. The simple meal, which he introduced after dismissing Judas, would remind those who would become his anointed followers of the benefits of Jesus' shed blood and of sharing in the new covenant. (1 Cor. 10:16, 17) To help them prove worthy of their heavenly calling, Jesus told his followers what he and his Father expected of them. (John 15:12-15) Jesus also told the apostles of the trials that lay ahead of them. Then, pointing to his own example, he urged them to "take courage!" (John 16:1-4a, 33) Many years later, Jesus' disciples were still following his self-sacrificing course and displaying courage. At great cost to themselves, they supported one another in their various trials.—Heb. 10:33, 34.

⁹ Likewise today, we follow Jesus' example of showing courage. For instance, it takes courage to assist our brothers who are persecuted because of their faith. At times, our brothers may be unjustly imprisoned. When that happens, we must do all that we can for them, including speaking up in their behalf. (Phil. 1:14; Heb. 13:19) Another way we show courage is by continuing to preach "with boldness." (Acts 14:3) Like Jesus, we are determined to preach the Kingdom message, even though people may oppose and perse-

9. How can we imitate Jesus in showing courage?

cute us. At times, however, we may find that we lack courage. What can we do?

¹⁰ We can strengthen our courage by thinking about the hope that the ransom sacrifice of Christ makes possible for us. (John 3:16; Eph. 1:7) In the weeks leading up to the Memorial, we have a special opportunity to build our appreciation for the ransom. During that time, keep up with the Memorial Bible reading and prayerfully meditate on the events surrounding Jesus' death. Then when we gather for the Lord's Evening Meal, we will understand more fully the significance of the Memorial emblems and the matchless sacrifice that they represent. When we appreciate what Jesus and Jehovah have done for us and understand how it benefits us and our loved ones, our hope grows stronger, and we are motivated to endure courageously to the end.—Heb. 12:3.

¹¹ So far we have learned that the Lord's Evening Meal reminds us not only of the precious ransom but also of Jesus' outstanding qualities of humility and courage. How grateful we can be that Jesus continues to display these qualities as our heavenly High Priest, who pleads in our behalf! (Heb. 7:24, 25) To show our heartfelt appreciation, we must loyally commemorate

10. In the weeks leading up to the Memorial, what should we do, and why?

11-12. What have we learned so far?

Jesus' death, just as he commanded. (Luke 22:19, 20) We do this on the day that corresponds to Nisan 14, the most important date of the year.

¹² We can discern from the simple features of the Lord's Evening Meal another quality that moved Jesus to die for us. As a man on earth, he was known for this quality. What was it?

JESUS IS LOVING

¹³ Jesus perfectly reflected Jehovah's intense love for us in everything that he did. (Read John 15:9; 1 John 4:8-10.) Above all, Jesus was moved from the heart to give his life in our behalf. Whether we are of the anointed or of the "other sheep," we benefit from the love that Jehovah and his Son have shown to us by means of that sacrifice. (John 10:16; 1 John 2:2) Think, too, about the very nature of the Memorial meal; it reveals Jesus' love and consideration for his disciples. How so?

¹⁴ Jesus showed love for his spirit-begotten followers by instituting, not a complicated ritual, but a simple meal for them to observe. As time passed, those anointed disciples needed to observe the Memorial

13. How do John 15:9 and 1 John 4:8-10 describe the love that Jehovah and Jesus have shown, and who benefit from their love?

14. In what way did Jesus show love for his disciples?

each year, doing so under various circumstances, including imprisonment. (Rev. 2:10) Were they able to obey Jesus? Yes, they were!

¹⁵ Down to modern times, true Christians have sought to commemorate Jesus' death. They followed the procedure for the Lord's Evening Meal as best they could, sometimes under difficult conditions. Note the following examples. While in solitary confinement in a Chinese prison, Brother Harold King had to be innovative. He discreetly prepared the Memorial emblems, using what he had on hand. He also calculated the date for the Memorial as carefully as he could. When the time came for the commemoration, he—alone in his cell—sang, prayed, and gave a Scriptural talk.

¹⁶ Here is another example. A group of sisters imprisoned in a concentration camp during World War II risked their lives to commemorate the Lord's Evening Meal. However, because of the meal's simple nature, they were able to observe the Memorial discreetly. They reported: "We stood close together in a circle, in the midst a footstool with a white cloth bearing the emblems. A candle lit the room, as electric light might have betrayed us. . . . We expressed anew our fervent vows to our Father to use all our strength for the vindication of His holy name." What

15-16. How have some been able to observe the Lord's Evening Meal under difficult conditions?



First century C.E.



19th century

Jesus lovingly instituted a Memorial ceremony that was simple enough to be observed over many centuries and under various circumstances
(See paragraphs 14-16)

outstanding faith they showed! And what love Jesus displayed when he made it possible for us to observe the Memorial even under difficult circumstances!

¹⁷ As the Memorial approaches, we do well to ask ourselves the following questions: ‘How can I imitate Jesus more closely in showing love? Do I think more about the needs of my fellow worshippers than about my own? Do I expect more from my brothers and sisters than they can give, or am I aware of their limita-

17. What questions might we ask ourselves?



Nazi concentration camp



Present-day Kingdom Hall

tions?’ May we always imitate Jesus and show “fellow feeling.”—1 Pet. 3:8.

KEEP THESE LESSONS IN FRONT OF YOU

¹⁸ The requirement to observe the Memorial of Christ’s death will not last much longer. When Jesus “comes” during the great tribulation, he will gather his remaining “chosen ones” to heaven, and the Memorial will cease to be commemorated.—1 Cor. 11:26; Matt. 24:31.

¹⁹ Even after the Memorial meal is no longer

18-19. (a) Of what can we be sure? (b) What are you determined to do?

observed, we can be sure that Jehovah's people will fondly remember this simple meal as a symbol of the greatest humility, courage, and love ever shown by a human. At that time, those who observed this extraordinary meal will no doubt tell about it for the good of all then living. But to benefit right now from this meal, we must be determined to imitate Jesus' humility, courage, and love. If we do, we can be confident that we will receive our reward from Jehovah.—2 Pet. 1:10, 11.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 48-49: Reenactments of faithful servants observing the Memorial in the first-century congregation; in the late 1800's; in a Nazi concentration camp; and in our day in a modest, open-sided Kingdom Hall in a South American country with a warm climate.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ■ What does the Memorial meal teach us about Jesus' outstanding humility ? | ■ How did Jesus display immense courage just after instituting the Lord's Evening Meal? | ■ In what way did Jesus show exceptional love by this simple arrangement? |
|---|--|--|

What Our Attendance at Meetings Says About Us

*“Keep proclaiming the death of the Lord,
until he comes.”—1 COR. 11:26.*

SONG 18

Grateful for the Ransom

PREVIEW

The Memorial of Christ’s death on Friday evening, **April 19, 2019**, will be the most important meeting of the entire year. What motivates us to attend that event? No doubt, we want to please Jehovah. In this article, we will consider what our attendance at the Memorial as well as at our weekly meetings says about us.

IMAGINE what Jehovah sees when millions around the world gather for the Lord's Evening Meal. He looks at more than just the large number of people; he notices each individual who is present. For instance, he sees those who faithfully come every year. Among them may be individuals who come despite facing severe persecution. Others do not come regularly to other meetings, but they view attending the Memorial as a solemn duty. Jehovah also notices those who may be at the Memorial for the first time, perhaps out of curiosity.

² Certainly, Jehovah is pleased to see that so many attend the Memorial. (Luke 22:19) However, Jehovah is not primarily concerned with the *number* of people who come. He is more interested in the *reason* for their coming; motive matters to Jehovah. In this article, we will discuss a question of vital importance: Why do we attend not only the annual observance of the Memorial but also the weekly meetings that Jehovah provides for those who love him?

1-2. (a) What does Jehovah see when millions gather for the Lord's Evening Meal? (See cover picture.) (b) What will we discuss in this article?

HUMILITY MOVES US TO ATTEND

³ We attend congregation meetings primarily because they are part of our worship. We also attend because we are taught by Jehovah at meetings. Proud people reject the idea that they need to be taught anything. (3 John 9) By contrast, we are eager to be instructed by Jehovah and the organization that he is using.—Isa. 30:20; John 6:45.

⁴ Our attendance at meetings says that we are humble—ready and willing to be taught. On the night of the Memorial of Jesus’ death, we attend this important event not merely because we feel it is a duty but also because we humbly obey Jesus’ command: “Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” (Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26.) That meeting strengthens our hope for the future and reminds us of just how much Jehovah loves us. However, Jehovah knows that we need to be encouraged and reassured more than just once a year. So he provides us with meetings each week and urges us to attend them. Humility moves us to obey. We spend a number of hours every week preparing for and attending those meetings.

3-4. (a) Why do we attend meetings? (b) What does our attendance at meetings say about us? (c) In view of what 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 states, why should we not miss the Memorial?

⁵ Each year, many humble people accept Jehovah's invitation to be taught by him. (Isa. 50:4) They enjoy attending the Memorial, and they start to attend the other meetings. (Zech. 8:20-23) Together, we are delighted to be instructed and guided by Jehovah, "[our] helper and [our] rescuer." (Ps. 40:17) Really, what could be more enjoyable—or more important—than accepting an invitation to be taught by Jehovah and by Jesus, the Son he loves so deeply?—Matt. 17:5; 18:20; 28:20.

⁶ Each year, we make an effort to invite as many as possible to attend the Memorial of Jesus' death. Many humble people have benefited by accepting our invitation. Consider an example. Several years ago, a man received a printed invitation to the Memorial, but he told the brother who handed it to him that he could not attend. However, on the night of the Memorial, the brother was surprised to see that same man walk into the Kingdom Hall. The man was so impressed by the welcome he received that he began attending our weekly meetings. In fact, he missed only three meetings during the entire following year. What helped him to respond in such a positive way? He was meek enough to change his

5. Why do humble people respond to Jehovah's invitation?

6. How did humility help one man to attend the Memorial?

mind. The brother who invited him later said, “He is a very humble man.” Jehovah undoubtedly drew this man to worship Him, and he is now a baptized brother.—2 Sam. 22:28; John 6:44.

⁷ What we learn at meetings and what we read in the Bible can help us to be humble. In the weeks leading up to the Memorial, our meetings often focus on the example of Jesus and the humility he showed in giving his life as a ransom. And during the days before the Memorial, we are urged to read Bible accounts about the events surrounding Jesus’ death and resurrection. What we learn at such meetings and what we read in those Bible accounts deepen our gratitude for the sacrifice Jesus made for us. We are moved to imitate his humble attitude and to do Jehovah’s will, even when it is difficult for us.—Luke 22:41, 42.

COURAGE HELPS US TO ATTEND

⁸ We also try to imitate Jesus in showing courage. Think about the courage he showed on the days before his death. He was fully aware that his enemies would soon humiliate, beat, and execute him. (Matt.

7. How can what we learn at meetings and read in the Bible help us to be humble?

8. How did Jesus show courage?

Your courage in attending Christian meetings gives strength to others
(See paragraph 9)



20:17-19) Still, he willingly faced death. When the time came, he said to his faithful apostles, who were with him in Gethsemane: “Get up, let us go. Look! My betrayer has drawn near.” (Matt. 26:36, 46) And when the armed mob came to arrest him, he stepped forward, identified himself, and ordered the soldiers to let his apostles go. (John 18:3-8) What outstanding courage Jesus displayed! Today, anointed Christians and those of the other sheep strive to imitate Jesus in showing courage. How?

⁹ To attend meetings regularly, we may need to demonstrate courage in the face of difficult circumstances. Some of our brothers and sisters attend

-
9. (a) Why might we need courage to attend meetings regularly?
(b) How can our example affect our brothers who are imprisoned for their faith?



meetings despite being burdened by grief, discouragement, or health problems. Others courageously attend meetings despite strong opposition from family members or governmental authorities. Think for a moment about how our example affects our brothers who are imprisoned for their faith. (Heb. 13:3) When they hear that we keep serving Jehovah in spite of our trials, they are strengthened to maintain their faith, courage, and integrity. The apostle Paul had a similar experience. When he was in prison in Rome, he rejoiced whenever he heard that his brothers were serving God faithfully. (Phil. 1:3-5, 12-14) Shortly before or just after his release, Paul wrote his letter to the Hebrews. In that letter he urged those faithful Christians to let their “brotherly love continue” and never to forsake meeting together.—Heb. 10:24, 25; 13:1.

¹⁰ We show courage when we invite relatives, workmates, and neighbors to the Memorial. Why do we invite such ones? We are so grateful for what Jehovah and Jesus have done for us that we cannot hold back from inviting others to attend the Memorial. We want them to learn how they too can benefit from Jehovah’s “undeserved kindness” by means of the ransom.—Read Ephesians 1:7; Rev. 22:17.

¹¹ When we show courage by meeting together, we also display another precious attribute, one that both God and his Son display in outstanding ways.

LOVE COMPELS US TO ATTEND

¹² Our love for Jehovah and Jesus compels us to attend meetings. In turn, what we learn at the meetings deepens our love for Jehovah and his Son. At meetings we are regularly reminded of what they have done for us. (Rom. 5:8) The Memorial in particular reminds us of how deep their love is, even for those who do not yet appreciate the ransom. Filled with gratitude, we try to imitate Jesus by how we live each day. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.) In

10-11. (a) Whom should we invite to the Memorial? (b) What reason does Ephesians 1:7 give for doing so?

12. (a) How do our meetings deepen our love for Jehovah and Jesus? (b) What does 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15 encourage us to do in imitation of Jesus?

addition, our heart stirs us to praise Jehovah for providing the ransom. One way we can praise him is by making heartfelt comments at our meetings.

¹³ We can show the depth of our love for Jehovah and his Son by being willing to make sacrifices for them. Often, we must make sacrifices of various kinds to attend our meetings. Many congregations hold one meeting at the end of a workday when we are most likely tired. And another meeting is held on the weekend when other people are resting. Does Jehovah notice that we attend our meetings even though we are tired? Certainly he does! In fact, the greater our struggle, the more Jehovah appreciates the love we show for him.—Mark 12:41-44.

¹⁴ Jesus set the pattern for us in showing self-sacrificing love. He was willing not only to die for his disciples but also to live each day in a way that put their interests ahead of his own. For instance, he met with his followers even when he was physically tired or emotionally distressed. (Luke 22:39-46) And he focused on what he could give to others, not on what he could get from them. (Matt. 20:28) When our love for Jehovah and for our brothers is that

13. How can we show the depth of our love for Jehovah and his Son? Explain.

14. How did Jesus set the pattern in showing self-sacrificing love?

Will You Invite Them?

The special public talk “Reach Out for the Real Life!” will be given the week of April 8, 2019. Those who come will learn the answers to these timely questions: What is the real life? How can you get a firm hold on the real life? Perhaps those who hear the special talk will be motivated to attend the Memorial. We hope that among those who attend may be some who are “rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Acts 13:48.

strong, we will do all we can to attend the Lord’s Evening Meal as well as all other congregation meetings.

¹⁵ We belong to the only true Christian brotherhood, and we enjoy spending as much time as possible inviting new ones to join us. However, we are particularly interested in helping those who are “related to us in the faith” but who have become inactive. (Gal. 6:10) We prove our love for them by encouraging them to attend our meetings, especially the Memorial. Like Jehovah and Jesus, we are deeply moved when an inactive one returns to Jehovah, our loving Father and Shepherd.—Matt. 18:14.

15. Whom are we particularly interested in helping?

¹⁶ In the coming weeks, invite as many as possible to attend the Memorial on Friday evening, April 19, 2019. (See the box “Will You Invite Them?”) Throughout the coming year, may we encourage one another by regularly attending all the meetings that Jehovah provides for us. As the end of this system draws near, we need our meetings to help us remain humble, courageous, and loving. (1 Thess. 5:8-11) With all our heart, let us show how we feel about Jehovah and his Son for loving us so much!—Read John 3:16.

16. (a) How can we encourage one another, and what will our meetings do for us? (b) Why is this a good time of year to remember Jesus’ words found at John 3:16?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 56-57: A brother who is in prison for his faith is encouraged by a letter from home. Knowing that he is not forgotten, he is joyful over receiving the news that his family is also remaining faithful to Jehovah despite the civil unrest in their area.

**HOW DOES OUR ATTENDANCE AT
CONGREGATION MEETINGS SHOW . . .**

■ *humility?*

■ *courage?*

■ *love?*

SONG 126

Stay Awake, Stand Firm, Grow Mighty

A NEW MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY



Kenneth E. Cook, Jr., and his wife, Jamie

ON Wednesday morning, January 24, 2018, the United States and Canada Bethel families enjoyed hearing a special announcement: Brother Kenneth Cook, Jr., had been added to the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Brother Cook was born and raised in south-central Pennsylvania, U.S.A. He learned the truth from a classmate just prior to graduating from high

school and was baptized on June 7, 1980. He began full-time service as a regular pioneer on September 1, 1982. After pioneering for two years, he was invited to Bethel, beginning his Bethel service at Wallkill, New York, on October 12, 1984.

For the next 25 years, Brother Cook served in various assignments in both the Printery and the Bethel Office. He married his wife, Jamie, in 1996, and she joined him in Bethel service at Wallkill. In December 2009, Brother and Sister Cook were transferred to the Watchtower Educational Center at Patterson, New York, where Brother Cook was assigned to work with the Writing Correspondence Department. In April 2016, after a brief return to the Wallkill facility, Brother and Sister Cook were transferred to Brooklyn, New York. Five months later, they relocated to world headquarters in Warwick, New York. In January 2017, Brother Cook was appointed to serve as a helper to the Writing Committee of the Governing Body.

The Governing Body now consists of eight anointed brothers:
K. E. Cook, Jr.; S. F. Herd; G. W. Jackson; M. S. Lett; G. Lösch;
A. Morris III; D. M. Sanderson; D. H. Splane

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COVER PICTURE: Millions of people around the world are welcomed to the Lord’s Evening Meal (See study article 5, paragraphs 1-2)

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