

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES

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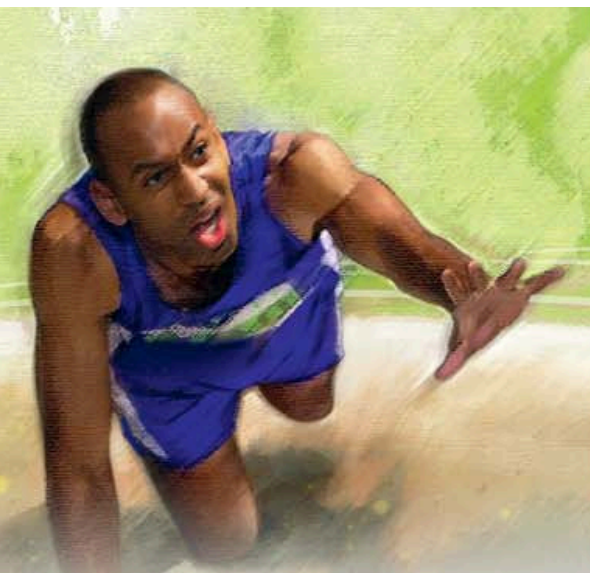
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**Honor Jehovah’s  
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1. Move ahead, move ahead to maturity!  
It's the will of our God that we gain ability.  
Try your best to improve in your ministry,  
Then our God your work will bless.  
There's a place in the service for all.  
It's the work Jesus did, you'll recall.  
Look to God that you thus at no time may fall,  
Standing firm for righteousness.
2. Move ahead, move ahead, boldly witnessing!  
Everlasting good news to all sorts of people bring.  
Join in praise to Jehovah, our God and King,  
As we preach from door to door.  
Wicked foes try to cause us to fear.  
Don't shrink back, but let ev'ryone hear  
Joyful news that the Kingdom of God is here.  
Teach the truth yet more and more.
3. Move ahead, move ahead, always follow through,  
And improve in your skills  
for there's so much work to do.  
Let God's spirit keep on motivating you.  
Find the joy that is divine.  
Love the people you work hard to find.  
Keep returning to reach heart and mind.  
And assist all good progress each day to make,  
So the light of truth will shine.



## FOR THOSE LOVING JEHOVAH, “THERE IS NO STUMBLING BLOCK”

*“Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, and for them there is no stumbling block.”*

—PS. 119:165.

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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How are Christians in a race, and what is the prize?

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What stones could stumble a Christian?

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In what sense is there no stumbling block for those loving Jehovah’s law?

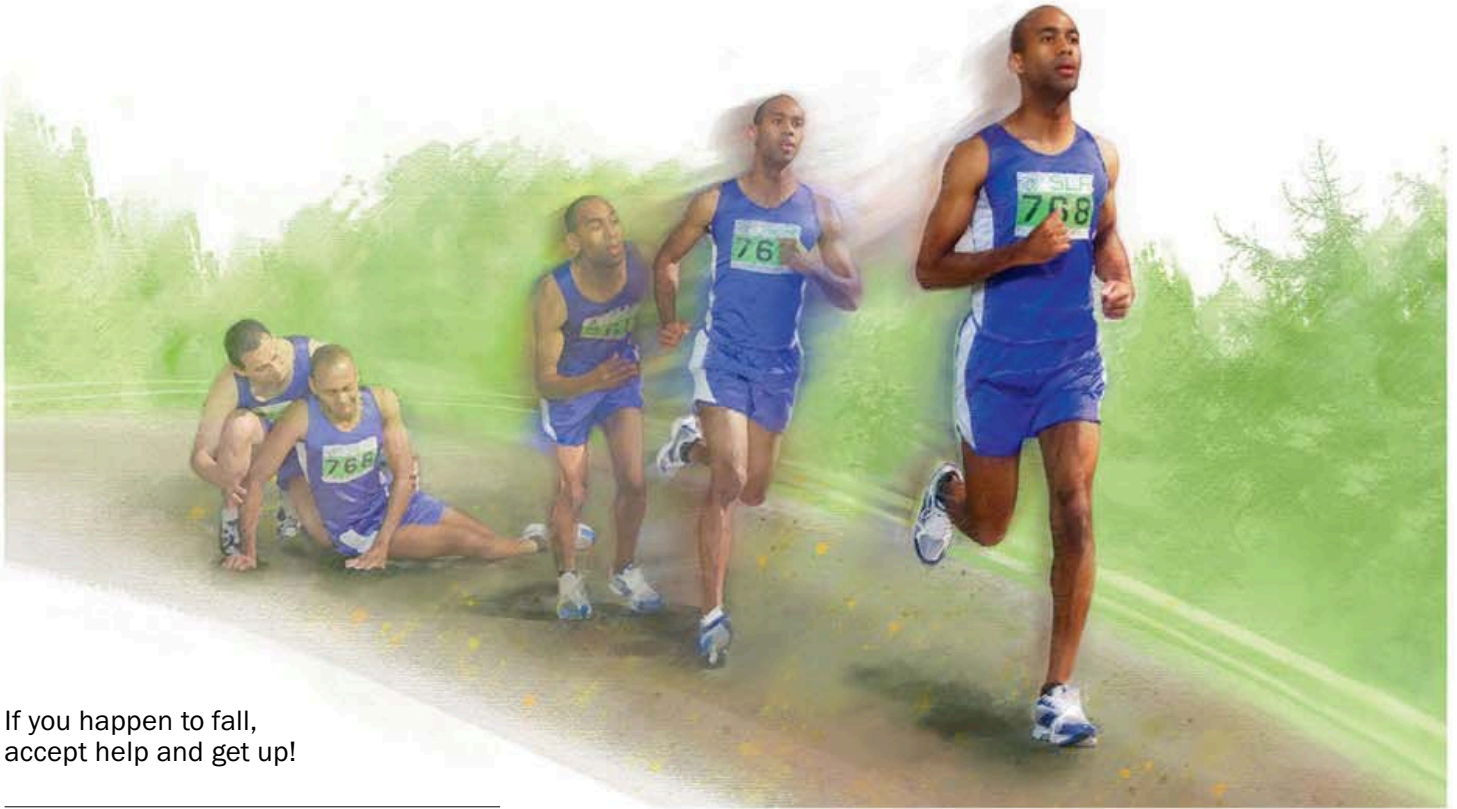
FROM her early teens, Mary Decker was renowned as a world-class runner. She was the favorite to win the gold medal in the 3,000-meter final at the 1984 Summer Olympics. However, her track shoes never crossed the finish line. She tripped on the leg of another runner and fell headlong off the course. Injured and in tears, she had to be carried off the track. Mary was no quitter, though. In less than a year, she was back in racing form and set a new world record for the women’s mile in 1985.

<sup>2</sup> As Christians, we are in a race—a symbolic foot-race. Our focus must be on running to win. Our race is not a sprint in which speed is the key to victory. And it definitely is not a mere jog with frequent idle moments. Rather, it can be likened to a marathon wherein endurance is necessary for victory. The apostle Paul used the metaphor of a runner in a race in his letter to Christians living in Corinth, a city renowned for athletic contests. He wrote: “Do you not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may attain it.”—1 Cor. 9:24.

<sup>3</sup> The Bible tells us to run in this figurative race. (*Read 1 Corinthians 9:25-27.*) The prize is everlasting life, either in heaven for anointed Christians or on earth for the rest of the participants. Unlike most athletic contests, this race allows for all who enter and who endure to the end to win the prize.

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1. How can the attitude of a certain runner illustrate our determination not to give up?
  2. In what sense are true Christians in a race, and on what must our focus be?
  3. How is it that all runners can win the race for everlasting life?





If you happen to fall,  
accept help and get up!

(Matt. 24:13) Contestants lose only if they fail to run according to the rules or do not cross the finish line. Furthermore, this is the only race that offers the prize of everlasting life.

<sup>4</sup> Crossing the finish line is not easy. It takes discipline and certainty of purpose. Only one person—Jesus Christ—has ever been able to cross the finish line without stumbling even once. But his disciple James wrote that followers of Christ “all stumble many times.” (Jas. 3:2) How true! All of us are subject to our own imperfections and those of others. So at times we may trip, then stagger and lose our momentum. We may even fall; but we get up and continue running. Some have fallen so hard that they had to be helped to get up and resume the race toward the finish line. Thus, it is possible that we could, momentarily or even repeatedly, stumble or fall down.—1 Ki. 8:46.

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4. What makes our race to gain everlasting life challenging?

#### IF YOU STUMBLE, STAY IN THE RACE

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps you have used the words “stumble” and “fall” interchangeably to describe a spiritual condition. These Bible expressions can, but do not always, have the same sense. For instance, notice the wording of Proverbs 24:16: “The righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up; but the wicked ones will be made to stumble by calamity.”

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah will not allow those trusting in him to stumble or to experience a fall—an adversity or a setback in their worship—from which they *cannot* recover. We are assured that Jehovah will help us “get up” so that we can continue giving him our utmost devotion. How comforting that is for all who love Jehovah deeply from the heart! The wicked do not have the same desire to get up. They do not seek the help of God’s

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5, 6. (a) How is there “no stumbling block” for a Christian, and what will help him to “get up”? (b) Why do some not recover after stumbling?

holy spirit and his people, or they refuse such help when offered to them. In contrast, for those 'loving Jehovah's law,' no stumbling block exists that can permanently knock them out of the race for life.—*Read Psalm 119:165.*

<sup>7</sup> Some lapse into *minor* sin—even repeatedly—because of some weakness. But they are still righteous in Jehovah's eyes if they continue to "get up," that is, sincerely repent and strive to resume a course of loyal service. We can see that from the way God dealt with ancient Israel. (Isa. 41:9, 10) Proverbs 24:16, quoted earlier, rather than emphasizing the negative—our 'falling'—focuses on the positive, our 'getting up' with the help of our merciful God. (*Read Isaiah 55:7.*) Expressing their confidence in us, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ kindly encourage us to "get up."—Ps. 86:5; John 5:19.

<sup>8</sup> Even if a runner stumbles or falls in a marathon, he may have time to recover and finish the course if he acts with urgency. In our race for everlasting life, we do not know the "day and hour" when the end of the race will come. (Matt. 24:36) Still, the less we stumble, the more likely we are to keep a steady pace, stay in the race, and finish it successfully. So how can we avoid stumbling?

### STUMBLING THAT IMPEDES PROGRESS

<sup>9</sup> Let us consider five potential stumbling blocks—personal weaknesses, desires of the flesh, injustices on the part of fellow believers, tribulation or persecution, and the imperfections of others. Remember, though, if we have stumbled, Jehovah is very patient. He is not quick to label us as being disloyal.

7, 8. How can one "fall" and yet have God's favor?

9. What potential stumbling blocks will we discuss?

<sup>10</sup> *Personal weaknesses* may be likened to loose stones lying on a race-track. Looking at events in the lives of King David and the apostle Peter, we can note two such weaknesses—lack of self-control and fear of man.

<sup>11</sup> King David manifested a weakness as to exercising self-control, as was evidenced in his actions involving Bathsheba. And when faced with the insults of Nabal, David was about to react rashly. Yes, his self-control faltered, but he never gave up trying to please Jehovah. With the help of others, he was able to regain his spiritual balance.—1 Sam. 25:5-13, 32, 33; 2 Sam. 12:1-13.

<sup>12</sup> Peter manifested fear of man, stumbling badly at times; yet, he remained loyal to Jesus and Jehovah. For example, he publicly denied his Master, not just once, but three times. (Luke 22:54-62) Later, Peter failed to act in a Christian manner, treating Gentile believers as if they were somehow not as good as circumcised Jewish Christians. The apostle Paul, however, saw the matter clearly—there was no room for class distinctions in the congregation. Peter's attitude was wrong. Before Peter's conduct could sour the brotherhood, Paul acted by counseling Peter directly, face-to-face. (Gal. 2:11-14) Was Peter's pride so wounded that he quit the race for life? No. He seriously considered Paul's counsel, applied it, and kept on in the race.

<sup>13</sup> Sometimes a personal weakness is a health issue. This too can loom as a stumbling block. It may interfere with

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10, 11. With what personal weakness did David struggle?

12. How did Peter stay in the race despite stumbling?

13. How may physical weakness cause stumbling?

our spiritual pace and even cause us to stagger and tire out. For example, a Japanese sister suffered a health crisis 17 years after her baptism. She became preoccupied with her health to the point of becoming spiritually weak. In time, she became inactive. Two elders visited her. Encouraged by their kind words, she began attending meetings again. She reflects, "I was moved to tears because the brothers greeted me so warmly." Our sister is now back in the race.

<sup>14</sup> The *desires of the flesh* have stumbled many. When tempted in this way, we need to take strong action to keep mentally, morally, and spiritually clean. Recall Jesus' counsel to 'throw away' in the figurative sense anything that might stumble us, even our eye or our hand. Would that not include immoral thinking and actions that have caused some to drop out of the race?—*Read Matthew 5:29, 30.*

<sup>15</sup> One brother who was raised in a Christian household wrote that for as long as he could remember, he struggled with homosexual tendencies. He said: "I always felt awkward. It seemed that I didn't fit in anywhere." By age 20, he had become a regular pioneer and was a ministerial servant in the congregation. Then he stumbled badly, was Scripturally disciplined, and received help from the elders. By praying, studying God's Word, and focusing on helping others, he picked himself up and resumed his spiritual pace. Years later, he admits: "At times I still have those feelings, but I don't let them overtake me. I have learned that Jehovah will not let you be tempted beyond what you can handle. So I believe that God thinks I

can make it." This brother concludes: "All the struggles I have endured will pay off in the new world. I want that! Until then, I will continue to fight." He is determined to stay in the race.

<sup>16</sup> *Injustices on the part of fellow believers* can be stumbling blocks. In France, a former elder believed that he had been the victim of an injustice, and he became bitter. As a result, he stopped associating with the congregation and became inactive. Two elders visited him and listened sympathetically, without interrupting while he related his story, as he perceived it. They encouraged him to throw his burden on Jehovah and stressed that the most important thing was to please God. He responded well and soon was back in the race, active in congregation matters again.

<sup>17</sup> All Christians need to keep focused on the appointed Head of the congregation, Jesus Christ, not on imperfect humans. Jesus, whose eyes are "as a fiery flame," views everything in proper perspective and thus sees much more than we ever could. (Rev. 1:13-16) For example, he recognizes that what seems to be an injustice to us may be a misinterpretation or a misunderstanding on our part. Jesus will handle congregation needs perfectly and at the right time. Thus, we should not allow the actions or decisions of any fellow Christian to become stumbling blocks to us.

<sup>18</sup> Two other stumbling blocks are *tribulation or persecution* and the *imperfections of others in the congregation*. In his parable of the sower, Jesus said that

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14, 15. What strong action is needed when wrong desires arise? Illustrate.

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16, 17. (a) What helped one brother who felt that he had suffered an injustice? (b) To avoid stumbling, on what do we need to be focused?

18. How can we withstand trials or troubling situations?



“tribulation or persecution” on account of the word would cause some individuals to stumble. Whatever the source of that persecution—family, neighbors, or governmental authorities—it may particularly affect one who “has no root in himself,” who lacks spiritual depth. (Matt. 13:21) However, if we maintain an upright heart condition, the Kingdom seed will help us develop deep stabilizing roots to our faith. When beset with trials, endeavor to meditate prayerfully on praiseworthy things. **(Read *Philippians 4:6-9*.)** In Jehovah’s strength, we will withstand trials, not allowing troubling situations to be stumbling blocks.

<sup>19</sup> Sadly, over the years some have let the imperfections of others knock them out of the race. Differences in viewpoints in matters of conscience have become stumbling blocks for them. (1 Cor. 8:12, 13) If someone offends us, will we allow this to become a major issue? The Bible admonishes Christians to stop judging, to forgive others, and to avoid insisting on personal rights. (Luke 6:37) When you face a possible stumbling stone, ask yourself: ‘Am I judging others based on my own preferences? Knowing that my brothers are imperfect, will I let someone’s lack of perfection take me out of the race for life?’ Love for Jehovah can help us be resolved not to allow anything another human does hinder us from crossing the finish line.

### **RUN WITH ENDURANCE —AVOID STUMBLING**

<sup>20</sup> Are you determined to “run the course to the finish”? (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) Then

**19.** How can we prevent an offense from becoming a stumbling block?

**20, 21.** What are you determined to do in the race for life?



Allow nothing to stop you from completing the race!

personal study is a must. Use the Bible and our theocratic publications to help you do research, meditate, and identify potential stumbling blocks. Beg for holy spirit to give you the spiritual stamina you need. Remember, no runner is doomed to fail in the race for life just because he stumbles or falls on occasion. He can get up and get back into the race. He may even use potential stumbling stones as stepping stones, learning valuable lessons from any challenge to his faith.

<sup>21</sup> The Bible describes participation in the race for everlasting life as active, not passive. It is not like getting on a bus that simply carries those on board to victory. We must *run* the race for life ourselves. As we do, “abundant peace” from Jehovah will be like wind at our back. (Ps. 119:165) We can be confident of his continued blessings now and unending blessings to come for all who finish the race.—Jas. 1:12.



## FOR THOSE LOVING JEHOVAH,

### “THERE IS NO STUMBLING BLOCK”

Psalm 119:165

"Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law,  
And for them there is no stumbling block."

#### PARAGRAPH 2

1 Corinthians 9:24 "Do YOU not know that the runners in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that YOU may attain it."

#### PARAGRAPH 3

**[READ]** 1 Corinthians 9:25-27 "Moreover, every man taking part in a contest exercises self-control in all things. Now they, of course, do it that they may get a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible one. 26 Therefore, the way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air; 27 but I pummel my body and lead it as a slave, that, after I have preached to others, I myself should not become disapproved somehow."

Matthew 24:13 "But he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved."

#### PARAGRAPH 4

James 3:2 "For we all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle also [his] whole body."

1 Kings 8:46 ""In case they sin against you (for there is no man that does not sin), and you have to be incensed at them and abandon them to the enemy, and their captors actually carry them off captive to the land of the enemy distant or nearby;,"

#### PARAGRAPH 5

Proverbs 24:16 "For the righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up; but the wicked ones will be made to stumble by calamity."

#### PARAGRAPH 6

**[READ]** Psalm 119:165 "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, And for them there is no stumbling block."

#### PARAGRAPH 7

Isaiah 41:9,10 "you, whom I have taken hold of from the extremities of the earth, and you, whom I have called even from the remote parts of it. And so I said to you, 'You are my servant; I have chosen you, and I have not rejected you. 10 Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not gaze about, for I am your God. I will fortify you. I will really help you. I will really keep fast hold of you with my right hand of righteousness."

Proverbs 24:16 "For the righteous one may fall even seven times, and he will certainly get up; but the wicked ones will be made to stumble by calamity."

**[READ]** Isaiah 55:7 "Let the wicked man leave his way, and the harmful man his thoughts; and let him return to Jehovah, who will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will forgive in a large way."

Psalm 86:5 "For you, O Jehovah, are good and ready to forgive; And the loving-kindness to all those calling upon you is abundant."

John 5:19 "Therefore, in answer, Jesus went on to say to them: "Most truly I say to YOU, The Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he beholds the Father doing. For whatever things that One does, these things the Son also does in like manner."

#### PARAGRAPH 8

Matthew 24:36 ""Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father."

#### PARAGRAPH 11

1 Samuel 25:5-13 "So David sent ten young men and David said to the young men: "Go up to Car'mel, and YOU must come to Na'bal and ask him in my name about his welfare. 6 And this is what YOU must say to my brother, 'May you be well and also your household be well and all that you have be well. 7 And now I have heard that you have shearers. Now the shepherds that belong to you happened themselves to be with us. We did not molest them, and nothing at all showed up missing of theirs all the days they happened to be in Car'mel. 8 Ask your own young men, and they will tell you, that my young men may find favor in your eyes, because it was upon a good day that we came. Just give, please, whatever your hand may find to your servants and to your son David.'" 9 Accordingly David's young men came and spoke to Na'bal in accord with all these words in the name of David and then waited. 10 At this Na'bal answered David's servants and said: "Who is David, and who is the son of Jes'se? Nowadays the servants that are breaking away, each one from before his master, have become many. 11 And do I have to take my bread and my water and my slaughtered meat that I have butchered for my shearers and give it to men of whom I do not even know from where they are?" 12 Upon that David's young men turned around on their way and went back and came and reported to him in accord with all these words. 13 Immediately David said to his men: "Gird on every one his sword!" So they girded on every one his sword and David also girded on his own sword; and they began to go up after David, about four hundred men, while two hundred sat by the baggage."



## PARAGRAPH 11 (cont.)

1 Samuel 25:32,33 "At this David said to Ab'i-gail: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! 33 And blessed be your sensibleness, and blessed be you who have restrained me this day from entering into bloodguilt and having my own hand come to my salvation."

2 Samuel 12:1-13 "And Jehovah proceeded to send Nathan to David. So he came in to him and said to him: "There were two men that happened to be in one city, the one rich and the other of little means. 2 The rich man happened to have very many sheep and cattle; 3 but the man of little means had nothing but one female lamb, a small one, that he had bought. And he was preserving it alive, and it was growing up with him and with his sons, all together. From his morsel it would eat, and from his cup it would drink, and in his bosom it would lie, and it came to be as a daughter to him. 4 After a while a visitor came to the rich man, but he spared taking some from his own sheep and his own cattle to get such ready for the traveler that had come in to him. So he took the female lamb of the man of little means and got it ready for the man that had come in to him." 5 At this David's anger grew very hot against the man, so that he said to Nathan: "As Jehovah is living, the man doing this deserves to die! 6 And for the female lamb he should make compensation with four, as a consequence of the fact that he has done this thing and because he did not have compassion." 7 Then Nathan said to David: "You yourself are the man! This is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, 'I myself anointed you as king over Israel, and I myself delivered you out of the hand of Saul. 8 And I was willing to give you the house of your lord and the wives of your lord into your bosom, and to give you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if it were not enough, I was willing to add to you things like these as well as other things. 9 Why did you despise the word of Jehovah by doing what is bad in his eyes? U-ri'ah the Hit'tite you struck down with the sword, and his wife you took as your wife, and him you killed by the sword of the sons of Am'mon. 10 And now a sword will not depart from your own house to time indefinite, as a consequence of the fact that you despised me so that you took the wife of U-ri'ah the Hit'tite to become your wife.' 11 This is what Jehovah has said, 'Here I am raising up against you calamity out of your own house; and I will take your wives under your own eyes and give them to your fellowman, and he will certainly lie down with your wives under the eyes of this sun. 12 Whereas you yourself acted in secret, I, for my part, shall do this thing in front of all Israel and in front of the sun.'" 13 David now said to Nathan: "I have sinned against Jehovah." At this Nathan said to David: "Jehovah, in turn, does let your sin pass by. You will not die."

## PARAGRAPH 12

Luke 22:54-62 "Then they arrested him and led him off and brought him into the house of the high priest; but Peter was following at a distance. 55 When they lit a fire in the midst of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter was sitting in among them. 56 But a certain servant girl saw him sitting by the bright fire and looked him over and said: "This man also was with him." 57 But he denied it, saying: "I do not know him, woman." 58 And after a short time another person seeing him said: "You also are one of them." But Peter said: "Man, I am not." 59 And after about an hour intervened a certain other [man] began insisting strongly: "For a certainty this [man] also was with him; for, in fact, he is a Gal-i-le'an!" 60 But Peter said: "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And instantly, while he was yet speaking, a cock crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter recalled the utterance of the Lord when he said to him: "Before a cock crows today you will disown me three times." 62 And he went outside and wept bitterly."

Galatians 2:11-14 "However, when Ce'phas came to Antioch, I resisted him face to face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before the arrival of certain men from James, he used to eat with people of the nations; but when they arrived, he went withdrawing and separating himself, in fear of those of the circumcised class. 13 The rest of the Jews also joined him in putting on this pretense, so that even Bar'na-bas was led along with them in their pretense. 14 But when I saw they were not walking straight according to the truth of the good news, I said to Ce'phas before them all: "If you, though you are a Jew, live as the nations do, and not as Jews do, how is it that you are compelling people of the nations to live according to Jewish practice?"

## PARAGRAPH 14

**[READ] Matthew 5:29,30 "If, now, that right eye of yours is making you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. For it is more beneficial to you for one of your members to be lost to you than for your whole body to be pitched into Ge-hen'na. 30 Also, if your right hand is making you stumble, cut it off and throw it away from you. For it is more beneficial to you for one of your members to be lost than for your whole body to land in Ge-hen'na."**

## PARAGRAPH 17

Revelation 1:13-16 "and in the midst of the lampstands someone like a son of man, clothed with a garment that reached down to the feet, and girded at the breasts with a golden girdle. 14 Moreover, his head and his hair were white as white wool, as snow, and his eyes as a fiery flame; 15 and his feet were like fine copper when glowing in a furnace; and his voice was as the sound of many waters. 16 And he had in his right hand seven stars, and out of his mouth a sharp, long two-edged sword was protruding, and his countenance was as the sun when it shines in its power."

## **PARAGRAPH 18**

Matthew 13:21 "Yet he has no root in himself but continues for a time, and after tribulation or persecution has arisen on account of the word he is at once stumbled."

**[READ]** Philippians 4:6-9 "Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let YOUR petitions be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard YOUR hearts and YOUR mental powers by means of Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things. 9 The things that YOU learned as well as accepted and heard and saw in connection with me, practice these; and the God of peace will be with you."

## **PARAGRAPH 19**

1 Corinthians 8:12,13 "But when YOU people thus sin against YOUR brothers and wound their conscience that is weak, YOU are sinning against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat flesh at all, that I may not make my brother stumble."

Luke 6:37 ""Moreover, stop judging, and YOU will by no means be judged; and stop condemning, and YOU will by no means be condemned. Keep on releasing, and YOU will be released."

## **PARAGRAPH 20**

2 Timothy 4:7,8 "I have fought the fine fight, I have run the course to the finish, I have observed the faith. 8 From this time on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me as a reward in that day, yet not only to me, but also to all those who have loved his manifestation."

## **PARAGRAPH 21**

Psalms 119:165 "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law, And for them there is no stumbling block."

James 1:12 "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him."

# 32 *Be Steadfast, Unmovable!*

(1 Corinthians 15:58)

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

*(CHORUS)*

*Steadfast we all need to be;  
Far from this world we keep free,  
As we feed on God's truth  
and keep integrity.*

2. Snares of this world and temptations abound.  
We can resist if our thinking is sound.  
If we hold fast to what God says is true,  
Safely he'll carry us through.

*(Chorus)*

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

*(Chorus)*