

- Song 121 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- “Carefully Avoid Stumbling Yourself and Others”: (10 min.)

Mt 18:6, 7—We must not stumble others (nwtsty study notes and media)

Mt 18:8, 9—We must avoid anything that would cause us to stumble (nwtsty study note and glossary, “Gehenna”)

Mt 18:10—Jehovah knows if we have stumbled others (nwtsty study note; w10 11/1 16)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)  
Mt 18:21, 22—How many times should we be willing to forgive our brother? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 19:7—What was the purpose of “a certificate of dismissal”? (nwtsty study note and media)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- Bible Reading: (4 min. or less) Mt 18:18-35

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- Second Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- Third Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) bhs 26 ¶18-20 —Show how to reach the heart.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 90
- Never Be a Cause for Stumbling (2Co 6:3): (9 min.)  
Play the video (video category PROGRAMS AND EVENTS).
- Memorial Campaign to Begin March 3: (6 min.)  
Talk based on the February 2016 *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*, page 8. Distribute a copy of the Memorial invitation to all in the audience, and review its contents. Emphasize that the special public talk “Who Really Is Jesus Christ?” will be given the week of March 19, 2018. It will increase anticipation for the Memorial. Outline local plans to cover the territory.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) jy chap. 10, box on p. 28
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 133 and Prayer

MATTHEW 18-19 | Carefully Avoid Stumbling Yourself and Others

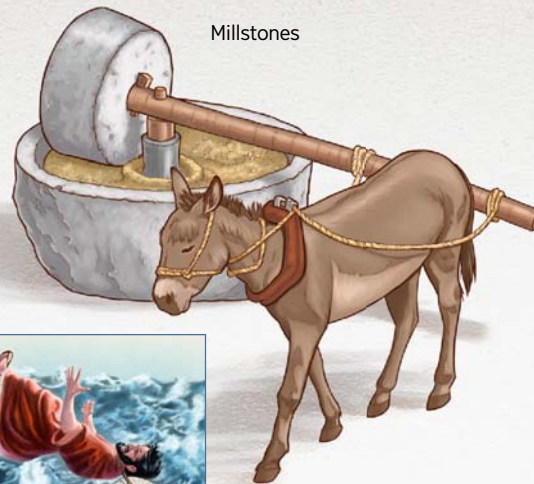
Jesus used illustrations to teach the seriousness of being stumbled or of causing others to stumble.


**18:6, 7**

- A “stumbling block” refers to an action or circumstance that leads a person to follow an improper course, to stumble or fall morally, or to fall into sin
- A person who causes someone to stumble would be better off if he fell into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck

**18:8, 9**

- Jesus counseled his followers to remove even something as precious as a hand or an eye if it causes them to stumble
- It would be better to give up such a cherished thing and enter into God’s Kingdom than to hold on to it and end up in Gehenna, a symbol of permanent destruction



 What in my life could become a stumbling block, and how can I keep from stumbling myself or others?



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## *We Need Self-Control*

(Romans 7:14-25)

1. We love Jehovah with heart, mind, and soul;  
But since we are sinful, we need self-control.  
Fleshly desires bring trouble and strife;  
Living by spirit brings peace and life.
2. Satan's temptations confront us each day,  
And sin's law within us can lead us astray.  
Power of truth is greater than sin.  
Thanks to Jehovah, our minds can win.
3. Each word and action reflects on God's name,  
So we must endeavor to keep free from blame.  
In all we do, we make this our goal:  
Always maintaining our self-control.

## MATTHEW 17:13-18:8

“Yes.” However, when he entered the house, Jesus spoke to him first and said: “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or head tax? From their sons or from the strangers?” **26** When he said: “From the strangers,” Jesus said to him: “Really, then, the sons are tax-free. **27** But that we do not cause them to stumble,<sup>a</sup> go to the sea, cast a fishhook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth, you will find a silver coin.\* Take that and give it to them for me and you.”

**18** In that hour the disciples came near to Jesus and said: “Who really is greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens?”<sup>b</sup> **2** So calling a young child to him, he stood him in their midst **3** and said: “Truly I say to you, unless you turn around\* and become as young children,<sup>c</sup> you will by no means enter into the Kingdom of the heavens.<sup>d</sup> **4** Therefore, whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one who is the greatest in the Kingdom of the heavens;<sup>e</sup> **5** and whoever receives one such young child on the basis of my name receives me also. **6** But whoever stumbles one of these little ones who have faith in me, it would be better for him to have hung around his neck a millstone that is turned by a donkey and to be sunk in the open sea.<sup>f</sup>

**7** “Woe to the world because of the stumbling blocks! Of course, it is inevitable that stumbling blocks will come, but woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes! **8** If, then, your hand or your foot makes you stumble, cut it off

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**17:27** \*Lit., “stater coin,” considered to be the tetradrachma. See App. B14.

**18:3** \*Or “change.”

## MATTHEW 18:9-30

and throw it away from you.<sup>a</sup> It is better for you to enter into life maimed or lame than to be thrown with two hands or two feet into the everlasting fire.<sup>b</sup>

**9** Also, if your eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it away from you. It is better for you to enter one-eyed into life than to be thrown with two eyes into the fiery Ge·hen'na.\*<sup>c</sup>

**10** See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I tell you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my Father who is in heaven.<sup>d</sup>

**11** \*—

**12** “What do you think? If a man has 100 sheep and one of them strays,<sup>e</sup> will he not leave the 99 on the mountains and set out on a search for the one that is straying?<sup>f</sup> **13** And if he finds it, I certainly tell you, he rejoices more over it than over the 99 that have not strayed. **14** Likewise, it is not a desirable thing to my\* Father who is in heaven for even one of these little ones to perish.<sup>g</sup>

**15** “Moreover, if your brother commits a sin, go and reveal his fault\* between you and him alone.<sup>h</sup> If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.<sup>i</sup>

**16** But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two more, so that on the testimony\* of two or three witnesses every matter may be established.<sup>j</sup> **17** If he does not listen to them, speak to the congregation. If he does not listen even to the congregation, let him be to you just as a man of the nations<sup>k</sup> and as a tax collector.<sup>l</sup>

**18** “Truly I say to you, whatever things you may bind on earth will be things already

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**18:9** \*See Glossary. **18:11** \*See App. A3. **18:14** \*Or possibly, “your.” **18:15** \*Lit., “and reprove him.” **18:16** \*Lit., “mouth.”

bound in heaven, and whatever things you may loosen on earth will be things already loosened in heaven. **19** Again I tell you truly, if two of you on earth agree concerning anything of importance that they should request, it will take place for them on account of my Father in heaven.<sup>a</sup> **20** For where there are two or three gathered together in my name,<sup>b</sup> there I am in their midst.”

**21** Then Peter came and said to him: “Lord, how many times is my brother to sin against me and am I to forgive him? Up to seven times?” **22** Jesus said to him: “I say to you, not up to seven times, but up to 77 times.<sup>c</sup>

**23** “That is why the Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** When he started to settle them, a man was brought in who owed him 10,000 talents.\* **25** But because he did not have the means to pay it back, his master ordered him and his wife and his children and all the things he owned to be sold and payment to be made.<sup>d</sup> **26** So the slave fell down and did obeisance\* to him, saying, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything to you.’ **27** Moved with pity at this, the master of that slave let him off and canceled his debt.<sup>e</sup> **28** But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves, who owed him 100 de·nar’i·i,\* and grabbed him and began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay back whatever you owe.’ **29** So his fellow slave fell down and began to beg him, saying, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ **30** However, he was not willing, but he went and

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**18:24** \*10,000 talents of silver equaled 60,000,000 denarii. See App. B14.

**18:26** \*Or “bowed down.” **18:28** \*See App. B14.

had him thrown into prison until he could pay back what he owed.

**31** When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they became greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all the things that had happened.

**32** Then his master summoned him and said to him: 'Wicked slave, I canceled all that debt for you when you pleaded with me.

**33** Should you not also have shown mercy to your fellow slave as I showed mercy to you?'<sup>a</sup>

**34** With that his master, provoked to wrath, handed him over to the jailers until he repaid all that he owed.

**35** My heavenly Father will also deal with you in the same way<sup>b</sup> if each of you does not forgive your brother from your heart."<sup>c</sup>

**19** When Jesus had finished speaking these things, he departed from Gal'i-lee and came to the borders\* of Ju-de'a across the Jordan.<sup>d</sup>

**2** Also, large crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

**3** And Pharisees came to him intent on testing him, and they asked: "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife on every sort of grounds?"<sup>e</sup>

**4** In reply he said: "Have you not read that the one who created them from the beginning made them male and female<sup>f</sup>

**5** and said: 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'<sup>g</sup>

**6** So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together, let no man put apart."<sup>h</sup>

**7** They said to him: "Why, then, did Moses direct giving a certificate of dismissal and divorcing her?"<sup>i</sup>

**8** He said to them: "Out of regard for your hard-heartedness, Moses made the concession to you of divorcing

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19:1 \* Or "frontiers."

## MATTHEW 18:31–19:20

your wives,<sup>a</sup> but that has not been the case from the beginning.<sup>b</sup> **9** I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of sexual immorality,<sup>\*</sup> and marries another commits adultery.”<sup>c</sup>

**10** The disciples said to him: “If that is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry.” **11** He said to them: “Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift.<sup>d</sup> **12** For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs on account of the Kingdom of the heavens. Let the one who can make room for it make room for it.”<sup>e</sup>

**13** Then young children were brought to him for him to place his hands on them and offer prayer, but the disciples reprimanded them.<sup>f</sup> **14** Jesus, however, said: “Let the young children alone, and do not try to stop them from coming to me, for the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to such ones.”<sup>g</sup> **15** And he placed his hands on them and departed from there.

**16** Now look! someone came up to him and said: “Teacher, what good must I do to gain everlasting life?”<sup>h</sup> **17** He said to him: “Why do you ask me about what is good? One there is who is good.<sup>i</sup> If, though, you want to enter into life, observe the commandments continually.”<sup>j</sup> **18** He said to him: “Which ones?” Jesus said: “You must not murder,<sup>k</sup> you must not commit adultery,<sup>l</sup> you must not steal,<sup>m</sup> you must not bear false witness,<sup>n</sup> **19** honor your father and your mother,<sup>o</sup> and you must love your neighbor as yourself.”<sup>p</sup> **20** The young man said to him: “I have kept all of these; what

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19:9 \*Greek, *por-nei'a*. See Glossary.

## MATTHEW 19:21–20:16

am I still lacking?” **21** Jesus said to him: “If you want to be perfect,\* go sell your belongings and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven;<sup>a</sup> and come be my follower.”<sup>b</sup>

**22** When the young man heard this, he went away grieved, for he had many possessions.<sup>c</sup>

**23** Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Truly I say to you that it will be difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of the heavens.<sup>d</sup>

**24** Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to get through a needle’s eye than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God.”<sup>e</sup>

**25** When the disciples heard that, they were greatly astounded, saying: “Who really can be saved?”<sup>f</sup>

**26** Looking at them intently, Jesus said to them: “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”<sup>g</sup>

**27** Then Peter said in reply: “Look! We have left all things and followed you; what, then, will there be for us?”<sup>h</sup>

**28** Jesus said to them: “Truly I say to you, in the re-creation, when the Son of man sits down on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will sit on 12 thrones, judging the 12 tribes of Israel.<sup>i</sup>

**29** And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit everlasting life.<sup>j</sup>

**30** “But many who are first will be last and the last first.”<sup>k</sup>

**20** “For the Kingdom of the heavens is like the master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard.<sup>l</sup> **2** After he had agreed with the workers for a de·nar’i·us\* a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

19:21 \*Or “complete.” 20:2, 9, 10, 13

\*See App. B14.



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MATTHEW 18-19 | Carefully Avoid Stumbling Yourself and Others

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- Jesus counseled his followers to remove even something as precious as a hand or an eye if it causes them to stumble
- It would be better to give up such a cherished thing and enter into God’s Kingdom than to hold on to it and end up in Gehenna, a symbol of permanent destruction



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## MATTHEW

### Study Notes—Chapter 18

#### 18:3

**Truly:** Greek, *a·men'*, a transliteration of the Hebrew *'a·men'*, meaning “so be it,” or “surely.” Jesus frequently uses this expression to preface a statement, a promise, or a prophecy, thereby emphasizing its absolute truthfulness and reliability. Jesus’ use of “truly,” or amen, in this way is said to be unique in sacred literature. When repeated in succession (*a·men' a·men'*), as is the case throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus’ expression is translated “most truly.”—Joh 1:51.

#### 18:6

**a millstone that is turned by a donkey:** Or “a huge millstone.” Lit., “a millstone of a donkey.” Such a millstone, likely 1.2-1.5 m (4-5 ft) in diameter, was so heavy that it had to be turned by a donkey.

#### 18:7

**stumbling blocks:** The original meaning of the Greek word *skan'da·lon*, rendered “stumbling block,” is thought to have referred to a trap; some suggest that it was the stick in a trap to which the bait was attached. By extension, it came to refer to any impediment that would cause one to stumble or fall. In a figurative sense, it refers to an action or circumstance that leads a person to follow an improper course, to stumble or fall morally, or to fall into sin. At Mt 18:8, 9, the related verb *skan·da·li'zo*, translated “make stumble,” could also be rendered “become a snare; cause to sin.”

#### 18:9

**Gehenna:** This term comes from the Hebrew words *geh hin·nom'*, meaning “valley of Hinnom,” which lay to the W and S of ancient Jerusalem. (See App. B12, map “Jerusalem and

Surrounding Area.”) By Jesus’ day, the valley had become a place for burning refuse, so the word “Gehenna” was a fitting symbol of complete destruction.—See Glossary.

## 18:10

**look upon the face of my Father:** Or “have access to my Father.” Because they have access to the very presence of God, only spirit creatures can see God’s face.—Ex 33:20.

## 18:11

Some manuscripts here include the words: “For the Son of man came to save what was lost,” but these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts. A similar statement is part of the inspired text at Lu 19:10. Some are of the opinion that an early copyist borrowed the expression from Luke’s account.—See App. A3.

## 18:14

**my:** Some ancient manuscripts read “your.”

## 18:17

**the congregation:** Under the Mosaic Law, judges and officers represented the congregation of Israel in dealing with judicial matters. (De 16:18) In Jesus’ day, offenders answered to local courts made up of elders of the Jews. (Mt 5:22) Later, responsible men would be appointed by the holy spirit to act as judges in each Christian congregation. (Ac 20:28; 1Co 5:1-5, 12, 13) For the meaning of the term “congregation,” see study note on Mt 16:18 and Glossary, “Congregation.”

**as a man of the nations and as a tax collector:** That is, those with whom Jews had no unnecessary dealings.—Compare Ac 10:28.

## 18:18

**whatever things you may bind . . . you may loosen:** In this context, to “bind” evidently means to “view as guilty; find guilty,” and to “loosen” means to “acquit; find innocent.” The pronoun “you” is plural, indicating that not only Peter but also others would be involved in carrying out such decisions.—Compare study note on Mt 16:19.

**will be things already bound . . . will be things already loosened:** The unusual construction of the Greek verbs here (future form of “to be” combined with the perfect passive participle of “bind” and “loose”) indicates that whatever decision was made by the disciples (“whatever things you may bind”; “whatever things you may loosen”) would be made after the corresponding decision was made in heaven. Any decision made by the disciples would follow heaven’s decision, not precede it, and the disciples would make decisions based on principles already laid down in heaven. It does not refer to heavenly support or validation of a decision made on earth. Instead, it means that the disciples would receive direction from heaven, highlighting the need for such guidance to ensure that the decisions made on earth harmonize with the decision that has already been made in heaven.—Compare study note on Mt 16:19.

## 18:19

**you . . . you . . . they . . . them:** Although the Greek text uses the pronouns “you” in the first part of the verse and then changes to “they” and “them,” these pronouns evidently refer to the same individuals. For this reason, some Bibles render the last part of the verse: “. . . that you should request, my heavenly Father will do it for you.”

## 18:22

**77 times:** Lit., “seventy times seven.” This Greek expression can be understood to mean either “70 and 7” (77 times) or “70 multiplied by 7” (490 times). The same wording found in the *Septuagint* at Ge 4:24 renders the Hebrew expression “77 times,” which supports the rendering “77 times.” Regardless of how it is understood, the repetition of the number seven was equivalent to “indefinitely” or “without limit.” By turning Peter’s 7 times into 77, Jesus was telling his followers not to set an arbitrary limit on forgiveness. In contrast, the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma 86b*) says: “If a man commits a transgression the first, second and third time he is forgiven, the fourth time he is not forgiven.”

## 18:24

**10,000 talents:** Just one talent would have been the equivalent of about 20 years’ wages for a common laborer, so it would have taken the average worker thousands of lifetimes of work to repay such a debt. Clearly, Jesus was using hyperbole to illustrate that the debt was impossible to repay. The 10,000 talents of silver equaled 60,000,000 denarii.—See study note on Mt 18:28; Glossary, “Talent”; and App. B14.

## 18:26

**did obeisance to him:** Or “bowed down to him; paid him homage.” When the Greek verb *pro-sky-ne’o* is used to refer to worship of a god or of a deity, it is rendered “to worship.” But in this context, it refers to a slave’s showing respect and submission to a person who had authority over him.—See study notes on Mt 2:2; 8:2.

## 18:27

**canceled his debt:** Or “forgave him the debt (loan).” In a figurative sense, debts can refer to sins. When sinning against someone, a person incurs a debt to that one, or has an obligation to him, and must therefore seek his forgiveness. Receiving God’s

forgiveness depends on whether the person has **forgiven** his personal **debtors**, that is, those who have sinned against him.—Mt 6:14, 15; 18:35; Lu 11:4.

## 18:28

**100 denarii:** Although 100 denarii was little compared to 10,000 talents (60,000,000 denarii), it was not insignificant; it represented the wages of 100 days of work for a laborer.—See App. B14.

## 18:32

**cancelled all that debt for you:** Or “forgave you all that debt.”—The Greek word literally means “to let go” but can also have the meaning “to cancel a debt,” as at Mt 18:27, 32.

## 18:34

**jailers:** The Greek term *ba·sa·ni·stes'*, rendered “jailers,” has the basic meaning of “tormentors,” likely because jailers often inflicted cruel torture on prisoners. However, the term came to be applied to jailers in a general sense, evidently because confinement with or without torture was considered a form of torment.—See study note on Mt 8:29.

# MATTHEW

## Study Notes—Chapter 19

## 19:1

**the borders of Judea across the Jordan:** This apparently refers to Perea, a region on the E side of the Jordan River, and especially the parts of Perea bordering on Judea. Jesus left Galilee and only returned there after his resurrection.—See App. A7, Map 5.

## 19:5

**stick to:** The Greek verb used here literally means “to glue; to join (bind) closely together; to cling to.” Here it is used figuratively to describe the bond that is to unite man and wife as if with glue.

**one flesh:** This expression is a literal rendering into Greek of the Hebrew term at Ge 2:24 and could also be rendered “one body” or “one person.” It describes the closest bond possible between two humans. It not only refers to sexual relations but extends to the whole relationship, making the two individuals faithful and inseparable companions. Such a union cannot be broken up without damage to the partners bound by it.

## 19:7

**certificate of dismissal:** Or “certificate of divorce.” By requiring a man who was considering divorce to prepare a legal document and likely to consult the elders, the Law gave him time to reconsider such a serious decision. The intent of the Law was evidently to prevent rash divorces and to provide women with a measure of legal protection. (De 24:1) But in Jesus’ day, religious leaders had made divorce easy to obtain. The first-century historian Josephus, himself a divorced Pharisee, suggested that divorce was allowable “for any cause whatsoever (and many such causes happen among men).”—See study note on Mt 5:31.

## 19:9

**sexual immorality:** The Greek word *por-nei'a* is a general term for all sexual intercourse that is unlawful according to the Bible. It includes adultery, prostitution, sexual relations between unmarried individuals, homosexuality, and bestiality.—See Glossary.

**adultery:** Voluntary sexual intercourse by a married man or woman with someone other than his or her mate.—Ex 20:14; Mt 5:27; 19:9.

## 19:12

**eunuchs:** In a literal sense, castrated men. In this verse, the term is used in both a literal and a figurative sense.—See Glossary, “Eunuch.”

**have made themselves eunuchs:** Or “have chosen to live as eunuchs.” Here “eunuchs” does not refer to males who have physically castrated themselves or have been emasculated. Instead, these voluntarily remain in a state of singleness.—See Glossary, “Eunuch.”

## 19:17

**One there is who is good:** Or “There is only one who is good,” that is, God. Jesus here recognized Jehovah as the ultimate standard of what is good. God has expressed and defined what is good by means of his Word, the Bible.—Mr 10:18; Lu 18:19.

## 19:19

**neighbor:** This Greek word for “neighbor” (lit., “the one near”) can include more than just those who live nearby. It can refer to anyone with whom a person interacts.—Lu 10:29-37; Ro 13:8-10; see study note on Mt 5:43.

## 19:21

**perfect:** The Greek term used here can mean “complete” or “faultless” according to standards set by an authority. (See study note on Mt 5:48.) In this context, material possessions were preventing this man from being perfect, or complete, in his service to God.—Lu 8:14.

## 19:23

**Truly:** Greek, *a·men'*, a transliteration of the Hebrew *'a·men'*, meaning “so be it,” or “surely.” Jesus frequently uses this expression to preface a statement, a promise, or a prophecy, thereby emphasizing its absolute truthfulness and reliability. Jesus' use of “truly,” or amen, in this way is said to be unique in



sacred literature. When repeated in succession (*a·men' a·men'*), as is the case throughout the Gospel of John, Jesus' expression is translated "most truly."—Joh 1:51.

## 19:24

**easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye:** Jesus is using hyperbole to illustrate a point. Just as a literal camel cannot go through the eye of an actual sewing needle, it is impossible for a rich man to enter the Kingdom if he continues to put his riches ahead of his relationship with Jehovah. Jesus did not mean that no wealthy person would inherit the Kingdom, for he went on to say: "With God all things are possible."—Mt 19:26.

## 19:28

**re-creation:** Or "regeneration; renewal." The Greek word *pa·lin·ge·ne·si'a* is composed of elements that mean "again; anew; once more" and "birth; origin." The ancient Jewish writer Philo used the term with reference to the renewal of the world after the Flood; Jewish historian Josephus used it regarding the reestablishment of Israel after the exile. Here in Matthew's account, it refers to the time when the rule of Christ and his corulers will bring to the earth a renewal of the perfect conditions enjoyed by the first humans before they sinned.

**Son of man:** Or "Son of a human." This expression occurs about 80 times in the Gospels. Jesus used it to refer to himself, evidently emphasizing that he was truly human, born from a woman, and that he was a fitting human counterpart to Adam, having the power to redeem humankind from sin and death. (Ro 5:12, 14-15) The same expression also identified Jesus as the Messiah, or the Christ.—Da 7:13, 14; see Glossary.

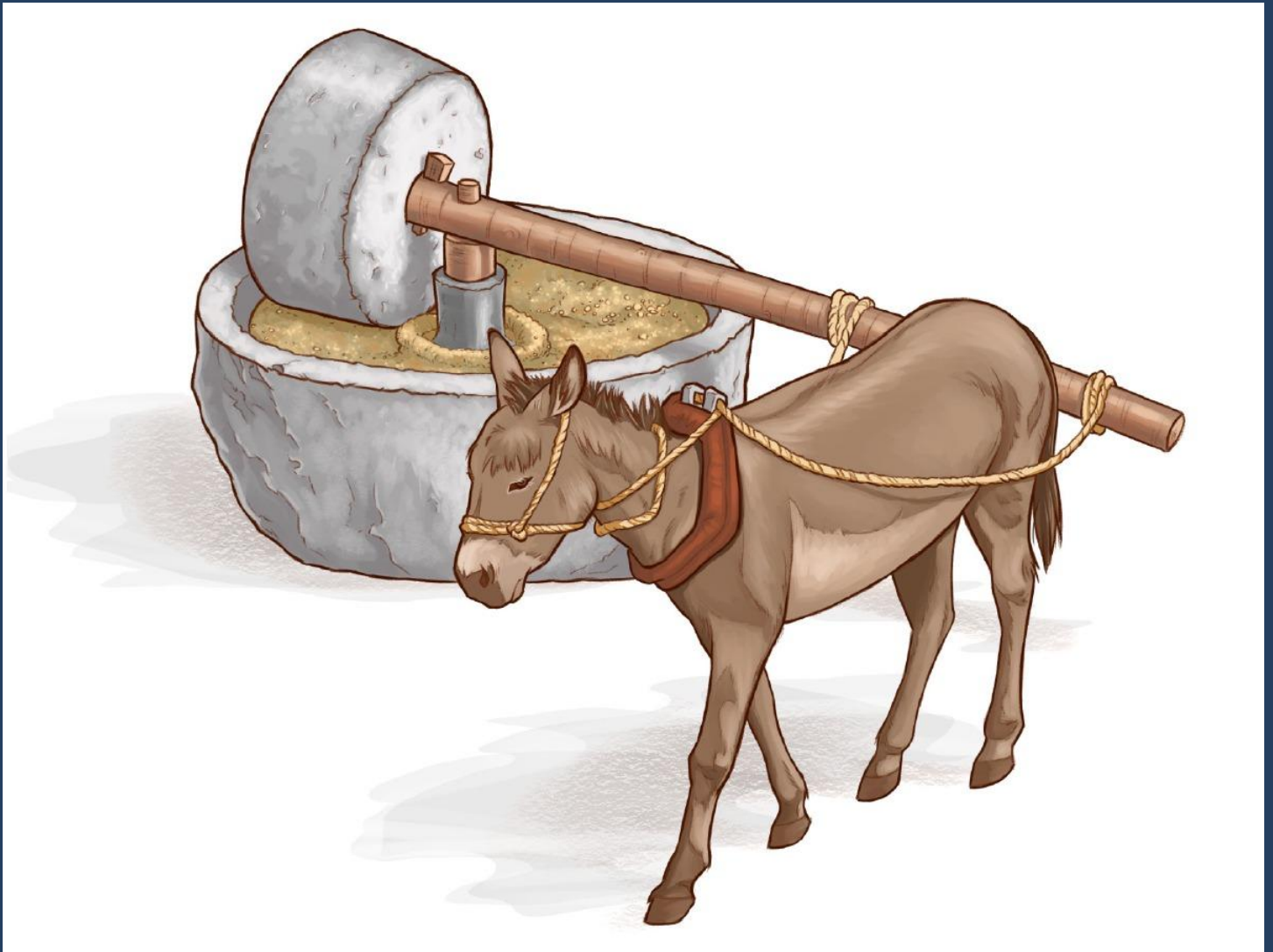
**judging:** This harmonizes with other verses that indicate that Christ's corulers will share with him in judgment. (1Co 6:2; Re 20:4) The combination of ruling and judging is in harmony with Biblical usage, which at times uses the term "judge" with the

more general meaning of “ruling over” or “governing.”—Jg 2:18; 10:2; Ob 21.

## 19:29

**a hundred times:** Although a few manuscripts read “many times,” the current reading has stronger manuscript support.— Compare Mr 10:30; Lu 18:30.

**inherit:** The basic meaning of the Greek verb is for an heir to receive something as a right, often because of relationship, such as a son receiving an inheritance from his father. (Ga 4:30) But here, as in most occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the term is used in the broader sense of receiving something as a reward from God.—Mt 19:29; 1Co 6:9.



## Millstone

Millstones were used for grinding grain and pressing oil out of olives. Some were small enough to be turned by hand, but others were so huge that they had to be turned by an animal. It may have been a large millstone similar to this one that Samson was forced to turn for the Philistines. (Jg 16:21) The animal-powered mill was common not only in Israel but also throughout much of the Roman Empire.

Related Scripture: Matthew 18:6



## Upper and Lower Millstones

A large millstone like the one depicted here would be turned by a domestic animal, such as a donkey, and be used to grind grain or crush olives. An upper millstone might be as much as 1.5 m (5 ft) in diameter and would be turned on an even larger lower stone.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 18:6; Mr 9:42; Lu 17:2





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## The Valley of Hinnom (Gehenna)

The Valley of Hinnom, called Gehenna in Greek, is a ravine to the south and southwest of ancient Jerusalem. In Jesus' day, it was a place for the burning of refuse, making it a fitting symbol of complete destruction.

Related Scriptures: Matthew 5:22; Matthew 5:29, 30; Matthew 10:28; Matthew 18:9; Matthew 23:15; Matthew 23:33



## The Shepherd and His Sheep

A shepherd's life could be difficult. He was exposed to heat and cold as well as to sleepless nights. (Ge 31:40; Lu 2:8) He protected the flock from predators, such as lions, wolves, and bears, and safeguarded them from thieves. (Ge 31:39; 1Sa 17:34-36; Isa 31:4; Am 3:12; Joh 10:10-12) The shepherd kept the flock from scattering (1Ki 22:17), looked for lost sheep (Lu 15:4), carried feeble or weary lambs in his bosom (Isa 40:11) or on his shoulders, and cared for the sick and injured (Eze 34:3, 4; Zec 11:16). The Bible often speaks of shepherds and their work in a figurative way. For example, Jehovah is likened to a Shepherd who lovingly cares for his sheep, that is, his people. (Ps 23:1-6; 80:1; Jer 31:10; Eze 34:11-16; 1Pe 2:25) Jesus is called "the great shepherd" (Heb 13:20) and "the chief shepherd," under whose direction the overseers in the Christian congregation shepherd the flock of God willingly, unselfishly, and eagerly.—1 Pe 5:2-4.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 18:12, 13; Lu 15:4, 5



# WHAT WE LEARN FROM JESUS

## How Spirit Creatures Affect Us

Jesus lived in the spirit realm with his Father "before the world was." (John 17:5) Therefore, he is well-qualified to answer the following questions.



*Angels play a role in gathering sincere people into the Christian congregation*

### Are angels interested in us?

■ From Jesus we learn that angels are deeply interested in people. He said: "Joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner that repents." —Luke 15:10.

Jesus revealed that angels are given the responsibility to look out for the spiritual welfare of God's servants. Thus, when Jesus warned his disciples against stumbling others, he said: "See to it that you men do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 18:10) By this, Jesus did not necessarily mean that each of his followers has a guardian angel assigned to him. But Jesus did show that angels who work closely with God have an active interest in members of the Christian congregation.

Mt 18:10 --Jehovah knows if we have stumbled others (w10 11/1 16)



- Song 121 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Carefully Avoid Stumbling Yourself and Others”:** (10 min.)

Mt 18:6, 7—We must not stumble others (nwtsty study notes and media)

Mt 18:8, 9—We must avoid anything that would cause us to stumble (nwtsty study note and glossary, “Gehenna”)

Mt 18:10—Jehovah knows if we have stumbled others (nwtsty study note; w10 11/1 16)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Mt 18:21, 22—How many times should we be willing to forgive our brother? (nwtsty study note)

Mt 19:7—What was the purpose of “a certificate of dismissal”? (nwtsty study note and media)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Mt 18:18-35

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) bhs 26 ¶18-20 —Show how to reach the heart.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 90
- **Never Be a Cause for Stumbling (2Co 6:3):** (9 min.)  
Play the video (video category PROGRAMS AND EVENTS).
- **Memorial Campaign to Begin March 3:** (6 min.)  
Talk based on the February 2016 *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*, page 8. Distribute a copy of the Memorial invitation to all in the audience, and review its contents. Emphasize that the special public talk “Who Really Is Jesus Christ?” will be given the week of March 19, 2018. It will increase anticipation for the Memorial. Outline local plans to cover the territory.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 10, box on p. 28
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 133 and Prayer

MATTHEW 18-19 | Carefully Avoid Stumbling Yourself and Others

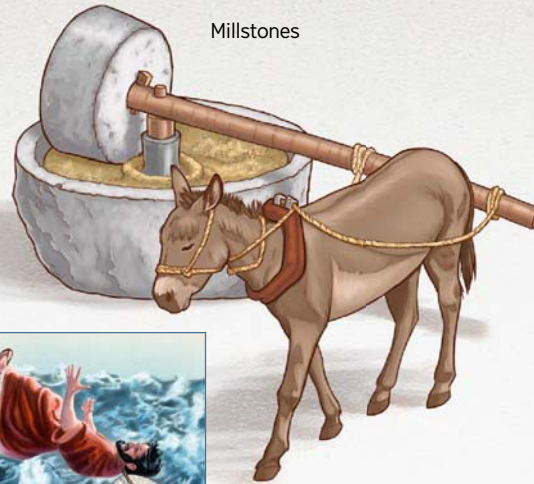
Jesus used illustrations to teach the seriousness of being stumbled or of causing others to stumble.

**18:6, 7**

- A “stumbling block” refers to an action or circumstance that leads a person to follow an improper course, to stumble or fall morally, or to fall into sin
- A person who causes someone to stumble would be better off if he fell into the sea with a millstone hung around his neck


**18:8, 9**

- Jesus counseled his followers to remove even something as precious as a hand or an eye if it causes them to stumble
- It would be better to give up such a cherished thing and enter into God’s Kingdom than to hold on to it and end up in Gehenna, a symbol of permanent destruction



Millstones



 What in my life could become a stumbling block, and how can I keep from stumbling myself or others?



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# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations

#### ●○○ INITIAL CALL

**Question:** Is the Bible still relevant today?

**Scripture:** 2Ti 3:16

**Link:** Is the Bible compatible with science?



#### ○○● FIRST RETURN VISIT

**Question:** Is the Bible compatible with science?

**Scripture:** Job 26:7

**Link:** Is the Bible's advice practical?



#### ○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

**Question:** Is the Bible's advice practical?

**Scripture:** Pr 14:30

**Link:** Has the Bible accurately foretold the future?

Jehovah will keep his promise to make the earth a paradise. (**Read Numbers 23:19.**) Yes, we have the hope of “everlasting life that God, who cannot lie, promised long ago.”—Titus 1:2.\*

### THE BIBLE CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE

**18** We have learned that there is no other book like the Bible. It is harmonious, and when it talks about scientific or historical matters, it is always accurate. It also gives us good advice and contains many prophecies that have already come true. But the Bible does even more than that. The apostle Paul wrote: “The word of God is alive and exerts power.” What does that mean?—**Read Hebrews 4:12.**

**19** The Bible can change your life. It can help you to know who you really are. It can help you to understand your deepest thoughts and feelings. For example, we may think that we love God. But to prove that we love him, we need to apply what the Bible says.

**20** The Bible truly is a book from God. He wants you to read it, study it, and love it. Be thankful for this gift, and keep studying it. Then you will understand God’s purpose for humans. In the next chapter, we will learn more about this purpose.

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\* The destruction of Babylon is just one Bible prophecy that came true. You can find information on prophecies about Jesus Christ in Endnote 5.

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18. How does Paul describe “the word of God”?

19, 20. (a) How can the Bible help you to know who you are?  
(b) How can you show that you are thankful for the gift of the Bible?

## *Encourage One Another*

(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. As we encourage one another  
    To serve Jehovah faithfully,  
We find the bonds of love are strengthened;  
    Fine works bring peace and unity.  
The love we find among God's people  
    Gives each the courage to endure.  
Our congregation is a refuge,  
    A place where we can feel secure.
2. A word when spoken at the right time  
    Is, oh, how comforting to hear!  
We hear these words of consolation  
    From friends so faithful and so dear.  
How good it is to work together  
    With those whose hopes and goals we share!  
We seek to strengthen one another  
    And help each one his burden bear.
3. As we with eyes of faith are seeing  
    The nearness of Jehovah's day,  
We need our gathering together  
    To keep us walking in the way.  
United with Jehovah's people,  
    We hope to serve eternally.  
So we encourage one another  
    To hold to our integrity.

- Song 121 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

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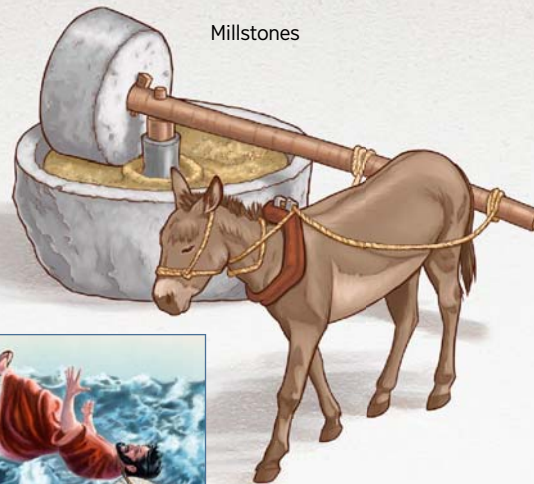
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**18:8, 9**

- Jesus counseled his followers to remove even something as precious as a hand or an eye if it causes them to stumble
- It would be better to give up such a cherished thing and enter into God’s Kingdom than to hold on to it and end up in Gehenna, a symbol of permanent destruction



 What in my life could become a stumbling block, and how can I keep from stumbling myself or others?



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## Invite Everyone in Your Territory to the Memorial!

During the campaign that begins on February 27, we will invite as many as possible in our community to observe the Memorial of Christ's death with us. We should also pay careful attention to any interest shown in order to cultivate it.

### STEPS TO CONSIDER

#### GIVE YOUR PRESENTATION

"We are distributing this invitation to a very important event. On March 23, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and to hear a free Bible discourse about how his death benefits us. This invitation shows the time and location of the meeting being held in our community. Please come if you can."



If the individual shows interest . . .

#### OFFER THE WATCHTOWER

Lay the groundwork for a return visit.



#### SHOW THE MEMORIAL VIDEO

Lay the groundwork for a return visit.



When you return, you can . . .



#### SHOW WHY STUDY THE BIBLE?

Then offer a Bible study aid.

#### OFFER WHAT DOES THE BIBLE REALLY TEACH?

Share more information about the Memorial, using pages 206-208. Then offer the book.



#### OFFER LISTEN TO GOD

Discuss the meaning of Christ's death, using pages 18-19. Then offer the brochure.



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# 10

## JESUS' FAMILY TRAVELS TO JERUSALEM

LUKE 2:40-52

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- TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JESUS QUESTIONS TEACHERS
  - JESUS REFERS TO JEHOVAH AS “MY FATHER”
- 

It is springtime. Thus, it is the time for Joseph's family, along with friends and relatives, to make their yearly trip to Jerusalem. They go there to celebrate the Passover, as the Law directs. (Deuteronomy 16:16) From Nazareth down to Jerusalem is a trip of about 75 miles. It is a busy and exciting time for all. Jesus, now 12 years old, is looking forward with special interest to the festival and the opportunity to be near the temple again.

To Jesus and his family, the Passover is not just a one-day event. The day after the Passover is the beginning of the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread. (Mark 14:1) It is considered part of the Passover season. The trip from their home in Nazareth, the stay in Jerusalem, and the return to their home

## JOYFUL TRIPS

Trips to Jerusalem for the three annual festivals were joyful events for all. (Deuteronomy 16:15) During those travels, Jesus would see different parts of the land, learn about its geography, and meet fellow worshippers from other regions. What memorable trips to make!

takes about two weeks. But this year, because of an incident that involves Jesus, it takes a bit longer. That has to do with a problem that is discovered on the return trip from Jerusalem.

While they are traveling, Joseph and Mary assume that Jesus is among the group of relatives and friends traveling northward together. However, when they stop for the night, they do not find him. So they go looking for him among their companions, but he is not there. Their boy is nowhere to be found! Joseph and Mary then head back to Jerusalem to look for him.

For a whole day, they search without finding him. Nor do they find him on the second day. Finally, on the third day, they locate their son in the temple, with its many halls. They see Jesus sitting in the midst of some Jewish teachers. He is listening,



asking questions, and amazing them with his understanding.

“Child, why did you treat us this way?” Mary asks. “Here your father and I have been frantically looking for you.”—Luke 2:48.

Jesus expresses surprise that they did not know where he would be. “Why were you looking for me?” he asks. “Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?”—Luke 2:49.

Now that they are reunited, Jesus returns home to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary and continues subject to them. He goes on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth. Though still young, he has the favor of God and men. Yes, from his childhood on, Jesus sets a fine example not only in seeking spiritual interests but also in showing respect to his parents.

- ◇ What springtime trip does Jesus regularly make with his family, and why?
- ◇ When Jesus is 12 years old, what do Joseph and Mary realize while returning from Jerusalem, leading to what discovery?
- ◇ Jesus set what good example for youths today?



# **133**    *Worship Jehovah During Youth* (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

1. Precious to God, we are daughters and sons,  
    Giving our strength as his faithful young ones.  
Loving attention to us he will give,  
    Blessing our days for as long as we live.
2. Honoring parents who care for our lives  
    Helps us express what we're feeling inside.  
Then we find favor with God and with men,  
    Drawing us close to Jehovah, our Friend.
3. May we remember our God in our youth,  
    Growing each day in our love of the truth.  
Giving our best to our God, we will bring  
    Joy to the heart of Jehovah, our King.

JANUARY 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
**FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 1, 2018**

**LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

# BOLIVIA

At Riberalta, Beni, two pioneer couples load literature onto an airplane. They are going to a remote area of the country to preach

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### **4 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 4**

#### “He Gives Power to the Tired One”

When we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, what can we do? This article discusses our yeartext for 2018 and shows why we need to give Jehovah the opportunity to strengthen us and how he will do so.

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### **16 WEEK OF MARCH 5-11**

#### Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

The annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2018. How can we prepare now for this occasion, how will we benefit from attending it, and how does that annual event contribute to the unity of God’s people everywhere? Find the answers in this article.

# 3

## *Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence*

(Proverbs 14:26)

1. O Jehovah, you have given us  
a hope that we hold dear.  
It's a hope we find so thrilling  
we want the world to hear.  
But at times this life's anxieties  
are the cause of fears within,  
And the hope that burned so brightly  
has suddenly grown dim.

*(CHORUS)*

*You're our strength, you're our hope,  
you're our confidence.*

*Whatever we lack, you supply.*

*When we preach, when we teach,  
we have confidence*

*because it's on you we rely.*

2. So Jehovah, please instill in us  
a heart that won't forget,  
For you've always been our comfort  
when troubled times we've met.  
And these thoughts that lift and strengthen us  
can revive that dying flame,  
For they fill our hearts with courage  
to speak about your name.

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
3, 47

**WHAT BEARING DO  
THESE SCRIPTURES  
HAVE ON OUR  
YEARETEXT?**

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Isaiah 40:26

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Matthew 11:28-30

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2 Corinthians  
12:9, 10

## “He Gives Power to the Tired One”

**Our yeartext for 2018:**  
*“Those hoping in Jehovah will regain  
power.”—ISA. 40:31.*

**AS YOU** know, life in this system of things is by no means trouble-free. Many of you dear brothers and sisters are coping with serious illness. Others, although well along in years themselves, are

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**1.** What pressures must we deal with, but what reason does Jehovah have to be pleased with his faithful servants? (See opening pictures.)

caring for elderly relatives. Still others are struggling to provide, not luxury items, but just the basic necessities for their families. And we know that many are dealing with, not one, but several of such problems all at once! This requires a tremendous expenditure of time and emotional energy—to say nothing of the financial burden. Nevertheless, your confidence in God’s promises is absolute; your faith in a better future, unwavering. How pleased Jehovah must be!

<sup>2</sup> Do you sometimes feel, though, that the pressures of life are driving you to the limit? If you do, you are not alone. The Bible reveals that faithful servants in the past often felt that they could not go on. (1 Ki. 19:4; Job 7:7) However, rather than give up, they looked to Jehovah for strength. They were not disappointed, for our God “gives power to the tired one.” (Isa. 40:29) Sadly, some of God’s people in our day have concluded that the best way to cope with the pressures of life is to ‘take a break from the truth,’ as they say, as if our Christian activities were a burden rather than a blessing. So they stop reading God’s Word, attending

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2. What encouragement can we draw from Isaiah 40:29, but what serious mistake could we make?



congregation meetings, and engaging in the field ministry—just as Satan hopes they will do.

<sup>3</sup> The Devil well knows that our being fully engaged in Christian activities can strengthen us, and he does not want us to be strong. When you feel physically and emotionally drained, then, do not cut yourself off from Jehovah. Draw ever closer to him, for “he will make you firm, he will make you strong.” (1 Pet. 5:10; Jas. 4:8) In this article, we will consider two situations that could cause us to slow down in our service to God and we will discuss how applying Bible principles can help us to cope. But first, let us focus on Jehovah’s ability to strengthen us, as shown at Isaiah 40:26-31.

## **THOSE HOPING IN JEHOVAH WILL REGAIN POWER**

<sup>4</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:26.** No one has been able to count all the stars in the universe. Scientists believe that our Milky Way galaxy alone may contain up to 400 billion stars. Yet, Jehovah gives a name or a designation to each star. The lesson for us? If Jehovah takes a personal interest in his inanimate

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3. (a) How can we frustrate Satan’s goal to weaken us? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

4. What lesson can we learn from Isaiah 40:26?

creation, imagine how he feels about you who serve him, not because you have been programmed to do so, but because you love him! (Ps. 19:1, 3, 14) Our dear Father knows you through and through. “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” by him. (Matt. 10:30) And the psalmist assures us: “Jehovah is aware of what the blameless go through.” (Ps. 37:18) Yes, he takes notice of the trials you face, and he can give you the strength to endure each one of them.

<sup>5</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:28.** Jehovah is the Source of dynamic energy. Consider, for example, the amount of energy that he supplies just to our sun. Science writer David Bodanis observed: “The mass our Sun is exploding into energy each second is equivalent to [billions of atomic] bombs.” Another researcher calculated that the sun “currently radiates . . . sufficient energy in one second to meet mankind’s needs for 200,000 years”! Can anyone doubt that the One who “fuels” the sun can give us the strength we need to cope with any problem?

<sup>6</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:29.** Serving Jehovah brings much joy. Jesus said to his disciples: “Take my

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5. How can we be sure that Jehovah is able to strengthen us?

6. In what sense is Jesus’ yoke kindly, and how should knowing that affect us?

yoke upon you.” And he added: “You will find refreshment for yourselves. For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) How true that statement is! At times, we may feel exhausted when we leave home to attend a congregation meeting or to engage in the field ministry. But how do we feel when we return? Refreshed—and better prepared to deal with life’s trials. Jesus’ yoke is kindly indeed!

<sup>7</sup> A sister whom we will call Kayla has had to battle with chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, and migraine headaches. Understandably, she has sometimes found it difficult to attend congregation meetings. However, after she made the effort to attend a public meeting, she wrote: “The talk was about discouragement. The information was presented in such an empathetic and concerned way that I was moved to tears. I was reminded that the meetings are where I need to be.” How happy she was that she made the effort to attend!

<sup>8</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:30.** No matter how qualified we may be, we are limited in what we can accomplish in our own strength. That is a lesson we all must

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7. Relate an experience that illustrates the truthfulness of Matthew 11:28-30.

8, 9. What did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote: “When I am weak, then I am powerful”?

learn. Although he was a capable man, the apostle Paul had limitations that prevented him from doing everything he wanted to do. When he expressed his concerns to God, he was told: “My power is being made perfect in weakness.” Paul got the point. He concluded: “When I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10) What did he mean by that?

<sup>9</sup> Paul realized that there was only so much he could do without help from a higher source. God’s holy spirit could supply the power that Paul lacked. Not only that, but God’s spirit could empower Paul to perform tasks that he would never have been able to complete in his own power. The same is true of us. If the strength we have comes from Jehovah, we will be strong indeed!

<sup>10</sup> The psalmist David often experienced the power of God’s holy spirit. He sang: “With your help I can charge against a marauder band; by God’s power I can scale a wall.” (Ps. 18:29) There are some walls—some problems—that we cannot “scale” in our own strength; we need a boost from Jehovah.

<sup>11</sup> **Read Isaiah 40:31.** The eagle does not soar and

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10. How did Jehovah help David to cope with the challenges he faced?

11. Describe the role of holy spirit in helping us to cope with our problems.

glide long distances solely in its own power. A draft of warm air gives it the lift it needs, enabling the eagle to conserve energy. So when you are faced with a daunting task, remember the eagle. Beg Jehovah to give you a “lift” by means of “the helper, the holy spirit.” (John 14:26) Happily, we can have access to it whenever we need it—24 hours a day. And we may most keenly feel the need for divine help when we have a disagreement with a member of the congregation. But why do such differences arise?

<sup>12</sup> Differences between individuals occur because we are all imperfect. Accordingly, there will be times when we will be irritated by the words or actions of fellow believers—or when they will be annoyed by ours. This can be a serious test. As with other tests, Jehovah allows us to prove our integrity by learning to work unitedly with dedicated men and women whom he loves despite their imperfections.

<sup>13</sup> That Jehovah does not prevent his servants from being tested is illustrated by the account of Joseph. As a young man, Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous half brothers and taken to Egypt. (Gen. 37:28) Jehovah saw what was happen-

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**12, 13.** (a) Why do differences between Christians occur? (b) What does the account of Joseph teach us about Jehovah?



Jehovah did not abandon Joseph; neither will he abandon you  
(See paragraph 13)

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ing and no doubt was grieved to observe the way his friend, righteous Joseph, was being treated. Still, He did not intervene. Later, when Joseph was accused of trying to rape Potiphar's wife and was thrown into prison, Jehovah still did not step in. But did God ever abandon Joseph? On the contrary: "Jehovah made whatever [Joseph] did successful." —Gen. 39:21-23.

<sup>14</sup> Here is another example. Few people have been

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14. What spiritual and physical benefits can we derive by 'letting go' of anger?

treated as badly as David was. Still, that friend of God did not allow resentment to gnaw away at him. Rather, he wrote: “*Let go of anger and abandon rage; do not become upset and turn to doing evil.*” (Ps. 37:8) The most important reason to “let go” of anger is to imitate Jehovah, who “has not dealt with us according to our sins.” (Ps. 103:10) But there are also practical benefits to ‘letting go’ of anger. Anger can cause such physical problems as high blood pressure and respiratory trouble. It can affect the liver and the pancreas, and it can cause digestive problems. When we are angry, we do not always think clearly. And at times a fit of anger may be followed by a prolonged period of depression. On the other hand, “a calm heart gives life to the body,” says the Bible. (Prov. 14:30) How, then, can we deal with hurt feelings and gain our brother? We can do so successfully by applying the Bible’s wise advice.

## **WHEN WE ARE DISAPPOINTED BY OUR BROTHERS**

<sup>15</sup> **Read Ephesians 4:26.** We are not surprised when we have to endure harsh treatment from the world. But when a fellow believer or a family member says or does something that hurts us deeply, we

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**15, 16.** How should we approach someone who has offended us?

may be devastated. Suppose we cannot simply forget the incident. Will we allow resentment to fester for years? Or will we follow the Bible's wise advice to settle matters quickly? The longer we put off dealing with the situation, the harder it will be for us to make peace with our brother.

<sup>16</sup> Suppose you have been offended by a brother and you cannot put it behind you. What positive steps can you take to make peace? First, approach Jehovah in earnest prayer. Ask him to help you to have an upbuilding conversation with your brother. Remember, he is one of Jehovah's friends. (Ps. 25: 14) God loves him. Jehovah treats his friends with kindness, and he expects no less from us. (Prov. 15: 23; Matt. 7:12; Col. 4:6) Next, review in your mind what you are going to say. Do not assume that your brother set out deliberately to hurt you; give him the benefit of the doubt. And be open to the possibility that in some way you may have contributed to the rift. You might begin the conversation by saying something like this, "Perhaps I am being overly sensitive, but when you spoke to me yesterday, I felt . . ." If the discussion does not produce the results you desire, look for another opportunity to make peace. In the meantime, pray for your brother; ask Jehovah to bless him. Ask God to



help you focus on your brother's positive qualities. Whatever the outcome, you can be sure that Jehovah will be pleased with your sincere efforts to gain your brother—God's friend.

## WHEN WE ARE TORMENTED BY OUR PAST

<sup>17</sup> Some feel unworthy of serving Jehovah because they have committed a serious sin. Guilt can be a harsh taskmaster. King David, who struggled with guilt, put it this way: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away because of my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me." Happily, David dealt with the problem like a man—a spiritual man. "Finally I confessed my sin to you," he wrote, "and you pardoned the error of my sins." (Ps. 32:3-5) If you have sinned seriously, Jehovah is ready to *help you* recover. But you must accept the help he provides through the congregation. (Prov. 24:16; Jas. 5:13-15) Do not delay—your everlasting future is at stake! But suppose that long after a transgression was forgiven, you still have pangs of conscience over past mistakes?

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17. What means can Jehovah use to help us recover when we have committed a sin, and why should we take advantage of the provision?

<sup>18</sup> There were evidently times when the apostle Paul was distressed over past misdeeds. He acknowledged: “I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God.” Nevertheless, Paul added: “But by God’s undeserved kindness *I am what I am.*” (1 Cor. 15:9, 10) Jehovah accepted Paul for what he was, and He expected Paul to realize that about himself. If you are sincerely repentant of past sins and have confessed them to the extent necessary, you can rest assured that Jehovah will be merciful. So take Jehovah at his word, and accept his forgiveness!—Isa. 55:6, 7.

<sup>19</sup> As this system nears its end, we can expect the pressures of life to increase. Be assured, however, that the One who “gives power to the tired one and full might to those lacking strength” can give you whatever you need to carry on. (Isa. 40:29; Ps. 55:22; 68:19) During 2018, we will be reminded of this important truth every time we attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall. It is embodied in the words displayed there from our yeartext: “*Those hoping in Jehovah will regain power.*”—Isa. 40:31.

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18. How can Paul’s example help those who struggle with feelings of unworthiness?

19. What is the yeartext for 2018, and why is it appropriate?

# 47 *Pray to Jehovah Each Day*

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

1. Pray to Jehovah, the Hearer of prayer.  
This is our priv'lege, for his name we bear.  
Open your heart as you would to a friend,  
Trust that on Him you can always depend.  
Pray to Jehovah each day.
2. Pray to Jehovah, give thanks that we live,  
Asking forgiveness as we do forgive.  
May we confess to our God whom we trust.  
He is our Maker and knows we are dust.  
Pray to Jehovah each day.
3. Pray to Jehovah when troubles appear.  
He is our Father and ever so near.  
Seek his protection, and look for his aid;  
He is our confidence; don't be afraid.  
Pray to Jehovah each day.

