

- Song 76 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”: (10 min.)

Mt 20:3—The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted “in the marketplace” (*nwtsty media*)

Mt 20:20, 21—Two apostles requested positions of honor and authority (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mt 20:25-28—Jesus explained that his followers must be humble ministers (*nwtsty study notes on Mt 20:26, 28*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Mt 21:9—When the crowds shouted: “Save, we pray, the Son of David!” what did they mean? (*nwtsty study note*)

Mt 21:18, 19—Why did Jesus cause a fig tree to wither? (*jy 244 ¶4-6*)

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 20:1-19

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call Video: (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- First Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *lv 36-37 ¶3-4*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- Local Needs: (5 min.)
- Organizational Accomplishments: (10 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for March.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *jy chap. 11*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 53 and Prayer

MATTHEW 20-21 | “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”

20:28

The proud scribes and Pharisees wanted to impress others and desired prominence. (Mt 23:5-7) Jesus was different. “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister.” (Mt 20:28) Do we focus our efforts primarily on aspects of worship that may bring us recognition and praise? Christlike greatness comes from serving the interests of others. Such work is often done behind the scenes—observed only by Jehovah. (Mt 6:1-4) A humble minister will . . .

- share in cleaning and maintaining the Kingdom Hall
- take the initiative to help the elderly and others
- contribute financially to support Kingdom interests
- _____
- _____



The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted in the marketplace

76 *How Does It Make You Feel?*

(Hebrews 13:15)

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

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;^a and come be my follower.”^b

22 When the young man heard this, he went away grieved, for he had many possessions.^c

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.^d

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.”^e

25 When the disciples heard that, they were greatly astounded, saying: “Who really can be saved?”^f **26** Looking at them intently, Jesus said to them: “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”^g

27 Then Peter said in reply: “Look! We have left all things and followed you; what, then, will there be for us?”^h **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.ⁱ **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.^j

30 “But many who are first will be last and the last first.”^k

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.^l **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.

3 Going out also about the third hour,* he saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace; **4** and to those he said, ‘You too go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is fair.’ **5** So off they went. Again he went out about the sixth hour* and the ninth hour# and did likewise. **6** Finally, about the 11th hour,* he went out and found others standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day unemployed?’ **7** They replied, ‘Because nobody has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into the vineyard.’

8 “When evening came, the master of the vineyard said to his man in charge, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages,^a starting with the last and ending with the first.’ **9** When the 11th-hour men came, they each received a de·nar’i·us.* **10** So when the first came, they assumed that they would receive more, but they too were paid at the rate of a de·nar’i·us.* **11** On receiving it, they began to complain against the master of the house **12** and said, ‘These last men put in one hour’s work; still you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat!’ **13** But he said in reply to one of them, ‘Fellow, I do you no wrong. You agreed with me for a de·nar’i·us,* did you not?’^b **14** Take what is yours and go. I want to give to this last one the same as to you. **15** Do I not have the right to do what I want with my own things? Or is your eye envious* because I am good?’^{#c} **16** In this way, the last ones will be first, and the first ones last.”^d

20:3 *That is, about 9:00 a.m. **20:5** *That is, about 12:00 noon. #That is, about 3:00 p.m. **20:6** *That is, about 5:00 p.m. **20:15** *Lit., “bad; wicked.”
#Or “generous.”

17 While going up to Jerusalem, Jesus took the 12 disciples aside privately and said to them on the road:^a 18 "Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes. They will condemn him to death^b 19 and hand him over to men of the nations to be mocked and scourged and executed on a stake;^c and on the third day he will be raised up."^d

20 Then the mother of the sons of Zeb'e-dee^e approached him with her sons, doing obeisance* and asking for something from him.^f 21 He said to her: "What do you want?" She replied to him: "Give the word that these two sons of mine may sit down, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your Kingdom."^g

22 Jesus answered: "You do not know what you are asking for. Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?"^h They said to him: "We can." 23 He said to them: "You will indeed drink my cup,ⁱ but to sit down at my right hand and at my left is not mine to give, but it belongs to those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."^j

24 When the ten others heard about it, they became indignant at the two brothers.^k 25 But Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them.^l 26 This must not be the way among you;^m but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister,ⁿ 27 and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave.^o 28 Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister^p and to give his life* as a ransom in exchange for many."^q

20:20 *Or "bowing down." 20:28 *Or "soul."

MATTHEW 20:17-21:9

29 As they were going out of Jer'i-cho, a large crowd followed him. **30** And look! two blind men sitting beside the road heard that Jesus was passing by and cried out: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!"^a **31** But the crowd rebuked them, telling them to keep silent; yet they cried all the louder, saying: "Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!" **32** So Jesus stopped, called them, and said: "What do you want me to do for you?" **33** They said to him: "Lord, let our eyes be opened." **34** Moved with pity, Jesus touched their eyes,^b and immediately they recovered their sight, and they followed him.

21 When they got close to Jerusalem and arrived at Beth'pha-ge on the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples,^c **2** saying to them: "Go into the village that is within sight, and you will at once find a donkey tied and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. **3** If someone says anything to you, you must say, 'The Lord needs them.' At that he will immediately send them."

4 This actually took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, who said: **5** "Tell the daughter of Zion: 'Look! Your king is coming to you,^d mild-tempered^e and mounted on a donkey, yes, on a colt, the offspring of a beast of burden.'"^f

6 So the disciples went and did just as Jesus had instructed them.^g **7** They brought the donkey and its colt, and they put their outer garments on them, and he sat on them.^h **8** Most of the crowd spread their outer garments on the road,ⁱ while others were cutting down branches from the trees and spreading them on the road. **9** Moreover, the crowds going ahead of him and those following him kept

MATTHEW 21:10-32

shouting: "Save, we pray, the Son of David!^a Blessed is the one who comes in Jehovah's* name!^b Save him, we pray, in the heights above!"^c

10 And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in an uproar, saying: "Who is this?" **11** The crowds kept saying: "This is the prophet Jesus,^d from Naz'a-reth of Gal'i-lee!"

12 Jesus entered the temple and threw out all those selling and buying in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves.^e

13 And he said to them: "It is written, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,'^f but you are making it a cave of robbers."^g

14 Also, blind and lame people came to him in the temple, and he cured them.

15 When the chief priests and the scribes saw the marvelous things he did and the boys who were shouting in the temple, "Save, we pray, the Son of David!"^h they became indignantⁱ

16 and said to him: "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them: "Yes. Did you never read this, 'Out of the mouth of children and infants, you have brought forth praise?'"^j **17** And leaving them behind, he went out of the city to Beth'a-ny and spent the night there.^k

18 While returning to the city early in the morning, he felt hungry.^l **19** He caught sight of a fig tree by the road and went to it, but he found nothing on it except leaves,^m and he said to it: "Let no fruit come from you ever again."ⁿ And the fig tree withered instantly. **20** When the disciples saw this, they were amazed and said: "How is it that the fig tree withered instantly?"^o **21** In answer Jesus said to them: "Tru-

21:9 *See App. A5.

ly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will happen.^a

22 And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive."^b

23 After he went into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came up to him while he was teaching and said: "By what authority do you do these things? And who gave you this authority?"^c

24 In reply Jesus said to them: "I will also ask you one thing. If you tell me, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things:

25 The baptism by John, from what source was it? From heaven or from men?"* But they began to reason among themselves, saying: "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why, then, did you not believe him?'"^d

26 But if we say, 'From men,' we have the crowd to fear, for they all regard John as a prophet."

27 So they answered Jesus: "We do not know." He, in turn, said to them: "Neither am I telling you by what authority I do these things.

28 "What do you think? A man had two children. Going up to the first, he said, 'Child, go work today in the vineyard.'

29 In answer this one said, 'I will not,' but afterward, he felt regret and went out.

30 Approaching the second, he said the same. This one replied, 'I will, Sir,' but did not go out.

31 Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said: "The first." Jesus said to them: "Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going ahead of you into the Kingdom of God.

32 For John came

21:25 *Or "of human origin?"

to you in a way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. However, the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him,^a and even when you saw this, you did not feel regret afterward so as to believe him.

33 “Hear another illustration: There was a man, a landowner, who planted a vineyard^b and put a fence around it and dug a winepress in it and erected a tower;^c then he leased it to cultivators and traveled abroad.^d **34** When the fruit season came around, he sent his slaves to the cultivators to collect his fruit. **35** However, the cultivators took his slaves, and they beat one up, another they killed, another they stoned.^e **36** Again he sent other slaves, more than the first group, but they did the same to these.^f **37** Lastly he sent his son to them, saying, ‘They will respect my son.’ **38** On seeing the son, the cultivators said among themselves, ‘This is the heir.^g Come, let us kill him and get his inheritance!’ **39** So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.^h **40** Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those cultivators?” **41** They said to him: “Because they are evil, he will bring a terrible* destruction on them and will lease the vineyard to other cultivators, who will give him the fruits when they become due.”

42 Jesus said to them: “Did you never read in the Scriptures, ‘The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the chief cornerstone.’ⁱ This has come from Jehovah,[#] and it is marvelous in our eyes’?^j **43** This is why I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and be given to a nation producing its

21:41 *Or “an evil.” **21:42** *Lit., “the head of the corner.” #See App. A5.

MATTHEW 21:33-22:11

fruits. **44** Also, the person falling on this stone will be shattered.^a As for anyone on whom it falls, it will crush him.”^b

45 When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his illustrations, they knew that he was speaking about them.^c **46** Although they wanted to seize* him, they feared the crowds, because these regarded him as a prophet.^d

22 Once more Jesus spoke to them with illustrations, saying: **2** “The Kingdom of the heavens may be likened to a king who made a marriage feast^e for his son. **3** And he sent his slaves to call those invited to the marriage feast, but they were unwilling to come.^f **4** Again he sent other slaves, saying, ‘Tell those invited: “Look! I have prepared my dinner, my bulls and fattened animals are slaughtered, and everything is ready. Come to the marriage feast.”’ **5** But unconcerned they went off, one to his own field, another to his business;^g **6** but the rest, seizing his slaves, treated them insolently and killed them.

7 “The king grew wrathful and sent his armies and killed those murderers and burned their city.^h **8** Then he said to his slaves, ‘The marriage feast is ready, but those invited were not worthy.’ⁱ **9** Therefore, go to the roads leading out of the city, and invite anyone you find to the marriage feast.’^j **10** Accordingly, those slaves went out to the roads and gathered all they found, both wicked and good; and the room for the wedding ceremonies was filled with those dining.*

11 “When the king came in to inspect the guests, he caught sight of a man not wearing

21:46 *Or “arrest.” **22:10** *Or “reclining at the table.”

- Song 76 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”: (10 min.)

Mt 20:3—The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted “in the marketplace” (*nwtsty media*)

Mt 20:20, 21—Two apostles requested positions of honor and authority (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mt 20:25-28—Jesus explained that his followers must be humble ministers (*nwtsty study notes on Mt 20:26, 28*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Mt 21:9—When the crowds shouted: “Save, we pray, the Son of David!” what did they mean? (*nwtsty study note*)

Mt 21:18, 19—Why did Jesus cause a fig tree to wither? (*jy 244 ¶4-6*)

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 20:1-19

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call Video: (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- First Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *lv 36-37 ¶3-4*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- Local Needs: (5 min.)
- Organizational Accomplishments: (10 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for March.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *jy chap. 11*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 53 and Prayer

MATTHEW 20-21 | “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”

20:28

The proud scribes and Pharisees wanted to impress others and desired prominence. (Mt 23:5-7) Jesus was different. “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister.” (Mt 20:28) Do we focus our efforts primarily on aspects of worship that may bring us recognition and praise? Christlike greatness comes from serving the interests of others. Such work is often done behind the scenes—observed only by Jehovah. (Mt 6:1-4) A humble minister will . . .

- share in cleaning and maintaining the Kingdom Hall
- take the initiative to help the elderly and others
- contribute financially to support Kingdom interests
- _____
- _____



The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted in the marketplace

MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 20

20:1

to hire workers: Some workers would be employed for the entire harvest period; others, for a day at a time as the need arose.

20:2

denarius: A Roman silver coin that weighed about 3.85 g (0.124 oz t) and bore an image of Caesar on one side. As this verse shows, agricultural laborers in Jesus' day commonly received a denarius for a 12-hour workday.—See Glossary and App. B14.

20:3

about the third hour: That is, about 9:00 a.m. In the first century C.E., the Jews used the count of 12 hours to the day, starting with sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Joh 11:9) Therefore, the third hour would be about 9:00 a.m., the sixth hour about noon, and the ninth hour about 3:00 p.m. Since people did not have precise timepieces, only the approximate time of an event was usually given.—Joh 1:39; 4:6; 19:14; Ac 10:3, 9.

20:5

about the sixth hour: That is, about 12:00 noon.—See study note on Mt 20:3.

the ninth hour: That is, about 3:00 p.m.—See study note on Mt 20:3.

20:6

about the 11th hour: That is, about 5:00 p.m.—See study note on Mt 20:3.

20:15

is your eye envious: The Greek word here rendered “envious” literally means “bad; wicked.” (See study note on Mt 6:23.) The term “eye” is here used figuratively of a person’s intent, disposition, or emotions.—Compare the expression “envious eye” at Mr 7:22.

good: Or “generous.” In this context, goodness is directly linked with an act of generosity.

20:17

While going up: Although a few manuscripts convey the idea “being about to go up,” the current reading has stronger manuscript support.

going up to Jerusalem: The city was about 750 m (2,500 ft) above sea level, so the Scriptures often speak of worshippers “going up to Jerusalem.” (Mr 10:32; Lu 2:22; Joh 2:13; Ac 11:2) Jesus and his disciples were about to ascend from the Jordan Valley (see study note on Mt 19:1), which at its lowest point is about 400 m (1,300 ft) below sea level. They would have to climb some 1,000 m (3,330 ft) to reach Jerusalem.

20:18

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.

20:19

executed on a stake: Or “to be fastened on a stake (pole).” This is the first of over 40 occurrences of the Greek verb *stau-ro'o* in

the Christian Greek Scriptures. This is the verb for the Greek noun *stau-ros'*, rendered "torture stake." (See study notes on Mt 10:38; 16:24; 27:32 and Glossary, "Stake"; "Torture stake.") The verb form is used in the *Septuagint* at Es 7:9, where the order was given to hang Haman on a stake that was over 20 m (65 ft) tall. In classical Greek, it meant "to fence with pales, to form a stockade, or palisade."

20:20

mother of the sons of Zebedee: That is, the mother of the apostles James and John. According to Mark's account, James and John are the ones who approach Jesus. They are evidently the source of the request, but they make the request through their mother, Salome, who may have been Jesus' aunt.—Mt 27:55, 56; Mr 15:40, 41; Joh 19:25.

doing obeisance: Or "bowing down; kneeling respectfully."—See study notes on Mt 8:2; 18:26.

20:21

one at your right hand and one at your left: Here both positions indicate honor and authority, but the place of greatest honor is always on the right.—Ps 110:1; Ac 7:55, 56; Ro 8:34; see study note on Mt 25:33.

20:22

You do not know what you are asking for: The plural Greek verbs used and the context indicate that Jesus is now addressing, not the woman, but her two sons.—Mr 10:35-38.

drink the cup: In the Bible, "cup" is often used figuratively of God's will, or the "assigned portion," for a person. To "drink the cup" here means to submit to God's will. In this case, the "cup" involved not only Jesus' suffering and death under the false charge of blasphemy but also his being resurrected to immortal life in heaven.

20:26

minister: Or “servant.” The Bible often uses the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* to refer to one who does not let up in humbly rendering service in behalf of others. The term is used to describe Christ (Ro 15:8), ministers or servants of Christ (1Co 3:5-7; Col 1:23), ministerial servants (Php 1:1; 1Ti 3:8), as well as household servants (Joh 2:5, 9) and government officials (Ro 13:4).

20:28

not to be ministered to, but to minister: Or “not to be served, but to serve.”—See study note on Mt 20:26.

life: The Greek word *psy-khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” is here used in the sense of “life.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

ransom: The Greek word *ly'tron* (from the verb *ly'o*, meaning “to let loose; to release”) was used by non-Biblical Greek writers to refer to a price paid to release those under bond or in slavery or to ransom prisoners of war. (Heb 11:35) It occurs twice in the Christian Greek Scriptures, here and at Mr 10:45. The related word *an-ti'ly-tron* appears at 1Ti 2:6 and is rendered “corresponding ransom.” Other related words are *ly-tro'o-mai*, meaning “to set free; to ransom” (Tit 2:14; 1Pe 1:18; also ftns.), and *a-po-ly'tro-sis*, often rendered “release by ransom” (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; Heb 9:15; Ro 3:24; 8:23).—See Glossary.

20:29

Jericho: The first Canaanite city W of the Jordan River to be conquered by the Israelites. (Nu 22:1; Jos 6:1, 24, 25) By Jesus' time, a new city had been built about 2 km (a little over a mile) S of the old city. This may explain why Lu 18:35 says of the same incident that “Jesus was getting near to Jericho.” Perhaps Jesus performs the miracle while leaving, or **going out of**, the Jewish

city and approaching the Roman city, or vice versa.—See App. B4 and B10.

20:30

two blind men: Mark and Luke mention one blind man, evidently focusing on Bartimaeus, who is named in Mark's account. (Mr 10:46; Lu 18:35) Matthew is more specific as to the number of blind men present.

Son of David: Addressing Jesus as “Son of David,” the two blind men openly acknowledge him as the Messiah.—See study notes on Mt 1:1, 6; 15:25.

20:34

pity: Or “compassion.”—The Greek verb *splag·khni'zo·mai* used for this expression is related to the word for “intestines” (*splag'khna*), denoting a feeling experienced deep inside the body, an intense emotion. It is one of the strongest words in Greek for the feeling of compassion.

MATTHEW

Study Notes—Chapter 21

21:1

Bethphage: The name of this village on the Mount of Olives comes from Hebrew, probably meaning “House of the Early Figs.” Tradition locates it between Jerusalem and Bethany on the SE slope of the Mount of Olives, near the peak, about 1 km (less than 1 mi) from Jerusalem.—Mr 11:1; Lu 19:29; see App. A7, Map 6.

21:2

a donkey tied and a colt with her: Only Matthew's account mentions both the donkey and its colt. (Mr 11:2-7; Lu 19:30-35;

Joh 12:14, 15) Evidently, since Jesus rode only on the colt, Mark, Luke, and John mention only one animal.—See study note on Mt 21:5.

21:4

to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: The first part of the quote at Mt 21:5 is evidently taken from Isa 62:11 and the second part, from Zec 9:9.—See study note on Mt 1:22.

21:5

the daughter of Zion: Or “daughter Zion,” as some Bible translations say. In the Bible, cities are often personified as women or figuratively referred to using feminine terms. In this expression, “daughter” may refer to the city itself or to the people of the city. The name Zion was closely connected with the city of Jerusalem.

mild-tempered: Or “humble.”—See study note on Mt 5:5.

on a donkey, yes, on a colt: Although two animals are mentioned at Mt 21:2, 7, the prophecy at Zec 9:9 refers to the king as riding only one animal.—See study note on Mt 21:2.

21:7

the donkey and its colt: Only Matthew’s account mentions both the donkey and its colt. (Mr 11:2-7; Lu 19:30-35; Joh 12:14, 15) Evidently, since Jesus rode only on the colt, Mark, Luke, and John mention only one animal.—See study note on Mt 21:5.

sat on them: That is, on the outer garments.

21:9

Save, we pray: Lit., “Hosanna.” That Greek term comes from a Hebrew expression that means “save, we pray” or “save, please.” Here the term is used as a plea to God for salvation or victory; it could be rendered “please, grant salvation to.” In time, it became

an expression of both prayer and praise. The Hebrew expression is found at Ps 118:25, which was part of the Hallel Psalms sung regularly during Passover season. Therefore, these words readily came to mind on this occasion. One way God answered this prayer to save the Son of David was by resurrecting him from the dead. At Mt 21:42, Jesus himself quotes Ps 118:22, 23 and applies it to the Messiah.

Son of David: An expression here showing recognition of Jesus' line of descent and his role as the promised Messiah.—See study notes on Mt 1:1, 6; 15:25; 20:30.

Jehovah's: In this quote from Ps 118:25, 26, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

21:10

was in an uproar: Or “was shaken (stirred up).” The agitation felt by the residents of the city is indicated by a Greek verb that in its literal sense is used to describe the effects of an earthquake or a storm. (Mt 27:51; Re 6:13) The related Greek noun *sei-smos*' is translated “storm” or “earthquake.”—Mt 8:24; 24:7; 27:54; 28:2.

21:12

temple: Probably referring to the part of the temple area known as the Court of the Gentiles.—See App. B11.

money changers: Many different types of coins were in use, but apparently only a certain type of coin could be used to pay the annual temple tax or to buy sacrificial animals. Therefore, Jews traveling to Jerusalem would have to exchange their currency for money that would be accepted at the temple. Jesus evidently felt that the fees charged by the money changers were exorbitant and that their actions amounted to extortion.

21:13

cave of robbers: Or “den of thieves.” Jesus here alludes to Jer 7:11. He likely called the merchants and money changers “robbers” because they made unjust profit from selling animals for sacrifice and charged exorbitant fees for exchanging currencies. Jesus was also indignant that Jehovah’s **house of prayer**, or place of worship, had been wrongly turned into a center for commercial activity.

21:14

temple: Probably referring to the Court of the Gentiles, since the **blind and lame** were barred from access to certain inner parts of the temple. Matthew’s account may indicate that Jesus’ zeal on this occasion was not limited to cleansing the temple but also involved curing the blind and lame who approached him there.

21:15

Save, we pray, the Son of David: An expression here showing recognition of Jesus’ line of descent and his role as the promised Messiah.—See study notes on Mt 1:1, 6; 15:25; 20:30.

21:17

Bethany: A village on the ESE slope of the Mount of Olives at a distance of about 3 km (2 mi) from Jerusalem. (Joh 11:18, fn.) The home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, located in this village, appears to have been Jesus’ base in Judea. (Joh 11:1) Today the site is marked by a small village with an Arabic name meaning “The Place of Lazarus.”

21:19

he found nothing on it except leaves: Although it was unusual for a fig tree to bear fruit at that time of year, the tree had leaves—normally a sign that it had produced an early crop of figs. Because the tree had borne only leaves, Jesus knew that it

was not going to produce any crop and was therefore deceptive in its appearance. So he cursed it as unproductive, causing it to wither.

21:21

Truly: reek, *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.

21:23

elders: Lit., "older men." In the Bible, the Greek term *pre·sby'te·ros* refers primarily to those who hold a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation. Although the term sometimes refers to physical age (as at Lu 15:25; Ac 2:17), it is not limited to those who are elderly. Here it refers to the leaders of the Jewish nation who are often mentioned together with chief priests and scribes. The Sanhedrin was made up of men from these three groups.—Mt 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57; 27:1, 41; 28:12; see Glossary, "Elder; Older man."

21:29

this one said, 'I will not': In this parable (Mt 21:28-31), some Greek manuscripts present the two sons and their answers and actions in a different order. (See the rendering in previous editions of the *New World Translation*.) The overall idea is the same, but the manuscript support for the current reading is stronger.

21:31

tax collectors: Many Jews collected taxes for the Roman authorities. People hated such Jews because they not only collaborated with a resented foreign power but also extorted more than the official tax rate. Tax collectors were generally shunned by fellow Jews, who put them on the same level as sinners and prostitutes.—Mt 11:19; 21:32.

21:33

illustration: Or “parables.” The Greek word *pa·ra·bo·le'*, which literally means “a placing beside (together),” may be in the form of a parable, a proverb, or an illustration. Jesus often explains a thing by ‘placing it beside,’ or comparing it with, another similar thing. (Mr 4:30) His illustrations were short and usually fictitious narratives from which a moral or spiritual truth could be drawn.

tower: Used as a vantage point to guard vineyards against thieves and animals.—Isa 5:2.

leased: A common practice in first-century Israel. In this case, the owner did much preliminary work, making his expectation of a return all the more reasonable.

21:41

a terrible destruction: Or “an evil destruction.” Using a play on words, the Greek text repeats different forms of the same root word to intensify the judgment message: “Because they are *evil*, he will bring an *evil* destruction on them.”

21:42

in the Scriptures: Often used to refer to the inspired Hebrew writings as a whole.

the chief cornerstone: Or “the most important stone.” The Hebrew expression at Ps 118:22 and the Greek expression used here literally mean “the head of the corner.” Although it has been

understood in different ways, it apparently refers to the stone that was installed atop the junction of two walls to hold them firmly together. Jesus quoted and applied this prophecy to himself as “the chief cornerstone.” Just as the topmost stone of a building is conspicuous, so Jesus Christ is the crowning stone of the Christian congregation of anointed ones, which is likened to a spiritual temple.

Jehovah: In this quote from Ps 118:22, 23, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.



The Marketplace

Some marketplaces, like the one depicted here, were located along a road. Vendors often placed so much merchandise in the street that it blocked traffic. Local residents could buy common household goods, pottery, and expensive glassware, as well as fresh produce. Because there was no refrigeration, people needed to visit the market each day to buy supplies. Here a shopper could hear news brought in by traders or other visitors, children could play, and the unemployed could wait to be hired. In the marketplace, Jesus healed the sick and Paul preached. (Ac 17:17) By contrast, the proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted in these public areas.

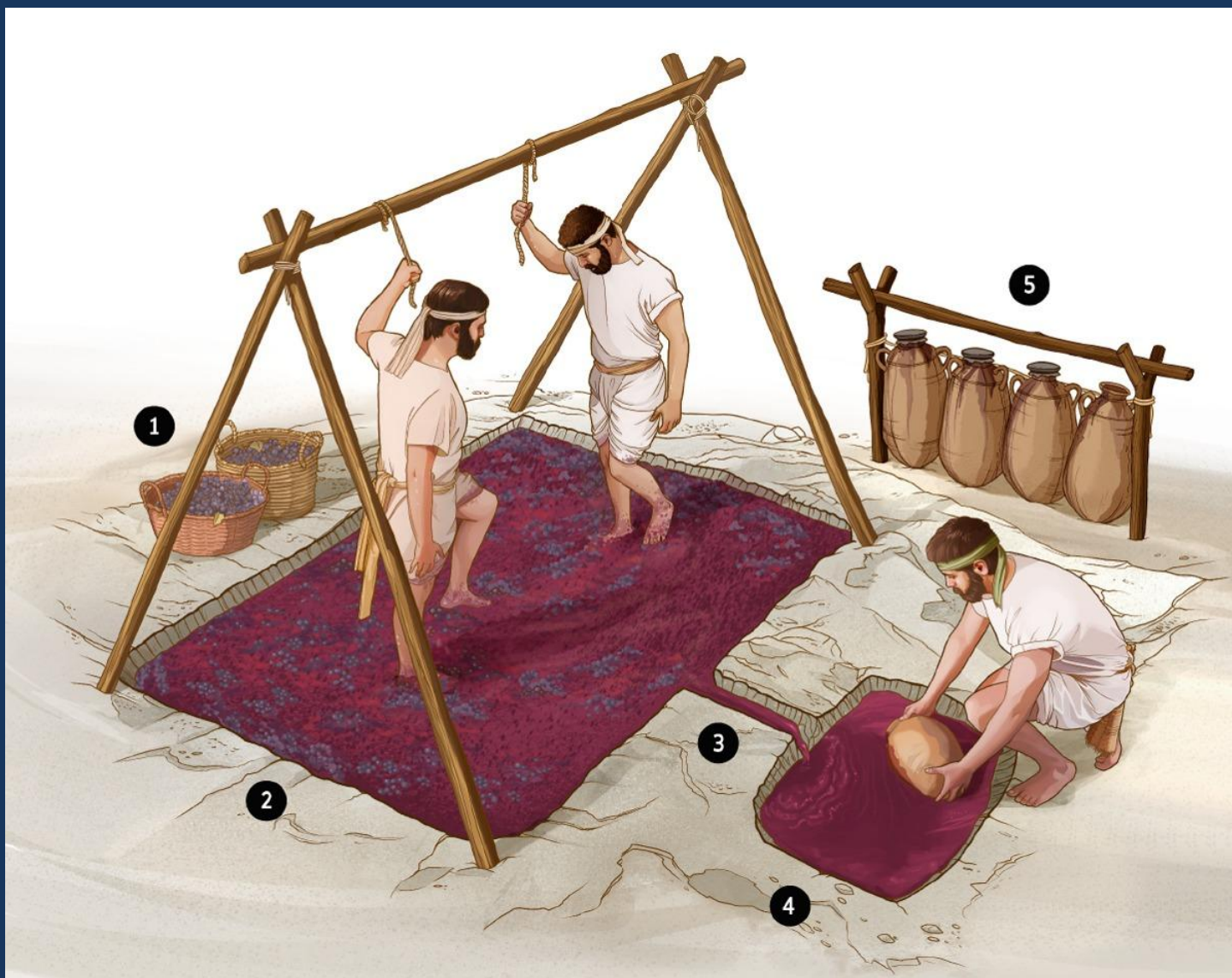
Related Scripture(s) Mt 11:16; Mt 20:3; Mr 6:56; Mr 12:38; Lu 7:32; Lu 11:43



Colt, or Young Donkey

The donkey is a hard-hoofed animal of the horse family, distinguished from the horse by its smaller size, shorter mane, longer ears, and shorter tail-hair, with only the end half of the tail having a brush. Although the donkey's stupidity and stubbornness are proverbial, its intelligence is actually considered to be superior to that of the horse, and it is usually a patient creature. Both men and women, even prominent Israelites, rode donkeys. (Jos 15:18; Jg 5:10; 10:3, 4; 12:14; 1Sa 25:42) Solomon, the son of David, rode to his anointing on his father's she-mule, a hybrid offspring of a male donkey. (1Ki 1:33-40) It was therefore most appropriate that Jesus, the one greater than Solomon, fulfill the prophecy of Zec 9:9 by riding, not on a horse, but on a young donkey.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 21:5; Mr 11:7; Lu 19:30; Joh 12:14



Winepress

In Israel, grapes were gathered during August and September, depending on the type of grapes and the climate of the region. They were usually placed in limestone vats or troughs cut into rock. Men normally crushed the grapes barefoot, singing songs as they trod the winepress.—Isa 16:10; Jer 25:30; 48:33.

1. Freshly picked grapes
2. Winepress
3. Drainage channel
4. Lower collecting basin
5. Earthenware wine jars

Related Scripture(s) Mt 21:33; Mr 12:1

But why did Jesus cause the tree to wither? He reveals the reason in his response: “Truly I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what I did to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will happen. And all the things you ask in prayer, having faith, you will receive.” (Matthew 21:21, 22) He is thus repeating the point he made earlier about faith being able to move a mountain.—Matthew 17:20.

So by causing the tree to wither, Jesus provides an object lesson on the need to have faith in God. He states: “All the things you pray and ask for, have faith that you have received them, and you will have them.” (Mark 11:24) What an important lesson for all of Jesus’ followers! It is especially appropriate for the apostles in view of the difficult tests they will soon face. There is yet another connection between the withering of the fig tree and the quality of faith.

Like this fig tree, the nation of Israel has a deceptive appearance. The people of this nation are in a covenant relationship with God, and they might outwardly appear to observe his Law. However, the nation as a whole has proved to be both lacking faith and barren of good fruitage. They even reject God’s own Son! Hence, by causing the unproductive fig tree to wither, Jesus demonstrates what the end will be for this fruitless, faithless nation.



- Song 76 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”: (10 min.)

Mt 20:3—The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted “in the marketplace” (*nwtsty media*)

Mt 20:20, 21—Two apostles requested positions of honor and authority (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mt 20:25-28—Jesus explained that his followers must be humble ministers (*nwtsty study notes on Mt 20:26, 28*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Mt 21:9—When the crowds shouted: “Save, we pray, the Son of David!” what did they mean? (*nwtsty study note*)

Mt 21:18, 19—Why did Jesus cause a fig tree to wither? (*jy 244 ¶4-6*)

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 20:1-19

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call Video: (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- First Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *lv 36-37 ¶3-4*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- Local Needs: (5 min.)
- Organizational Accomplishments: (10 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for March.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *jy chap. 11*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 53 and Prayer

MATTHEW 20-21 | “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”

20:28

The proud scribes and Pharisees wanted to impress others and desired prominence. (Mt 23:5-7) Jesus was different. “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister.” (Mt 20:28) Do we focus our efforts primarily on aspects of worship that may bring us recognition and praise? Christlike greatness comes from serving the interests of others. Such work is often done behind the scenes—observed only by Jehovah. (Mt 6:1-4) A humble minister will . . .

- share in cleaning and maintaining the Kingdom Hall
- take the initiative to help the elderly and others
- contribute financially to support Kingdom interests
- _____
- _____



The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted in the marketplace



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

Inviting people to the Memorial in Slovenia

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Memorial Invitation Campaign (March 3-31): We want to invite you to a very important event. Here is your personal invitation. On Saturday, March 31, millions around the world will gather to commemorate the death of Jesus Christ. This invitation shows the time and location of the meeting being held in our area. We also invite you to a talk the week before entitled “Who Is Jesus Christ?”

Link When Interest Is Shown: Why did Jesus die?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: Why did Jesus die?

Scripture: Mt 20:28

Link: What does the ransom accomplish?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What does the ransom accomplish?

Scripture: Ro 6:23

Link: How can we show our appreciation for the ransom?

then, some questions arise. Why can it be so difficult for us to respect authority? Why does Jehovah ask this of us, and what will help us to comply? Finally, in what ways can we show respect for authority?

WHY IT IS A CHALLENGE

③ Let us briefly consider two reasons why it can be such a challenge for us to show respect for those in authority. First, imperfection afflicts us; second, it afflicts those humans in authority over us. Human sin and imperfection got their start a long time ago, back in the garden of Eden when Adam and Eve rebelled against God's authority. So sin began with rebellion. To this day, we have an inborn tendency to rebel.—Genesis 2:15-17; 3:1-7; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12.

④ Because of our sinful nature, pride and haughtiness arise easily in most of us, whereas humility is a rare quality that we need to work hard to cultivate and maintain. Even after years of faithful service to God, we may give in to stubbornness and pride. For example, consider Korah, who faithfully stuck with

3, 4. How did sin and imperfection begin, and why does our sinful nature make it a challenge for us to respect authority?

Jehovah's people through many hardships. Still, he craved more authority and brazenly led a rebellion against Moses, the meekest man alive at that time. (Numbers 12:3; 16:1-3) Think, too, of King Uzziah, whose pride led him to enter Jehovah's temple and carry out a sacred duty reserved for the priests. (2 Chronicles 26:16-21) Such men paid dearly for their rebellion. Yet, their negative examples are useful reminders for all of us. We need to combat the pride that makes it difficult for us to respect authority.

⁵ On the other hand, imperfect humans in positions of power have done much to undermine respect for authority. Many have been cruel, abusive, or tyrannical. In fact, human history is largely a record of the abuse of power. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) For example, Saul was a good, humble man when Jehovah chose him to be king. However, he succumbed to pride and jealousy; he then persecuted the faithful man David. (1 Samuel 9:20, 21; 10:20-22; 18:7-11) David later became one of the best kings Israel ever had, yet he misused his power when he stole the wife

5. How have imperfect humans misused their authority?

Myriads of Brothers

(Revelation 7:9, 10)

1. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
Millions for all to see,
Each one a faithful witness,
Firm in integrity.
Myriads we are on myriads,
Growing, a mighty crowd,
From ev'ry nation and tribe and tongue,
We praise our God aloud.
2. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
We preach both far and near
"Good news of something better,"
Which millions long to hear.
And as we keep on preaching,
Though we at times are stressed,
Jesus refreshes the weary souls;
He gives us peace and rest.
3. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
God keeps us in his sight,
Safe in his earthly courtyards,
Serving him day and night.
Myriads we are on myriads,
With Kingdom news we go,
God's fellow workers we have become,
Serving him here below.

- Song 76 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”: (10 min.)

Mt 20:3—The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted “in the marketplace” (*nwtsty media*)

Mt 20:20, 21—Two apostles requested positions of honor and authority (*nwtsty study notes*)

Mt 20:25-28—Jesus explained that his followers must be humble ministers (*nwtsty study notes on Mt 20:26, 28*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Mt 21:9—When the crowds shouted: “Save, we pray, the Son of David!” what did they mean? (*nwtsty study note*)

Mt 21:18, 19—Why did Jesus cause a fig tree to wither? (*jy 244 ¶4-6*)

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 20:1-19

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call Video: (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- First Return Visit: (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- Bible Study: (6 min. or less) *lv 36-37 ¶3-4*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- Local Needs: (5 min.)
- Organizational Accomplishments: (10 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for March.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *jy chap. 11*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 53 and Prayer

MATTHEW 20-21 | “Whoever Wants to Become Great Among You Must Be Your Minister”

20:28

The proud scribes and Pharisees wanted to impress others and desired prominence. (Mt 23:5-7) Jesus was different. “The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister.” (Mt 20:28) Do we focus our efforts primarily on aspects of worship that may bring us recognition and praise? Christlike greatness comes from serving the interests of others. Such work is often done behind the scenes—observed only by Jehovah. (Mt 6:1-4) A humble minister will . . .

- share in cleaning and maintaining the Kingdom Hall
- take the initiative to help the elderly and others
- contribute financially to support Kingdom interests
- _____
- _____



The proud scribes and Pharisees loved to be noticed and greeted in the marketplace

11

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

MATTHEW 3:1-12 MARK 1:1-8 LUKE 3:1-18
JOHN 1:6-8, 15-28

- JOHN COMES PREACHING AND BAPTIZING
 - MANY GET BAPTIZED, BUT NOT ALL
-

Some 17 years have passed since Jesus at 12 years of age was questioning the teachers in the temple. It is now the spring of 29 C.E. Many are talking about Jesus' relative John, who is preaching in all the country on the western side of the Jordan River.

John is quite an impressive man, both in appearance and in speech. His clothing is made of camel's hair, and he wears a leather belt around his waist. He eats locusts—a type of grasshopper—and wild honey. What is his message? "Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near."—Matthew 3:2.

John's message excites those who have come out to hear him. Many realize their need to repent, that is, to change their attitude and ways, rejecting their past course of life as undesirable. Those who come

to him are from “Jerusalem and all Judea and all the country around the Jordan.” (Matthew 3:5) Many of those who come out to John do repent. He baptizes them, immersing them in the waters of the Jordan. Why?

He baptizes people in symbol, or acknowledgment, of their heartfelt repentance for sins against God’s Law covenant. (Acts 19:4) Not all qualify, though. When some religious leaders, Pharisees and Sadducees, come to him, John calls them “offspring of vipers.” He says: “Produce fruit that befits repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I say to you that God is able to raise up children for Abraham from these stones. The ax is already lying at the root of the trees. Every tree, then, that does not produce fine fruit is to be cut down and thrown into the fire.”—Matthew 3:7-10.

Because John is receiving much attention, has a powerful message, and is baptizing many, the priests and Levites are sent out to ask him: “Who are you?”

“I am not the Christ,” John confesses.

“What, then? Are you Elijah?” they inquire.

He answers: “I am not.”

“Are you the Prophet?” they ask, meaning the great Prophet who Moses said would come.—Deuteronomy 18:15, 18.

“No!” John replies.

They become insistent: “Who are you? Tell us so that we may give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” John says: “I am a voice of someone crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make the way of Jehovah straight,’ just as Isaiah the prophet said.”—John 1:19-23.

“Why, then, do you baptize,” they want to know, “if you are not the Christ or Elijah or the Prophet?” He gives a meaningful answer: “I baptize in water. One is standing among you whom you do not know, the one coming behind me.”—John 1:25-27.

Yes, John acknowledges that he is preparing the way by getting people in a proper heart condition to accept the foretold Messiah, the one who is to become King. Of him, John says: “The one coming

after me is stronger than I am, whose sandals I am not worthy to take off.” (Matthew 3:11) In fact, John even says: “The one coming behind me has advanced in front of me, for he existed before me.” —John 1:15.

Thus, John’s message “Repent, for the Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near” is indeed appropriate. (Matthew 3:2) It serves as a public notice that the ministry of Jehovah’s coming King, Jesus Christ, is about to begin.

- ◇ What sort of man is John, and what is he doing?
- ◇ Why does John baptize people?
- ◇ What is John’s message, and why is it appropriate?



1. Morning comes.

Soon we will be

On our way to preach good news.

But it's dark outside,

And the rain starts to fall.

It would be easy to stay inside,
sleepy-eyed.

(CHORUS)

Positive thoughts and preparation,

Praying that we'll succeed;

This can provide the inspiration,

We'll surely need.

We're not alone; the angels guide us.

Jesus commands them all.

And with a loyal friend beside us,

We'll never fall.

2. Soon we'll see

Joy come our way

If these things we keep in mind.

And Jehovah sees

Ev'ry effort we make,

And he remembers the love we show;
this we know.

(Chorus)

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

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.

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.

18

Grateful for the Ransom

(Luke 22:20)

1. Today, Jehovah God,
we stand before your throne,
For you showed the greatest love
that could ever be shown.
You gave the gift of your dear Son,
that we might live.
No greater sacrifice than this
could you ever give.

(CHORUS)

*He gave his life to set us free.
His precious blood provides the key.
With all our hearts,
we'll go on thanking you eternally.*

2. It was a willing sacrifice
that Jesus made.
Out of love, his perfect life
was the price that he paid.
We had no hope until he came
to save mankind.
But now our hope is finding life,
leaving death behind.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
18, 14

Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

**HOW DOES
THE MEMORIAL . . .**

benefit us
personally?

influence the unity
of God's people?

motivate us to
promote unity?

*“How good and how pleasant it is . . .
to dwell together in unity!”—PS. 133:1.*

ON March 31, 2018, as the sun begins to set, God's people and many interested ones will assemble for the annual observance of the Lord's Evening Meal. As the planet turns on its axis, millions

1, 2. What is the most unifying event of 2018, and why? (See opening picture.)

will gather to observe the Memorial of Christ's death. Each year, this observance is the most amazing unifying event that takes place on planet Earth!

² We can only try to imagine how Jehovah and Jesus must rejoice as they observe hour after hour millions of earth's inhabitants attending this special event until that day ends. The Bible foretold that "a great crowd, which no man [would be] able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" would shout: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9, 10) How wonderful that Jehovah and Jesus are honored in this way by means of the annual Memorial observance!

³ Some questions have arisen that this article will answer. (1) How can we individually prepare for the Memorial and benefit from attending it? (2) In what ways does the Memorial influence the unity of God's people? (3) How can we personally contribute to that unity? (4) Will there ever be a final Memorial? If so, when?

3. What questions will this article answer?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND BENEFIT FROM ATTENDING

⁴ Reflect on the importance of attending the Memorial. Remember, congregation meetings are part of our worship. Surely Jehovah and Jesus take note of who makes the effort to attend this most important meeting of the year. Frankly, we want them to see that unless it is physically or circumstantially impossible, we will be present at the Memorial. When we show by our actions that meetings for worship are important to us, we give Jehovah added reason to keep our name in his “book of remembrance”—“the book of life”—in which the names of those who are in line to attain to everlasting life are inscribed.—Mal. 3:16; Rev. 20:15.

⁵ In the days leading up to the Memorial, we can set aside time to examine prayerfully and carefully our personal relationship with Jehovah. (Read **2 Corinthians 13:5**.) How can we do that? By ‘testing whether we are in the faith.’ To do that, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do I really believe that I am part of the only organization that Jehovah has ap-

4. Why is it important for us to be present at the Memorial if at all possible?

5. In the days before the Memorial, how can we ‘test whether we are in the faith’?

proved to accomplish his will? Am I doing my utmost to preach and teach the good news of the Kingdom? Do my actions show that I truly believe that these are the last days and that the end of Satan's rule is near? Do I have the same confidence in Jehovah and Jesus now that I had when I dedicated my life to Jehovah God?' (Matt. 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 3:14) Pondering the answers to such questions will help us to keep proving what we ourselves are.

⁶ Read and meditate on Scriptural material that discusses the significance of the Memorial. (Read John 3:16; 17:3.) The only path to everlasting life involves "coming to know" Jehovah and "exercising faith" in Jesus, His only-begotten Son. To prepare for the Memorial, why not choose some study projects that will help you to draw closer to Jehovah and Jesus? Consider what one longtime elder has been doing. Over the years, he has collected *Watchtower* articles that particularly discuss the Memorial and the love that Jehovah and Jesus have shown us. In the weeks prior to the Memorial, he rereads these articles and meditates on the

6. (a) What is the only path to life? (b) How does one elder prepare for the Memorial each year, and how might you do something similar?

importance of this observance. On occasion, he updates his collection with an article or two. This elder has found that by rereading these articles and by reading and meditating on the Memorial Bible reading, he learns new things each year. Most important, he feels that his love for Jehovah and Jesus deepens each and every year. Such a study project may help you to deepen your love and appreciation for Jehovah and Jesus and thus may help you to benefit more fully from the Memorial.

THE MEMORIAL'S INFLUENCE ON OUR UNITY

⁷ On the night of the first Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus prayed that his followers would all be united and that they would enjoy the same unity that he and his Father treasure. (Read John 17:20, 21.) Jehovah has indeed answered that prayer of his dear Son, and now millions believe that Jehovah sent his Son. The Memorial, like no other meeting of God's people, provides undeniable evidence of the unity of Jehovah's Witnesses. People of many nations and skin colors gather together in meeting places around the earth. In some areas, the gathering of

7. (a) What did Jesus pray for on the night of the first Lord's Evening Meal? (b) What shows that Jehovah has answered Jesus' prayer?

these different races at a religious meeting is unheard of or is looked down on by others. But such unity is beautiful in the eyes of Jehovah and Jesus!

⁸ As Jehovah's people, we are not surprised at the unity we enjoy. Jehovah, in fact, foretold it. Consider the message he gave to the prophet Ezekiel regarding the joining together of two sticks, the stick "for Judah" and the stick "for Joseph." (Read Ezekiel 37:15-17.) The "Questions From Readers" published in *The Watchtower* of July 2016 explained: "Jehovah gave Ezekiel a message of hope promising the unification of the nation of Israel after its being restored to the Promised Land. That message also foretells the unification of God's people that started to take place during the last days."

⁹ From the year 1919 onward, Jehovah first gradually reorganized and reunited the anointed, who were symbolically like the stick "for Judah." Then, as more and more of those with the earthly hope—symbolically like the stick "for Joseph"—joined the anointed, the two groups became "one flock." (John 10:16; Zech. 8:23) Jehovah promised to join these two sticks and make

8. What message did Jehovah give Ezekiel regarding unity?

9. How is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy in evidence each year at the Memorial?

them one in his hand. (Ezek. 37:19) Now both groups serve unitedly under one King—the glorified Jesus Christ, who is prophetically spoken of as God’s “servant David.” (Ezek. 37:24, 25) The precious unity described in Ezekiel is clearly evident each year as the anointed remnant and the “other sheep” gather to observe the Memorial of Christ’s death! What, though, can we individually do to preserve and promote that unity?

WAYS WE INDIVIDUALLY CAN PROMOTE UNITY

¹⁰ One way we can promote the unity of God’s people is by cultivating humility. When on earth, Jesus admonished his disciples to humble themselves. (Matt. 23:12) If we are lowly in heart, we will not give in to the worldly spirit of self-exaltation. Rather, our humility will help us to be submissive to those taking the lead, and such an obedient spirit is essential for unity in the congregation. Above all, our humility will please God, for he “opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.”—1 Pet. 5:5.

¹¹ A second way we can promote unity is by re-

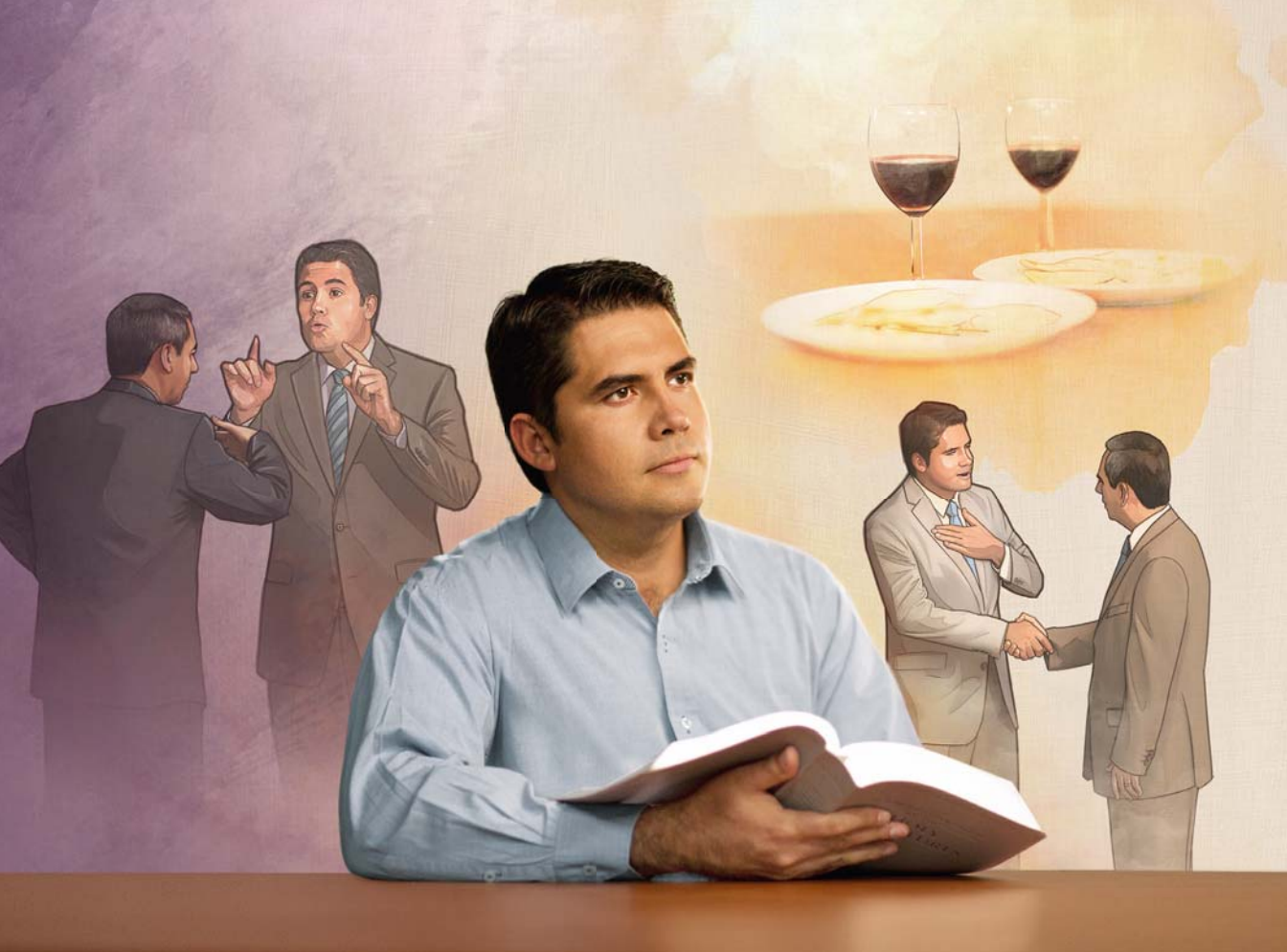
10. How can we promote unity among God’s people?

11. How can reflecting on the meaning of the Memorial emblems help us to promote unity?

flecting on the meaning of the emblems used at the Memorial. Prior to that special night—and especially on that night—give serious thought to the significance of the unleavened bread and the red wine. (1 Cor. 11:23-25) The bread represents the sinless body of Jesus offered in sacrifice, and the wine pictures his shed blood. But we need more than just an intellectual understanding of what those emblems mean. Remember that the ransom sacrifice of Christ involved the two greatest expressions of love—the love that Jehovah showed in giving his Son in our behalf, and the love that Jesus showed by willingly offering up his life for us. Reflecting on their love should move us to love them in return. And the love for Jehovah that we and our fellow worshippers share is like a cord that ties us together and strengthens our bond of unity.

¹² A third way we can promote unity is by freely forgiving others. When we forgive those who have offended us, we show that we appreciate the forgiveness of our own sins made possible by Christ's ransom sacrifice. Consider one of Jesus' illustrations as recorded at Matthew 18:23-34. Ask yourself: 'Am I moved to apply what Jesus taught? Do I

12. In his illustration of the king settling accounts, how did Jesus make it clear that Jehovah expects us to be forgiving?



When we are forgiving, we promote unity
(See paragraphs 12, 13)

show patience and understanding to my fellow servants? Am I ready to forgive those who sin against me personally?’ Granted, there are degrees of sin, and some offenses are very hard for imperfect humans to forgive. Yet, this illustration teaches us what Jehovah expects. **(Read Matthew 18:35.)** Je-

sus makes it clear that Jehovah will not forgive us if we do not forgive our brothers when there is a sound basis for doing so. What a sobering thought! We protect and preserve our precious unity when we forgive others as Jesus taught us to do.

¹³ When we forgive others, we prove ourselves to be peacemakers. Recall the apostle Paul's counsel that we should be "earnestly endeavoring to maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3) During this Memorial season and especially on the night of the Memorial, think deeply about how you treat others. Ask yourself: 'Do I give clear evidence of being one who does not hold grudges? Am I known for going out of my way to promote peace and unity?' These are serious questions to ponder at this time of the year.

¹⁴ A fourth way to promote unity is by showing love in imitation of Jehovah, the God of love. (1 John 4:8) Never would we want to say regarding fellow worshippers, "I may have to love them, but I do not have to like them"! To think that way is contrary to Paul's counsel that we should be "putting up with one another in love." (Eph. 4:2)

13. How does proving ourselves to be peacemakers promote unity?

14. How can we show that we are "putting up with one another in love"?

Note that he did not simply say that we should be “putting up with one another.” He added that we should do so “in love.” There is a difference. In our congregations are found all sorts of people whom Jehovah has drawn to him. (John 6:44) Since Jehovah has drawn them to him, he must find them lovable. How, then, could any of us judge a fellow worshipper as being unworthy of our love? We must not hold back the love that Jehovah commands us to display!—1 John 4:20, 21.

A FINAL MEMORIAL—WHEN?

¹⁵ One day the Memorial will be observed for the last time. How do we know? In his first inspired letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote to anointed Christians that by commemorating Jesus’ death each year, they “keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, *until he comes.*” (1 Cor. 11:26) The word “comes” here refers to the same event as the “coming” that Jesus mentioned in his prophecy about the time of the end. Regarding the great tribulation just ahead of us, he said: “The sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief, and they will see *the Son of man coming* on the clouds of heaven with

15. How do we know that there will be a final Memorial?

power and great glory. And [Jesus] will send out his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity.” (Matt. 24:29-31) This ‘gathering of chosen ones’ refers to the time when all anointed Christians who still remain on earth will receive their heavenly reward. It will happen after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed but before the battle of Armageddon. Then all of the 144,000 will share with Jesus in conquering the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:12-14) The last Memorial that is observed prior to this gathering of the anointed to heaven will be the final one, for Jesus will have ‘come.’

¹⁶ May we be determined to benefit ourselves by attending the Memorial on March 31, 2018. And let us ask Jehovah to help us keep contributing to the unity of his people! (Read Psalm 133:1.) Remember, someday the Memorial we observe will be the final one. Meanwhile, may we do our utmost to be in attendance, and may we treasure the pleasant unity experienced at the Memorial.

16. Why are you determined to be present at this year’s Memorial?

14 *Praising Earth's New King* (Psalm 2:12)

1. A multitude is gathering
 from ev'ry tribe and nation,
 Collected by the Christ and his
 anointed congregation.
God's Kingdom has been brought to birth;
 We pray his will be done on earth.
This hope is a gift of priceless worth,
 Giving joy and consolation.

(CHORUS)

*Praise our God, Jehovah; Praise his Son forever—
 King of all kings and the Lord of lords.
Now unitedly we bow to his rule
 And praise him with one accord.*

2. We praise the Christ, our reigning King,
 with sounds of jubilation.
 This Prince of Peace will be our Judge
 and bring about salvation.
We see the joys that lie ahead:
 An earth released from fear and dread;
The time for our Lord to raise the dead.
 What a time for exultation!

(Chorus)

