

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Show Gratitude”**: (10 min.)
 Lu 17:11-14—Jesus healed ten lepers (*nwtsty* study notes on Lu 17:12, 14)
 Lu 17:15, 16—Only one of the lepers returned to thank Jesus
 Lu 17:17, 18—This account highlights the importance of showing gratitude (*w08* 8/1 14-15 ¶18-9)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems**: (8 min.)
 Lu 17:7-10—What is the point of Jesus’ illustration? (*nwtsty* study note on Lu 17:10)

Lu 18:8—What kind of faith is Jesus referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

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) Lu 18:24-43

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) *fg* lesson 4 ¶1-2

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 39
- **“Remember the Wife of Lot”**: (15 min.) Discussion.
- **Congregation Bible Study**: (30 min.) *jy* chap. 32
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 117 and Prayer


LUKE 17-18 | Show Gratitude



17:11-18

What do we learn about gratitude from this incident?

- We should not only feel gratitude but also express it
- Sincere expressions of appreciation give evidence of Christian love and are a sign of good manners
- Those who wish to please Christ owe love and appreciation to all, regardless of nationality, race, or religion

 When was the last time I thanked someone for helping me?

When was the last time I wrote a thank-you note?



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)

LUKE 16:15-17:6

member that you had your fill of good things in your lifetime, but Laz'a·rus for his part received bad things. Now, however, he is being comforted here, but you are in anguish. **26** And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to go over from here to you cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.' **27** Then he said, 'That being so, I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father, **28** for I have five brothers, in order that he may give them a thorough witness so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' **29** But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these.'^a **30** Then he said, 'No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' **31** But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses^b and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

17 Then he said to his disciples: "It is unavoidable that causes for stumbling should come. Nevertheless, woe to the one through whom they come! **2** It would be more advantageous for him if a millstone were hung from his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to stumble one of these little ones.^c **3** Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother commits a sin, rebuke him,^d and if he repents, forgive him.^e **4** Even if he sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."^f

5 Now the apostles said to the Lord: "Give us more faith."^g **6** Then the Lord said: "If you had faith the size of a mustard grain, you would say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be

LUKE 17:7-33

uprooted and planted in the sea! and it would obey you.^a

7 “Which one of you who has a slave plowing or shepherding would say to him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come here at once and dine at the table’? **8** Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and serve me until I finish eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink’? **9** He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did what was assigned, will he? **10** Likewise, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’”^b

11 While he was going to Jerusalem, he was passing between Sa-mar'i-a and Gal'i-lee. **12** And as he was entering a village, ten men with leprosy met him, but they stood at a distance.^c **13** And they raised their voices and said: “Jesus, Instructor, have mercy on us!” **14** When he saw them, he said to them: “Go and show yourselves to the priests.”^d Then as they were going off, they were cleansed.^e **15** One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. **16** And he fell facedown at Jesus' feet, thanking him. Furthermore, he was a Sa-mar'i-tan.^f **17** In reply Jesus said: “All ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine? **18** Did no one else turn back to give glory to God except this man of another nation?” **19** Then he said to him: “Get up and be on your way; your faith has made you well.”^g

20 On being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God was coming,^h he answered

them: "The Kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness; **21** nor will people say, 'See here!' or, 'There!' For look! the Kingdom of God is in your midst."^a

22 Then he said to the disciples: "Days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, but you will not see it. **23** And people will say to you, 'See there!' or, 'See here!' Do not go out or chase after them.^b **24** For just as lightning flashes from one part of heaven to another part of heaven, so the Son of man^c will be in his day.^d **25** First, however, he must undergo many sufferings and be rejected by this generation.^e **26** Moreover, just as it occurred in the days of Noah,^f so it will be in the days of the Son of man:^g **27** they were eating, they were drinking, men were marrying, women were being given in marriage until that day when Noah entered into the ark,^h and the Flood came and destroyed them all.ⁱ **28** Likewise, just as it occurred in the days of Lot:^j they were eating, they were drinking, they were buying, they were selling, they were planting, they were building. **29** But on the day that Lot went out of Sod'om, it rained fire and sulfur from heaven and destroyed them all.^k **30** It will be the same on that day when the Son of man is revealed.^l

31 "On that day let the person who is on the housetop but whose belongings are in the house not come down to pick these up, and likewise, the person out in the field must not return to the things behind. **32** Remember the wife of Lot.^m **33** Whoever seeks to keep his life* safe will lose it, but who-

17:21 *Or "is among you." 17:33 *Or "soul."

ever loses it will preserve it alive.^a **34** I tell you, in that night two people will be in one bed; the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned.^b **35** There will be two women grinding at the same mill; the one will be taken along, but the other will be abandoned.” **36** *— **37** So in response they said to him: “Where, Lord?” He said to them: “Where the body is, there also the eagles will be gathered together.”^c

18 Then he went on to tell them an illustration about the need for them always to pray and not to give up,^d **2** saying: “In a certain city there was a judge who had no fear of God and no respect for man. **3** There was also a widow in that city who kept going to him and saying, ‘See that I get justice from my legal opponent.’ **4** Well, for a while he was unwilling, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Although I do not fear God or respect any man, **5** because this widow keeps making me trouble, I will see that she gets justice so that she will not keep coming and wearing me out with her demand.’”^e **6** Then the Lord said: “Hear what the judge, although unrighteous, said! **7** Certainly, then, will not God cause justice to be done for his chosen ones who cry out to him day and night,^f while he is patient toward them?”^g **8** I tell you, he will cause justice to be done to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man arrives, will he really find this faith* on the earth?”

9 He also told this illustration to some who trusted in their own righteousness and who considered others as noth-

17:36 *See App. A3. 18:5 *Or “and pummeling me to a finish.” 18:8 *Or “this kind of faith.” Lit., “the faith.”

LUKE 17:34-18:22

ing: **10** “Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. **11** The Pharisee stood and began to pray these things to himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like everyone else—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. **12** I fast twice a week; I give the tenth of all things I acquire.’^a **13** But the tax collector, standing at a distance, was not willing even to raise his eyes heavenward but kept beating his chest, saying, ‘O God, be gracious to me,* a sinner.’^b **14** I tell you, this man went down to his home and was proved more righteous than that Pharisee.^c Because everyone who exalts himself will be humiliated, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”^d

15 Now people were also bringing him their infants for him to touch them, but on seeing this, the disciples began to reprimand them.^e **16** However, Jesus called the infants to him, saying: “Let the young children come to me, and do not try to stop them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such ones.^f **17** Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a young child will by no means enter into it.”^g

18 And one of the rulers questioned him, saying: “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit everlasting life?”^h **19** Jesus said to him: “Why do you call me good? Nobody is good except one, God.ⁱ **20** You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,^j do not murder,^k do not steal,^l do not bear false witness,^m honor your father and your mother.’”ⁿ **21** Then he said: “All of these I have kept from youth on.” **22** After

18:13 *Or “have mercy on me.”

LUKE 18:23-19:7

hearing that, Jesus said to him, "There is still one thing lacking about you: Sell all the things you have and distribute the proceeds to the poor, and you will have treasure in the heavens; and come be my follower."^a

23 When he heard this, he became deeply grieved, for he was very rich.^b

24 Jesus looked at him and said: "How difficult it will be for those having money to make their way into the Kingdom of God!^c **25** It is easier, in fact, for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God."^d

26 Those who heard this said: "Who possibly can be saved?"^e

27 He said: "The things impossible with men are possible with God."^f **28** But Peter said:

"Look! We have left what was ours and followed you."^g **29** He

said to them: "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Kingdom of God^h **30** who will not get many times more in this period of time, and in the coming system of things,* everlasting life."ⁱ

31 Then he took the Twelve aside and said to them: "Look! We are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things written by means of the prophets about the Son of man will be accomplished."^j **32** For instance, he

will be handed over to men of the nations^k and will be mocked^l and treated insolently and spat on.^m **33** And after scourging him, they will kill him,ⁿ but on the third day he will rise."^o

34 However, they did not get the meaning of any of these things, for these words were hidden

18:30 *Or "the coming age." See Glossary. **18:31** *Or "completed."

from them, and they did not understand the things said.

35 Now as Jesus was getting near to Jer'i-cho, a blind man was sitting beside the road begging.^a **36** Because he heard a crowd passing by, he began to inquire what was going on. **37** They reported to him: "Jesus the Naz-a-rene' is passing by!" **38** At that he cried out: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" **39** And those who were in front began rebuking him, telling him to keep quiet, but all the more he kept shouting: "Son of David, have mercy on me!" **40** Then Jesus stopped and commanded that the man be brought to him. After he came near, Jesus asked him: **41** "What do you want me to do for you?" He said: "Lord, let me recover my sight." **42** So Jesus said to him: "Recover your sight; your faith has made you well."^b **43** And instantly he recovered his sight, and he began to follow him,^c glorifying God. Also, at seeing it, all the people gave praise to God.^d

19 He then entered Jer'i-cho and was passing through. **2** Now a man named Zac-chae'us was there; he was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. **3** Well, he was trying to see who this Jesus was, but he could not see because of the crowd, since he was short. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore* tree in order to see him, for he was about to pass that way. **5** Now when Jesus got to the place, he looked up and said to him: "Zac-chae'-us, hurry and get down, for today I must stay in your house." **6** With that he hurried down and joyfully welcomed him as a guest. **7** When they saw this, they were all muttering: "He went as a guest to the house of

19:4 *Or "fig-mulberry."

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- **"Show Gratitude":** (10 min.)
 Lu 17:11-14—Jesus healed ten lepers (*nwtsty* study notes on Lu 17:12, 14)
 Lu 17:15, 16—Only one of the lepers returned to thank Jesus
 Lu 17:17, 18—This account highlights the importance of showing gratitude (*w08* 8/1 14-15 ¶18-9)
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 Lu 17:7-10—What is the point of Jesus' illustration? (*nwtsty* study note on Lu 17:10)

Lu 18:8—What kind of faith is Jesus referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

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LUKE 17-18 | Show Gratitude



17:11-18

What do we learn about gratitude from this incident?

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- Sincere expressions of appreciation give evidence of Christian love and are a sign of good manners
- Those who wish to please Christ owe love and appreciation to all, regardless of nationality, race, or religion

 When was the last time I thanked someone for helping me?

When was the last time I wrote a thank-you note?



August 6-12

Treasures From God's Word

Luke 17:11-14—Jesus healed ten lepers

Luke 17:11-14 While he was going to Jerusalem, he was passing between Samaria and Galilee. And as he was entering a village, ten men with leprosy met him, but they stood at a distance. And they raised their voices and said: “Jesus, Instructor, have mercy on us!” When he saw them, he said to them: “Go and show yourselves to the priests.” Then as they were going off, they were cleansed.

Study notes

ten men with leprosy: In Bible times, lepers evidently congregated together or lived in groups, making it possible for them to help one another. (2 Kings 7:3-5) God's Law required that lepers live in isolation. A leper was also to warn others of his presence by calling out: “Unclean, unclean!” (Leviticus 13:45, 46) In line with what the Law prescribed, the lepers stood at a distance from Jesus.—See study note on Matthew 8:2 and Glossary, “Leprosy; Leper.”

show yourselves to the priests: Jesus Christ, being under the Law while on earth, recognized the Aaronic priesthood as being in force, and he directed ones whom he cured of leprosy to go to the priest. (Matthew 8:4; Mark 1:44) In accord with the Mosaic Law, a priest had to verify that a leper was healed. The cured leper then traveled to the temple and brought as an offering, or gift, two live clean birds, cedarwood, scarlet material, and hyssop.—Leviticus 14:2-32.

Luke 17:15, 16—Only one of the lepers returned to thank Jesus

Luke 17:15, 16 One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. And he fell facedown at Jesus' feet, thanking him. Furthermore, he was a Samaritan.

Luke 17:17, 18—This account highlights the importance of showing gratitude

Luke 17:17, 18 In reply Jesus said: "All ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine? Did no one else turn back to give glory to God except this man of another nation?"

w08 8/1 14-15 paragraphs 8-9

Did Jesus overlook the failure of the others to express gratitude? The account continues: "In reply Jesus said: 'The ten were cleansed, were they not? Where, then, are the other nine? Were none found that turned back to give glory to God but this man of another nation?'"—Luke 17:17, 18.

The other nine lepers were not wicked men. Earlier, they had openly expressed faith in Jesus and willingly obeyed his instructions, which involved traveling to Jerusalem to show themselves to the priests. However, although they no doubt felt deep appreciation for Jesus' kind act, they failed to express that appreciation to him. Their conduct disappointed Christ. What about us? When someone treats us well, are we quick to say thank you and, where appropriate, to show appreciation by sending a written note?

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Luke 17:7-10—What is the point of Jesus' illustration?

Luke 17:7-10 “Which one of you who has a slave plowing or shepherding would say to him when he comes in from the field, ‘Come here at once and dine at the table’? Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Get something ready for me to have my evening meal, and put on an apron and serve me until I finish eating and drinking, and afterward you can eat and drink’? He will not feel gratitude to the slave because he did what was assigned, will he? Likewise, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’”

study note

good-for-nothing: Literally, “useless; worthless.” The point of Jesus' illustration is not that the slaves, his disciples, are to consider themselves useless or worthless. According to the context, “good-for-nothing” conveys the idea that the slaves would view themselves modestly, not as deserving special credit or praise. Some scholars consider the term as it is used here to be hyperbole meaning “we are merely slaves deserving no special attention.”

Luke 18:8—What kind of faith is Jesus referring to in this verse?

Luke 18:8 I tell you, he will cause justice to be done to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of man arrives, will he really find this faith on the earth?”

study note

this faith: Or “this kind of faith.” Literally, “the faith.” The use of the Greek definite article before the word “faith” indicates that Jesus was referring, not to faith in a general sense, but to a particular kind of faith, like that of the widow in Jesus’ illustration. (Luke 18:1-8) This would include having faith in the power of prayer as well as faith that God will cause justice to be done to his chosen ones. Jesus apparently left the question about faith unanswered so that his disciples would think about the quality of their own faith. The illustration about prayer and faith was particularly appropriate because Jesus had just been describing the tests his disciples would face.—Luke 17:22-37.

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 minutes or less) Luke 18:24-43

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 17

17:1

causes for stumbling: Or “stumbling blocks.” The original meaning of the Greek word *skan'da-lon* is thought to have referred to a trap; some suggest that it was the stick in the trap to which bait was attached. By extension, the word came to refer to any impediment that would cause one to stumble or fall. In a figurative sense, it refers to an action or a circumstance that leads a person to follow an improper course, to stumble or fall morally, or to fall into sin. At Lu 17:2, the related verb *skan-da-li'zo*, translated “stumble,” could also be rendered “become a snare to; cause to sin.”

17:4

seven times a day: This expression may have reminded Peter of the answer Jesus gave on an earlier occasion. Peter had asked Jesus how many times someone should forgive a brother. In that instance, Jesus replied: “Up to 77 times.” (See study note on Mt 18:22.) Neither of Jesus’ comments should be taken literally. “Seven times” here conveys the idea of an indefinite number of times. (Compare the expression “seven times a day” at Ps 119:164, which conveys the idea of repeatedly, constantly, always.) A Christian might sin against his brother seven times in a single day and repent seven times. If on being rebuked he is repentant, the sinner is to be forgiven every time. In those circumstances, forgiveness is to be extended indefinitely, or without limit.—Lu 17:3.

17:6

the size of a mustard grain: Or “as small as a mustard seed.” Several kinds of mustard plants are found growing wild in Israel. Black mustard (*Brassica nigra*) is the variety commonly

cultivated. The relatively small seed, 1 to 1.6 mm (0.039 to 0.063 in.) in diameter and weighing 1 mg (0.000035 oz), produces a treelike plant. Some varieties of the mustard plant attain a height of up to 4.5 m (15 ft). The mustard grain, called “the tiniest of all the seeds” at Mt 13:32 and Mr 4:31, was used in ancient Jewish writings as a figure of speech for the very smallest measure of size. Although there are smaller seeds known today, it was evidently the tiniest of seeds gathered and sown by Israelite farmers in Jesus’ day.

black mulberry tree: Or “sycamine tree.” This tree is mentioned only once in the Bible. The Greek word used was regularly applied to the mulberry tree, and the black mulberry (*Morus nigra*) is commonly cultivated in Israel. It is a sturdy tree that grows to a height of about 6 m (20 ft), with large heart-shaped leaves and dark-red or black fruit resembling the blackberry. This tree is known for having an extensive root system, thus requiring great effort to uproot.

17:8

put on an apron: The Greek word *pe-ri-zon'ny-mai*, rendered “put on an apron,” literally means “gird oneself about,” that is, to bind on an apron or to tighten the garments, often with a belt, in order to be prepared for service. In this context, the Greek word could also be rendered “get dressed and ready to serve.” The Greek word occurs at Lu 12:35, 37 and Eph 6:14.—See study notes on Lu 12:35, 37.

17:10

good-for-nothing: Lit., “useless; worthless.” The point of Jesus’ illustration is not that the **slaves**, his disciples, are to consider themselves useless or worthless. According to the context, “good-for-nothing” conveys the idea that the slaves would view themselves modestly, not as deserving special credit or praise. Some scholars consider the term as it is used here to be

hyperbole meaning “we are merely slaves deserving no special attention.”

17:11

While he was going to Jerusalem . . . passing between Samaria and Galilee: The final destination of this journey was Jerusalem, but Jesus first traveled N from the city of Ephraim through Samaria and Galilee (probably its southern part) to Perea. During this trip, while Jesus was entering a village either in Samaria or in Galilee, he was met by ten men who had leprosy. (Lu 17:12) This visit to Galilee was his last one prior to his death.—Joh 11:54; see App. A7.

17:12

ten men with leprosy: In Bible times, lepers evidently congregated together or lived in groups, making it possible for them to help one another. (2Ki 7:3-5) God’s Law required that lepers live in isolation. A leper was also to warn others of his presence by calling out: “Unclean, unclean!” (Le 13:45, 46) In line with what the Law prescribed, the lepers **stood at a distance** from Jesus.—See study note on Mt 8:2 and Glossary, “Leprosy; Leper.”

17:14

show yourselves to the priests: Jesus Christ, being under the Law while on earth, recognized the Aaronic priesthood as being in force, and he directed ones whom he cured of leprosy to go to the priest. (Mt 8:4; Mr 1:44) In accord with the Mosaic Law, a priest had to verify that a leper was healed. The cured leper then traveled to the temple and brought as an offering, or gift, two live clean birds, cedarwood, scarlet material, and hyssop.—Le 14:2-32.

they were cleansed: This healing of the ten lepers by Jesus is reported by Luke alone.

17:20

with striking observableness: The Greek expression used here occurs only once in the Christian Greek Scriptures and is derived from a verb meaning “to watch closely; to observe.” According to some scholars, medical writers used this expression when they described watching the symptoms of disease. The way the word is used here seems to convey the idea that **the Kingdom of God** is not coming in a way that is obvious to all.

17:21

is in your midst: Or “is among you.” The pronoun “you” is plural in the original Greek and obviously refers to the Pharisees, to whom Jesus was speaking. (Lu 17:20; compare Mt 23:13.) Jesus was God’s royal representative, the one anointed by God for the kingship; hence, it could be said that “the Kingdom” was in their midst. Not only was he present in this capacity but he also had authority to perform works manifesting God’s kingly power and to prepare candidates for positions within his coming Kingdom.—Lu 22:29-30.

17:24

just as lightning flashes: Jesus’ presence was to resemble lightning in that the evidence of his presence in Kingdom power would be clearly visible to all attentive onlookers.

so the Son of man will be in his day: Or possibly, “so the Son of man will be.” Some ancient manuscripts use the shorter reading, whereas other ancient manuscripts use this reading in the main text, as do many Bible translations.

17:26

the days of Noah: In the Bible, the term “day(s) of” is sometimes used with reference to the time period of a particular person. (Isa 1:1; Jer 1:2, 3; Lu 17:28) Here “the days of Noah” are compared to **the days of the Son of man**. In a similar statement recorded

at Mt 24:37, the term “the presence of the Son of man” is used. Jesus does not limit the comparison just to the coming of the Flood as a final climax during Noah’s days, though he shows that his “days” or “presence” will see a similar climax. “The days of Noah” actually covered a period of years, so there is basis for believing that the foretold “days [or, “presence”] of the Son of man” would likewise cover a period of years, being climaxed by the destruction of those who do not seek deliverance.—See study note on Mt 24:3.

17:27

ark: The Greek term can also be rendered “chest; box,” perhaps to denote that it was a large boxlike structure. In the *Vulgate*, this Greek word is rendered *arca*, meaning “box; chest,” from which the English term “ark” is derived.

Flood: Or “deluge; cataclysm.” The Greek word *ka-ta-kly-smos*’ denotes a large flood with destructive force, and the Bible uses the word with reference to the Deluge of Noah’s day.—Ge 6:17, *Septuagint*; Mt 24:38, 39; 2Pe 2:5.

17:31

on the housetop: The roofs of Israelite houses were flat and were used for many purposes, including storage (Jos 2:6), rest (2Sa 11:2), sleep (1Sa 9:26), and festivals for worship (Ne 8:16-18). That is why a parapet was required. (De 22:8) Generally, an external stairway or ladder allowed a householder to leave the rooftop without having to enter the house, which helps us understand how a person could heed Jesus’ warning and shows how urgent the situation would be.

17:33

life: Or “soul.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

17:34

be taken along: The Greek term rendered “taken along” is used in different contexts, often in a positive sense. For instance, at Mt 1:20, it is rendered “take . . . home”; at Mt 17:1, “took . . . along”; and at Joh 14:3, “receive . . . home.” In this context, it evidently refers to receiving a favorable standing with the “Lord” and being saved. (Lu 17:37) It may also correspond to Noah’s being taken into the ark on the day of the Flood and to Lot’s being taken by the hand and led out of Sodom. (Lu 17:26-29) To be **abandoned** would then mean to be judged worthy of destruction.

17:36

A few ancient manuscripts here include the words: “Two men will be in the field; one will be taken along, and the other will be abandoned.” However, these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and are evidently not part of the original text of Luke. Similar words, though, can be found at Mt 24:40 as part of the inspired text. Some scholars are of the opinion that a copyist inserted the words from Matthew’s account into Luke’s account.—See App. A3.

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 18

18:1

the need for them always to pray: Luke alone mentions the illustration recorded in verses 2-8, providing another example of how his Gospel emphasizes the matter of prayer.—Lu 1:10, 13; 2:37; 3:21; 6:12; 9:28, 29; 11:1; 18:1-8; 22:39-46; 23:46.

18:2

a judge: Jesus is apparently referring to a judge or police magistrate appointed by the Romans. It seems that the judge

mentioned in this illustration does not fit into the Jewish judicial arrangement in which at least a three-man court officiated. Also, the judge did not fear God and had **no respect for** any human, that is, he was not concerned about what other people thought.

18:4

not . . . respect any man: In this context, it means not being constrained by public opinion or not being overly concerned about what other people think.—See study note on Lu 18:2.

18:5

wearing me out with her demand: Or “pummeling me to a finish.” Lit., “hitting me under [that is, under the eye] into the end.” The Greek verb *hy-po-pi-a'zo* used here has been defined “to strike in the face; to give a black eye.” Here it is evidently used figuratively to convey the idea of causing someone constant annoyance or wearing someone out completely. Some scholars feel that the term conveys the idea of damaging someone’s reputation. As the expression is used in this context, it describes the feeling of the judge, who was at first unwilling to listen to the widow’s plea for justice but who was moved to act because of her persistence. (Lu 18:1-4) The illustration does not say that God is like the unrighteous judge; rather, it contrasts God with the judge. If this unrighteous judge would eventually do what was right, how much more so would God! Like the widow, God’s servants must persist in asking Jehovah for his help. God, who is righteous, will respond in answer to their prayer, causing justice to be done.—Lu 18:6, 7.

18:8

this faith: Or “this kind of faith.” Lit., “the faith.” The use of the Greek definite article before the word “faith” indicates that Jesus was referring, not to faith in a general sense, but to a particular kind of faith, like that of the widow in Jesus’ illustration. (Lu 18:1-8) This would include having faith in the power of prayer as well

as faith that God will cause justice to be done to his chosen ones. Jesus apparently left the question about faith unanswered so that his disciples would think about the quality of their own faith. The illustration about prayer and faith was particularly appropriate because Jesus had just been describing the tests his disciples would face.—Lu 17:22-37.

18:10

the temple: Those who went to the temple to pray did not go into the Holy or the Most Holy, but they were permitted to enter the surrounding courtyards. Evidently, in this illustration the two Jewish men are portrayed as standing in one of the courts.—See App. B11.

18:11

extortioners: When the Romans ruled Israel, Jewish tax collectors were often guilty of extortion. Their position provided them with many opportunities to enrich themselves unjustly (and undoubtedly their Roman masters) at the expense of the people. Jesus may have alluded to this practice when in this illustration he spoke of the self-righteous Pharisee's commending himself to God for not being an extortioner.

18:12

fast twice a week: Although the Mosaic Law does not use the term "fast," it is generally understood that the command to "afflict yourselves" once a year in connection with the Atonement Day involved fasting. (Le 16:29, ftn.; Nu 29:7, ftn.; Ps 35:13) Later, other annual fasts were gradually established in memory of national calamities. However, the Pharisees customarily fasted "twice a week," on the second and fifth day of the week. They wanted their piety to be observed. (Mt 6:16) According to some sources, the days they chose for fasting were the regular market days, when many people would be in town. They also fasted

when special services were held in the synagogues and when the local courts met.

18:13

be gracious to me: Or “have mercy on me.” The Greek word for the expression “be gracious” occurs only twice in the Christian Greek Scriptures and is connected with the idea of propitiation, or atonement. At Heb 2:17 (see also ftn.), it is rendered “to offer a propitiatory [“atoning”] sacrifice,” or “to make atonement.”

18:15

infants: Or “babies.” The Greek word *bre'phos* used here refers to very small children, infants, or even unborn children. (Lu 1:41; 2:12; Ac 7:19; 2Ti 3:15, “infancy”; 1Pe 2:2) The parallel accounts at Mt 19:13 and Mr 10:13 use *pai-di'on*, a different Greek word that is used not only of newborns and infants (Mt 2:8; Lu 1:59) but also of Jairus' 12-year-old daughter (Mr 5:39-42). The Gospel writers' use of different Greek words may indicate that on this occasion the children were of varying ages, though Luke evidently focuses on the infants who were present.

18:17

like a young child: Refers to having the desirable qualities of young children. Such qualities include being humble, teachable, trustful, and receptive.—Mt 18:5.

18:18

Good Teacher: The man was evidently using the words “Good Teacher” as a flattering and formalistic title, since such honor was usually demanded by the religious leaders. While Jesus had no objection to being properly identified as “Teacher” and “Lord” (Joh 13:13), he directed all honor to his Father.

18:22

Jesus said to him: Jesus saw how earnest the ruler was and, according to Mr 10:21, “felt love for him.” However, Jesus may have realized that the man would need to cultivate a greater degree of self-sacrifice to become a disciple, so he told him: **Sell all the things you have and distribute the proceeds to the poor.** Unlike Peter and others who left everything to follow Jesus, this young man could not part with his possessions to become a disciple.—Mt 4:20, 22; Lu 18:23, 28.

18:25

easier . . . for a camel to get through the eye of a sewing needle: Jesus uses hyperbole to illustrate a point. Just as a literal camel cannot go through the eye of a needle, it is impossible for a rich man to **enter the Kingdom of God** 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: “The things impossible with men are possible with God.” (Lu 18:27) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *be-lo'ne*, rendered “sewing needle,” is used only here. It was sometimes used to refer to a surgical needle, whereas the Greek word *rha-phis'*, translated “needle,” is found in the parallel accounts at Mt 19:24 and Mr 10:25 and is drawn from a verb meaning “to sew.”

18:30

the coming system of things: Or “the coming age.” The Greek word *ai-on'*, having the basic meaning “age,” can refer to a state of affairs or to features that distinguish a certain period of time, epoch, or age. Jesus is here referring to the coming era of God’s Kingdom rule, under which faithful ones will enjoy **everlasting life**.—Mr 10:29, 30; see Glossary, “System(s) of things.”

18:35

Jericho: The first Canaanite city W of the Jordan River to be conquered by the Israelites. (Nu 22:1; Jos 6:1, 24, 25) This ancient city was eventually abandoned, but after the Jews returned from Babylonian exile, another Jewish city was developed at the site because a good water source ('Ein es-Sultan) was located there. By Jesus' time, a new Roman city had been built about 2 km (a little over a mile) S of the Jewish city. This may explain why the accounts of Matthew and Mark say of the same incident that Jesus was "going out of Jer'i-cho" (Mt 20:29; Mr 10:46), whereas Luke's account says that Jesus was **getting near to Jericho**. Perhaps Jesus cures the blind man while leaving the Jewish city and approaching the Roman city.— See App. B4 and B10.



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



Black Mulberry Tree

Also called the sycamine, the black mulberry (*Morus nigra*) is mentioned only once, in Jesus' statement to the apostles about their faith. (Lu 17:5, 6) The Greek word used was regularly applied to the mulberry tree, and the black mulberry is commonly cultivated in Israel. It is a sturdy tree that grows to a height of about 6 m (20 ft) with large heart-shaped leaves and dark-red or black fruit resembling the blackberry.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 17:6

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **"Show Gratitude":** (10 min.)
Lu 17:11-14—Jesus healed ten lepers (*nwtsty* study notes on Lu 17:12, 14)
Lu 17:15, 16—Only one of the lepers returned to thank Jesus
Lu 17:17, 18—This account highlights the importance of showing gratitude (*w08* 8/1 14-15 ¶18-9)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Lu 17:7-10—What is the point of Jesus' illustration? (*nwtsty* study note on Lu 17:10)

Lu 18:8—What kind of faith is Jesus referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

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) Lu 18:24-43

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) *fg* lesson 4 ¶1-2

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 39
- **"Remember the Wife of Lot":** (15 min.) Discussion.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 32
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 117 and Prayer


LUKE 17-18 | Show Gratitude



17:11-18

What do we learn about gratitude from this incident?

- We should not only feel gratitude but also express it
- Sincere expressions of appreciation give evidence of Christian love and are a sign of good manners
- Those who wish to please Christ owe love and appreciation to all, regardless of nationality, race, or religion

 When was the last time I thanked someone for helping me?

When was the last time I wrote a thank-you note?



Sample Conversations-August 2018

Initial Call

Publisher (Employee 1): I'm sure that as a married man you're interested in building a successful marriage. Many are surprised to learn that the Bible is highly practical in this regard.

Employee 2: Yeah

Publisher (Employee 1): Absolutely... Consider for example what sort of help you can give to married couples. Notice what the Bible says here Colossians 3:12 "Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience." Do you see anything in there that might be especially helpful to married couples?

Employee 2: Hmm... Patience, that's a big one.

Publisher (Employee 1): I agree. It's just a short time that I've been married. I've already seen how beneficial this for both mates to show patience. It's almost time to get back to work. But before we go... I'd like to show you this magazine. It discusses several other Bible principles that can help families. Maybe on another break we can talk about how the Bible offers help for parents. I'm sure it has been on your mind with a little one on the way.

Employee 2: For sure, thank you



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: What help can the Bible give married couples?

Scripture: Col 3:12

Link: What help can the Bible give parents?



●●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What help can the Bible give parents?

Scripture: Col 3:21

Link: What help can the Bible give young people?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What help can the Bible give young people?

Scripture: Pr 2:11

Link: Why does the Bible's advice always work?

4

Who Is Jesus Christ?



1. How did Jesus' life begin?

Unlike any other human, Jesus lived in heaven as a spirit person before he was born on earth. (John 8:23) He was God's first creation, and he helped in the creation of all other things. He is the only one created directly by Jehovah and is therefore appropriately called God's "only-begotten" Son. (John 1:14) Jesus served as God's Spokesman, so he is also called "the Word."

📖 *Read Proverbs 8:22, 23, 30; Colossians 1:15, 16.*

2. Why did Jesus come to the earth?

God sent his Son to earth by transferring his life from heaven to the womb of a virgin Jewess named Mary. So Jesus did not have a human father. (Luke 1:30-35) Jesus came to the earth (1) to teach the truth about God, (2) to set us an example in how to do God's will even when we are in difficulties, and (3) to give his perfect life as "a ransom." 📖 *Read Matthew 20:28.*

3. Why do we need a ransom?

A ransom is the price paid to release a person from the threat of death. (Exodus 21:29, 30) Death and old age were not part of God's original purpose for mankind. How do we know that? God told the first man, Adam, that if he committed what the Bible calls "sin," he would die. So if

Adam had not sinned, he would never have died. (Genesis 2:16, 17; 5:5) According to the Bible, death "entered" the world of mankind through Adam. Thus, Adam passed on

What qualities made Jesus approachable?

—MATTHEW 11:29;
MARK 10:13-16.

39 *Make a Good Name With God* (Ecclesiastes 7:1)

1. Throughout our lifetime, We want to use each day
 To make a good name And all God's laws obey.
If in Jehovah's sight We strive to do what's right,
 Then we will please him, To his delight.
2. This world may cause us To try to make a name,
 To seek its favor, To bask in its acclaim.
But that is vanity, For if its friend we'll be,
 Jehovah's favor, We will not see.
3. In God's remembrance, We want our name to be
 And have a good name For all eternity.
On him we can depend, So we his truth defend
 And keep our good name Down to the end.

- Song 18 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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- Song 39
- **“Remember the Wife of Lot”**: (15 min.) Discussion.
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- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 117 and Prayer


LUKE 17-18 | Show Gratitude



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 When was the last time I thanked someone for helping me?

When was the last time I wrote a thank-you note?



Remember the Wife of Lot



Why did Lot’s wife look back as she was fleeing Sodom? The Bible does not say. (Ge 19:17, 26) The context of Jesus’ warning indicates that she may have longed for the things she left behind. (Lu 17:31, 32) How can we avoid losing God’s favor as Lot’s wife did? We must not allow a quest for material comforts to become our priority. (Mt 6:33) Jesus taught that we “cannot slave for God and for Riches.” (Mt 6:24) But what if we detect that material things are starting to crowd out spiritual things in our life? We can pray to Jehovah for discernment to see where we need to make changes and for the courage and strength to do so.

RECALL THE THREE-PART VIDEO *REMEMBER THE WIFE OF LOT*, AND ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did pressure to make more money influence Gloria’s thinking, speech, and actions?

- How is Lot’s wife a warning example for us today?

- How did applying Bible principles help Joe and his family?

- How did Anna’s association at work affect her spiritually?

- Why do we need courage if we are pressured to put money first in life?

- How did Brian and Gloria once again give priority to spiritual things?

- What Bible principles did you see illustrated in this video?

How can I show by my actions that I “remember the wife of Lot”?

WHAT IS LAWFUL ON THE SABBATH?

MATTHEW 12:9-14 MARK 3:1-6 LUKE 6:6-11

- HEALING A MAN'S HAND ON THE SABBATH

On another Sabbath, Jesus visits a synagogue, likely in Galilee. There he finds a man whose right hand is withered. (Luke 6:6) The scribes and the Pharisees are watching Jesus closely. Why? They reveal what their real intent is when they ask: “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?”—Matthew 12:10.

The Jewish religious leaders believe that healing is lawful on the Sabbath *only* if life is in danger. Thus, for example, on the Sabbath it is unlawful to set a bone or bandage a sprain, conditions that are not life threatening. Clearly the scribes and the Pharisees are not questioning Jesus because they feel genuine concern for this poor man's suffering. They are trying to find a pretext for condemning Jesus.

Jesus, however, knows their twisted reasoning. He realizes that they have adopted an extreme,



unscriptural view of what constitutes a violation of the prohibition against doing work on the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:8-10) He has already faced such misplaced criticism of his good works. Now Jesus sets the stage for a dramatic confrontation by telling the man with the withered hand: “Get up and come to the center.”—Mark 3:3.

Turning to the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus says: “If you have one sheep and that sheep falls into a pit on the Sabbath, is there a man among you who will not grab hold of it and lift it out?” (Matthew 12:11) A sheep represents a financial investment, so they would not leave it in the pit until the next day; it might die in the meantime and thus cause them loss. Besides, the Scriptures say: “The righteous one takes care of his domestic animals.”—Proverbs 12:10.

Drawing a reasonable parallel, Jesus continues: “How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! So it is lawful to do a fine thing on the Sabbath.” (Matthew 12:12) Accordingly, Jesus would not be violating the Sabbath by healing the man. The reli-

religious leaders are unable to refute such logical, compassionate reasoning. They just remain silent.

With indignation, as well as grief at their misguided thinking, Jesus looks around. Then he says to the man: “Stretch out your hand.” (Matthew 12:13) As the man stretches out his withered hand, it is restored. That is a cause for joy for the man, but how does it affect those trying to trap Jesus?

Instead of being happy that the man’s hand is restored, the Pharisees go out and immediately conspire “with the party followers of Herod against [Jesus], in order to kill him.” (Mark 3:6) This political party evidently includes members of the religious group called the Sadducees. Ordinarily, the Sadducees and the Pharisees are opposed to each other, but now they are solidly united in their opposition to Jesus.

- ◇ What is the setting for a confrontation between Jesus and Jewish religious leaders?
- ◇ The Jewish religious leaders have what wrong view of the Sabbath law?
- ◇ How does Jesus wisely refute wrong views about the Sabbath?

117 *The Quality of Goodness*

(2 Chronicles 6:41)

1. O Jehovah, God of goodness,
 You have blessed us all our days!
You are holy, ever loyal,
 And so good in all your ways.
You show favor, granting mercy,
 Far beyond what we deserve.
You're so worthy of our worship,
 And it's you we gladly serve.

2. Your own goodness is reflected
 In the people whom you choose;
And the proof is in their conduct
 And the preaching of good news.
Your good teaching, your good shepherds,
 Bear good fruit in many lands.
May you grant us holy spirit,
 And may goodness guide our hands.

3. May you bless our deeds of goodness
 To our brothers, great or small.
May we show them special favor
 As we work at good t'ward all.
In each fam'ly, congregation,
 In each town and neighborhood,
With your blessing and your spirit,
 May we be a force for good.

JUNE 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
AUGUST 6–SEPTEMBER 2, 2018

**LARGE
PRINT
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

URUGUAY

Two sisters share a timely message with a store owner in Montevideo, capital of Uruguay

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF AUGUST 6-12

“My Kingdom Is No Part of This World”

16 WEEK OF AUGUST 13-19

May We All Be One as Jehovah and Jesus Are One

The people in Jesus’ day were divided by political, social, and ethnic differences. In these two articles, we will see how Christ taught his followers to become united and to overcome the prejudices that tend to divide. We will also see how their example can move us to do the same in our divided world.

15 Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!

(Hebrews 1:6)

1. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
God's duly appointed King.
He reigns for truth and justice;
Rich blessings his rule will bring.

With dignity and splendor
And love for God's great name,
He'll vindicate Jehovah,
His sov'reignty proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Praise Jehovah's Firstborn!
All praise God's anointed Son.
Installed upon Mount Zion,
His Kingship has now begun!*

2. Praise Jehovah's Firstborn,
Who died so that we may live.
He humbly paid the ransom;
Our sins God can now forgive.

The bride of Christ awaits him,
Adorned for him in white.
This marriage in the heavens
Will prove God's rule is right.

(Chorus)



SONGS:

15, 74

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did Jesus show that he had no interest in political movements?

What balanced position on taxation did Jesus recommend?

What is the Christian's position on the use of violence?

“My Kingdom Is No Part of This World”

“For this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.”—JOHN 18:37.

“FROM an early age, I saw only injustice,” recalls a sister in southern Europe, who was reflecting on her past. **“So I rejected the political system in my coun-**

1, 2. (a) How is the world becoming more divided? (b) What questions will we answer in this study?

try, and I supported what many viewed as radical ideas. In fact, for many years I was the girlfriend of a terrorist.” A brother in southern Africa had also previously justified violence. “I believed that my tribe was superior to all others, and I joined a political party,” he says. “We were taught to kill our opponents with spears—even those of our own tribe who supported other political parties.” A sister living in central Europe admits: “I was prejudiced, and I hated anyone who was of a different nationality or who had a religion that was different from mine.”

² A growing trend in today’s world is reflected in the attitudes that those three once had. Violent independence movements flourish, political divisions become more entrenched, and in many countries, foreigners are subjected to growing animosity. As the Bible foretold, people of all sorts are “not open to any agreement” during these last days. (2 Tim. 3:1, 3) While the world becomes more divided, how can Christians safeguard their unity? We can learn much by examining how Jesus handled a situation in the first century when the land was unsettled by political turmoil. Let us consider three main points: Why did Jesus refuse to get involved in separatist movements? How did he demonstrate the need for God’s servants to avoid taking sides on

political issues? And how did Jesus teach us that violence against others is not justified?

JESUS' ATTITUDE TOWARD INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS

³ Many Jews to whom Jesus preached longed for independence from Rome. Jewish Zealots, or nationalists, stirred up these feelings among the people. Many of those extremists followed the ideas of Judas the Galilean. He was a false messiah in the first century who misled a large number. Jewish historian Josephus states that this Judas “incited his countrymen to revolt, upbraiding them as cowards for consenting to pay tribute to the Romans.” The Romans had Judas executed. (Acts 5:37) Some of the Zealots even resorted to violence to further their goals.

⁴ Apart from those extremists, ordinary Jews were keenly awaiting the arrival of a political Messiah. That is, they expected that when the Messiah appeared, he would bring glory to their nation and freedom from the yoke of Rome. (Luke 2:38; 3:15) Many believed that the Messiah would establish a kingdom on earth in Israel. When that occurred,

3, 4. (a) What political expectations did the Jews have in Jesus' day? (b) How did those sentiments affect Jesus' disciples?

millions of Jews scattered abroad would return to their homeland. Recall that John the Baptist once asked Jesus: “Are you the Coming One, or are we to expect a different one?” (Matt. 11:2, 3) John may have wanted to know whether someone else would fulfill all the hopes of the Jews. The two disciples who met the resurrected Jesus on the road to Emmaus also had unfulfilled hopes about the Messiah. (Read Luke 24:21.) Soon thereafter, Jesus’ apostles asked him: “Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?”—Acts 1:6.

⁵ Such expectations about the Messiah doubtless led the people of Galilee to want Jesus to become their king. We can imagine that they were thinking that Jesus would be an ideal leader. He was an outstanding speaker; he could cure the sick; he could even supply food for the hungry. After Jesus fed about 5,000 men, he sensed the mood among the people. “Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain all alone.” (John 6:10-15) The following day on the other side of the Sea of Galilee, the enthusiasm may have died down some. Jesus then explained to the crowd the true nature

-
5. (a) Why did the people of Galilee want Jesus to be their king?
(b) How did Jesus correct their thinking?

of his work. He had come to bring spiritual, not material, benefits to the nation. “Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for everlasting life,” he told them.—John 6:25-27.

⁶ Shortly before his death, Jesus realized that some of his followers were expecting him to set up an earthly kingdom centered in Jerusalem. He corrected that idea by giving them the illustration of the minas. It showed that Jesus, the “man of noble birth” would have to go away for a long time. (Luke 19:11-13, 15) Jesus also stated his neutral position to the Roman authorities. Pontius Pilate asked Jesus: “Are you the King of the Jews?” (John 18:33) Perhaps the governor feared that Jesus could cause political unrest, a principal concern throughout Pilate’s rule. Jesus answered: “My Kingdom is no part of this world.” (John 18:36) He would not get involved in politics, for his Kingdom was to be a heavenly one. He told Pilate that his work on earth was to “bear witness to the truth.”—Read John 18:37.

⁷ When we understand our assignment as clearly as Jesus understood his, we will avoid even lending

6. How did Jesus make clear that he did not seek political power on earth? (See opening picture.)

7. Why may it be a challenge to avoid giving tacit support to independence movements?



Is your focus on the world's problems or on God's Kingdom?
(See paragraph 7)

tacit, or unspoken, support for political independence movements. This may not be easy. “People in our area are becoming more and more radical,” notes one traveling overseer. “A nationalistic spirit has taken over, and many take for granted that political independence will improve their lives. Thankfully, the brothers have safeguarded their Christian unity by concentrating on preaching the good news of the Kingdom. They look to God to solve injustice and the other problems we face.”

HOW DID JESUS FACE DIVISIVE POLITICAL ISSUES?

⁸ Injustice often inflames political passions. Taxation was a hot political issue in Jesus' time. In fact, the rebellion of Judas the Galilean, mentioned earlier, was sparked by a registration to ensure that the people paid tribute to Rome. Subjects of Rome, including those who listened to Jesus, were required to pay many taxes, such as on goods, land, and houses. And the corruption of the tax collectors increased the sense of being under a heavy burden. Tax collectors might purchase a position of authority at a public auction and then profit from what was collected. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector in Jericho, had become rich by extorting money from the people. (Luke 19:2, 8) His course was probably typical of that of many.

⁹ Jesus' enemies tried to trap Jesus by getting him to take sides on a taxation issue. The tax in question was the "head tax," a tax of one denarius levied on Roman subjects. (Read Matthew 22:16-18.) The Jews especially resented this tax. It repre-

8. Give an example of the burden faced by first-century Jews.

9, 10. (a) How did Jesus' enemies try to get him involved in a political issue? (b) What do we learn from Jesus' response? (See opening picture.)

sented their subjection to Rome. The “party followers of Herod” who raised this issue hoped that if Jesus denounced the tax, he might be accused of sedition. If Jesus said that taxation was a necessary burden, he could lose the support of his followers.

¹⁰ Jesus was careful to remain neutral on the taxation issue. “Pay back . . . Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God,” he said. (Matt. 22:21) Of course, Jesus knew that corruption was common among tax collectors. But Jesus did not want to get sidetracked, diverted from the much more important issue. That was God’s Kingdom, which would be the real solution. He thereby set the example for all his followers. They should avoid becoming involved in political issues, no matter how right or just a certain cause might seem. Christians seek the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. They do that instead of forming strong opinions about, or speaking out against, certain unjust practices.—Matt. 6:33.

¹¹ Many of Jehovah’s Witnesses have succeeded in moving away from strong political views that they once held. “After taking social studies classes at the university, I developed radical views,” says a sister

11. How can we in a positive way channel our desire for justice?

in Great Britain. “I wanted to champion the rights of black people, since we had suffered so much injustice. Although I was good at winning arguments, I still ended up feeling frustrated. I did not realize that the causes of racial injustice had to be uprooted from people’s hearts. When I began to study the Bible, however, I realized that I had to start with my own heart. And it was a white sister who patiently helped me to make the journey. Now I am serving as a regular pioneer in a sign-language congregation, and I am learning to reach out to all kinds of people.”

“RETURN YOUR SWORD TO ITS PLACE”

¹² In Jesus’ day, religion was often mixed up in politics. The book *Daily Life in Palestine at the Time of Christ* notes that “the religious sects into which the Jews were divided corresponded more or less to what we term political parties.” So Jesus warned his disciples: “Keep your eyes open; look out for the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.” (Mark 8:15) That reference to Herod likely refers to the party followers of Herod. Politically, the Pharisees supported Jewish independence. Matthew’s

12. What kind of “leaven” did Jesus tell his disciples to avoid?

account reveals that Jesus also mentioned the Sadducees in this conversation. They wanted to keep the status quo. Many of their members enjoyed political power under the Roman administration. Jesus emphatically warned his disciples to stay clear of the teachings, or leaven, that these three groups advocated. (Matt. 16:6, 12) Interestingly, this conversation took place not long after the occasion when the people wanted to make Jesus king.

¹³ When religion is mixed with politics, violence can easily erupt. Jesus taught his disciples that they must maintain neutrality in these circumstances. That is related to the reason why the chief priests and the Pharisees planned to kill Jesus. They saw him as a political and religious rival who threatened their position. “If we let him go on this way, they will all put faith in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation,” they said. (John 11:48) Thus, High Priest Caiaphas took the lead in plotting Jesus’ death.—John 11:49-53; 18:14.

¹⁴ Caiaphas sent soldiers to arrest Jesus under the cover of night. Jesus was aware of this shameful

13, 14. (a) How did political and religious issues lead to violence and injustice? (b) Why does injustice not justify violence? (See opening picture.)

strategy, so during his final meal with the apostles, he asked them to get some swords. Two would be sufficient to teach them a vital lesson. (Luke 22:36-38) Later that night, Peter used a sword to attack a member of the mob. No doubt, he was incensed at the injustice of Jesus' nighttime arrest. (John 18:10) But Jesus told Peter: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take up the sword will perish by the sword." (Matt. 26:52, 53) This powerful lesson was in harmony with what Jesus prayed about earlier that night—they must be no part of the world. (Read John 17:16.) Fighting injustice was something to be left to God.

¹⁵ The sister in southern Europe mentioned earlier learned this same lesson. "I have seen that violence does not bring justice," she observes. "I saw that those who resort to violence often end up dead. And many others become embittered. I was so happy to learn from the Bible that only God can bring true justice to the earth. For the last 25 years, that is the message I have been preaching." The brother in southern Africa has replaced his spear with "the sword of the spirit," God's Word, as he

15, 16. (a) How has God's Word helped Christians to avoid conflict? (b) What contrast does Jehovah see when he observes today's world?

preaches a message of peace to his neighbors, whatever their tribe. (Eph. 6:17) And after becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses, the sister in central Europe married a brother from an ethnic group she formerly hated. All three made these changes because they desired to be like Christ.

¹⁶ And how important these changes are! The Bible likens humanity to a sea that tosses and turns, a sea that knows no peace. (Isa. 17:12; 57:20, 21; Rev. 13:1) While political issues stir people up, divide them, and provoke senseless violence, we maintain our peace and unity. And as Jehovah observes our divided world, it must warm his heart to see the unity that exists among his people.—**Read Zephaniah 3:17.**

¹⁷ We have seen that we can promote Christian unity in three ways: (1) We put our trust in God's heavenly Kingdom to correct injustice, (2) we refuse to take sides in political issues, and (3) we reject violence. Sometimes, however, our unity can be threatened by prejudice. The following article will look at how we can successfully face this challenge, as Christians did in the first century.

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17. (a) What are three ways in which we can promote unity?
(b) What will we consider in the following article?

Join in the Kingdom Song!

(Psalm 98:1)

1. This is a song, a happy song of vict'ry;
It magnifies the One who is supreme.
The words give hope and prompt all to be loyal.
Come sing with us; enjoy its Kingdom theme:

(CHORUS)

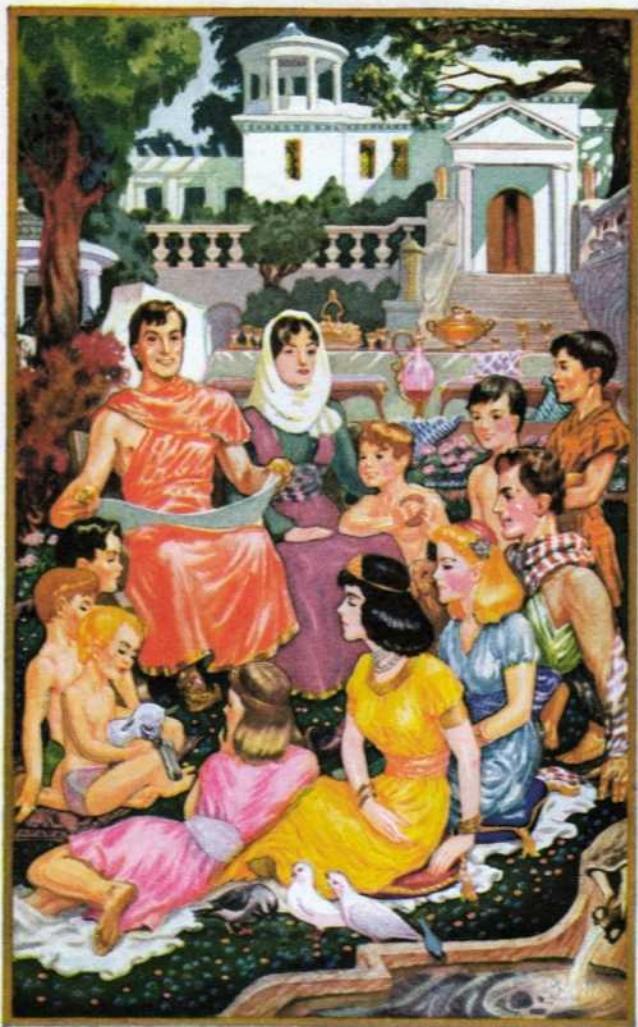
*'Come worship God Before his throne.
His Son is King; Let's make it known!
Come learn this song, this song about the Kingdom;
Bow down to God, and praise his holy name.'*

2. With this new song, we advertise the Kingdom.
Christ Jesus rules; the earth is his domain.
And as foretold, there is a newborn nation:
The Kingdom heirs, who welcome Jesus' reign:

(Chorus)

3. This Kingdom song, all humble ones can master.
The words are clear, their message warm and bright.
In all the earth, a multitude have learned it,
And they in turn still others now invite:

(Chorus)



THE THEOCRATIC RULE · CHAPTER 12