

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Be Ready to Forgive Others”:** (10 min.)  
 Lu 23:34—Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the stake (*cl* 297 ¶16)  
 Lu 23:43—Jesus forgave a criminal (*g* 2/08 11 ¶5-6)  
 Lu 24:34—Jesus forgave Peter (*cl* 297-298 ¶17-18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Lu 23:31—What is Jesus apparently referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 23:33—What archaeological evidence indicates that in executions nails were likely used to fasten a person to a stake? (*nwtsty* media)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 23:1-16

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer a publication from our Teaching Toolbox that meets the needs of the householder.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *fg* lesson 4 ¶3-4

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 20
- **“Jesus Died for Your Brother Too”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Become More Beautiful!* (video category **THE BIBLE**).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 35 ¶1-11
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 82 and Prayer


LUKE 23-24 | Be Ready to Forgive Others



**24:34**

What does it mean to be “ready to forgive”? (Ps 86:5) Jehovah and his Son look for any change of heart that would provide a basis to extend mercy to sinful humans.



 Whom should I forgive?

## 1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son  
For our sins to be forgiven  
And for death to be undone.

If we truly are repentant,

His forgiveness we can claim  
On the basis of Christ's ransom,  
Asking pardon in his name.

## 2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above  
And forgive each other freely,  
Showing empathy and love.

Putting up with one another,

Putting hurtfulness away;  
Showing honor to our brother,  
Showing love's surpassing way.

## 3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.

It will keep us from resentment,  
From the bitterness of hate.

When we imitate Jehovah,

Who is unsurpassed in love,  
We will truly be forgiving;  
We will be like God above.

## LUKE 22:64-23:22

him,<sup>a</sup> hitting him;<sup>b</sup> **64** and after covering his face, they kept asking: "Prophecy! Who is it that struck you?" **65** And they said many other blasphemous things against him.

**66** And when it became day, the assembly of elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, gathered together,<sup>c</sup> and they led him into their San'hedrin hall and said: **67** "If you are the Christ, tell us."<sup>d</sup> But he said to them: "Even if I told you, you would not believe it at all. **68** Moreover, if I questioned you, you would not answer. **69** However, from now on the Son of man<sup>e</sup> will be seated at the powerful right hand of God."<sup>f</sup> **70** At this they all said: "Are you, therefore, the Son of God?" He said to them: "You yourselves are saying that I am." **71** They said: "Why do we need further testimony? For we ourselves have heard it out of his own mouth."<sup>g</sup>

**23** So the multitude got up, one and all, and led him to Pilate.<sup>h</sup> **2** Then they began to accuse him,<sup>i</sup> saying: "We found this man subverting our nation, forbidding the paying of taxes to Caesar,<sup>j</sup> and saying he himself is Christ a king."<sup>k</sup> **3** Now Pilate asked him the question: "Are you the King of the Jews?" In answer he said: "You yourself are saying it."<sup>l</sup> **4** Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds: "I find no crime in this man."<sup>m</sup> **5** But they insisted, saying: "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Ju-de'a, starting from Gal'i-lee even to here." **6** On hearing that, Pilate asked whether the man was a Gal-i-le'an. **7** After ascertaining that he was under the jurisdiction of Herod,<sup>n</sup> he sent him on to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem in those days.

**8** When Herod saw Jesus, he rejoiced greatly. For a considerable time he had been wanting to see Jesus because he had heard much about him,<sup>a</sup> and he was hoping to see some sign performed by him. **9** So he began to question him at length, but he gave him no answer.<sup>b</sup> **10** However, the chief priests and the scribes kept standing up and vehemently accusing him. **11** Then Herod together with his soldiers treated him with contempt,<sup>c</sup> and he mocked him<sup>d</sup> by clothing him with a splendid garment and then sent him back to Pilate. **12** Herod and Pilate became friends with each other on that very day, for before that they had been at enmity with each other.

**13** Pilate then called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people **14** and said to them: "You brought this man to me as one inciting the people to revolt. Now look! I examined him in front of you but found in this man no grounds for the charges you are bringing against him."<sup>e</sup> **15** In fact, neither did Herod, for he sent him back to us, and look! he has done nothing deserving of death. **16** I will therefore punish him<sup>f</sup> and release him." **17** \*— **18** But the whole crowd shouted out: "Do away with this man,\* and release Bar·ab'bas to us!"<sup>g</sup> **19** (This man had been thrown into prison for sedition that had occurred in the city and for murder.) **20** Again Pilate called out to them, because he wanted to release Jesus.<sup>h</sup> **21** Then they began to yell, saying: "To the stake with him! To the stake with him!"<sup>\*i</sup> **22** The third time he said to them: "Why? What

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**23:17** \* See App. A3. **23:18** \* Lit., "Take this one away." **23:21** \* Or "Execute him on the stake! Execute him on the stake!"

bad thing did this man do? I found in him nothing deserving of death; I will therefore punish him and release him.” **23** At this they became insistent, demanding with loud voices that he be executed,\* and their voices prevailed.<sup>a</sup> **24** So Pilate made the decision that their demand be met. **25** He released the man whom they were demanding, who had been thrown into prison for sedition and murder, but he surrendered Jesus to their will.

**26** Now as they led him away, they seized a certain Simon of Cy-re’ne, who was coming from the countryside, and they placed the torture stake\* on him to carry it behind Jesus.<sup>b</sup> **27** A large number of people were following him, including women who kept beating themselves in grief and wailing for him. **28** Jesus turned to the women and said: “**Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me. Weep instead for yourselves and for your children;**<sup>c</sup> **29** for look! days are coming when people will say, ‘Happy are the barren women, the wombs that did not give birth and the breasts that did not nurse!’<sup>d</sup> **30** Then they will start saying to the mountains, ‘Fall over us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us over!’<sup>e</sup> **31** If they do these things when the tree is moist, what will occur when it is withered?”

**32** Two other men, criminals, were also being led off to be executed with him.<sup>f</sup> **33** And when they got to the place called Skull,<sup>g</sup> they nailed him to the stake there alongside the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.<sup>h</sup> **34** But Jesus was saying: “**Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.**” Furthermore, they cast

**23:23** \*Or “executed on the stake.”

**23:26** \*See Glossary.

## LUKE 23:23-48

lots to distribute his garments.<sup>a</sup>

**35** And the people stood looking on. But the rulers were sneering and saying: "Others he saved; let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."<sup>b</sup> **36** Even the soldiers mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine<sup>c</sup> **37** and saying: "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself." **38** There was also an inscription over him: "This is the King of the Jews."<sup>d</sup>

**39** Then one of the criminals hanging there began to speak abusively to him,<sup>e</sup> saying: "You are the Christ, are you not? Save yourself and us too!" **40** In response the other rebuked him, saying: "Do you not fear God at all, now that you have received the same judgment? **41** And we rightly so, for we are getting back what we deserve for the things we did; but this man did nothing wrong." **42** Then he said: "Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom."<sup>f</sup> **43** And he said to him: **"Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise."**<sup>g</sup>

**44** Well, by now it was about the sixth hour,<sup>\*</sup> and yet a darkness fell over all the land until the ninth hour,<sup>#h</sup> **45** because the sunlight failed; then the curtain of the sanctuary<sup>i</sup> was torn down the middle.<sup>j</sup> **46** And Jesus called out with a loud voice and said: **"Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit."**<sup>k</sup> After he said this, he expired.<sup>l</sup> **47** Because of seeing what occurred, the army officer began to glorify God, saying: "Truly, this man was righteous."<sup>m</sup> **48** And when all the crowds that were gathered together there for this spectacle saw

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**23:44** \*That is, about 12:00 noon.

<sup>#</sup>That is, about 3:00 p.m. **23:46** \*Or "he breathed his last."

## LUKE 23:49-24:18

the things that occurred, they returned home, beating their chests. **49** And all those acquainted with him were standing at a distance. Also, women who had accompanied him from Gal'i-lee were there and saw these things.<sup>a</sup>

**50** And look! there was a man named Joseph, a member of the Council, who was a good and righteous man.<sup>b</sup> **51** (This man had not voted in support of their scheme and action.) He was from Ar·i·ma·the'a, a city of the Ju·de'ans, and was waiting for the Kingdom of God. **52** This man went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. **53** And he took it down<sup>c</sup> and wrapped it up in fine linen, and he laid it in a tomb\* carved in the rock,<sup>d</sup> where no man had yet lain. **54** Now it was the day of Preparation,<sup>e</sup> and the Sabbath<sup>f</sup> was about to begin. **55** But the women who had come with him from Gal'i-lee followed along and took a look at the tomb\* and saw how his body was laid,<sup>g</sup> **56** and they went back to prepare spices and perfumed oils. But, of course, they rested on the Sabbath<sup>h</sup> according to the commandment.

**24** But on the first day of the week, they came very early to the tomb,\* bringing the spices they had prepared.<sup>i</sup> **2** But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb,<sup>j</sup> **3** and when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.<sup>k</sup> **4** While they were perplexed about this, look! two men in shining garments stood by them. **5** The women became frightened and kept their faces turned toward the ground, so the men said to them: "Why are you looking for the living

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23:53, 55; 24:1, 2, 9, 12 \*Or "memorial tomb."

one among the dead?<sup>a</sup> **6** He is not here, but has been raised up. Recall how he spoke to you while he was yet in Gal'ilee, **7** saying that the Son of man must be handed over to sinful men and be executed on the stake and on the third day rise."<sup>b</sup> **8** Then they remembered his words,<sup>c</sup> **9** and they returned from the tomb\* and reported all these things to the Eleven and to all the rest.<sup>d</sup> **10** They were Mary Mag'da·lene, Jo·an'na, and Mary the mother of James. Also, the rest of the women with them were telling these things to the apostles. **11** However, these sayings seemed like nonsense to them, and they would not believe the women.

**12** But Peter got up and ran to the tomb,\* and stooping forward, he saw only the linen cloths. So he went off, wondering to himself what had occurred.

**13** But look! on that very day, two of them were traveling to a village named Em·ma'us, about seven miles\* from Jerusalem, **14** and they were conversing with each other about all these things that had happened.

**15** Now as they were conversing and discussing these things, Jesus himself approached and began walking with them, **16** but their eyes were kept from recognizing him.<sup>e</sup> **17** He said to them: "What are these matters that you are debating between yourselves as you walk along?" And they stood still, looking sad. **18** In answer the one named Cle'o·pas said to him: "Are you a stranger dwelling alone in Jerusalem and do not know\* the

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**24:13** \*About 11 km. Lit., "60 stadia." A stadium equaled 185 m (606.95 ft). See App. B14. **24:18** \*Or possibly, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who does not know?"



things that have occurred there during these days?" **19** He asked them: "What things?" They said to him: "The things concerning Jesus the Naz-a-rene',<sup>a</sup> who proved to be a prophet powerful in deed and word before God and all the people;<sup>b</sup> **20** and how our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death,<sup>c</sup> and they nailed him to the stake. **21** But we were hoping that this man was the one who was going to deliver Israel.<sup>d</sup> Yes, and besides all these things, this is the third day since these things occurred. **22** Moreover, some women from among us also astonished us, for they went early to the tomb<sup>\*e</sup> **23** and when they did not find his body, they came saying that they had also seen a supernatural sight of angels, who said he is alive. **24** Then some of those who were with us went off to the tomb,<sup>\*f</sup> and they found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him."

**25** So he said to them: "O senseless ones and slow of heart to believe all the things the prophets have spoken! **26** Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things<sup>g</sup> and to enter into his glory?"<sup>h</sup> **27** And starting with Moses and all the Prophets,<sup>i</sup> he interpreted to them things pertaining to himself in all the Scriptures.

**28** Finally they got close to the village to which they were traveling, and he made as if to travel on farther. **29** But they urged him to remain, saying: "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is nearly over." With that he went in to stay with them. **30** And as he was dining\* with them,

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24:22, 24 \*Or "memorial tomb." 24:30

\*Or "reclining at the table."

## LUKE 24:19-44

he took the bread, blessed it, broke it, and began handing it to them.<sup>a</sup> **31** At that their eyes were fully opened and they recognized him; but he disappeared from them.<sup>b</sup> **32** And they said to each other: "Were not our hearts burning within us as he was speaking to us on the road, as he was fully opening up\* the Scriptures to us?" **33** And they got up in that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the Eleven and those assembled together with them, **34** who said: "For a fact the Lord was raised up, and he appeared to Simon!"<sup>c</sup> **35** Then they related the events on the road and how he became known to them by the breaking of the bread.<sup>d</sup>

**36** While they were speaking of these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them: "**May you have peace.**"<sup>e</sup> **37** But because they were terrified and frightened, they imagined that they were seeing a spirit. **38** So he said to them: "**Why are you troubled, and why have doubts come up in your hearts? 39 See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have.**" **40** And as he said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. **41** But while they were still not believing for sheer joy and amazement, he said to them: "**Do you have something there to eat?**" **42** So they handed him a piece of broiled fish, **43** and he took it and ate it before their eyes.

**44** He then said to them: "**These are my words that I spoke to you while I was yet with you,<sup>f</sup> that all the things written about me in the Law**

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24:32 \*Or "clearly explaining."

## LUKE 24:45–JOHN Contents

of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms must be fulfilled.”<sup>a</sup>

**45** Then he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures,<sup>b</sup> **46** and he said to them, “This is what is written: that the Christ would suffer and rise from among the dead on the third day,<sup>c</sup> **47** and on the basis of his name, repentance for forgiveness of sins<sup>d</sup> would be preached in all the nations<sup>e</sup>—starting out from Jerusalem.<sup>f</sup> **48** You are to be witnesses of these things.<sup>g</sup> **49** And look! I am sending upon you what my Father promised. You, though, stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.”<sup>a</sup>

**50** Then he led them out as far as Beth’a·ny, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.

**51** As he was blessing them, he was parted from them and taken up to heaven.<sup>b</sup> **52** And they did obeisance\* to him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy.<sup>c</sup>

**53** And they were continually in the temple, praising God.<sup>d</sup>

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24:52 \*Or “bowed down.”

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**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **“Be Ready to Forgive Others”:** (10 min.)  
 Lu 23:34—Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the stake (*cl* 297 ¶16)  
 Lu 23:43—Jesus forgave a criminal (*g* 2/08 11 ¶5-6)  
 Lu 24:34—Jesus forgave Peter (*cl* 297-298 ¶17-18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Lu 23:31—What is Jesus apparently referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 23:33—What archaeological evidence indicates that in executions nails were likely used to fasten a person to a stake? (*nwtsty* media)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 23:1-16

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 20
- **“Jesus Died for Your Brother Too”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Become More Beautiful!* (video category **THE BIBLE**).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 35 ¶1-11
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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LUKE 23-24 | Be Ready to Forgive Others



**24:34**

What does it mean to be “ready to forgive”? (Ps 86:5) Jehovah and his Son look for any change of heart that would provide a basis to extend mercy to sinful humans.



 Whom should I forgive?

## August 27–September 2

### Treasures From God's Word

Luke 23:34—Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the stake

**Luke 23:34:** But Jesus was saying: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” Furthermore, they cast lots to distribute his garments.

#### **c/ 297 paragraph 16**

Jesus perfectly reflected his Father's love in another important way—he was “ready to forgive.” (Psalm 86:5) This willingness was evident even when he was on the torture stake. Subjected to a shameful death, with nails piercing his hands and feet, what did Jesus speak about? Did he call out to Jehovah to punish his executioners? On the contrary, among Jesus' last words were: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”—Luke 23:34.

Luke 23:43—Jesus forgave a criminal

**Luke 23:43:** And he said to him: “Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.”

#### **g 2/08 11 paragraphs 5-6**

It is not only the sin but also the attitude of the sinner that Jehovah notes. (Isaiah 1:16-19) Reflect for a moment on the two evildoers impaled alongside Jesus. Both had evidently committed serious crimes, for one of the men admitted: “We are receiving in full what we deserve for things we did; but this man [Jesus] did nothing out of the way.” The evildoer's words indicate that he knew something

about Jesus. And that knowledge likely contributed to a wholesome change in his attitude. This is indicated by what he said next, this time imploring Jesus: “Remember me when you get into your kingdom.” How did Christ respond to that heartfelt entreaty? “Truly I tell you today,” he said, “You will be with me in Paradise.”—Luke 23:41-43.

Think about that: Jesus’ final statements as a human included an expression of mercy toward a man who had admitted to deserving the death penalty. How encouraging that is! We can be sure, then, that both Jesus Christ and his Father, Jehovah, will show compassion toward all who manifest true repentance, regardless of their past deeds.—Romans 4:7.

Luke 24:34—Jesus forgave Peter

**Luke 24:34:** who said: “For a fact the Lord was raised up, and he appeared to Simon!”

### **c/ 297-298 paragraphs 17-18**

17 Perhaps an even more touching example of Jesus’ forgiveness can be seen in the way he dealt with the apostle Peter. There is no question that Peter dearly loved Jesus. On Nisan 14, the final night of Jesus’ life, Peter told him: “Lord, I am ready to go with you both into prison and into death.” Yet, just a few hours later, Peter three times denied even knowing Jesus! The Bible tells us what happened as Peter uttered his third denial: “The Lord turned and looked upon Peter.” Crushed by the weight of his sin, Peter “went outside and wept bitterly.” When Jesus died later that day, the apostle may well have wondered, ‘Did my Lord forgive me?’—Luke 22:33, 61, 62.

18 Peter did not have to wait long for an answer. Jesus was

resurrected on the morning of Nisan 16, and evidently on that same day, he made a personal visit to Peter. (Luke 24:34; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8) Why did Jesus give such special attention to the apostle who had so vigorously denied Him? Jesus may have wanted to assure the repentant Peter that he was still loved and valued by his Lord. But Jesus did even more to reassure Peter.

## Digging for Spiritual Gems

Luke 23:31—What is Jesus apparently referring to in this verse? (“when the tree is moist, ... when it is withered” study note on Luke 23:31, *nwtsty*)

**Luke 23:31:** If they do these things when the tree is moist, what will occur when it is withered?”

### study note

**when the tree is moist, . . . when it is withered:** Jesus is apparently referring to the Jewish nation. It was like a dying tree that still had some moisture left, for Jesus was present and so were a number of Jews who believed in him. However, Jesus would soon be executed, and faithful Jews would be anointed with holy spirit and become part of spiritual Israel. (Romans 2:28, 29; Galatians 6:16) At that time, the literal nation of Israel would be spiritually dead, resembling a withered tree.—Matthew 21:43.

Luke 23:33—What archaeological evidence indicates that in executions nails were likely used to fasten a person to a stake?

**Luke 23:33:** And when they got to the place called Skull, they nailed him to the stake there alongside the criminals, one on his right and one on his left.

## **media**

### **Nail in a Heel Bone**

This is a photograph of a replica of a human heel bone pierced by an iron nail that was 11.5 centimeters (4.5 inches) long. The original artifact was found in 1968, during excavations in northern Jerusalem, and dates to Roman times. It provides archaeological evidence that nails were likely used in executions to fasten the person to a wooden stake. This nail may be similar to the nails employed by the Roman soldiers to fasten Jesus Christ to the stake. The artifact was found in a stone box, called an ossuary, into which the dried bones of a deceased person were placed after the flesh had decomposed. This indicates that someone executed on a stake could be given a burial.

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 23:1-16



## LUKE

### Study Notes—Chapter 23

#### 23:2

**Caesar:** Or “the Emperor.” The Roman emperor during Jesus’ earthly ministry was Tiberius, but the term was not restricted to the ruling emperor. “Caesar” could refer to the Roman civil authority, or the State, and its duly appointed representatives, who are called “the superior authorities” by Paul, and “the king” and his “governors” by Peter.—Ro 13:1-7; 1Pe 2:13-17; Tit 3:1; see Glossary.

#### 23:3

**Are you the King of the Jews?:** All four Gospel accounts record the same question by Pilate in precisely the same words. (Mt 27:11; Mr 15:2; Lu 23:3; Joh 18:33) No king in the Roman Empire could rule without Caesar’s consent. So Pilate apparently concentrated his interrogation on the issue of Jesus’ kingship.

#### 23:7

**Herod:** That is, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great. Antipas was the district ruler (tetrarch) of Galilee and Perea. Only Luke reports that Jesus was brought before Herod.—Lu 3:1; see Glossary.

#### 23:17

Some manuscripts here read: “Now he was under necessity to release one man to them from feast to feast,” but these words do not appear in several early authoritative manuscripts and were apparently not part of the original text of Luke. A few other manuscripts add these words after verse 19. Similar verses with a slightly different wording do appear at Mt 27:15 and Mr 15:6, where there is no uncertainty regarding the text. It is thought that copyists added these words here in Luke as an explanation

based on the parallel accounts in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark.

## 23:26

**Cyrene:** A city located in North Africa near the coast, SSW of the island of Crete. (See App. B13.) It may be that **Simon**, though born in Cyrene, later settled in Israel.

**torture stake:** Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also Lu 9:23; 14:27, where the term is used in a figurative sense.

## 23:31

**when the tree is moist, . . . when it is withered:** Jesus is apparently referring to the Jewish nation. It was like a dying tree that still had some moisture left, for Jesus was present and so were a number of Jews who believed in him. However, Jesus would soon be executed, and faithful Jews would be anointed with holy spirit and become part of spiritual Israel. (Ro 2:28, 29; Ga 6:16) At that time, the literal nation of Israel would be spiritually dead, resembling a withered tree.—Mt 21:43.

## 23:33

**Skull:** The Greek expression *Kra-ni'on* corresponds to the Hebrew word *Golgotha*. (See Joh 19:17 and study note on Mt 27:33.) The term “Calvary” is used here in some English Bible translations. It comes from the Latin *calvaria*, the word for “skull,” used in the *Vulgate*.

## 23:34

. . . **doing:** The first part of this verse is not included in certain ancient manuscripts. However, because these words are found in other early authoritative manuscripts, they are included in the *New World Translation* and numerous other Bible translations.

## 23:36

**sour wine:** Or “wine vinegar.” Likely referring to a thin, tart, or sour wine known in Latin as *acetum* (vinegar) or as *posca* when diluted with water. This was a cheap drink that poor people, including Roman soldiers, commonly drank to quench their thirst. The Greek word *o'xos* is also used at Ps 69:21 in the *Septuagint*, where it was prophesied that Messiah would be given “vinegar” to drink.

## 23:38

**an inscription over him:** Some manuscripts make additions that could be rendered: “(written) in letters of Greek and Latin and Hebrew.” However, these words do not occur in early authoritative manuscripts, and it is thought that copyists added these words in order to agree with Joh 19:20.

## 23:39

**hanging:** The Greek verb used here is, not *stauro'o* (“to execute on a stake”), but *kre·man'ny·mi* (“to hang”). In connection with Jesus’ execution, this verb is used with the phrase *e·pi' xy'lou* (“on a stake or tree”). (Ac 5:30, ftn.; 10:39, ftn.; Ga 3:13) In the *Septuagint*, the verb is often used to describe hanging a person on a stake or a tree.—Ge 40:19; De 21:22; Es 8:7.

## 23:43

**Truly I tell you today,:** The form of Greek script used in the earliest available manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures is composed solely of capital letters. Ancient scribes did occasionally—but not consistently—use some forms of punctuation. Therefore, the punctuation in modern Bible translations is based on the grammar of the Greek text and the context of the verse. In this verse, the grammar of the Greek text allows for placing a comma (or a colon) either before or after the

word “today.” However, the punctuation shown in renderings of Jesus’ statement depends on how translators understand the sense of what Jesus said and on what the Bible as a whole teaches. Greek texts like the ones prepared by Westcott and Hort, Nestle and Aland, and the United Bible Societies put a comma before the Greek word rendered “today.” However, placing the comma after “today” harmonizes with earlier statements that Jesus made and with teachings found elsewhere in the Scriptures. For example, Jesus said that he would die and be “in the heart of the earth”—the grave—until the third day. (Mt 12:40; Mr 10:34) On more than one occasion, he told his disciples that he would be killed and raised on the third day. (Lu 9:22; 18:33) Also, the Bible states that Jesus was resurrected as “the firstfruits of those who [had] fallen asleep in death” and that he ascended to heaven 40 days later. (1Co 15:20; Joh 20:17; Ac 1:1-3, 9; Col 1:18) Jesus was resurrected, not on the day that he died, but on the third day after his death, so it is evident that the criminal could not be with Jesus in Paradise on the same day that Jesus spoke to him.

In harmony with this reasoning, a fifth-century Syriac version of Luke’s account, known as the Curetonian Syriac, renders this text: “Amen, I say to thee to-day that with me thou shalt be in the Garden of Eden.” (F. C. Burkitt, *The Curetonian Version of the Four Gospels*, Vol. 1, Cambridge, 1904) It is also worth noting that both early and later Greek writers and commentators indicated that there were disagreements regarding how to render these words. For example, Hesychius of Jerusalem, who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries C.E., wrote regarding Lu 23:43: “Some indeed read in this manner: ‘Truly I tell you today,’ and put a comma; then they follow: ‘You will be with me in Paradise.’” (Greek text found in *Patrologiae Graecae*, Vol. 93, col. 1432-1433.) Theophylact, who lived in the 11th and 12th centuries C.E., wrote about some who argued for “putting a punctuation

mark after 'today,' so that it would be said this way: 'Truly I tell you today'; and then they follow with the expression: 'You will be with me in Paradise.'" (*Patrologiae Graecae*, Vol. 123, col. 1104.) G. M. Lamsa, in the publication *Gospel Light—Comments on the Teachings of Jesus From Aramaic and Unchanged Eastern Customs*, pp. 303-304, says about the use of "today" at Lu 23:43: "The emphasis in this text is on the word 'today' and should read, 'Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.' The promise was made on that day and it was to be fulfilled later. This is a characteristic of Oriental speech implying that the promise was made on a certain day and would surely be kept." Therefore, the Greek phrase at Lu 23:43 may reflect a Semitic way of expressing emphasis. The Hebrew Scriptures provide numerous examples of the idiomatic usage of "today" in solemn expressions, such as promises and commands. (De 4:26; 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 19; 30:15; Zec 9:12) The evidence presented above suggests that Jesus used the word "today" to call attention, not to the time of the criminal's being in Paradise, but to the time at which the promise was being made.

A number of translations, such as those in English by Rotherham and by Lamsa (1933 edition) and those in German by L. Reinhardt and by W. Michaelis, recognize that the emphasis is correctly placed on the time that the promise is being made rather than on the time that it is being fulfilled. Those translations render the text in a form similar to the reading of the *New World Translation*.

**Paradise:** The English word "paradise" comes from the Greek word *pa-ra'dei-sos*, and similar words can be found in both Hebrew (*par-des'*, at Ne 2:8; Ec 2:5; Ca 4:13) and Persian (*pairidaeza*). All three words convey the basic idea of a beautiful park or parklike garden. The translators of the *Septuagint* used the Greek term *pa-ra'dei-sos* to render the Hebrew word for

“garden” (*gan*) in the expression “garden of Eden” at Ge 2:8. Some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J<sup>17, 18, 22</sup> in App. C) render Lu 23:43: “You will be with me in the garden of Eden.” This promise made to the criminal hanging next to Jesus was not the promise to be in “the paradise of God” mentioned at Re 2:7, since that promise was made to “the one who conquers,” that is, Christ’s corulers in the heavenly Kingdom. (Lu 22:28-30) This criminal was not a conqueror of the world with Jesus Christ; nor had he been “born from water and spirit.” (Joh 3:5; 16:33) He will evidently be one of “the unrighteous” who are resurrected as earthly subjects of the Kingdom when Christ rules over the Paradise earth for a thousand years.—Ac 24:15; Re 20:4, 6.

## 23:44

**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.

## 23:45

**curtain:** This beautifully ornamented drape separated the Most Holy from the Holy in the temple. Jewish tradition indicates that this heavy curtain was some 18 m (60 ft) long, 9 m (30 ft) wide, and 7.4 cm (2.9 in.) thick. By tearing the curtain in two, Jehovah not only manifests his wrath against his Son’s killers but also signifies that entry into heaven itself is now possible.—Heb 10:19, 20; see Glossary.

**sanctuary:** The Greek word *na·os*’ here refers to the central edifice with its Holy and Most Holy compartments.

## 23:46

**spirit:** Jesus here quotes from Ps 31:5, where David is calling on God to guard, or care for, his spirit, or life force. This was a way of saying that he was putting his life in God's hands. At his death, Jesus entrusted his life force to Jehovah; thus his future life prospects rested entirely with God.—See Glossary.

**expired:** The Greek verb *ek·pne'o* (lit., “to breathe out”) could here also be rendered “breathed his last.” (See study note on Mt 27:50.) The Scriptures clearly show that when Jesus' spirit went out, he was not on his way to heaven. He expired, or died. Jesus himself foretold that he would not be resurrected from the dead until “the third day.” (Mt 16:21; Lu 9:22) Then, as Ac 1:3, 9 shows, it was 40 days later that he actually ascended to heaven.

## 23:47

**army officer:** Or “centurion,” that is, one in command of about 100 soldiers in the Roman army. According to the parallel accounts in Matthew and Mark, he also acknowledged that Jesus “was God's Son.”—Mt 27:54; Mr 15:39.

## 23:50

**Joseph:** The individuality of the Gospel writers is evident in the varying details they provide about Joseph. Tax collector Matthew notes that he was “a rich man”; Mark, writing primarily for the Romans, says that he was “a reputable member of the Council” who was waiting for God's Kingdom; Luke, the sympathetic physician, says that he “was a good and righteous man” who did not vote in support of the Council's action against Jesus; John alone reports that he was “a secret [disciple] because of his fear of the Jews.”—Mt 27:57-60; Mr 15:43-46; Lu 23:50-53; Joh 19:38-42.

**member of the Council:** Or “councilor,” that is, a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court in Jerusalem.—See study note on Mt 26:59 and Glossary, “Sanhedrin.”

### 23:51

**Arimathea:** The name of this city comes from a Hebrew word meaning “height.” At Lu 23:51, it is called “a city of the Judeans.”—See App. B10.

### 23:53

**tomb:** Or “memorial tomb.” A vault, or chamber, cut into the soft limestone rock, rather than a natural cave. Such tombs often contained benchlike shelves or niches where bodies could be laid.—See Glossary, “Memorial tomb.”

### 23:54

**Preparation:** A name applied to the day preceding the weekly Sabbath. During this day, the Jews got ready for the Sabbath by preparing extra meals and finishing any work that could not wait until after the Sabbath. In this case, the day of Preparation fell on Nisan 14.—Mr 15:42; see Glossary.

### 23:55

**tomb:** Or “memorial tomb.” A vault, or chamber, cut into the soft limestone rock, rather than a natural cave. Such tombs often contained benchlike shelves or niches where bodies could be laid.—See Glossary, “Memorial tomb.”



## LUKE

### Study Notes—Chapter 24

#### 24:1

**the first day of the week:** That is, Nisan 16. For the Jews, the day immediately after the Sabbath was the first day of the week.

**tomb:** Or “memorial tomb.” A vault, or chamber, cut into the soft limestone rock, rather than a natural cave. Such tombs often contained benchlike shelves or niches where bodies could be laid.—See Glossary, “Memorial tomb.”

#### 24:3

**of the Lord Jesus:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but the longer reading has strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

#### 24:6

**He is not here, but has been raised up:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but they have strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

#### 24:7

**executed on the stake:** Or “fastened on a stake (pole).”—See study note on Mt 20:19 and Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake.”

#### 24:9

**from the tomb:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but they have strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

#### 24:12

**. . . what had occurred:** Some manuscripts do not include the words of this verse, but the verse has strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

## 24:13

**about seven miles:** About 11 km. Lit., “60 stadia.” A Roman stadium equaled 185 m (606.95 ft).—See Glossary, “Mile,” and App. B14.

## 24:27

**interpreted:** The Greek word *di-er-me-neu'o* can be used in the sense “to translate from one language to another.” (Ac 9:36; 1Co 12:30, ftn.) However, it also signifies “to clarify the meaning; to explain fully.” In this verse, it refers to interpreting the meaning of prophecies.

## 24:32

**within us:** Some early manuscripts do not include these words, but they are included in other early authoritative manuscripts.

## 24:36

**and said to them: “May you have peace”:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but they have strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

## 24:37

**a spirit:** Although the Greek word *pneu'ma* can refer to invisible spirit persons, the disciples were evidently using the term to refer to an apparition or a vision. Jesus showed the disciples his hands and feet and told them: “Touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you see that I have.” (Lu 24:39) This was to prove that like angels in the past, he had materialized in order to be seen by the disciples.—Ge 18:1-8; 19:1-3.

## 24:39

**my hands and my feet:** As in Jesus' case, nailing the hands (and likely the feet also) of the accused to a stake was customary

among the Romans. (Ps 22:16; Joh 20:25, 27; Col 2:14) Some scholars believe that a nail or nails pierced Jesus' feet, fixing them directly to the stake or to a small platform attached to the stake.

#### **24:40**

**. . . and his feet:** Some manuscripts do not include the words of this verse, but the verse has strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

#### **24:42**

**fish:** Some later manuscripts add the words "and a honeycomb," but early authoritative manuscripts do not include these words.

#### **24:44**

**in the Law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms:** Jesus was here evidently grouping the entire inspired Hebrew Scriptures in the way adopted by the Jews and known to them. "The Law" (Hebrew, *Toh-rah*) refers to the Bible books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. "The Prophets" (Hebrew, *Nevi-'im*) refers to the prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures, including the so-called Former Prophets (the Bible books of Joshua through Kings). "Psalms" refers to the third section, which contains the remaining books of the Hebrew Scriptures and is called the Writings, or in Hebrew, *Kethu-vim*'. The designation "Psalms" is used because it was the first book of the third section. The term "Tanakh," a Jewish designation for the Hebrew Scriptures, comes from combining the first letter of each of these three sections (*TaNakh*). Jesus' use of these three terms indicates that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was well-established when he was on earth and was approved by him.

#### **24:49**

**the city:** That is, Jerusalem.

## 24:51

**and taken up to heaven:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but the words do have strong support in early authoritative manuscripts. Also, Luke indicated at Ac 1:1, 2 that in his “first account,” namely, his Gospel, he had discussed what Jesus had done in his life and ministry “until the day that he [Jesus] was taken up.” So it is quite appropriate that in his inspired account, Luke would have included these words about Jesus’ ascension to heaven.

## 24:52

**did obeisance to him:** Or “bowed down to him; prostrated themselves to him; paid him homage.” When the Greek verb *pro-sky-ne’o* is used to refer to the worship of a god or a deity, it is rendered “to worship.” (Mt 4:10; Lu 4:8) In this context, however, the disciples recognized the resurrected Jesus as God’s representative. They rendered obeisance to him, not as to God or a deity, but as to “God’s Son,” the foretold “Son of man,” the Messiah with divine authority. (Lu 1:35; Mt 16:13-16; Joh 9:35-38) This was similar to the way that people mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures bowed down when meeting prophets, kings, or other representatives of God. (1Sa 25:23, 24; 2Sa 14:4; 1Ki 1:16; 2Ki 4:36, 37) On many occasions, the obeisance done to Jesus expressed gratitude for divine revelation or evidence of divine favor.—See study notes on Mt 2:2; 8:2; 14:33; 15:25.

**did obeisance to him and:** Some manuscripts do not include these words, but the words do have strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.



Photo Clara Amit, Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

## **Nail in a Heel Bone**

This is a photograph of a replica of a human heel bone pierced by an iron nail that was 11.5 cm (4.5 in.) long. The original artifact was found in 1968, during excavations in northern Jerusalem, and dates to Roman times. It provides archaeological evidence that nails were likely used in executions to fasten the person to a wooden stake. This nail may be similar to the nails employed by the Roman soldiers to fasten Jesus Christ to the stake. The artifact was found in a stone box, called an ossuary, into which the dried bones of a deceased person were placed after the flesh had decomposed. This indicates that someone executed on a stake could be given a burial.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 27:35; Mr 15:24; Lu 23:33; Lu 24:39; Joh 19:18



## **Tomb Chamber**

The Jews usually buried their dead in caves or vaults cut into the rock. These tombs were customarily located outside the cities, an exception being the tombs of the kings. Jewish tombs that have been found are notable for their simplicity. This was evidently because the Jews' worship allowed no veneration of the dead and did not foster any ideas of a conscious existence in a spirit world after death.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 27:52, 53; Mt 28:8; Mr 15:46; Lu 23:53; Joh 19:41, 42

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Be Ready to Forgive Others”:** (10 min.)  
 Lu 23:34—Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the stake (*cl* 297 ¶16)  
 Lu 23:43—Jesus forgave a criminal (*g* 2/08 11 ¶5-6)  
 Lu 24:34—Jesus forgave Peter (*cl* 297-298 ¶17-18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Lu 23:31—What is Jesus apparently referring to in this verse? (*nwtsty* study note)

Lu 23:33—What archaeological evidence indicates that in executions nails were likely used to fasten a person to a stake? (*nwtsty* media)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 23:1-16

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then offer a publication from our Teaching Toolbox that meets the needs of the householder.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *fg* lesson 4 ¶3-4

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 20
- **“Jesus Died for Your Brother Too”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Become More Beautiful!* (video category **THE BIBLE**).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 35 ¶1-11
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 82 and Prayer


LUKE 23-24 | Be Ready to Forgive Others



**24:34**

What does it mean to be “ready to forgive”? (Ps 86:5) Jehovah and his Son look for any change of heart that would provide a basis to extend mercy to sinful humans.



 Whom should I forgive?



# 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

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What qualities made Jesus approachable?

—MATTHEW 11:29;  
MARK 10:13-16.

to all his descendants sin and its penalty, death. We need a ransom to release us from the penalty of death that we inherited from Adam. 📖 *Read Romans 5:12; 6:23.*

Who could pay the ransom to free us from death? When we die, we pay the penalty only for our own sins. No imperfect man can pay for the sins of others. 📖 *Read Psalm 49:7-9.*

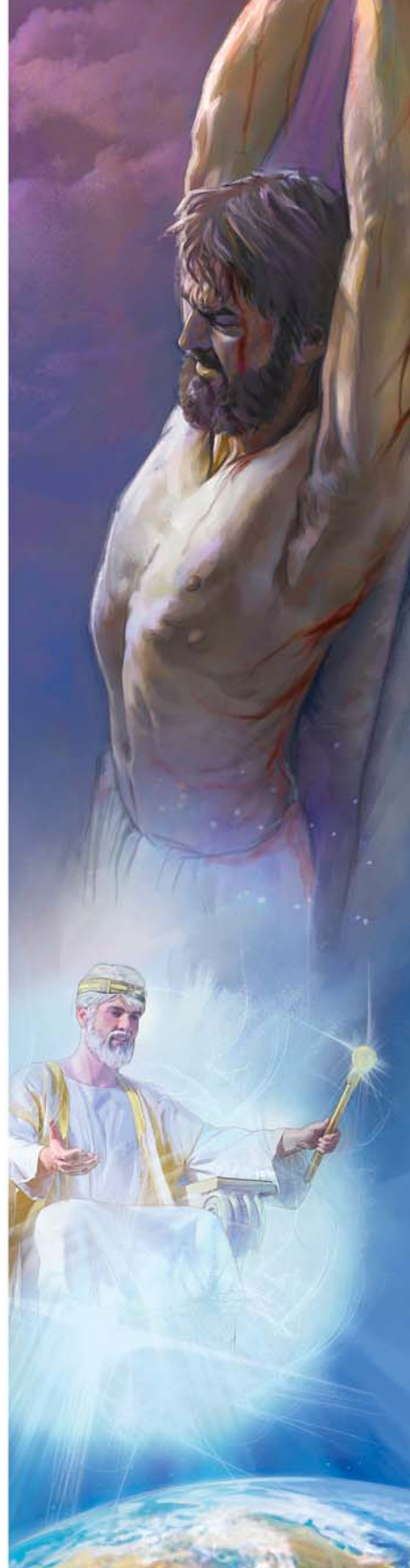
#### 4. Why did Jesus die?

Unlike us, Jesus was perfect. So he did not need to die for his sins—he never committed any. Instead, Jesus died for the sins of others. God expressed extraordinary love for mankind by sending his Son to die for us. Jesus also showed love for us by obeying his Father and giving his life for our sins. 📖 *Read John 3:16; Romans 5:18, 19.*

#### 5. What is Jesus doing now?

When on earth, Jesus cured the sick, raised the dead, and rescued people in peril. He thereby demonstrated what he will do in the future for all obedient mankind. (Matthew 15:30, 31; John 5:28) After Jesus died, God restored him to life as a spirit person. (1 Peter 3:18) Jesus then waited at God's right hand until Jehovah gave him power to rule as King over all the earth. (Hebrews 10:12, 13) Now Jesus is ruling as King in heaven, and his followers are announcing that good news worldwide. 📖 *Read Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 24:14.*

Soon, Jesus will use his power as King to bring an end to all suffering and to those who cause it. All who exercise faith in Jesus by obeying him will enjoy life in a paradise on earth. 📖 *Read Psalm 37:9-11.*



# 20      *You Gave Your Precious Son* (1 John 4:9)

1. Jehovah, dear Father,  
    There seemed no hope for us.  
The ransom has given  
    Hope to ev'ryone!  
We give our lives to you,  
    Our best in all we do.  
And we'll tell others too,  
    That your will might be done.

*(CHORUS)*

*You gave your precious Son,  
And now we sing as one,  
A song we'll sing forever,  
for giving us your precious Son.*

2. Your kindness, your mercy,  
    They draw us close to you.  
Your great name, your friendship,  
    These we've come to love.  
But something more than this  
    Is your most precious gift.  
He died that we might live.  
    You sent him from above.

*(Chorus)*

*(ENDING)*

Jehovah, dear Father, we pray in gratitude.  
    We offer our thanks for giving us your precious Son.

- Song 130 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Be Ready to Forgive Others”:** (10 min.)  
 Lu 23:34—Jesus forgave the Roman soldiers who nailed him to the stake (*cl* 297 ¶16)  
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What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

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

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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 20
- **“Jesus Died for Your Brother Too”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Become More Beautiful!* (video category **THE BIBLE**).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 35 ¶1-11
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 82 and Prayer


LUKE 23-24 | Be Ready to Forgive Others



**24:34**

What does it mean to be “ready to forgive”? (Ps 86:5) Jehovah and his Son look for any change of heart that would provide a basis to extend mercy to sinful humans.



 Whom should I forgive?

## Jesus Died for Your Brother Too



Jesus sacrificed his life for imperfect people. (Ro 5:8) No doubt we personally appreciate that Jesus showed his love for us by giving his life in our behalf. Nevertheless, at times we may need to remind ourselves that Christ died for our brother too. How can we show Christlike love to our brothers and sisters, who just like us are imperfect? Consider three ways. First, we can expand our circle of friends to include those whose background is different from ours. (Ro 15:7; 2Co 6:12, 13) Second, we can be careful to avoid saying or doing things that may offend others. (Ro 14:13-15) Finally, if someone sins against us, we can be quick to forgive. (Lu 17:3, 4; 23:34) If we work hard to imitate Jesus in these ways, Jehovah will continue to bless the congregation with peace and unity.

WATCH THE VIDEO *BECOME MORE BEAUTIFUL!* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How did Miki initially feel about her congregation?

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- What caused her feelings to change?

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- How did Jesus' example help Miki to adjust her viewpoint? (Mr 14:38)

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- How can Proverbs 19:11 help us to view fellow Christians in a positive way?

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### FOR MEDITATION:

Am I holding on to specific offenses committed against me that I should overlook?

## Become More Beautiful!

[Music]

[At the Kingdom Hall]

My name is Miki.

I moved here one year ago.

Everyone was so nice and friendly. Well, that's how I felt in the beginning.

[Sad faced]

[At the Kingdom Hall]

[Holding a baby]

I am not your babysitter!

[Sister interrupts a conversation]

Didn't you see we were talking?

[Children running in the Kingdom Hall]

Come on! This is not a park!

[Three elders in discussion]

And the elders are always busy.

I'm not sure if they really want me here.

[In a café with Yoko]

Yoko, a pioneer sister from my former congregation, visited me.

## Become More Beautiful!

She asked me how I was doing. I told her how I felt about my congregation.

Then she told me that she had a similar experience.

And she shared with me a Watchtower article that helped her.

[At home on her laptop]

I made this my next personal study project.

Quotation: “What do you see when you look at others? Do you have the tendency to view what they say or do “as either black or white, as if no other colors or shades existed?”

“Having that viewpoint would be like a photographer who ignores the large variety of brilliant hues and shades in an autumn landscape, as if only black and white images existed.”

[Miki considers a photograph of an autumn landscape and ponders]

Maybe I’ve been viewing the congregation as “black and white.” The article then turned my attention to Jesus’ example.

“The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak.” Why was Jesus able to say such kind words to his disciples?

[At the Kingdom Hall]

Hmm. Insight is the ability to put yourself in the other’s place. Jesus did that with his disciples. OK, I need to do the same.

She always looks after the children at home. She also needs time to be refreshed by association with friends at the Kingdom Hall.

She probably didn’t mean to be rude. Since we looked like we were having an enjoyable conversation, she may have just wanted to join us.

## **Become More Beautiful!**

The elders are so busy caring for the needs of the congregation. I know they're doing the best they can. I want to do what I can to make their job easier.

[Out to lunch and a child bumps her and Miki spills her drink]

[Miki laughs]

[In a park playing with the brothers and sisters]

Older Sister: Miki, you are such a beautiful Christian. We're so glad to have you in our congregation.

[In the park as young girl shares a drawing]

“The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, and it is beauty on his part to overlook an offense.” - Proverbs 19:11



# 35

## THE FAMOUS SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 5:1–7:29 LUKE 6:17-49

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- SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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Jesus must be tired after spending the whole night in prayer and then choosing 12 disciples to be apostles. It is now day, but he still has the strength and desire to help people. He does so on a mountain-side in Galilee, perhaps not far from his center of activity in Capernaum.

Crowds have come to him from distant locations. Some are from down south, from Jerusalem and places in Judea. Others are from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon to the northwest. Why have they come looking for Jesus? “To hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses.” And that is just what happens—Jesus is “healing them all.” Think of that! *All* the sick ones are healed. Jesus also ministers to “those troubled with unclean spirits,” people who are afflicted by the wicked angels of Satan.—Luke 6:17-19.



Jesus next finds a level place on the mountainside and the crowd gathers around. His disciples, especially the 12 apostles, are probably nearest to him. All are eager to hear from this teacher who is able to perform such powerful works. Jesus delivers a sermon that clearly benefits his listeners. Since then, countless others have also benefited from it. We can too because of its depth of spiritual content presented with simplicity and clarity. Jesus draws on ordinary experiences and things familiar to people. This makes his ideas understandable to all who are seeking a better life in God's way. What key aspects of Jesus' sermon make it so valuable?

### **WHO ARE TRULY HAPPY?**

Everyone wants to be happy. Knowing this, Jesus begins by describing those who are truly happy. Imagine how this captures the attention of his listeners. But some things must puzzle them.

He says: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted. . . . Happy are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they

will be filled. . . . Happy are those who have been persecuted for righteousness' sake, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them. Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you . . . for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed.”—Matthew 5:3-12.

What does Jesus mean by saying “happy”? He is not referring to being jovial or mirthful, as when one is having a good time. Genuine happiness is deeper. It involves real contentment, a sense of satisfaction and fulfillment in life.

Jesus says that people who recognize their spiritual need, who are saddened by their sinful condition, and who come to know and serve God are the truly happy ones. Even if they are hated or persecuted for doing God's will, they are happy because they know that they are pleasing him and that he will reward them with everlasting life.

- ◇ Where does Jesus give his most memorable sermon, and who are present for it?
- ◇ What makes Jesus' sermon so valuable?
- ◇ Who are truly happy, and why?

Many people, though, think that being prosperous and pursuing pleasures are what makes one happy. Jesus says otherwise. Drawing a contrast that must make many of his listeners think, he says: “Woe to you who are rich, for you are having your consolation in full. Woe to you who are filled up now, for you will go hungry. Woe, you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe whenever all men speak well of you, for this is what their forefathers did to the false prophets.”—Luke 6:24-26.

Why do having riches, laughing in delight, and enjoying praise from others bring woe? Because when someone has and cherishes these things, serving God may be neglected at the cost of true happiness. Jesus is not saying that simply being poor or hungry makes one happy. However, it is often the disadvantaged person who responds to Jesus’ teachings and who gains the blessing of true happiness.

With his disciples in mind, Jesus says: “You are the salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13) Of course, they are not literal salt. Rather, salt is a preservative. A large amount of it is kept near the altar at

God's temple and is used to salt offerings. It also represents freedom from corruption or decay. (Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:23, 24) Jesus' disciples are "the salt of the earth" in that their influence on people has a preserving effect, helping them to avoid spiritual and moral decay. Yes, their message can preserve the lives of all who respond to it.

Jesus also tells the disciples: "You are the light of the world." A lamp is not put under a basket but is set on a lampstand, where it can shed light. So Jesus urges: "Let your light shine before men, so that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens."—Matthew 5:14-16.

- ◇ In contrast to those who are truly happy, who have woe, and why?
- ◇ How are Jesus' disciples "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world"?
- ◇ Does Jesus show high regard for God's Law? Explain.
- ◇ How does Jesus provide help to root out the causes of murder and adultery?

*“Let Your Light Shine”*

(Matthew 5:16)

1. Jesus has commanded  
That we shine our light,  
Like the sun, impartial,  
Comforting and bright.  
Through the Holy Scriptures,  
Thoughts of peace are heard.  
May we now reflect his light  
As we teach God’s Word.
2. Let God’s Kingdom message  
Speak to ev’ry heart;  
Let it shine before us  
As we play our part.  
Light from Scripture guides us  
As we bring good news.  
Sharing truth with ev’ryone;  
Truth is theirs to choose.
3. Light from acts of kindness  
Brightens up this world,  
To our words adds beauty  
Like a priceless pearl.  
May our light keep shining  
As we do what’s right,  
Then our works will always be  
Pleasing in God’s sight.

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

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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.

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### Let God's Laws and Principles Train Your Conscience

For our conscience to be an effective guide, it must be trained. Jehovah has lovingly provided both laws and principles to help us fine-tune our conscience and view things the way he does. This article discusses how we can apply Bible principles in a practical way.

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Jesus urged his disciples to let their light shine to glorify God. This article offers practical suggestions that, when applied, will certainly help us to 'let our light shine' more fully.

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# *Light in a Darkened World*

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

1. In these days, dark and lawless days,  
Shines a light we can see.  
Like the dawn of another day  
That will soon come to be.

*(CHORUS)*

*Shining through the darkness,  
Ours is a message so bright.  
It offers hope and light—  
Sparkling like the daylight,  
Bringing tomorrow in sight—  
So ends the night.*

2. Those who sleep need awakening  
As the time ebbs away.  
We give hope and encouragement.  
For their future we'll pray.

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
77, 59

**HOW WOULD YOU  
ANSWER?**

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In addition to engaging in the ministry, in what other ways can we let our light shine?

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How is Christian unity involved in drawing attention to the truth?

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Why is keeping on the watch so important today?

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## “Let Your Light Shine” to Glorify Jehovah

*“Let your light shine before men, so that they may . . . give glory to your Father.”—MATT. 5:16.*

**HOW** thrilling it is to hear of increases that Jehovah’s people are experiencing! Last year we regularly conducted over 10,000,000 Bible studies. This certainly indicates that God’s servants are letting their light shine! And think of the millions of interested ones

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1. What special cause for joy do we have?

whom we welcomed at the Memorial. They could thus learn of the love that God expressed when he provided the ransom.—1 John 4:9.

<sup>2</sup> Worldwide, Jehovah’s people speak many different languages. However, this does not prevent us from offering united praise to our Father, Jehovah. (Rev. 7:9) No matter what our mother tongue is or where we live, we can shine “as illuminators in the world.”—Phil. 2:15.

<sup>3</sup> The increase we observe, the unity we enjoy, and the watchful attitude that we strive to maintain all contribute to our bringing glory to Jehovah. In this article, we will discuss how that is accomplished.—Read Matthew 5:14-16.

## EXTEND THE INVITATION

<sup>4</sup> “No one could be faithful and true to the Lord in these remaining days . . . unless he would avail himself of the opportunity of letting his light shine.” That was a comment in the article “Light in the Darkness,” published in *The Watch Tower* of June 1,

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2, 3. (a) What obstacle does not prevent us from “shining as illuminators”? (b) In view of Jesus’ words recorded at Matthew 5:14-16, what will we consider?

4, 5. (a) In addition to preaching, how can we let our light shine? (b) What benefits may come from our kind demeanor? (See opening picture.)

1925. The article then explained: “He must do this by telling the good news to the peoples of the earth, and by conforming himself to the ways of light.” Clearly, one way we let our light shine is by preaching the good news and making disciples. (Matt. 28: 19, 20) In addition, we can glorify Jehovah by our Christian conduct. Householders and passersby observe our behavior. Our friendly smile and warm greeting say much about who we are and what kind of God we worship.

<sup>5</sup> “When you enter the house,” Jesus told his disciples, “greet the household.” (Matt. 10:12) In the area where Jesus and the apostles often preached, it was not unusual for people to invite strangers into their homes. Today, this is not the custom in many places. Still, your positive, friendly manner as you explain why you are there can often allay a householder’s concern or ease his irritation. A pleasant smile is often the best introduction. That has also proved true when brothers and sisters engage in public witnessing using a literature cart. As you share in that form of service, you may find that people often react favorably to a pleasant smile and greeting. It may move them to approach us and take one of our publications. Your kind demeanor can also help you to start a conversation.

<sup>6</sup> An elderly couple in England have health issues that severely limit their house-to-house ministry. They decided to let their light shine right outside their home. They display some Bible publications on a table at the time when parents come to pick up their children from a nearby school. Curiosity has prompted many to obtain copies of *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volumes 1 and 2, as well as brochures. A pioneer sister from their congregation joined them in their witnessing initiative. Her friendly manner and the couple’s genuine, sincere efforts prompted one of the parents to accept a Bible study.

<sup>7</sup> In recent years, many countries have experienced an influx of refugees. What can you do to help such ones come to know Jehovah and his purpose? For a start, why not learn a greeting in the languages commonly spoken by newcomers in your area? The *JW Language* app is a tool that can help you do that. Additionally, why not learn a few phrases that may capture their interest? You might then be able to direct them to [jw.org](http://jw.org) and show them the variety of videos and publications available in their language.—Deut. 10:19.

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6. How did one elderly couple expand their ministry?

7. What help can you offer to newcomers in your area?

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah lovingly provides the Life and Ministry Meeting so that we can become more effective in the field ministry. The practical instruction we receive at this meeting helps many of us feel more confident about making return visits and conducting Bible studies.

<sup>9</sup> Many newcomers have observed that our children participate at meetings. Parents, help your children to let their light shine by teaching them to comment in their own words. Their simple, heartfelt expressions have sometimes prompted newly interested ones to recognize the ring of truth.—1 Cor. 14:25.

## PROMOTE UNITY

<sup>10</sup> Another way to let your light shine is by promoting unity in your family and in your congregation. One way parents can do so is by arranging for a regular Family Worship program. Many include watching JW Broadcasting sometime during the month. After viewing the program, why not take time to discuss how to apply the points that were

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8, 9. (a) What practical help do we receive at our midweek meetings? (b) How can parents help their children to participate at meetings?

10. What role does family worship play in promoting unity?



featured? When presiding over family worship, the parent should remember that the guidance a young child needs may well differ from that of a teenager. Make suitable application of the study material so that each member of the family benefits.—Ps. 148: 12, 13.

<sup>11</sup> How can young ones promote unity in the congregation and thus encourage others to let their light shine? If you are a Christian youth, why not make it your aim to take an interest in older ones? You might respectfully ask them to relate an experience from their years of service. You will find this very upbuilding, and both you and they will be even more motivated to let the light of truth shine. And all of us can make it a point to welcome those who attend meetings at the Kingdom Hall. Your doing so will promote unity and may move visitors to want to share in letting their light shine. Your efforts can include greeting visitors with a friendly smile, perhaps even helping new ones to their seats. Try to introduce them to others, thus making newcomers feel at home.

<sup>12</sup> If you are assigned to handle a meeting for field service, you can do much to help older ones to have

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**11-13.** How can all promote unity in the congregation and help others to let their light shine?

a share in the ministry. Do they have suitable territory? In some cases, you may choose to assign them to work with a younger companion who can provide physical support. You can also show understanding to those whose health and circumstances limit what they can do. Yes, your consideration and discernment can help young and old, experienced and less experienced, to preach the good news with zeal. —Lev. 19:32.

<sup>13</sup> The psalmist was moved to exclaim: “How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Read Psalm 133:1, 2.) By being together, the Israelites benefited greatly from the good influence of others who worshipped Jehovah. It was like



Taking an interest  
in older ones is  
very upbuilding  
(See paragraph 11)

anointing oil that was both pleasant and refreshing. Why not be resolved to have a positive influence, promoting unity among your brothers and sisters? If you are already doing so, that is commendable. Could you “widen out,” that is, do it to a greater extent and more consistently?—2 Cor. 6:11-13, ftn.

<sup>14</sup> What about increasing your efforts to let the light of Bible truth shine in your neighborhood? Your kind words and deeds may well attract a neighbor to the truth. Ask yourself: ‘How do my neighbors view me? Do I keep my home and property tidy, thus reflecting well on the neighborhood? Do I take the initiative to be helpful to others?’ When you are in conversation with other Witnesses, why not draw them out on how their kindness and good conduct have affected relatives, neighbors, workmates, or schoolmates? It is quite likely that you will hear positive experiences.—Eph. 5:9.

## **KEEP ON THE WATCH**

<sup>15</sup> Our attitude comes into the picture as we strive to increase the extent to which we let our light shine. Jesus repeatedly exhorted his disciples: “Keep on the watch.” (Matt. 24:42; 25:13; 26:41) Obviously, if

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14. What can you do to let your light shine in the neighborhood?  
15. Why is keeping on the watch vital?

we believe that the “great tribulation” is a long way off, that it will come sometime but not in our lifetime, we will lack a sense of urgency with regard to the preaching work. (Matt. 24:21) Instead of shining brilliantly in our neighborhood, our light will flicker and could even go out.

<sup>16</sup> As these critical times worsen, all of us need to keep on the watch. When Jehovah acts, it will be at the right time. There is no question about that. (Matt. 24:42-44) Meanwhile, exercise patience, being ever watchful. Read God’s Word each day, and be vigilant with a view to prayers. (1 Pet. 4:7) Take note of sterling examples of brothers and sisters whose lives reflect their joy in keeping on the watch as well as letting their light shine. One fine example is the experience recounted in the article “Seventy Years of Holding On to the Skirt of a Jew,” published in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2012, pages 18-21.

<sup>17</sup> Fill your life with upbuilding activity and association. That will bring you great joy, and it will seem to you that time is passing quickly. (Eph. 5:16) A century ago, our brothers were busy and accomplished much. But we are accomplishing much more today under Jehovah’s guiding hand. We are letting

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16, 17. What can you do to maintain a watchful attitude?



Shepherding visits offer us the opportunity  
to seek wisdom from God's Word  
(See paragraphs 18, 19)

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our light shine to an extent that could not have been imagined previously.

<sup>18</sup> It is faith-strengthening to know that our imperfection does not stop us from serving Jehovah acceptably. Consequently, appreciate Jehovah's provision of "gifts in men," congregation elders. (Read Ephesians 4:8, 11, 12.) The next time an elder visits you, take advantage of the opportunity to draw on his wisdom and benefit from his advice.

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**18, 19.** How can congregation elders help us to be vigilant and active? Illustrate.

<sup>19</sup> Two elders in England responded to a call from a married couple who were having problems. The wife felt unevenly yoked spiritually. Her husband admitted that he was not the best teacher and did not arrange for regular family worship. The elders directed the couple's attention to Jesus' example. He took care of his disciples and considered their needs. The elders urged the husband to imitate Jesus. They encouraged the wife to be patient. The elders also gave the couple some practical suggestions on how they could work together to have family worship with their two children. (Eph. 5:21-29) Later the elders commended the husband for his efforts. They encouraged him to persevere and to rely on holy spirit to help him become a good spiritual head. Their loving interest and support have helped this family to let their light shine.

<sup>20</sup> "Happy is everyone who fears Jehovah, who walks in His ways," sang the psalmist. (Ps. 128:1) When you let your light shine—by inviting others to serve God, by conducting yourself in a way that promotes unity, and by maintaining a watchful attitude—you will find increased happiness. Others will see your fine works, and many will be moved to give glory to our Father.—Matt. 5:16.

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20. What can you expect as you let your light shine?

1. Praise Jah with me;  
Come! Let us sing!  
He gives us life, breath, and ev'ry good thing.  
Each day and night,  
His name we bless,  
Praising his love and his almightiness.  
We sing his praise, and his name we confess.
2. Praise Jah with me;  
He satisfies.  
He hears our prayers as our needs he supplies.  
His mighty arm  
Strengthens the weak;  
His holy spirit sustains all the meek.  
His name we praise; Of his power we speak.
3. Praise Jah with me;  
Our God is just.  
He brings us comfort, in him we can trust.  
Wrongs he will right;  
Hearts he will heal.  
Rich Kingdom blessings all mankind will feel.  
Come let us praise him with joy and with zeal!

