

- Song 2 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Follow Jesus With the Right Motive”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 6:9-11—Jesus miraculously fed a large crowd (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:10)
 Joh 6:14, 24—The people concluded that Jesus was the Messiah and looked for him the next day (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:14)
 Joh 6:25-27, 54, 60, 66-69—Because the people had the wrong motive for associating with Jesus and his disciples, they stumbled at his words (nwtsty study notes on Joh 6:27, 54; w05 9/1 21 ¶13-14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 6:44—How does the Father draw people to himself? (nwtsty study note)

 Joh 6:64—In what sense did Jesus know “from the beginning” that Judas would betray him? (nwtsty study notes)

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) Joh 6:41-59

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person raises an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person tells you that he is a Christian.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 31
- **How Did You Do?:** (5 min.) Discussion. Invite the audience to relate experiences that resulted from trying to start conversations that led to a witness.
- **“Nothing Was Wasted”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 35 ¶128-36
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 89 and Prayer


JOHN 5-6 | Follow Jesus With the Right Motive

6:9-11, 25-27, 54, 66-69

When Jesus gave an illustration that the disciples found difficult to understand, some were stumbled and would no longer walk with him. Just one day earlier, Jesus had fed them miraculously, confirming that his power was from God. So why did they stumble? Apparently, their motive for following Jesus was selfish. They were associating with Jesus for material advantage.

Each of us should ask himself: ‘Why do I follow Jesus? Is it primarily because of current and future blessings? Or is it because I love Jehovah and want to please him?’



 Why might we be stumbled if we **primarily** serve Jehovah for the following reasons?

- We enjoy being with God’s people
- We want to live in Paradise

2

Jehovah Is Your Name

(Psalm 83:18)

1. The living and true God—
The God of all creation
In ev'ry generation—
Jehovah is your name.
We're honored and we're proud
To be your congregation.
In ev'ry tribe and nation,
Your glory we proclaim.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, Jehovah,
There is no God like you.
There's no other in the heavens
Or on the earth below.
You alone are God Almighty,
And this all men must know.
Jehovah, Jehovah,
We have no other God but you.*

2. You cause us to become
Whatever you desire,
To do as you require—
Jehovah is your name.
And Witnesses for you
Is what you've kindly named us.
We're honored you have claimed us—
A people for your name.

(Chorus)

(See also 2 Chron. 6:14; Ps. 72:19; Isa. 42:8.)

JOHN 4:29-5:3

that a prophet has no honor in his own homeland.^a **45** So when he arrived in Gal'i-lee, the Gal-i-le'ans welcomed him, because they had seen all the things he did in Jerusalem at the festival,^b for they too had gone to the festival.^c

46 Then he came again to Ca'na of Gal'i-lee, where he had turned the water into wine.^d Now there was a royal official whose son was sick in Ca-per'na-um.

47 When this man heard that Jesus had come out of Ju-de'a into Gal'i-lee, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of dying. **48** But Jesus said to him: "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will never believe."^e

49 The royal official said to him: "Lord, come down before my young child dies."

50 Jesus said to him: "Go your way; your son lives."^f The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he left.

51 But while he was on his way down, his slaves met him to say that his boy was alive.*

52 So he asked them at what hour he got better. They replied to him: "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour."*

53 The father then knew that it was in the very hour that Jesus had said to him: "Your son lives."^g So he and his whole household believed.

54 This was the second sign^h Jesus performed when he came from Ju-de'a into Gal'i-lee.

5 After this there was a festivalⁱ of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate^j is a pool called in Hebrew *Beth·za'tha*, with five colonnades.

3 Within these a multitude of the sick, blind, lame, and those with withered* limbs were lying

4:51 *Or "was recovering." **4:52** *That is, about 1:00 p.m. **5:3** *Or "paralyzed."

JOHN 5:4-30

down. **4** *— **5** But one man was there who had been sick for 38 years. **6** Seeing this man lying there and being aware that he had already been sick for a long time, Jesus said to him: **“Do you want to get well?”**^a **7** The sick man answered him: “Sir, I do not have anyone to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am on my way, another steps down ahead of me.” **8** Jesus said to him: **“Get up! Pick up your mat* and walk.”**^b **9** And the man immediately got well, and he picked up his mat* and began to walk.

That day was the Sabbath. **10** So the Jews began to say to the cured man: “It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry the mat.”^{*c} **11** But he answered them: “The same one who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat* and walk.’” **12** They asked him: “Who is the man who told you, ‘Pick it up and walk?’” **13** But the healed man did not know who he was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14 After this Jesus found him in the temple and said to him: **“See, you have become well. Do not sin anymore, so that something worse does not happen to you.”** **15** The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. **16** For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things during the Sabbath. **17** But he answered them: **“My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.”**^d **18** This is why the Jews began seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his own Father,^e making himself equal to God.^f

5:4 *See App. A3. 5:8-11 *Or “bed.”

19 Therefore, in response Jesus said to them: "Most truly I say to you, the Son cannot do a single thing of his own initiative, but only what he sees the Father doing.^a For whatever things that One does, these things the Son does also in like manner.

20 For the Father has affection for the Son^b and shows him all the things he himself does, and he will show him works greater than these, so that you may marvel.^c

21 For just as the Father raises the dead up and makes them alive,^d so the Son also makes alive whomever he wants to.^e

22 For the Father judges no one at all, but he has entrusted all the judging to the Son,^f

23 so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him.^g

24 Most truly I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes the One who sent me has everlasting life,^h and he does not come into judgment but has passed over from death to life.ⁱ

25 "Most truly I say to you, the hour is coming, and it is now, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who have paid attention will live.

26 For just as the Father has life in himself,^{*j} so he has granted also to the Son to have life in himself.^k

27 And he has given him authority to do judging,^l because he is the Son of man.^m

28 Do not be amazed at this, for the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voiceⁿ

29 and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, and those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.^o

30 I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative.

5:26 *Or "has in himself the gift of life."

Just as I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous^a because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.^b

31 “If I alone bear witness about myself, my witness is not true.^c

32 There is another who bears witness about me, and I know that the witness he bears about me is true.^d

33 You have sent men to John, and he has borne witness to the truth.^e

34 However, I do not accept the witness from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved.

35 That man was a burning and shining lamp, and for a short time you were willing to rejoice greatly in his light.^f

36 But I have the witness greater than that of John, for the very works that my Father assigned me to accomplish, these works that I am doing, bear witness that the Father sent me.^g

37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.^h You have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his form,ⁱ

38 and you do not have his word residing in you, because you do not believe the very one whom he sent.

39 “You are searching the Scriptures^j because you think that you will have everlasting life by means of them; and these are the very ones* that bear witness about me.^k

40 And yet you do not want to come to me^l so that you may have life.

41 I do not accept glory from men, **42** but I well know that you do not have the love of God in you.

43 I have come in the name of my Father, but you do not receive me. If someone else came in his own name, you would receive that one.

44 How can you believe, when you are accepting glory from one another and you are not seeking the glory that is

5:39 *That is, the Scriptures.

JOHN 5:31-6:12

from the only God?^a **45** Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you, Moses,^b in whom you have put your hope. **46** In fact, if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.^c **47** But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe what I say?"

6 After this Jesus set out across the Sea of Gal'i-lee, or Ti-be'ri-as.^d **2** And a large crowd kept following him,^e because they were observing the miraculous signs he was performing in healing the sick.^f

3 So Jesus went up on a mountain and sat down there with his disciples. **4** Now the Passover,^g the festival of the Jews, was near. **5** When Jesus raised his eyes and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, he said to Philip: "Where will we buy bread for these people to eat?"^h

6 However, he was saying this to test him, for he knew what he was about to do. **7** Philip answered him: "Two hundred denar'i-i* worth of bread is not enough for each of them to get even a little." **8** One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him: **9** "Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fish. But what are these among so many?"ⁱ

10 Jesus said: "Have the men sit down." As there was a lot of grass in that place, the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number.^j **11** Jesus took the bread, and after giving thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there; he did likewise with the small fish, and they had as much as they wanted. **12** But when they had eaten their fill, he said to his disciples: "Gather together the fragments left over, so that nothing is wasted."

6:7 *See App. B14.

JOHN 6:13-39

13 So they gathered them together and filled 12 baskets with fragments left over by those who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw the sign he performed, they began to say: "This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world."^a **15** Then Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew^b again to the mountain all alone.^c

16 When evening fell, his disciples went down to the sea,^d **17** and boarding a boat, they set out across the sea for Ca-per'na-um. By now it had grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them.^e **18** Also, the sea was getting rough because a strong wind was blowing.^f **19** However, when they had rowed about three or four miles,* they saw Jesus walking on the sea and getting near the boat, and they became fearful. **20** But he said to them: "**It is I; do not be afraid!**"^g **21** Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and right away the boat arrived at the land to which they had been heading.^h

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there except a small one, and that Jesus had not boarded the boat with his disciples, but his disciples had left by themselves. **23** Boats from Ti-be'ri-as, however, arrived near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24** So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they boarded their boats and came to Ca-per'na-um to look for Jesus.

25 When they found him across the sea, they said to him:

6:19 *About five or six km. Lit., "about 25 or 30 stadia." See App. B14.

“Rabbi,^a when did you get here?”

26 Jesus answered them: “Most truly I say to you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate from the loaves and were satisfied.^b **27** Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for everlasting life,^c which the Son of man will give you; for on this one the Father, God himself, has put his seal of approval.”^d

28 So they said to him: “What must we do to carry out the works of God?” **29** In answer Jesus said to them: “This is the work of God, that you exercise faith in the one whom he sent.”^e

30 Then they said to him: “What are you performing as a sign,^f so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you doing?”

31 Our forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness,^g just as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”^h

32 Jesus then said to them: “Most truly I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. **33** For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” **34** So they said to him: “Lord, always give us this bread.”

35 Jesus said to them: “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will not get hungry at all, and whoever exercises faith in me will never get thirsty at all.”ⁱ

36 But as I said to you, you have even seen me and yet do not believe.^j **37** All those whom the Father gives me will come to me, and I will never drive away the one who comes to me;^k

38 for I have come down from heaven^l to do, not my own will, but the will of him who sent me.^m **39** This is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose none out of all those whom he

has given me, but that I should resurrect^a them on the last day. **40** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who recognizes the Son and exercises faith in him should have everlasting life,^b and I will resurrect^c him on the last day.”

41 Then the Jews began to murmur about him because he had said: “I am the bread that came down from heaven.”^d

42 And they began saying: “Is this not Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?^e How does he now say, ‘I have come down from heaven?’”

43 In response Jesus said to them: “Stop murmuring among yourselves. **44** No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him,^f and I will resurrect him on the last day.^g

45 It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by Jehovah.’^{*h} Everyone who has listened to the Father and has learned comes to me. **46** Not that any man has seen the Father,ⁱ except the one who is from God; this one has seen the Father.^j

47 Most truly I say to you, whoever believes has everlasting life.^k

48 “I am the bread of life.^l **49** Your forefathers ate the manna in the wilderness and yet they died.^m **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread he will live forever; and for a fact, the bread that I will give is my flesh in behalf of the life of the world.”ⁿ

52 Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying: “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?”

53 So Jesus said to them: “Most truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the

6:45 *See App. A5.

JOHN 6:40-68

Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.^a

54 Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will resurrect^b him on the last day; **55** for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink. **56** Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in union with me, and I in union with him.^c **57** Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will live because of me.^d **58** This is the bread that came down from heaven. It is not as when your forefathers ate and yet died. Whoever feeds on this bread will live forever.”^e **59** He said these things as he was teaching in a synagogue* in Capernaum.

60 When they heard this, many of his disciples said: “This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?” **61** But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were murmuring about this, said to them: “Does this stumble you? **62** What, therefore, if you should see the Son of man ascending to where he was before?^f **63** It is the spirit that is life-giving;^g the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.^h **64** But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.ⁱ **65** He went on to say: “This is why I have said to you, no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”^j

66 Because of this, many of his disciples went off to the things behind^k and would no longer walk with him. **67** So Jesus said to the Twelve: “You do not want to go also, do you?” **68** Simon Peter answered him: “Lord,

6:59 *Or “public assembly.”

JOHN 6:69-7:26

whom shall we go away to?^a You have sayings of everlasting life.^b **69** We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.”^c **70** Jesus answered them: “I chose you twelve, did I not?^d Yet one of you is a slanderer.”^{*e} **71** He was, in fact, speaking of Judas the son of Simon Is-car'i-ot, for this one was going to betray him, although he was one of the Twelve.^f

7 After this Jesus continued traveling* about in Gal'i-lee, for he did not want to do so in Ju-de'a because the Jews were seeking to kill him.^g **2** However, the Jewish Festival of Tabernacles^{*h} was near. **3** So his brothersⁱ said to him: “Leave here and go into Ju-de'a, so that your disciples may also see the works you are doing. **4** For no one does anything in secret when he seeks to be known publicly. If you are doing these things, show yourself to the world.” **5** His brothers were, in fact, not exercising faith in him.^j **6** So Jesus said to them: “My time has not yet arrived,^k but your time is always at hand. **7** The world has no reason to hate you, but it hates me, because I bear witness about it that its works are wicked.^l **8** You go up to the festival; I am not yet going up to this festival, because my time has not yet fully come.”^m **9** So after he told them these things, he remained in Gal'i-lee.

10 But when his brothers had gone up to the festival, then he also went up, not openly but in secret. **11** So the Jews began looking for him at the festival and saying: “Where is that man?” **12** And there was a lot of subdued talk about him among the crowds. Some would say: “He is a good man.” Others would say:

6:70 *Or “a devil.” 7:1 *Or “walking.”
7:2 *Or “Booths.”

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JOHN 5-6 | Follow Jesus With the Right Motive

6:9-11, 25-27, 54, 66-69

When Jesus gave an illustration that the disciples found difficult to understand, some were stumbled and would no longer walk with him. Just one day earlier, Jesus had fed them miraculously, confirming that his power was from God. So why did they stumble? Apparently, their motive for following Jesus was selfish. They were associating with Jesus for material advantage.

Each of us should ask himself: ‘Why do I follow Jesus? Is it primarily because of current and future blessings? Or is it because I love Jehovah and want to please him?’



 Why might we be stumbled if we **primarily** serve Jehovah for the following reasons?

- We enjoy being with God’s people
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September 17-23

Treasures From God's Word

John 6:9-11—Jesus miraculously fed a large crowd

John 6:9-11: “Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fish. But what are these among so many?” Jesus said: “Have the men sit down.” As there was a lot of grass in that place, the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number. Jesus took the bread, and after giving thanks, he distributed it to those who were sitting there; he did likewise with the small fish, and they had as much as they wanted.

Study note

the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number: Only Matthew's account adds “as well as women and young children” when reporting this miracle. (Matthew 14:21) It is possible that the total number of those miraculously fed was well over 15,000.

John 6:14, 24—The people concluded that Jesus was the Messiah and looked for him the next day

John 6:14: When the people saw the sign he performed, they began to say: “This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world.”

John 6:24: So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they boarded their boats and came to Capernaum to look for Jesus.

Study note

the Prophet: Many Jews in the first century C.E. expected that the

prophet like Moses, mentioned at Deuteronomy 18:15, 18, would be the Messiah. In this context, the expression **come into the world** seems to refer to the expected appearance of the Messiah. Only John recorded the events mentioned in this verse.

John 6:25-27, 54, 60, 66-69—Because the people had the wrong motive for associating with Jesus and his disciples, they stumbled at his words

John 6:25-27: When they found him across the sea, they said to him: “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered them: “Most truly I say to you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate from the loaves and were satisfied. Work, not for the food that perishes, but for the food that remains for everlasting life, which the Son of man will give you; for on this one the Father, God himself, has put his seal of approval.”

John 6:54: Whoever feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life, and I will resurrect him on the last day.

John 6:60: When they heard this, many of his disciples said: “This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?”

John 6:66-69: Because of this, many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him. So Jesus said to the Twelve: “You do not want to go also, do you?” Simon Peter answered him: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life. We have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Study notes

food that perishes . . . food that remains for everlasting life:
Jesus understood that some people were associating with him and

his disciples solely for material advantage. While physical food sustains people day by day, “food” from God’s Word will make it possible for humans to stay alive forever. Jesus urges the crowd to work . . . for “the food that remains for everlasting life,” that is, to put forth effort to satisfy their spiritual need and to exercise faith in what they learn.—Matthew 4:4; 5:3; John 6:28-39.

feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood: The context indicates that those who feed and drink do so in a figurative sense by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. (John 6:35, 40) Jesus made this statement in 32 C.E., so he was not discussing the Lord’s Evening Meal, which he would institute a year later. He made this declaration just prior to “the Passover, the festival of the Jews” (John 6:4), so his listeners would likely have been reminded of the impending festival and the significance of the lamb’s blood in saving lives on the night that Israel left Egypt (Exodus 12:24-27). Jesus was emphasizing that his blood would likewise play an essential role in making it possible for his disciples to gain everlasting life.

w05 9/1 21 paragraphs 13-14

13 Nevertheless, the crowds determinedly followed Jesus and found him, as John says, “across the sea.” Why did they follow him after he avoided their efforts to make him a king? Many betrayed a fleshly viewpoint, speaking pointedly of the material provisions that Jehovah had made in the wilderness in Moses’ day. The implication was that Jesus should continue to make material provisions for them. Jesus, perceiving their wrong motives, began to teach them spiritual truths that could help adjust their thinking. (John 6:17, 24, 25, 30, 31, 35-40) In response, some murmured against him, especially when he spoke this illustration: “Most truly I say to you, Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves. He that feeds on my flesh and drinks my

blood has everlasting life, and I shall resurrect him at the last day.”—John 6:53, 54.

14 Jesus’ illustrations often moved people to show whether they truly desired to walk with God. This one was no exception. It provoked strong reactions. We read: “Many of his disciples, when they heard this, said: ‘This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?’” Jesus went on to explain that they should look for the spiritual meaning of his words. He said: “It is the spirit that is life-giving; the flesh is of no use at all. The sayings that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.” Still, many would not listen, and the account reports: “Owing to this many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him.”—John 6:60, 63, 66.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

John 6:44—How does the Father draw people to himself?

John 6:44: No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him, and I will resurrect him on the last day.

Study note

draws him: Although the Greek verb for “draw” is used in reference to hauling in a net of fish (John 21:6, 11), it does not suggest that God drags people against their will. This verb can also mean “to attract,” and Jesus’ statement may allude to Jeremiah 31:3, where Jehovah said to his ancient people: “I have drawn you to me with loyal love.” (The *Septuagint* uses the same Greek verb here.) John 12:32 shows that in a similar way, Jesus draws men of all sorts to himself. The Scriptures show that Jehovah has given humans free will. Everyone has a choice when it comes to serving Him.

(Deuteronomy 30:19, 20) God gently draws to himself those who have a heart that is rightly disposed. (Psalm 11:5; Proverbs 21:2; Acts 13:48) Jehovah does so through the Bible's message and through his holy spirit. The prophecy from Isaiah 54:13, quoted in John 6:45, applies to those who are drawn by the Father.—Compare John 6:65.

John 6:64—In what sense did Jesus know “from the beginning” that Judas would betray him?

John 6:64: But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him.

Study notes

Jesus knew . . . the one who would betray him: Jesus was referring to Judas Iscariot. Jesus spent the entire night in prayer to his Father before selecting the 12 apostles. (Luke 6:12-16) So at first, Judas was faithful to God. However, Jesus knew from Hebrew Scripture prophecies that he would be betrayed by a close associate. (Psalm 41:9; 109:8; John 13:18, 19) When Judas started to go bad, Jesus, who could read hearts and thoughts, detected this change. (Matthew 9:4) By use of his foreknowledge, God knew that a trusted companion of Jesus would turn traitor. But it is inconsistent with God's qualities and past dealings to think that Judas had to be the one who would fail, as if his failure were predestined.

from the beginning: This expression does not refer to Judas' birth or to his being selected as an apostle, which happened after Jesus had prayed the entire night. (Luke 6:12-16) Rather, it refers to the start of Judas' acting treacherously, which Jesus immediately

discerned. (John 2:24, 25; Revelation 1:1; 2:23; see study notes on John 6:70; 13:11.) This also shows that Judas' actions were premeditated and planned, not the result of a sudden change of heart. The meaning of the term "beginning" (Greek, *arkhe*) in the Christian Greek Scriptures is relative, depending on the context. For example, at 2 Peter 3:4, "beginning" refers to the start of creation. But in most instances, it is used in a more limited sense. For instance, Peter said that the holy spirit fell on the Gentiles "just as it did also on us in the beginning." (Acts 11:15) Peter was not referring to the time of his birth or to the time when he was called to be an apostle. Rather, he was referring to the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., that is, "the beginning" of the outpouring of holy spirit for a specific purpose. (Acts 2:1-4) Other examples of how the context affects the meaning of the term "beginning" can be found at Luke 1:2; John 15:27; and 1 John 2:7.

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) John 6:41-59

JOHN

Study Notes—Chapter 5

5:1

a festival of the Jews: Although John does not specify which festival is referred to, there are good reasons to conclude that it is the Passover of 31 C.E. John's account was generally in chronological order. The context places this festival shortly after Jesus said that there were "yet four months before the harvest." (Joh 4:35) The harvest season, particularly the barley harvest, got under way about Passover time (Nisan 14). So it seems that Jesus' statement was made about four months before that, about the month of Chislev (November/December). Two other festivals, the festivals of Dedication and of Purim, fell during the time period from Chislev to Nisan. However, these festivals did not require an Israelite to go **up to Jerusalem**. So in this context, the Passover seems to be the most likely "festival of the Jews" that required Jesus to attend in Jerusalem according to God's Law to Israel. (De 16:16) It is true that John records only a few events before the next mention of the Passover (Joh 6:4), but a consideration of the chart in App. A7 shows that John's account of Jesus' early ministry was abbreviated, and many events already covered by the other three Gospel writers were not mentioned. In fact, the great amount of activity of Jesus recorded in the other three Gospels lends weight to the conclusion that an annual Passover did indeed come between the events recorded at Joh 2:13 and those at Joh 6:4.—See App. A7 and study note on Joh 2:13.

5:2

Hebrew: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, inspired Bible writers used the term "Hebrew" in designating the language spoken by the Jews (Joh 19:13, 17, 20; Ac 21:40; 22:2; Re 9:11; 16:16), as well as the language in which the resurrected and glorified Jesus addressed Saul of Tarsus (Ac 26:14, 15). At Ac 6:1, "Hebrew-speaking Jews" are distinguished from "Greek-speaking Jews." While some scholars hold that the term "Hebrew" in these references should instead be rendered "Aramaic," there is good reason to believe that the term actually applies to the Hebrew language. When the physician Luke says that Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem "in the Hebrew language," Paul was addressing those whose life revolved around studying the Law of Moses in Hebrew. Also, of the great number of

fragments and manuscripts comprising the Dead Sea Scrolls, the majority of Biblical and non-Biblical texts are written in Hebrew, showing that the language was in daily use. The smaller number of Aramaic fragments found shows that both languages were used. So it seems highly unlikely that when Bible writers used the word “Hebrew,” they actually meant the Aramaic or Syrian language. (Ac 21:40; 22:2; compare Ac 26:14.) The Hebrew Scriptures earlier distinguished between “Aramaic” and “the language of the Jews” (2Ki 18:26), and first-century Jewish historian Josephus, considering this passage of the Bible, speaks of “Aramaic” and “Hebrew” as distinct tongues. (*Jewish Antiquities*, X, 8 [i, 2]) It is true that there are some terms that are quite similar in both Aramaic and Hebrew and possibly other terms that were adopted into Hebrew from Aramaic. However, there seems to be no reason for the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures to have said Hebrew if they meant Aramaic.

Bethzatha: The Hebrew name means “House of the Olive [or, of Olives].” According to some manuscripts, the pool is called “Bethesda,” possibly meaning “House of Mercy.” Other manuscripts read “Bethsaida,” meaning “House of the Hunter [or, Fisherman].” Many scholars today prefer the name Bethzatha.

5:3

the sick . . . were lying down: It was commonly believed that people could be healed by getting into the pool when the water was stirred up. (Joh 5:7) As a result, those seeking a cure congregated at the site. However, the Bible does not say that an angel of God performed miracles at the pool of Bethzatha. (See study note on Joh 5:4.) What it does say is that Jesus performed a miracle at the pool. It is worth noting that the man did not enter the water; yet, he was instantly cured.

5:4

Some manuscripts add, in whole or in part, the following text, beginning at the end of verse 3 and continuing as verse 4: “waiting for the movement of the water. **4** For an angel of the Lord [or, “of Jehovah”] would come down into the pool from season to season and disturb the water; the first one then to step in after the disturbance of the water would become sound in health from whatever disease it was by which he was afflicted.” These words, however, do not appear in the earliest authoritative manuscripts and most likely are not part of the original text of John. (See App. A3.) Some

translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew, referred to as J⁹,^{22, 23} in App. C, read “an angel of Jehovah” instead of “an angel of the Lord.”

5:8

mat: Or “bed.” In Bible lands, a bed was often a simple mat made of straw or rushes, perhaps with quilting or a mattress of some sort added for comfort. When not in use, these beds were rolled up and stored away. In this context, the Greek word *kra'bat·tos* evidently refers to a poor man’s bed. In the account at Mr 2:4-12, the same Greek word refers to some kind of “stretcher” on which the paralytic man was carried.

5:10

the Jews: As used in the Gospel of John, this term conveys somewhat different meanings depending on the context. It can refer to Jewish people in general, to those living in Judea, or to those living in or near Jerusalem. The term may also refer to Jews who zealously adhered to human traditions connected with the Mosaic Law and who were hostile to Jesus. In this context, “the Jews” may refer to the Jewish authorities or religious leaders, but the term may also have been used broadly to include other Jews who were zealous for the traditions.

5:14

Do not sin anymore: Jesus’ words here do not mean that this man’s sickness was due to some sin he had committed. Rather, the man whom Jesus cured had been sick for 38 years because of inherited imperfection. (Joh 5:5-9; compare Joh 9:1-3.) Now that the man had been shown mercy and was healed, Jesus urged him to follow the way of salvation and avoid willful sin that could result in **something worse** than sickness, that is, everlasting destruction.—Heb 10:26, 27.

5:16

were persecuting: The imperfect form of the Greek verb used here indicates that **the Jews**—perhaps referring to the Jewish leaders or to Jews who zealously adhered to human traditions connected with the Mosaic Law—began to persecute Jesus and continued doing so.

5:18

making himself equal to God: While properly referring to God as his Father, Jesus never claimed equality with God. (Joh 5:17) Rather, it was the Jews who accused Jesus of attempting to make himself God's equal by claiming God as his Father. Just as the Jews were wrong in stating that Jesus was a Sabbath breaker, they were wrong in making this accusation. Jesus makes this evident by what he says as recorded in verses 19 through 24—he could do nothing of his own initiative. Clearly, he was not claiming to be equal to God.—Joh 14:28.

5:19

of his own initiative: Or “on his own,” that is, independently. Lit., “from himself.” As God's Chief Representative, Jesus always listens to Jehovah's voice and speaks what Jehovah directs.

5:24

judgment: The Greek term *kri'sis*, here rendered “judgment,” may convey several shades of meaning. The context determines what is meant. For example, this term can denote the act of judging (Joh 5:22), the quality of justice (Mt 23:23; Lu 11:42), or a court of law (Mt 5:21). It can also refer to a judgment that is either favorable or unfavorable, but most of the occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures convey the idea of a condemnatory judgment. In this verse, “judgment” is used in parallel with **death** and set in contrast with **life** and **everlasting life**; therefore, it refers to a judgment that results in loss of life.—2Pe 2:9; 3:7; see study note on Joh 5:29.

has passed over from death to life: Jesus is apparently speaking about those who were once spiritually dead but who upon hearing his words put faith in him and discontinued walking in their sinful course. (Eph 2:1, 2, 4-6) They pass over “from death to life” in that the condemnation of death is lifted from them, and they are given the hope of everlasting life because of their faith in God. In a similar way, Jesus apparently referred to spiritually dead ones when he said to the Jewish son who wanted to go home to bury his father: “Let the dead bury their dead.”—Lu 9:60; see study notes on Lu 9:60; Joh 5:25.

5:25

the dead: Jesus said that the **hour**, or time, for the dead to “hear [his] voice” **is now**, so he could only mean living humans who inherited sin from Adam and were therefore condemned to death. (Ro 5:12) From God’s standpoint, mankind in general has no right to life because “the wages” that sin pays to them is death. (Ro 6:23) By hearing and heeding Jesus’ “word,” individuals could figuratively ‘pass over from death to life.’ (See study note on Joh 5:24.) The terms “hear” and “listen” are frequently used in the Bible with the meaning of “pay heed to” or “obey.”

5:26

has life in himself: Or “has in himself the gift of life.” Jesus has “life in himself” because his Father granted him powers that originally only Jehovah had. These powers no doubt include the authority to give humans the opportunity to have a fine standing before God and thus gain life. They would also include the ability to impart life by resurrecting the dead. About a year after Jesus made the statement recorded here, he indicated that his followers could have life in themselves.—For the meaning of the expression “life in yourselves” as it applies to Jesus’ followers, see study note on Joh 6:53.

5:27

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

5:28

the memorial tombs: This term renders the Greek word *mne·mei'on*, which comes from the verb *mi·mne'sko·mai*, “to remember; to remind (oneself),” and refers to a tomb or a grave. Thus, the term carries the implication of preserving the memory of the deceased person. In this context, it suggests that the person who died is remembered by God. This connotation gives added meaning to the term used by Luke in recording the plea of the criminal executed alongside Jesus: “Remember [form of the verb *mi·mne'sko·mai*] me when you get into your Kingdom.”—Lu 23:42.

5:29

resurrection: The Greek word *a·na'sta·sis* literally means “raising up; standing up.” It is used about 40 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures with reference to the resurrection of the dead. (Mt 22:31; Ac 4:2; 24:15; 1Co 15:12, 13) In the *Septuagint* at Isa 26:19, the verb form of *a·na'sta·sis* is used to render the Hebrew verb “to live” in the expression “Your dead *will live.*”—See Glossary.

of life . . . of judgment: Here and at Joh 5:24, “judgment” is set in contrast with “life” and “everlasting life,” implying a judgment that results in death. (2Pe 2:9; 3:7; see study note on Joh 5:24.) Most occurrences of the Greek word rendered “judgment” (*kri'sis*) in the Christian Greek Scriptures carry the force of condemnatory judgment. As indicated by the context and by other scriptures, the judgment Jesus speaks of is not based on what a person did before he died but on his actions after he is resurrected. Ro 6:7 states that a person “who has died has been acquitted from his sin.” Each person who is resurrected will show by his course of action whether he is obedient, with eternal “life” as a reward, or disobedient, resulting in the “judgment” of death.

5:30

of my own initiative: Or “on my own,” that is, independently. Lit., “from myself.” As God’s Chief Representative, Jesus always listens to Jehovah’s voice and speaks what Jehovah directs.

Just as I hear: That is, from the Father as the Supreme Judge.

5:32

another: No doubt referring to the Father.—Joh 5:34, 37.

5:39

the Scriptures: This expression is often used to refer to the inspired Hebrew writings as a whole. The Jews who were carefully **searching** the Scriptures could easily have discerned that Jesus was the Messiah by comparing his life and teachings with what the Scriptures foretold. But these Jews refused to make a sincere examination of the abundant Scriptural evidence that Jesus was the promised Messiah. Although they thought that they could **have everlasting life by means of** the Scriptures,

they refused to accept Jesus as the one whom the Scriptures pointed to as the true means to gain life.—De 18:15; Lu 11:52; Joh 7:47, 48.

these: That is, **the Scriptures** mentioned in the first part of the verse. These Scriptures contained Messianic prophecies that pointed to Jesus as the one through whom his listeners could gain “everlasting life.”

5:44

the only God: Some early manuscripts do not include the word “God” and could be rendered “the only One.” But the main text reading has strong support in other early authoritative manuscripts.

JOHN Study Notes—Chapter 6

6:1

the Sea of Galilee, or Tiberias: The Sea of Galilee was sometimes called the Sea of Tiberias—after the city on its western shore that was named for Roman Emperor Tiberius Caesar. (Joh 6:23) The name Sea of Tiberias occurs here and at Joh 21:1.—See study note on Mt 4:18.

6:4

the Passover: Apparently referring to the Passover of 32 C.E., the third Passover during Jesus’ earthly ministry.—See study notes on Joh 2:13; 5:1; 11:55 and App. A7.

6:7

denarii: Glossary, “Denarius” —A Roman silver coin that weighed about 3.85 g (0.124 oz t) and bore an image of Caesar on one side. It was the daily wage of a laborer and was the “head tax” coin exacted by the Romans from the Jews. (Mt 22:17; Lu 20:24)—See App. B14.

6:10

the men sat down there, about 5,000 in number: Only Matthew’s account adds “as well as women and young children” when reporting this miracle. (Mt 14:21) It is possible that the total number of those miraculously fed was well over 15,000.

6:14

the Prophet: Many Jews in the first century C.E. expected that the prophet like Moses, mentioned at De 18:15, 18, would be the Messiah. In this context, the expression **come into the world** seems to refer to the expected appearance of the Messiah. Only John recorded the events mentioned in this verse.—See study note on Joh 1:9.

6:15

to make him king: Only John recorded this incident. Jesus resolutely refused to get involved in the politics of his homeland. He would accept kingship only in God's way and in God's due time. Jesus later emphasized that his followers were to take the same position.—Joh 15:19; 17:14, 16; 18:36.

6:17

the sea: That is, the Sea of Galilee.—See study notes on Mt 4:18; Joh 6:1.

6:19

about three or four miles: About 5 or 6 km. Lit., “about 25 or 30 stadia.” The Greek word *sta'di-on* denotes a linear measurement that equaled 185 m (606.95 ft), or one eighth of a Roman mile. Since the Sea of Galilee is about 12 km (8 mi) wide, the disciples may have been in about the middle of the lake.—Mr 6:47; see study note on Mt 4:18 and App. A7 and B14.

6:23

Tiberias: A city on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, about 15 km (9.5 mi) S of Capernaum and just N of some hot springs that were famous in ancient times. It was built by Herod Antipas sometime between 18 and 26 C.E. as his new capital and residence. He named the city in honor of Tiberius Caesar, Roman emperor at the time, and it is still called Tiberias (Hebrew: Teverya). Though it was the largest city in the region, this is the only mention of it in the Scriptures. It is never stated that Jesus visited Tiberias, perhaps because of its strong foreign influence. (Compare Mt 10:5-7.) According to Josephus, the city of Tiberias had been built on the site of tombs; therefore, many Jews had been reluctant to move there. (Num 19:11-14) After the Jewish revolt in the second century C.E., Tiberias was declared cleansed and became the leading city of Jewish scholarship

and the seat of the Sanhedrin. The Mishnah and the Palestinian (Jerusalem) Talmud were compiled here, as well as the Masoretic text that was later used for translating the Hebrew Scriptures.—See App. B10.

6:27

food that perishes . . . food that remains for everlasting life: Jesus understood that some people were associating with him and his disciples solely for material advantage. While physical food sustains people day by day, “food” from God’s Word will make it possible for humans to stay alive forever. Jesus urges the crowd to **work . . . for** “the food that remains for everlasting life,” that is, to put forth effort to satisfy their spiritual need and to exercise faith in what they learn.—Mt 4:4; 5:3; Joh 6:28-39.

6:31

Our forefathers ate the manna: The Jews wanted a Messianic King who could supply them with material food. As a justification, they reminded Jesus that God had given their forefathers manna **in the wilderness** of Sinai. Quoting from Ps 78:24, they referred to the miraculously provided manna as **bread** [or, “grain”] **from heaven**. When requesting “a sign” from Jesus (Joh 6:30), they may have had in mind the miracle he had performed just the day before when he multiplied five barley loaves and two small fish into enough food to feed thousands.—Joh 6:9-12.

6:33

the world: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *ko’smos* generally refers to the world of mankind or a part of it. (See study note on Joh 1:10.) At Joh 1:29, Jesus as the Lamb of God is said to take away “the sin of the world.” At Joh 6:33, Jesus is described as **the bread of God**, Jehovah’s channel of **life** and blessings to mankind.

6:35

the bread of life: This expression occurs only twice in the Scriptures. (Joh 6:35, 48) In this context, **life** refers to “everlasting life.” (Joh 6:40, 47, 54) During this discussion, Jesus refers to himself as “the true bread from heaven” (Joh 6:32), “the bread of God” (Joh 6:33), and “the living bread” (Joh 6:51). He points out that the Israelites were given the manna in the wilderness (Ne 9:20); yet, this divinely provided food did not sustain their lives forever (Joh 6:49). By contrast, Christ’s faithful followers have

available to them heavenly manna, or “bread of life” (Joh 6:48-51, 58), which makes it possible for them to live forever. They ‘eat of this bread’ by exercising faith in the redeeming power of Jesus’ flesh and blood that he sacrificed.

6:39

I should resurrect them on the last day: Jesus states four times that he will resurrect people on the last day. (Joh 6:40, 44, 54) At Joh 11:24, Martha too refers to “the resurrection on the last day.” (Compare Da 12:13; see study note on Joh 11:24.) At Joh 12:48, this “last day” is associated with a time of judgment, which will apparently include the Thousand Year Reign of Christ when he will judge mankind, including all those resurrected from the dead.—Re 20:4-6.

6:40

everlasting life: On this occasion, the expression “everlasting life” is used four times (Joh 6:27, 40, 47, 54) by Jesus and once (Joh 6:68) by one of his disciples. The expression “everlasting life” occurs 17 times in the Gospel of John compared with 8 times in the three other Gospels combined.

6:44

draws him: Although the Greek verb for “draw” is used in reference to hauling in a net of fish (Joh 21:6, 11), it does not suggest that God drags people against their will. This verb can also mean “to attract,” and Jesus’ statement may allude to Jer 31:3, where Jehovah said to his ancient people: “I have drawn you to me with loyal love.” (The *Septuagint* uses the same Greek verb here.) Joh 12:32 shows that in a similar way, Jesus draws men of all sorts to himself. The Scriptures show that Jehovah has given humans free will. Everyone has a choice when it comes to serving Him. (De 30:19, 20) God gently draws to himself those who have a heart that is rightly disposed. (Ps 11:5; Pr 21:2; Ac 13:48) Jehovah does so through the Bible’s message and through his holy spirit. The prophecy from Isa 54:13, quoted in Joh 6:45, applies to those who are drawn by the Father.—Compare Joh 6:65.

6:45

Jehovah: In this quote from Isa 54:13, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text. Existing Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John use the word *the·os'* here (perhaps reflecting the term used at Isa 54:13 in copies of the *Septuagint*), which explains why most translations say “God.” However, in view of the Hebrew Scripture background of this quotation, the divine name is used in the main text.

6:53

life in yourselves: At Joh 5:26, Jesus said that he was granted “life in himself” just as his father has “life in himself.” (See study note on Joh 5:26.) Now, about a year later, Jesus uses the same expression regarding his followers. Here he equates having “life in yourselves” with gaining “everlasting life.” (Joh 6:54) Rather than denoting the power to impart life, in this context the expression “life in oneself” seems to refer to entering into the very fullness of life, or being fully alive. Anointed Christians become fully alive when they are resurrected to immortal life in heaven. Faithful ones with an earthly hope will be fully alive after they pass the final test that will occur right after the end of the Millennial Reign of Christ.—1Co 15:52, 53; Re 20:5, 7-10.

6:54

feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood: The context indicates that those who feed and drink do so in a figurative sense by exercising faith in Jesus Christ. (Joh 6:35, 40) Jesus made this statement in 32 C.E., so he was not discussing the Lord’s Evening Meal, which he would institute a year later. He made this declaration just prior to “the Passover, the festival of the Jews” (Joh 6:4), so his listeners would likely have been reminded of the impending festival and the significance of the lamb’s blood in saving lives on the night that Israel left Egypt (Ex 12:24-27). Jesus was emphasizing that his blood would likewise play an essential role in making it possible for his disciples to gain **everlasting life**.

6:56

in union with me: Or “in me.” This expression indicates close association, harmony, and unity.

6:59

a synagogue: Or possibly, “public assembly.” The Greek noun *sy·na·go·ge'* used here literally means “a bringing together; an assembly.” In most occurrences in the Christian Greek Scriptures, it refers to the building or place where Jews assembled for Scripture reading, instruction, preaching, and prayer. (See Glossary, “Synagogue.”) Although the term in this context could be used in a broader sense to refer to any type of gathering that was accessible to the public, it most likely refers to “a synagogue” where Jesus was addressing a Jewish audience who were under the Mosaic Law.

6:63

the spirit: Apparently referring to God’s holy spirit. Jesus adds that in contrast with the power and wisdom that God grants through his spirit, **the flesh is of no use at all.** This indicates that the power as well as the wisdom of humans, as reflected in their writings, philosophies, and teachings, cannot lead to everlasting life.

the flesh: This expression seems to refer broadly to things connected with the limitations of a fleshly or human existence, including human reasoning and achievements. The sum total of human experience and wisdom, all its writings, philosophies, and teachings, are **of no use at all** as a means to gain eternal life.

are spirit and are life: The Greek word rendered “are” (*e·stin'*) may here have the sense of “mean,” so this phrase could be rendered “means spirit and means life.” (See study notes on Mt 12:7; 26:26.) Jesus is apparently indicating that his sayings are inspired by holy spirit and that these sayings are life-giving.

6:64

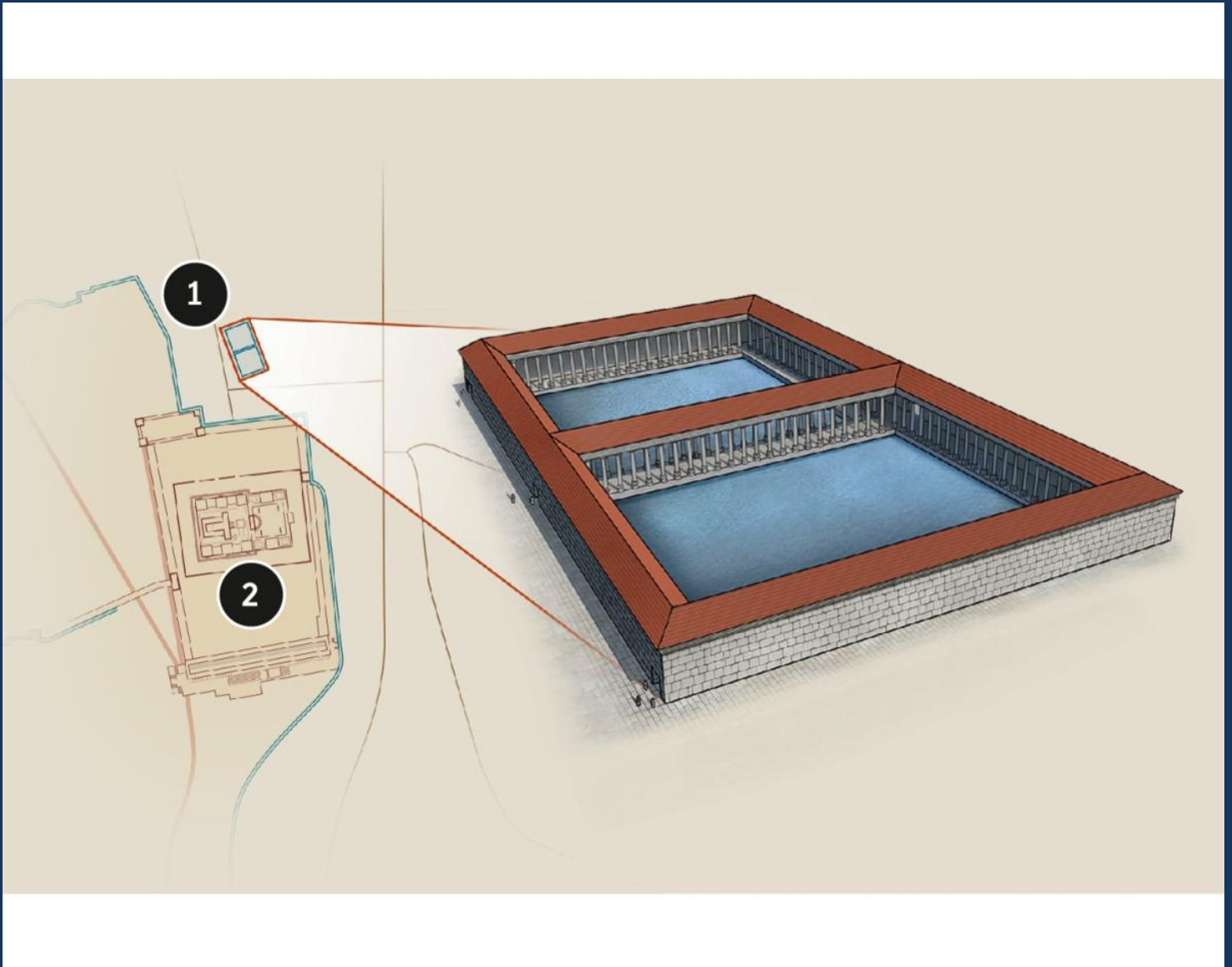
Jesus knew . . . the one who would betray him: Jesus was referring to Judas Iscariot. Jesus spent the entire night in prayer to his Father before selecting the 12 apostles. (Lu 6:12-16) So at first, Judas was faithful to God. However, Jesus knew from Hebrew Scripture prophecies that he would be betrayed by a close associate. (Ps 41:9; 109:8; Joh 13:18, 19) When Judas started to go bad, Jesus, who could read hearts and thoughts, detected this change. (Mt 9:4) By use of his foreknowledge, God knew that a trusted companion of Jesus would turn traitor. But it is inconsistent with

God's qualities and past dealings to think that Judas had to be the one who would fail, as if his failure were predestined.

from the beginning: This expression does not refer to Judas' birth or to his being selected as an apostle, which happened after Jesus had prayed the entire night. (Lu 6:12-16) Rather, it refers to the start of Judas' acting treacherously, which Jesus immediately discerned. (Joh 2:24, 25; Re 1:1; 2:23; see study notes on Joh 6:70; 13:11.) This also shows that Judas' actions were premeditated and planned, not the result of a sudden change of heart. The meaning of the term "beginning" (Greek, *ar·khe*) in the Christian Greek Scriptures is relative, depending on the context. For example, at 2Pe 3:4, "beginning" refers to the start of creation. But in most instances, it is used in a more limited sense. For instance, Peter said that the holy spirit fell on the Gentiles "just as it did also on us in the beginning." (Ac 11:15) Peter was not referring to the time of his birth or to the time when he was called to be an apostle. Rather, he was referring to the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., that is, "the beginning" of the outpouring of holy spirit for a specific purpose. (Ac 2:1-4) Other examples of how the context affects the meaning of the term "beginning" can be found at Lu 1:2; Joh 15:27; and 1Jo 2:7.

6:70

a slanderer: Or "a devil." The Greek word *di·a'bo·los*, most often used with reference to the Devil, means "slanderer." It is rendered "slanderers" (2Ti 3:3) or "slandorous" (1Ti 3:11; Tit 2:3) in the few other occurrences where the term does not refer to the Devil. In Greek, when used about the Devil, it is almost always preceded by the definite article. (See study note on Mt 4:1 and Glossary, "Definite Article.") Here the term is used to describe Judas Iscariot, who had developed a bad quality. It is possible that at this point Jesus detected that Judas was starting down a wrong course, one that later allowed Satan to use Judas as an ally in having Jesus killed.—Joh 13:2, 11.



Pool of Bethzatha

Only the Gospel of John mentions a pool called Bethzatha, located “in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate.” (Joh 5:2) This gate is likely the Sheep Gate that was mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. That gate was located in the NE corner of the city. (Ne 3:1, 32; 12:39) Or “the Sheep Gate” mentioned by John may have been built at a later date than the one mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. North of the temple mount, archaeologists have discovered the remains of a large pool that seems to match the description given by John. Excavations reveal a pool consisting of two basins and embracing an overall area of about 46 by 92 m (150 by 300 ft). The Gospel account says that the pool had “five colonnades” and could accommodate “a multitude” of sick and disabled people. (Joh 5:2, 3) The wall separating the northern and southern basins likely included one of these five colonnades, and the other four likely lined the outer perimeter of the pool area.

1. Bethzatha

2. Temple Mount

Related Scripture(s) Joh 5:2, 3



Baskets

In the Bible, a number of different words are used to describe various types of baskets. For example, the Greek word identifying the 12 vessels used to gather leftovers after Jesus miraculously fed about 5,000 men indicates that they may have been relatively small wicker handbaskets. However, a different Greek word is used to describe the seven baskets that contained the leftovers after Jesus fed about 4,000 men. (Mr 8:8, 9) This word denotes a large basket or hamper, and the same Greek word is used to describe the kind of basket in which Paul was lowered to the ground through an opening in the wall of Damascus.—Ac 9:25.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 14:20; Mt 15:37; Mt 16:9, 10; Mr 6:43; Lu 9:17; Joh 6:13

- Song 2 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Follow Jesus With the Right Motive”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 6:9-11—Jesus miraculously fed a large crowd (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:10)
 Joh 6:14, 24—The people concluded that Jesus was the Messiah and looked for him the next day (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:14)
 Joh 6:25-27, 54, 60, 66-69—Because the people had the wrong motive for associating with Jesus and his disciples, they stumbled at his words (nwtsty study notes on Joh 6:27, 54; w05 9/1 21 ¶13-14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 6:44—How does the Father draw people to himself? (nwtsty study note)

 Joh 6:64—In what sense did Jesus know “from the beginning” that Judas would betray him? (nwtsty study notes)

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) Joh 6:41-59

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person raises an objection that is common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. The person tells you that he is a Christian.
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 31
- **How Did You Do?:** (5 min.) Discussion. Invite the audience to relate experiences that resulted from trying to start conversations that led to a witness.
- **“Nothing Was Wasted”:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 35 ¶128-36
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 89 and Prayer


JOHN 5-6 | Follow Jesus With the Right Motive

6:9-11, 25-27, 54, 66-69

When Jesus gave an illustration that the disciples found difficult to understand, some were stumbled and would no longer walk with him. Just one day earlier, Jesus had fed them miraculously, confirming that his power was from God. So why did they stumble? Apparently, their motive for following Jesus was selfish. They were associating with Jesus for material advantage.

Each of us should ask himself: ‘Why do I follow Jesus? Is it primarily because of current and future blessings? Or is it because I love Jehovah and want to please him?’



 Why might we be stumbled if we **primarily** serve Jehovah for the following reasons?

- We enjoy being with God’s people
- We want to live in Paradise



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: How does God feel about those who sincerely seek him?

Scripture: 1Pe 5:6, 7

Link: To what extent does God pay attention to us as individuals?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: To what extent does God pay attention to us as individuals?

Scripture: Mt 10:29-31

Link: How do we know that God understands us?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: How do we know that God understands us?

Scripture: Ps 139:1, 2, 4

Link: How can God's care benefit us?

Sample Conversations - September 2018

SECOND RETURN VISIT

Publisher 1: But how do we know that God understands us notice what the faithful men David said of God here in Psalm 139, will read verses 1, 2, and 4. David said:

“O’ Jehovah, you have searched through me, and you know me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up. You discern my thoughts from afar. There is not a word on my tongue, but look! O’ Jehovah, you already know it well.”

Publisher 1: Now after reading those verses do you see anything that indicates just how thoroughly God understands us?

Jonah (householder): It says he knows our thoughts.

Publisher 1: Imagine that sometimes we may feel misunderstood by humans but God sees beneath the surface. He knows our thoughts our motives our worries. He understands us. Isn't that comforting.

Jonah (householder): Yes it definitely is, thank you. I mean it's here that today

Publisher 1: You're welcome. May I ask have you been going through a hard time?

Jonah (householder): Well...

Publisher 1: I'm so sorry to hear about that. Please know that we care about you and so does the creator. Next time we talk I would like to show you a really encouraging this steps, answers the question how can God's care benefit us. Would that be okay?

Jonah (householder): I would love that.

Oh, Walk With God!

(Micah 6:8)

1. Oh, walk with God in modesty;
 Show loyal love, and be true.
 Stay close to Jehovah, leaning on him,
 And let his strength sustain you.
 Keep holding tight to his faithful Word;
 You'll never drift away.
 So let God lead you by the hand
 As you listen and obey.

2. Oh, walk with God in holiness;
 Consider things that are pure.
 No matter how great temptations may be,
 He'll help you to endure them.
 Whatever praiseworthy things there are,
 Whatever things are true,
 Continue to consider them,
 And our God will be with you.

3. Oh, walk with God in happiness;
 Rejoice that he is your Friend.
 Be thankful for all the gifts that he gives
 And blessings that are endless.
 Oh, walk with God, let your heart be glad;
 Express your joy in song.
 Your joy will show, and all will know,
 To Jehovah you belong.

- Song 2 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Follow Jesus With the Right Motive”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 6:9-11—Jesus miraculously fed a large crowd (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:10)
 Joh 6:14, 24—The people concluded that Jesus was the Messiah and looked for him the next day (nwtsty study note on Joh 6:14)
 Joh 6:25-27, 54, 60, 66-69—Because the people had the wrong motive for associating with Jesus and his disciples, they stumbled at his words (nwtsty study notes on Joh 6:27, 54; w05 9/1 21 ¶13-14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 6:44—How does the Father draw people to himself? (nwtsty study note)

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Nothing Was Wasted



After Jesus miraculously fed 5,000 men plus women and children, he instructed his disciples: “Gather together the fragments left over, so that nothing is wasted.” (Joh 6:12) Jesus showed appreciation for Jehovah’s provisions by not wasting them.

In modern times, the Governing Body strives to imitate Jesus by making wise use of dedicated resources. For example, when building world headquarters in Warwick, New York, the brothers chose designs that allowed for the best use of donated funds.

HOW CAN WE AVOID WASTE . . .

- when we are at Christian meetings?



- when we obtain publications for our personal use? (*km 5/09 3 ¶4*)



- when we pick up literature items for use in the ministry? (*mwb17.02 4 ¶1*)



- when we share in the ministry? (*mwb17.02 4 ¶2, box*)



Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah

Over the last several years, the U.S. branch and world headquarters have had the responsibility of constructing several new buildings.

Nine of these buildings were awarded a Four Green Globes rating, which is the highest Green Globes certification possible.

The two at Wallkill were the Office Building and F Residence.

The seven at the new Warwick complex were the four residence buildings, the Maintenance Building, Office and Services Building, and Vehicle Maintenance Building.

Now, a good number of you may be asking right about now, ‘What exactly is this Green Globes program?’ Well, it is a program which assesses the “eco-friendliness” of a building starting from design through construction.

An independent third party assesses the environmental impact of a completed building on a scale of one to four Globes.

The organization that coordinates the program stated that a Four Green Globes rating “demonstrates national leadership “and excellence in the practice of water, energy and environmental efficiency to reduce environmental impact.” The organization that coordinates the Green Globes program drew our attention to how significant an accomplishment receiving this award is by mentioning that only 4 percent of properties that apply are able to achieve the top rating for even one of their buildings.

In spite of this, on September 14, 2016, the Warwick project was simultaneously awarded seven of these Four Green Globes for all buildings that qualified for consideration.

Now, understanding the significance of this award, you probably feel a measure of pride and satisfaction with this milestone.

Another question you may have is, ‘How does this environmental design at Warwick and Wallkill benefit the organization?’ Well, since Revelation 11:18 points out that it is Jehovah that will ultimately need to step in to save our earth from ruin, the intent is not to join some sustainable design fad or try to do what only Jehovah can do.

This means that we don’t design simply to be “green” as many in the world would.

Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah

Rather, **we saw four noteworthy benefits from this level of design.**

First and foremost, Jehovah's name is glorified.

It often happens that during the design phase of a project, claims are made as to the anticipated environmental impact of a building's design.

However, the final outcome after construction often falls short of what is promised, which can leave officials quite frustrated.

With Warwick, we modestly made known our goal to the local officials and community that we would strive to achieve three of four Green Globes.

In contrast, this award confirms that Jehovah's Witnesses have kept our word by achieving not three but four Green Globes.

Keeping our word has brought honor to Jehovah and built a trustworthy reputation in the community.

And that leads to our **second benefit.**

This top environmental rating confirms that we, as an organization, respect Jehovah's creation.

Being known as responsible stewards of the environment allows us to have many benefits, one of which is in the case of Walkill.

Our reputation made it easier to gain approvals to expand our facilities there.

A **third benefit** is to our neighbors in the surrounding community.

For example, the drinking water in the adjoining lake is not contaminated.

Our site lighting doesn't light the night sky.

The use of native plants serves to protect the health of the beautiful surrounding forest that we all enjoy.

And the design and location of the buildings on-site preserve the spectacular views from the adjoining forest trails.

Yet, a **fourth benefit** to the organization is that this level of design makes the best use of donated funds.

Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah

While experts vary on the exact percentages, over the lifetime of a typical building, operational and maintenance costs can be four to six times the initial construction costs.

So the more efficient the design and construction, the more long-term savings are realized for the organization.

For instance, an independent energy consultant recently calculated that we could expect to see savings of over one million dollars annually from the energy-efficient measures incorporated into our project as compared to a standard construction of similar facilities.

But you may be curious as to what energy and environmental features were incorporated into the Warwick project to earn these awards and save funds.

These features covered multiple aspects of design.

They basically fall into five categories: landscaping, rainwater control, lighting control, energy efficiency, and water usage.

With respect to the **first category** —landscaping— a control system checks rainfall and local weather conditions to determine how much water is needed in each irrigation zone, and drought-resistant native plants and trees also reduce water needs.

The **second category** is rainwater control.

All rainwater from the roofs and building surfaces is treated with green roofs, bioretention areas, permeable concrete paving, underground sand filters, and storm-water planters.

Yet a **third category** is lighting control.

Lighting sensors in perimeter window spaces are linked to a control system that balances natural lighting with fluorescent lighting, while still permitting the occupant control as desired.

The **fourth category** is energy efficiency.

High-efficiency HVAC equipment, boilers, and chillers were incorporated.

Eco-Friendly Design Brings Honor to Jehovah

A geothermal well field consisting of some 120 wells takes advantage of renewable energy to supplement building heating and cooling needs.

And with respect to our **fifth category** —water usage— water is conserved in all the buildings by means of plumbing fixtures that use lower volumes of water.

As we stated earlier, the operation and maintenance expense is the greatest part of a building's total cost.

To the extent that we practice water, lighting, and energy conservation in our individual rooms and work places —to that extent we can have a personal share in realizing the full benefit, potential, and purpose of these new facilities at Walkill and Warwick.

And what knitted together all of these features, making the awards possible though, were the people.

This was only because of the close cooperation and tireless efforts of the thousands who worked in various areas such as design, purchasing and construction.

It truly was a strong testimony to the power of unity.

Certainly, Jehovah's heart is filled with joy as he sees all the fine work that has been accomplished and the glory that it's brought and will continue to bring to his name.

THE FAMOUS SERMON ON THE MOUNT

MATTHEW 5:1-7:29 LUKE 6:17-49



HOW TO GAIN LIFE

The apostles and other sincere ones want to live in a way that pleases God, but that is not easy in their circumstances. Many Pharisees, for example, are critical, harshly judging others. So Jesus admonishes his listeners: “Stop judging that you may not be judged; for with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged.”—Matthew 7:1, 2.

It is dangerous to follow the lead of the overly critical Pharisees, as Jesus illustrates: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Both will fall into a pit, will they not?” Then how should Jesus’ listeners view others? Not with a critical eye, because that would be a serious offense. He asks: “How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, allow me to remove the straw that is in your eye,’ while you yourself do not see the rafter in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the straw that is in your brother’s eye.”—Luke 6:39-42.

This does not mean that the disciples are not to make any judgments at all. “Do not give what is

holy to dogs nor throw your pearls before swine,” Jesus urges them. (Matthew 7:6) Truths from God’s Word are precious, like figurative pearls. If some people act like animals, showing no appreciation for these precious truths, the disciples should leave them and seek ones who are receptive.

Returning to the subject of prayer, Jesus stresses the need to persist in it. “Keep on asking, and it will be given you.” God is ready to answer prayers, as Jesus emphasizes by asking: “Which one of you, if his son asks for bread, will hand him a stone? . . . Therefore, if you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will your Father who is in the heavens give good things to those asking him!”—Matthew 7:7-11.

Jesus then sets out what has become a famous rule of conduct: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them.” Should not all of us take to heart and apply that positive exhortation in our dealings with others? Doing so, however, may be challenging, as revealed by Jesus’ instruction: “Go in through the narrow

gate, because broad is the gate and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are finding it.”—Matthew 7:12-14.

There are those who would try to divert the disciples from the way leading to life, so Jesus warns: “Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves.” (Matthew 7:15) Good trees and bad trees can be recognized by their fruits, Jesus notes. It is similar with people. Thus, we can recognize false prophets by their teachings and actions. Yes, Jesus explains, it is not simply what a person *says* that makes him his disciple but also what he *does*. Some people claim that Jesus is their Lord, but what if they are not doing God’s will? Jesus says: “I will declare to them: ‘I never knew you! Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!’”—Matthew 7:23.

Concluding his sermon, Jesus declares: “Everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does them will

be like a discreet man who built his house on the rock. And the rain poured down and the floods came and the winds blew and lashed against that house, but it did not cave in, for it had been founded on the rock.” (Matthew 7:24, 25) Why did the house stand? Because the man “dug and went down deep and laid a foundation on the rock.” (Luke 6: 48) So more is involved than just hearing Jesus’ words. We must exert ourselves to ‘do them.’

What, though, about the one “hearing these sayings” but “not doing them”? He is “like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.” (Matthew 7: 26) Rain, floods, and winds would cause such a house to collapse.

The crowds are astounded at Jesus’ way of teaching in this sermon. He does so as a person having authority and not as the religious leaders. Probably many of those who listened to him become his disciples.



- ◇ What does Jesus say about judging others, yet why do we need to make some judgments at times?
- ◇ What does Jesus further say about prayer, and what rule of conduct does he give?
- ◇ How does Jesus show that being his disciple is not easy and that being misled is a danger?

89 *Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed*

(Luke 11:28)

1. If we have listened to Christ, will we show it?
His teaching shines as it shows us the way.
It makes us happy to hear and to know it,
But we'll be blessed if we know and obey.

(CHORUS)

*Listen, obey, and be blessed
When you hear God's will expressed.
If you'd be happy and enter his rest,
Listen, obey, and be blessed.*

2. Our way of life, like a house, gives protection
When it is built on the rock, not on sand.
If we apply Jesus' loving direction,
We'll build a life which on bedrock will stand.

(Chorus)

3. Just as a tree rooted deep by the waters
Gives of its fruit when each season arrives,
If we obey as God's own sons and daughters,
We'll all be blessed and enjoy endless lives.

(Chorus)

JULY 2018

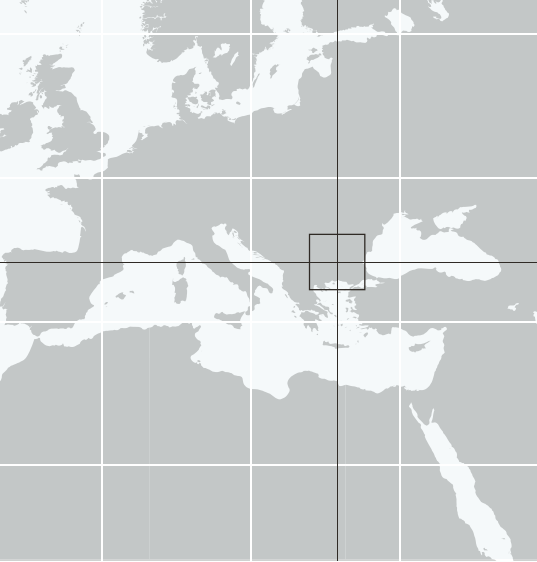
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
SEPTEMBER 3-30, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

BULGARIA

This reenactment shows the circumstances under which a Bible study is conducted in Bulgarian prisons with interested inmates

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Whose Recognition Do You Seek?

Many today are concerned with seeking recognition from this wicked world. This article will discuss why we should maintain our focus on gaining the greatest form of recognition—the recognition granted by Jehovah to his faithful servants. We will also discuss how Jehovah shows this recognition, sometimes in very unexpected ways.

16 WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 10-16

Where Are Your Eyes Looking?

In this article, we will analyze why the faithful man Moses lost out on the privilege of entering the Promised Land. We will also be helped to see how we can avoid falling into the trap that ensnared Moses.

PUBLISHERS

2,475

BIBLE STUDIES

2,950

MEMORIAL
ATTENDANCE (2017)

5,327

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Unless otherwise indicated,
Scripture quotations are
from the modern-language
New World Translation
of the Holy Scriptures.

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“Who Is on Jehovah’s Side?”

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We Belong to Jehovah

Jehovah can rightfully claim ownership of all humans. Thus, he requires our exclusive devotion. Some individuals, though, pursue a course of disobedience while pretending to be faithful to God. In the first article, we will draw vital lessons from the Bible accounts of Cain, Solomon, Moses, and Aaron. In the second article, we will consider various ways that we can show appreciation for the privilege of belonging to Jehovah as his people.

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2. Who is your friend, O God?

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Who brings delight and makes you rejoice?

Whose name to you is known?

All who exalt your name,

All who your Word obey,

All who are faithful, honest in heart,

Truthful in all they say.

3. Throwing our cares on you,

Baring our hearts in prayer,

Drawing us closer, bonding in love,

Feeling your daily care,

We yearn to be your friend.

Long may our friendship grow.

No greater Friend could we ever gain,

No greater Friend we'll know.



SONGS:

28, 32

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

While professing to worship Jehovah, how did Cain and Solomon lose Jehovah's favor?

How did Moses and Aaron seize opportunities to show that they were on Jehovah's side?

How can we fully benefit from Jehovah's mercy and forgiveness?

“Who Is on Jehovah’s Side?”

“Jehovah your God you should fear, him you should serve, to him you should cling.”—DEUT. 10:20.

IT MAKES sense to cling to Jehovah. No one is more powerful, wise, or loving than our God! Who of us would not want to be on his side? (Ps. 96:4-6) Still, some of God’s worshippers have

1, 2. (a) Why is it wise to be on Jehovah’s side? (b) What will we consider in this article?

wavered when a situation called for them to take sides with Jehovah.

² In this article, we will consider examples of individuals who claimed to be on Jehovah's side while at the same time following a course that offended him. These accounts contain vital lessons that can help us remain fully loyal to Jehovah.

JEHOVAH SEARCHES THE HEART

³ Consider the case of Cain. He did not profess to worship any other god but Jehovah. Cain's worship, however, was not acceptable to God. There were seeds of wickedness growing deep within his heart. (1 John 3:12) Jehovah reached out to Cain and told him: "If you turn to doing good, will you not be restored to favor? But if you do not turn to doing good, sin is crouching at the door, and its craving is to dominate you; but will you get the mastery over it?" (Gen. 4:6, 7) Jehovah was, in effect, telling Cain, "If you repent and take a firm stand on my side, I will, in turn, be on your side."

⁴ If only Cain would correct his thinking, Jehovah would restore him to favor. But Cain did not

3. Why did Jehovah reach out to Cain, and what did He tell him?

4. Given the opportunity to be on Jehovah's side, what did Cain do?

listen to the counsel. Wrong thinking and selfish desire led him to wrong actions. (Jas. 1:14, 15) In his youth, Cain may never have imagined that he would take a stand against Jehovah. In time, however, he did the unimaginable—he rebelled against God and killed his own brother!

⁵ Like Cain, a Christian today could be following the wrong path even while professing to worship Jehovah. (Jude 11) For instance, one could nurture immoral fantasies, greedy thoughts, or hateful feelings toward a fellow Christian. (1 John 2:15-17; 3:15) This thinking can lead to sinful actions. All the while, one could be active in the ministry and regular at congregation meetings. Other humans may not be aware of our thoughts and conduct, but Jehovah sees all things and knows if we are not wholeheartedly on his side.—Read Jeremiah 17:9, 10.

⁶ Even so, Jehovah is not quick to give up on us. When a person's steps lead him away from God, Jehovah urges him: "Return to me, and I will return to you." (Mal. 3:7) Especially when we struggle with weaknesses, Jehovah wants us to take a stand

5. What kind of thinking could cause us to lose Jehovah's favor?

6. How does Jehovah help us to "get the mastery over" sinful inclinations when we take a firm stand on his side?

against badness. (Isa. 55:7) If we do, he will in turn prove to be on our side by giving us the spiritual, emotional, and physical strength needed to “get the mastery over” our sinful inclinations.—Gen. 4:7.

“DO NOT BE MISLED”

⁷ We can learn much from the example of King Solomon. During his younger years, Solomon looked to Jehovah for guidance. God gave him great wisdom and entrusted him with the building of a magnificent temple in Jerusalem. But Solomon lost his friendship with Jehovah. (1 Ki. 3:12; 11:1, 2) God’s Law specifically prohibited a Hebrew king from taking “many wives for himself, so that his heart [might] not go astray.” (Deut. 17:17) Solomon disobeyed, eventually marrying 700 women. He brought into his household an additional 300 concubines. (1 Ki. 11:3) Many of his wives were non-Israelites, who worshipped false gods. Hence, Solomon also disobeyed God’s law against marrying foreign women.—Deut. 7:3, 4.

⁸ Solomon’s gradual departure from Jehovah’s requirements led him in time to extreme

7. How did Solomon lose his good standing with Jehovah?

8. To what extreme did Solomon offend Jehovah?

wrongdoing. Solomon built an altar to the idol goddess Ashtoreth and at least one other altar to the false god Chemosh. There he joined his wives in pagan worship. He built those altars on, of all places, a mountain located directly in front of Jerusalem, where he had built Jehovah's temple! (1 Ki. 11:5-8; 2 Ki. 23:13) Perhaps Solomon fooled himself into thinking that Jehovah would overlook his disobedience as long as he also continued to offer sacrifices at the temple.

⁹ But Jehovah never overlooks wrongdoing. The Bible reports: "Jehovah became furious at Solomon, because his heart had inclined away from Jehovah . . . , who had appeared to him twice and had warned him about this very thing, that he should not go after other gods. But he did not obey what Jehovah had commanded." As a result, God withdrew his approval and support. Solomon's heirs lost the unified kingdom of Israel and suffered many calamities for generations to come.—1 Ki. 11:9-13.

¹⁰ As in Solomon's case, one of the greatest threats to spirituality is friendship with those who

9. What resulted from Solomon's disregard for God's warnings?

10. What can threaten our good standing with Jehovah?



What effect are your associates having
on your relationship with Jehovah?
(See paragraph 11)

do not understand or respect Jehovah's standards. Some may be associated with the congregation but may be spiritually weak. Others could be relatives, neighbors, coworkers, or schoolmates who are not worshippers of Jehovah. In any case, if our close associates do not show a high regard for Jehovah's standards, they can in time destroy our good standing with God.

¹¹ **Read 1 Corinthians 15:33.** Most people have some good qualities, and many outside the congregation do not engage in blatant misconduct. If

11. What can help us to determine whether an associate should be avoided?

that is true of your acquaintances, can you assume that they are good associations? Ask yourself what effect their companionship will have on your relationship with Jehovah. Will they improve it? What is in their heart? For example, are their conversations almost exclusively about fashion, money, gadgets, entertainment, or other material pursuits? Does their speech often include disparaging comments about others or obscene jesting? Jesus aptly warned: “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matt. 12:34) If you realize that your associates pose a threat to your good standing with Jehovah, act decisively by limiting and if necessary ending such friendships.—Prov. 13:20.

JEHOVAH REQUIRES EXCLUSIVE DEVOTION

¹² Additional lessons can be learned from what took place shortly after the Israelites were freed from Egypt. The people gathered in front of Mount Sinai. There Jehovah made his presence strikingly real. A miraculous dark cloud formed. Jehovah produced thunder, lightning, smoke, and what seemed to be the loud and constant sound of

12. (a) What did Jehovah make clear to the Israelites shortly after they left Egypt? (b) How did the Israelites respond to God’s requirement for exclusive devotion?

a horn. (Ex. 19:16-19) In this setting, Jehovah revealed himself to the Israelites as “a God who requires exclusive devotion.” He assured them that he would be loyal to those who love him and keep his commandments. (Read Exodus 20:1-6.) In effect, Jehovah was telling his people, “If you prove to be on my side, I will prove to be on your side.” How would you respond to such a promise of loyalty from Jehovah God? You would surely do as the Israelites did. They “answered with one voice: ‘All the words that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do.’” (Ex. 24:3) Soon, however, something unexpected put the Israelites’ loyalty to the test.

¹³ The Israelites had been frightened by the dark cloud, the lightning, and the other awe-inspiring signs from God. At their request, Moses agreed to be their spokesperson for all communication with Jehovah on Mount Sinai. (Ex. 20:18-21) Moses was on the mountaintop for a long time. Were the Israelites now stranded in the wilderness without their trustworthy leader? Apparently, the people’s faith was too dependent on Moses’ visible presence. They became anxious and told Aaron: “Make for us a god who will go ahead of us, because we do not know what has happened to this Moses, the man

13. What circumstances put the loyalty of the Israelites to the test?

who led us up out of the land of Egypt.”—Ex. 32: 1, 2.

¹⁴ The people knew that idolatry was a serious offense against Jehovah. (Ex. 20:3-5) But soon they were worshipping a golden calf! Despite this obvious act of disobedience, the Israelites somehow fooled themselves into thinking that they were still on Jehovah’s side. Why, Aaron even called their calf worship “a festival to Jehovah”! How did Jehovah react? He felt betrayed. Jehovah told Moses that the people had “corrupted themselves” and had “deviated from the way [He] commanded them to go.” In his “burning anger,” Jehovah even considered wiping out the newly formed nation of Israel.—Ex. 32:5-10.

¹⁵ Jehovah decided not to eliminate the Israelites. His mercy gave loyal worshippers an opportunity to take a firm stand on his side. (Ex. 32:14) After witnessing the unrestrained behavior of the people—shouting, singing, and dancing before an idol—Moses crushed the golden calf into powder. He then proclaimed: “Who is on Jehovah’s side?”

14. What did the Israelites fool themselves into thinking, and what was Jehovah’s reaction?

15, 16. How did Moses and Aaron show that they were firmly on Jehovah’s side? (See opening picture.)

Come to me!” In response, “all the Levites gathered around” Moses.—Ex. 32:17-20, 26.

¹⁶ Although initially involved in setting up the idol, Aaron repented and joined the rest of the Levites on Jehovah’s side. These loyal ones were not just taking sides with Jehovah but were at the same time separating themselves from the wrongdoers. That was a wise move; that day thousands lost their lives because of their idolatry. However, those who were on Jehovah’s side were promised a blessing.—Ex. 32:27-29.

¹⁷ The apostle Paul drew attention to the golden calf episode and warned: “These things became examples for us, in order for us not to . . . become idolaters, as some of them did. [The examples] were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come. So let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.” (1 Cor. 10:6, 7, 11, 12) As Paul pointed out, even true worshippers could become involved in wrong practices. Those who give in to temptation may think that they still have a good standing with Jehovah. But merely wanting to be Jehovah’s friend or claiming to be loyal to him does

17. What do Paul’s words about the golden calf episode teach us?

not always mean that one is actually approved by Jehovah.—1 Cor. 10:1-5.

¹⁸ Just as the Israelites became anxious over Moses' delay in coming down from Sinai, Christians today may feel anxious over the seeming delay of Jehovah's day of judgment and the coming of the new world. The fulfillment of these promises may seem too far off in the future or too good to be true. Left unchecked, such thinking can lead us to put fleshly pursuits ahead of Jehovah's will. In time, we could drift away from Jehovah and eventually engage in practices that we would never have considered being involved in when we were in good spiritual health.

¹⁹ Never should we forget that Jehovah requires wholehearted obedience and exclusive devotion. (Ex. 20:5) Any wandering away from Jehovah's worship really means doing Satan's will, and that could lead only to disaster. Hence, Paul reminds us: "You cannot be drinking the cup of Jehovah and the cup of demons; you cannot be partaking of 'the table of Jehovah' and the table of demons." —1 Cor. 10:21.

18. What could cause us to drift away from Jehovah, and with what consequences?

19. What fundamental truth should we never forget, and why?

CLING TO JEHOVAH!

²⁰ The Bible accounts about Cain, Solomon, and the Israelites at Mount Sinai have a noteworthy element in common. These individuals had opportunity to “repent . . . and turn around.” (Acts 3:19) Clearly, Jehovah is not quick to give up on those who take a false step. In Aaron’s case, Jehovah extended forgiveness. Today, warnings from Jehovah may come in the form of a Bible account, Bible-based publications, or kind advice from a fellow Christian. When we heed the warnings, we are assured of Jehovah’s mercy.

²¹ Jehovah’s undeserved kindness has a purpose. (2 Cor. 6:1) It gives us an opportunity “to reject ungodliness and worldly desires.” (Read Titus 2: 11-14.) As long as we live “amid this present system of things,” we will face situations that will put our exclusive devotion to Jehovah to the test. May we always be ready to take a firm stand on his side, for it is ‘Jehovah our God we should fear, him we should serve, and to him we should cling’!—Deut. 10:20.

20. Even after we take a false step, how can Jehovah help us?

21. What should we be determined to do when our loyalty to Jehovah is put to the test?

Take Sides With Jehovah!

(Exodus 32:26)

1. Once with confusion our sad hearts were filled,
Drinking the cup false religion distilled;
But with what happiness our hearts were thrilled
When of God's Kingdom we heard.

(CHORUS)

*Take sides with Jehovah; Make him your delight.
He'll never forsake you; Walk on in his light.
Tell, tell the glad tidings Of freedom and peace.
His rule by Christ Jesus Will ever increase.*

2. Shoulder to shoulder we stand on God's side,
Preaching the news of his Kingdom earth wide.
Now is the time for each one to decide,
Time to take sides with our God.

(Chorus)

3. We will not fear what the Devil can do.
Trusting Jehovah will carry us through.
Though they are many and though we are few,
God is our strength and our might.

(Chorus)

