

- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

#### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Do You Love Me More Than These?”:** (10 min.)  
Joh 21:1-3—After Jesus’ death, Peter and other disciples went fishing  
Joh 21:4-14—The resurrected Jesus appeared to Peter and other disciples  
Joh 21:15-19—Jesus helped Peter understand his priority (*nwtsty* study notes on Joh 21:15, 17)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Joh 20:17—What is the meaning of Jesus’ words to Mary Magdalene? (*nwtsty* study note)

Joh 20:28—Why did Thomas call Jesus “my Lord and my God”? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Joh 20:1-18

#### APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs* 79 ¶21-22  
—Invite the person to the meeting.

#### LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 37
- **Local Needs:** (15 min.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 42
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 45 and Prayer

## JOHN 20-21 | “Do You Love Me More Than These?”

### 21:1-19

In Bible times, successful fishermen were patient, hardworking, and willing to endure hardship in the pursuit of a worthwhile reward. (*w12* 8/1 18-20) Such qualities would serve Peter well as a fisher of men. However, Peter needed to decide what he would put first in his life—a secular career that he enjoyed or the work of spiritually feeding Jesus’ followers.



**What adjustments have you made in order to put Kingdom interests first?**



*“Make Sure of the  
More Important Things”*  
(Philippians 1:10)

1. How great our need today for discernment,  
To know the things that are true,  
To know which things have greater importance,  
To know which things we must do!

*(CHORUS)*

*Love what is good; Hate what is bad.  
Make God's heart glad;  
Oh, what rich blessings it brings when we learn,  
When we discern,  
And when we do the important things!*

2. And what could be of greater importance  
Than sharing Kingdom good news,  
To search for those who hunger for truth  
And to help them God's way to choose?

*(Chorus)*

3. If we take care to do what's important,  
Then true contentment we'll find.  
The peace surpassing all understanding  
Will guard our heart and our mind.

*(Chorus)*

## JOHN 19:33-20:15

him. **33** But on coming to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. **34** But one of the soldiers jabbed his side with a spear,<sup>a</sup> and immediately blood and water came out. **35** And the one who has seen it has given this witness, and his witness is true, and he knows that what he says is true, so that you also may believe.<sup>b</sup> **36** In fact, these things took place for the scripture to be fulfilled: "Not a bone of his will be broken."<sup>\*c</sup> **37** And again, a different scripture says: "They will look to the one whom they pierced."<sup>d</sup>

**38** Now after these things, Joseph of Ar-i-ma-the'a, who was a disciple of Jesus but a secret one because of his fear of the Jews,<sup>e</sup> asked Pilate if he could take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body away.<sup>f</sup> **39** Nic-o-de'mus,<sup>g</sup> the man who had come to him in the night the first time, also came, bringing a mixture\* of myrrh and aloes weighing about a hundred pounds.<sup>#h</sup> **40** So they took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices,<sup>i</sup> according to the burial custom of the Jews. **41** Incidentally, there was a garden at the place where he was executed,<sup>\*</sup> and in the garden was a new tomb<sup>#j</sup> in which no one had ever yet been laid. **42** Because it was the day of Preparation<sup>k</sup> of the Jews and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

**20** On the first day of the week, Mary Mag'da-lene came to the tomb<sup>#</sup> early,<sup>l</sup> while it was still dark, and she saw that

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**19:36** \*Or "crushed." **19:39** \*Or possibly, "a roll." #That is, Roman pounds. See App. B14. **19:41** \*Or "executed on the stake." **19:41; 20:1** #Or "memorial tomb."

the stone had already been taken away from the tomb.<sup>#a</sup> **2** So she came running to Simon Peter and to the other disciple, for whom Jesus had affection,<sup>b</sup> and she said to them: "They have taken away the Lord out of the tomb,<sup>c</sup> and we do not know where they have laid him."

**3** Then Peter and the other disciple set out for the tomb. **4** The two of them began running together, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and reached the tomb first. **5** Stooping forward, he saw the linen cloths lying there,<sup>d</sup> but he did not go in. **6** Then Simon Peter also came, following him, and he went into the tomb. And he saw the linen cloths lying there. **7** The cloth that had been on his head was not lying with the other cloth bands but was rolled up in a place by itself. **8** Then the other disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. **9** For they did not yet understand the scripture that he must rise from the dead.<sup>e</sup> **10** So the disciples went back to their homes.

**11** Mary, however, kept standing outside near the tomb, weeping. While she was weeping, she stooped forward to look into the tomb, **12** and she saw two angels<sup>f</sup> in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and one at the feet. **13** And they said to her: "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them: "They have taken my Lord away, and I do not know where they have laid him." **14** After saying this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.<sup>g</sup> **15** Jesus said to her: "**Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?**" She, thinking it was the gardener, said to him: "Sir,

if you have carried him off, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.” **16** Jesus said to her: **“Mary!”** On turning around, she said to him in Hebrew: *“Rab·bo’ni!”* (which means “Teacher!”) **17** Jesus said to her: **“Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers<sup>a</sup> and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father<sup>b</sup> and your Father and to my God<sup>c</sup> and your God.’”** **18** Mary Mag’da·lene came and brought the news to the disciples: “I have seen the Lord!” And she told them what he had said to her.<sup>d</sup>

**19** When it was late that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst and said to them: **“May you have peace.”<sup>e</sup>** **20** After saying this, he showed them his hands and his side.<sup>f</sup> Then the disciples rejoiced at seeing the Lord.<sup>g</sup> **21** Jesus said to them again: **“May you have peace.<sup>h</sup> Just as the Father has sent me,<sup>i</sup> I also am sending you.”<sup>j</sup>** **22** After saying this he blew on them and said to them: **“Receive holy spirit.<sup>k</sup>** **23** If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if you retain those of anyone, they are retained.”

**24** But Thomas,<sup>l</sup> one of the Twelve, who was called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. **25** So the other disciples were telling him: “We have seen the Lord!” But he said to them: “Unless I see in his hands the print\* of the nails and stick my finger into the print of the nails and stick my hand into his side,<sup>m</sup> I will never believe it.”

**26** Well, eight days later his disciples were again indoors, and Thomas was with them. Jesus

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20:25 \* Or “mark.”

## JOHN 20:16–21:6

came, although the doors were locked, and he stood in their midst and said: **“May you have peace.”<sup>a</sup>** **27** Next he said to Thomas: **“Put your finger here, and see my hands, and take your hand and stick it into my side, and stop doubting\* but believe.”** **28** In answer Thomas said to him: **“My Lord and my God!”** **29** Jesus said to him: **“Because you have seen me, have you believed? Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.”**

**30** To be sure, Jesus also performed many other signs before the disciples, which are not written down in this scroll.<sup>b</sup> **31** But these have been written down so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and because of believing, you may have life by means of his name.<sup>c</sup>

**21** After this Jesus manifested himself\* again to the disciples, at the Sea of Ti-be’ri-as. He made the manifestation in this way. **2** There were together Simon Peter, Thomas (who was called the Twin),<sup>d</sup> Na-than’a-el<sup>e</sup> from Ca’na of Gal’i-lee, the sons of Zeb’e-dee,<sup>f</sup> and two others of his disciples. **3** Simon Peter said to them: **“I am going fishing.”** They said to him: **“We are coming with you.”** They went out and got aboard the boat, but during that night they caught nothing.<sup>g</sup>

**4** However, just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.<sup>h</sup> **5** Then Jesus said to them: **“Children, you do not have anything\* to eat, do you?”** They answered: **“No!”** **6** He said to them: **“Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.”** So they cast it, but

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**20:27** \*Lit., “being unbelieving.” **21:1**

\*Or “appeared.” **21:5** \*Or “any fish.”

## JOHN 21:7-25

they were not able to haul it in because of the large number of fish.<sup>a</sup> **7** Then the disciple whom Jesus loved<sup>b</sup> said to Peter: "It is the Lord!" Now Simon Peter, on hearing that it was the Lord, put on\* his outer garment, for he was naked,<sup>#</sup> and plunged into the sea. **8** But the other disciples came in the small boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not a long way from land, only about 300 feet\* away.

**9** When they came ashore, they saw there a charcoal fire with fish lying on it and bread. **10** Jesus said to them: "**Bring some of the fish you just now caught.**" **11** So Simon Peter went on board and hauled the net ashore full of big fish, 153 of them. And though there were so many, the net did not burst. **12** Jesus said to them: "**Come, have your breakfast.**" Not one of the disciples had the courage to ask him: "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. **13** Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. **14** This was now the third time<sup>c</sup> that Jesus appeared to the disciples after being raised up from the dead.

**15** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: "**Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?**" He replied to him: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "**Feed my lambs.**"<sup>d</sup> **16** Again he said to him a second time: "**Simon son of John, do you love me?**" He replied: "Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you." He said to him: "**Shepherd my little sheep.**"<sup>e</sup> **17** He said to him a third time: "**Simon son of**

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**21:7** \*Or "girded about himself." <sup>#</sup>Or "lightly clad." **21:8** \*About 90 m. Lit., "about 200 cubits." See App. B14.

John, do you have affection for me?" Peter became grieved that he asked him the third time: "Do you have affection for me?" So he said to him: "Lord, you are aware of all things; you know that I have affection for you." Jesus said to him: "Feed my little sheep.<sup>a</sup> 18 Most truly I say to you, when you were younger, you used to clothe yourself and walk about where you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another man will clothe you and carry you where you do not wish." 19 He said this to indicate by what sort of death he would glorify God. After he said this, he said to him: "Continue following me."<sup>b</sup>

20 Peter turned around and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved<sup>c</sup> following, the one who at the evening meal had also leaned back on his chest and said: "Lord, who is the one betraying you?" 21 So when he caught sight of him, Peter said to Jesus: "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him: "If it is my will for him to remain until I come, of what concern is that to you? You continue following me." 23 So the saying went out among the brothers that this disciple would not die. However, Jesus did not say to him that he would not die, but he said: "If it is my will for him to remain until I come, of what concern is that to you?"

24 This is the disciple<sup>d</sup> who gives this witness about these things and who wrote these things, and we know that his witness is true.

25 There are also, in fact, many other things that Jesus did, which if ever they were written in full detail, I suppose the world itself could not contain the scrolls written.<sup>e</sup>



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## JOHN 20-21 | “Do You Love Me More Than These?”

### 21:1-19

In Bible times, successful fishermen were patient, hardworking, and willing to endure hardship in the pursuit of a worthwhile reward. (*w12* 8/1 18-20) Such qualities would serve Peter well as a fisher of men. However, Peter needed to decide what he would put first in his life—a secular career that he enjoyed or the work of spiritually feeding Jesus’ followers.



**What adjustments have you made in order to put Kingdom interests first?**



**November 5-11**

**Treasures From God's Word**

John 21:1-3—After Jesus' death, Peter and other disciples went fishing

**John 21:1-3:** After this Jesus manifested himself again to the disciples, at the Sea of Tiberias. He made the manifestation in this way. There were together Simon Peter, Thomas (who was called the Twin), Nathanael from Cana of Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. Simon Peter said to them: "I am going fishing." They said to him: "We are coming with you." They went out and got aboard the boat, but during that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4-14—The resurrected Jesus appeared to Peter and other disciples

**John 21:4-14:** However, just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them: "Children, you do not have anything to eat, do you?" They answered: "No!" He said to them: "Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." So they cast it, but they were not able to haul it in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter: "It is the Lord!" Now Simon Peter, on hearing that it was the Lord, put on his outer garment, for he was naked, and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the small boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not a long way from land, only about 300 feet away. When they came ashore, they saw there a charcoal fire with fish lying on it and bread. Jesus said to them: "Bring some of the fish you just now caught." So Simon Peter went on board and hauled the net ashore full of big fish, 153 of them. And though there were

so many, the net did not burst. Jesus said to them: “Come, have your breakfast.” Not one of the disciples had the courage to ask him: “Who are you?” because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after being raised up from the dead.

John 21:15-19—Jesus helped Peter understand his priority

**John 21:15-19:** When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter: “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” He replied to him: “Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you.” He said to him: “Feed my lambs.” Again he said to him a second time: “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He replied: “Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you.” He said to him: “Shepherd my little sheep.” He said to him a third time: “Simon son of John, do you have affection for me?” Peter became grieved that he asked him the third time: “Do you have affection for me?” So he said to him: “Lord, you are aware of all things; you know that I have affection for you.” Jesus said to him: “Feed my little sheep. Most truly I say to you, when you were younger, you used to clothe yourself and walk about where you wanted. But when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands and another man will clothe you and carry you where you do not wish.” He said this to indicate by what sort of death he would glorify God. After he said this, he said to him: “Continue following me.”

## Study notes

**Jesus said to Simon Peter:** This conversation between Jesus and Peter took place shortly after Peter had denied Jesus three times. Jesus asked three probing questions about Peter’s feelings for him, to the point that “Peter became grieved.” (John 21:17) John’s

account recorded at John 21:15-17 uses two different Greek verbs: *agapa'o*, rendered **love**, and *phile'o*, rendered **have affection**. Twice Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Both times Peter earnestly affirmed that he had "affection" for Jesus. Finally, Jesus asked: "Do you have affection for me?" Again Peter asserted that he did. Each time Peter affirmed his love, Jesus emphasized that this love and affection should motivate Peter to **feed** and "shepherd" Jesus' disciples spiritually, here referred to as his **lambs**, or "little sheep." (John 21:16, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-3) Jesus allowed Peter to confirm his love three times and then entrusted him with the responsibility to care for the sheep. In this way, Jesus dispelled any doubts that he had forgiven Peter for denying him three times.

**do you love me more than these?:** Grammatically, the phrase "more than these" can be understood in more than one way. Some scholars prefer such a meaning as "do you love me more than you love these other disciples?" or "do you love me more than these disciples love me?" However, the likely meaning is "do you love me more than these things?" that is, the fish they caught or the things connected with the fishing business. So the overall idea of the verse seems to be: 'Do you love me more than material things or pursuits? If so, feed my lambs.' The question would be appropriate in view of Peter's past. Although Peter was one of Jesus' first disciples (John 1:35-42), he did not immediately follow Jesus full-time. Rather, he returned to his fishing. Some months later, Jesus called Peter away from that substantial business to become a 'fisher of men.' (Matthew 4:18-20; Luke 5:1-11) Again, shortly after Jesus' death, Peter announced that he was going fishing, and other apostles joined him. (John 21:2, 3) So it seems likely that Jesus is here driving home to Peter the need for making a decisive choice: Would he put first in his life a career in the fishing business, represented by the fish piled before them, or would he give priority to the work of spiritually feeding Jesus' lambs, or followers?—John

21:4-8.

**a third time:** Peter had denied his Lord three times; Jesus now gave him the opportunity to affirm his feelings three times. As Peter did so, Jesus told him to show that love and affection by putting sacred service ahead of all else. Along with other responsible brothers, Peter would feed, strengthen, and shepherd Christ's flock of faithful followers. These ones were anointed but still needed to be fed spiritually.—Luke 22:32.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

John 20:17—What is the meaning of Jesus' words to Mary Magdalene?

**John 20:17:** Jesus said to her: "Stop clinging to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God.'"

#### **Study note**

**Stop clinging to me:** The Greek verb *ha'ptomai* can mean either "to touch" or "to cling to; to hang on to." Some translations render Jesus' words: "Do not touch me." However, Jesus was not objecting to Mary Magdalene's merely touching him, since he did not object when other women who saw him after he was resurrected "took hold of his feet." (Matthew 28:9) It appears that Mary Magdalene feared that Jesus was about to ascend to heaven. Moved by her strong desire to be with her Lord, she was holding fast to Jesus, not letting him go. To assure her that he was not yet leaving, Jesus instructed Mary to stop clinging to him and, instead, to go to his disciples and declare the news of his resurrection.

John 20:28—Why did Thomas call Jesus “my Lord and my God”?

**John 20:28:** In answer Thomas said to him: “My Lord and my God!”

### Study note

**My Lord and my God!:** Literally, “The Lord of me and the God [*ho theos*] of me!” Some scholars view this expression as an exclamation of astonishment spoken to Jesus but actually directed to God, his Father. Others claim that the original Greek requires that the words be viewed as being directed to Jesus. Even if this is so, the intent of the expression “my Lord and my God” is best understood in the context of the rest of the inspired Scriptures. Since the record shows that Jesus had previously sent his disciples the message, “I am ascending to my Father and your Father and *to my God* and your God,” there is no reason to believe that Thomas thought that Jesus was the almighty God. (See study note on John 20:17.) Thomas had heard Jesus pray to his “Father,” calling him “the only true God.” (John 17:1-3) So Thomas may have addressed Jesus as “my God” for the following reasons: He viewed Jesus as being “a god” though not the almighty God. (See study note on John 1:1.) Or he may have addressed Jesus in a manner similar to the way that servants of God addressed angelic messengers of Jehovah, as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thomas would have been familiar with accounts in which individuals, or at times the Bible writer of the account, responded to or spoke of an angelic messenger as though he were Jehovah God. (Compare Genesis 16:7-11, 13; 18:1-5, 22-33; 32:24-30; Judges 6:11-15; 13:20-22.) Therefore, Thomas may have called Jesus “my God” in this sense, acknowledging Jesus as the representative and spokesman of the true God.

Some argue that the use of the Greek definite article before the words for “lord” and “god” indicates that these words refer to the

almighty God. However, in this context the use of the article may simply reflect Greek grammar. Cases where a nominative noun with the definite article is used as vocative in Greek can be illustrated by a literal translation of such scriptures as Luke 12:32 (lit., “the little flock”) and Colossians 3:18–4:1 (“lit., “the wives”; “the husbands”; “the children”; “the fathers”; “the slaves”; “the masters”). In a similar way, a literal translation of 1 Peter 3:7 would read: “The husbands.” So the use of the article here may not be of significance in determining what Thomas had in mind when he made his statement.

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 20:1-18

## JOHN

### Study Notes—Chapter 20

#### 20:1

**tomb:** Or “memorial tomb.”—See Glossary, “Memorial tomb.” A burial place in which the remains of a deceased person were placed. This term renders the Greek word *mne·mei'on*, which comes from the verb “to remind,” suggesting that the person who has died is remembered.—Joh 5:28, 29.

#### 20:9

**the scripture:** Probably referring to Ps 16:10 or Isa 53:10. Certain prophecies about the Messiah were not yet understood, even by Jesus' disciples. This was particularly true about those prophecies dealing with the Messiah's rejection, suffering, death, and resurrection.—Isa 53:3, 5, 12; Mt 16:21-23; 17:22, 23; Lu 24:21; Joh 12:34.

#### 20:16

**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.

***Rabboni!***: A Semitic word meaning “My Teacher.” Some think that originally “*Rabboni*” was a more respectful title or that it conveyed more warmth than the form “Rabbi.” However, here and at Joh 1:38, John simply translated both titles as **Teacher**. Perhaps the first person suffix (“-i” meaning “my”) added in the title “*Rabboni*” had lost its special significance by the time John wrote his Gospel.

## 20:17

**Stop clinging to me:** The Greek verb *ha'pto·mai* can mean either “to touch” or “to cling to; to hang on to.” Some translations render Jesus’ words: “Do not touch me.” However, Jesus was not objecting to Mary Magdalene’s merely touching him, since he did not object when other women who saw him after he was resurrected “took hold of his feet.” (Mt 28:9) It appears that Mary Magdalene feared that Jesus was about to ascend to heaven. Moved by her strong desire to be with her Lord, she was holding fast to Jesus, not letting him go. To assure her that he was not yet leaving, Jesus instructed Mary to stop clinging to him and,

instead, to go to his disciples and declare the news of his resurrection.

**my God and your God:** This conversation between Jesus and Mary Magdalene on Nisan 16, 33 C.E., shows that the resurrected Jesus viewed the Father as his God, just as the Father was God to Mary Magdalene. Two days earlier, when on the torture stake, Jesus had cried out: “My God, my God,” fulfilling the prophecy found at Ps 22:1 and acknowledging his Father as his God. (Mt 27:46; Mr 15:34; Lu 23:46) In the book of Revelation, Jesus also speaks of his Father as “my God.” (Re 3:2, 12) These passages confirm that the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ worships the heavenly Father as his God, just as Jesus’ disciples do.

## 20:19

**the Jews:** Apparently referring to the Jewish authorities or religious leaders.—See study note on Joh 7:1.

## 20:24

**the Twin:** This Greek name comes from an Aramaic word meaning “Twin.” The apostle Thomas was known by another Greek name, *Di'dy-mos* (in some English Bibles rendered “Didymus”), which also means **Twin**.

## 20:28

**My Lord and my God!:** Lit., “The Lord of me and the God [*ho the-os*] of me!” Some scholars view this expression as an exclamation of astonishment spoken to Jesus but actually directed to God, his Father. Others claim that the original Greek requires that the words be viewed as being directed to Jesus. Even if this is so, the intent of the expression “my Lord and my God” is best understood in the context of the rest of the inspired Scriptures. Since the record shows that Jesus had previously sent his disciples the message, “I am ascending to my Father

and your Father and *to my God* and your God,” there is no reason to believe that Thomas thought that Jesus was the almighty God. (See study note on Joh 20:17.) Thomas had heard Jesus pray to his “Father,” calling him “the only true God.” (Joh 17:1-3) So Thomas may have addressed Jesus as “my God” for the following reasons: He viewed Jesus as being “a god” though not the almighty God. (See study note on Joh 1:1.) Or he may have addressed Jesus in a manner similar to the way that servants of God addressed angelic messengers of Jehovah, as recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures. Thomas would have been familiar with accounts in which individuals, or at times the Bible writer of the account, responded to or spoke of an angelic messenger as though he were Jehovah God. (Compare Ge 16:7-11, 13; 18:1-5, 22-33; 32:24-30; Jg 6:11-15; 13:20-22.) Therefore, Thomas may have called Jesus “my God” in this sense, acknowledging Jesus as the representative and spokesman of the true God.

Some argue that the use of the Greek definite article before the words for “lord” and “god” indicates that these words refer to the almighty God. However, in this context the use of the article may simply reflect Greek grammar. Cases where a nominative noun with the definite article is used as vocative in Greek can be illustrated by a literal translation of such scriptures as Lu 12:32 (lit., “the little flock”) and Col 3:18–4:1 (“lit., “the wives”; “the husbands”; “the children”; “the fathers”; “the slaves”; “the masters”). In a similar way, a literal translation of 1Pe 3:7 would read: “The husbands.” So the use of the article here may not be of significance in determining what Thomas had in mind when he made his statement.

## JOHN

### Study Notes—Chapter 21

#### 21:5

**Children:** Or “Young children.” The Greek word *pai·di'on* (diminutive of *pais*, “child”) is an endearing form of address that may indicate a fatherly interest. Here it is used as an affectionate expression of friendship.

**anything to eat:** Or “any fish.” The Greek word *pro·spha'gi-on* occurs only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures. In non-Biblical texts, it describes something that can be eaten with bread. In this context, used in a question addressed to a group of fishermen, it obviously refers to fish.

#### 21:7

**the disciple whom Jesus loved:** That is, the one whom Jesus especially loved. This is the fourth of five occurrences mentioning a certain disciple “whom Jesus [or “he”] loved” or “for whom Jesus had affection.” (Joh 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) It is generally believed that this disciple was the apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James.—Mt 4:21; Mr 1:19; Lu 5:10; Joh 21:2; the reasons for this identification are given in the study notes on Joh 13:23; 21:20.

**naked:** Or “lightly clad.” The Greek word *gy·mnos'* can have the meaning “lightly clad; in the undergarment only.”—Jas 2:15, ftn.; see study note on Mt 25:36.

#### 21:8

**about 300 feet:** About 90 m. Lit., “about 200 cubits.” The Greek word *pe'khys* (rendered “cubit(s)” at Mt 6:27; Lu 12:25; Re 21:17) refers to a short measure that is roughly the distance from the elbow to the tip of the middle finger. The Israelites commonly used a cubit of about 44.5 cm (17.5 in.).—See Glossary, “Cubit,” and App. B14.

## 21:15

**Jesus said to Simon Peter:** This conversation between Jesus and Peter took place shortly after Peter had denied Jesus three times. Jesus asked three probing questions about Peter's feelings for him, to the point that "Peter became grieved." (Joh 21:17) John's account recorded at Joh 21:15-17 uses two different Greek verbs: *a·ga·pa'o*, rendered **love**, and *phi·le'o*, rendered **have affection**. Twice Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Both times Peter earnestly affirmed that he had "affection" for Jesus. Finally, Jesus asked: "Do you have affection for me?" Again Peter asserted that he did. Each time Peter affirmed his love, Jesus emphasized that this love and affection should motivate Peter to **feed** and "shepherd" Jesus' disciples spiritually, here referred to as his **lambs**, or "little sheep." (Joh 21:16, 17; 1Pe 5:1-3) Jesus allowed Peter to confirm his love three times and then entrusted him with the responsibility to care for the sheep. In this way, Jesus dispelled any doubts that he had forgiven Peter for denying him three times.

**John:** According to some ancient manuscripts, the father of the apostle Peter is here called John. In other ancient manuscripts, he is called Jona. At Mt 16:17, Jesus addresses Peter as "Simon son of Jonah." (See study note on Mt 16:17.) According to some scholars, the Greek forms of the names John and Jona(h) may be different spellings of the same Hebrew name.

**do you love me more than these?:** Grammatically, the phrase "more than these" can be understood in more than one way. Some scholars prefer such a meaning as "do you love me more than you love these other disciples?" or "do you love me more than these disciples love me?" However, the likely meaning is "do you love me more than these things?" that is, the fish they caught or the things connected with the fishing business. So the overall idea of the verse seems to be: 'Do you love me more than material things or pursuits? If so, feed my lambs.' The question

would be appropriate in view of Peter's past. Although Peter was one of Jesus' first disciples (Joh 1:35-42), he did not immediately follow Jesus full-time. Rather, he returned to his fishing. Some months later, Jesus called Peter away from that substantial business to become a 'fisher of men.' (Mt 4:18-20; Lu 5:1-11) Again, shortly after Jesus' death, Peter announced that he was going fishing, and other apostles joined him. (Joh 21:2, 3) So it seems likely that Jesus is here driving home to Peter the need for making a decisive choice: Would he put first in his life a career in the fishing business, represented by the fish piled before them, or would he give priority to the work of spiritually feeding Jesus' lambs, or followers?—Joh 21:4-8.

## 21:16

**love . . . have affection:** This conversation between Jesus and Peter took place shortly after Peter had denied Jesus three times. Jesus asked three probing questions about Peter's feelings for him, to the point that "Peter became grieved." (Joh 21:17) John's account recorded at Joh 21:15-17 uses two different Greek verbs: *a·ga·pa'o*, rendered **love**, and *phi·le'o*, rendered **have affection**. Twice Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me?" Both times Peter earnestly affirmed that he had "affection" for Jesus. Finally, Jesus asked: "Do you have affection for me?" Again Peter asserted that he did. Each time Peter affirmed his love, Jesus emphasized that this love and affection should motivate Peter to **feed** and "shepherd" Jesus' disciples spiritually, here referred to as his **lambs**, or "little sheep." (Joh 21:16, 17; 1Pe 5:1-3) Jesus allowed Peter to confirm his love three times and then entrusted him with the responsibility to care for the sheep. In this way, Jesus dispelled any doubts that he had forgiven Peter for denying him three times.

**little sheep:** The Greek word *pro·ba'ti-on*, here and in verse 17 rendered "little sheep," is the diminutive form of the Greek word for "sheep." In the Christian Greek Scriptures, diminutives are

often used to indicate affection and familiarity.—See Glossary, “Diminutive.”

## 21:17

**a third time:** Peter had denied his Lord three times; Jesus now gave him the opportunity to affirm his feelings three times. As Peter did so, Jesus told him to show that love and affection by putting sacred service ahead of all else. Along with other responsible brothers, Peter would feed, strengthen, and shepherd Christ’s flock of faithful followers. These ones were anointed but still needed to be fed spiritually.—Lu 22:32.

## 21:20

**the disciple whom Jesus loved:** That is, the one whom Jesus especially loved. This is the last of five occurrences mentioning a certain disciple “whom Jesus [or “he”] loved” or “for whom Jesus had affection.” (Joh 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20) It is generally believed that this disciple was the apostle John, the son of Zebedee and brother of James. (Mt 4:21; Mr 1:19; Lu 5:10; Joh 21:2) As the context of Joh 21:20-24 shows, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was also “the disciple who . . . wrote these things,” that is, the writer of the Gospel of John.—See study notes on Joh Title; 1:6; 13:23.

**the one who . . . leaned back on his chest:** Lit., “in the bosom of.” This expression refers to the way people were positioned at a dining table in Jesus’ day. Guests reclined on their left side with a cushion supporting their left elbow. A guest could lean back on the bosom, or chest, of a friend reclining next to him and engage in a confidential conversation. (Joh 13:25) Being “close to,” or “in the bosom of,” someone meant being in a special relationship of favor and close fellowship with that person. This custom was apparently the background for the expressions used in Lu and Joh.—See study notes on Lu 16:22, 23; Joh 1:18.

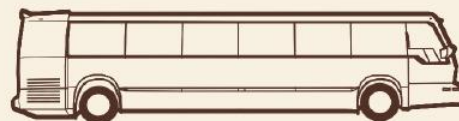
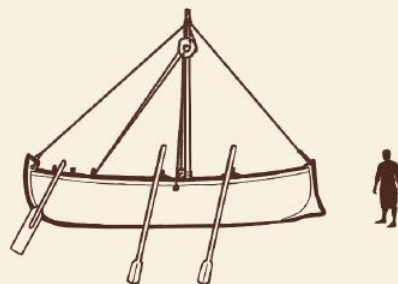
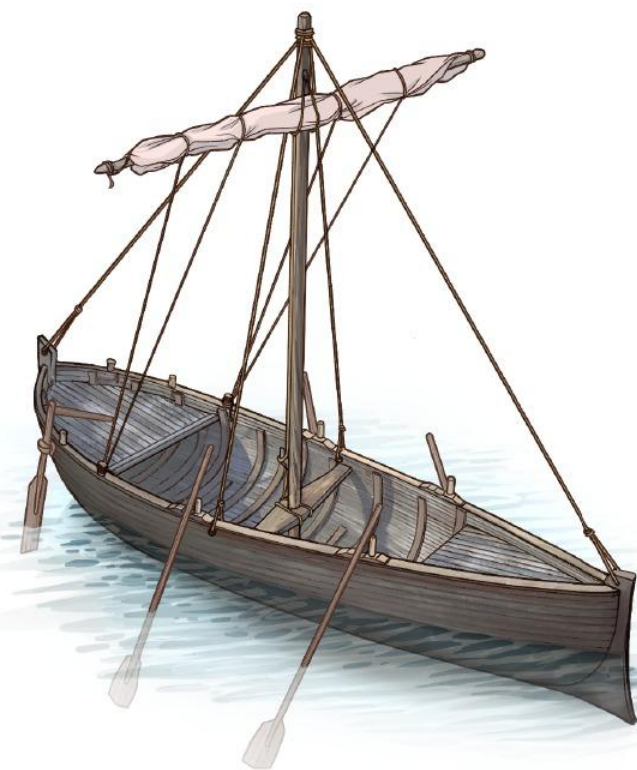
## 21:22

**until I come:** These words may have given the other apostles the impression that the apostle John would outlive them. In fact, he served faithfully for almost another 70 years and was likely the last apostle to die. Also, the expression “until I come” may have reminded Jesus’ disciples of his reference to “the Son of man coming in his Kingdom.” (Mt 16:28) In a sense, John did remain until Jesus came. Near the end of John’s life, while in exile on the isle of Patmos, he received the Revelation with all its amazing prophetic signs of events that were to occur during “the Lord’s day” when Jesus would come in Kingdom power. John was so deeply moved by these spectacular visions that when Jesus said: “Yes; I am coming quickly,” John exclaimed: “Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.”—Re 1:1, 9, 10; 22:20.

## 21:25

**many other things that Jesus did:** Using hyperbole, John wrote that **the world itself** would not have room for all **the scrolls** (the book style then used) needed to record every detail about Jesus’ life and ministry. The Greek term John used for world (*ko’smos*) could have been understood in the broad sense of the whole human society (with its then existing libraries), though it was sometimes used in secular Greek writings to refer to the whole universe, that is, the greatest space conceivable. (Compare study note on Ac 17:24.) John’s point was that much more could have been written, but there is enough in John’s “scroll” and the other inspired Scriptures to prove beyond doubt that “Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.” (Joh 20:30, 31) John’s relatively brief written record reveals a beautiful portrait of God’s Son.





## First-Century Fishing Boat

This rendering is based on the remains of a first-century fishing boat found buried in mud near the shores of the Sea of Galilee and on a mosaic discovered in a first-century home in the seaside town of Migdal. This kind of boat may have been rigged with a mast and sail(s) and may have had a crew of five—four oarsmen and one helmsman, who stood on a small deck at the stern. The boat was approximately 8 m (26.5 ft) long and at midpoint was about 2.5 m (8 ft) wide and 1.25 m (4 ft) deep. It seems that it could carry 13 or more men.

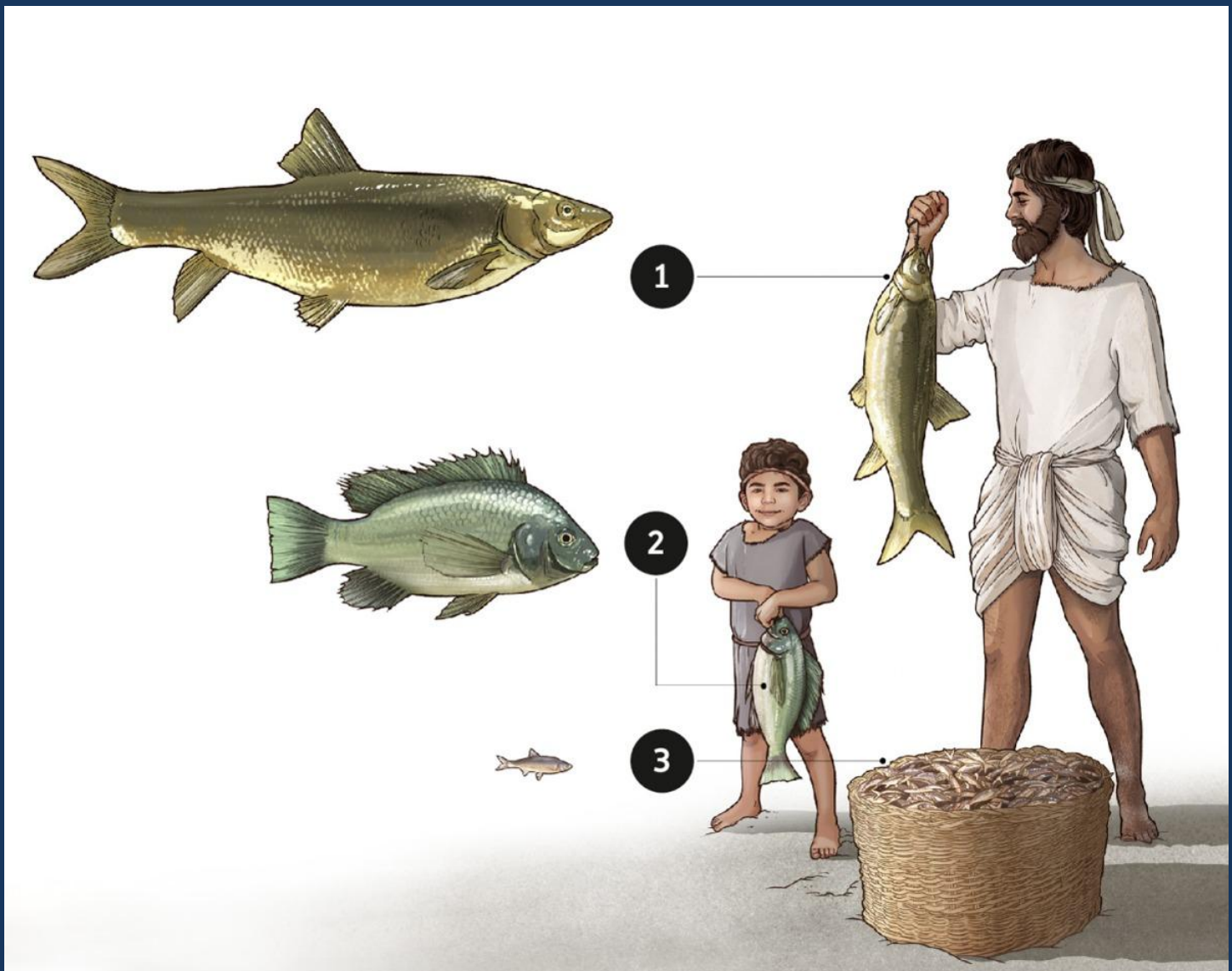
**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 4:21; Mr 4:37; Lu 5:7; Lu 8:22, 23; Joh 21:3



## Remains of a Galilean Fishing Boat

A 1985/1986 drought caused the water level in the Sea of Galilee to fall, exposing part of the hull of an ancient boat that was buried in the mud. The remains of the boat are 8.2 m (27 ft) long and 2.3 m (7.5 ft) wide and have a maximum height of 1.3 m (4.3 ft). Archaeologists say that the boat was built sometime between the first century B.C.E. and the first century C.E. This video animation reconstructs the boat, which is now displayed in a museum in Israel, showing what it may have looked like as it traversed the waters some 2,000 years ago.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 4:21; Mr 4:37; Lu 5:3; Lu 8:22; Joh 21:3



## Fish of the Sea of Galilee

The Bible contains many references to fish, fishing, and fishermen in connection with the Sea of Galilee. About 18 species of fish live in the Sea of Galilee. Of that number, only about ten have been sought by fishermen. These ten can be divided into three commercially important groups. One group is the binny, also known as the barbel (*Barbus longiceps* is shown) (1). Its three species display barbs at the corners of the mouth; hence, its Semitic name *biny*, meaning “hair.” It feeds on mollusks, snails, and small fish. The longheaded barbel reaches a length of 75 cm (30 in.) and can weigh over 7 kg (15 lb). The second group is called musht (*Tilapia galilea* is shown) (2), which means “comb” in Arabic, because its five species display a comblike dorsal fin. One variety of musht reaches a length of about 45 cm (18 in.) and can weigh some 2 kg (4.5 lb). The third group is the Kinneret sardine (*Acanthobrama terra sanctae* is shown) (3), which resembles a small herring. From ancient times, this fish has been preserved by pickling.

**Related Scripture(s)** Mt 4:18; Mr 1:16; Lu 5:6; Joh 21:9, 10



- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

#### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Do You Love Me More Than These?”:** (10 min.)  
Joh 21:1-3—After Jesus’ death, Peter and other disciples went fishing  
Joh 21:4-14—The resurrected Jesus appeared to Peter and other disciples  
Joh 21:15-19—Jesus helped Peter understand his priority (*nwtsty* study notes on Joh 21:15, 17)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
Joh 20:17—What is the meaning of Jesus’ words to Mary Magdalene? (*nwtsty* study note)

Joh 20:28—Why did Thomas call Jesus “my Lord and my God”? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Joh 20:1-18

#### APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *bhs* 79 ¶21-22  
—Invite the person to the meeting.

#### LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 37
- **Local Needs:** (15 min.)
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 42
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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## JOHN 20-21 | “Do You Love Me More Than These?”

### 21:1-19

In Bible times, successful fishermen were patient, hardworking, and willing to endure hardship in the pursuit of a worthwhile reward. (*w12* 8/1 18-20) Such qualities would serve Peter well as a fisher of men. However, Peter needed to decide what he would put first in his life—a secular career that he enjoyed or the work of spiritually feeding Jesus’ followers.



**What adjustments have you made in order to put Kingdom interests first?**





# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations

#### ●○○ INITIAL CALL

**Question:** Where can we find help to deal with grief?

**Scripture:** 2Co 1:3, 4

**Link:** What happens when someone dies?



#### ○○● FIRST RETURN VISIT

**Question:** What happens when someone dies?

**Scripture:** Ec 9:5, 10

**Link:** What hope do we have for the dead?



#### ○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

**Question:** What hope do we have for the dead?

**Scripture:** Ac 24:15

**Link:** Where will the resurrection take place?

## Sample Conversations-November 2018

### INITIAL CALL

**Linda (Publisher 1):** Hello my name is Linda and this is Susan, May I ask your name?

**Householder:** Jamie

**Linda (Publisher 1):** It's nice to meet you Jamie. We're here because everyone at one point or another faces a loss of a loved one. If I may ask where do you think we can find reliable help for dealing with grief.

**Jamie (Householder):** Hmm, I think friends and family are a big help.

**Linda (Publisher 1):** We agree. Their support is invaluable. There is another source of help available to us to notice what we read in this Bible passage. Susan, would you read that please?

**Suzan (Publisher 2):** Sure,

#### **2 Corinthians 1:3, 4**

*"Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials so that we may be able to comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God."*

**Linda (Publisher 1):** Thank you, according to these verses then what help can God offer?

**Jamie (Householder):** Hmm, It says that he comforts us in all our trials.

**Linda (Publisher 1):** That's right. And he really wants to do that. Did you notice how he's described in verse 3?

**Jamie (Householder):** The Father of Tender Mercies.

**Linda (Publisher 1):** Yes The God of all comfort, one way comforts us is by teaching us the truth about what happens when a person dies. Perhaps we can come back another time and share with you the Bible's comforting message on that topic.

**Jamie (Householder):** Thank you. I would like that.

**19** “The unrighteous” include billions of people who did not have the opportunity to know Jehovah. Even though they died, Jehovah hasn’t forgotten them. He will resurrect them, and they will have the opportunity to learn about him and serve him.

**20** Does this mean that everyone who has died will be resurrected? No. Jesus said that some people would not be brought back to life. (Luke 12:5) Who will decide whether a person will be resurrected or not? Jehovah is the final Judge, but he has also given Jesus the authority “to be judge of the living and the dead.” (Acts 10:42) Anyone who is judged as wicked and unwilling to change will not be resurrected.—See Endnote 19.

### RESURRECTION TO HEAVEN

**21** The Bible also tells us that some people will live in heaven. When someone is resurrected to heaven, he is not brought back to life as a human with a human body. He is resurrected to life in heaven as a spirit person.

**22** Jesus was the first person to receive this type of resurrection. (John 3:13) Three days after Jesus was killed, Jehovah resurrected him. (Psalm 16:10; Acts 13:34, 35) Jesus was not resurrected with a human body. The apostle Peter explains that Jesus “was put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit.”

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19. Who are “the unrighteous”? What opportunity will Jehovah give them?

20. Why won’t everyone be resurrected?

21, 22. (a) What does it mean to be resurrected to heaven?  
(b) Who was the first person to be resurrected to life in heaven?

(1 Peter 3:18) Jesus was brought back to life as a powerful spirit person! (1 Corinthians 15:3-6) But the Bible says that he would not be the only one.

**23** Just before he died, Jesus told his faithful disciples: “I am going my way to prepare a place for you.” (John 14:2) This means that some of his followers would be resurrected to live with him in heaven. How many? Jesus said that it would be a small number, a “little flock.” (Luke 12:32) The apostle John gave the exact number when he saw Jesus “standing on [heavenly] Mount Zion, and with him 144,000.” —Revelation 14:1.

**24** When would the 144,000 Christians be resurrected? The Bible tells us that this would happen after Christ started to rule in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:23) We are living in that time right now, and most of the 144,000 have already been resurrected to heaven. Those who are still on earth and who die in our day will instantly be resurrected to life in heaven. However, the majority of people will be resurrected in the future to life in Paradise here on earth.

**25** Very soon, Jehovah will free all humans from death, and death will be gone forever! (**Read Isaiah 25:8.**) But what will those who go to heaven do there? The Bible explains that they will rule with Jesus in a Kingdom government. We will learn more about that government in the next chapter.

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23, 24. Who are the “little flock” that Jesus spoke about, and how many will there be?

25. What will we learn about in the next chapter?



# 37      *Serving Jehovah Whole-Souled* (Matthew 22:37)

1. O Jehovah, Sov'reign Ruler,  
    You are the one I love and obey.  
    You deserve my full devotion;  
    You are my God; I'll serve you each day.  
    Your commands I loyally follow;  
    How I love reminders from you!

*(CHORUS)*

*O Jehovah, you are worthy;  
    Whole-souled devotion I give to you.*

2. Father, all your works exalt you.  
    Earth, moon, and stars your glory proclaim.  
    May I also be as faithful,  
    Using my strength to make known your name.  
    May I use my whole life to serve you,  
    Proving to be loyal and true.

*(Chorus)*

- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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### 21:1-19

In Bible times, successful fishermen were patient, hardworking, and willing to endure hardship in the pursuit of a worthwhile reward. (*w12* 8/1 18-20) Such qualities would serve Peter well as a fisher of men. However, Peter needed to decide what he would put first in his life—a secular career that he enjoyed or the work of spiritually feeding Jesus’ followers.



What adjustments have you made in order to put Kingdom interests first?



## JESUS REBUKES THE PHARISEES

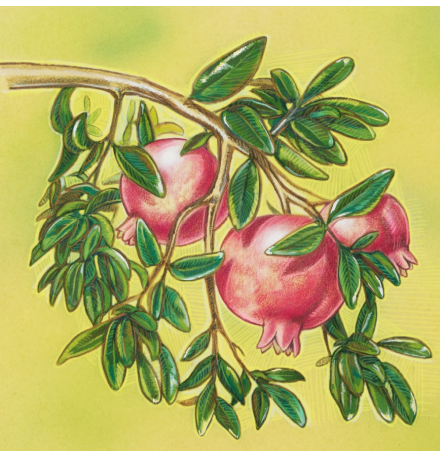
MATTHEW 12:33-50   MARK 3:31-35   LUKE 8:19-21

- 
- JESUS TELLS OF “THE SIGN OF JONAH”
  - DISCIPLES ARE CLOSER THAN FAMILY
- 

By denying that Jesus expels demons with God’s power, the scribes and Pharisees are at risk of blaspheming the holy spirit. Hence, whose side will they take—God’s or Satan’s? Jesus says: “Either you make the tree fine and its fruit fine or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten, for by its fruit the tree is known.”—Matthew 12:33.

It is foolish to charge that the good fruit of casting out demons results from Jesus’ serving Satan. As Jesus made plain in his Sermon on the Mount, if the fruit is fine, the tree is fine, not rotten. So, what does the Pharisees’ fruit, their absurd accusations against Jesus, prove? That they are rotten. Jesus tells them: “Offspring of vipers, how can you speak good things when you are wicked? For out of the abun-





dance of the heart the mouth speaks.”—Matthew 7:16, 17; 12:34.

Yes, our words reflect the condition of our hearts and provide a basis for judgment. Hence, Jesus says: “I tell you that men will render an account on Judgment Day for every unprofitable saying that they speak; for by your words you will be declared righteous, and by your words you will be condemned.”—Matthew 12:36, 37.

Despite the powerful works Jesus is doing, the scribes and Pharisees demand more: “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” Whether they have personally seen him perform miracles or not, there is ample eyewitness testimony of what he is doing. Jesus can thus tell those Jewish leaders: “A wicked and adulterous generation keeps on seeking a sign, but no sign will be given it except the sign of Jonah the prophet.”—Matthew 12:38, 39.

Jesus does not leave them to wonder about what he means: “Just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish for three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” Jonah was swallowed by

some sort of huge fish but then came out as if resurrected. Jesus thus foretells that he himself will die and on the third day be raised. When that later occurs, the Jewish leaders reject “the sign of Jonah,” refusing to repent and change. (Matthew 27:63-66; 28:12-15) In contrast, the “men of Nineveh” did repent after Jonah preached to them. So they will condemn this generation. Jesus also says that by her example, the queen of Sheba will likewise denounce them. She desired to hear Solomon’s wisdom and marveled at it. Now, Jesus notes, “something more than Solomon is here.”—Matthew 12:40-42.

Jesus likens the situation of this wicked generation to a man from whom an unclean spirit comes out. (Matthew 12:45) Because the man does not fill the void with good things, the wicked spirit returns with seven spirits more wicked than himself and they possess him. Comparably, the Israelite nation had been cleansed and had reformed—much like the man from whom the unclean spirit came out. But the nation rejected God’s prophets, culminating in its opposing this one who clearly has God’s spirit,

Jesus. This shows the nation's condition to be worse than at its start.

While Jesus is speaking, his mother and his brothers arrive and stand at the edge of the crowd. Some sitting near him say: “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” Jesus then shows how close he feels to his disciples, who are like real brothers, sisters, and mothers to him. Extending his hand toward his disciples, he says: “My mother and my brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.” (Luke 8:20, 21) He thus shows that regardless of how precious the ties are that bind him to his relatives, his relationship with his disciples is even more precious. How refreshing it is for us to have such closeness with our spiritual brothers, especially when others doubt us or reproach us and our good works!

- ◇ In what way are the Pharisees like a rotten tree?
- ◇ What is “the sign of Jonah,” and how is it later rejected?
- ◇ How is the first-century Israelite nation like the man from whom an unclean spirit came out?
- ◇ How does Jesus emphasize his close relationship with his disciples?

# 45      *The Meditation of My Heart*

(Psalm 19:14)

1. The meditation of my heart,  
    The thoughts I ponder through the day—  
    May they be pleasing to you, Lord,  
    And keep me steadfast in your way.  
When worries weigh upon my mind  
    And make me restless in the night,  
Then may I meditate on you  
    And things I know to be upright.
2. Whatever things are chaste and true,  
    Whatever virtue there may be,  
Whatever things well-spoken-of—  
    May thoughts of these bring peace to me.  
How precious are your thoughts, O God!  
    Beyond all counting is their sum.  
So may I ponder your own words,  
    Absorbed in them may I become.



SEPTEMBER 2018

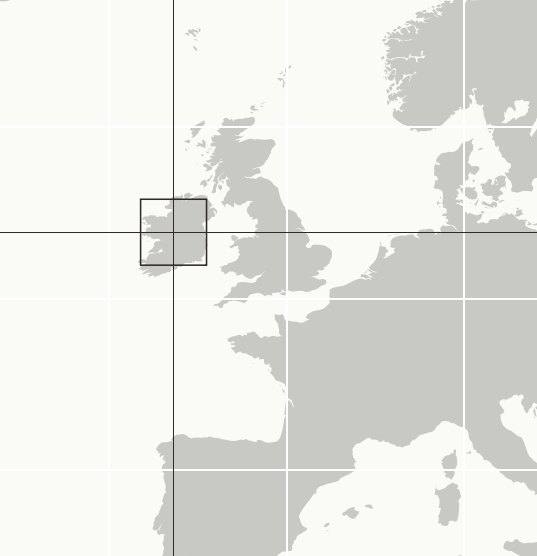
# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
**OCTOBER 29–DECEMBER 2, 2018**

**LARGE  
PRINT  
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

## IRELAND

Brothers make day trips to the Aran Islands, off the west coast of Ireland, to share the good news with the islanders in the Irish language

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

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#### **4 WEEK OF OCTOBER 29–NOVEMBER 4**

##### **“If You Know These Things, Happy You Are if You Do Them”**

Knowledge is of little value if not used. But it takes humility to apply what we learn. This article will encourage us to maintain humility by imitating Bible examples of those who preached to people of all sorts, prayed for others, and waited on Jehovah to act.

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

##### **Keep Displaying Love—It Builds Up**

In these difficult times, it is easy to become discouraged or overwhelmed by life's challenges. Jehovah and Jesus help us to cope. But we all have a responsibility to comfort and encourage one another. This article shows how we can build one another up in love.

# **109     *Love Intensely From the Heart***

(1 Peter 1:22)

1. When our love is pure and intense,

    We make Jehovah's heart rejoice.

Love is his greatest quality,

    Something that we hold dear.

Warm affection glows in our hearts,

    Making a loyal friendship grow.

Love always acts unselfishly,

    Proving our love sincere.

When we see a friend in need,

    We'll be there to lend a helping hand.

Truly we can be a friend,

    Someone who can understand.

Jesus showed what love really means,

    Helping us see Jehovah's love,

Touching our hearts and moving us.

    Tender feelings are a start.

Love intensely from the heart.



### SONGS:

109, 121

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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Why do we need  
to build up our  
brothers and  
sisters?

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How do Jehovah  
and Jesus build  
us up in love?

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What can we do to  
strengthen others?

## Keep Displaying Love —It Builds Up

*“Love builds up.”*—1 COR. 8:1.

ON HIS final night with his disciples, Jesus mentioned love nearly 30 times. He specifically indicated that his disciples should “love one another.” (John 15:12, 17) Their love for one another would be so outstanding that it would clearly distinguish them as his true followers. (John 13:

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1. What important subject did Jesus discuss on his final night with his disciples?

34, 35) This love is not mere sentimentality. Jesus was referring to a most noble quality—self-sacrificing love. He said: “No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his life in behalf of his friends. You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you.”—John 15:13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> The genuine, self-sacrificing love and unbreakable unity of Jehovah’s servants today identify them as God’s people. (1 John 3:10, 11) How grateful we are that Christlike love prevails among Jehovah’s servants regardless of their nationality, tribe, language, or background! We may wonder, though: ‘Why is love especially vital in our day? How do Jehovah and Jesus build us up in love? How can we individually display Christlike love that “builds up”?’—1 Cor. 8:1.

## **WHY LOVE IS ESPECIALLY VITAL NOW**

<sup>3</sup> Because life is “filled with trouble and sorrow,” many in these “critical times” suffer from various degrees of emotional distress. (Ps. 90:10; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) Countless individuals feel like

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2. (a) What do we find among God’s servants? (b) What questions will we answer in this article?

3. How do these “critical times” affect people?

just giving up. Estimates suggest that more than 800,000 people die every year from suicide—about one death every 40 seconds. Sad to say, even some Christians have succumbed to such pressures and have taken their own life.

<sup>4</sup> Back in Bible times, some of God’s faithful servants were so overwhelmed by their circumstances that they felt that they wanted to die. For example, pain-ridden Job lamented: “I loathe my life; I do not want to go on living.” (Job 7:16; 14:13) Jonah was so disappointed with the way things had turned out in his assignment that he said: “Now, O Jehovah, please take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3) Also, at one point the faithful prophet Elijah felt so affected by his situation that he asked that he might die. He said: “It is enough! Now, O Jehovah, take my life away.” (1 Ki. 19:4) However, Jehovah valued those devoted servants and wanted them to live. Instead of condemning how they felt, he helped them to overcome their desire to die and built them up in love so that they could continue serving him faithfully.

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4. Which Bible characters expressed a desire to die?



<sup>5</sup> Even if our brothers and sisters do not necessarily feel like giving up, many today deal with stressful situations and need to be built up in love. Some endure persecution and ridicule. Others are the victims of criticism or backbiting at their workplace. Or they are exhausted because of working overtime or having to meet relentless deadlines. Still others deal with strength-sapping domestic problems, perhaps being the target of criticism by an unbelieving mate. As a result of these and other pressures, many in the congregation feel physically and emotionally drained. Who can help discouraged ones to keep going?

## **BE BUILT UP BY JEHOVAH'S LOVE**

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah builds up his worshippers by reassuring them of his unfailing love. How encouraging it must have been for faithful Israelites to hear Jehovah's words: "You became precious in my eyes, you were honored, and I have loved you. . . . Do not be afraid, for I am with you"! (Isa. 43: 4, 5) As one of Jehovah's servants, you can be

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5. Why do brothers and sisters need our love especially now?

6. How does Jehovah build up his servants in love?

sure that Jehovah loves you most tenderly.\* God's Word promises concerning those pursuing pure worship: "As a mighty One, he will save. He will exult over you with great joy."—Zeph. 3:16, 17.

<sup>7</sup> No matter what trials his people may face, Jehovah promises to sustain and comfort them. "You will nurse and be carried on the hip, and you will be bounced on the knees. As a mother comforts her son, so I will keep comforting you." (Isa. 66:12, 13) What a heartwarming scene—a loving mother carrying a baby on her hip or bouncing him on her knees! In this way Jehovah touchingly illustrates the intensity and tenderness of his love for true worshippers. Never doubt that you are personally very precious and dear to Jehovah. —Jer. 31:3.

<sup>8</sup> True Christians also have this reason to be drawn to God's love: He "loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16)

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\* See chapter 24 of the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*.

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7. In what way is Jehovah's love like that of a nursing mother? (See opening picture.)

8, 9. How can Jesus' love fortify us?



What love Jesus also showed in giving his life for us! And what a powerful motivation that love is for us! God's Word promises that not even "tribulation or distress" can "separate us from the love of the Christ."—Rom. 8:35, 38, 39.

<sup>9</sup> When we grapple with trials that are physically, emotionally, or spiritually draining, the compelling force of Christ's love can give us the strength to endure. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.) Jesus' love has the power to sustain us and to motivate us not to give up, even in the face of such trials as disasters, persecution, personal disappointments, or gnawing anxiety.

## **OUR BROTHERS NEED OUR LOVE**

<sup>10</sup> One means by which Jehovah builds us up in love is the Christian congregation. Individually, we can reciprocate his love by loving and building up our spiritual brothers and sisters not only spiritually but also emotionally. (1 John 4:19-21) The apostle Paul urged Christians: "Keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing." (1 Thess. 5:11) Yes, all in

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**10, 11.** Who have the responsibility to build up discouraged brothers? Explain.

Studying  
Jesus' example  
can motivate you  
(See paragraphs 10, 11)



the congregation—not just elders—can imitate Jehovah and Jesus in comforting and building up the brothers and sisters.—**Read Romans 15:1, 2.**

<sup>11</sup> Some in the congregation who have emotional disorders may need professional help and medication. (Luke 5:31) Elders and others in the congregation modestly recognize that they are not trained mental-health-care professionals. However, they and others in the congregation have a vital role to play—to “speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all.” (1 Thess. 5:14) All Christians need to



display loving empathy and patience, speaking consolingly in order to build up discouraged ones. Are you a source of comfort and encouragement? Knowing how to provide such help can render your efforts more effective.

<sup>12</sup> How can our love build up those who experience painful emotions? “At times I have suicidal thoughts,” says one Christian sister in Europe. “But I have a good support system. The congregation I belong to has saved my life. The brothers

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**12.** Give an example of someone who was built up by a congregation’s love.

and sisters are always very encouraging and loving. Although only a few know that I suffer from depression, the congregation is always there for me. One married couple are like my spiritual parents. They take good care of me, and they are there for me literally 24 hours a day.” True, not everyone can assist to the same degree. But our genuine expressions of support can make a big difference to those who are suffering from emotional pain.\*

## HOW TO BUILD UP OTHERS IN LOVE

<sup>13</sup> *Be a good listener.* (Jas. 1:19) To listen with empathy is an act of love. You may ask tactful and sympathetic questions with the aim of understanding the feelings of a sufferer. You will then be able to show empathy and to build up your fellow servant. Let your facial expressions reflect your sincere, loving concern. If the other Christian feels the need to explain things in greater de-

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\* For practical suggestions on dealing with suicidal thoughts and feelings, see articles in *Awake!*: “Why Go On? Three Reasons to Keep Living” (April 2014); “When You Feel Like Giving Up on Life” (January 2012); and “Life Is Worth Living” (October 22, 2001).

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**13.** What is essential if we want to build up others?

tail, be patient and resist any urge to interrupt. By listening patiently, you will more likely understand the feelings involved. That can help your suffering brother or sister to have confidence in you and thus be more inclined to listen to what you say as you strive to be upbuilding. When you show that you truly care, your loving concern can be very comforting.

<sup>14</sup> *Avoid a critical spirit.* Our coming across as being critical of depressed ones can add to their anguish and can undermine our sincere efforts to build them up in love. “Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is a healing.” (Prov. 12:18) Naturally, we do not intentionally ‘stab’ depressed individuals with hurtful words. Yet, even if someone is ‘stabbed’ unintentionally, the effect can be very painful. To build others up in love by encouraging them requires that we exercise empathy, putting ourselves in their situation to the extent possible.—Matt. 7:12.

<sup>15</sup> *Console others with God’s Word.* (Read Romans 15:4, 5.) The Holy Scriptures are a treasure trove

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14. Why do we want to avoid a critical spirit?

15. What is a valuable tool we can use to build others up in love?

of comfort and consolation. The Bible is from “the God who supplies endurance and comfort.” Besides comforting scriptures, we have a wealth of Bible study aids. We can use the *Watch Tower Publications Index* and the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*. These can help us locate upbuilding Scriptural thoughts to cope with all kinds of problems. These aids can thus equip us to be in a position to provide empathetic thoughts that can make our loving efforts more effective.

<sup>16</sup> *Be tender and gentle.* These are priceless facets of the unselfish love we show when we encourage and build up someone. Jehovah himself is “the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort,” and he has “tender compassion” for his servants. (Read **2 Corinthians 1:3-6**; Luke 1:78; Rom. 15:13) Paul set a fine example in this regard, writing: “We became gentle in your midst, as when a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children. So having tender affection for you, we were determined to impart to you, not only the good news of God but also our very selves, because you became so beloved to us.”

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16. What qualities do we need when encouraging a depressed Christian?

(1 Thess. 2:7, 8) When we display godlike tenderness, we can be the answer to a distressed person's prayers.

<sup>17</sup> *Do not expect perfection from your brothers.* Keep a balanced view of your spiritual brothers and sisters. To expect faultless behavior from your brothers is unrealistic and will bring disappointment. (Eccl. 7:21, 22) Remember, Jehovah is realistic in what he requires of his servants. If we imitate his example, we will be prepared to put up with the imperfections of others. (Eph. 4:2, 32) Instead of giving them the impression that they are not doing enough, make it a point to commend them for what they are doing. That can encourage them. Sincere commendation can build others up in love and help them to find “cause for rejoicing” in their own sacred service. How much better when we do so rather than express frustrating comparisons with others.—Gal. 6:4.

<sup>18</sup> Every one of Jehovah's sheep is extremely precious to him and to Jesus, who provided

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17. What balanced view of our brothers will help us build them up in love?

18. What incentive do we have to build others up in love?

the ransom sacrifice. (Gal. 2:20) We love our spiritual brothers and sisters dearly. And we want to care for them in a tender and loving way. In order to be a source of refreshment, “let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that build one another up.” (Rom. 14:19) How we all look forward to the time when, in the coming Paradise, we will never have reason to be discouraged! There will be no more sickness, wars, inherited death, persecution, domestic strife, and disappointments. When the Millennium is past, mankind will have reached perfection. Those who pass the final test will then be adopted as earthly sons of Jehovah God and have “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21) May we all keep displaying the love that builds up and helping one another to attain that joyful and rewarding goal.



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



