

Monday, July 12

Can a man make gods for himself when they are not really gods?—Jeremiah 16:20.

A brother with much experience preaching to nonreligious people in the Far East explains: “Typically, when a person here says, ‘I don’t believe in God,’ he means that he does not believe in worshipping traditional gods. So I usually agree that most gods are man-made and are not real. I often read Jeremiah 16:20 and ask: ‘How could we tell a real god from man-made ones?’ I listen carefully, and then I read Isaiah 41:23: ‘Tell us what will happen in the future, so that we may know that you are gods.’ Then I show an example of how Jehovah has foretold the future.” Another brother says: “I show them examples of Bible wisdom, fulfilled Bible prophecies, and laws that control the universe. Then I show them how all of it points to a living and wise Creator. When a person accepts the possibility that God exists, I start showing him what the Bible says about Jehovah.” *w19.07*
23-24 paragraphs 14-15

Tuesday, July 13

Make sure of the more important things.—Philippians 1:10.

These important things include the sanctification of Jehovah's name, the fulfillment of his purposes, and the peace and unity of the congregation. (Matthew 6:9, 10; John 13:35) When we build our life around these important things, we prove that we love Jehovah. The apostle Paul also said that we must "be flawless." This does not mean that we must be perfect. Jehovah will view us as flawless if we do our very best to deepen our love and make sure of the more important things. One way in which we show our love is by doing our utmost to avoid stumbling others. The instruction to avoid stumbling others is really a warning. How might we stumble someone? We could do so by our choice of entertainment, our choice of clothing, or even our choice of employment. What we do may not be wrong in itself. But if the choices we make offend someone else's conscience and he or she is stumbled, that matters.—Matthew 18:6. *w19.08*
10 paragraphs 9-11

Wednesday, July 14

These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.—Revelation 7:14.

Since 1935, Jehovah's Witnesses have understood that the great crowd of John's vision is made up of a group of faithful Christians who have the prospect of living forever on earth. (Revelation 7:9, 10) In order to survive the great tribulation, the great crowd would have to be educated in Jehovah's ways before the Millennium begins. They would need to show strong faith in order to "succeed in escaping all these things that must occur" before Christ's Thousand Year Reign. (Luke 21:34-36) Those of the great crowd rejoice in their hope. They understand that Jehovah determines where his faithful worshippers will serve him, whether in heaven or on earth. Both the anointed and the great crowd recognize that their reward is possible only because of Jehovah's undeserved kindness as expressed through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.—Romans 3:24. *w19.09 28* paragraph 10; 29 paragraphs 12-13

Thursday, July 15

The joy of Jehovah is your strength.—Nehemiah 8:10, footnote.

Do you have a new assignment? Make it a success. Do not consider a change to be a failure or a step backward. Look for Jehovah's hand in your life and keep preaching. Imitate the faithful Christians of the first century. Wherever they were, they "went through the land declaring the good news of the word." (Acts 8:1, 4) Your efforts to keep on preaching may yield good results. For example, pioneers who were expelled from one country moved to a neighboring land where there also was a great need in their language. Within months, new rapidly growing groups were formed. We must find our joy primarily in Jehovah. Therefore, keep walking with Jehovah, looking to him for wisdom, guidance, and support. Remember that you came to love your former assignment because you put your heart into helping the people there. Put your heart into your present assignment and see how Jehovah helps you to love it too.—Ecclesiastes 7:10. *w19.08* 24-25 paragraphs 15-16

Friday, July 16

Should we not more readily submit ourselves to the Father?—Hebrews 12:9.

We should submit to Jehovah because he is our Creator. As such, he has the right to set standards for his creation. (Revelation 4:11) But we have another compelling reason to obey him—his way of ruling is the best. Throughout history, many human rulers have had a measure of power and authority over others. In comparison to them, Jehovah is the wisest and the most loving, merciful, and compassionate Ruler of all. (Exodus 34:6; Romans 16:27; 1 John 4:8) We submit to Jehovah by doing our best to obey him in all things and by resisting the urge to rely on our own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5) We find it easier to submit to Jehovah as we come to know his beautiful qualities. Why? Because these qualities are reflected in all that he does. (Psalm 145:9) The more we learn about Jehovah, the more we will love him. And when we love Jehovah, we do not need a long list of rules telling us what to do and what not to do. *w19.09* 14 paragraph 1, 3

Saturday, July 17

My yoke is kindly, and my load is light.—Matthew 11:30.

Satan loads people down with burdens they cannot carry. For example, he wants us to believe that Jehovah will not forgive us for our sins and that we are unlovable. What a crushing burden, and what a terrible lie! (John 8:44) When we “come to” Christ, our sins are forgiven. (Matthew 11:28) And the truth is that Jehovah loves all of us deeply. (Romans 8:32, 38, 39) The load that Jesus asks us to carry is different from other loads that we must bear. For example, at the end of a day of secular work, many feel not only exhausted but also unfulfilled. By contrast, after spending time serving Jehovah and Christ, we feel a deep sense of satisfaction. We may be exhausted and have to push ourselves to attend a congregation meeting that night. But often we come home from that meeting refreshed and energized. The same is true when we make the effort to preach and to do our personal Bible study. The reward we receive is far greater than the energy we expend! *w19.09 20* paragraph 1; 23-24 paragraphs 15-16

Sunday, July 18

*Jehovah's day is coming exactly as a thief in the night.—
1 Thessalonians 5:2.*

In the short time remaining before his “day” begins, Jehovah expects us to keep busy in the preaching work. We need to make sure that we are “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Corinthians 15:58) When Jesus spoke about all the significant things that would happen during the last days, he added: “Also, in all the nations, the good news has to be preached first.” (Mark 13:4, 8, 10; Matthew 24:14) Just think: Every time you go in the ministry, you are having a share in fulfilling that Bible prophecy! Year by year, the Kingdom-preaching work is moving ahead. For example, think about the increase in the number of Kingdom proclaimers worldwide during the last days. In 1914, there were 5,155 publishers in 43 lands. Today, there are some 8.5 million publishers in 240 lands! Even so, our work is not yet over. We must keep proclaiming God’s Kingdom as the only solution to all mankind’s problems.—Psalm 145:11-13.
w19.10 8 paragraph 3; 9-10 paragraphs 7-8

[See my Ramble: "The Preaching Work"](#)

Song 38 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 14:21—What can we learn from the prohibition in the Law not to boil a young goat in its mother’s milk? (w06 4/1 31)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

Bible Reading: (4 min.) De 13:1-18 (5)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: Suffering—1Jo 5:19* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (6)

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 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 7

“Never Be Anxious”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Love Never Fails Despite . . . Poverty—Congo* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 10 ¶13-17, boxes 10B and 10C



How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor

The poor and those who had no inheritance received help from the nation of Israel (De 14:28, 29; *it-2* 1110 ¶3)

During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted “a release” from their debt (De 15:1-3; *it-2* 833)

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master (De 15:12-14; *it-2* 978 ¶6)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?’



He Will Make You Strong

(1 Peter 5:10)

1. There was a reason why God brought the truth to you
And called you from the darkness to the light.
Within your heart, he saw the longing that you had
To search for him and practice what is right.
You promised him in prayer to do his will;
He helped you then, and he will help you still.

(CHORUS)

*With Jesus' blood He bought you,
to God you now belong.*

*So he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

*He'll guide you and protect you,
as he has all along.*

*Yes, he will make you firm,
and he will make you strong.*

2. God gave his own beloved Son in your behalf;
On this account, He wants you to succeed.
If He did not withhold the gift of His dear Son,
Then never doubt He'll give the strength you need.
He won't forget the faith and love you've shown;
He will not fail to care for all His own.

(Chorus)

DEUTERONOMY 13-15

13 “In case a prophet or one who foretells by dreams arises in your midst and gives you a sign or a portent, ² and the sign or the portent about which he spoke to you comes true while he is saying, ‘Let us walk after other gods, gods that you have not known, and let us serve them,’ ³ you must not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer, for Jehovah your God is testing you to know whether you love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul.

⁴ After Jehovah your God you should walk, him you should fear, his commandments you should keep, to his voice you should listen; he is the one you should serve, and to him you should hold fast. ⁵ But that prophet or that dreamer should be put to death, because he encouraged rebellion against Jehovah your God—who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of slavery—to turn you from the way in which Jehovah your God has commanded you to walk. And you must remove what is evil from your midst.

⁶ “If your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or your cherished wife or your closest companion should try to entice you in secrecy, saying, ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ gods that neither you nor your forefathers have known, ⁷ from the gods of the peoples all around you, whether near you or those far away from you, from one end of the land to the other end of the land, ⁸ you must not give in to him or listen to him, nor should you show

pity or feel compassion or protect him; ⁹ instead, you should kill him without fail. Your hand should be the first to come upon him to put him to death, and the hand of all the people afterward. ¹⁰ And you must stone him to death, because he has sought to turn you away from Jehovah your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹¹ Then all Israel will hear and become afraid, and they will never again do anything bad like this among you.

¹² “In case you hear it said in one of your cities that Jehovah your God is giving you to occupy, ¹³ ‘Good-for-nothing men have gone out among you to turn away the inhabitants of their city, saying: “Let us go and serve other gods,” gods that you have not known,’ ¹⁴ you should look into the matter, making a thorough investigation and inquiry; and if it is confirmed to be true that this detestable thing has been done among you, ¹⁵ you should without fail strike down the inhabitants of that city with the sword. Devote it and everything that is in it, including its livestock, to destruction by the sword. ¹⁶ You should then collect all its spoil into the middle of its public square and burn the city with fire, and its spoil will serve as a whole offering to Jehovah your God. It will become a permanent heap of ruins. It should never be rebuilt. ¹⁷ Your hand should take nothing that was set apart for destruction, so that Jehovah may turn away from his burning anger and show you mercy and compassion and multiply you, just as he has sworn to your forefathers. ¹⁸ For you should obey Jehovah your God by keeping all his

commandments that I am commanding you today, thus doing what is right in the eyes of Jehovah your God.

14 “You are sons of Jehovah your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave your foreheads bald for a dead person.² For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God, and Jehovah has chosen you to become his people, his special property, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

³ “You must not eat anything that is detestable. ⁴ These are the animals that you may eat: the bull, the sheep, the goat, ⁵ the deer, the gazelle, the roebuck, the wild goat, the antelope, the wild sheep, and the mountain sheep. ⁶ You may eat any animal that has a split hoof divided into two and that chews the cud. ⁷ However, you must not eat the following animals that chew the cud or that have split hooves: the camel, the hare, and the rock badger, because they chew the cud but do not have split hooves. They are unclean for you. ⁸ Also the pig because it has a split hoof but does not chew the cud. It is unclean for you. You must not eat their flesh or touch their carcasses.

⁹ “Of everything that is living in the waters, you may eat these: Anything with fins and scales, you may eat. ¹⁰ But you must not eat anything that has no fins and scales. It is unclean for you.

¹¹ “You may eat any clean bird. ¹² But you must not eat these: the eagle, the osprey, the black vulture, ¹³ the red kite,

the black kite, every kind of glee, ¹⁴ every kind of raven, ¹⁵ the ostrich, the owl, the gull, every kind of falcon, ¹⁶ the little owl, the long-eared owl, the swan, ¹⁷ the pelican, the vulture, the cormorant, ¹⁸ the stork, every kind of heron, the hoopoe, and the bat. ¹⁹ Every winged swarming creature also is unclean for you. They should not be eaten. ²⁰ Any clean flying creature you may eat.

²¹ “You must not eat any animal that was found dead. You may give it to the foreign resident who is inside your cities, and he may eat it, or it may be sold to a foreigner. For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God.

“You must not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.

²² “You must without fail give a tenth of everything your seed produces in the field year by year. ²³ You will eat the tenth part of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the firstborn of your herd and your flock before Jehovah your God in the place that he chooses to have his name reside, so that you may learn to fear Jehovah your God always.

²⁴ “But if the journey should be too long for you and you are not able to carry it to the place that Jehovah your God chooses as the place for his name because it is far away from you (because Jehovah your God will bless you), ²⁵ you may then convert it into money, and with your money in hand, travel to the place that Jehovah your God will choose. ²⁶ You may then spend the money on whatever you desire—cattle, sheep, goats, wine and other alcoholic beverages,

and anything you please; and you will eat there before Jehovah your God and rejoice, you and your household.

²⁷ And do not neglect the Levite who is inside your cities, for he has no share or inheritance with you.

²⁸ “At the end of every three years, you should bring out the entire tenth part of your produce for that year and deposit it inside your cities. ²⁹ Then the Levite, who has no share or inheritance with you, the foreign resident, the fatherless child, and the widow who are in your cities will come and eat their fill, so that Jehovah your God may bless you in all that you do.

15 “At the end of every seven years, you should grant a release. ² This is the nature of the release: Every creditor will release his neighbor from the debt he incurred. He should not demand payment from his neighbor or his brother, for it will be proclaimed a release to Jehovah. ³ You may demand payment from the foreigner, but you should release your claim on whatever your brother owes you. ⁴ However, no one among you should become poor, for Jehovah will surely bless you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, ⁵ but only if you strictly obey the voice of Jehovah your God and carefully observe all this commandment that I am giving you today. ⁶ For Jehovah your God will bless you just as he has promised you, and you will lend to many nations, but you will not need to borrow; and you will dominate many nations, but they will not dominate you.

⁷ “If one of your brothers becomes poor among you in one of your cities of the land that Jehovah your God is giving you, do not harden your heart or be tightfisted toward your poor brother. ⁸ For you should generously open your hand to him and by all means lend whatever he needs or is lacking. ⁹ Be careful not to harbor this evil idea in your heart, ‘The seventh year, the year of the release, has approached,’ and hold back your generosity toward your poor brother and give him nothing. If he calls out to Jehovah against you, it will be a sin on your part. ¹⁰ You should generously give to him, and you should not give to him grudgingly, for this is why Jehovah your God will bless your every deed and undertaking. ¹¹ For there will always be poor people in the land. That is why I am commanding you, ‘You should generously open up your hand to your afflicted and poor brother in your land.’

¹² “If one of your brothers, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you and has served you for six years, then in the seventh year you should set him free. ¹³ And if you should set him free, do not send him away empty-handed. ¹⁴ You should supply him generously with something from your flock, your threshing floor, and your press for oil and wine. Just as Jehovah your God has blessed you, you should give to him. ¹⁵ Remember that you became a slave in the land of Egypt and that Jehovah your God redeemed you. That is why I am commanding you to do this today.

¹⁶ “But if he says to you, ‘I will not go out from your company!’ because he loves you and your household, since he has been happy while with you, ¹⁷ you should then take an awl and put it through his ear into the door, and he will become your slave for life. You should do the same with your slave girl. ¹⁸ Do not consider it a hardship when you set him free and he leaves you, because his service to you for six years was worth twice as much as that of a hired worker, and Jehovah your God has blessed you in everything that was done.

¹⁹ “You should sanctify every firstborn male of your herd and your flock to Jehovah your God. You must not do any work with the firstborn of your herd nor shear the firstborn of your flock. ²⁰ You and your household should eat it before Jehovah your God year by year in the place that Jehovah will choose. ²¹ But if it has a defect—lameness, blindness, or any other serious defect—you must not sacrifice it to Jehovah your God. ²² You should eat it inside your cities, the unclean and clean person together, as though it were a gazelle or a deer. ²³ But you must not eat its blood; you should pour it out on the ground like water.

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“How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 14:21—What can we learn from the prohibition in the Law not to boil a young goat in its mother’s milk? (w06 4/1 31)

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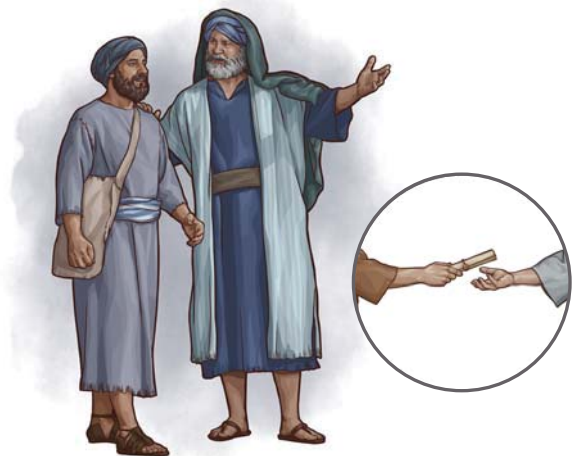
How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor

The poor and those who had no inheritance received help from the nation of Israel (De 14:28, 29; *it-2* 1110 ¶3)

During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted “a release” from their debt (De 15:1-3; *it-2* 833)

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master (De 15:12-14; *it-2* 978 ¶6)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?’



July 12-18 / Deuteronomy 13-15

Song 38 and Prayer

Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah's Concern for the Poor": (10 minutes)

The poor and those who had no inheritance received help from the nation of Israel

Deuteronomy 14:28, 29: "At the end of every three years, you should bring out the entire tenth part of your produce for that year and deposit it inside your cities. Then the Levite, who has no share or inheritance with you, the foreign resident, the fatherless child, and the widow who are in your cities will come and eat their fill, so that Jehovah your God may bless you in all that you do.

***it-2* 1110 paragraph 3**

It seems there was an additional tithe, a second tenth, set aside each year for purposes other than the direct support of

the Levitical priesthood, though the Levites shared in it. Normally it was used and enjoyed in large measure by the Israelite family when assembling together at the national festivals. In cases where the distance to Jerusalem was too great for the convenient transport of this tithe, then the produce was converted into money and this, in turn, was used in Jerusalem for the household's sustenance and enjoyment during the holy convention there. (Deuteronomy 12:4-7, 11, 17, 18; 14:22-27) Then, at the end of every third and sixth years of the seven year sabbatical cycle, this tithe, instead of being used to defray expenses at the national assemblies, was set aside for the Levites, alien residents, widows, and fatherless boys in the local community.— Deuteronomy 14:28, 29; 26:12.

During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted “a release” from their debt

Deuteronomy 15:1-3: “At the end of every seven years, you should grant a release. This is the nature of the release: Every creditor will release his neighbor from the debt he incurred.

He should not demand payment from his neighbor or his brother, for it will be proclaimed a release to Jehovah. You may demand payment from the foreigner, but you should release your claim on whatever your brother owes you.

it-2 833

The Sabbath year was called "the year of the release [*hashshemittah*]." (Deuteronomy 15:9; 31:10) During that year the land enjoyed a complete rest, or release, lying uncultivated. (Exodus 23:11) There was also to be a rest, or a release, on debts incurred. It was "a release to Jehovah," in honor of him. Though others view it differently, some commentators hold that the debts were not actually canceled, but, rather, that a creditor was not to press a fellow Hebrew for payment of a debt, for there would be no income for the farmer during that year; though the lender could press a foreigner for payment. (Deuteronomy 15:1-3) Some rabbis hold the view that debts for loans of charity to help a poor brother were canceled, but that debts incurred in business dealings were in a different category. It is said by them that, in the first century of the Common Era, Hillel instituted a procedure whereby the lender could go before

the court and secure his debt against forfeiture by making a certain declaration.—*The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, edited by J. Hertz, London, 1972, pages 811, 812.

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master

Deuteronomy 15:12-14: “If one of your brothers, a Hebrew man or woman, is sold to you and has served you for six years, then in the seventh year you should set him free. And if you should set him free, do not send him away empty-handed. You should supply him generously with something from your flock, your threshing floor, and your press for oil and wine. Just as Jehovah your God has blessed you, you should give to him.

***it-2* 978 paragraph 6**

Laws governing slave-master relationships. Among the Israelites the status of the Hebrew slave differed from that of a slave who was a foreigner, alien resident, or settler. Whereas the non-Hebrew remained the property of the

owner and could be passed on from father to son (Leviticus 25:44-46), the Hebrew slave was to be released in the seventh year of his servitude or in the Jubilee year, depending upon which came first. During the time of his servitude the Hebrew slave was to be treated as a hired laborer. (Exodus 21:2; Leviticus 25:10; Deuteronomy 15:12) A Hebrew who sold himself into slavery to an alien resident, to a member of an alien resident's family, or to a settler could be repurchased at any time, either by himself or by one having the right of repurchase. The redemption price was based on the number of years remaining until the Jubilee year or until the seventh year of servitude. (Leviticus 25:47-52; Deuteronomy 15:12) When granting a Hebrew slave his freedom, the master was to give him a gift to assist him in getting a good start as a freedman. (Deuteronomy 15:13-15) If a slave had come in with a wife, the wife went out with him. However, if the master had given him a wife (evidently a foreign woman who would not be entitled to freedom in the seventh year of servitude), she and any children by her remained the property of the master. In such a case the Hebrew slave could choose to remain with his master. His ear would then be pierced with an awl to indicate that he would

continue in servitude to time indefinite.—Exodus 21:2-6; Deuteronomy 15:16, 17.

[Image:] Collage: 1. An Israelite master sets his Hebrew slave free. 2. A man hands a sealed scroll to another man.

Ask yourself, 'In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?'

Spiritual Gems

Deuteronomy 14:21—What can we learn from the prohibition in the Law not to boil a young goat in its mother's milk?

Deuteronomy 14:21: "You must not eat any animal that was found dead. You may give it to the foreign resident who is inside your cities, and he may eat it, or it may be sold to a foreigner. For you are a holy people to Jehovah your God. "You must not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

w06 4/1 31

Questions From Readers

What can we learn from the prohibition found at Exodus

23:19: "You must not boil a kid in its mother's milk"?

This directive of the Mosaic Law, which appears three times in the Bible, can help us appreciate Jehovah's sense of propriety, his compassion, and his tenderness. It also highlights his abhorrence of false worship.—Exodus 34:26; Deuteronomy 14:21.

To boil a young goat or other animal in its mother's milk would be contrary to Jehovah's natural arrangement of things. God provided the mother's milk to nourish the kid and help it grow. Cooking the kid in the milk of its own mother would, in the words of one scholar, display "a contempt of the relation which God has established and sanctified between parent and young."

Further, some suggest that boiling a kid in its mother's milk may have been a pagan ritual performed to produce rain. If that was the case, the prohibition would have served to protect the Israelites from the senseless and heartless religious practices of the nations surrounding them. The Mosaic Law specifically forbade the Israelites to walk in the statutes of those nations.—Leviticus 20:23.

Finally, we see in this particular law Jehovah's tender compassion. Actually, the Law contained a number of similar injunctions against cruelty to animals and safeguards against working contrary to the natural order of things. For instance, the Law included commands that prohibited sacrificing an animal unless it had been with its mother for at least seven days, slaughtering both an animal and its offspring on the same day, and taking from a nest both a mother and her eggs or offspring.—Leviticus 22:27, 28; Deuteronomy 22:6, 7.

Clearly, the Law was not just a complex set of commands and prohibitions. Among other things, its principles help instill in us an elevated moral sensibility that truly reflects Jehovah's marvelous qualities.—Psalm 19:7-11.

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During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted “a release” from their debt (De 15:1-3; *it-2* 833)

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master (De 15:12-14; *it-2* 978 ¶6)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?’





Being Courageous Is Not Too Difficult



Courage is the quality of being strong, bold, and valiant. It does not mean never being afraid. Rather, it means taking action *in spite of* our fears. Jehovah is the Source of true courage. (Ps 28:7) How can young ones demonstrate courage?

WATCH THE VIDEO DRAMATIZATION *IMITATE, NOT THE COWARDS, BUT THE COURAGEOUS!* AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What situations faced by youths require courage?

- What Bible accounts inspire courage?

- How do we and observers benefit from our displaying courage?



SAMPLE CONVERSATIONS

Initial Call

Question: How do we know that our suffering is not punishment from God?

Scripture: **Jas 1:13**

Link: Why do we suffer?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 9 ¶7**

Return Visit

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: **1Jo 5:19**

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?

► FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



• **bhs 117 ¶7**



7

Jehovah, Our Strength

(Isaiah 12:2)

1. Gracious Jehovah, our strength and our might,
You are our Savior, in you we delight.
We are your Witnesses bearing your news,
Whether men hear or they proudly refuse.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, our Rock, Our strength and our might,
Your name we make known Both day and night.
Glorious Jehovah, Almighty in pow'r,
You are our hiding place; You are our Tow'r.*

2. We who now serve you rejoice in your light;
Eyes that are opened now see truth and right.
Searching the Scriptures, we hear your command;
Making our choice, for your Kingdom we stand.

(Chorus)

3. Gladly, O God, we keep doing your will.
Though Satan mocks us, we're trusting you still.
Though he may slay us, oh, help us to be
Firm to the end for your grand Sov'reignty.

(Chorus)

Song 38 and Prayer | Opening Comments (1 min.)

 TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

“How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor”: (10 min.)

Spiritual Gems: (10 min.)

De 14:21—What can we learn from the prohibition in the Law not to boil a young goat in its mother’s milk? (w06 4/1 31)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah, the field ministry, or something else?

Bible Reading: (4 min.) De 13:1-18 (5)

 APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Return Visit: Suffering—1Jo 5:19* (video category OUR MEETINGS AND MINISTRY). Stop the video at each pause, and ask the audience the questions that appear in the video.

Return Visit: (3 min.) Use the sample conversation. (6)

Return Visit: (5 min.) Begin with the sample conversation. Offer a publication from the Teaching Toolbox. (11)

 LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 7

“Never Be Anxious”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Love Never Fails Despite . . . Poverty—Congo* (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) rr chap. 10 ¶13-17, boxes 10B and 10C

 How the Law Demonstrated Jehovah’s Concern for the Poor

The poor and those who had no inheritance received help from the nation of Israel (De 14:28, 29; *it-2* 1110 ¶3)

During the Sabbath year, Israelites who owed money were granted “a release” from their debt (De 15:1-3; *it-2* 833)

In the seventh year of his servitude, an Israelite who had sold himself into slavery was set free and given a gift by his master (De 15:12-14; *it-2* 978 ¶6)

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what practical ways can I show concern for Christians in need?’





“Never Be Anxious”

Jehovah helped the poor in ancient Israel. What are some ways that he helps the poor among his servants today?

- He has taught them to have a balanced view of money.—Lu 12:15; 1Ti 6:6-8
- He has helped them to have self-respect.—Job 34:19
- He has taught them to work hard and avoid harmful habits.—Pr 14:23; 20:1; 2Co 7:1
- He has brought them into a loving Christian brotherhood.—Joh 13:35; 1Jo 3:17, 18
- He gives them hope.—Ps 9:18; Isa 65:21-23

No matter how desperate our situation may become, we do not need to be anxious. (Isa 30:15) Jehovah will care for our material needs as long as we keep on seeking first his Kingdom.—Mt 6:31-33.



WATCH THE VIDEO LOVE NEVER FAILS DESPITE . . . POVERTY—CONGO, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



- How have the brothers who live near regional convention locations shown loving hospitality to those who must travel to the convention?



- What does the video teach about Jehovah’s love for the poor?



- How can we imitate Jehovah regardless of how much we have materially?

Love Never Fails Despite . . . Poverty—Congo

Raw Transcript

Every year we organize more than 150 regional conventions in our branch territory. Some convention locations are 50 kilometers (30 miles) or more away from the local congregations, and the families are poor. Sometimes families have to walk for two or more days to reach the convention location. Generally, the convention committee will request local elders to ask families who live in the town where the convention is organized if they can accommodate brothers and sisters coming for the convention. But the problem is that these families are poor too. Even in their poverty, they are willing to give everything they have. I host brothers who come for the convention. I will sell one of my pigs or chickens, and with that money we can all have something to eat. I know Jehovah is a generous God. I also want to show that love for those who draw close to him. The book of Philippians 4:12, 13 teaches me not only to focus on my own needs but also on the needs of my brothers. I take in guests so that they can hear Jehovah's teaching. This gives me a lot of joy. The spiritual food that Jehovah provides for us is helpful in this life and in the life we'll have in the future. That's why I consider it more important than physical food. In reality, hospitality is not about our material possessions; it's about the heart.

Pure Worship
GRADUALLY RESTORED

SEE PARAGRAPHS 11-14

“A rattling sound”

William Tyndale and others prepared Bible translations in English and other languages

“Sinews and flesh”

Charles T. Russell and his associates restored Bible truths

“They began to live and to stand on their feet”

After Jehovah’s people “came to life” in 1919, they intensified their preaching work

servants. In the early 1900’s, God’s anointed people were further energized by such tools as the “Photo-Drama of Creation” and the book *The Finished Mystery*. Shortly thereafter, God’s time came to make his people “stand on their feet.” (Ezek. 37:10) When and how did that occur? Events that took place in ancient Babylon help us to answer that question.

“They Began to Live and to Stand on Their Feet”

¹³ Beginning in 537 B.C.E., the Jews in Babylon saw

13. (a) Beginning in 537 B.C.E., how did the words found at Ezekiel 37:10, 14 see fulfillment? (b) What scriptures indicate that some members of the ten-tribe kingdom returned to Israel?

the fulfillment of the vision. How? Jehovah brought them to life and made them “stand on their feet” by delivering them from captivity and letting them return to Israel. A group of 42,360 Israelites and some 7,000 non-Israelites left Babylon to rebuild Jerusalem and its temple and to settle on the soil of Israel. (Ezra 1:1-4; 2:64, 65; Ezek. 37:14) Then, some 70 years later, about 1,750 exiles joined Ezra when he returned to Jerusalem. (Ezra 8:1-20) So, in total, over 44,000 Jews returned—indeed, a “large army.” (Ezek. 37:10) In addition, God’s Word indicates that members of the ten-tribe kingdom, whose forefathers had been deported by the Assyrians during the eighth century B.C.E., also returned to Israel to assist in rebuilding the temple.—1 Chron. 9:3; Ezra 6:17; Jer. 33:7; Ezek. 36:10.

¹⁴ How did this part of Ezekiel’s prophecy see a larger fulfillment? As Jehovah revealed to Ezekiel in a related prophecy, the principal fulfillment of this restoration prophecy would occur some time after the

14. (a) How do the words at Ezekiel 37:24 help us to determine the time of the prophecy’s principal fulfillment? (b) What took place in 1919? (See also the box “‘Dry Bones’ and ‘Two Witnesses’—How Do They Relate?’”)

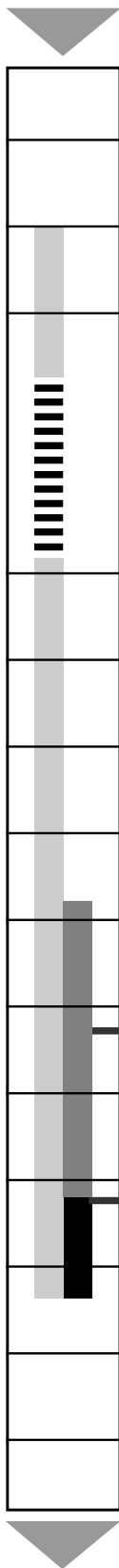
“DRY BONES” AND “TWO WITNESSES” HOW DO THEY RELATE?

SEE PARAGRAPHS 9, 14

THE year 1919 saw the fulfillment of two related prophecies: one regarding “dry bones,” the other about “two witnesses.” The vision of “dry bones” foretells a very long period (which turned out to be many centuries) that ends with the coming to life of a large group of God’s people. (Ezek. 37:2-4; Rev. 11:1-3, 7-13) The prophecy about the “two witnesses” describes a short period (fulfilled from late 1914 to early 1919) that ends with the coming to life of a small group of God’s servants. Both prophecies depicted a symbolic resurrection, and both prophecies saw a modern-day fulfillment in 1919 when Jehovah caused his anointed servants “to stand on their feet,” leave their captivity to Babylon the Great, and be gathered in the restored congregation.—Ezek. 37:10.

Note, though, that the fulfillment of these two prophecies differs in an important way. The prophecy of the “dry bones” foretells the coming to life of *all* members of the anointed remnant. However, the prophecy of the “two witnesses” foretells the coming to life of *some* members of God’s anointed remnant—those who were taking the lead in the organization and who were appointed as “the faithful and discreet slave.”—Matt. 24:45; Rev. 11:6.*[a]

*[a] See *The Watchtower*, March 2016, “Questions From Readers.”



▼ AFTER
100 C.E.

“The Valley Plain . . .
Full of Bones”
—Ezek. 37:1

From the second century C.E. onward when the anointed Christian congregation was killed symbolically, “the valley plain” was filled with “bones”

▼ LATE
1914

preaching
“in sackcloth”

“Two Witnesses”
—Rev. 11:3

1914: The “two witnesses” preached “in sackcloth” for three and a half years. At the end of that period, they were symbolically killed

symbolic
death

▼ EARLY
1919

1919: The “dry bones” came to life when Jehovah caused all anointed ones to leave Babylon the Great and be gathered in the restored congregation

1919: The “two witnesses” came to life when a small group of anointed brothers who were taking the lead in the organization were appointed to serve as “the faithful and discreet slave”

Greater David, Jesus Christ, began to rule as King.*^[2] (Ezek. 37:24) And indeed, in 1919, Jehovah put his spirit in his people. As a result, they came “to life” and were released from their captivity to Babylon the Great. (Isa. 66:8) After that, Jehovah allowed them to settle on their “land,” that is, in the spiritual paradise. How, though, have Jehovah’s modern-day people become a “large army”?

¹⁵ Not long after Christ appointed the faithful slave in 1919, God’s servants began to experience what Zechariah, a prophet serving among the returned exiles, had foretold when he said: “Many peoples and mighty nations will come to seek Jehovah.” The prophet depicted those seekers of Jehovah as “ten men out of all the languages of the nations.” The men would take firm hold of “a Jew,” spiritual Israel, while saying: “We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.”—Zech. 8:20-23.

*^[2] This Messianic prophecy was discussed in Chapter 8 of this publication.

15, 16. (a) How have Jehovah’s modern-day people become a “large army”? (b) How does this prophecy of Ezekiel help us to cope with troublesome circumstances in life? (See the box “Help to Get Back on Our Feet.”)

¹⁶ Today, those of spiritual Israel (the anointed remnant) and, by extension, the “ten men” (the other sheep) together do indeed form “an extremely large army,” numbering into the millions. (Ezek. 37:10) As soldiers of Christ in this ever-growing army, we closely follow our King, Jesus, onward to the blessings that lie ahead of us.—Ps. 37:29; Ezek. 37:24; Phil. 2:25; 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

¹⁷ This restoration of pure worship would bring on God’s people an important responsibility. What is it? To find the answer to that question, we need to go back and examine an assignment that Ezekiel received from Jehovah even before Jerusalem was destroyed. We will do that in the following chapter of this publication.

17. What will we consider in the following chapter?

YOUR PLACE IN PURE WORSHIP

- 1** Why did the exiles in Babylon say that their bones were dry? (Ezek. 37:11)
- 2** In what way was the modern-day “Israel of God” in a deathlike situation? (Matt. 13:24-30)
- 3** How did “the Israel of God” experience a gradual restoration, and when did they “come to life”? (Ezek. 37:7-9)
- 4** How do you feel about being part of the “extremely large army” that Ezekiel’s prophecy foretold? (Ezek. 37:10)

HELP TO GET BACK ON OUR FEET

WE CAN be strengthened by reflecting on the lesson from this impressive vision recorded at Ezekiel 37:1-14, a lesson that we can apply to our personal circumstances. What is it?

At times, we may feel so overwhelmed by pressures and trials in our life that we are worn out, and we struggle to go on. However, at such moments, we may be fortified if we reflect on the vivid description in Ezekiel's restoration vision. Why? We can learn from this prophecy that a God who has the power to breathe life into dead bones can surely give us the strength we need to overcome obstacles—even those that, humanly speaking, are insurmountable.—**Read Psalm 18:29; Phil. 4:13.**

We may be reminded that many centuries before Ezekiel's day, the prophet Moses stated that Jehovah has not only the power but also the desire to use his strength in behalf of his people. Moses wrote: "God is a refuge from ancient times, his everlasting arms are beneath you." (Deut. 33:27) Yes, we can be sure that if we turn to our God in times of distress, Jehovah will put his caring arms beneath us, gently lift us up, and help us to get back on our feet.—Ezek. 37:10.

We Are Jehovah's Army!

(Joel 2:7)

1. We are Jehovah's army,
Under Christ, his Son.
Though we're opposed by Satan,
We are marching as one.
We keep serving faithfully,
Preaching far and near;
We remain determined
With no hint of fear.

(CHORUS)

*We are Jehovah's army;
With his Christ we're one,
Joyfully declaring,
"God's rule has begun."*

2. We are Jehovah's servants,
Searching for his sheep,
Those who are lost and scattered,
Those who sigh and who weep.
These we try to find and feed
With repeated calls;
These we keep inviting
To our Kingdom Halls.

(Chorus)

3. We are Jehovah's army,
Under Christ's command,
Fully equipped for battle,
Each one firmly will stand.
Cautious though we need to be,
Upright we remain.
In the face of danger,
Truth we will maintain.

(CHORUS)

*We are Jehovah's army;
With his Christ we're one,
Joyfully declaring,
"God's rule has begun."*

MAY 2021

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



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COVER PICTURE:

After Jesus ascends to heaven, his disciples zealously preach in Jerusalem and beyond (See study article 20, paragraph 1)

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1. Nations are troubled as never before.
People are fearful of what lies in store.
Firm and immovable we need to be,
Serving our God faithfully.

(CHORUS)

*Steadfast we all need to be;
Far from this world we keep free,
Standing firm to the end,
Unending life we'll see.*

2. Snares of the world and temptations abound.
We can resist if our thinking is sound.
Hating what's bad while we love what is true
Makes us immovable too.

(Chorus)

3. Give to God worship that comes from the heart.
In the Lord's service may we have a part.
Preach the good news, always holding it fast.
Soon the last days will have passed.

(Chorus)

Nothing Can Make the Righteous Stumble

*“Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law;
nothing can make them stumble.”—PS. 119:165.*

SONG 122

Be Steadfast, Immovable!

PREVIEW

In the preceding article, we discussed four reasons why people rejected Jesus in the past and why they reject his followers today. In this article, we will consider four additional reasons. We will also see why honesthearted individuals who love Jehovah do not allow themselves to be stumbled.

TODAY millions claim to believe in Jesus, but they do not accept the things he taught. (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) In fact, a writer once stated: “If there were another ‘Jesus’ among us today who would say things the way the original Jesus said . . . , would we reject him today the way we did two thousand years ago? . . . The answer has generally been: Yes, we would.”

² Many in the first century heard Jesus teach and saw him perform miracles, but they refused to put faith in him. Why? In the preceding article, we considered four reasons why people stumbled at what Jesus said and did. Let us consider four additional reasons. As we do, we will see why people today reject Jesus’ followers and how we can avoid being stumbled.

(1) JESUS WAS IMPARTIAL

³ While on earth, Jesus chose to associate with all types of people. He dined with the rich and the powerful, but he also spent much of his time with the poor and the downtrodden. In addition, he was compassionate toward those who were generally regarded as “sinners.” Some self-righteous individuals

1-2. What comment did one writer make, and what will we discuss in this article?

3. What choice did Jesus make that led some to be stumbled?

stumbled at what Jesus did. They asked his disciples: “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?” To this, Jesus replied: “Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but those who are ill do. I have come to call, not righteous people, but sinners to repentance.”—Luke 5:29-32.

⁴ *What do the Scriptures say?* Long before the Messiah came, the prophet Isaiah described him as one who would not be accepted by the world. The prophecy foretold: “He was despised and was avoided by men . . . It was as if his face were hidden from us. He was despised, and we held him as of no account.” (Isa. 53:3) The Messiah was to be avoided “by men,” so those first-century Jews should have expected that Jesus would be rejected.

⁵ *Do we see the same problem today?* Yes. Many clergymen are eager to accept as members of their congregations individuals who are prominent, wealthy, and viewed as wise by the world. Such clergy do this even though the morals and lifestyle of those new members often are out of harmony with God’s standards. The same clergymen look with disdain on Jehovah’s zealous, morally clean servants

4. According to the prophet Isaiah, what should the Jews have expected about the Messiah?

5. How do many today view Jesus’ followers?

because they are not prominent by this world's standards. As Paul said, God chose those who are "looked down on." (1 Cor. 1:26-29) However, to Jehovah, all his faithful servants are precious.

⁶ *How can we avoid being stumbled?* (Read Matthew 11:25, 26.) Do not be influenced by the world's view of God's people. Recognize that Jehovah uses only humble people to do his will. (Ps. 138:6) And reflect on how much he has accomplished by using those whom the world does not consider to be wise or intellectual.

(2) JESUS EXPOSED WRONG IDEAS

⁷ Jesus courageously denounced the hypocritical religious practices of his day. For example, he exposed the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who were more concerned with how they washed their hands than with how they cared for their parents. (Matt. 15:1-11) Jesus' disciples may have been surprised by his words. In fact, they asked him: "Do you know that the Pharisees were stumbled at hearing what you said?" Jesus answered: "Every plant that my

6. How can we imitate Jesus' attitude, as expressed at Matthew 11: 25, 26?

7. Why did Jesus call the Pharisees hypocrites, and how did they react?

heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted. Let them be. Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit.” (Matt. 15:12-14) Jesus did not allow the negative reaction of the religious leaders to stop him from speaking the truth.

⁸ Jesus also exposed false religious teachings. He did not say that all religious beliefs are acceptable to God. Rather, he spoke of many who would be on the spacious road that leads to destruction, whereas only a few would be on the cramped road to life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) He made it clear that some would appear to serve God, but in reality they were not serving him. He warned: “Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep’s covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves. By their fruits you will recognize them.”—Matt. 7:15-20.

⁹ *What do the Scriptures say?* Bible prophecy foretold that the Messiah would be consumed by zeal for Jehovah’s house. (Ps. 69:9; John 2:14-17) That zeal moved Jesus to expose false religious beliefs and practices. For instance, the Pharisees believed that

8. How did Jesus show that not all religious beliefs are acceptable to God?

9. What are some of the false religious teachings that Jesus exposed?

the soul is immortal; Jesus taught that the dead are sleeping. (John 11:11) The Sadducees denied the resurrection; Jesus resurrected his friend Lazarus. (John 11:43, 44; Acts 23:8) The Pharisees attributed everything to fate and to God; Jesus taught that humans can choose whether to serve God or not. —Matt. 11:28.

¹⁰ *Do we see the same problem today?* Yes. Many are stumbled because our Bible-based teachings expose false religious ideas. Clergymen teach their flocks that God punishes the wicked in hell. They use that false teaching to maintain control over the people. As Jehovah's servants, who worship a God of love, we expose that false teaching. The clergy also teach that the soul is immortal. We expose the pagan origin of that doctrine, which—if true—would make the resurrection irrelevant. And contrary to the belief in predestination that many religions embrace, we teach that man has free will and can choose to serve God. How do religious leaders respond? Often, they are furious!

¹¹ *How can we avoid being stumbled?* If we love the truth, we must accept the sayings of God. (Read

10. Why are many stumbled by our teachings?

11. According to Jesus' words found at John 8:45-47, what does God require of his people?



(See paragraph 3) 1



(See paragraph 9) 2

Many were stumbled because of (1) Jesus' choice of associates, (2) his condemnation of false beliefs and practices, (3) his death on a stake, and (4) his betrayal by Judas.

How could the same things stumble some today?

John 8:45-47.) Unlike Satan the Devil, we stand fast in the truth. We never compromise our beliefs. (John 8:44) God requires that his people “abhor what is wicked” and “cling to what is good,” just as Jesus did.—Rom. 12:9; Heb. 1:9.

(3) JESUS WAS PERSECUTED

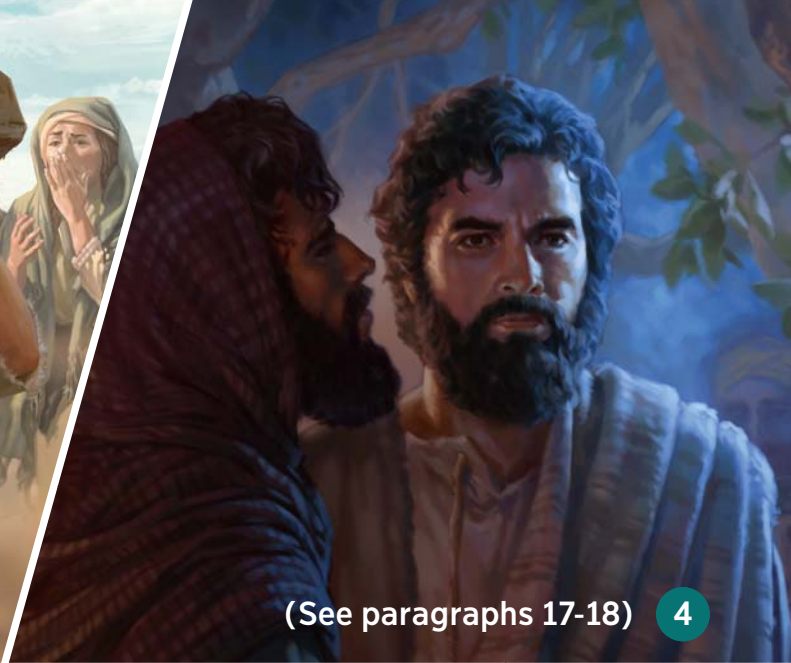
12 What was another stumbling block to the Jews

12. Why was the manner of Jesus' death a cause for stumbling to many Jewish people?



(See paragraph 12)

3



(See paragraphs 17-18)

4

in Jesus' day? Paul said: "We preach Christ executed on the stake, to the Jews a cause for stumbling." (1 Cor. 1:23) Why were many Jews disturbed by the way Jesus died? To them, Jesus' death on a stake made him appear to be a criminal and a sinner—not the Messiah.—Deut. 21:22, 23.

¹³ Those among the Jews who stumbled at Jesus failed to recognize that he was innocent, that he was falsely accused, and that he was treated unjustly. Those conducting Jesus' trial made a mockery of justice. The Jewish supreme court was hastily convened, and the proceedings were most irregular. (Luke 22:54; John 18:24) Rather than

13. What did those who stumbled at Jesus fail to recognize?

impartially listen to the charges and the evidence against Jesus, the judges themselves sought “false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death.” When that failed, the high priest tried to get Jesus to incriminate himself. This was completely out of harmony with accepted legal standards. (Matt. 26:59; Mark 14:55-64) And after Jesus was raised from the dead, those unrighteous judges paid the Roman soldiers who were guarding his tomb “a considerable number of silver pieces” to spread a false story to explain why the tomb was empty. —Matt. 28:11-15.

¹⁴ *What do the Scriptures say?* Although many Jews in Jesus’ day did not expect that the Messiah would need to die, notice what had been prophesied in the Scriptures: “He poured out his life even to death and was counted among the transgressors; he carried the sin of many people, and he interceded for the transgressors.” (Isa. 53:12) So the Jews had no reason to be stumbled when Jesus was executed as a sinner.

¹⁵ *Do we see the same problem today?* Absolutely!

14. What did the Scriptures foretell concerning the Messiah’s death?

15. What accusations against Jehovah’s Witnesses have caused some to stumble?

Jesus was charged and convicted unfairly, and Jehovah's Witnesses have been subjected to similar unjust treatment. Note some examples. During the 1930's and 1940's in the United States, our freedom to worship God was time and again challenged in the courts. Some judges were shamelessly prejudiced against us. In Quebec, Canada, Church and State worked hand in glove in opposition to our work. Many publishers were jailed simply for speaking to their neighbors about God's Kingdom. In Nazi Germany, a number of faithful young brothers were put to death by that godless regime. And in recent years, many of our brothers in Russia have been convicted and imprisoned for discussing the Bible, which has been classified as an "extremist activity." Even the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in the Russian language has been banned and classified as "extremist material" because it uses the name Jehovah.

¹⁶ *How can we avoid being stumbled?* Learn the facts. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned his listeners that some would "lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against" them. (Matt. 5:11) The source of these lies is Satan. He influences opposers

16. As highlighted at 1 John 4:1, why should we not be misled by false stories about Jehovah's people?

to spread malicious slander about those who love the truth. (Rev. 12:9, 10) We must reject the lies told by our opponents. Never should we allow such lies to intimidate us or to undermine our faith.—Read 1 John 4:1.

(4) JESUS WAS BETRAYED AND ABANDONED

¹⁷ Just before his death, Jesus was betrayed by one of his 12 apostles. Another apostle denied Jesus three times, and all his apostles abandoned him on the evening before his death. (Matt. 26:14-16, 47, 56, 75) Jesus was not surprised. He had even foretold that this would happen. (John 6:64; 13:21, 26, 38; 16:32) On seeing this, some could have been stumbled, reasoning, ‘If that is the way Jesus’ apostles behave, I want no part of that group!’

¹⁸ *What do the Scriptures say?* Centuries earlier, Jehovah revealed in his Word that the Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver. (Zech. 11:12, 13) The betrayer would be one of Jesus’ close companions. (Ps. 41:9) The prophet Zechariah also wrote: “Strike the shepherd, and let the flock be

17. In what way could the events prior to Jesus’ death have stumbled some?

18. What prophecies were fulfilled in the events surrounding Jesus’ death?

scattered.” (Zech. 13:7) Instead of being stumbled by these events, honesthearted ones should have been strengthened by seeing these prophecies fulfilled in Jesus.

19 *Do we see the same problem today?* Yes. In modern times, a few well-known Witnesses have left the truth, become apostate, and then tried to turn others away. They have spread negative reports, half-truths, and outright lies about Jehovah’s Witnesses through the news media and the Internet. But honesthearted ones are not stumbled. On the contrary, they realize that the Bible foretold that such things would happen.—Matt. 24:24; 2 Pet. 2:18-22.

20 *How can we avoid being stumbled?* We need to keep our faith strong by studying regularly, by praying continually, and by keeping busy in the work that Jehovah has given us to do. (Read 2 Timothy 4:4, 5.) If we exercise faith, we will not panic when we hear negative reports. (Isa. 28:16) Our love for Jehovah, his Word, and our brothers will help us to avoid being stumbled by those who have left the truth.

19. What do honesthearted ones realize?

20. How can we avoid being stumbled by those who have left the truth? (2 Timothy 4:4, 5)

²¹ In the first century, many were stumbled, and they rejected Jesus. Yet, many others accepted him. These included at least one member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and even “a large crowd of priests.” (Acts 6:7; Matt. 27:57-60; Mark 15:43) Likewise today, millions have not been stumbled. Why not? Because they know and love the truths found in the Scriptures. God’s Word says: “Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble.”—Ps. 119:165.

21. Even though the majority of people today reject our message, of what can we be confident?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Pages 22-23: (1) Jesus shares a meal with Matthew and tax collectors. (2) Jesus drives the merchants out of the temple. (3) Jesus is made to bear the torture stake. (4) Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- Why were some in the first century stumbled by Jesus’ words and actions?
- Why are many today stumbled?
- How can we avoid being stumbled?

Ever Loyal (Psalm 18:25)

1. Ever loyal to Jehovah,
Loyal love we wish to show.
As a people, dedicated,
His commands we want to know.
His advice will never fail us,
And his counsel we obey.
He is loyal; we can trust him.
From his side we'll never stray.
2. Ever loyal to our brothers,
Sticking close in times of need.
Ever caring, always trusting,
Ever kind in word and deed.
We show honor to our brothers
And respect them from the heart.
Ever loyal, ever closer,
From their side we'll never part.
3. Ever loyal to their guidance
When our brothers lead the way.
When they give us clear direction,
May we loyally obey.
Then the blessing from Jehovah
Will be ours to make us strong.
When we're loyal, ever faithful,
To Jehovah we'll belong.