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SONG 13

Christ, Our Model

PREVIEW

He calmed a violent wind-storm, healed the sick, and raised the dead. It is simply thrilling to read about the miracles Jesus performed! Those accounts are recorded in the Bible, not to entertain us, but to teach us. As we review them, we learn faith-strengthening lessons about Jehovah and Jesus and identify godly qualities that we do well to cultivate.

What Can We Learn From the Miracles of Jesus?

“He went through the land doing good and healing.”

—ACTS 10:38.

PICTURE the scene in late 29 C.E. at the start of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus and his mother, Mary, and some of his disciples are invited to a wedding feast in Cana, a village north of Jesus’ hometown of Nazareth. Mary is a friend of the family and is apparently helping to care for the guests. But during the wedding feast, a problem arises that could greatly embarrass the family and the young couple—the wine runs out.* Perhaps the number of guests is greater than expected. Mary quickly turns to her son and says: “They have no wine.” (John 2:1-3) What does Jesus do? Something extraordinary—he miraculously turns water into “fine wine.”—John 2:9, 10.

² Jesus would go on to perform many other miracles during his ministry.[#] He used his miraculous power to help tens of thousands of people. For example, just two of his miracles—feeding 5,000 men and later 4,000 men—may have involved a total of over 27,000 people if we include the women and children who were also present. (Matt. 14:15-21; 15:32-38) On both occasions, Jesus also healed many who were sick. (Matt. 14:14; 15:

* A Bible scholar explains: “Hospitality in the East was a sacred duty and it was not deemed sufficient to set before people that which was just enough. Real hospitality, especially at a wedding feast, demanded superabundance.”

[#] The Gospels report over 30 specific miracles of Jesus. In addition, at times a number of miracles are grouped together. On one occasion, a “whole city” came to him and “he cured many who were ill.”—Mark 1:32-34.

1. Describe the setting in which Jesus performed his first miracle.
- 2-3. (a) How did Jesus use his miraculous power? (b) How can we benefit from considering Jesus’ miracles?

30, 31) Imagine how amazed the crowds were to be miraculously healed and fed by Jesus!

³ The miracles of Jesus have great meaning for us today. In this article, we will discuss some faith-strengthening lessons that those miracles can teach us. Then we will examine how we can imitate the humility and the compassion that Jesus showed when performing miracles.

LESSONS ABOUT JEHOVAH AND JESUS

⁴ The miracles of Jesus teach us faith-strengthening lessons not only about him but also about his Father. After all, Jehovah was the real Source of the miracles. Acts 10:38 tells us: “God anointed him [Jesus] with holy spirit and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil, because God was with him.” Remember, too, that in all that Jesus said and did—including the miracles he performed—he perfectly reflected his Father’s thinking and feelings. (John 14:9) Consider three lessons we can learn from Jesus’ miracles.

⁵ ***First, Jesus and his Father deeply love us.*** While on earth, Jesus showed the depth of his love for people by using his miraculous power to ease their suffering. On one occasion, two blind men cried out to him for help. **(Read Matthew 20:30-34.)** Notice that Jesus was “moved with pity” and then he healed

them. As used here, the Greek verb translated “moved with pity” refers to an intense compassion felt deep inside the body. Such deep compassion, which is an expression of love, also moved Jesus to feed the hungry and to cure a leper. (Matt. 15:32; Mark 1:41) We can be sure that Jehovah, the God of “tender compassion,” and his Son deeply love us and are pained by our suffering. (Luke 1:78; 1 Pet. 5:7) How they must long to remove all the woes that afflict humankind!

⁶ ***Second, God has given Jesus the power to solve all mankind’s problems.*** By means of his miracles, Jesus demonstrated his power to conquer obstacles that we could never overcome on our own. For example, he has the power to free us from the root cause of mankind’s problems—inherited sin and its effects, sickness and death. (Matt. 9:1-6; Rom. 5:12, 18, 19) His miraculous works proved that he can cure “every sort of” sickness and even resurrect the dead. (Matt. 4:23; John 11:43, 44) Also, he has the power to control violent windstorms and defeat wicked spirits. (Mark 4:37-39; Luke 8:2) How reassuring it is to know that Jehovah has placed such power in the hands of his Son!

⁷ ***Third, we can be fully confident that the future blessings under God’s Kingdom will come true.*** The miracles Jesus performed as a man on earth teach us what he will do on a much greater scale

4. Jesus’ miracles teach us faith-strengthening lessons about whom?

5. What moved Jesus to perform miracles? (Matthew 20:30-34)

6. What power has God given to Jesus?

7-8. (a) Jesus’ miracles give us what confidence? (b) What miracle are you looking forward to in the coming new world?



Imitate Jesus by not boasting about personal accomplishments
 (See paragraphs 10-11)

as the heavenly King of God’s Kingdom. Consider what we will soon experience under Christ’s rule. We will enjoy perfect health, for he will remove every disease and disability that has plagued humankind. (Isa. 33:24; 35:5, 6; Rev. 21:3, 4) We will never go hungry or deal with the devastating effects of natural disasters. (Isa. 25:6; Mark 4:41) We will have the great joy of welcoming our loved ones back from “the memorial tombs.” (John 5:28, 29) What miracle are you especially looking forward to in the coming new world?

⁸ When performing miracles, Jesus showed great humility and compassion—qualities that we do well to imitate.

Let us consider two examples, starting with the account of the wedding feast in Cana.

A LESSON IN HUMILITY

⁹ **Read John 2:6-10.** When the wine ran out at the wedding feast, was Jesus obligated to do anything? No. There was no prophecy foretelling that the Messiah would miraculously produce wine. But just imagine how you would feel if the beverages ran out at your own wedding. Jesus likely felt compassion for the family, especially the bride and groom, and wanted to spare them embarrass-

9. What did Jesus do at the wedding feast? (John 2:6-10)

ment. So, as mentioned at the outset, he performed a miracle. He turned water—some 390 liters (103 gal)—into the finest wine. Perhaps he provided such a generous amount so that some would be left over for future use or could even be sold to help the young couple financially. How relieved the newly married couple must have been!

¹⁰ Consider some meaningful details in the account recorded in John chapter 2. Did you notice that Jesus did not fill the stone jars with water? Rather than draw attention to himself, he told the servants to fill the jars. (Verses 6, 7) And after he turned the water into wine, Jesus did not personally take some of the wine to the director of the feast. Instead, he told the servants to do that. (Verse 8) Jesus certainly did not take a cup of the wine, hold it up in front of the guests, and boast, ‘Taste some of the wine that I just made!’

¹¹ What can we learn from Jesus’ miracle of turning water into wine? We learn a lesson in humility. Jesus did not boast about the miracle; in fact, he *never* boasted about his accomplishments. On the contrary, he humbly and repeatedly gave all glory and credit to his Father. (John 5:19, 30; 8:28) If we imitate Jesus by keeping a humble view of ourselves, we will not boast about our achievements. No matter what we may do in Jehovah’s service, let us boast, not about ourselves, but about the won-

derful God we are privileged to serve. (Jer. 9:23, 24) Let us give him due credit. After all, what good could we possibly accomplish without Jehovah’s help?—1 Cor. 1:26-31.

¹² Consider another way we can imitate Jesus’ humility. Imagine this scenario: An elder spends much time helping a young ministerial servant prepare for his first public talk. As a result, the young brother gives an encouraging talk, to the delight of the congregation. After the meeting, someone comes up to the elder and says: ‘Brother So-and-so gave an excellent talk, didn’t he?’ Does the elder need to say: ‘Yes, but I spent a lot of time helping him’? Or might he humbly say: ‘Yes, he did. I’m so proud of him’? When we are humble, we do not have to take credit for the good things we do for others. We are content with knowing that Jehovah sees and values what we do. (Compare Matthew 6:2-4; Heb. 13:16) Surely, we please Jehovah when we imitate Jesus in showing humility.—1 Pet. 5:6.

A LESSON IN COMPASSION

¹³ **Read Luke 7:11-15.** Imagine this scene that took place about halfway through Jesus’ ministry. He has traveled to Nain, a Galilean city not far from Shunem, where the prophet Elisha resurrected a woman’s son about 900 years earlier. (2 Ki. 4:32-37) As Jesus approaches the gate, he sees a funeral procession leaving the city. The scene

10. What are some meaningful details in the account recorded in John chapter 2? (See also picture.)

11. What can we learn from Jesus’ miracle?

12. What is another way we can imitate Jesus’ humility? Illustrate.

13. What does Jesus see near the city of Nain, and what does he do about it? (Luke 7:11-15)



Imitate Jesus by taking the initiative to show compassion for bereaved ones
(See paragraphs 14-16)

is especially sad—a widow has lost her only child. But the grieving mother is not alone; a large crowd from the city is with her. Jesus interrupts the procession and does something remarkable for this grieving mother—he resurrects her son! This is the first of three resurrections by Jesus that are specifically reported in the Gospels.

¹⁴ Consider some meaningful details in the account found in Luke chapter 7. Did you notice that Jesus “caught sight of” the grieving mother and **then** “he was moved with pity for her”? (Verse 13) So, what he observed—perhaps her weeping as she walked before the body of her son—filled his heart with compassion for her. Jesus did not just **feel** pity for the mother; he **showed** his compassion for her. He spoke to her, no doubt with a reassuring tone, and said: “Stop

14. What are some meaningful details in the account recorded in Luke chapter 7? (See also picture.)

weeping.” Then he took the initiative to do something. He brought her son back to life and “gave him to his mother.”—Verses 14, 15.

¹⁵ What can we learn from Jesus’ miracle of resurrecting the widow’s son? We learn a lesson in showing compassion to those who grieve. Of course, we cannot raise the dead, as Jesus did. But, like Jesus, we can cultivate compassion for bereaved ones by being observant. We can take the initiative to show compassion by saying and doing what we can to help them and comfort them.* (Prov. 17:17; 2 Cor. 1:3, 4; 1 Pet. 3:8) Even simple words and small gestures can mean a lot.

¹⁶ Consider an experience. Some years

* For suggestions on what you can say or do to comfort those who grieve, see the article “Comfort the Bereaved, as Jesus Did” in the November 1, 2010, issue of *The Watchtower*.

15. What can we learn from Jesus’ miracle?

16. As reenacted in the picture, what do you learn from the experience of a mother who had recently lost her child in death?

ago while singing a song at a congregation meeting, a sister noticed a mother across the aisle who was crying. The song mentioned the resurrection hope, and that mother had recently lost her young daughter in death. Knowing that, the sister immediately went over, put her arm around the mother, and sang the rest of the song with her. The mother later recalled: “I felt so full of love for the brothers and sisters.” She was very grateful that she had gone to the meeting. “That’s where our help is,” she said, “there at the Kingdom Hall.” We can be sure that Jehovah notices and values even the simple things we do to show compassion to bereaved ones, who are “crushed in spirit.”—Ps. 34:18.

A REWARDING STUDY PROJECT

¹⁷ The Gospel accounts of Jesus’ miracles could make for a rewarding study project. They teach us that Jehovah and Jesus deeply love us, that Jesus has the power to solve all mankind’s problems, and that we can have full confidence in

17. What have we learned in this article?

the promised Kingdom blessings so near at hand. As we analyze those accounts, we can meditate on ways we might imitate Jesus’ qualities. Why not schedule a personal study project or a Family Worship session that focuses on other miracles of Jesus? See what lessons you can glean, and then share what you learn with others. Just imagine the upbuilding conversations you could have!—Rom. 1: 11, 12.

¹⁸ Toward the end of his ministry, Jesus performed the third of his three reported resurrections. But this one was different—he resurrected a dear friend, and he did so under unusual circumstances. What lessons can we learn from the Gospel account of that miracle? And how can we strengthen our faith in the resurrection hope? The next article will consider those questions.

18. What will we discuss in the next article?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 4: While Jesus stands in the background, the bride and groom and their guests enjoy the provision of fine wine.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ■ What faith-strengthening lessons do we learn from Jesus’ miracles? | ■ What did we learn about humility from the miracle recorded at John 2:6-10? | ■ What did we learn about compassion from the miracle recorded at Luke 7:11-15? |
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SONG 151

He Will Call

PREVIEW

If you have lost a loved one in death, no doubt the resurrection promise brings you much comfort. How, though, would you explain to others why you believe in that promise? And how can you make the resurrection hope even more real to you? The purpose of this article is to help all of us to strengthen our faith in the resurrection hope.

“Your Brother Will Rise”!

“Jesus said to [Martha]: ‘Your brother will rise.’”

—JOHN 11:23.

A BOY named Matthew has a serious medical condition that has required many surgeries. When he was seven years old, he and his family were watching a monthly program on JW Broadcasting®. Toward the end of the program, they saw a music video about welcoming loved ones back in the resurrection.* After the program, Matthew approached his parents, held their hands, and said: “You see, Mom and Dad? Even if I die, I will wake up in the resurrection. You can wait for me; it will be OK.” Can you imagine how those parents must have felt when they learned how real the resurrection hope is to their son?

² From time to time, we all do well to reflect on the Bible’s promise of a future resurrection. (John 5:28, 29) Why? Because we never know when we might face a life-threatening illness or suddenly lose someone we love in death. (Eccl. 9:11; Jas. 4:13, 14) Our resurrection hope can help us endure such challenges. (1 Thess. 4:13) The Scriptures assure us that our heavenly Father knows us well and loves us dearly. (Luke 12:7) Think of how well Jehovah God must know us in order to re-create us with our personality and memories intact. And how loving of Jehovah to give us the opportunity for everlasting life, even by resurrecting us if necessary!

³ In this article, we will first discuss why we can believe in the resurrection promise. Then, we will examine the faith-strengthening Bible account that contains the

* The music video is entitled *Just Around the Corner* and was featured in the November 2016 broadcast.

1. How did one boy express his hope in the resurrection?
- 2-3. Why is it good for us to reflect on the resurrection promise?

words of our theme text: “Your brother will rise.” (John 11:23) Lastly, we will learn how to make the resurrection hope more real to us.

WHY WE CAN BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION PROMISE

⁴ To believe in a promise, we must be convinced that the one making the promise has the *desire* as well as the *power*, or ability, to fulfill it. To illustrate: Imagine that your house has been badly damaged by a storm. A friend comes to you and promises, ‘I am going to help you rebuild your house.’ He is sincere, and you are convinced that he has the desire to help you. If he is a skilled builder and has the needed tools, you know that he also has the ability. So you believe in his promise. What, then, about God’s promise of a resurrection? Does he really have the desire and the power to fulfill it?

⁵ Does Jehovah have the *desire* to resurrect the dead? Without question, he does. He inspired a number of Bible writers to record his promise of a future resurrection. (Isa. 26:19; Hos. 13:14; Rev. 20:11-13) And when Jehovah makes a promise, he always fulfills it. (Josh. 23:14) Jehovah is, in fact, eager to restore the dead to life. Why can we say that?

⁶ Consider the words of the patriarch Job. He was sure that even if he died, Jehovah would yearn to see him live again. (Job 14:14, 15, fn.) Jehovah has the

same longing for all his worshippers who have died. He is eager to bring them back to life, healthy and happy. What about the billions who have died without having a chance to learn the truth about Jehovah? Our loving God wants to resurrect them too. (Acts 24:15) He wants them to have the opportunity to become his friends and live forever on earth. (John 3:16) Clearly, Jehovah has the desire to resurrect the dead.

⁷ Does Jehovah also have the *power* to resurrect the dead? Absolutely! He is “the Almighty.” (Rev. 1:8) So he is powerful enough to defeat any enemy, even death. (1 Cor. 15:26) We find strength and comfort in knowing that. Consider the experience of Sister Emma Arnold. She and her family faced severe tests of faith during World War II. To comfort her daughter over the loss of loved ones in Nazi concentration camps, Emma said: “If death would keep mankind perpetually in its bonds, it would be stronger than God, wouldn’t it?” Surely, nothing is stronger than Jehovah! The almighty God who *created* life is capable of *restoring* life to those who have died.

⁸ Another reason why we know that God is capable of resurrecting the dead is that he has a limitless memory. He calls each star by its name. (Isa. 40:26) Also, he remembers those who have died. (Job 14:13; Luke 20:37, 38) He can easily remember the smallest details about those he will resurrect, including their genetic code, their experiences in life, and their memories.

4. To believe in a promise, of what must we be convinced? Illustrate.

5-6. Why can we be sure that Jehovah has the *desire* to resurrect the dead?

7-8. Why can we be sure that Jehovah has the *power* to resurrect the dead?



Jesus felt deep compassion for his grieving friends
(See paragraphs 13-14)

⁹ Clearly, we can believe in Jehovah’s promise of a future resurrection because we know that he has both the desire and the power to fulfill it. Consider another reason for believing in God’s promise of a resurrection: Jehovah has already done it. In Bible times, he empowered a handful of faithful men, including Jesus, to raise the dead. Let us examine the account of one of the resurrections performed by Jesus, as recorded in John chapter 11.

JESUS LOSES A DEAR FRIEND

¹⁰ **Read John 11:1-3.** Imagine the scene in Bethany toward the end of 32 C.E. Jesus has close friends in this village—Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha. (Luke 10:38-42) But Lazarus has become ill, and his sisters are worried. They send a message to Jesus, who is across the Jordan, about a two-day walk from Bethany. (John 10:40)

9. Why do you believe in Jehovah’s promise of a future resurrection?

10. What happens while Jesus is preaching across the Jordan from Bethany, and what does he do? (John 11:1-3)

Sadly, Lazarus dies about the time the messenger reaches Jesus. Even though Jesus knows that his friend has just died, he remains where he is for two more days and then he makes the trip to Bethany. So by the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been dead for four days. Jesus intends to do something that will benefit his friends and glorify God.—John 11:4, 6, 11, 17.

¹¹ We learn a lesson about friendship from this account. Consider: When Mary and Martha sent the message to Jesus, they did not ask him to come to Bethany. They simply said that his dear friend was sick. (John 11:3) When Lazarus died, Jesus could have resurrected him from a distance. Yet, Jesus chose to go to Bethany to be with his friends Mary and Martha. Do you have a friend who will come to your aid without being asked? Then you know that you can count on him for help in “times of distress.” (Prov. 17:17) Like Jesus, may we be such a friend to others! Now let us return to the account and see what happens next.

¹² **Read John 11:23-26.** Martha learns that Jesus is near Bethany. She rushes out to meet him and says: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” (John 11:21) True, he could have healed Lazarus. But Jesus has in mind doing something even more remarkable. He promises: “Your brother will rise.” He also gives Martha further reason for believing in his promise, saying: “I am the resurrection and the life.” Yes, he has God-given power over life

11. What lesson about friendship can we learn from this account?

12. What does Jesus promise Martha, and why is it not an empty promise? (John 11:23-26)

and death. Earlier, he raised a young girl shortly after her death and he also raised a young man, apparently on the day the man died. (Luke 7:11-15; 8:49-55) But can he resurrect someone who has been dead for four days and whose body has begun to decay?

“LAZARUS, COME OUT!”

13 Read John 11:32-35. Picture what happens next. Mary, Lazarus’ other sister, goes out to meet Jesus. She repeats what her sister said: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” She and others with her are grief-stricken. Seeing and hearing them weeping, Jesus is deeply saddened. Moved by tender compassion for his friends, he gives way to tears. He understands how painful it is when a loved one dies. Surely, he is eager to remove the cause of their tears!

13. As recorded at John 11:32-35, how does Jesus react when he sees Mary and others weeping? (See also picture.)

14 Jesus’ reaction to Mary’s weeping teaches us that Jehovah is a God of tender compassion. Why can we say that? As we saw in the preceding article, Jesus perfectly reflects his Father’s thinking and feelings. (John 12:45) So when we read that Jesus felt such deep compassion for his grieving friends that he wept, we may conclude that Jehovah too is deeply moved by our tears of sorrow. (Ps. 56:8) Does that not make you want to draw closer to our tender God?

15 Read John 11:41-44. Jesus arrives at the tomb of Lazarus and asks that the stone covering it be removed. Martha objects, saying that the body must smell by now. Jesus replies: “Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” (John 11:39, 40) Jesus then raises his eyes and prays publicly. He wants to give Jehovah all

14. What can we learn about Jehovah from Jesus’ reaction to Mary’s weeping?

15. As reported at John 11:41-44, what happens at the tomb of Lazarus? (See also picture.)



Jesus demonstrated his power over death
(See paragraphs 15-16)

the credit for what happens next. Then Jesus calls out: “Lazarus, come out!” And Lazarus walks out of the tomb! Jesus has just done what some thought would have been impossible.—See study note on John 11:17.

¹⁶ The account found in John chapter 11 strengthens our faith in the resurrection hope. How so? Recall Jesus’ promise to Martha: “Your brother will rise.” (John 11:23) Like his Father, Jesus has the desire and the power to fulfill that promise. His tears revealed that he has a heartfelt yearning to undo death and the sorrow that it causes. And the moment Lazarus walked out of the tomb, Jesus again proved that he has the power to raise the dead. Also, think about Jesus’ reminder to Martha: “Did I not tell you that if you would **believe** you would **see** the glory of God?” (John 11:40) We have sound reasons for believing that God’s promise of a resurrection will come true. What, though, can we do to make this hope even more real to us?

HOW WE CAN MAKE THE RESURRECTION HOPE MORE REAL TO US

¹⁷ *Read about and meditate on past resurrections.* The Bible describes eight resurrections of people raised to life on earth.* Why not make a careful examination of each account? As you do,

* See the box “Eight Resurrections Described in the Bible” in the August 1, 2015, issue of *The Watchtower*, p. 4.

16. How does the account found in John chapter 11 strengthen our faith in the resurrection hope?

17. What should we keep in mind when we read Bible accounts about the resurrection?

What Would You Ask Them?

In the new world, imagine asking resurrected ones the following questions:

Noah’s wife: What is your name? How did you and Noah protect your sons from the wickedness all around you? (Gen. 6:5, 13)

Isaac: What was going through your mind as you carried the firewood up the mountain? (Gen. 22:6-8)

Job: How do you feel now that you know what was going on in heaven during your trial on earth? (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-7)

John the Baptizer: What was it like to hear the voice of Jehovah? (Matt. 3:13-17)

The criminal executed alongside Jesus: Can you tell us anything else about Jesus’ last moments on the stake? (Luke 23:39-43)

What would you ask . . .

Abel?

Abraham?

Jephthah’s daughter?

David?

Jonah?

remember that these were real people—men, women, and children. Look for lessons you can learn. Think about how each example demonstrates God’s desire and power to restore the dead to life.

Above all, reflect on the most important resurrection—that of Jesus. Remember that his resurrection was confirmed by hundreds of eyewitnesses and gives us a solid basis for our faith.—1 Cor. 15:3-6, 20-22.

18 *Make good use of “spiritual songs” that mention the resurrection hope.** (Eph. 5:19) These songs make the resurrection more real to us and strengthen our faith in this precious hope. Listen to them, practice them, and discuss the meaning of the lyrics during your family worship. Etch the lyrics in your mind and heart. Then if you face a life-threatening trial or lose a loved one in death, Jehovah’s spirit will help you to recall these songs and draw comfort and strength from them.

* See the following songs in “Sing Out Joyfully” to Jehovah: “See Yourself When All Is New” (Song 139), “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize!” (Song 144), and “He Will Call” (Song 151). See also on jw.org the original songs “Just Around the Corner,” “The New World to Come,” and “You Will See.”

18. How can you make good use of our songs about the resurrection hope? (See also footnote.)

19 *Use your imagination.* Jehovah has given us the ability to picture ourselves in the new world. One sister explains: “I have spent so much time imagining myself in the new world that it is as if I could smell the roses blooming in Paradise.” Imagine meeting men and women of faith from Bible times. Whom are you looking forward to meeting? What questions will you ask that person? Imagine also being reunited with your loved ones who have passed away. Picture details about the reunion—the first words, the warm embraces, the tears of joy.

20 How thankful we are for Jehovah’s promise of the resurrection! We can be sure that this promise will come true, for Jehovah has the desire and the power to fulfill it. Let us be determined to keep strengthening our faith in this precious hope. By doing so, we will draw ever closer to the God who, in effect, promises each of us, ‘Your loved ones *will* rise!’

19. What may we imagine about the resurrection? (See the box “What Would You Ask Them?”)

20. What should be our determination?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ■ Why can we believe in Jehovah’s promise of a resurrection? | ■ What did we learn from the account of Jesus’ resurrection of Lazarus? | ■ How can you make the resurrection hope more real to you? |
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SONG 44

A Prayer of the Lowly One

PREVIEW

Although life in this system of things can bring unexpected challenges, we can be certain that Jehovah will support his faithful worshippers. How has Jehovah helped his servants in the past? How is he sustaining us today? Considering examples from the Bible and from modern times will strengthen our conviction that if we rely on him, Jehovah will sustain us too.

Jehovah Will Help You Deal With Life's Uncertainties

“Many are the hardships of the righteous one, but Jehovah rescues him from them all.”—PS. 34:19.

AS JEHOVAH’S people, we know that he loves us and that he wants us to enjoy the best life possible. (Rom. 8: 35-39) We are also convinced that Bible principles always benefit us when we apply them. (Isa. 48:17, 18) What, though, if we face challenges that we did not expect?

² All of Jehovah’s servants deal with problems. For example, a family member might disappoint us in some way. We may have serious health issues that limit what we can do in Jehovah’s service. We might experience the devastating effects of a natural disaster. Or we may be persecuted for our beliefs. When we face such trials, we may wonder: ‘Why is this happening to me? Have I done something wrong? Does this indicate that Jehovah is not blessing me?’ Have you ever felt that way? If so, do not be discouraged. Many of Jehovah’s loyal servants have struggled with similar feelings.—Ps. 22:1, 2; Hab. 1: 2, 3.

³ **Read Psalm 34:19.** Note two important points in this psalm: (1) Righteous people face problems. (2) Jehovah delivers us from our trials. How does Jehovah deliver us?

1. Of what are we convinced?
2. What problems may we face, and what can such problems cause us to wonder?
3. What can we learn from Psalm 34:19?

One way is by helping us to have a realistic view of life in this system of things. While Jehovah does promise that we will have joy in serving him, he does not guarantee a worry-free life now. (Isa. 66:14) He urges us to focus on our future—the time when we will have the life that he wants us to enjoy forever. (2 Cor. 4:16-18) In the meantime, he helps us to keep going each day.—Lam. 3:22-24.

⁴ Let us discuss what we can learn from the examples of faithful worshippers of Jehovah, both in Bible times and in our day. As we will see, we may face unexpected problems. But when we lean on Jehovah, he will never fail to sustain us. (Ps. 55:22) As we consider these examples, ask yourself: ‘How would I have reacted in a similar situation? How do these examples strengthen my trust in Jehovah? What lessons can I apply to my own life?’

IN BIBLE TIMES

⁵ Servants of Jehovah in Bible times faced challenges that they did not expect. Consider **Jacob**. He was commanded by his father to take a wife from the daughters of Laban, a believing relative, and was assured that Jehovah would bless him richly. (Gen. 28:1-4) So Jacob did the right thing. He left the land of Canaan and journeyed to the home of Laban, who had two daughters—Leah and Rachel. Jacob fell in love with Laban’s younger daughter, Rachel, and agreed to work seven years for her father before marrying her. (Gen. 29:18) But matters

did not turn out as Jacob had hoped. Laban tricked him into marrying his older daughter, Leah. Laban allowed Jacob to marry Rachel a week later, but only if he worked seven more years. (Gen. 29:25-27) Laban was also unfair in his business dealings with Jacob. In all, Laban exploited Jacob for 20 years!—Gen. 31:41, 42.

⁶ Jacob endured other problems. He had a large family, but his sons did not always get along with one another. They even sold their own brother Joseph into slavery. Two of Jacob’s sons, Simeon and Levi, brought disgrace on the family and reproach on Jehovah’s name. In addition, Jacob’s beloved wife, Rachel, died while giving birth to their second child. And because of a severe famine, Jacob was forced to move to the land of Egypt in his old age.—Gen. 34:30; 35:16-19; 37:28; 45:9-11, 28.

⁷ Through it all, Jacob never lost faith in Jehovah and in His promises. In turn, Jehovah showed Jacob that he had His favor. For example, despite Laban’s deceitfulness, Jehovah blessed Jacob materially. And just think of how grateful Jacob must have been to Jehovah when he was reunited with Joseph—the son whom he had long thought to be dead! Jacob’s close friendship with Jehovah enabled him to face his trials successfully. (Gen. 30:43; 32:9, 10; 46:28-30) When we maintain a close friendship with Jehovah, we too can successfully deal with unexpected trials.

4. What will we discuss in this article?

5. What challenges did Jacob face because of Laban? (See cover picture.)

6. What other problems did Jacob endure?

7. How did Jehovah show Jacob that he had His favor?

⁸ *King David* could not do everything he had hoped to do in Jehovah's service. For example, David earnestly desired to build a temple for his God. He expressed that desire to the prophet Nathan. In reply, Nathan said: "Do whatever is in your heart, for the true God is with you." (1 Chron. 17:1, 2) We can only imagine how those words must have encouraged David. Perhaps he immediately began planning for this grand project.

⁹ Soon, though, Jehovah's prophet returned with disappointing news. "On that very night," Jehovah told Nathan that David would not be the one to build the temple; rather, one of his sons would do so. (1 Chron. 17:3, 4, 11, 12) How did David react when he received this message? He adjusted his goal. He focused on gathering the funds and the materials that his son Solomon would need for the project.—1 Chron. 29:1-5.

¹⁰ Immediately after informing David that he would not be the one to build the temple, Jehovah made a covenant with him. Jehovah promised David that one of his descendants would rule forever. (2 Sam. 7:16) In the new world, imagine how happy David will be to learn that he is enjoying life under the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus, a King from his own family line! This account helps us to see that even if we cannot do all that we had hoped to do for Jehovah, our God may have other blessings in store for us that we could never have anticipated.

8. What did King David hope to do?

9. How did David react to disappointing news?

10. How did Jehovah bless David?

¹¹ *First-century Christians* dealt with uncertainties. For instance, they were eager for God's Kingdom to come, but they did not know when that would happen. (Acts 1:6, 7) So, what did they do? They kept busy in the preaching work. As the good news spread, they saw tangible proof of Jehovah's blessing on their efforts.—**Read Acts 6:7.**

¹² At one point, a great famine came "on the entire inhabited earth." (Acts 11:28) First-century Christians were not spared. Can you imagine how this severe food shortage must have affected them? No doubt family heads worried about how they would provide for their household. And what about young people who had been planning to expand their ministry? Might they have felt that they should delay those plans? Regardless of their circumstances, the Christians adapted. They continued to preach in any way that they could, and they gladly shared their material belongings with fellow believers in Judea.—Acts 11:29, 30.

¹³ What blessings did the Christians experience during the famine? Those who received relief supplies saw Jehovah's support firsthand. (Matt. 6:31-33) They must have felt closer to their fellow believers who had come to their assistance. And those who made donations or who otherwise shared in the re-

11. How were first-century Christians blessed even though the Kingdom did not come when they expected it? (Acts 6:7)

12. What did first-century Christians do when there was a famine?

13. What blessings did the Christians experience during the famine?

lief work experienced the happiness that comes from giving. (Acts 20:35) Jehovah blessed all of them as they adapted to the changing circumstances.

¹⁴ First-century Christians were often persecuted, sometimes when they may have least expected it. Consider what happened to Barnabas and the apostle Paul while they were preaching in the area of Lystra. At first, they were warmly received by those who listened to them. But later, opposers “persuaded the crowds,” and some of those same people stoned Paul and left him for dead. (Acts 14:19) But Barnabas and Paul continued preaching elsewhere. The results? They made “quite a few disciples,” and their words and example strengthened their fellow believers. **(Read Acts 14:21, 22.)** Many benefited because Barnabas and Paul did not give up in the face of sudden persecution. As long as we do not give up in the work Jehovah has asked us to do, we will be blessed.

IN OUR DAY

¹⁵ During the years leading up to 1914, Jehovah’s people had high expectations. Consider, for example, Brother A. H. Macmillan. Like many at that time, Brother Macmillan thought that he would receive his heavenly reward very soon. In a talk he gave in September 1914, he said: “This is probably the last public address I shall ever deliver.” Of course, that was not his last talk.

14. What happened to Barnabas and the apostle Paul, and with what results? (Acts 14:21, 22)

15. What do you learn from the example of Brother A. H. Macmillan?

Brother Macmillan later wrote: “Perhaps some of us had been a bit too hasty in thinking that we were going to heaven right away.” He added: “The thing for us to do would be to keep busy in the Lord’s service.” Brother Macmillan did keep busy. He was zealous in the ministry. He had the privilege of encouraging many brothers who were in prison for their neutrality. And he faithfully attended congregation meetings even in his later years. How did Brother Macmillan benefit from using his time productively while he waited for his reward? Shortly before his death in 1966, he wrote: “My faith is as strong today as it ever was.” What an excellent attitude for all of us to imitate—especially if we have been enduring longer than we anticipated!—Heb. 13:7.

¹⁶ Many of Jehovah’s people struggle with unexpected health problems. For instance, in his life story, Brother Herbert Jennings* described how he and his wife had enjoyed their assignment as missionaries in Ghana. In time, however, he was diagnosed with a serious mood disorder. Drawing on the words of **James 4:14**, Brother Jennings called this development “a ‘tomorrow’ we did not anticipate.” **(Read.)** He wrote: “Facing reality, we arranged to leave Ghana and our many close friends and return to Canada [for medical treatment].” Jehovah helped Brother Jennings and his wife continue serving faithfully despite the challenge they were facing.

* See *The Watchtower*, December 1, 2000, pp. 24-28.

16. What unexpected challenge did Herbert Jennings and his wife face? (James 4:14)



When we rely on Jehovah, life's uncertainties can actually draw us closer to him
(See paragraph 18)



¹⁷ Brother Jennings' candid remarks found in his life story had a great impact on others. One sister wrote: "I have never been as deeply moved as I was when I read this article. . . . Reading how Brother Jennings had to give up an assignment to care for his illness helped me to view my situation in a balanced way." Similarly, a brother wrote: "After serving as a congregation elder for ten years, I had to relinquish my privilege because of a mental illness. My feelings of failure were such that it was often too depressing for me to read the life-story articles. . . . But Brother Jennings' perseverance was uplifting to me." This reminds us that when we endure unexpected problems, we can encourage others. Even when life does not turn out the way

17. How did Brother Jennings' example benefit fellow believers?

we had hoped, we can still be a living example of faith and endurance.—1 Pet. 5:9.

¹⁸ Disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic have affected many of Jehovah's people. For example, a widow in Nigeria was very low on provisions. One morning, her daughter asked her what they were going to eat after they cooked their last cup of rice. Our sister told her daughter that they did not have any money or food left but that they should imitate the widow of Zarephath—prepare their last meal and put their complete trust in Jehovah. (1 Ki. 17: 8-16) Before they even started thinking about what they would eat for lunch that day, they received a package of relief supplies from fellow believers. The

18. As reenacted in the pictures, what do you learn from the example of a widow in Nigeria?

package contained enough food to last for more than two weeks. The sister said that she did not realize how closely Jehovah was listening to what she had told her daughter. Indeed, when we rely on Jehovah, life's uncertainties can actually draw us closer to him.—1 Pet. 5: 6, 7.

¹⁹ In recent years, many of our brothers and sisters have endured persecution that they may not have expected. Consider Brother Aleksey Yershov, who lives in Russia. Jehovah's people in that area enjoyed a measure of freedom when Brother Yershov was baptized in 1994. In later years, though, the situation in Russia changed. In 2020, Brother Yershov's home was invaded and searched, and many of his possessions were confiscated. Several months later, the government filed criminal charges against him. To make matters worse, the charges were based on video recordings made by a person who pretended for over a year to be interested in studying the Bible. What a betrayal!

19. What persecution has Aleksey Yershov endured?

²⁰ Has anything good come out of Brother Yershov's ordeal? Yes. His relationship with Jehovah has grown stronger. "My wife and I pray together more frequently," he says. "I realize that I would not be able to manage this situation without Jehovah's help." He adds: "Personal study helps me to deal with discouragement. I meditate on the examples of faithful servants in the past. There are many accounts recorded in the Bible highlighting how important it is to keep calm and to show trust in Jehovah."

²¹ What have we learned in this article? Life in this system of things is uncertain. Even so, Jehovah always helps his servants when they rely on him. As stated in our theme scripture, "many are the hardships of the righteous one, but Jehovah rescues him from them all." (Ps. 34:19) May we continue to focus, not on our hardships, but on Jehovah's sustaining power. Then like the apostle Paul, we can say: "For all things I have the strength through the one who gives me power."—Phil. 4:13.

20. How has Brother Yershov strengthened his relationship with Jehovah?

21. What have we learned in this article?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| ■ What realistic view of life in this system of things does Jehovah teach us? | ■ How did Jehovah support his faithful servants in Bible times? | ■ How has Jehovah helped his worshippers in our day? |
|---|---|--|

SONG 88

Make Me Know Your Ways

PREVIEW

We encourage one another when we comment at meetings. Some, however, feel anxious about giving a comment. Others enjoy commenting but wish they could be called on more often. In either situation, how can we show consideration for one another so that we all feel encouraged? And how can we give comments that incite our brothers and sisters to love and fine works? This article will explain.

Encourage One Another at Congregation Meetings

“Let us consider one another . . . , encouraging one another.”—HEB. 10:24, 25.

WHY do we attend congregation meetings? Primarily, to praise Jehovah. (Ps. 26:12; 111:1) We also attend meetings so that we can encourage one another during these difficult times. (1 Thess. 5:11) When we raise our hand and give a comment, we contribute toward both of these objectives.

² Each week, we have opportunities to comment at our meetings. For example, on the weekends, we can participate during the congregation *Watchtower* Study. At our midweek meetings, we may comment during the Spiritual Gems, the Congregation Bible Study, and other discussion parts.

³ We all want to praise Jehovah and encourage our fellow worshippers. But when commenting, we may face challenges. We may feel anxious about commenting, or we may keenly desire to participate but are not called on as often as we would like. How can we deal with these challenges? We find a key to the answer in the apostle Paul’s letter to the Hebrews. When discussing the importance of meeting together, he said that we should focus on “encouraging one another.” (**Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.**) When we realize that others in the audience can be encouraged by even a simple expression of our faith, we

1. Why do we comment at meetings?
2. What opportunities do we have to comment at our meetings?
3. What challenges might we face, and how can Hebrews 10:24, 25 help?

will feel better about volunteering to comment. And if we are not called on often, we can be happy that others in the congregation will have the opportunity to comment.—1 Pet. 3:8.

⁴ In this article, we will first discuss how we can encourage one another in a **small congregation** where the number of commenters is limited. Then, we will examine how to encourage one another in a **large congregation** where many raise their hand to comment. Finally, we will discuss ways that we can make the **content** of our comments genuinely encouraging to others.

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER IN A SMALL CONGREGATION

⁵ In a small congregation or group, there are not as many commenters for the conductor to choose from. At times, he may need to wait awhile before someone volunteers to comment. The meeting may seem to drag on—which is hardly encouraging. What can you do? Be willing to raise your hand frequently. By doing so, you may motivate others to participate more often.

⁶ What if the very thought of commenting makes you nervous? Many can relate to that feeling. Yet, in order to be of greater encouragement to your brothers and sisters, why not explore ways to reduce your anxiety about commenting? How might you do that?

4. What three points will be discussed in this article?

5. How can we encourage one another if few are in attendance?

6-7. How might we reduce any anxiety we have about commenting?

⁷ You may find it helpful to review some of the suggestions published in previous issues of *The Watchtower*.^{*} For example, prepare well. (Prov. 21:5) The more familiar you are with the material, the more at ease you will feel about volunteering to comment. Also, make your comments brief. (Prov. 15:23; 17:27) A short answer gives you less to worry about. A brief comment, perhaps consisting of just one or two sentences, may even be easier for your brothers and sisters to understand than a lengthy comment that develops many ideas. By making a brief comment in your own words, you will show that you have prepared well and that you have a clear understanding of the material.

⁸ What if you try some of these suggestions but still feel too anxious to comment more than once or twice? Be assured that Jehovah will appreciate your sincere efforts to do what you can. (Luke 21:1-4) Giving your best does not mean putting an unbearable strain on yourself. (Phil. 4:5) Determine what you can do, set a goal to do it, and pray for a calm heart. Initially, that goal may be to make one brief comment.

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER IN A LARGE CONGREGATION

⁹ If your congregation has many publishers, you may have a different challenge. Perhaps so many brothers and

^{*} For additional suggestions, review the January 2019 issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 8-13, and the September 1, 2003, issue, pp. 19-22.

8. How does Jehovah view our best efforts?

9. What challenge might arise in large congregations?

sisters volunteer to comment that your hand is frequently overlooked. Danielle, for example, has always enjoyed commenting at meetings.* She views it as part of her worship, a way to encourage others, and a means of reinforcing Bible truths in her own mind. But when she moved to a larger congregation, she was called on less frequently—sometimes not even once during an entire meeting. “I was frustrated,” she said. “I felt as if I had missed out on a privilege. When it happens again and again, you begin to wonder if it’s deliberate.”

¹⁰ Can you relate to Danielle’s feelings? If so, you might be tempted to give up and just listen to the meeting. But do not stop trying to comment. What can you do? You may find it helpful to prepare several comments for each meeting. Then if you are not chosen to comment early in the study, you will still have

* Name has been changed.

10. How might we increase our chances of giving a comment?

opportunities to comment as the meeting progresses. When preparing for the *Watchtower* Study, think about how each paragraph ties in to the theme of the article. If you do, you will likely have something to offer throughout the lesson. Additionally, you might prepare to comment on paragraphs that discuss deeper truths that are more difficult to explain. (1 Cor. 2:10) Why? Because there may be fewer volunteers during that part of the lesson. What if, despite applying these suggestions, you find that after several meetings you still have not had an opportunity to comment? You might approach the conductor before the meeting and tell him which question you would like to answer.

¹¹ **Read Philippians 2:4.** Under inspiration, the apostle Paul encouraged Christians to look out for the interests of others. How can we apply that counsel during meetings? By remembering that others, like us, want to participate.

11. What does Philippians 2:4 encourage us to do?

Just as you allow others to share in a conversation, allow others to comment at meetings

(See paragraph 12)





When might we choose not to raise our hand at a meeting?

(See paragraph 14)

¹² Think about it this way. When you are having a conversation with your friends, would you talk so much that they have little opportunity to speak? Of course not! You want them to share in the conversation. Similarly, at meetings, we want to allow as many as possible to comment. In fact, one of the best ways to encourage our brothers and sisters is by giving them a chance to express their faith. (1 Cor. 10:24) Let us consider how we can do that.

¹³ For one thing, we can ***keep our comments brief***, thus allowing time for more to participate. Elders and other experienced publishers can set the example. Even when you give a short comment, ***avoid talking about too many points***.

12. What is a good way to encourage others at meetings? (See also picture.)

13. How can we allow more in the audience to share in commenting?

If you cover everything in the paragraph, there will be little left for others to say. In this paragraph, for example, two suggestions are given—keep comments brief and avoid covering too many points. If you are called on first to comment on this paragraph, why not talk about just one of these points?

¹⁴ Use discretion when deciding how often you will volunteer to comment. If we raise our hand too often, we might make the conductor feel pressured to call on us repeatedly even though others have not yet had an opportunity. This could discourage others from raising their hand.—Eccl. 3:7.

¹⁵ When many publishers raise their

14. What can help us decide how often to raise our hand? (See also picture.)

15. (a) How should we respond if we are not called on to comment? (b) How can conductors show consideration for everyone? (See the box “If You Are Conducting.”)

If You Are Conducting

If you are conducting a question-and-answer part, try to allow as many as possible to share in commenting. How can you accomplish this?

- Do not talk too much. Limit yourself to a brief introduction, a short conclusion, and a **few** well-placed remarks during the lesson.* There is no need to introduce every paragraph before it is read.
- After you read the question, pause briefly to give a number of publishers time to raise their hand. Do not call on the same ones repeatedly if others who have not had an opportunity to comment have their hand up. Remember, even mature publishers may become discouraged if they are often overlooked.
- Avoid saying, “I am looking for a new hand” or asking, “Who has not commented yet?”
- If conducting a question-and-answer part near the end of the midweek meeting, try to remember who has already commented during earlier parts in order to give others a chance to participate.
- Be mindful of timing. If you spend too much time on the opening paragraphs of a lesson, you may have to rush through the latter part of the article and not have time to call on others.

* See the July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, p. 32, and the September 1, 2003, issue, pp. 21-22.

hand during a study, we may not get to comment as often as we would like. At times, the conductor may not be able to call on us at all. That can be disappointing, but we should try not to take it personally when we are not called on.—Eccl. 7:9.

¹⁶ If you are unable to comment as often as you would like, why not listen carefully as others participate and then after the meeting commend them for their comment? Your brothers and sisters may find your commendation just as encouraging as the comments you

16. How might we encourage others who comment?

would have given. (Prov. 10:21) Giving commendation is yet another way that we can encourage one another.

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER

¹⁷ How else can we encourage one another at our meetings? If you are a parent, help your young ones to prepare comments appropriate to their age. (Matt. 21:16) At times, serious matters, such as marital problems or moral issues, are considered during a study, but

17. (a) How can parents help their children prepare appropriate comments? (b) According to the video, what are the four steps to preparing a comment? (See also footnote.)

there will probably be a paragraph or two that a child can comment on. Also, help your children understand why they will not likely be called on every time they raise their hand. Explaining this can prevent them from being disappointed when others are chosen instead of them. —1 Tim. 6:18.*

¹⁸ All of us can prepare upbuilding comments that honor Jehovah and encourage our fellow Christians. (Prov. 25:11) While we may occasionally offer a brief personal experience, we should refrain from talking too much about ourselves. (**Read Proverbs 27:2; 2 Cor. 10:18**) Instead, we endeavor to keep the focus on Jehovah, his Word, and his people as a whole. (Rev. 4:11) Of course, if the question for a paragraph invites us to make a personal ex-

* Watch the video on jw.org *Become Jehovah's Friend—Prepare Your Comment*.

18. How can we avoid drawing attention to ourselves when commenting? (Proverbs 27:2)

pression, it is appropriate to do so. An example of this occurs in the next paragraph of this article.

¹⁹ While there are no strict rules on how to give comments, all of us can endeavor to make our participation encouraging. This may mean commenting a little more often. Or it may mean being content with the opportunities we have to comment and being glad that others appreciate the privilege as much as we do. By focusing on the interests of others at congregation meetings, we can all enjoy “an interchange of encouragement.”—**Read Romans 1:11, 12.**

19. (a) What will result when we show consideration for all in attendance? (Romans 1:11, 12)
(b) What do you personally appreciate about commenting at meetings?

PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 23: In a large congregation, a brother who has already commented allows others the opportunity to participate in the meeting.

HOW CAN WE SHOW CONSIDERATION FOR ONE ANOTHER WHEN . . .

- | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ■ few volunteer to comment at a meeting? | ■ many are volunteering to comment? | ■ we are preparing our comments? |
|--|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|

SONG 142

Holding Fast to Our Hope

PREVIEW

Many today do not believe in the Bible's promise of a new world. They think that it is only a dream, a fairy tale, too good to be true. However, we are certain that all of Jehovah's promises will be fulfilled. Even so, to keep our faith alive, we must continue strengthening it. How? This article will explain.

How Can We Strengthen Our Faith in Jehovah's Promise of a New World?

"When [Jehovah] says something, will he not do it?"

—NUM. 23:19.

WE TREASURE Jehovah's promise to replace this system of things with a righteous new world. (2 Pet. 3:13) Although we do not know just when that new world will become a reality, the evidence indicates that we do not have much longer to wait.—Matt. 24:32-34, 36; Acts 1:7.

² Meanwhile, no matter how long we have been in the truth, all of us need to strengthen our faith in that promise. Why? Because even strong faith can grow weak. In fact, the apostle Paul called a lack of faith "the sin that **easily** entangles us." (Heb. 12:1) To prevent our faith from weakening, we need to review regularly the evidence that proves that the new world will soon be a reality.—Heb. 11:1.

³ In this article, we will discuss three ways that we can strengthen our faith in Jehovah's promise of a new world: (1) by meditating on the ransom, (2) by contemplating Jehovah's power, and (3) by spending time in spiritual activities. Then we will discuss how Jehovah's message to Habakkuk strengthens our faith today. First, though, let us consider some situations we may be facing right now that require strong faith in the promise of a coming new world.

1-2. What do we need to do while waiting for the new world?

3. What will we discuss in this article?

SITUATIONS THAT REQUIRE STRONG FAITH

⁴ Every day, we make decisions that require strong faith. For example, we make decisions involving our associations, entertainment, education, marriage, children, and secular work. We do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do my choices show that I am certain that this system is temporary and will soon be replaced by God’s new world? Or are my choices influenced by people who live as if death were the end of everything?’ (Matt. 6:19, 20; Luke 12:16-21) We will make the best decisions if we strengthen our faith that the new world is close at hand.

⁵ We also face trials that require strong faith. We may face persecution, chronic illness, or other things that can cause us to become discouraged. At first, we might meet our trial with determination. But if it drags on—as trials often do—we will need strong faith in order to endure and to continue serving Jehovah with joy.—Rom. 12:12; 1 Pet. 1:6, 7.

⁶ When undergoing a trial, we may feel that Jehovah’s new world will never come. Does this mean that our faith is weak? Not necessarily. Consider an illustration. In the middle of a brutally cold winter, we may feel that summer will never come. And yet summer does come. Likewise, when we are deeply discouraged, we might *feel* that the new world will never come. If our faith

is strong, though, we *know* that God’s promises will be fulfilled. (Ps. 94:3, 14, 15; Heb. 6:17-19) With that confidence, we can continue putting our worship of Jehovah first in our life.

⁷ Consider one more area in which strong faith is required—the preaching work. Many people to whom we preach feel that the “good news” about God’s coming new world is too good to be true. (Matt. 24:14; Ezek. 33:32) We never want to allow their skeptical attitude to rub off on us. To prevent that from happening, we must keep strengthening our faith. Let us consider three ways we can do that.

MEDITATE ON THE RANSOM

⁸ One way we can strengthen our faith is by meditating on the ransom. The ransom is a guarantee that God’s promises will come true. When we carefully reflect on why the ransom was provided and what it involved, we strengthen our faith that God’s promise of endless life in a better world is sure to be fulfilled. Why can we say that?

⁹ Well, what did the ransom involve? Jehovah sent his beloved firstborn Son, his closest companion, from heaven to be born as a perfect human. While on earth, Jesus endured all kinds of hardships. Then he suffered and died a painful death. What a high price Jehovah paid! Our loving God would never have allowed his Son to suffer and die just to provide a better but very brief life for

4. What decisions require strong faith?

5-6. Why do we need strong faith in times of distress? Illustrate.

7. What attitude must we guard against?

8-9. How can meditating on the ransom affect our faith?

us. (John 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19) Having paid so high a price, Jehovah will see to it that unending life in the new world becomes a reality.

CONTEMPLATE JEHOVAH'S POWER

¹⁰ A second way to strengthen our faith is by contemplating Jehovah's power. He has the power to fulfill everything he promises to do. True, the fulfillment of the promise of unending life in a new world may seem impossible to humans. But Jehovah frequently promises things that humans could never accomplish. He is, after all, Almighty God. (Job 42:2; Mark 10:27) Would we expect him to make ordinary promises? —**Read Ephesians 3:20.**

¹¹ Consider some of the seemingly impossible things that Jehovah promised his people in the past. He assured Abraham and Sarah that they would have a son in their old age. (Gen. 17:15-17) He also told Abraham that his descendants would be given the land of Canaan. During the many years that Abraham's descendants, the Israelites, were slaves in Egypt, it must have seemed as if that promise would never come true. But it did. Later, Jehovah announced that elderly Elizabeth would have a child. He also told Mary, a virgin, that she would give birth to his own Son, whose arrival Jehovah had promised thousands of years earlier in the

garden of Eden—another promise fulfilled!—Gen. 3:15.

¹² We strengthen our faith in Jehovah's power to bring about the new world by reflecting on his record of making and fulfilling his promises. (**Read Joshua 23:14; Isaiah 55:10, 11.**) That makes us better prepared to help others appreciate that the promised new world is no dream, no fantasy. Jehovah himself declared with regard to the new heavens and new earth: "These words are faithful and true." —Rev. 21:1, 5.

FILL YOUR LIFE WITH SPIRITUAL ACTIVITIES

¹³ A third way we can strengthen our faith is by spending time in spiritual activities. Consider, for example, how we benefit from our *congregation meetings*. Anna, who has spent decades in various features of the full-time ministry, says: "Meetings keep my faith solidly anchored. Even if the speaker is limited in his teaching ability or does not impart anything new, I will often hear something that leads me to a better understanding of a Bible truth, and that strengthens my faith."* No doubt we also appreciate faith-building comments from those in the audience. —Rom. 1:11, 12; 10:17.

¹⁴ We also strengthen our faith when we participate in *the field ministry*.

* Some names have been changed.

10. According to Ephesians 3:20, what is Jehovah able to do?

11. Give an example of one of God's extraordinary promises. (See the box "Some Extraordinary Promises Fulfilled.")

12. Of what do Joshua 23:14 and Isaiah 55:10, 11 assure us about Jehovah's power?

13. How can congregation meetings strengthen our faith? Explain.

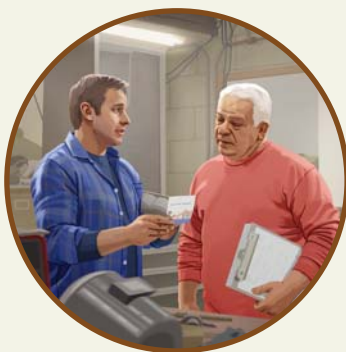
14. How does the ministry strengthen our faith?

SOME EXTRAORDINARY PROMISES FULFILLED

Promise	Why It Seemed Impossible	Fulfillment	
Abraham and Sarah would have a son in their old age.—Gen. 18:14.	Sarah was past the age of childbearing.—Gen. 18:11.	Gen. 21:1, 2	
Abraham's descendants would make their home in Canaan.—Gen. 17:8.	The Israelites became slaves in Egypt.—Ex. 1:13, 14.	Josh. 11:23	
A descendant of David would sit on Jehovah's throne forever.—2 Sam. 7:8, 16.	There were no more Judean kings after Zedekiah died.—Jer. 52:11.	Luke 1:32, 33	
Jerusalem would be restored after the Israelites spent 70 years in Babylonian captivity.—Jer. 29:10.	Jerusalem was desolate, and Babylon was known for never releasing its captives.—Isa. 14:17.	Ezra 1:1-3; 2:1	
The Assyrians would not defeat Jerusalem.—2 Ki. 19:32-34.	The Assyrian army was great and had already captured many Judean cities and towns.—2 Ki. 18:13.	Isa. 37:36, 37	
Elizabeth would have a son, and Mary would give birth to God's Son.—Luke 1:13, 31.	Elizabeth was barren and well along in years. Mary was a virgin.—Luke 1:18, 34.	Luke 1:57; 2:7	



CONGREGATION
MEETINGS



FIELD
MINISTRY



PERSONAL
STUDY

How can each of these spiritual activities
strengthen your faith?
(See paragraphs 13-15)

(Heb. 10:23) Barbara, who has been serving Jehovah for over 70 years, says: “I have always found the preaching work to be faith-strengthening. The more I talk to others about Jehovah’s wonderful promises, the more my faith is kept alive and strong.”

¹⁵ Consider another spiritual activity that strengthens our faith: **personal study**. Susan finds it helpful to schedule her study sessions. She says: “On Sunday, I study for the next week’s *Watchtower* Study. On Monday and Tuesday, I prepare for the midweek meeting. On the remaining days, I work on a personal study project.” By maintaining a consistent schedule for study, Susan continually builds her faith. Irene, who has served for decades at world headquarters, has found it faith-strengthening to study Bible prophecy. She says: “I find it

amazing that Jehovah’s prophecies are fulfilled to the smallest detail.”*

“IT WILL WITHOUT FAIL
COME TRUE”

¹⁶ Some of Jehovah’s servants have been waiting for the end of this system of things for a long time. From a human standpoint, the fulfillment of God’s promise might seem to be delaying. Jehovah addressed that concern when he assured the prophet Habakkuk: “The vision is yet for its appointed time, and it is rushing toward its end, and it will not lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it! For it will without fail come true. It will not be late!” (Hab.

* Many articles on Bible prophecy can be found by looking under the subject “Prophecy” in the *Watchtower Publications Index*. For example, see the article “What Jehovah Foretells Comes to Be” in the January 1, 2008, issue of *The Watchtower*.

15. How does personal study strengthen our faith? (See also pictures.)

16. Why does Jehovah’s assurance to Habakkuk have meaning for us today? (Hebrews 10:36, 37)

2:3) Did God provide that assurance for the benefit of Habakkuk only? Or do His words have meaning for us today? Under inspiration, the apostle Paul applied those words to Christians, who are in expectation of the new world. **(Read Hebrews 10:36, 37.)** Yes, we can be sure that even if our promised deliverance seems to delay, “it will without fail come true. It will not be late!”

¹⁷ Many servants of Jehovah have applied Jehovah’s counsel to “keep in expectation”—even for decades. Louise, for example, began serving Jehovah in 1939. She says: “At that time, I thought Armageddon would come before I finished high school. That didn’t happen. Over the years, I found it helpful to read what I call ‘the waiting accounts’—the Bible narratives of Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and others who had to wait a long time before receiving the promised reward from Jehovah. Remaining in expectation has kept me and others focused on the certainty of the nearness of the new world.” Many other longtime worshippers of Jehovah agree!

17. How did one sister apply the counsel Jehovah gave to Habakkuk?

¹⁸ True, the new world is not yet here. Note, however, some of the things that are here—the stars, the trees, the animals, and your fellow humans. No one would doubt that all these things are real, even though there was a time when they did not exist. They are now here only because Jehovah created them. (Gen. 1:1, 26, 27) Our God has also purposed to establish a new world. He will fulfill that purpose. In the new world, people will enjoy endless life in perfect health. At God’s appointed time, the new world will become as real as the universe around us today.—Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:3, 4.

¹⁹ In the meantime, use every opportunity you have to strengthen your faith. Build appreciation for the ransom. Contemplate Jehovah’s power. Fill your life with spiritual activities. By doing so, you can be among “those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”—Heb. 6:11, 12; Rom. 5:5.

18. How can observing creation strengthen our faith in the coming new world?

19. How can you strengthen your faith?

HOW CAN WE STRENGTHEN OUR FAITH BY . . .

■ meditating on the ransom?

■ contemplating Jehovah’s power?

■ engaging in spiritual activities?

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STUDY TIP

Are you benefiting from the Bible-verse explanations found in the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses*?

These explanations can help you dig deeper into God’s Word. They may include details about the historical setting of a Bible verse, why it was written, to whom it applied, or the meaning of specific words or phrases.

Both *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*™ and *JW Library*® allow you to access *Research Guide* references directly from a Bible verse. You can find these references in the study pane of any of the Bible versions available there.

When using these references, pay attention to the date. The newest articles display at the top. Further down the list, older articles may contain an understanding that has since been clarified.

- *Research Guide* verse references are automatically available in *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*.
- To enable verse references in *JW Library*, install the *Research Guide* and download updates when available. This can be done using the button at the top of the study pane of any chapter in the Bible.

COVER PICTURE:

For 20 years, Jehovah blessed Jacob as he worked hard for his deceitful uncle, Laban (See study article 17, paragraph 5)

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