

- Song 128 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Israel Forgot Jehovah”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 13:1-5—Jeremiah obeyed God’s instructions to hide a linen belt, although it took great effort (*jr* 51 ¶17)
 Jer 13:6, 7—When Jeremiah made the long trek to retrieve the belt, he found that it was ruined (*jr* 52 ¶18)
 Jer 13:8-11—Jehovah was illustrating that the close relationship that he had with the Israelites would be ruined because of their stubbornness (*jr* 52 ¶19-20; *it-1* 1121 ¶2)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 12:1, 2, 14—What was Jeremiah’s question, and what was Jehovah’s answer? (*jr* 118 ¶11)

 Jer 15:17—What was Jeremiah’s view of associations, and how can we imitate him? (*w04* 5/1 12 ¶16)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 13:15-27

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Memorial invitation and video—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Memorial invitation and video—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Talk:** (6 min.) *w16.03* 29-31—Theme: When Were God’s People Held Captive by Babylon the Great?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 79
- **“Help Your Family to Remember Jehovah”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Start by playing the video “*These Words . . . Must Be on Your Heart*”—*Family Interviews* (video category FAMILY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 10 ¶8-11, boxes on pp. 103, 105 (left)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 48 and Prayer

Help Your Family to Remember Jehovah

Jeremiah was commissioned to warn the Jews of an impending destruction because they had forgotten their God, Jehovah. (Jer 13:25) How did the nation get to this sad spiritual state? Israelite families had lost their spirituality. Evidently family heads were not following Jehovah’s direction recorded at Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

Spiritually strong families contribute to the stability of our congregations today. Family heads can help their family to remember Jehovah by means of a regular and meaningful Family Worship program. (Ps 22:27) After watching the video “*These Words . . . Must Be on Your Heart*”—*Family Interviews*, answer these questions:



How have some families successfully confronted the common challenges to family worship?

What are some of the rewards of having a regular and meaningful Family Worship program?

When it comes to family worship, what challenges do I have, and how do I plan to address them?

Enduring to the End

(Matthew 24:13)

E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7/D E♭ E♭sus4 E♭ E♭/G Fm/A♭ A♭ B♭7 E♭

God's Word and all it prom - is - es Give rea - son to en - dure.
Main - tain the love you had at first, Which some - how could be lost.
All those en - dur - ing to the end Are those who will be saved.

B♭7 E♭ D°7 Cm/E♭ G7/D Cm Fm/A♭ A♭ma7 B♭ B♭7 E♭

The things you've learned and come to love Are all well - found - ed and sure.
De - spite the tri - als you will meet, En - dure no mat - ter the cost.
The book of life will list their names, A rec - ord clear - ly en - graved.

A♭ E♭/B♭ A♭/C A° E♭/B♭ B♭7 E♭ Fm/C C7 Fm E♭/G Fm/A♭ F7/A B♭

Be sta - bi - lized in ho - ly faith, Keep - ing God's day close in mind.
What - ev - er test may come your way, Nev - er yield to doubt or fear.
So let en - dur - ance be your aim; Let it have its work com - plete.

B♭7/D E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7/D E♭ E♭sus4 E♭ A♭ E♭/G Fm/A♭ E♭/B♭ B♭7 E♭

Stand firm in your in - teg - ri - ty; By tests you will be re - fined.
Je - ho - vah will pro - vide es - cape, Our God ev - er will be near.
Je - ho - vah's fa - vor you will know; With joy you will be re - plete.

Beautiful with fine fruit.
With a great roaring sound,
he has set her on fire,
And they have broken its
branches.

17 “Jehovah of armies, your Planter,^a has declared that a calamity will come upon you because of the evil committed by the house of Israel and the house of Judah, who have offended me by making sacrifices to Ba'al.”^b

18 Jehovah informed me so that I would know;
At that time you caused me to see what they were doing.

19 I was like a docile lamb being brought to the slaughter. I did not know that they were scheming against me:^c

“Let us destroy the tree with its fruit,
And let us cut him off from the land of the living,
So that his name may be remembered no more.”

20 But Jehovah of armies judges with righteousness; He examines the innermost thoughts* and the heart.^d Let me see your vengeance on them,
For to you I have committed my legal case.

21 Therefore this is what Jehovah says against the men of An'a-thoth^e who are seeking to take your life* and who say: “You must not prophesy in the name of Jehovah,^f or you will die by our hand”; **22** therefore this is what Jehovah of armies says: “Here I am going to call them to account. The young men will die by the sword,^g and their sons and their daughters will die by famine.^h **23** Not even a remnant will be left of them, be-

11:20; 12:2 *Or “deepest emotions.” Lit., “kidneys.” 11:21 *Or “seeking your soul.”

CHAP. 11

a Isa 5:2
Jer 2:21

b Jer 19:5, 15

c Jer 18:18

d 1Ch 28:9
Jer 17:10
Jer 20:12

e Jer 1:1

f Isa 30:10
Am 2:12
Am 7:16

g 2Ch 36:17
La 2:21

h Jer 18:21

Second Col.

a Jos 21:8, 18

CHAP. 12

b Ge 18:25

c Job 12:6
Job 21:7
Ps 73:3
Jer 5:28

d Isa 29:13

e Ps 139:1, 2

f 2Ki 20:3
Ps 17:3
Jer 11:20

g Jer 14:6
Jer 23:10

h Jer 4:13

cause I will bring calamity on the men of An'a-thoth^a in the year of their being called to account.”

12 You are righteous,
O Jehovah,^b when I make my complaint to you,

When I speak about matters of justice with you.

But why is the way of wicked ones successful,^c
And why are the treacherous unworried?

2 You planted them, and they have taken root.
They have grown and produced fruit.

You are on their lips, but far away from their innermost thoughts.^{*d}

3 But you know me well,
O Jehovah,^e you see me;
You have examined my heart and found it in union with you.^f

Single them out like sheep for slaughtering,
And set them apart for the day of killing.

4 How much longer should the land wither away
And the vegetation of every field dry up?^g

Because of the evil of those dwelling in it,

The beasts and the birds have been swept away.
For they have said: “He does not see what will happen to us.”

5 If you get tired running with footmen,
How can you run a race against horses?^h

Even if you are confident in the land of peace,

How will you fare among the dense thickets along the Jordan?

6 For even your own brothers, the household of your own father,

- Have dealt treacherously with you.^a
 They have raised a loud cry against you.
 Do not put faith in them, Even if they speak good things to you.
- 7 "I have abandoned my house;^b I have deserted my inheritance.^c
 I have given my dearly beloved one* into the hand of her enemies.^d
- 8 My inheritance has become to me like a lion in the forest.
 She has roared against me. So I have come to hate her.
- 9 My inheritance is like a multicolored* bird of prey to me;
 The other birds of prey surround it and attack it.^e
 Come, gather together, all you beasts of the field, Come to eat.^f
- 10 Many shepherds have destroyed my vineyard;^g
 They have trampled my portion of land.^h
 They have turned my desirable portion of land into a desolate wilderness.
- 11 It has become a wasteland. It has withered;*
 It is desolate before me.ⁱ
 The whole land has been made desolate,
 But no man takes it to heart.^j
- 12 On all the worn paths through the wilderness the destroyers have come,
 For the sword of Jehovah is devouring from one end of the land to the other end.^k
 There is no peace for anyone.*
- 13 They have sown wheat, but they have reaped thorns.^l

12:7 *Or "the beloved one of my soul."
 12:9 *Or "speckled." 12:11 *Or possibly, "it mourns." 12:12 *Lit., "any flesh."

CHAP. 12

a Jer 9:4

b Lu 13:35

c Ex 19:5
Isa 47:6

d La 2:1

e 2Kj 24:2
Eze 16:37f Isa 56:9
Jer 7:33g Ps 80:8
Isa 5:1, 7
Jer 6:3h Isa 63:18
Jer 3:19i Jer 9:11
Jer 10:22

j Isa 42:24, 25

k Le 26:33
Jer 15:2l Le 26:16
Mic 6:15

Second Col.

a Ps 79:4
Jer 48:26
Eze 25:3
Zec 1:15
Zec 2:8b Jer 48:2
Jer 49:2

c Isa 60:12

They have worn themselves out, but to no benefit.

They will be ashamed of their produce

Because of the burning anger of Jehovah."

14 This is what Jehovah says against all my wicked neighbors, who are touching the inheritance that I caused my people Israel to possess:^a "Here I am uprooting them from their land,^b and I will uproot the house of Judah from among them. 15 But after I uproot them, I will again have mercy on them and bring each of them back to his inheritance and to his land."

16 "And if they make sure to learn the ways of my people and to swear by my name, 'As surely as Jehovah is alive!' just as they taught my people to swear by Ba'al, they will then be built up among my people. 17 But if they refuse to obey, I will also uproot that nation, uprooting and destroying it," declares Jehovah.^c

13 This is what Jehovah told me: "Go and buy a linen belt for yourself and put it around your waist, and do not dip it in water." 2 So I bought the belt according to the word of Jehovah and put it around my waist. 3 And the word of Jehovah came to me a second time: 4 "Take the belt that you bought and are wearing and get up, go to the Eu-phra'tes, and hide it there in a cleft of the crag." 5 So I went and hid it by the Eu-phra'tes, just as Jehovah had commanded me.

6 But many days later Jehovah said to me: "Get up, go to the Eu-phra'tes, and take from there the belt that I commanded you to hide there." 7 So I went to the Eu-phra'tes and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, and

I saw that the belt had been ruined; it was completely useless.

8 Then the word of Jehovah came to me: **9** "This is what Jehovah says, 'In the same way I will destroy the pride of Judah and the immense pride of Jerusalem.'^a **10** These evil people who refuse to obey my words,^b who stubbornly follow their own heart,^c and who are following other gods, serving and bowing down to them, will become just like this belt that is completely useless.' **11** 'For just as a belt clings to the waist of a man, so I made the whole house of Israel and the whole house of Judah cling to me,' declares Jehovah, 'to become to me a people,^d a name,^e a praise, and something beautiful. But they did not obey.'^f

12 "And you must also give this message to them, "This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says: "Every large jar should be filled with wine." And they will reply to you, 'Do we not already know that every large jar should be filled with wine?' **13** Then say to them, 'This is what Jehovah says: "Here I am filling with drunkenness all the inhabitants of this land,^g the kings sitting on the throne of David, the priests and the prophets, and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. **14** And I will smash them against each other, fathers and sons alike," declares Jehovah.^h "I will not show compassion or feel any sorrow or have any mercy on them; nothing will stop me from bringing them to ruin."ⁱ

15 Hear and pay attention.

Do not be haughty, for Jehovah has spoken.

16 Give glory to Jehovah your God

Before he brings darkness
And before your feet
stumble on the mountains
at dusk.

CHAP. 13

- a Le 26:19
Zep 3:11
- b 2Ch 36:15,16
- c Jer 6:28
- d Ex 19:5
De 26:18
Ps 135:4
- e Jer 33:9
- f Jer 6:17
- g Isa 29:9
Isa 51:17
Jer 25:27
- h Jer 6:21
Eze 5:10
- i Eze 7:4
Eze 24:14

Second Col.

- a Isa 59:9
- b Jer 9:1
- c Ps 100:3
- d 2Ki 24:12
Jer 22:24, 26
- e De 28:64
- f Jer 6:22
- g Eze 34:8
- h Isa 39:1, 2
- i Jer 6:24
Mic 4:9
- j Jer 5:19
Jer 16:10, 11
- k Eze 16:37
- l Pr 27:22

You will hope for the light,
But he will bring deep
shadow;
He will turn it into thick
gloom.^a

17 And if you refuse to listen,
I* will weep in secret
because of your pride.

I will shed many tears, and
my eyes will stream with
tears,^b

Because the flock of
Jehovah^c has been
carried away captive.

18 Tell the king and the queen
mother, *^d 'Sit in a lower
place,

For your beautiful crown
will fall from your head.'

19 The cities of the south are
shut,* with no one to open
them.

All of Judah has been
taken into exile, taken
completely into exile.^e

20 Raise your eyes and see
those coming from the
north.^f

Where is the flock you
were given, your beautiful
sheep?^g

21 What will you say when your
punishment comes

From your close friends
whom you cultivated from
the start?^h

Will not birth pains seize
you, like those of a woman
giving birth?ⁱ

22 And when you say in your
heart, 'Why have these
things befallen me?'^j

It is because of your great
error that your skirts have
been stripped off^k

And your heels have been
treated violently.

23 Can a Cush'ite* change his
skin, or a leopard its
spots?^l

13:17 *Or "My soul." **13:18** *Or "the lady." **13:19** *Or "besieged." **13:23** *Or "an Ethiopian."

If so, then you can do good,
You who are trained to do
bad.

24 So I will scatter them like
straw blown by the desert
wind.^a

25 This is your lot, the portion
that I have measured out
to you," declares Jehovah,
"Because you have forgotten
me^b and you trust in lies.^c

26 Therefore, I will lift up your
skirts over your face,
And your shame will be
seen.^d

27 Your acts of adultery^e and
your lustful neighing,
Your obscene* prostitution.
On the hills, in the field,
I have seen your disgusting
behavior.^f

Woe to you, O Jerusalem!
How much longer will you
remain unclean?"^g

14 This is the word of Jeho-
vah that came to Jeremiah
concerning the droughts:^h

2 Judah mourns,ⁱ and its gates
have faded away.

They sink to the ground
dejected,
And a cry goes up from
Jerusalem.

3 And their masters send their
servants* for water.

They go to the water holes[#]
and find no water.

They return with their
vessels empty.

They are ashamed and
disappointed,

And they cover their heads.

4 Because the ground is
cracked,

For there is no rain on the
land,^j

The farmers are dismayed
and cover their heads.

CHAP. 13

a Le 26:33
De 28:64

b Jer 2:32

c De 32:37, 38
Isa 28:15
Jer 10:14

d La 1:8
Eze 16:37
Eze 23:29

e Jer 2:20
Eze 16:15

f Isa 65:7
Eze 6:13

g Eze 24:13

CHAP. 14

h De 28:24

i Joe 1:10

j Le 26:20
De 28:23

Second Col.

a Jer 12:4
Joe 1:18

b Jos 7:9
Ps 25:11
Ps 115:1, 2

c Eze 9:6
Ne 9:33
Da 9:5, 8

d Ps 106:8
Ps 106:21
Isa 45:15

e Ex 29:45
De 23:14

f Da 9:19

g Jer 2:23

h Jer 2:25

i Jer 6:20

j Ho 8:13

k Jer 7:16
Jer 11:14

l Isa 1:15
Isa 58:3
Jer 11:11
Eze 8:18

m Isa 1:11

n Jer 9:16
Eze 5:12

5 Even the doe in the field
forsakes her newborn
Because there is no grass.

6 The wild donkeys stand on
the bare hills.
They pant for air like jackals;
Their eyes fail because there
is no vegetation.^a

7 Although our own errors
testify against us,
O Jehovah, act for the sake
of your name.^b

For our acts of unfaithful-
ness are many,^c
And it is against you that
we have sinned.

8 O hope of Israel, his Savior^d
in times of distress,
Why are you like a stranger
in the land,
Like a traveler who stops
only to spend the night?

9 Why are you like a man
who is stunned,
Like a mighty man who
cannot save?
For you are among us,
O Jehovah,^e
And your name has been
called on us.^f
Do not abandon us.

10 This is what Jehovah says
concerning this people: "They
love to wander about;^g they have
not restrained their feet.^h So Je-
hovah finds no pleasure in them.ⁱ
Now he will remember their er-
ror and call them to account for
their sins."^j

11 Then Jehovah said to me:
"Do not pray for good to come
to this people.^k **12** When they
fast, I do not listen to their en-
treaties,^l and when they offer
whole burnt offerings and grain
offerings, I take no pleasure in
them,^m for by the sword, by fam-
ine, and by pestilence,^{*} I will do
away with them."ⁿ

13 At this I said: "Alas, O Sov-
ereign Lord Jehovah! Here the

13:27 *Or "shameful." 14:3 *Or "their small ones." #Or "the ditches; the cis-terns."

14:12 *Or "disease."

prophets are saying to them, 'You will not see the sword, and famine will not come upon you, but I will give you true peace in this place.'"^a

14 Jehovah then said to me: "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name.^b I have not sent them or commanded them or spoken to them.^c A lying vision and a worthless divination and the deceit of their own heart is what they are prophesying to you.^d **15** Therefore this is what Jehovah says concerning the prophets who are prophesying in my name, though I did not send them, and who say that no sword or famine will occur in this land: 'By sword and by famine those prophets will perish.'^e

16 And the people to whom they are prophesying will be cast out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword, with no one to bury them^f—them, their wives, their sons, or their daughters—for I will pour out on them the calamity they deserve.^g

17 "You must speak this word to them,

'Let my eyes stream with tears night and day, let them not cease,^h

For the virgin daughter of my people has been completely crushed and broken,ⁱ

With an extremely severe wound.

18 If I go out into the field and look,

I see those slain by the sword!^j

And if I come into the city, I see the diseases from the famine!^k

For both the prophet and the priest have gone around in a land that they do not know."^l

CHAP. 14

a Jer 4:10
Jer 5:31
Jer 6:13, 14
Jer 23:16, 17
Jer 27:8-10
Eze 13:10
Mic 3:11

b Jer 23:25, 26
Jer 29:21

c Jer 23:21
Jer 27:15

d La 2:14

e Jer 5:12, 13
Jer 23:15
Eze 12:24
Eze 13:9

f Ps 79:2, 3
Jer 9:22

g Jer 4:18

h Jer 8:18, 21
Jer 9:1

i La 1:15

j Eze 7:15

k La 5:10

l De 28:36

Second Col.

a Jer 12:8
La 5:22

b 2Ch 36:15, 16

c Jer 8:15

d Eze 9:7
Da 9:5, 8

e Eze 36:22
Da 9:15

f Ex 32:13
Le 26:41, 42
Ps 106:43-45

g De 28:12
Isa 30:23
Joe 2:23

CHAP. 15

h Ex 32:11
1Sa 7:9
Ps 99:6
Ps 106:23

i Eze 5:2

j Eze 12:11

19 Have you completely rejected Judah, or have you* abhorred Zion?^a Why have you struck us, so that there is no healing for us?^b

There was a hope for peace, but nothing good came, For a time of healing, but there is terror!^c

20 We acknowledge our wickedness, O Jehovah, And the error of our forefathers, For we have sinned against you.^d

21 For the sake of your name, do not reject us;^e Do not despise your glorious throne.

Remember, and do not break your covenant with us.^f

22 Can any of the worthless idols of the nations give rain,

Or can even the heavens send showers of rain on their own?

Are you not the only One, O Jehovah our God?^g

And we hope in you, For you alone have done all these things.

15 Then Jehovah said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were standing before me,^h I would show no favor toward* this people. Drive them out from before me. Let them go. **2** And if they say to you, 'Where should we go?' you must say to them, 'This is what Jehovah says:

"Whoever is for deadly plague, to deadly plague!

Whoever is for the sword, to the sword!

Whoever is for the famine, to the famine!

And whoever is for the captivity, to the captivity!"ⁱ

14:19 *Or "has your soul." 15:1 *Or "my soul would not be toward."

3 “And I will appoint over them four calamities,^{*a} declares Jehovah, ‘the sword to kill, the dogs to drag away, and the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the earth to devour and to destroy.’^b 4 And I will make them an object of horror to all the kingdoms of the earth^c because of Ma-nas’sseh the son of Hez-e-ki’ah, the king of Judah, for what he did in Jerusalem.^d

5 Who will show compassion to you, O Jerusalem,
Who will sympathize with you,
And who will stop to ask about your welfare?’

6 ‘You have deserted me,’ declares Jehovah.^e
‘You keep turning your back on me.’^{*f}

So I will stretch out my hand against you and destroy you.^g

I am tired of feeling pity for you.^h

7 And I will winnow them with a fork in the gates of the land.

I will bereave them of children.^h

I will destroy my people,
Since they refuse to turn back from their ways.ⁱ

8 Their widows will become more numerous before me than the sand of the seas.

I will bring a destroyer against them at midday,
against mothers and young men.

I will bring agitation and terror upon them suddenly.

9 The woman who bore seven children has grown faint;
She^{*} struggles for breath.

15:3 *Or possibly, “four kinds of judgment.” Lit., “four families.” 15:6 *Or possibly, “keep walking backward.” #Or “feeling regret.” 15:9 *Or “Her soul.”

CHAP. 15

a Eze 14:21

b De 28:26
Jer 7:33

c De 28:15, 25
Jer 24:9
Eze 23:46

d 2Ki 21:11
2Ki 23:26
2Ki 24:3, 4

e Jer 2:13

f Isa 1:4

g Zep 1:4

h De 28:15, 18
Jer 9:21
Eze 24:21

i Jer 5:3

Second Col.

a Jer 44:27
Eze 5:12

b Jer 20:14

c Jer 20:5

d Le 26:38
Jer 16:13

e De 32:22
Isa 42:24, 25
Jer 17:4

f Jer 11:20
Jer 12:3
Jer 17:18
Jer 37:15

Her sun has set while it is yet day,
Causing shame and humiliation.^{*a}

‘And those few remaining ones of them

I will give to the sword before their enemies,’ declares Jehovah.”^a

10 Woe to me, O my mother, because you gave birth to me,^b

A man subject to quarrel and strife with all the land.

I have neither loaned nor borrowed;

But all of them curse me.

11 Jehovah said: “I will surely minister to you for good;

I will surely intercede for you in the time of calamity, In the time of distress against the enemy.

12 Can anyone break iron in pieces,

Iron from the north, and copper?

13 Your resources and your treasures I will give as plunder,^c

Not for a price, but because of all your sins throughout all your territories.

14 I will give them to your enemies

To take to a land you do not know.^d

For a fire has been ignited by my anger,

And it is burning against you.”^e

15 You know, O Jehovah, Remember me and turn your attention to me.

Take vengeance on my persecutors for me.^f

Do not let me perish^{*} because of your slowness to anger.

15:9 *Or possibly, “It has become ashamed and felt abashed.” 15:15 *Lit., “Do not take me away.”

Know that for your sake
I bear this reproach.^a

- 16** Your words were found,
and I ate them;^b
And your word became to
me the exultation and the
rejoicing of my heart,
For your name has been
called on me, O Jehovah
God of armies.
- 17** I do not sit in the company of
merrymakers and rejoice.^c
Because your hand is upon
me, I sit alone,
For you have filled me with
indignation.^{*d}
- 18** Why is my pain chronic and
my wound incurable?
It refuses to be healed.
Will you become to me like
a deceptive water supply
That cannot be relied on?
- 19** Therefore this is what
Jehovah says:
“If you return, then I will
restore you,
And you will stand
before me.
If you separate what is
precious from what is
worthless,
You will become like my own
mouth.*
They will have to turn to you,
But you will not turn to
them.”
- 20** “I am making you a fortified
copper wall to this people.^e
They will certainly fight
against you,
But they will not prevail
against you.^{*f}
For I am with you, to save
you and to rescue you,”
declares Jehovah.
- 21** “And I will rescue you from
the hand of the wicked
And redeem you from the
palm of the ruthless.”

15:17 *Or “a message of denunciation.”
15:19 *Or “become my spokesman.”
15:20 *Or “defeat you.”

CHAP. 15
a Ps 69:7

b Eze 3:1-3
Re 10:9,10

c Ps 1:1

d Jer 20:8

e Jer 1:18
Eze 3:9

f Jer 20:11

Second Col.

CHAP. 16
a Jer 15:2

b Ps 79:2, 3
Isa 5:25
Jer 7:33
Jer 9:22
Jer 36:30

c Eze 5:12

d Eze 24:16, 17

e De 31:17
Isa 27:11
Isa 63:10

16 The word of Jehovah
again came to me, saying:
2 “You must not take a wife for
yourself, and you must not have
sons and daughters in this place.
3 For this is what Jehovah says
concerning the sons and daugh-
ters who are born here and con-
cerning their mothers who give
birth to them and concerning
their fathers who cause their
birth in this land: **4** ‘They will
die of deadly diseases,^a but no
one will mourn them or bury
them; they will become like ma-
nure on the surface of the
ground.^b They will perish by the
sword and by famine,^c and their
dead bodies will be food for the
birds of the heavens and for the
beasts of the earth.’

5 For this is what Jehovah
says,
‘Do not enter a house where
a mourners’ feast is held,
And do not go to wail or offer
sympathy.^d
‘For I have taken away my
peace from this people,’
declares Jehovah,
‘As well as my loyal love and
mercy.^e

6 Both the great and the small
will die in this land.
They will not be buried,
No one will mourn them,
Nor will anyone cut himself
or make himself bald for
them.*

7 And no one will provide food
for those in mourning,
To comfort them over their
dead;
Nor will anyone give them
the cup of consolation
To drink over the loss of
their father or mother.

8 And do not enter a house
of feasting
To sit down with them to eat
and drink.’

16:6 *Pagan mourning customs appar-
ently practiced in apostate Israel.

9 "For this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, 'Here in this place, in your days and before your very eyes, I will put an end to the sounds of exultation and rejoicing, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride.'^a

10 "When you tell this people all these words, they will ask you, 'Why has Jehovah spoken of all this great calamity against us? What error and what sin have we committed against Jehovah our God?'^b 11 You must reply to them, "Because your forefathers abandoned me,"^c declares Jehovah, "and they kept following other gods and serving them and bowing down to them.^d But me they abandoned, and my law they did not keep.^e 12 And you have behaved far worse than your forefathers,^f and each one of you follows the stubbornness of his wicked heart instead of obeying me.^g 13 So I will hurl you out of this land into a land that neither you nor your forefathers have known,^h and there you will have to serve other gods day and night,ⁱ because I will show you no favor."^j

14 "However, the days are coming," declares Jehovah, "when they will no longer say: "As surely as Jehovah is alive, who brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt!"^j 15 but rather: "As surely as Jehovah is alive, who brought the people of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands to which he had dispersed them!" and I will bring them back to their land, which I gave to their forefathers."^k

16 'Here I am sending for many fishermen,' declares Jehovah, 'And they will fish for them. After that I will send for many hunters,

CHAP. 16

a Isa 24:7, 8
Jer 7:34
Re 18:23

b Jer 5:19

c Jg 2:12

d Jer 8:1, 2

e Da 9:11
Am 2:4

f Jer 7:26

g Ne 9:29
Jer 6:28

h 2Ch 7:20
Jer 15:14
Jer 17:4

i De 4:27, 28
De 28:36

j Ex 20:2
Jer 23:7, 8

k De 30:1-3
Jer 3:18
Jer 24:6
Jer 30:3
Jer 32:37
Am 9:14

Second Col.

a Isa 40:2

b Le 26:30
Ps 106:38

c Jer 17:17

d Jer 10:5, 14

e Ps 115:4
Jer 2:11
1Co 8:4

And they will hunt them down on every mountain and every hill

And out of the clefts of the crags.

17 For my eyes are on everything they do.*

They have not been hidden from before me,

Nor has their error been hidden from my eyes.

18 First, I will repay the full amount due for their error and their sin,^a

For they have profaned my land with the lifeless figures* of their disgusting idols

And have filled my inheritance with their detestable things."^b

19 O Jehovah, my strength and my stronghold,

My place to flee in the day of distress,^c

To you the nations will come from the ends of the earth,

And they will say: "Our forefathers inherited utter falsehood,

Futility and useless things of no benefit."^d

20 Can a man make gods for himself

When they are not really gods?^e

21 "So I will make them know, At this time I will make them know my power and my might,

And they will have to know that my name is Jehovah."

17 "The sin of Judah is written down with an iron stylus.

With a diamond point it is engraved on the tablet of their heart

And on the horns of their altars,

16:17 *Lit., "on all their ways." 16:18

*Lit., "the corpses."

- Song 128 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Israel Forgot Jehovah”:** (10 min.)
Jer 13:1-5—Jeremiah obeyed God’s instructions to hide a linen belt, although it took great effort (*jr* 51 ¶17)
Jer 13:6, 7—When Jeremiah made the long trek to retrieve the belt, he found that it was ruined (*jr* 52 ¶18)
Jer 13:8-11—Jehovah was illustrating that the close relationship that he had with the Israelites would be ruined because of their stubbornness (*jr* 52 ¶19-20; *it-1* 1121 ¶2)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Jer 12:1, 2, 14—What was Jeremiah’s question, and what was Jehovah’s answer? (*jr* 118 ¶11)

Jer 15:17—What was Jeremiah’s view of associations, and how can we imitate him? (*w04* 5/1 12 ¶16)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 13:15-27

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 79
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Jeremiah was commissioned to warn the Jews of an impending destruction because they had forgotten their God, Jehovah. (Jer 13:25) How did the nation get to this sad spiritual state? Israelite families had lost their spirituality. Evidently family heads were not following Jehovah’s direction recorded at Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

Spiritually strong families contribute to the stability of our congregations today. Family heads can help their family to remember Jehovah by means of a regular and meaningful Family Worship program. (Ps 22:27) After watching the video “*These Words . . . Must Be on Your Heart*”—*Family Interviews*, answer these questions:



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When it comes to family worship, what challenges do I have, and how do I plan to address them?

March 27–April 2

Treasures From God's Word

Jeremiah 13:1-5—Jeremiah obeyed God's instructions to hide a linen belt, although it took great effort

Reference: *jr* 51 paragraph 17.

Jeremiah's assignment involved obedience to God's direction. If you had been Jeremiah, would you have accepted any such instructions given? At one point, Jehovah told Jeremiah to get a linen belt and wear it. Next, God commanded him to travel to the Euphrates. Consult a map, and you will see that this meant a trip of some 300 miles (500 kilometers). Once there, Jeremiah was to hide the belt in the cleft of a crag and then travel all the way back to Jerusalem. And God later had him return to get the belt. (*Read Jeremiah 13:1-9.*) In all, Jeremiah would have traveled about 1,200 miles (1,900 kilometers). Bible critics just cannot believe that he would travel so far, walking for months. (Ezra 7:9) Still, that is what God said and what Jeremiah did.

Jeremiah 13:67—When Jeremiah made the long trek to retrieve the belt, he found that it was ruined

Reference: *jr* 52 paragraph 18.

Picture the prophet trekking through the Judean mountains and then, depending on his route, into a desert toward the Euphrates. All of that just to hide a linen belt! His long absence must have aroused the curiosity of his neighbors. When he returned, he did not have the linen belt with him. Then God told him to make the long trip again, to retrieve the belt, now rotten and "not fit for anything." Imagine how easy it would have been to think: 'Now that is just too much. I see no point to it.' Yet, having been molded by God, he did not react that way. Rather than complain, he did as he was instructed!

Jeremiah 13:8-11—Jehovah was illustrating that the close relationship that he had with the Israelites would be ruined because of their stubbornness

Reference: *jr* 52 paragraphs 19-20.

19 It was only after the second journey that God explained matters. Jeremiah's actions set the stage for him to deliver a potent message: "This bad people who are refusing to obey my words, who are walking in the stubbornness of their heart and who keep walking after other gods in order to serve them and to bow down to them, will also become just like this belt that is fit for nothing." (**Jeremiah 13:10**) What an impressive way for Jehovah to teach his people! Jeremiah's heartfelt obedience to Jehovah in what may have seemed trivial played a role in His efforts to reach the hearts of the people.—**Jeremiah 13:11.**

20 Christians today are not being asked to walk hundreds of miles as part of a divine lesson. Might it be, though, that the Christian course you pursue could cause neighbors or associates to be puzzled or even to criticize you? It may involve your dress and grooming, your choice as to education, what you prefer as

a career, or even your view of alcoholic beverages. Will you be as determined to comply with God's guidance as Jeremiah was? Your choices because of allowing your heart to be molded by God may lead to your giving a fine witness. In any case, being obedient to Jehovah's direction found in his Word and accepting the guidance given through the faithful slave class is for your lasting good. Rather than being led by a treacherous heart, you can be like Jeremiah. Be resolved, then, to accept being molded by God; let him form you into an honorable vessel for his lasting use.

Reference: *it-1* 1121 **paragraph 2**.

Jehovah spoke of the houses of Israel and Judah as having been like a belt on his hips, so closely had he held them to himself, in order that they might become to him a praise and something beautiful.

(**Jeremiah 13:11**) Jesus Christ is prophetically pictured as reigning with righteousness as the belt of his hips and faithfulness as the belt of his loins. This may refer to the fact that all the active powers of Jesus Christ adhere unchangeably to righteousness and faithfulness. Like a belt that provides support, the moral quality of righteousness strengthens him in acting as Jehovah's appointed Judge.—**Isaiah 11:1, 5**.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Jeremiah 12:1, 2, 14—What was Jeremiah's question, and what was Jehovah's answer?

Reference: *jr* 118 **paragraph 11**.

Jeremiah had a vexing question when he observed the wicked succeed. (*Read **Jeremiah 12:1, 3***.) Though not at all questioning Jehovah's righteousness, the prophet sought a response to his "complaint." His forthrightness made it clear that he had a strong bond with God, much like that of a child with his beloved father. It was just that Jeremiah did not understand why many Jews were prospering despite being wicked. Did Jeremiah get a satisfying answer? Jehovah assured him that He would uproot the wicked. (**Jeremiah 12:14**) As Jeremiah saw the outworking of the matters he took to God in prayer, his confidence in divine justice must have deepened. As a result, Jeremiah must have increasingly turned to God in prayer, expressing himself to his Father.

Jeremiah 15:17—What was Jeremiah's view of associations, and how can we imitate him?

Reference: *w04* 5/1 12 **paragraph 16**.

Jeremiah reports something else that helped him to be courageous. He said: "I have not sat down in the intimate group of those playing jokes and begun exulting. Because of your hand I have sat down all by myself, for it is with denunciation that you have filled me." (**Jeremiah 15:17**) Jeremiah would rather be alone than be corrupted by bad companions. We today view matters the same way. We never forget the apostle Paul's warning that "bad associations spoil useful habits," even useful habits that we have had for many years.—**1 Corinthians 15:33**.

- Song 128 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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INVITATION

Centuries ago, a divinely inspired prophet foretold the time when man would be at peace with nature. Illness would be eliminated. Families would build their own houses, plant their own fields, and enjoy the fruits of their labors.—Isaiah 11:6-9; 35:5, 6; 65:21-23.

Jesus performed powerful works that showed on a small scale how such prophecies will become a global reality. His death was fundamental to the future elimination of every cause for sorrow. So important was Jesus' death to the fulfillment of God's purposes that Jesus commanded his disciples to commemorate it.—Luke 22:19, 20.

This year, according to the Bible's lunar calendar, the anniversary of Jesus' death falls on **Tuesday, April 11**. Jehovah's Witnesses invite you to meet with them on that date to listen to an explanation of how his death can benefit you and your family.

This free event will be held at the time and place shown below.

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You are also invited to a special Bible talk entitled
"How to Cultivate Peace in an Angry World."

FIND THE LOCATION OF
A PUBLIC MEETING NEAR YOU
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When were God’s people held captive by Babylon the Great?

■ That spiritual captivity lasted from the second century C.E. to 1919. Why is this adjusted view warranted?

All the evidence indicates that this captivity ended in 1919 when anointed Christians were gathered into the restored congregation. Consider: God’s people were tested and refined during the years following the establishment of God’s Kingdom in the heavens in 1914.* (Mal. 3:1-4) Then, in 1919, Jesus appointed “the faithful and discreet slave” over God’s cleansed people to give them spiritual “food at the proper time.” (Matt. 24:45-47) This was the year that God’s people started to return to their God-given spiritual estate. It was also the time when they were released from symbolic captivity to Babylon the Great. (Rev. 18:4) But when did that captivity actually begin?

For a number of years, we explained that this captivity began in 1918 and involved a brief period of time when God’s people came under the control of Babylon the Great. For example, *The*

Watchtower of March 15, 1992, stated: “Yet, as God’s ancient people were taken into Babylonian captivity for a time, in 1918 Jehovah’s servants came into a measure of bondage to Babylon the Great.” However, further research has shown that this captivity began much earlier than 1918.

For example, let us consider one of the prophecies that foretold this captivity and release of God’s people. It is recorded at Ezekiel 37:1-14. In a vision, Ezekiel sees a valley filled with bones. Jehovah explains to Ezekiel that these bones represent “the whole house of Israel.” In its larger fulfillment, this restoration prophecy applies to “the Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16; Acts 3:21) Next, Ezekiel sees the bones come to life and become a large army. What a fitting way to describe the spiritual resurrection of God’s people that culminated in the events of 1919! But what does this vision reveal to us concerning the length of time involved?

First, we note that the bones are described as either “dry” or “very dry.” (Ezek. 37:2, 11) This indicates that those to whom the bones belonged

* See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, pp. 10-12, pars. 5-8, 12.

Warnings were given by Jesus, Paul, and John —yet, apostasy came to flourish

SECOND CENTURY C.E.
Christian congregation entered captivity to Babylon the Great

MORE RECENT CENTURIES
“A rattling sound” was heard as Bible translations were made in common languages

CAPTIVITY TO BABYLON THE GREAT

100
B.C.E.

100
C.E.

500

1000

1500



had been dead for a very long time. Second, the restoration is described as a gradual process, not something that happens suddenly. Initially, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and “the bones began to come together, bone to bone.” Then, “sinews and flesh” were added. Next, the bones, sinews, and flesh were covered with skin. Eventually, “breath came into them, and they began to live.” Finally, Jehovah settled the revived people on their land. All of this would take time.—Ezek. 37:7-10, 14.

The captivity of the ancient nation of Israel lasted a long time. It began in 740 B.C.E. with the fall and exile of many from the ten-tribe northern kingdom. Then, in 607 B.C.E., Jerusalem was destroyed and people of the southern kingdom of Judah were also taken into exile. This period of captivity ended in 537 B.C.E. when a remnant of the Jews returned to rebuild the temple and re-established pure worship in Jerusalem.

With these Scriptural details in mind, it becomes clear that the captivity of God’s people to Babylon the Great must have been much longer than the events of 1918-1919. The captivity parallels the time when the symbolic weeds would grow together with the wheatlike “sons of the

Kingdom.” (Matt. 13:36-43) That growing season refers to the period during which genuine Christians were greatly outnumbered by apostates. The Christian congregation, in effect, was held captive by Babylon the Great. That captivity began sometime in the second century C.E. and continued until the cleansing of the spiritual temple in the time of the end.—Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Thess. 2:3, 6; 1 John 2:18, 19.

During that extended period of spiritual captivity, the clergy and their political associates, who were desirous of maintaining their power, kept the Word of God from the people under their control. At times, it was a crime to read the Bible in a common language. Some people who did so were even burned at the stake. Any who expressed an opinion contrary to what the clergy taught were dealt with harshly, thus stifling any attempts to spread the light of the truth.

What about the second development, the restoration? When and how did that occur? This spiritual restoration work was a gradual process. It was accompanied by “a rattling sound” during the centuries leading up to the time of the end. Although false religious teachings held sway for the most part, some faithful individuals stood up



LATE 1800's
A gradual restoration of Bible truths began



1919-TODAY
Freedom from captivity: God’s people were restored to life and freed from captivity

**CAPTIVITY TO
BABYLON THE GREAT**

1850
C.E.

1900

1950

2000

in behalf of true worship to the extent that they were able to do so. Some of them endeavored to produce Bibles in the languages of the common people. Others declared the truths that they had discovered in the pages of God's Word.

Then, in the late 1800's, Charles Taze Russell and his associates worked zealously to restore Bible truths. It was as if symbolic flesh and skin were starting to be put on spiritual skeletons. *Zion's Watch Tower* and other publications helped honesthearted ones to discover spiritual truths. Later, such tools as the "Photo-Drama of Creation" in 1914 and the book *The Finished Mystery* in 1917 also strengthened God's people. Finally, in 1919, God's people were given life, spiritually speaking, and were settled in their new spiritual land. As time has progressed, this remnant of anointed ones has been joined by those with an earthly hope, and together they have become "an

extremely large army."—Ezek. 37:10; Zech. 8:20-23.*

Given these facts, it becomes clear that God's people went into captivity to Babylon the Great with the growth of the apostasy in the second century C.E. This was a dark period of time, similar to what the ancient Israelites experienced while in exile. How happy we can be, though, that after God's people experienced centuries of spiritual oppression, we are living in the time when "those having insight will shine . . . brightly" and "many will cleanse themselves" and they "will be refined"!—Dan. 12:3, 10.

* Ezekiel 37:1-14 and Revelation 11:7-12 each speak of a spiritual restoration that took place in 1919. However, the prophecy in Ezekiel foretold the eventual spiritual restoration of *all of God's people* after an extremely long period of captivity. On the other hand, the prophecy in Revelation refers to the spiritual rebirth of a *small group of anointed brothers who have taken the lead* after a relatively short period of forced inactivity.

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Did Satan physically take Jesus to the temple when tempting him?

■ Put simply, we cannot be certain whether Jesus actually stood in the temple or he did so only by means of a vision. At times, both possibilities have been presented in our publications.

Consider first what the Bible record says. In his Gospel account of this event, the apostle Matthew was inspired to write: "Then the Devil *took him* [Jesus] along into the holy city, and he *stationed him* on the battlement ["parapet; highest point," *ftn.*] of the temple." (Matt. 4:5) Luke's parallel account puts it this way: "He then *led him* into Jerusalem and *stationed him* on the battlement of the temple."—Luke 4:9.

In the past, our publications have reasoned that this event may not have happened literally.

For example, in the issue of March 1, 1961, *The Watchtower* explained: "It does not seem reasonable to place a literal construction on all that appears in the account of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness. Certainly there is no mountain from which one could be shown 'all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.' So too, we must reasonably conclude that Satan did not literally, bodily, physically, take Jesus 'along into the holy city' and station him 'upon the battlement of the temple.' Such was not at all necessary for the temptation to have force." However, in subsequent issues of this journal, we have observed that Christ's complying with Satan's request could have resulted in Jesus' suicide.

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Teach Them to Stand Firm

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

Eb/F *Bb* *F/Eb* *Bb/D* *Eb/G*

What a joy to teach Je - ho - vah's sheep And to
 Ev - 'ry day we said a prayer for them, As their
 May they all main - tain their con - fi - dence, Trust in

Bb/F *Gm* *Bb/F* *Cm/Eb* *Cm/F* *Eb/F*

see how they have grown. We have
 faith was un - der test. We made
 God and in his Son. Through en -

Bb *F/Eb* *Bb/D* *Eb*

seen how he has guid - ed them As they've
 time to teach and care for them; They've grown
 dur - ance and o - be - di - ence, May their

Bb/F *F7sus4* *Bb* *Chorus* *F6/A*

made the truth their own.
 strong, and they've been blessed. Je - ho - vah,
 race for life be won.

Teach Them to Stand Firm

may you hear our prayer And keep them in your watch - ful

care. In Je - sus' name, for them we plead: May they suc -

ceed; May ev - 'ry one of them stand firm.

R.H.

Chord symbols: Gm9, Bbma7/F, Ebadd9, Dm7, Eb6, Bb, F6/A, Gm9, Bbadd9/F, Ebadd9, Eb, Bb/F, Ebadd9, Bb/D, Eb, F7sus4, Bb, F7sus4, Bb.

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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Jer 12:1, 2, 14—What was Jeremiah’s question, and what was Jehovah’s answer? (*jr* 118 ¶11)

Jer 15:17—What was Jeremiah’s view of associations, and how can we imitate him? (*w04* 5/1 12 ¶16)

What does this week’s Bible reading teach me about Jehovah?

What points from this week’s Bible reading can I use in the field ministry?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 13:15-27

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Memorial invitation and video—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Memorial invitation and video—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Talk:** (6 min.) *w16.03* 29-31—Theme: When Were God’s People Held Captive by Babylon the Great?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 79
- **“Help Your Family to Remember Jehovah”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Start by playing the video “*These Words . . . Must Be on Your Heart*”—*Family Interviews* (video category FAMILY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* chap. 10 ¶8-11, boxes on pp. 103, 105 (left)
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 48 and Prayer

Help Your Family to Remember Jehovah

Jeremiah was commissioned to warn the Jews of an impending destruction because they had forgotten their God, Jehovah. (Jer 13:25) How did the nation get to this sad spiritual state? Israelite families had lost their spirituality. Evidently family heads were not following Jehovah’s direction recorded at Deuteronomy 6:5-7.

Spiritually strong families contribute to the stability of our congregations today. Family heads can help their family to remember Jehovah by means of a regular and meaningful Family Worship program. (Ps 22:27) After watching the video “*These Words . . . Must Be on Your Heart*”—*Family Interviews*, answer these questions:



How have some families successfully confronted the common challenges to family worship?

What are some of the rewards of having a regular and meaningful Family Worship program?

When it comes to family worship, what challenges do I have, and how do I plan to address them?

⁵ Was that the end of the refining and cleansing for God’s people? No. Throughout the last days, Jehovah by means of the Messianic King has continued to help his followers to be clean so that they might remain in the spiritual temple. In the next two chapters, we will see how he has refined them morally and organizationally. First, though, let us discuss *spiritual* cleansing. It is faith-strengthening to consider what Jesus has done—both in clearly recognizable ways and behind the scenes—to help his followers to be spiritually clean.

“Keep Yourselves Clean”

⁶ What is spiritual cleanness? To answer that, let us examine the words that Jehovah spoke to Jewish exiles as they were about to leave Babylon in the sixth century B.C.E. (**Read Isaiah 52:11.**) Those exiles were returning home to Jerusalem primarily to rebuild the temple and restore true worship. (Ezra 1:2-4) Jehovah wanted his people to leave behind all traces of Babylon’s religion. Notice that he gave them a series of commands: “Touch nothing unclean,” “get out from the midst of her,” and “keep yourselves clean.” Jehovah’s pure worship must not be tainted by false worship. What, then, may we conclude? Spiritual cleanness involves keeping free of the teachings and practices of false religion.

⁷ Shortly after he was installed as King, Jesus put in place a clearly recognizable channel through which he has helped his followers to be spiritually clean. That channel is the faithful and discreet slave, which Christ appointed in 1919. (Matt. 24:45) By that year, the Bible Students had already cleansed themselves of many false religious teachings. Still, they needed some further cleansing spiritually. Through his faithful slave, Christ has gradually enlightened his followers about various observances and practices that they needed to abandon. (Prov. 4:18) Let us consider some examples of this.

Should Christians Celebrate Christmas?

⁸ The Bible Students long acknowledged that Christmas has pagan roots and that Jesus was not born on December 25. *Zion’s Watch Tower* of December 1881 stated: “Millions were brought into the church from Paganism. But the *change* was mostly in *name*, for the pagan priests became christian priests and the pagan holidays came to be called by christian names—Christmas being one of these holidays.” In 1883, under the title “When Was Jesus Born?” the

-
6. How do Jehovah’s commands to the Jewish exiles help us to understand what spiritual cleanness involves?
 7. Through what channel has Jesus helped his followers to be spiritually clean?
 8. What had the Bible Students long acknowledged about Christmas, yet what did they not see clearly?



The last time Christmas was celebrated at Brooklyn Bethel, 1926

9. What did the Bible Students come to realize about Christmas?

10. (a) What thorough exposé of Christmas was presented in December 1928? (See also the box “Christmas, Its Origin and Purpose.”) (b) How were God’s people alerted to other holidays and celebrations that should be avoided? (See the box “Exposing Other Holidays and Celebrations.”)

FOOTNOTE

[3] This article noted that a winter date for Jesus’ birth “does not comport well with the account of the shepherds being out with their flocks.” —Luke 2:8.

Watch Tower reasoned that Jesus was born about the beginning of October.^[3] Yet, the Bible Students did not at the time clearly see the need to stop celebrating Christmas. It continued to be celebrated even by members of the Brooklyn Bethel family. After 1926, however, things began to change. Why?

⁹ As a result of careful, closer scrutiny of the subject, the Bible Students came to realize that the origin of Christmas and the practices associated with it actually dishonor God. The article “The Origin of Christmas,” in *The Golden Age* of December 14, 1927, noted that Christmas is a pagan celebration, focuses on pleasures, and involves idol worship. The article made it clear that the celebration was not ordered by Christ and concluded with this pointed statement about Christmas: “The fact that the world, the flesh, and the Devil are in favor of its perpetuation and observance . . . is a final and conclusive argument against its celebration by those who are dedicated wholly to the service of Jehovah.” Not surprisingly, the Bethel family did not celebrate Christmas that December—or ever again!

¹⁰ The following year, the Bible Students received an even more thorough exposé of Christmas. On December 12, 1928, Brother Richard H. Barber, a member of the headquarters staff, gave a radio discourse that laid bare the

“CHRISTMAS, ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE”

IN December 1928, Brother Richard H. Barber (circled at left) delivered a powerful radio discourse on the subject of Christmas. The content of that discourse was published in *The Golden Age* of December 12, 1928, under the title “Christmas, Its Origin and Purpose.” Among the statements in the discourse were the following:

- “Satan . . . has taught the people to give more prominence to the *birth* of the

babe Jesus than to the *death* of the *man* Jesus, in order to hide the importance of the *ransom*.”

- “Every one is aware of the spirit of frivolity, debauchery, drunkenness and revelry so prevalent during the Christmas season . . . Surely none of these things honor either Jehovah God or His Son.”
- “The Devil has now succeeded in grafting his counterfeit festivals, feast days, fast days and holy days upon the church . . . The Devil has succeeded in getting the people to adopt all his wicked schemes and to give them the name Christian, in order that thus he might mock the great Jehovah God.”

unclean origins of this holiday. How did God’s people respond to the clear direction from headquarters? Recalling when he and his family stopped celebrating Christmas, Brother Charles Brandlein said: “Did we mind putting those pagan things away? Absolutely not! . . . It was just like taking a soiled garment off and throwing it away.” Reflecting a similar spirit, Brother Henry A. Cantwell, who later served as a traveling overseer, recalled: “We were pleased that we were able to give up something to prove our love for Jehovah.” Christ’s loyal followers were willing to make the needed changes and have no part in a celebration that stemmed from unclean worship.^[4]—John 15:19; 17:14.

11 What a fine example those faithful Bible Students set for us! Reflecting on their example, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘How do I view the direction we receive from headquarters? Do I gratefully accept it and apply what I learn?’ Our willing obedience shows our support for the Messianic King, who is using the faithful slave to dispense timely spiritual food.—Acts 16:4, 5.

Should Christians Use the Cross?

12 For many years, the Bible Students viewed the cross as an acceptable symbol of Christianity. They certainly did not feel that the cross should be worshipped, for they

11. How can we show our support for the Messianic King?

12. For many years, how did the Bible Students view the cross?

FOOTNOTE

[4] In a personal letter dated November 14, 1927, Brother Frederick W. Franz wrote: “We will have no Christmas this year. The Bethel family has voted not to have Christmas anymore.” A few months later, in a letter dated February 6, 1928, Brother Franz wrote: “Little by little the Lord is cleansing us from the errors of the Devil’s Babylonish organization.”

EXPOSING OTHER HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

OVER the years, Christ has helped his followers to remain no part of the world. Here are some of the earliest references that alerted God's people to various holidays and celebrations that true Christians avoid.

- **Easter.** "The prominent heathen festival of Easter was also brought over and engrafted into the so-called Christian church."—*The Golden Age*, December 12, 1928, page 168.
- **Valentine's Day.** "St. Valentine's Day has nothing very saintly to commend it as to its origin."—*The Golden Age*, December 25, 1929, page 208.
- **Birthdays.** "There are but two such celebrations mentioned in the Scriptures, one of the heathen king Pharaoh of Egypt, in the days of Joseph, and the other of [Herod,] whose birthday cost John the Baptist his life. In the Bible there is no instance of celebrations of birthdays by any of God's people."—*The Golden Age*, May 6, 1936, page 499.
- **New Year's Day.** "The whole New Year's celebration with its high jinks and drunken revelry is not Christian, regardless of the day on which it occurs. Early Christians did not observe it."—*Awake!* December 22, 1946, page 24.



PROGRESSIVELY ENLIGHTENED ABOUT USE OF THE CROSS

- Cross-and-crown pins are not only unnecessary but also objectionable.—Assembly in Detroit, Michigan, U.S.A., 1928.
- Cross-and-crown pins are idols.—*Preparation*, 1933, page 239.
- The cross is pagan in origin.—*The Golden Age*, February 28, 1934, page 336.
- Jesus died on a stake, not on a cross.—*The Golden Age*, November 4, 1936, page 72; *Riches*, 1936, page 27.

The Greek word *stau-ros*' is translated "cross" in many Bible translations. Notice, however, what various sources say about the meaning of this word:

"The Greek word [*stau-ros*'] properly . . . means merely a stake."—*Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*.

"A pole in the broadest sense. It is not the equivalent of a 'cross.'"—*Crucifixion in Antiquity*.

"A strong stake, such as farmers drive into the ground to make their fences or palisades—no more, no less."—*History of the Cross*.

"It never means *two* pieces of timber placed across one another at any angle, but always of one piece alone."—*The Companion Bible*.

"An upright pole or stake . . . It never means two pieces of wood joining each other at any angle."—*A Critical Lexicon and Concordance*.

Daily Walking With Jehovah

(Micah 6:8)

F/C F C7 Bb/D Bb Bb/F F Dm

Hand in hand with our dear Fa - ther, We would
 In this day of Sa - tan's an - ger, As the
 Help for us God has pro - vid - ed Through his

Am Dm Bb Bb/C C7 F F/C

hum - bly walk with him each day. Oh, how
 end is draw - ing ev - er near, We are
 spir - it and his writ - ten Word, Through the

F C7 Bb/D Bb Bb/F F Dm

un - de - served his kind - ness That he
 faced with op - po - si - tion That could
 Chris - tian con - gre - ga - tion, Through as -

Am Dm Bb Bb/C C7 F F/A

grants to those who seek his way! By his
 make us turn a - way in fear. But Je -
 sur - ance that our prayer is heard. As we're

Daily Walking With Jehovah

C/Bb Bb C7 Bb/F F F/C

love God made pro - vi - sion; We may
 ho - vah gives pro - tec - tion; Close to
 walk - ing with Je - ho - vah, He will

G/B G7/B C/G G7 C7 F F/A

free - ly take his hand. So we
 him we want to stay, That we
 help us do what's right. He will

C/Bb Bb C7 Bb/F F F/A A+5

make our ded - i - ca - tion; With Je -
 might for - ev - er serve him. Love him
 help us to be loy - al And walk

Bb Bb/C C7 F

ho - vah we take our stand.
 loy - al - ly, nev - er stray.
 mod - est - ly in his sight.

JANUARY 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 27–APRIL 2, 2017



COVER IMAGE:

CHILE

Publishers in the south of Chile follow a river that winds through lush forests and snowcapped peaks of the Andes Mountains. They participate in a preaching campaign to reach as many remote homes as possible while the weather is favorable.

PUBLISHERS

76,296

BIBLE STUDIES

64,178

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)

174,761

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7 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 27–MARCH 5 “Trust in Jehovah and Do What Is Good”

This article discusses how our yeartext for 2017 encourages us to look to Jehovah for help when faced with challenges. Using faithful examples from the past, we will examine how we can trust in Jehovah to support us while taking whatever action we can to solve problems and help others.

12 WEEK OF MARCH 6-12 Treasure Your Gift of Free Will

In this article, we will learn how to treasure God’s gift of free will by using it in a way that pleases the Giver of that gift. It will also help us to see how we can respect the way that others exercise their gift of free will.

17 WEEK OF MARCH 13-19 Why Modesty Still Matters

22 WEEK OF MARCH 20-26 You Can Remain Modest Under Test

These articles will help us to understand better the desirable quality of modesty. The first article explains what modesty is and what it is not. The second article teaches us how to remain modest even when we are under test.

27 WEEK OF MARCH 27–APRIL 2 “These Things Entrust to Faithful Men”

As one generation replaces another, younger ones take on the work of older ones. This article discusses how both young and old can successfully make the transition.

32 DID YOU KNOW?

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January 2017

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Shepherds—Gifts in Men

(Ephesians 4:8)

C G/C F/C C F/C C D/C G/B

Help in our lives, Je - ho - vah pro - vides, Shep - herds to tend his flock.
 Shep - herds who love us care how we feel; Gent - ly they guide the way.
 God - ly ad - vice and coun - sel they give, That we may nev - er stray.

C G/B F/A C/G F Dm7 E7sus4 E7

By their ex - am - ple they serve as guides, Show - ing us how to walk.
 When we are hurt, they help us to heal, Kind in the words they say.
 Thus they as - sist us, God's way to live, Serv - ing him ev - 'ry day.

Chorus
Am F F/G G/F C/E Dm7 C/E D7/F# G

God gives us men who have earned our trust, Men who are loy - al and true.

Am F E7 Am F C/G G7 C

They show con - cern for his pre - cious sheep; Love them for all that they do.



“These Things Entrust to Faithful Men”

“These things entrust to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others.”—2 TIM. 2:2.

PEOPLE often define themselves by the work they do. To many, a job or position determines a person’s self-worth. In some cultures, when getting to know another person, one of the first questions asked is, “What kind of work do you do?”

² The Bible sometimes describes people by the work they did. It speaks of “Matthew the tax collector”; “Simon, a tanner”; and “Luke, the beloved physician.” (Matt. 10:3; Acts 10:6; Col. 4:14) Spiritual assignments or privileges also identify people. We read of *King David*, the *prophet Elijah*, and the *apostle Paul*. These men valued their God-given assignments. If we have privileges of service, we likewise should value them.

³ Many of us love the work we do and would like to continue doing it indefinitely. Sadly, though, from the days of Adam, each generation grows old and is replaced by another. (Eccl. 1:4) In recent times, this transition has presented

- 1, 2. How do many people view their work?
3. Why is there a need for older ones to train younger ones? (See opening picture.)

SONGS: 103, 101

DO YOU RECALL?

How did King David respond when told that his son would build God’s temple?

Why should older ones help younger ones to take on increased responsibility?

How can younger men demonstrate a proper attitude as they take on the work of older brothers?

unique challenges for true Christians. The work of Jehovah’s people has grown in scope and complexity. As we tackle new projects, new ways of doing things are adopted—often ways that involve the use of rapidly changing technology. Some older ones may find it hard to keep pace with these advances. (Luke 5:39) Even when that is not the case, younger ones may have greater strength and energy than older ones have. (Prov. 20:29) Thus, it is both loving and practical for older ones to prepare younger ones to take on greater responsibility.—**Read Psalm 71:18.**

⁴ Those in positions of authority may not find it easy to delegate to younger ones. Some fear losing a position they cherish. Others worry about losing control, convinced that younger ones cannot do things as well. Some may reason that they do not have time to train

4. Why is it difficult for some to delegate authority? (See the box “Why Some People Do Not Delegate.”)

someone else. On the other hand, those who are younger must guard against becoming impatient when they are not given more to do.

⁵ Let us discuss this matter of delegating from two angles. First, how can older ones help younger ones take on increased responsibility, and why is this important? (2 Tim. 2:2) Second, why is it important that younger ones keep the right attitude as they assist brothers who are more experienced and learn from them? To begin, let us see how King David equipped his son to take on an important responsibility.

DAVID PREPARED AND SUPPORTED SOLOMON

⁶ After residing for years as a fugitive, David became king and lived in a comfortable house. Dismayed that there was no “house,” or temple, dedicated to Je-

5. What questions will this article discuss?

6. What did King David want to do, and how did Jehovah respond?

WHY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT DELEGATE

1	They fear that they will not get credit for what is done.	→	However, all credit belongs to Jehovah.—Ps. 115:1.
2	They do not want to give up work that they enjoy.	→	However, there is joy in training others.—Acts 20:35.
3	They fear that the work will not be done properly.	→	However, God can help others to do the work.—Ps. 37:5.
4	They do not want to lose control of an assignment.	→	However, it is best to acknowledge that Jehovah is in control.—Isa. 45:6, 7.
5	They think that they do not have time to train others.	→	However, training others saves time in the long run.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

hovah, he wanted to build one. So he said to Nathan the prophet: “Here I am living in a house of cedars while the ark of the covenant of Jehovah is under tent cloths.” Nathan replied: “Do whatever is in your heart, for the true God is with you.” However, Jehovah directed otherwise. He told Nathan to tell David: “You are not the one who will build the house for me to dwell in.” Although Jehovah lovingly assured David that He would continue to bless him, God directed that David’s son Solomon build the temple. How did David react? —1 Chron. 17:1-4, 8, 11, 12; 29:1.

⁷ David did not withhold his support, brooding over the prospect that the credit for temple construction would not be his. The building did, in fact, become known as Solomon’s temple, not David’s. While David may have been disappointed that he could not fulfill his heart’s desire, he fully supported the project. He eagerly organized work groups and gathered iron, copper, silver, and gold, as well as cedar timbers. Further, he encouraged Solomon, saying: “Now, my son, may Jehovah be with you, and may you be successful and build the house of Jehovah your God, just as he has spoken concerning you.” —1 Chron. 22:11, 14-16.

⁸ **Read 1 Chronicles 22:5.** David might have concluded that Solomon was not qualified to oversee such an important project. After all, the temple was to be “exceedingly magnificent,” and Solomon was at the time “young and inexperienced.” Yet, David knew that Jehovah would equip Solomon to handle the

7. How did David react to Jehovah’s direction?
8. Why might David have concluded that Solomon was unqualified, but what did he do?



It is satisfying to see younger men taking on greater responsibility (See paragraph 9)

work given to him. So David focused on what he could do to assist, preparing materials in great quantity.

EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF TRAINING OTHERS

⁹ Older brothers should not be disheartened when it becomes necessary to hand their assignments over to younger men. Rather, it is in the best interests of the work when younger ones are trained to handle responsibilities. Appointed men should have great satisfaction when the younger ones whom they have trained become qualified to take on the work. To illustrate, think of a father who teaches his son to drive a car. When he is a child, the son simply observes his father. When the boy is older, the father explains what he is doing. Then, when the boy is of legal age, he begins to drive the car as his father gives him further instruction. Sometimes they may take turns driving,

9. How can older ones find satisfaction in handing over responsibilities? Illustrate.

but eventually the son may do most, if not all, of the driving for his aging father. The wise father is pleased to have his son take over and does not feel that he has to be in control. Similarly, older men feel proud when they have trained younger ones to take on theocratic responsibilities.

¹⁰ As older ones, we must guard against jealousy. Notice how Moses reacted when certain ones in the camp of Israel began behaving as prophets. **(Read Numbers 11:24-29.)** Joshua, Moses' assistant, wanted to restrain them. He evidently thought that they were detracting from Moses' prominence and authority. But Moses replied: "Are you jealous for me? No, I wish that all of Jehovah's people were prophets and that Jehovah would put his spirit on them!" Moses saw Jehovah's hand in the matter. Disclaiming honor for himself, Moses expressed his desire that the same spiritual gifts be shared by all of Jehovah's servants. Like Moses, are we not pleased when others receive privileges that might otherwise have come to us?

¹¹ Today, there are many examples of brothers who have worked energetically for decades and who have prepared others to take on increased responsibility. For example, a brother named Peter served for more than 74 years in the full-time service, 35 of these at a branch office in Europe. Until recently, he was the overseer of the Service Department. Now Paul, a younger man who had worked alongside Peter for sev-

10. How did Moses feel about glory and authority?

11. What did one brother say about handing over his responsibility?

eral years, cares for that responsibility. When Peter was asked how he felt about his change of assignment, he replied, "I am so pleased that there are brothers who have been trained to accept greater responsibility and who are doing so well in caring for the work."

VALUE THE OLDER ONES AMONG US

¹² After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. When Rehoboam needed advice on how to handle his responsibilities, he first asked the older men. But he rejected their advice! Instead, he took the advice of the younger men with whom he had grown up and who were now his attendants. The results were disastrous. (2 Chron. 10:6-11, 19) The lesson? It is wise to seek and consider carefully the advice of older, experienced ones. Though younger ones should not feel shackled to past ways of doing things, they should not be quick to dismiss the counsel of older ones.

¹³ Some younger ones may now be coordinating activities that include older brothers. Though such younger ones have a changed role, they would do well to benefit from the wisdom and experience of older ones before making decisions. Paul, mentioned earlier, who replaced Peter as the overseer of a Bethel department, said, "I took time to seek out the advice of Peter, and I encouraged others in the department to do the same."

¹⁴ Timothy, a younger man, worked alongside the apostle Paul for many

12. What lesson should we learn from the Bible account of Rehoboam?

13. How should younger ones cooperate with older ones?

14. What do we learn from the cooperation between Timothy and the apostle Paul?

years. **(Read Philippians 2:20-22.)** Paul had written to the Corinthians: “I am sending Timothy to you, because he is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation.” (1 Cor. 4:17) This brief statement points to the close cooperation between Paul and Timothy. Paul had taken time to teach Timothy his “methods in connection with Christ.” Timothy learned well and had won Paul’s affection, and Paul was confident that Timothy could care for the spiritual needs of those in Corinth. What a fine example for elders to imitate today as they train other men to take the lead in the congregation!

ALL OF US HAVE A PART TO PLAY

¹⁵ We live in exciting times. The earthly part of Jehovah’s organization is growing in many ways, but growth necessitates change. As changes affect us personally, may we be humble, keeping an eye on Jehovah’s interests and not on our own. Doing so promotes unity. To Christians in Rome, Paul wrote: “I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has given to him a measure of faith. For just as we have in one body many members, but the members do not all have the same function, so we, although many, are one body in union with Christ.”—Rom. 12:3-5.

¹⁶ Whatever our circumstances, then,

15. How should Paul’s counsel to Christians in Rome help us when we are affected by change?

16. What might older ones and younger ones, as well as their wives, do to help maintain the peace and unity of Jehovah’s organization?

let all of us work to further the interests of Jehovah’s magnificent Kingdom. You older ones, equip younger ones to do what you do. You younger brothers, accept responsibility, be modest, and maintain a respectful attitude toward the older ones. And you wives, imitate Aquila’s wife, Priscilla, who accompanied and supported Aquila faithfully as their circumstances changed.—Acts 18:2.

¹⁷ In the matter of training others to take on increased responsibility, there is no better example than that of Jesus. He knew that his earthly ministry would come to an end and that others would carry on his work. Though his disciples were imperfect, he had confidence in them and told them that they would do works greater than he did. (John 14:12) He trained them thoroughly, and they spread the good news throughout the then-known world.—Col. 1:23.

¹⁸ After his sacrificial death, Jesus was resurrected to heaven where he was given more work to do with authority “far above every government and authority and power and lordship.” (Eph. 1:19-21) If we die faithful before Armageddon, we will be resurrected into a righteous new world, where there will be plenty of satisfying work for us to do. Now, though, there is vitally important work that all of us can participate in—preaching the good news and making disciples. May all of us, young or old, keep on “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Cor. 15:58.

17. What confidence did Jesus have in his disciples, and for what did he train them?

18. What prospects lie ahead, and what can we do now?

Working Together in Unity

(Ephesians 4:3)

F F6/C Fma7 F/C F/A

From a world di - vid - ed and cold, God has
As we pray to be of one mind, Al - ways

Ab^o C7/G C7 Bb/C C7 C7/G Bb/C

brought us in - to his fold. U - ni - ty and
ten - der, lov - ing, and kind, Love will grow and

C7/G C7 Bb/C C7 C7/E Bb/D C7 Gm C7 F Gm11

peace we pos - sess, Bring - ing us hap - pi - ness.
praise will in - crease, Giv - ing us joy and peace.

F7/A Eb/G F7 Bb F/A Dm7 Db7

U - ni - ty we cher - ish; Har - mo -
Peace is so re - fresh - ing, Bring - ing

Working Together in Unity

C7 Bb/C C7 Bb/C C7 F F6/C

ny is sweet. In God's work there's
such de - light. As we show true

Fma7 F/C F/A Ab° C7/G

much to be done. He di - rects us now through his
broth - er - ly love, God will grant us peace from a -

C7 Bb/C C7 C7/G Bb/C C7/G

Son. May we serve o - be - di - ent -
bove. With his help, u - nit - ed we'll

C7 Bb/C C7 Bb6 Dm/A Gm7 Bb/C C7 F Gm7/C F

ly, Work - ing in har - mo - ny.
be, Serv - ing him end - less - ly.

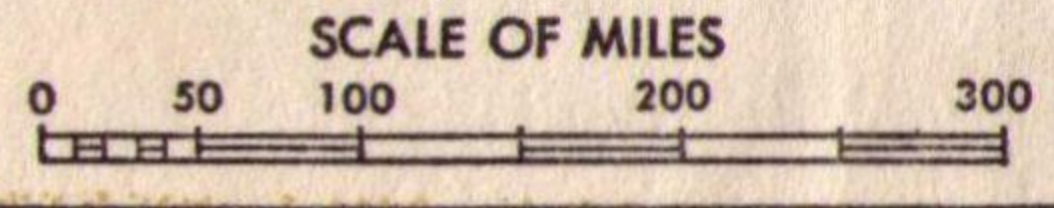
(See also Mic. 2:12; Zeph. 3:9; 1 Cor. 1:10.)





**MEDITERRANEAN AREA
and Paul's Journeys**

- Early Journeys *****
- First Evangelistic Journey ————
- Second Evangelistic Journey ◆◆◆◆
- Third Evangelistic Journey ~~~~~~
- Journey to Rome ○○○○○
- Cities and Towns ●



D A L M A T I A N U M
 D A C I A
 M A C E D O N I A
 T H R A C I A
 G R E E C E
 C H A I A
 A S I A
 B I T H Y N I A
 P O N T U S
 C A P P A D O C I A
 C I L I C I A
 S Y R I A
 J U D E A
 E G Y P T
 L I B Y A
 I T A L Y
 S I C I L Y
 M A L T A
 C R E T E
 (B L A C K S E A)
 (M E D I T E R R A N E A N)

Rome, Puteoli, Rhegium, Syracuse, Athens, Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Beroea, Troas, Assos, Adramyttium, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, Smyrna, Ephesus, Colossae, Miletus, Laodicea, Iconium, Lystra, Tarsus, Seleucia, Antioch, Paphos, Salamis, Tyre, Sidon, Damascus, Jerusalem, Joppa, Gaza, Caesarea, Alexandria, Cyrene, Lasea.