

- Song 125 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Parable of the Lost Son”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 15:11-16—A wayward son squandered his inheritance on a debauched life (nwtsty study notes)
 Lu 15:17-24—He repented and was welcomed back by his loving father (nwtsty study notes)
 Lu 15:25-32—The older son’s thinking was corrected
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 14:26—What does the word “hate” mean in this context? (nwtsty study note)

Lu 16:10-13—What was Jesus’ point regarding “unrighteous riches”? (w17.07 8-9 ¶7-8)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 14:1-14

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *Jvs* 37-38 ¶14-15

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 107
- **“The Prodigal Returns”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Begin by playing *The Prodigal Returns—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 31
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 139 and Prayer

LUKE 14-16 | The Parable of the Lost Son



15:11-32

Some lessons that we learn from the parable.

- It is wise to remain in the security of God’s people, under the care of our loving heavenly Father
- If we deviate from God’s way, we should humbly return, confident of Jehovah’s willingness to forgive us
- We should imitate Jehovah by warmly welcoming those who repent and return to the congregation

125 *“Happy Are the Merciful!”*

(Matthew 5:7)

1. Our happy God is merciful,
His mercy not just dutiful.
He takes delight in kindly deeds
And freely grants our daily needs.
Repentant ones can be assured
Their plea for mercy will be heard.
Remembering that we are dust,
He’s merciful and kind and just.
2. When we have sinned and feel distressed,
When God’s forgiveness we request,
Our Lord, Christ Jesus, showed the way
To ask for mercy when we pray:
“Forgive our debts, we beg of you,
As we forgive our debtors too.”
We then can let resentment go,
And peace of mind and heart we’ll know.
3. When gifts of mercy we bestow,
The giving spirit we should show.
We give without desiring praise,
Content with joy our gift conveys.
Then God, who sees all things we do,
Will be the One repaying you.
Yes, happy are the merciful,
In God’s eyes they are beautiful.

LUKE 13:25-14:11

you did not want it.^a **35** Look! Your house is abandoned to you.^b I tell you, you will by no means see me until you say: ‘Blessed is the one who comes in Jehovah’s* name!’”^c

14 On another occasion he went to eat a meal in the house of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on the Sabbath, and they were closely watching him. **2** And look! a man who had dropsy* was in front of him. **3** So in response Jesus asked those versed in the Law and the Pharisees: “Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath or not?”^d **4** But they kept silent. With that he took hold of the man, healed him, and sent him away. **5** Then he said to them: “Who of you, if his son or bull falls into a well,^e will not immediately pull him out on the Sabbath day?”^f **6** And they were not able to reply to this.

7 He then told the invited men an illustration when he noticed how they were choosing the most prominent places for themselves.^g He said to them: **8** “When you are invited by someone to a marriage feast, do not recline in the most prominent place.^h Perhaps someone more distinguished than you may also have been invited. **9** Then the one who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Let this man have your place.’ Then you will proceed with shame to take the lowest place. **10** But when you are invited, go and recline in the lowest place, so that when the man who invited you comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, go on up higher.’ Then you will have honor in front of all your fellow guests.”ⁱ **11** For

13:35 *See App. A5. 14:2 *Or “edema,” an excess buildup of fluid in the body.

LUKE 14:12-35

everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”^a

12 Next he said also to the man who had invited him: “When you spread a dinner or an evening meal, do not call your friends or your brothers or your relatives or your rich neighbors. Otherwise, they might also invite you in return, and it would become a repayment to you.

13 But when you spread a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind;^b **14** and you will be happy, because they have nothing with which to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection^c of the righteous ones.”

15 On hearing these things, one of the fellow guests said to him: “Happy is the one who dines* in the Kingdom of God.”

16 Jesus said to him: “A man was spreading a grand evening meal,^d and he invited many.

17 He sent his slave out at the hour of the evening meal to say to the invited ones, ‘Come, because everything is now ready.’

18 But they all alike began to make excuses.^e The first said to him, ‘I bought a field and need to go out and see it; I ask you, have me excused.’ **19** And another said, ‘I bought five yoke* of cattle and am going to examine them; I ask you, have me excused.’^f **20** Still another said,

‘I just got married, and for this reason I cannot come.’ **21** So the slave came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out quickly to the main streets and the alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ **22** In time the slave said, ‘Master, what

14:15 *Lit., “eats bread.” **14:19** *Or “pairs.”

you ordered has been done, and still there is room.' **23** So the master said to the slave, 'Go out to the roads and the lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled.^a

24 For I say to you, none of those men who were invited will taste my evening meal.'"^b

25 Now large crowds were traveling with him, and he turned and said to them: **26** "If

anyone comes to me and does not hate* his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life,^{#c} he cannot be my disciple.^d **27** Whoever does

not carry his torture stake* and come after me cannot be my disciple.^e **28** For example, who

of you wanting to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense to see if he has enough to complete it?

29 Otherwise, he might lay its foundation but not be able to finish it, and all the onlookers would start to ridicule him,

30 saying: 'This man started to build but was not able to finish.' **31** Or what king marching

out against another king in war does not first sit down and take counsel whether he is able with 10,000 troops to stand up to the

one who comes against him with 20,000? **32** If, in fact, he cannot do so, then while that one is yet far away, he sends out a body of

ambassadors and sues for peace.

33 In the same way, you may be sure that not one of you who does not say good-bye to* all his belongings can be my disciple.^f

34 "Salt, to be sure, is fine. But if the salt loses its strength, with what will it be seasoned?^g

35 It is not suitable for soil or for manure. People throw it

14:26 *Or "love to a lesser degree."

#Or "soul." 14:27 *See Glossary.

14:33 *Or "give up."

away. Let the one who has ears to listen, listen.”^a

15 Now all the tax collectors and the sinners kept gathering around him to hear him.^b **2** And both the Pharisees and the scribes kept muttering: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” **3** Then he told them this illustration, saying: **4** “What man among you with 100 sheep, on losing one of them, will not leave the 99 behind in the wilderness and go after the lost one until he finds it?^c **5** And when he has found it, he puts it on his shoulders and rejoices. **6** And when he gets home, he calls his friends and his neighbors together, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’^d **7** I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents^e than over 99 righteous ones who have no need of repentance.

8 “Or what woman who has ten drachma coins,* if she loses one of the drachmas,* does not light a lamp and sweep her house and search carefully until she finds it? **9** And when she has found it, she calls her friends[#] and neighbors together, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma coin* that I had lost.’ **10** In the same way, I tell you, joy arises among the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”^f

11 Then he said: “A man had two sons. **12** And the younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that should come to me.’ So he divided his belongings between them. **13** A few days later, the younger son gathered all his things together and traveled

15:8, 9 *See App. B14. 15:9 #Or “her women friends.”

LUKE 15:1-25

to a distant country and there squandered his property by living a debauched* life. **14** When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he fell into need. **15** He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to herd swine.^a **16** And he longed to be filled with the carob pods that the swine were eating, but no one would give him anything.

17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, while I am dying here from hunger! **18** I will get up and travel to my father and say to him: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19** I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.”’ **20** So he got up and went to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and embraced him* and tenderly kissed him. **21** Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.^b I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ **22** But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quick! bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. **23** Also bring the fattened calf, slaughter it, and let us eat and celebrate, **24** for this son of mine was dead but has come to life again;^c he was lost and has been found.’ And they started to enjoy themselves.

25 “Now his older son was in the field, and as he returned and got near the house, he heard

15:13 *Or “wasteful; reckless.” 15:20 *Lit., “fell upon his neck.”

LUKE 15:26-16:14

music and dancing. **26** So he called one of the servants to him and asked what was happening. **27** He said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father slaughtered the fattened calf because he got him back in good health.* **28** But he became angry and refused to go in. Then his father came out and began to plead with him. **29** In reply he said to his father, 'Look! These many years I have slaved for you and never once did I disobey your orders, and yet you never once gave me a young goat to enjoy with my friends. **30** But as soon as this son of yours arrived who squandered* your belongings with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.' **31** Then he said to him, 'My son, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours. **32** But we just had to celebrate and rejoice, for your brother was dead but has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"

16 Then he also said to the disciples: "A rich man had a steward* who was accused of handling his goods wastefully. **2** So he called him and said, 'What is this I hear about you? Hand in the account of your stewardship, for you can no longer manage the house.' **3** Then the steward said to himself, 'What am I to do, seeing that my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. **4** Ah! I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from the stewardship, people will welcome me into their homes.' **5** And calling to him each one of his master's debtors, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my

15:27 *Or "safe." 15:30 *Lit., "devoured." 16:1 *Or "house manager."

master?' **6** He replied, 'A hundred measures* of olive oil.' He said to him, 'Take back your written agreement and sit down and quickly write 50.' **7** Next, he said to another one, 'Now you, how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred large measures* of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take back your written agreement and write 80.' **8** And his master commended the steward, though unrighteous, because he acted with practical wisdom;* for the sons of this system of things# are wiser in a practical way toward their own generation than the sons of the light^a are.

9 "Also, I say to you: Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches,^b so that when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.^c **10** The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much. **11** Therefore, if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with the unrighteous riches, who will entrust you with what is true? **12** And if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with what belongs to another, who will give you something for yourselves?^d **13** No servant can be a slave to two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves to God and to Riches."^e

14 Now the Pharisees, who were money lovers, were listening to all these things, and they

16:6 *Or "bath measures." A bath equaled 22 L (5.81 gal). See App. B14.

16:7 *Or "A hundred cor measures." A cor equaled 220 L (200 dry qt). See App. B14. **16:8** *Or "acted shrewdly; acted discreetly." #Or "this age." See Glossary.

began to sneer at him.^a **15** So he said to them: "You are those who declare yourselves righteous before men,^b but God knows your hearts.^c For what is considered exalted by men is a disgusting thing in God's sight.^d

16 "The Law and the Prophets were until John. From then on, the Kingdom of God is being declared as good news, and every sort of person is pressing forward toward it.^e **17** Indeed, it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to go unfulfilled.^f

18 "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.^g

19 "There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and linen, enjoying himself day after day with magnificence. **20** But a beggar named Laz'a-rus used to be put at his gate, covered with ulcers **21** and desiring to be filled with the things dropping from the table of the rich man. Yes, even the dogs would come and lick his ulcers. **22** Now in the course of time, the beggar died and was carried off by the angels to Abraham's side.*

"Also, the rich man died and was buried. **23** And in the Grave* he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and he saw Abraham from afar and Laz'a-rus by his side.[#] **24** So he called and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Laz'a-rus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this blazing fire.' **25** But Abraham said, 'Child, re-

16:22 *Lit., "to the bosom of Abraham."

16:23 *Or "Hades," that is, the common grave of mankind. See Glossary. #Lit., "in his bosom."

LUKE 16:15-17:6

member that you had your fill of good things in your lifetime, but Laz'a-rus for his part received bad things. Now, however, he is being comforted here, but you are in anguish. **26** And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you, so that those who want to go over from here to you cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.' **27** Then he said, 'That being so, I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father, **28** for I have five brothers, in order that he may give them a thorough witness so that they will not also come into this place of torment.' **29** But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these.'^a **30** Then he said, 'No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.' **31** But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses^b and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

17 Then he said to his disciples: "It is unavoidable that causes for stumbling should come. Nevertheless, woe to the one through whom they come! **2** It would be more advantageous for him if a millstone were hung from his neck and he were thrown into the sea than for him to stumble one of these little ones.^c **3** Pay attention to yourselves. If your brother commits a sin, rebuke him,^d and if he repents, forgive him.^e **4** Even if he sins seven times a day against you and he comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."^f

5 Now the apostles said to the Lord: "Give us more faith."^g **6** Then the Lord said: "If you had faith the size of a mustard grain, you would say to this black mulberry tree, 'Be

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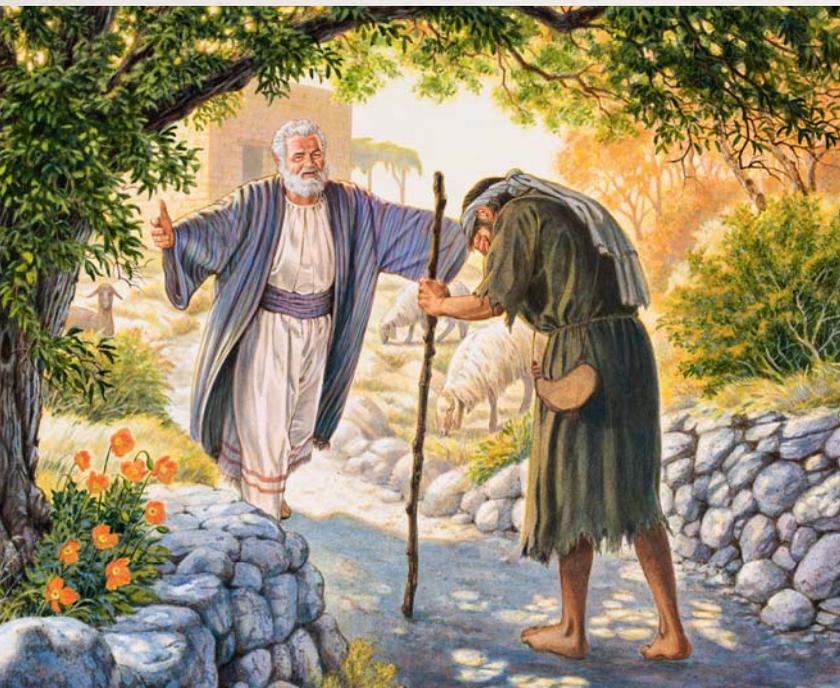
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LUKE 14-16 | The Parable of the Lost Son



15:11-32

Some lessons that we learn from the parable.

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- If we deviate from God’s way, we should humbly return, confident of Jehovah’s willingness to forgive us
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July 30-August 5

Treasures From God's Word

Luke 15:11-16—A wayward son squandered his inheritance on a debauched life

Luke 15:11-16 Then he said: “A man had two sons. And the younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that should come to me.’ So he divided his belongings between them. A few days later, the younger son gathered all his things together and traveled to a distant country and there squandered his property by living a debauched life. When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he fell into need. He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to herd swine. And he longed to be filled with the carob pods that the swine were eating, but no one would give him anything.

study notes

A man had two sons: Some aspects of the illustration of the prodigal son (also known as “the lost son”) are unique. It is one of the longest that Jesus gave. An outstanding feature is the family relationships he describes. In other illustrations, Jesus often referred to inanimate things, such as different kinds of seed or soil, or to the formal relationship between a master and his slaves. (Matthew 13:18-30; 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27) In this illustration, however, Jesus highlights the intimate relationship between a father and his sons. Many who hear this account may not have had such a kind, warmhearted father. This illustration portrays the deep compassion and love that our heavenly Father has for his earthly children, both those who remain with him and those who return to him after going astray.

the younger one: According to the Mosaic Law, the firstborn received a double share. (Deuteronomy 21:17) So if the older son in this illustration was the firstborn, it would mean that the inheritance of the younger son was half that of his older brother.

squandered: The Greek word used here literally means “to scatter (in different directions).” (Luke 1:51; Acts 5:37) At Matthew 25:24, 26, it is rendered “winnow.” Here it is used in the sense of being wasteful, spending foolishly.

a debauched life: Or “a wasteful (reckless; wild) life.” A related Greek word is used with a similar meaning at Ephesians 5:18; Titus 1:6; 1 Peter 4:4. Since the Greek word may also include the idea of a spendthrift, or wasteful, lifestyle some Bible translations use the expression “with prodigal living.”

to herd swine: These animals were unclean according to the Law, so this was a degrading, despicable occupation for a Jew.—Leviticus 11:7, 8.

carob pods: The fruit or pods of the carob have a shiny, leathery shell of a purplish-brown color and, in harmony with the literal meaning of their name in Greek (*kera'tion*, “small horn”), have a curved horn shape. Carob pods are widely used till this day as food for horses, cattle, and pigs. The degradation to which the young man had sunk was accentuated by his willingness even to eat the food of swine.—See study note on Luke 15:15.

Luke 15:17-24—He repented and was welcomed back by his loving father

Luke 15:17-24 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, while I am dying here from hunger! I will get up and travel to my father and say to him: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men.”’ So he got up and went to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him and was moved with pity, and he ran and embraced him and tenderly kissed him. Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son.’ But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quick! bring out a robe, the best one, and clothe him with it, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. Also bring the fattened calf, slaughter it, and let us eat and celebrate, for this son of mine was dead but has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.’ And they started to enjoy themselves.

study notes

against you: Or “in your sight.” The Greek preposition *eno'pion*, literally meaning “before; in the sight of,” is used in a similar way at 1 Samuel 20:1 in the *Septuagint*. In that verse, David asks Jonathan: “How have I sinned *against* your father?”

hired men: When he returned home, the younger son planned to ask his father to be accepted, not as a son, but as a hired man. Such a man was not part of the estate, as were the slaves, but was an outsider who was hired, often for just a day at a time.—Matthew 20:1, 2, 8.

tenderly kissed him: Or “affectionately kissed him.” The Greek term rendered “tenderly kissed” has been understood to be an intensive form of the verb *phile'o*, sometimes rendered “to kiss” (Matthew 26:48; Mark 14:44; Luke 22:47) but more often having the meaning “to have affection for” (John 5:20; 11:3; 16:27). By greeting him in such a warm, friendly manner, the father in the illustration shows his willingness to welcome back his repentant son.

called your son: Some manuscripts add: “Make me as one of your hired men,” but the current main text reading has support in various early, authoritative manuscripts. Some scholars consider that the extra expression was added to make the verse harmonize with Luke 15:19.

robe . . . ring . . . sandals: This robe was not merely a simple article of clothing but the best one—perhaps a richly embroidered vestment of the sort presented to an honored guest. The act of putting a ring on the hand of his son shows the favor and affection of the father as well as the dignity, honor, and status accorded this restored son. A ring and sandals were not usually seen on slaves. Thus, the father was making it clear that his son was being welcomed back as a full-fledged member of the family.

Luke 15:25-32—The older son’s thinking was corrected

Luke 15:25-32 “Now his older son was in the field, and as he returned and got near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants to him and asked what was happening. He said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father slaughtered the fattened calf because he got him back in good health.’ But he became angry and refused to go in. Then his father came out and began to plead with him. In reply he said to his father, ‘Look! These many years I have slaved for you and never once did I disobey your orders, and yet you never once gave me a young goat to enjoy with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours arrived who squandered your belongings with prostitutes, you slaughtered the fattened calf for him.’ Then he said to him, ‘My son, you have always been with me, and all the things that are mine are yours. But we just had to celebrate and rejoice, for your brother was dead but has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Luke 14:26—What does the word “hate” mean in this context?

Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

study note

hate: In the Bible, the term “hate” has several shades of meaning. It may denote a feeling of hostility that is motivated by malice, prompting someone to harm others. Or it may refer to an intense feeling of dislike for or strong aversion to someone or something, thus causing a person to avoid having anything to do with that person or thing. Or the term may simply mean to love to a lesser degree. For example, when Jacob is said to have “hated” Leah and

loved Rachel, the meaning is that he loved Leah less than he loved Rachel (Genesis 29:31, footnote.; Deuteronomy 21:15, footnote.), and the term is used in this sense in other ancient Jewish literature. Therefore, Jesus did not mean that his followers were to feel hostility or loathing toward their families and toward themselves, as this would contradict the rest of the Scriptures. (Compare Mark 12:29-31; Ephesians 5:28, 29, 33.) In this context, the term “hate” could be rendered “love to a lesser degree.”

Luke 16:10-13—What was Jesus’ point regarding “unrighteous riches”?

Luke 16:10-13 The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much. Therefore, if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with the unrighteous riches, who will entrust you with what is true? And if you have not proved yourselves faithful in connection with what belongs to another, who will give you something for yourselves? No servant can be a slave to two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot be slaves to God and to Riches.”

w17.07 8-9 paragraphs 7-8

⁷ The steward in Jesus’ illustration made friends for personal benefit. However, Jesus urged his followers to make friends in heaven for unselfish purposes. The verses that follow the illustration connect the use of “unrighteous riches” with faithfulness to God. Jesus’ point was that we can ‘prove ourselves faithful’ with, or control, those riches once we obtain them. How so?

⁸ An obvious way to prove ourselves faithful with our material things is by contributing financially to the worldwide preaching work that Jesus foretold would take place. (Matthew 24:14) A young girl in India kept a small money box and gradually added coins, even giving up toys to do so. When the box was full, she handed the money over to be used for the preaching work. A brother in India who has a coconut farm contributed a large number of coconuts to the Malayalam remote translation office, reasoning that since the office needs to buy coconuts, his supplying them directly will help his contribution to go further than it would if he gave cash. That is practical wisdom. Likewise, brothers in Greece regularly contribute olive oil, cheese, and other foods for the Bethel family.

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

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

Bible Reading: (4 minutes or less) Luke 14:1-14

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 14

14:2

dropsy: Or “edema,” an excess buildup of fluid in the body, evidenced by swelling. The term was used by ancient physicians from Hippocrates onward. Dropsy, which may have been a symptom of advanced deterioration of the body’s vital organs, was dreaded because it often indicated that the person would suffer a sudden death. Some believe that the man was brought to Jesus on the Sabbath as a trap by the Pharisees, for verse 1 says: “They were closely watching him.” This is one of at least six miracles that are mentioned only in Luke’s Gospel.

14:7

most prominent places: At feasts or banquets in Jesus’ day, guests reclined on couches placed along three sides of a table. Servers had access to the fourth side. The number of couches may have varied, depending on the size of the table. Four or five people could occupy one couch, but usually the number was three. Each person would recline with his head near the table, resting his left elbow on a cushion, and taking food with his right hand. The customary three places on the couch indicated the high, middle, and low location of the guests.

14:15

dines: Or “is at the feast.” Lit., “eats bread.” In Bible times, bread was such an important part of the diet that in both Hebrew and Greek, the expression “to eat bread” means “to eat (a meal); to dine.” The Hebrew term for “eat bread” has often been rendered “eat” (Ge 37:25; 2Ki 4:8); “dine” (2Sa 9:7), or “eat . . . food” (Ec 9:7). Similarly, at Lu 14:1, the Greek expression rendered “eat a meal” is literally “eat bread.”

14:26

hate: In the Bible, the term “hate” has several shades of meaning. It may denote a feeling of hostility that is motivated by malice, prompting someone to harm others. Or it may refer to an intense feeling of dislike for or strong aversion to someone or something, thus causing a person to avoid having anything to do with that person or thing. Or the term may simply mean to love to a lesser degree. For example, when Jacob is said to have “hated” Leah and loved Rachel, the meaning is that he loved Leah less than he loved Rachel (Ge 29:31, ftn.; De 21:15, ftn.), and the term is used in this sense in other ancient Jewish literature. Therefore, Jesus did not mean that his followers were to feel hostility or loathing toward their families and toward themselves, as this would contradict the rest of the Scriptures. (Compare Mr 12:29-31; Eph 5:28, 29, 33.) In this context, the term “hate” could be rendered “love to a lesser degree.”

life: Or “soul.” The meaning of the Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” has to be determined by the context. Here it refers to a person’s life. Thus, Jesus’ words mean that a true disciple must love Jesus more than he loves his own life, even being willing to lose his life if necessary.—See Glossary, “Soul.”

14:27

torture stake: Or “execution stake.” In classical Greek, the word *stau·ros'* primarily referred to an upright stake or pole. Used figuratively in the Scriptures, this term often stands for the suffering, shame, torture, and even death that a person experienced because of being a follower of Jesus. This is the third time that Jesus said that his disciples would have to carry a torture stake; the two earlier occasions are recorded at (1) Mt 10:38; (2) Mt 16:24; Mr 8:34; Lu 9:23.—See Glossary.

14:34

Salt: A mineral used for preserving and flavoring food. In this context, Jesus likely focused on the preserving quality of salt; his disciples could help others to avoid spiritual and moral decay.

loses its strength: In Jesus' day, salt was often obtained from the Dead Sea area and was contaminated by other minerals. If the salty portion was removed from this mixture, only a tasteless, useless residue remained.

LUKE

Study Notes—Chapter 15

15:8

ten: As shown in the study note on **drachma coins** in this verse, a drachma was worth almost a day's wages. However, this lost coin may have had special value as one of a set of ten, perhaps an heirloom or part of a prized string of drachmas used for adornment. It was necessary to **light a lamp** to search for it because the window in a home, if there was one, was usually quite small. And houses at that time generally had clay floors, so the woman swept the floor to help her find the lost coin.

drachma coins: A drachma was a Greek silver coin. By the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the drachma probably weighed about 3.4 g (0.109 oz t). At that time, the Greeks equated the drachma with the denarius, but the Roman government officially reckoned the value of the drachma at three fourths of a denarius. The Jews paid an annual temple tax of two drachmas (a didrachma).—See study note on Mt 17:24; Glossary, "Drachma"; and App. B14.

15:9

the drachma coin: A drachma was a Greek silver coin. By the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, the drachma probably weighed about 3.4 g (0.109 oz t). At that time, the Greeks equated the drachma with the denarius, but the Roman government officially reckoned the value of the drachma at three fourths of a denarius. The Jews paid an annual temple tax of two drachmas (a didrachma).—See study note on Mt 17:24; Glossary, “Drachma”; and App. B14.

15:11

A man had two sons: Some aspects of the illustration of the prodigal son (also known as “the lost son”) are unique. It is one of the longest that Jesus gave. An outstanding feature is the family relationships he describes. In other illustrations, Jesus often referred to inanimate things, such as different kinds of seed or soil, or to the formal relationship between a master and his slaves. (Mt 13:18-30; 25:14-30; Lu 19:12-27) In this illustration, however, Jesus highlights the intimate relationship between a father and his sons. Many who hear this account may not have had such a kind, warmhearted father. This illustration portrays the deep compassion and love that our heavenly Father has for his earthly children, both those who remain with him and those who return to him after going astray.

15:12

the younger one: According to the Mosaic Law, the firstborn received a double share. (De 21:17) So if the older son in this illustration was the firstborn, it would mean that the inheritance of the younger son was half that of his older brother.

15:13

squandered: The Greek word used here literally means “to scatter (in different directions).” (Lu 1:51; Ac 5:37) At Mt 25:24, 26, it is rendered “winnow.” Here it is used in the sense of being wasteful, spending foolishly.

a debauched life: Or “a wasteful (reckless; wild) life.” A related Greek word is used with a similar meaning at Eph 5:18; Tit 1:6; 1Pe 4:4. Since the Greek word may also include the idea of a spendthrift, or wasteful, lifestyle some Bible translations use the expression “with prodigal living.”

15:15

to herd swine: These animals were unclean according to the Law, so this was a degrading, despicable occupation for a Jew.—Le 11:7, 8.

15:16

carob pods: The fruit or pods of the carob have a shiny, leathery shell of a purplish-brown color and, in harmony with the literal meaning of their name in Greek (*ke-ra'ti-on*, “small horn”), have a curved horn shape. Carob pods are widely used till this day as food for horses, cattle, and pigs. The degradation to which the young man had sunk was accentuated by his willingness even to eat the food of swine.—See study note on Lu 15:15.

15:18

against you: Or “in your sight.” The Greek preposition *e-no'pi-on*, literally meaning “before; in the sight of,” is used in a similar way at 1Sa 20:1 in the *Septuagint*. In that verse, David asks Jonathan: “How have I sinned *against* your father?”

15:19

hired men: When he returned home, the younger son planned to ask his father to be accepted, not as a son, but as a hired man. Such a man was not part of the estate, as were the slaves, but was an outsider who was hired, often for just a day at a time.—Mt 20:1, 2, 8.

15:20

tenderly kissed him: Or “affectionately kissed him.” The Greek term rendered “tenderly kissed” has been understood to be an intensive form of the verb *phi-le'o*, sometimes rendered “to kiss” (Mt 26:48; Mr 14:44; Lu 22:47) but more often having the meaning “to have affection for” (Joh 5:20; 11:3; 16:27). By greeting him in such a warm, friendly manner, the father in the illustration shows his willingness to welcome back his repentant son.

15:21

called your son: Some manuscripts add: “Make me as one of your hired men,” but the current main text reading has support in various early, authoritative manuscripts. Some scholars consider that the extra expression was added to make the verse harmonize with Lu 15:19.

15:22

robe . . . ring . . . sandals: This robe was not merely a simple article of clothing but **the best one**—perhaps a richly embroidered vestment of the sort presented to an honored guest. The act of putting a ring on the hand of his son shows the favor and affection of the father as well as the dignity, honor, and status accorded this restored son. A ring and sandals were not usually seen on slaves. Thus, the father was making it clear that

his son was being welcomed back as a full-fledged member of the family.

15:30

squandered: Lit., “devoured.” The Greek word is here used to give a graphic description of how the younger son wasted his father’s **belongings**, or means of living.

LUKE Study Notes—Chapter 16

16:1

steward: The Greek word *oi-ko-no'mos* refers to a person placed over servants, though he himself is a servant. In ancient times, such a position was often filled by a faithful slave who was placed in charge of his master’s affairs. Therefore, it was a position of great trust. Abraham’s servant “who was managing all [Abraham] had” was such a steward, or household manager. (Ge 24:2) This was also true of Joseph, as described at Ge 39:4. The “steward” in Jesus’ illustration is referred to in the singular, but this does not necessarily mean that the steward represented only one particular person. The Scriptures contain examples of a singular noun referring to a collective group, such as when Jehovah addressed the collective group of the Israelite nation and told them: “You are my witnesses [plural], . . . yes, my servant [singular] whom I have chosen.” (Isa 43:10) Similarly, this illustration refers to a composite steward. In the parallel illustration at Mt 24:45, this steward is called “the faithful and discreet slave.”

16:6

measures: Or “bath measures.” The Greek word *ba'tos* is equated with the Hebrew bath measure by some scholars. Based on jar fragments bearing the designation “bath” in ancient Hebrew characters, the capacity of the bath measure is reckoned at approximately 22 L (5.81 gal).—See Glossary, “Bath,” and App. B14.

16:7

large measures: Or “cor measures.” The Greek word *ko'ros* is equated by some scholars with the Hebrew cor measure that contained ten bath measures. With the bath measure reckoned at 22 L (20 dry qt), the cor measure equals 220 L (200 dry qt).—See study note on Lu 16:6; Glossary, “Bath,” “Cor”; and App. B14.

16:8

acted with practical wisdom: Or “acted shrewdly (discreetly).” The Greek word *phro·ni'mos* is here rendered “with practical wisdom.” Forms of the related adjective are rendered **wiser in a practical way** later in this verse and “discreet” at Mt 7:24; 24:45; 25:2; and Lu 12:42.—See study notes on Mt 24:45; Lu 12:42.

this system of things: The Greek word *ai·on'*, having the basic meaning “age,” can refer to a state of affairs or to features that distinguish a certain period of time, epoch, or age. In this context, it refers to the present unrighteous system of things and a worldly way of life.—See Glossary, “System(s) of things.”

16:9

friends: That is, friends in heaven, Jehovah God and Jesus Christ, the only ones who can receive others into “everlasting dwelling places.”

the unrighteous riches: Lit., “the mammon of the unrighteousness.” The Greek word *ma·mo·nas'* (of Semitic origin), traditionally translated “mammon,” is generally understood to denote money or riches. (See study note on Mt 6:24.) Jesus evidently viewed this type of riches as unrighteous because they are under the control of sinful humans, they normally serve selfish ends, and they are often acquired by means of unrighteous actions. The possession of or desire for material riches can also lead to lawless acts. Literal riches can lose their value, so a person having such riches should not put his trust in them. (1Ti 6:9, 10, 17-19) Rather, he should use them to make friends with Jehovah and Jesus, who can receive a person into the everlasting dwelling places.

everlasting dwelling places: Lit., “everlasting tents.” Evidently referring to perfect dwelling places in the everlasting new world, whether this be in the heavenly Kingdom with Jesus Christ or on the Paradise earth under that Kingdom’s rule.

16:13

hate: That is, be less devoted to.—In the Bible, the term “hate” has several shades of meaning. It may denote a feeling of hostility that is motivated by malice, prompting someone to harm others. Or it may refer to an intense feeling of dislike for or strong aversion to someone or something, thus causing a person to avoid having anything to do with that person or thing. Or the term may simply mean to love to a lesser degree. For example, when Jacob is said to have “hated” Leah and loved Rachel, the meaning is that he loved Leah less than he loved Rachel (Ge 29:31, ftn.; De 21:15, ftn.), and the term is used in this sense in other ancient Jewish literature. Therefore, Jesus did not mean that his followers were to feel hostility or loathing toward their families and toward themselves, as this would contradict the rest

of the Scriptures. (Compare Mr 12:29-31; Eph 5:28, 29, 33.) In this context, the term “hate” could be rendered “love to a lesser degree.”

be slaves: The Greek verb refers to working as a slave, that is, someone owned by only one master. Jesus was here stating that a Christian cannot give God the exclusive devotion that He deserves and at the same time be devoted to gathering material possessions.

Riches: The Greek word *ma·mo·nas'* (of Semitic origin), traditionally translated “Mammon,” can also be rendered “Money.” “Riches” is here personified as a master, or a kind of false god, though there is no conclusive proof that the word was ever used as the name of a specific deity.

16:16

The Law and the Prophets: “The Law” refers to the Bible books of Genesis through Deuteronomy. “The Prophets” refers to the prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, when these terms are mentioned together, the expression could be understood to include the entire Hebrew Scriptures.—Mt 5:17; 7:12; 22:40; see study note on Mt 11:13.

pressing forward: The Greek word used here conveys the basic idea of forceful action or endeavor. Some Bible translators have understood this in a negative sense (that of acting with or suffering violence), but the context, **the Kingdom of God is being declared as good news**, makes it reasonable to understand the term in the positive sense of “going after something with enthusiasm; seeking fervently.” These words evidently describe the forceful actions or endeavors of those who responded to the preaching of the good news about God’s Kingdom, which put them in line to become prospective members of that Kingdom.

16:17

one stroke of a letter: In the Hebrew alphabet current in Jesus' day, certain characters featured a tiny stroke that differentiated one letter from another. Jesus' hyperbole thus emphasized that God's Word would be fulfilled down to the smallest detail.—See study note on Mt 5:18.

16:18

commits adultery: The Greek verb *moi-kheu'o* refers to committing marital sexual unfaithfulness. In the Bible, adultery refers to voluntary acts of “sexual immorality” between a married person and someone who is not his or her mate. (Compare the study note on Mt 5:32, where the term “sexual immorality,” rendered from the Greek *por-nei'a*, is discussed.) During the time when the Mosaic Law was valid, having sexual relations with another man's wife or fiancée was considered to be adultery.—See study notes on Mt 5:27; Mr 10:11.

a woman divorced: That is, a woman divorced except on account of sexual immorality.—See study note on Mt 5:32.

16:20

a beggar: Or “a poor man.” The Greek word can refer to one who is very poor, or destitute. The use of this word provides a stark contrast to the rich man in Jesus' illustration. It is used in a figurative sense at Mt 5:3 in the phrase rendered “*those conscious of their spiritual need*,” literally, “*those who are poor (needy; destitute; beggars) as to the spirit*,” conveying the idea of people who are painfully aware of their spiritual poverty and of their need for God.—See study note on Mt 5:3.

Lazarus: Probably the Greek form of the Hebrew name Eleazar, meaning “God Has Helped.”

16:21

dogs: According to the Mosaic Law, dogs were unclean. (Le 11:27) The dogs that licked the beggar's sores were apparently scavengers that roamed the streets. In the Hebrew Scriptures, the term "dog" is often used in a derogatory sense. (De 23:18, ftn; 1Sa 17:43; 24:14; 2Sa 9:8; 2Ki 8:13; Pr 26:11) At Mt 7:6, the expression "dogs" is figuratively used of people who do not value spiritual treasures. Because dogs were unclean animals to the Jews and thus have an unfavorable figurative sense in the Bible, the mention of "dogs" in this illustration clearly indicates the low state of the beggar named Lazarus.—See study notes on Mt 7:6; 15:26.

16:22

to Abraham's side: Lit., "to the bosom of Abraham." The bosom position was one of special favor and close fellowship. (See study note on Joh 1:18.) This figure of speech is drawn from the practice of reclining on couches at meals in such a way that one would lean back on the bosom, or chest, of a special friend.—Joh 13:23-25.

16:23

the Grave: Or "Hades," that is, the common grave of mankind.—See Glossary, "Grave."

by his side: Lit., "in his bosom."—See study note on Lu 16:22. (above)

16:29

They have Moses and the Prophets: That is, the writings of Moses and the prophets, which were read every Sabbath in the synagogues (Ac 15:21) and should have led them to accept Jesus as God's Messiah and King.



Prominent Places at Evening Meals

In the first century, a common way of dining was to recline at the table. Each person would rest his left elbow on a cushion and eat using his right hand. According to the Greco-Roman custom, a typical dining room had three couches set around a low dining table. The Romans called this kind of dining room a *triclinium* (Latin from a Greek word meaning “room with three couches”). Although this arrangement traditionally accommodated nine people, three to a couch, it became common to use longer couches to accommodate even more people. Each position in the dining room was traditionally viewed as having a different degree of honor. One couch was the lowest place of honor (A), one was the middle (B), and one was the highest (C). The positions on the couch differed in importance. The person dining was considered to be above the one to his right and below the one to his left. At a formal banquet, the host typically sat at the first position (1) on the lowest couch. The place of honor was the third position (2) on the middle couch. Although it is not clear to what extent the Jews adopted this custom, it appears that Jesus alluded to it when teaching his followers the need for humility.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 23:6; Mr 12:39; Lu 14:7-9; Lu 20:46



Salt on the Shore of the Dead Sea

Today, the water in the Dead Sea (Salt Sea) is about nine times as salty as the water in the world's oceans. (Ge 14:3) Evaporation of the Dead Sea waters produced an ample supply of salt for the Israelites, although this salt was of poor quality because it was contaminated with other minerals. The Israelites may also have acquired salt from the Phoenicians, who, it is said, obtained it from the Mediterranean by means of evaporation. The Bible mentions salt as a seasoning for food. (Job 6:6) Jesus was a master at using illustrations based on things related to the everyday lives of the people, so he used salt to illustrate important spiritual lessons. For example, in the Sermon on the Mount, he told his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth," having a preserving influence on others, preventing spiritual corruption and moral decay.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 5:13; Mr 9:50; Lu 14:34, 35



The Shepherd and His Sheep

A shepherd's life could be difficult. He was exposed to heat and cold as well as to sleepless nights. (Ge 31:40; Lu 2:8) He protected the flock from predators, such as lions, wolves, and bears, and safeguarded them from thieves. (Ge 31:39; 1Sa 17:34-36; Isa 31:4; Am 3:12; Joh 10:10-12) The shepherd kept the flock from scattering (1Ki 22:17), looked for lost sheep (Lu 15:4), carried feeble or weary lambs in his bosom (Isa 40:11) or on his shoulders, and cared for the sick and injured (Eze 34:3, 4; Zec 11:16). The Bible often speaks of shepherds and their work in a figurative way. For example, Jehovah is likened to a Shepherd who lovingly cares for his sheep, that is, his people. (Ps 23:1-6; 80:1; Jer 31:10; Eze 34:11-16; 1Pe 2:25) Jesus is called "the great shepherd" (Heb 13:20) and "the chief shepherd," under whose direction the overseers in the Christian congregation shepherd the flock of God willingly, unselfishly, and eagerly.—1 Pe 5:2-4.

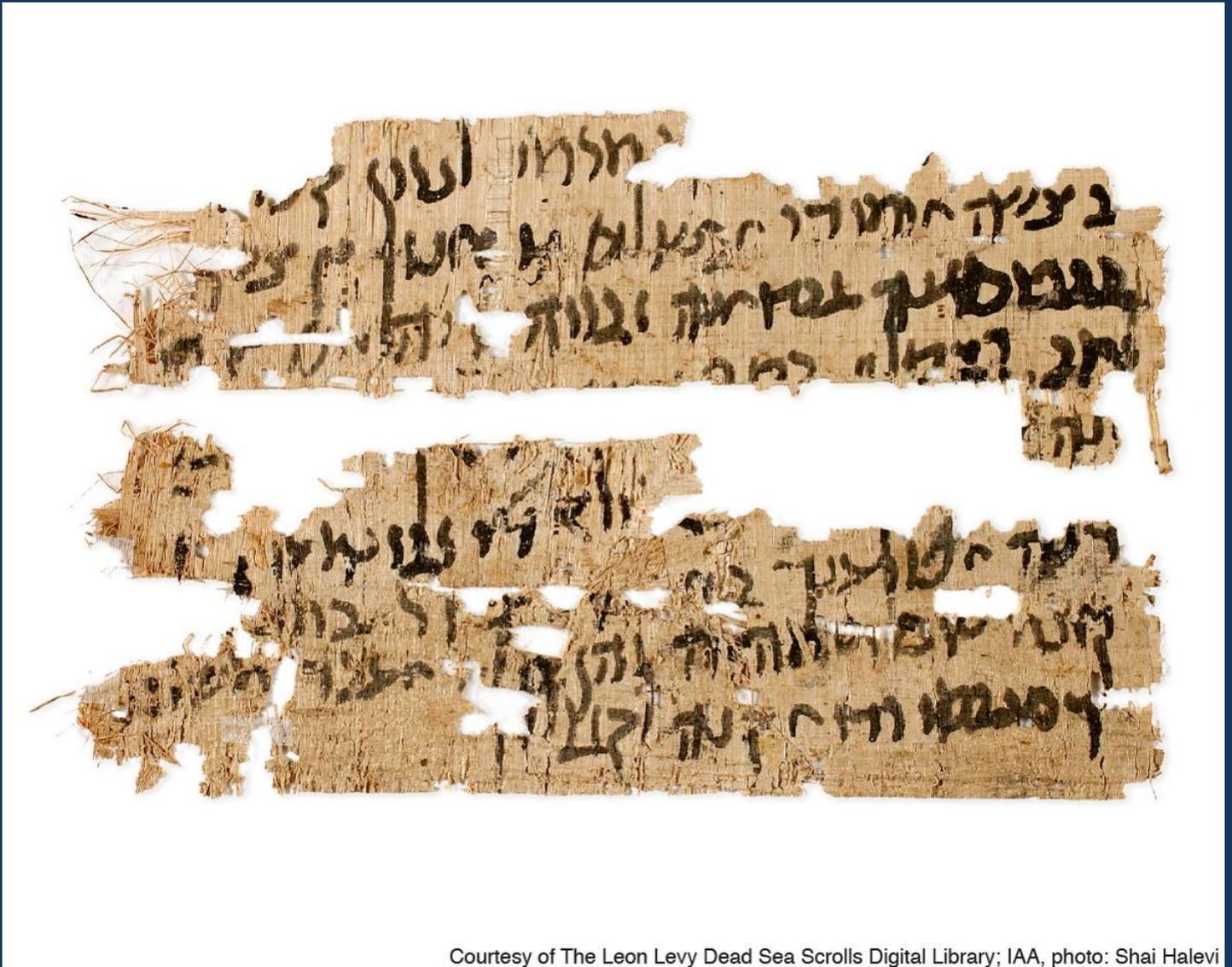
Related Scripture(s) Mt 18:12, 13; Lu 15:4, 5



Carob Pods

Carob pods grow on the carob tree (*Ceratonia siliqua*), an attractive evergreen that is found throughout Israel as well as in the rest of the Mediterranean area. The tree reaches a height of up to 9 m (30 ft). The fruit, or pods, measure from 15 to 25 cm (6 to 10 in.) in length and about 2.5 cm (1 in.) in width. As they mature, the green pods turn a purplish-brown color and look like shiny leather. Inside are several pealike seeds separated from one another by a sweet, sticky, edible pulp. Carob pods are widely used till this day as food for horses, cattle, and pigs.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 15:16



Courtesy of The Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library; IAA, photo: Shai Halevi

Written Agreement Acknowledging a Debt

In his parable of the unrighteous steward, Jesus referred to the practice of recording business transactions in a written agreement. (Lu 16:6, 7) The papyrus document shown here is written in Aramaic and is dated to about 55 C.E. It was found in a cave located in Wadi Murabbaat, a dry riverbed in the Judean Desert. The document describes the debt and the terms of repayment agreed to by Absalom son of Hanin and Zechariah son of Jehohanan. This type of document may have come to mind when people heard Jesus' illustration.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 16:6, 7



Courtesy of SDC Colour Experience (www.sdc.org.uk)

Purple Dyes

Purple dye was obtained from shellfish or mollusks such as the *Murex trunculus* (left) and the *Murex brandaris* (right) shown here. The shells measure from 5 to 8 cm (2 to 3 in.) in length. In the neck of the flesh of these creatures is a small gland containing only a single drop of fluid, called the flower. This fluid initially has the appearance and consistency of cream, but on exposure to air and light, it gradually changes to a deep violet or reddish-purple color. These shellfish are found along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, and the shades of color acquired from them vary according to their location. The larger specimens were broken open individually, and the precious fluid was carefully removed, whereas the smaller ones were crushed in mortars. The amount of fluid acquired from each shellfish was small, so accumulating a large amount was a costly process. Hence, this dye was expensive, and garments dyed purple became the mark of wealthy people or those in high station.—Es 8:15.

Related Scripture(s) Lu 16:19

- Song 125 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The Parable of the Lost Son”:** (10 min.)
 Lu 15:11-16—A wayward son squandered his inheritance on a debauched life (nwtsty study notes)
 Lu 15:17-24—He repented and was welcomed back by his loving father (nwtsty study notes)
 Lu 15:25-32—The older son’s thinking was corrected
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Lu 14:26—What does the word “hate” mean in this context? (nwtsty study note)

Lu 16:10-13—What was Jesus’ point regarding “unrighteous riches”? (w17.07 8-9 ¶7-8)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 14:1-14

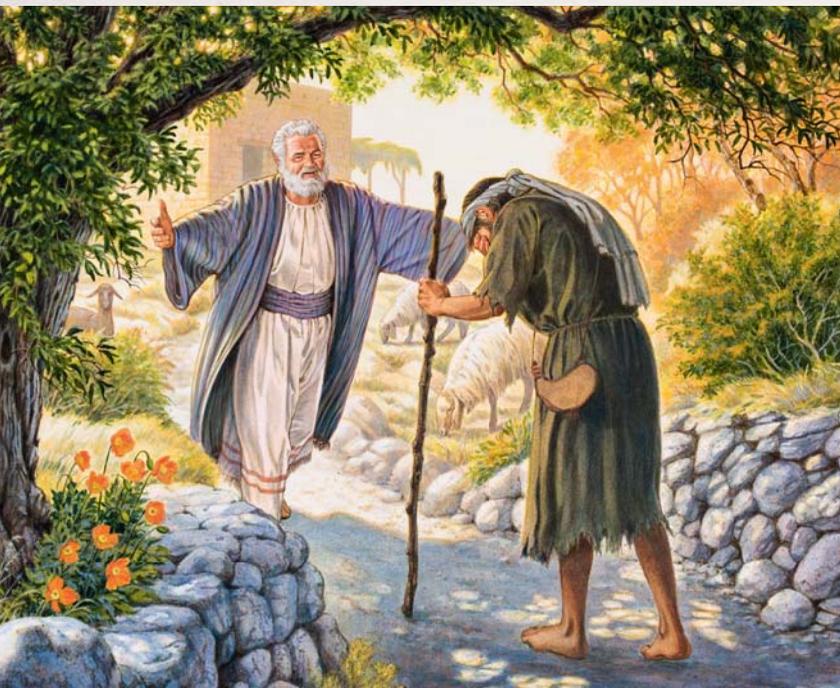
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *Jvs 37-38 ¶14-15*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 107
- **“The Prodigal Returns”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Begin by playing *The Prodigal Returns—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy chap. 31*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 139 and Prayer

LUKE 14-16 | The Parable of the Lost Son



15:11-32

Some lessons that we learn from the parable.

- It is wise to remain in the security of God’s people, under the care of our loving heavenly Father
- If we deviate from God’s way, we should humbly return, confident of Jehovah’s willingness to forgive us
- We should imitate Jehovah by warmly welcoming those who repent and return to the congregation

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 minutes or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 minutes or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 minutes or less) /vs 37-38 paragraphs 14-15

¹⁴ We must protect our relationship with Jehovah. It is the most precious thing we have. So we avoid being close friends with anyone who could weaken our faith and damage that relationship. Just as we cannot soak a sponge in vinegar and expect it to become filled with water, we cannot have friends who do wrong things and expect that it will be easy for us to do right things. We need to choose our close friends carefully.—1 Corinthians 5:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 7, 14.

¹⁵ In the congregation, you can find people who truly love Jehovah. They can become your close friends. (Psalm 133:1) Don't look for friends only among people of your own age or background. Remember that Jonathan was much older than David, and Ruth was much younger than Naomi. We want to follow the Bible's advice: "Open your hearts wide." (2 Corinthians 6:13; read 1 Peter 2:17.) And the more you imitate Jehovah, the more others will want to be your friend.

107 *The Divine Pattern of Love*

(1 John 4:19)

1. The pattern of love, we learn from Jehovah
Shows the way, guides our way.
In all he has done, his dealings have shown us
How to display his loving way.
He gave us his Son, his dearest possession
To cover our sin, forgiving transgression.
What proof of his love—its greatest expression!
His way is love, Yes, God’s way is love.
2. When we walk his way, our love for each other
Will be true, warm and true,
Will move us to care for all of our brothers,
Old ones and new, not just a few.
True love for our God and love for our brother,
We can’t have the one and not have the other.
The faults of our friends, we readily cover,
Proving our love, Our brotherly love.
3. The pattern of love, the bond that unites us
Lets us be family.
Our Father above now warmly invites us:
“Come taste and see real unity.”
Come share in the love and joy that define us;
God’s spirit and Word, he gives to refine us.
Our brothers and friends are here to remind us,
God’s way is love. Jehovah is love.

(See also Rom. 12:10; Eph. 4:3; 2 Pet. 1:7.)

- Song 125 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Lu 14:1-14

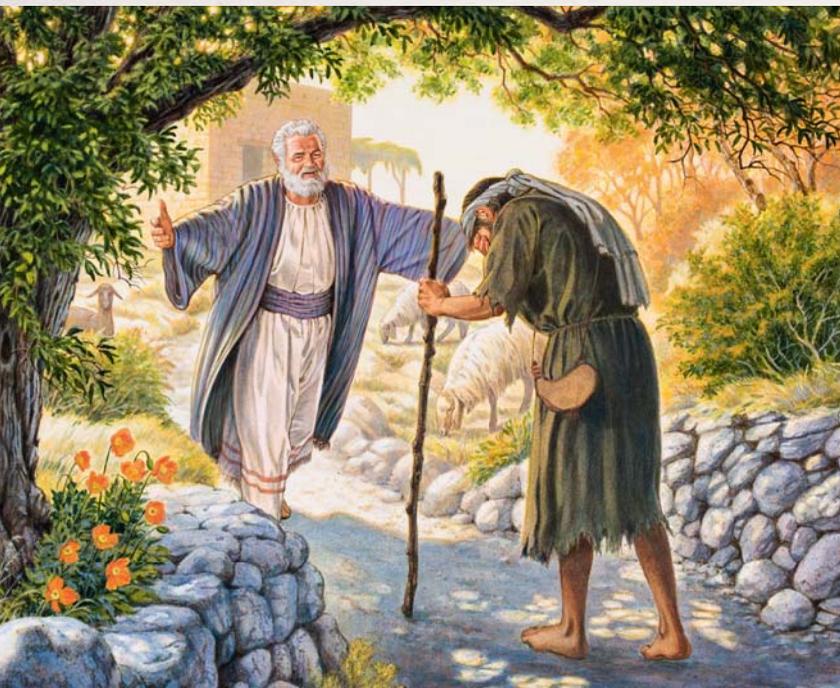
APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
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LUKE 14-16 | The Parable of the Lost Son



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- If we deviate from God’s way, we should humbly return, confident of Jehovah’s willingness to forgive us
- We should imitate Jehovah by warmly welcoming those who repent and return to the congregation

The Prodigal Returns

WATCH THE VIDEO *THE PRODIGAL RETURNS* (VIDEO CATEGORY MOVIES), AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



What indicated that David was drifting away spiritually, and how did his family and the elders try to help him?

How were Brother and Sister Barker good examples as parents?

What lessons did the video teach about . . .



- devoting our life to our secular work?
-
-



- bad associations?
-
-



- listening to counsel?
-
-



- repentance and forgiveness?
-
-

The Prodigal Returns - Excerpt

[Music]

[David leaves his co-workers apartment late at night- it is raining]

[David in the alleyway outside his co-worker's apartment]

[David cries]

David: Jehovah. I'm so sorry.

[Music]

David: Can you ever forgive me?

[Music]

[David in Bed having fallen asleep reading the Bible]

[At the Kingdom Hall - brother giving a talk with David in the audience]

Brother: What Manasseh did was shocking. But was he a lost cause? Was he beyond hope? Let's read Second Chronicles Chapter 33 verse 12: "And as soon as he caused him distress, he softened the face of Jehovah his God...". Jehovah forgave Manasseh. What can we learn from that? When a person sins, even seriously, and shows true repentance by abandoning his wrong course, and making every effort to do what is right, he's not a lost cause. He's not beyond hope. Our loving God Jehovah will forgive him in a large way.

[Bro. Barker in the loungeroom watching TV weather report – Sis. Barker closes the blinds]

Bro. Barker: Well looks like we're gonna be working indoors one more day. Better get to bed.

Sis. Barker: Well don't forget, honey, trash pickup is tomorrow.

The Prodigal Returns - Excerpt

Bro. Barker: That's right.

[Bro. Barker puts on his raincoat and takes the trash outside-it is raining]

[A taxi approaches and Bro. Barker watches someone exit the taxi]

Bro. Barker: David?

[Music]

[Bro. Barker runs to David]

Bro. Barker: David!

[David lowers his head]

[Bro. Barker embraces David]

Bro. Barker: Welcome home son! I missed you so much!

[Music]

[David cries]

David: Dad, I'm so sorry! Can I please come home?

31

PLUCKING GRAIN ON THE SABBATH

MATTHEW 12:1-8 MARK 2:23-28 LUKE 6:1-5

- DISCIPLES PLUCK GRAIN ON THE SABBATH
 - JESUS IS “LORD OF THE SABBATH”
-

Jesus and his disciples now travel northward toward Galilee. It is springtime, and in the fields there is grain on the stalks. Being hungry, the disciples pluck some heads of grain and eat. But the day is a Sabbath, and the Pharisees observe what they are doing.

Recall that recently certain Jews in Jerusalem wanted to kill Jesus, accusing him of violating the Sabbath. Now the Pharisees bring an accusation based on the disciples' actions. “Look! Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.”—Matthew 12:2.

The Pharisees claim that picking grain and rubbing it in the hands to eat is harvesting and threshing. (Exodus 34:21) Their strict interpretation of



what constitutes work makes the Sabbath burdensome, whereas it was originally meant to be a joyous, spiritually upbuilding day. Jesus counters their wrong view with examples to show that Jehovah God never meant for His Sabbath law to be applied that way.

One example Jesus gives is that of David and his men. When they were hungry, they stopped at the tabernacle and ate the loaves of presentation. Those loaves, which had already been removed from before Jehovah and replaced by fresh ones, were ordinarily reserved for the priests to eat. Yet, under the circumstances, David and his men were not condemned for eating them.—Leviticus 24:5-9; 1 Samuel 21:1-6.

As a second example, Jesus says: “Have you not read in the Law that on the Sabbaths the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and continue guiltless?” What he means is that even on the Sabbath, the priests slaughter animals for sacrifice and do other work at the temple. “But I tell you,” Jesus says, “that something greater than the temple is here.”—Matthew 12:5, 6; Numbers 28:9.

Jesus again draws on the Scriptures to make his point: “If you had understood what this means, ‘I want mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless ones.” He concludes: “For the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.” Jesus is referring to his coming peaceful Kingdom rule of a thousand years.—Matthew 12:7, 8; Hosea 6:6.

Humankind has long been suffering laborious enslavement by Satan, with violence and war abounding. What a contrast it will be under the great Sabbath rule of Christ, who will provide the time of rest we long for and need!

- ◇ The Pharisees make what charge against Jesus’ disciples, and why?
- ◇ How does Jesus correct the Pharisees’ view?
- ◇ In what way is Jesus “Lord of the Sabbath”?

139 *See Yourself When All Is New* (Revelation 21:1-5)

1. Just see yourself, just see me too;
 Just see us all in a world that is new.
Think how you'll feel, how it will be,
 To live in peace, to be truly free.
No evil one will then prevail;
 Rule by our God cannot ever fail.
The time will have come for a new earthly start,
 The song of our praises
 will pour out from our heart:

(CHORUS)

*"We thank you, our God, for all you have done.
All things are new by the rule of your Son.
The fullness of our heart overflows in our song;
All glory and honor and praise to you belong."*

2. Now see yourself, and see me too;
 And look ahead to a world that is new.
No sight we see, no sound we hear
 Will cause alarm or give rise to fear.
All has come true, just as he said;
 Now over mankind, his tent is spread.
He now will awaken those sleeping in death;
 Their voices will join ours with
 ev'ry grateful breath:

(Chorus)

(See also Ps. 37:10, 11; Isa. 65:17; John 5:28; 2 Pet. 3:13.)

MAY 2018

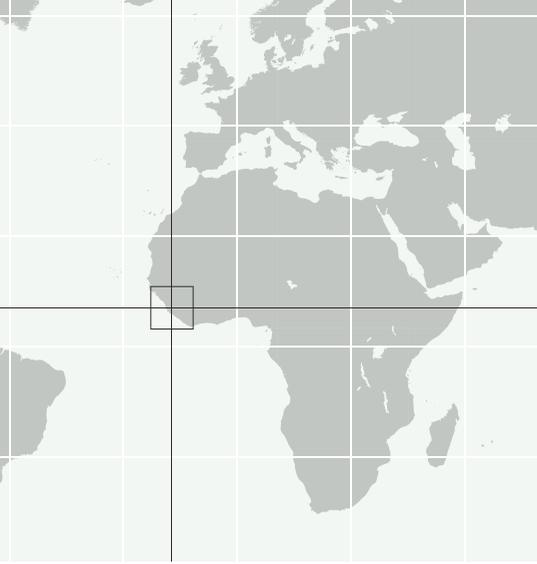
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 9–AUGUST 5, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

SIERRA LEONE

Two pioneers offer a tract to a passerby in the capital, Freetown, during the country's long rainy season

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Jehovah Loves Those Who
“Bear Fruit With Endurance”

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The first of these two articles considers Jesus' parables of the vine and of the sower and explains what they teach us about our preaching work. The second article examines several Scriptural reasons that motivate us to carry out the preaching work with endurance.

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

27 WEEK OF JULY 23-29

Know Your Enemy

39 WEEK OF JULY 30–AUGUST 5

Young Ones—Stand Firm Against the Devil

Satan is our enemy. What is the extent of his influence? What are the limits of his power? And how can all of us, including young Christians, resist him? These two articles will answer those questions and will help us strengthen our resolve to stand firm against the Devil.

50 LIFE STORY

A Poor Start—A Rich Ending

79 *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

1. What a joy to teach Jehovah's sheep
And to see how they have grown.
We have seen how he has guided them
As they've made the truth their own.

(CHORUS)

*Jehovah, may you hear our prayer
And keep them in your watchful care.
In Jesus' name, for them we plead: May they succeed;
May ev'ry one of them stand firm.*

2. Ev'ry day we said a prayer for them,
As their faith was under test.
We made time to teach and care for them;
They've grown strong, and they've been blessed.

(Chorus)

3. May they all maintain their confidence,
Trust in God and in his Son.
Through endurance and obedience,
May their race for life be won.

(Chorus)



Young Ones Stand Firm Against the Devil

“Put on the complete suit of armor from God so that you may be able to stand firm against the crafty acts of the Devil.”—EPH. 6:11.

THE apostle Paul likened our life as Christians to that of soldiers engaged in hand-to-hand combat. Of course, the war we fight is spiritual, not literal. Even so, our

1, 2. (a) Why are young Christians winning the fight against wicked spirit forces? (See opening picture.) (b) What will we examine?

SONGS:
79, 140

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

What are the pieces of the spiritual armor?

Why is it vital that we wear each piece?

What do you think of the example that our young ones set?

enemies are real. Satan and the demons are skilled warriors with vast experience. At first glance, our prospects may seem bleak. Young Christians in particular may appear to be vulnerable. How can they hope to win against superhuman, wicked spirit forces? The fact is, young ones can win, and they are winning! Why? Because they “go on acquiring power in the Lord.” But they do more than draw on God’s power. They are dressed for battle. Like well-trained soldiers, they have “put on the complete suit of armor from God.”—Read Ephesians 6:10-12.

² When developing his illustration, Paul perhaps had in mind the armor worn by Roman legionnaires. (Acts 28:16) Let us examine why that illustration is appropriate. As we do, take note of what some young ones have to say about the challenges and the benefits of wearing each piece of spiritual armor.

“THE BELT OF TRUTH”

³ Read Ephesians 6:14. A Roman military belt had metal plates that protected a soldier’s waist. It was designed to help relieve the weight of his upper-body armor. Some belts also had strong clips that served to carry a sword and a dagger. With his belt fastened tightly, a soldier could confidently stand firm in battle.

3, 4. How is the truth found in the Bible like a Roman military belt?

⁴ Similarly, the truths we learn from God’s Word protect us from the spiritual harm that false teachings cause. (John 8:31, 32; 1 John 4:1) And the more we love divine truths, the easier it is to carry our “breastplate,” that is, to live by God’s righteous standards. (Ps. 111:7, 8; 1 John 5:3) In addition, when we have a clear understanding of the truths from God’s Word, we can confidently stand our ground and defend them against opposers.—1 Pet. 3:15.

⁵ When Bible truth is wrapped around us tightly, as it were, we will be moved to live in harmony with it and to speak the truth at all times. Why will we avoid telling lies? Because lies have been one of Satan’s most effective weapons. Lies damage both the one telling them and the one believing them. (John 8:44) So to the best of our imperfect ability, we avoid telling lies. (Eph. 4:25) But it can be a challenge. Eighteen-year-old Abigail says: “Speaking the truth may not always seem worth it, especially when telling a lie can get you out of a difficult situation.” Why, then, does she always try to tell the truth? “When I’m truthful,” she says, “I have a clean conscience before Jehovah. And my parents and my friends know that they can trust me.” Victoria, 23, says: “When you tell the truth and stand up for your beliefs, you might get

5. Why should we speak the truth?

bullied. But you always get outstanding benefits: You gain confidence, you feel closer to Jehovah, and you earn the respect of those who love you.” Certainly, it is worth keeping “the belt of truth fastened around your waist” at all times.

“THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS”

⁶ One type of breastplate worn by a Roman soldier in the first century consisted of overlapping horizontal strips of iron. These strips were bent to fit his torso and were fastened to straps of leather by means of metal hooks and buckles. The rest of the soldier’s upper body was covered in more strips of iron fastened to leather. This type of garment restricted a soldier’s movement to some degree, and it required that he regularly check that the plates were firmly fixed in place. But his armor hindered the edge of a sword or the point of an arrow from piercing his heart or other vital organs.

⁷ What an appropriate symbol of how Jehovah’s righteous standards can protect our figurative heart! (Prov. 4:23) Just as a soldier would not swap a breastplate of iron for one made of an inferior metal, we would never want to exchange Jehovah’s standards of what is right for our own. Our judgment is

6, 7. Why is righteousness likened to a breastplate?

IS YOUR SUIT OF ARMOR COMPLETE?



The breastplate of righteousness
(See paragraphs 6-8)



The helmet of salvation
(See paragraphs 15-18)



The sword of the spirit
(See paragraphs 19-20)



The belt of truth
(See paragraphs 3-5)



Feet shod in readiness
(See paragraphs 9-11)



The large shield of faith
(See paragraphs 12-14)



just too flawed to offer us the protection that we need. (Prov. 3:5, 6) Instead, we regularly check that the ‘iron plates’ Jehovah has given us are firmly fixed over our heart.

⁸ Do you sometimes feel that Jehovah’s righteous standards weigh you down or restrict your freedom?

8. Why is it worth sticking to Jehovah’s standards?

Daniel, aged 21, says: “Teachers and fellow students made fun of me because I live by Bible standards. For a while, I lost my confidence and felt depressed.” How did he recover? “Eventually,” he says, “I saw the benefits of living by Jehovah’s standards. Some of my ‘friends’ began taking drugs; others dropped out of school. It was sad to see how their lives turned out. Jehovah really protects us.” Madison, 15, says: “It’s a struggle for me to stick to Jehovah’s standards and not go along with what my peers think is cool or fun.” How does she cope? “I remind myself that I bear Jehovah’s name and that temptation is just Satan’s way of shooting at me. When I win a struggle, I feel better about myself.”

“FEET SHOD IN READINESS TO DECLARE THE GOOD NEWS OF PEACE”

9 Read Ephesians 6:15. A Roman soldier who was not wearing his boots was not ready to march into battle. His sandallike boots were made of three layers of leather fastened together that gave him an excellent foothold. The design made the footwear both durable and comfortable.

9-11. (a) What symbolic footwear do Christians put on? (b) What can help us be more comfortable when declaring the good news?

¹⁰ While the literal boots worn by Roman soldiers carried them into war, the symbolic footwear worn by Christians helps them deliver a message of peace. (Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15) Even so, it takes courage to speak up when the opportunity arises. “I was afraid to witness to my classmates,” says 20-year-old Bo. “I think I was embarrassed. Looking back, I don’t know why I should have been. Now I’m happy to witness to my peers.”

¹¹ Many young ones have found that if they are well-prepared to declare the good news, they feel more comfortable doing it. What can you do to be ready? “I keep literature in my schoolbag,” says Julia, 16, “and I listen to the opinions and beliefs expressed by my classmates. Then I’m able to think of what will help them. When I am prepared, I can talk to them about what will specifically benefit them.” Makenzie, 23, says: “If you are kind and are a good listener, you’ll get an idea of what your peers are dealing with. I make sure that I’ve read all the material published for young people. That way I can direct my peers to something in the Bible or on jw.org that will help them.” As those comments indicate, the more prepared you are to preach, the more securely your “boots” will be bound to your feet.

“THE LARGE SHIELD OF FAITH”

12 Read **Ephesians 6:16**. “The large shield” carried by a Roman legionnaire was rectangular and covered him from his shoulders to his knees. It served to protect him from the blows of weapons and the hails of arrows.

13 Some of the “burning arrows” that Satan might fire at you are lies about Jehovah—that He does not care about you and that you are unlovable. Nineteen-year-old Ida struggles with feelings of unworthiness. She says, “I have often felt that Jehovah isn’t close to me and that he doesn’t want to be my Friend.” How does she deal with this attack? “The meetings are a giant boost to my faith,” says Ida. “I used to sit there and never comment, thinking that nobody would want to hear what I had to say. Now, though, I prepare for the meetings and try to answer two or three times. It’s difficult, but I feel much better when I do. And the brothers and sisters are so encouraging. I always come away from the meetings knowing that Jehovah loves me.”

14 Ida’s experience highlights an important truth: The literal shield given to a soldier had fixed dimensions, but the size of our shield of faith can either

12, 13. What are some of Satan’s “burning arrows”?

14. What truth does Ida’s experience highlight?

shrink or grow. It is up to us. (Matt. 14:31; 2 Thess. 1:3) How important it is that we build up our faith!

“THE HELMET OF SALVATION”

15 Read Ephesians 6:17. The helmet worn by the Roman infantry was designed to ward off blows directed at the head, neck, and face. Some helmets had a handle so that a soldier could carry it in his hand.

16 Just as a helmet protects a soldier’s brain, our “hope of salvation” protects our mind, our thinking ability. (1 Thess. 5:8; Prov. 3:21) Hope keeps us focused on God’s promises and helps us see problems in the right perspective. (Ps. 27:1, 14; Acts 24:15) But if we want our “helmet” to be effective, we must wear it on our head, not carry it in our hand.

17 How could Satan induce us to remove our helmet? Consider the way he dealt with Jesus. Satan surely knew that Jesus had the hope of eventually ruling mankind. But Jesus would have to wait until Jehovah’s appointed time. And before then, he would have to suffer and die. So Satan offered Jesus the chance to fulfill his hope sooner. Satan suggested

15, 16. How is hope like a helmet?

17, 18. (a) How could Satan induce us to remove our helmet?
(b) How can we show that we have not been fooled by Satan’s deception?

that if Jesus would do one act of worship, he could have it all and have it right then. (Luke 4:5-7) Similarly, Satan knows that Jehovah offers us material benefits in the new system. But we have to wait, and we might have to suffer hardships in the meantime. So Satan offers us tempting opportunities to enjoy such a life now. He wants us to seek material benefits first—to have it all and have it now. Satan urges us to seek the Kingdom second.—Matt. 6:31-33.

¹⁸ Like many young Christians, 20-year-old Kiana has not been fooled by this deception. “I know that the only hope for solving all our problems is God’s Kingdom,” she says. How does this solid hope affect her thinking and actions now? “The hope of Paradise helps me put secular goals in perspective,” she adds. “I don’t try to cash in on my talents or attempt to climb the corporate ladder. Instead, I’m investing time and energy in spiritual goals.”

“THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT,” GOD’S WORD

¹⁹ The sword used by Roman infantrymen at the time Paul wrote his letter was about 20 inches (50 cm) long and was designed for hand-to-hand combat. One reason that Roman soldiers were so effective is that they practiced with their weapons every day.

19, 20. How can we improve our skills in using God’s Word?

²⁰ Paul likens God’s Word to a sword that Jehovah has given us. But we must learn to use it skillfully when defending our beliefs—or when adjusting our own thinking. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 2 Tim. 2:15) How can you improve your skills? Sebastian, aged 21, says: “I’ve been writing down one verse from every chapter in my Bible reading. I’m compiling a list of my favorite verses. That way, I feel more in tune with Jehovah’s thinking.” Daniel, quoted earlier, says: “As I do my Bible reading, I pick verses that I think will help people I meet in the ministry. I’ve found that people respond well when they see that you are passionate about the Bible and are doing your best to help them.”

²¹ As the young ones quoted in this article have shown, there is no need to feel intimidated by Satan and the demons. They are formidable but not unbeatable. And they are mortal. Soon, during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, they will be confined to a state of complete inactivity, after which they will be destroyed. (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10) We know our enemy, his tactics, and his intentions. With Jehovah’s help, we can stand firm against him!

21. Why is there no need to feel intimidated by Satan and the demons?

140 *Life Without End—At Last!*

(John 3:16)

1. Can you see with your mind's eye,
Peoples dwelling together?
Sorrow has passed. Peace at last!
Life without tears or pain.

(CHORUS)

*Sing out with joy of heart!
You too can have a part.
Live for the day when you'll say,
"Life without end, at last!"*

2. In those days all will be young,
All at peace with Jehovah.
Troubles are gone, from now on,
No need to weep or fear.

(Chorus)

3. Paradise all will enjoy
As we sing of God's glory.
Long as we live, we will give
Honor and praise to God.

(Chorus)

