

- Song 54 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 18:36—The truth focuses on the Messianic Kingdom
 Joh 18:37—Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes (*nwtsty* study notes)
 Joh 18:38a—Pilate apparently scoffed at the existence of truth in general (*nwtsty* study note)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 19:30—What does it mean that Jesus “gave up his spirit”? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Joh 19:31—What evidence indicates that Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Joh 18:1-14

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then show the household-er jw.org.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture and linking question.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *fg* lesson 14 ¶¶6-7

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 46
- **“Love Identifies True Christians—Rejoice With the Truth”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Have Love Among Yourselves—Rejoice, Not Over Unrighteousness, But With the Truth*.” As time allows, consider the box “Bible Example for Meditation.”
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 41
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 32 and Prayer

JOHN 18-19 | Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth

18:36-38a

Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes

As Jesus’ disciples, we too bear witness to the truth

- **IN WORD:** He zealously preached the truth about God’s Kingdom
- **IN DEED:** His life course proved God’s prophetic word to be true

- **IN WORD:** We zealously preach the good news of God’s established Kingdom with Christ as King, even in the face of ridicule
- **IN DEED:** We show by our strict neutrality and godly conduct that we support Jesus’ kingship

ASK YOURSELF, ‘Is it obvious to those around me that my life is centered on bearing witness to the truth?’



“This Is the Way”

(Isaiah 30:20, 21)

1. There is a way of peace,
The way you've come to know.
It is the way you learned,
The way of long ago,
The way that Jesus taught you
When his voice you heard.
This is the way of peace,
Found in Jehovah's Word.

(CHORUS)

*This is the way to life; This is the way.
Don't look aside; Not for a moment stray!
God's voice is calling: 'This is the way;
Do not look back, for yes, this is the way.'*

2. There is a way of love,
No need to look around.
God's voice has shown the way
He lets himself be found.
His love is full and good;
His love is warm and true.
This is the way of love;
It touches all we do.

(Chorus)

3. There is a way of life,
 No need to look behind.
Our God has promised us:
 No better way we'll find,
No higher way to peace,
 No finer way to love.
This is the way to life,
 Thanks to our God above.

(Chorus)

may believe that you sent me. **22** I have given them the glory that you have given me, in order that they may be one just as we are one.^a **23** I in union with them and you in union with me, in order that they may be perfected into one,* so that the world may know that you sent me and that you loved them just as you loved me. **24** Father, I want those whom you have given me to be with me where I am,^b in order that they may look upon my glory that you have given me, because you loved me before the founding of the world.^c **25** Righteous Father, the world has, indeed, not come to know you,^d but I know you,^e and these have come to know that you sent me. **26** I have made your name known to them and will make it known,^f so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them.”^g

18 After he said these things, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kid’ron Valley^{*h} to where there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.ⁱ **2** Now Judas, his betrayer, also knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. **3** So Judas brought the detachment of soldiers and officers of the chief priests and of the Pharisees and came there with torches and lamps and weapons.^j **4** Then Jesus, knowing all the things that were going to happen to him, stepped forward and said to them: “**Whom are you looking for?**” **5** They answered him: “Jesus the Naz·a·rene’.”^k He said to them: “**I am he.**” Now Judas, his betrayer, was also standing with them.^l

6 However, when Jesus said to them, “**I am he,**” they drew

17:23 *Or “be completely unified.”

18:1 *Or “the winter torrent of Kidron.”

back and fell to the ground.^a **7** So he asked them again: **“Whom are you looking for?”** They said: “Jesus the Naz-a-rene’.” **8** Jesus answered: **“I told you that I am he. So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”** **9** This was to fulfill what he had said: **“Of those whom you have given me, I have not lost a single one.”^b**

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.^c The name of the slave was Malchus. **11** Jesus, however, said to Peter: **“Put the sword into its sheath.^d Should I not drink the cup that the Father has given me?”^e**

12 Then the soldiers and the military commander and the officers of the Jews seized* Jesus and bound him. **13** They led him first to An’nas, for he was the father-in-law of Ca’ia·phas,^f who was high priest that year.^g **14** Ca’ia·phas was, in fact, the one who had advised the Jews that it was to their benefit for one man to die in behalf of the people.^h

15 Now Simon Peter, as well as another disciple, was following Jesus.ⁱ That disciple was known to the high priest, and he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest, **16** but Peter was standing outside at the door.* So the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper and brought Peter in. **17** The servant girl who was the doorkeeper then said to Peter: “You are not also one of this man’s disciples, are you?” He said: “I am not.”^j **18** Now the slaves and the officers were standing around a

18:12 *Or “arrested.” **18:16** *Or “entrance.”

JOHN 18:7-29

charcoal fire they had made, because it was cold and they were warming themselves. Peter also was standing with them and warming himself.

19 So the chief priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about his teaching. **20** Jesus answered him: "I have spoken to the world publicly. I always taught in a synagogue and in the temple,^a where all the Jews come together, and I said nothing in secret. **21** Why do you question me? Question those who have heard what I told them. See! These know what I said." **22** After he said these things, one of the officers who was standing by gave Jesus a slap in the face^b and said: "Is that the way you answer the chief priest?" **23** Jesus answered him: "If I said something wrong, bear witness* about the wrong; but if what I said was right, why do you hit me?" **24** Then An'nas sent him away bound to Ca'ia·phas the high priest.^c

25 Now Simon Peter was standing there warming himself. Then they said to him: "You are not also one of his disciples, are you?" He denied it and said: "I am not."^d **26** One of the slaves of the high priest, who was a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off,^e said: "I saw you in the garden with him, did I not?" **27** However, Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed.^f

28 Then they led Jesus from Ca'ia·phas to the governor's residence.^g It was now early in the morning. But they themselves did not enter into the governor's residence, so that they would not get defiled^h but could eat the Passover. **29** So Pilate came outside to them and said: "What

18:23 *Or "testify."

JOHN 18:30-19:12

accusation do you bring against this man?" **30** They answered him: "If this man were not a wrongdoer,* we would not have handed him over to you." **31** So Pilate said to them: "Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law."^a The Jews said to him: "It is not lawful for us to kill anyone."^b **32** This was to fulfill the word that Jesus had spoken to indicate what sort of death he was about to die.^c

33 So Pilate entered the governor's residence again and called Jesus and said to him: "Are you the King of the Jews?"^d **34** Jesus answered: "Are you asking this of your own originality, or did others tell you about me?" **35** Pilate replied: "I am not a Jew, am I? Your own nation and the chief priests handed you over to me. What did you do?" **36** Jesus answered:^e "My Kingdom is no part of this world.^f If my Kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be handed over to the Jews.^g But as it is, my Kingdom is not from this source." **37** So Pilate said to him: "Well, then, are you a king?" Jesus answered: "You yourself are saying that I am a king.^h For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.ⁱ Everyone who is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." **38** Pilate said to him: "What is truth?"

After saying this, he went out again to the Jews and said to them: "I find no fault in him.^j **39** Moreover, you have a custom that I should release a man to you at the Passover.^k So do you want me to release to you the King of the Jews?" **40** Again they shouted: "Not this man, but Bar·ab·bas!" Now Bar·ab·bas was a robber.^l

18:30 *Or "criminal."

19 Pilate then took Jesus and scourged him.^a **2** And the soldiers braided a crown of thorns and put it on his head and clothed him with a purple robe,^b **3** and they kept coming up to him and saying: "Greetings,* you King of the Jews!" They also kept slapping him in the face.^c **4** Pilate went outside again and said to them: "See! I bring him outside to you in order for you to know that I find no fault in him."^d **5** So Jesus came outside, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them: "Look! The man!" **6** However, when the chief priests and the officers saw him, they shouted: "To the stake with him! To the stake with him!"^e Pilate said to them: "Take him yourselves and execute him,[#] for I do not find any fault in him."^f **7** The Jews answered him: "We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die,^g because he made himself God's son."^h

8 When Pilate heard what they were saying, he became even more fearful, **9** and he entered the governor's residence again and said to Jesus: "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer.ⁱ **10** So Pilate said to him: "Are you refusing to speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and I have authority to execute you?"^{*} **11** Jesus answered him: "You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been granted to you from above. This is why the man who handed me over to you has greater sin."

12 For this reason Pilate kept trying to find a way to release him, but the Jews shouted: "If

19:3 *Or "Hail." **19:6** *Or "Execute him on the stake! Execute him on the stake!"

[#]Or "execute him on the stake." **19:10**

*Or "execute you on the stake?"

you release this man, you are not a friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself a king speaks against* Caesar.”^a **13** Then Pilate, after hearing these words, brought Jesus outside, and he sat down on a judgment seat in a place called the Stone Pavement, but in Hebrew, *Gab’ba·tha*. **14** Now it was the day of Preparation^b of the Passover; it was about the sixth hour.* And he said to the Jews: “See! Your king!” **15** However, they shouted: “Take him away! Take him away! To the stake with him!”* Pilate said to them: “Shall I execute your king?” The chief priests answered: “We have no king but Caesar.” **16** Then he handed him over to them to be executed on the stake.^c

So they took charge of Jesus. **17** Bearing the torture stake* for himself, he went out to the so-called Skull Place,^d which is called *Gol’go·tha* in Hebrew.^e **18** There they nailed him to the stake^f alongside two other men, one on each side, with Jesus in the middle.^g **19** Pilate also wrote a title and put it on the torture stake.* It was written: “Jesus the Naz·a·rene’ the King of the Jews.”^h **20** Many of the Jews read this title, because the place where Jesus was nailed to the stake was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, in Latin, and in Greek. **21** However, the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate: “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that he said, ‘I am King of the Jews.’” **22** Pilate answered: “What I have written, I have written.”

23 Now when the soldiers had nailed Jesus to the stake, they

19:12 *Or “opposes.” 19:14 *That is, about 12:00 noon. 19:15 *Or “Execute him on the stake!” 19:17, 19, 25, 29 *See Glossary.

JOHN 19:13-32

took his outer garments and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier, and they also took the inner garment. But the inner garment was without a seam, being woven from top to bottom. **24** So they said to one another: "Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots over it to decide whose it will be."^a This was to fulfill the scripture: "They divided my garments among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing."^b So the soldiers actually did these things.

25 By the torture stake* of Jesus, however, there were standing his mother^c and his mother's sister; Mary the wife of Clo'pas and Mary Mag'da-lene.^d **26** So when Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved^e standing nearby, he said to his mother: "**Woman, see! Your son!**" **27** Next he said to the disciple: "**See! Your mother!**" And from that hour on, the disciple took her into his own home.

28 After this, when Jesus knew that by now all things had been accomplished, in order to fulfill the scripture he said: "**I am thirsty.**"^f **29** A jar was sitting there full of sour wine. So they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop* stalk and held it up to his mouth.^g **30** When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said: "**It has been accomplished!**"^h and bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.^{*i}

31 Since it was the day of Preparation,^j so that the bodies would not remain on the torture stakes^k on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath day was a great one),^l the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. **32** So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man and those of the other man who was on a stake alongside

19:30 *Or "he expired."

JOHN 19:33-20:15

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

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

20 On the first day of the week, Mary Mag'da-lene came to the tomb[#] early,^l while it was still dark, and she saw that

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

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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 Joh 18:37—Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes (*nwtsty* study notes)
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Joh 19:31—What evidence indicates that Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

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- Song 32 and Prayer

JOHN 18-19 | Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth

18:36-38a

Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes

As Jesus’ disciples, we too bear witness to the truth

- **IN WORD:** He zealously preached the truth about God’s Kingdom
 - **IN DEED:** His life course proved God’s prophetic word to be true
-
- **IN WORD:** We zealously preach the good news of God’s established Kingdom with Christ as King, even in the face of ridicule
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ASK YOURSELF, ‘Is it obvious to those around me that my life is centered on bearing witness to the truth?’



October 29–November 4

Treasures From God's Word

John 18:36—The truth focuses on the Messianic Kingdom

John 18:36: Jesus answered: “My Kingdom is no part of this world. If my Kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my Kingdom is not from this source.”

John 18:37—Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God's purposes

John 18:37: So Pilate said to him: “Well, then, are you a king?” Jesus answered: “You yourself are saying that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of the truth listens to my voice.”

Study notes

bear witness to: As used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek words rendered “to bear witness” (*martyre'o*) and “witness” (*martyri'a; mar'tys*) are broad in meaning. Both terms are used in the basic sense of testifying to facts from firsthand or personal knowledge, but they may also include the idea of “declaring; confirming; speaking well of.” Not only did Jesus testify to and proclaim truths of which he was convinced but he also lived in such a way that he upheld the truth of his Father's prophetic word and promises. (2 Corinthians 1:20) God's purpose in connection with the Kingdom and its Messianic Ruler had been foretold in detail. Jesus' entire earthly life course, culminating in his sacrificial death, fulfilled all prophecies about him, including the shadows, or

patterns, contained in the Law covenant. (Colossians 2:16, 17; Hebrews 10:1) So by word and deed, it may be said that Jesus 'bore witness to the truth.'

the truth: Jesus was referring, not to truth in general, but to the truth regarding God's purposes. A key element of God's purpose is that Jesus, the "son of David," serves as High Priest and as Ruler of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 1:1) Jesus explained that a primary reason for his coming into the world of mankind, his life on earth, and his ministry was to declare the truth about that Kingdom. The angels declared a similar message prior to and at the time of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea, the city where David was born.—Luke 1:32, 33; 2:10-14.

John 18:38a—Pilate apparently scoffed at the existence of truth in general

John 18:38a: Pilate said to him: "What is truth?"

Study note

What is truth?: Pilate's question apparently refers to truth in general, not specifically to "the truth" that Jesus had just spoken about. (John 18:37) Had this been a sincere question, Jesus would no doubt have answered it. But Pilate likely asks the question rhetorically in skeptical or cynical disbelief, as if to say, "Truth? What is that? There is no such thing!" In fact, Pilate does not even wait for an answer but leaves and goes outside to the Jews.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

John 19:30—What does it mean that Jesus “gave up his spirit”?

John 19:30: When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said: “It has been accomplished!” and bowing his head, he gave up his spirit.

Study note

he gave up his spirit: Or “he expired; he stopped breathing.”

The term “spirit” (Greek, *pneu'ma*) may here be understood to refer to “breath” or “life force.” This is supported by the use of the Greek verb *ekpne'o* (lit., “to breathe out”) in the parallel accounts at Mark 15:37 and Luke 23:46 (where it is rendered “expired” or, as in the alternative rendering mentioned in the study notes on these verses, “breathed his last”). Some suggest that the use of the Greek term rendered “gave up” means that Jesus voluntarily stopped struggling to stay alive, since all things had **been accomplished**. He willingly “poured out his life even to death.”—Isaiah 53:12; John 10:11.

John 19:31—What evidence indicates that Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.?

John 19:31: Since it was the day of Preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the torture stakes on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath day was a great one), the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away

Study note

that Sabbath day was a great one: Nisan 15, the day after Passover, was always a sabbath, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. (Leviticus 23:5-7) When this special Sabbath coincided with the regular Sabbath (the seventh day of the Jewish

week, which runs from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday), it was “a great” Sabbath. Such a sabbath followed the day of Jesus’ death, which was on a Friday. In the period from 29 to 35 C.E., the only year in which Nisan 14 fell on a Friday was the year 33 C.E. So this evidence supports the conclusion that it must have been on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., that Jesus died.

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

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

Bible Reading: (4 minutes or less) John 18:1-14

JOHN

Study Notes—Chapter 18

18:1

the Kidron Valley: Or “the winter torrent of Kidron.” The Kidron Valley, mentioned only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures, separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. It runs from N to S along the eastern side of the city. The Kidron Valley was usually waterless, even in winter, except in the case of an especially heavy rain. The Greek word *khei'mar-ros*, here rendered “valley,” literally means “a winter torrent,” that is, a stream of water that flows abundantly because of the heavy rains during the winter season. This Greek word is used more than 80 times in the *Septuagint* to render the Hebrew word *na'chal*, the corresponding expression for “valley,” used when the Kidron Valley is mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. (2Sa 15:23; 1Ki 2:37) These Hebrew and Greek words for “valley” can both refer to a torrent or a stream. (De 10:7; Job 6:15; Isa 66:12; Eze 47:5) More frequently, however, these words refer to the valley cut by a winter torrent and through which a stream runs during the winter rains. (Nu 34:5; Jos 13:9; 17:9; 1Sa 17:40; 1Ki 15:13; 2Ch 33:14; Ne 2:15; Ca 6:11) Both words are often rendered “wadi.”—See Glossary, “Wadi.”

18:3

the detachment of soldiers: The Greek term *spei'ra* used here indicates that Roman soldiers are referred to. Of the four Gospel writers, John is the only one to mention that Roman soldiers were present when Jesus was arrested.—Joh 18:12.

18:10

struck the slave of the high priest: This incident is recorded by all four Gospel writers, and their accounts are complementary.

(Mt 26:51; Mr 14:47; Lu 22:50) Only Luke, “the beloved physician” (Col 4:14), mentions that Jesus “touched the ear and healed him.” (Lu 22:51) John is the only Gospel writer to mention that **Simon Peter** wielded the sword and that **Malchus** was **the name of the slave** whose ear was cut off. John was evidently the disciple “known to the high priest” as well as to his household (Joh 18:15, 16), so it is natural that his Gospel would mention the injured man by name. John’s familiarity with the high priest’s household is further shown at Joh 18:26, where John explains that the slave who accused Peter of being a disciple of Jesus was “a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off.”

18:11

drink the cup: In the Bible, “cup” is often used figuratively of God’s will, or “assigned portion,” for a person. To “drink the cup” here means to submit to God’s will. In Jesus’ case, “the cup” involved suffering and death under the false charge of blasphemy, as well as his resurrection to immortal life in heaven.—See study notes on Mt 20:22; 26:39.

18:12

military commander: The Greek term *khi-li'ar-khos* (chiliarch) literally means “ruler of a thousand,” that is, soldiers. It refers to a Roman military commander called a tribune. There were six tribunes in each Roman legion. The legion, however, was not divided into six different commands; rather, each tribune commanded the whole legion for one sixth of the time. Such a military commander had great authority, including the power to nominate and assign centurions. The Greek word could also refer to high-ranking military officers in general. A Roman military commander accompanied the soldiers who arrested Jesus.

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

18:13

They led him first to Annas: Only John states specifically that Jesus was led to Annas, who had been appointed high priest about 6 or 7 C.E. by Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria. Annas served until about 15 C.E. Even after he was deposed by the Romans and no longer held the official title of high priest, Annas seems to have continued to exercise great power and influence as high priest emeritus and the predominant voice of the Jewish hierarchy. Five of his sons held the office of high priest, and his son-in-law **Caiaphas** served as high priest from about 18 C.E. to about 36 C.E., which included **that year**, that is, 33 C.E., the memorable year in which Jesus was executed.— See study note on Lu 3:2.

18:15

another disciple: Apparently referring to the apostle John. This would fit John's characteristic style of not referring to himself by name in his Gospel. (See study notes on Joh 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7; 21:20.) Furthermore, John and Peter are linked in the postresurrection account at Joh 20:2-8. The Bible does not explain how John, a disciple from Galilee, might have become **known to the high priest**, but his familiarity with the household of the high priest enabled John to get past the doorkeeper into the courtyard and also to gain entrance for Peter.—Joh 18:16.

18:18

charcoal: A black, brittle, porous form of carbon, usually the residue of partially burned wood. In ancient times, charcoal was made by covering a pile of wood with earth and burning it slowly for several days with only enough air to burn off the gases. This left behind a relatively pure form of carbon. It was a time-consuming process requiring careful supervision, but charcoal was a favored fuel when intense, sustained heat without smoke

was desired. Charcoal in an open fire or in a brazier was used for warmth. (Isa 47:14; Jer 36:22) Its even heat and the absence of flames and smoke made it ideal for cooking.—Joh 21:9.

18:24

to Caiaphas the high priest: See App. B12 for the possible location of Caiaphas' house.

18:28

governor's residence: The Greek term *prai-to'ri-on* (derived from the Latin *praetorium*) designates the official residence of the Roman governors. In Jerusalem, the residence was probably the palace built by Herod the Great, situated in the NW corner of the upper city, that is, of the southern part of Jerusalem. (See App. B12 for the location.) Pilate stayed in Jerusalem only on certain occasions, such as festivals, since there was a potential for unrest. His usual residence was in Caesarea.

early in the morning: That is, the morning of Nisan 14, the day of Jesus' trial and death. The Passover began the evening before, and as shown in the other Gospel accounts, Jesus and the apostles had eaten the Passover meal the preceding night. (Mt 26:18-20; Mr 14:14-17; Lu 22:15) Therefore, in this verse, the reference to eating **the Passover** must refer to the meal on Nisan 15, the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread. In Jesus' time, the Passover (Nisan 14) and the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15-21) that followed were sometimes referred to collectively as "Passover."—Lu 22:1.

18:33

Are you the King of the Jews?: No king in the Roman Empire could rule without Caesar's consent. So Pilate apparently concentrated his interrogation on the issue of Jesus' kingship.

18:37

You yourself are saying that I am a king: With this reply, Jesus confirms that he is a king. (Mt 27:11; compare study notes on Mt 26:25, 64.) But Jesus' kingship differs from what Pilate imagines, since Jesus' Kingdom is "no part of this world" and thus no threat to Rome.—Joh 18:33-36.

bear witness to: As used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek words rendered "to bear witness" (*mar·ty·re'o*) and "witness" (*mar·ty·ri'a*; *mar'tys*) are broad in meaning. Both terms are used in the basic sense of testifying to facts from firsthand or personal knowledge, but they may also include the idea of "declaring; confirming; speaking well of." Not only did Jesus testify to and proclaim truths of which he was convinced but he also lived in such a way that he upheld the truth of his Father's prophetic word and promises. (2Co 1:20) God's purpose in connection with the Kingdom and its Messianic Ruler had been foretold in detail. Jesus' entire earthly life course, culminating in his sacrificial death, fulfilled all prophecies about him, including the shadows, or patterns, contained in the Law covenant. (Col 2:16, 17; Heb 10:1) So by word and deed, it may be said that Jesus 'bore witness to the truth.'

the truth: Jesus was referring, not to truth in general, but to the truth regarding God's purposes. A key element of God's purpose is that Jesus, the "son of David," serves as High Priest and as Ruler of God's Kingdom. (Mt 1:1) Jesus explained that a primary reason for his coming into the world of mankind, his life on earth, and his ministry was to declare the truth about that Kingdom. The angels declared a similar message prior to and at the time of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem of Judea, the city where David was born.—Lu 1:32, 33; 2:10-14.

18:38

What is truth?: Pilate's question apparently refers to truth in general, not specifically to "the truth" that Jesus had just spoken about. (Joh 18:37) Had this been a sincere question, Jesus would no doubt have answered it. But Pilate likely asks the question rhetorically in skeptical or cynical disbelief, as if to say, "Truth? What is that? There is no such thing!" In fact, Pilate does not even wait for an answer but leaves and goes outside to the Jews.

18:39

you have a custom that I should release a man: This custom to release a prisoner is also mentioned at Mt 27:15 and Mr 15:6. It was apparently of Jewish origin because Pilate said to the Jews: "*You* have a custom." Although there is no basis or precedent for this custom in the Hebrew Scriptures, it seems that by Jesus' day, the Jews had developed this tradition. The practice would not have seemed strange to the Romans, since there is evidence that they released prisoners to please the crowds.

JOHN

Study Notes—Chapter 19

19:1

scourged him: The punishment of scourging usually preceded execution on a stake. After giving in to the Jews' insistent cry for Jesus' execution and for the release of Barabbas, **Pilate then took Jesus** and "scourged him." (Mt 20:19; 27:26) The most terrible instrument for scourging was known as a flagellum. It consisted of a handle into which several cords or leather thongs

were fixed. These thongs were likely weighted with jagged pieces of bone or metal to make the blows more painful.

19:2

clothed him with a purple robe: This was done to mock Jesus and make fun of his kingship. Matthew's account (27:28) says that the soldiers draped Jesus "with a scarlet cloak," a garment worn by kings, magistrates, or military officers. Mark's and John's accounts (19:2) say that it was a purple garment, but in ancient times, "purple" was used to describe any color that had a mixture of red and blue. Also, angle, light reflection, and background could have influenced the observer's perception of the exact color. This variation in describing the color shows that the Gospel writers did not simply copy one another's accounts.

19:3

Greetings: Or "Hail." Lit., "Be rejoicing." They hailed him as they would have hailed Caesar, evidently to ridicule the claim that he was a king.

19:5

Look! The man!: Though battered and wounded, Jesus displayed a quiet dignity and calm that even Pilate acknowledged; his words seemed to mingle respect with pity. The *Vulgate* rendering of Pilate's words, *ecce homo*, has been the theme for many artists. Those who were familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures and who heard Pilate's words may have called to mind the prophetic description of the Messiah found at Zec 6:12: "Here is [or, "Look!"] the man whose name is Sprout."

19:7

We have a law: Seeing that their charges of political wrongdoing failed to produce results, the Jews exposed their real motive by bringing against Jesus the religious charge of blasphemy. This is

the same accusation they used hours earlier at the Sanhedrin, but it is a new charge for Pilate to consider.

19:11

from above: Or “from heaven.” The Greek word *a'no·then* is rendered “from above” here and at Jas 1:17; 3:15, 17. The same term is used at Joh 3:3, 7, where it can be rendered both “again (anew)” and “from above.”—See study note on Joh 3:3.

the man: Rather than Judas Iscariot or any specific individual, it seems likely that Jesus had in mind all those who shared in the sin of killing him. That included Judas, “the chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin,” and even “the crowds” that were persuaded to ask for the release of Barabbas.—Mt 26:59-65; 27:1, 2, 20-22; Joh 18:30, 35.

19:12

friend of Caesar: This title of honor was often bestowed on provincial governors in the Roman Empire. In this context, the Jewish leaders apparently used it in a general way, implying that Pilate was laying himself open to the charge of condoning high treason. The **Caesar** of that time was Tiberius, an emperor with a reputation for executing any whom he considered disloyal—even high-ranking officials. For example, Lucius Aelius Sejanus was the commander of the Praetorian Guard and was officially designated “a friend of Caesar.” He could be considered second in command after Tiberius. Pilate was a favored acquaintance of the highly influential Sejanus. As long as he was in power, Sejanus protected and supported Pilate. In 31 C.E., however, Tiberius turned against Sejanus, accusing him of sedition and ordering that he and many of his supporters be executed. This event occurred shortly before Jesus appeared in front of Pilate. Therefore, Pilate’s life could have been threatened if the Sadducees complained to the emperor, especially since their

charge would be that Pilate was “not a friend of Caesar.” Pilate had already irritated the Jews, so he did not want to risk any further friction, much less an accusation of disloyalty. It seems, therefore, that Pilate allowed his fear of a jealous emperor to influence him when he pronounced the death sentence on Jesus, a man he knew to be innocent.

Caesar: Or “the Emperor.” The Roman emperor during Jesus’ earthly ministry was Tiberius, but the term was not restricted to the ruling emperor. “Caesar” could refer to the Roman civil authority, or the State, and its duly appointed representatives, who are called “the superior authorities” by Paul, and “the king” and his “governors” by Peter.—Ro 13:1-7; 1Pe 2:13-17; Tit 3:1; see Glossary.

19:13

judgment seat: Usually a raised outdoor platform from which seated officials could address crowds and announce their judicial decisions.

the Stone Pavement: The site was called, in Hebrew, *Gabbatha*, a word of uncertain derivation and possibly meaning “hill,” “height,” or “open space.” The Greek name for it, *Li·tho'stro·ton* (Stone Pavement), may indicate a plain stone pavement or a decorative one; some scholars feel that it may have been an ornamental mosaic work. The location of this site may have been an open area in front of the palace of Herod the Great, though some scholars favor other locations. The exact location of this pavement is uncertain.

Hebrew: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, inspired Bible writers used the term “Hebrew” in designating the language spoken by the Jews (Joh 19:13, 17, 20; Ac 21:40; 22:2; Re 9:11; 16:16), as well as the language in which the resurrected and glorified Jesus addressed Saul of Tarsus (Ac 26:14, 15). At Ac 6:1, “Hebrew-

speaking Jews” are distinguished from “Greek-speaking Jews.” While some scholars hold that the term “Hebrew” in these references should instead be rendered “Aramaic,” there is good reason to believe that the term actually applies to the Hebrew language. When the physician Luke says that Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem “in the Hebrew language,” Paul was addressing those whose life revolved around studying the Law of Moses in Hebrew. Also, of the great number of fragments and manuscripts comprising the Dead Sea Scrolls, the majority of Biblical and non-Biblical texts are written in Hebrew, showing that the language was in daily use. The smaller number of Aramaic fragments found shows that both languages were used. So it seems highly unlikely that when Bible writers used the word “Hebrew,” they actually meant the Aramaic or Syrian language. (Ac 21:40; 22:2; compare Ac 26:14.) The Hebrew Scriptures earlier distinguished between “Aramaic” and “the language of the Jews” (2Ki 18:26), and first-century Jewish historian Josephus, considering this passage of the Bible, speaks of “Aramaic” and “Hebrew” as distinct tongues. (*Jewish Antiquities*, X, 8 [i, 2]) It is true that there are some terms that are quite similar in both Aramaic and Hebrew and possibly other terms that were adopted into Hebrew from Aramaic. However, there seems to be no reason for the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures to have said Hebrew if they meant Aramaic.

19:14

the day of Preparation: A name applied to the day preceding the weekly Sabbath, during which the Jews prepared for the Sabbath. (See study note on Mr 15:42.) John’s Gospel includes the words **of the Passover**. The time period referred to in this context is the morning of Nisan 14, the day of Jesus’ trial and death. The Passover day had begun the evening before, and as shown in the other Gospel accounts, Jesus and the apostles had

eaten the Passover meal that night. (Mt 26:18-20; Mr 14:14-17; Lu 22:15) Christ perfectly carried out the regulations of the Law, including the requirement to celebrate the Passover on Nisan 14. (Ex 12:6; Le 23:5) This day in the year 33 C.E. could be viewed as the **Preparation of the Passover** in the sense that it was the preparation for the seven-day Festival of Unleavened Bread that was to begin the next day. Because these days were close in the calendar, the entire festival was sometimes referred to by the term “Passover.” (Lu 22:1) The day after Nisan 14 was always a sabbath, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. (Le 23:5-7) In 33 C.E., Nisan 15 fell on the regular Sabbath, making the day “a great,” or double, Sabbath.—See study note on Joh 19:31.

about the sixth hour: That is, about 12:00 noon.—For an explanation of a seeming discrepancy between this account and the one recorded by Mark, who said that Jesus was nailed to the stake at “the third hour,” see study note on Mr 15:25.

19:17

Bearing the torture stake for himself: According to John’s account, Jesus carried his own torture stake. However, the other Gospel accounts (Mt 27:32; Mr 15:21; Lu 23:26) say that Simon of Cyrene was compelled into service to carry the stake to the place of execution. John’s account is sometimes condensed, and often he does not repeat what was mentioned in the other Gospels. So John did not add the detail that Simon was compelled to carry the stake.

torture stake: Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also study notes on Mt 10:38 and 16:24, where the term is used in a figurative sense.

Skull Place: The Greek expression *Kra-ni'ou To'pon* renders the Hebrew name *Golgotha*. (See study note on **Golgotha** in this

verse. For a discussion of the term **Hebrew**, as used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, see study note on Joh 5:2.) The term “Calvary” is used at Lu 23:33 in some English Bible translations. It comes from the Latin word *calvaria* (skull) used in the *Vulgate*.

Golgotha: From a **Hebrew** word meaning “skull.” (Compare Jg 9:53; 2Ki 9:35; 1Ch 10:10, where the Hebrew word *gul-go'leth* is rendered “skull.”) In Jesus’ day, the site was outside the city walls of Jerusalem. Although the exact location is uncertain, the vicinity of the traditional site where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands is thought by some to be a reasonable possibility. (See App. B12.) The Bible record does not state that Golgotha was on a hill, though it does mention that some observed the execution from a distance.—Mr 15:40; Lu 23:49.

19:19

torture stake: Or “execution stake.”—See Glossary, “Stake”; “Torture stake”; see also study notes on Mt 10:38 and 16:24, where the term is used in a figurative sense.

19:20

Hebrew: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, inspired Bible writers used the term “Hebrew” in designating the language spoken by the Jews (Joh 19:13, 17, 20; Ac 21:40; 22:2; Re 9:11; 16:16), as well as the language in which the resurrected and glorified Jesus addressed Saul of Tarsus (Ac 26:14, 15). At Ac 6:1, “Hebrew-speaking Jews” are distinguished from “Greek-speaking Jews.” While some scholars hold that the term “Hebrew” in these references should instead be rendered “Aramaic,” there is good reason to believe that the term actually applies to the Hebrew language. When the physician Luke says that Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem “in the Hebrew language,” Paul was addressing those whose life revolved around studying the Law of Moses in Hebrew. Also, of the great number of fragments and

manuscripts comprising the Dead Sea Scrolls, the majority of Biblical and non-Biblical texts are written in Hebrew, showing that the language was in daily use. The smaller number of Aramaic fragments found shows that both languages were used. So it seems highly unlikely that when Bible writers used the word “Hebrew,” they actually meant the Aramaic or Syrian language. (Ac 21:40; 22:2; compare Ac 26:14.) The Hebrew Scriptures earlier distinguished between “Aramaic” and “the language of the Jews” (2Ki 18:26), and first-century Jewish historian Josephus, considering this passage of the Bible, speaks of “Aramaic” and “Hebrew” as distinct tongues. (*Jewish Antiquities*, X, 8 [i, 2]) It is true that there are some terms that are quite similar in both Aramaic and Hebrew and possibly other terms that were adopted into Hebrew from Aramaic. However, there seems to be no reason for the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures to have said Hebrew if they meant Aramaic.

19:25

Clopas: In the Bible, this name is mentioned only here. It is understood by many scholars that Clopas was the same person as Alphaeus mentioned at Mt 10:3; Mr 3:18; Lu 6:15; and Ac 1:13. As other examples in the Bible show, it was not uncommon for an individual to have two names that were used interchangeably.—Compare Mt 9:9; 10:2, 3; Mr 2:14.

19:26

the disciple whom he loved: That is, the one whom Jesus especially loved. This is the second of five occurrences mentioning a certain disciple “whom he [or, “Jesus”] loved” or “for whom Jesus had affection.” (Joh 13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20) It is generally believed that the disciple referred to is the apostle John.—See study note on Joh 13:23.

19:27

he said to the disciple: “See! Your mother!”: Jesus’ love and concern moved him to entrust the care of his mother, Mary, (apparently a widow by now) to the beloved apostle John. (See study note on Joh 13:23.) No doubt, Jesus was concerned not just with Mary’s physical and material needs but especially with her spiritual welfare. The apostle John had proved his faith, whereas it is unclear whether Jesus’ fleshly brothers were as yet believers.—Mt 12:46-50; Joh 7:5.

19:29

sour wine: Or “wine vinegar.” Likely referring to a thin, tart, or sour wine known in Latin as *acetum* (vinegar) or as *posca* when diluted with water. This was a cheap drink that poor people, including Roman soldiers, commonly drank to quench their thirst. The Greek word *o’xos* is also used at Ps 69:21 in the *Septuagint*, where it was prophesied that Messiah would be given “vinegar” to drink.

19:30

he gave up his spirit: Or “he expired; he stopped breathing.” The term “spirit” (Greek, *pneu'ma*) may here be understood to refer to “breath” or “life force.” This is supported by the use of the Greek verb *ek·pne'o* (lit., “to breathe out”) in the parallel accounts at Mr 15:37 and Lu 23:46 (where it is rendered “expired” or, as in the alternative rendering mentioned in the study notes on these verses, “breathed his last”). Some suggest that the use of the Greek term rendered “gave up” means that Jesus voluntarily stopped struggling to stay alive, since all things had **been accomplished**. He willingly “poured out his life even to death.”—Isa 53:12; Joh 10:11.

19:31

the day of Preparation: The day preceding the weekly Sabbath. During this day, the Jews got ready for the Sabbath by preparing extra meals and by finishing any work that could not wait until after the Sabbath. In the case mentioned here, the day of Preparation fell on Nisan 14. (Mr 15:42; see Glossary, “Preparation.”) According to the Mosaic Law, dead **bodies** “should not remain all night on the stake” but, rather, should be buried “on that day.”—De 21:22, 23; compare Jos 8:29; 10:26, 27.

that Sabbath day was a great one: Nisan 15, the day after Passover, was always a sabbath, regardless of the day of the week on which it fell. (Le 23:5-7) When this special Sabbath coincided with the regular Sabbath (the seventh day of the Jewish week, which runs from sunset Friday to sunset Saturday), it was “a great” Sabbath. Such a sabbath followed the day of Jesus’ death, which was on a Friday. In the period from 29 to 35 C.E., the only year in which Nisan 14 fell on a Friday was the year 33 C.E. So this evidence supports the conclusion that it must have been on Nisan 14, 33 C.E., that Jesus died.

to have the legs broken: In Latin, this practice was called *crurifragium*. A brutal form of punishment, it was likely done in this case to hasten the death of those executed on stakes. A person hanging on a stake had difficulty breathing. With his legs broken, he would not be able to raise his body and relieve the pressure on his lungs, so he would suffocate.

19:36

Not a bone of his will be broken: This is a quotation from Ps 34:20. At the institution of the Passover, Jehovah commanded regarding the lamb (or goat) slaughtered on that night: “You must not break any of its bones.” (Ex 12:46; Nu 9:12) Paul called

Jesus “our Passover lamb,” and true to the pattern as well as the prophecy at Ps 34:20, none of Jesus’ bones were broken. (1Co 5:7; see study note on Joh 1:29.) This took place as foretold, even though it was apparently customary for Roman soldiers to break the legs of those who were executed on the stake, likely to hasten death. (See study note on Joh 19:31.) The soldiers did break the legs of the two criminals alongside Jesus, but when they found that Jesus had already died, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of them “jabbed his side with a spear.”—Joh 19:33, 34.

19:38

Joseph: The individuality of the Gospel writers is evident in the varying details they provide about Joseph. Tax collector Matthew notes that he was “a rich man”; Mark, writing primarily for the Romans, says that he was “a reputable member of the Council” who was waiting for God’s Kingdom; Luke, the sympathetic physician, says that he “was a good and righteous man” who did not vote in support of the Council’s action against Jesus; John alone reports that he was “a secret [disciple] because of his fear of the Jews.”—Mt 27:57-60; Mr 15:43-46; Lu 23:50-53; Joh 19:38-42.

Arimathea: The name of this city comes from a Hebrew word meaning “height.” At Lu 23:51, it is called “a city of the Judeans.”—See App. B10.

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

19:39

Nicodemus: Only John mentions that Nicodemus joined Joseph of Arimathea in preparing Jesus’ body for burial.—See study note on Joh 3:1.

a mixture: Some manuscripts read “a roll,” but the main text reading has strong support in early authoritative manuscripts.

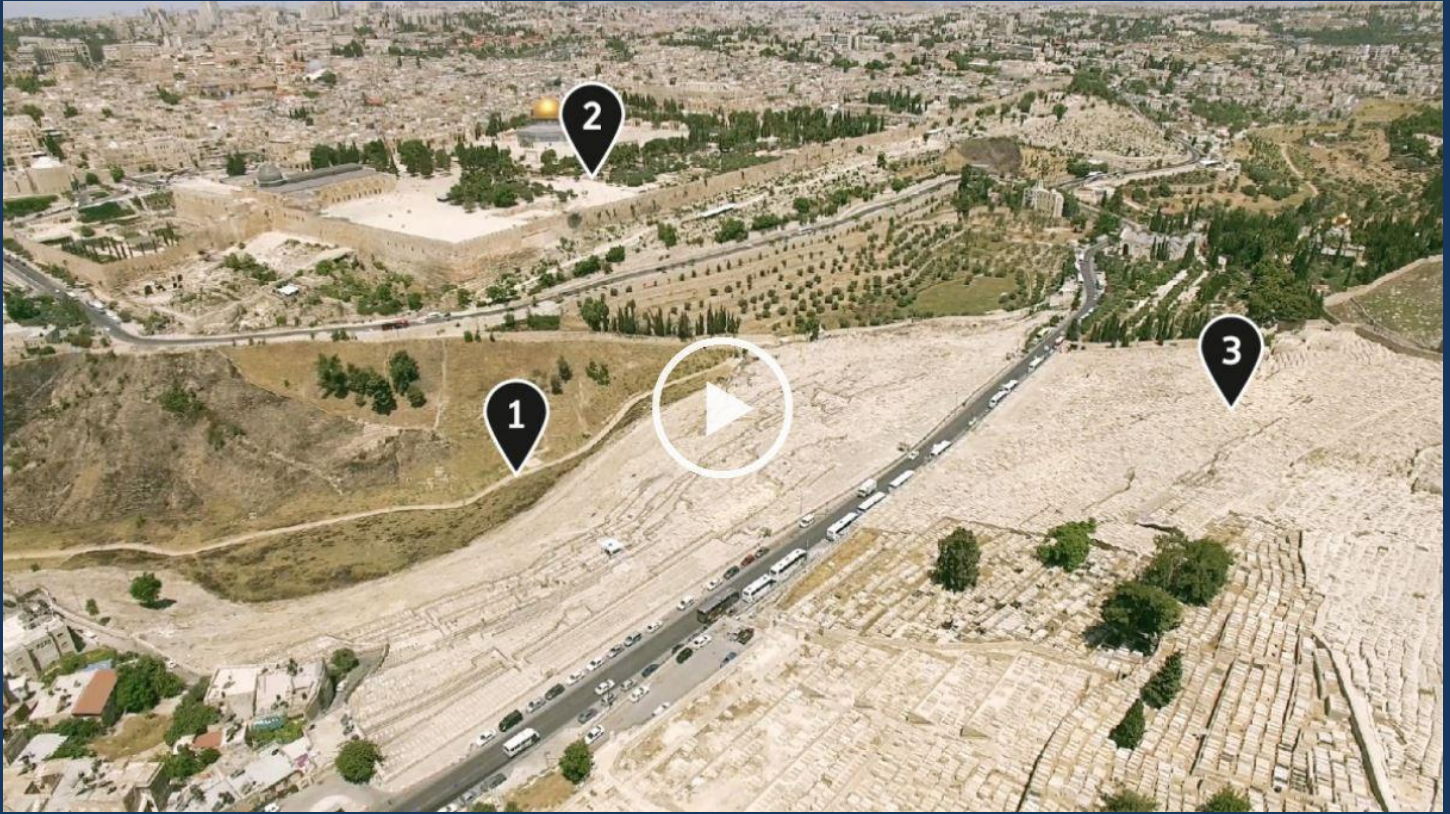
myrrh: See Glossary: An aromatic gum resin obtained from a variety of thorny shrubs or small trees of the genus *Commiphora*. Myrrh was one of the ingredients of the holy anointing oil. It was used to scent such things as garments or beds, and it was added to oil for massages and body lotions. Myrrh was also used to prepare bodies for burial.—Ex 30:23; Pr 7:17; Joh 19:39.

aloes: A name applied to a type of tree containing a fragrant, or aromatic, substance used as a perfume in the Biblical period. (Ps 45:8; Pr 7:17; Ca 4:14) The aloes brought by Nicodemus were likely the same as the aloeswood product that was referred to in the Hebrew Scriptures. In connection with preparing a dead body for burial, aloes were used in the form of a powder together with the myrrh, possibly to overpower the smell of decay. Most commentators consider the aloe tree of the Bible to be the *Aquilaria agallocha*, sometimes called the eaglewood tree and now found principally in India and neighboring regions. The tree may reach a height of 30 m (c. 100 ft). The inner core of the trunk and the branches is impregnated with resin and a fragrant oil, from which comes the highly prized perfume. Apparently attaining its most aromatic state when in decay, the wood is sometimes buried in the ground to hasten the decaying process. It was ground into a fine powder and then sold as “aloes.” Some scholars feel that the term “aloes” in this text refers to the plant of the lily family that now bears the botanical name *Aloe vera*, which is used, not for its aroma, but for health-related purposes.

pounds: The Greek term *li'tra* (singular) is usually equated with the Roman pound (Latin, *libra*) that weighed 327 g (11.5 oz). Thus the mixture mentioned here weighed about 33 kg (72 lb).—See App. B14.

19:41

tomb: Or “memorial tomb.” A vault, or chamber, cut into the soft limestone rock, rather than a natural cave. Such tombs often contained benchlike shelves or niches where bodies could be laid.—See Glossary, “Memorial tomb.”

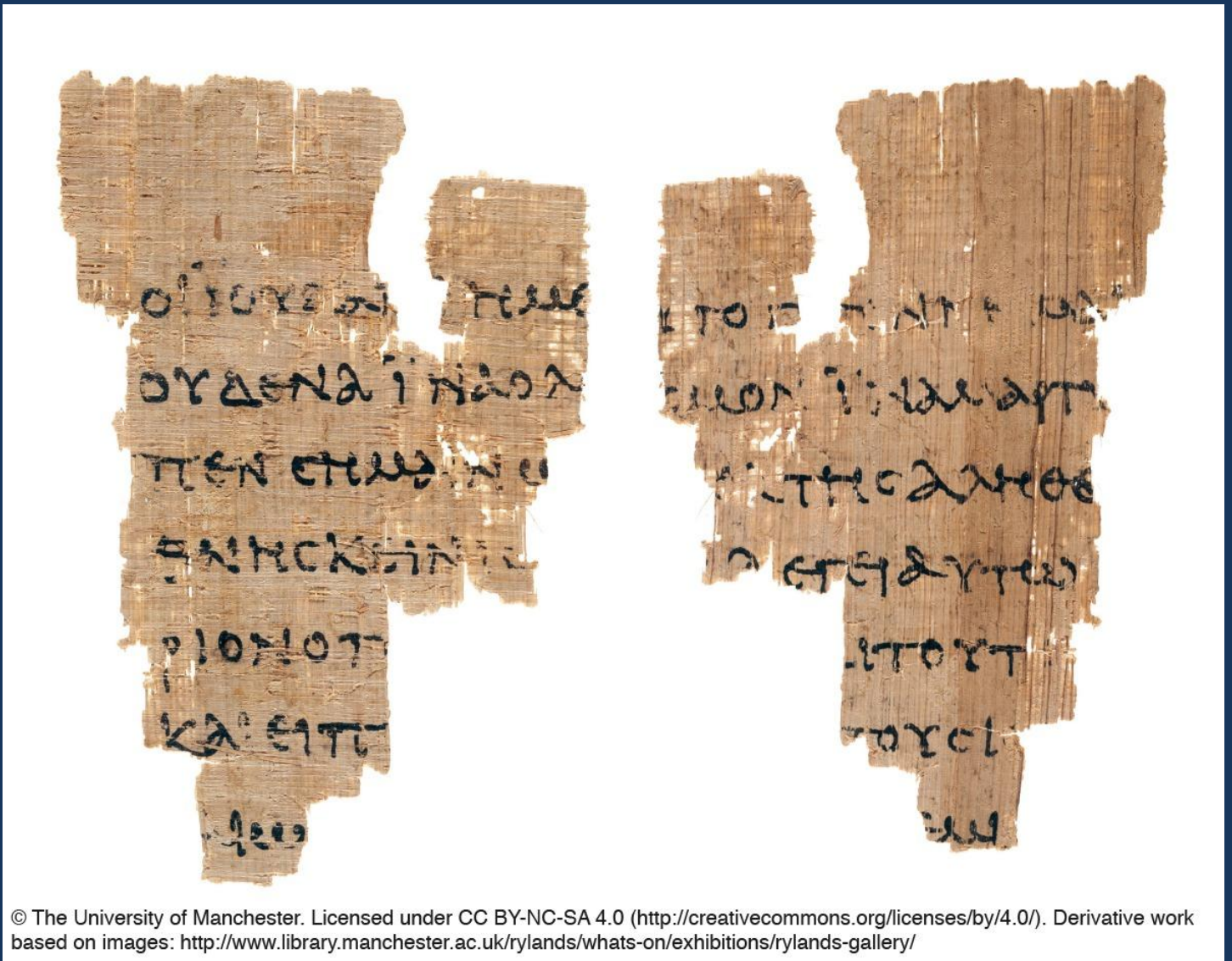


Kidron Valley

The Kidron Valley (Nahal Qidron) separates Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives and generally runs from N to S along the eastern side of the city. The valley starts some distance to the N of Jerusalem's walls. At first, it is broad and shallow, but then it begins to narrow and deepen. Opposite the southern end of the former temple area, it is approximately 30 m (100 ft) deep and 120 m (390 ft) wide, though it was evidently deeper in Jesus' day. The valley continues running through the Judean wilderness to the Dead Sea. It was this valley that Jesus traversed on his way to the garden of Gethsemane after he instituted the Lord's Evening Meal on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.—Joh 18:1.

1. Kidron Valley
2. Temple Mount
3. Mount of Olives (portion shown is covered in tombs)

Related Scripture(s) Joh 18:1



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Oldest Known Fragment of the Christian Greek Scriptures

Shown here are the front and back of the Papyrus Rylands 457 (P⁵²) fragment, a very early copy of a portion of John's Gospel. Housed at the John Rylands University Library in Manchester, England, it was acquired in Egypt in 1920. It preserves a portion of Joh 18:31-33 on one side and a portion of Joh 18:37, 38 on the other. The presence of writing on both sides of the papyrus is clear evidence that it was part of a codex. The fragment measures 9 by 6 cm (3.5 by 2.4 in.). Many scholars consider it to be the oldest extant Greek manuscript of the Christian Greek Scriptures, dating it to sometime in the first half of the second century C.E. The Gospel of John was written about 98 C.E., so this copy was likely made just a few decades later. The text of this fragment agrees very closely with later more complete Greek manuscripts that form the basis for modern translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

Related Scripture(s) Joh 18:31



Photo Clara Amit, Courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

Nail in a Heel Bone

This is a photograph of a replica of a human heel bone pierced by an iron nail that was 11.5 cm (4.5 in.) long. The original artifact was found in 1968, during excavations in northern Jerusalem, and dates to Roman times. It provides archaeological evidence that nails were likely used in executions to fasten the person to a wooden stake. This nail may be similar to the nails employed by the Roman soldiers to fasten Jesus Christ to the stake. The artifact was found in a stone box, called an ossuary, into which the dried bones of a deceased person were placed after the flesh had decomposed. This indicates that someone executed on a stake could be given a burial.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 27:35; Mr 15:24; Lu 23:33; Lu 24:39; Joh 19:18



The Hyssop Mentioned in the Bible

The Hebrew and Greek terms translated “hyssop” in many Bible translations (Hebrew *'e-zohv'* and Greek *hys'so-pos*) may embrace several different kinds of plants. Shown here is marjoram (*Origanum maru*; *Origanum syriacum*), the plant that many scholars think is referred to by the Hebrew term. This plant of the mint family is common in the Middle East. Under favorable conditions, it attains a height of 0.5 to 0.9 m (1.5 to 3 ft). In the Bible, this hyssop is often associated with cleanness. (Ex 12:21, 22; Le 14:2-7; Nu 19:6, 9, 18; Ps 51:7) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, “hyssop” is mentioned only twice. Heb 9:19 describes the inauguration of the old covenant, and in that context, “hyssop” evidently refers to the plant mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. At Joh 19:29, Jesus is said to have been given a sponge full of sour wine “on a hyssop stalk” held up to his mouth. Scholars have different opinions about which plant the Greek word *hys'so-pos* refers to in this context. Some think that because marjoram might not have been long enough to carry the stalk to Jesus’ mouth, the term here refers to another plant with a longer stalk, perhaps durra, a variety of common sorghum (*Sorghum vulgare*). Others think that even in this case, hyssop may have been marjoram. They suggest that a bunch of marjoram may have been attached to the “reed” mentioned by Matthew and Mark.—Mt 27:48; Mr 15:36.

Related Scripture(s) Joh 19:29



Roman Spears

Roman soldiers were commonly equipped with long weapons suitable for thrusting or throwing. The *pilum* (1) was designed to penetrate its target. Its heavy weight limited the range at which it could be thrown but enabled the weapon to pierce through armor or a shield. There is evidence that Roman legionnaires often carried the *pilum*. Simpler spears (2) had a wooden shaft and a tip of forged iron. Auxiliary infantry sometimes carried one or more spears of this type. It is unknown what kind of spear was used to jab the side of Jesus' body.

Related Scripture(s) Joh 19:34; Ac 23:23



Tomb Chamber

The Jews usually buried their dead in caves or vaults cut into the rock. These tombs were customarily located outside the cities, an exception being the tombs of the kings. Jewish tombs that have been found are notable for their simplicity. This was evidently because the Jews' worship allowed no veneration of the dead and did not foster any ideas of a conscious existence in a spirit world after death.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 27:52, 53; Mt 28:8; Mr 15:46; Lu 23:53; Joh 19:41, 42

- Song 54 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 18:36—The truth focuses on the Messianic Kingdom
 Joh 18:37—Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes (*nwtsty* study notes)
 Joh 18:38a—Pilate apparently scoffed at the existence of truth in general (*nwtsty* study note)
 - **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 19:30—What does it mean that Jesus “gave up his spirit”? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Joh 19:31—What evidence indicates that Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Joh 18:1-14

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then show the household-er jw.org.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture and linking question.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *fg* lesson 14 ¶¶6-7

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 46
- **“Love Identifies True Christians—Rejoice With the Truth”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Have Love Among Yourselves—Rejoice, Not Over Unrighteousness, But With the Truth*.” As time allows, consider the box “Bible Example for Meditation.”
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 41
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 32 and Prayer

JOHN 18-19 | Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth

18:36-38a

Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes

As Jesus’ disciples, we too bear witness to the truth

- **IN WORD:** He zealously preached the truth about God’s Kingdom
 - **IN DEED:** His life course proved God’s prophetic word to be true
-
- **IN WORD:** We zealously preach the good news of God’s established Kingdom with Christ as King, even in the face of ridicule
 - **IN DEED:** We show by our strict neutrality and godly conduct that we support Jesus’ kingship

ASK YOURSELF, ‘Is it obvious to those around me that my life is centered on bearing witness to the truth?’





Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

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

Scripture: Jas 1:13

Link: Why do we suffer?



○○● FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: Why do we suffer?

Scripture: 1Jo 5:19

Link: How does God feel about our suffering?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT


Question: How does God feel about our suffering?

Scripture: Isa 63:9


Link: What will God do to end our suffering?

3. How did the modern-day organization of Jehovah's Witnesses begin?


In the 1870's a small group of Bible students began rediscovering long-lost Bible truths. They knew that Jesus had organized the Christian congregation to preach, so they began an international Kingdom-preaching campaign. In 1931 they adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses.

 Read Acts 1:8; 2:1, 4; 5:42.

4. How are Jehovah's Witnesses organized?

In the first century, the Christian congregations in many lands benefited from a central governing body that recognized Jesus as the Head of the congregation. (Acts 16:4, 5) Similarly today, Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide benefit from a Governing Body of experienced elders. It oversees branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses that translate, print, and distribute Bible-study material in over 600 languages. Thus the Governing Body can provide Scriptural encouragement and direction for over 100,000 congregations worldwide. In each congregation, qualified men serve as elders, or overseers. These men lovingly care for God's flock.  Read 1 Peter 5:2, 3.

Jehovah's Witnesses are organized to preach the good news and make disciples. Like the apostles, we preach from house to house. (Acts 20:20) We also offer to study the Bible with sincere lovers of truth. But Jehovah's Witnesses are not just an organization. We are a family with a loving Father. We are brothers and sisters who care for one another. (2 Thessalonians 1:3) Since Jehovah's people are organized to please God and to help others, they form the happiest family on earth.

 Read Psalm 33:12; Acts 20:35.



For more information, see chapter 19 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

We Thank You, Jehovah

(1 Thessalonians 5:18)

1. We thank you, Jehovah, each day and each night,
That you shed upon us your precious light.
We thank you that we have the priv'lege of prayer,
That we can approach you with ev'ry care.
2. We thank you, Jehovah, for your loving Son,
Who conquered the world; by his faith he won.
We thank you for guidance in doing your will.
You lovingly help us our vows fulfill.
3. We thank you, our God, for the honor to preach
About your great name and the truth to teach.
We thank you that soon all earth's woes will be past,
While your Kingdom blessings forever last.

- Song 54 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth”:** (10 min.)
 Joh 18:36—The truth focuses on the Messianic Kingdom
 Joh 18:37—Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes (*nwtsty* study notes)
 Joh 18:38a—Pilate apparently scoffed at the existence of truth in general (*nwtsty* study note)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Joh 19:30—What does it mean that Jesus “gave up his spirit”? (*nwtsty* study note)
- Joh 19:31—What evidence indicates that Jesus died on Nisan 14, 33 C.E.? (*nwtsty* study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Joh 18:1-14

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then show the household-er jw.org.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture and linking question.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *fg* lesson 14 ¶¶6-7

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 46
- **“Love Identifies True Christians—Rejoice With the Truth”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Have Love Among Yourselves—Rejoice, Not Over Unrighteousness, But With the Truth*.” As time allows, consider the box “Bible Example for Meditation.”
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 41
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 32 and Prayer

JOHN 18-19 | Jesus Bore Witness to the Truth

18:36-38a

Jesus bore witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes

As Jesus’ disciples, we too bear witness to the truth

- **IN WORD:** He zealously preached the truth about God’s Kingdom
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ASK YOURSELF, ‘Is it obvious to those around me that my life is centered on bearing witness to the truth?’



Love Identifies True Christians—Protect Precious Unity

WHY IMPORTANT: On the night before his death, Jesus prayed that his disciples would “be completely unified.” (Joh 17:23, ftn.) To remain united, we must display love, which “does not keep account of the injury.” —1Co 13:5.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Imitate Jehovah by looking for the good in others
- Forgive freely
- After resolving a matter, do not bring it up again.—Pr 17:9



Whom do we hurt the most if we keep account of the injury?

WATCH THE VIDEO “HAVE LOVE AMONG YOURSELVES”—DO NOT KEEP ACCOUNT OF THE INJURY, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- In the first part of the video, how did Helen indicate that she was ‘keeping account of the injury’?
- In the second part of the video, how did Helen overcome her negative thinking and develop a positive viewpoint?
- Ultimately, how did Helen add to the unity of the congregation?

BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION: The apostle Paul recognized John Mark’s good qualities, even though John Mark had disappointed him earlier.—Ac 13:13; 15:37, 38; 2Ti 4:11.

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How can I show confidence in someone who has disappointed me?’

Love Identifies True Christians—Rejoice With the Truth

WHY IMPORTANT: In imitation of Jesus, we must bear witness to the truth regarding God’s purposes. (Joh 18:37) We must also rejoice with the truth, speak the truth, and consider whatever things are true, despite living in a world full of falsehood and unrighteousness.—1Co 13:6; Php 4:8.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Be determined not to listen to or spread harmful gossip.—1Th 4:11
- Do not rejoice over another’s calamity
- Take delight in positive, encouraging things



Rejoice, not over unrighteousness, but with the truth

WATCH THE VIDEO “HAVE LOVE AMONG YOURSELVES”—REJOICE, NOT OVER UNRIGHTEOUSNESS, BUT WITH THE TRUTH, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- In what sense did Debbie “rejoice over unrighteousness”?
- How did Alice steer the conversation with Debbie in a positive direction?
- What are some of the good things that we can talk about?

BIBLE EXAMPLE FOR MEDITATION: Lot was constantly tormented by the unrighteous conduct of people in Sodom and Gomorrah. —2Pe 2:8.

ASK YOURSELF, ‘In what ways can I show that I rejoice, not over unrighteousness, but with the truth?’



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**“Have Love Among Yourselves”- Rejoice Not Over Unrighteousness,
But with the Truth**

[At the Kingdom Hall]

Oh, Alice!

Oh, hi, Debbie.

I've got to tell you what I just heard yesterday.

Well, . . .

Remember Bethany, who used to attend some of our meetings years ago?

Yes, has she started going back to the meetings again?

Not at all. She left the man that she was living with to move in with another!

Wait! You've been keeping in touch with her?

Well, no, I haven't talked to her directly, but, you know, word gets around. Anyway, can you believe it?

Debbie, we both know that Bethany has done a lot of bad things since she stopped attending the meetings. And I really hope she makes changes and comes back. But in the meantime, do you really think we should be spending our time talking about all the bad things she's doing right now?

Well, probably not. I just figured that since we all grew up together, you'd want to know how far from the truth she has gotten.

But, Debbie, “love . . . does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth.”

You know what? You're right. Why talk about this? We have so many good things to talk about.

**“Have Love Among Yourselves”- Rejoice Not Over Unrighteousness,
But with the Truth**

Yes, we do, like this morning. Do you remember that call we went on last week? Well, Helen and I went back again this morning, and the lady was home! She invited us in, and we placed a book.

Really!

Yes! We even got to show her one of our videos, and she said she may come to the meeting this Sunday!

That's wonderful! I hope she . . .

41

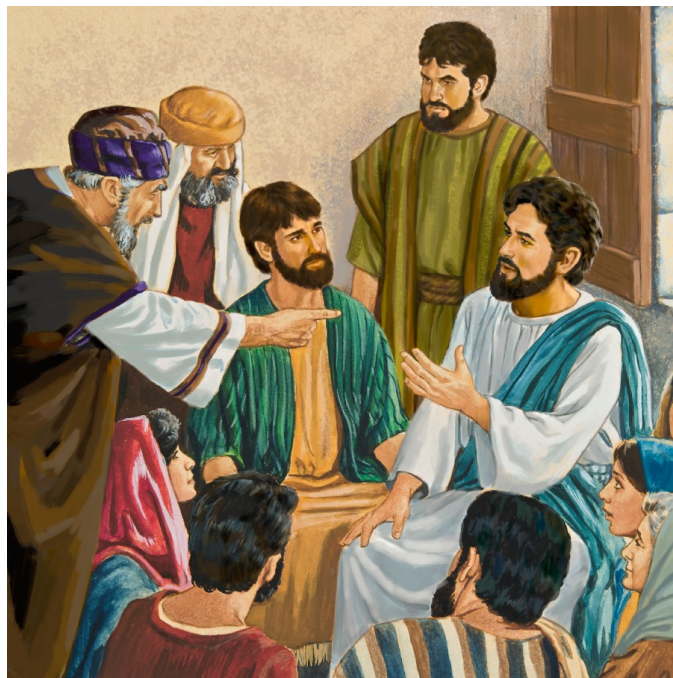
MIRACLES—BY WHOSE POWER?

MATTHEW 12:22-32 MARK 3:19-30 LUKE 8:1-3

- JESUS' SECOND PREACHING TOUR BEGINS
 - EXPELS DEMONS AND WARNS OF UNFORGIVABLE SIN
-

Soon after speaking about forgiveness at the home of the Pharisee Simon, Jesus begins another preaching tour of Galilee. He is in the second year of his ministry, and he is not traveling alone. The 12 apostles are with him, as well as certain women whom he had “cured of wicked spirits and sicknesses.” (Luke 8:2) Among them are Mary Magdalene, Susanna, and Joanna, whose husband is an officer of King Herod Antipas.

As more people learn of Jesus, the controversy over his activity intensifies. That is clear when a demon-possessed man, who is blind and unable to speak, is brought to Jesus and is cured. Now the man is free of demon control and can both see and speak. The people are simply carried away, saying:



“May this not perhaps be the Son of David?”—Matthew 12:23.

The crowds gathered around the house where Jesus is staying are so large that he and his disciples cannot even eat a meal. Not all, though, think that Jesus is the promised “Son of David.” Some scribes and Pharisees have come all the way from Jerusalem—but not to learn from Jesus or to support him. They are telling people: “He has Beelzebub” and thus is in league with “the ruler of the demons.” (Mark 3:22) When Jesus’ relatives hear about the commotion, they come to lay hold of Jesus. For what reason?

Well, at this point, Jesus’ own brothers do not believe that he is God’s Son. (John 7:5) The Jesus who seems to be creating this public uproar is not like the Jesus they knew while they were growing up together in Nazareth. Concluding that something must be mentally wrong with him, they say: “He has gone out of his mind.”—Mark 3:21.

What does the evidence prove, though? Jesus just healed a demonized man, who can now see and

speak. No one can deny this. So the scribes and Pharisees try to discredit Jesus with a false charge. They say: “This fellow does not expel the demons except by means of Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”—Matthew 12:24.

Jesus knows what the scribes and Pharisees are thinking, so he points out: “Every kingdom divided against itself comes to ruin, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. In the same way, if Satan expels Satan, he has become divided against himself; how, then, will his kingdom stand?”—Matthew 12:25, 26.

What impressive logic! The Pharisees know that some Jews practice the casting out of demons. (Acts 19:13) So Jesus asks: “If I expel the demons by means of Beelzebub, by whom do your sons expel them?” In other words, their charge should just as well be applied to them. Jesus then extends the reasoning: “But if it is by means of God’s spirit that I expel the demons, the Kingdom of God has really overtaken you.”—Matthew 12:27, 28.

To illustrate that his expelling demons is evidence of his power over Satan, Jesus says: “How can any-

one invade the house of a strong man and seize his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Only then can he plunder his house. Whoever is not on my side is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.” (Matthew 12:29, 30) The scribes and Pharisees surely are against Jesus, thus giving evidence that they are Satan’s agents. They are scattering people away from the Son of God, who is acting with Jehovah’s backing.

Jesus warns these satanic opposers: “All things will be forgiven the sons of men, no matter what sins they commit and what blasphemies they speak. But whoever blasphemes against the holy spirit has no forgiveness forever but is guilty of everlasting sin.” (Mark 3:28, 29) Think of the implications of that for those who are attributing to Satan what is plainly being done by God’s spirit!

- ◇ Who are with Jesus on his second tour of Galilee?
- ◇ Why do Jesus’ relatives attempt to lay hold of him?
- ◇ How do the scribes and Pharisees attempt to discredit Jesus’ miracles, and how does Jesus refute them?

Take Sides With Jehovah!

(Exodus 32:26)

1. Once with confusion our sad hearts were filled,
Drinking the cup false religion distilled;
But with what happiness our hearts were thrilled
When of God's Kingdom we heard.

(CHORUS)

*Take sides with Jehovah; Make him your delight.
He'll never forsake you; Walk on in his light.
Tell, tell the glad tidings Of freedom and peace.
His rule by Christ Jesus Will ever increase.*

2. Shoulder to shoulder we stand on God's side,
Preaching the news of his Kingdom earth wide.
Now is the time for each one to decide,
Time to take sides with our God.

(Chorus)

3. We will not fear what the Devil can do.
Trusting Jehovah will carry us through.
Though they are many and though we are few,
God is our strength and our might.

(Chorus)

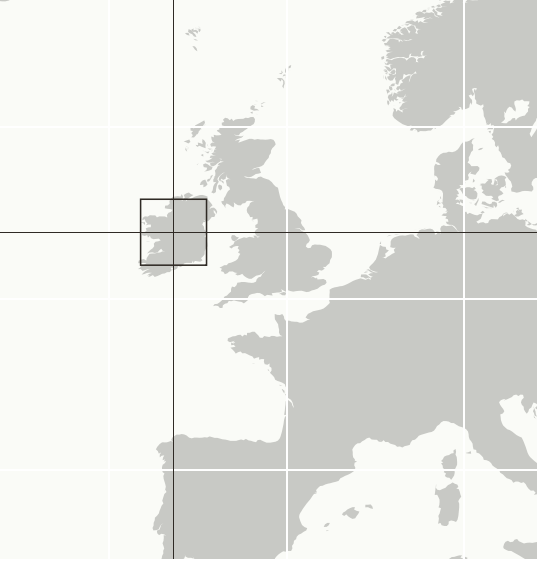
SEPTEMBER 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
OCTOBER 29–DECEMBER 2, 2018

**LARGE
PRINT
EDITION**



COVER IMAGE:

IRELAND

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF OCTOBER 29–NOVEMBER 4

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

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

16 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 5-11

Keep Displaying Love—It Builds Up

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

“Taste and See That Jehovah Is Good”

(Psalm 34:8)

1. Our service to God we cherish;
We value our priv’lege to preach.
We buy out the time and give God our best,
For many we still need to reach.

(CHORUS)

*God’s Word invites us: ‘Come taste and see—
See that Jehovah is good.’
Godly devotion brings greatest gain,
We know we’ve done all we could.*

2. For those in the full-time service,
Rich blessings and treasures abound.
By trusting in God to care for our needs,
In all things contentment is found.

(Chorus)



SONGS:
80, 35

**HOW MIGHT YOU
IMITATE . . .**

the humility of Paul
and Barnabas?

the unselfish spirit
of Epaphras?

King David's
self-restraint
when provoked
by Shimei?

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

*“My food is to do the will of him
who sent me and to finish his work.”*

—JOHN 4:34.

WHY is it a challenge to apply what we learn from God's Word? One reason is that it takes humility to do what is right, and our ability to remain humble is under assault. In these “last days,” we are surrounded by people who

1. What effect could the world's selfish spirit have on our humility?

are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, haughty,” and “without self-control.” (2 Tim. 3:1-3) When selfish behavior is reported and even celebrated, a servant of God might despise such conduct but envy the results. (Ps. 37:1; 73:3) One might even wonder: ‘Is there any point in my putting others’ interests ahead of my own? If I conduct myself “as a lesser one,” might people lose respect for me?’ (Luke 9:48) Allowing the world’s selfish spirit to influence us could harm the loving relationships we enjoy in the congregation and our identity as Christians. But we are rewarded when we study the good examples set out in the Bible and imitate them.

² If we want to make faithful ones our role models, we need to investigate what they did that brought the desired results. How did they achieve friendship with God, enjoy his approval, and acquire power to accomplish his will? This kind of study is an essential part of our spiritual feeding.

SPIRITUAL FOOD—MORE THAN JUST INFORMATION

³ We receive much good counsel and training

2. What effect can faithful servants of God have on us?

3, 4. (a) How do we receive spiritual instruction? (b) Why can we say that spiritual food involves more than taking in knowledge?

through the Bible, our Christian publications, our websites, JW Broadcasting, and our meetings and assemblies. But according to Jesus' words found at John 4:34, spiritual food involves more than just taking in knowledge. What more is involved? Jesus said: "My food is to *do the will* of him who sent me and to finish his *work*."

⁴ To Jesus, spiritual food included acting on God's direction. In what sense is this like food? Just as our bodies are contented and nourished when we eat a good meal, our hearts are strengthened and our faith is nourished for everlasting life when we participate in doing God's will. How many times have you gone to a meeting for field service not feeling your best—only to finish preaching that day refreshed and invigorated?

⁵ Putting divine instruction into practice is essentially what wisdom means. (Ps. 107:43) The reward for wisdom is worth the effort. "Nothing you desire can compare to it. . . . It is a tree of life to those who take hold of it, and those who keep firm hold of it will be called happy." (Prov. 3:13-18) Jesus said: "If you know these things, happy you are if you do them." (John 13:17) The disciples' happi-

5. What is the reward for acting wisely?

ness would last if they kept doing what Jesus instructed them to do. They did not embrace his teachings and example simply as an immediate response on that one occasion. It became their way of life.

⁶ Endurance in applying what we know to be true is just as important today. To illustrate, a mechanic may have tools, materials, and knowledge. But he will not benefit from those assets unless he uses them. If he has done mechanical work in the past and has gained valuable experience in the process, he must continue to practice what he has learned in order to stay skillful and productive. Likewise, we might enjoy initial success because we apply what we read in the Bible. However, we will find lasting happiness by living humbly by Jehovah's instruction each day.

⁷ Let us consider some different situations in which our humility might be put to the test and see how similar challenges were met by faithful ones of old. Spiritual strength comes from more than just considering the information. So think of how you

6. Why must we endure in showing wisdom?

7. In developing wisdom, what should be our response to Bible examples?

personally can apply each of these points, and then do it without delay.

VIEW THEM AS EQUALS

⁸ God’s will is that “all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Tim. 2:4) What is your view of the many sorts of people who have yet to learn the truth? Although the apostle Paul searched in synagogues for those who already knew something about God, he certainly did not restrict his efforts to Jewish people. The responses he received from those who worshipped other deities would test the depth of his humility.

⁹ On Paul’s first missionary journey, for instance, the Lycaonian people mistook him and Barnabas for superheroes—as incarnations of their false gods Zeus and Hermes. Were Paul and Barnabas tempted to ride the wave of popularity? Would that seem to be a refreshing break from all the persecution they had experienced in the last two cities they visited? Did they imagine that the publicity could help to advance the good news? Not at all! They

8, 9. What do the events recorded at Acts 14:8-15 reveal about the apostle Paul’s humility? (See opening picture.)

immediately protested by ripping their garments and leaping into the crowd, crying out: “Why are you doing these things? We too are humans having the same infirmities as you have.”—Acts 14: 8-15.

¹⁰ In acknowledging that they too were imperfect, Paul and Barnabas were not saying that their way of worship was basically the same as that of those pagans. Were the two of them not missionaries with a special appointment? (Acts 13:2) Had they not been anointed with holy spirit and clothed with a glorious hope? Yes, but Paul and Barnabas understood that the Lycaonian people could receive the same advantages if they responded favorably to the good news.

¹¹ How might we imitate Paul’s exemplary humility? First, we must resist any temptation to expect or accept adulation for what we accomplish in Jehovah’s strength. Each of us does well to ask himself: ‘How do I view the people to whom I preach? Might I unwittingly harbor toward certain people a bias that is common in my community?’

10. In what sense could Paul and Barnabas consider themselves the equals of the Lycaonian people?

11. When preaching, how can we imitate Paul’s exemplary humility?

Commendably, Jehovah’s Witnesses around the world have been analyzing their territories to determine whether there are yet more who might respond to the good news. At times, this may require learning the languages and customs of those whom society in general has marginalized. In no way should Witnesses who reach out to such ones view themselves as superior. Rather, they seek to understand each individual in order to reach his heart with the Kingdom message.

PRAY FOR OTHERS BY NAME

¹² Another way to show that we are humbly heeding divine direction is by praying for those who have already “acquired a faith as precious as ours.” (2 Pet. 1:1) Epaphras did so. The Bible mentions him only three times—all in the inspired writings of Paul. While under house arrest in Rome, Paul wrote to Christians living in Colossae that Epaphras was “always exerting himself in [their] behalf in his prayers.” (Col. 4:12) Epaphras knew the brothers well, and he cared for them deeply. His situation as Paul’s “fellow captive” did not blind him to the spiritual needs of others. (Philem. 23) And he did

12. How did Epaphras show unselfish concern for others?

something about it. Is that not a mark of unselfish concern? Praying for our fellow servants of Jehovah has real force, especially when we remember them individually, such as by name.—2 Cor. 1:11; Jas. 5:16.

¹³ Think of those whom you can pray for by name. Like Epaphras, many of our brothers and sisters are praying for those in their congregation and for families who are carrying a heavy load of responsibility or who are facing serious decisions or temptations. Many pray for those whose names are listed in the jw.org article “Jehovah’s Witnesses Imprisoned for Their Faith.” (Look under NEWSROOM > LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS.) In addition, we do well to remember those who have lost loved ones in death, those who have survived recent disasters and wars, and those who are enduring economic crises. Clearly, there are many brothers and sisters who need our prayers and who can benefit from them. When we pray for such ones, we show that we are looking out not only for our own interests but for those of others. (Phil. 2:4) Jehovah hears such prayers.

13. How might you imitate the example of Epaphras in your prayers?

“BE QUICK TO LISTEN”

¹⁴ Another area that reveals the depth of our humility is our willingness to hear people out. James 1:19 says that we should “be quick to listen.” Jehovah himself sets the superlative example in this regard. (Gen. 18:32; Josh. 10:14) Consider what we can learn from the interchange recorded at **Exodus 32:11-14. (Read.)** Although not needing Moses’ input, Jehovah gave Moses an opportunity to reveal how he felt. What human would listen at length to the reasoning of someone who has displayed faulty thinking and then act on that person’s word? Yet, Jehovah listens patiently to humans who call on him in faith.

¹⁵ Each of us does well to ask: ‘If Jehovah can stoop down to deal with people and listen to them as he did with Abraham, Rachel, Moses, Joshua, Manoah, Elijah, and Hezekiah, should I not be better at honoring all my brothers, dignifying them, listening to their ideas, and even acting on their good ideas? Does someone in my congregation or in my family deserve my attention right now? What should I do about that? What will I do about that?’

14. How does Jehovah set the best example as a listener?

15. How might we imitate Jehovah in honoring others?



David said: “Leave him alone!” What would you have done?
(See paragraphs 16, 17)

—Gen. 30:6; Judg. 13:9; 1 Ki. 17:22; 2 Chron. 30:20.

“PERHAPS JEHOVAH WILL SEE MY AFFLICTION”

¹⁶ Humility also helps us to show self-control when we are provoked. (Eph. 4:2) A remarkable example of this can be found at **2 Samuel 16:5-13. (Read.)** David and his servants endured reproach and physical assault by Shimei, a relative of

16. How did King David react when provoked by Shimei?

King Saul's. David did so despite having the power to put an end to it. How did David muster up the strength to control his spirit? We gain insight into this by examining the third Psalm.

¹⁷ The superscription of Psalm 3 indicates that it was composed when David “was fleeing from his son Absalom.” Verses 1 and 2 fit events described in chapter 16 of Second Samuel. Then Psalm 3:4 highlights David's confidence: “I will call aloud to Jehovah, and he will answer me from his holy mountain.” We too can pray when under attack. In response, Jehovah provides his holy spirit, which can help us to endure. Can you think of a situation in which you need to exercise self-restraint or freely forgive unwarranted animosity? Are you confident that Jehovah can see your affliction and bestow a blessing?

“WISDOM IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING”

¹⁸ Doing what we know to be right brings rich blessings. No wonder Proverbs 4:7 says that “wis-

17. What enabled David to control his spirit, and how might we imitate him?

18. How will we benefit if we keep applying divine instruction?

dom is the most important thing"! Although wisdom is based on knowledge, it particularly has to do with the decisions we make rather than just the facts we understand. Even ants reveal wisdom. Ants demonstrate instinctive wisdom by preparing their food in the summer. (Prov. 30:24, 25) Christ, "the wisdom of God," always does the things pleasing to the Father. (1 Cor. 1:24; John 8:29) God knows the difference between making the right choice and acting on that choice. And he rewards those who demonstrate humility with endurance and who practice what they know to be true. (Read Matthew 7:21-23.) Therefore, work to preserve the spiritual environment in which genuine humility can flourish. Applying what we know to be true takes time and requires patience, but it is a mark of humility that leads to happiness now and forever.

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

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

(CHORUS)

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

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

(Chorus)

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

(Chorus)

