

- Song 104 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- “Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation”: (10 min.)

[Play the video *Introduction to Acts*.]

Ac 2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41—After receiving holy spirit, Jesus’ disciples gave a witness that resulted in the baptism of about 3,000

Ac 2:42-47—Jesus’ disciples showed great generosity and hospitality, allowing newly baptized ones visiting Jerusalem to lengthen their stay and have their faith strengthened (*w86 12/1 29 ¶4-5, 7*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Ac 3:15—Why is Jesus called “the Chief Agent of life”? (*it-2 61 ¶1*)

Ac 3:19—How does this verse describe the way Jehovah forgives repentant wrongdoers? (*cl 265 ¶14*)

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) Ac 2:1-21

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- First Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- Talk: (6 min. or less) *it-1 129 ¶2-3*—Theme: Why Was Judas Replaced When the Apostles Who Died Faithful Were Not?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 85
- “Cooperating to Preach in Multilingual Territory”: (15 min.) Discussion by the service overseer. Play and discuss the video. Outline local arrangements for working multilingual territory.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *jy chap. 43 ¶1-7*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 68 and Prayer

ACTS 1-3 | Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation



2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41-47

Many Jews who were present in Jerusalem during Pentecost 33 C.E. came from other nations. (Ac 2:9-11) Although they observed the Mosaic Law, they may have lived in a foreign land their entire life. (Jer 44:1) Therefore, some may have looked and talked more like the natives of their country than like the Jews. When 3,000 from this multinational crowd got baptized, the Christian congregation suddenly became much more diverse. Despite their different backgrounds, “they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose.”—Ac 2:46.



How can you show genuine interest in . . .

people in your territory who are from other lands?

brothers and sisters in your congregation who are from other lands?

104 *God's Gift of Holy Spirit*

(Luke 11:13)

1. Sov'reign, Jehovah, merciful Father,
 Greater you are than our sinful hearts.
 Lighten our burden, soften our anguish,
 Give us the comfort your spirit imparts.
2. Father, we all fall short of your glory;
 Times there have been when we've lost our way.
 God, we implore you: Hear our petition.
 Give us your spirit to guide us each day.
3. When we are weary, weak, or discouraged,
 Your active force will our hearts renew.
 Give us the strength to soar like the eagles;
 May we receive holy spirit from you.

ACTS OF APOSTLES

1 The first account, O The-oph'i-lus, I composed about all the things Jesus started to do and to teach ² until the day that he was taken up, after he had given instructions through holy spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After he had suffered, he showed himself alive to them by many convincing proofs. He was seen by them throughout 40 days, and he was speaking about the Kingdom of God. ⁴ While he was meeting with them, he ordered them: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but keep waiting for what the Father has promised, about which you heard from me; ⁵ for John, indeed, baptized with water, but you will be baptized with holy spirit not many days after this."

⁶ So when they had assembled, they asked him: "Lord, are you restoring the kingdom to Israel at this time?" ⁷ He said to them: "It does not belong to you to know the times or seasons that the Father has placed in his own jurisdiction. ⁸ But you will receive power when the holy spirit comes upon you, and you will be witnesses of me in Jerusalem, in all Ju-de'a and Sa-mar'i-a, and to the most distant part of the earth." ⁹ After he had said these things, while they were looking on, he was lifted up and a cloud caught him up from their sight. ¹⁰ And as they were gazing into the sky while he was on his way, suddenly two men in white garments stood beside them ¹¹ and said: "Men of Gal'i-lee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus who was taken up from you into the sky will come in the same manner as you have seen him going into the sky."

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from a mountain called the Mount of Olives, which is near Jerusalem, only a sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ When they arrived, they went up into the upper room where they were staying. There were Peter as well as John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bar-thol'o-mew and

Matthew, James the son of Al-phae'us, and Simon the zealous one, and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ With one purpose all of these were persisting in prayer, together with some women and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brothers.

¹⁵ During those days Peter stood up in the midst of the brothers (the number of people was altogether about 120) and said: ¹⁶ "Men, brothers, it was necessary for the scripture to be fulfilled that the holy spirit spoke prophetically through David about Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he had been numbered among us and he obtained a share in this ministry. ¹⁸ (This very man, therefore, purchased a field with the wages for unrighteousness, and falling headfirst, his body burst open and all his insides spilled out. ¹⁹ This became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their language *A-ke'l'da-ma*, that is, "Field of Blood.") ²⁰ For it is written in the book of Psalms, 'Let his dwelling become desolate, and let there be no inhabitant in it' and, 'His office of oversight let someone else take.' ²¹ It is therefore necessary that of the men who accompanied us during all the time in which the Lord Jesus carried on his activities among us, ²² starting with his baptism by John until the day he was taken up from us, one of these men should become a witness with us of his resurrection."

²³ So they proposed two, Joseph called Bar'sab-bas, who was also called Justus, and Mat-thi'as. ²⁴ Then they prayed and said: "You, O Jehovah, who know the hearts of all, designate which one of these two men you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas deviated to go to his own place." ²⁶ So they cast lots over them, and the lot fell to Mat-thi'as, and he was counted along with the 11 apostles.

2 Now while the day of the Festival of Pentecost was in progress, they were all together at the same place. ² Suddenly there was a

noise from heaven, just like that of a rushing, stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And tongues as if of fire became visible to them and were distributed, and one came to rest on each one of them, ⁴ and they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak in different languages, just as the spirit enabled them to speak.

⁵ At that time devout Jews from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. ⁶ So when this sound occurred, a crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. ⁷ Indeed, they were utterly amazed and said: “See here, all these who are speaking are Gal-i-le'ans, are they not? ⁸ How is it, then, that each one of us is hearing his own native language? ⁹ Par'thi-ans, Medes, and E'lam-ites, the inhabitants of Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a, Ju-de'a and Cap-pa-do'ci-a, Pon'tus and the province of Asia, ¹⁰ Phryg'i-a and Pam-phyli'a, Egypt and the regions of Lib'y-a near Cy-re'ne, sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cre'tans, and Arabians—we hear them speaking in our languages about the magnificent things of God.” ¹² Yes, they were all astonished and perplexed, saying to one another: “What does this mean?” ¹³ However, others mocked them and said: “They are full of sweet wine.”

¹⁴ But Peter stood up with the Eleven and spoke to them in a loud voice: “Men of Ju-de'a and all you inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen carefully to my words. ¹⁵ These people are, in fact, not drunk, as you suppose, for it is the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ On the contrary, this is what was said through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “And in the last days,” God says, “I will pour out some of my spirit on every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy and your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams, ¹⁸ and even on my male slaves and on my female slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. ¹⁹ And I will give wonders in heaven above and

signs on earth below—blood and fire and clouds of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great and illustrious day of Jehovah comes. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”

²² “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus the Naz-a-rene' was a man publicly shown to you by God through powerful works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, just as you yourselves know. ²³ This man, who was handed over by the determined will and foreknowledge of God, you fastened to a stake by the hand of lawless men, and you did away with him. ²⁴ But God resurrected him by releasing him from the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held fast by it. ²⁵ For David says about him: ‘I keep Jehovah constantly in front of me, for he is at my right hand that I may never be shaken. ²⁶ On this account my heart became cheerful and my tongue rejoiced greatly. And I will reside in hope; ²⁷ because you will not leave me in the Grave, nor will you allow your loyal one to see corruption. ²⁸ You have made life's ways known to me; you will fill me with great joy in your presence.’

²⁹ “Men, brothers, it is permissible to speak with freeness of speech to you about the family head David, that he died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. ³⁰ Because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would seat one of his offspring on his throne, ³¹ he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he forsaken in the Grave nor did his flesh see corruption. ³² God resurrected this Jesus, and of this we are all witnesses. ³³ Therefore, because he was exalted to the right hand of God and received the promised holy spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to the heavens, but he himself says, ‘Jehovah said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand ³⁵ until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.”’ ³⁶ Therefore, let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God

made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you executed on a stake.”

³⁷ Now when they heard this, they were stabbed to the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: “Men, brothers, what should we do?” ³⁸ Peter said to them: “Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is to you and your children, and to all those who are far away, to all those whom Jehovah our God may call to himself.”

⁴⁰ And with many other words he gave a thorough witness and kept exhorting them, saying: “Get saved from this crooked generation.”

⁴¹ So those who gladly accepted his word were baptized, and on that day about 3,000 people were added. ⁴² And they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to associating together, to the taking of meals, and to prayers.

⁴³ Indeed, fear began to fall upon everyone, and many wonders and signs began to occur through the apostles. ⁴⁴ All those who became believers were together and had everything in common, ⁴⁵ and they were selling their possessions and properties and distributing the proceeds to all, according to what each one needed.

⁴⁶ And day after day they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose, and they took their meals in different homes and shared their food with great rejoicing and sincerity of heart, ⁴⁷ praising God and finding favor with all the people. At the same time Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved.

3 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple for the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, ² and a man who was lame from birth was being carried. Every day they would put him near the temple door that was called Beautiful, so he could ask for gifts of mercy from those entering the temple. ³ When he caught sight of Peter and John about to go into the temple, he began asking for gifts of

mercy. ⁴ But Peter, together with John, looked straight at him and said: "Look at us." ⁵ So he fixed his attention on them, expecting to get something from them. ⁶ However, Peter said: "Silver and gold I do not possess, but what I do have is what I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ the Naz-a-rene', walk!" ⁷ With that he took hold of him by the right hand and raised him up. Instantly his feet and his ankles were made firm; ⁸ and leaping to his feet, he began walking and went with them into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. ⁹ And all the people saw him walking and praising God. ¹⁰ And they began to recognize him, that this was the man who used to sit waiting for gifts of mercy at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, and they were completely astonished and ecstatic about what had happened to him.

¹¹ While the man was still holding on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them at what was called Sol'o-mon's Colonnade, completely surprised. ¹² When Peter saw this, he said to the people: "Men of Israel, why are you so amazed at this, and why are you staring at us as though by personal power or godly devotion we have made him walk?" ¹³ The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his Servant, Jesus, whom you handed over and disowned before Pilate, even though he had decided to release him. ¹⁴ Yes, you disowned that holy and righteous one, and you asked for a man who was a murderer to be given to you, ¹⁵ whereas you killed the Chief Agent of life. But God raised him up from the dead, of which fact we are witnesses. ¹⁶ And through his name, and by our faith in his name, this man whom you see and know has been made strong. The faith that is through him has made this man completely healthy in front of all of you. ¹⁷ And now, brothers, I know that you acted in ignorance, just as your rulers also did. ¹⁸ But in this way God has fulfilled the things he announced beforehand through the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ would suffer.

¹⁹ “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from Jehovah himself ²⁰ and he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus. ²¹ Heaven must hold this one within itself until the times of restoration of all things of which God spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets of old. ²² In fact, Moses said: ‘Jehovah your God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me. You must listen to whatever he tells you. ²³ Indeed, anyone who does not listen to that Prophet will be completely destroyed from among the people.’ ²⁴ And all the prophets from Samuel and those who followed him, as many as have spoken, have also plainly declared these days. ²⁵ You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant that God made with your forefathers, saying to Abraham: ‘And by means of your offspring all the families of the earth will be blessed.’ ²⁶ God, after raising up his Servant, sent him to you first to bless you by turning each one of you away from your wicked deeds.”

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Ac 2:42-47—Jesus’ disciples showed great generosity and hospitality, allowing newly baptized ones visiting Jerusalem to lengthen their stay and have their faith strengthened (*w86 12/1 29 ¶4-5, 7*)

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ACTS 1-3 | Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation



2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41-47

Many Jews who were present in Jerusalem during Pentecost 33 C.E. came from other nations. (Ac 2:9-11) Although they observed the Mosaic Law, they may have lived in a foreign land their entire life. (Jer 44:1) Therefore, some may have looked and talked more like the natives of their country than like the Jews. When 3,000 from this multinational crowd got baptized, the Christian congregation suddenly became much more diverse. Despite their different backgrounds, “they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose.”—Ac 2:46.



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brothers and sisters in your congregation who are from other lands?

November 12-18

Treasures From God's Word

Acts 2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41—After receiving holy spirit, Jesus' disciples gave a witness that resulted in the baptism of about 3,000

Acts 2:1-8: Now while the day of the Festival of Pentecost was in progress, they were all together at the same place. Suddenly there was a noise from heaven, just like that of a rushing, stiff breeze, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And tongues as if of fire became visible to them and were distributed, and one came to rest on each one of them, and they all became filled with holy spirit and started to speak in different languages, just as the spirit enabled them to speak. At that time devout Jews from every nation under heaven were staying in Jerusalem. So when this sound occurred, a crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Indeed, they were utterly amazed and said: "See here, all these who are speaking are Galileans, are they not? How is it, then, that each one of us is hearing his own native language?"

Acts 2:14: But Peter stood up with the Eleven and spoke to them in a loud voice: "Men of Judea and all you inhabitants of Jerusalem, let this be known to you and listen carefully to my words.

Acts 2:37, 38: Now when they heard this, they were stabbed to the heart, and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men, brothers, what should we do?" Peter said to them: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit.

Acts 2:41: So those who gladly accepted his word were baptized, and on that day about 3,000 people were added.

Acts 2:42-47—Jesus' disciples showed great generosity and hospitality, allowing newly baptized ones visiting Jerusalem to lengthen their stay and have their faith strengthened

Acts 2:42-47: And they continued devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles, to associating together, to the taking of meals, and to prayers. Indeed, fear began to fall upon everyone, and many wonders and signs began to occur through the apostles. All those who became believers were together and had everything in common, and they were selling their possessions and properties and distributing the proceeds to all, according to what each one needed. And day after day they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose, and they took their meals in different homes and shared their food with great rejoicing and sincerity of heart, praising God and finding favor with all the people. At the same time Jehovah continued to add to them daily those being saved.

w86 12/1 29 paragraphs 4-5

On the first day of the birth of the Christian congregation in the year 33 C.E., a 'sharing with one another, taking of meals, and prayers' were practiced by the 3,000 newly baptized converts. For what good reason? To make it possible for them to bolster their fledgling faith by 'continuing to devote themselves to the teaching of the apostles.'—Acts 2:41, 42.

Jews and proselytes had come to Jerusalem planning to stay only for the period of the Pentecost Festival. But those that became Christians desired to remain longer and learn more to strengthen their new faith. This created an emergency food and housing problem. Some of the visitors did not have sufficient funds with them, while others had a surplus. So there was a temporary pooling and a distribution of material things to those in need.—Acts 2:43-47.

w86 12/1 29 paragraph 7

The sale of real estate and the common sharing of all things was strictly voluntary. No one was obligated to sell or donate; neither was this a promotion of poverty. The idea expressed is not that the richer members sold all their property and thus became poor. Rather, out of compassion for fellow believers under the circumstances at that time, they sold property and contributed all the proceeds in order to provide what was needed to advance Kingdom interests.—Compare 2 Corinthians 8:12-15.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 3:15—Why is Jesus called “the Chief Agent of life”?

Acts 3:15: whereas you killed the Chief Agent of life. But God raised him up from the dead, of which fact we are witnesses.

it-2 61 paragraph 1

“Chief Agent of life.” As an expression of his Father’s undeserved kindness, Christ Jesus laid down his perfect human life in sacrifice. This made possible the union of Christ’s chosen followers with him in his heavenly reign and also made possible the arrangement for earthly subjects of his Kingdom rule. (Matthew 6:10; John 3:16; Ephesians 1:7; Hebrews 2:5; see RANSOM.) He thereby became “the Chief Agent [“Prince,” KJ; JB] of life” for all mankind. (Acts 3:15) The Greek term here used means, basically, “chief leader,” a related word being applied to Moses (Acts 7:27, 35) as “ruler” in Israel.

Acts 3:19—How does this verse describe the way Jehovah forgives repentant wrongdoers?

Acts 3:19: “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins blotted out, so that seasons of refreshing may come from Jehovah himself

c/ 265 paragraph 14

Jehovah’s forgiveness is further described at Acts 3:19: “Repent, therefore, and turn around so as to get your sins *blotted out*.” That last phrase translates a Greek verb that can mean “to wipe out, . . . cancel or destroy.” According to some scholars, the image expressed is that of erasing handwriting. How was this possible? The ink commonly used in ancient times was made of a mixture that included carbon, gum, and water. Soon after working with such ink, a person could take a wet sponge and wipe the writing away. Therein is a beautiful picture of Jehovah’s mercy. When he forgives our sins, it is as though he takes a sponge and wipes them away.

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) Acts 2:1-21

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 1

Title

Acts of Apostles: The Greek title *Pra'xeis A·po·sto'lon* is found in some manuscripts going back to the second century C.E., though there is no evidence that this book originally had a title. The book is a continuation of the Gospel written by Luke. (See study note on Ac 1:1.) It covers primarily the activities of Peter and Paul, not those of all the apostles. The book provides a reliable and comprehensive history of the spectacular beginning and rapid development of the Christian congregation, first among the Jews, next among the Samaritans, and then among the Gentiles. (See study note on Mt 16:19.) The book also provides a historical background for the inspired letters of the Christian Greek Scriptures.

1:1

The first account: Luke here refers to his Gospel account of Jesus' life. In his Gospel account, Luke focused on "all the things Jesus started to do and to teach." In the book of Acts, Luke picks up where he left off and records what Jesus' followers said and did. The accounts are similar in style and wording, and both are addressed to **Theophilus**. Whether Theophilus was a disciple of Christ is not stated explicitly. (See study note on Lu 1:3.) Luke begins the book of Acts by summarizing many of the events recorded at the end of his Gospel, clearly indicating that this second account is a continuation of the first. In this summary, however, Luke uses somewhat different wording and provides extra details.—Compare Lu 24:49 with Ac 1:1-12.

Theophilus: Both Luke's Gospel and Acts of Apostles are addressed to this man. At Lu 1:3, his name is preceded by the title "most excellent."—For more information on the use of this

expression and the background of Theophilus, see study note on Lu 1:3.

1:3

the Kingdom of God: The overriding theme of the entire Bible, Jehovah's Kingdom, dominates the book of Acts. (Ac 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:31) The book emphasizes that the apostles bore "thorough witness" concerning that Kingdom and fully accomplished their ministry.—Ac 2:40; 5:42; 8:25; 10:42; 20:21, 24; 23:11; 26:22; 28:23.

1:7

times or seasons: Two aspects of time are mentioned here. The plural form of the Greek word *khro'nos*, rendered **times**, may refer to an unspecified period of time, long or short. The Greek word *kai-ros'* (sometimes rendered "appointed time[s]"; the plural form is here rendered **seasons**) is often used with reference to future time periods within God's arrangement or timetable, particularly in relation to Christ's presence and his Kingdom.—Ac 3:19; 1Th 5:1; see study notes on Mr 1:15; Lu 21:24.

in his own jurisdiction: Or "under his own authority." This expression indicates that Jehovah has reserved for himself the right to set "the times or seasons" for the fulfillment of his purposes. He is the Great Timekeeper. Before Jesus died, Jesus said that even the Son did not then know the "day and hour" when the end would come but "only the Father" knew.—Mt 24:36; Mr 13:32.

1:8

the holy spirit: Or "the holy active force." In the book of Acts, the expression "holy spirit" occurs 41 times, and there are at least 15 other occurrences of the term "spirit" (Greek, *pneu'ma*) that refer to God's holy spirit. (For examples, see Ac 2:4, 17, 18; 5:9; 11:28; 21:4; see also Glossary, "Spirit.") Thus, this Bible book

makes it clear again and again that the international preaching and teaching work to be performed by Jesus' followers could be accomplished only with the aid of God's active force.—Compare study note on Mr 1:12.

witnesses of me: As faithful Jews, Jesus' early disciples were already witnesses of Jehovah, and they testified that Jehovah is the only true God. (Isa 43:10-12; 44:8) Now, though, the disciples were to be witnesses of both Jehovah *and* Jesus. They were to make known Jesus' vital role in sanctifying Jehovah's name by means of His Messianic Kingdom, a new feature of Jehovah's purpose. With the exception of John's Gospel, Acts uses the Greek terms for "witness" (*mar'tys*), "to bear witness" (*mar·ty·re'o*), "to bear thorough witness" (*di·a·mar·ty'ro·mai*), and related words more times than any other Bible book. (See study note on Joh 1:7.) The idea of being a witness and bearing thorough witness about God's purposes—including his Kingdom and Jesus' vital role—is a theme that runs through the book of Acts. (Ac 2:32, 40; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:39; 13:31; 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:20; 23:11; 26:16; 28:23) Some first-century Christians bore witness to, or confirmed, historical facts about Jesus' life, death, and resurrection from their firsthand knowledge. (Ac 1:21, 22; 10:40, 41) Those who later put faith in Jesus bore witness by proclaiming the significance of his life, death, and resurrection.—Ac 22:15; see study note on Joh 18:37.

to the most distant part of the earth: Or "to the ends (extremity) of the earth." The same Greek expression is used at Ac 13:47 in a prophecy quoted from Isa 49:6, where the Greek *Septuagint* also uses the term. Jesus' statement at Ac 1:8 may echo that prophecy, which foretold that Jehovah's servant would be "a light of nations" so that salvation would reach "the ends of the earth." This harmonizes with Jesus' previous statement that his followers would perform "works greater" than his. (See study

note on Joh 14:12.) The statement is also in line with Jesus' description of the worldwide scope of the Christian preaching work.—See study notes on Mt 24:14; 26:13; 28:19.

1:10

men in white garments: This is a reference to angels. (Compare Lu 24:4, 23.) In the book of Acts, the term “angel” (Greek, *ag'ge·los*) is found 21 times, the first occurrence at Ac 5:19.

1:11

the sky: The Greek word *ou·ra·nos'* that occurs three times in this verse can refer to the physical heavens, that is, the sky, or to the spiritual heavens.

will come in the same manner: The Greek word for “come” (*er'kho·mai*) is used frequently in the Scriptures in a variety of ways. In some contexts, it refers to Jesus' coming as Judge to pronounce and execute judgment during the great tribulation. (Mt 24:30; Mr 13:26; Lu 21:27) However, this Greek word is used regarding Jesus on other occasions. (Mt 16:28; 17:1, 2; Mt 21:5, 9; 23:39; Lu 19:38) Therefore, the context determines in what sense the term “come” is used here. The angels said that Jesus would “come,” or return, in the same “manner” (Greek, *tro'pos*) as he departed. The term *tro'pos* does not refer to the same form, shape, or body but to the same way. As the context shows, Jesus' manner of departure was not observed by the world in general. Only the apostles were aware that Jesus left the vicinity of the earth to return to his Father in heaven. Jesus had indicated that his return as King of “the Kingdom of God” would not be in a way that was obvious to all—only his disciples would know it had taken place. (Lu 17:20; see study note.) The “coming” mentioned at Re 1:7 is different. On that occasion, “every eye will see him.” (Re 1:7) So in the context of Ac 1:11, the term “come” apparently

refers to Jesus' invisible coming in Kingdom power at the beginning of his presence.—Mt 24:3.

1:12

a sabbath day's journey: That is, the distance an Israelite was allowed to travel on the Sabbath. The term is here connected with the distance between the Mount of Olives and the city of Jerusalem. The Law restricted travel on the Sabbath but did not specify the distance that could be covered. (Ex 16:29) Over time, rabbinic sources defined the distance a Jew could travel on that day as being about 2,000 cubits (890 m; 2,920 ft). That interpretation was based on Nu 35:5: "You should measure outside the city 2,000 cubits" and on the statement found at Jos 3:3, 4 that instructed the Israelites to keep a distance of about 2,000 cubits from "the ark of the covenant." Rabbis reasoned that an Israelite was permitted to travel at least that far on the Sabbath to worship at the tabernacle. (Nu 28:9, 10) Possibly because of reckoning from two different starting points, Josephus gives the distance between Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives one time as five furlongs (925 m; 3,034 ft) and another time as six furlongs (1,110 m; 3,640 ft). Either way, the distance is approximately the same as the distance that the rabbis had defined as a sabbath day's journey, and it harmonizes with Luke's comment in this verse.

1:13

the zealous one: A designation distinguishing the apostle Simon from the apostle Simon Peter. (Lu 6:14, 15) The Greek word used here and at Lu 6:15, *ze·lo·tes'*, means "zealot; enthusiast." The accounts at Mt 10:4 and Mr 3:18 use the designation "the Cananaean," a term thought to be of Hebrew or Aramaic origin that likewise means "Zealot; Enthusiast." While it is possible that Simon once belonged to the Zealots, a Jewish party opposed to

the Romans, he may have been given this designation because of his zeal and enthusiasm.

1:14

his brothers: That is, Jesus' half brothers. The four Gospels, Acts of Apostles, and two of Paul's letters mention "the Lord's brothers," "the brother of the Lord," "his brothers," and "his sisters," naming four of the "brothers"—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. (1Co 9:5; Ga 1:19; Mt 12:46; 13:55, 56; Mr 3:31; Lu 8:19; Joh 2:12) These siblings were all born after the miraculous birth of Jesus. Most Bible scholars accept the evidence that Jesus had at least four brothers and two sisters and that all were offspring of Joseph and Mary by natural means.—See study note on Mt 13:55.

1:15

the brothers: At times, a male Christian believer is distinguished as "a brother" and a female as "a sister." (1Co 7:14, 15) At other times, as in this context, the Bible uses the term "brothers" to refer to both males and females. (Ac 1:13, 14) Generally, the term "brothers" was the accepted greeting to mixed groups and was not restricted to males. (Ro 1:13; 1Th 1:4) The term "brothers" is used in this sense in most of the inspired Christian letters. In the preceding verse (Ac 1:14), the plural form of the Greek word *a-del-phos'* is used with regard to Jesus' half brothers, the younger sons of Joseph and Mary.—See study notes on Mt 13:55; Ac 1:14.

number of people: Lit., "crowd of names." In this context, the Greek word for "name" (*o'no-ma*) refers to a person. It is used in the same way at Re 3:4, ftn.

1:16

Men, brothers: Unlike the preceding verse, here the term "brothers" is used together with the Greek word for "men; males"

(*a·ner*). In the context of determining who should replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle, this combination may indicate that only male members of the congregation were being addressed.

1:18

falling headfirst, his body burst open: Matthew's account of Judas' death says that Judas "hanged himself," showing *how* he committed suicide. (Mt 27:5) But here Luke's account describes the *result*. A comparison of the two accounts indicates that Judas hanged himself near a cliff. At some point, the rope or the tree limb broke, so that he plunged down and his body burst open on the rocks below. The steep and rocky topography around Jerusalem allows for drawing such a conclusion.

1:20

His office of oversight: Or "His assignment as an overseer." The Greek word used here, *e·pi·sko·pe'*, is related to the Greek noun for "overseer," *e·pi'sko·pos*, and the verb *e·pi·sko·pe'o*, rendered "carefully watch" at Heb 12:15. Peter quoted Ps 109:8 to support his recommendation that the place left vacant by the unfaithful apostle Judas be filled. In that passage, the Hebrew text uses the word *pequd·dah'*, which can be rendered with such terms as "office of oversight; oversight; overseers." (Nu 4:16; Isa 60:17) At Ps 109:8 in the *Septuagint* (108:8, *LXX*), this Hebrew word is rendered by the same Greek word that Luke used here at Ac 1:20. From this inspired statement by Peter, it is clear that the apostles had an office, or assignment, as overseers. They had been directly appointed by Jesus. (Mr 3:14) So on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., the Christian congregation, which grew from about 120 members to about 3,000 in one day, started out with 12 overseers. (Ac 1:15; 2:41) Thereafter, others were appointed as overseers to help take care of the growing congregation. However, the apostles' oversight remained special, since Jehovah apparently purposed to have the 12 apostles form the

future “12 foundation stones” of New Jerusalem.—Re 21:14; see study note on Ac 20:28.

1:21

carried on his activities among us: Lit., “went in and went out among us,” which reflects a Semitic idiom that refers to carrying on activities of life in association with other people. It could also be rendered “lived among us.”—Compare De 28:6, 19; Ps 121:8, fn.

1:23

Matthias: The Greek name *Math·thi'as* is probably a shortened form of *Mat·ta·thi'as*, derived from the Hebrew name rendered “Mattithiah” (1Ch 15:18), meaning “Gift of Jehovah.” According to Peter’s words (Ac 1:21, 22), Matthias was a follower of Christ throughout Jesus’ three-and-a-half-year ministry. He was closely associated with the apostles and was quite likely one of the 70 disciples whom Jesus sent out to preach. (Lu 10:1) After his selection, Matthias was “counted along with the 11 apostles” (Ac 1:26), and when the book of Acts immediately thereafter speaks of “the apostles” or “the Twelve,” Matthias was included.—Ac 2:37, 43; 4:33, 36; 5:12, 29; 6:2, 6; 8:1, 14.

1:24

Jehovah: Available Greek manuscripts use the term “Lord” (Greek, *Ky'ri-os*) here. However, as explained in App. C, there are good reasons to believe that the divine name was originally used in this verse and later replaced by the title Lord. Therefore, the name Jehovah is used in the main text.

who know the hearts of all: The Hebrew Scriptures frequently identify Jehovah God as the one with the ability to read hearts. (De 8:2; 1Sa 16:7; 1Ki 8:39; 1Ch 28:9; Ps 44:21; Jer 11:20; 17:10) It would have been natural in this context, then, for those Hebrew-speaking Jews to use the divine name when praying to

God. The Greek word rendered “who know the hearts,” *kar·di·o·gno'stes* (lit., “knower of hearts”), occurs only here and at Ac 15:8, where it reads, “God, who knows the heart.”

1:26

cast lots: When making decisions on a variety of issues, God’s servants in pre-Christian times cast lots to determine Jehovah’s will. (Le 16:8; Nu 33:54; 1Ch 25:8; Pr 16:33; 18:18; see Glossary, “Lots.”) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, there is only this one mention of lots being used by Jesus’ followers. Lots were cast to help the disciples decide which one of the two men proposed as candidates should replace Judas Iscariot. The disciples knew that they needed Jehovah’s direction. Each of the 12 apostles had been appointed directly by Jesus only after he spent a whole night in prayer to his Father. (Lu 6:12, 13) It is noteworthy, therefore, that *before* “the lot fell to Matthias,” the disciples reviewed several Scriptures and prayed specifically for Jehovah to “designate” *his* choice. (Ac 1:20, 23, 24) After Pentecost 33 C.E., however, there is no record in the Bible that lots were used to select overseers and their assistants or to decide matters of importance. This method was not needed once the holy spirit became active on the Christian congregation. (Ac 6:2-6; 13:2; 20:28; 2Ti 3:16, 17) Men were selected as overseers, not because they had been chosen by the casting of lots, but because they displayed the fruitage of the holy spirit in their lives. (1Ti 3:1-13; Tit 1:5-9) Other cultures also used lots. (Es 3:7; Joe 3:3; Ob 11) For example, the Roman soldiers cast lots over Jesus’ garments, as foretold at Ps 22:18. Apparently their motive was, not to fulfill Bible prophecy, but to get some personal gain.—See study notes on Mt 27:35; Joh 19:24.

counted along with: Or “reckoned along with,” that is, viewed the same as the other 11 apostles. So when Pentecost arrived, there were 12 apostles to serve as the foundation of spiritual

Israel. Matthias would have been one of “the Twelve” who were present at Jesus’ postresurrection appearances (1Co 15:4-8) and who later helped settle the problem concerning the Greek-speaking disciples (Ac 6:1, 2).

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 2

2:1

Pentecost: The Greek word *pen·te·ko·ste'* (meaning “50th [Day]”) is used in the Christian Greek Scriptures to denote what is called “the Festival of Harvest” (Ex 23:16) and the “Festival of Weeks” (Ex 34:22) in the Hebrew Scriptures. This festival took place at the end of a seven-week harvest period that included first the barley harvest and then the wheat harvest. The Festival of Pentecost was celebrated on the 50th day counted from Nisan 16, the day when a sheaf of the firstfruits of the barley harvest was offered. (Le 23:15, 16) On the Hebrew calendar, Pentecost falls on Sivan 6. (See App. B15.) Instructions for this festival are found at Le 23:15-21; Nu 28:26-31; and De 16:9-12. The Festival of Pentecost drew great multitudes of Jews and proselytes from distant lands to Jerusalem. The festival was intended to promote hospitality and kindness to people, regardless of their position or background—whether they were free, slaves, poor, fatherless, widows, Levites, or foreign residents. (De 16:10, 11) This made Pentecost 33 C.E. in Jerusalem an ideal occasion for the birth of the Christian congregation with its mission to bear witness to all people “about the magnificent things of God.” (Ac 1:8; 2:11) The Jews traditionally hold that Pentecost corresponded to the time of the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai when Israel was set apart as God’s chosen nation. It was early in the third month (Sivan) that the Israelites gathered at Mount Sinai and received the Law. (Ex

19:1) Just as Moses as mediator was used to introduce Israel to the Law covenant, so Jesus Christ as Mediator of spiritual Israel now brought that new nation into the new covenant.

2:4

languages: Or “tongues.” In the Bible, the Greek word *glos'sa* can refer to the “tongue” as an organ of speech. (Mr 7:33; Lu 1:64; 16:24) But it can also be used figuratively to refer to a language or to a people speaking a certain language. (Re 5:9; 7:9; 13:7; ftns.) This Greek word is found at Ac 2:3, describing “tongues as if of fire” that became visible. So the outpouring of holy spirit was made evident by these “tongues” resting on each one of the disciples and by their speaking in different tongues, or languages.

2:8

his own native language: Lit., “our own language in which we were born.” The Greek word here rendered “language” is *di·a'le·ktos*. (See study note on Ac 2:4.) Many who heard the disciples may have spoken an international tongue, perhaps Greek. Being “devout Jews,” they may also have been able to understand the Hebrew services at the temple in Jerusalem. (Ac 2:5) But hearing the good news in the language they had known from childhood caught their attention.

2:9

province of Asia: Glossary, “Asia.”—In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the name of the Roman province that included what is today the western part of Turkey, as well as some coastal islands, such as Samos and Patmos. The capital was Ephesus. (Ac 20:16; Re 1:4)—See App. B13.

2:10

proselytes: Or “convert.” The Greek word *pro-se'ly-tos* denotes a Gentile who has converted to Judaism, which included circumcision for male proselytes.

2:13

sweet wine: Or “new wine.” The Greek word *gleu'kos*, which occurs only here in the Christian Greek Scriptures, refers to sweet new wine that is in the process of fermentation.

2:15

the third hour of the day: That is, about 9:00 a.m. In the first century C.E., the Jews used the count of 12 hours to the day, starting with sunrise at about 6:00 a.m. (Joh 11:9) Therefore, the third hour would be about 9:00 a.m., the sixth hour about noon, and the ninth hour about 3:00 p.m. Since people did not have precise timepieces, only the approximate time of an event was usually given.—Joh 1:39; 4:6; 19:14; Ac 10:3, 9.

2:17

in the last days: In this quote from Joel’s prophecy, Peter under inspiration uses the phrase “in the last days” rather than the expression “after that,” which is used in the original Hebrew and in the *Septuagint*. (Joe 2:28; 3:1, *LXX*) Joel’s prophecy was fulfilled when holy spirit was poured out at Pentecost. Therefore, Peter’s use of the term “the last days” indicates that this special time period had begun and that it would precede “the great and illustrious day of Jehovah.” This “day of Jehovah” would apparently bring “the last days” to their conclusion. (Ac 2:20) Peter was speaking to natural Jews and Jewish proselytes, so his inspired words must have had an initial fulfillment involving them. His statement apparently indicated that the Jews were living in “the last days” of the system of things that had its center of worship in Jerusalem. Earlier, Jesus himself foretold the

destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. (Lu 19:41-44; 21:5, 6)
That destruction took place in 70 C.E.

my spirit: The Greek word *pneu'ma* here refers to God's holy spirit, or active force. At Joe 2:28, quoted here, the corresponding Hebrew word *ru'ach* is used. Both the Hebrew and the Greek words convey the basic idea of that which is invisible to human sight and gives evidence of force in motion.—See Glossary, “Spirit.”

every sort of flesh: Or “all sorts (kinds) of people.” Lit., “all flesh.” The Greek word *sarx* (often rendered “flesh”) is here used of living humans, so “all flesh” would generally refer to all mankind. (See study note on Joh 17:2.) But in this context, the Greek phrase “all flesh” has a more restricted use. God did not pour out his spirit on all humans on earth or even on all humans in Israel, so it does not refer to all humans without exception. Rather, the phrase here refers to all sorts of humans without distinction. God poured out holy spirit on ‘sons and daughters, young men and old men, male slaves and female slaves,’ that is, all sorts of people. (Ac 2:17, 18) A similar use of the Greek word for “all” (*pas*) is found at 1Ti 2:3, 4, according to which it is God's will that “*all sorts of people should be saved.*”—See study note on Joh 12:32.

prophecy: The Greek term *pro·phe·teu'o* literally means “to speak out.” In the Scriptures, it is used of making known messages from a divine source. While it often includes the thought of foretelling the future, the basic meaning of the word is not that of prediction. The Greek word can also refer to identifying a matter by divine revelation. (See study notes on Mt 26:68; Mr 14:65; Lu 22:64.) In this context, holy spirit impelled some to prophecy. By declaring “the magnificent things” that Jehovah had done and would still do, they would serve as spokesmen for the Most High. (Ac 2:11) The Hebrew word for “to

prophecy” carries a similar idea. For example, at Ex 7:1, Aaron is referred to as Moses’ “prophet” in the sense that he became Moses’ spokesman, or mouthpiece, rather than in the sense of foretelling future events.

old men: Or “older men; elders.” Here the Greek term *pre·sby'te·ros* likely refers to men of advanced physical age in contrast with the “young men” mentioned earlier in the verse. In other contexts, the same term is used to refer to men holding a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation.—Ac 4:5; 11:30; 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; see study note on Mt 16:21.

2:19

wonders: Or “portents.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *te'ras* is consistently used in combination with *se·mei'on* (“sign”), both terms being used in the plural form. (Mt 24:24; Joh 4:48; Ac 7:36; 14:3; 15:12; 2Co 12:12) Basically, *te'ras* refers to anything that causes awe or wonderment. When the term clearly refers to something portending what will happen in the future, the alternate rendering “portent” is used in a study note.

2:20

Jehovah: In this quote from Joe 2:31, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

2:21

Jehovah: In this quote from Joe 2:32, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

2:22

the Nazarene: A descriptive epithet applied to Jesus and later to his followers. (Ac 24:5) Since many Jews had the name Jesus, it was common to add a further identification; the practice of associating people with the places from which they came was customary in Bible times. (2Sa 3:2, 3; 17:27; 23:25-39; Na 1:1; Ac 13:1; 21:29) Jesus lived most of his early life in the town of Nazareth in Galilee, so it was natural to use this term regarding him. Jesus was often referred to as “the Nazarene,” in different situations and by various individuals. (Mr 1:23, 24; 10:46, 47; 14:66-69; 16:5, 6; Lu 24:13-19; Joh 18:1-7) Jesus himself accepted the name and used it. (Joh 18:5-8; Ac 22:6-8) On the sign that Pilate placed on the torture stake, he wrote in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: “Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews.” (Joh 19:19, 20) From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the apostles as well as others often spoke of Jesus as the Nazarene or as being from Nazareth.—Ac 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 26:9; see also study note on Mt 2:23.

wonders: Or “portents.” The miracles that God caused Jesus to perform served as credentials that he was sent by God. These miraculous cures and resurrections also showed, or portended, what Jesus would do on a greater scale in the future.—See study note on Ac 2:19.

2:23

will: Or “counsel.” The Greek word *bou·le'* is rendered “counsel [or, “direction; guidance,” ftn.]” at Lu 7:30 and “purpose” at Heb 6:17.—See study note on Ac 20:27.

2:24

the pangs of death: Although the Bible clearly states that there is no consciousness or feeling of pain in death (Ps 146:4; Ec 9:5, 10), here “death” is said to cause “pangs” or “pain.” This wording

was likely used because death is presented as a bitter and distressing experience. (1Sa 15:32, ftn.; Ps 55:4; Ec 7:26) That is so not only in the pain usually preceding it (Ps 73:4, 5) but also in the loss of all activity and freedom that its paralyzing grip brings (Ps 6:5; 88:10). It is apparently in this sense that Jesus' resurrection released him from "the pangs of death," freeing him from its distressing and restraining grip. While the Greek word (*o·din'*), here translated "pangs," is elsewhere used to mean the pains of childbirth (1Th 5:3), it may also refer to pain, calamity, or distress in a general sense (Mt 24:8). The expression "pangs of death" is found in the *Septuagint* at 2Sa 22:6 and Ps 18:4 (17:5, *LXX*), where the Hebrew Masoretic text reads "ropes of the Grave" and "ropes of death." Interestingly, in ancient Hebrew manuscripts, which were written without vowels, the term for "rope" (*che'vel*) has the same consonantal spelling as the Hebrew term for "pang." This may explain the rendering found in the *Septuagint*. In either case, the expressions "pangs of death" and "ropes of death" convey the same overall idea, namely, the bitter and distressing experience of death.

2:25

Jehovah: In this quote from Ps 16:8, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

2:26

I: Lit., "my flesh." Peter introduces this quote from Ps 16 by saying: "David says about him," that is, about the Messiah, Jesus. (Ac 2:25) In this verse (Ac 2:26) and at Ps 16:9, the Greek and Hebrew texts use the term "flesh," which may denote a person's body or the person himself. Even though Jesus knew that he would be put to death as the ransom sacrifice, he resided **in hope**. Jesus knew that his Father would resurrect him, that his sacrifice would successfully serve as a ransom for mankind, and

that his flesh, or body, would not see corruption, or decay.—Ac 2:27, 31.

2:27

me: Or “my soul.” In this quote from Ps 16:10, the Greek word *psy·khe'* is used to render the Hebrew word *ne'phesh*, both traditionally rendered “soul.” The psalmist used “soul” to refer to himself. On the day of Pentecost when declaring Christ’s resurrection to the Jews, Peter applied this psalm of David to Jesus.—Ac 2:24, 25; see Glossary, “Soul,” and App. A2.

the Grave: Or “Hades.” The Greek term *hai'des*, perhaps meaning “the unseen place,” occurs ten times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (See Mt 11:23; 16:18; Lu 10:15; 16:23; Ac 2:27, 31; Re 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14) This verse quotes Ps 16:10, which uses the corresponding Hebrew term “Sheol,” also rendered “the Grave.” The *Septuagint* generally uses the Greek “Hades” as the equivalent of the Hebrew “Sheol.” In the Scriptures, both terms refer to the common grave of mankind; other original-language terms denote an individual grave. Some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{7, 8, 11-18, 22} in App. C4) use the term “Sheol” here.—See App. A2.

2:28

in your presence: Lit., “with (before) your face.” In this quote from Ps 16:11, the Greek text renders the Hebrew text literally. The Hebrew expression “with one’s face” is an idiom meaning “in someone’s presence.”

2:30

God: Available Greek manuscripts here use the word *The·os'*, “God.” It is worth noting that some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{7, 8, 10} in App. C4) here use the Tetragrammaton.

one of his offspring: David received the promise that one of his descendants would become the Messianic “offspring” promised at Ge 3:15. (2Sa 7:12, 13; Ps 89:3, 4; 132:11) This promise was fulfilled in Jesus in that both his mother and his adoptive father descended from King David. The Greek phrase rendered “offspring” reflects a Hebrew idiom that literally reads “fruitage of his loins.” In the human body, the loins contain the reproductive organs. (Ge 35:11, ftn.; 1Ki 8:19, ftn.) A person’s offspring is also referred to as “the fruit of the womb [or, “body”],” and there are other similar expressions in which “fruit” refers to the product of human reproduction.—Ge 30:2, ftn.; De 7:13, ftn.; Ps 127:3; La 2:20, ftn.; Lu 1:42.

2:31

the Grave: Or “Hades,” that is, the common grave of mankind.— See study note on Ac 2:27 and Glossary, “Grave.”

nor did his flesh see corruption: Or “nor did his body experience decay.” Jehovah did not allow the physical body of Jesus to decay into dust as did the bodies of Moses and David, men who foreshadowed Christ. (De 34:5, 6; Ac 2:27; 13:35, 36) In order for Jesus to be “the last Adam” (1Co 15:45) and to be “a corresponding ransom” for all mankind (1Ti 2:5, 6; Mt 20:28), his fleshly body had to be a real human body. It had to be perfect, for it was to be presented to Jehovah God as the purchase price to buy back what Adam had lost. (Heb 9:14; 1Pe 1:18, 19) No imperfect descendant of Adam could provide the needed ransom price. (Ps 49:7-9) For this reason, Jesus was not conceived in the normal manner. Instead, as he said to his Father, apparently when presenting himself for baptism: “You [Jehovah] prepared a body for me,” that is, Jesus’ perfect human body that would be given in sacrifice. (Heb 10:5) When the disciples went to Jesus’ tomb, they discovered that Jesus’ body had disappeared, but they found the linen cloths with which his body had been

wrapped. Jehovah apparently disposed of the fleshly body of his beloved Son before it began to decay.—Lu 24:3-6; Joh 20:2-9.

2:34

Jehovah: The divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text at Ps 110:1, quoted here. However, as explained in App. A5, most Bible translations do not use God's name in what is commonly called the New Testament, not even in quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is worth noting, though, that some 17th-century editions of the *King James Version* have the rendering "the LORD" in capital and small capitals here and at three other places where Ps 110:1 is quoted in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Mt 22:44; Mr 12:36; Lu 20:42) Later editions continued this practice. Since "the LORD" is used in the Hebrew Scriptures of that translation to indicate where the original Hebrew text uses the divine name, writing "the LORD" in the Christian Greek Scriptures would indicate that the translators thought that it is Jehovah who is being referred to. It is also noteworthy that the *New King James Version*, first published in 1979, extends this use of "the LORD" to all occurrences of that word when it refers to the divine name in quotes from the Hebrew Scriptures.

2:36

executed on a stake: Or "fastened on a stake (pole)."—See study note on Mt 20:19 and Glossary, "Stake"; "Torture stake."

2:38

Repent: The Greek word *me·ta·no·e'o* used here could literally be rendered "to change one's mind," signifying a change in thinking, attitude, or purpose. Previously, John the Baptist had been "preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins." (See study note on Mr 1:4.) This baptism involved

repentance for straying far from obedience to the precepts of the Law of Moses, and this repentance prepared God's people for what was to come. (Mr 1:2-4) But Peter here pointed out that in harmony with Jesus' command found at Mt 28:19, God's people would need to repent and **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of . . . sins.** Since the Jews had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, repenting and exercising faith in him was a new and vital factor in seeking and receiving God's forgiveness. They could give public evidence of such faith by being immersed in water in the name of Jesus Christ. In that way, they would symbolize their personal dedication to God through Christ.—See study notes on Mt 3:8, 11 and Glossary, "Repentance."

2:39

Jehovah: Available Greek manuscripts use the term "Lord" (Greek, *Ky'ri-os*) here. However, as explained in App. C, there are a number of reasons to believe that the divine name was originally used in this verse and later replaced by the title Lord. Therefore, the name Jehovah is used in the main text. As shown by Ac 2:33-38, **the promise** Peter mentions in this verse refers to what is stated at Joe 2:28-32 about the outpouring of holy spirit. The phrase **to all those whom Jehovah our God may call to himself** therefore seems to echo the words found at the end of Joe 2:32. The Hebrew text of Joe 2:32 uses the divine name three times, specifically stating that Jehovah is the one who does the calling.

2:41

people: Or "souls." The Greek word *psy-khe'*, traditionally rendered "soul," here refers to a living person.—See Glossary, "Soul."

2:42

to associating together: Or “to sharing with one another.” The basic meaning of the Greek word *koi·no·ni'a* is “sharing; fellowship.” Paul used this word several times in his letters. (1Co 1:9; 10:16; 2Co 6:14; 13:14) The context of this passage shows that this fellowship involves close friendship rather than just casual acquaintance.

the taking of meals: Lit., “the breaking of the bread.”—See study note on Ac 20:7.

2:43

everyone: Or “every soul.” The Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to a living person.—See Glossary, “Soul.”

wonders: Or “portents.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *te'ras* is consistently used in combination with *se·mei'on* (“sign”), both terms being used in the plural form. (Mt 24:24; Joh 4:48; Ac 7:36; 14:3; 15:12; 2Co 12:12) Basically, *te'ras* refers to anything that causes awe or wonderment. When the term clearly refers to something portending what will happen in the future, the alternate rendering “portent” is used in a study note.

2:46

in different homes: Or “from house to house.” Here the preposition *ka·ta'*, as used in the Greek phrase *kat' oi'kon* (lit., “according to house”), can be understood in a distributive sense. Apparently, during this time of need, the disciples met and shared meals at different homes of fellow believers who lived in or around Jerusalem.—See study notes on Ac 5:42; 20:20.

2:47

Jehovah: Available Greek manuscripts use the term “the Lord” (Greek, *ho . . . Ky'ri-os*) here. However, as explained in App. C, there are several reasons to believe that the divine name was originally used in this verse and later replaced by the title Lord. Therefore, the name Jehovah is used in the main text.

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 3

3:1

the hour of prayer: Prayers were apparently offered at the temple in conjunction with the morning and evening sacrifices. (Ex 29:38-42; 30:7, 8) Luke connects “the hour of offering incense” with the time when “the people were praying.” (Lu 1:10) In providing details about the daily sacrifices, Jehovah commanded King David to organize the priests and the Levites to honor, thank, and praise Him, which doubtless included prayer. (1Ch 16:4; 23:30; 2Ch 29:25, 26) Incense and prayers were therefore closely related. (Ps 141:2; Re 5:8; 8:3, 4) At the hour of prayer, people typically assembled in the temple courtyards. Some likely came to be purified by the priests that day, while many others would have come to share in the prayers and worship in general. (Lu 2:22-38) Rabbinic tradition says that the priests determined by lot which one of them who had not previously presented incense on the golden altar should have this once-in-a-lifetime honor. With all the priests and Levites gathered, the chosen priest would solemnly enter the Holy while the priests and the people in the courtyards were praying. As the pleasing aroma of incense ascended, the people continued to pray in deep silence for about half an hour. (Lu 1:9, 10) “The hour of prayer” was then brought to a joyful finale that included a blessing of the people (Nu 6:22-27) and a chorus of Levites singing the psalm designated for that day of the week.

the ninth hour: That is, about 3:00 p.m.—See study note on Ac 2:15.

3:6

the Nazarene: A descriptive epithet applied to Jesus and later to his followers. (Ac 24:5) Since many Jews had the name Jesus, it was common to add a further identification; the practice of associating people with the places from which they came was customary in Bible times. (2Sa 3:2, 3; 17:27; 23:25-39; Na 1:1; Ac 13:1; 21:29) Jesus lived most of his early life in the town of Nazareth in Galilee, so it was natural to use this term regarding him. Jesus was often referred to as “the Nazarene,” in different situations and by various individuals. (Mr 1:23, 24; 10:46, 47; 14:66-69; 16:5, 6; Lu 24:13-19; Joh 18:1-7) Jesus himself accepted the name and used it. (Joh 18:5-8; Ac 22:6-8) On the sign that Pilate placed on the torture stake, he wrote in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: “Jesus the Nazarene the King of the Jews.” (Joh 19:19, 20) From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the apostles as well as others often spoke of Jesus as the Nazarene or as being from Nazareth.—Ac 2:22; 3:6; 4:10; 6:14; 10:38; 26:9; see also study note on Mt 2:23.

3:15

Chief Agent: The Greek term used here (*ar·khe·gos*) basically means “chief leader; one who goes first.” It is used four times in the Bible, each time referring to Jesus. (Ac 3:15; 5:31; Heb 2:10; 12:2) This Greek word may also apply to one who leads the way, such as a pathfinder or a pioneer, and prepares it for others to follow. By becoming the Mediator between God and mankind and introducing the way for gaining eternal life, Jesus could rightly be called a Pioneer of Life. The expression rendered “Chief Agent” indicates that the one going first does so in an official or administrative capacity as a leader or a prince. (A related word is used at Ac 7:27, 35 regarding Moses as a “ruler” in Israel.) As the

term is used here, it includes the idea of being the means that God uses to accomplish his purpose. Jesus became “a corresponding ransom” in exchange for many. (1Ti 2:5, 6; Mt 20:28; Ac 4:12) After Jesus was resurrected, he could as High Priest and Judge administer the value of his ransom. The sacrifice allows humans who exercise faith in it to be free from sin and death. Jesus is, therefore, the one through whom the resurrection of the dead takes place. (Joh 5:28, 29; 6:39, 40) That is how he opens up the way to everlasting life. (Joh 11:25; 14:6; Heb 5:9; 10:19, 20) Although some Bible translators render this expression “Author” or “Originator” of life, the Bible clearly shows that Jesus does not fit that description. Rather, he received his life and his authority from God and is used by God.—Ps 36:9; Joh 6:57; Ac 17:26-28; Col 1:15; Re 3:14.

3:19

Repent . . . and turn around: The Greek word *me·ta·no·e'ō*, “to repent,” literally means “to change one’s mind,” signifying a change in thinking, attitude, or purpose. In this context, repentance involved a person’s wanting to repair or restore his relationship with God. A sinner who genuinely repents deeply regrets his wrong course and is determined not to repeat his sin. (2Co 7:10, 11; see study notes on Mt 3:2, 8.) Moreover, true repentance moves a sinner to “turn around,” abandoning his wrong course and pursuing a course that is pleasing to God. Both in Hebrew and in Greek, the verbs for “to turn around” (Hebrew, *shuv*; Greek, *stre'pho*; *e·pi·stre'pho*) mean “to return; to turn back (around)” in a literal sense. (Ge 18:10; 50:14; Ru 1:6; Ac 15:36) When used in a positive *spiritual* sense, however, this may denote turning to God from a wrong way.—1Ki 8:33; Eze 33:11; see study notes on Ac 15:3; 26:20.

get . . . blotted out: The Greek verb used here has been defined “to cause to disappear by wiping.” In the Bible, it is used in

connection with wiping out tears (Re 7:17; 21:4) and erasing names from the book of life (Re 3:5). In this context, it conveys the idea of “to remove so as to leave no trace.” According to some scholars, the image expressed here is that of erasing handwriting.—Compare Col 2:14, where the same Greek word is rendered “erased,” or “blotted out,” ftn.

seasons: Or “appointed times.” The Greek word *kai-ros*’ (here the plural form is rendered “seasons”) may refer to a point of time or a fixed or definite period of time or a “season” marked by certain features. (Mt 13:30; 21:34; Mr 11:13) This Greek term is used of “the appointed time” for Jesus’ ministry to begin (Mr 1:15) and the “appointed time” of his death (Mt 26:18). It is also used with reference to future times or seasons within God’s arrangement or timetable, particularly in relation to Christ’s presence and his Kingdom.—Ac 1:7; 1Th 5:1.

from Jehovah himself: Available Greek manuscripts literally read “from face of the Lord.” (See App. C.) The context of Ac 3:17-22 indicates that “the Lord” refers, not to Jesus, but to Jehovah God, the one who would “send the Christ.” (Ac 3:20) The Greek word for “Lord” (*Ky’ri-os*) is also used at Ac 3:22 in a quote from De 18:15, where the Tetragrammaton occurs in the original Hebrew text. (See study note on Ac 3:22.) In the Hebrew Scriptures, the phrase “the face of Jehovah” is a combination of the Hebrew word for “face” and the Tetragrammaton.—Ge 3:8; Ex 34:24; Jg 5:5; Ps 34:16; La 4:16.

3:21

hold this one within itself: Or “receive this one.” This apparently refers to the time during which Jesus would wait at God’s right hand in heaven until the times of restoration would begin.—Ps 110:1, 2; Lu 21:24; Heb 10:12, 13.

the times of restoration: The Greek word for “restoration” (*a·po·ka·ta'sta·sis*), in some Bible translations rendered “restitution,” comes from *a·po'*, meaning “back” or “again,” and *ka·thi'ste·mi*, literally meaning “to set down.” The corresponding verb is translated “restoring” at Ac 1:6. Josephus used the Greek word for “restoration” in referring to the return of the Jews from their exile in Babylon. In papyrus writings, the word is used of the repair of certain buildings, the restoration of estates to rightful owners, and the balancing of accounts. Ac 3:21 does not specify what things would be restored, so this **restoration of all things** must be ascertained by a study of God’s message spoken through his **prophets of old**. Restoration is a recurring theme in the writings of the Hebrew prophets. Through them, Jehovah promised a land restored and repopulated, fertile, protected from wild beasts and enemy attacks. He described their restored land as a paradise! (Isa 65:25; Eze 34:25; 36:35) Above all, the temple would be rebuilt, and pure worship would be reestablished. (Isa 2:1-5; Mic 4:1-5) The foretold restoration would include both a spiritual and a physical restoration.

3:22

Jehovah: In this quote from De 18:15, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text. It is worth noting that when this quote occurs in an early fragment of the *Septuagint* (Papyrus Fouad Inv. 266), the divine name is written in square Hebrew characters () within the Greek text. This fragment is dated to the first century B.C.E. (See App. A5.) Also a number of translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{7, 8, 10-18, 20, 22-24, 28} in App. C4) use the Tetragrammaton here. So although existing manuscripts of the Christian Greek Scriptures use *Ky'ri-os* (Lord) here, there are good reasons for using the divine name in the main text.—See App. C.

3:23

anyone: Or “any soul.” The Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to an individual or a person. (See Glossary, “Soul.”) This is one of several verses in the Christian Greek Scriptures that speak of the “soul” (*psy·khe'*) as mortal and destructible.—See study notes on Mt 2:20; Mr 3:4; Lu 6:9; see also Heb 10:39, ftn.; Jas 5:20, ftn.

3:25

offspring: Lit., “seed.”—See App. A2.— The term “seed” in ancient Hebrew and Greek could refer to plant seed as well as to human offspring, or descendants, or to semen. Because it is no longer common in English to use the term “seed” when referring to humans, it was replaced with expressions that convey the intended idea according to the context. (Genesis 1:11; 22:17; 48:4; Matthew 22:24; John 8:37) In most cases, the term “offspring” is now used when referring to the Edenic promise, found at Genesis 3:15.



Video Introduction to the Book of Acts

Related Scripture(s) Ac 1:1

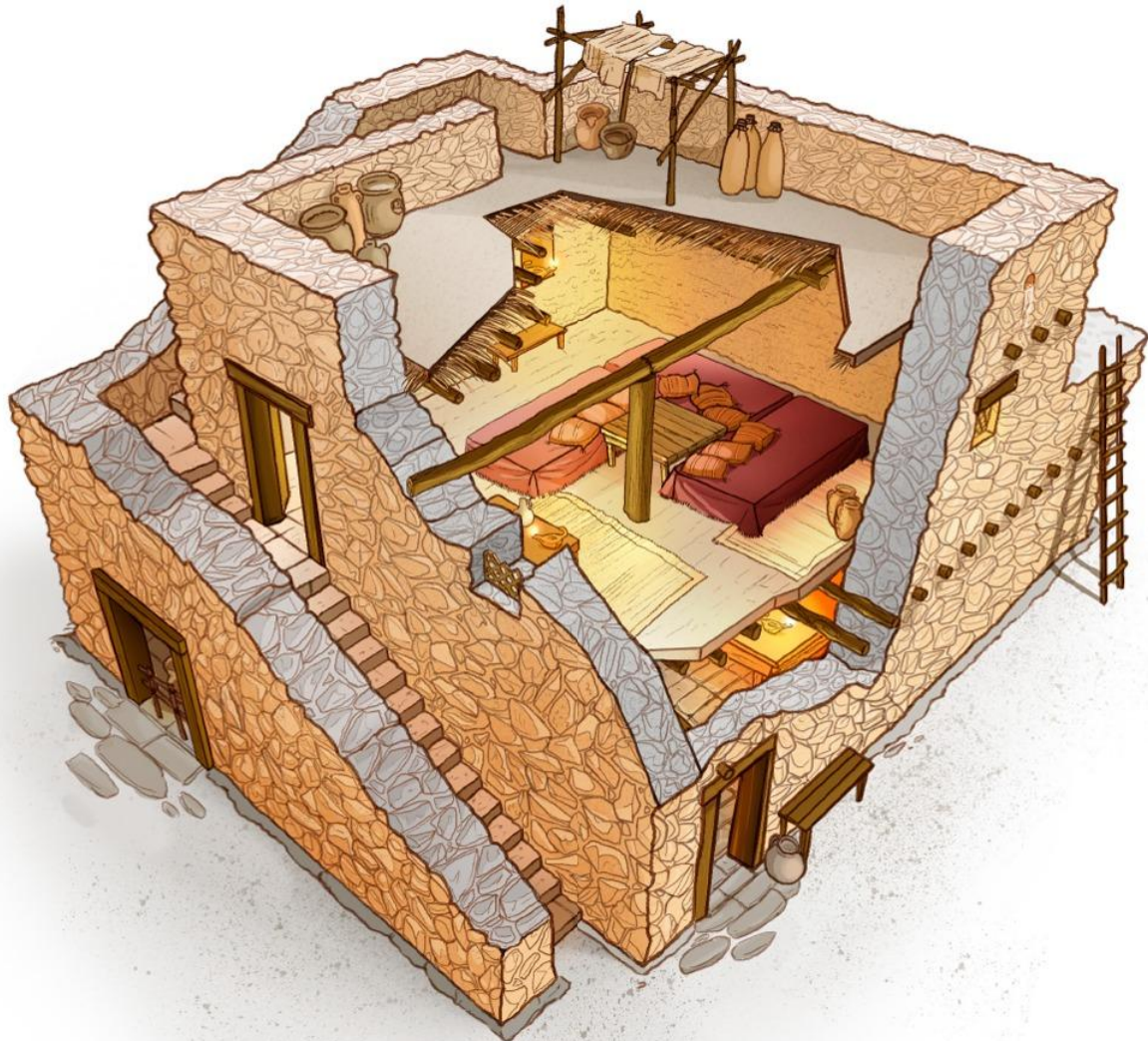


Bethphage, the Mount of Olives, and Jerusalem

This short video follows a path approaching Jerusalem from the east, from the village of modern-day et-Tur—thought to correspond to the Biblical Bethphage—to one of the higher points on the Mount of Olives. Bethany lies east of Bethphage on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. When in Jerusalem, Jesus and his disciples customarily spent the night at Bethany, today marked by the town of el-‘Azariyeh (El ‘Eizariya), an Arabic name meaning “The Place of Lazarus.” Jesus undoubtedly stayed at the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. (Mt 21:17; Mr 11:11; Lu 21:37; Joh 11:1) When traveling from their home to Jerusalem, Jesus may have followed a route similar to the one shown in the video. On Nisan 9, 33 C.E., when Jesus rode the colt of a donkey over the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, he may well have done so from Bethphage, following the road to Jerusalem.

1. Road from Bethany to Bethphage
2. Bethphage
3. Mount of Olives
4. Kidron Valley
5. Temple Mount

Related Scripture(s) Mt 21:1; Mr 11:1; Lu 19:29; Ac 1:12



Upper Room

Some homes in Israel had an upper story. That room was accessed by means of an inside ladder or wooden staircase or an outside stone staircase or a ladder. In a large upper chamber, possibly similar to the one depicted here, Jesus celebrated the last Passover with his disciples and instituted the commemoration of the Lord's Evening Meal. (Lu 22:12, 19, 20) On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., about 120 disciples were apparently in an upper chamber of a house in Jerusalem when God's spirit was poured out on them.—Ac 1:15; 2:1-4.

Related Scripture(s) Mr 14:15; Lu 22:12; Ac 1:13; Ac 9:37

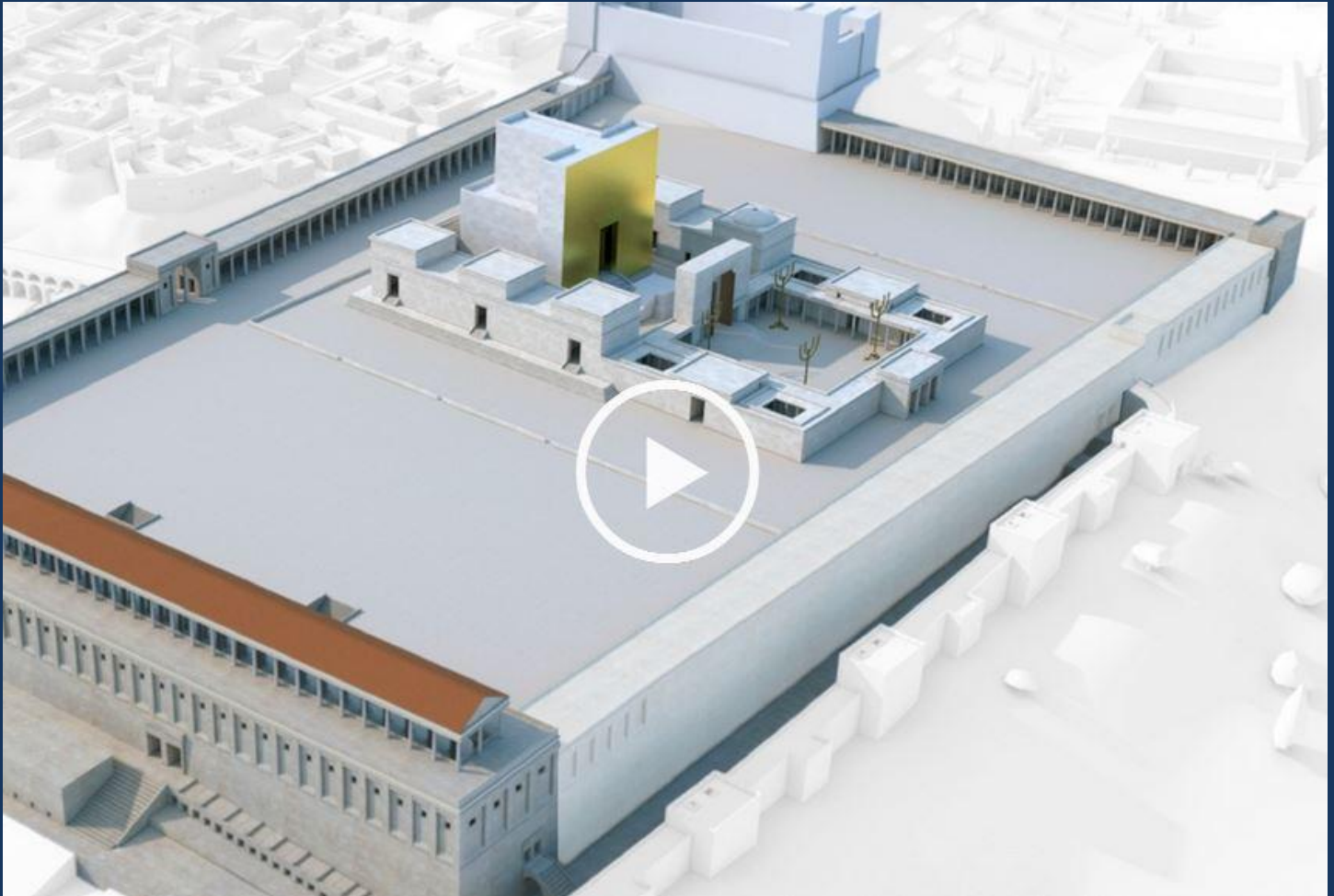


Courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority

Theodotus Inscription to Greek-Speaking Jews

The text shown here, carved on a limestone slab measuring 72 cm (28 in.) in length and 42 cm (17 in.) in width, is known as the Theodotus Inscription. It was discovered at the beginning of the 20th century on the hill of Ophel in Jerusalem. The text, written in Greek, refers to Theodotus, a priest who “built the synagogue for the reading of the Law and for teaching the commandments.” The inscription has been dated to the time before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. It confirms the presence of Greek-speaking Jews in Jerusalem in the first century C.E. (Ac 6:1) Some believe that this synagogue was “the so-called Synagogue of the Freedmen.” (Ac 6:9) The inscription also mentions that Theodotus, as well as his father and his grandfather, had the title *ar-khi-sy-na'go-gos* (“presiding officer of the synagogue”), a title used a number of times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Mr 5:35; Lu 8:49; Ac 13:15; 18:8, 17) The inscription also states that Theodotus built accommodations for those visiting from abroad. The lodging mentioned in the inscription would likely have been used by Jews visiting Jerusalem, especially those who came during the yearly festivals.—Ac 2:5.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 2:5; Ac 6:1; Ac 9:29



Solomon's Colonnade

This 3-D animation shows one possibility of what Solomon's Colonnade may have looked like. Located on the east side of the outer courtyard of the first-century temple in Jerusalem, Solomon's Colonnade was a spacious, covered passageway. The Bible mentions this location three times by name. John states that on one occasion when Jesus walked through this colonnade, a group of Jews surrounded him, demanding that he tell them if he was the Christ. (Joh 10:22-24) Later, an amazed crowd gathered at Solomon's Colonnade to hear Peter explain how he had cured a man who was crippled from birth. (Ac 3:1-7, 11) And early Christians met publicly in Solomon's Colonnade.—Ac 5:12, 13; see Glossary, "Solomon's Colonnade."

Related Scripture(s) Joh 10:23; Ac 3:11; Ac 5:12

- Song 104 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- “Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation”: (10 min.)

[Play the video *Introduction to Acts*.]

Ac 2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41—After receiving holy spirit, Jesus’ disciples gave a witness that resulted in the baptism of about 3,000

Ac 2:42-47—Jesus’ disciples showed great generosity and hospitality, allowing newly baptized ones visiting Jerusalem to lengthen their stay and have their faith strengthened (*w86 12/1 29 ¶4-5, 7*)

- Digging for Spiritual Gems: (8 min.)

Ac 3:15—Why is Jesus called “the Chief Agent of life”? (*it-2 61 ¶1*)

Ac 3:19—How does this verse describe the way Jehovah forgives repentant wrongdoers? (*cl 265 ¶14*)

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) Ac 2:1-21

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- Initial Call: (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- First Return Visit Video: (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- Talk: (6 min. or less) *it-1 129 ¶2-3*—Theme: Why Was Judas Replaced When the Apostles Who Died Faithful Were Not?

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 85
- “Cooperating to Preach in Multilingual Territory”: (15 min.) Discussion by the service overseer. Play and discuss the video. Outline local arrangements for working multilingual territory.
- Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.) *fy chap. 43 ¶1-7*
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 68 and Prayer

ACTS 1-3 | Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation



2:1-8, 14, 37, 38, 41-47

Many Jews who were present in Jerusalem during Pentecost 33 C.E. came from other nations. (Ac 2:9-11) Although they observed the Mosaic Law, they may have lived in a foreign land their entire life. (Jer 44:1) Therefore, some may have looked and talked more like the natives of their country than like the Jews. When 3,000 from this multinational crowd got baptized, the Christian congregation suddenly became much more diverse. Despite their different backgrounds, “they were in constant attendance in the temple with a united purpose.”—Ac 2:46.



How can you show genuine interest in . . .

people in your territory who are from other lands?

brothers and sisters in your congregation who are from other lands?



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: Where can we find help to deal with grief?

Scripture: 2Co 1:3, 4

Link: What happens when someone dies?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What happens when someone dies?

Scripture: Ec 9:5, 10

Link: What hope do we have for the dead?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What hope do we have for the dead?

Scripture: Ac 24:15

Link: Where will the resurrection take place?

Sample Conversations-November 2018

FIRST RETURN VISIT

Linda (Publisher 1): Hi Jamie. It's me Linda, Susan and I glad to see you again.

Jamie (Householder): It's good to see you too.

Linda (Publisher 1): The last time we were here we left you with the question what happens when someone dies. How would you answer that question.

Jamie (Householder): Hmm, to be honest I'm not really sure. Some people say we go to heaven. Others say we come back in another life.

Linda (Publisher 1): It's true that people have a lot of different ideas. Has anyone ever showed you though what the Bible says on the matter?

Jamie (Householder): No, I don't think so.

Linda (Publisher 1): You may be surprised at its answer. Notice what we read here at Ecclesiastics 9:5 and 10, Susan, would you please read that?

Susan (Publisher 2): Sure I'd be happy to it says:

Ecclesiastics 9:5, 10

"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all, nor do they have any more reward, because all memory of them is forgotten. Whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might for there is no work nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the Grave, where you are going."

Linda (Publisher 1): Thank you. So if there is no work or planning in the grave what does that teach us about the condition of the dead?

Jamie (Householder): It says the dead know nothing at all.

Linda (Publisher 1): That's right, according to this do we need to fear for our loved ones who've died as if they're suffering or in pain for their past sins?

Jamie (Publisher 1): Not of the dead or unconscious.

Linda (Publisher 1): Exactly, however death doesn't have to be the end. The Bible teaches that there is a wonderful hope for those who've died. When we come back another time we'll show you what the Bible says about that.

Jamie (Householder): Okay. I can't wait.

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

- **Initial Call:** (2 minutes or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **First Return Visit Video:** (5 minutes) Play and discuss the video.
- **Talk:** (6 minutes or less) *it-1* 129 paragraphs 2-3—Theme: Why Was Judas Replaced When the Apostles Who Died Faithful Were Not?

Because of the defection of Judas Iscariot, who died unfaithful, there were only 11 apostles remaining, and during the 40 days from Jesus' resurrection until his ascension to heaven he made no appointment of a replacement. Sometime during the ten days between Jesus' ascension and the day of Pentecost it was viewed as necessary that another be selected to fill the vacancy left by Judas, not simply on the basis of his death but, rather, on the basis of his wicked defection, as the Scriptures quoted by Peter indicate. (Acts 1:15-22; Psalm 69:25; 109:8; compare Revelation 3:11.) Thus, by contrast, when the *faithful* apostle James was put to death, there is no record of any concern to appoint anyone to succeed him in his position of apostle.—Acts 12:2.

It is evident from Peter's statements that it was then considered that any individual filling the position of an apostle of Jesus Christ must have the qualifications of having been personally conversant with him, having been an eyewitness of his works, his miracles, and particularly his resurrection. In view of this it can be seen that any apostolic succession would in course of time become an impossibility, unless there were divine action to supply these requirements in each individual case. At that particular time before Pentecost, however, there were men meeting these requirements, and two were put forth as suitable for replacing unfaithful Judas. Doubtless having in mind Proverbs 16:33, lots were cast, and

Matthias was selected and was thereafter “reckoned along with the eleven apostles.” (Acts 1:23-26) He is thus included among “the twelve” who settled the problem concerning the Greek-speaking disciples (Acts 6:1, 2), and evidently Paul includes him in referring to “the twelve” when speaking of Jesus’ postresurrection appearances at 1 Corinthians 15:4-8. Thus, when Pentecost arrived, there were 12 apostolic foundations on which the spiritual Israel then formed could rest.

Welcome One Another

(Romans 15:7)

1. Welcome to all who gather here this day
To hear God's Word and to learn his way.
Life-giving truth he offers to us all;
With thankfulness of heart, we respond to his call.
2. Thanks to our God for brothers such as these,
Who welcome us and who seek to please.
May we keep holding men of that sort dear,
And now we welcome others who meet with us here.
3. God's invitation reaches all mankind,
That all sincere ones the truth may find.
God by his Son has drawn us to His side.
So welcome one another with hearts opened wide.

- Song 104 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “Holy Spirit Is Poured Out on the Christian Congregation”: (10 min.)

[Play the video *Introduction to Acts*.]

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 **How can you show genuine interest in . . .**
people in your territory who are from other lands?

brothers and sisters in your congregation who are from other lands?

Cooperating to Preach in Multilingual Territory

People often respond more readily to the Kingdom message when they hear it spoken in their native language. Perhaps that is why at Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah arranged for “devout Jews from every nation under heaven” to hear the good news in their “own native language,” even though they likely spoke a common language, such as Hebrew or Greek. (Ac 2:5, 8) In multilingual areas today, congregations that hold meetings in different languages may have territory in the same neighborhoods. How can publishers in such congregations cooperate to give everyone a witness while avoiding unnecessary overlapping of efforts that may irritate householders?



- **Consult (Pr 15:22):** Service overseers should consult together and work out a mutually acceptable system for spreading the good news. If their territory is limited, congregations that preach in other languages will likely want you to skip homes that are in their territory. However, if they are unable to cover all their territory regularly because it is scattered over a large area, they may prefer that you not skip any homes but inform them when someone in their territory shows interest. (*od 93 ¶137*) Or they may ask that your congregation help them to find people who speak the language of their congregation and whose addresses can be transferred to their territory. (*km 7/12 5, box*) Keep in mind that in some instances, more than one language may be spoken in the same home. Arrangements for covering the territory should comply with applicable data protection laws.
- **Cooperate (Eph 4:16):** Carefully follow any direction you receive from your service overseer. Are you conducting a Bible study with someone whose preferred language is not the language of your congregation? The student would likely progress faster if you transferred the study to a nearby congregation or group that speaks his language.
- **Prepare (Pr 15:28; 16:1):** If a householder in your territory speaks a different language, do your best to share the good news. You can prepare by anticipating the languages you may encounter and by downloading in advance Bible translations and videos onto your mobile device. You can also use the *JW Language* app to learn greetings in some languages.



43

ILLUSTRATIONS ABOUT THE KINGDOM

MATTHEW 13:1-53 MARK 4:1-34 LUKE 8:4-18

- JESUS GIVES KINGDOM ILLUSTRATIONS

Jesus is apparently in Capernaum when he rebukes the Pharisees. Later that day, he leaves the house and walks to the nearby Sea of Galilee, where crowds gather. Jesus boards a boat, pulls out from the shore, and begins teaching the people about the Kingdom of the heavens. He does so by means of a number of illustrations, or parables. His listeners are familiar with many of the settings or features that Jesus mentions, making it easier for them to grasp various aspects of the Kingdom.

First, Jesus tells of a sower who is sowing seed. Some seeds fall alongside the road and are eaten by birds. Other seeds fall on rocky ground where there is not much soil. The roots that develop cannot reach down far, and the new plants are scorched by the sun and wither. Still other seeds fall among thorns, which choke the young plants when they



come up. Finally, some seeds fall on fine soil. These seeds produce fruit, “this one 100 times more, that one 60, the other 30.”—Matthew 13:8.

In another illustration, Jesus likens the Kingdom to when a man sows seeds. In this case, whether the man sleeps or is awake, the seeds grow. Just how, “he does not know.” (Mark 4:27) They grow by themselves and produce grain, which he can harvest.

Jesus then tells a third illustration about sowing. A man sows the right kind of seed, but “while men were sleeping,” an enemy sows weeds in among the wheat. The man’s slaves ask if they should pull out the weeds. He replies: “No, for fear that while collecting the weeds, you uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest season, I will tell the reapers: First collect the weeds and bind them in bundles to burn them up; then gather the wheat into my storehouse.”—Matthew 13:24-30.

Many who are listening to Jesus know about farming. He also mentions something else commonly known, the tiny mustard seed. It grows into a

tree so large that birds can lodge in its branches. About this seed, he says: “The Kingdom of the heavens is like a mustard grain that a man took and planted in his field.” (Matthew 13:31) Jesus, however, is not giving a botany lesson. He is illustrating spectacular growth, how something very small can grow or expand into something very large.

Then Jesus draws on a process that is familiar to many of his listeners. He likens the Kingdom of the heavens to “leaven that a woman took and mixed with three large measures of flour.” (Matthew 13:33) Although such leaven is hidden from view, it permeates every part of the dough and makes it rise. It produces considerable growth and changes that are not readily discernible.

After giving these illustrations, Jesus dismisses the crowds and returns to the house where he is staying. Soon his disciples come to him, wanting to understand what he meant.

- ◇ When and where does Jesus speak with illustrations to the crowds?
- ◇ What five illustrations does Jesus first present?

Sowing Kingdom Seed

(Matthew 13:4-8)

1. Come share in the work of our Master;
Respond to his call and obey.
He offers to help and to guide you;
His teaching will show you the way.
The seed of the truth has power to grow
In hearts that are honest and true.
So give of your best as you faithfully share
In the work you've been given to do.
2. How much of your work is successful
May often depend much on you.
Those hearing will need your assistance
To learn and to love what is true.
So help them to deal with pressures and doubts
They're certain to face on their way.
The seed of the truth will bring joy when you see
How it grows in their heart day by day.

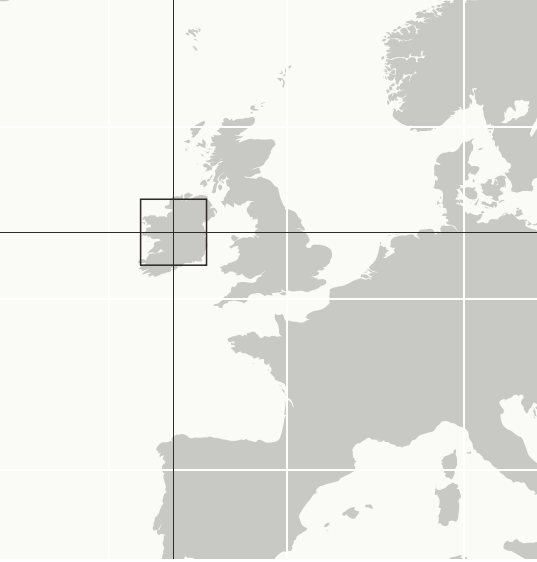
SEPTEMBER 2018

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

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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.

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29 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 12-18

Happy Are Those Who Serve “the Happy God”

Jehovah is a happy God who wants his servants to be happy. How, though, can we be happy despite the trials and difficulties of Satan’s world? In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gave very practical advice that can help us to be lastingly happy.

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Almighty yet Considerate

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Be Considerate and Kind in Imitation of Jehovah

In a world where people are becoming increasingly self-centered, the Christian congregation stands out as a beacon of love. One aspect of that love is consideration for others, the topic of these two articles. First, we will see how Jehovah sets a wonderful example of being considerate of others. Then we will review some practical ways in which we can imitate him.

44 *A Prayer of the Lowly One* (Psalm 4:1)

1. Jehovah God, I call to you and ask you:

“Hear my prayer.”

My wounds are deep and slow to heal;
my load is hard to bear.

Despondent thoughts and disappointed hopes
have left me weak.

O God of comfort, care for me;
your favor I do seek.

(CHORUS)

Do raise me up; help me endure.

When I'm in doubt, make my hope sure.

From deep despair, I turn to you.

Jehovah God, my strength renew.

2. Your Word has been my comfort and
a refuge when I'm weak,

Expressing feelings dear to me
in words I cannot speak.

Please build in me the faith and trust
that your Word does impart.

And help me always know your love
is greater than my heart.

(Chorus)



Happy Are Those Who Serve “the Happy God”

“Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!”—PS. 144:15.

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES certainly are a happy people. Their meetings, assemblies, and social gatherings are characterized by the pleasant sound of joyful conversations and laughter. Why are

1. Why are Jehovah’s worshippers a happy people? (See opening picture.)

SONGS:
44, 125

**HOW WOULD YOU
ANSWER?**

What is
fundamental to
true happiness?

What qualities help
us to be happy?

How can we be
happy though
enduring
difficulties?

they so happy? The main reason is that they know, serve, and strive to imitate Jehovah, “the happy God.” (1 Tim. 1:11; Ps. 16:11) Being the Source of happiness, God wants us to be happy, and he gives us many reasons to rejoice.—Deut. 12:7; Eccl. 3:12, 13.

² What about you personally? Are you happy? Can you increase your happiness? Happiness may be defined as “a state of well-being that is characterized by relative permanence, by emotion ranging from mere contentment to deep and intense joy in living, and by a natural desire for it to continue.” The Bible shows that true happiness refers to the condition of one who is blessed by Jehovah. In today’s world, though, being happy may be a challenge. Why?

³ Stressful events—such as when a loved one dies or is disfellowshipped or when faced with a divorce or the loss of a job—can rob us of happiness. Domestic strife and a breakdown in peaceful communication can erode our sense of well-being. Ridicule by workmates or classmates, religious persecution, or imprisonment can undermine our happiness. So can deteriorating health, chronic illness, or depres-

2, 3. (a) What is happiness? (b) Why might it be a challenge to be happy?

sion. Nevertheless, Jesus Christ, “the happy and only Potentate,” delighted in bringing comfort and happiness to people. (1 Tim. 6:15; Matt. 11:28-30) In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus identified a number of qualities that can contribute to our happiness despite distressing trials in Satan’s world.

STRONG SPIRITUALITY —FUNDAMENTAL TO HAPPINESS

⁴ The first thing that Jesus focused on is especially important: “*Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.*” (Matt. 5:3) How do we show that we are conscious of that need? We do so by taking in spiritual food, cherishing spiritual values, and giving priority to worshipping the happy God. If we take those steps, our happiness will grow. We will strengthen our faith in the coming fulfillment of God’s promises. And we will be encouraged by “the happy hope” that God’s Word provides for true worshippers.—Titus 2:13.

⁵ Building a strong relationship with Jehovah is a vital part of finding lasting happiness. The apostle Paul was inspired to write: “Always rejoice in the Lord [Jehovah]. Again I will say, Rejoice!” (Phil.

4, 5. How can we gain and maintain happiness?

4:4) To enjoy such a precious relationship, we need to acquire divine wisdom. God’s Word states: “Happy is the man who finds wisdom and the man who acquires discernment. 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.

⁶ However, to be lastingly happy, it is vital that we not only read God’s Word but apply it. Confirming the importance of putting into practice what we learn, Jesus said: “If you know these things, happy you are if you do them.” (John 13:17; read James 1:25.) This is the key to satisfying your spiritual need and being lastingly happy. But how can we be happy when there is so much that can rob us of happiness? Let us examine what Jesus next said in the Sermon on the Mount.

QUALITIES THAT ENHANCE HAPPINESS

⁷ *“Happy are those who mourn, since they will be comforted.”* (Matt. 5:4) Some may wonder, ‘How is it possible for those who mourn to be happy?’ Jesus did not have in mind all who mourn for any sort of reason. Even wicked people bemoan the distressing difficulties that characterize these “critical times

6. Our lasting happiness depends on what?

7. How can those who mourn be happy?

hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) But their self-centered mourning does not draw them closer to Jehovah; hence, it does not lead them toward happiness. Jesus must have had in mind people who are conscious of their spiritual need and therefore mourn the appalling spiritual conditions that prevail. They may recognize their own sinful state and the heartbreaking circumstances that have resulted from human sinfulness. Jehovah takes note of such sincere mourners; he comforts and blesses them with spiritual consolation, happiness, and life.—Read Ezekiel 5:11; 9:4.

⁸ *“Happy are the mild-tempered, since they will inherit the earth.”* (Matt. 5:5) How can being mild-tempered contribute to happiness? After coming to an accurate knowledge of the truth, individuals change. At one time, they may have been harsh, quarrelsome, and aggressive. But now they have clothed themselves with “the new personality” and display “the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:9-12) As a result, they now enjoy a peaceful, loving, and happier life. Furthermore, God’s Word promises that such ones will “inherit the earth.”—Ps. 37:8-10, 29.

8. Explain how being mild-tempered contributes to happiness.

⁹ In what sense do the mild-tempered “inherit the earth”? Jesus’ spirit-anointed disciples inherit the earth when they rule over it as kings and priests. (Rev. 20:6) Millions of others who do not have the heavenly calling, however, will inherit the earth in the sense that they will be allowed to live here forever in perfection, peace, and happiness. These are the same ones who are happy because of “*hungering and thirsting for righteousness.*” (Matt. 5:6) Their spiritual hunger and thirst for righteousness will be fully satisfied in the new world. (2 Pet. 3:13) When God has finally eliminated all wickedness, the happiness of righteous ones will never again be undermined by lawlessness and unrighteousness.—Ps. 37:17.

¹⁰ “*Happy are the merciful, since they will be shown mercy.*” (Matt. 5:7) A Hebrew verb associated with mercy means “to glow, to feel warm with tender emotion; . . . to be compassionate.” Similarly, the Greek verb includes the sense of feeling sympathy for someone else. However, mercy is more than a tender feeling. In the Bible, it includes the active *manifestation of pity by an act of mercy.*

9. (a) In what sense do the mild-tempered “inherit the earth”?
(b) Why can “those hungering and thirsting for righteousness” be happy?

10. What does it mean to be merciful?

¹¹ Read Luke 10:30-37. Jesus' illustration of the neighborly Samaritan vividly portrays what it means to show mercy. Moved by heartfelt compassion and mercy, the Samaritan took positive action to bring relief to the suffering victim. After relating the illustration, Jesus said: "Go and do the same yourself." Hence, we might ask ourselves: 'Am I doing the same? Am I doing what the compassionate Samaritan did? Could I more actively display mercy and engage in positive deeds of kindness toward those who are suffering? For instance, could I offer practical help to older fellow Christians, widows, and those who are spiritually fatherless children? Can I take the initiative to "speak consolingly to those who are depressed"?'—1 Thess. 5:14; Jas. 1:27.

¹² How, though, does being merciful result in happiness? When we display mercy toward others, we enjoy the happiness that results from giving. Moreover, we know that we are pleasing Jehovah. (Acts 20:35; read Hebrews 13:16.) Regarding a person who shows consideration, King David said: "Jehovah will guard him and keep him alive. He will be

11. What can we learn about being merciful from the illustration of the neighborly Samaritan?

12. How does being merciful contribute to our happiness?



Take the initiative to display mercy, and see how much happiness results
(See paragraph 12)

pronounced happy in the earth.” (Ps. 41:1, 2) Giving expression to our feelings of compassion will also put us in line to receive Jehovah’s mercy, which in turn can result in our being eternally happy. —Jas. 2:13.

WHY “THE PURE IN HEART” ARE HAPPY

¹³ *“Happy are the pure in heart,”* Jesus said, “since they will see God.” (Matt. 5:8) To keep our hearts

13, 14. What is the relationship between a pure heart and happiness?

pure, we must be clean on the inside and nurture chaste affections and desires. We need to keep our thoughts clean so as to be spiritually untainted in our devotion to Jehovah.—Read 2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Tim. 1:5.

¹⁴ Those who are pure in heart can enjoy a clean and happy standing before Jehovah, who declared: *“Happy are those who wash their robes.”* (Rev. 22:14) In what sense do they “wash their robes”? Anointed Christians “wash their robes” in that they are clean in Jehovah’s eyes and will be granted immortal life and enjoy endless happiness in their heavenly position. The great crowd who hope to live on earth can also enjoy a righteous standing as friends of God. They are even now ‘washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb.’—Rev. 7:9, 13, 14.

¹⁵ How, though, do the pure in heart “see God” when, in fact, “no man can see [God] and live”? (Ex. 33:20) The Greek word rendered “see” can carry the sense of “to see with the mind, to perceive, know.” Those who see God with ‘the eyes of the heart’ are those who have really come to know him, appreciating his qualities. (Eph. 1:18) Jesus perfectly reflected God’s personality, so he could say:

15, 16. How can the pure in heart “see God”?

“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father also.”
—John 14:7-9.

¹⁶ In addition to getting to know God’s qualities, true worshippers can “see God” by observing the way he acts in their behalf. (Job 42:5) They also focus ‘their eyes of the heart’ on the wonderful blessings that God holds out for those who strive to remain pure and to serve him loyally. Of course, resurrected anointed ones will in a literal sense see Jehovah when they receive their heavenly reward.
—1 John 3:2.

HAPPY DESPITE DIFFICULTIES

¹⁷ Jesus next said: “*Happy are the peacemakers.*” (Matt. 5:9) Those who take the initiative to make peace have good reason to be happy. The disciple James wrote: “The fruit of righteousness is sown in peaceful conditions for those who are making peace.” (Jas. 3:18) When we have a strained relationship with someone either in the congregation or in the family, we can plead for God’s help to be peacemakers. Thus, Jehovah’s holy spirit, righteous conduct, and happiness can predominate. Jesus emphasized the importance of taking the initiative to make peace when he said: “If, then, you are bring-

17. What role does peace play in being happy?

ing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.”—Matt. 5:23, 24.

¹⁸ *“Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake.”* What did Jesus mean? He went on to say: “Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.” (Matt. 5:11, 12) When the apostles were beaten and commanded to stop preaching, “they went out from before the Sanhedrin, rejoicing.” Of course, they did not relish the pain of being whipped. Yet, they rejoiced “because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus’] name.”—Acts 5:41.

¹⁹ In our time, Jehovah’s people also endure with joy when they suffer in behalf of Jesus’ name or when they face difficult trials. (Read James 1:2-4.) Like the apostles, we do not take delight in any kind of suffering. But if we maintain our integrity to God during trials, Jehovah can help us to endure with fortitude. For example, in August 1944, authorities in a totalitarian regime sent Henryk Dornik and his

18, 19. Why can Christians rejoice even if they are persecuted?

brother to a concentration camp. However, the opposers acknowledged: “It is impossible to persuade them to do anything. Their martyrdom brings them joy.” Brother Dornik explained: “Although I had no desire to be a martyr, suffering with courage and dignity for my loyalty to Jehovah did bring me joy. . . . Fervent prayers drew me closer to Jehovah, and he proved to be a reliable Helper.”

²⁰ When we have the smile of approval of “the happy God,” we can be happy despite religious persecution, opposition at home, sickness, or advanced age. (1 Tim. 1:11) We also experience happiness because of the precious promises of our God, “who cannot lie.” (Titus 1:2) The fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises will be so impressive that the difficulties and trials of the present time will pale into insignificance. In the coming Paradise, the blessings from Jehovah will surpass our imagination. And we will certainly experience unprecedented happiness. Yes, we “will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Ps. 37:11.

20. Why are we happy to serve “the happy God”?

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.

