

- Song 124 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The New Christian Congregation Is Tested”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 6:1—Greek-speaking widows were apparently being discriminated against in the congregation (bt 41 ¶17)
 Ac 6:2-7—The apostles acted to resolve the problem (bt 42 ¶18)
 Ac 7:58-8:1—Great persecution arose against the congregation
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 6:15—In what sense was Stephen’s face “like an angel’s face”? (bt 45 ¶2)

 Ac 8:26-30—In what way are Christians today privileged to share in work like that done by Philip? (bt 58 ¶16)

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 6:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *Jvs* 38 ¶16-17

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 109
- **“A Gift in Hand for Jehovah”:** (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Begin by playing the video ‘A Gift in Hand to Jehovah’ (video category OUR ORGANIZATION). Read the letter from the branch expressing appreciation for the donations received during the past service year. Consider how we benefit from making donations. Outline the local congregation’s monthly expenses. Discuss how we can donate and how these donations are used. Commend the congregation for its generous support.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jj* chap. 43 ¶19-29
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 67 and Prayer

ACTS 6-8 | The New Christian Congregation Is Tested

6:1-7; 7:58-8:1

Newly baptized Greek-speaking widows who had lengthened their visit to Jerusalem were being discriminated against. Did this injustice stumble them, or did they patiently wait on Jehovah to correct matters?

After Stephen was stoned and intense persecution caused Christians in Jerusalem to scatter throughout Judea and Samaria, did they slow down in their ministry?

With Jehovah’s backing, the new Christian congregation endured and flourished.—Ac 6:7; 8:4.

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How am I dealing with trials?’



Ever Loyal (Psalm 18:25)

1. Ever loyal to Jehovah,
Loyal love we wish to show.
As a people, dedicated,
His commands we want to know.
His advice will never fail us,
And his counsel we obey.
He is loyal; we can trust him.
From his side we'll never stray.
2. Ever loyal to our brothers,
Sticking close in times of need.
Ever caring, always trusting,
Ever kind in word and deed.
We show honor to our brothers
And respect them from the heart.
Ever loyal, ever closer,
From their side we'll never part.
3. Ever loyal to their guidance
When our brothers lead the way.
When they give us clear direction,
May we loyally obey.
Then the blessing from Jehovah
Will be ours to make us strong.
When we're loyal, ever faithful,
To Jehovah we'll belong.

Acts 6-8

6 Now in those days when the disciples were increasing, the Greek-speaking Jews began complaining against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution. ² So the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples together and said: "It is not right for us to leave the word of God to distribute food to tables. ³ So, brothers, select for yourselves seven reputable men from among you, full of spirit and wisdom, that we may appoint them over this necessary matter; ⁴ but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." ⁵ What they said was pleasing to the whole multitude, and they selected Stephen, a man full of faith and holy spirit, as well as Philip, Proch'o-rus, Ni-ca'nor, Ti'mon, Par'me-nas, and Nic-o-la'us, a proselyte of Antioch. ⁶ They brought them to the apostles, and after praying, they laid their hands on them.

⁷ Consequently, the word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying very much in Jerusalem; and a large crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith.

⁸ Now Stephen, full of divine favor and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people. ⁹ But some men of the so-called Synagogue of the Freedmen came forward, along with some Cy-re'ni-ans and Alexandrians, and some from Ci-li'cia and Asia, to dispute with Stephen. ¹⁰ But they could not hold their own against the wisdom and the spirit with which he was speaking.

¹¹ Then they secretly persuaded men to say: "We have heard him speaking blasphemous things against Moses and God." ¹² And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and coming upon him suddenly, they forcibly seized him and led him to the San'he-drin. ¹³ And they brought forward false witnesses, who said: "This man does not stop speaking things against this holy place and against the Law. ¹⁴ For instance, we have heard him say that

this Jesus the Naz-a-rene' will throw down this place and change the customs that Moses handed down to us.”

¹⁵ And as all those sitting in the San'he-drin stared at him, they saw that his face was like an angel's face.

7 But the high priest said: “Are these things so?” ² Stephen replied: “Men, brothers and fathers, listen. The God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mes-o-po-ta'mi-a, before he took up residence in Ha'ran, ³ and he said to him: ‘Go out from your land and from your relatives and come into the land that I will show you.’ ⁴ Then he went out of the land of the Chal-de'ans and took up residence in Ha'ran. And from there, after his father died, God caused him to resettle in this land where you now dwell. ⁵ And yet, he did not give him any inheritance in it, no, not even enough to put his foot on; but he promised to give it to him as a possession and after him to his offspring, though as yet he had no child. ⁶ Moreover, God told him that his offspring would be foreigners in a land not theirs and that the people would enslave them and afflict them for 400 years. ⁷ ‘And that nation for which they will slave I will judge,’ God said, ‘and after these things they will come out and will offer sacred service to me in this place.’

⁸ “He also gave him a covenant of circumcision, and he became the father of Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day, and Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob of the 12 family heads. ⁹ And the family heads became jealous of Joseph and sold him into Egypt. But God was with him, ¹⁰ and he rescued him out of all his tribulations and gave him favor and wisdom before Phar'aoh king of Egypt. And he appointed him to govern Egypt and his whole house. ¹¹ But a famine came on all of Egypt and Ca'naan, yes, a great tribulation, and our forefathers could not find anything to eat. ¹² But Jacob heard that there were food supplies in Egypt, and he sent our forefathers out the first time. ¹³ During the second time, Joseph made himself known to his brothers, and the family of

Joseph became known to Phar'aoh. ¹⁴ So Joseph sent a message and called his father Jacob and all his relatives from that place, 75 persons in all. ¹⁵ So Jacob went down into Egypt, and he died there, and so did our forefathers. ¹⁶ They were carried to She'chem and were laid in the tomb that Abraham had bought for a sum of silver money from the sons of Ha'mor in She'chem.

¹⁷ “Just as the time was approaching to fulfill the promise that God had announced to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, ¹⁸ until there rose a different king over Egypt, one who did not know of Joseph. ¹⁹ This one dealt cunningly with our race and wrongfully forced the fathers to abandon their infants so that they would not be kept alive. ²⁰ At that time Moses was born, and he was divinely beautiful. And he was nursed for three months in his father's home. ²¹ But when he was abandoned, the daughter of Phar'aoh took him and brought him up as her own son. ²² So Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. In fact, he was powerful in his words and deeds.

²³ “Now when he reached the age of 40, it came into his heart to make a visit on his brothers, the sons of Israel. ²⁴ When he caught sight of one of them being unjustly treated, he defended him and avenged the one being abused by striking down the Egyptian. ²⁵ He thought that his brothers would grasp that God was giving them salvation by his hand, but they did not grasp it. ²⁶ The next day he appeared to them as they were fighting, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying: ‘Men, you are brothers. Why do you mistreat each other?’ ²⁷ But the one who was mistreating his neighbor pushed him away, saying: ‘Who appointed you ruler and judge over us?’ ²⁸ You do not want to do away with me the way you did away with the Egyptian yesterday, do you?’ ²⁹ On hearing this, Moses fled and lived as a foreigner in the land of Mid'i-an, where he became the father of two sons.

³⁰ “After 40 years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Si'nai in the flame of a burning thornbush.

³¹ When Moses saw it, he was amazed at the sight. But as he was approaching to investigate, Jehovah's voice was heard: ³² ‘I am the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.’ Moses started trembling and did not dare to investigate further. ³³ Jehovah said to him: ‘Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. ³⁴ I have certainly seen the oppression of my people who are in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and I have come down to rescue them. Now come, I will send you off to Egypt.’ ³⁵ This same Moses whom they had disowned, saying: ‘Who appointed you ruler and judge?’ is the very one God sent as both ruler and deliverer by means of the angel who appeared to him in the thornbush. ³⁶ This man led them out, performing wonders and signs in Egypt and at the Red Sea and in the wilderness for 40 years.

³⁷ “This is the Moses who said to the sons of Israel: ‘God will raise up for you from among your brothers a prophet like me.’

³⁸ This is the one who came to be among the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Si'nai and with our forefathers, and he received living sacred pronouncements to give us. ³⁹ Our forefathers refused to obey him, but they pushed him aside and in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron: ‘Make gods for us to go ahead of us. For we do not know what has happened to this Moses, who led us out of the land of Egypt.’ ⁴¹ So they made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol and began to enjoy themselves in the works of their hands. ⁴² So God turned away from them and handed them over to offer sacred service to the army of heaven, just as it is written in the book of the Prophets: ‘It was not to me that you made offerings and sacrifices for 40 years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel?

⁴³ But it was the tent of Mo'loch and the star of the god Re'phan that

you took up, the images that you made to worship them. So I will deport you beyond Babylon.'

⁴⁴ "Our forefathers had the tent of the witness in the wilderness, just as He gave orders when speaking to Moses to make it according to the pattern he had seen. ⁴⁵ And our forefathers received possession of it and brought it in with Joshua into the land possessed by the nations, whom God drove out from before our forefathers. Here it remained until the days of David. ⁴⁶ He found favor in the sight of God and asked for the privilege of providing a dwelling place for the God of Jacob. ⁴⁷ But it was Sol'o-mon who built a house for him. ⁴⁸ However, the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands, just as the prophet says: ⁴⁹ 'The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. What sort of house will you build for me? Jehovah says. Or where is my resting-place? ⁵⁰ My hand made all these things, did it not?'

⁵¹ "Obstinate men and uncircumcised in hearts and ears, you are always resisting the holy spirit; as your forefathers did, so you do. ⁵² Which one of the prophets did your forefathers not persecute? Yes, they killed those who announced in advance the coming of the righteous one, whose betrayers and murderers you have now become, ⁵³ you who received the Law as transmitted by angels but have not kept it."

⁵⁴ Well, at hearing these things, they were infuriated in their hearts and began to grind their teeth at him. ⁵⁵ But he, being full of holy spirit, gazed into heaven and caught sight of God's glory and of Jesus standing at God's right hand, ⁵⁶ and he said: "Look! I see the heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at God's right hand." ⁵⁷ At this they cried out at the top of their voices and put their hands over their ears and rushed at him all together. ⁵⁸ After throwing him outside the city, they began stoning him. The witnesses laid down their outer garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. ⁵⁹ As they were stoning Stephen, he made this

appeal: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." ⁶⁰ Then, kneeling down, he cried out with a strong voice: "Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them." And after saying this, he fell asleep in death.

8 Saul, for his part, approved of his murder.

On that day great persecution arose against the congregation that was in Jerusalem; all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Ju-de'a and Sa-mar'i-a. ² But devout men carried Stephen away to bury him, and they made a great mourning over him. ³ Saul, though, began to ravage the congregation. He would invade one house after another, dragging out both men and women and turning them over to prison.

⁴ However, those who had been scattered went through the land declaring the good news of the word. ⁵ Now Philip went down to the city of Sa-mar'i-a and began to preach the Christ to them. ⁶ The crowds with one accord were paying attention to what Philip said while they listened and observed the signs he was performing. ⁷ For many had unclean spirits, and these would cry out with a loud voice and come out. Moreover, many who were paralyzed and lame were cured. ⁸ So there came to be a great deal of joy in that city.

⁹ Now in the city was a man named Simon, who prior to this had been practicing magical arts and amazing the nation of Sa-mar'i-a, claiming that he was somebody great. ¹⁰ All of them, from the least to the greatest, would pay attention to him and say: "This man is the Power of God, which is called Great." ¹¹ So they would pay attention to him because he had amazed them for quite a while by his magical arts. ¹² But when they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the Kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were getting baptized. ¹³ Simon himself also became a believer, and after being baptized, he continued with Philip; and he was amazed at seeing the signs and great powerful works taking place.

¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Sa-mar'i-a had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them; ¹⁵ and these went down and prayed for them to get holy spirit. ¹⁶ For it had not yet come upon any one of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid their hands on them, and they began to receive holy spirit.

¹⁸ Now when Simon saw that the spirit was given through the laying on of the hands of the apostles, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying: "Give me this authority also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive holy spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him: "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire the free gift of God with money. ²¹ You have neither part nor share in this matter, for your heart is not straight in the sight of God. ²² So repent of this badness of yours, and supplicate Jehovah that, if possible, the wicked intention of your heart may be forgiven you; ²³ for I see you are a bitter poison and a slave of unrighteousness." ²⁴ In answer Simon said to them: "Make supplication for me to Jehovah that none of the things you have said may come upon me."

²⁵ Therefore, when they had given the witness thoroughly and had spoken the word of Jehovah, they started back toward Jerusalem, and they went declaring the good news to many villages of the Sa-mar'i-tans.

²⁶ However, Jehovah's angel spoke to Philip, saying: "Get up and go to the south to the road that runs down from Jerusalem to Gaz'a." (This is a desert road.) ²⁷ With that he got up and went, and look! an E-thi-o'pi-an eunuch, a man who had authority under Can-da'ce, queen of the E-thi-o'pi-ans, and who was in charge of all her treasure. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, ²⁸ and he was returning and was sitting in his chariot, reading aloud the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ So the spirit said to Philip: "Go over and approach this chariot." ³⁰ Philip ran alongside and heard him reading aloud Isaiah

the prophet, and he said: “Do you actually know what you are reading?”³¹ He said: “Really, how could I ever do so unless someone guided me?” So he urged Philip to get on and sit down with him.³² Now this was the passage of Scripture that he was reading: “Like a sheep he was brought to the slaughter, and like a lamb that is silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.”³³ During his humiliation, justice was taken away from him. Who will tell the details of his generation? Because his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch then said to Philip: “I beg you, about whom does the prophet say this? About himself or about some other man?”³⁵ Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he declared to him the good news about Jesus.³⁶ Now as they were going along the road, they came to a body of water, and the eunuch said: “Look! Here is water; what prevents me from getting baptized?”³⁷ ———³⁸ With that he commanded the chariot to halt, and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.³⁹ When they came up out of the water, Jehovah’s spirit quickly led Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him anymore, but he went on his way rejoicing.⁴⁰ Philip, however, found himself in Ash'dod, and he went through the territory and kept on declaring the good news to all the cities until he got to Caes·a·re'a.

- Song 124 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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- **“The New Christian Congregation Is Tested”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 6:1—Greek-speaking widows were apparently being discriminated against in the congregation (bt 41 ¶17)
 Ac 6:2-7—The apostles acted to resolve the problem (bt 42 ¶18)
 Ac 7:58-8:1—Great persecution arose against the congregation
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 6:15—In what sense was Stephen’s face “like an angel’s face”? (bt 45 ¶2)

 Ac 8:26-30—In what way are Christians today privileged to share in work like that done by Philip? (bt 58 ¶16)

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 6:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 109
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ACTS 6-8 | The New Christian Congregation Is Tested

6:1-7; 7:58-8:1

Newly baptized Greek-speaking widows who had lengthened their visit to Jerusalem were being discriminated against. Did this injustice stumble them, or did they patiently wait on Jehovah to correct matters?

After Stephen was stoned and intense persecution caused Christians in Jerusalem to scatter throughout Judea and Samaria, did they slow down in their ministry?

With Jehovah’s backing, the new Christian congregation endured and flourished.—Ac 6:7; 8:4.

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How am I dealing with trials?’



November 26–December 2

Treasures From God's Word

Acts 6:1—Greek-speaking widows were apparently being discriminated against in the congregation

Acts 6:1: Now in those days when the disciples were increasing, the Greek-speaking Jews began complaining against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution.

bt 41 paragraph 17

The young congregation now faced a subtle danger that threatened it from within. What was that? Many of the disciples being baptized were visitors to Jerusalem and wanted to learn more before returning home. Disciples living in Jerusalem willingly donated funds to meet the need for food and other supplies. (Acts 2:44-46; 4:34-37) At this time, a delicate situation arose. “In the daily distribution” of food, the Greek-speaking widows “were being overlooked.” (Acts 6:1) The Hebrew-speaking widows, however, were not being overlooked. The problem, then, apparently involved discrimination. Few issues have the potential to be more divisive than this one.

Acts 6:2-7—The apostles acted to resolve the problem

Acts 6:2-7: So the Twelve called the multitude of the disciples together and said: “It is not right for us to leave the word of God to distribute food to tables. So, brothers, select for yourselves seven reputable men from among you, full of spirit and wisdom, that we may appoint them over this necessary matter; but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.” What they said was pleasing to the whole multitude, and they selected Stephen, a

man full of faith and holy spirit, as well as Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch. They brought them to the apostles, and after praying, they laid their hands on them. Consequently, the word of God continued to spread, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying very much in Jerusalem; and a large crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith.

***bt* 42 paragraph 18**

The apostles, acting as the governing body of the expanding congregation, recognized that it would not be wise for them “to leave the word of God to distribute food.” (Acts 6:2) To resolve matters, they directed the disciples to search for seven men “full of spirit and wisdom” whom the apostles could appoint over this “necessary business.” (Acts 6:3) Qualified men were needed because the work likely involved not just serving food but also handling money, purchasing supplies, and keeping careful records. The men chosen all had Greek names, which perhaps made them more acceptable to the offended widows. After giving prayerful consideration to the recommendation, the apostles appointed the seven men to care for this “necessary business.”

Acts 7:58–8:1—Great persecution arose against the congregation

Acts 7:58–8:1: After throwing him outside the city, they began stoning him. The witnesses laid down their outer garments at the feet of a young man called Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he made this appeal: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Then, kneeling down, he cried out with a strong voice: “Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them.” And after saying this, he fell asleep in death. Saul, for his part, approved of his murder. On that day great persecution arose against the congregation that was in Jerusalem;

all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 6:15—In what sense was Stephen’s face “like an angel’s face”?

Acts 6:15: And as all those sitting in the Sanhedrin stared at him, they saw that his face was like an angel’s face.

bt 45 paragraph 2

There is something remarkable about Stephen’s countenance at this moment. The judges gaze at him and see that his face is “as an angel’s face.” (Acts 6:15) Angels bear messages from Jehovah God and thus have reason to be fearless, serene, and peaceful. So it is with Stephen—even those hate-filled judges can see that. How can he be so calm?

Acts 8:26-30—In what way are Christians today privileged to share in work like that done by Philip?

Acts 8:26-30: However, Jehovah’s angel spoke to Philip, saying: “Get up and go to the south to the road that runs down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a desert road.) With that he got up and went, and look! an Ethiopian eunuch, a man who had authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, and who was in charge of all her treasure. He had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and he was returning and was sitting in his chariot, reading aloud the prophet Isaiah. So the spirit said to Philip: “Go over and approach this

chariot.” Philip ran alongside and heard him reading aloud Isaiah the prophet, and he said: “Do you actually know what you are reading?”

bt 58 paragraph 16

Christians today are privileged to share in work like that done by Philip. Often, they are able to present the Kingdom message to those they meet in informal settings, such as when traveling. In many cases, it is apparent that their meeting up with an honest hearted individual is no coincidence. This is to be expected, for the Bible makes clear that the angels are directing the preaching work so that the message reaches “every nation and tribe and tongue and people.” (Revelation 14:6) Angelic direction in the preaching work is precisely what Jesus foretold. In his illustration about the wheat and weeds, Jesus said that during the harvesttime—the conclusion of the system of things—“the reapers are angels.” He added that these spirit creatures would “collect out from his kingdom all things that cause stumbling and persons who are doing lawlessness.” (Matthew 13:37-41) At the same time, the angels would gather prospective heavenly heirs of the Kingdom—and later “a great crowd” of “other sheep”—whom Jehovah wants to draw to his organization.—Revelation 7:9; John 6:44, 65; 10:16.

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 6:1-15

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 6

6:1

the Greek-speaking Jews: Lit., “the Hellenists.” The Greek word *Hel·le·ni·stes*’ is not found in Greek or Hellenistic Jewish literature, but the context supports the rendering “Greek-speaking Jews,” as is true of many lexicons. At the time, all the Christian disciples in Jerusalem, including those who spoke Greek, were of Jewish descent or were Jewish proselytes. (Ac 10:28, 35, 44-48) The term rendered “Greek-speaking Jews” is used in contrast with a term rendered “Hebrew-speaking Jews” (lit., “Hebrews”; plural form of the Greek word *E·brai’os*). Therefore, “the Hellenists” were Jews who communicated with one another in Greek and who had come to Jerusalem from various parts of the Roman Empire, perhaps including the Decapolis. In contrast, most Hebrew-speaking Jews were probably Judeans and Galileans. These two groups of Jewish Christians likely had somewhat different cultural backgrounds.—See study note on Ac 9:29.

the Hebrew-speaking Jews: Lit., “the Hebrews.” The Greek word *E·brai’os* (singular) refers in general to an Israelite, a Hebrew. (2Co 11:22; Php 3:5) In this context, though, the term refers to Hebrew-speaking Jewish Christians in contrast with Greek-speaking Jewish Christians.—See study note on **the Greek-speaking Jews** in this verse and study note on Joh 5:2.

in the daily distribution: Or “in the daily service (ministry).” The Greek word *di·a·ko·ni’a*, often rendered “ministry,” is here used for an aspect of the ministry that involves caring materially for needy brothers and sisters inside the congregation.—See study note on Ac 6:2, where the related verb *di·a·ko·ne’o* is rendered “to distribute food”; see also study note on Lu 8:3.

6:2

right: Lit., “pleasing.” It would not have been pleasing either to God or to the apostles to neglect “the ministry of the word” of God.—Ac 6:4.

to distribute food: Or “to minister; to serve.” The Greek word *di·a·ko·ne'o* here describes an aspect of the ministry that involves caring materially for needy but deserving fellow believers inside the congregation.—See study note on Ac 6:1, where the related noun *di·a·ko·ni'a* is rendered “distribution”; see also study note on Lu 8:3.

6:3

reputable men: Or “men who are well-reported-on; men with a good reputation.” Here the passive form of the Greek verb *mar·ty·re'o* (“to bear witness”) is used. Qualified men were needed because the work likely involved not only serving food but also handling money, purchasing supplies, and keeping careful records. These men were said to be **full of spirit and wisdom**, showing evidence of being guided by God’s spirit and godly wisdom in their lives. The situation here was a sensitive one. Difficulties and differences already existed in the congregation, so experienced men who showed good judgment, discretion, and understanding were needed. One of these men was Stephen, and his defense before the Sanhedrin indicates that he was well-qualified.—Ac 7:2-53.

6:4

the ministry of the word: The same Greek word for “ministry” (*di·a·ko·ni'a*) is used at Ac 6:1 and 6:4. It is therefore obvious that two kinds of ministry are involved here—the impartial distribution of food supplies for those in need and the supplying of spiritual food from God’s Word. The apostles discerned that it would not

be proper for them to devote their time to distributing physical food instead of focusing on their primary ministry, that of providing the congregation with spiritual food by means of prayerful study, research, teaching, and shepherding. They knew that caring for the physical needs of the destitute widows in the congregation was a necessary part of a Christian's ministry. Later, Jehovah inspired James to write that those who want to worship God acceptably must "look after orphans and widows in their tribulation." (Jas 1:27) However, the apostles also recognized that their priority was to care for the spiritual needs of all the disciples, including the widows.

6:5

Stephen, . . . Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus: All seven of these names are Greek, raising the possibility that from among all the qualified men available in the Jerusalem congregation, the apostles selected Greek-speaking Jews or proselytes. However, **Nicolaus** is the only one called a **proselyte of Antioch**, which suggests that he may have been the only non-Jew of the group. The Greek names of the others were common even among natural Jews. Still, the apostles, acting as a governing body, seem to have chosen these particular men out of consideration for the feelings of the Greek-speaking Jews.—Ac 6:1-6.

Antioch: This city, mentioned here for the first time in the Bible, lay some 500 km (300 mi) N of Jerusalem. Antioch became the capital of the Roman province of Syria in 64 B.C.E. By the first century C.E., it was the third-largest city in the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria. While Antioch of Syria was admired for its beauty and its extensive political, commercial, and cultural influence, the city also acquired a reputation for moral corruption. A sizable population of Jews in Antioch reportedly made many

proselytes among the Greek-speaking people there. Nicolaus became such a proselyte and later converted to Christianity. Barnabas and the apostle Paul spent a year teaching in Antioch, and Paul used that city as the base from which he launched his missionary tours. It was first in Antioch that Christ's followers "were by divine providence called Christians." (See study notes on Ac 11:26.) This Antioch is not to be confused with Antioch in Pisidia, mentioned at Ac 13:14.—See study note on Ac 13:14.

6:6

they laid their hands on them: In the Hebrew Scriptures, the laying on of hands was done either to a person or to an animal and had a variety of meanings. (Ge 48:14; Le 16:21; 24:14) In connection with humans, it was usually a gesture to indicate that the person was being recognized in a special way or designated for a special purpose. (Nu 8:10) For example, Moses laid his hand on Joshua as a way to acknowledge him as Moses' successor. As a result, Joshua became "full of the spirit of wisdom" and was able to lead Israel properly. (De 34:9) In the account recorded here at Ac 6:6, the apostles laid their hands on the men whom they appointed to positions of responsibility. The apostles did so only **after praying** about the matter, showing that they wanted God's guidance. Later, the members of a body of congregation elders appointed Timothy to a special position of service by laying their hands on him. (1Ti 4:14) Timothy too was authorized to appoint others by laying his hands on them, but only after he had carefully considered their qualifications.—1Ti 5:22.

6:8

wonders: Or "portents." In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *teras* is consistently used in combination with *se-meion* ("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.

6:9

Synagogue of the Freedmen: During Roman rule, a “freedman” was a person who had been set free from slavery. It has been suggested that those who belonged to this synagogue were Jews who had been taken captive by the Romans and then later were emancipated. Another view is that these were freed slaves who had become Jewish proselytes.

6:12

elders: Lit., “older men.” In the Bible, the Greek term *pre-sby'te-ros* refers primarily to those who hold a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation. Although the term sometimes refers to physical age (as at Lu 15:25; Ac 2:17), it is not limited to those who are elderly. Here it refers to the leaders of the Jewish nation who are often mentioned together with chief priests and scribes. The Sanhedrin was made up of men from these three groups.—Mt 21:23; 26:3, 47, 57; 27:1, 41; 28:12; see Glossary, “Elder; Older man.”

6:14

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.

6:15

like an angel’s face: Both the Hebrew and the Greek terms rendered “angel” mean “messenger.” (See study note on Joh 1:51.) Since angels bear messages from God, they have reason to be fearless and serene, confident that they have divine backing. Similarly, Stephen’s facial expression was that of a messenger of God. It gave no indication of guilt. Instead, he was serene, and his expression showed that he had confidence in the backing of Jehovah, “the God of glory.”—Ac 7:2.

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 7

7:1

the high priest: That is, Caiaphas.— This high priest, appointed by the Romans, was a skillful diplomat who held office longer than any of his immediate predecessors. He was appointed about 18 C.E. and remained in office until about 36 C.E. He was the one who examined Jesus and handed him over to Pilate. (Mt 26:3, 57; Joh 11:49; 18:13, 14, 24, 28) This is the only time he is

mentioned by name in the book of Acts. Elsewhere in Acts he is referred to as “the high priest.”—Ac 5:17, 21, 27; 7:1; 9:1.

7:3

Go out from your land: When speaking to the Sanhedrin, Stephen says that Abraham was given this command when “the God of glory appeared to our forefather Abraham while he was in Mesopotamia, before he took up residence in Haran.” (Ac 7:2) Abraham (first known as Abram) was originally from the Chaldean city of Ur. As Stephen indicated, that was apparently where Abraham was first told to go out from his land. (Ge 11:28, 29, 31; 15:7; 17:5; Ne 9:7) The account at Ge 11:31–12:3 may give the impression that this command was first given after the death of Abraham’s father, Terah, when Abraham had temporarily settled in Haran. However, in view of that account, taken together with Stephen’s comment here, it is reasonable to conclude that Jehovah gave Abraham this command when he was still in Ur and then repeated the command while Abraham was living in Haran.

7:4

God: Lit., “He,” referring to “the God of glory” in verse 2.

7:5

offspring: Lit., “seed.”— 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.

7:6

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afflict them for 400 years: At Ge 15:13, which is quoted here, God told Abram (Abraham) that his descendants would be enslaved and afflicted for 400 years. This period ended when Jehovah freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt on Nisan 14, 1513 B.C.E., so it must have begun in 1913 B.C.E. Bible chronology indicates that in that year, Abraham’s offspring Isaac—who was about five years old at the time—began to be mocked and mistreated by Ishmael, his half brother. Ishmael was born some 19 years earlier to Sarai’s (Sarah’s) Egyptian servant Hagar. Ishmael may have taunted his younger brother because Isaac was to receive the firstborn’s inheritance even though Ishmael was born first. (Ge 16:1-4; 21:8-10) Paul later described Ishmael’s treatment of Isaac as persecution. (Ga 4:29) Apparently, it was severe enough for Jehovah to approve of Sarah’s demand that Abraham drive Ishmael and his mother away. (Ge 21:11-13) So Isaac was the first of Abraham’s offspring to experience the foretold affliction. Therefore, this incident, recorded in detail in the divine record, apparently marks the commencement of the prophesied 400-year period of affliction that would not end until the Exodus.

7:7

offer sacred service to me: Or “worship me.” The Greek verb *la-treu'o* basically denotes serving but in some contexts may be rendered “to worship.” The second part of the verse alludes to Ex 3:12, where the corresponding Hebrew verb can be rendered “serve” or “worship.” (Ex 3:12; ftn.) In Scriptural usage, the Greek word *la-treu'o* generally refers to serving God or to service connected with worship of God (Mt 4:10; Lu 1:74; 2:37; 4:8; Ro 1:9; Php 3:3; 2Ti 1:3; Heb 9:14; 12:28; Re 7:15; 22:3), including service at the sanctuary or temple (Heb 8:5; 9:9; 10:2; 13:10). In a few cases, it refers to false worship—rendering service to, or worshipping, created things.—Ac 7:42; Ro 1:25.

7:8

and Isaac became the father of Jacob: The Greek text does not repeat either of the two preceding verbs “became the father of” and “circumcised.” Therefore, either or both of these verbs could be implied in the last part of the verse. Thus, it is also possible to render that part of the verse: “And Isaac did the same with [that is, circumcised] Jacob, and Jacob with the 12 family heads.”

family heads: Or “patriarchs.” The Greek word *pa-tri-ar'khes* occurs four times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Here it refers to Jacob’s 12 sons (Ge 35:23-26), and it is also used with regard to David (Ac 2:29) and Abraham (Heb 7:4).

7:14

75 persons in all: Stephen may not be quoting a particular verse from the Hebrew Scriptures when he gives the total number of Jacob’s family in Egypt as 75. This figure is not found in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Ge 46:26 says: “All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him,

aside from the wives of Jacob's sons, were 66." Verse 27 continues: "All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70." Here the people are counted in two different ways, the first figure apparently including only his natural descendants and the second figure giving the total of those who came into Egypt. The number of Jacob's descendants is also mentioned at Ex 1:5 and De 10:22, where the figure "70" is given. Stephen apparently gives a third figure that includes more of Jacob's extended family. Some suggest that it includes sons and grandsons of Joseph's sons Manasseh and Ephraim, who are mentioned in the *Septuagint* translation of Ge 46:20. Others suggest that it includes the wives of Jacob's sons, who are specifically excluded from the figure given at Ge 46:26. So the figure "75" may be a grand total. This figure, though, may have a basis in copies of the Hebrew Scriptures circulating in the first century. For years, scholars have known that "75" was the figure given at Ge 46:27 and Ex 1:5 in the Greek *Septuagint*. Additionally, in the 20th century, two Dead Sea Scroll fragments of Ex 1:5 in Hebrew were discovered, and they also use the figure "75." Stephen's figure may be based on one of those ancient texts. Regardless of which idea is correct, Stephen's figure simply reflects a different way of counting the total number of Jacob's descendants.

persons: Or "souls." The Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered "soul," here refers to a living person.—See Glossary, "Soul," and App. A2.

7:20

divinely beautiful: The Greek expression used here literally means "beautiful to God." This phrase reflects a Semitic idiom used to refer to what is superlative. In this context, it may convey a dual idea of being "extremely beautiful" and of being "beautiful

in the sight of God.” (Compare Ex 2:2.) Some scholars suggest that the expression could refer not only to a person’s physical attributes but also to the inner qualities that God sees in a person. A similar construction occurs at Jon 3:3 where, according to a literal rendering of the Hebrew text, Nineveh is described as “a city great to God,” conveying the idea of “a very large city.”— For other examples, see Ge 23:6; ftn.; Ps 36:6; ftn.

7:22

instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians: Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin includes a number of facts of Jewish history that are not found in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Stephen alone speaks of Moses’ Egyptian education. For other details in Stephen’s talk that are not included in the Hebrew Scriptures, see study notes on Ac 7:23, 30, 53.

7:23

reached the age of 40: Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin includes a number of facts concerning Jewish history that are not found in the Hebrew Scriptures. For example, Stephen reveals that Moses was 40 years of age when he fled Egypt. For other details in Stephen’s speech that are not included in the Hebrew Scriptures, see study notes on Ac 7:22, 30, 53.

it came into his heart: Or “the thought came to him; he decided.” This Greek expression reflects a Hebrew idiom.— Compare Isa 65:17; Jer 3:16.

the sons of Israel: Or “people of Israel; the Israelites.”—See Glossary, “Israel.”

7:30

40 years: The Hebrew Scriptures do not explicitly state how many years Moses stayed in Midian. But here Stephen reveals facts of Jewish history not previously recorded in the Scriptures.

He states that Moses was 40 years of age when he fled to Midian (Ex 2:11; Ac 7:23) and that he stayed there until an additional 40 years had passed or were near completion. So the period referred to here apparently runs from 1553 to 1513 B.C.E.

Stephen's account agrees with the statement that Moses was 80 years old when he spoke to Pharaoh (Ex 7:7) and led the people of Israel out of Egypt. It also harmonizes with the statement that Moses was 120 years old when he died after spending 40 years in the wilderness.—De 34:7; Ac 7:36.

an angel: Stephen is here referring to the account at Ex 3:2, where the original Hebrew text says “Jehovah’s angel.” Most Greek manuscripts read “an angel” here, but a few manuscripts and a few ancient translations into other languages have a reading that can be rendered “an angel of [the] Lord [or, “of Jehovah”].” A number of translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{7, 8, 10-17, 28} in App. C4.) use the Tetragrammaton here and read “Jehovah’s angel.”

7:31

Jehovah’s voice: This part of Stephen’s speech (Ac 7:30-33) refers to the account at Ex 3:2-10. In verse 4, “Jehovah” calls out to Moses by means of His angel, and in verse 6, “Jehovah” tells him what is quoted at Ac 7:32. The phrase “the voice of Jehovah” is often found in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for “voice” and the Tetragrammaton. (Some examples are Ge 3:8; Ex 15:26; De 5:25; 8:20; 15:5; 18:16; 26:14; 27:10; 28:1, 62; Jos 5:6; 1Sa 12:15; 1Ki 20:36; Ps 106:25; Isa 30:31; Jer 3:25; Da 9:10; Zec 6:15.) It is worth noting that when the expression “voice of Jehovah” occurs at De 26:14; 27:10; 28:1, 62 in a first-century B.C.E. fragment of the *Septuagint* (Papyrus Fouad Inv. 266), the divine name is written in square Hebrew characters within the Greek text. The reasons

why the *New World Translation* uses the expression “Jehovah’s voice” in the main text, although available Greek manuscripts of Ac 7:31 read “Lord’s voice,” are explained in App. C.

7:33

Jehovah said to him: The context of the original account referred to by Stephen is Ex 3:2-10, where it is clear that Jehovah is the one speaking by means of His angel. Although most of the content of this verse is taken from Ex 3:5, an equivalent of the introductory phrase can be found in the original Hebrew text at Ex 3:7, literally reading: “And Jehovah said.”— See App. C.

7:35

deliverer: Or “redeemer; liberator.” The Greek word *ly-tro-tes'* comes from the verb *ly-tro'o-mai*, meaning “to set free; to deliver.” It is also related to the noun *ly'tron*, meaning “ransom.” (See study note on Mt 20:28.) The verb form is used with regard to the deliverance granted through Jesus Christ (Lu 24:21; Tit 2:14, ftn.; 1Pe 1:18, ftn.), who was foretold to be a prophet like Moses (De 18:15; Ac 7:37). Just as Moses was the deliverer of the Israelites from Egypt, so Jesus Christ is the Deliverer of all mankind by means of his ransom sacrifice.

7:36

wonders: Or “portents.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *te'ras* is consistently used in combination with *se-me'i'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.

for 40 years: These 40 years run from 1513 B.C.E., the time of the Exodus, to 1473 B.C.E. when the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Before and during these 40 years, Moses performed **wonders and signs**. For example, when Moses returned to Egypt, he first performed signs before all the Israelite elders. (Ex 4:30, 31) Then, in the time leading up to the Exodus, Moses was instrumental in performing great wonders and signs before Pharaoh and all the people of Egypt. Later, he played a role when Pharaoh and his army were destroyed in the Red Sea. (Ex 14:21-31; 15:4; De 11:2-4) One of the most remarkable signs associated with Moses was the daily provision of manna in the wilderness. This miracle continued for 40 years until the people began eating some of the produce of the land of Canaan, early in the year 1473 B.C.E.—Ex 16:35; Jos 5:10-12.

7:37

the sons of Israel: Or “the people of Israel; the Israelites.”—See Glossary, “Israel.”

God: In this quote from De 18:15, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text, which reads “Jehovah your God.” Stephen’s quote is slightly abbreviated; he uses only the word for “God.” Peter quotes the same verse at Ac 3:22, using the whole expression “Jehovah your God.” (See study note on Ac 3:22.) Some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew use the divine name here and read “Jehovah your God” (J^{7, 8, 10-17}) or “Jehovah God” (J²⁸). (See App. C4.) A few Greek manuscripts also have readings that can be rendered “the Lord God” or, for the same reasons as presented in App. C, “Jehovah God.” However, the vast majority of Greek manuscripts and translations into other languages simply read “God.”

7:38

the congregation in the wilderness: Here the Israelites who were called out of Egypt are referred to as a “congregation.” In the Hebrew Scriptures, the Hebrew word *qa·hal'*, usually rendered “congregation” in the *New World Translation*, is from a root word meaning “to call together; to congregate.” (Nu 20:8; De 4:10) The word is frequently used to describe the Israelites as an organized body, in such expressions as “congregation of Israel” (Le 16:17; Jos 8:35; 1Ki 8:14), “congregation of the true God” (Ne 13:1), “congregation of Jehovah” (De 23:2, 3; Mic 2:5), and “Jehovah’s congregation” (Nu 20:4; 1Ch 28:8). In the *Septuagint*, the Hebrew word *qa·hal'* is often rendered by the Greek word *ek·kle·si'a* (as at Ps 22:22 [21:23, LXX]), which is the expression used in the Christian Greek Scriptures for “congregation.”—See study notes on Mt 16:18; Ac 5:11.

7:44

the tent of the witness: Or “the tabernacle of the testimony.” In the *Septuagint*, which may have influenced Luke’s wording of this verse, this expression is used to render the Hebrew term for “the tent of meeting.” (Ex 27:21; 28:43; Nu 1:1) During Israel’s wilderness trek, this tent was where the ark of the covenant, with its principal contents, the “two tablets of the Testimony,” was kept. In these contexts, the term “Testimony” usually refers to the Ten Commandments as written on stone tablets. (Ex 25:16, 21, 22; 31:18; 32:15) The Hebrew term for “testimony” could also be rendered “reminder.” The ark served as a holy archive for the safekeeping of sacred reminders or testimony.—See Glossary, “Ark of the covenant” and “Most Holy, the.”

pattern: Or “design; type.” The Greek word *ty'pos* used here has the same meaning at Heb 8:5 and in the *Septuagint* at Ex 25:40.

7:45

Joshua: Here referring to the leader of Israel who brought the Israelites into the Promised Land. (De 3:28; 31:7; Jos 1:1, 2) The Hebrew name Jehoshua and its shortened form Joshua mean “Jehovah Is Salvation.” Luke here uses its Greek equivalent, *I·e·sous*. The Latin form of the same name is Jesus (*Iesus*). (See App. A4. This was a common name among Jews in Bible times. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, four people referred to by the Greek name *I·e·sous* are mentioned: Joshua, the son of Nun, the successor of Moses (Ac 7:45; Heb 4:8); an ancestor of Jesus Christ (Lu 3:29); Jesus Christ himself (Mt 1:21); and a Christian, evidently Jewish, who was one of Paul’s fellow workers (Col 4:11). Josephus mentions several others, besides those in the Bible record, bearing that name.

7:48

houses made with hands: Or “places (things) made with hands.” The Greek word *khei-ro·poi'e-tos* is also used at Ac 17:24 (“handmade”) and Heb 9:11, 24 (“made with hands”).

7:49

Jehovah: In this quote from Isa 66:1, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text. The phrase rendered **Jehovah says** corresponds to a phrase at the beginning of Isa 66:1 (“This is what Jehovah says”) and also to a phrase in the middle of the next verse (“declares Jehovah”).—Isa 66:2; see App. C.

7:51

Obstinate: Lit., “Stiff-necked.” The Greek word used here occurs only once in the Christian Greek Scriptures but is used a few times in the *Septuagint* to render a Hebrew expression with a

similar meaning.—Ex 33:3, 5, ftns.; 34:9, ftn.; De 9:6, ftn.; Pr 29:1, ftn.

uncircumcised in hearts and ears: This figurative expression for being stubborn and unresponsive has its background in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Le 26:41, ftn.; Jer 9:25, 26; Eze 44:7, 9) At Jer 6:10 (ftn.), the literal phrase “their ear is uncircumcised” is rendered “their ears are closed.” So hearts and ears that are not sensitive to or responsive to God’s direction are spoken of as being uncircumcised.

7:53

as transmitted by angels: Stephen’s account delivered before the Sanhedrin includes a number of facts concerning Jewish history that are not found in the Hebrew Scriptures. One example is the role of angels in giving the Mosaic Law. (Ga 3:19; Heb 2:1, 2) For other details in Stephen’s speech that cannot be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, see study notes on Ac 7:22, 23, 30.

7:54

they were infuriated: Or “they felt cut.” The Greek expression occurs only here and at Ac 5:33. It literally means “to be sawn through” but is used figuratively in both occurrences to describe a strong emotional response.

grind their teeth: Or “gnash (clench) their teeth.” The expression can include the idea of anguish, despair, or anger, possibly accompanied by bitter words and violent action. In this context, it obviously refers to furious rage.—Job 16:9; see study note on Mt 8:12.

7:55

Jesus standing at God’s right hand: Stephen was the first to bear witness that he had seen Jesus in heaven and standing at

the right hand of God, as prophesied at Ps 110:1. The right hand was considered to be of great importance symbolically. To be on the right hand of a ruler was to have the second most important position, next to the ruler himself (Ro 8:34; 1Pe 3:22), or to have a position in his favor.—See study notes on Mt 25:33; Mr 10:37; Lu 22:69.

7:58

Saul: Meaning “Asked [of God]; Inquired [of God].” Saul, also known by his Roman name Paul, was “of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born from Hebrews.” (Php 3:5) Since Saul was born a Roman citizen (Ac 22:28), it is logical that his Jewish parents may have given him the Roman name Paulus, or Paul, meaning “Little; Small.” From childhood, he likely had both names. His parents may have named him Saul for a number of reasons. Saul was a traditional name of importance among Benjaminites because the first king over all Israel, a Benjaminite, was named Saul. (1Sa 9:2; 10:1; Ac 13:21) Or his parents might have given him the name because of its meaning. Another possibility is that his father’s name was Saul, and according to custom, the son was named after the father. (Compare Lu 1:59.) Whatever the reason, when among fellow Jews—and especially when studying to be a Pharisee and living as one—he would have used his Hebrew name, Saul. (Ac 22:3) And for over a decade after becoming a Christian, he seemed to have been known mostly by his Hebrew name.—Ac 11:25, 30; 12:25; 13:1, 2, 9.

7:59

he made this appeal: “Lord Jesus”: As mentioned in verses 55 and 56, Stephen had a vision in which he saw “the heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at God’s right hand.” So Stephen clearly distinguished Jesus from Jehovah. Stephen was aware that Jehovah had given Jesus the power to resurrect the

dead. It would therefore have been natural for Stephen to speak directly to Jesus, whom he had seen in the vision, and to ask Jesus to safeguard his **spirit**, or life force. (Joh 5:27-29) Stephen addressed Jesus by using the expression “Lord Jesus [Greek, *Ky'ri-e I·e·sou*].” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, *Ky'ri-os* can refer to Jehovah God or to Jesus Christ, but here the context clarifies that *Ky'ri-os* refers to Jesus. The Greek word here rendered “he made this appeal” is not the usual word for “praying” in the Christian Greek Scriptures, but it is rendered “prayed” in many Bible translations, giving the impression that Stephen prayed directly to Jesus. However, reliable reference works state that the Greek word used here (*e·pi·ka·le'o*) means “to call on; to invoke; to appeal to an authority,” and it is often rendered that way. (Ac 2:21; 9:14; Ro 10:13; 2Ti 2:22) The same word is used in rendering Paul’s words: “I *appeal to Caesar!*” (Ac 25:11) Therefore, there is no reason for concluding that Stephen was praying directly to Jesus. Rather, because of this vision, Stephen felt free to make this plea to him.—See study note on Ac 7:60.

7:60

Jehovah: Available Greek manuscripts use the term “Lord” (*Ky'ri-os*) here. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, this title often refers to Jehovah God or to Jesus Christ, depending on the context. In this case, the reference is apparently to Jehovah God for the following reasons: Stephen here echoes Jesus’ words to his Father at Lu 23:34: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” In Luke’s account of Stephen’s speech, recorded at Ac 7:2-53, the term *Ky'ri-os* is used three times. All three are quotes from or allusions to the Hebrew Scriptures that clearly refer to God. (See study notes on Ac 7:31, 33, 49.) Many commentators and translators support the view that in these contexts, *Ky'ri-os* refers to Jehovah. (See App. C.)

While the term *Ky'ri-os* also occurs at Ac 7:59, there Stephen specifically says “Lord Jesus.” However, this statement does not mean, as some claim, that Jesus is the one addressed as *Ky'ri-os* at Ac 7:60. There is a natural break between Stephen’s words in verse 59 and his words in verse 60. Stephen had been standing, so when he knelt in front of his enemies, it was likely in order to address Jehovah in prayer. (Compare Lu 22:41; Ac 9:40; 20:36; 21:5, where kneeling is connected with prayer to God.) Therefore, it seems that Stephen’s last words were a prayer to the almighty God, Jehovah. In addition, Ac 7:56 says that Stephen saw “the heavens opened up and the Son of man standing at God’s right hand,” so it is understandable that he would address Jesus in verse 59 and then Jehovah in verse 60. A number of translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{17, 18, 22, 23} in App. C4) use the Tetragrammaton here in verse 60 but not in verse 59 when rendering the expression “Lord Jesus.”—See App. C.

he fell asleep in death: The Scriptures use the expressions “sleep” and “fall asleep” to refer both to physical sleep (Mt 28:13; Lu 22:45; Joh 11:12; Ac 12:6) and to the sleep of death (Joh 11:11; Ac 7:60; 13:36; 1Co 7:39; 15:6, 51; 2Pe 3:4). When these expressions are used in contexts that refer to death, Bible translators often use such wording as “fall asleep in death” or simply “died,” which helps the reader avoid confusion. In the figurative sense, the term “asleep” is applied in the Scriptures to those who have died because of the sin and death passed on from Adam.—See study notes on Mr 5:39; Joh 11:11.

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 8

8:5

Philip: According to Ac 8:1, “all except the apostles were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria.” Therefore, the Philip mentioned here is not the apostle Philip. (Mt 10:3; Ac 1:13) Rather, it is apparently the Philip who was among the “seven reputable men” appointed to organize the daily distribution of food among the Greek-speaking and Hebrew-speaking Christian widows in Jerusalem. (Ac 6:1-6) After the events recorded in Acts chapter 8, Philip is mentioned just once more, at Ac 21:8, as “Philip the evangelizer.”—See study note on Ac 21:8.

the city: Or, according to some manuscripts, “a city.” This is apparently referring to the main city of the Roman district of Samaria. The name Samaria originally referred to the capital city of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel as well as to the entire territory of that kingdom. Samaria was the capital until that kingdom was overthrown by the Assyrians in 740 B.C.E. The city, however, remained throughout Roman times, and in Jesus’ day, Samaria was also the name of the Roman district that lay between Galilee in the N and Judea in the S. (See Glossary, “Samaria.”) Herod the Great rebuilt the city of Samaria and renamed it Sebaste in honor of Roman Emperor Augustus. (The name Sebaste is a feminine Greek form of the Latin name Augustus.) The present-day Arabic name, Sabastiya, preserves the name Herod gave it.

8:14

Samaria . . . accepted the word of God: After Jesus preached to a Samaritan woman, “many of the Samaritans” put faith in him. (Joh 4:27-42) This may have laid the foundation for many of

these Samaritans to respond to Philip's preaching.—Ac 8:1, 5-8, 14-17.

8:18

Simon . . . offered them money: From this Bible account comes the term “simony,” referring to the buying or selling of positions, specifically in a religious context. Peter's reply to Simon, recorded at Ac 8:20-24, shows that Christians must be on guard against the wicked practice of trying to gain “authority” by using money or other means.—Ac 8:19; 1Pe 5:1-3.

8:22

supplicate Jehovah: The Greek verb for “supplicate” is used in the *Septuagint* in connection with prayers, requests, and pleadings addressed to Jehovah. In these scriptures, the divine name is often used in the Hebrew text. (Ge 25:21; Ex 32:11; Nu 21:7; De 3:23; 1Ki 8:59; 13:6) The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the name Jehovah in this verse, although available Greek manuscripts read “the Lord” (Greek, *to Ky·ri'ou*), are explained in App. C.—For a discussion of the Greek word for “supplicate,” which can also be rendered “make supplication,” see study note on Ac 4:31.

8:23

a bitter poison: Lit., “gall of bitterness.” The Greek word *kho·le'* literally refers to the fluid produced by the liver and stored in the gallbladder. Gall, or bile, is an extremely bitter yellowish or greenish fluid used by the body in digestion. Gall came to be associated with something that is bitter or poisonous, and that is how the word is used here.—Compare study note on Mt 27:34.

8:24

Make supplication for me to Jehovah: The Greek verb for “supplicate” is used in the *Septuagint* in connection with prayers,

requests, and pleadings addressed to Jehovah. In these scriptures, the divine name is often used in the Hebrew text. (Ge 25:21; Ex 32:11; Nu 21:7; De 3:23; 1Ki 8:59; 13:6) The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the name Jehovah in this verse, although available Greek manuscripts read “the Lord” (Greek, *tou Ky·ri'ou*), are explained in App. C.—For a discussion of the Greek word for “supplicate,” which can also be rendered “make supplication,” see study note on Ac 4:31.

8:25

the word of Jehovah: This expression has its background in the Hebrew Scriptures, where it appears as a combination of a Hebrew term for “word” and the divine name. Together with the expression “Jehovah’s word,” it occurs in some 200 verses. (Some examples are found at 2Sa 12:9; 24:11; 2Ki 7:1; 20:16; 24:2; Isa 1:10; 2:3; 28:14; 38:4; Jer 1:4; 2:4; Eze 1:3; 6:1; Hos 1:1; Mic 1:1; Zec 9:1.) When this expression occurs at Zec 9:1 in an early copy of the *Septuagint* found at Nahal Hever, Israel, in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea, the Greek word *lo'gos* is followed by the divine name written in ancient Hebrew characters (יהוה). This parchment scroll is dated between 50 B.C.E. and 50 C.E. The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the expression “the word of Jehovah” in the main text, although many Greek manuscripts of Ac 8:25 read “the word of the Lord,” are explained in App. C.

8:26

Jehovah’s angel: Starting at Ge 16:7, this phrase is often found in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for “angel” and the Tetragrammaton. When it occurs at Zec 3:5, 6 in an early copy of the *Septuagint*, the Greek word *ag'ge·los* (angel; messenger) is followed by the divine name written in Hebrew characters. This fragment, found in a cave in Nahal

Hever, Israel, in the Judean Desert, is dated between 50 B.C.E. and 50 C.E. The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the expression “Jehovah’s angel” in the main text, although available Greek manuscripts of Ac 5:19 read “Lord’s angel,” are explained in App. C.

8:27

Ethiopian: From the region of an ancient nation S of Egypt, then referred to as Ethiopia. The Greek word for “Ethiopia” (*Ai·thi·o·pi’a*, meaning “Region of Burnt Faces”) was the name applied by the ancient Greeks to the region of Africa S of Egypt. It generally corresponded with the Hebrew name Cush, which primarily embraced the southernmost part of modern-day Egypt and the present Sudan. When the *Septuagint* translation was made, the translators used the Greek term “Ethiopia” to render the Hebrew “Cush” in almost all passages. One example is Isa 11:11, where “Cush” (“Ethiopia” in *LXX*) is mentioned as one of the lands to which the Jewish exiles were scattered after the Babylonian conquest of Judah. Hence, this Ethiopian official may have had association with Jews in his area or perhaps in Egypt, where many Jews resided.

eunuch: In a literal sense, the Greek word *eu·nou'khos* refers to a man deprived of his ability to procreate. Castrated men were often appointed to serve in various capacities in ancient royal courts of the Middle East and northern Africa, especially as attendants or caretakers of the queen and the concubines. However, the term “eunuch” was not always used of men who had been castrated. It came to refer more generally to men assigned to various official duties in royal courts. Similar to the Greek term, the Hebrew word for “eunuch” (*sa·ris'*) can refer to a royal officer. For example, Potiphar, a married man, is called “a court official [lit., “a eunuch”] of Pharaoh.” (Ge 39:1) In this

account, the Ethiopian man who oversaw the royal treasury is referred to by the term “eunuch,” apparently used in the sense of a court official. He was obviously a circumcised proselyte—that is, a non-Jew who had embraced the worship of Jehovah—for he had just **gone to Jerusalem to worship**. (See Glossary, “Proselyte.”) The Mosaic Law forbade castrated men from coming into the congregation of Israel (De 23:1), so he could not have been a literal eunuch. Therefore, this Ethiopian proselyte was apparently not viewed as a Gentile and did not precede Cornelius as the first uncircumcised Gentile to convert to Christianity.—Ac 10:1, 44-48; for an explanation of the figurative use of the term “eunuch,” see study note on Mt 19:12.

Candace: Instead of being a specific personal name, Candace, like Pharaoh and Caesar, is considered to be a title. Ancient writers, including Strabo, Pliny the Elder, and Eusebius used this designation in referring to queens of Ethiopia. Pliny the Elder (c. 23-79 C.E.) wrote that “the town [Meroë, capital of ancient Ethiopia] possesses few buildings. They said that it is ruled by a woman, Candace, a name that has passed on through a succession of queens for many years.”—*Natural History*, VI, XXXV, 186.

8:30

know: Or “understand.” The Greek word *gi-no'sko* basically means “to know” but is broad in meaning and can also be rendered “understand; perceive.”

8:33

his generation: In this quote from Isa 53:8, the term “generation” apparently refers to one’s “descent,” or “family history.” When Jesus was on trial before the Sanhedrin, its members did not take into account his background—that he fulfilled the requirements for the promised Messiah.

8:36

getting baptized: Or “being immersed.” The Greek word *ba·pti'zo* means “to dip; to plunge.” The context indicates that baptism involves complete immersion. If pouring or sprinkling water were all that was needed, it would not have been necessary for the eunuch to halt his chariot at **a body of water**. Although it cannot be determined whether this was a river, a stream, or a pond, the account says that “both Philip and the eunuch *went down into the water.*” (Ac 8:38) Other Biblical references agree with the idea that being baptized means being totally immersed in a body of water. For example, Jesus was baptized in a river, the Jordan. Also, on one occasion John the Baptist chose a location in the Jordan Valley near Salim to baptize people “because there was a great quantity of water there.” (Joh 3:23) It is worth noting that the Greek word *ba·pti'zo* is used in the *Septuagint* at 2Ki 5:14 when recounting how Naaman “plunged into the Jordan seven times.” Further, the Scriptures equate baptism with burial, indicating that a person who is baptized is completely submerged.—Ro 6:4-6; Col 2:12.

8:37

Some later manuscripts and some translations into other languages, with slight variations in wording, add: “Philip said to him: ‘If you believe with all your heart, it is permissible.’ In reply he said: ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’” However, these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and are most likely not part of the original text of Acts.—See App. A3.

8:39

Jehovah’s spirit: The expression “Jehovah’s spirit” (or, “the spirit of Jehovah”) occurs several times in the Hebrew Scriptures. (Some examples are found at Jg 3:10; 6:34; 11:29; 13:25; 14:6;

15:14; 1Sa 10:6; 16:13; 2Sa 23:2; 1Ki 18:12; 2Ki 2:16; 2Ch 20:14; Isa 11:2; 40:13; 63:14; Eze 11:5; Mic 2:7; 3:8.) The expression “Jehovah’s spirit” is found at Lu 4:18 as part of a quote from Isa 61:1. There and in other Hebrew Scripture occurrences, the original Hebrew text uses the Tetragrammaton together with the word for “spirit.” The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the expression “the spirit of Jehovah” in the main text, although available Greek manuscripts of Ac 5:9 read “the spirit of Lord,” are explained in App. C.

8:40

Ashdod: This is the Hebrew name of the place known by the Greek name Azotus in the first century C.E.—Jos 11:22; 15:46; see App. B6 and B10.

- Song 124 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“The New Christian Congregation Is Tested”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 6:1—Greek-speaking widows were apparently being discriminated against in the congregation (bt 41 ¶17)
 Ac 6:2-7—The apostles acted to resolve the problem (bt 42 ¶18)
 Ac 7:58-8:1—Great persecution arose against the congregation
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 6:15—In what sense was Stephen’s face “like an angel’s face”? (bt 45 ¶2)

 Ac 8:26-30—In what way are Christians today privileged to share in work like that done by Philip? (bt 58 ¶16)

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 6:1-15

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Then invite the person to the meeting.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture, and offer a study publication.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *Jvs* 38 ¶16-17

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 109
- **“A Gift in Hand for Jehovah”:** (15 min.) Discussion by an elder. Begin by playing the video ‘A Gift in Hand to Jehovah’ (video category OUR ORGANIZATION). Read the letter from the branch expressing appreciation for the donations received during the past service year. Consider how we benefit from making donations. Outline the local congregation’s monthly expenses. Discuss how we can donate and how these donations are used. Commend the congregation for its generous support.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jjy* chap. 43 ¶19-29
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 67 and Prayer

ACTS 6-8 | The New Christian Congregation Is Tested

6:1-7; 7:58-8:1

Newly baptized Greek-speaking widows who had lengthened their visit to Jerusalem were being discriminated against. Did this injustice stumble them, or did they patiently wait on Jehovah to correct matters?

After Stephen was stoned and intense persecution caused Christians in Jerusalem to scatter throughout Judea and Samaria, did they slow down in their ministry?

With Jehovah’s backing, the new Christian congregation endured and flourished.—Ac 6:7; 8:4.

ASK YOURSELF, ‘How am I dealing with trials?’





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?

WHEN THERE ARE PROBLEMS

¹⁶ In every family, there are different personalities, opinions, and ways of doing things. This is also true in a congregation. This variety makes life interesting, and we can learn a lot from one another. But sometimes our differences cause us to misunderstand our brothers or sisters and become irritated with them. At times, we may get offended or our feelings may get hurt. (Proverbs 12:18) Should we let such problems discourage us or keep us away from the congregation?

¹⁷ No. Even if someone disappoints us in some way, we would not stay away from the congregation. Jehovah is not the one who offended us. He gave us life and all other things. He deserves our love and loyalty. (Revelation 4:11) The congregation is a gift from Jehovah that helps us to keep our faith strong. (Hebrews 13:17) We would never reject his gift just because someone disappointed us.—**Read Psalm 119:165.**

109 *Love Intensely From the Heart*

(1 Peter 1:22)

1. When our love is pure and intense,

 We make Jehovah's heart rejoice.

Love is his greatest quality,

 Something that we hold dear.

Warm affection glows in our hearts,

 Making a loyal friendship grow.

Love always acts unselfishly,

 Proving our love sincere.

When we see a friend in need,

 We'll be there to lend a helping hand.

Truly we can be a friend,

 Someone who can understand.

Jesus showed what love really means,

 Helping us see Jehovah's love,

Touching our hearts and moving us.

 Tender feelings are a start.

Love intensely from the heart.

- Song 124 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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ASK YOURSELF, ‘How am I dealing with trials?’



‘A Gift in Hand for Jehovah’

[The needy widow approaches a temple treasury chest and deposits two small coins of little value]]

In ancient times when an Israelite made a heartfelt offering to support the temple that offering was referred to as “a gift in hand to Jehovah”.

[Transitions to the kingdom hall where a mother gives her young daughter a coin to deposit into the contribution box]

Today, in kingdom halls of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world, there are small boxes marked for voluntary contributions.

When we give our valuable things, where does it actually go?

Each year hundreds of thousands become our new brothers and sisters. To accommodate our growing numbers, funds are provided to help construct new places of worship, as well as branch facilities all over the world.

[Construction Volunteer – Sister] “One thing that I really appreciate about being here is to see family heads, fathers and husbands, choose to use their vacation time. So, thank you to the families, and congregations, that support all of this, and us to be here.”

[Construction Volunteer – Brother] “But what’s just as impressive is seeing millions of brothers and sisters voluntarily give of their funds so that we can keep building. Just that in itself is an amazing act of Jehovah’s Holy Spirit.”

Large doors leading to greater activity are being opened by means of theocratic schools. Training is provided to help those enrolled to develop spiritually, and take a zealous lead in the evangelizing work.

[Bro. Malenfant] “When you think of the organization, and the education, the divine education that it provides, there is no government on earth today that educates the citizens like the kingdom.”

[SKE Student – Sister] “It has strengthened my relationship with Jehovah in ways I never considered before. The training is wonderful, and motivates spiritual growth.”

Voluntary contributions help support the thousands of special full-time servants worldwide. These include Bethelites.

‘A Gift in Hand for Jehovah’

[Bethel Printery - Brother 1] “While working in the printery it's abundantly clear that none of this could have happened without Jehovah's support, shown by what the friends can give.”

[Bethel Printery -Brother 2] “I love my assignment and serve with the knowledge that my sacrifice wouldn't be possible without the sacrifice of brothers and sisters in the field.”

Also included, our missionaries, traveling overseers, international servants and special pioneers.

[Fulltime Sister 1] “All that support makes it possible, and makes our assignment a great joy and a privilege, something that we look forward to. Each and every week, each and every month, each and every year that were able to devote our full-time efforts and preaching the good news of the kingdom.”

[Fulltime Sister 2] “It allows us to be here so that we can help as many people as possible to want to learn about Jehovah.”

Every year we look forward to receiving rich spiritual gems at our conventions. Funds are provided for equipment, and other needs, to help everything run as smoothly as possible.

[Brother] “It was a delight this year to see how technology was used to promote the unity. Having the different cities involved where video streaming to them for the key talks by governing body members, and their helpers, received tremendous response from those cities. We've seen more people in their seats during the program because they were afraid to get up, even for a moment, because they might miss something that was special.”

When disaster strikes, your donations help give immediate relief for our brothers and sisters in need. Food, clothing, building materials, and much more, are shipped over as quickly as possible.

[Filipino Brother] “I have come to really appreciate Jehovah's organization. No other organization can compare in how it provides support in such a loving way.”

[USA Sister] “I know now, you know, like Jehovah does look after his people. So, I'm really grateful for that and I've been praying and giving thanks.”

‘A Gift in Hand for Jehovah’

Yes, all our contributions have a meaningful share in supporting Kingdom interest worldwide. Each donation is like “a gift in hand” to our Heavenly Father, Jehovah. When we give from our heart, we are expressing our love for him, and that is the best gift we can give him.

“A Gift in Hand for Jehovah”

How can we “come forward today with a gift in hand for Jehovah”? (1Ch 29:5, 9, 14) Below are various ways in which we can choose to make voluntary donations to support the work of Jehovah’s Witnesses, both locally and worldwide.

DONATIONS MADE ONLINE OR PLACED IN CONTRIBUTION BOXES SUPPORT:



THE WORLDWIDE WORK

- construction and operation of branch facilities and remote translation offices
- theocratic schools
- special full-time servants
- disaster relief
- printing, video production, and digital publishing



LOCAL CONGREGATION EXPENSES

- congregation expenses, such as utilities and basic maintenance of the Kingdom Hall
- any resolutions made by the congregation to send funds to the branch office for:
 - ▶ Kingdom Hall and Assembly Hall construction worldwide
 - ▶ the Global Assistance Arrangement
 - ▶ other worldwide activities

CONVENTIONS AND ASSEMBLIES

Donations made to your regional convention are forwarded to the worldwide work. In turn, the expenses related to regional, special, and international conventions are paid from the worldwide work.

Donations made to a circuit are used to rent, operate, and maintain assembly venues and for other circuit-related expenses. A circuit may resolve to contribute excess funds to the worldwide work of Jehovah’s Witnesses.



donate.jw.org

LEARN MORE ONLINE

To see how you can donate, use one of the following options:

- go to donate.jw.org
- select “Donations” in the About Us section of jw.org
- use the “Donations” link at the bottom of the home page on the *JW Library* app

In some countries, there is a document entitled “Frequently Asked Questions” that supplies answers to common questions about donations.

The video *Tutorial for Making Donations Electronically* provides helpful information on donation methods that are available.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

Some donations made to the worldwide work require advance planning and/or legal advice. These include:

- wills and trusts
- real estate, stocks, bonds, and insurance
- conditional donations

If you would like to make such a donation, contact your branch office, using the contact details found on donate.jw.org.

der a bed, is it?” he asks. “Is it not brought out to be put on a lampstand?” Thus, Jesus advises: “Whoever has ears to listen, let him listen.”—Mark 4:21-23.

BLESSED WITH MORE INSTRUCTION

After receiving Jesus’ explanation of the illustration of the sower, the disciples want to learn more. “Explain to us,” they request, “the illustration of the weeds in the field.”—Matthew 13:36.

In asking that, they display quite a different attitude from that of the rest of the crowd on the beach. Evidently, those people hear but lack the desire to learn the meaning behind the illustrations and their application. They are satisfied with merely the outline of things set out in the illustrations. Jesus contrasts that seaside audience with his inquisitive disciples who have come to him for more instruction, saying:

“Pay attention to what you are hearing. With the measure that you are measuring out, you will have it measured out to you, yes, you will have more added to you.” (Mark 4:24) The disciples are paying

attention to what they are hearing from him. They are measuring out to Jesus earnest interest and attention, and they are blessed with more instruction, more enlightenment. Thus, in answer to his disciples' inquiry about the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus explains:

“The sower of the fine seed is the Son of man; the field is the world. As for the fine seed, these are the sons of the Kingdom, but the weeds are the sons of the wicked one, and the enemy who sowed them is the Devil. The harvest is a conclusion of a system of things, and the reapers are angels.”—Matthew 13: 37-39.

After identifying each feature of his illustration, Jesus describes the outcome. He says that at the conclusion of the system of things, the reapers, or angels, will separate weedlike imitation Christians from the true “sons of the Kingdom.” “The righteous ones” will be gathered and will eventually shine brightly “in the Kingdom of their Father.” And what about “the sons of the wicked one”? The outcome for them will be destruction, a just cause

for “their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth.”
—Matthew 13:41-43.

Jesus next blesses his disciples with three more illustrations. First, he says: “The Kingdom of the heavens is like a treasure, hidden in the field, that a man found and hid; and because of his joy, he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.”—Matthew 13:44.

He continues: “The Kingdom of the heavens is like a traveling merchant seeking fine pearls. Upon finding one pearl of high value, he went away and promptly sold all the things he had and bought it.”
—Matthew 13:45, 46.

With both illustrations, Jesus highlights a person’s willingness to make sacrifices for what is truly valuable. The merchant promptly sells “all the things he had” to obtain the one pearl of high value. Jesus’ disciples can understand that example regarding a precious pearl. And the man who finds treasure hidden in a field “sells everything” to possess it. In both cases, something valuable is available, something to be obtained and treasured. This

can be compared to the sacrifices a person makes to satisfy his spiritual need. (Matthew 5:3) Some of those hearing Jesus give these illustrations have already shown a willingness to go to great lengths to satisfy their spiritual need and to be his true followers.—Matthew 4:19, 20; 19:27.

Finally, Jesus likens the Kingdom of the heavens to a dragnet that gathers up fish of every kind. (Matthew 13:47) When the fish are separated, the good ones are kept in containers but the unsuitable ones are thrown away. Jesus says that it will be the same in the conclusion of the system of things—the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous.

Jesus himself was doing a type of spiritual fishing when he called his first disciples to be “fishers of men.” (Mark 1:17) However, he says that his illustration about the dragnet applies in the future, “in the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 13:49) So the apostles and other disciples hearing Jesus can sense that very interesting things are yet to develop.

Those who heard the illustrations given from the boat are further enriched. Jesus is showing his willingness to “explain all things privately to his disciples.” (Mark 4:34) He is “like a man, the master of the house, who brings out of his treasure store things both new and old.” (Matthew 13:52) In giving these illustrations, Jesus is not showing off his teaching ability. Rather, he is sharing with his disciples truths that are like a priceless treasure. He truly is a “public instructor” beyond compare.



- ◇ In the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, who or what is represented by the sower, the field, the fine seed, the weeds, the enemy, the harvest, and the reapers?
- ◇ What three additional illustrations does Jesus provide, and what can we learn from them?

1. God has commanded us this day;
He has given us a charge to obey.
At all times, be ready to impart
The reason for the hope within your heart.

(CHORUS)

*So preach the word
So that ev'ryone can hear!
Preach the word,
For we know the end is near.
Preach the word,
Help the meek to understand.
Preach the word
Throughout the land!*

2. Seasons of trouble we will face;
Opposition may bring shame and disgrace.
Though preaching may out of season seem,
Our trust is in our God, who is supreme.

(Chorus)

3. Seasons of favor we will see,
And the need for us to teach, there will be.
The way to salvation we proclaim
And help to sanctify Jehovah's name.

(Chorus)

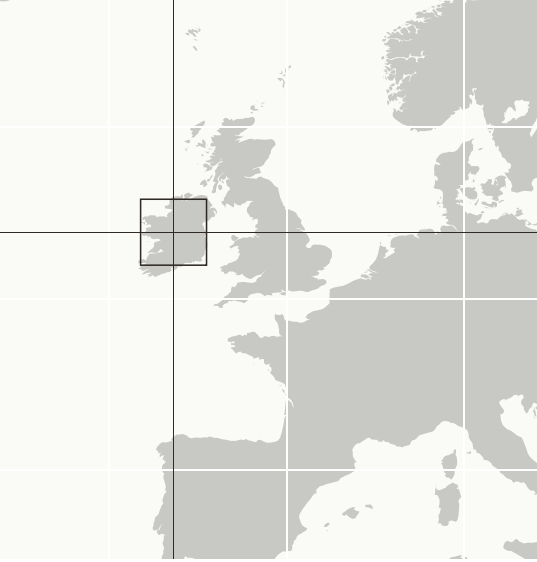
SEPTEMBER 2018

THE  **WATCHTOWER**
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
OCTOBER 29–DECEMBER 2, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

IRELAND

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF OCTOBER 29–NOVEMBER 4

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

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

16 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 5-11

Keep Displaying Love—It Builds Up

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

PUBLISHERS

6,747

BIBLE STUDIES

3,392

MEMORIAL
ATTENDANCE (2017)

12,082

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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.

41 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 19-25

Almighty yet Considerate

53 WEEK OF NOVEMBER 26–DECEMBER 2

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.

1. Lovingly Jehovah

Made provision through his Son
For our sins to be forgiven
And for death to be undone.

If we truly are repentant,

His forgiveness we can claim
On the basis of Christ's ransom,
Asking pardon in his name.

2. We receive such mercy

When we act like God above
And forgive each other freely,
Showing empathy and love.

Putting up with one another,

Putting hurtfulness away;
Showing honor to our brother,
Showing love's surpassing way.

3. Mercy is a virtue

That we all should cultivate.

It will keep us from resentment,
From the bitterness of hate.

When we imitate Jehovah,

Who is unsurpassed in love,
We will truly be forgiving;
We will be like God above.



Be Considerate and Kind in Imitation of Jehovah

“Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one.”

—PS. 41:1.

GOD’S people are a spiritual family—one marked by love. (1 John 4:16, 21) That love is usually reflected, not in rare

1. How is love evident among God’s people?

SONGS:
130, 107

IN WHAT WAYS SHOULD WE SHOW CONSIDERATION . . .

in the family?

in the congregation?

in the field ministry?

heroic acts, but in countless smaller ways, such as by thoughtful words and kind deeds. When we treat others kindly and considerately, we “become imitators of God, as beloved children.”—Eph. 5:1.

² Jesus perfectly imitated his Father. “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down,” said Jesus, “and I will refresh you . . . , for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart.” (Matt. 11:28, 29) When we imitate Christ’s example by “[showing] consideration to the lowly one,” we receive our heavenly Father’s favor and find great happiness. (Ps. 41:1) Let us see how we can show consideration for others in the family, in the congregation, and in the field ministry.

BE CONSIDERATE IN THE FAMILY

³ Husbands should take the lead in being considerate of others in the family. (Eph. 5:25; 6:4) For example, they are exhorted to dwell with their wives “according to knowledge”—an expression that could also be rendered “showing them consideration; understanding them.” (1 Pet. 3:7; ftn.) Understanding and consideration go hand in hand.

2. How did Jesus show godlike love?

3. For a husband, how should understanding and consideration go hand in hand? (See opening picture.)

For instance, an understanding husband knows that his wife, as his complement, is different from him in many respects, but she is by no means inferior. (Gen. 2:18) He thus shows thoughtful regard for her feelings, treating her with dignity and honor. A wife in Canada said of her husband: “He never belittles my feelings or says, ‘You should not feel that way.’ He is also a good listener. When he helps me to adjust my viewpoint on a matter, he does so with kindness.”

⁴ A thoughtful husband also takes his wife’s feelings into account when he interacts with other women. Never does he flirt with them or show an improper interest in them; nor does he show such interest when using social media or the Internet. (Job 31:1) Yes, he remains loyal to his wife, not just because of his love for her but also because of his love for God and his hatred for what is bad. —Read Psalm 19:14; 97:10.

⁵ When a husband looks to his head, Jesus Christ, as a role model, he helps his wife to cultivate “deep respect” for him. (Eph. 5:22-25,

4. In his dealings with other women, how should a husband show consideration for his wife?

5. How can a wife show consideration for her husband?

33) Her respect, in turn, will move her to be considerate of her husband, perhaps when he has to devote extra time to theocratic responsibilities or when problems weigh on his mind. “On occasion, my wife will discern from a change in my demeanor that something is bothering me,” says a husband in Britain. “Then she will apply the principle found at Proverbs 20:5, even when this means waiting for the right time to ‘draw out’ my thoughts if it is a matter that I am free to discuss with her.”

⁶ When parents show consideration for each other, they set a fine example for their children. Parents, of course, have the primary responsibility to teach their children how to be considerate of others. For example, parents can teach them not to run around in the Kingdom Hall. At a social gathering, parents might tell their children to let older ones go ahead of them when lining up for food. Of course, all in the congregation can support the parents. For example, when a child performs a thoughtful deed for us—perhaps opening a door—we should commend the child. Doing so can have a good effect on the young one, impressing

6. How can all of us encourage children to be considerate of others, and how will children benefit?

on his heart that “there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35.

“CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER” IN THE CONGREGATION

⁷ One time when Jesus was in the Decapolis region, people “brought him a deaf man with a speech impediment.” (Mark 7:31-35) Instead of healing him in public, Jesus “took him aside” and healed him. Why? The man’s disabilities may have made him feel uncomfortable in a crowd. Perhaps sensing this, Jesus healed him in private. Of course, we cannot perform miraculous cures. But we can—and should—show thoughtful regard for the needs and feelings of our fellow worshippers. The apostle Paul wrote: “Let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works.” (Heb. 10:24) Jesus understood how the deaf man felt and treated him thoughtfully. What a fine example for us!

⁸ *Show consideration for the elderly and the infirm.* The Christian congregation is marked, not by mere

7. How did Jesus show consideration for a deaf man, and what lessons can we learn from Jesus’ example?

8, 9. In what ways can we show consideration for the elderly and the infirm? (Give examples.)

efficiency, but by love. (John 13:34, 35) That love moves us to go out of our way to help older ones and those with disabilities to attend Christian meetings and to preach the good news. That is so even if what they can do is limited. (Matt. 13:23) Michael, who is confined to a wheelchair, deeply appreciates the help he gets from his family and from the brothers in his field service group. “Because of the help they all give me,” he says, “I am able to attend most meetings and to share regularly in the ministry. I especially like public witnessing.”

⁹ Many Bethel homes have elderly and infirm members. Caring overseers show these faithful servants consideration by arranging for them to share in letter writing and phone witnessing. “We appreciate the privilege of being able to write letters,” says Bill, who is 86 years old and writes to people in isolated areas. Nancy, who is nearly 90, comments: “I don’t view letter writing as just stuffing envelopes. This is field service. People need to know the truth!” Ethel, born in 1921, says: “Pain is a part of my life. Some days I have a hard time just getting dressed.” Even so, she enjoys telephone witnessing and has some good return visits. Barbara, who is 85 years old, explains: “Because of my

poor health, I find regular field service very difficult. But phone witnessing enables me to speak to others. Thank you, Jehovah!” In less than a year, a group of precious older ones devoted 1,228 hours to the ministry, wrote 6,265 letters, made over 2,000 phone calls, and placed 6,315 publications! Surely, this effort brought joy to Jehovah’s heart! —Prov. 27:11.

¹⁰ *Show consideration at Christian meetings.* We want our brothers to benefit fully from the meetings. Our being considerate can help them to do that. How? One way is to arrive on time so that we do not create needless distractions. Of course, unforeseen events may delay us on occasion. But if we are habitually late, we should give thought to how we can be more considerate. Keep in mind, too, that our hosts are Jehovah and his Son. (Matt. 18:20) They certainly merit our deep respect!

¹¹ Consideration for our brothers also means heeding the instruction: “Let all things take place decently and by arrangement.” (1 Cor. 14:40) Brothers who have parts on a meeting obey that

10. How can we help our brothers to benefit fully from Christian meetings?

11. Why should those who have parts on a meeting apply the direction given at 1 Corinthians 14:40?

directive by staying within their allotted time. Their doing so reflects consideration not only for the next speaker but also for the congregation. Some brothers may have to travel a long way to their homes. Others may depend on public transportation. And some might have unbelieving mates who are impatiently awaiting their return.

¹² Spiritual shepherds who work hard in the congregation and take a zealous lead in the ministry are themselves worthy of special consideration. (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.) No doubt you appreciate the efforts the elders make in your behalf. By all means, then, show it by your willing cooperation and support. After all, “they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account.”—Heb. 13:7, 17.

BE CONSIDERATE IN THE MINISTRY

¹³ Concerning Jesus, Isaiah foretold: “No crushed reed will he break, and no smoldering wick will he extinguish.” (Isa. 42:3) Jesus’ love for people made him empathetic. He understood the feel-

12. Why are hardworking elders worthy of “extraordinary consideration in love”? (See the box “Show Consideration to Those Taking the Lead.”)

13. What can we learn from the way Jesus treated people?

Show Consideration to Those Taking the Lead

At times, a brother who is somewhat prominent or well-known might visit our congregation or the convention we attend. He may be a circuit overseer, a Bethelite, a member of the Branch Committee, a member of the Governing Body, or a helper to the Governing Body.

We rightly want to give such faithful servants “extraordinary consideration in love because of their work.” (1 Thess. 5:12, 13) We can show that consideration by treating such ones as our brothers and not as celebrities. Some have fallen short in this regard. How? By aggressively trying to photograph well-known ones, by taking photos of them without their permission and posting such photos on social media, or by asking them to sign their books or Bibles. Do you not agree that this attitude reflects the world’s spirit?—Eph. 2:1, 2.

Jehovah wants his servants to be humble and modest—especially those who carry weighty responsibilities! (Matt. 23:11, 12) So let us treat responsible brothers as humble ministers, not demanding to take photographs.*—Mic. 6:8; 1 Cor. 10:31.

* See the box “Love ‘Does Not Behave Indecently’” in *The Watchtower* of January 2016, p. 27.

ings of those who were figuratively like a bruised reed or the wick of an oil lamp about to go out. As a result, he was considerate, kind, and patient. Even children were drawn to him. (Mark 10:14) Of course, we do not have Jesus' insight and teaching ability! But we can—and should—be considerate of the people in our territory. That includes how we speak to them, when we do so, and for how long.

¹⁴ *How should we speak to people?* Today, countless millions have been “skinned and thrown about” by corrupt and heartless commercial, political, and religious leaders. (Matt. 9:36) As a result, many people are cynical and without hope. How important, then, that we be kind and compassionate in our choice of words and also in our tone of voice! Indeed, many are drawn to our message not only because of our Bible knowledge or sound reasoning but also because of our genuine interest in them and our thoughtful manner.

¹⁵ There are many practical ways to show consideration for the people to whom we witness. Questions, for example, are a fine teaching aid. We

14. Why should we take special care in how we talk to people?

15. In what practical ways can we be considerate of the people to whom we witness?

should phrase our questions kindly and respectfully. A pioneer whose territory included many who were reserved and shy learned not to ask questions that might be embarrassing. These included questions that the person might be unable to answer or might answer incorrectly. For example, he avoided such questions as, ‘Do you know God’s name?’ or ‘Do you know what God’s Kingdom is?’ Instead, he would say something like, “I have learned from the Bible that God has a personal name. May I show you what that name is?” Of course, cultures and people vary, so we do not need rules. However, we should *always* be considerate and respectful, which includes getting to know the local people well.

¹⁶ *When should we call on our neighbors?* When we go from door to door, we are uninvited guests. How important, then, that we call at a time when people might be more inclined to converse! (Matt. 7:12) For example, do people in your territory like to sleep longer on weekends? If so, you may be able to start your ministry by doing street work, public witnessing, or return visits on people you know will be up and about.

16, 17. How may consideration for our neighbors influence (a) the time we call at their homes? (b) how long we spend talking to a person?

17 *How long should we stay?* Many people are very busy, so it may be appropriate to keep your visits brief, at least initially. It is better to finish a discussion sooner than to stay too long. (1 Cor. 9:20-23) When people see that we are aware of their circumstances or busy schedules, they may be more willing to have us call back. Clearly, the fruitage of God’s spirit should be reflected in our ministry. When it is, we truly become “God’s fellow workers”—even a means by which Jehovah may draw someone to the truth.—1 Cor. 3:6, 7, 9.

18 So let us make every effort to be considerate of others—in the family, in the congregation, and in the field ministry. When we do, we will receive many blessings both now and in the future. Says Psalm 41:1, 2: “Happy is anyone who shows consideration to the lowly one; Jehovah will rescue him in the day of calamity. . . . He will be pronounced happy in the earth.”

18. When we are considerate of others, what blessings may we hope to receive?



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107 *The Divine Pattern of Love*

(1 John 4:19)

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

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

