

- Song 115 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness”: (10 min.)

Ac 9:1, 2—Saul brutally persecuted Jesus’ disciples (bt 60 ¶1-2)

Ac 9:15, 16—Saul was chosen to bear witness about Jesus (w16.06 7 ¶4)

Ac 9:20-22—Saul became a zealous witness (bt 64 ¶15)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Ac 9:4—Why did Jesus ask Saul: “Why are you persecuting me?” (bt 60-61 ¶5-6)

Ac 10:6—Why is it significant that the apostle Peter lodged with a tanner? (nwtsty study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ac 9:10-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 6

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (7 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for December.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jl* chap. 44
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 59 and Prayer

ACTS 9-11 | A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness

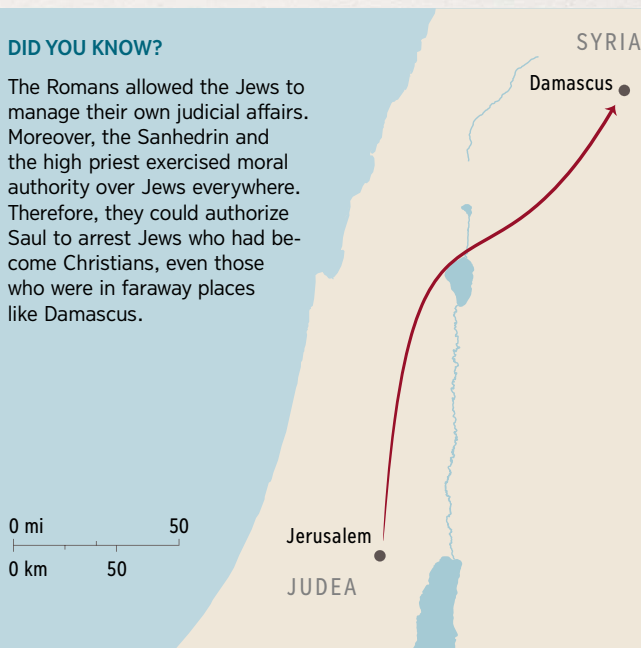


9:15, 16, 20-22

Saul acted swiftly on what he learned. Why did Saul respond when others failed to do so? Because he feared God more than man and he deeply appreciated the mercy Christ had shown him. If you are studying the Bible but are not baptized, will you imitate Saul by acting decisively on what you learn?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Romans allowed the Jews to manage their own judicial affairs. Moreover, the Sanhedrin and the high priest exercised moral authority over Jews everywhere. Therefore, they could authorize Saul to arrest Jews who had become Christians, even those who were in faraway places like Damascus.



Gratitude for Divine Patience

(2 Peter 3:15)

C F6 Em/G G7 C

Great God, Je - ho - vah, bound - less in might,
One thou - sand years, from your point of view,

C G7/D C/E Am G/D D7 G

You have made known your love of right.
Are like a day when they are through.

R.H.

G/B Gm/E A7 Dm

Bad - ness pre - vails on earth be - low,
Time now pro - ceeds to your great day;

G7 Em/G G/F C/E Am Dm6/F E

Caus - ing us pain, as you well know.
It will ar - rive with - out de - lay.

Gratitude for Divine Patience

Am E7/B Am/C Am Am/E E7 Am

You are not slow, as men may con - tend;
 Though all trans - gres - sion you do re - sent,

F G9/F C/E G7/D C G/B G C

Your time is near for pa - tience to end.
 Your heart is glad when sin - ners re - pent.

Chorus
 C G7/D C/E F A7/E Dm/F D7/F# G G/F

We look a - head with hope re - newed,

C/E C F6 F Dm7 G7 C

Prais - ing your name in deep grat - i - tude.

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,^a **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."^b **33** During his humiliation, justice was taken away from him.^c Who will tell the details of his generation? Because his life is taken away from the earth."^d

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

8:27 *Or "court official." 8:30 *Or "understand." 8:37 *See App. A3.

CHAP. 8
a 2Ch 6:32, 33

b 1Pe 2:23

c Mt 26:59

d Isa 53:7, 8
Da 9:26
Php 2:8

Second Col.
a Ac 21:8

CHAP. 9
b Ac 8:3
Ac 22:4
Ac 26:10, 11
Ga 1:13
1Ti 1:12, 13

c Ac 11:26
Ac 22:4

d Ac 22:6-11
Ac 26:13-18

e 1Co 15:8

f Mt 25:45

g Ac 22:9

h Ac 13:11

i Ac 22:12

j Ac 21:39
Ac 22:3

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.^a

9 But Saul, still breathing threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord,^b went to the high priest **2** and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that he might bring bound to Jerusalem any whom he found who belonged to The Way,^c both men and women.

3 Now as he was traveling and getting near Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him,^d **4** and he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him: "**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?**" **5** He asked: "Who are you, Lord?" He said: "**I am Jesus,^e whom you are persecuting.^f** **6** But get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." **7** Now the men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing, indeed, the sound of a voice but seeing no one.^g **8** Saul then got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. **9** And for three days he did not see anything,^h and he neither ate nor drank.

10 There was a disciple named An-a-ni'asⁱ in Damascus, and the Lord said to him in a vision: "**An-a-ni'as!**" He said: "Here I am, Lord." **11** The Lord said to him: "**Get up, go to the street called Straight, and look for a man named Saul, from Tarsus,^j at the house of Judas. For look!**

8:39 *See App. A5.

he is praying, **12** and in a vision he has seen a man named An-a-ni'as come in and lay his hands on him so that he may recover sight."^a **13** But An-a-ni'as answered: "Lord, I have heard from many about this man, about all the harm he did to your holy ones in Jerusalem. **14** And here he has authority from the chief priests to arrest* all those calling on your name."^b **15** But the Lord said to him: "Go! because this man is a chosen vessel to me^c to bear my name to the nations^d as well as to kings^e and the sons of Israel. **16** For I will show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name."^f

17 So An-a-ni'as went and entered the house, and he laid his hands on him and said: "Saul, brother, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road along which you were coming, has sent me so that you may recover sight and be filled with holy spirit."^g **18** And immediately, what looked like scales fell from his eyes, and he recovered his sight. He then got up and was baptized, **19** and he ate some food and gained strength.

He stayed for some days with the disciples in Damascus,^h **20** and immediately in the synagogues he began to preach about Jesus, that this one is the Son of God. **21** But all those hearing him were astonished and were saying: "Is this not the man who ravaged those in Jerusalem who call on this name?ⁱ Did he not come here for the purpose of arresting them and taking them* to the chief priests?"^j **22** But Saul kept on acquiring more and more power and was confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus, as he proved logically that this is the Christ.^k

9:14 *Lit., "bind; put in bonds." 9:21 *Lit., "that he might lead them bound."

CHAP. 9

a Ac 9:17

b Ac 9:1, 2

c Ac 13:2

Ro 1:1

1Ti 1:12

d Ro 1:5

Ga 2:7

1Ti 2:7

e Ac 26:1

Ac 27:24

f Ac 20:22, 23

Ac 21:11

2Co 11:23-28

Col 1:24

2Ti 1:12

g Ac 22:12, 13

h Ac 26:19, 20

i Ac 8:3

Ga 1:13, 23

j Ac 9:1, 2

k Ac 17:2, 3

Second Col.

a Ac 20:2, 3

Ac 23:12

2Co 11:23

b 2Co 11:32, 33

c Ga 1:18

d Ac 4:36, 37

e Ac 9:3, 4

1Co 9:1

f Ac 9:19, 20

g 2Co 11:23, 26

h Ac 11:25

Ga 1:21

i Ac 8:1

j Joh 14:16

k Ac 9:38

23 Now when many days had passed, the Jews plotted together to do away with him.^a

24 However, their plot against Saul became known to him. They were also watching the gates closely both day and night in order to do away with him. **25** So his disciples took him and let him down by night through an opening in the wall, lowering him in a basket.^b

26 On arriving in Jerusalem,^c he made efforts to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, because they did not believe he was a disciple. **27** So Bar'na-bas^d came to his aid and led him to the apostles, and he told them in detail how on the road he had seen the Lord,^e and that he had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus.^f

28 So he remained with them, moving about freely in* Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. **29** He was talking and disputing with the Greek-speaking Jews, but these made attempts to do away with him.^g **30** When the brothers found out about this, they brought him down to Caes-a-re'a and sent him off to Tarsus.^h

31 Then, indeed, the congregation throughout the whole of Ju-de'a and Gal'i-lee and Sa-mar'i-a' entered into a period of peace, being built up; and as it walked in the fear of Jehovah* and in the comfort of the holy spirit,ⁱ it kept on multiplying.

32 Now as Peter was traveling through all the region, he came down also to the holy ones who lived in Lyd'da.^k **33** There he found a man named Ae-ne'-as, who had been lying flat on his bed for eight years, for he was paralyzed. **34** Peter said to him: "Ae-ne'as, Jesus Christ

9:28 *Lit., "walking in and out of." 9:31 *See App. A5.

heals you.^a Rise and make up your bed.^b And he got up immediately. **35** When all those living in Lyd'da and the Plain of Shar'on saw him, they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was in Jop'pa a disciple named Tab'i-tha, which means, when translated, "Dor'-cas."^{*} She abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy that she was making. **37** But in those days she fell sick and died. So they bathed her and laid her in an upper room. **38** Since Lyd'da was near Jop'pa, when the disciples heard that Peter was in that city, they sent two men to him to urge him: "Please come to us without delay." **39** At that Peter got up and went with them. And when he arrived, they led him up into the upper room; and all the widows presented themselves to him, weeping and showing many garments and robes^{*} that Dor'cas had made while she was with them. **40** Peter then put everyone outside,^c and kneeling down, he prayed. Then turning toward the body, he said: "Tab'i-tha, rise!" She opened her eyes, and as she caught sight of Peter, she sat up.^d **41** Giving her his hand, he raised her up, and he called the holy ones and the widows and presented her alive.^e **42** This became known throughout all Jop'pa, and many became believers in the Lord.^f **43** He remained for quite a few days in Jop'pa with a tanner named Simon.^g

10 Now there was a man in Caes-a-re'a named Cornelius, an army officer^{*} in what was called the Italian unit.[#] **2** He was a devout man who feared

9:36 *The Greek name Dorcas and the Aramaic name Tabitha both mean "Gazelle." **9:39** *Or "outer garments." **10:1** *Or "a centurion," in command of 100 soldiers. #Or "cohort," a Roman army unit of 600 soldiers.

CHAP. 9

a Mt 10:8
Ac 4:9,10

b Ac 3:6

c Lu 8:51

d Mt 9:24, 25
Lu 7:14, 15
Joh 11:43, 44

e 1Kl 17:23

f Joh 11:44, 45

g Ac 10:6, 32

Second Col.

CHAP. 10

a Ac 3:1

b Ps 65:2

c Ac 11:5-10

d Le 11:4
Le 11:13-20
Le 20:25
De 14:3, 19
Eze 4:14

God together with all his household, and he made many gifts of mercy to the people and made supplication to God continually. **3** About the ninth hour^a of the day,^{*} he saw plainly in a vision an angel of God come in to him and say: "Cornelius!" **4** Cornelius stared at him, terrified, and asked: "What is it, Lord?" He said to him: "Your prayers and gifts of mercy have ascended as a remembrance before God.^b **5** So now send men to Jop'pa and summon a man named Simon who is called Peter. **6** This man is staying as a guest with^{*} Simon, a tanner who has a house by the sea." **7** As soon as the angel who spoke to him left, he called two of his servants and a devout soldier from among those who were his attendants, **8** and he related everything to them and sent them to Jop'pa.

9 The next day as they were continuing on their journey and were approaching the city, Peter went up to the housetop about the sixth hour^{*} to pray. **10** But he became very hungry and wanted to eat. While they were preparing the meal, he fell into a trance^c **11** and saw heaven opened and something^{*} descending like a great linen sheet being let down by its four corners on the earth; **12** and in it were all sorts of four-footed animals and reptiles^{*} of the earth and birds of heaven. **13** Then a voice said to him: "Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!" **14** But Peter said: "Not at all, Lord, because I have never eaten anything defiled and unclean."^d **15** And the voice spoke again to him, the second time: "Stop calling defiled the things God has

10:3 *That is, about 3:00 p.m. **10:6** *Or "being entertained by." **10:9** *That is, about 12:00 noon. **10:11** *Lit., "some sort of vessel." **10:12** *Or "creeping things."

cleansed.” **16** This happened a third time, and immediately it* was taken up into heaven.

17 While Peter was still perplexed about what the vision he had seen could mean, just then the men sent by Cornelius asked where Simon’s house was and stood there at the gate.^a

18 They called out and inquired whether Simon who was called Peter was a guest there. **19** As Peter was still pondering over the vision, the spirit^b said: “Look! Three men are asking for you. **20** So get up, go downstairs and go with them, not doubting at all, because I have sent them.”

21 Then Peter went downstairs to the men and said: “Here I am, the one you are looking for. Why are you here?” **22** They said: “Cornelius,^c an army officer, a righteous and God-fearing man who is well-reported-on by the whole nation of the Jews, was given divine instructions by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to hear what you have to say.” **23** So he invited them in and had them stay as his guests.

The next day he got up and went off with them, and some of the brothers from Jop’pa went with him. **24** The following day he entered into Caes-a-re’a. Cornelius, of course, was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. **25** As Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet, and did obeisance* to him. **26** But Peter lifted him up, saying: “Rise; I too am just a man.”^d **27** As he conversed with him, he went in and found many people assembled. **28** He said to them: “You well know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with or approach a man of another

10:16 *Lit., “the vessel.” 10:25 *Or “bowed down.”

CHAP. 10

a Ac 11:11

b Ac 13:2
Ac 15:28
Ac 16:6
Ac 20:23

c Ac 10:1

d Lu 4:8
Ac 14:12-15
Re 19:10
Re 22:8, 9

Second Col.

a Joh 18:28

b Ac 10:45
Eph 3:5, 6

c Ac 9:43

d De 10:17
2Ch 19:7
Ro 2:11

e Ro 2:13
1Co 12:13
Ga 3:28

f Isa 52:7
Na 1:15

g Mt 28:18
Ro 14:9
Re 19:11, 16

h Lu 4:14

i Isa 11:2
Isa 42:1
Isa 61:1
Mt 3:16

j Lu 13:16

k Joh 3:1, 2

race,^a and yet God has shown me that I should call no man defiled or unclean.^b **29** So I came, really without objection, when I was sent for. Therefore, I ask you why you sent for me.”

30 Then Cornelius said: “Four days ago counting from this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour;^{*} just then a man in bright clothing stood in front of me **31** and said: ‘Cornelius, your prayer has been favorably heard, and your gifts of mercy have been remembered before God. **32** Therefore, send to Jop’pa and call for Simon who is called Peter. This man is a guest in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea.’^c **33** I then sent for you at once, and you were kind enough to come here. So now we are all present before God to hear all the things you have been commanded by Jehovah* to say.”

34 At this Peter began to speak, and he said: “Now I truly understand that God is not partial,^d **35** but in every nation the man who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.^e **36** He sent out the word to the sons of Israel to declare to them the good news of peace^f through Jesus Christ—this one is Lord of all.^g **37** You know the subject that was talked about throughout all Ju-de’a, starting from Gal’i-lee^h after the baptism that John preached: **38** about Jesus who was from Naz’a-reth, how God anointed him with holy spiritⁱ and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil,ⁱ because God was with him.^k **39** And we are witnesses of all the things he did both in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem; but they did away

10:30 *That is, about 3:00 p.m. 10:33 *See App. A5.

with him by hanging him on a stake.* **40** God raised this one up on the third day^a and allowed him to become manifest,* **41** not to all the people, but to witnesses appointed beforehand by God, to us, who ate and drank with him after his rising from the dead.^b **42** Also, he ordered us to preach to the people and to give a thorough witness^c that this is the one decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.^d **43** To him all the prophets bear witness,^e that everyone putting faith in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”^f

44 While Peter was still speaking about these matters, the holy spirit came upon all those hearing the word.^g **45** And the circumcised believers* who had come with Peter were amazed, because the free gift of the holy spirit was being poured out also on people of the nations. **46** For they heard them speaking in foreign languages* and magnifying God.^h Then Peter responded: **47** “Can anyone deny water to prevent these from being baptizedⁱ who have received the holy spirit just as we have?” **48** With that he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.^j Then they requested him to stay for some days.

11 Now the apostles and the brothers who were in Jude’a heard that people of the nations had also accepted the word of God. **2** So when Peter came up to Jerusalem, the supporters of circumcision^k began to criticize* him, **3** saying: “You went into the house of men who were not circumcised and ate with them.” **4** At this Peter went on

10:39 *Or “tree.” 10:40 *Or “visible.” 10:45 *Or “faithful ones.” 10:46 *Lit., “in tongues.” 11:2 *Or “contend with.”

CHAP. 10

- a Jon 1:17
Jon 2:10
Ac 2:23, 24
- b Lu 24:30, 31
Joh 21:13, 14
- c Mt 28:19, 20
Ac 1:8
- d Ac 17:31
Ro 14:9
2Co 5:10
2Ti 4:1
1Pe 4:5
- e Lu 24:27
Re 19:10
- f Isa 53:11
Jer 31:34
Da 9:24
- g Ac 4:31
Ac 8:14, 15
- h Ac 2:1, 4
Ac 19:6
- i Mt 3:11
Ac 8:36
Ac 11:17
- j Mt 16:19
Ac 2:38

CHAP. 11

- k Ac 10:45
Ga 2:12

Second Col.

- a Ac 10:10-16
- b Ac 10:17-20
- c Ac 10:30-33
- d Ac 2:1, 4
Ac 10:44, 45
- e Mt 3:11
Mr 1:8
Lu 3:16
Ac 1:5

- f Joe 2:28
Joh 1:33
Ac 2:17

to explain the matter in detail to them, saying:

5 “I was in the city of Jop’pa praying, and while in a trance I saw a vision, something* descending like a great linen sheet being let down by its four corners from heaven, and it came right down to me.” **6** Looking closely into it, I observed four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles,* and birds of heaven. **7** I also heard a voice say to me: ‘Get up, Peter, slaughter and eat!’ **8** But I said: ‘Certainly not, Lord, because a defiled or unclean thing has never entered my mouth.’ **9** The second time, the voice from heaven answered: ‘You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed.’ **10** This happened a third time, and everything was pulled up again into heaven. **11** Also just at that moment, three men were standing at the house where we were staying, having been sent to me from Caes-a-re’a.^b **12** Then the spirit told me to go with them, not doubting at all. But these six brothers also went with me, and we entered into the house of the man.

13 “He reported to us how he saw the angel stand in his house and say: ‘Send men to Jop’pa and summon Simon who is called Peter,^c **14** and he will tell you things by which you and all your household may get saved.’ **15** But when I started to speak, the holy spirit fell on them just as it did also on us in the beginning.^d **16** At this I recalled the saying of the Lord, how he used to say: ‘John baptized with water,^e but you will be baptized with holy spirit.’^f **17** If, therefore, God gave the same free gift to them that he gave to us who

11:5 *Lit., “some sort of vessel.” 11:6 *Or “creeping things.”

have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I should be able to hinder God?"*^a

18 When they heard these things, they stopped objecting,* and they glorified God, saying: "So, then, God has also granted to people of the nations repentance leading to life."^b

19 Now those who had been scattered^c by the tribulation that arose over Stephen went as far as Phoe-ni'cia, Cy'prus, and Antioch, but they spoke the word only to the Jews.^d **20** However, some of the men among them from Cy'prus and Cy-re'ne came to Antioch and began talking to the Greek-speaking people, declaring the good news of the Lord Jesus. **21** Furthermore, the hand of Jehovah* was with them, and a great number became believers and turned to the Lord.^e

22 The report about them reached the ears of the congregation in Jerusalem, and they sent out Bar'na-bas^f as far as Antioch. **23** When he arrived and saw the undeserved kindness of God, he rejoiced and began to encourage them all to continue in the Lord with heartfelt resolve;^g **24** for he was a good man and full of holy spirit and faith. And a considerable crowd was added to the Lord.^h **25** So he went to Tarsus to make a thorough search for Saul.ⁱ **26** After he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year they assembled with them in the congregation and taught quite a crowd, and it was first in Antioch that the disciples were by divine providence called Christians.^j

27 In those days prophets^k came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. **28** One of them

11:17 *Or "stand in God's way?" 11:18 *Lit., "they became silent." 11:21; 12:7 *See App. A5.

CHAP. 11

- a Ac 10:47
- b Isa 11:10
Ac 17:30
Ro 10:12
Ro 15:8,9
- c Ac 8:1
- d Mt 10:5,6
- e Ac 2:47
Ac 9:35
- f Ac 4:36,37
- g Ac 13:43
Ac 14:21,22
- h Ac 2:47
Ac 4:4
Ac 5:14
Ac 9:31
- i Ac 21:39
- j Ac 9:2
- k 1Co 12:28
Eph 4:11

Second Col.

- a Ac 21:10,11
- b Mt 24:7
- c 2Co 8:12
- d Ga 2:10
- e Ac 12:25

CHAP. 12

- f Joh 15:20
- g Mt 4:21
- h Mt 20:20-23
Lu 11:49
- i Ex 12:15
Ex 23:15
Le 23:6
- j Lu 21:12
- k 2Co 1:11

- l Ps 34:7
Heb 1:7,14

- m Ac 5:18,19

named Ag'a-bus^a stood up and foretold through the spirit that a great famine was about to come on the entire inhabited earth,^b which, in fact, did take place in the time of Claudius. **29** So the disciples determined, each according to what he could afford,^c to send relief^{*d} to the brothers living in Ju-de'a; **30** and this they did, sending it to the elders by the hand of Bar'na-bas and Saul.^e

12 About that time Herod the king began mistreating some of those of the congregation.^f **2** He put James the brother of John^g to death by the sword.^h **3** When he saw that it was pleasing to the Jews, he also went on to arrest Peter. (This was during the days of the Unleavened Bread.)ⁱ **4** He seized him and put him in prison,^j turning him over to four shifts of four soldiers each to guard him, intending to bring him out* before the people after the Passover. **5** So Peter was being kept in the prison, but the congregation was intensely praying to God for him.^k

6 When Herod was about to bring him out, that night Peter was sleeping bound with two chains between two soldiers, and guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. **7** But look! Jehovah's* angel was standing there,^l and a light shone in the prison cell. Hitting Peter on the side, he woke him, saying: "Get up quickly!" And the chains fell off his hands.^m **8** The angel said to him: "Get dressed* and put on your sandals." He did so. Finally he said to him: "Put your outer garment on, and keep following me." **9** And he went out and kept following him, but

11:29 *Or "a relief ministration." 12:4 *Or "bring him out to trial." 12:8 *Or "Gird yourself."

- Song 115 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness”: (10 min.)

Ac 9:1, 2—Saul brutally persecuted Jesus’ disciples (bt 60 ¶1-2)

Ac 9:15, 16—Saul was chosen to bear witness about Jesus (w16.06 7 ¶4)

Ac 9:20-22—Saul became a zealous witness (bt 64 ¶15)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Ac 9:4—Why did Jesus ask Saul: “Why are you persecuting me?” (bt 60-61 ¶5-6)

Ac 10:6—Why is it significant that the apostle Peter lodged with a tanner? (nwtsty study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ac 9:10-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 6

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (7 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for December.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jl* chap. 44
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 59 and Prayer

ACTS 9-11 | A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness

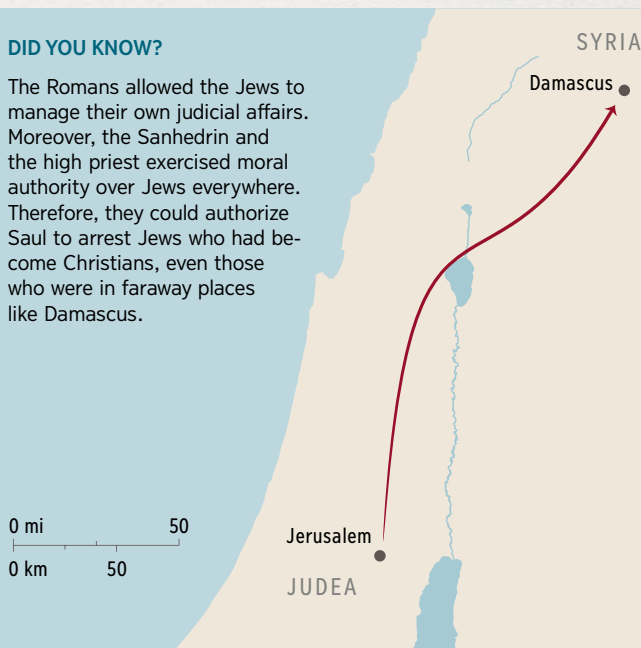


9:15, 16, 20-22

Saul acted swiftly on what he learned. Why did Saul respond when others failed to do so? Because he feared God more than man and he deeply appreciated the mercy Christ had shown him. If you are studying the Bible but are not baptized, will you imitate Saul by acting decisively on what you learn?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Romans allowed the Jews to manage their own judicial affairs. Moreover, the Sanhedrin and the high priest exercised moral authority over Jews everywhere. Therefore, they could authorize Saul to arrest Jews who had become Christians, even those who were in faraway places like Damascus.



December 3-9

Treasures From God's Word

Acts 9:1, 2—Saul brutally persecuted Jesus' disciples

Acts 9:1, 2: But Saul, still breathing threat and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that he might bring bound to Jerusalem any whom he found who belonged to The Way, both men and women.

bt 60 paragraphs 1-2

1 The grim travelers are approaching Damascus, where they intend to carry out an evil plan. They will tear the hated disciples of Jesus from their homes, bind them, humiliate them, and drag them to Jerusalem to face the wrath of the Sanhedrin.

2 The mob leader, named Saul, already has blood on his hands. Recently, he watched with approval as fellow zealots stoned to death Stephen, a devout disciple of Jesus. (Acts 7:57–8:1) Not content with raging against the followers of Jesus who live in Jerusalem, Saul becomes a firebrand ready to spread the flames of persecution. He wants to eradicate the pestilent sect known as "The Way."—Acts 9:1, 2; see the box "Saul's Mandate in Damascus," on page 61.

Acts 9:15, 16—Saul was chosen to bear witness about Jesus

Acts 9:15, 16: But the Lord said to him: "Go! because this man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel. For I will show him plainly how many things he must suffer for my name."

w16.06 7 paragraph 4

When Jehovah observes humans, he does not pay attention to outward appearances. Rather, he examines the heart, the inner person. (Read 1 Samuel 16:7b.) This fact was amply demonstrated when God formed the Christian congregation. He drew to himself and his Son many individuals who from a human standpoint might have seemed to be undesirable. (John 6:44) One such person was a Pharisee named Saul—"a blasphemer and a persecutor and an insolent man." (1 Timothy 1:13) "The examiner of hearts," however, did not see Saul as useless clay. (Proverbs 17:3) Instead, God saw that he could be molded into a desirable vessel—in fact, "a chosen vessel" to bear witness "to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel." (Acts 9:15) Others whom God saw as potential vessels "for an honorable use" included former drunkards, immoral people, and thieves. (Romans 9:21; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11) As they gained accurate knowledge of God's Word and expressed faith, they allowed Jehovah to mold them.

Acts 9:20-22—Saul became a zealous witness

Acts 9:20-22: and immediately in the synagogues he began to preach about Jesus, that this one is the Son of God. But all those hearing him were astonished and were saying: "Is this not the man who ravaged those in Jerusalem who call on this name? Did he not come here for the purpose of arresting them and taking them to the chief priests?" But Saul kept on acquiring more and more power and was confounding the Jews who lived in Damascus, as he proved logically that this is the Christ.

bt 64 paragraph 15

Can you picture the surprise, shock, and anger that must have rippled through the crowds when Saul began to preach about Jesus in the synagogues? “Is this not the man that ravaged those in Jerusalem who call upon this name?” they asked. (Acts 9:21) When explaining his change of heart about Jesus, Saul “proved logically that this is the Christ.” (Acts 9:22) But logic is not a universal key. It cannot unlock every mind shackled by tradition or every heart bound by pride. Still, Saul did not give up.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 9:4—Why did Jesus ask Saul: “Why are you persecuting *me*?”

Acts 9:4: and he fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him: “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?”

bt 60-61 paragraphs 5-6

5 When Jesus stopped Saul on the road to Damascus, He did not ask: “Why are you persecuting my disciples?” As noted above, he said: “Why are you persecuting *me*?” (Acts 9:4) Yes, Jesus personally feels the trials experienced by his followers.—Matthew 25:34-40, 45.

6 If you are being oppressed because of your faith in Christ, be assured that both Jehovah and Jesus are aware of your situation. (Matthew 10:22, 28-31) At present, the trial may not be removed. Remember, Jesus watched Saul’s involvement in Stephen’s death, and He saw Saul drag faithful disciples from their homes in Jerusalem. (Acts 8:3) Yet, Jesus did not intervene at that time. Even so, Jehovah, through Christ, gave Stephen and the other disciples the strength they needed to remain faithful.

Acts 10:6—Why is it significant that the apostle Peter lodged with a tanner?

Acts 10:6: This man is staying as a guest with Simon, a tanner who has a house by the sea.”

Study note

Simon, a tanner: A tanner worked with the hides of animals, using a lime solution to remove any fur or traces of flesh and fat. Then he treated the hide with a potent liquor so that it could be used to make articles of leather. The tanning process smelled bad and required a great deal of water, which may explain why Simon lived **by the sea**, likely on the outskirts of Joppa. According to the Mosaic Law, a person who worked with the carcasses of animals was ceremonially unclean. (Leviticus 5:2; 11:39) Therefore, many Jews looked down on tanners and would hesitate to lodge with one. In fact, the Talmud later rated the tanner’s profession as lower than that of a dung collector. However, Peter did not let prejudice keep him from staying with Simon. Peter’s open-mindedness in this case makes an interesting prelude to the assignment that came next—visiting a Gentile in his home. Some scholars consider the Greek word for “tanner” (*byrseus*) to be a surname of Simon.

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 9:10-22

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 9

9:1

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.

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.

9:2

letters: In the first century C.E., people relied on letters from a credible source to introduce a stranger and to authenticate his or her identity or authority. (Ro 16:1; 2Co 3:1-3) Jews in Rome referred to this kind of communication. (Ac 28:21) The letters Saul requested from the high priest and addressed to the synagogues in Damascus authorized him to persecute the Jewish Christians in that city. (Ac 9:1, 2) The letters Saul requested apparently asked the synagogues in Damascus to cooperate with Saul in his campaign against the Christians.

Damascus: Located in modern-day Syria, Damascus is said to be one of the oldest cities in the world to be continuously inhabited from the time it was founded. The patriarch Abraham may have passed by or through this city on his way S to Canaan. At some point, he took Eliezer, “a man of Damascus,” into his household as a servant. (Ge 15:2) Nearly a thousand years later, Damascus reappears in the Bible account. (See Glossary, “Aram; Aramaeans.”) At this time, the Syrians (Aramaeans) were at war with Israel, and the two nations became enemies. (1Ki 11:23-25) In the first century, Damascus was part of the Roman province of Syria. By that time, Damascus had a Jewish population of perhaps some 20,000 and a number of **synagogues**. Saul may have targeted the Christians living in Damascus because the city was located at the crossroads of important travel routes and he feared that Christian teachings would quickly spread from that city.

The Way: A designation used in the book of Acts to refer to the Christian way of life and the early Christian congregation. It may have roots in Jesus’ statement at Joh 14:6: “I am

the way.” Those who became followers of Jesus were spoken of as belonging to “The Way,” that is, they kept a way of life following Jesus’ example. (Ac 19:9) His life centered on worship of the only true God, Jehovah. For Christians, this manner of life also focused on faith in Jesus Christ. Sometime after 44 C.E., in Syrian Antioch, disciples of Jesus “were by divine providence called Christians.” (Ac 11:26) However, even after that designation was applied, Luke refers to the congregation as “The Way” or “this Way.”—Ac 19:23; 22:4; 24:22; see study notes on Ac 18:25; 19:23.

9:7

hearing . . . the sound of a voice: At Ac 22:6-11, Paul himself describes his experience on the road to Damascus. That account taken together with this account gives the full picture of what happened. The Greek words used in both accounts are the same, but the grammar is different. The Greek term *pho·ne'* could be rendered both “sound” and “voice.” Here it is in the genitive case and is therefore rendered “the sound of a voice.” (At Ac 22:9, the same Greek word is in the accusative case and is rendered “voice.”) So the men accompanying Paul heard the sound of a voice but apparently could not hear *and* understand the words spoken. So they did not hear the voice the way Paul did.—Ac 26:14; see study note on Ac 22:9.

9:11

the street called Straight: This is the only street mentioned by name in the Christian Greek Scriptures. It is believed to have been the main thoroughfare that ran from E to W through Damascus, which in the first century C.E. was laid out in a grid. The street was about 1.5 km (1 mi) long and 26 m (85 ft) wide, including pedestrian lanes, and it may also have been lined with columns. A main thoroughfare still runs through what remains of the old Roman city and follows the course of the ancient Roman Via Recta, or Straight Street.

9:12

in a vision: These words are found in a number of ancient manuscripts.

9:14

arrest: Or “imprison.” Lit., “bind; put in bonds,” that is, prison bonds.—Compare Col 4:3.

9:15

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

9:25

a basket: Luke here used the Greek word *sphy·ris'*, which is also used in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark for the seven baskets in which leftovers were collected after Jesus fed 4,000 men. (See study note on Mt 15:37.) This word refers to a large basket or hamper. In telling the Corinthian Christians about his escape, the apostle Paul used the Greek word *sar·ga'ne*, which denotes a plaited basket or “wicker basket” made of rope or woven twigs. Both Greek terms can be used for the same type of large basket.—2Co 11:32, 33; ftn.

9:28

moving about freely: Or “carrying on his daily life.” Lit., “going in and going out.” This expression reflects a Semitic idiom that includes the idea of freely conducting the regular activities of life or associating with others without hindrance.—Compare De 28:6, 19; Ps 121:8, ftn.; see study note on Ac 1:21.

9:29

the Greek-speaking Jews: Lit., “the Hellenists.” Most likely, these were Jews who communicated in Greek rather than in Hebrew. These Jews had probably come to Jerusalem from various parts of the Roman Empire. At Ac 6:1, the term applies to Christians, but the context here at Ac 9:29 shows that these Greek-speaking Jews were not disciples of Christ. The Theodotus Inscription, found on the hill of Ophel in Jerusalem, provides evidence that many Greek-speaking Jews came to Jerusalem.—See study note on Ac 6:1.

9:31

the fear of Jehovah: The expression “the fear of Jehovah” is found many times in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of a Hebrew word for “fear” and the Tetragrammaton. (Some examples are found at 2Ch 19:7, 9; Ps 19:9; 111:10; Pr 2:5; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 19:23; Isa 11:2, 3.) However, the expression “fear of the Lord” is never used in the Hebrew Scripture text. The reasons why the *New World Translation* uses the expression “the fear of Jehovah” in the main text, although most Greek manuscripts of Ac 9:31 read “the fear of the Lord,” are explained in App. C.

9:36

Tabitha: The Aramaic name Tabitha means “Gazelle” and apparently corresponds to a Hebrew word (*tsevi-yah*) meaning “female gazelle.” (Ca 4:5; 7:3) The Greek name **Dorcas** also means “Gazelle.” In a seaport such as Joppa, with its mixed population of Jews and Gentiles, it may be that Tabitha was known by both names, according to the language being spoken. Or Luke may have translated the name for the benefit of Gentile readers.

9:39

robes: Or “outer garments.” The Greek word *hi-ma'ti-on* appears to have been a loose robe, but more often it was a rectangular piece of material.

9:40

Tabitha, rise!: Peter followed a procedure similar to that used by Jesus in resurrecting Jairus’ daughter. (Mr 5:38-42; Lu 8:51-55) This is the first reported resurrection performed by an apostle, resulting in many becoming believers throughout Joppa.—Ac 9:39-42.

9:43

a tanner named Simon: A tanner worked with the hides of animals, using a lime solution to remove any fur or traces of flesh and fat. Then he treated the hide with a potent liquor so that it could be used to make articles of leather. The tanning process smelled bad and required a great deal of water, which may explain why Simon lived **by the sea**, likely on the outskirts of Joppa. According to the Mosaic Law, a person who worked with the

carcasses of animals was ceremonially unclean. (Le 5:2; 11:39) Therefore, many Jews looked down on tanners and would hesitate to lodge with one. In fact, the Talmud later rated the tanner's profession as lower than that of a dung collector. However, Peter did not let prejudice keep him from staying with Simon. Peter's open-mindedness in this case makes an interesting prelude to the assignment that came next—visiting a Gentile in his home. Some scholars consider the Greek word for “tanner” (*byr-seus*) to be a surname of Simon.

ACTS Study Notes—Chapter 10

10:1

an army officer: Or “a centurion.” A centurion was in command of about 100 soldiers in the Roman army.

what was called the Italian unit: This was probably a cohort, so named to distinguish it from the regular Roman legions. A cohort in full strength consisted of about 600 men, that is, about one tenth of the number in a legion. (See study note on Mt 26:53.) There is verification that the Second Italian Cohort of Roman Citizen Volunteers (Latin, *Cohors II Italica voluntariorum civium Romanorum*) was present in Syria in 69 C.E., and some have suggested that this was the Italian unit mentioned here.

10:3

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

10:6

Simon, a tanner: A tanner worked with the hides of animals, using a lime solution to remove any fur or traces of flesh and fat. Then he treated the hide with a potent liquor so that it could be used to make articles of leather. The tanning process smelled bad and required a great deal of water, which may explain why Simon lived **by the sea**, likely on the outskirts of Joppa. According to the Mosaic Law, a person who worked with the carcasses of animals was ceremonially unclean. (Le 5:2; 11:39) Therefore, many Jews looked down on tanners and would hesitate to lodge with one. In fact, the Talmud later rated the tanner's profession as lower than that of a dung collector. However, Peter did not let prejudice keep him from staying with Simon. Peter's open-mindedness in this case makes an interesting prelude to the assignment that came next—visiting a Gentile in his home. Some scholars consider the Greek word for “tanner” (*byr-seus*) to be a surname of Simon.

10:9

the housetop: The roofs of houses were flat and were used for many purposes, including storage (Jos 2:6), rest (2Sa 11:2), sleep (1Sa 9:26), festivals for worship (Ne 8:16-18), and

as a private place to pray. When Peter prayed on the rooftop, he was not being like the hypocrites who made sure that they were seen while praying. (Mt 6:5) A parapet around the flat roof likely hid him from view. (De 22:8) The roof was also a place to relax and escape street noise in the evening.—See study note on Mt 24:17.

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

10:10

a trance: The Greek word *ek'sta-sis* (from *ek*, meaning “out of,” and *sta'sis*, meaning “standing”) refers to a person’s being cast out of his normal state of mind because of amazement, astonishment, or a vision from God. The Greek word is rendered “ecstasy” (Mr 5:42), “amazement” (Lu 5:26), and “overwhelmed with emotion” (Mr 16:8). In the book of Acts, the word is connected with divine action. Apparently, the holy spirit would, at times, superimpose on a person’s mind a vision or a picture of God’s purpose while the person was in a state of deep concentration or a sleeplike condition. An individual in a trance would be oblivious of his physical surroundings and would be receptive to a vision.—See study note on Ac 22:17.

10:22

was given divine instructions: The Greek verb *khre·ma·ti'zo* appears nine times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Mt 2:12, 22; Lu 2:26; Ac 10:22; 11:26; Ro 7:3; Heb 8:5; 11:7; 12:25) In most occurrences, the word has a clear connection with things having divine origin. For example, the verb is here used together with the expression “by a holy angel.” At Mt 2:12, 22, it is used in connection with divinely inspired dreams. The related noun *khre·ma·ti·smos'* appears at Ro 11:4, and most lexicons and translations use such renderings as “divine pronouncement; divine response; God’s reply; the answer of God.” Here at Ac 10:22, one translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J¹⁸ in App. C4) reads “was given a command of Jehovah.”—See study note on Ac 11:26.

10:25

did obeisance to him: Or “bowed down to him; prostrated himself to him; paid him homage.” When Jesus was on earth, people did obeisance to him, and he did not reprove them. (Lu 5:12; Joh 9:38) This was because Jesus was the heir to the throne of David and was rightfully honored as a king. (Mt 21:9; Joh 12:13-15) Also, in the Hebrew Scriptures, people are said to bow down when meeting prophets, kings, or other representatives of God, who accepted the honor. (1Sa 25:23, 24; 2Sa 14:4-7; 1Ki 1:16; 2Ki 4:36, 37) However, when Cornelius bowed down to Peter and did obeisance to him, Peter refused to accept this honor and told him: “Rise; I too am just a man.” (Ac 10:26) The teachings of Christ apparently introduced new standards of conduct between human servants of God. Jesus taught his disciples: “One is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers. . . . Your Leader is one, the Christ.”—Mt 23:8-12.

10:28

how unlawful it is for a Jew: The Jewish religious leaders in Peter's day taught that anyone who entered a Gentile's home would become ceremonially unclean. (Joh 18:28) However, the Law given through Moses made no specific injunction against this type of association. In addition, Jesus had removed the wall separating Jews from Gentiles when he gave his life as a ransom and established the new covenant. In doing so, Jesus made "the two groups one." (Eph 2:11-16) Yet, even after Pentecost 33 C.E., the early disciples were slow to grasp the significance of what Jesus had done. In fact, Jewish Christians took many years to free themselves of the attitudes that were promoted by their former religious leaders and that were embedded in their culture.

10:30

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

10:33

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

10:34

is not partial: The Greek phrase for "is not partial" could literally be rendered "is not one who takes (receives; accepts) faces." God, who is impartial, does not judge by outward appearance, favoring people because of their race, nationality, social standing, or any external factors. Imitating God's impartiality means, not making surface judgments, but paying attention to the character and qualities of others, particularly qualities that reflect those of our impartial Creator.

10:36

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

10:39

a stake: Or "a tree." The Greek word *xy'lon* (lit., "wood") is here used as a synonym for the Greek word *stau·ros'* (rendered "torture stake") and describes the instrument of execution to which Jesus was nailed. In the Christian Greek Scriptures, Luke, Paul, and Peter used the word *xy'lon* in this sense five times altogether. (Ac 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Ga 3:13; 1Pe 2:24) In the *Septuagint*, *xy'lon* is used at De 21:22, 23 to translate the corresponding Hebrew word 'ets (meaning "tree; wood; piece of wood") in the sentence "and you have hung him on a stake." When Paul quotes this scripture at Ga 3:13, *xy'lon* is used in the sentence: "Accursed is every man hung upon a stake." This Greek word is also used in the *Septuagint* at Ezr 6:11 (1 Esdras 6:31, LXX) to translate the Aramaic word 'a', corresponding to the Hebrew term 'ets. There it is said regarding violators of a Persian

king's decree: "A *timber* will be pulled out of his house and he will be lifted up and fastened to it." The fact that Bible writers used *xy'lon* as a synonym for *stau-ros'* provides added evidence that Jesus was executed on an upright stake without a crossbeam, for that is what *xy'lon* in this special sense means.

10:44

the holy spirit came upon all those hearing the word: This is the only reported instance when holy spirit was poured out on disciples *before* baptism. Additionally, Peter is here taking an active role in the conversion of Cornelius and his family, none of whom were Jews. So Peter was using the third of "the keys of the Kingdom of the heavens," opening up the preaching work and the prospect of entering God's Kingdom to the vast field of Gentiles—those who were not Jews, Jewish proselytes, or Samaritans. Peter had used the first of those keys to open up the same hope to the Jews and Jewish proselytes, and the second, to the Samaritans.—Ac 2:22-41; 8:14-17; see study note on Mt 16:19.

10:45

the circumcised believers: Or "the faithful ones of those circumcised." That is, Jewish Christians.—Ac 10:23.

10:46

in foreign languages: Lit., "in tongues." This miracle gave visible evidence that God was now extending the heavenly calling to Gentiles. Just as at Pentecost, Jehovah used holy spirit to show clearly that this new arrangement had his backing. This convincing evidence could be both seen and heard.—See study note on Ac 2:4.

ACTS Study Notes—Chapter 11

11:20

Antioch: This city was located in Syria on the river Orontes, some 32 km (20 mi) upstream from the Mediterranean seaport of Seleucia. By the first century C.E., Syrian Antioch ranked third in size and wealth among the cities of the Roman Empire, after Rome and Alexandria. It hosted a large and ancient Jewish community, and there was no great hostility between Jews and Gentiles at this time. Syrian Antioch apparently offered the right atmosphere for something new to take place—the disciples were preaching not only to Jews but also to uncircumcised Gentiles. (See study note on **the Greek-speaking people** in this verse.) This Antioch should not be confused with Antioch in Pisidia in Asia Minor.—See study notes on Ac 6:5; 13:14.

the Greek-speaking people: Lit., "Hellenists." The meaning of the Greek term used here (*Hel·le·ni·stes*) has to be determined by the context. When used at Ac 6:1, it most likely means "Greek-speaking Jews." (See study note at Ac 6:1.) This has led some scholars to conclude that the disciples in Syrian Antioch must have been preaching to circumcised Jews or proselytes who spoke Greek. However, what is described here apparently refers to a new development in Antioch. As mentioned at Ac 11:19, the preaching of God's word in Antioch had previously been restricted to Jews only, but now the message was

apparently spreading among the non-Jews living there. Barnabas was likely dispatched to Antioch to encourage these new disciples who communicated in Greek. (Ac 11:22, 23) Some ancient manuscripts use the word *Hel'le-nas* (meaning “Greeks”; see Ac 16:3) here instead of *Hel-le-ni-stes'*. So a number of translations use the terms “the Greeks” or “the Gentiles.” These terms would indicate that none of those spoken to in Antioch were adherents to the Jewish religion. It is possible, though, that *both* Jews and Gentiles familiar with the Greek language may have been referred to, and for that reason, the term “Greek-speaking people” is used in this translation. These Greek-speaking people may have come from various national backgrounds, but they adopted the Greek language and perhaps Greek customs.

11:21

hand of Jehovah: This phrase, as well as “Jehovah’s hand,” is often found in the Hebrew Scriptures as a combination of the Hebrew word for “hand” and the Tetragrammaton. (Some examples are found at Ex 9:3; Nu 11:23; Jg 2:15; Ru 1:13; 1Sa 5:6, 9; 7:13; 12:15; 1Ki 18:46; Ezr 7:6; Job 12:9; Isa 19:16; 40:2; Eze 1:3.) In the Bible, the term “hand” is often used figuratively for “power.” Since the hand applies the power of the arm, “hand” may also convey the idea of “applied power.” The Greek expression rendered “the hand of Jehovah” (or, “Jehovah’s hand”) also occurs at Lu 1:66 and Ac 13:11.—See study notes on Lu 1:6, 66 and App. C.

11:26

were by divine providence called: Most Bible translations simply read “were called.” However, the Greek words commonly rendered “called” are not used here. (Mt 1:16; 2:23; Mr 11:17; Lu 1:32, 60; Ac 1:12, 19) The word that appears in this verse is *khre-ma-ti'zo*, and in most of the nine places where it occurs in the Christian Greek Scriptures, it clearly refers to things that come from God, that have a divine origin. (Mt 2:12, 22; Lu 2:26; Ac 10:22; 11:26; Ro 7:3; Heb 8:5; 11:7; 12:25) For example, at Ac 10:22, this word is used together with the expression “by a holy angel,” and at Mt 2:12, 22, it is used in connection with divinely inspired dreams. The related noun *khre-ma-ti-smos'* appears at Ro 11:4, and most lexicons and Bible translations use such renderings as “divine pronouncement; divine response; God’s reply; the answer of God.” It is possible that Jehovah directed Saul and Barnabas to use the name Christians. Some have suggested that the Gentile population in Antioch may have used the nickname Christians out of jest or scorn, but the usage of the Greek term *khre-ma-ti'zo* clearly indicates that God was responsible for the designation “Christians.” And it would have been most unlikely that the Jews would label Jesus’ followers “Christians” (from Greek) or “Messianists” (from Hebrew). They had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, or Christ, so they would not have tacitly recognized him as the Anointed One, or Christ, by identifying his followers with the designation “Christians.”

Christians: The Greek term *Khri-sti-a-nos'*, meaning “follower of Christ,” is found only three times in the Christian Greek Scriptures. (Ac 11:26; 26:28; 1Pe 4:16) It is derived from *Khri-stos'*, meaning Christ, or Anointed One. Christians follow both the example and the teachings of Jesus, “the Christ,” or the one anointed by Jehovah. (Lu 2:26; 4:18) The designation “Christians” was given “by divine providence” possibly as early as the year 44 C.E. when the events mentioned in this text occurred. The name apparently gained widespread acceptance, so that when Paul appeared before King Herod Agrippa II, about

58 C.E., Agrippa knew who the Christians were. (Ac 26:28) The historian Tacitus indicates that by about the year 64 C.E., the term “Christian” was in use among the general population in Rome. In addition, sometime between 62 and 64 C.E., Peter wrote his first letter to Christians scattered throughout the Roman Empire. By then, the name Christian seems to have been widespread, distinctive, and specific. (1Pe 1:1, 2; 4:16) With this divinely provided name, Jesus’ disciples could no longer be mistaken for a sect of Judaism.

11:28

a great famine: The report of this disaster, which occurred about 46 C.E., was corroborated by Josephus, who also referred to “the great famine” that occurred during the reign of Roman Emperor Claudius. Famines were particularly hard on the poor, who had no reserves of money or food. The Christians in Antioch were thus moved to send a relief contribution to their impoverished brothers in Judea.

in the time of Claudius: Roman Emperor Claudius, who ruled from 41 to 54 C.E., began his reign with a friendly disposition toward the Jews. By the end of his reign, the relationship had soured, and he expelled all Jews from Rome. (Ac 18:2) Claudius was reportedly poisoned with mushrooms given to him by his fourth wife. Nero succeeded him.

11:29

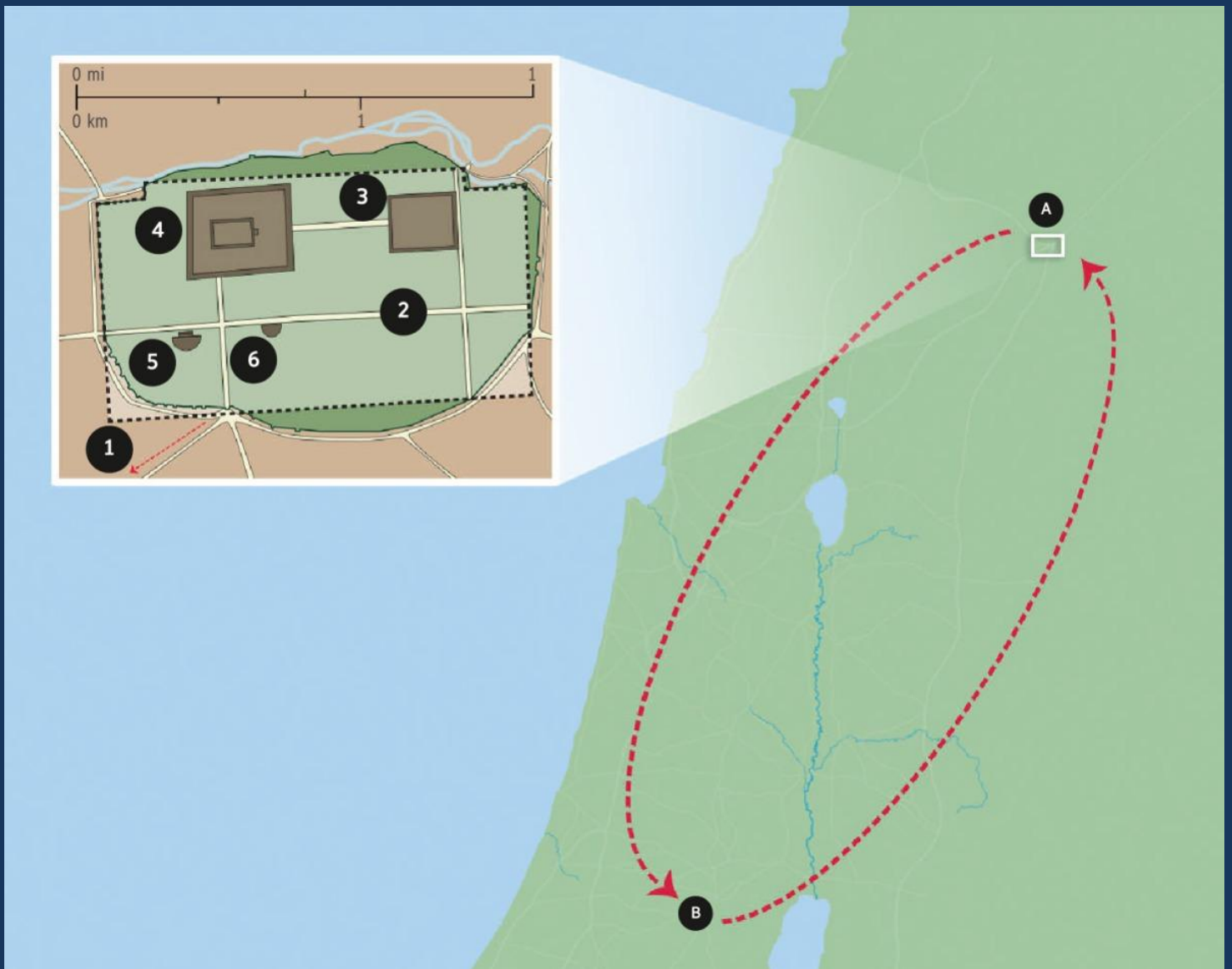
relief: Or “a relief ministrations.” This is the first recorded instance of Christians sending relief aid to fellow Christians living in another part of the world. The Greek word *di-a-ko-ni'a*, often rendered “ministry,” is also used in the sense of “relief work” at Ac 12:25 and “relief ministry” at 2Co 8:4. The use of the Greek word *di-a-ko-ni'a* in the Christian Greek Scriptures shows that Christians have a twofold ministry. One aspect is “the ministry [form of *di-a-ko-ni'a*] of the reconciliation,” that is, the preaching and teaching work. (2Co 5:18-20; 1Ti 2:3-6) The other aspect involves their ministry in behalf of fellow believers, as mentioned here. Paul stated: “There are different ministries [plural of *di-a-ko-ni'a*], and yet there is the same Lord.” (1Co 12:4-6, 11) He showed that these different aspects of the Christian ministry all constitute “sacred service.”—Ro 12:1, 6-8.

11:30

the elders: Lit., “the 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 physically older men. (See study note on Mt 16:21.) In the ancient nation of Israel, elders shared the responsibility of leadership and administration, both on a community level (De 25:7-9; Jos 20:4; Ru 4:1-12) and on a national level (Jg 21:16; 1Sa 4:3; 8:4; 1Ki 20:7). This is the first use of the term in connection with the Christian congregation. As had been true in fleshly Israel, the elders in spiritual Israel were responsible for the direction of the congregation. In this context, the elders were the ones who received the relief contribution, and they supervised its distribution to the congregations in Judea.



Saul on the road to Damascus



Saul and Damascus

In the first century C.E., the city of Damascus likely had a layout similar to what is shown here. It was an important center for trade, and water drawn from the nearby Barada River (the Abanah of 2Ki 5:12) made the area around the city like an oasis. Damascus had a number of synagogues. Saul came to that city intending to arrest “any whom he found who belonged to The Way,” an expression used to describe the followers of Jesus. (Ac 9:2; 19:9, 23; 22:4; 24:22) On the road to Damascus, however, the glorified Jesus appeared to Saul. After that, Saul stayed for a time in Damascus at the house of a man named Judas, who lived on the street called Straight. (Ac 9:11) In a vision, Jesus directed the disciple Ananias to Judas’ house to restore Saul’s sight, and Saul later got baptized. So instead of arresting the Jewish Christians, Saul became one of them. He began his career as a preacher of the good news in the synagogues of Damascus. After traveling to Arabia and then back to Damascus, Saul returned to Jerusalem, likely about the year 36 C.E.—Ac 9:1-6, 19-22; Ga 1:16, 17.

A. Damascus

1. Road to Jerusalem
2. Street called Straight
3. Agora
4. Temple of Jupiter
5. Theater
6. Musical Performance Theater (?)

B. Jerusalem

Related Scripture(s) Ac 9:1, 2; Ac 22:5



Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com

Roman Road in Tarsus

Tarsus, the birthplace of Saul (later the apostle Paul), was the principal city of the region of Cilicia in the southeast corner of Asia Minor, part of modern-day Turkey. (Ac 9:11; 22:3) Tarsus was a large, prosperous trading city, strategically located along a prime E-W overland trade route that threaded through the Taurus Mountains and the Cilician Gates (a narrow gorge with a wagon road cut through the rock). The city also maintained a harbor that connected the Cydnus River with the Mediterranean Sea. Tarsus was a center of Greek culture and had a sizable Jewish community. This photograph shows some of the ancient ruins that remain in the modern-day settlement of the same name, situated about 16 km (10 mi) from where the Cydnus River empties into the Mediterranean Sea. During the city's history, a number of noted personalities visited Tarsus, including Mark Antony, Cleopatra, and Julius Caesar, as well as several emperors. Roman statesman and writer Cicero was the city's governor from 51 to 50 B.C.E. Tarsus was famous as a seat of learning in the first century C.E., and according to the Greek geographer Strabo, as such it outranked even Athens and Alexandria. With good reason, Paul described Tarsus as "no obscure city."—Ac 21:39.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 9:11; Ac 21:39



Construction of a Roman Road

The extensive Roman road system helped early Christians to spread the good news throughout the empire. The apostle Paul no doubt traveled many miles on these roads. (Col 1:23) The diagram shown here illustrates the typical construction of a stone-paved Roman road. First, the path was marked. Next, builders dug a trench for the road and filled the trench with layers of road base made of stones, cement, and sand. The workers paved the road with large stone slabs and installed curb stones that helped keep the paving in place. The materials used and the camber of the road allowed water to drain from its surface. Outlets placed at intervals along the curbs let water escape into ditches that ran beside the road. The builders did such excellent work that some of their roads are still in existence today. Most roads in the Roman Empire, however, were not this sophisticated. The most common types were made simply of packed gravel.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 9:17; Ac 28:14-16



Joppa

This video shows the seaport of Joppa, located on the Mediterranean Coast halfway between Mount Carmel and Gaza. Modern Yafo (Arabic, Jaffa) merged with Tel Aviv in 1950. Now Tel Aviv-Yafo occupies the ancient site. Joppa was situated on a rocky hill rising to a height of about 35 m (115 ft), and its harbor is formed by a low ledge of rocks about 100 m (330 ft) from the coast. The Tyrians floated rafts of timber from the forests of Lebanon to Joppa to be used in constructing Solomon's temple. (2Ch 2:16) Later, the prophet Jonah, seeking to flee his assignment, went to Joppa and boarded a ship bound for Tarshish. (Jon 1:3) In the first century C.E., there was a Christian congregation in Joppa. In that group was Dorcas (Tabitha), whom Peter resurrected. (Ac 9:36-42) And it was while staying at Simon the tanner's house in Joppa that Peter received the vision that prepared him to preach to the Gentile Cornelius.—Ac 9:43; 10:6, 9-17.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 9:36; Ac 11:5

- Song 115 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness”: (10 min.)

Ac 9:1, 2—Saul brutally persecuted Jesus’ disciples (bt 60 ¶1-2)

Ac 9:15, 16—Saul was chosen to bear witness about Jesus (w16.06 7 ¶4)

Ac 9:20-22—Saul became a zealous witness (bt 64 ¶15)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Ac 9:4—Why did Jesus ask Saul: “Why are you persecuting me?” (bt 60-61 ¶5-6)

Ac 10:6—Why is it significant that the apostle Peter lodged with a tanner? (nwtsty study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ac 9:10-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 6

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (7 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for December.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jl* chap. 44
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 59 and Prayer

ACTS 9-11 | A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness

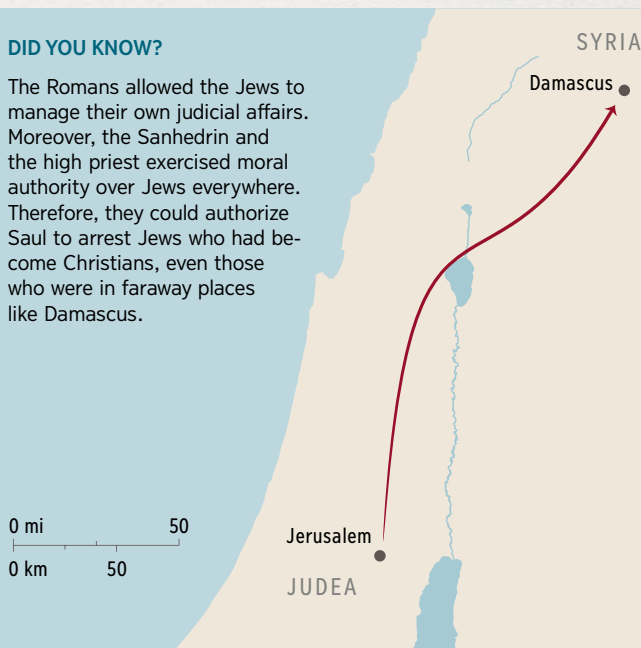


9:15, 16, 20-22

Saul acted swiftly on what he learned. Why did Saul respond when others failed to do so? Because he feared God more than man and he deeply appreciated the mercy Christ had shown him. If you are studying the Bible but are not baptized, will you imitate Saul by acting decisively on what you learn?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Romans allowed the Jews to manage their own judicial affairs. Moreover, the Sanhedrin and the high priest exercised moral authority over Jews everywhere. Therefore, they could authorize Saul to arrest Jews who had become Christians, even those who were in faraway places like Damascus.





Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: What is the purpose of life?

Scripture: Ge 1:27, 28

Link: Why can we trust that God will fulfill his purpose?



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: Why can we trust that God will fulfill his purpose?

Scripture: Jos 21:45

Link: What has God promised for the future?



○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What has God promised for the future?

Scripture: Re 21:4

Link: How can we experience the blessings that God has promised?

How Does Association With Fellow Christians Benefit Us?

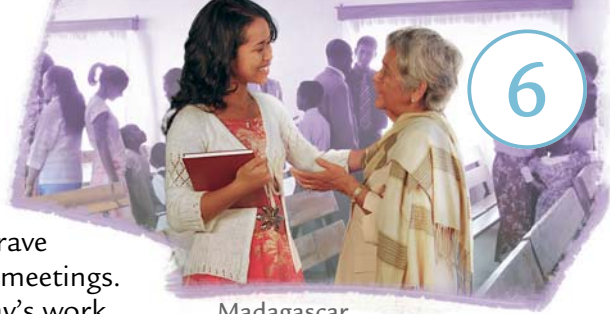
Even if we have to trek through dense jungle or brave harsh weather, we regularly attend our Christian meetings. Despite challenges of life and tiredness after a day's work, why do Jehovah's Witnesses make such an effort to associate with fellow believers?

It is good for our well-being. "Consider one another," wrote Paul, speaking of those with whom we associate in the congregation. (Hebrews 10:24) This expression means "to think about carefully," that is, to get to know one another. So the apostle's words encourage us to be concerned about others. By getting to know other Christian families, we discover that some of them have successfully overcome challenges similar to our own and that they can help us to succeed as well.

It builds lasting friendships. At our meetings, we gather together, not with mere acquaintances, but with a group of close friends. On other occasions, we spend time together in wholesome recreation. What beneficial effect does such association have? We learn to appreciate one another more, and that strengthens our bonds of love. Then, when our companions are facing problems, we readily help them because strong friendships have been established. (Proverbs 17:17) By associating with all members of our congregation, we show that we "have mutual concern for one another."—1 Corinthians 12:25, 26.

We encourage you to choose as your friends those who are doing God's will. You will find such friends among Jehovah's Witnesses. Please do not let anything hold you back from associating with us.

- Why is it in our best interests to associate together at the meetings?
- When would you like to get acquainted with our congregation?



Madagascar



Norway



Lebanon



Italy

Searching for Friends of Peace

(Luke 10:6)

D Dsus4 D A

Je - sus com - mand - ed: 'Let the truth be heard.' In sum - mer
Time waits for no one, so the search goes on. A mil - lion

Bm7 D/G Gadd9

heat, on dust - y roads, He let all hear Je - ho - vah's word.
hearts, a mil - lion lives, We give our all to save just one.

D Dsus4 D A

He loved God's sheep and called to ev - 'ry - one. He searched the
Love is the force that makes us call a - gain. A wound - ed

Bm7 Em7 D/F# D/G Gadd9

land from the sun - rise 'til the day was done. From
heart can be healed, and bro - ken lives can mend. We

Searching for Friends of Peace

Em11 D/G A D/F# Gadd9 D/E

door to door and in the street, We share with ev - 'ry -
search the towns and cit - y squares, And when we find some -

A Bm7 Em11 D/G A Bm7

one we meet The news that soon man's trou - bles all will be
one who cares, The joy we feel in - spi - res us to go

Asus4 A Chorus D

gone.
on. Search - ing the world

A/C# D/F# Gadd9

For friends of peace in ev - 'ry na - tion,

Searching for Friends of Peace

D A/C# D/F# Gadd9

Search - ing to find A heart in - clined to - ward

The first system of music features a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature. The melody begins with a half note chord, followed by a quarter note, and then a series of eighth notes. A fermata is placed over the first two notes. The bass clef staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The lyrics are positioned below the treble staff.

D A/C#

sal - va - tion, Want - ing to leave No

The second system continues the melody from the first system. It features a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a common time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. A fermata is placed over the first two notes. The bass clef staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The lyrics are positioned below the treble staff.

D/F# Gadd9

stone un - turned.

The third system concludes the piece. It features a treble clef staff with a key signature of two sharps and a common time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes and half notes. A fermata is placed over the first two notes. The bass clef staff provides a steady accompaniment of eighth notes. The lyrics are positioned below the treble staff.

- Song 115 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- “A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness”: (10 min.)

Ac 9:1, 2—Saul brutally persecuted Jesus’ disciples (bt 60 ¶1-2)

Ac 9:15, 16—Saul was chosen to bear witness about Jesus (w16.06 7 ¶4)

Ac 9:20-22—Saul became a zealous witness (bt 64 ¶15)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)

Ac 9:4—Why did Jesus ask Saul: “Why are you persecuting me?” (bt 60-61 ¶5-6)

Ac 10:6—Why is it significant that the apostle Peter lodged with a tanner? (nwtsty study note)

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

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ac 9:10-22

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 6

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 58
- **Local Needs:** (8 min.)
- **Organizational Accomplishments:** (7 min.) Play the *Organizational Accomplishments* video for December.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jl* chap. 44
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 59 and Prayer

ACTS 9-11 | A Vicious Persecutor Becomes a Zealous Witness

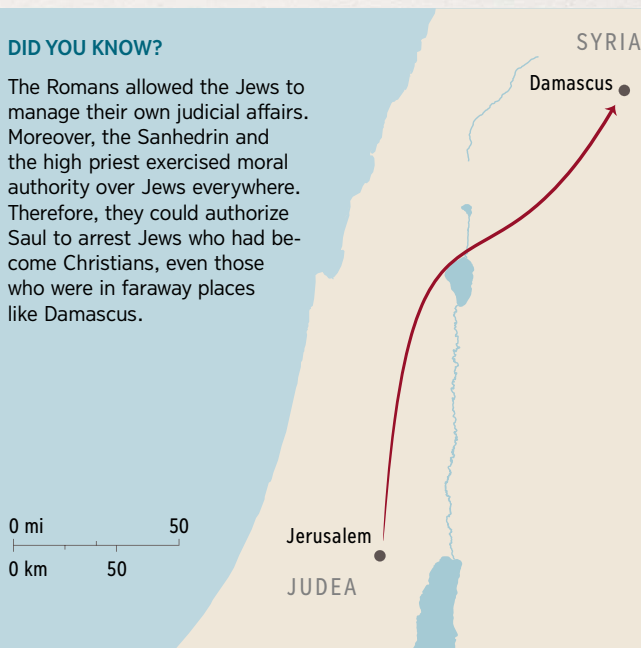


9:15, 16, 20-22

Saul acted swiftly on what he learned. Why did Saul respond when others failed to do so? Because he feared God more than man and he deeply appreciated the mercy Christ had shown him. If you are studying the Bible but are not baptized, will you imitate Saul by acting decisively on what you learn?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Romans allowed the Jews to manage their own judicial affairs. Moreover, the Sanhedrin and the high priest exercised moral authority over Jews everywhere. Therefore, they could authorize Saul to arrest Jews who had become Christians, even those who were in faraway places like Damascus.



JESUS SILENCES A STORM AT SEA

MATTHEW 8:18, 23-27 MARK 4:35-41 LUKE 8:22-25



Jesus has had a long, tiring day. When evening comes, he says to the disciples: “Let us cross to the other shore,” which is across from the area of Capernaum.—Mark 4:35.

Over on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is the region of the Gerasenes. This area is also known as the Decapolis. The cities of the Decapolis are a center of Greek culture, though many Jews live there too.

Jesus’ departure from Capernaum does not go unnoticed. There are other boats that at least start to cross the sea. (Mark 4:36) Actually, it is not that far across. The Sea of Galilee is like a large freshwater lake, being about 13 miles long and having a maximum width of about 7 miles. But it is not shallow.

Though Jesus is a perfect man, he is understandably tired from his active ministry. So after they set sail, he lies down in the back of the boat, puts his head on a pillow, and falls asleep.

Several of the apostles are well-qualified to sail the boat, but this is not going to be an easy trip. There are surrounding mountains, and the surface of the Sea of Galilee is often quite warm. At times, colder air in the mountains rushes down and meets the warm surface water, creating sudden, violent windstorms on the sea. This is what now occurs. Soon the waves are dashing against the boat. It begins “to fill up with water and to be in danger.” (Luke 8:23) Still, Jesus remains asleep!

The seamen work frantically to steer the boat, drawing on their past experience at maneuvering through storms. But this time is different. Fearing for their lives, they wake Jesus up and exclaim: “Lord, save us, we are about to perish!” (Matthew 8:25) The disciples are now afraid that they are going to drown!

When Jesus wakes up, he says to the apostles: “Why are you so afraid, you with little faith?” (Matthew 8:26) Then Jesus commands the wind and the sea: “Hush! Be quiet!” (Mark 4:39) The raging wind stops and the sea becomes calm. (Mark and Luke tell of this impressive episode, first emphasizing that Jesus miraculously calms the storm, and then they mention the disciples’ lack of faith.)

Imagine the effect this has on the disciples! They have just seen the sea go from a raging storm to complete calm. An unusual fear grips them. They say to one another: “Who really is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him.” And they come to the other side of the sea safely. (Mark 4:41–5:1) Perhaps the other boats that put to sea have been able to return to the western shore.

How reassuring it is to know that God’s Son has power over the elements! When his full attention is directed toward our earth during his Kingdom rule, all people will dwell in security, for there will be no terrifying natural calamities!

-
- ◇ What natural features may contribute to the violent storm that occurs on the Sea of Galilee?
 - ◇ In desperation, what do the disciples do?
 - ◇ Why can we be reassured by this event?

Praise Jah With Me

(Psalm 146:2)

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

Praise Jah with me; Come! Let us sing! He gives us life, breath, and
 Praise Jah with me; He sat - is - fies. He hears our prayers as our
 Praise Jah with me; Our God is just. He brings us com - fort, in

C/E G7/D G C F/C C G7 G F/A G7/B

ev - 'ry good thing. Each day and night, His name we bless,
 needs he sup - plies. His might - y arm Strength - ens the weak;
 him we can trust. Wrongs he will right; Hearts he will heal.

C F C/G G7 Gm/E A7

Prais - ing his love and his al - might - i - ness.
 His ho - ly spir - it sus - tains all the meek.
 Rich King - dom bless - ings all man - kind will feel.

Dm D#° C/E C Dm7 Em/G G7 C

We sing his praise, and his name we con - fess.
 His name we praise; Of his pow - er we speak.
 Come let us praise him with joy and with zeal!

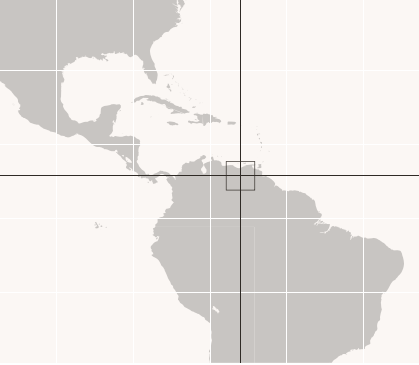
OCTOBER 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 3-30, 2018



COVER IMAGE:
VENEZUELA

A mother and her children enjoying some refreshment while sharing together in the ministry in Telares de Palo Grande, Caracas

PUBLISHERS
149,355

BIBLE STUDIES
209,866

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2017)
478,266

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 1918—One Hundred Years Ago

6 WEEK OF DECEMBER 3-9 Speaking the Truth

11 WEEK OF DECEMBER 10-16 Teaching the Truth

Lying has become commonplace in today's society. How did the practice get started? What was the worst lie ever told? How can we protect ourselves from being deceived, and how can we show that we speak the truth with one another? How can we use our Teaching Toolbox to teach the truth in our ministry? These articles will explain.

17 LIFE STORY Jehovah Richly Blessed My Decision

22 WEEK OF DECEMBER 17-23 Put Trust in Our Active Leader —The Christ

27 WEEK OF DECEMBER 24-30 Maintain Inner Peace Despite Changing Circumstances

As imperfect humans, we tend to struggle with change, whether in our life or within the organization. These two articles will help us to maintain inner peace and to put trust in our active Leader, the Christ, even when our life takes an unexpected turn.

32 DID YOU KNOW?

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.



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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 13 October 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2018 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

October 2018
Vol. 139, No. 13 ENGLISH

Make the Truth Your Own

(Proverbs 3:1, 2)

E♭ *B♭9*

The way of the truth is the best way of
 The effort you make and the time you are
 Com - pared with our God, we are all lit - tle

A♭/E♭ *E♭* *Gm/D* *Cm* *F7*

liv - ing, But no one can live your life
 spend - ing In ser - vice to God and his
 chil - dren And need his di - rec - tion and

B♭13sus4 *B♭9* *E♭*

for you. So take the ad - vice that Je -
 King - dom Will yield rich re - sults and a
 coun - sel. So walk ev - 'ry day with our

B♭9 *A♭/E♭* *E♭* *Gm/D* *Cm* *B♭/C*

ho - vah is giv - ing; Be - lieve what he
 life that's un - end - ing; A life full of
 Fa - ther in heav - en; Re - ceive his rich

Make the Truth Your Own

F7 Ab/Bb Bb7 Chorus Eb Ebma7/G Eb6/G

tells you is true.
good things to come.
bless - ing in full.

Make the truth your

Ab C7 Bb/D C7/E Fm Abma7/Eb Ab/Eb Bb/D Fm7/C

own. Make it live, yes, make it real.

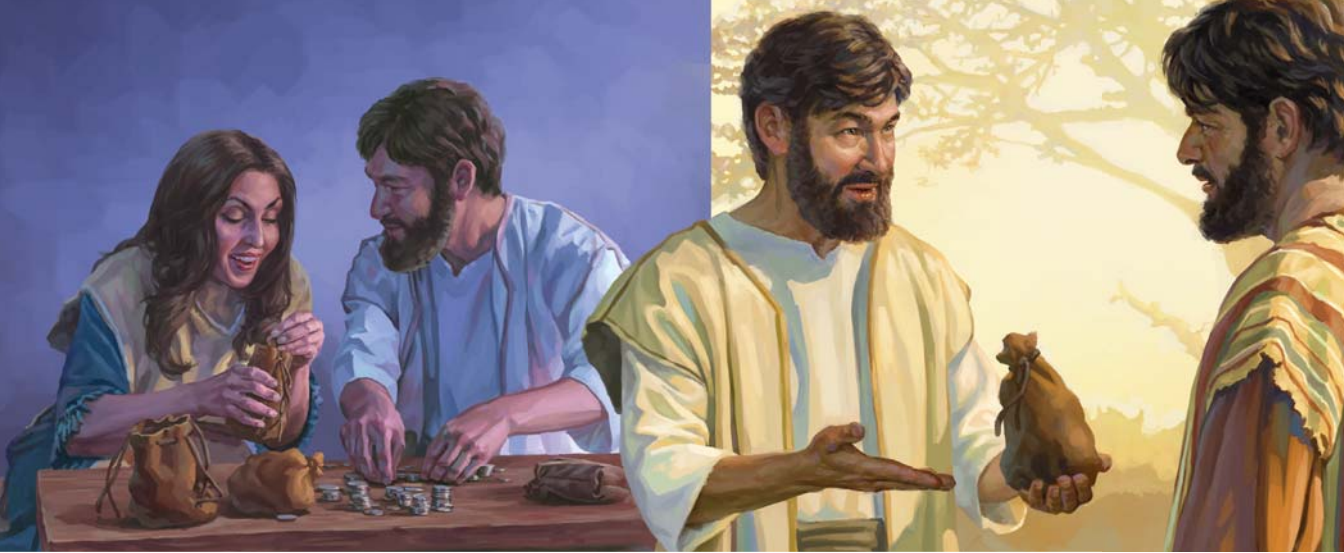
Bb7 Ebma7 Eb Ebadd9/G Bb/Ab Ab

And then feel the joy Je - ho - vah

Abm/F Eb/Bb Ab/Bb Bb7 Ab/Bb Eb

gives you When you make the truth your own.

(See also Ps. 26:3; Prov. 8:35; 15:31; John 8:31, 32.)



Speaking the Truth

“Speak the truth with one another.”—ZECH. 8:16.

SONGS: 56, 124

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How is Satan misleading people today?

Why do people commonly lie?

How can we show that we are truthful with one another?

THE telephone, the electric light bulb, the automobile, and the refrigerator are just some of the inventions that have improved everyday life. Other innovations, though, have made life more dangerous—gunpowder, land mines, cigarettes, and the atomic bomb, to name a few. However, there is a device that predates all of them and that has had the worst possible effect on humankind. What is it? The lie! That is, saying something that one knows is not true in order to deceive someone else. And who devised the first lie? Jesus Christ identified “the Devil” as “the father of the lie.” **(Read John 8:44.)** When did he utter the first lie?

² It happened thousands of years ago in the garden of Eden. The first human couple, Adam and Eve, were enjoying life in the Paradise that their Creator had provided for them. Then, the Devil entered the scene. He knew that God had commanded the couple not to eat from “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad,” lest they die for their disobedience. Even so, through a serpent, Satan told Eve: “You certainly will not die [the first lie ever told]. For God knows that in the very day you eat from it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and bad.”—Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-5.

1, 2. What device has had the worst possible effect on humankind, and who was responsible for it?

³ Satan's lie was malicious because he knew full well that if Eve believed him and ate the fruit, she would die. Eve and Adam both disobeyed Jehovah's command and eventually died. (Gen. 3:6; 5:5) More than that, through such sin, "death spread to all men." In fact, "death ruled as king . . . , even over those who had not sinned in the same way that Adam transgressed." (Rom. 5:12, 14) Now, instead of being able to enjoy perfect, endless life as God had originally intended, humans are doing well if they live "70 years, or 80 if one is especially strong." Even then, life is often "filled with trouble and sorrow." (Ps. 90:10) How tragic—all resulting from Satan's lie!

⁴ In explaining the Devil's actions, Jesus stated: "He did not stand fast in the truth, because truth is not in him." Truth is still not in Satan, for he continues "misleading the entire inhabited earth" with his lies. (Rev. 12:9) We do not want to be misled by the Devil. Let us, then, consider three questions: How is Satan misleading humans? Why do people commonly lie? And so that we never forfeit our friendship with Jehovah, as did Adam and Eve, how can we show that we are "speaking the truth" at all times?—**Read Psalm 15:1, 2.**

HOW SATAN IS MISLEADING HUMANS

⁵ The apostle Paul knew that we can avoid being "outwitted by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his intentions."

3. Why can it be said that Satan's lie was malicious, and what has resulted from it?

4. (a) What questions do we need to be able to answer? (b) According to Psalm 15:1, 2, who only can be Jehovah's friend?

5. How is Satan misleading mankind today?

(2 Cor. 2:11; ftn.) We know that the whole world—including false religion, corrupt politics, and greedy commercialism—is under the Devil's control. (1 John 5:19) We are not surprised, then, that Satan and his demons would influence men in powerful positions to "speak lies." (1 Tim. 4:1, 2) That certainly is true of people in big business who promote harmful products and fraudulent schemes through false advertising.

⁶ Religious leaders who lie are especially guilty because they endanger the future life prospects of those who believe their lies. If an individual accepts a false teaching and practices something that is actually condemned by God, it can cost that person his eternal life. (Hos. 4:9) Jesus knew that the religious leaders in his day were guilty of such deception. He told them to their face: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you travel over sea and dry land to make one convert, and when he becomes one, you make him a subject for Gehenna [everlasting destruction] twice as much so as yourselves." (Matt. 23:15; ftn.) Jesus condemned those false religious leaders in the strongest terms. They truly were 'from their father the Devil, a murderer.'—John 8:44.

⁷ Whether called pastors, priests, rabbis, swamis, or by some other title, religious leaders abound in the world today. Like their first-century counterparts, they are "suppressing the truth" from God's Word and have "exchanged the truth of God for the lie." (Rom. 1:18, 25) They promote such false teachings as

6, 7. (a) Why are religious leaders who lie especially guilty? (b) What lies have you heard religious leaders tell?

“once saved, always saved,” the immortality of the human soul, reincarnation, and the foolish idea that God would condone homosexual lifestyles and same-sex marriages.

⁸ Politicians have used lies to mislead mankind. One of the biggest lies is yet to be heard when men proclaim that they have achieved “peace and security!” But “then sudden destruction is to be instantly on them.” May we not be taken in by their attempt to minimize how precarious this system of things really is! In truth, we “know very well that Jehovah’s day is coming exactly as a thief in the night.”—1 Thess. 5:1-4.

WHY PEOPLE COMMONLY LIE

⁹ When a new invention or innovation becomes popular, it is eventually mass-produced. The same has happened with the lie. Spreading lies has become commonplace in today’s society, and influential people are not the only ones who deceive others. As stated in the article “Why We Lie” by Y. Bhattacharjee, “lying has come to be recognized as a deeply ingrained human trait.” People often resort to lying either to protect themselves or to promote themselves. They lie to cover up their mistakes and misdeeds or to gain economic and personal advantages. As the article states, there are people who “lie with ease, in ways big and small, to strangers, coworkers, friends, and loved ones.”

¹⁰ What is the result of all this lying? Trust is lost and relationships can be ru-

8. What lie do we expect politicians to tell one day soon, but how should we react to it?

9, 10. (a) Why do people lie, and in what does that result? (b) What should we remember about Jehovah?

ined. Imagine how disheartening it is, for example, when a wife cheats on her faithful husband and lies to cover up the immoral affair. Or when an abusive man mistreats his wife and children in private but in public puts on the pretense of being a model family man. However, we should remember that such deceitful people cannot keep anything secret from Jehovah, for “all things are naked and openly exposed” to him.—Heb. 4:13.

¹¹ As an example, the Bible tells of how “Satan emboldened” a Christian couple in the first century to lie to God. Ananias and Sapphira schemed in their hearts to deceive the apostles. They sold some property but brought only part of the proceeds of the sale to the apostles. The couple wanted to make themselves look good in the congregation, appearing to be more generous with their donation than they really were. Yet, Jehovah could see what they had done, and he punished them accordingly.—Acts 5:1-10.

¹² How does Jehovah feel about lying? Satan as well as all unrepentant, malicious liars who imitate him are heading for “the lake of fire.” (Rev. 20:10; 21:8; Ps. 5:6) And why? Because Jehovah puts such liars in the same category as everyone else “whose practices are disgusting in God’s eyes.”—Rev. 22:15, fn.

¹³ We know that Jehovah “is not a mere man who tells lies.” In fact, “it is impossible for God to lie.” (Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18) “Jehovah hates . . . a lying

11. What does the bad example of Ananias and Sapphira teach us? (See opening picture.)

12. Where are unrepentant, malicious liars heading, and why?

13. What do we know about Jehovah, and what does that knowledge motivate us to do?

tongue.” (Prov. 6:16, 17) To have his approval, we must live by his standard of truthfulness. That is why we “do not lie to one another.”—Col. 3:9.

WE “SPEAK THE TRUTH”

¹⁴ What is one way that true Christians distinguish themselves from members of false religions? We “speak the truth.” (Read **Zechariah 8:16, 17.**) Paul explained: “We recommend ourselves as God’s ministers, . . . by truthful speech.” (2 Cor. 6:4, 7) Jesus said of man: “Out of the heart’s abundance his mouth speaks.” (Luke 6:45) So when a good man speaks truth in his heart, truthful speech will come out of his mouth. He will tell the truth in ways big and small—to strangers, coworkers, friends, and loved ones. Consider some examples of how we can show that we are thus trying to be honest in all things.

¹⁵ What if you are a young person who wants to fit in with your peers? Make

14. (a) How do we distinguish ourselves from members of false religions? (b) Explain the principle found at Luke 6:45.

15. (a) Why is it never wise to try to live a double life? (b) What can help youths to resist unwholesome peer pressure? (See footnote.)

sure that you never do what some have done by leading a double life. They appear to be chaste when around their family and the congregation but are entirely different when around worldly youths and on social media. They may use bad language, wear immodest clothes, listen to debased music, abuse alcohol or drugs, date secretly, and worse. They are living a lie, playing false to their parents, to fellow worshippers, and to God. (Ps. 26:4, 5) Jehovah knows when we are only ‘honoring him with our lips, but our heart is far removed from him.’ (Mark 7:6) How much better it is to do as the proverb says: “Let your heart not envy sinners, but be in the fear of Jehovah all day long.” —Prov. 23:17.*

¹⁶ Perhaps you wish to serve as a regular pioneer or in some feature of special full-time service, such as at Bethel. During the application process, it is important that you give honest and completely

* See chapter 15, “How Can I Resist Peer Pressure?,” and chapter 16, “A Double Life—Who Has to Know?,” in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2.

16. What does truthfulness have to do with applying for a special privilege of service?

Do you see a problem in this young sister’s life?
(See paragraphs 15, 16)



truthful answers to all the questions asked regarding your health, choices of entertainment, and morals. (Heb. 13:18) What if you have been involved in some type of unclean or questionable conduct that has not been addressed by the elders? Seek their help so that you will be able to serve with a clean conscience.—Rom. 9:1; Gal. 6:1.

¹⁷ What should you do, for example, if the authorities restrict the Kingdom activity in your land and you are called in for questioning about your brothers? Must you tell them everything you know? What did Jesus do when he was interrogated by the Roman governor? In line with the Scriptural principle that there is “a time to be silent and a time to speak,” Jesus at times said nothing at all! (Eccl. 3:1, 7; Matt. 27:11-14) In such a setting, discretion is the better course, so that we do not put our brothers at risk.—Prov. 10:19; 11:12.

¹⁸ What if a serious sin has been committed by someone in the congregation

17. What should we do when speaking to persecutors about our brothers?

18. What responsibility do we have when speaking to the elders about our brothers?

and you have knowledge of what occurred? The elders, who are responsible for keeping the congregation morally clean, may need to ask you what you know about the matter. What will you do, especially if a close friend or relative is involved? “The one who testifies faithfully will tell the truth.” (Prov. 12:17; 21:28) So you have a responsibility to tell the elders the whole truth, not just half of it, and you must not distort it. They have a right to know the facts so that they can determine the best way to help the wrongdoer restore his or her relationship with Jehovah.—Jas. 5:14, 15.

¹⁹ The psalmist David prayed to Jehovah: “You find pleasure in truth in the inner person.” (Ps. 51:6) David knew that our being truthful comes from the inside, from our heart. In every aspect of life, true Christians “speak the truth with one another.” Another way that we can show that we are different as God’s ministers is to teach his truths to others in our ministry. How to do that is the focus of the next article.

19. What can we look forward to learning in the next article?

How would you decide when to remain silent and when to tell the whole truth?

(See paragraphs 17, 18)



Ever Loyal

(Psalm 18:25)

Bb7sus4 Bb7 Eb Fm11 Bb7/F Eb/G Ab

Ev - er loy - al to Je - ho - vah, Loy - al
 Ev - er loy - al to our broth - ers, Stick - ing
 Ev - er loy - al to their guid - ance When our

R.H.

Eb/Bb Gm Gm7 Ab C7sus4 C7

love we wish to show. As a
 close in times of need. Ev - er
 broth - ers lead the way. When they

Fm Gm11 C7/G Fm/Ab Bb/C C7

peo - ple, ded - i - cat - ed, His com -
 car - ing, al - ways trust - ing, Ev - er
 give us clear di - rec - tion, May we

R.H.

Fm Ab/Eb Dm11 G7

mands we want to know. His ad -
 kind in word and deed. We show
 loy - al - ly o - bey. Then the

Ever Loyal

Cm Ab Eb/G G7

vice will nev - er fail us, And his
 hon - or to our broth - ers
 bless - ing from Je - ho - vah Will be

R.H.

Cm Eb/F F9 Bb Bb/Ab Eb/G

coun - sel we o - bey. He is
 spect them from the heart. Ev - er
 ours to make us strong. When we're

Fm7 Bb Bb/Ab Eb/G Cm9 Cm

loy - al; we can trust him. From his
 loy - al, ev - er clos - er, From their
 loy - al, ev - er faith - ful, To Je -

R.H. R.H.

Fm7 Bb7sus4 Bb7 Eb

side we'll nev - er stray.
 side we'll nev - er part.
 ho - vah we'll be - long.

R.H.

