

- Song 96 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **"A Unanimous Decision Based on God's Word":** (10 min.)

Ac 15:1, 2—The circumcision issue threatened to divide the early Christian congregation (bt 102-103 ¶8)

Ac 15:13-20—The governing body's decision was based on the Scriptures (w12 1/15 5 ¶6-7)

Ac 15:28, 29; 16:4, 5—The governing body's decision strengthened the congregations (bt 123 ¶18)

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

Ac 16:6-9—What can we learn from this account about expanding our ministry? (w12 1/15 10 ¶8)

Ac 16:37—How did the apostle Paul use his Roman citizenship to advance the good news? (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 16:25-40

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Respond to an objection common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. Introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?*
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 74
- **"Joyfully Praise Jehovah With Song":** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Children Praise Jehovah in Song* (video category MUSIC). To conclude the part, invite all to stand and sing along to the video *Song 084 Reaching Out* (video category CHILDREN).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 46
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 102 and Prayer


ACTS 15-16 | A Unanimous Decision Based on God's Word

What can we learn from the way this situation was resolved?

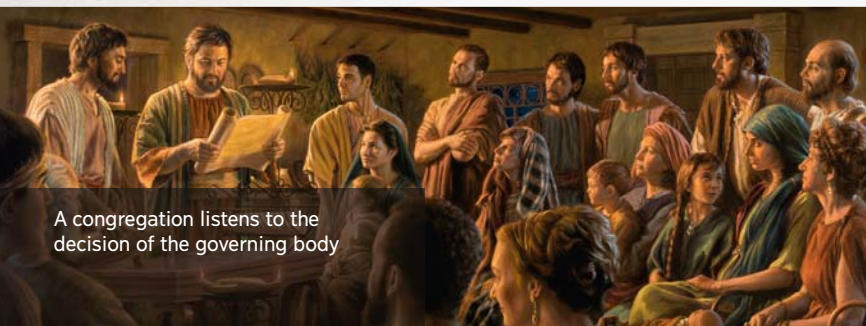
**15:1, 2—Exercise humility and patience.** Rather than settling the issue themselves, Paul and Barnabas sought direction from Jehovah's organization.

**15:28, 29—Trust God's organization.** The congregation was confident that Jehovah would direct matters by means of his holy spirit and Christ Jesus.

**16:4, 5—Obey.** The congregations prospered when they followed the direction from the governing body.

 What is one example of recent direction received from Jehovah's organization?

How do I benefit from following it?



A congregation listens to the decision of the governing body

# God's Own Book—A Treasure

(Proverbs 2:1)

Ab Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db Ab/C Bbm Bbm/Ab Ab/Gb Gb

There is a book that by its man - y pag - es,  
They wrote a rec - ord true of God's cre - a - tions,  
The time has come with rea - son for re - joic - ing:

Bb Ab/C Bb7/D Ebm9 Ebm Ebm/Db Ebm/C

Brings peace and joy and hope to hu - man - kind.  
How by his might this u - ni - verse ap - peared.  
Je - ho - vah rules by his a - noint - ed King.

Ebm/F F7 Bbm9 Bbm Bbm/Ab Gbma7 Ebm/Gb

Its won - drous thoughts are charged with such great pow - er;  
They al - so told how man at first was sin - less  
So now we preach the good news of the King - dom

Db/F Bbm7 Eb7 Ebm11

It brings life to the "dead," sight to the "blind."  
But how his Par - a - dise then dis - ap - peared.  
And share the hope of bless - ings it will bring.

God's Own Book—A Treasure

Ab7 Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db Ab/C Bbm Bbm/Ab Ab/Gb Gb

That pre - cious book is God's own Ho - ly Bi - ble.  
 They fur - ther told a - bout a cer - tain an - gel  
 With - in his book are found these cheer - ful tid - ings;

Bb Ab/C Bb7/D Ebm9 Ebm EbmDb Ebm/C

Its words were penned by men whom God in - spired,  
 Who chal - langed God and spurned his sov - 'reign - ty.  
 A sa - cred ban - quet feast on which to feed.

F7 Eb/G F7/A Bbm Fm/Ab Gb Db/F Ebm9 Ebm

By men who tru - ly loved their God Je - ho - vah,  
 That chal - lenge led to sin and man's great sor - row,  
 It of - fers peace be - yond all hu - man think - ing;

Gbm Gbm(ma7) Gbm6 Db/F Ab/Eb D° Gb/Db Ab7/C Gb/Bb Ab7/C Db

And by his ho - ly spir - it they were fired.  
 But soon will come Je - ho - vah's vic - to - ry.  
 This Liv - ing Trea - sure beck - ons all to read.

(See also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.)

restrained the crowds from sacrificing to them.

**19** But Jews arrived from Antioch and I-co'ni-um and persuaded the crowds,<sup>a</sup> and they stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, imagining that he was dead.<sup>b</sup> **20** However, when the disciples surrounded him, he got up and entered the city. On the next day he left with Bar'na-bas for Der'be.<sup>c</sup> **21** After declaring the good news to that city and making quite a few disciples, they returned to Lys'tra, I-co'ni-um, and Antioch. **22** There they strengthened the disciples,<sup>d</sup> encouraging them to remain in the faith and saying: "We must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations."<sup>e</sup> **23** Moreover, they appointed elders for them in each congregation,<sup>f</sup> offering prayer with fasting,<sup>g</sup> and they entrusted them to Jehovah,<sup>\*</sup> in whom they had become believers.

**24** Then they went through Pi-sid'i-a and came into Pam-phyl'i-a,<sup>h</sup> **25** and after proclaiming the word in Perga, they went down to At-ta-li'a. **26** From there they sailed off for Antioch, where they had been entrusted to the undeserved kindness of God for the work they had now completed.<sup>i</sup>

**27** When they had arrived and had gathered the congregation together, they related the many things God had done by means of them, and that he had opened to the nations the door to faith.<sup>j</sup> **28** So they spent considerable time with the disciples.

**15** Now some men came down from Ju-de'a and began to teach the brothers: "Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses,<sup>k</sup> you cannot be saved." **2** But after quite a bit

14:22 \*Or "the souls of the disciples."  
14:23 \*See App. A5.

CHAP. 14

a Ac 17:13

b 2Co 11:25

c Ac 16:1

d Ac 11:22, 23

e Mt 10:38  
Joh 15:19  
Ro 8:17  
1Th 3:4

f Tit 1:5

g Ac 13:2, 3

h Ac 13:13

i Ac 13:1, 2

j Ac 11:18

CHAP. 15

k Ge 17:9, 10  
Ex 12:48  
Le 12:2, 3

Second Col.

a Ga 2:1

b Ex 12:48  
Ac 11:2, 3

c Ac 10:34, 35  
Ac 11:16, 17

d 1Ch 28:9  
Jer 11:20

e Ac 10:44, 45  
Ac 11:15

f Ga 3:28

g Ga 2:15, 16  
1Pe 1:22

h Ga 5:1

i Ga 3:10

of dissension and disputing by Paul and Bar'na-bas with them, it was arranged for Paul, Bar'na-bas, and some of the others to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem<sup>a</sup> regarding this issue.<sup>\*</sup>

**3** So after being escorted partway by the congregation, these men continued on through both Phoe'ni'cia and Sa-mar'i-a, relating in detail the conversion of people of the nations and bringing great joy to all the brothers. **4** On arriving in Jerusalem, they were kindly received by the congregation and the apostles and the elders, and they related the many things God had done by means of them. **5** But some of those of the sect of the Pharisees who had become believers stood up from their seats and said: "It is necessary to circumcise them and command them to observe the Law of Moses."<sup>b</sup>

**6** So the apostles and the elders gathered together to look into this matter. **7** After much intense discussion<sup>\*</sup> had taken place, Peter rose and said to them: "Men, brothers, you well know that from early days God made the choice among you that through my mouth people of the nations should hear the word of the good news and believe.<sup>c</sup>

**8** And God, who knows the heart,<sup>d</sup> bore witness by giving them the holy spirit,<sup>e</sup> just as he did to us also. **9** And he made no distinction at all between us and them,<sup>f</sup> but purified their hearts by faith.<sup>g</sup> **10** So why are you now making a test of God by imposing on the neck of the disciples a yoke<sup>h</sup> that neither our forefathers nor we were capable of bearing?<sup>i</sup> **11** On the contrary, we have faith that we are saved through the undeserved

15:2 \*Or "dispute." 15:7 \*Or "much disputing."

kindness of the Lord Jesus<sup>a</sup> in the same way that they are.”<sup>b</sup>

**12** At that the entire group became silent, and they began to listen to Bar’na-bas and Paul relate the many signs and wonders\* that God had done through them among the nations.

**13** After they finished speaking, James replied: “Men, brothers, hear me. **14** Sym’e-on<sup>c</sup> has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name.<sup>d</sup>

**15** And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written: **16** ‘After these things I will return and raise up again the tent\* of David that is fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, **17** so that the men who remain may earnestly seek Jehovah,\* together with people of all the nations, people who are called by my name, says Jehovah,\* who is doing these things,<sup>e</sup> **18** known from of old.’<sup>f</sup> **19** Therefore, my decision\* is not to trouble those from the nations who are turning to God,<sup>g</sup> **20** but to write them to abstain from things polluted by idols,<sup>h</sup> from sexual immorality,<sup>i</sup> from what is strangled,<sup>j</sup> and from blood.<sup>j</sup> **21** For from ancient times Moses has had those who preach him in city after city, because he is read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath.”<sup>k</sup>

**22** Then the apostles and the elders, together with the whole congregation, decided to send chosen men from among them to Antioch, along with Paul and Bar’na-bas; they sent Judas who was called Bar’sab-bas and Si-

15:12 \*Or “portents.” 15:16 \*Or “booth; house.” 15:17 \*See App. A5. 15:19 \*Or “opinion.” 15:20, 29 \*Greek, *por-nei’a*. See Glossary. 15:20, 29 \*Or “what is killed without draining its blood.”

CHAP. 15

- a Isa 53:11
- Joh 1:17
- b Mt 20:28
- c Mt 10:2
- Ac 11:13
- 2Pe 1:1
- d 1Pe 2:9, 10
- e Am 9:11, 12
- f Isa 45:21
- g Ac 15:10
- h Ge 35:2
- Ex 20:3
- 1Co 10:14
- i 1Co 6:9, 10
- Col 3:5
- 1Th 4:3
- j Ge 9:4
- Le 3:17
- Le 7:26
- Le 17:10, 13
- Le 19:26
- De 12:23
- De 15:23
- 1Sa 14:32, 33
- k Ac 13:15
- 2Co 3:15

Second Col.

- a 1Th 1:1
- 1Pe 5:12
- b Ac 11:26
- c Ac 15:1
- d Ac 13:50
- 1Co 15:30, 31
- 2Co 11:23-26
- e Ac 16:4
- f Joh 16:13
- Ac 5:32
- g Ge 35:2
- Ex 20:3
- Ex 34:15
- 1Co 10:14
- h Ge 9:4
- Le 3:17
- Le 7:26
- Le 17:10
- De 12:16, 23
- 1Sa 14:32, 33
- i Le 17:13
- j Ge 39:7-9
- 1Co 6:9, 10
- Eph 5:5
- Col 3:5
- 1Th 4:3
- k Ac 18:23

las,<sup>a</sup> who were leading men among the brothers. **23** They wrote this and sent it through them:

“The apostles and the elders, your brothers, to those brothers in Antioch,<sup>b</sup> Syria, and Cilicia who are from the nations: Greetings! **24** Since we have heard that some went out from among us and caused you trouble with what they have said,<sup>c</sup> trying to subvert you,\* although we did not give them any instructions, **25** we have come to a unanimous decision to choose men to send to you together with our beloved Bar’na-bas and Paul, **26** men who have given up their lives\* for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>d</sup> **27** We are therefore sending Judas and Silas, so that they also may report the same things by word of mouth.<sup>e</sup> **28** For the holy spirit<sup>f</sup> and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things: **29** to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols,<sup>g</sup> from blood,<sup>h</sup> from what is strangled,<sup>i</sup> and from sexual immorality.<sup>j</sup> If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!”<sup>a</sup>

**30** So when these men were dismissed, they went down to Antioch, and they gathered the whole group together and handed them the letter. **31** After reading it, they rejoiced over the encouragement. **32** And Judas and Silas, since they were also prophets, encouraged the brothers with many talks and strengthened them.<sup>k</sup> **33** After they had spent some time there, they were sent off in peace by the brothers to those who had sent them. **34** \*— **35** But

15:24 \*Or “your souls.” 15:26 \*Or “souls.” 15:29 <sup>a</sup>Or “Farewell.” 15:34 \*See App. A3.

Paul and Bar'na-bas stayed in Antioch, teaching and declaring, along with many others, the good news of the word of Jehovah.\*

**36** After some days, Paul said to Bar'na-bas: "Let us now<sup>#</sup> return and visit the brothers in every one of the cities where we proclaimed the word of Jehovah,\* to see how they are."<sup>a</sup>

**37** Bar'na-bas was determined to take along John, who was called Mark.<sup>b</sup> **38** Paul, however, was not in favor of taking him along with them, seeing that he had departed from them in Pam-phy'l'i-a and had not gone with them to the work.<sup>c</sup> **39** At this there was a sharp burst of anger, so that they separated from each other; and Bar'na-bas<sup>d</sup> took Mark along and sailed away to Cy'prus.

**40** Paul selected Silas and departed after he had been entrusted by the brothers to the undeserved kindness of Jehovah.\*<sup>e</sup> **41** He went through Syria and Ci-li'cia, strengthening the congregations.

**16** So he arrived at Der'be and also at Lys'tra.<sup>f</sup> And a disciple named Timothy<sup>g</sup> was there, the son of a believing Jewish woman but of a Greek father, **2** and he was well-reported-on by the brothers in Lys'tra and I-co'ni-um. **3** Paul expressed the desire for Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews in those places,<sup>h</sup> for they all knew that his father was a Greek. **4** As they traveled on through the cities, they would deliver to them for observance the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem.<sup>i</sup> **5** Then, indeed, the congregations continued to be made

15:35, 36, 40; 16:14, 15 \*See App. A5. 15:36 <sup>#</sup>Or possibly, "by all means."

CHAP. 15

a 2Co 11:28

b Ac 13:4, 5  
Col 4:10  
2Ti 4:11

c Ac 13:13

d Ac 4:36, 37

e Ac 14:26

CHAP. 16

f Ac 14:5-7  
2Ti 3:11

g Ac 19:22  
Ro 16:21  
1Co 4:17  
1Th 3:2  
1Ti 1:2

h 1Co 9:20

i Ac 15:28, 29

Second Col.

a Ac 18:23

b 1Pe 1:1

c Php 1:1

d Re 1:11

e Ac 16:33  
Ac 18:8

firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day.

**6** Moreover, they traveled through Phryg'i-a and the country of Ga-la'ti-a,<sup>a</sup> because they were forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in the province of Asia. **7** Further, when they came down to Mys'i-a, they made efforts to go into Bi-thyn'i-a,<sup>b</sup> but the spirit of Jesus did not permit them. **8** So they passed by<sup>\*</sup> Mys'i-a and came down to Tro'as. **9** And during the night a vision appeared to Paul—a Mac-e-do'ni-an man was standing there urging him and saying: "Step over into Mac-e-do'ni-a and help us." **10** As soon as he had seen the vision, we tried to go into Mac-e-do'ni-a, drawing the conclusion that God had summoned us to declare the good news to them.

**11** So we put out to sea from Tro'as and made a straight run to Sam'o-thrace, but on the following day to Ne-ap'o-lis; **12** and from there we went to Phi-lip'pi,<sup>c</sup> a colony, which is the principal city of the district of Mac-e-do'ni-a. We stayed in this city for some days. **13** On the Sabbath day we went outside the gate beside a river, where we thought there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled. **14** And a woman named Lyd'i-a, a seller of purple from the city of Thy-a-ti'ra<sup>d</sup> and a worshipper of God, was listening, and Jehovah<sup>\*</sup> opened her heart wide to pay attention to the things Paul was saying. **15** Now when she and her household got baptized,<sup>e</sup> she urged us: "If you have considered me to be faithful to Jehovah,\* come and stay at my house." And she just made us come.

16:8 \*Or "passed through."

16 Now it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a servant girl with a spirit, a demon of divination,<sup>a</sup> met us. She supplied her masters with much profit by fortune-telling.\* 17 This girl kept following Paul and us and crying out with the words: "These men are slaves of the Most High God<sup>b</sup> and are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. Finally Paul got tired of it and turned and said to the spirit: "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.<sup>c</sup>

19 Well, when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone,<sup>d</sup> they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the rulers.<sup>e</sup> 20 Leading them up to the civil magistrates, they said: "These men are disturbing our city very much.<sup>f</sup> They are Jews, 21 and they are proclaiming customs that it is not lawful for us to adopt or practice, seeing that we are Romans." 22 And the crowd rose up together against them, and the civil magistrates, after tearing the garments off them, gave the command to beat them with rods.<sup>g</sup> 23 After they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to guard them securely.<sup>h</sup> 24 Because he got such an order, he threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 But about the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song,<sup>i</sup> and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly a great earthquake occurred, so that the foundations of the

CHAP. 16

- a Le 19:31  
Le 20:6
  - b Mr 1:23, 24  
Lu 4:41
  - c Mt 17:18  
Mr 1:25, 26  
Mr 1:34  
Lu 9:1  
Lu 10:17
  - d Ac 19:24, 25
  - e Mt 10:18
  - f Ac 17:6
  - g 1Th 2:2
  - h Lu 21:12
  - i Eph 5:19  
Col 3:16
- 
- Second Col.
- a Ac 5:18-20  
Ac 12:7
  - b Ac 12:18, 19
  - c Joh 3:16  
Joh 6:47
  - d Ac 8:12
  - e Ac 22:25  
Ac 23:27
  - f Ac 22:27-29

jail were shaken. Moreover, all the doors were instantly opened, and everyone's bonds came loose.<sup>a</sup> 27 When the jailer woke up and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, assuming that the prisoners had escaped.<sup>b</sup> 28 But Paul called out with a loud voice: "Do not hurt yourself, for we are all here!" 29 So he asked for lights and rushed in, and seized with trembling, he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 He brought them outside and said: "Sirs, what must I do to get saved?" 31 They said: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will get saved, you and your household."<sup>c</sup> 32 Then they spoke the word of Jehovah\* to him together with all those in his house. 33 And he took them along in that hour of the night and washed their wounds. Then he and his entire household were baptized without delay.<sup>d</sup> 34 He brought them into his house and set a table before them, and he rejoiced greatly with all his household now that he had believed in God.

35 When it became day, the civil magistrates sent the constables to say: "Release those men." 36 The jailer reported their words to Paul: "The civil magistrates have sent men to have you two released. So come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them: "They flogged us publicly, uncondemned,\* though we are Romans,<sup>e</sup> and threw us into prison. Are they now throwing us out secretly? No, indeed! Let them come themselves and escort us out." 38 The constables reported these words to the civil magistrates. These grew fearful when they heard that the men were Romans.<sup>f</sup> 39 So they

16:16 \*Or "practicing the art of prediction."

16:32 \*See App. A5. 16:37 \*Or "without a trial."

came and pleaded with them, and after escorting them out, they requested them to depart from the city. **40** But they came out of the prison and went to the home of Lyd'i-a; and when they saw the brothers, they encouraged them<sup>a</sup> and departed.

**17** They now traveled through Am-phi-p'o-lis and Ap-ol-lo'-ni-a and came to Thes-sa-lo-ni'-ca,<sup>b</sup> where there was a synagogue of the Jews. **2** So according to Paul's custom<sup>c</sup> he went inside to them, and for three sabbaths he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,<sup>d</sup> **3** explaining and proving by references that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer<sup>e</sup> and to rise from the dead,<sup>f</sup> saying: "This is the Christ, this Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." **4** As a result, some of them became believers and associated themselves with Paul and Silas,<sup>g</sup> and so did a great multitude of the Greeks who worshipped God, along with quite a few of the principal women.

**5** But the Jews, getting jealous,<sup>h</sup> gathered together some wicked men who were loitering at the marketplace and formed a mob and proceeded to throw the city into an uproar. They assaulted the house of Ja'son and were seeking to have Paul and Silas brought out to the mob. **6** When they did not find them, they dragged Ja'son and some of the brothers to the city rulers, crying out: "These men who have overturned\* the inhabited earth are present here also,<sup>i</sup> **7** and Ja'son has received them as his guests. All these men act in opposition to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, Jesus."<sup>j</sup> **8** When they heard these things, the crowd and the city rulers were alarmed; **9** and after taking

17:6 \*Or "stirred up trouble in."

CHAP. 16  
a 2Co 1:3, 4

CHAP. 17  
b 1Th 2:1

c Ac 9:19, 20  
Ac 13:13, 14  
Ac 14:1  
Ac 18:4

d Ac 18:19

e Ps 22:7  
Ps 34:20  
Ps 69:21  
Ps 118:22  
Isa 50:6  
Isa 53:3, 5

f Ps 16:10  
Lu 24:45, 46

g Ac 15:22, 40

h Ac 13:45

i Ac 16:19-21

j Lu 23:1, 2  
Joh 19:12

Second Col.

a Ac 14:2, 19

b Mt 10:23

c Ac 16:1, 2  
1Th 3:2

sufficient security\* from Ja'son and the others, they let them go.

**10** Immediately by night the brothers sent both Paul and Silas to Be-roe'a. On arriving, they went into the synagogue of the Jews. **11** Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thes-sa-lo-ni'-ca, for they accepted the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. **12** Therefore, many of them became believers, and so did quite a few of the reputable Greek women as well as some of the men. **13** But when the Jews from Thes-sa-lo-ni'-ca learned that the word of God was also being proclaimed by Paul in Be-roe'a, they came there to incite and agitate the crowds.<sup>a</sup> **14** Then the brothers immediately sent Paul away to the sea,<sup>b</sup> but both Silas and Timothy remained behind there. **15** However, those accompanying Paul brought him as far as Athens, and they departed after receiving instructions that Silas and Timothy<sup>c</sup> should come to Paul as quickly as possible.

**16** Now while Paul was waiting for them in Athens, his spirit within him became irritated on seeing that the city was full of idols. **17** So he began to reason in the synagogue with the Jews and the other people who worshipped God and every day in the marketplace with those who happened to be on hand. **18** But some of both the Ep-i-cu-re'an and the Sto'ic philosophers began disputing with him, and some were saying: "What is it this chatterer would like to tell?" Others: "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign deities." This was because

17:9 \*Or "after taking bail."



- Song 96 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **"A Unanimous Decision Based on God's Word":** (10 min.)

Ac 15:1, 2—The circumcision issue threatened to divide the early Christian congregation (bt 102-103 ¶8)

Ac 15:13-20—The governing body's decision was based on the Scriptures (w12 1/15 5 ¶6-7)

Ac 15:28, 29; 16:4, 5—The governing body's decision strengthened the congregations (bt 123 ¶18)

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

Ac 16:6-9—What can we learn from this account about expanding our ministry? (w12 1/15 10 ¶8)

Ac 16:37—How did the apostle Paul use his Roman citizenship to advance the good news? (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?

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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

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What can we learn from the way this situation was resolved?

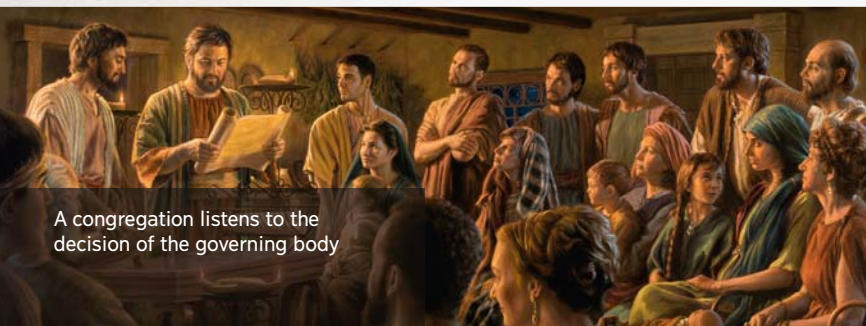
**15:1, 2—Exercise humility and patience.** Rather than settling the issue themselves, Paul and Barnabas sought direction from Jehovah's organization.

**15:28, 29—Trust God's organization.** The congregation was confident that Jehovah would direct matters by means of his holy spirit and Christ Jesus.

**16:4, 5—Obey.** The congregations prospered when they followed the direction from the governing body.

 What is one example of recent direction received from Jehovah's organization?

How do I benefit from following it?



A congregation listens to the decision of the governing body

## December 17-23

### Treasures From God's Word

Acts 15:1, 2—The circumcision issue threatened to divide the early Christian congregation

**Acts 15:1, 2:** Now some men came down from Judea and began to teach the brothers: “Unless you get circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” But after quite a bit of dissension and disputing by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was arranged for Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others to go up to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem regarding this issue.

#### **bt 102-103 paragraph 8**

Luke continued: “When there had occurred no little dissension and disputing by Paul and Barnabas with them [the “certain men”], they [the elders] arranged for Paul and Barnabas and some others of them to go up to the apostles and older men in Jerusalem regarding this dispute.” (Acts 15:2) The “dissension and disputing” reflected strong feelings and firm convictions on both sides, and the congregation in Antioch could not resolve it. In the interests of peace and unity, the congregation wisely arranged to take the question to “the apostles and older men in Jerusalem,” who made up the governing body. What can we learn from the elders in Antioch?

Acts 15:13-20—The governing body's decision was based on the Scriptures

**Acts 15:13-20:** After they finished speaking, James replied: “Men, brothers, hear me. Symeon has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name. And with this the words of the Prophets agree, just as it is written: ‘After these things I will return and raise up again the tent of David that is fallen down; I will rebuild its ruins and restore it, so that the men who remain may earnestly seek Jehovah, together with people of all the nations, people who are called by my name, says Jehovah, who is doing these things, known from of old.’ Therefore, my decision is not to trouble those from the nations who are turning to God, but to write them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood.

#### **w12 1/15 5 paragraphs 6-7**

6 The passage that helped settle the matter was Amos 9:11, 12. As quoted at Acts 15:16, 17, it reads: “I shall return and rebuild the booth of David that is fallen down; and I shall rebuild its ruins and erect it again, in order that *those who remain of the men* may earnestly seek Jehovah, *together with people of all the nations*, people who are called by my name, says Jehovah.”

7 ‘But wait,’ someone may object, ‘that text does not say that it was unnecessary for Gentile believers to be circumcised.’ That is true; however, Jewish Christians would have got the point. They did not consider *circumcised* Gentiles as ‘people of the nations’ but as brothers. (Exodus 12:48, 49) For example, according to Bagster’s version of the *Septuagint*, Esther 8:17 reads: “Many of the Gentiles were circumcised, and *became Jews*.” Thus, when the Scriptures foretold that those remaining of the house of Israel (Jews and circumcised Jewish proselytes) *together with* “people of all the nations”

(*uncircumcised* Gentiles) would become one people for God's name, the message was clear. Circumcision was not required of Gentiles who wanted to become Christians.

Acts 15:28, 29; 16:4, 5—The governing body's decision strengthened the congregations

[Inserted scriptures.] Acts 15:28, 29: For the holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you except these necessary things: to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols, from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"

**Acts 16:4, 5:** As they traveled on through the cities, they would deliver to them for observance the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem. Then, indeed, the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number day by day. [End of inserted scriptures.]

### **bt 123 paragraph 18**

Paul and Timothy worked together for years. As traveling ministers, they carried out various missions on behalf of the governing body. The Bible record says: "As they traveled on through the cities they would deliver to those there for observance the decrees that had been decided upon by the apostles and older men who were in Jerusalem." (Acts 16:4) Evidently, the congregations did follow the direction from the apostles and older men in Jerusalem. As a result of such obedience, "the congregations continued to be made firm in the faith and to increase in number from day to day."—Acts 16:5.

## **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

Acts 16:6-9—What can we learn from this account about expanding our ministry? (*w12 1/15 10* paragraph 8)

**Acts 16:6-9:** Moreover, they traveled through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, because they were forbidden by the holy spirit to speak the word in the province of Asia. Further, when they came down to Mysia, they made efforts to go into Bithynia, but the spirit of Jesus did not permit them. So they passed by Mysia and came down to Troas. And during the night a vision appeared to Paul—a Macedonian man was standing there urging him and saying: "Step over into Macedonia and help us."

### **w12 1/15 10 paragraph 8**

What can we learn from this account? Note that only *after* Paul set out for Asia did God's spirit intervene. Then, only *after* Paul neared Bithynia did Jesus step in. And finally, only *after* Paul reached Troas did Jesus direct him to Macedonia. As Head of the congregation, Jesus may deal with us in a similar way. (Colossians 1:18) For example, you may have been thinking about serving as a pioneer or moving to an area where the need is greater. But it may be only *after* you take steps to reach your goal that Jesus, by means of God's spirit, will guide you. To illustrate: A driver can direct his car to turn left or right but only if the car is moving. Likewise, Jesus may direct us in expanding our ministry but only if we are moving—if we are putting forth effort to reach our goal.

Acts 16:37—How did the apostle Paul use his Roman citizenship to advance the good news? (“we are Romans” study note on Acts 16:37, *nwtsty*)

**Acts 16:37:** But Paul said to them: “They flogged us publicly, uncondemned, though we are Romans, and threw us into prison. Are they now throwing us out secretly? No, indeed! Let them come themselves and escort us out.”

### **Study note**

**we are Romans:** That is, Roman citizens. Paul and apparently also Silas were Roman citizens. Roman law stated that a citizen was always entitled to a proper trial and was never to be punished in public uncondemned. Roman citizenship entitled a person to certain rights and privileges wherever he went in the empire. A Roman citizen was subject to Roman law, not to the laws of provincial cities. When accused, he could agree to be tried according to local law; yet, he still retained the right to be heard by a Roman tribunal. In the case of a capital offense, he had the right to appeal to the emperor. The apostle Paul preached extensively throughout the Roman Empire. He made use of his rights as a Roman citizen on three recorded occasions. The first is here in Philippi when he informed the Philippian magistrates that they had infringed on his rights by beating him.—For the other two occasions, see study notes on Acts 22:25; 25:11.

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 16:25-40

## ACTS

### Study Notes—Chapter 15

#### 15:2

**elders:** Lit., “older men.” Here the Greek term *pre-sby'te-ros* refers to those who held a position of responsibility in the early Christian congregation. The elders of the Jerusalem congregation are mentioned together with **the apostles** as the ones to whom Paul, Barnabas, and some other brothers from Syrian Antioch went in order to get the matter of circumcision settled. So just as some elders served in fleshly Israel on a national level, these elders together with the apostles formed a governing body for all the Christian congregations in the first century C.E. This indicates that the original group serving as a governing body, the 12 apostles, had now been enlarged.—Ac 1:21, 22, 26; see study notes on Mt 16:21; Ac 11:30.

**issue:** Or “dispute.” The Greek word *ze'te-ma* often refers to a controversial question or a specific issue being debated. It is related to a Greek word meaning “to seek” (*ze-te'o*).—See study note on Ac 15:7.

#### 15:3

**conversion:** The Greek word used here, *e-pi-stro-phe'*, comes from a verb that means “to return; to turn back (around).” (Joh 12:40; 21:20; Ac 15:36) Used in a spiritual sense, it may involve turning to or returning to the true God as well as turning away from idols and false gods. (This verb appears at Ac 3:19; 14:15; 15:19; 26:18, 20; 2Co 3:16.) At 1Th 1:9, the verb is used in the phrase “how you *turned* to God from your idols.” Conversion is preceded by repentance.—See study notes on Mt 3:2, 8; Ac 3:19; 26:20.

#### 15:5

**those of the sect of the Pharisees:** Apparently, these Christians were still identified in some sense with their Pharisaic background.—Compare study note on Ac 23:6.

#### 15:7

**intense discussion:** Or “disputing.” The Greek word used here is related to a verb meaning “to seek” (*ze-te'o*) and denotes “a seeking; a questioning.” (*Kingdom Interlinear*) It thus indicates that the apostles and elders diligently searched out the matter by asking questions, by carefully investigating the issue, and no doubt by frankly and openly expressing their different opinions.

#### 15:12

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

## 15:13

**James:** Likely referring to Jesus' half brother and the James mentioned at Ac 12:17. (See study notes on Mt 13:55; Ac 12:17.) It appears that when the circumcision issue came before "the apostles and elders in Jerusalem," James presided over the discussion. (Ac 15:1, 2) Apparently referring to that occasion, Paul mentions that James, Cephas (Peter), and John were "the ones who seemed to be pillars" of the Jerusalem congregation.—Ga 2:1-9.

## 15:14

**Symeon:** That is, Simon Peter. The Greek form *Sy-me-on'* closely reflects the Hebrew form of the name (Simeon). The use of the Greek form of the name that closely reflects the Hebrew form of the name indicates that Hebrew may have been the language spoken at this meeting. In the Bible, the apostle Peter is only once called by this form of the name.—See study note on Mt 10:2.

**a people for his name:** This expression may allude to statements in the Hebrew Scriptures where Jehovah is said to have chosen a people as his special property. (Ex 19:5; De 7:6; 14:2; 26:18, 19) This new people bearing Jehovah's name, referred to as "the Israel of God," that is, spiritual Israel, would now also include non-Jewish believers. (Ga 6:16; Ro 11:25, 26a; Re 14:1) They were to declare the praises of the One they represented and were to glorify his name publicly. (1Pe 2:9, 10) As had been true of fleshly Israel, members of spiritual Israel were the ones Jehovah called "the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise." (Isa 43:21) Those early Christians boldly proclaimed that Jehovah is the one true God, exposing as false all the gods that were being worshipped at that time.—1Th 1:9.

## 15:15

**the words of the Prophets:** The speech by Symeon, or Simon Peter (Ac 15:7-11), and the evidence submitted by Barnabas and Paul (Ac 15:12) probably brought to James' mind pertinent scriptures that shed light on the subject under discussion. (Joh 14:26) After saying that "the words of the Prophets agree" with what was just presented, James quoted Am 9:11, 12, a book in the part of the Hebrew Scriptures commonly called "the Prophets."—Mt 22:40; Ac 15:16-18; see study note on Lu 24:44.

## 15:16

**the tent of David:** Or "the booth (dwelling) of David." Jehovah promised that David's kingdom would "be secure forever." (2Sa 7:12-16) "The tent of David," that is, his royal house, or dynasty, fell when King Zedekiah was dethroned. (Eze 21:27) From that time on, no king of the line of David occupied "Jehovah's throne" in earthly Jerusalem. (1Ch 29:23) However, Jehovah would rebuild the symbolic tent of David with David's descendant Jesus as the permanent King. (Ac 2:29-36) James indicated that this rebuilding foretold by Amos (the reestablishment of the kingship in David's line) would include the gathering of Jesus' disciples (Kingdom heirs) from among both Jews and Gentiles.—Am 9:11, 12.

## 15:17

**so that the men who remain may earnestly seek Jehovah:** As shown in the study note on Ac 15:15, James quoted the words of Am 9:11, 12. Parts of this quote, however, read somewhat differently from the Hebrew text that is currently available. It has been suggested that the difference may exist because James quoted from the *Septuagint*, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. However, when James referred to Peter, he used a Greek form of the name that closely reflects the Hebrew name Simeon, indicating that Hebrew may have been spoken at this meeting. (Ac 15:14) If that is so, another possibility is that James quoted the verses in Hebrew but Luke recorded the quotation using the wording from the *Septuagint*. This approach was used by Luke, James, and other Bible writers when they quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures. While some of such verses quoted from the *Septuagint* vary slightly from the Hebrew text that is available today, Jehovah permitted the Bible writers to use this translation, thereby making such quotes part of the inspired record. (2Ti 3:16) Regarding this quotation from Am 9:12, it is noteworthy that the *Septuagint* reads “the men who remain,” whereas the available Hebrew manuscripts read “what is remaining of Edom.” Some suggest that the difference may have arisen because in ancient Hebrew the word for “men” looked very similar to the word for “Edom.” The Hebrew words for “seek” and “possess” also look similar. It has been suggested that the *Septuagint* rendering of Am 9:12 was based on an ancient Hebrew text that varied from the Hebrew text available today; however, that remains uncertain. Whatever the case, the *Septuagint* and the Hebrew Masoretic text convey the basic thrust of James’ argument; both texts indicate that Amos foretold that Gentiles would be called by Jehovah’s name.

**Jehovah:** James says at Ac 15:14 that Symeon related “how God . . . turned his attention to the nations,” and in verse 19, James refers to “the nations who are turning to God.” James is here quoting from Am 9:11, 12. In the original Hebrew text, the divine name appears once, in the expression “declares [or, “says”] Jehovah.” However, the Greek term *Ky’ri-os* (Lord) appears twice here at Ac 15:17, both times referring to Jehovah. In view of the context, the Hebrew Scripture background, and the use of the term *Ky’ri-os* in the *Septuagint* and elsewhere in the Christian Greek Scriptures, there are good reasons for using the divine name in both occurrences of *Ky’ri-os* in this verse.—See App. C.

**together with people of all the nations:** That is, with non-Jews, or Gentiles. A Gentile who submitted himself to circumcision would no longer be considered a man of the nations but would “become like a native of the land,” in other words, a Jew. (Ex 12:48, 49) In Esther’s day, many Gentiles “were declaring themselves Jews.” (Es 8:17) It is worth noting that the *Septuagint* rendering of Es 8:17 says that these Gentiles “were circumcised, and became Jews.” The prophecy at Am 9:11, 12, as quoted here in Acts, stated that “people of all the nations” (uncircumcised Gentiles) would join “the men who remain” of the house of Israel (Jews and circumcised proselytes) and would become “people who are called by my [Jehovah’s] name.” On the basis of this prophecy, the disciples discerned that uncircumcised people of the nations would not have to get circumcised to become acceptable to God.

**people who are called by my name:** Or “people on whom my name has been called.” In the Hebrew Scriptures, Jehovah’s name being called on the Israelites indicated that they were his people. (De 28:10; 2Ch 7:14; Isa 43:7; 63:19; Da 9:19) Jehovah also placed his name on Jerusalem with its temple, thereby accepting it as the approved center for worship of him.—2Ki 21:4, 7.

**says Jehovah:** In this quote from Am 9:12, the divine name, represented by four Hebrew consonants (transliterated *YHWH*), occurs in the original Hebrew text.—See App. C.

**who is doing these things, [vs. 18] known from of old:** Or according to another understanding of the Greek text, this could be translated “who has been making these things [vs. 18] known from of old.”

### 15:19

**my decision is:** Or “my opinion (conclusion) is.” Lit., “I am judging.” As the Greek expression is used here, it does not indicate that James, who apparently was acting as chairman of the meeting, tried to impose his own opinion on the entire group. Rather, he was proposing for their consideration a course of action based on the evidence heard and on what the Scriptures said about the matter. One lexicon defines the Greek word in this context as “to make a judgment based on taking various factors into account.” Therefore, the verb used here refers, not to a formal judicial decision, but to James’ opinion based on his conclusion from the scripture just quoted.

### 15:20

**sexual immorality:** The Greek word *por-nei'a* is a general term for all sexual activity that is unlawful according to the Bible. It includes adultery, prostitution, sexual relations between unmarried individuals, homosexual acts, and bestiality.—See Glossary.

**what is strangled:** Or “what is killed without draining its blood.” This prohibition would apparently also include an animal that dies by itself or as a result of a wound caused by another animal. In either case, the animal’s body would not have been properly drained of its blood.—Ex 22:31; Le 17:15; De 14:21.

### 15:21

**Moses:** James referred to the writings of Moses, which included not only the Law code but also a record of God’s dealings with His people and the indications of His will that predated the Law. For example, God’s view on the consumption of blood, on adultery, and on idolatry can be plainly seen in the book of Genesis. (Ge 9:3, 4; 20:2-9; 35:2, 4) Jehovah thus revealed principles that are binding on all of mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. The decision recorded at Ac 15:19, 20 would not “trouble,” or make things difficult for, Gentile Christians by imposing on them the many requirements of the Mosaic Law. It would also show respect for the conscientious views held by Jewish Christians, who over the years had heard **Moses . . . read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath.** (See study notes on Lu 4:16; Ac 13:15.) The recommended course would strengthen the bond between Jewish and Gentile Christians.



**read aloud in the synagogues on every sabbath:** See study notes on Lu 4:16; Ac 13:15.

## 15:22

**the apostles and the elders:** Lit., “older men.” Here the Greek term *pre-sby'te-ros* refers to those who held a position of responsibility in the early Christian congregation. The elders of the Jerusalem congregation are mentioned together with **the apostles** as the ones to whom Paul, Barnabas, and some other brothers from Syrian Antioch went in order to get the matter of circumcision settled. So just as some elders served in fleshly Israel on a national level, these elders together with the apostles formed a governing body for all the Christian congregations in the first century C.E. This indicates that the original group serving as a governing body, the 12 apostles, had now been enlarged.—Ac 1:21, 22, 26; see study notes on Mt 16:21; Ac 11:30.

## 15:23

**Greetings!:** The Greek word *khai'ro*, which literally means “to rejoice,” is here used as a salutation and conveys the thought “may things be well with you.” The introduction to this letter concerning circumcision, which was sent to the congregations, follows the common ancient form of letter writing. First the writer was mentioned, then a person was addressed, and third the common greeting was given. (See study note on Ac 23:26.) Of all the letters included in the Christian Greek Scriptures, only the letter of James uses the Greek term *khai'ro* as a salutation in the same way as this letter from the first-century governing body. (Jas 1:1) The disciple James was involved in formulating this letter, which supports the conclusion that the James who wrote the letter bearing his name is the same as the one who had a prominent part in the meeting recounted in Acts chapter 15.

## 15:24

**subvert you:** Or “unsettle you.” Here “you” is rendered from the Greek “the souls of you [plural].” In this context, *psy-khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” refers to the person himself, so it is rendered by the pronoun “you.”—See Glossary, “Soul.”

## 15:25

**unanimous:** Lit., “like-mindedly (of one mind).” The Greek word *ho-mo-thy-ma-don'* appears several times in the book of Acts, often describing the unique unity among the early Christians. Some examples are “with one purpose,” Ac 1:14; “with a united purpose,” Ac 2:46; “with one accord,” Ac 4:24.

## 15:26

**have given up their lives for:** Here the plural form of the Greek word *psy-khe'*, often rendered “soul,” is rendered “lives.” It can refer to a person or to a person’s life. (See Glossary, “Soul.”) The whole phrase could be understood to mean “have risked their lives (souls) for” or “have devoted their lives (or, themselves) to.”

## 15:29

**keep abstaining from:** Or “keep away from.” The verb used here could apply to all the practices that follow. Christians were to avoid idolatry, sexual immorality, and the eating of meat from animals that were strangled and thus not bled properly. With regard to abstaining from blood, the meaning of this verb is broader than simply not consuming blood. It implies avoiding all misuse of blood, showing regard for its sacredness.—Le 17:11, 14; De 12:23.

**keep abstaining . . . from blood:** This decree rests, ultimately, on God’s command not to eat blood, a command given to Noah and his sons and, therefore, to all mankind. (Ge 9:4-6) Eight centuries later, God put that command in his Law to the Israelites. (Le 17:13-16) Fifteen centuries after that, he reaffirmed it to the Christian congregation, as mentioned here. In God’s eyes, abstaining from blood is as important as avoiding idolatry and sexual immorality.

**what is strangled:** See study note on Ac 15:20.

**sexual immorality:** See study note on Ac 15:20.

**Good health to you!:** Or “Farewell.” The Greek expression used here was typical for letters of that time. It does not necessarily mean that the requirements mentioned immediately before were given as health measures, suggesting that ‘if you abstain from these things, you will have better health.’ However, it was a closing wish for the recipient to have strength, health, and happiness. The expression is similar in intent to the Hebrew expression *sha·lohm’*, wishing “peace” to the recipient. (Ex 4:18; Jg 18:6; 19:20; 1Sa 1:17) In fact, one translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures into modern Hebrew (referred to as J<sup>22</sup> in App. C4) renders the expression *sha·lohm’ la·khem’*, “May you have peace!”

## 15:34

Some later manuscripts and some translations into other languages, with slight variations in wording, add: “But it seemed good to Silas to remain there further; however Judas alone departed for Jerusalem.” These words, though, do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and thus are not part of the original text of Acts. The passage was probably a marginal note intended to explain Ac 15:40; in time, it was added to the text of a minority of manuscripts.—See App. A3.

## 15:35

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

main text, although many Greek manuscripts of Ac 8:25 read “the word of the Lord,” are explained in App. C.

### 15:36

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

### 15:40

**of Jehovah:** In the book of Acts, the expression **undeserved kindness** is most often connected with God. (Ac 11:23; 13:43; 20:24, 32) At Ac 14:26, the similar expression “entrusted to the undeserved kindness of *God*” is found.—See App. C.

## ACTS Study Notes—Chapter 16

### 16:1

**Timothy:** In the Bible, this is the first mention of Timothy, whose Greek name means “One Who Honors God.” It is not known precisely when Timothy embraced Christianity. However, his believing Jewish mother, Eunice, and probably also his grandmother Lois taught him from his early childhood “the holy writings” found in the Hebrew Scriptures, as the Jews understood them. (2Ti 1:5; 3:15) It is very likely that Eunice and Lois became Christians when Paul visited Lystra during his first missionary tour. Timothy’s father was called a **Greek**, meaning either that his ancestors were from Greece or that he was a member of another race. He was apparently not a Christian. During Paul’s second missionary tour, in late 49 or early 50 C.E., Paul came to Lystra, apparently Timothy’s hometown. At that time, Timothy was a Christian disciple who “was well-reported-on by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium.” (Ac 16:2) Timothy may then have been in his late teens or early 20’s, a conclusion supported by Paul’s statement to Timothy some 10 or 15 years later when he said: “Never let anyone look down on your youth.” (1Ti 4:12, likely written between 61 and 64 C.E.) This indicates that even then, Timothy was a relatively young man.

### 16:3

**circumcised him:** Paul well knew that circumcision was not a Christian requirement. (Ac 15:6-29) Timothy, whose father was an unbeliever, had not been circumcised. Paul knew

that this might stumble some of the Jews whom they would visit together on their preaching tour. Instead of allowing this obstacle to impede their work, Paul asked Timothy to submit to this painful surgery. Both men thus exemplified what Paul himself later wrote to the Corinthians: “To the Jews I became as a Jew in order to gain Jews.”—1Co 9:20.

#### 16:4

**the apostles and the elders who were in Jerusalem:** As shown in the study note on Ac 15:2, some elders in the nation of Israel served in positions of responsibility on a national level. Likewise, these elders in Jerusalem together with the apostles formed a governing body for all the Christian congregations in the first century C.E. After handling the issue of circumcision, these apostles and elders made their decision known to the congregations, and it was accepted as authoritative.

#### 16:6

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

#### 16:7

**the spirit of Jesus:** Apparently referring to Jesus’ use of the holy spirit, or active force, which he had “received . . . from the Father.” (Ac 2:33) As head of the Christian congregation, Jesus used the spirit to direct the preaching work of the first Christians, indicating where they should concentrate their efforts. In this case, Jesus used “the holy spirit” to prevent Paul and his traveling companions from preaching in the province of Asia and the province of Bithynia. (Ac 16:6-10) These regions, however, were later reached with the good news.—Ac 18:18-21; 1Pe 1:1, 2.

#### 16:8

**passed by:** Or “passed through.” The Greek verb *pa-rer'kho-mai*, here rendered “passed by,” allows for the idea of traveling through the area, which is apparently what Paul and his companions did. The seaport of **Troas** was in the region of **Mysia**, located in the NW part of Asia Minor. They had to travel through Mysia to reach Troas, so they “passed by Mysia” in the sense that they traveled through the area without stopping to do extensive preaching there.

#### 16:9

**Macedonia:** Glossary. A region north of Greece that gained prominence under Alexander the Great and remained independent until conquered by the Romans. Macedonia was a Roman province when the apostle Paul made his first visit to Europe. Paul visited the area three times. (Ac 16:9)—See App. B13.

#### 16:10

**we:** Up to Ac 16:9, the book of Acts is narrated strictly in the third person, that is, the writer Luke reports only what others said and did. Here at Ac 16:10, however, there is a change

in that style, and Luke includes himself in the narrative. From this point on, he uses the pronouns “we” and “us” in sections of the book where he was apparently accompanying Paul and his traveling companions. (See study note on Ac 1:1 and “Introduction to Acts.”) Luke first accompanied Paul from Troas to Philippi in about 50 C.E., but when Paul left Philippi, Luke was no longer with him.—Ac 16:10-17, 40; see study notes on Ac 20:5; 27:1.

**declare the good news:** The Greek verb *eu·ag·ge·li'zo·mai*, used here, is related to the noun *eu·ag·ge'li·on*, “good news.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, an important aspect of the good news is closely linked with God’s Kingdom, the theme of Jesus’ preaching and teaching work, and with the salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, the Greek verb *eu·ag·ge·li'zo·mai* occurs numerous times, emphasizing the preaching work.—Ac 8:4, 12, 25, 35, 40; 10:36; 11:20; 13:32; 14:7, 15, 21; 15:35; 16:10; 17:18; see study notes on Mt 4:23; 24:14.

## 16:12

**Philippi:** This city was originally called Crenides (Krenides). Philip II of Macedon (father of Alexander the Great) took the city from the Thracians about the middle of the fourth century B.C.E. and named it after himself. There were rich gold mines in the area, and gold coins were issued in Philip’s name. About 168 B.C.E., the Roman consul Lucius Aemilius Paulus defeated Perseus, the last of the Macedonian kings, and took Philippi and the surrounding territory. In 146 B.C.E., all Macedonia was formed into a single Roman province. The battle in which Octavian (Octavius) and Mark Antony defeated the armies of Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus, assassins of Julius Caesar, took place on the Plain of Philippi in 42 B.C.E. Afterward, as a memorial of his great victory, Octavian made Philippi a Roman **colony**. Some years later, when Octavian was made Caesar Augustus by the Roman Senate, he named the town Colonia Augusta Julia Philippensis.

## 16:13

**a river:** Many scholars identify the river with the Gangites, located 2.4 km (1.5 mi) W of Philippi, more than a sabbath day’s journey away. Some feel that because of Philippi’s military character, the Jews may have been forbidden to assemble for worship inside the city and had to meet far away. Others favor the Crenides (Krenides), a small stream that is closer to the city and is locally called the stream of Lydia. However, Roman tombs have been found there, and since it was an area in public view, some feel that it would have been an unlikely place for prayer. Still others suggest the area of a now-dry streambed that was outside the Neapolis Gate, where a number of churches were built in the fourth or fifth century C.E. to commemorate Paul’s visit to Philippi.

**a place of prayer:** Perhaps the Jews were forbidden to have a synagogue in the city because of Philippi’s military character. Or the city might have lacked ten Jewish males—the minimum number traditionally required for establishing a synagogue.

## 16:14

**a woman named Lydia:** Lydia is named only twice in the Bible, here and at Ac 16:40. There is documentary evidence to show that Lydia was used as a proper name, though

some believe that Lydia was a nickname meaning “Lydian Woman.” Lydia and her household became Christians about 50 C.E. in Philippi, so they were among the first individuals in Europe to embrace Christianity as a result of Paul’s preaching. Lydia—who possibly never married or was a widow—had a generous spirit that enabled her to enjoy rewarding association with missionaries Paul, Silas, and Luke.—Ac 16:15.

**a seller of purple:** Lydia may have traded in purple goods of various kinds, including purple fabric, clothing, tapestries, dyes, or other items. She was originally from **Thyatira**, a city of western Asia Minor in the region called Lydia. An inscription found in Philippi testifies to the presence of a guild of sellers of purple in that city. The Lydians and their neighbors were famed for their skill in the dyeing of purple since the days of Homer (ninth or eighth century B.C.E.). Since Lydia’s trade required substantial capital and she had a large house capable of hosting four men—Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke—in all likelihood she was a successful and wealthy merchant. The reference to “her household” could mean that she lived with relatives, but it could also imply that she had slaves and servants. (Ac 16:15) And the fact that before leaving the city, Paul and Silas met with some brothers in this hospitable woman’s home suggests that it became a meeting place for the first Christians in Philippi.—Ac 16:40.

**Jehovah opened her heart wide:** Lydia is identified as a **worshipper of God**, an expression that indicates that she was a Jewish proselyte. (Ac 13:43) On the Sabbath, she had gathered with other women at a place of prayer at a river outside Philippi. (Ac 16:13) It may be that there were few Jews and no synagogue in Philippi. Lydia may have become acquainted with the worship of Jehovah in her home city, Thyatira, which had a large Jewish population and a Jewish meeting place. Jehovah, the God whom she worshipped, noticed that she **was listening** attentively.—See App. C.

## 16:15

**faithful to Jehovah:** As shown in the study note in the preceding verse, Lydia’s background as a Jewish proselyte makes it logical that she had Jehovah in mind. She had just heard about Jesus Christ from Paul’s preaching but had not yet shown that she was faithful to Jesus. It seems logical, then, that she was referring to her faithfulness to the God whom she had already been worshipping, Jehovah.—See App. C.

## 16:16

**with a spirit, a demon of divination:** Lit., “with a spirit of python.” Python was the name of the mythical snake or dragon that guarded the temple and oracle of Delphi, Greece. The Greek word *py'thon* came to refer to a person who could foretell the future and to the spirit that spoke through that one. Although later used to denote a ventriloquist, here in Acts it is used to describe a demon who enabled a young girl to practice the art of prediction.

**by fortune-telling:** Or “by practicing the art of prediction.” In the Bible, magic-practicing priests, spiritistic diviners, astrologers, and others are listed as claiming the ability to foretell the future. (Le 19:31; De 18:11) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the only mention of demons predicting the future is in connection with this event in Philippi. The demons oppose God and those who do his will, so it is not surprising that Paul and Silas suffered severe opposition as a result of casting out this demon of divination.—Ac 16:12, 17-24.

## 16:19

**marketplace:** Or “public square; forum.” The Greek word *a-go-ra'* is here used to refer to an open area that served as a center for buying and selling and as a place of public assembly in cities and towns of the ancient Near East and the Greek and Roman world. From this account about what happened in Philippi, it appears that some judicial matters were handled in the marketplace. Excavations of the ruins of Philippi indicate that the Egnatian Way ran through the middle of the city and alongside it was a fair-sized forum, or marketplace.—See study notes on Mt 23:7; Ac 17:17.

## 16:20

**the civil magistrates:** The plural form of the Greek term *stra-te-gos'* here denotes the highest officials of the Roman colony of Philippi. These had the duties of keeping order, administering finances, trying and judging violators of the law, and ordering punishment.

## 16:21

**we are Romans:** The city of Philippi was a Roman colony, and its inhabitants were granted many privileges, possibly including a partial or secondary form of Roman citizenship. This may explain why they seem to have had a stronger attachment to Rome than would otherwise have been the case.—See study note on Ac 16:12.

## 16:32

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

## 16:33

**were baptized without delay:** The jailer and his **household**, his family, were Gentiles and were likely unfamiliar with basic Scriptural truths. After having encouraged them to “believe in the Lord Jesus,” Paul and Silas spoke “the word of Jehovah” to them, no doubt extensively. (Ac 16:31, 32) This affected them deeply, for that same night, as Ac 16:34 shows, they “believed in God,” or came to have faith in him. Therefore, it was appropriate that they were baptized without delay. When Paul and Silas left Philippi, Paul’s traveling companion Luke did not leave together with them, as indicated at Ac 16:40. (See study note on Ac 16:10.) Perhaps Luke was able to remain in Philippi for some time to give extra help to the new Christians there.

## 16:35

**the constables:** The Greek word *rha·bdou'khos*, literally meaning “rod bearer,” referred to an official attendant assigned to escort a Roman magistrate in public and to carry out his instructions. The Roman term was *lictor*. Some of the duties of the Roman constables were policelike in nature, but the constables were strictly attached to the magistrate, with the responsibility of being constantly at his service. They were not directly subject to the wishes of the people but only to the orders of their magistrate.

## 16:37

**we are Romans:** That is, Roman citizens. Paul and apparently also Silas were Roman citizens. Roman law stated that a citizen was always entitled to a proper trial and was never to be punished in public uncondemned. Roman citizenship entitled a person to certain rights and privileges wherever he went in the empire. A Roman citizen was subject to Roman law, not to the laws of provincial cities. When accused, he could agree to be tried according to local law; yet, he still retained the right to be heard by a Roman tribunal. In the case of a capital offense, he had the right to appeal to the emperor. The apostle Paul preached extensively throughout the Roman Empire. He made use of his rights as a Roman citizen on three recorded occasions. The first is here in Philippi when he informed the Philippian magistrates that they had infringed on his rights by beating him.—For the other two occasions, see study notes on Ac 22:25; 25:11.



- Song 96 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD**

- **"A Unanimous Decision Based on God's Word":** (10 min.)

Ac 15:1, 2—The circumcision issue threatened to divide the early Christian congregation (bt 102-103 ¶8)

Ac 15:13-20—The governing body's decision was based on the Scriptures (w12 1/15 5 ¶6-7)

Ac 15:28, 29; 16:4, 5—The governing body's decision strengthened the congregations (bt 123 ¶18)

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

Ac 16:6-9—What can we learn from this account about expanding our ministry? (w12 1/15 10 ¶8)

Ac 16:37—How did the apostle Paul use his Roman citizenship to advance the good news? (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 16:25-40

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Respond to an objection common in your territory.
- **First Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. Introduce and discuss (but do not play) the video *Why Study the Bible?*
- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

- Song 74
- **"Joyfully Praise Jehovah With Song":** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Children Praise Jehovah in Song* (video category MUSIC). To conclude the part, invite all to stand and sing along to the video *Song 084 Reaching Out* (video category CHILDREN).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 46
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 102 and Prayer


ACTS 15-16 | A Unanimous Decision Based on God's Word

What can we learn from the way this situation was resolved?

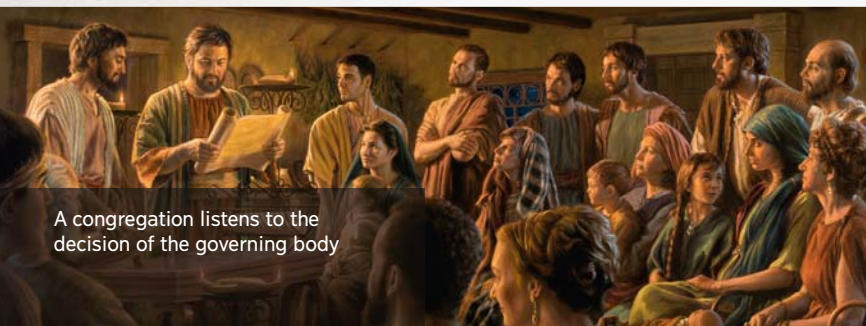
**15:1, 2—Exercise humility and patience.** Rather than settling the issue themselves, Paul and Barnabas sought direction from Jehovah's organization.

**15:28, 29—Trust God's organization.** The congregation was confident that Jehovah would direct matters by means of his holy spirit and Christ Jesus.

**16:4, 5—Obey.** The congregations prospered when they followed the direction from the governing body.

 What is one example of recent direction received from Jehovah's organization?

How do I benefit from following it?



A congregation listens to the decision of the governing body



# Our Christian Life and Ministry

## MEETING WORKBOOK

### Sample Conversations

▲ Singing during family worship in South Africa

#### ●○○ 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?

# Join in the Kingdom Song!

(Psalm 98:1)

Ab/Bb Bb7 Ebma7 E° Fm11

This is a song, a hap - py song of vic - t'ry;  
 With this new song, we ad - ver - tise the King - dom.  
 This King - dom song, all hum - ble ones can mas - ter.

Bb7 E° Fm7 Ab/Bb Bb7 Ebma7

It mag - ni - fies the One who is su - preme.  
 Christ Je - sus rules; the earth is his do - main.  
 The words are clear, their mes - sage warm and bright.

Eb6 Bb/D Bbm6/Db Bbm6/C C7b9b13 Bb° Abma7 Ab6

The words give hope and prompt all to be loy - al.  
 And as fore - told, there is a new - born na - tion:  
 In all the earth, a mul - ti - tude have learned it,

Db7 Eb/Bb C° Bb7sus4 Ab/Bb Gm/Bb Bb7 Eb Chorus Eb/G

Come sing with us; en - joy its King - dom theme:  
 The King - dom heirs, who wel - come Je - sus' reign: 'Come  
 And they in turn still oth - ers now in - vite:

# Join in the Kingdom Song!

Bb7/F Eb Bb7sus4 Bb7 Ebma7/Bb

wor - ship God Be - fore his throne.

Eb6/Bb Cm6/A D7sus4 D7 Gm

His Son is King; Let's make it known!

Fm7 Ab/Bb Bb7 Eb Eb/Db Ab/C

Come learn this song, this song a - bout the King - dom;

Abm/Cb Eb/Bb C° Bb7sus4 Ab/Bb Gm/Bb Bb7 Eb

Bow down to God, and praise his ho - ly name.'

- Song 96 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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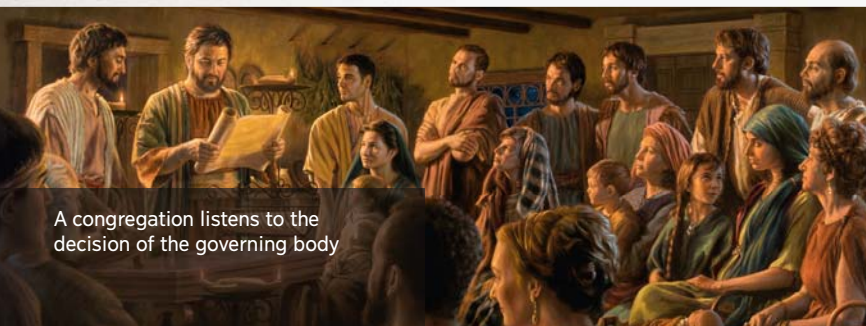
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 What is one example of recent direction received from Jehovah's organization?

How do I benefit from following it?



A congregation listens to the decision of the governing body



## Joyfully Praise Jehovah With Song

Paul and Silas praised Jehovah with song while they were in prison. (Ac 16:25) No doubt their singing strengthened them to endure. What about us today? Songs used for worship and original songs can lift our spirit and help us to remain faithful when under trial. More than that, they praise Jehovah. (Ps 28:7) We have been encouraged to memorize the lyrics of at least some of the songs. Have you tried to do so? We can use family worship to practice the songs and learn the lyrics.



WATCH THE VIDEO *CHILDREN PRAISE JEHOVAH IN SONG*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



What good effect can singing Kingdom songs have on us?

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How do Audio/Video Departments prepare to record a singing session?

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How do children and their families prepare for a recording session?

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What are your favorite Kingdom songs, and why?

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## Children Praise Jehovah in Song

[Childrens chorus sings “Reaching Out”]

Young Sister 1: You get so happy when you sing with others!

Young Brother 1: Jehovah created us like that. The birds also sing.

Young Brother 2: I feel that Jehovah is proud of me.

Andreas Thomsen – Audio/ Video Department – Scandinavia Branch: The Scandinavia branch office supervises nine languages in audio and video production. In the three largest languages —Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish— there are also three children choruses that help us with the recordings of the songs for the Become Jehovah’s Friend series.

Bjarne Anderson – Singing Coach – Denmark: First, I listen very carefully to the American adult chorus. I try to spot where they breathe, where they pause, and the overall mood in their way of singing. Then, I listen to the music we have received.

Helena Ryden – Singing Coach- Sweden: I have a piano at home to practice the voices and figure out where the high notes and low notes are, where the challenging parts are, and how I can pass this on to the children. I also think about what the goal with the recording is —how other children who listen to the song can feel the same joy as we feel when we are singing and recording it.

Marlene Cordes- Recording Technician – Denmark: Before the children arrive, we make sure that all the equipment is prepared and tested so that everything is ready when they come here.

[Parents 1] Father: When we receive the assignment to participate in the recordings of a new song, I feel that our girls have been full of initiative to practice. And we have made it our custom to sing the songs at our family worship.

Mother: When we are driving, like to the RTO for the recordings and on other occasions, we usually sing in the car.

## Children Praise Jehovah in Song

Young Sister 3: I like to sing the songs because they are good and have nice melodies.

Young Brother 3: I especially like the new songs because they are so different. One has African drums in it, and the next is a bit Irish and like you are walking in a valley and on a mountain.

[Parents 2] Father: Alma plays the cello and has asked to get the sheet music for the new Kingdom songs, which are her favorites right now.

Mother: It's been a challenge for André and me because we are not that musical.

Oystein Marcussen – Singing Coach – Norway: There is also a serious part, so we start with a prayer to Jehovah. Then, we watch the video and talk about the point of the video and how other children and families can benefit when listening to them. Then, we need to loosen up a bit, so we warm up with some exercises, and then we're ready to sing.

[Children singing "Reaching Out"]

Fredrik Zether- Recording Technician – Sweden: It is clear to us that they appreciate their privilege more and more. They actually see it as praise to Jehovah.

Henrik Granat – Recording Technician – Norway: The joy they have of singing for Jehovah rubs off on us who work with them.

[Parents 2] Father: When the children sing with joy and express themselves freely, it has an effect on us as parents and the ones in the congregation.

Young Sister 4: Jehovah becomes happy when he sees it, and also many brothers and sisters and children become happy.

Young Sister 5: It is fun to make the recordings. You get so happy, and then it's more fun to sing at the meetings.



## Children Praise Jehovah in Song

Young Sister 6: I see more clearly why we sing and why it is a part of our worship.

Young Sister 7: We don't go there just to spend time with our friends; we go there to sing. It is a part of praising Jehovah. Singing is like a prayer to him.

Young Sister 8: I have been humming the songs, and people around me wonder what it is I am always humming. So it has helped me, and it is an easy way to give a witness. My faith in Jehovah is stronger now.

Young Sister 9: I think that I am happier knowing Jehovah after I began singing.

Young Brother 4: You understand that singing is a huge part of our worship, and Jehovah wants us to use it.

# Reaching Out

(Matthew 9:37, 38)

*E<sub>b</sub>*

Je - ho - vah knows just what we  
 There's work to do in ev - 'ry  
 And here at home, in towns near -

*A<sub>b</sub>add9* *Cm7*

need To bring us joy and to suc -  
 land. Where there's a need, we lend a  
 by, We plan, we build, new skills we

*D<sub>b</sub>add9* *E<sub>b</sub>*

ceed. So he pro - vides so man - y  
 hand. By reach - ing out, we show we  
 try. We learn to speak a for - eign

*A<sub>b</sub>add9* *Cm*

ways In which to serve and spend our  
 care. We want to help and want to  
 tongue And bring good news to ev - 'ry -

# Reaching Out

Chorus

Bbsus4 Bb Ab Bb Eb Cm7 Eb/Bb Ab

days.  
share.  
one.

Reach - ing out, giv - ing all,

Eb/G Ab Fm7 Cm7 Bbsus4 Bb Gm7

for our God a - bove. And where the

Ab Bb Eb Cm7 Eb/Bb Ab

need is great, there we'll be,

Eb/G Ab Fm7 Bb13 Ab Eb

reach - ing out in love.

(See also John 4:35; Acts 2:8; Rom. 10:14.)

## HEALED BY TOUCHING JESUS' GARMENT

MATTHEW 9:18-22 MARK 5:21-34 LUKE 8:40-48

News of Jesus' return from the Decapolis spreads among Jews living on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Likely many have heard that during the recent storm, Jesus calmed the wind and the waters, and some may know that he cured the demon-possessed men. Hence, "a large crowd" gather by the sea, likely in the area of Capernaum, to welcome Jesus back. (Mark 5:21) As he steps ashore, they are eager and expectant.

One of those anxious to see Jesus is Jairus, a presiding officer of the synagogue, perhaps the one in Capernaum. He falls at Jesus' feet and begs again and again: "My little daughter is extremely ill. Please come and put your hands on her so that she may get well and live." (Mark 5:23) How will Jesus respond to Jairus' fervent plea to help his only daughter, who is just 12 years old and very precious to him?—Luke 8:42.

On his way to Jairus' house, Jesus is confronted with another emotion-filled situation. Many of the people accompanying Jesus are excited, wondering whether they will be able to see him perform another miracle. However, one woman in the crowd is focused on her own severe health problem.

For 12 long years, this Jewish woman has been suffering from a flow of blood. She has sought help from one doctor after another, using up all her money on treatments they have recommended. But she has not been helped. In fact, her problem has "become worse."—Mark 5:26.

You can likely appreciate that her ailment, besides weakening her, is embarrassing and humiliating. One generally does not speak open-

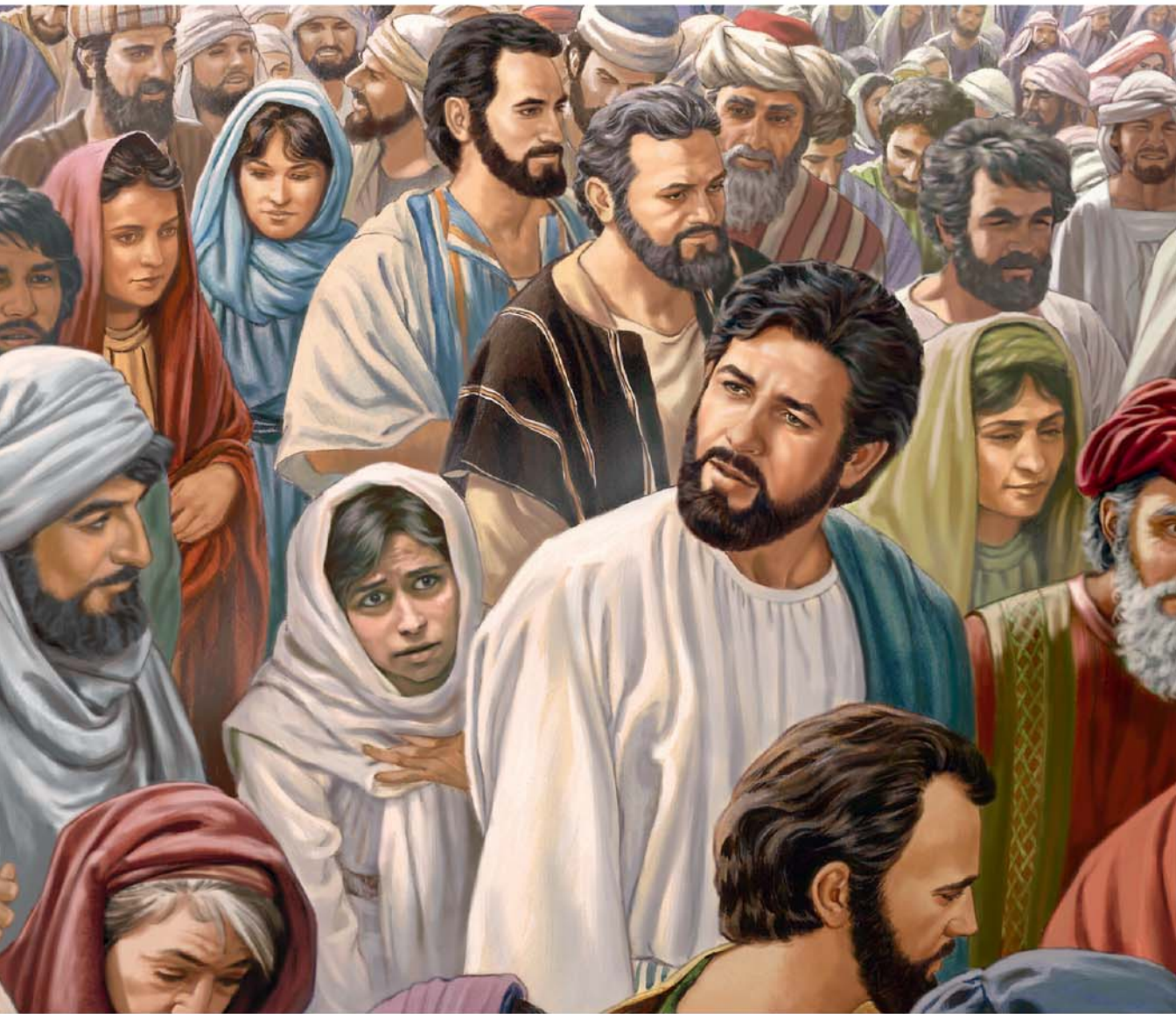
ly about such a condition. Moreover, under the Mosaic Law, a discharge of blood makes a woman ceremonially unclean. Anyone touching her or her blood-stained garments needs to wash and is unclean until the evening.—Leviticus 15:25-27.

This woman has "heard the reports about Jesus," and she now seeks him out. Because of her uncleanness, she makes her way through the crowd as inconspicuously as possible, saying to herself: "If I touch just his outer garments, I will get well." When she does touch the fringe of his garment, she immediately senses that her flow of blood has stopped! She has "been healed of the grievous sickness."—Mark 5:27-29.

Jesus then says: "Who touched me?" How do you think the woman feels at hearing those words? Peter protests with an implied reproof of Jesus: "The crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you." So why did Jesus ask, "Who touched me?" Jesus explains: "Someone touched me, for I know that power went out of me." (Luke 8:45, 46) Yes, the healing that occurred has drawn on Jesus' vitality.

Realizing that she has not escaped notice, the woman falls down before Jesus, frightened and trembling. In front of all, she tells the truth about her illness and that she has just been cured. Jesus kindly comforts her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed from your grievous sickness."—Mark 5:34.

Clearly, the One whom God has chosen to rule the earth is a warm, compassionate person who not only cares for people but also has the power to help them!



- ◇ Why do the people gather to greet Jesus as he returns to the area of Capernaum?
- ◇ What problem does one woman have, and why is she seeking help from Jesus?
- ◇ How is the woman healed, and what comfort does Jesus give her?

# “Assist Those Who Are Weak”

(Acts 20:35)

E $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 6 B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  G $\flat$ /B $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  E $\flat$

Man - y are the weak - ness - es That we all pos - sess.  
Some at times are weak in faith, Strong though they ap - pear.  
Rath - er than con-demn the weak, We should bear in mind

E $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 6 B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  G $\flat$ /B $\flat$  A $\flat$  A $\flat$ /B $\flat$  E $\flat$

Still Je - ho - vah cares for us, Loves us none - the - less.  
By our re - as - sur - ing words, We can calm their fears.  
How much we can strength - en them By our be - ing kind.

F $\flat$ m7 G $\flat$ /B $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7/A $\flat$  G $\flat$  C $\flat$  C $\flat$ /A D7+5 $\flat$ 9 D7 G $\flat$  F $\flat$ m7 B $\flat$ 7

He is so mer - ci - ful; His love, so pow - er - ful.  
Weak ones to God be - long; His spir - it makes them strong.  
May we be dil - i - gent, Give them en - cour - age - ment.

E $\flat$  B $\flat$ 7 E $\flat$ 6 B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$  B $\flat$  A $\flat$ /E $\flat$  G $\flat$ /B $\flat$  A $\flat$  A $\flat$ /B $\flat$  E $\flat$

May we show this kind of love, Help those in dis - tress.  
May we feel their pain and cares, Help them dry their tears.  
As we lend our kind sup - port, Com - fort they will find.



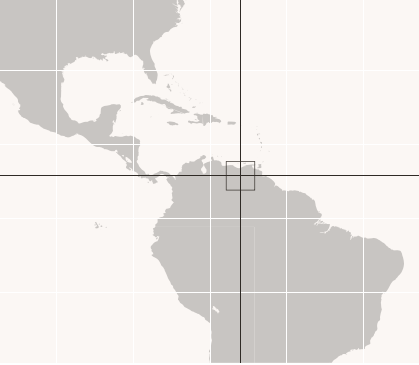
OCTOBER 2018

# 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**

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# 16 Praise Jah for His Son, the Anointed

(Revelation 21:2)

F Bb Eb/Bb F/Bb Eb/Bb Bb F/A Gm7 Bb/F Eb Bb/F

Je - ho - vah a - noint - ed his Son To rule o - ver ev - 'ry -  
 Christ's broth - ers are cho - sen and called. God gives them their own new

F Fsus4/G F/A F Bb C/Bb Csus4/Bb C/Bb F/A F

one. His throne is es - tab - lished on jus - tice, That  
 birth. This bride class will share in the King - dom And

C C7 Gm7/D C7/E Am/C C7/Bb F/A C7/G F *Chorus* Gm Dm/F Gm/E

God's will on earth may be done. Praise Jah for his Son, the A -  
 bring Par - a - dise to this earth.

Dm/F Dm Eb Bb/D Cm7 Bb/D Cm11 Bb

noint - ed. Praise Je - sus, O you faith - ful sheep, Who

*Praise Jah for His Son, the Anointed*

E $\flat$  B $\flat$ /D Cm7 B $\flat$ /D D7 Gm/D D7 Gm F/C Gm/C F/C Gm/C C7

loy - al - ly fol - low day af - ter day and all his com - mand - ments

F Fsus4 F Gm Dm/F Gm/E F/Dm Dm

keep. Praise Jah for his Son, the A - noint - ed, the

E $\flat$  B $\flat$ /D Cm7 B $\flat$ /D Cm11 B $\flat$  E $\flat$  B $\flat$ /D Cm7 B $\flat$ /D

Rul - er of heav - en - ly fame, A - noint - ed with ex - ul -

D7 Gm/D D7 Gm E $\flat$ m6/G $\flat$  B $\flat$ /F Cm/E $\flat$  B $\flat$ /D Cm7 F7 B $\flat$

ta - tion and might to hon - or God's ho - ly name.



## Put Trust in Our Active Leader The Christ

*“Your Leader is one, the Christ.”—MATT. 23:10.*

SONGS: 16, 14

### DO YOU RECALL?

What trustworthy leadership was given to God’s people in Joshua’s day?

What do we learn from the way Christ led the first-century congregation?

What reasons do we have for trusting in Christ’s leadership today?

Jehovah’s words were still ringing in Joshua’s ears: “Moses my servant is dead. Now get up, cross the Jordan, you and all this people, and go into the land that I am giving to them.” (Josh. 1:1, 2) What a sudden change for Joshua, who had been Moses’ attendant for almost 40 years!

<sup>2</sup> Because Moses had been Israel’s leader for so long, Joshua may have wondered how God’s people would respond to his leadership. (Deut. 34:8, 10-12) One Bible reference work, referring to Joshua 1:1, 2, notes: “In both ancient and modern times a transition of leadership is one of the most precarious times in the security of a state.”

<sup>3</sup> Joshua must have had legitimate fears, but within a few days, he took decisive action. (Josh. 1:9-11) His trust in God was not misplaced. As the Bible record shows, Jehovah actually guided Joshua and His people, Israel, by means of an

1, 2. What challenges did Joshua face after the death of Moses?

3, 4. How do we know that Joshua’s trust in God was not misplaced, and what question might we ask ourselves?

angelic representative. It is reasonable to think that this angel was the Word, God's firstborn Son.—Ex. 23:20-23; John 1:1.

<sup>4</sup> With Jehovah's help, Israel successfully navigated the transition from Moses' leadership to that of Joshua. We too are living in times of historic change, and we may wonder, 'As God's organization is rapidly moving forward, do we have good reasons to trust in Jesus as our appointed Leader?' (**Read Matthew 23:10.**) Well, consider how Jehovah provided trustworthy leadership in the past during times of change.

### LEADING GOD'S PEOPLE INTO CANAAN

<sup>5</sup> Soon after Israel crossed the Jordan, Joshua had an unexpected encounter. As he was nearing Jericho, he met a man carrying a drawn sword. Not knowing who the stranger was, Joshua asked: "Are you on our side or on the side of our adversaries?" To Joshua's surprise, the warrior revealed his identity. He was none other than the "chief of Jehovah's army," who was ready to defend God's people. (**Read Joshua 5:13-15 and footnote.**) Although the account in other places refers to Jehovah as speaking directly to Joshua, no doubt God was speaking through his angelic representative, as he often did in the past.—Ex. 3:2-4; Josh. 4:1, 15; 5:2, 9; Acts 7:38; Gal. 3:19.

<sup>6</sup> Joshua received clear instructions from the angelic Leader on how to take

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5. What encounter did Joshua have as he was nearing Jericho? (See opening picture.)

6-8. (a) Why might some of Jehovah's instructions have appeared unusual from a human standpoint? (b) How did the instructions prove to be both wise and timely? (See also footnote.)

the city of Jericho. At first, some of the instructions may not have appeared to be a good strategy. For instance, Jehovah commanded that all the men be circumcised, which would leave them indisposed for several days. Was it really the right time to circumcise those able-bodied men?—Gen. 34:24, 25; Josh. 5:2, 8.

<sup>7</sup> Likely, those defenseless Israelite soldiers wondered how they would protect their family if enemy warriors raided their camp. But suddenly, the news broke that Jericho was "tightly shut up because of the Israelites." (Josh. 6:1) Would their trust in God's direction not have been strengthened by such an unexpected turn of events?

<sup>8</sup> In addition, the Israelites were commanded not to attack Jericho but to march around the city once a day for six days and seven times on the seventh day. Some soldiers may have thought, 'What a waste of time and energy!' But Israel's invisible Leader knew exactly what he was doing. Not only did his strategy strengthen the faith of the Israelites but it also spared them direct confrontation with Jericho's mighty warriors.—Josh. 6:2-5; Heb. 11:30.\*

<sup>9</sup> What can we learn from this account? We may not at times fully comprehend the reasons for new initiatives

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\* Archaeologists found great reserves of grain in Jericho's rubble, which indicates that the city had not undergone a long siege; nor were its food supplies exhausted. Since the Israelites were not allowed to plunder Jericho, the time was right for them to invade the land, for it was harvest season and abundant food was available in the fields.—Josh. 5:10-12.

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9. Why should we follow the instructions we receive from God's organization? Give an example.

put forth by the organization. For example, we may at first have questioned the use of electronic devices for personal study, in the ministry, and at the meetings. Now we likely realize the benefits of using them if possible. When we see the positive results of such advancements despite any doubts we might have had, we grow in faith and unity.

### CHRIST'S LEADERSHIP IN THE FIRST CENTURY

<sup>10</sup> About 13 years after Cornelius' conversion, some Jewish believers were still promoting circumcision. (Acts 15:1, 2) When dissension broke out in Antioch, it was arranged for Paul to take the matter to the governing body in Jerusalem. But who was behind that direction? Paul stated: "I went up as a result of a revelation." Obviously, Christ directed matters so that the governing body would settle the dispute.—Gal. 2:1-3.

10. Who was behind the important meeting of the governing body held in Jerusalem?

<sup>11</sup> Under Christ's direction, the governing body made it clear that non-Jewish Christians did not need to be circumcised. (Acts 15:19, 20) But years after this decision, many Jewish believers continued to circumcise their children. When the elders in Jerusalem heard that a rumor was circulating about Paul, that he was not observing the Mosaic Law, they gave him some unexpected instructions.\* (Acts 21:20-26) They told him to take four men to the temple so that people would conclude that Paul was "keeping the Law." Paul could have questioned the wisdom of what they told him to do, objecting that the real problem lay with Jewish Christians who lacked clear understanding of the circumcision issue. However, showing

\* See the box "Paul Humbly Meets a Test" in *The Watchtower*, March 15, 2003, p. 24.

11. (a) What situation regarding circumcision persisted among Jewish believers? (b) How was Paul's willingness to support the elders in Jerusalem tested? (See also footnote.)

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Christ's active leadership was evident in the first century  
(See paragraphs 10, 11)





his support for the elders' desire to promote unity among believers, Paul humbly complied with the orders that he was given. We may wonder, though, 'Why did Jesus allow this issue to remain unsettled for such a long time when his death had abolished the Mosaic Law?'—Col. 2:13, 14.

<sup>12</sup> For some, it takes time to adjust to a clarification in understanding. Jewish Christians needed sufficient time to adjust their viewpoint. (John 16:12) Some found it hard to accept that circumcision was no longer a sign of a special relationship with God. (Gen. 17:9-12) Others, out of fear of persecution, were reluctant to stand out in Jewish communities. (Gal. 6:12) In time, though, Christ provided further guidance through inspired letters written by Paul.—Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 3:23-25.

### CHRIST IS STILL LEADING HIS CONGREGATION

<sup>13</sup> When we do not fully understand the reasons for some organizational changes, we do well to reflect on how Christ exercised his leadership in the past. Whether in Joshua's day or in the first century, Christ has always provided wise direction to protect God's people as a whole, to strengthen their faith, and to maintain unity among God's servants.—Heb. 13:8.

<sup>14</sup> Jesus' loving concern for our spiritual welfare is clearly reflected in the

---

12. What might explain why Christ allowed time to pass before resolving the issue of circumcision?

13. What can help us to appreciate Christ's leadership today?

14-16. How is Christ's concern for our spiritual welfare clearly reflected in the direction given by "the faithful and discreet slave"?

timely direction given by "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45) Marc, a father of four, says: "Satan is trying to weaken congregations by attacking families. Now with the encouragement to conduct family worship each week, the message is clear for family heads—safeguard your family!"

<sup>15</sup> When we discern Christ's direction, we sense his keen interest in our spiritual advancement. Patrick, who serves as an elder, notes: "At first, some found it discouraging to meet in small groups for field service on weekends. But one of Jesus' main qualities—his interest in the lowly ones—is clearly seen in this arrangement. Modest or less active brothers and sisters have come to feel more appreciated and useful and, as a result, have grown spiritually."

<sup>16</sup> In addition to caring for our spiritual needs, Christ helps us to keep our focus on the most important work being done on earth today. (**Read Mark 13:10.**) André, a newly appointed elder, has always been attentive to changes in direction within God's organization. He says: "The reductions in branch office personnel remind us of the urgency of the times and the need to focus our energy on the preaching activity."

### LOYALLY UPHOLDING CHRIST'S DIRECTION

<sup>17</sup> As shown by his active direction, our enthroned King, Jesus Christ, is definitely looking to the future. Therefore, let us rejoice over the benefits we derive from adjusting to recent changes. You might find it encouraging during your

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17, 18. Why is it profitable to reflect on the benefits we have reaped from adjusting to recent changes?

family worship to discuss how you have benefited from changes in the weekly meetings or in the ministry.

<sup>18</sup> If we perceive the spirit behind the instructions we receive from Jehovah's organization and their beneficial effect on us, we will likely follow that guidance with joy. We certainly appreciate that reducing the amount of literature being printed saves money; using new technologies allows us to further the Kingdom work throughout the earth. Having this in mind, we may be able to use electronic publications and media more extensively if possible. In this way, we will reflect Christ's concern to use the organization's resources wisely.

<sup>19</sup> When we earnestly uphold Christ's direction, we strengthen the faith of others and contribute to unity. Reflecting on the reduction of the size of the global Bethel family, André remarks: "The fine spirit shown by former Bethelites who adapted to such changes inspires me with trust and respect. They keep

19. Why should we uphold Christ's direction?

pace with Jehovah's chariot by finding joy in any assignment they are given."

### WITH EYES OF FAITH, PUT TRUST IN OUR LEADER

<sup>20</sup> Our appointed Leader, Jesus Christ, will soon "complete his conquest" and "accomplish awe-inspiring things." (Rev. 6:2; Ps. 45:4) In the meantime, he is preparing God's people for the time beyond this system of things when each one of us will share in the vast teaching and building work that will take place during the resurrection.

<sup>21</sup> Our anointed King will succeed in leading us into the new world, provided we maintain implicit trust in him despite changing circumstances. **(Read Psalm 46:1-3.)** We may, at times, struggle with change, especially when our life takes an unexpected turn. How, then, can we maintain inner peace and full faith in Jehovah? That question will be the subject of the next article.

20, 21. (a) Why can we trust in Christ, our Leader? (b) What question will we consider in the next article?

---

Are you helping your family and others to keep pace with Jehovah's organization?  
(See paragraphs 17, 18)



# Praising Earth's New King

(Psalm 2:12)

Ab Abma7/C Fm

A mul - ti - tude is gath - er - ing from ev - 'ry tribe and  
We praise the Christ, our reign - ing King, with sounds of ju - bi -

Ab Bbm F7/C Bbm/Db Bb7/D Eb Bb7/F Eb/G Eb

na - tion, Col - lect - ed by the Christ and his a -  
la - tion. This Prince of Peace will be our Judge and

Fm Bb7 Eb7 Ab

noint - ed con - gre - ga - tion. God's King - dom has been  
bring a - bout sal - va - tion. We see the joys that

Abma7/C Bbm F/C Bbm/Db Bb7/D Eb Bb7 Eb Eb/Db

brought to birth; We pray his will be done on earth. This  
lie a - head: An earth re - leased from fear and dread; The



# Praising Earth's New King

Ab/C Db Ab/C Eb7/Bb Ab Eb7/Bb Ab/C Ab Db Eb7

hope is a gift of price-less worth, Giv-ing joy and con-so-  
time for our Lord to raise the dead. What a time for ex-ul-

Absus4 Ab Chorus Ab Fm

la-tion. Praise our God, Je-ho-vah; Praise his Son for-ev-er-  
ta-tion!

Bb Bb7 Eb Ab/Eb Eb Bb7 Bb13 Eb Eb7 Ab Eb/Bb Ab/C Db Ab/C

King of all kings and the Lord of lords. Now u-nit-ed-ly we

Db Ab/C Eb7/Bb Ab Db Bbm Eb7 Ab

bow to his rule, And praise him with one ac-cord.

