

- Song 103 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”:** (10 min.)

Ac 20:28—Elders shepherd the congregation (w11 6/15 20-21 ¶5)

Ac 20:31—Elders offer assistance “night and day” as necessary (w13 1/15 31 ¶15)

Ac 20:35—Elders must display a self-sacrificing spirit (bt 172 ¶20)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Ac 19:9—How did the apostle Paul set an example in being industrious and adaptable? (bt 161 ¶11)

Ac 19:19—How did the Ephesians set an example that is worthy of imitation? (bt 162-163 ¶15)

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 19:1-20

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Give the householder a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture and linking question.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 15

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- **Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What vital role do elders play in the congregation? (Ac 20:28) Why must elders continue to train others? How can elders imitate Jesus’ example of training his apostles? What attitude should brothers have toward being trained? (Ac 20:35; 1Ti 3:1) What practical training can elders give them? What balanced view should elders have toward those whom they are training?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *gy* chap. 48
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 118 and Prayer

ACTS 19-20 | “Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”



20:28, 31, 35

Elders feed, protect, and care for the flock, remembering that each sheep was bought with Christ’s precious blood. Christians truly appreciate and love those who, like Paul, give of themselves unselfishly in behalf of the flock.

Ask yourself, ‘How am I showing my appreciation for the hard work of the congregation elders?’

103 *Shepherds—Gifts in Men*

(Ephesians 4:8)

1. Help in our lives, Jehovah provides,
 Shepherds to tend his flock.
 By their example they serve as guides,
 Showing us how to walk.

(CHORUS)

*God gives us men who have earned our trust,
Men who are loyal and true.
They show concern for his precious sheep;
Love them for all that they do.*

2. Shepherds who love us care how we feel;
 Gently they guide the way.
 When we are hurt, they help us to heal,
 Kind in the words they say.

(Chorus)

3. Godly advice and counsel they give,
 That we may never stray.
 Thus they assist us, God's way to live,
 Serving him ev'ry day.

(Chorus)

Acts 19-20

19 In the course of events, while A-pol'los was in Corinth, Paul went through the inland regions and came down to Eph'e-sus. There he found some disciples ² and said to them: "Did you receive holy spirit when you became believers?" They replied to him: "Why, we have never heard that there is a holy spirit." ³ So he said: "In what, then, were you baptized?" They said: "In John's baptism." ⁴ Paul said: "John baptized with the baptism in symbol of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." ⁵ On hearing this, they got baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ⁶ And when Paul laid his hands on them, the holy spirit came upon them, and they began speaking in foreign languages and prophesying. ⁷ There were about 12 men in all.

⁸ Entering the synagogue, for three months he spoke with boldness, giving talks and reasoning persuasively about the Kingdom of God. ⁹ But when some stubbornly refused to believe, speaking injuriously about The Way before the crowd, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples from them, giving talks daily in the school auditorium of Ty-ran'nus. ¹⁰ This went on for two years, so that all those living in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

¹¹ And God kept performing extraordinary powerful works through the hands of Paul, ¹² so that even cloths and aprons that had touched his body were carried to the sick, and the diseases left them, and the wicked spirits came out. ¹³ But some of the Jews who traveled around casting out demons also tried to use the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had wicked spirits; they would say: "I solemnly charge you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." ¹⁴ Now there were seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sce'va doing this. ¹⁵ But in answer the wicked spirit said to them: "I know Jesus

and I am acquainted with Paul; but who are you?" ¹⁶ At that the man with the wicked spirit leaped on them, overpowered them one after the other, and prevailed against them, so that they fled naked and wounded out of that house. ¹⁷ This became known to all, both the Jews and the Greeks who lived in Eph'e-sus; and fear fell upon them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus went on being magnified. ¹⁸ And many of those who had become believers would come and confess and report their practices openly. ¹⁹ Indeed, quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated their value and found them worth 50,000 pieces of silver. ²⁰ Thus in a mighty way, the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing.

²¹ After these things had taken place, Paul resolved in his spirit that after going through Mac-e-do'ni-a and A-cha'ia, he would travel to Jerusalem. He said: "After going there, I must also see Rome."

²² So he sent to Mac-e-do'ni-a two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and E-ras'tus, but he himself stayed on for some time in the province of Asia.

²³ At that time quite a disturbance arose concerning The Way.

²⁴ For a man named De-me'tri-us, a silversmith who made silver shrines of Ar'te-mis, brought considerable profit to the craftsmen.

²⁵ He gathered them and others who worked at such things and said: "Men, you well know that from this business comes our prosperity. ²⁶ Now you see and hear how, not only in Eph'e-sus but in nearly all the province of Asia, this Paul has persuaded a considerable crowd and turned them to another opinion, saying that the gods made by hands are not really gods. ²⁷ Moreover, the danger exists not only that this business of ours will come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Ar'te-mis will be viewed as nothing, and she who is worshipped in the whole province of Asia and the inhabited earth will be deprived of her

magnificence.”²⁸ Hearing this and becoming full of anger, the men began crying out: “Great is Ar'te-mis of the E-phe'sians!”

²⁹ So the city became filled with confusion, and all together they rushed into the theater, dragging along with them Ga'ius and Ar-is-tar'chus, Mac-e-do'ni-ans, traveling companions of Paul.³⁰ For his part, Paul was willing to go inside to the people, but the disciples would not permit him.³¹ Even some of the commissioners of festivals and games who were friendly to him sent word to him, pleading with him not to risk going into the theater.³² Some were, in fact, crying out one thing and others something else; for the assembly was in confusion and the majority of them did not know the reason why they had come together.³³ So they brought Alexander out of the crowd, the Jews shoving him forward, and Alexander motioned with his hand and wanted to make his defense to the people.³⁴ But when they recognized that he was a Jew, they all started shouting in unison for about two hours: “Great is Ar'te-mis of the E-phe'sians!”

³⁵ When the city recorder had finally quieted the crowd, he said: “Men of Eph'e-sus, who really is there among men who does not know that the city of the E-phe'sians is the temple keeper of the great Ar'te-mis and of the image that fell from heaven?³⁶ Since these things are indisputable, you should keep calm and not act rashly.³⁷ For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess.³⁸ So if De-me'tri-us and the craftsmen with him do have a case against someone, court days are held and there are proconsuls; let them bring charges against one another.³⁹ But if you are searching for anything beyond that, it must be decided in a regular assembly.⁴⁰ For we are really in danger of being charged with sedition over today's affair, since there are no grounds we could present as a

reason for this disorderly mob.”⁴¹ And after saying this, he dismissed the assembly.

20 When the uproar had subsided, Paul sent for the disciples, and after he had encouraged them and said farewell, he began his journey to Mac-e-do'ni-a.² After going through those regions and giving many words of encouragement to the ones there, he arrived in Greece.³ He spent three months there, but because a plot was hatched against him by the Jews when he was about to set sail for Syria, he made up his mind to return through Mac-e-do'ni-a.⁴ He was accompanied by Sop'a-ter the son of Pyr'rhus of Be-roe'a, Ar-is-tar'chus and Se-cun'dus of the Thes-sa-lo'ni-ans, Ga'ius of Der'be, Timothy and, from the province of Asia, Tych'i-cus and Troph'i-mus.⁵ These men went on ahead and were waiting for us in Tro'as;⁶ but we put out to sea from Phi-lip'pi after the days of the Unleavened Bread, and within five days we came to them in Tro'as, and there we spent seven days.

⁷ On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to have a meal, Paul began addressing them, as he was going to depart the next day; and he prolonged his speech until midnight.⁸ So there were quite a few lamps in the upper room where we were gathered together.⁹ Seated at the window, a young man named Eu'ty-chus sank into a deep sleep while Paul kept talking, and overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was picked up dead.¹⁰ But Paul went downstairs, threw himself on him and embraced him, and said: “Stop making a commotion, for he is alive.”¹¹ He then went upstairs and began the meal and ate. He continued conversing for quite a while, until daybreak, and then he departed.¹² So they took the boy away alive and were comforted beyond measure.

¹³ We now went ahead to the ship and set sail for As'sos, where we were intending to take Paul aboard, for after giving instructions

to this effect, he was intending to go there on foot. ¹⁴ So when he caught up with us in As'sos, we took him aboard and went to Mit-y-le'ne. ¹⁵ And sailing away from there the next day, we arrived off Chi'os, but the day after that, we touched at Sa'mos, and on the following day, we arrived at Mi-le'tus. ¹⁶ Paul had decided to sail past Eph'e-sus so as not to spend any time in the province of Asia, for he was hurrying to get to Jerusalem on the day of the Festival of Pentecost if he possibly could.

¹⁷ However, from Mi-le'tus he sent word to Eph'e-sus and called for the elders of the congregation. ¹⁸ When they came to him, he said to them: "You well know how I conducted myself among you from the first day I stepped into the province of Asia, ¹⁹ slaving for the Lord with all humility and with tears and trials that befell me by the plots of the Jews, ²⁰ while I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from house to house. ²¹ But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus. ²² And now look! bound in the spirit, I am traveling to Jerusalem, although not knowing what will happen to me there, ²³ except that from city to city the holy spirit repeatedly bears witness to me, saying that imprisonment and tribulations are waiting for me. ²⁴ Nevertheless, I do not consider my own life of any importance to me, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to bear thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God.

²⁵ "And now look! I know that none of you among whom I preached the Kingdom will ever see my face again. ²⁶ So I call you to witness this very day that I am clean from the blood of all men, ²⁷ for I have not held back from telling you all the counsel of God. ²⁸ Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the

congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son. ²⁹ I know that after my going away oppressive wolves will enter in among you and will not treat the flock with tenderness, ³⁰ and from among you yourselves men will rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves.

³¹ “Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I never stopped admonishing each one of you with tears. ³² And now I entrust you to God and to the word of his undeserved kindness, which word can build you up and give you the inheritance among all the sanctified ones. ³³ I have desired no man’s silver or gold or clothing. ³⁴ You yourselves know that these hands have provided for my own needs and the needs of those with me. ³⁵ I have shown you in all things that by working hard in this way, you must assist those who are weak and must keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said: **‘There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’**”

³⁶ And when he had said these things, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. ³⁷ Indeed, quite a bit of weeping broke out among them all, and they embraced Paul and affectionately kissed him, ³⁸ for they were especially pained at the word he had spoken that they would not see his face anymore. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

- Song 103 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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Ac 20:28—Elders shepherd the congregation (w11 6/15 20-21 ¶5)

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Ac 19:19—How did the Ephesians set an example that is worthy of imitation? (bt 162-163 ¶15)

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

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- Song 99
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- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *ky* chap. 48
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ACTS 19-20 | “Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”



20:28, 31, 35

Elders feed, protect, and care for the flock, remembering that each sheep was bought with Christ’s precious blood. Christians truly appreciate and love those who, like Paul, give of themselves unselfishly in behalf of the flock.

Ask yourself, ‘How am I showing my appreciation for the hard work of the congregation elders?’

December 31–January 6
Treasures From God’s Word

“Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”: (10 minutes)

Acts 20:28—Elders shepherd the congregation

Acts 20:28: Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.

w11 6/15 20-21 paragraph 5

The apostle wrote that the older men were to ‘shepherd the flock *of God* in their care.’ It was most important for them to recognize that the flock belongs to Jehovah and Jesus Christ. The elders had to render an account about how they kept watch over God’s sheep. Suppose that a close friend of yours asked you to look after his children while he was away. Would you not take good care of them and feed them? If one child got sick, would you not make sure that he received any needed medical help? Similarly, the elders in the congregation are “to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son.” (Acts 20:28) They keep in mind that each sheep was bought with the precious blood of Christ Jesus. Being accountable, the elders feed, protect, and care for the flock.

Acts 20:31—Elders offer assistance “night and day” as necessary

Acts 20:31: “Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I never stopped admonishing each one of you with tears.

w13 1/15 31 paragraph 15

Being a shepherd involves hard work. At times, elders spend sleepless nights in prayerful concern for God’s flock or in giving spiritual support to fellow believers. (2 Corinthians 11:27, 28) Still, elders carry out their responsibility fully and gladly, just as Paul did. He wrote to the Corinthians: “I will most gladly spend and be completely spent for your souls.” (2 Corinthians 12:15) Indeed, out of love for his brothers, Paul fully spent himself in strengthening them. (Read 2 Corinthians 2:4; Philippians 2:17; 1 Thessalonians 2:8) No wonder the brothers dearly loved Paul!—Acts 20:31-38.

Acts 20:35—Elders must display a self-sacrificing spirit

Acts 20:35: I have shown you in all things that by working hard in this way, you must assist those who are weak and must keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said: ‘There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’”

bt 172 paragraph 20

Paul’s life course was in stark contrast to that of those who would in later times take advantage of the flock. He worked to support himself so as not to impose a burden on the congregation. His efforts in behalf of fellow believers were not for personal gain. Paul urged the Ephesian elders to display a self-sacrificing spirit. “You must assist those who are weak,” he told them, “and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, ‘There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.’”—Acts 20:35.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 19:9—How did the apostle Paul set an example in being industrious and adaptable?

Acts 19:9: But when some stubbornly refused to believe, speaking injuriously about The Way before the crowd, he withdrew from them and separated the disciples from them, giving talks daily in the school auditorium of Tyrannus.

***bt* 161 paragraph 11**

Paul may have spoken in that school auditorium daily from about 11:00 a.m. until about 4:00 p.m. (Acts 19:9, footnote.) Those were likely the quietest but hottest hours of the day when many stopped their work to eat and rest. Imagine if Paul followed that rigorous schedule for two full years, he would have spent well over 3,000 hours teaching. Here, then, is another reason why the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing. Paul was industrious and adaptable. He adjusted his schedule so that his ministry met the needs of the people in that community. The result? “All those inhabiting the district of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.” (Acts 19:10) What a thorough witness he gave!

Acts 19:19—How did the Ephesians set an example that is worthy of imitation?

Acts 19:19: Indeed, quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And they calculated their value and found them worth 50,000 pieces of silver.

bt 162-163 paragraph 15

The humiliation of the sons of Sceva led to a widespread godly fear, which influenced many to become believers and abandon spiritistic practices. Ephesian culture was steeped in the magical arts. Spells and amulets were commonplace, as were incantations, often in written form. Many Ephesians were now moved to bring out their books on magical arts and burn them publicly—though these were evidently worth tens of thousands of dollars by present standards. *

[Footnote.] * Luke cites a value of 50,000 silver pieces. If he meant the denarius, it would have taken a worker back then 50,000 days—about 137 years—to earn that amount of money if he worked seven days a week. [End of Footnote.]

Luke reports: “Thus in a mighty way the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing.” (Acts 19:17-20) What a marvelous victory of truth over falsehood and demonism! Those faithful people set a good example for us today. We likewise live in a world steeped in spiritism. Should we find that we own something connected to spiritism, we would do as the Ephesians did—get rid of it promptly! Let us keep far away from such disgusting practices, whatever the cost.

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 19:1-20

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 19

19:3

In John's baptism: This baptism was a public demonstration of the individual's repentance over his sins against the Law that Jehovah gave to Moses, a Law that the Jews had agreed to follow. (Ex 24:7, 8) Undergoing the baptism of John, however, was not valid after Pentecost 33 C.E. when the Law covenant ended. (Ro 10:4; Ga 3:13; Eph 2:13-15; Col 2:13, 14) From that time on, the only baptism approved by Jehovah was the one that Jesus instructed his disciples to carry out. (Mt 28:19, 20) The events involving Apollos, described here, happened about the year 52 C.E.

19:9

The Way: A designation used in the book of Acts to refer to the Christian way of life and the early Christian congregation. It may have roots in Jesus' statement at Joh 14:6: "I am the way." Those who became followers of Jesus were spoken of as belonging to "The Way," that is, they kept a way of life following Jesus' example. (Ac 19:9) His life centered on worship of the only true God, Jehovah. For Christians, this manner of life also focused on faith in Jesus Christ. Sometime after 44 C.E., in Syrian Antioch, disciples of Jesus "were by divine providence called Christians." (Ac 11:26) However, even after that designation was applied, Luke refers to the congregation as "The Way" or "this Way."—Ac 19:23; 22:4; 24:22; see study notes on Ac 18:25; 19:23.—
Glossary "Way, the": An expression used figuratively in the Scriptures to refer to a mode of action or conduct that is either approved or disapproved by Jehovah. Those who became followers of Jesus Christ were spoken of as belonging to "The

Way,” that is, they kept a way of life centered on faith in Jesus Christ, following his example.—Ac 19:9.

the school auditorium of Tyrannus: Or “the lecture hall of Tyrannus.” No details are provided regarding the purpose for which that school was established, but Paul was apparently welcome to use the facilities, perhaps for a number of hours each day. A few ancient manuscripts add “from the fifth hour to the tenth,” that is, from about 11:00 a.m. to about 4:00 p.m. The fact that this phrase is missing from several early manuscripts indicates that it is not part of the original text. However, some suggest that even if this addition is not original, the timing mentioned seems reasonable and may reflect Paul’s daily schedule while he was in Ephesus. It would denote that Paul took the opportunity to teach the disciples during those hot but quiet hours when many stopped their work to rest.

19:10

the province of Asia: Glossary, “Asia.” An expression used figuratively in the Scriptures to refer to a mode of action or conduct that is either approved or disapproved by Jehovah. Those who became followers of Jesus Christ were spoken of as belonging to “The Way,” that is, they kept a way of life centered on faith in Jesus Christ, following his example.—Ac 19:9.

19:12

cloths and aprons: The cloths may have been handkerchiefs worn by Paul around the forehead to keep perspiration from running into the eyes. Aprons were worn by laborers, suggesting that Paul may have been plying his trade of tentmaking during his free hours, perhaps early in the morning.—Ac 20:34, 35.

19:19

magical arts: The Greek word for “magical arts” is *pe-ri'er-ga*, “curiosities.” One lexicon defines the word as “pert[aining] to

undue or misdirected curiosity . . . as in the practice of magic.” (*A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Third Edition, 2000) It describes the arts of those who with the aid of evil spirits pry into forbidden things. Many people practiced magic and other forms of demonism in Ephesus. When Paul wrote his inspired letter to the Ephesians, he urged them to put on the complete suit of armor from God so that they could fight against wicked spirit forces.—Eph 6:11, 12.

50,000 pieces of silver: If the drachma or the denarius is meant by the term “pieces of silver,” a laborer would have had to spend 50,000 days, or about 137 years working seven days a week, to earn that amount of money.

19:20

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 (𐤅𐤍𐤐𐤔). 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.—See App. C.

19:23

The Way: As shown in the study note on Ac 9:2, the expression “The Way” was used with reference to the early Christian

congregation. True Christianity is not a matter of outward appearance or mere formal worship. It is a way of life permeated by the worship of God and guided by his spirit. (Joh 4:23, 24) The Syriac *Peshitta* reads: “the way of God”; the Latin *Vulgate* according to the Clementine recension reads: “the way of the Lord”; and some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{17, 18} in App. C4) use the divine name here and read: “Jehovah’s way.”

19:24

Artemis: Artemis of Ephesus was a fertility goddess who was worshipped in cities throughout Asia Minor. (Ac 19:27) Statues of Artemis were adorned with what have variously been identified as multiple breasts, eggs, and the testicles of sacrificed bulls. The mummylike lower half of her body was decorated with various symbols and animals. Though there was a Greek virgin goddess of hunting known as Artemis, the Artemis of Ephesus has little in common with the Greek deity of classical mythology. The Roman name for Artemis was Diana.

19:31

some of the commissioners of festivals and games: Lit., “some of the Asiarchs.” These high-ranking officials or leading men of the Roman province of Asia were apparently chosen because of their influence and wealth. They presided over and financed the public games held in the province.

19:38

proconsuls: A proconsul was the principal governor of a province administered by the Roman Senate. He had judicial and military power, and although his actions were subject to review by the Senate, he was the highest authority in the province. A province had only one proconsul, so the plural form here is apparently used in a general sense. Ephesus was the capital of

the Roman province of Asia, and the proconsul resided there.—
See Glossary, “Asia.”

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 20

20:5

us: Luke’s use of the first person pronoun “us” indicates that he rejoined Paul at Philippi; the two men had parted company at Philippi some time earlier. (Ac 16:10-17, 40) They now traveled together from Philippi to Jerusalem, where Paul was later arrested. (Ac 20:5–21:18, 33) This is the second section of the book of Acts where Luke includes himself in the narrative.—See study notes on Ac 16:10; 27:1.

20:6

the days of the Unleavened Bread: Glossary, “Festival of Unleavened Bread.” The first of the three major annual festivals of the Israelites. It began on Nisan 15, the day after Passover, and continued for seven days. Only unleavened bread could be eaten, in remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt.—Ex 23:15; Mr 14:1.—See App. B15.

20:7

to have a meal: Lit., “to break bread.” Bread was the staple of the diet in the ancient Middle East; hence, this expression came to denote any kind of meal. Bread was generally formed into flat loaves that were baked hard, so the bread was often broken rather than cut with a knife. Therefore, breaking the loaves to eat them was customary and something that Jesus often did. (See study note on Mt 14:19; see also Mt 15:36; Lu 24:30.) When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Evening Meal, he took a loaf and broke it. Since this was the normal way to divide a loaf, there is

no spiritual significance to Jesus' breaking the bread. (See study note on Mt 26:26.) Some claim that when this expression occurs in certain places in the book of Acts, it refers to the observance of the Lord's Evening Meal. (Ac 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11) Every time the Lord's Evening Meal is mentioned, though, breaking bread is associated with drinking wine from a cup. (Mt 26:26-28; Mr 14:22-25; Lu 22:19, 20; 1Co 10:16-21; 11:23-26) The two actions are equally significant. So when breaking bread is mentioned without any reference to drinking from a cup, this is a reference, not to the Lord's Evening Meal, but to an ordinary meal. Moreover, there is nothing to indicate that Jesus intended the Memorial of his death to be observed more often than the festival it replaced, the Passover, which was observed just once a year.

20:10

for he is alive: Or "for his soul [that is, "his life"] is in him." In other words, the young man's life had been restored. As in many places in the Christian Greek Scriptures, the Greek word *psy-khe'* here means "life as a person."—Mt 6:25; 10:39; 16:25, 26; Lu 12:20; Joh 10:11, 15; 13:37, 38; 15:13.

20:11

began the meal: Lit., "broke the bread." Bread was the staple of the diet in the ancient Middle East; hence, this expression came to denote any kind of meal. Bread was generally formed into flat loaves that were baked hard, so the bread was often broken rather than cut with a knife. Therefore, breaking the loaves to eat them was customary and something that Jesus often did. (See study note on Mt 14:19; see also Mt 15:36; Lu 24:30.) When Jesus instituted the Lord's Evening Meal, he took a loaf and broke it. Since this was the normal way to divide a loaf, there is no spiritual significance to Jesus' breaking the bread. (See study note on Mt 26:26.) Some claim that when this expression occurs in certain places in the book of Acts, it refers to the observance of

the Lord's Evening Meal. (Ac 2:42, 46; 20:7, 11) Every time the Lord's Evening Meal is mentioned, though, breaking bread is associated with drinking wine from a cup. (Mt 26:26-28; Mr 14:22-25; Lu 22:19, 20; 1Co 10:16-21; 11:23-26) The two actions are equally significant. So when breaking bread is mentioned without any reference to drinking from a cup, this is a reference, not to the Lord's Evening Meal, but to an ordinary meal. Moreover, there is nothing to indicate that Jesus intended the Memorial of his death to be observed more often than the festival it replaced, the Passover, which was observed just once a year.

20:17

elders: Lit., "older men." In the Bible, the Greek term *pre-sby'te-ros* refers primarily to those who hold a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation. Spiritually older, or mature, men shared the responsibility of leadership and administration in the cities of the ancient nation of Israel. Likewise, spiritually older, or mature, men served in the different Christian congregations in the first century C.E. This account about Paul meeting with the elders from Ephesus clearly shows that there was more than one elder in that congregation. The number of elders in each congregation depended on the number who qualified as spiritually mature men. (1Ti 3:1-7; Tit 1:5-8) When Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy, who likely lived in Ephesus at the time, he mentioned "the body of elders."—1Ti 1:3; 4:14.

20:19

humility: This quality involves freedom from pride or arrogance. Humility is manifested in the way a person views himself in relation to God and others. It is not a weakness but a state of mind that is pleasing to God. Christians who are truly humble can work together in unity. (Eph 4:2; Php 2:3; Col 3:12; 1Pe 5:5) In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the word *ta-peí-no-phro-sy'ne*,

here translated “humility,” is drawn from the words *ta·pei·no’o*, “to make low,” and *phren*, “the mind.” It could therefore literally be rendered “lowliness of mind.” The related term *ta·pei·nos’* is rendered “lowly” (Mt 11:29) and “humble ones” (Jas 4:6; 1Pe 5:5).—See study note on Mt 11:29.

20:20

from house to house: Or “in different houses.” The context shows that Paul had visited the houses of these men to teach them “about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.” (Ac 20:21) Therefore, he is not referring solely to social calls or visits to encourage fellow Christians after they became believers, since fellow believers would already have repented and exercised faith in Jesus. In his book *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Dr. A. T. Robertson comments as follows on Ac 20:20: “It is worth noting that this greatest of preachers preached from house to house and did not make his visits merely social calls.” (1930, Vol. III, pp. 349-350) In *The Acts of the Apostles With a Commentary* (1844), Abiel Abbot Livermore made this comment on Paul’s words at Ac 20:20: “He was not content merely to deliver discourses in the public assembly . . . but zealously pursued his great work in private, from house to house, and literally carried *home* the truth of heaven to the hearths and hearts of the Ephesians.” (p. 270)—For an explanation of rendering the Greek expression *kat’ oi’kous* (lit., “according to houses”), see study note on Ac 5:42.

20:22

bound in: Or “compelled by.” Paul felt both an obligation and a willingness to follow the direction of God’s spirit to go to Jerusalem.

20:24

my own life: Or “my soul.” The Greek word *psy·khe'* here refers to a person’s life.—See Glossary, “Soul,” and App. A2.

20:25

preached: The Greek word basically means “to make proclamation as a public messenger” and stresses the *manner* of the proclamation, usually an open, public declaration rather than a sermon to a group. The theme of Christian preaching continued to be “the Kingdom of God.”—Ac 28:31.

the Kingdom: That is, God’s Kingdom. This overriding theme of the entire Bible runs through the book of Acts. (Ac 1:3; 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23, 31) Some early translations into other languages, such as the Latin *Vulgate* and the Syriac *Peshitta*, read “the Kingdom of God.” One translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J¹⁷ in App. C4) uses the divine name, and the whole expression can be rendered “the Kingdom of Jehovah.”

20:26

I am clean from the blood of all men: Paul was free of bloodguilt before God because he had not failed to preach the good news of the Kingdom. He had not withheld the lifesaving information that this message contains. (Ac 18:6; compare Eze 33:6-8) Paul conveyed “all the counsel of God” to the disciples in Ephesus because he did not want anyone to lose his life in God’s day of judgment. (Ac 20:27) Other ways in which a Christian can become bloodguilty before God are by committing murder or bloodshed, which can include actively or tacitly supporting the activities of a bloodguilty organization, such as “Babylon the Great” (Re 17:6; 18:2, 4), or other organizations that have shed innocent blood (Re 16:5, 6; compare Isa 26:20, 21). Also, eating or drinking blood in any way would incur bloodguilt.—Ac 15:20.

20:27

all the counsel of God: Or “the whole purpose (will) of God.” Here referring to all that God has purposed to do by means of his Kingdom, including everything that he has decided is essential for salvation. (Ac 20:25) The Greek word *bou·le'* is rendered “counsel [or, “direction; guidance,” ftn.]” at Lu 7:30 and “purpose” at Heb 6:17.

20:28

Pay attention to: Or “Keep watch over.” The sheep in Jehovah’s **flock** are dear to him because he purchased them with the precious “blood of his own Son.” Jehovah could not have paid a higher price. Humble overseers, therefore, keep watch over the welfare of each member of the flock, bearing in mind how much Jehovah loves his sheep.—1Pe 5:1-3.

overseers: The Greek word for overseer, *e·pi'sko·pos*, is related to the verb *e·pi·sko·pe'o*, meaning “carefully watch” (Heb 12:15), and to the noun *e·pi·sko·pe'*, meaning “inspection” (Lu 19:44, *Kingdom Interlinear*; 1Pe 2:12), “to be an overseer” (1Ti 3:1), or “office of oversight” (Ac 1:20). Therefore, the overseer was one who visited, inspected, and directed members of the congregation. Protective supervision is a basic idea inherent in the Greek term. Overseers in the Christian congregation have the responsibility to care for spiritual concerns of their fellow believers. Paul here used the term “overseers” when speaking to the “elders” from the congregation in Ephesus. (Ac 20:17) And in his letter to Titus, he uses the term “overseer” when describing the qualifications for “elders” in the Christian congregation. (Tit 1:5, 7) The terms, therefore, refer to the same position, *pre·sby'te·ros* indicating the mature qualities of the one so appointed and *e·pi'sko·pos* indicating the duties inherent in the appointment. This account about Paul meeting with the elders from Ephesus clearly shows that there were several overseers in

that congregation. There was no set number of overseers for any one congregation, but the number serving depended on the number of those qualifying as “elders,” or spiritually mature men, in that congregation. Likewise, in writing to the Philippian Christians, Paul referred to the “overseers” there (Php 1:1), indicating that they served as a body, overseeing the affairs of that congregation.—See study note on Ac 1:20.

God: Some ancient manuscripts read “the Lord” here, but the main text reading “God” has strong manuscript support and is viewed by many scholars as the original reading.

with the blood of his own Son: Lit., “through the blood of the own (one).” Grammatically, the Greek expression could be translated “with the blood of his own” or “with his own blood,” so the context has to be taken into consideration. In Greek, the expression *ho i'di-os* (“his own”) could stand alone without a clarifying noun or pronoun, as seen by how it is rendered at Joh 1:11 (“his own home”); at Joh 13:1 (“his own”); at Ac 4:23 (“their own people”); and at Ac 24:23 (“his people”). In non-Biblical Greek papyri, the phrase is used as a term of endearment to refer to close relatives. A reader of this verse would logically understand from the context that a noun in the singular number is implied after the expression “his own” and that the noun referred to God’s only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whose blood was shed. Based on this, quite a number of scholars and translators acknowledge that the word “son” is to be understood here and render the phrase “with the blood of his own Son.”

20:32

God: A few manuscripts read “the Lord” here, but the majority of manuscripts read “God.”

20:35

the words of the Lord Jesus: The statement following these words is quoted by the apostle Paul only, although the sense of those words is found in the Gospels and in the rest of the inspired Scriptures. (Ps 41:1; Pr 11:25; 19:17; Mt 10:8; Lu 6:38) Paul may have been told this quote orally, either by someone who heard Jesus say it or by the resurrected Jesus himself or in a divine revelation.—Ac 22:6-15; 1Co 15:6, 8.

20:37

embraced Paul: Lit., “fell upon Paul’s neck.” In the Scriptures, to embrace someone along with kissing and tears was a sign of great affection, something that these elders certainly felt for Paul.—See also Ge 33:4; 45:14, 15; 46:29; Lu 15:20.

affectionately kissed him: Or “tenderly kissed him.” Paul’s genuine love for his brothers had endeared him to them. In Bible times, such friendship was often expressed with a kiss. (Ge 27:26; 2Sa 19:39) At times, kissing was accompanied by a warm embrace along with tears. (Ge 33:4; 45:14, 15; Lu 15:20) The Greek term rendered “affectionately kissed” has been understood to be an intensive form of the verb *phi·le’o*, sometimes rendered “to kiss” (Mt 26:48; Mr 14:44; Lu 22:47) but more often meaning “to have affection for” (Joh 5:20; 11:3; 16:27).—Compare study note on Mt 26:49.



With the courtesy of the Efes Müzesi (Museum), Selçuk, İzmir, Turkey

Inscription Mentioning Ephesian Silversmiths

A number of inscriptions mentioning the silversmiths of the city have been found in Ephesus. The one shown here, dated to the third century C.E., records the honor they gave to the proconsul Valerius Festus as their benefactor and for his work on the harbor. The inscription confirms the prominence of the silversmiths as well as the fact that they were organized into an association, or guild. The book of Acts tells of their rioting when faced with the loss of profits from selling their “silver shrines of Artemis.”—Ac 19:24.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 19:23-28

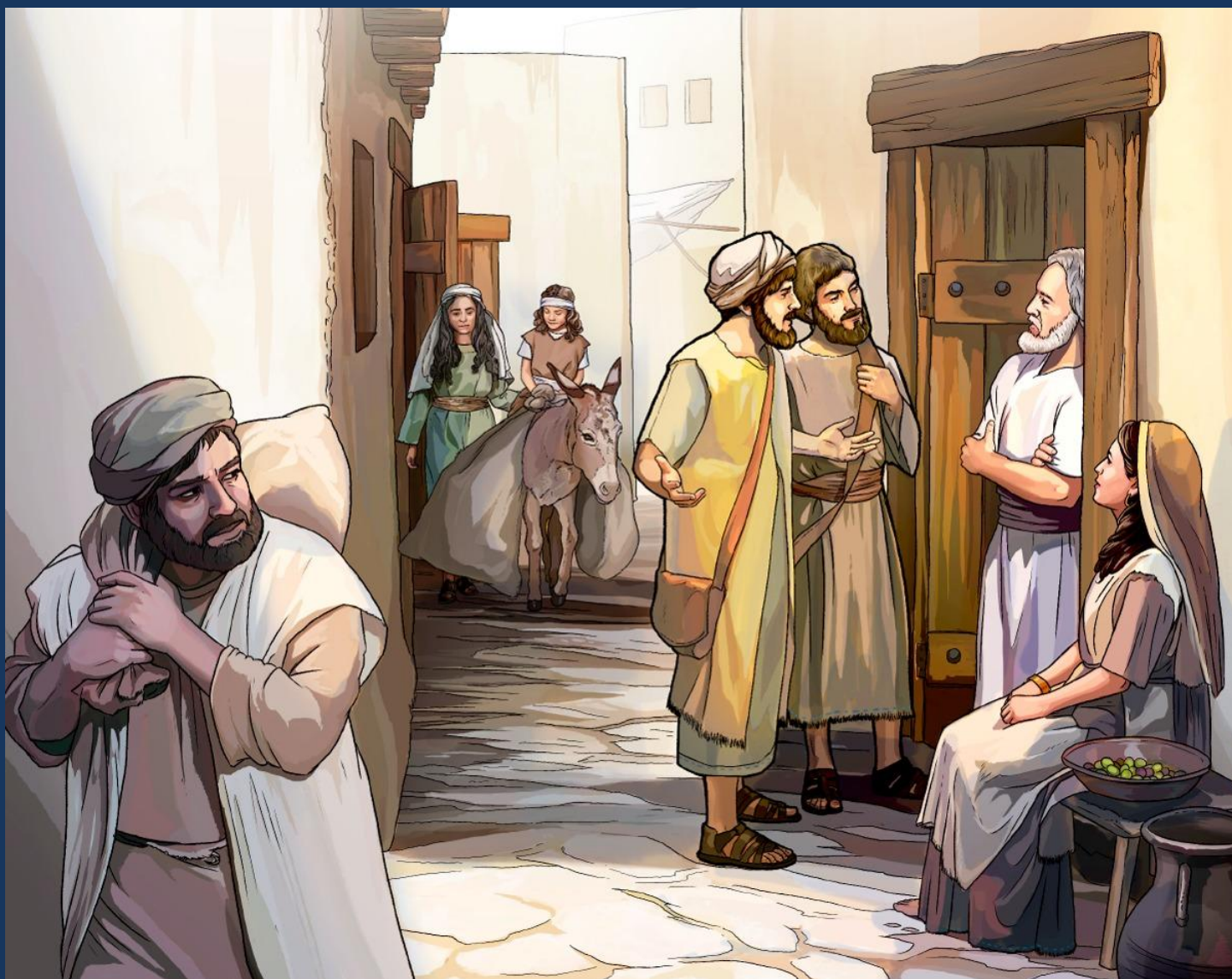


The Theater and Surroundings in Ephesus

The theater shown in this video could hold 25,000 people, making it the largest theater in Asia Minor in Paul's day. Located at the intersection of two of the principal thoroughfares in Ephesus, the theater was a prominent part of life in that city. Roman theaters were used not only for theatrical performances but also for hosting debates. It was into this theater that a mob dragged Paul's traveling companions when the silversmith Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen stirred up a riot against Paul.—Ac 19:23-28.

1. Theater
2. Agora
3. Arcadian Way
4. Gymnasium (built in the late first century C.E.)

Related Scripture(s) Ac 19:29



Preaching From House to House

In the days following Pentecost 33 C.E., Jesus' disciples continued bringing the good news right to the homes of the people. Though the disciples were ordered to "stop speaking," the inspired record says that "every day in the temple and *from house to house* they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Ac 5:40-42) About 56 C.E., the apostle Paul told the elders of Ephesus: "I did not hold back from . . . teaching you publicly and *from house to house*." (Ac 20:20) Paul was speaking of his efforts to preach to these men when they were yet unbelievers and needed to know "about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." (Ac 20:21) When he found spiritually inclined people, he doubtless returned to their homes to teach them further and, as these became believers, to strengthen them in the faith.—See study notes on Ac 5:42; 20:20.

Related Scripture(s) Ac 5:42; Ac 20:20



Wolf

The wolves of Israel are primarily nighttime predators. (Hab 1:8) Wolves are fierce, voracious, bold, and greedy, frequently killing more sheep than they can eat or drag away. In the Bible, animals and their characteristics and habits are often applied in a figurative sense, picturing both desirable and undesirable traits. For example, in Jacob's deathbed prophecy, the tribe of Benjamin is described figuratively as a fighter like a wolf (*Canis lupus*). (Ge 49:27) But in most occurrences, the wolf is used to picture such undesirable qualities as ferocity, greed, viciousness, and craftiness. Those compared to wolves include false prophets (Mt 7:15), vicious opposers of the Christian ministry (Mt 10:16; Lu 10:3), and false teachers who would endanger the Christian congregation from within (Ac 20:29, 30). Shepherds were well-aware of the danger posed by wolves. Jesus spoke of "the hired man" who "sees the wolf coming and abandons the sheep and flees." Unlike the hired man, who "does not care for the sheep," Jesus is "the fine shepherd," who surrendered "his life in behalf of the sheep."—Joh 10:11-13.

Related Scripture(s) Mt 7:15; Mt 10:16; Lu 10:3; Joh 10:12; Ac 20:29

- Song 103 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”:** (10 min.)

Ac 20:28—Elders shepherd the congregation (w11 6/15 20-21 ¶5)

Ac 20:31—Elders offer assistance “night and day” as necessary (w13 1/15 31 ¶15)

Ac 20:35—Elders must display a self-sacrificing spirit (bt 172 ¶20)

- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
Ac 19:9—How did the apostle Paul set an example in being industrious and adaptable? (bt 161 ¶11)

Ac 19:19—How did the Ephesians set an example that is worthy of imitation? (bt 162-163 ¶15)

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 19:1-20

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Give the householder a JW.ORG contact card.
- **Third Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Choose your own scripture and linking question.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *jl* lesson 15

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 99
- **Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category THE BIBLE). Then answer the following questions: What vital role do elders play in the congregation? (Ac 20:28) Why must elders continue to train others? How can elders imitate Jesus’ example of training his apostles? What attitude should brothers have toward being trained? (Ac 20:35; 1Ti 3:1) What practical training can elders give them? What balanced view should elders have toward those whom they are training?
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *fy* chap. 48
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 118 and Prayer

ACTS 19-20 | “Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”



20:28, 31, 35

Elders feed, protect, and care for the flock, remembering that each sheep was bought with Christ’s precious blood. Christians truly appreciate and love those who, like Paul, give of themselves unselfishly in behalf of the flock.

Ask yourself, ‘How am I showing my appreciation for the hard work of the congregation elders?’



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

●○○ INITIAL CALL

Question: What is the purpose of life?

Scripture: Ge 1:27, 28

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



○●○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

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

Scripture: Jos 21:45

Link: What has God promised for the future?

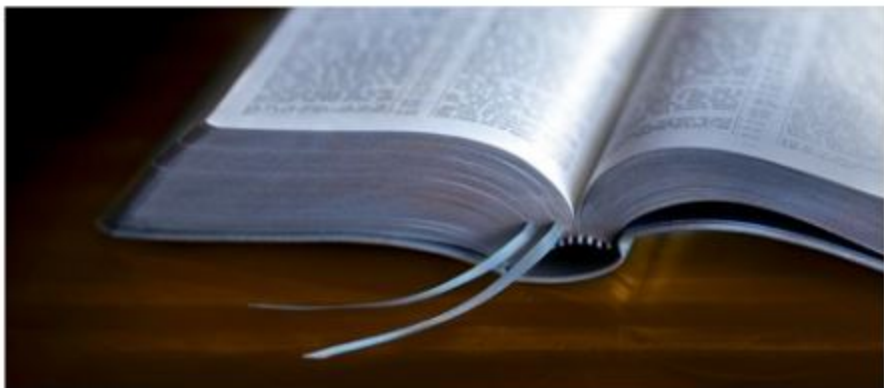


○○● SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What has God promised for the future?

Scripture: Re 21:4

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



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Teaching



Shepherding



Witnessing

How Do the Elders Serve the Congregation?

We do not have a paid clergy in our organization. Instead, as was done when the Christian congregation got its start, qualified overseers are appointed “to shepherd the congregation of God.” (Acts 20:28) These elders are spiritually mature men who take the lead in the congregation and shepherd, “not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.” (1 Peter 5:1-3) What work do they perform in our behalf?

They care for us and watch over us. The elders guide and help to protect the congregation spiritually. Aware that God has entrusted them with this important role, the elders do not dominate his people, but rather, they contribute to our well-being and joy. (2 Corinthians 1:24) Just as a shepherd diligently cares for each one of his sheep, the elders try to get to know every member of the congregation individually.—Proverbs 27:23.

They teach us how to do God’s will. Every week, the elders preside over the congregation meetings in order to strengthen our faith. (Acts 15:32) These devoted men also take the lead in the evangelizing activity, working with us and training us in all features of the ministry.

They give us personal encouragement. In order to care for our individual spiritual needs, local elders may visit with us in our home or at the Kingdom Hall to offer help and comfort from the Scriptures.—James 5:14, 15.

In addition to their work in the congregation, most elders also have secular jobs and family responsibilities that require their time and attention. These hardworking brothers deserve our respect.—1 Thessalonians 5:12, 13.

- What is the role of the congregation elders?
- In what ways do the elders show personal interest in us?

FIND OUT MORE

Who qualify to serve? You can read the Scriptural qualifications for elders and ministerial servants at 1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, and Titus 1:5-9.



Myriads of Brothers

(Revelation 7:9, 10)

1. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
Millions for all to see,
Each one a faithful witness,
Firm in integrity.
Myriads we are on myriads,
Growing, a mighty crowd,
From ev'ry nation and tribe and tongue,
We praise our God aloud.
2. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
We preach both far and near
"Good news of something better,"
Which millions long to hear.
And as we keep on preaching,
Though we at times are stressed,
Jesus refreshes the weary souls;
He gives us peace and rest.
3. Myriads on myriads of brothers,
God keeps us in his sight,
Safe in his earthly courtyards,
Serving him day and night.
Myriads we are on myriads,
With Kingdom news we go,
God's fellow workers we have become,
Serving him here below.

- Song 103 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Pay Attention to Yourselves and to All the Flock”:** (10 min.)

Ac 20:28—Elders shepherd the congregation (w11 6/15 20-21 ¶5)

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20:28, 31, 35

Elders feed, protect, and care for the flock, remembering that each sheep was bought with Christ’s precious blood. Christians truly appreciate and love those who, like Paul, give of themselves unselfishly in behalf of the flock.

Ask yourself, ‘How am I showing my appreciation for the hard work of the congregation elders?’

Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out

[Gathering of brothers and sisters to say goodbye to Daniel a young elder moving on to another assignment]

[A congregation elder Narrates]

We're very happy for Daniel.

He's going to be a blessing in his new assignment.

But we are going to miss him and everything he was doing for the congregation.

[Daniel hands over a congregation file]

This will change things for us.

[Brother arrives home takes a telephone call from a fellow elder]

We really want to be there for our brothers and sisters.

[The two brothers visit a widowed sister with her young son – share scriptures and pray together]

[Brother at home with his wife studying together]

[At the field service group at the Kingdom Hall]

And it's true: Having plenty to do in the Lord's work is good.

[Brother works on the file that Daniel handed over]

[At the Kingdom Hall – the brother is taking the Watchtower study]

But where will we get more help?

Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out

[Richie is on microphones and distracted before passing the mike to a sister to answer]

We do have good ministerial servants like Richie.

[Richie apologises to the brother]

[At an elders' meeting – 4 older brothers]

But after Daniel left, our elder body is one fewer now.

That prompted a good question: Are we doing all we can to train our brothers?

[At the Kingdom Hall for field service]

Brother: Richie, do you have some time for me? I have some calls you can help me with.

Richie: Sure, I'd like that.

[In field service]

I realized it had been a while since we talked about him qualifying to do more.

He explained that he wanted to help but didn't want to appear presumptuous.

He'd been praying about it, and he wanted to know what else he could do to keep reaching out.

Talking to Richie made me think of Jesus' example.

[Various scenes of Jesus working with his disciples]

His disciples offered themselves willingly, and he trained them.

Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out

They were eager but needed his direction.

Jesus' training gave them confidence to do the assignments he gave them.

They were happy, not just to follow Jesus, but to work alongside him.

And Jesus was happy to share his work.

Up to his final evening with them, he prepared them for the work ahead.

John 14:12 - "Most truly I say to you, whoever exercises faith in me will also do the works that I do; and he will do works greater than these, because I am going my way to the Father."

[Brother prepares for a shepherding call with Richie]

I now remember how much training I had received from the brothers.

[The brother and Richie visit an older sister together]

[At the Kingdom Hall the brother and Richie review the territory maps together]

It was easy to forget that I didn't always get things right at first.

[The brother and Richie visit the widowed sister and her son together]

[Richie takes over caring for the field service maps]

Soon, Richie was taking on more responsibility.

[The brother and Richie visit the widowed sister and her son together – Richie is sharing a scripture]

Train Young Men Who Are Reaching Out

And he told me something that I too once felt.

[At the Kingdom Hall – Richie has the field service maps ready and arranges for the widowed sister's son to work with him]

He just didn't realize how much work went into caring for Jehovah's sheep.

[At an elders' meeting with Richie attending]

But once he knew, he was glad he offered himself willingly.

48

PERFORMING MIRACLES, BUT REJECTED EVEN IN NAZARETH

MATTHEW 9:27-34; 13:54-58 MARK 6:1-6

- JESUS HEALS THE BLIND AND THE SPEECHLESS
 - PEOPLE IN NAZARETH REJECT HIM
-

It has been a full day for Jesus. After a voyage from the region of the Decapolis, he healed the woman with the flow of blood and he resurrected Jairus' daughter. But the day is not over. As Jesus leaves Jairus' home, two blind men follow him, shouting: "Have mercy on us, Son of David."—Matthew 9:27.

By calling Jesus "Son of David," these men express their belief that Jesus is heir to the throne of David and thus the Messiah. Jesus seems to ignore their cries, perhaps to see whether they will be persistent, and they are. When Jesus enters a house, the two men follow him inside. Jesus asks them: "Do you have faith that I can do this?" They answer confidently: "Yes, Lord." At that, Jesus touches their



eyes and says: “According to your faith let it happen to you.”—Matthew 9:28, 29.

Suddenly they can see! As he has earlier instructed others, Jesus directs them not to publicize what he did. But filled with gladness, they later talk about him far and wide.

As these two men are leaving, people bring in a man who cannot speak because he is demon-possessed. Jesus expels the demon, and instantly the man begins to talk. The crowds marvel at this, saying: “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel.” Pharisees are also present. They cannot deny the miracles, so they repeat their charge as to the source of Jesus’ works: “It is by the ruler of the demons that he expels the demons.”—Matthew 9:33, 34.

Shortly thereafter, Jesus heads back to his hometown, Nazareth, now accompanied by his disciples. About a year earlier, he taught in the synagogue there. The people initially marveled at what he said, but they later took offense at his teaching and tried to kill him. Now Jesus again tries to help his former neighbors.

On the Sabbath, he returns to the synagogue to teach. Many are astounded, even asking: “Where did this man get this wisdom and these powerful works?” They say: “Is this not the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where, then, did he get all of this?”—Matthew 13:54-56.

The people feel that Jesus is just a local man. ‘We saw him grow up,’ they think, ‘so how can he be the Messiah?’ Consequently, despite all the evidence—including Jesus’ great wisdom and powerful works—they reject him. Because of their familiarity with Jesus, even his relatives stumble at him, causing him to observe: “A prophet is not without honor except in his home territory and in his own house.”—Matthew 13:57.

Indeed, Jesus is amazed at their lack of faith. So he does not perform any miracles there “except to lay his hands on a few sick people and cure them.”—Mark 6:5, 6.

- ◇ By addressing Jesus as “Son of David,” what do the blind men show they believe?
- ◇ The Pharisees fall back on what explanation for Jesus’ miracles?
- ◇ What reception does Jesus receive in Nazareth, and why?

(Luke 17:5)

1. Because we are imperfect, O Jehovah,
The inclination of our heart is flawed.
There is a sin that easily ensnares us—
A lack of faith in you, the living God.

(CHORUS)

*Give us more faith, we beg of you, Jehovah.
Please help us out according to our need.
Give us more faith, according to your mercy,
That we may honor you in word and deed.*

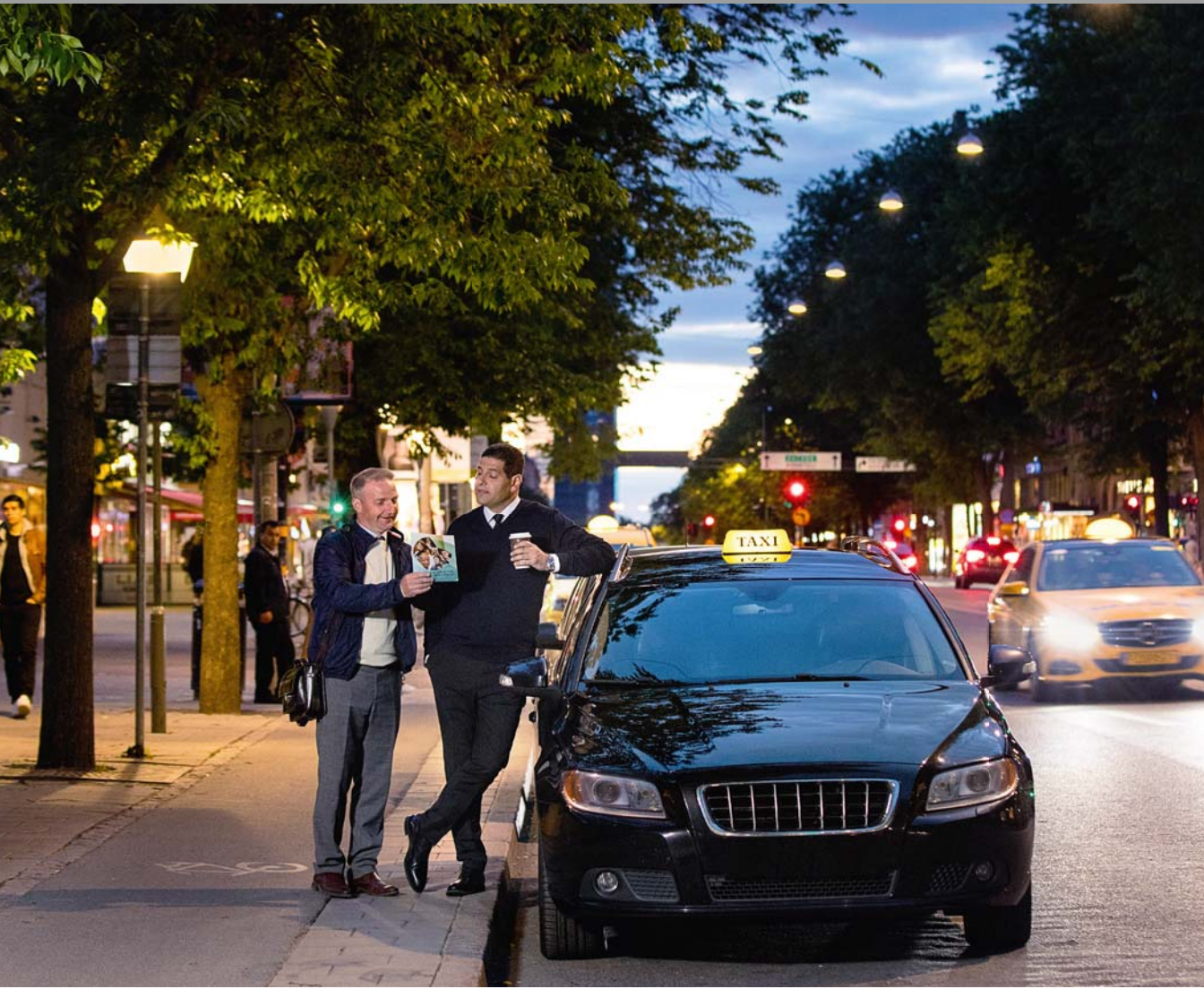
2. Apart from faith, no one can fully please you.
We must believe our faith will be repaid.
And as a shield, our faith provides a refuge.
We face the future firm and unafraid.

(Chorus)

NOVEMBER 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 31, 2018–
FEBRUARY 3, 2019

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:
SWEDEN

Publishers in Stockholm take advantage of the Nordic summer light to do evening witnessing. They share a message of hope with taxi drivers, store clerks, service station attendants, and other night workers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF DECEMBER 31–JANUARY 6 “Buy Truth and Never Sell It”

16 WEEK OF JANUARY 7-13 “I Will Walk in Your Truth”

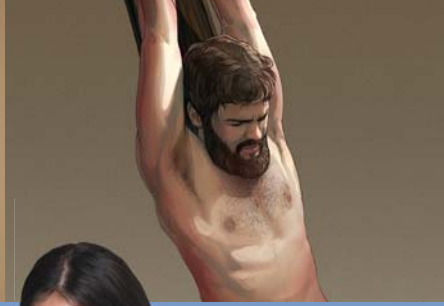
These two articles encourage us to appreciate the priceless value of Jehovah’s precious truth. The value of that truth goes far beyond any sacrifice we make to obtain it. The articles also consider what we can do to ensure that we keep viewing the truth as a treasure and that we never give up or never compromise on even one aspect of the precious truth Jehovah has taught us.

Grateful for God's Word

(Philippians 2:16)

1. Jehovah, our Father, we want to express
How grateful we are that your Word we possess!
All Scripture is inspired;
its truth has set us free.
Its light gives us knowledge; the truth we can see.
2. Your Word has the power to reach deep inside.
Our thoughts and intentions, it helps to divide.
Your laws are clear and perfect,
your judgments ever true.
Your principles guide us in all that we do.
3. Your Word, O Jehovah, has human appeal.
Your prophets were like us; they felt what we feel.
Please help us build a strong faith
that follows what is heard.
We thank you, Jehovah, for your precious Word!

יהוה



SONGS:
94, 96

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How can we buy truth from Jehovah?

Describe five things that may be included in the price we have to pay for obtaining truth.

How valuable should the truth be to us?

“Buy Truth and Never Sell It”

“Buy truth and never sell it, also wisdom and discipline and understanding.”—PROV. 23:23.

WHAT is your most precious possession? Would you be willing to exchange it for something of lesser value? For Jehovah’s dedicated worshippers, the answers to these questions are simple.

1, 2. (a) What is our most precious possession? (b) What truths do we treasure, and why? (See opening pictures.)

Our most precious possession is our relationship with Jehovah, and we would not trade it for anything. We also treasure Bible truth, which made cultivating that bond with our heavenly Father possible.—Col. 1:9, 10.

² Just think of all that our Grand Instructor teaches us in his Word, the Bible! He reveals the truth about his meaningful name and his appealing qualities. He informs us about the outstanding provision of the ransom, which he lovingly provided for us by means of his Son, Jesus. Jehovah also informs us about the Messianic Kingdom, and he sets before the anointed the heavenly hope and before the “other sheep” the hope of the earthly Paradise. (John 10:16) He teaches us how we should conduct ourselves. We treasure these truths because they enable us to draw close to our Creator. They give meaning to our life.

³ Jehovah is a generous God. He does not hold back good from truth-seekers. Jehovah even provided the life of his dear Son as a free gift. God would certainly not require us to pay money for the truth. In fact, when a man named Simon offered the apostle Peter money in return for the

3. What does buying truth not mean?

authority to impart holy spirit, Peter rebuked him, saying: “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire the free gift of God with money.” (Acts 8:18-20) What, then, is the meaning of the inspired instruction: “Buy truth”?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO “BUY” TRUTH?

4 Read Proverbs 23:23. We do not find the truth in God’s Word without effort. We must be willing to make whatever sacrifices are needed to obtain it. As the wise writer of Proverbs notes, once we “buy,” or acquire, “truth,” we must be careful not to “sell,” or lose, it. Let us discuss what it means to “buy” truth and the price we may have to pay for it, so to speak. We can thereby deepen our appreciation for the truth and strengthen our resolve never to “sell” it. As we will see, buying truth is well worth the cost.

5 Even something that is free may come at a cost. The Hebrew word translated “buy” at Proverbs 23:23 can also mean “acquire.” Both words imply making an effort or exchanging something for an item of value. We might illustrate the idea of buy-

4. In this article, what will we learn about the truth?

5, 6. (a) How can we buy truth without money? Illustrate. (b) How does truth benefit us?

ing truth this way. Let us say that a market advertises “Free Bananas.” Will those bananas miraculously appear on our table? No. We have to make the effort to go to the market to pick them up. Are the bananas free? Yes, but we must expend the effort and take the time to go to the market. Similarly, we do not need money to buy truth. However, we must make an effort to obtain it.

⁶ Read Isaiah 55:1-3. Jehovah’s words recorded by Isaiah shed further light on what it means to buy truth. In this Bible passage, Jehovah compares his word to water, milk, and wine. Like a drink of cool, clear water, God’s words of truth are refreshing. Also, just as milk strengthens us and helps children to grow, Jehovah’s nourishing words strengthen us and help us to grow spiritually. Further, Jehovah’s words are also like wine. In what way? In the Bible, wine is associated with rejoicing. (Ps. 104:15) So by telling his people to “buy wine,” Jehovah assures us that living according to his words will make us rejoice. (Ps. 19:8) What a beautiful way to illustrate the beneficial effects of learning and applying God’s words of truth! We could compare the effort to the price we pay. So, then, let us consider five things that we may have to pay to buy truth.

WHAT HAVE YOU GIVEN UP TO BUY TRUTH?

⁷ **Time.** This is a price everyone who buys truth must pay. It takes time to listen to the Kingdom message, read the Bible and Bible literature, have a personal Bible study, and prepare for and attend congregation meetings. We must ‘buy out,’ or take, that time from some other less important activity. (Read Ephesians 5:15, 16 and footnote.) How much time will it take for us to gain an accurate knowledge of basic Bible teachings? That depends on our circumstances. There is no limit to what we can learn about Jehovah’s wisdom, ways, and works. (Rom. 11:33) The first issue of the *Watch Tower* likened the truth to “a modest little flower” and stated: “Be not content with *one* flower of truth. Had one been sufficient there would have been no more. Gather ever, seek for more.” We might ask ourselves, ‘How big is my bouquet of truth?’ Even with an eternity of time, we can always learn more about Jehovah. Today, the important thing is that we use our time wisely so as to buy as much truth as our circumstances allow. Consider an example of someone who longed for truth.

7, 8. (a) Why must we spend time to buy truth? (b) How much was one young student willing to pay, and what was the result?

⁸ Mariko,* a young Japanese woman, came to New York City, U.S.A., to attend school. At the time, she followed a religious movement that started in Japan in the late 1950's. A pioneer sister met Mariko in the house-to-house ministry. When she began to learn Bible truth, her joy was so great that she asked the pioneer to study the Bible with her twice a week. In spite of having a busy school schedule and holding down a part-time job, Mariko immediately began to attend congregation meetings. She also stopped spending time on some social activities in order to buy out time to learn the truth. Making such sacrifices contributed to her rapid spiritual progress. Within a year, she got baptized. Six months later, in 2006, she began to pioneer, and she is still serving as a pioneer.

⁹ **Material advantages.** To buy truth, we might have to give up a lucrative job or career. When the fishermen Peter and Andrew were invited by Jesus to become “fishers of men,” they “abandoned their nets.” (Matt. 4:18-20) Of course, most

* Some names in this article have been changed.

9, 10. (a) How does buying truth affect our view of material things? (b) What prospects did one young woman give up, and how does she feel about it?

of those who learn the truth today cannot simply walk away from their jobs. They have Scriptural obligations. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, individuals who learn the truth must often change their attitude toward material things and adjust their priorities. Jesus stated this clearly when he said: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth . . . Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” (Matt. 6:19, 20) Consider the example of one young woman.

¹⁰ Maria was swinging a golf club even before she was old enough to go to school. She continued to develop her golfing skills during high school and eventually earned a university scholarship. Golf was her life, and her goal was to enjoy a lucrative career as a professional golfer. Then Maria started to study the Bible, and she loved the truths she was learning. She was pleased with the changes that the truth helped her make in her life. She said: “The more I adjusted my attitude and lifestyle to the Bible’s standards, the happier I became.” Maria realized that it would be difficult for her to pursue both spiritual and material riches. (Matt. 6:24) She paid the price of giving up her lifelong goal of becoming a professional golfer and the prospects of gaining riches and fame. However, as a result of buying

truth, she now serves as a pioneer and enjoys what she describes as “the happiest, most meaningful life possible.”

¹¹ Personal relationships. When we choose to live according to Bible truth, our ties with friends and relatives may change. Why? Jesus prayed regarding his followers: “Sanctify them by means of the truth; your word is truth.” (John 17:17; ftn.) “Sanctify them” can also mean “set them apart.” When we accept the truth, we are set apart from the world because we no longer fit into its mold. People view us differently because our values have changed. We live by the standards of Bible truth. Though we do not want to cause division, some friends and close family members may distance themselves from us or even oppose our newfound faith. This does not surprise us. Jesus acknowledged: “Indeed, a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.” (Matt. 10:36) He also gave assurance that the rewards for buying truth far exceed any price we may pay.—**Read Mark 10:28-30.**

¹² From his early years, a Jewish businessman named Aaron was taught that God’s name is not to

11. When we buy truth, what may happen to some of our relationships?

12. What price did one Jewish man pay for truth?

be pronounced. However, Aaron had a thirst for truth. He was thrilled when a Witness showed him that by combining vowel points with the four Hebrew consonants of God's name, it could be pronounced "Jehovah." Excitedly, he went to the synagogue to share his wonderful discovery with the rabbis. Their reaction was not what Aaron expected. Instead of sharing his joy of learning the truth about God's name, they spit on him and treated him as an outcast. His family bonds became strained. Undaunted, he continued to buy truth and served as a bold Witness of Jehovah for the rest of his life. Like Aaron, in order to walk in the truth, we are willing to pay the price of accepting whatever changes may occur in our social status or family relationships.

13 Ungodly thinking and conduct. To accept the truth and live by the Bible's moral standards, we must be willing to make changes in our thinking and conduct. Note what Peter wrote regarding these adjustments: "As obedient children, stop being molded by the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but . . . become holy yourselves in all your conduct." (1 Pet. 1:14, 15) For people in

13, 14. What changes in our thinking and conduct are needed in order to buy truth? Give an example.

the morally corrupt city of Corinth, buying truth meant making major changes in their lifestyle. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Likewise, to be able to buy truth, many today have turned their back on ungodly conduct. Peter further reminded Christians in his day: “The time that has passed by is sufficient for you to have done the will of the nations when you carried on in acts of brazen conduct, unbridled passions, overdrinking, wild parties, drinking bouts, and lawless idolatries.”—1 Pet. 4:3.

¹⁴ For many years, Devynn and Jasmine were drunkards. Although Devynn was a skilled bookkeeper, his alcohol abuse prevented him from holding a permanent job. Jasmine was notorious for her aggressive, violent behavior. One day while walking drunk along the road, Jasmine met two Witness missionaries. The missionaries arranged for a Bible study, but when they arrived at Devynn’s home the next week, both Jasmine and Devynn were drunk. They had not expected the missionaries to care enough about them to come to their home. The situation was different the next time. From the first study, Jasmine and Devynn became diligent students of the Bible and started to apply what they were learning. Within three months, they decided to give up alcohol and later legalized their

marriage. The changes they made became well-known, and this moved many others in their village to study the Bible.

¹⁵ **Unscriptural customs and practices.** Giving up unscriptural customs and practices can be one of the most difficult prices to pay for truth. Although some may find it easy to accept the Scriptural basis for abandoning these practices, others may hesitate to pay the price because of pressure from family members, workmates, and close friends. The situation may become emotionally charged, especially if a custom involves rites in honor of dead relatives. (Deut. 14:1) The courageous example of others can help us to make the necessary changes. Consider the bold action taken by some inhabitants of Ephesus in the first century.

¹⁶ Ephesus was renowned for its magical arts. What did newly converted Christians who had been practicing magical arts do in order to put away those unscriptural practices and buy truth? The Bible explains: “Quite a number of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them up before everybody. And

15. What can be one of the most difficult prices to pay for truth, and why?

16. What did some in Ephesus do in order to buy truth?

they calculated their value and found them worth 50,000 pieces of silver. Thus in a mighty way, the word of Jehovah kept growing and prevailing.” (Acts 19:19, 20) The faithful Christians made this costly sacrifice and gained priceless blessings.

¹⁷ What did you pay for truth? We all spend time gathering flowers of truth. Some also pay for truth by forgoing material advantages and by dealing with adjustments in their personal relationships. Many have to make changes in their thinking and conduct and must give up unscriptural customs and practices. Whatever the cost, we are convinced that Bible truth is well worth any price we have to pay. It gives us our most precious possession, a close relationship with Jehovah. When we reflect on our blessings of knowing the truth, we find it difficult to imagine that anyone would want to sell it. How could that happen, and how can we avoid making such a grave mistake? We will consider these questions in the next article.

17. (a) What things may be included in the price we have to pay for the truth? (b) What questions will we consider in the following article?

96 *God's Own Book—A Treasure*

(Proverbs 2:1)

1. There is a book that by its many pages,
 Brings peace and joy and hope to humankind.
Its wondrous thoughts are charged with such great power;
 It brings life to the “dead,” sight to the “blind.”
That precious book is God's own Holy Bible.
 Its words were penned by men whom God inspired,
By men who truly loved their God Jehovah,
 And by his holy spirit they were fired.
2. They wrote a record true of God's creations,
 How by his might this universe appeared.
They also told how man at first was sinless
 But how his Paradise then disappeared.
They further told about a certain angel
 Who challenged God and spurned his sov'reignty.
That challenge led to sin and man's great sorrow,
 But soon will come Jehovah's victory.
3. The time has come with reason for rejoicing:
 Jehovah rules by his anointed King.
So now we preach the good news of the Kingdom
 And share the hope of blessings it will bring.
Within his book are found these cheerful tidings;
 A sacred banquet feast on which to feed.
It offers peace beyond all human thinking;
 This Living Treasure beckons all to read.

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

