

- Song 55 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 21:8-12—Fellow Christians begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem because of the danger that awaited him there (bt 177-178 ¶15-16)
 Ac 21:13—Paul remained determined to do Jehovah’s will (bt 178 ¶17)
 Ac 21:14—After seeing Paul’s resolve, the brothers stopped objecting (bt 178 ¶18)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 21:23, 24—Why did the elders in Jerusalem give Paul this direction if Christians were no longer under the Mosaic Law? (bt 184-185 ¶10-12)

Ac 22:16—How could Paul’s sins be washed away? (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 21:1-19 (5)*

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Effective Introduction*, and then discuss study 1 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w10 2/1 13 ¶2-14 ¶2—Theme: Are Christians Required to Keep the Weekly Sabbath? (1)*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 134
- **“Taught by Jehovah to Raise Our Family”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 49
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

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ACTS 21-22 | “Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”

21:8-14

Paul felt that holy spirit was leading him to Jerusalem, where trouble awaited him. (Ac 20:22, 23) Therefore, when well-meaning Christians begged him not to go, he replied: “What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve?” (Ac 21:13) We never want to dissuade others from pursuing a self-sacrificing course in their service to Jehovah.

 **How can we strengthen, not weaken, the resolve of a fellow Christian in the following circumstances?**

- He is willing to accept humble work in order to expand his ministry instead of pursuing a lucrative career
- He wishes to transfer to another congregation in order to serve where the need is greater
- He makes great effort to share in the ministry despite poor health



1. Ever onward, O my people,
Let the Kingdom tidings go.
Tremble not before our foe.
Let all lovers of truth know
That my reigning Son, Christ Jesus,
To the earth has cast the foe,
Soon to bind the Devil, Satan,
Letting all his victims go.

(CHORUS)

*Fear them not, O my beloved,
Though their boasting threats may fly.
I will keep my faithful servant
As the apple of my eye.*

2. Even though your foes are many,
Though they threaten and revile,
Though they flatter and they smile,
To mislead and to beguile.
Fear them not, my faithful people,
Nor their persecution's heat,
For I will preserve the faithful
Till the vict'ry is complete.

(Chorus)

3. Never fear you are forgotten;
I am still your strength and shield.
Though you die upon the field,
Even death to me will yield.
Fear them not who kill the body
But cannot destroy the soul.
To the end may you be faithful;
I will bring you to your goal!

(Chorus)

Acts 21-22

21 After tearing ourselves away from them and putting out to sea, we ran with a straight course and came to Cos, on the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Pat'a-ra. ² When we found a ship that was crossing to Phoe-ni'cia, we went aboard and sailed away. ³ After coming in sight of the island of Cy'prus, we left it behind on the left side and sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ We searched for and found the disciples and remained there for seven days. But through the spirit they repeatedly told Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ So when our time there was over, we left and started on our way, but they all, together with the women and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed ⁶ and said good-bye to one another. Then we went aboard the ship, and they returned to their homes.

⁷ We then completed the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptol-e-ma'is, and we greeted the brothers and stayed one day with them. ⁸ The next day we left and came to Caes-a-re'a, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelizer, who was one of the seven men, and we stayed with him. ⁹ This man had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. ¹⁰ But after we had stayed there for quite a number of days, a prophet named Ag'a-bus came down from Ju-de'a. ¹¹ And he came to us and took Paul's belt and tied his own feet and hands and said: "Thus says the holy spirit, 'The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will give him into the hands of people of the nations.'" ¹² Now when we heard this, both we and those who were there began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered: "What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve? Rest assured, I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." ¹⁴ When he would not be dissuaded, we stopped objecting and said: "Let the will of Jehovah take place."

¹⁵ Now after these days we prepared for the journey and started on our way to Jerusalem. ¹⁶ Some of the disciples from Caes-a-re'a also went with us, taking us to Mna'son of Cy'prus, an early disciple at whose home we were to be guests. ¹⁷ When we got to Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly. ¹⁸ But on the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. ¹⁹ And he greeted them and began giving a detailed account of the things God did among the nations through his ministry.

²⁰ After hearing this, they began to glorify God, but they said to him: "You see, brother, how many thousands of believers there are among the Jews, and they are all zealous for the Law. ²¹ But they have heard it rumored about you that you have been teaching all the Jews among the nations an apostasy from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or to follow the customary practices. ²² What, then, is to be done about it? They are certainly going to hear that you have arrived. ²³ So do what we tell you: We have four men who have put themselves under a vow. ²⁴ Take these men with you and cleanse yourself ceremonially together with them and take care of their expenses, so that they may have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that there is nothing to the rumors they were told about you, but that you are walking orderly and you are also keeping the Law. ²⁵ As for the believers from among the nations, we have sent them our decision in writing that they should keep away from what is sacrificed to idols as well as from blood, from what is strangled, and from sexual immorality."

²⁶ Then Paul took the men the next day and cleansed himself ceremonially along with them, and he went into the temple to give notice of when the days for the ceremonial cleansing would be completed and the offering should be presented for each one of them.

²⁷ Now when the seven days were about to end, the Jews from Asia, on seeing him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd, and they seized him, ²⁸ shouting: "Men of Israel, help! This is the man

who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our Law and this place. And what is more, he even brought Greeks into the temple and has defiled this holy place.”²⁹ For they had previously seen Troph'i-mus the E-phe'sian in the city with him, and they assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.³⁰ The whole city was in an uproar, and the people came running together and seized Paul and dragged him outside the temple, and immediately the doors were closed.³¹ While they were trying to kill him, word reached the commander of the army unit that all Jerusalem was in confusion;³² and he immediately took soldiers and army officers and ran down to them. When they caught sight of the military commander and the soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

³³ Then the military commander came near and took him into custody and ordered that he be bound with two chains; then he inquired who he was and what he had done.³⁴ But some in the crowd began shouting out one thing, and others something else. So being unable himself to learn anything for certain because of the disturbance, he commanded him to be brought to the soldiers' quarters.³⁵ But when he reached the stairs, he had to be carried by the soldiers because of the violence of the crowd,³⁶ for a crowd of the people kept following, crying out: “Do away with him!”

³⁷ As he was about to be led into the soldiers' quarters, Paul said to the military commander: “Am I allowed to say something to you?” He said: “Can you speak Greek?”³⁸ Are you not, then, the Egyptian who some time ago stirred up a sedition and led the 4,000 dagger men out into the wilderness?”³⁹ Then Paul said: “I am, in fact, a Jew, of Tarsus in Ci-li'cia, a citizen of no obscure city. So I beg you, permit me to speak to the people.”⁴⁰ After he gave permission, Paul, standing on the stairs, motioned with his hand to the people. When a great silence fell, he addressed them in the Hebrew language, saying:

22 “Men, brothers and fathers, hear my defense to you now.”

² Well, when they heard that he was addressing them in the

Hebrew language, they kept all the more silent, and he said: ³ “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Ci-li'cia, but educated in this city at the feet of Ga-ma'li-el, instructed according to the strictness of the ancestral Law, and zealous for God just as all of you are this day. ⁴ I persecuted this Way to the point of death, binding and handing over to prisons both men and women, ⁵ as the high priest and all the assembly of elders can bear witness. From them I also obtained letters to the brothers in Damascus, and I was on my way to bring those who were there in bonds to Jerusalem to be punished.

⁶ “But as I was traveling and getting near to Damascus, about midday, suddenly out of heaven a great light flashed all around me, ⁷ and I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ⁸ I answered: ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And he said to me: ‘I am Jesus the Naz-a-rene', whom you are persecuting.’ ⁹ Now the men who were with me did see the light, but they did not hear the voice of the one speaking to me. ¹⁰ At that I said: ‘What should I do, Lord?’ The Lord said to me: ‘Rise, go into Damascus, and there you will be told about everything it is appointed for you to do.’ ¹¹ But since I could not see anything because of the glory of that light, I arrived in Damascus led by the hand of those who were with me.

¹² “Then a man named An-a-ni'as, a devout man according to the Law, well-reported-on by all the Jews living there, ¹³ came to me. He stood by me and said to me: ‘Saul, brother, regain your sight!’ And that very moment I looked up and saw him. ¹⁴ He said: ‘The God of our forefathers has chosen you to come to know his will and to see the righteous one and to hear the voice of his mouth, ¹⁵ because you are to be a witness for him to all men of the things you have seen and heard. ¹⁶ And now why are you delaying? Rise, get baptized, and wash your sins away by your calling on his name.’

¹⁷ “But when I had returned to Jerusalem and was praying in the temple, I fell into a trance ¹⁸ and saw him saying to me: ‘Hurry up

and get out of Jerusalem quickly, because they will not accept your witness concerning me.’¹⁹ And I said: ‘Lord, they themselves well know that I used to imprison and flog in one synagogue after another those believing in you;²⁰ and when the blood of Stephen your witness was being spilled, I was standing by and approving and guarding the outer garments of those doing away with him.’²¹ And yet he said to me: ‘Go, because I will send you out to nations far away.’”

²² Now they kept listening to him down to this word. Then they raised their voices, saying: “Take such a man away from the earth, for he is not fit to live!”²³ Because they were crying out, throwing their outer garments about, and tossing dust into the air,²⁴ the military commander ordered Paul to be brought into the soldiers’ quarters and said that he should be interrogated under scourging, so that he could learn exactly why they were shouting against Paul this way.²⁵ But when they had stretched him out for the whipping, Paul said to the army officer standing there: “Is it lawful for you to scourge a Roman who has not been condemned?”²⁶ Well, when the army officer heard this, he went to the military commander and reported it, saying: “What are you intending to do? For this man is a Roman.”²⁷ So the military commander approached and said to him: “Tell me, are you a Roman?” He said: “Yes.”²⁸ The military commander responded: “I purchased these rights as a citizen for a large sum of money.” Paul said: “But I have them by birth.”

²⁹ Immediately, therefore, the men who were about to interrogate him under torture backed away from him; and the military commander became afraid when he realized that he was a Roman and that he had bound him in chains.

³⁰ So the next day, because he wanted to know for sure just why he was being accused by the Jews, he released him and commanded the chief priests and all the San'he-drin to assemble. He then brought Paul down and had him stand among them.

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ACTS 21-22 | “Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”

21:8-14

Paul felt that holy spirit was leading him to Jerusalem, where trouble awaited him. (Ac 20:22, 23) Therefore, when well-meaning Christians begged him not to go, he replied: “What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve?” (Ac 21:13) We never want to dissuade others from pursuing a self-sacrificing course in their service to Jehovah.

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January 7-13

Treasures From God's Word

Acts 21:8-12—Fellow Christians begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem because of the danger that awaited him there

Acts 21:8-12: The next day we left and came to Caesarea, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelizer, who was one of the seven men, and we stayed with him. This man had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. But after we had stayed there for quite a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. And he came to us and took Paul's belt and tied his own feet and hands and said: "Thus says the holy spirit, 'The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will give him into the hands of people of the nations.'" Now when we heard this, both we and those who were there began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

***bt* 177-178 paragraphs 15-16**

15 During Paul's stay with Philip, another respected visitor arrived—Agabus. Those gathered at Philip's home knew Agabus to be a prophet; he had foretold a great famine during the reign of Claudius. (Acts 11:27, 28) Perhaps they wondered: 'Why has Agabus come? What message does he bring?' As they watched intently, he took Paul's girdle—a long beltlike strip of cloth that could hold money and other items and was worn around the waist. With it, Agabus bound his own feet and hands. Then he spoke. The message was sobering: "Thus says the holy spirit, 'The man to whom this girdle belongs the Jews will bind in this manner in Jerusalem and deliver into the hands of people of the nations.'" — Acts 21:11.

16 The prophecy confirmed that Paul would go to Jerusalem. It also indicated that his dealings with the Jews there would result in his being delivered “into the hands of people of the nations.” The prophecy had a profound effect on those who were present. Luke writes: “Now when we heard this, both we and those of that place began entreating him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered: ‘What are you doing by weeping and making me weak at heart? Rest assured, I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.’”—Acts 21:12, 13.

Acts 21:13—Paul remained determined to do Jehovah’s will

Acts 21:13: Then Paul answered: “What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve? Rest assured, I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.”

***bt* 178 paragraph 17**

Imagine the scene. The brothers, including Luke, entreat Paul not to proceed. Some are weeping. Moved by the loving concern they show for him, Paul tenderly says that they are making him “weak at heart,” or as some translations render the Greek, they are “breaking [his] heart.” Still, his resolve is firm, and as was the case when he met with the brothers in Tyre, he will not allow entreaties or tears to cause him to waver. Instead, he explains to them why he must proceed. What courage and determination he showed! Like Jesus before him, Paul set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. (Hebrews 12:2) Paul was not seeking to be a martyr, but if that happened, he would consider it an honor to die as a follower of Christ Jesus.

Acts 21:14—After seeing Paul’s resolve, the brothers stopped objecting

Acts 21:14: When he would not be dissuaded, we stopped objecting and said: “Let the will of Jehovah take place.”

bt 178 paragraph 18

How did the brothers react? In a word, respectfully. We read: “When he would not be dissuaded, we acquiesced with the words: ‘Let the will of Jehovah take place.’” (Acts 21:14) Those who tried to convince Paul to avoid going to Jerusalem did not insist on having their way. They listened to Paul and yielded, recognizing and accepting the will of Jehovah, even though doing so was difficult for them. Paul had embarked on a course that would eventually lead to his death. It would be easier for Paul if those who loved him did not try to dissuade him.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 21:23, 24—Why did the elders in Jerusalem give Paul this direction if Christians were no longer under the Mosaic Law?

Acts 21:23, 24: So do what we tell you: We have four men who have put themselves under a vow. Take these men with you and cleanse yourself ceremonially together with them and take care of their expenses, so that they may have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know that there is nothing to the rumors they were told about you, but that you are walking orderly and you are also keeping the Law.

bt 184-185 paragraphs 10-12

10 Nevertheless, Paul showed understanding toward those who felt comfortable observing some Jewish customs, such as abstaining from work on the Sabbath or avoiding certain foods. (Romans 14:1-6) And he did not set down rules about circumcision. Indeed, Paul had Timothy circumcised so that the Jews would not be suspicious of Timothy, whose father was a Greek. (Acts 16:3) Circumcision was a matter for personal decision. Paul told the Galatians: “Neither circumcision is of any value nor is uncircumcision, but faith operating through love is.” (Galatians 5:6) However, to get circumcised so as to come under the Law or to present the practice as being necessary in order to obtain Jehovah’s approval would betray a lack of faith.

11 Hence, although the rumors were gross distortions, Jewish believers were still disturbed by them. For that reason, the older men offered Paul this direction: “We have four men with a vow upon themselves. Take these men along and cleanse yourself ceremonially with them and take care of their expenses, that they may have their heads shaved. And so everybody will know that there is nothing to the rumors they were told about you, but that you are walking orderly, you yourself also keeping the Law.”—Acts 21:23, 24.

12 Paul could have objected that the real problem was, not the rumors about him, but the zeal of those Jewish believers for the Mosaic Law. But he was willing to be flexible, as long as he did not have to compromise godly principles. Earlier he had written: “To those under law I became as under law, though I myself am not under law, that I might gain those under law.” (1 Corinthians 9:20) On this occasion, Paul cooperated with the Jerusalem elders and

became “as under law.” In so doing, he set a fine example for us today to cooperate with the elders and not insist on doing things our own way.—Hebrews 13:17.

Acts 22:16—How could Paul’s sins be washed away?

Acts 22:16: And now why are you delaying? Rise, get baptized, and wash your sins away by your calling on his name.’

Study note

wash your sins away by your calling on his name: Or “wash your sins away and call on his name.” A person will have his sins washed away, not by the baptismal water itself, but by calling on the name of Jesus. Doing this involves putting faith in Jesus and demonstrating that faith by Christian works.—Acts 10:43; James 2:14, 18.

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 21:1-19 (*th* study 5) *

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Acts Study Notes—Chapter 21

21:3

left side: Or “port side.” Apparently, the ship was passing the SW end of **the island of Cyprus** as it sailed eastward toward Tyre. On his first missionary journey about nine years earlier, Paul, along with Barnabas and John Mark, had encountered on Cyprus the sorcerer Elymas, who opposed their preaching. (Ac 13:4-12) Seeing Cyprus again and reflecting on what had occurred there may have encouraged Paul and strengthened him for what lay ahead.

21:8

evangelizer: The basic meaning of the Greek term *eu·ag·ge·li·stes'*, rendered “evangelizer,” is “a proclaimer of good news.” (See study note on Mt 4:23.) While all Christians are commissioned to proclaim the good news (Mt 24:14; 28:19, 20; Ac 5:42; 8:4; Ro 10:9, 10), the context of the three scriptures where this Greek term occurs shows that “evangelizer” can be used in a special sense (Ac 21:8; Eph 4:11; ftn.; 2Ti 4:5; ftn.). For example, when it is used of a person opening up new fields where the good news had never been preached, the Greek term could also be rendered “missionary.” After Pentecost, **Philip** pioneered the work in the city of Samaria with great success. He was also directed by an angel to preach the good news about Christ to the Ethiopian eunuch, whom he baptized. Then Philip was led away by the spirit to preach in Ashdod and all the cities on the way to Caesarea. (Ac 8:5, 12, 14, 26-40) Some 20 years later, when the events recorded at Ac 21:8 occurred, Philip is still referred to as “the evangelizer.”

21:9

unmarried daughters: Lit., “daughters; virgins.” In the Bible, the Greek term *par·the'nos*, often rendered “virgin,” refers to “one who has never engaged in sexual intercourse” and can apply both to single men and to single women. (Mt 25:1-12; Lu 1:27; 1Co 7:25, 36-38) In this context, the Greek term emphasizes the idea that Philip’s four daughters had never been married.

prophesied: The prophet Joel foretold that both men and women would prophesy. (Joe 2:28, 29) The original-language words rendered “to prophesy” have the basic meaning of making known messages from a divine source; they do not necessarily include the thought of foretelling the future. (See study note on Ac 2:17.) While all in the Christian congregation may speak about the fulfillment of the prophecies recorded in God’s Word, the “prophesying” mentioned at 1Co 12:4, 10 was among the miraculous gifts of the spirit granted to some of those in the newly formed Christian congregation. Some who had the miraculous gift of prophesying were able to foretell future events, as did Agabus. (Ac 11:27, 28) The women who were chosen by Jehovah to receive this gift no doubt demonstrated their deep respect for him by remaining subject to the headship of the male members of the congregation.—1Co 11:3-5.

21:13

trying to weaken my resolve: Or “making me weak at heart.” The Greek verb used here literally means “to crush together; to break to pieces.” It is here used figuratively with the Greek word for “heart.”

21:14

the will of Jehovah: The Greek term for “will” (*the'le·ma*), as used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, is most often connected with God’s will. (Mt 7:21; 12:50; Mr 3:35; Ro 12:2; 1Co 1:1; Heb 10:36; 1Pe 2:15; 4:2; 1Jo 2:17) In the *Septuagint*, the Greek term

the'le·ma is often used to translate Hebrew expressions for God's will, or delight, and can be found in passages where the divine name occurs. (Ps 40:8, 9 [39:9, 10, *LXX*]; 103:21 [102:21, *LXX*]; 143:9-11 [142:9-11, *LXX*]; Isa 44:24, 28; Jer 9:24 [9:23, *LXX*]; Mal 1:10) Jesus expressed a similar thought when he, according to Mt 26:42, prayed to his Father: "Let your will take place."—See App. C.

21:18

James: Likely referring to Jesus' half brother and the James mentioned at Ac 12:17; 15:13.—See study notes on Mt 13:55; Ac 12:17; 15:13.

and all the elders: See study notes on Ac 15:2; 16:4. None of the apostles are mentioned in connection with this meeting that took place in 56 C.E. The Bible does not explain why. However, regarding that time leading up to Jerusalem's destruction, the historian Eusebius (born about 260 C.E.) said: "The remaining apostles, in constant danger from murderous plots, were driven out of Judea. But to teach their message they travelled into every land in the power of Christ." (*Eusebius*, Book III, V, v. 2) Although Eusebius' words are not part of the inspired record, they do harmonize with what the Bible says. For example, by 62 C.E., Peter was in Babylon—far from Jerusalem. (1Pe 5:13) However, **James** the brother of Jesus was still in Jerusalem, likely presiding at this meeting when "all the elders were present" with Paul.

21:20

thousands: Lit., "myriads; tens of thousands." The Greek word literally refers to a group of 10,000, a myriad, but it can also be used of a very large, unspecified number.

21:21

an apostasy: The Greek noun *a·po·sta·si'a*, used here, comes from the verb *a·phi'ste·mi*, which literally means “to stand away from” and can be rendered, depending on the context, “to withdraw; to renounce.” (Ac 19:9; 2Ti 2:19) The noun has the sense of “desertion; abandonment; rebellion.” It appears twice in the Christian Greek Scriptures, here and at 2Th 2:3. In classical Greek, the noun was used to refer to political defection, and the verb is apparently employed in this sense at Ac 5:37 concerning Judas the Galilean, who “drew [a form of *a·phi'ste·mi*] followers after himself.” The *Septuagint* uses the verb at Ge 14:4 with reference to such a political rebellion, and the noun *a·po·sta·si'a* is used at Jos 22:22; 2Ch 29:19; and Jer 2:19 to translate Hebrew expressions for “rebellion” and “unfaithfulness.” In the Christian Greek Scriptures, the noun *a·po·sta·si'a* is used primarily with regard to religious defection, a withdrawal from or abandonment of the true worship and service of God, an abandonment of what one has previously professed, a total desertion of principles or faith.

21:25

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.

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.

21:31

the commander: The Greek term *khi-li'ar-khos* (chiliarch) literally means “ruler of a thousand,” that is, soldiers. It refers to a Roman military commander called a tribune. (See study note on Joh 18:12.) In about 56 C.E., Claudius Lysias was the military commander of the Jerusalem garrison. (Ac 23:22, 26) As recounted in Acts chapters 21 through 24, he was the one who rescued Paul both from the street mob and from the rioting Sanhedrin and who wrote a letter of explanation to Governor Felix when Paul was secretly taken to Caesarea.

21:32

army officers: Or “centurions.” A centurion was in command of about 100 soldiers in the Roman army.

21:34

the soldiers' quarters: That is, a barracks for Roman troops, located in the Tower, or Fortress, of Antonia in Jerusalem. This fortress was situated at the NW corner of the temple court, overlooking the whole temple area. It apparently occupied the site where Nehemiah earlier had constructed “the Fortress of the House,” mentioned at Ne 2:8. Herod the Great did extensive and costly repair work on it and increased its fortifications. Herod named it Antonia in honor of the Roman military commander Mark Antony. Prior to Herod's time, the fortress primarily served to guard against incursions from the N. Later, it mainly served as a point of control over the Jews and as a means of policing activities in the temple area. It was connected with that location by means of a passageway. (Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, XV, 424 [xi, 7]) The Roman garrison could thus gain quick access to the area around the temple, which is likely what happened when soldiers rescued Paul from a mob.—Ac 21:31, 32; see App. B11 for the location of the Fortress of Antonia.

21:40

in the Hebrew language: In the Christian Greek Scriptures, inspired Bible writers used the term “Hebrew” in designating the language spoken by the Jews (Joh 19:13, 17, 20; Ac 21:40; 22:2; Re 9:11; 16:16), as well as the language in which the resurrected and glorified Jesus addressed Saul of Tarsus (Ac 26:14, 15). At Ac 6:1, “Hebrew-speaking Jews” are distinguished from “Greek-speaking Jews.” While some scholars hold that the term “Hebrew” in these references should instead be rendered “Aramaic,” there is good reason to believe that the term actually applies to the Hebrew language. When the physician Luke says that Paul spoke to the people of Jerusalem “in the Hebrew language,” Paul was addressing those whose life revolved around studying the Law of Moses in Hebrew. Also, of the great number of fragments and manuscripts comprising the Dead Sea Scrolls, the majority of Biblical and non-Biblical texts are written in Hebrew, showing that the language was in daily use. The smaller number of Aramaic fragments found shows that both languages were used. So it seems highly unlikely that when Bible writers used the word “Hebrew,” they actually meant the Aramaic or Syrian language. (Ac 21:40; 22:2; compare Ac 26:14.) The Hebrew Scriptures earlier distinguished between “Aramaic” and “the language of the Jews” (2Ki 18:26), and first-century Jewish historian Josephus, considering this passage of the Bible, speaks of “Aramaic” and “Hebrew” as distinct tongues. (*Jewish Antiquities*, X, 8 [i, 2]) It is true that there are some terms that are quite similar in both Aramaic and Hebrew and possibly other terms that were adopted into Hebrew from Aramaic. However, there seems to be no reason for the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures to have said Hebrew if they meant Aramaic.

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 22

22:2

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22:3

Gamaliel: A Law teacher mentioned twice in Acts, here and at Ac 5:34. He is thought to be Gamaliel the Elder, as he is known in non-Biblical sources. Gamaliel was the grandson, or possibly the son, of Hillel the Elder, who is credited with developing a more liberal school of thought among the Pharisees. Gamaliel was so highly **esteemed** among the people that he is said to be the first to be called by the honorific title “Rabban.” Therefore, he greatly influenced the Jewish society of his time by training many sons of Pharisees, such as Saul of Tarsus. (Ac 22:3; 23:6; 26:4, 5; Ga 1:13, 14) He often interpreted the Law and traditions in a way that appears to have been comparatively broad-minded. For example, he is said to have enacted laws protecting wives against unprincipled husbands and defending widows against unprincipled children. He is also said to have argued that poor non-Jews should have the same gleaning rights as poor Jews. This tolerant attitude is evident in the way Gamaliel treated Peter and the other apostles. (Ac 5:35-39) Rabbinic records show, however, that Gamaliel placed greater emphasis on rabbinic tradition than on the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, on the whole, his teachings were similar to those of most of his rabbinic forefathers and the religious leaders of his day.—Mt 15:3-9; 2Ti 3:16, 17; see Glossary, “Pharisees”; “Sanhedrin.”

22:5

assembly of elders: Or “council (body) of elders.” The Greek word *pre-sby-te'ri-on* used here is related to the term *pre-sby'te-ros* (lit., “older man”), which in the Bible refers primarily to those who hold a position of authority and responsibility in a community or a nation. Although the term sometimes refers to physical age (as at Lu 15:25 and Ac 2:17), it is not limited to those who are elderly. The expression “assembly of elders” here apparently refers to the Sanhedrin, the Jewish high court in Jerusalem, which was made up of the chief priests, the scribes,

and the elders. These three groups are often mentioned together.—Mt 16:21; 27:41; Mr 8:31; 11:27; 14:43, 53; 15:1; Lu 9:22; 20:1; see study note on Lu 22:66.

22:8

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

22:9

they did not hear the voice: Or “they did not understand the voice.” At Ac 9:3-9, Luke describes Paul’s experience on the road to Damascus. These two accounts taken together give the full picture of what happened. As explained in the study note on Ac 9:7, the men accompanying Paul heard “the sound of a voice” but apparently did not understand the words spoken. Thus, they did not hear the voice the way Paul did. This is in agreement with how the Greek word for “hear” is used at Ac 22:7, where Paul explains that he “heard a voice,” that is, he heard *and* understood the words. By contrast, those traveling with Paul did not

understand the *message* being conveyed to Paul, perhaps because the voice was muffled or distorted in some way. It is apparently in this sense that “they did not hear the voice.”— Compare Mr 4:33; 1Co 14:2, where the same Greek word for “hear” could be rendered “to listen” or “to understand.”

22:13

regain your sight!: Lit., “look up!” The Greek word basically means “to direct one’s vision upward” (Mt 14:19; Lu 19:5), but it can also refer to gaining sight for the first time (Joh 9:11, 15, 18) or to having one’s sight restored (Mr 10:52; Lu 18:42; Ac 9:12).

22:16

wash your sins away by your calling on his name: Or “wash your sins away and call on his name.” A person will have his sins washed away, not by the baptismal water itself, but by calling on the name of Jesus. Doing this involves putting faith in Jesus and demonstrating that faith by Christian works.—Ac 10:43; Jas 2:14, 18; see study note on Ro 10:13.

22:17

I fell into a trance: For a discussion of the Greek term *ek'sta·sis*, here rendered “a trance,” see study note Ac 10:10. Some translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures into Hebrew (referred to as J^{13, 14, 17, 22} in App. C4) read: “Jehovah’s hand was upon me.” Another translation (referred to as J¹⁸) reads: “Jehovah’s spirit clothed me.”

22:20

your witness: The Greek term for “witness,” *mar'tys*, refers to one who observes a deed or an event. From firsthand knowledge, some first-century Christians could bear witness to, or confirm, historical facts about Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection. (Ac 1:21, 22; 10:40, 41) Those who later put faith in Jesus could bear witness by proclaiming the significance of his

life, death, and resurrection. (Ac 22:15) Speaking to Jesus, Paul used the word in this sense when he called **Stephen** “your witness.” Before the Sanhedrin, Stephen had given a powerful testimony about Jesus. Stephen was also the first to bear witness that he had seen, in a special vision, Jesus returned to heaven and standing at the right hand of God, as prophesied at Ps 110:1. (Ac 7:55, 56) Christian witnessing often meant facing opposition, arrest, beatings, and even death, as in the case of Stephen, James, and others. Accordingly, the Greek term *mar'tys* later came to signify “one who witnesses at the cost of his life, martyr,” that is, one who suffers death rather than renounce his faith. In this sense, Stephen became the first Christian martyr, whose **blood . . . was being spilled** because of the testimony he gave about Christ.—See study note on Ac 1:8.

22:24

military commander: The Greek term *khi-li'ar-khos* (chiliarch) literally means “ruler of a thousand,” that is, soldiers. It refers to a Roman military commander called a tribune. (See study note on Joh 18:12.) In about 56 C.E., Claudius Lysias was the military commander of the Jerusalem garrison. (Ac 23:22, 26) As recounted in Acts chapters 21-24, he was the one who rescued Paul both from the street mob and from the rioting Sanhedrin and who wrote a letter of explanation to Governor Felix when Paul was secretly taken to Caesarea.

22:25

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

a Roman: That is, a Roman citizen. This is the second of three recorded instances in which Paul made use of his rights as a Roman citizen. Roman authorities usually interfered little in Jewish affairs. However, the Romans got involved in Paul’s case not only because a riot erupted when he visited the temple but

also because he was a Roman citizen. Citizenship afforded a person certain privileges that were recognized and honored throughout the empire. It was illegal, for example, to bind or beat an uncondemned Roman, since such treatment was considered fit for slaves only.—For the other two occasions, see study notes on Ac 16:37; 25:11.

22:28

purchased these rights as a citizen: Or “purchased this citizenship.” As this account shows, under certain circumstances, it was possible to obtain Roman citizenship for a sum of money. Paul told Claudius Lysias that he (Paul) had the rights as a citizen **by birth**, which indicates that one of Paul’s male ancestors must have acquired citizenship. There were other ways to acquire Roman citizenship. An individual or even the entire free population of a city or district could receive a form of it as an award from the emperor. A slave could gain it after he bought his freedom from or was set free by a Roman citizen. A veteran of the auxiliary forces who was discharged from the Roman army would be granted it. And a person could also inherit citizenship. It is unlikely that there were many Roman citizens who lived in Judea in the first century C.E. Only in the third century C.E. were all provincial subjects given Roman citizenship.

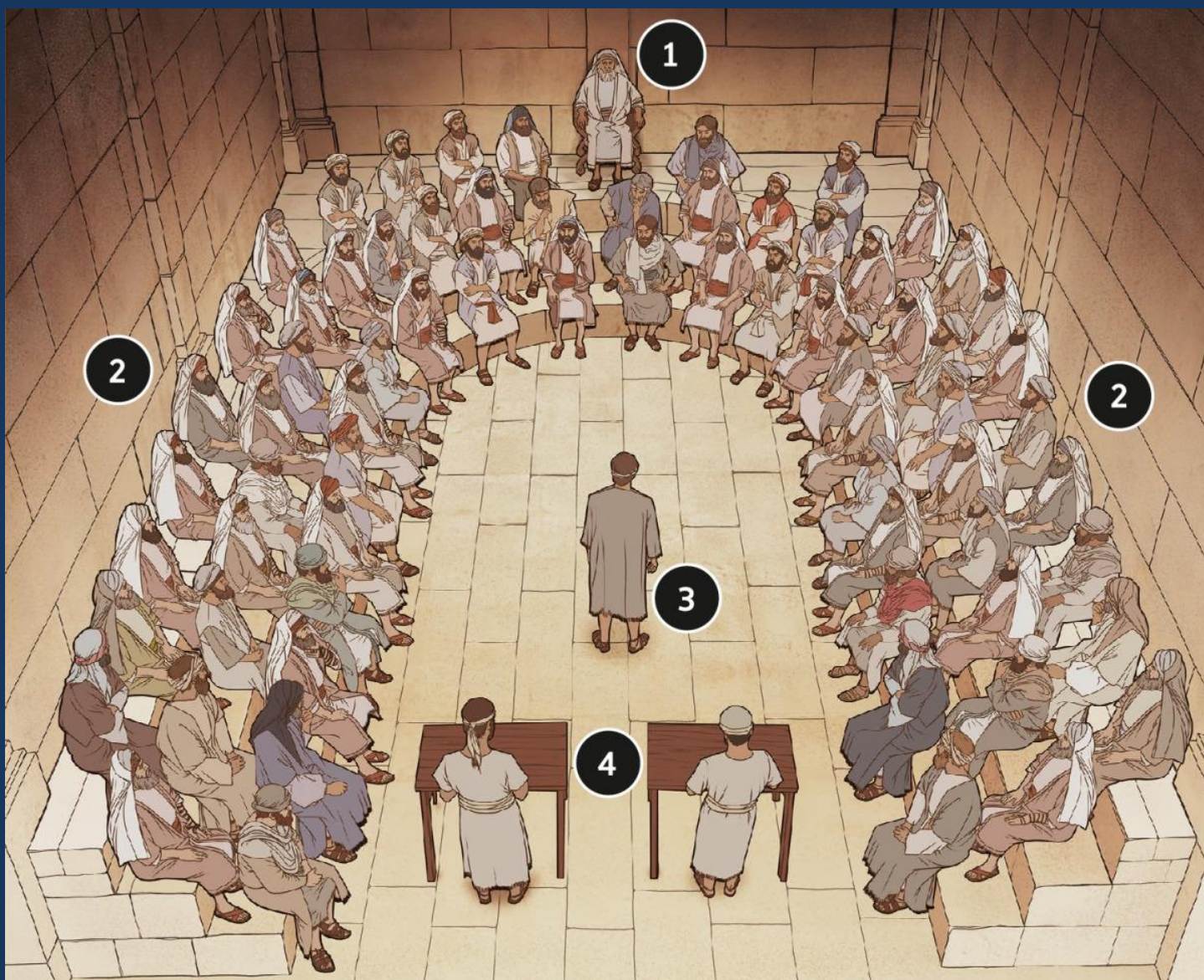


Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com

Roman Road in Tarsus

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

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

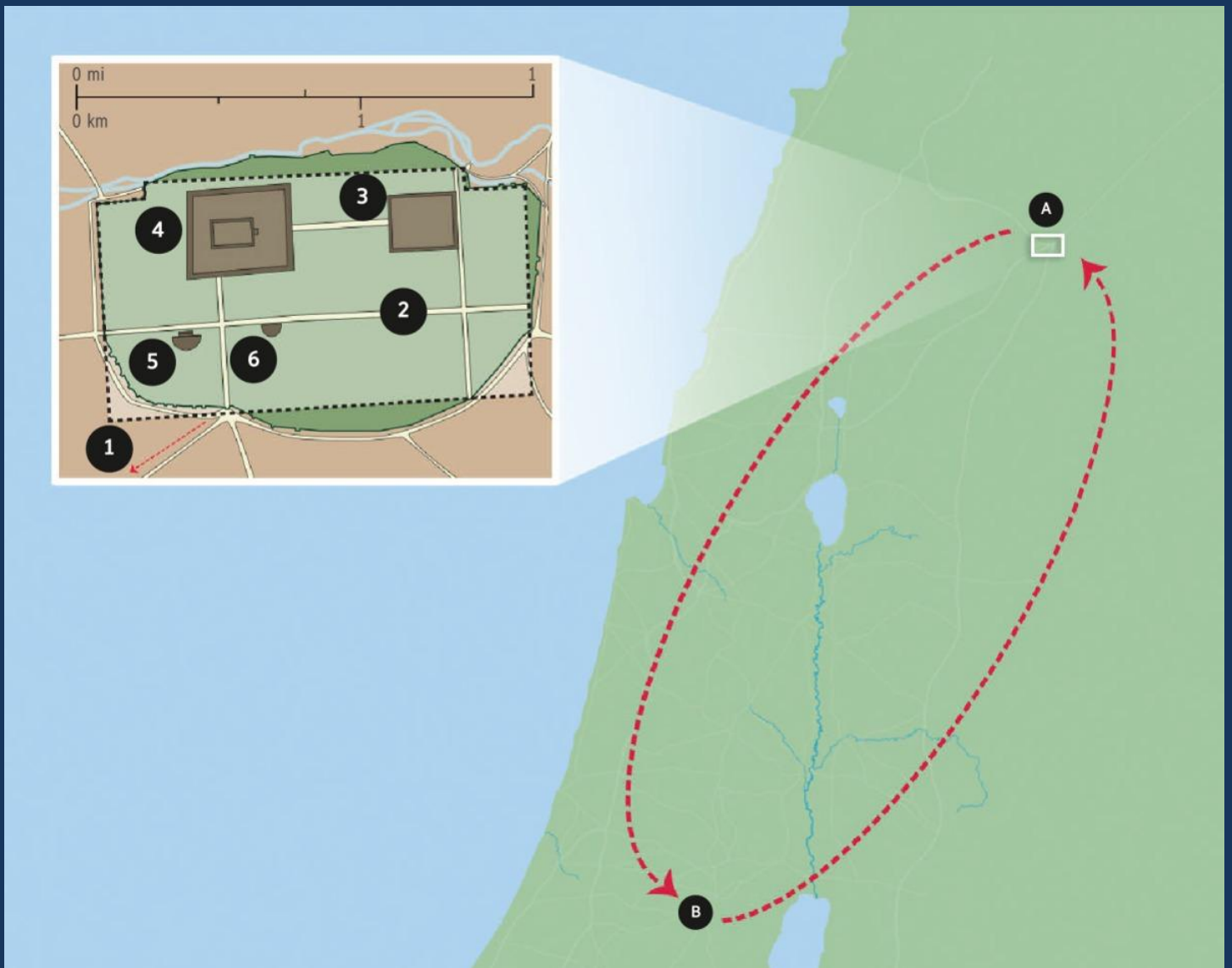


The Sanhedrin

Seventy-one members constituted the Jewish high court called the Great Sanhedrin. It was located in Jerusalem. (See Glossary, “Sanhedrin.”) According to the Mishnah, the seating was arranged in a semicircle three rows deep, and two scribes were present to record the court’s rulings. Some of the architectural features shown here are based on a structure discovered in Jerusalem that is considered by some to be the Council Chamber from the first century.—See Appendix B12, map “Jerusalem and Surrounding Area.”

1. High priest
2. Members of the Sanhedrin
3. A defendant
4. Clerks

Related Scripture(s) Mr 15:1; Lu 22:66; Joh 11:47; Ac 4:15; Ac 22:30; Ac 24:20



Saul and Damascus

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

A. Damascus

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

B. Jerusalem

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

- Song 55 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 21:8-12—Fellow Christians begged Paul not to go up to Jerusalem because of the danger that awaited him there (bt 177-178 ¶15-16)
 Ac 21:13—Paul remained determined to do Jehovah’s will (bt 178 ¶17)
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- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 21:23, 24—Why did the elders in Jerusalem give Paul this direction if Christians were no longer under the Mosaic Law? (bt 184-185 ¶10-12)

Ac 22:16—How could Paul’s sins be washed away? (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 21:1-19 (5)*

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Effective Introduction*, and then discuss study 1 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) w10 2/1 13 ¶2-14 ¶2—Theme: Are Christians Required to Keep the Weekly Sabbath? (1)*

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS


- Song 134
- **“Taught by Jehovah to Raise Our Family”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video (video category FAMILY).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 49
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 70 and Prayer

* **Note:** Beginning with this issue, the instructions for each student assignment will include in parentheses the specific study point from the brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching (th)* that the student should work on.

ACTS 21-22 | “Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”

21:8-14

Paul felt that holy spirit was leading him to Jerusalem, where trouble awaited him. (Ac 20:22, 23) Therefore, when well-meaning Christians begged him not to go, he replied: “What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve?” (Ac 21:13) We never want to dissuade others from pursuing a self-sacrificing course in their service to Jehovah.

 **How can we strengthen, not weaken, the resolve of a fellow Christian in the following circumstances?**

- He is willing to accept humble work in order to expand his ministry instead of pursuing a lucrative career
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- He makes great effort to share in the ministry despite poor health



1

Effective Introduction



Acts 17:22

SUMMARY: Your introduction should arouse interest, identify your subject, and show why your listeners should be interested in it.

HOW TO DO IT:

- **Arouse interest.** Select a question, statement, real-life experience, or news item that will be of interest to your listeners.



In advance, give careful thought to the interests and concerns of your listeners and adapt your introduction accordingly.

- **Identify your subject.** Make sure that your introduction makes the subject and purpose of your presentation clear to your listeners.

- **Show why the subject is important.** Adapt what you say to the practical needs of your listeners. They should clearly understand how the subject can help them personally.



While preparing a discourse, ask yourself, 'What situations are brothers and sisters in my congregation facing?' Then tailor your introduction to their needs.

IN THE MINISTRY: To determine what a person might be interested in, observe his or her activities or surroundings. Begin a conversation by asking a question or making a brief comment about those things.

Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Talk: (5 minutes or less) *w10 2/1 13 paragraphs 2–14 paragraph 2*—Theme: Are Christians Required to Keep the Weekly Sabbath? (*th study 1*) *

[Footnote.] * Note: Beginning with this issue, the instructions for each student assignment will include in parentheses the specific study point from the brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching (th)* that the student should work on. [End of Footnote.]

w10 2/1 13 paragraphs 2–14 paragraph 2

Since Christ fulfilled the Law, are Christians obligated to keep the weekly Sabbath? Under inspiration, the apostle Paul answers: “Therefore let no man judge you in eating and drinking or in respect of a festival or of an observance of the new moon or of a sabbath; for those things are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality belongs to the Christ.”—Colossians 2:16, 17.

Those inspired words suggest quite a change in God’s requirements for his servants. Why the change? Because Christians are under a new law, “the law of the Christ.” (Galatians 6:2) The former Law covenant given through Moses to Israel came to an end when Jesus’ death fulfilled it. (Romans 10:4; Ephesians 2:15) Did the commandment about keeping the Sabbath also come to an end? Yes. After saying that “we have been discharged from the Law,” Paul went on to refer to one of the Ten Commandments. (Romans 7:6, 7) So the Ten Commandments—including the Sabbath law—are part of the Law that came to an end. God’s worshippers, therefore, are no longer required to observe a weekly Sabbath.

The change from the Israelite to the Christian system of worship could be illustrated this way: A nation may change its constitution. Once the new constitution is legally in place, people are no longer required to obey the former one. Even though some of the laws in the new constitution may be the same as those in the former constitution, others may be different. So a person would need to study the new constitution carefully to see what laws now apply. Additionally, a loyal citizen would want to know when the new constitution went into effect.

In like manner, Jehovah God provided over 600 laws, including 10 main ones, for the nation of Israel. These included laws about morals, sacrifices, health matters, and Sabbath-keeping. However, Jesus said that his anointed followers would constitute a new “nation.” (Matthew 21:43) From 33 C.E. onward, this nation has had a new “constitution,” founded on two basic laws—love of God and love of neighbor. (Matthew 22:36-40) Although “the law of the Christ” includes instructions that are similar to those in the Law given to Israel, we should not be surprised that some laws are very different and that others are no longer required. The law requiring the observance of a weekly Sabbath is one of those that are no longer binding.

134 *Children Are a Trust From God*

(Psalm 127:3-5)

1. When a man becomes a father

And a woman has a child of her own,
They share a trust, they must remember,
That is not theirs, not theirs alone.
The gift they share is from Jehovah;
Of life and love he is the one true Source.
To parents he gives sure direction
That they may follow the wisest course.

(CHORUS)

*A sacred trust you have been given;
A precious life is in your hands.
You can bestow the greatest favor;
Instruct your child in God's commands.*

2. All the words God has commanded—

They must always prove to be on your heart.
These words you'll speak to sons and daughters;
This is your trust, this is your part.
To them you'll speak along your roadway,
When you rise up and when you are at rest.
In years to come, may they remember,
May they be faithful, may they be blessed.

(Chorus)

- Song 55 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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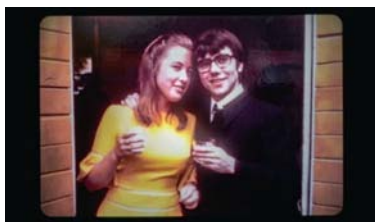
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Taught by Jehovah to Raise Our Family

What can couples learn from their heavenly Father, Jehovah, that will help them to raise their children successfully? Watch the video *Taught by Jehovah to Raise Our Family*, and then answer the following questions about Abilio and Ulla Amorim:



- To what extent did their childhood prepare them for raising their own children?

- What pleasant childhood memories did their children have?



- How did Abilio and Ulla try to apply Deuteronomy 6:6, 7?

- Why did they not just dictate laws to their children?



- How did they help their children to build their own future?



- They always encouraged their children to pursue full-time service despite what possible sacrifice? (*bt* 178 ¶19)



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PREACHING IN GALILEE AND TRAINING THE APOSTLES

MATTHEW 9:35–10:15 MARK 6:6-11 LUKE 9:1-5

- JESUS AGAIN TOURS GALILEE
 - HE SENDS THE APOSTLES OUT TO PREACH
-

Jesus has been preaching intensively for some two years. Is it now time to let up and take it easy? On the contrary, Jesus expands his preaching activity by setting out “on a tour of all the cities and villages [of Galilee], teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the Kingdom and curing every sort of disease and every sort of infirmity.” (Matthew 9:35) What he sees convinces him of the need to expand the preaching work. But how will he accomplish this?

As he travels, Jesus sees people in need of spiritual healing and comfort. They are like sheep without a shepherd, skinned and thrown about. He feels pity for them and tells his disciples: “Yes, the har-



vest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.”—Matthew 9:37, 38.

Jesus knows what will help. He summons the 12 apostles and divides them into pairs, making six teams of preachers. He then gives them clear instructions: “Do not go off into the road of the nations, and do not enter any Samaritan city; but instead, go continually to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. As you go, preach, saying: ‘The Kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.’”—Matthew 10:5-7.

The Kingdom they are to preach about is the one Jesus spoke of in the model prayer. ‘The Kingdom has drawn near’ in the sense that God’s designated King, Jesus Christ, is present. What, though, will prove that his disciples truly represent this Kingdom government? Jesus empowers them to cure the sick and even raise the dead, all of this at no charge. How, then, will the apostles care for their own needs, such as their daily food?

Jesus tells his disciples not to make their own material preparations for this preaching tour. They are

not to get gold, silver, or copper for their purses. They do not even need a food pouch for the trip nor extra undergarments or sandals. Why not? Jesus assures them: “The worker deserves his food.” (Matthew 10:10) The people they find who appreciate their message will help care for the disciples’ basic needs. Jesus says: “Wherever you enter into a home, stay there until you leave that place.”—Mark 6:10.

Jesus also gives instructions on how to approach householders with the Kingdom message, saying: “When you enter the house, greet the household. If the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it; but if it is not deserving, let the peace from you return upon you. Wherever anyone does not receive you or listen to your words, on going out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet.”—Matthew 10:12-14.

It could even be that an entire city or village rejects their message. What does that mean for such a place? Jesus reveals that severe adverse judgment will result. He explains: “Truly I say to you, it will

be more endurable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on Judgment Day than for that city.”—Matthew 10:15.



- ◇ When does Jesus begin another preaching tour of Galilee, and what does he note about the people?
- ◇ How does Jesus send out the 12 apostles, and with what instructions?
- ◇ In what sense has ‘the Kingdom drawn near’?

Search Out Deserving Ones

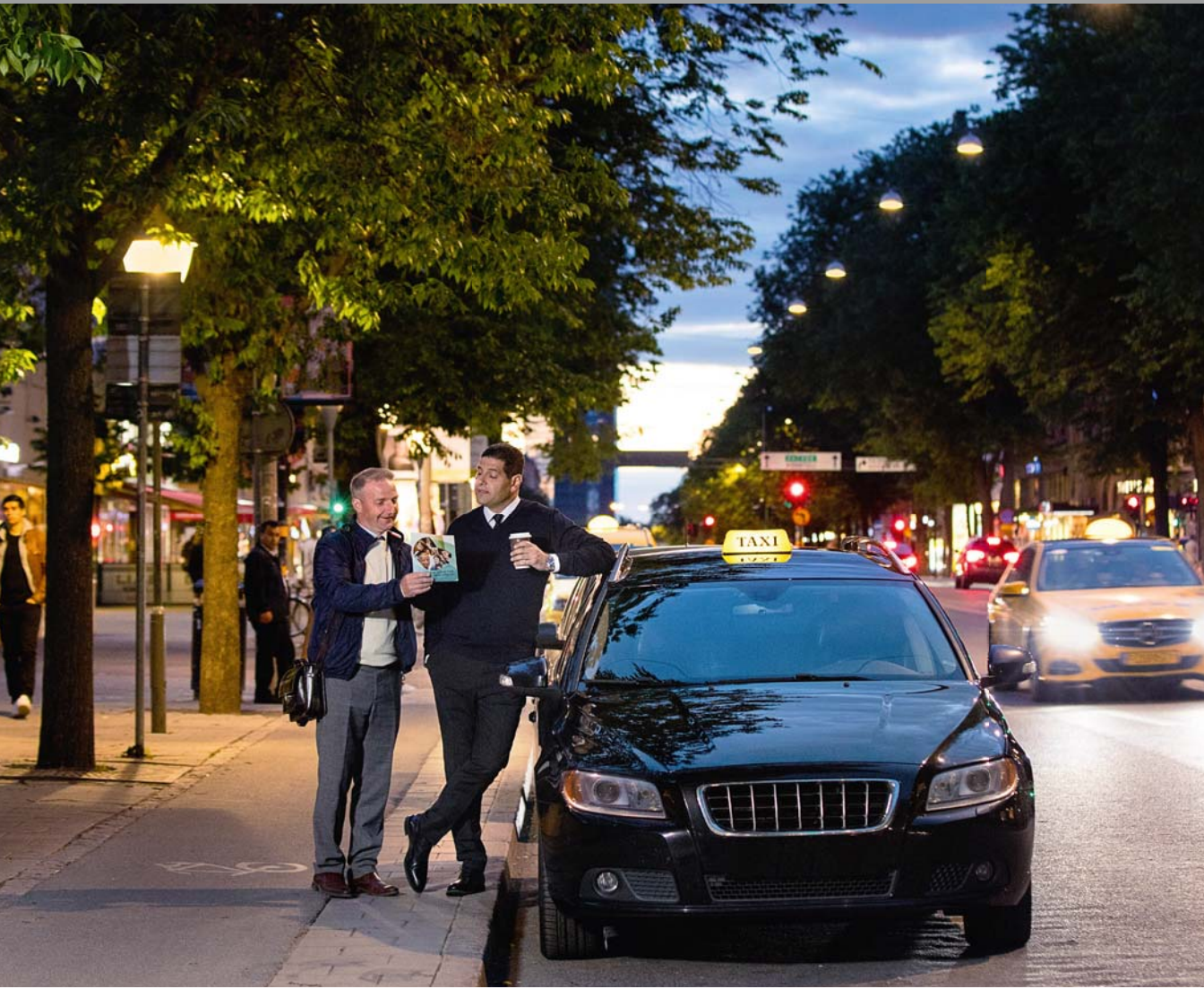
(Matthew 10:11-15)

1. In preaching the Kingdom and teaching the truth,
Our Lord showed us how to proceed:
'Search out those deserving and ready to hear,
Those aware of their spiritual need.
By greeting the household and wishing it peace,
Then it may be that peace you'll impart.
But when they refuse you or turn you away,
Shake the dust from your feet and depart.'
2. All those who receive you receive him as well,
Respond when their heart opens wide.
Their right disposition for unending life
Will impel them to serve at your side.
And never be anxious about what to say,
For Jehovah will help you to speak.
Your answer when gracious and seasoned with salt
Will appeal to the humble and meek.

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

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“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.

1. Oh, walk with God in modesty;
 Show loyal love, and be true.
 Stay close to Jehovah, leaning on him,
 And let his strength sustain you.
 Keep holding tight to his faithful Word;
 You'll never drift away.
 So let God lead you by the hand
 As you listen and obey.
2. Oh, walk with God in holiness;
 Consider things that are pure.
 No matter how great temptations may be,
 He'll help you to endure them.
 Whatever praiseworthy things there are,
 Whatever things are true,
 Continue to consider them,
 And our God will be with you.
3. Oh, walk with God in happiness;
 Rejoice that he is your Friend.
 Be thankful for all the gifts that he gives
 And blessings that are endless.
 Oh, walk with God, let your heart be glad;
 Express your joy in song.
 Your joy will show, and all will know,
 To Jehovah you belong.



SONGS:

31, 72

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What could cause a Christian to “sell” the truth?

How can we avoid either drawing away from or drifting away from the truth?

What are three ways that we can strengthen our resolve to walk in the truth?

“I Will Walk in Your Truth”

“Instruct me, O Jehovah, about your way. I will walk in your truth.”

—PS. 86:11.

RETURNING an item that was purchased is a common practice. Estimates reveal that in some countries, buyers return nearly 9 percent of items purchased in stores. The return rate for items

1-3. (a) How should we feel about Bible truth? Illustrate. (See opening pictures.) (b) What questions will we consider in this article?

ordered online can be more than 30 percent. Perhaps the buyers found that the item did not meet their expectations, was defective, or was just not to their liking. So they decided to exchange the item or to ask for a refund.

² Although we might request a refund for material goods that we bought, we would never want to return, or “sell,” the “accurate knowledge” of Bible truth that we “buy.” (Read Proverbs 23:23; 1 Tim. 2:4) As we considered in the preceding article, we acquired the truth by spending much time to learn it. In addition, to buy the truth, we may have forgone a lucrative career, dealt with changes in our personal relationships and in our thinking and conduct, or given up unscriptural customs and practices. However, the price we paid is small in comparison to the blessings that we have received.

³ When it comes to Bible truth, our feelings are similar to those of a man whom Jesus described in a brief illustration. To show how precious the truth of God’s Kingdom is to those who find it, Jesus told about a traveling merchant who searched for fine pearls and found one. In fact, that pearl was of such high value that he “promptly sold” everything he had to buy it. (Matt. 13:45, 46) Similarly, the truth we found—the truth of God’s Kingdom and all

the other precious truths we learned from God’s Word—is of such high value to us that we willingly and promptly made the sacrifices needed to obtain it. As long as we value the truth, we will “never sell it.” Sadly, though, some of God’s people have lost sight of the value of the truth they obtained—and have even sold it. May that never happen to us! To show that we deeply treasure the truth and that we would never sell it, we must heed the Bible’s admonition to “go on walking in the truth.” (Read **3 John 2-4**.) To walk in the truth involves living it—giving it priority in our lives and conducting ourselves in harmony with it. Let us consider these questions: Why and how might some “sell” the truth? How can we avoid making that sad mistake? How can we strengthen our determination to “go on walking in the truth”?

WHY AND HOW SOME “SELL” THE TRUTH

⁴ In the first century, some who initially responded favorably to the teachings of Jesus failed to continue walking in the truth. For example, after a large crowd had been fed in a miraculous way by Jesus, the crowd followed him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. There, Jesus said something that

4. In the first century, why did some “sell” the truth?

startled them: “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in yourselves.” Instead of asking Jesus to explain, they were stumbled by his words and said: “This speech is shocking; who can listen to it?” As a result, “many of his disciples went off to the things behind and would no longer walk with him.”—John 6:53-66.

⁵ Sadly, some today have failed to hold on to the truth. Some were stumbled by an adjusted understanding of a Bible passage or by what a prominent brother said or did. Others were offended by Scriptural counsel they received, or they let go of the truth because of a personality clash with a fellow Christian. Still others took sides with apostates and other opposers who misrepresented our beliefs. As a result, some deliberately began “drawing away” from Jehovah and the congregation. (Heb. 3:12-14) How much better it would have been if they had maintained their faith and kept their confidence in Jesus, as the apostle Peter did! When Jesus asked the apostles if they wanted to leave, Peter immediately replied: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.”—John 6:67-69.

5, 6. (a) In recent times, why have some failed to hold on to the truth? (b) How might one gradually leave the truth?

⁶ Others have left the truth gradually, perhaps without even noticing what was happening. A person who gradually leaves the truth is like a boat that slowly slips away from the riverbank. The Bible describes such a slow change as ‘drifting away.’ (Heb. 2:1) Unlike one who intentionally draws away from the truth, one who drifts away does not do so deliberately. However, such a person strains his relationship with Jehovah and is in danger of losing it. How can we avoid such a tragic course?

HOW CAN WE AVOID SELLING THE TRUTH?

⁷ To walk in the truth, we must accept and obey *all* of Jehovah’s sayings. We must give the truth priority in our lives and live according to Bible principles. In prayer to Jehovah, King David declared: “I *will* walk in your truth.” (Ps. 86:11) David was determined. We too must be firmly resolved to keep walking in God’s truth. If we are not, we could have second thoughts about what we paid for the truth and perhaps be tempted to begin taking back part of the payment. Rather, we carefully hold on to the complete truth. We recognize that we cannot pick which truths to accept and which to ignore. After all, we must walk in “*all* the truth.” (John 16:13) Let

7. What initial step will help us to avoid selling the truth?

us reflect on five things that we may have paid for the truth. Doing so will strengthen our resolve not to be lured into taking back even part of our payment.—Matt. 6:19.

⁸ Time. To avoid drifting away from the truth, we must make wise use of our time. If we are not careful, we might start to spend excessive amounts of time on recreation, hobbies, browsing the Internet, or watching television. Although these things are not wrong in themselves, the time we spend on them can begin to encroach on time previously spent in personal study and other spiritual activities. Consider what happened to a Christian sister named Emma.* From the time of her youth, Emma had a passion for horses. Whenever she had the chance, she went horseback riding. After a while, she began to feel uneasy about all the time she spent on her hobby. She made adjustments and eventually succeeded in keeping recreation in its proper place. She was also encouraged by the experience of Cory Wells, a former rodeo trick rider.†

* Name has been changed.

† Go to JW Broadcasting, and look under INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES > TRUTH TRANSFORMS LIVES.

8. How could unwise use of time cause a Christian to drift away from the truth? Give an example.

Emma now enjoys spending more time in spiritual activities and with her Christian family and friends. She feels closer to Jehovah and is at peace, knowing that she is using her time wisely.

9 Material Advantages. If we are to continue walking in the truth, we must keep material things in their proper place. When we learned the truth, our interest in material things became secondary to our spiritual pursuits. We were happy to make material sacrifices in order to walk in the truth. Over time, however, we may see others buying the latest electronic devices or enjoying other material advantages. We could begin to feel that we are losing out. No longer content with the necessities, we might put spiritual pursuits aside in favor of accumulating material possessions. Such a course reminds us of Demas. His love for “the present system of things” led him to abandon a life of service with the apostle Paul. (2 Tim. 4:10) Why did Demas leave Paul? Whether he loved material things more than spiritual activities or he was no longer willing to make personal sacrifices in order to serve with Paul, the Bible does not say. We surely do not want to rekindle a desire for material things and

9. How could seeking material advantages cause some to put aside spiritual pursuits?

let those attractions crowd out our love for the truth.

¹⁰ Personal relationships. To continue walking in the truth, we must not give in to pressure from others. When we started to walk in the truth, our relationship with non-Witness associates and family members changed. Some were tolerant; others became outright opposers. (1 Pet. 4:4) Although we endeavor to have good relations with family members and treat them kindly, we must be careful not to compromise the truth to please them. We will continue to try to get along well with family members. In view of the clear warning at 1 Corinthians 15:33, we will have close friendships only with those who love Jehovah.

¹¹ Ungodly thinking and conduct. All who walk in the truth must be holy. (Isa. 35:8; read 1 Peter 1:14-16.) When coming into the truth, all of us had to make adjustments to conform to the Bible's righteous standards. Some had to undergo major changes. Whichever the case, we must never trade our pure, holy condition for the immoral filth of this world. How can we avoid succumbing to

10. To go on walking in the truth, what pressure must we resist?

11. How can we avoid unscriptural practices?

immoral conduct? Reflect on the high price that Jehovah paid in order for us to be holy—the precious blood of his Son, Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:18, 19) To maintain our clean standing before Jehovah, we need to keep the value of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice foremost in our mind and heart.

¹² **Unscriptural customs and practices.** Family members, workmates, and schoolmates may try to get us to join them in their celebrations. How can we resist the pressure to conform to customs and holidays that do not honor Jehovah? We can do so by keeping Jehovah’s view of such practices clearly in mind. Reviewing discussions printed in our publications that show the origin of popular holidays can be helpful. When we remind ourselves of the Scriptural reasons for not participating in such holidays, we are convinced that we are walking in the way that “is acceptable to the Lord.” (Eph. 5:10) Trusting in Jehovah and his Word of truth will protect us from “trembling at men.”—Prov. 29:25.

¹³ Walking in the truth is an ongoing process, a path that we hope to follow throughout eternity. How can we strengthen our determination to go on walking in the truth? Let us consider three ways.

12, 13. (a) Why is it vital to maintain Jehovah’s view of holidays?
(b) What will we consider next?

STRENGTHEN YOUR RESOLVE TO WALK IN THE TRUTH

¹⁴ First, continue to study the precious truths of God’s Word and meditate on them. Yes, buy truth by regularly setting aside time to feed on the precious truths of God’s Word. You will thus deepen your appreciation for the truth and strengthen your resolve never to sell it. In addition to buying truth, Proverbs 23:23 says that we should also buy “wisdom and discipline and understanding.” Knowledge alone is not enough. We must put the truth to work in our lives. With understanding, we discern the harmony of all of Jehovah’s sayings. Wisdom moves us to act on what we know. At times, the truth disciplines us, showing us where we need to make changes. May we always be responsive to such guidance. Its value is far more than silver.—Prov. 8:10.

¹⁵ Second, be firmly resolved to live in harmony with the truth day by day. Wear the belt of truth around your waist. (Eph. 6:14) In Bible times, the

14. (a) How will continuing to buy truth strengthen our resolve never to sell it? (b) Why are wisdom, discipline, and understanding essential?

15. How does the belt of truth protect us?

belt of a soldier supported and protected his waist and his internal organs. For his belt to provide protection, however, it had to be tight. A loose belt gave little support. How does our spiritual belt of truth protect us? If we keep it wrapped tightly around us like a belt, the truth will guard us from faulty reasoning and will help us to make sound decisions. When we are tempted or under trial, Bible truth will strengthen our resolve to do what is right. Just as a soldier would never have thought of going into battle without his belt, we must be determined never to loosen or remove our belt of truth. Rather, we do all we can to keep it tight around our body by living in harmony with the truth. Another function of the soldier's belt was that it furnished a convenient place to suspend his

The Truth

Learn it. Live it. Teach it.

(See paragraphs 14-16)

sword. That brings us to the next way to strengthen our determination to go on walking in the truth.

¹⁶ Third, have as full a share as possible in teaching Bible truth to others. In this way you will keep a firm grip on our spiritual sword, which is “God’s word.” (Eph. 6:17) All of us can strive to improve our skills as teachers, “handling the word of the truth aright.” (2 Tim. 2:15) As we use the Bible to help others to buy truth and reject falsehoods, we embed God’s sayings in our own mind and heart. In this way, we strengthen our determination to go on walking in the truth.

¹⁷ The truth is a precious gift from Jehovah. By means of this gift, we have our most prized possession, our intimate relationship with our heavenly Father. What he has taught us until now is only the beginning! God has promised us an eternity to add to the truth we have already bought. Therefore, cherish the truth like a fine pearl. Continue to “buy truth and never sell it.” Then, like David, you will carry out this promise to Jehovah: “I will walk in your truth.”—Ps. 86:11.

16. How does sharing the truth with others strengthen our determination to go on walking in the truth?

17. Why is the truth precious to you?

72 *Making Known the Kingdom Truth* (Acts 20:20, 21)

1. There was a time we did not know
 The way a Christian ought to go.
 Then Jehovah sent the light,
 His Kingdom truth so clear and bright.
Our Father's will we then could see
 To serve the grand Theocracy,
 To declare Jehovah's fame,
 And help to glorify his holy name.
We witness now to all we meet,
 From door to door and on the street.
We take the time to help them see;
 We teach the truth that sets us free.
And as we strive in ev'ry land
 Jehovah's worship to expand,
May we serve our God as one
 Until Jehovah says the work is done.

