

- Song 148 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 23:12, 16—A plot to murder Paul was foiled (bt 191 ¶5-6)
 Ac 24:2, 5, 6—A public speaker named Tertullus made accusations against Paul to the Roman governor (bt 192 ¶10)
 Ac 24:10-21—Paul respectfully denied the accusations and boldly gave a witness (bt 193-194 ¶13-14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 23:6—Why did Paul call himself a Pharisee? (nwtsty study note)

Ac 24:24, 27—Who was Drusilla? (nwtsty study note on Ac 24:24)

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 23:1-15 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (2)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 77
- **Annual Service Report:** (15 min.) Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 50
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 128 and Prayer

ACTS 23-24 | Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions

23:12, 16; 24:2, 5, 6, 10-21 ✍️

The Jews in Jerusalem “bound themselves with a curse” in order to kill Paul. (Ac 23:12) However, it was Jehovah’s will that Paul go to Rome to give a witness. (Ac 23:11) Paul’s nephew heard of the plot and reported it, preventing Paul’s premature death. (Ac 23:16) What does this account teach you about . . .

- any attempt made to thwart God’s purpose?
- the means by which God might help us?
- courage?



Jehovah Provides Escape

(2 Samuel 22:1-8)

A Dm Gm/B \flat A Dm Gm6/B \flat A7+5 Dm A Dm

The liv - ing God, Je - ho - vah, you have proved to be;
 Though ropes of death en - cir - cle me, I call to you,
 From heav - en you will thun - der and give forth your voice.

Dm/F E \flat /G Gm7 A A(b9) A A7 Dm A

Your might - y works a - bound in earth and sky and
 "Je - ho - vah, give me strength, and give me cour - age
 Your en - e - mies will quake; your ser - vants will re -

Dm Gm D7/F \sharp Cadd9/E D/F \sharp D7 Gm Cm7 Cm6 Gm/B \flat D/A Gm

sea. No ri - val god can e - qual what you have done—
 too." From your own tem - ple dwell - ing, you hear my plea,
 joyce. You prove to be what - ev - er you need to be;

Gm6 B \flat /F Gm6/EA7 Dm Gm/B \flat Dm/A B \flat 7 \flat 5 B \flat 7 A Bm7 A/C \sharp A/C \sharp *Chorus*

there is none. Our foes will be con - sumed.
 "Shel - ter me; Res - cue me, O my God." Je -
 all will see How you pro - vide es - cape.

Jehovah Provides Escape

D A/C# G A A7 D D7/C G/B D/A

ho - vah pro - vides es - cape for the loy - al. His ser - vants will

G6 D/A G/B D/A Bm6/G# A D D7 G Em6/G

see what a might - y Crag is he. So with cour - age and

R.H. R.H.

D/F# F#/A# Bm D7/A G A9/G D/F# D Em11 D/F#

faith in our God, we spread the fame Of Je -

G Em7 G D/F# F#/A# Bm D7/A Em/G A7 D

ho - vah, our Source of es - cape, and praise his name.

R.H.

23 Looking intently at the San'he-drin, Paul said: "Men, brothers, I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience^a down to this day."

2 At this the high priest An-ni'as ordered those standing by him to strike him on the mouth.

3 Then Paul said to him: "God is going to strike you, you white-washed wall. Do you sit to judge me according to the Law and at the same time violate the Law by commanding me to be struck?"

4 Those standing by said: "Are you insulting the high priest of God?" **5** And Paul said: "Brothers, I did not know he was high priest. For it is written, 'You must not speak injuriously of a ruler of your people.'"^b

6 Now Paul, knowing that the one part was made up of Sadducees but the other of Pharisees, cried out in the San'he-drin: "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee,^c a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am being judged." **7** Because he said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was split. **8** For the Sadducees say that there is neither resurrection nor angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees accept^{*} them all.^d **9** So a great uproar broke out, and some of the scribes of the party of the Pharisees rose and began arguing fiercely, saying: "We find nothing wrong in this man, but if a spirit or an angel spoke to him^e—." **10** Now when the dissension grew great, the military commander feared that Paul would be torn apart by them, and he commanded the soldiers to go down and snatch him from their midst and bring him into the soldiers' quarters.

11 But the following night the Lord stood by him and said:

23:8 *Or "publicly declare."

CHAP. 23

a Ac 24:15, 16
2Co 1:12
Heb 13:18
1Pe 3:16

b Ex 22:28

c Ac 26:4, 5
Php 3:4, 5

d Ac 4:1, 2

e Ac 22:6, 7
Ac 22:17, 18

Second Col.

a Ac 18:9

b Ac 27:23, 24
Ac 28:23
Ac 28:30, 31

c Ac 23:15

"Take courage!"^a For just as you have been giving a thorough witness about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome."^b

12 When it became day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. **13** There were more than 40 men who formed this oath-bound conspiracy. **14** These men went to the chief priests and the elders and said: "We have solemnly bound ourselves with a curse^{*} not to eat anything at all until we have killed Paul. **15** So now you together with the San'he-drin should inform the military commander that he should bring him down to you as though you want to examine his case more thoroughly. But before he gets near, we will be ready to do away with him."

16 However, the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush they were planning, and he entered the soldiers' quarters and reported it to Paul. **17** Paul then called one of the army officers to him and said: "Take this young man to the military commander, for he has something to report to him." **18** So he brought him and led him to the military commander and said: "The prisoner Paul called me and asked me to bring this young man to you because he has something to tell you." **19** The military commander took him by the hand and withdrew privately and asked him: "What do you have to report to me?" **20** He said: "The Jews have agreed to request you to bring Paul down to the San'he-drin tomorrow, as though they intend to learn more details about his case." **21** But

23:14 *Or "an oath."

do not let them persuade you, for more than 40 of their men are waiting to ambush him, and they have bound themselves with a curse* neither to eat nor to drink until they have killed him;^a and they are now ready, waiting for the promise from you.”
22 So the military commander let the young man go, after ordering him: “Do not tell anyone that you have informed me of this.”

23 And he summoned two of the army officers and said: “Get 200 soldiers ready to march clear to Caes-a-re’a, also 70 horsemen and 200 spearmen, at the third hour of the night.* **24** Also, provide horses for Paul to ride, to take him safely to Felix the governor.” **25** And he wrote a letter with this content:

26 “Claudius Lys’i-as to His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings! **27** This man was seized by the Jews and was about to be killed by them, but I came quickly with my soldiers and rescued him,^b because I learned that he is a Roman.^c **28** And wanting to find out the cause for which they were accusing him, I brought him down into their San’he-drin.^d **29** I found him to be accused about questions of their Law,^e but not charged with a single thing deserving of death or prison bonds. **30** But because a plot against the man has been made known to me,^f I am at once sending him to you and ordering the accusers to speak against him before you.”

31 So these soldiers took Paul^g according to their orders and brought him by night to An-tip’a-tris. **32** The next day they permitted the horsemen to go on with him, but they returned to the soldiers’ quarters.

23:21 *Or “an oath.” 23:23 *That is, about 9:00 p.m.

CHAP. 23

a Ac 23:12

b Ac 21:31-33

c Ac 16:37
Ac 22:25

d Ac 22:30

e Ac 25:19

f Ac 23:16

g Ac 23:23, 24

Second Col.

a Ac 21:39
Ac 22:3

b Ac 24:1

CHAP. 24

c Ac 23:2

d Ac 23:26

e Mt 5:11
Ac 16:20, 21
Ac 17:6, 7

f Lu 23:1, 2

g Mt 2:23
Ac 28:22

h Ac 21:27, 28

33 The horsemen entered Caes-a-re’a and delivered the letter to the governor and also presented Paul to him. **34** So he read it and asked what province he was from and learned that he was from Ci-li’cia.^a **35** “I will give you a thorough hearing,” he said, “when your accusers arrive.”^b And he commanded that he be kept under guard in Herod’s palace.*

24 Five days later the high priest An-a-ni’as^c came down with some elders and a public speaker* named Ter-tul-lus, and they presented their case against Paul to the governor.^d **2** When he was called, Ter-tul-lus started accusing him, saying:

“Seeing that we enjoy great peace through you and that through your forethought reforms are taking place in this nation, **3** at all times and also in all places we acknowledge this, Your Excellency Felix, with the greatest thankfulness. **4** But that I may not detain you any further, I beg you to hear us briefly in your kindness. **5** For we have found this man to be a pest,^e stirring up seditions^f among all the Jews throughout the inhabited earth, and he is a spearhead of the sect of the Naz-a-renes’.^g **6** He also tried to profane the temple, so we seized him.^h **7** *—
8 When you examine him yourself, you will find out about all these things of which we are accusing him.”

9 With that the Jews also joined in the attack, asserting that these things were true. **10** When the governor nodded to Paul to speak, he answered:

23:35 *Or “praetorium.” 24:1 *Or “a lawyer.” 24:5 *Or “troublemaker.” Lit., “pestilence.” 24:7 *See App. A3.

"Knowing well that this nation has had you as judge for many years, I readily speak in my own defense.^a **11** As you can verify for yourself, it has not been more than 12 days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem;^b **12** and they found me neither arguing with anyone in the temple nor stirring up a mob, either in the synagogues or throughout the city. **13** Nor can they prove to you the things they are accusing me of right now. **14** But I do admit this to you, that according to the way that they call a sect, in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers,^c as I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets.^d **15** And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection^e of both the righteous and the unrighteous.^f **16** Because of this I always strive to maintain a clear* conscience before God and men.^g **17** Now after quite a number of years, I arrived to bring gifts of mercy^h to my nation and to make offerings. **18** While I was caring for these matters, they found me ceremonially cleansed in the temple,ⁱ but not with a crowd or causing a disturbance. But there were some Jews from the province of Asia **19** who ought to be present before you to accuse me if they actually have anything against me.^j **20** Or let the men here say for themselves what wrong they found as I stood before the San'he-drin, **21** except for this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: 'Over the resurrection of the dead I am today being judged before you!'"^k

22 However, Felix, knowing quite well the facts concern-

24:16 *Or "blameless."

CHAP. 24

a Php 1:7

b Ac 21:17, 26

c Ex 3:15
Ac 3:13
2Ti 1:3

d Ac 28:23
Ro 3:21

e Isa 26:19
Mt 22:31, 32
Lu 14:13, 14
Joh 5:28, 29
Joh 11:25
Heb 11:35
Re 20:12

f Lu 23:43

g Ac 23:1
1Co 4:4
Heb 13:18

h 2Co 8:4

i Ac 21:24, 26

j Ac 25:16

k Ac 23:6

Second Col.

a Ac 9:1, 2
Ac 19:9

b Mt 10:18

c Ac 17:30, 31
2Co 5:10

d Ac 25:9

CHAP. 25

e Ac 24:27

f Ac 24:1

g Ac 23:20, 21

h Ac 25:16

ing this Way,^a began to put them off and say: "Whenever Lys'i-as the military commander comes down, I will decide these matters involving you." **23** And he gave orders to the army officer that the man be kept under arrest but given some freedom, and that his people be allowed to attend to his needs.

24 Some days later Felix came with Dru-sil'la his wife, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and listened to him speak about the belief in Christ Jesus.^b **25** But as Paul talked about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come,^c Felix became frightened and answered: "Go away for now, but when I have an opportunity I will send for you again." **26** At the same time he was hoping that Paul would give him money. For that reason, he sent for him even more frequently and conversed with him. **27** But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and because Felix desired to gain favor with the Jews,^d he left Paul in custody.

25 Therefore Festus,^e after arriving in the province and taking charge, went up three days later to Jerusalem from Caes-a-re'a. **2** And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews gave him information against Paul.^f So they began to beg Festus **3** as a favor* to send for Paul to come to Jerusalem. But they were planning to ambush Paul and kill him along the road.^g **4** However, Festus answered that Paul was to be kept in Caes-a-re'a and that he himself was about to go back there shortly. **5** "So let those who are in power among you," he said, "come down with me and accuse him if, indeed, the man has done something wrong."^h

25:3 *Lit., "asking a favor against him."

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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ACTS 23-24 | Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions

23:12, 16; 24:2, 5, 6, 10-21 ✍

The Jews in Jerusalem “bound themselves with a curse” in order to kill Paul. (Ac 23:12) However, it was Jehovah’s will that Paul go to Rome to give a witness. (Ac 23:11) Paul’s nephew heard of the plot and reported it, preventing Paul’s premature death. (Ac 23:16) What does this account teach you about . . .

- any attempt made to thwart God’s purpose?
- the means by which God might help us?
- courage?



January 14-20

Treasures From God's Word

Acts 23:12, 16—A plot to murder Paul was foiled

Acts 23:12: When it became day, the Jews formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.

Acts 23:16: However, the son of Paul's sister heard of the ambush they were planning, and he entered the soldiers' quarters and reported it to Paul.

bt 191 paragraphs 5-6

5 The encouragement given Paul was timely. The very next day, over 40 Jewish men “formed a conspiracy and bound themselves with a curse, saying they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul.” This “oath-bound conspiracy” showed just how determined those Jews were to murder the apostle. If they did not succeed in carrying out their plot, the end result, they believed, would be a curse, or an evil, to them. (Acts 23:12-15) Their plan, sanctioned by the chief priests and older men, was to have Paul brought back to the Sanhedrin for further questioning, as if to ascertain matters concerning him more accurately. But en route, the conspirators would be lying in wait to pounce on Paul and kill him.

6 Paul's nephew, however, heard of this plot and reported it to Paul. In turn, Paul had the young man report it to the Roman military commander Claudius Lysias. (Acts 23:16-22) Surely Jehovah loves young ones who, like this unnamed nephew of Paul, courageously put the welfare of God's people ahead of their own and faithfully do whatever they can to promote Kingdom interests.

Acts 24:2, 5, 6—A public speaker named Tertullus made accusations against Paul to the Roman governor

Acts 24:2: When he was called, Tertullus started accusing him, saying: “Seeing that we enjoy great peace through you and that through your forethought reforms are taking place in this nation,

Acts 24:5, 6: For we have found this man to be a pest, stirring up seditions among all the Jews throughout the inhabited earth, and he is a spearhead of the sect of the Nazarenes. He also tried to profane the temple, so we seized him.

bt 192 paragraph 10

In Caesarea, Paul was “kept under guard in the praetorian palace of Herod” to await the arrival of the accusers from Jerusalem. (Acts 23:35) Five days later, they came—High Priest Ananias, a public speaker named Tertullus, and a group of older men. Tertullus first praised Felix for what he was doing for the Jews, evidently to flatter him and gain his favor. Then, getting to the matter at hand, Tertullus referred to Paul as “a pestilent fellow and stirring up seditions among all the Jews throughout the inhabited earth and a spearhead of the sect of the Nazarenes, one who also tried to profane the temple and whom we seized.” The other Jews “joined in the attack, asserting that these things were so.” (Acts 24:5, 6, 9) Stirring up sedition, spearheading a dangerous sect, and profaning the temple—these were serious charges that could result in a sentence of death.

Acts 24:10-21—Paul respectfully denied the accusations and boldly gave a witness

Acts 24:10-21: When the governor nodded to Paul to speak, he answered: “Knowing well that this nation has had you as judge for many years, I readily speak in my own defense. As you can verify for yourself, it has not been more than 12 days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem; and they found me neither arguing with anyone in the temple nor stirring up a mob, either in the synagogues or throughout the city. Nor can they prove to you the things they are accusing me of right now. But I do admit this to you, that according to the way that they call a sect, in this manner I am rendering sacred service to the God of my forefathers, as I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets. And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous. Because of this I always strive to maintain a clear conscience before God and men. Now after quite a number of years, I arrived to bring gifts of mercy to my nation and to make offerings. While I was caring for these matters, they found me ceremonially cleansed in the temple, but not with a crowd or causing a disturbance. But there were some Jews from the province of Asia who ought to be present before you to accuse me if they actually have anything against me. Or let the men here say for themselves what wrong they found as I stood before the Sanhedrin, except for this one thing that I cried out while standing among them: ‘Over the resurrection of the dead I am today being judged before you!’”

bt 193-194 paragraphs 13-14

13 Paul set a good example for us to follow if we are ever brought before secular authorities because of our worship and are falsely accused of such things as being rabble-rousers, seditionists, or members of a “dangerous sect.” Paul did not fawn over the governor, uttering words of flattery as did Tertullus. Paul stayed calm and respectful. Tactfully, he gave clear and truthful testimony. Paul mentioned that the “Jews from the district of Asia” who had accused him of defiling the temple were not present and that legally, he should be able to face them and hear their accusations.—Acts 24:18, 19.

14 Most strikingly, Paul did not hold back from giving testimony regarding his beliefs. Boldly, the apostle reiterated his belief in the resurrection, the issue that had created such turmoil when he was before the Sanhedrin. (Acts 23:6-10) In his defense, Paul emphasized the resurrection hope. Why? Because Paul was bearing witness to Jesus and to His resurrection from the dead—something those opposers would not accept. (Acts 26:6-8, 22, 23) Yes, it was the issue of the resurrection—and more precisely, belief in Jesus and in his resurrection—on which the controversy was centered.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Acts 23:6—Why did Paul call himself a Pharisee?

Acts 23:6: Now Paul, knowing that the one part was made up of Sadducees but the other of Pharisees, cried out in the Sanhedrin: “Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am being judged.”

Study note

I am a Pharisee: Some of those in the audience knew Paul. (Acts 22:5) They would have understood that by calling himself **a son of Pharisees**, he was acknowledging his common heritage with them. They understood that Paul was not misrepresenting himself, since the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin knew that he had become a

zealous Christian. But in this context, Paul's statement about being a Pharisee could be understood in a relative sense; Paul was identifying himself with the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees because he shared the Pharisees' belief in the resurrection. In so doing, he established a common ground with the Pharisees who were present. He apparently hoped that raising this controversial issue would cause some members of the Sanhedrin to sympathize with his argument, and the strategy worked. (Acts 23:7-9) Paul's statement here at Acts 23:6 also harmonizes with how he described himself when he later defended himself before King Agrippa. (Acts 26:5) And when writing from Rome to fellow Christians in Philippi, Paul again made reference to his heritage as a Pharisee. (Philippians 3:5) It is also worth noting how other Christians who were former Pharisees are described at Acts 15:5.—See study note on Acts 15:5.

Acts 24:24, 27—Who was Drusilla?

Acts 24:24: Some days later Felix came with Drusilla his wife, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and listened to him speak about the belief in Christ Jesus.

Acts 24:27: But when two years had elapsed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus; and because Felix desired to gain favor with the Jews, he left Paul in custody.

Study note

Drusilla: The third and youngest daughter of the Herod mentioned at Acts 12:1, that is, Herod Agrippa I. She was born about 38 C.E. and was a sister of Agrippa II and Bernice. (See study note on Acts 25:13 and Glossary, "Herod.") Governor **Felix** was her second husband. She was first married to Syrian King Azizus of Emesa but divorced him and married Felix about the year 54 C.E., or when she was about 16 years old. It is possible that she was present when Paul spoke before Felix "about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come." (Acts 24:25) When Felix turned the governorship over to Festus, he left Paul in custody "to gain favor with the Jews," which some think was done to please his youthful wife, **who was Jewish**.—Acts 24:27.

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 23:1-15 (*th* study 5)

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 23

23:1

I have behaved: Or “I have lived my life.” The form of the Greek verb *po-li-teu'o-mai* used here could be rendered “to behave as a citizen.” (*Kingdom Interlinear*) Paul indicates that he has behaved in a proper way as a good citizen who followed the laws of his country. Roman citizens generally took an active part in the affairs of the State because Roman citizenship was highly prized and it carried with it responsibilities and privileges. (Ac 22:25-30) When Paul on this occasion described how he had “behaved” **before God**, it may have carried the implication that he was primarily a citizen of God’s Kingdom.—Php 3:20; compare the use of the same verb form at Php 1:27; ftn.

23:6

I am a Pharisee: Some of those in the audience knew Paul. (Ac 22:5) They would have understood that by calling himself **a son of Pharisees**, he was acknowledging his common heritage with them. They understood that Paul was not misrepresenting himself, since the Pharisees of the Sanhedrin knew that he had become a zealous Christian. But in this context, Paul’s statement about being a Pharisee could be understood in a relative sense; Paul was identifying himself with the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees because he shared the Pharisees’ belief in the resurrection. In so doing, he established a common ground with the Pharisees who were present. He apparently hoped that raising this controversial issue would cause some members of the Sanhedrin to sympathize with his argument, and the strategy worked. (Ac 23:7-9) Paul’s statement here at Ac 23:6 also harmonizes with how he described himself when he later defended himself before King Agrippa. (Ac 26:5) And when writing from Rome to fellow Christians in Philippi, Paul again made reference to his heritage as a Pharisee. (Php 3:5) It is also worth noting how other Christians who were former Pharisees are described at Ac 15:5.—See study note on Ac 15:5.

23:12

bound themselves with a curse: Or “bound themselves with an oath.” The Greek word *a-na-the-ma-ti'zo* is apparently used to refer to the declaring of an oath that if not carried out or if proved false would result in a curse against the one who took the oath.

23:14

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

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23:21

bound themselves with a curse: Or “bound themselves with an oath.” The Greek word *a·na·the·ma·ti'zo* is apparently used to refer to the declaring of an oath that if not carried out or if proved false would result in a curse against the one who took the oath.

23:23

the third hour of the night: That is, about 9:00 p.m., counting from sunset. The Christian Greek Scriptures usually refer to “watch” periods when counting time, following the Greek and Roman custom. (Mt 14:25; Mr 6:48; Lu 12:38) This is the only mention of a specific “hour” of the 12 hours that make up the nighttime.—Compare Ac 16:25, 33; see study note on Mr 13:35.

23:26

Claudius Lysias to His Excellency, Governor Felix: Greetings!: This was a common introduction used in ancient letters. First the writer was mentioned, then the person was addressed, and third the common greeting was given using the Greek word *khai'ro*, which literally means “to rejoice.” It expressed the thought: “May things be well with you.” It commonly appears in non-Biblical papyrus letters. In this context, the Greek word can appropriately be rendered “Greetings!” A similar introduction to a letter can be found at Ac 15:23 and Jas 1:1.—See study note on Ac 15:23.

23:27

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

23:35

palace: Or “praetorium.” In the Gospels and Acts, the Greek word *prai·to'ri·on* (from Latin) is used with regard to a palace or a residence. The tent of an army commander had been known as the praetorium, so in time the term was applied to the residence of a provincial governor. Here the term refers to a palace located in Caesarea and built by Herod the Great. At this time, about 56 C.E., it served as the residence of the Roman governor.—See study note on Mt 27:27.

ACTS

Study Notes—Chapter 24

24:1

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

a public speaker: Or “a lawyer; an attorney.” The Greek word *rhe'tor* originally had the meaning “public speaker; orator” but also came to refer to “a speaker in court; an advocate; an attorney.” **Tertullus** presented the Jews' case against Paul before Governor Felix in Caesarea.

24:5

a pest: Or “a troublemaker.” Lit., “a pestilence.” The only other occurrence of this Greek word in the Christian Greek Scriptures is at Lu 21:11, where it is used about literal pestilences, or widespread diseases. Here at Ac 24:5, it is used figuratively about a person perceived to be “a pest,” one who causes problems, a troublemaker or public menace.

the inhabited earth: In a broad sense, the Greek word for “inhabited earth” (*oi-kou-me'ne*) refers to the earth as the dwelling place of mankind. (Lu 4:5; Ac 17:31; Ro 10:18; Re 12:9; 16:14) In the first century, this term was also used in reference to the vast Roman Empire, where the Jews had been dispersed.—Ac 24:5.

sect: The Greek word here rendered “sect,” *hai're-sis* (from which the English word “heresy” is derived), apparently had the original meaning “a choice.” That is how the word is used at Le 22:18 in the *Septuagint*, which speaks about Israelites offering gifts “according to all their choice.” As used in the Christian Greek Scriptures, this term refers to a group of people holding to distinctive views or doctrines. It is used to describe the two prominent branches of Judaism—the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (Ac 5:17; 15:5; 26:5) Non-Christians called Christianity “a sect” or “the sect of the Nazarenes,” possibly viewing it as a breakaway group from Judaism. (Ac 24:5, 14; 28:22) The Greek word *hai're-sis* was also applied to groups that developed within the Christian congregation. Jesus emphasized and prayed that unity would prevail among his followers (Joh 17:21), and the apostles sought to preserve the oneness of the Christian congregation (1Co 1:10; Jude 17-19). If the members of the congregation separated into groups or factions, this would disrupt the unity. Therefore, in describing such groups, the Greek word *hai're-sis* came to be used in the negative sense of a faction or a divisive group, a sect. Disunity in belief could give rise to fierce disputing, dissension, and even enmity. (Compare Ac 23:7-10.) So sects were to be avoided and were considered a manifestation of “the works of the flesh.”—Ga 5:19-21; 1Co 11:19; 2Pe 2:1.

the Nazarenes: 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.

24:7

A few later manuscripts and some translations into other languages, with slight variations in wording, add the following as parts of verses 6-8: “and wanted to judge according to our Law. (7) But Lysias the military commander came up and with great force took him out of our hands, (8) commanding his accusers to come to you.” However, these words do not appear in the earliest and most reliable manuscripts and are apparently not part of the original text of Acts.—See App. A3.

24:14

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

24:15

resurrection: The Greek word *a-na'sta-sis* literally means “raising up; standing up.” It is used about 40 times in the Christian Greek Scriptures with reference to the resurrection of the dead. (Some examples are found at Mt 22:31; Ac 2:31; 4:2; 17:18, 32; 23:6; 1Co 15:12, 13.) In the *Septuagint* at Isa 26:19, the verb form of *a-na'sta-sis* is used to render the Hebrew verb “to live” in the expression “your dead *will live*.”—See Glossary.

24:23

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

24:24

Drusilla: The third and youngest daughter of the Herod mentioned at Ac 12:1, that is, Herod Agrippa I. She was born about 38 C.E. and was a sister of Agrippa II and Bernice. (See study note on Ac 25:13 and Glossary, “Herod.”) Governor **Felix** was her second husband. She was first married to Syrian King Azizus of Emesa but divorced him and

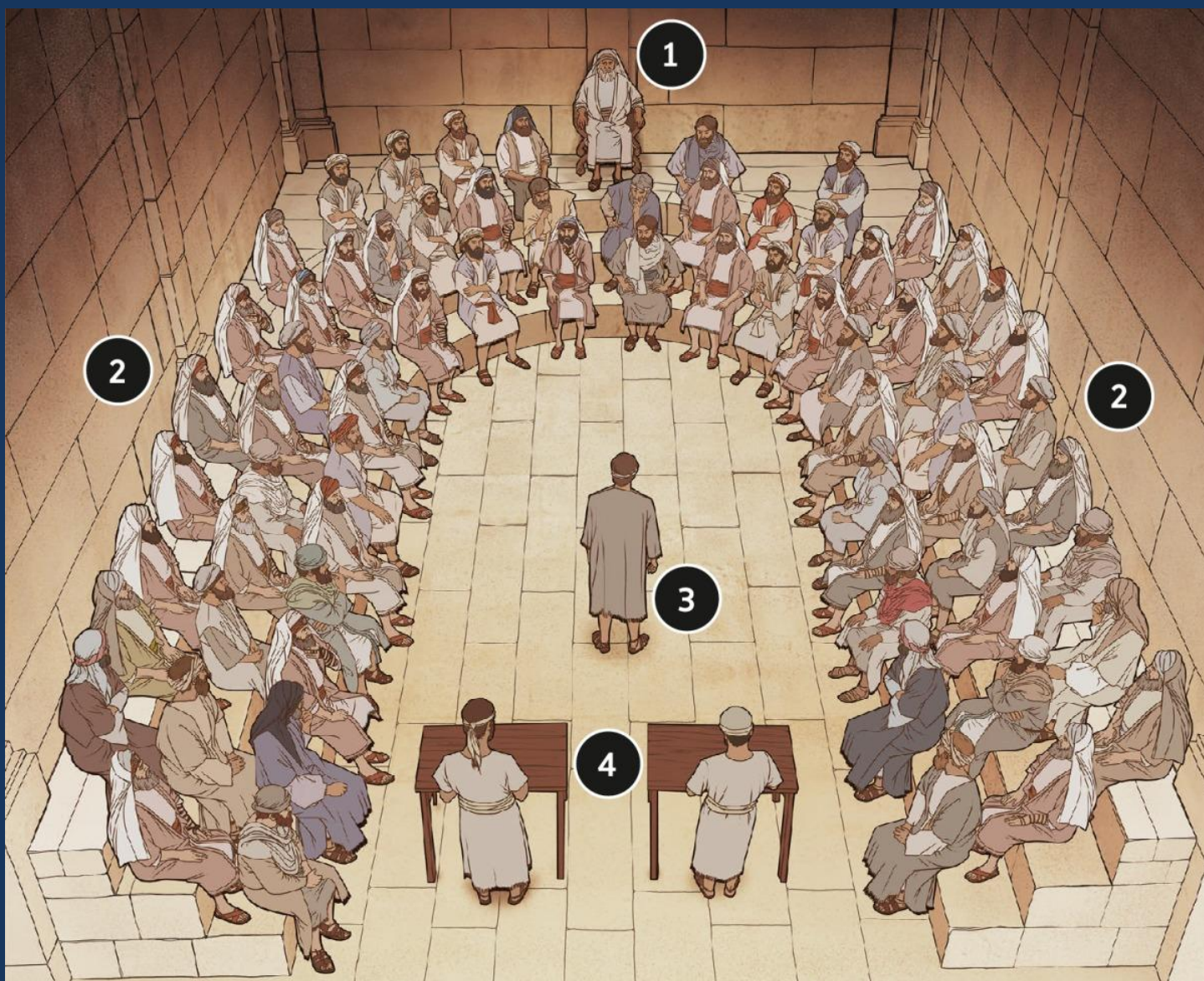
married Felix about the year 54 C.E., or when she was about 16 years old. It is possible that she was present when Paul spoke before Felix “about righteousness and self-control and the judgment to come.” (Ac 24:25) When Felix turned the governorship over to Festus, he left Paul in custody “to gain favor with the Jews,” which some think was done to please his youthful wife, **who was Jewish.**—Ac 24:27.



Roman Spears

Roman soldiers were commonly equipped with long weapons suitable for thrusting or throwing. The *pilum* (1) was designed to penetrate its target. Its heavy weight limited the range at which it could be thrown but enabled the weapon to pierce through armor or a shield. There is evidence that Roman legionnaires often carried the *pilum*. Simpler spears (2) had a wooden shaft and a tip of forged iron. Auxiliary infantry sometimes carried one or more spears of this type. It is unknown what kind of spear was used to jab the side of Jesus' body.

Related Scripture(s) Joh 19:34; Ac 23:23



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

- Song 148 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions”:** (10 min.)
 Ac 23:12, 16—A plot to murder Paul was foiled (bt 191 ¶5-6)
 Ac 24:2, 5, 6—A public speaker named Tertullus made accusations against Paul to the Roman governor (bt 192 ¶10)
 Ac 24:10-21—Paul respectfully denied the accusations and boldly gave a witness (bt 193-194 ¶13-14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Ac 23:6—Why did Paul call himself a Pharisee? (nwtsty study note)

Ac 24:24, 27—Who was Drusilla? (nwtsty study note on Ac 24:24)

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 23:1-15 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (1)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (2)
- **Initial Call:** (3 min. or less) Begin with the sample conversation. Overcome a common objection. (3)

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 77
- **Annual Service Report:** (15 min.) Talk by an elder. After reading the announcement from the branch office regarding the annual service report, interview publishers, selected in advance, who had encouraging experiences in the ministry during the past year.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) jy chap. 50
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 128 and Prayer

ACTS 23-24 | Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions

23:12, 16; 24:2, 5, 6, 10-21 ✍

The Jews in Jerusalem “bound themselves with a curse” in order to kill Paul. (Ac 23:12) However, it was Jehovah’s will that Paul go to Rome to give a witness. (Ac 23:11) Paul’s nephew heard of the plot and reported it, preventing Paul’s premature death. (Ac 23:16) What does this account teach you about . . .

- any attempt made to thwart God’s purpose?
- the means by which God might help us?
- courage?



Sample Conversations – January 2019

Initial Call

Question: What is God's name?

Scripture: Ps 83:18

Link: How do we know that Jehovah God wants us to become his friends?

Becky (Publisher 1): Good morning. My name is Becky, and this is my friend Susan. May I ask your name?

Householder: Katie.

Becky (Publisher 1): It's very nice to meet you, Katie. We're here because we find that many people are interested in how it can draw closer to God. No doubt you'd agree that a first step to forming any real relationship with someone, is learning that person's name. But what's God's name? What have you heard?

Katie (Householder): I've just heard him called God, or the Lord.

Becky (Publisher 1): The Bible does use those titles, but it also teaches that he has a personal name. Susan, would you please read Psalm 83:18 for us?

Susan (Publisher 2): Sure, I'd be glad to. It says: "May people know that you, whose name is Jehovah, you alone are the Most High over all the earth."

Becky (Publisher 1): Thank you. So, Katie, according to this verse what is God's name?

Katie (Householder): Jehovah. I never knew that.

Becky (Publisher 1): It's a beautiful thing to know God's personal name. That name is the key to developing a relationship with God. Of course, even though it's impossible to know everything about God, we shouldn't stop learning as much as we can. But how do we know that Jehovah God wants us to draw close to him as a friend? What if Susan and I come back, about this time next week, and consider the answer from the Bible?

Katie (Householder): Yeah, I'd love that.

Susan (Publisher 2): We would too.

Becky (Publisher 1): See you then.



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations



INITIAL CALL

Question: What is God's name?

Scripture: Ps 83:18

Link: How do we know that Jehovah God wants us to become his friends?



FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: How do we know that Jehovah God wants us to become his friends?

Scripture: Jas 4:8

Link: How can we become God's friends?



SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: How can we become God's friends?

Scripture: Joh 17:3

Link: How can we feel close to God since we cannot see him?



Light in a Darkened World

(2 Corinthians 4:6)

Bb/C Ab/C Bb/C Ab/C Gm/C Fm/C

In these days, dark and law-less days,
Those who sleep need a wak-en-ing

Bb/C Ab/C Gm/C Eb/C F/C Bb/D

Shines a light we can see.
As the time ebbs a-way.

Ab/Eb Bb/Eb Ab/Eb Bb/Eb Ab/Eb Bb/Eb

Like the dawn of an-oth-er day
We give hope and en-cour-age-ment.

D7ma7 Eb/Db Bbm7 Eb/Bb Cm7

That will soon come to be.
For their fu-ture we'll pray.

Light in a Darkened World

Chorus
Fm D♭ma7 Ab

Shin - ing through the dark - ness, Ours is a

B♭ Fm Eb/G Ab E♭sus4

mes - sage so bright. It of - fers hope and light—

B♭ Fm D♭ma7 Ab

Spar - kling like the day - light, Bring - ing to -

B♭ Fm Eb/G Ab E♭sus4 B♭

mor - row in sight— So ends the night.

(See also John 3:19; 8:12; Rom. 13:11, 12; 1 Pet. 2:9.)

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- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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- courage?



2018

Service Year Report of Jehovah's Witnesses Worldwide

2018 Grand Totals

Branches of Jehovah's Witnesses:	87
Number of Lands Reporting:	240
Total Congregations:	119,954
Worldwide Memorial Attendance:	20,329,317
Memorial Partakers Worldwide:	19,521
Peak of Publishers*:	8,579,909
Average Publishers Preaching Each Month:	8,360,594
Percentage of Increase Over 2017:	1.4
Total Number Baptized [#] :	281,744
Average Pioneer [△] Publishers Each Month:	1,267,808
Average Auxiliary Pioneer Publishers Each Month:	446,642
Total Hours Spent in Field:	2,074,655,497
Average Bible Studies [⊠] Each Month:	10,079,709

During the 2018 service year,[□] Jehovah's Witnesses spent over \$214 million in caring for special pioneers, missionaries, and circuit overseers in their field service assignments. ■ Worldwide, a total of 20,331 ordained ministers staff the branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.

* A publisher refers to one who actively publishes, or preaches, the good news of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 24:14) For a complete explanation of how this figure is determined, see the jw.org article "How Many of Jehovah's Witnesses Are There Worldwide?"

[#] For more information on the steps leading to baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, see the jw.org article "How Do I Become One of Jehovah's Witnesses?"

[△] A pioneer is an exemplary baptized Witness who volunteers to spend a specified number of hours each month in preaching the good news.

[⊠] For more information, see the jw.org article "What Is a Bible Study?"

[□] The 2018 service year ran from September 1, 2017, through August 31, 2018.

Country and Territory Reports

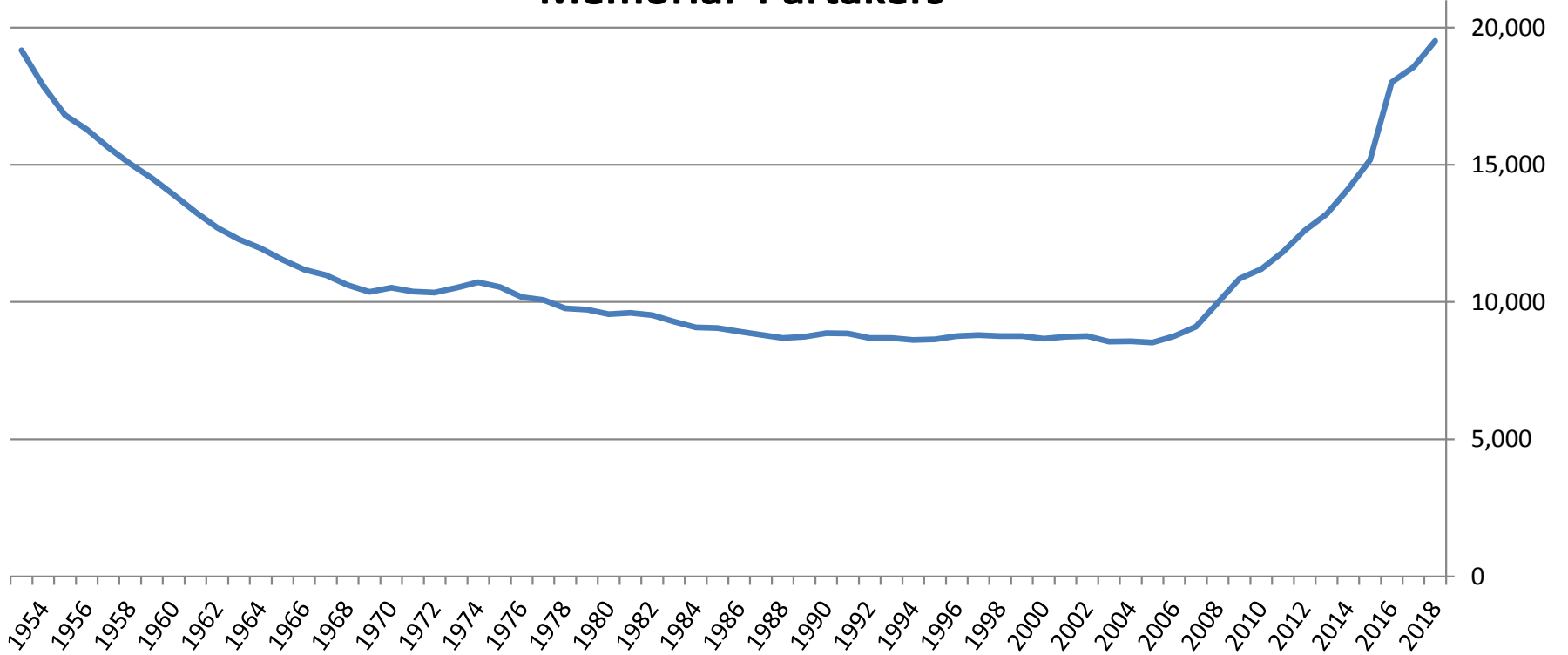
Country or Territory	Population	2018 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	% Inc. Over 2017	2018 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Memorial Attendance
Albania	2,870,324	5,647	508		143	1,332	93	11,866
American Samoa	55,679	194	287	-6	8	36	3	682
Andorra	76,953	178	432	-4	3	16	3	354
Angola	27,794,030	155,991	178	9	12,215	22,994	2,111	635,980
Anguilla	17,087	67	255			11	2	225
Antigua	91,889	479	192	-1	9	48	7	1,337
Argentina	44,494,502	153,342	290	1	4,229	24,075	1,980	312,994
Armenia	2,986,500	10,977	272		262	2,213	134	21,843
Aruba	106,000	1,080	98		31	96	14	2,898
Australia	24,772,247	68,247	363	1	1,250	6,578	786	116,581
Austria	8,823,054	21,563	409		332	1,690	299	34,118
Azerbaijan	9,898,085	1,430	6,922	2	77	335	14	2,874
Azores	243,862	767	318		11	102	15	1,528
Bahamas	399,000	1,762	226	3	46	244	27	4,237
Bangladesh	166,368,149	303	549,070	1	15	137	6	839
Barbados	292,336	2,496	117	-2	55	190	30	5,573
Belarus	9,491,823	6,146	1,544	2	224	1,255	80	10,046
Belgium	11,514,752	25,429	453		425	1,939	339	43,326
Belize	383,040	2,673	143	1	125	534	63	7,987
Benin	11,486,000	13,644	842	4	587	1,725	209	44,661
Bermuda	61,000	521	117	-2	8	88	5	927
Bolivia	11,240,000	27,776	405	3	1,414	6,684	404	86,800
Bonaire	26,000	160	163	2		20	2	351
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3,507,000	1,108	3,165	-4	10	179	16	1,690
Botswana	2,341,861	2,316	1,011	2	118	306	45	6,225
Brazil	208,888,781	869,537	240	3	32,457	113,750	12,270	1,827,079
Britain	64,310,785	139,783	460		2,293	14,424	1,615	221,205
Bulgaria	7,037,000	2,530	2,781	3	52	702	55	5,424
Burkina Faso	19,752,000	1,958	10,088	3	74	277	48	4,309
Burundi	9,732,000	14,508	671	5	921	2,211	266	50,681
Cambodia	16,245,729	1,156	14,053	5	27	648	16	3,023
Cameroon	25,293,116	43,965	575	4	1,764	5,198	486	98,947
Canada	36,953,765	115,959	319		1,703	13,125	1,402	183,048
Cape Verde	560,899	2,317	242	3	119	417	34	7,874
Cayman Islands	62,000	265	234		3	34	3	620
Central African Republic	5,000,000	2,889	1,731	3	138	306	56	17,622
Chad	15,000,000	847	17,710	3	69	76	19	4,558
Chile	18,552,218	80,451	231	2	2,140	13,280	1,012	177,431
Chuuk	48,651	47	1,035	10	2	17	2	181
Colombia	49,850,000	181,691	274	3	6,482	27,657	2,243	512,386
Congo, Dem. Republic of	84,004,989	229,740	366	4	15,825	20,940	3,772	1,220,046
Congo, Republic of	5,399,895	7,899	684	8	550	737	88	34,550
Cook Islands	17,411	196	89	-3	3	26	3	482
Costa Rica	4,956,898	31,786	156	2	1,023	3,711	451	69,999
Côte d'Ivoire	23,889,455	11,938	2,001	5	525	1,657	324	69,529
Croatia	4,189,000	5,042	831	-3	81	438	59	7,579
Cuba	11,480,000	95,031	121		2,537	9,985	1,503	230,936
Curaçao	161,000	2,057	78	-1	60	229	26	5,259
Cyprus	885,600	2,659	333	2	45	454	43	4,674
Czech Republic	10,625,449	15,442	688		228	1,274	216	26,370
Denmark	5,789,957	14,644	395		227	1,075	173	20,923
Dominica	73,897	428	173	-1	17	60	10	1,046
Dominican Republic	10,882,996	38,606	282	1	1,307	7,234	577	113,928
Ecuador	17,023,408	97,168	175	3	4,449	17,887	1,119	276,542
El Salvador	6,190,216	40,900	151		1,006	5,362	738	88,132
Equatorial Guinea	928,778	2,272	409	9	165	279	22	8,342
Estonia	1,319,133	4,036	327	-1	88	510	57	6,265
Ethiopia	104,957,000	10,472	10,023	1	395	2,416	221	23,401
Falkland Islands	2,910	15	194	18		1	1	24
Faroe Islands	50,844	123	413	-6		28	4	170
Fiji	912,241	3,250	281	1	127	505	82	11,131
Finland	5,513,130	18,324	301		241	2,132	290	24,814
France	65,204,153	129,974	502	1	2,126	15,012	1,687	222,822
French Guiana	290,384	2,694	108	3	109	429	47	10,535
Gabon	1,853,964	4,604	403	4	185	609	53	11,002
Gambia	2,163,765	246	8,796	7	4	32	5	597
Georgia	3,729,600	18,173	205		456	3,334	219	31,930

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Germany	82,792,351	165,870	499		2,791	13,998	2,105	262,628
Ghana	29,463,643	140,274	210	3	6,260	15,639	2,097	387,138
Gibraltar	34,733	128	271	4	4	18	2	156
Greece	10,815,197	28,254	383	-1	524	4,059	359	44,777
Greenland	55,877	165	339	-5	5	35	5	318
Grenada	117,724	595	198		5	65	10	1,215
Guadeloupe	403,613	8,332	48	1	207	708	121	19,065
Guam	159,358	745	214	3	11	159	10	1,878
Guatemala	17,368,134	40,490	429	1	1,315	6,688	884	96,570
Guinea	13,740,608	1,015	13,538	8	49	119	20	4,059
Guinea-Bissau	1,907,268	171	11,154	3	8	44	3	642
Guyana	775,864	3,121	249		132	472	48	13,330
Haiti	9,993,000	19,951	501		995	2,788	282	82,913
Honduras	8,429,901	23,430	360		883	4,276	450	63,549
Hong Kong	7,448,900	5,571	1,337	1	498	1,104	63	9,880
Hungary	9,688,847	21,412	452	-2	411	1,861	294	36,677
Iceland	348,450	387	900	2	7	55	7	713
India	1,354,051,854	48,615	27,853	4	1,702	7,958	684	136,916
Indonesia	268,459,957	28,283	9,492	2	1,442	4,283	492	58,658
Ireland	6,632,457	7,061	939	2	131	1,048	120	11,842
Israel	9,055,123	1,808	5,008	7	42	309	31	4,179
Italy	60,457,909	251,502	240		4,307	37,435	2,921	417,090
Jamaica	2,899,000	11,425	254	-1	315	1,522	178	31,962
Japan	127,185,332	212,802	598		2,050	65,890	3,025	294,296
Kazakhstan	18,533,849	17,507	1,059	-1	517	3,869	261	30,809
Kenya	51,226,537	29,860	1,716	2	1,160	3,643	641	73,103
Kiribati	118,414	150	789	5	9	33	3	557
Korea, Republic of	51,635,256	101,246	510		1,770	43,692	1,278	135,489
Kosovo	1,798,506	262	6,865	-1	7	110	8	579
Kosrae	6,616	18	368	-6		6	1	82
Kyrgyzstan	6,256,700	5,420	1,154	1	183	1,223	83	10,321
Latvia	1,925,253	2,216	869	-1	42	328	37	3,288
Lesotho	2,269,178	4,248	534	2	169	517	91	10,919
Liberia	4,892,190	7,286	671	3	333	707	141	46,011
Liechtenstein	38,110	90	423	-1		2	1	132
Lithuania	2,799,127	3,026	925	-1	55	435	46	4,661
Luxembourg	602,005	2,141	281	1	41	182	33	3,861
Macao	658,900	346	1,904	10	7	86	5	765
Macedonia	2,088,091	1,281	1,630		54	159	23	2,870
Madagascar	26,431,287	35,823	738	3	2,382	5,826	778	136,847
Madeira	254,368	1,152	221	1	20	118	19	1,836
Malawi	18,990,325	95,203	199	5	6,692	7,331	1,571	339,734
Malaysia	32,000,000	5,350	5,981	4	292	1,440	118	13,584
Mali	19,107,706	322	59,341	4	13	56	7	1,096
Malta	431,000	774	557	6	20	101	10	1,274
Marshall Islands	69,747	226	309	-6	4	31	4	793
Martinique	384,769	4,901	79		106	583	62	10,233
Mauritius	1,266,692	1,917	661		94	205	26	4,234
Mayotte	260,000	177	1,469	8	4	43	3	358
Mexico	131,918,726	871,339	151	1	29,134	143,820	13,245	2,214,594
Moldova	4,043,000	19,213	210	-2	497	2,224	210	34,199
Mongolia	3,121,772	459	6,801	-2	8	210	9	1,269
Montenegro	620,029	274	2,263		10	57	5	571
Montserrat	5,292	34	156	24		17	1	162
Mozambique	30,500,000	64,536	473	6	4,065	5,491	1,289	306,876
Myanmar	53,866,417	4,499	11,973	4	123	673	82	9,585
Namibia	2,599,082	2,476	1,050	1	44	272	45	8,202
Nauru	11,302	19	595	6		2	1	83
Nepal	28,441,000	2,629	10,818	5	147	910	41	8,097
Netherlands	17,218,328	29,603	582	-1	482	2,034	357	49,622
Nevis	12,000	65	185	5		3	1	225
New Caledonia	284,000	2,489	114	5	107	265	32	7,255
New Zealand	4,749,598	14,301	332		287	1,338	186	26,513
Nicaragua	6,290,787	29,243	215	1	809	4,499	502	88,303
Niger	22,311,000	332	67,202	6	18	37	7	860
Nigeria	195,875,000	390,250	502	2	13,256	40,430	6,547	806,256
Niue	1,624	22	74	-9		2	1	52
Norfolk Island	1,748	9	194	17		1	1	26
Norway	5,312,343	11,745	452	1	234	1,134	167	17,235
Pakistan	197,015,955	1,140	172,821	1	44	87	20	3,622
Palau	21,108	80	264	-9	1	8	2	221

Country or Territory	Population	2018 Peak Pubs.	Ratio, 1 Publisher to	% Inc. Over 2017	2018 No. Bptzd.	Av. Pio. Pubs.	No. of Congs.	Memorial Attendance
Palestinian Territories	4,780,000	68	70,294	-18	4	12	2	147
Panama	4,116,741	17,780	232	2	574	3,011	321	53,238
Papua New Guinea	8,418,346	5,141	1,637	4	393	546	118	39,086
Paraguay	6,932,449	10,750	645	2	483	1,873	239	22,796
Peru	31,237,385	131,624	237	2	3,913	28,750	1,493	370,882
Philippines	105,097,329	217,220	484	3	9,330	46,757	3,419	601,325
Pohnpei	35,981	67	537	-10		19	1	183
Poland	38,433,558	116,299	330	-1	1,508	8,383	1,288	180,603
Portugal	9,792,797	49,299	199	1	1,072	4,638	652	86,182
Puerto Rico	3,659,000	23,632	155	-7	472	3,753	299	46,097
Réunion	883,153	3,380	261	3	87	451	41	6,535
Rodrigues	42,638	57	748	10		16	1	183
Romania	19,581,000	39,788	492	-1	738	3,990	538	75,082
Rota	2,477	12	206			3	1	23
Rwanda	12,089,721	30,076	402	3	1,777	5,272	553	80,601
Saba	1,800	11	164	-18		2		65
St. Barthélemy	9,604	34	282	-14		5	1	66
St. Eustatius	4,020	30	134			3	1	102
St. Helena	4,074	117	35	1			3	246
St. Kitts	40,715	216	188	-1	8	27	4	684
St. Lucia	164,994	819	201	5	23	114	11	1,760
St. Maarten	42,083	361	117	4	14	40	5	876
St. Martin	36,629	300	122	-9	3	27	5	1,047
St. Pierre and Miquelon	6,372	12	531	-23		6	1	19
St. Vincent & the Grenadines	102,089	344	297	-2	2	41	8	982
Saipan	48,200	217	222	-1	14	37	3	498
Samoa	197,695	538	367	6	38	99	12	2,300
San Marino	34,589	198	175	3		35	2	313
São Tomé and Príncipe	201,025	875	230	6	54	142	13	3,231
Senegal	16,294,270	1,369	11,902	3	38	169	29	2,725
Serbia	7,040,272	3,933	1,790		90	637	66	8,149
Seychelles	94,988	338	281	-2	6	41	4	906
Sierra Leone	6,926,767	2,349	2,949	3	130	297	40	7,179
Slovakia	5,445,087	11,293	482	-1	188	929	134	20,639
Slovenia	2,075,000	1,841	1,127	-2	17	232	30	2,842
Solomon Islands	626,227	2,077	302	-1	120	228	52	9,953
South Africa	57,539,935	105,232	547	2	4,581	13,209	2,034	262,126
South Sudan	13,172,963	1,697	7,763	6	96	177	32	5,435
Spain	46,397,452	114,544	405	1	2,230	16,423	1,486	189,369
Sri Lanka	20,967,913	6,482	3,235	5	395	797	115	15,656
Sudan	41,727,690	633	65,921	-3	22	95	14	2,319
Suriname	569,874	3,133	182	2	126	336	56	10,061
Swaziland	1,396,414	3,316	421	1	133	322	80	8,272
Sweden	10,182,291	22,330	456		321	2,400	306	34,035
Switzerland	8,482,152	19,354	438		240	1,313	272	31,329
Tahiti	275,918	3,250	85	1	116	508	48	9,196
Taiwan	23,570,000	10,839	2,175	3	344	3,603	181	20,626
Tanzania	59,477,688	18,705	3,180	4	1,066	1,950	455	58,620
Thailand	68,414,135	5,170	13,233	6	154	1,923	125	10,347
Timor-Leste	1,324,094	366	3,618	4	28	82	5	845
Tinian	2,500	14	179	8		1	1	41
Togo	7,991,000	21,755	367	3	794	2,290	307	64,898
Tonga	109,008	209	522	-5	6	30	2	511
Trinidad & Tobago	1,371,824	10,030	137	1	274	1,322	127	24,401
Turkey	80,810,525	3,506	23,049	13	121	841	47	6,275
Turks and Caicos	36,000	338	107	2	10	49	6	985
Tuvalu	11,308	88	129	-6	9	7	1	224
Uganda	39,049,142	8,179	4,774	7	486	1,116	152	28,147
Ukraine	42,309,269	138,513	305	-6	2,897	18,457	1,522	217,417
United States	326,767,000	1,234,877	265		26,618	181,822	13,016	2,441,125
Uruguay	3,505,985	11,915	294	1	323	1,283	152	23,579
Vanuatu	283,432	753	376	3	64	84	16	3,797
Venezuela	32,560,997	148,042	220	-3	7,259	32,152	1,801	452,717
Virgin Islands, British	32,000	260	123	3		34	4	699
Virgin Islands, U.S.	105,000	607	173	1	8	118	10	1,549
Wallis & Futuna Islands	11,000	52	212	15	1	3	1	275
Yap	11,376	30	379	4	3	10	1	124
Zambia	16,897,386	204,176	83	6	16,218	16,362	3,249	931,426
Zimbabwe	16,913,261	48,278	350	4	2,079	6,678	1,353	122,058
33 Other Lands		223,747		1.3	4,672	45,348	3,371	334,215
Grand Total (240 Lands)		8,579,909		1.4	281,744	1,267,808	119,954	20,329,317

Year	Number of Lands	World Average Publishers	Number Baptized	Memorial Attendance	Memorial Partakers	% Inc. World Average Publishers
2018	240	8,360,594	281,744	20,329,317	19,521	1.4%
2017	240	8,248,982	284,212	20,175,477	18,564	1.4%
2016	240	8,132,358	264,535	20,085,142	18,013	1.8%
2015	240	7,987,279	260,273	19,862,783	15,177	1.5%
2014	239	7,867,958	275,581	19,950,019	14,121	2.2%
2013	239	7,698,377	277,344	19,241,252	13,204	2.1%
2012	239	7,538,994	268,777	19,013,343	12,604	1.9%
2011	236	7,395,672	263,131	19,374,737	11,824	2.4%
2010	236	7,224,930	294,368	18,706,895	11,202	-1.2%
2009	236	7,313,173	276,233	18,168,323	10,857	7.1%
2008	236	6,829,455	289,678	17,790,631	9,986	2.1%
2007	236	6,691,790	298,304	17,672,443	9,105	3.1%
2006	236	6,491,775	248,327	16,675,113	8,758	1.6%
2005	235	6,390,016	247,631	16,383,333	8,524	1.3%
2004	235	6,308,341	262,416	16,760,607	8,570	2.0%
2003	235	6,184,046	258,845	16,097,622	8,565	2.2%
2002	234	6,048,600	265,469	15,597,746	8,760	2.8%
2001	235	5,881,776	263,431	15,374,986	8,730	1.7%
2000	235	5,783,003	288,907	14,872,086	8,661	2.3%
1999	234	5,653,987	323,439	14,088,751	8,755	2.0%
1998	233	5,544,059	316,092	13,896,312	8,756	3.6%
1997	232	5,353,078	375,923	14,322,226	8,795	3.6%
1996	233	5,167,258	366,579	12,921,933	8,757	4.4%
1995	232	4,950,344	338,491	13,147,201	8,645	5.4%
1994	232	4,695,111	314,818	12,288,917	8,617	4.7%
1993	231	4,483,900	296,004	11,865,765	8,693	4.5%
1992	229	4,289,737	301,002	11,431,171	8,683	5.3%
1991	211	4,071,954	300,945	10,650,158	8,850	5.9%
1990	212	3,846,311	301,518	9,950,058	8,869	6.1%
1989	212	3,624,773	263,855	9,479,064	8,734	5.6%
1988	212	3,430,926	239,268	9,201,071	8,685	6.0%
1987	210	3,237,751	230,843	8,965,221	8,808	5.7%
1986	208	3,063,289	225,868	8,160,597	8,927	6.9%
1985	205	2,865,183	189,800	7,792,109	9,051	6.9%
1984	203	2,680,274	179,421	7,416,974	9,081	7.1%
1983	205	2,501,722	161,896	6,767,707	9,292	6.8%
1982	205	2,342,634	138,540	6,252,787	9,529	4.2%
1981	206	2,247,486	119,836	5,987,893	9,601	3.3%
1980	205	2,175,403	113,779	5,726,656	9,564	3.7%
1979	205	2,097,070	113,672	5,323,766	9,727	0.5%
1978	205	2,086,698	95,052	5,095,831	9,767	-1.4%
1977	216	2,117,194	124,459	5,107,518	10,080	-1.0%
1976	210	2,138,537	196,656	4,972,571	10,187	3.7%
1975	210	2,062,449	295,073	4,925,643	10,550	9.7%
1974	207	1,880,713	297,872	3,550,457	10,723	13.5%
1973	208	1,656,673	193,990	3,994,924	10,523	3.8%
1972	208	1,596,442	163,123	3,662,407	10,350	5.7%
1971	207	1,510,245	149,808	3,453,542	10,384	9.1%
1970	206	1,384,782	164,193	2,226,168	10,526	10.2%
1969	203	1,256,784	120,905	2,719,860	10,368	8.7%
1968	200	1,155,826	82,842	2,493,519	10,619	5.6%
1967	197	1,094,280	74,981	2,195,612	10,981	3.4%
1966	199	1,058,675	58,904	1,971,107	11,179	2.4%
1965	197	1,034,268	64,393	1,933,089	11,550	3.2%
1964	194	1,001,870	68,236	1,809,476	11,953	4.7%
1963	194	956,648	62,798	1,693,752	12,292	3.9%
1962	189	920,920	69,649	1,639,681	12,714	4.1%
1961	185	884,587		1,553,909	13,284	3.9%
1960	179	851,378	69,027	1,519,821	13,911	6.0%
1959	175	803,482	86,345	1,283,603	14,511	12.0%
1958	175	717,088	62,666	1,171,789	15,037	9.8%
1957	164	653,273	59,828	1,075,163	15,628	10.4%
1956	162	591,556		919,994	16,302	3.7%
1955	158	570,694	63,642	878,303	16,815	8.5%
1954	159	525,924	57,369	829,836	17,884	12.4%
1953	143	468,106	50,665	742,565	19,183	9.7%
1952	127	426,704	54,707	667,099		10.9%
1951	121	384,694	63,178			17.1%
1950	115	328,572		511,203		

Memorial Partakers



PREPARED TO PREACH DESPITE PERSECUTION

MATTHEW 10:16-11:1 MARK 6:12, 13 LUKE 9:6

Jesus provides his apostles with excellent instructions on how to carry out the preaching work as they go forth in pairs. He does not stop there, however. He kindly warns them about opposers: “Look! I am sending you out as sheep among wolves . . . Be on your guard against men, for they will hand you over to local courts and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake.”—Matthew 10:16-18.

Yes, Jesus’ followers may encounter severe persecution, yet he reassuringly promises them: “When they hand you over, do not become anxious about how or what you are to speak, for what you are to speak will be given you in that hour; for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you.” Jesus continues: “Brother will hand brother over to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and will have them put to death. And you will be hated by all people on account of my name, but the one who has endured to the end will be saved.”—Matthew 10:19-22.

Because the preaching is of primary importance, Jesus emphasizes the need for his followers to be discreet so as to remain free to car-

ry out this work. He says: “When they persecute you in one city, flee to another; for truly I say to you, you will by no means complete the circuit of the cities of Israel until the Son of man arrives.”—Matthew 10:23.

What outstanding instructions, warnings, and encouragement Jesus gives to his 12 apostles! You can appreciate, though, that these words are also meant for those who will share in the preaching work after Jesus’ death and resurrection. This is shown by his saying that his disciples will be “hated by *all* people,” not just by those to whom the apostles are being sent to preach. Furthermore, we do not read of the apostles’ being brought before governors and kings during this short preaching campaign in Galilee nor of their being delivered up to death by family members.

Clearly, Jesus has the future in mind in saying these things to the apostles. Consider his statement that his disciples will not complete their circuit of preaching “until the Son of man arrives.” Jesus is indicating that his disciples will not complete the preaching about God’s Kingdom before the glorified King Jesus Christ arrives as God’s judge.

While carrying out the preaching work, the



apostles should not be surprised to face opposition, for Jesus says: “A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.” Jesus’ point is clear. He faces ill-treatment and persecution for preaching God’s Kingdom, and so will they. Yet Jesus urges: “Do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, fear him who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.”—Matthew 10: 24, 28.

In this, Jesus set the example. He fearlessly endured death rather than compromise his loyalty to the one with all power, Jehovah. It is Almighty God who can destroy a person’s “soul” (his future prospects for life) or who can resurrect him to enjoy everlasting life. How reassuring this must be to the apostles!

Jesus illustrates God’s loving care for his followers in this way: “Two sparrows sell for a coin of small value, do they not? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. . . . So have no fear; you are worth more than many sparrows.”—Matthew 10: 29, 31.

The message Jesus’ disciples preach will divide households, some family members accepting it and others not. “Do not think I came to bring peace to the earth,” Jesus explains. Yes, it takes courage for a family member to em-



brace Bible truth. “Whoever has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me,” Jesus observes, “and whoever has greater affection for son or daughter than for me is not worthy of me.”—Matthew 10:34, 37.

Yet, some will receive his disciples favorably. He says: “Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water to drink because he is a disciple, I tell you truly, he will by no means lose his reward.”—Matthew 10:42.

Well-equipped with Jesus’ instructions, warnings, and encouragement, the apostles head out “through the territory from village to village, declaring the good news and performing cures everywhere.”—Luke 9:6.

-
- ◇ Jesus provides what warnings for his disciples?
 - ◇ What encouragement and comfort does he give them?
 - ◇ Why do Jesus’ instructions also apply to us today?

Enduring to the End

(Matthew 24:13)

E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7/D E♭ E♭sus4 E♭ E♭/G Fm/A♭ A♭ B♭7 E♭

God's Word and all it prom - is - es Give rea - son to en - dure.
Main - tain the love you had at first, Which some - how could be lost.
All those en - dur - ing to the end Are those who will be saved.

B♭7 E♭ D°7 Cm/E♭ G7/D Cm Fm/A♭ A♭ma7 B♭ B♭7 E♭

The things you've learned and come to love Are all well - found - ed and sure.
De - spite the tri - als you will meet, En - dure no mat - ter the cost.
The book of life will list their names, A rec - ord clear - ly en - graved.

A♭ E♭/B♭ A♭/C A° E♭/B♭ B♭7 E♭ Fm/C C7 Fm E♭/G Fm/A♭ F7/A B♭

Be sta - bi - lized in ho - ly faith, Keep - ing God's day close in mind.
What - ev - er test may come your way, Nev - er yield to doubt or fear.
So let en - dur - ance be your aim; Let it have its work com - plete.

B♭7/D E♭ B♭7 E♭ B♭7/D E♭ E♭sus4 E♭ A♭ E♭/G Fm/A♭ E♭/B♭ B♭7 E♭

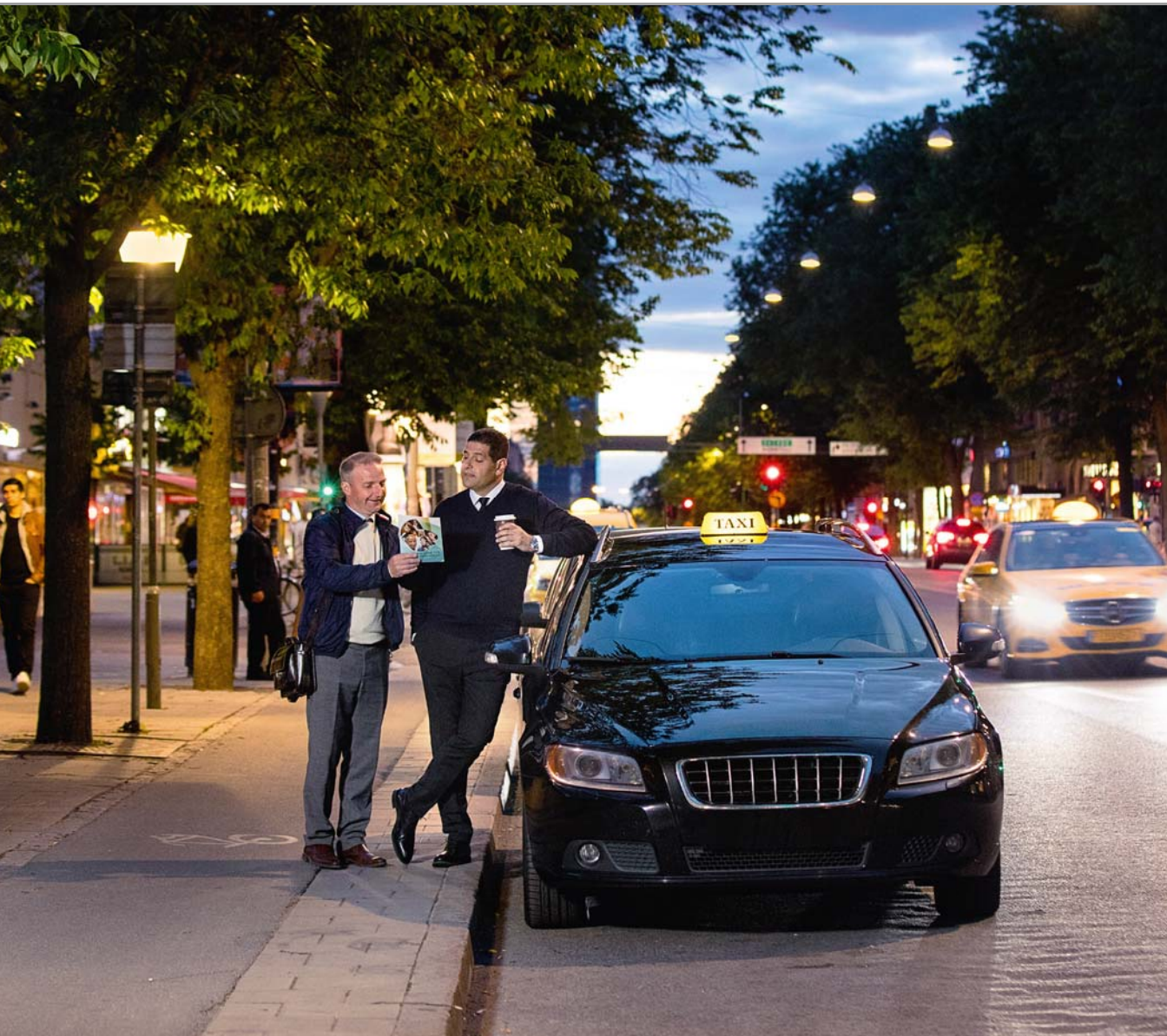
Stand firm in your in - teg - ri - ty; By tests you will be re - fined.
Je - ho - vah will pro - vide es - cape, Our God ev - er will be near.
Je - ho - vah's fa - vor you will know; With joy you will be re - plete.

(See also Heb. 6:19; Jas. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:12; Rev. 2:4.)

NOVEMBER 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



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



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

PUBLISHERS
22,418

BIBLE STUDIES
10,027

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2017)
34,966

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

8 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.

13 WEEK OF **JANUARY 14-20**
Trust in Jehovah and Live!

The book of Habakkuk shows us how to maintain a trusting relationship with Jehovah when we experience distress. This article helps us to see that even if worries, trials, and pain increase, ultimately our trust in God will be rewarded with deliverance.

18 WEEK OF **JANUARY 21-27**
Who Molds Your Thinking?

23 WEEK OF **JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3**
Are You Making Jehovah’s Thoughts Your Own?

As we grow spiritually, we come to appreciate the superiority of Jehovah’s way of thinking. These two articles explain how we can avoid being molded by the world’s thoughts and instead align our thinking with Jehovah’s.

28 **Kindness—A Quality Expressed in Word and Action**

31 **QUESTIONS FROM READERS**

32 **What Gift Can We Give to Jehovah?**

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

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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 14 November 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2018 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

November 2018
Vol. 139, No. 14 ENGLISH

3 Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

(Proverbs 14:26)

C F G C G/B

O Je - ho - vah, you have giv - en us a
So Je - ho - vah, please in - still in us a

Am F Gsus4 G

hope that we hold dear. It's a
heart that won't for - get, For you've

C F G Am Am/G

hope we find so thrill - ing we
al - ways been our com - fort when

F Dm7 Gsus4 G

want the world to hear. But at
trou - bled times we've met. And these

Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

C F G C C/B

times thoughts this that life's lift anx and i - e - ties strength - en us are the can re -

Detailed description: This system contains the first line of music. The treble clef staff has a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and moving lines. The lyrics are: "times thoughts this that life's lift anx and i - e - ties strength - en us are the can re -".

Am F Gsus4 G G7/F

cause vive of that fears dy - ing with - ing in, flame, And For the they

Detailed description: This system contains the second line of music. The treble clef staff continues the melody. The bass clef staff includes a measure with a 7 (dominant seventh) chord. The lyrics are: "cause vive of that fears dy - ing with - ing in, flame, And For the they".

C/E F G Am

hope fill that our hearts burned so with bright - ly cour - age has to

Detailed description: This system contains the third line of music. The treble clef staff continues the melody. The bass clef staff includes a measure with a 7 (dominant seventh) chord. The lyrics are: "hope fill that our hearts burned so with bright - ly cour - age has to".

F Dm7 E7sus4 E7 Chorus

sud speak - den - ly a - bout grown your dim. name. You're our

Detailed description: This system contains the fourth line of music, which is the start of the chorus. The treble clef staff features chords and a melodic line. The bass clef staff provides a bass line. The lyrics are: "sud speak - den - ly a - bout grown your dim. name. You're our".

Our Strength, Our Hope, Our Confidence

Am Am/G G/F F C/E

strength, you're our hope, you're our con - fi - dence. What -

Detailed description: This system contains the first line of music. The treble staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature. It features a melody of eighth and quarter notes with lyrics underneath. The bass staff provides a simple accompaniment of quarter notes. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff: Am, Am/G, G/F, F, and C/E.

Dm7 Am/C Bb Fadd9 G7sus4 G7

ev - er we lack, you sup - ply. When we

Detailed description: This system contains the second line of music. The treble staff continues the melody with lyrics. The bass staff has a more active accompaniment with eighth notes. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff: Dm7, Am/C, Bb, Fadd9, G7sus4, and G7.

Am Am/G G/F F Dm7

preach, when we teach, we have con - fi - dence be -

Detailed description: This system contains the third line of music. The treble staff continues the melody with lyrics. The bass staff continues the accompaniment. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff: Am, Am/G, G/F, F, and Dm7.

C/E F6 F/G G13 C

cause it's on you we re - ly.

Detailed description: This system contains the final line of music. The treble staff continues the melody with lyrics. The bass staff continues the accompaniment. Chord symbols are placed above the treble staff: C/E, F6, F/G, G13, and C. The final chord, C, is held for a longer duration, indicated by a large oval.

(See also Ps. 72:13, 14; Prov. 3:5, 6, 26; Jer. 17:7.)



Trust in Jehovah and Live!

“Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding.”—PROV. 3:5.

WE ALL need comfort. Perhaps worries, disappointments, and afflictions have become part of our life. We may be struggling with heartaches resulting from advancing age, disease, or the loss of a loved one. Some of us are subjected to hostility. Escalating violence surrounds us. True, we are convinced that these “critical times hard to deal with” are evidence that we are living “in the last days” and that each passing day brings us one step closer to the new world. (2 Tim. 3:1) Still, we may have been waiting for a long time to see the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises, and our difficulties may be increasing. So where can we find comfort?

² To find the answer, let us examine the book of Habakkuk. Though the Scriptures do not provide specific details about Habakkuk’s life and activity, the book that bears his name is a source of encouragement. His name probably means “Ardent

1. Why do we all need comfort?
- 2, 3. (a) What do we know about Habakkuk? (b) Why will we consider the book of Habakkuk?

SONGS: 3, 8

DO YOU REMEMBER?

Why can we tell Jehovah our concerns?

What should our prayers include?

Why is waiting on Jehovah so important?

Embrace.” This could refer to Jehovah’s comforting embrace or to the way his worshippers confidently cling to him. Habakkuk spoke to God, asking probing questions. In effect, he asked questions on our behalf, since Jehovah inspired Habakkuk to write down the conversation.—Hab. 2:2.

³ This intimate dialogue between the distraught man of God and Jehovah is all the Scriptures reveal about the prophet. His book is part of “all the things that were written beforehand” and that are preserved in God’s Word, the Bible, “so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” (Rom. 15:4) How can we personally benefit from the book of Habakkuk? It can help us to see what it means to trust in Jehovah. Further, Habakkuk’s prophecy assures us that it is possible to acquire and maintain a calm heart despite our afflictions and problems. With that in mind, let us consider the book of Habakkuk in more detail.

CALL ON JEHOVAH

⁴ **Read Habakkuk 1:2, 3.** Habakkuk lived during a very difficult and challenging time. He was deeply saddened because he was surrounded by wicked, violent people. When would their wickedness end? Why did Jehovah take so long before acting? All Habakkuk saw was injustice and oppression practiced by his own countrymen. He felt helpless. So in the midst of this dark period, he called on Jehovah to intervene. Habakkuk may have started to imagine that Jehovah was not concerned. It

4. Why was Habakkuk distraught?

seemed that God would not act soon enough. Can you identify with the feelings of this dear servant of God?

⁵ Had Habakkuk lost trust in Jehovah? Did he fail to maintain his faith in God’s promises? By no means! The mere fact that he entrusted his problems and concerns to Jehovah and not to humans shows that he had not given up in despair. He was obviously troubled because he could not understand God’s timing or the reason why Jehovah allowed him to be in such a painful situation. By inspiring Habakkuk to write down his concerns, Jehovah provided us with an important object lesson: We must not be afraid to tell Him about our concerns or doubts. Indeed, he kindly invites us to pour out our heart to him in prayer. (Ps. 50:15; 62:8) Proverbs 3:5 adds the encouragement to “trust in Jehovah with all [our] heart” and not to “rely on [our] own understanding.” Habakkuk likely knew these words and took them to heart.

⁶ Habakkuk took the initiative to draw close to Jehovah, his trusted Friend and Father. Habakkuk did not just fret over his situation, relying on his own understanding. Instead, he prayed about his feelings and worries, setting a good example for us. Moreover, Jehovah, the Hearer of prayer, invites us to show our trust by prayerfully sharing our concerns with him. (Ps. 65:2) Doing so will help us to experience Jehovah’s response—his warm embrace by means of his kind guidance. (Ps. 73:23, 24) He will help us to know his thoughts no matter

5. What important lesson is found in the book of Habakkuk? (See opening picture.)

6. Why is prayer important?

what afflicts us. Our heartfelt prayers are one of the deepest expressions of our trust in God.

LISTEN TO JEHOVAH

7 Read Habakkuk 1:5-7. After leaving his worries and concerns in Jehovah's hands, Habakkuk may have wondered how Jehovah would react. As an empathetic and understanding Father, Jehovah did not rebuke him for his sincere complaint. God knew that it was a desperate cry of pain and sorrow. In words really aimed at the wayward Jews, Jehovah informed Habakkuk of what would happen in the near future. It could well be that Habakkuk was the first to whom Jehovah revealed that the end of that violent era was very near.

8 Jehovah showed Habakkuk that He was ready to act. The punishment of that violent and wicked generation was imminent. By the expression "in your days," Jehovah indicated that this judgment would definitely occur during the lifetime of the prophet or that of his contemporaries. Jehovah's reply was not at all what Habakkuk expected. Was this the answer to his impatient cry? What Jehovah told him surely meant that suffering would increase for all of Judah.* The Chaldeans (Babylonians) were ruthless and brutal, more violent than Habakkuk's own people, who at least knew Jehovah's standards. Why would Jehovah use this cruel pagan nation to bring calamity on his

* Habakkuk 1:5 uses the plural "you," indicating that this calamity would befall all of Judah.

7. How did Jehovah react to Habakkuk's worries?

8. Why did Jehovah's response puzzle Habakkuk?

people? How would you have reacted after hearing this divine response?

9 Read Habakkuk 1:12-14, 17. Habakkuk understood that Jehovah would use Babylon to judge and punish the evil-doers surrounding him, but he was still perplexed. Yet, he humbly told Jehovah that He continued to be his "Rock." (Deut. 32:4; Isa. 26:4) Habakkuk would patiently continue to trust in God's love and kindness. The prophet's resolve gave him the confidence to appeal to Jehovah again. Why would God allow conditions in Judah to get even worse? Why would he not act right away? Why would the Almighty tolerate even more distress? Why would he "keep silent" when wickedness took over? He is the "Holy One"; his "eyes are too pure to look on what is evil."

10 At times, we may feel as did Habakkuk. We listen to Jehovah. With full trust, we read and study his Word, and this gives us hope. We hear about his promises through the instruction that his organization provides. But we still may wonder, 'When will our afflictions end?' What can we learn from what Habakkuk did next?

WAIT ON JEHOVAH

11 Read Habakkuk 2:1. Habakkuk's conversation with Jehovah gave him a calm heart. So he resolved to keep waiting confidently on Jehovah to act. This was not just a spur-of-the-moment reaction, for he repeated his resolve when

9. What questions may Habakkuk have asked himself?

10. How might we at times feel as did Habakkuk?

11. What did Habakkuk resolve to do after listening to Jehovah?

he later said that he would “quietly wait for the day of distress.” (Hab. 3:16) Other faithful servants of God displayed the same patient trust, encouraging us not to give up waiting on Jehovah to act.—Mic. 7:7; Jas. 5:7, 8.

¹² What does Habakkuk’s resolve teach us? First, we must never stop praying to Jehovah, no matter what trials befall us. Second, we need to listen to what Jehovah tells us through his Word and organization. Third, we should patiently wait on Jehovah, fully trusting that he will relieve our pains in his own time. If we continue to talk intimately with Jehovah and listen to him with a waiting attitude, as Habakkuk did, we too will gain a calm heart, which will help us to endure. Our hope will strengthen our patience, which in turn will help us to rejoice despite all the adversities we may face. Hope gives us confidence that our heavenly Father will act.—Rom. 12:12.

¹³ **Read Habakkuk 2:3.** Jehovah surely was pleased with Habakkuk’s decision to wait. The Almighty was fully aware of Habakkuk’s dire circumstances. Therefore, God provided consolation by lovingly and gently assuring the prophet that he would receive answers to his sincere questions. Relief for all his worries would come before too long. God, in effect, told Habakkuk: “Be patient, trust in me. My answer will come despite the apparent delay!” Jehovah reminded him that He had an appointed time for fulfilling His promises. He counseled Habakkuk to wait for the accomplishment of His purposes. Ulti-

12. What are some lessons we learn from Habakkuk?

13. What kind assurance do we find at Habakkuk 2:3?

mately, the prophet would not be disappointed.

¹⁴ Patiently waiting on Jehovah and paying close attention to what he tells us will give us confidence and will help us to acquire a calm heart despite adversities and hardships. Jesus confirmed that we can trust in Jehovah as the Great Timekeeper, not focusing on “times or seasons” that God has not yet revealed. (Acts 1:7) Therefore, may we not give up but wait in humility, faith, and patience, making good use of the time we have to serve Jehovah to the best of our abilities.—Mark 13:35-37; Gal. 6:9.

TRUSTING IN JEHOVAH RESULTS IN LIFE AND A GLORIOUS FUTURE

¹⁵ To the righteous who trust in him, Jehovah has promised: “The righteous one will live by his faithfulness,” and “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Jehovah.” (Hab. 2:4, 14) Yes, those who patiently trust in God will be rewarded with life.

¹⁶ At first glance, the promise found at Habakkuk 2:4 might seem to be merely a general statement. However, the apostle Paul saw Jehovah’s assurance as so significant that he quoted this verse three times! (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38) Whatever difficulties the righteous one may suffer, he will by his faith and trust live to see the fulfillment of God’s purposes. Jehovah tells us to look beyond the present.

14. What should be our resolve in times of trouble?

15, 16. (a) What powerful promises can we find in the book of Habakkuk? (b) What do these promises teach us?



Why are we resolved to serve Jehovah to the best of our abilities? (See paragraph 14)

¹⁷ The book of Habakkuk provides a powerful lesson for all of us living in these last days. Jehovah extends his promise of life to any righteous person who displays faith and trust in Him. Let us continue to strengthen our faith and trust in God, no matter what distress and anxiety we face. Through Habakkuk, Jehovah assures us that He will support and deliver us. He kindly asks us to trust in him and to wait patiently for his appointed time when, under God's Kingdom, the whole earth will be filled with his happy and mild-tempered worshippers.—Matt. 5:5; Heb. 10:36-39.

JOYFULLY TRUST IN JEHOVAH

¹⁸ **Read Habakkuk 3:16-19.** Jehovah's words had a profound effect on Habakkuk. He meditated on Jehovah's awe-inspiring past actions in behalf of his people. Now he was able to renew his trust. He knew that Jehovah would act soon! That comforted the prophet, even though he knew that his own suffering might continue for a time. Habakkuk's honest doubt changed into unshakable,

17. What assurances does the book of Habakkuk give us?

18. How did Jehovah's words affect Habakkuk?

joyous trust in Jehovah's saving power. He uttered what may be one of the most memorable expressions of confidence ever expressed by a human. Some scholars think that verse 18 literally means "I will jump for joy in the Lord; I will spin round for delight in God." What a powerful assurance for all of us! Not only has Jehovah given us wonderful promises but he has assured us that he is swiftly working out his great purpose.

¹⁹ No doubt, the vital message of Habakkuk is to trust in Jehovah. (Hab. 2:4) We can acquire and maintain such trust if we strengthen our relationship with Jehovah by (1) persevering in prayer, telling Jehovah all about our anxieties and concerns; (2) paying careful attention to Jehovah's Word and any direction we receive through his organization; and (3) faithfully and patiently waiting on Jehovah. That is what Habakkuk did. Though he began his book with grief, he ended with a confident and joyful exclamation. May we follow this inspiring example so that we too can feel Jehovah's fatherly embrace! What greater comfort could we find in this darkening world?

19. How can we find the same comfort as did Habakkuk?

Jehovah Is Our Refuge

(Psalm 91)

C7 F F/A Dm

Je - ho - vah is our ref - uge, Our
Though thou - sands will have fall - en And
He'll keep us and pro - tect us From

Bb C7/G Gm C C7 F F/A

God in whom we trust. His shad - ow is our
man - y at our side, The righ - teous and the
snares a - long our way, From ter - rors in the

Dm Gm/Bb Gm D/A Gm/Bb C7 C13

shel - ter; Re - main in it we must. His
meek ones Will nev - er be de - nied. So
night - time, And ar - rows by the day. Yes,

F F/A Ab°

faith - ful ones he will de - fend, On
in our hearts we need not fear; Ca -
there will be no cause for dread, No

Jehovah Is Our Refuge

Gm D7/A Gm/Bb G7/B C G C7

this we know we can de - pend. Je -
lam - i - ty we will will not fear to come near. From
place where we will tread. Je -

F Dm Gm/Bb D/A

ho - vah is a strong - hold, Ev - er
dan - ger he will shield us, For be -
ho - vah is our ref - uge, Ev - er

Gm Eb7/G C7/G Am/C C7 F

faith - ful, loy - al, and just.
neath God's wings - we'll re - side.
guard - ing us on our way.

