

- Song 129 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Paul Sails for Rome”:** (10 min.)  
 Ac 27:23, 24—An angel told Paul that all those sailing with him would survive the storm (*bt* 208 ¶15)  
 Ac 28:1, 2—Paul was shipwrecked on Malta (*bt* 209 ¶18; 210 ¶21)  
 Ac 28:16, 17—Paul safely arrived in Rome (*bt* 213 ¶10)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Ac 27:9—What was “the fast of Atonement Day”? (*nwtsty* study note)

Ac 28:11—What is significant about the detail regarding the ship’s figurehead? (*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 27:1-12 (5)

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (2)
- **Bible Study:** (5 min. or less) *lvs* 165-166 ¶16-17 (3)

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

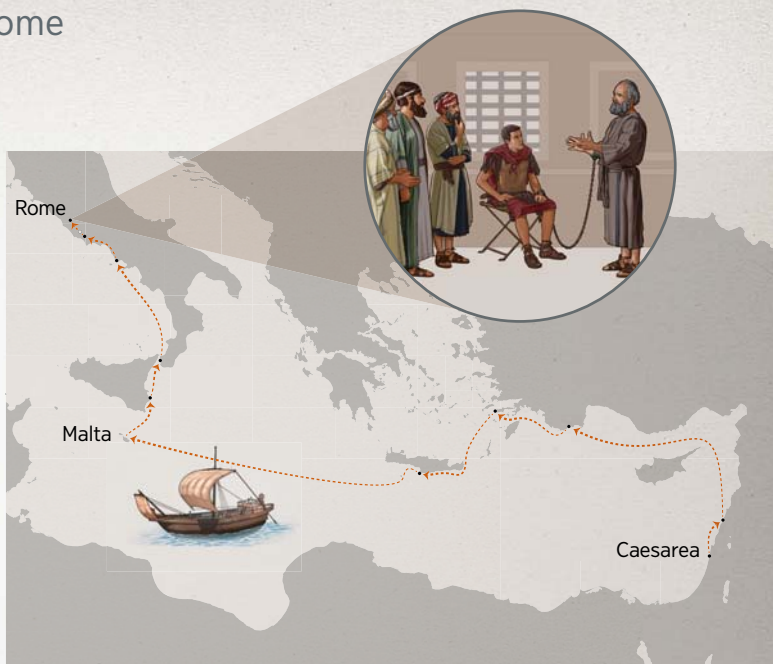
- Song 103
- **“Paul Thanked God and Took Courage”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Iron Sharpens Iron*”—*Excerpt*. Encourage all to view the video in its entirety (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 52
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 93 and Prayer

ACTS 27-28 | Paul Sails for Rome

**27:23, 24; 28:1, 2, 16, 17**

Paul never stopped sharing his faith despite being a prisoner. While on the ship, he witnessed to crew members and fellow passengers. After being shipwrecked on Malta, he no doubt took the opportunity to share the good news with those he healed. Just three days after arriving in Rome, he called together the principal men of the Jews in order to witness to them. And during the two years of his house arrest, he preached to all who visited him.

**What can you do to share the good news despite any limitations you may have?**



# *We Will Keep Enduring*

(Matthew 24:13)

## 1. How can we endure

When trials come, as Jesus said?  
Through his pain he saw  
The joy of better things ahead.  
God's promise, God's justice,  
Were thoughts on which he fed.

*(CHORUS)*

*We need to have endurance.  
Our faith we must defend.  
His love is our assurance.  
So we will keep enduring to the end.*

## 2. Though the passing years

May bring us sorrow, bring us pain;  
There beyond the tears,  
We see the life that we can gain.  
To be there, feel free there,  
Determined we remain.

*(Chorus)*

## 3. We will not give up

Nor see the need for doubt or fear.  
Faithfully we'll serve  
Until Jehovah's day is here.  
Let's keep on enduring.  
That time is very near.

*(Chorus)*

## Acts 27-28

**27** Now as it was decided for us to sail away to Italy, they handed Paul and some other prisoners over to an army officer named Julius, of the unit of Au-gus'tus. <sup>2</sup> Going aboard a ship from Ad-ra-myt'ti-um that was about to sail to ports along the coast of the province of Asia, we set sail; Ar-is-tar'chus, a Mac-e-do'ni-an from Thes-sa-lo-ni'ca, was with us. <sup>3</sup> The next day we landed at Si'don, and Julius treated Paul with kindness and permitted him to go to his friends and enjoy their care.

<sup>4</sup> And putting out to sea from there, we sailed under the shelter of Cy'prus, because the winds were against us. <sup>5</sup> Then we navigated through the open sea along Ci-li'cia and Pam-phyli'a and put into port at My'ra in Ly'ci-a. <sup>6</sup> There the army officer found a ship from Alexandria that was sailing for Italy, and he made us board it.

<sup>7</sup> Then after sailing on slowly quite a number of days, we came to Cni'dus with difficulty. Because the wind did not let us make headway, we sailed under the shelter of Crete off Sal-mo'ne. <sup>8</sup> And sailing with difficulty along the coast, we came to a place called Fair Havens, which was near the city of La-se'a.

<sup>9</sup> A considerable time had passed and by now it was hazardous to navigate, because even the fast of Atonement Day was already over, so Paul made a recommendation <sup>10</sup> to them: "Men, I can see that this voyage is going to result in damage and great loss not only of the cargo and the ship but also of our lives." <sup>11</sup> However, the army officer listened to the pilot and the shipowner rather than to what Paul was saying. <sup>12</sup> Since the harbor was unsuitable for wintering, the majority advised setting sail from there to see if they could somehow make it to spend the winter in Phoenix, a harbor of Crete that opens toward the northeast and toward the southeast.

<sup>13</sup> When the south wind blew softly, they thought they had achieved their purpose, and they lifted anchor and began sailing

along Crete close to the shore. <sup>14</sup> After a short time, however, a violent wind called Eu-ro-aq'ui-lo rushed down on it. <sup>15</sup> As the ship was violently seized and was not able to keep its head against the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. <sup>16</sup> Then we ran under the shelter of a small island called Cau'da, and yet we were hardly able to get the skiff at the stern of the ship under control. <sup>17</sup> But after hoisting it aboard, they used supports to undergird the ship, and fearing that they would run aground on the Syr'tis, they lowered the gear and so were driven along. <sup>18</sup> Because we were being violently tossed by the storm, they began to lighten the ship the following day. <sup>19</sup> And on the third day, they threw away the tackling of the ship with their own hands.

<sup>20</sup> When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and a violent storm was battering us, all hope of our being saved finally began to fade. <sup>21</sup> After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up in their midst and said: "Men, you certainly should have taken my advice and not have put out to sea from Crete and as a result suffered this damage and loss. <sup>22</sup> Still, I now urge you to take courage, for not one of you will be lost, only the ship will. <sup>23</sup> This night an angel of the God to whom I belong and to whom I render sacred service stood by me <sup>24</sup> and said: 'Have no fear, Paul. You must stand before Caesar, and look! God has granted to you all those sailing with you.' <sup>25</sup> So take courage, men, for I believe God that it will be exactly as I was told. <sup>26</sup> However, we must be cast ashore on some island."

<sup>27</sup> Now when the 14th night fell and we were being tossed about on the Sea of A'dri-a, at midnight the sailors began to suspect that they were getting near to some land. <sup>28</sup> They sounded the depth and found it 20 fathoms, so they proceeded a short distance and again made a sounding and found it 15 fathoms. <sup>29</sup> And fearing that we might run aground on the rocks, they cast out four anchors from the stern and began wishing for it to become day. <sup>30</sup> But when the

sailors began trying to escape from the ship and were lowering the skiff into the sea under the pretense of intending to let down anchors from the bow, <sup>31</sup> Paul said to the army officer and the soldiers: “Unless these men remain in the ship, you cannot be saved.” <sup>32</sup> Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the skiff and let it fall off.

<sup>33</sup> Now close to daybreak, Paul encouraged them all to take some food, saying: “Today is the 14th day you have been waiting anxiously, and you have gone without taking any food at all. <sup>34</sup> So I encourage you to eat some food; this is in the interests of your safety, for not a hair of the head of any one of you will perish.”

<sup>35</sup> After he said this, he took bread, gave thanks to God before them all, broke it, and started eating. <sup>36</sup> So they all took courage and began taking some food themselves. <sup>37</sup> In all we were 276 persons in the ship. <sup>38</sup> When they had eaten enough food to be satisfied, they lightened the ship by throwing the wheat overboard into the sea.

<sup>39</sup> When daylight came, they could not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a beach and were determined to beach the ship there if they could. <sup>40</sup> So they cut away the anchors and let them fall into the sea, at the same time loosening the lashings of the rudder oars; and after hoisting the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. <sup>41</sup> When they struck a shoal washed on each side by the sea, they ran the ship aground and the bow got stuck and stayed immovable, but the stern began to be violently broken to pieces by the waves. <sup>42</sup> At this the soldiers decided to kill the prisoners so that no one might swim away and escape. <sup>43</sup> But the army officer was determined to bring Paul safely through and prevented them from carrying out their plan. He commanded those able to swim to jump into the sea and make it to land first, <sup>44</sup> and the rest were to follow, some on planks and some on pieces of the ship. So all were brought safely to land.

**28** After we made it to safety, we learned that the island was called Malta. <sup>2</sup> And the foreign-speaking people showed us extraordinary kindness. They kindled a fire and received all of us kindly because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold. <sup>3</sup> But when Paul collected a bundle of sticks and laid it on the fire, a viper came out because of the heat and fastened itself on his hand. <sup>4</sup> When the foreign-speaking people caught sight of the venomous creature hanging from his hand, they began saying to one another: "Surely this man is a murderer, and although he made it to safety from the sea, Justice did not permit him to keep on living." <sup>5</sup> However, he shook the creature off into the fire and suffered no harm. <sup>6</sup> But they were expecting him to swell up or suddenly to drop dead. After they waited for a long time and saw that nothing bad happened to him, they changed their mind and began saying he was a god.

<sup>7</sup> Now in the neighborhood of that place were lands belonging to the principal man of the island, whose name was Pub'li-us, and he welcomed us and entertained us hospitably for three days. <sup>8</sup> It so happened that the father of Pub'li-us was lying in bed sick with fever and dysentery, and Paul went in to him and prayed, laid his hands on him, and healed him. <sup>9</sup> After this occurred, the rest of the people on the island who were sick also began to come to him and be cured. <sup>10</sup> They also honored us with many gifts, and when we were setting sail, they loaded us up with whatever we needed.

<sup>11</sup> Three months later we set sail in a ship with the figurehead "Sons of Zeus." The ship was from Alexandria and had wintered in the island. <sup>12</sup> Putting into port at Syracuse, we remained there for three days; <sup>13</sup> from there we went along and arrived at Rhe'gi-um. A day later a south wind sprang up and we made it into Pu-te'o-li on the second day. <sup>14</sup> Here we found brothers and were urged to remain with them for seven days, and so we went toward Rome. <sup>15</sup> From there the brothers, when they heard the news about us,

came as far as the Marketplace of Ap'pi-us and Three Taverns to meet us. On catching sight of them, Paul thanked God and took courage. <sup>16</sup> When finally we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier guarding him.

<sup>17</sup> However, three days later he called together the principal men of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them: "Men, brothers, although I had done nothing contrary to the people or the customs of our forefathers, I was handed over as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans. <sup>18</sup> And after making an examination, they wanted to release me, for there were no grounds for putting me to death. <sup>19</sup> But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, but not because I had any accusation to make against my nation. <sup>20</sup> So for this reason I asked to see and speak to you, for it is because of the hope of Israel that I have this chain around me." <sup>21</sup> They said to him: "We have not received letters about you from Ju-de'a, nor have any of the brothers who came from there reported or spoken anything bad about you. <sup>22</sup> But we think it proper to hear from you what your thoughts are, for truly as regards this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere."

<sup>23</sup> They now arranged for a day to meet with him, and they came in even greater numbers to him in his lodging place. And from morning to evening, he explained the matter to them by bearing thorough witness concerning the Kingdom of God, to persuade them about Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets. <sup>24</sup> Some began to believe the things he said; others would not believe. <sup>25</sup> So because they disagreed with one another, they began to leave, and Paul made this one comment:

"The holy spirit aptly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your forefathers, <sup>26</sup> saying, 'Go to this people and say: "You will indeed hear but by no means understand, and you will indeed look but by no means see. <sup>27</sup> For the heart of this people has grown

unreceptive, and with their ears they have heard without response, and they have shut their eyes, so that they might never see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn back and I heal them.”<sup>28</sup> So let it be known to you that this salvation from God has been sent out to the nations; they will certainly listen to it.”<sup>29</sup> \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>30</sup> So he remained there for an entire two years in his own rented house, and he would kindly receive all those who came to him,<sup>31</sup> preaching the Kingdom of God to them and teaching about the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance.



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**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

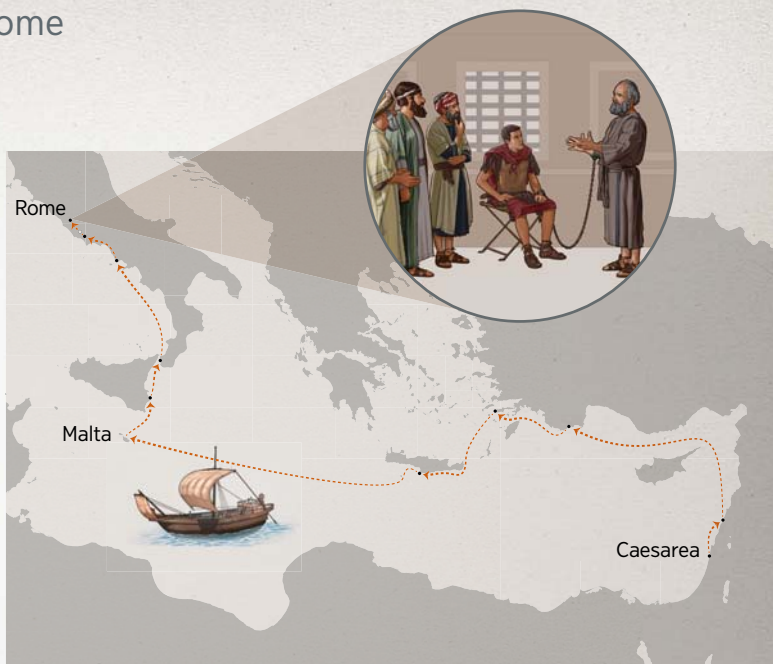
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ACTS 27-28 | Paul Sails for Rome

**27:23, 24; 28:1, 2, 16, 17**

Paul never stopped sharing his faith despite being a prisoner. While on the ship, he witnessed to crew members and fellow passengers. After being shipwrecked on Malta, he no doubt took the opportunity to share the good news with those he healed. Just three days after arriving in Rome, he called together the principal men of the Jews in order to witness to them. And during the two years of his house arrest, he preached to all who visited him.

**What can you do to share the good news despite any limitations you may have?**



## January 28–February 3

### Treasures From God's Word

**“Paul Sails for Rome”:** (10 minutes)

Acts 27:23, 24—An angel told Paul that all those sailing with him would survive the storm

**Acts 27:23, 24:** This night an angel of the God to whom I belong and to whom I render sacred service stood by me and said: ‘Have no fear, Paul. You must stand before Caesar, and look! God has granted to you all those sailing with you.’

#### ***bt* 208 paragraph 15**

Likely Paul had been witnessing to many on the ship about “the hope of the promise that was made by God.” (Acts 26:6; Colossians 1:5) Now, with shipwreck probable, Paul could offer a powerful basis for a more immediate hope. He said: “This night there stood near me an angel . . . , saying, ‘Have no fear, Paul. You must stand before Caesar, and, look! God has freely given you all those sailing with you.’” Paul urged them: “Therefore be of good cheer, men; for I believe God that it will be exactly as it has been told me. However, we must be cast ashore on a certain island.”—Acts 27:23-26.

Acts 28:1, 2—Paul was shipwrecked on Malta

**Acts 28:1, 2:** After we made it to safety, we learned that the island was called Malta. And the foreign-speaking people showed us extraordinary kindness. They kindled a fire and received all of us kindly because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

## **bt 209 paragraph 18; 210 paragraph 21**

18 It turned out that the survivors were on the island of Malta, south of Sicily. (See the box “Malta—Where?”) The foreign-speaking people of the island showed them “extraordinary human kindness.” (Acts 28:2) They made a fire for these strangers who had reached their shore drenched and shivering. The fire helped them to get warm despite the cold and rain. It also gave rise to a miracle.

21 The wealthy landowner Publius lived in the area. He may have been the leading Roman officer on Malta. Luke described him as “the *principal man* of the island,” employing the exact title that has been found on two Maltese inscriptions. He hospitably entertained Paul and his companions for three days. However, Publius’ father was ill. Again Luke described a condition with accuracy. He wrote that the man “was lying down distressed with fever and dysentery,” citing the precise medical nature of the illness. Paul prayed and laid his hands on the man, and he was healed. Deeply impressed by this miracle, the local people brought other sick ones to be healed, and they brought gifts to fill the needs of Paul and his companions.—Acts 28:7-10.

Acts 28:16, 17—Paul safely arrived in Rome

**Acts 28:16, 17:** When finally we entered Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier guarding him. However, three days later he called together the principal men of the Jews. When they had assembled, he said to them: “Men, brothers, although I had done nothing contrary to the people or the customs of our forefathers, I was handed over as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

## **bt 213 paragraph 10**

When the band of travelers finally entered into Rome, “Paul was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier guarding him.” (Acts 28:16) For those in light custody, security against escape usually called for a chain that bound the prisoner to his guard. Even so, Paul was a Kingdom proclaimer, and a chain certainly could not silence him. Hence, after giving himself just three days to recover from the journey, he called together the principal men of the Jews in Rome in order to introduce himself and give a witness.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

Acts 27:9—What was “the fast of Atonement Day”?

**Acts 27:9:** A considerable time had passed and by now it was hazardous to navigate, because even the fast of Atonement Day was already over, so Paul made a recommendation

#### **Study note**

**the fast of Atonement Day:** Or “the autumn fast.” Literally, “the fast.” The Greek term for “the fast” refers to the only fast commanded under the Mosaic Law, that is, the fast in connection with the yearly Atonement Day, also called Yom Kippur (Hebrew, *yohm hakkippurim*, “day of the coverings”). (Leviticus 16:29-31; 23:26-32; Numbers 29:7; see Glossary, “Day of Atonement.”) The expression “to afflict oneself,” used in connection with the Atonement Day, is generally understood to mean to engage in various forms of self-denial, including fasting. (Leviticus 16:29, footnote.) The use of the term “the fast” at Acts 27:9 supports the idea that a primary form of self-denial practiced on Atonement Day involved fasting. The Atonement Day fast fell in late September or early October.

Acts 28:11—What is significant about the detail regarding the ship's figurehead?

**Acts 28:11:** Three months later we set sail in a ship with the figurehead "Sons of Zeus." The ship was from Alexandria and had wintered in the island.

### **Study note**

**Sons of Zeus:** According to Greek and Roman mythology, the "Sons of Zeus" (Greek, *Dio'skouroi*) were Castor and Pollux, twin sons of the god Zeus (Jupiter) and the Spartan Queen Leda. Among other things, they were regarded as the protectors of mariners, able to save sailors imperiled at sea. This detail regarding the ship's figurehead is another testimony that the account was written by an eyewitness.

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 27:1-12 (*th* study 5)

# ACTS

## Study Notes—Chapter 27

### 27:1

**us:** As mentioned in the study notes on Ac 16:10 and 20:5, the book of Acts contains sections where Luke, the writer of the book, uses first person pronouns such as “we,” “us,” and “our” (Ac 27:20) when describing what happened. This indicates that Luke accompanied Paul for portions of some of his many journeys. The section of Acts that starts here and continues to Ac 28:16 includes such references, showing that Luke traveled with Paul to Rome.

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

### 27:3

**with kindness:** Or “with human kindness (affection).” The Greek word *phi-lan-thro'pos* and the related word *phi-lan-thro-pi'a* denote showing an affectionate concern for and interest in humans. After spending one day at sea and traveling about 110 km (70 mi) N, the ship docked at Sidon, on the Syrian coast. Apparently, the army officer Julius did not treat Paul as an ordinary criminal, possibly because Paul was a Roman citizen who had not been proved guilty.—Ac 22:27, 28; 26:31, 32.

### 27:6

**a ship:** A grain ship. (Ac 27:37, 38) In those days, Egypt was the chief granary for Rome. Egyptian grain ships docked at Myra, a major city situated near the coast of SW Asia Minor. The army officer Julius located such a ship and had the soldiers and prisoners board. This vessel must have been much larger than the ship that carried them on the first part of the journey. (Ac

27:1-3) It carried a valuable cargo of wheat as well as 276 people—the crew, the soldiers, the prisoners, and likely others heading to Rome. Myra was due N of **Alexandria** and may therefore have been on the regular route of ships from that Egyptian city. Or it may be that contrary winds (Ac 27:4, 7) forced the Alexandrian vessel to change its course and drop anchor at Myra.—See App. B13.

## 27:9

**the fast of Atonement Day:** Or “the autumn fast.” Lit., “the fast.” The Greek term for “the fast” refers to the only fast commanded under the Mosaic Law, that is, the fast in connection with the yearly Atonement Day, also called Yom Kippur (Hebrew, *yohm hak-kip-pu-rim'*, “day of the coverings”). (Le 16:29-31; 23:26-32; Nu 29:7; see Glossary, “Day of Atonement.”) The expression “to afflict oneself,” used in connection with the Atonement Day, is generally understood to mean to engage in various forms of self-denial, including fasting. (Le 16:29, ftn.) The use of the term “the fast” at Ac 27:9 supports the idea that a primary form of self-denial practiced on Atonement Day involved fasting. The Atonement Day fast fell in late September or early October.

## 27:10

**lives:** Or “souls.” The Greek word *psy-khe'* used here refers to a person or the life that a person has.—See Glossary, “Soul,” and App. A2.

## 27:14

**Euroaquilo:** Greek, *Eu-ra-ky'lon*; Latin, *euroaquilo*. That is, a NE wind known to Maltese mariners as the gregale. It is the most violent wind on the Mediterranean. It would be extremely dangerous to a ship with large sails, which could easily capsize during such a storm.

## 27:16

**the skiff:** The Greek word *skaphē* refers to a small auxiliary boat that was pulled behind a ship or kept aboard a larger ship. It could be used to get to shore when the ship was anchored near a coast, to unload cargo, or to pull the ship in order to turn it. In an emergency, it could also be used as a lifeboat. To prevent the skiff from being swamped or crushed during storms, it was hauled up out of the water and secured to the ship.

## 27:17

**the Syrtis:** The Greek name *Syr'tis* comes from a root meaning “to drag.” Syrtis was the name of two gulfs located within the large indentation on the coast of northern Africa (on the coast of modern-day Libya). The western gulf (between Tunis and Tripoli) was called Syrtis Minor (now the Gulf of Gabès). Just to the E was Syrtis Major, the modern-day Gulf of Sidra. Ancient sailors dreaded both gulfs because of the treacherous sandbanks that were constantly being shifted by the tides. Strabo, a first-century C.E. Greek geographer, said regarding vessels that got caught in the shoals: “The safe escape of a boat is rare.” (*Geography*, 17, III, 20) Josephus (*Jewish Wars* 2.16.4 [2.381]) says that the name Syrtis alone caused terror in those who heard it.

## 27:20

**a violent storm:** Lit., “no small storm.” The Greek expression refers to a severe storm. In Paul’s day, sailors navigated by using the **sun** or the **stars** as reference points, so cloudy weather would make navigation very difficult for them.

## 27:22

**for not one of you will be lost:** Or “for there will be no loss of life among you; not a single life (soul) will be lost.” The Greek



word *psy·khe'* used in this phrase refers to a person or the life that a person has.—See Glossary, “Soul,” and App. A2.

## **27:23**

**to whom I render sacred service:** Or “whom I serve (worship).”—See study note on Ac 26:7.

## **27:27**

**the Sea of Adria:** In Paul’s day, this term applied to an area larger than the present Adriatic Sea. Greek geographer Strabo said that this name was derived from the city of Atria, located at the mouth of the Po River on what is now called the Gulf of Venice. (*Geography*, 5, 1, 8) The present Italian city of Adria lies somewhat away from the coast. It appears that the name Adria came to apply to the waters in the vicinity of the ancient city and was progressively extended to include all the present Adriatic Sea, the Ionian Sea, and those waters of the Mediterranean E of Sicily (and Malta) and W of Crete.

## **27:28**

**20 fathoms:** About 36 m (120 ft). A fathom is a unit for measuring the depth of water. The fathom is commonly viewed as being four cubits (c. 1.8 m; 6 ft) and approximately corresponds to the distance between the fingertips of a man’s two hands when his arms are stretched in opposite directions. Appropriately, the Greek word for “fathom” (*or·gui·a'*) comes from a word meaning “to stretch out; to reach.”—See App. B14.

**15 fathoms:** About 27 m (90 ft).—See study note on **20 fathoms** in this verse and App. B14.

## **27:37**

**276:** Although a few manuscripts give different numbers regarding how many people were on board, the number 276 has

strong manuscript support and is accepted by most scholars. Ships of the period could carry that many passengers. Josephus recounts that a ship with about 600 people on board experienced shipwreck on its way to Rome.

**persons:** Or “souls.” The Greek word *psy·khe'*, traditionally rendered “soul,” here refers to a living person.—See Glossary, “Soul,” and App. A2.

## ACTS

### Study Notes—Chapter 28

#### 28:1

**Malta:** The Greek text uses the term *Me·li'te*, which for centuries has been identified with the modern-day island of Malta. The ship on which Paul traveled was forced southward by strong winds, from Cnidus on the SW tip of Asia Minor to below Crete. (Ac 27:7, 12, 13, 21) At Ac 27:27, the record says that the ship was “being tossed about on the Sea of Adria,” which in Paul’s day applied to an area larger than the present-day Adriatic Sea. It included the Ionian Sea and waters E of Sicily and W of Crete, thus encompassing the sea near modern-day Malta. (See study note on Ac 27:27.) In view of the prevailing winds of the storm called Euroaquilo (Ac 27:14), it is likely that the ship was driven W and shipwrecked on the island of Malta, S of Sicily. Over the years, some scholars have suggested other islands as the Biblical *Me·li'te*. One theory singled out an island near Corfu, off the western coast of Greece. Another suggestion is based on the Greek word *Me·li'te* and points to Melite Illyrica, now known as Mljet, located off the coast of Croatia in the present-day Adriatic Sea. However, in view of the Bible’s description of the route, it is

unlikely that the ship turned and sailed as far northward as Corfu or Mljet.

## 28:2

**the foreign-speaking people:** Or “the local inhabitants.” Some older Bible translations render the Greek word *bar'ba·ros* used here as “Barbarians.” The repetition of “*bar bar*” in this Greek word conveyed the idea of stammering, babble, or unintelligible speech, so the Greeks originally used the term to refer to a foreigner who spoke a different language. At that time, the term did not denote lack of civilization, refinement, or good manners; nor did it convey contempt. The word *bar'ba·ros* simply distinguished non-Greeks from Greeks. Some Jewish writers, including Josephus, recognized themselves as being designated by the term. (*Jewish Antiquities*, XIV, 187 [x, 1]; *Against Apion*, I, 58 [11]) In fact, Romans called themselves barbarians until they adopted Greek culture. So the term was applied here to the inhabitants of Malta, who apparently spoke their native, unrelated language, likely Punic.—See study note on Ro 1:14.

**kindness:** Or “human kindness.” The Greek word *phi·lan·thro·pi'a* literally means “affection (love) for mankind.” Such kindness could include the idea of having genuine interest in others and showing hospitality in caring for human needs and comforts. As shown here, people may display this godly quality even before they come to know Jehovah. A similar example is recorded at Ac 27:3, where the related word *phi·lan·thro'pos* is used to describe the way that the army officer Julius treated Paul. At Tit 3:4, the Greek word *phi·lan·thro·pi'a* is used to describe Jehovah’s feelings and is rendered “love for mankind.”

## 28:3

**a viper:** In modern times, vipers are not found on the island of Malta. But as this account shows, the first-century inhabitants knew of these snakes. Over the centuries, environmental changes or the increase in human population may have eradicated this species from Malta.

## 28:4

**Justice:** The Greek term for “Justice” here is *di'ke*. It may refer to a goddess who personifies avenging justice or to the concept of justice. In Greek mythology, Dike was the name of the goddess of justice. It was thought that she had oversight of human affairs and reported undisclosed injustices to Zeus so that the guilty would be punished. The inhabitants of Malta may have thought that, although he had survived the shipwreck, Paul was now overtaken by some sort of divine justice and punished by means of a snake.

## 28:11

**Sons of Zeus:** According to Greek and Roman mythology, the “Sons of Zeus” (Greek, *Di-o'skou-roi*) were Castor and Pollux, twin sons of the god Zeus (Jupiter) and the Spartan Queen Leda. Among other things, they were regarded as the protectors of mariners, able to save sailors imperiled at sea. This detail regarding the ship’s figurehead is another testimony that the account was written by an eyewitness.

## 28:12

**Syracuse:** A city with a fine harbor, located on the SE coast of the island of Sicily, today called Siracusa. According to Greek historian Thucydides, it was founded by the Corinthians in 734 B.C.E. Syracuse was the birthplace of some well-known figures of ancient times. For example, the mathematician

Archimedes was born there. In 212 B.C.E., the Romans conquered Syracuse.

## 28:13

**Puteoli:** Now called Pozzuoli, this chief port SE of Rome was located about 10 km (6 mi) WSW of Naples. Extensive ruins of an ancient breakwater, or mole, are still visible. Josephus calls the site by its older name, Dicaearchia, and says that a Jewish colony was located there. (*Jewish Antiquities*, XVII, 328, xii, 1) Paul, on his way to stand before Caesar in Rome, arrived at Puteoli about the year 59 C.E. The ship arrived from **Rhegium** (now called Reggio di Calabria), a port city at the southern tip of Italy across from Sicily, some 320 km (200 mi) to the SSE of Puteoli. Christian brothers in Puteoli entreated Paul and those accompanying him to spend a week with them. (Ac 28:14) This indicates that, although he was a prisoner, Paul enjoyed some freedom.

## 28:14

**so we went toward Rome:** It would have taken up to a week to make the journey from Puteoli to Rome, which was 245 km (152 mi) away. Paul and his companions likely went from Puteoli to Capua and from there traveled 212 km (132 mi) to Rome on the Appian Way (Latin, *Via Appia*). The Appian Way was named after Appius Claudius Caecus, the Roman statesman who began building it in 312 B.C.E. It eventually linked Rome with the port of Brundisium (modern-day Brindisi), a gateway to the E. Much of the road was paved with large blocks of volcanic rock. The road varied greatly in width—some portions were less than 3 m (10 ft) wide and other portions were more than 6 m (20 ft) wide. The general criterion was that two vehicles traveling in opposite directions could pass at the same time without hindering each other. At certain points, the Mediterranean Sea was visible. The

road crossed the Pontine Marshes, a swampy area that caused one Roman writer to complain about the mosquitoes and foul smell. A canal was built along the road, so when the road was flooded, travelers used canal boats to travel through the area. Located just N of those marshes were the Marketplace of Appius, about 65 km (40 mi) from Rome, and Three Taverns, a rest stop some 50 km (31 mi) from the city.

## 28:15

**the Marketplace of Appius:** Or “Forum of Appius.” Latin, *Appii Forum*. A marketplace about 65 km (40 mi) SE of Rome. It was a well-known station on the famous Roman highway Via Appia, running from Rome to Brundisium (now Brindisi) by way of Capua. Both the road and the marketplace draw their names from the founder, Appius Claudius Caecus, of the fourth century B.C.E. As the usual point at which travelers halted at the close of the first day’s journey out of Rome, this post station became a busy trading center and market town. Adding to its importance was its location on a canal that ran alongside the road, traversing the Pontine Marshes. Travelers reportedly were conveyed over this canal by night in barges pulled by mules. The Roman poet Horace describes the discomforts of the journey, complaining of the frogs and gnats and depicting the Marketplace of Appius as “crammed with boatmen and stingy tavern-keepers.” (*Satires*, I, V, 1-6) Despite all the discomforts, however, the delegation from Rome happily waited for Paul and his companions in order to escort them safely along the final leg of their journey. Today the site of the Foro Appio, or Forum of Appius, is marked by the small village of Borgo Faiti, located on the Appian Way.

**Three Taverns:** Or “Tres Tabernae.” Latin, *Tres Tabernas*. This place, which is also mentioned in other ancient writings, was

situated on the Appian Way. The site is some 50 km (31 mi) SE of Rome, about 15 km (9.5 mi) from the Marketplace of Appius. Today, a few Roman ruins remain at this site.

## 28:19

**Caesar:** Or “the Emperor.” The Roman emperor at this time was Nero, who ruled from 54 to 68 C.E. when he committed suicide at about the age of 31. All references to Caesar in Acts chapters 25 through 28 apply to Nero.—See study notes on Mt 22:17; Ac 17:7 and Glossary.

## 28:22

**this sect: 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.

## 28:23

**by bearing thorough witness concerning the Kingdom of God:** With the exception of the book of John, Acts contains the Greek words rendered “witness” (*mar'tys*), “to bear witness” (*mar·ty·re'o*), “to bear thorough witness” (*di·a·mar·ty'ro·mai*), and related words more times than any other Bible book. (See study notes on Joh 1:7; Ac 1:8.) The idea of being a witness and bearing thorough witness about God’s purposes, including his Kingdom and Jesus’ vital role, is the theme that runs through the book of Acts.—Ac 2:32, 40; 3:15; 4:33; 5:32; 8:25; 10:39; 13:31; 18:5; 20:21, 24; 22:20; 23:11; 26:16.

## 28:28

**this salvation from God:** Or “this, the means by which God saves.” The Greek word *so·te'ri·on* may refer not only to salvation but also to the means by which salvation or deliverance is brought about. (Lu 2:30; 3:6; ftns.) By extension, it may include the message about how God will save mankind.

## 28:29

Some later manuscripts and translations into other languages add: “And when he had said this, the Jews went away, having a great deal of disputing among themselves.” 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.



## 28:30

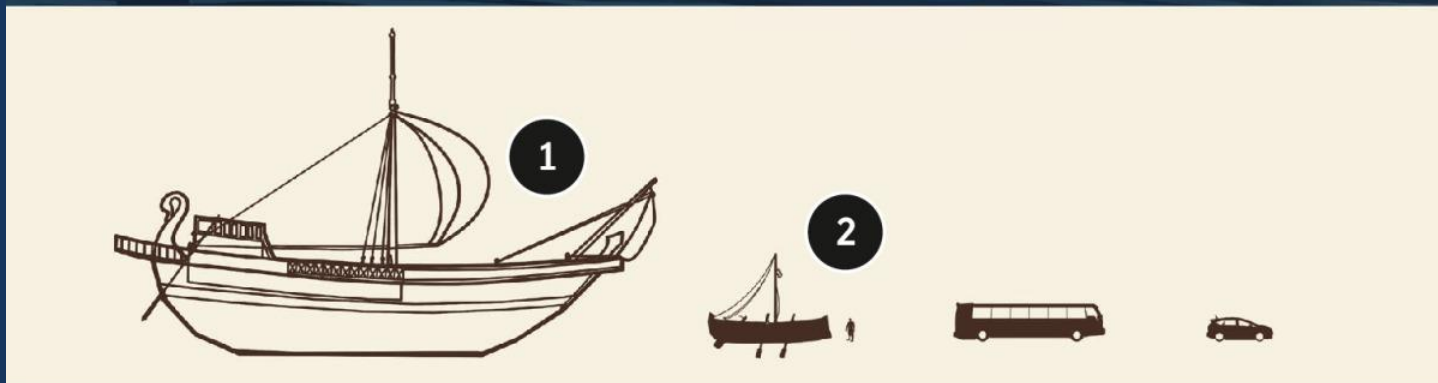
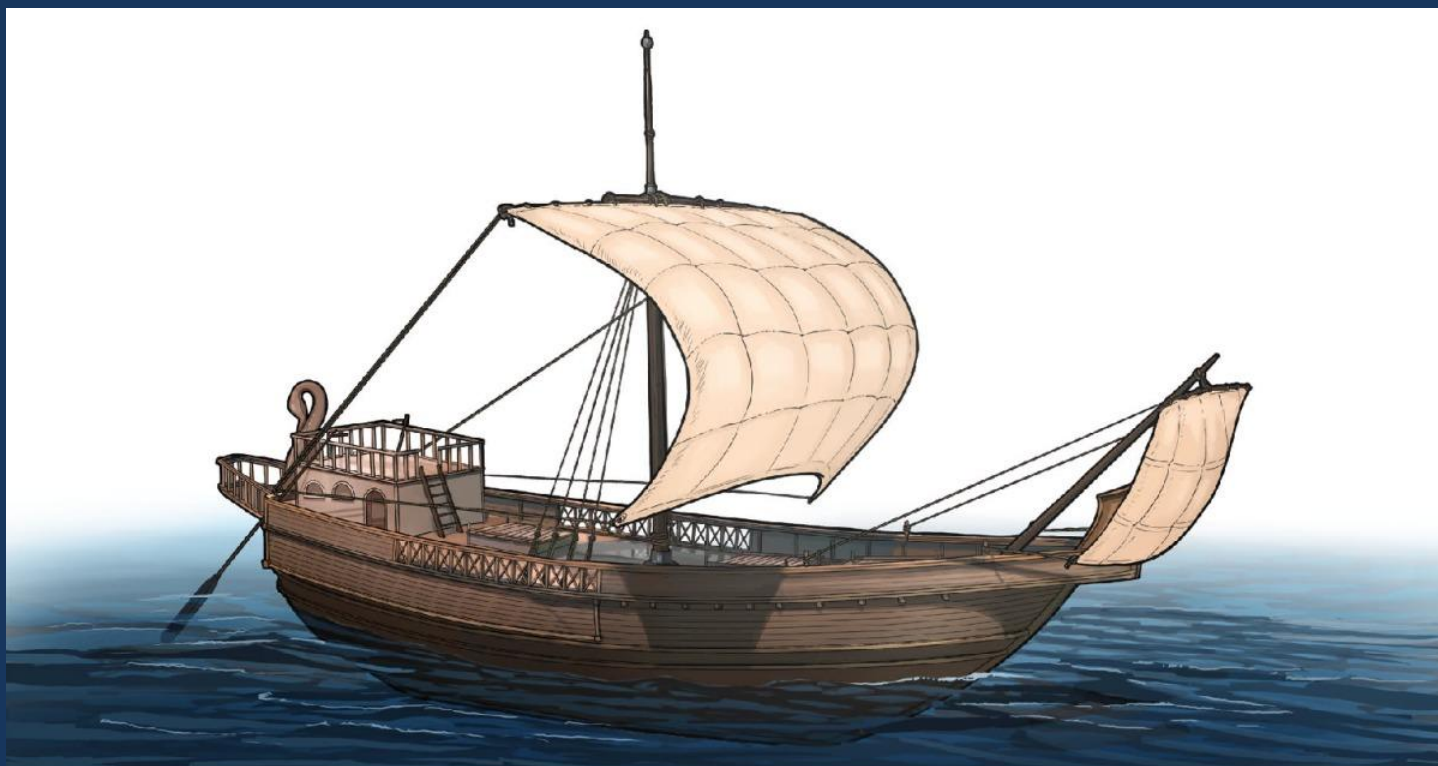
**he remained there for an entire two years:** During this two-year period, Paul wrote his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 4:1; 6:20), to the Philippians (Php 1:7, 12-14), to the Colossians (Col 4:18), to Philemon (Phm 9), and apparently also to the Hebrews. His house arrest seems to have ended in about the year 61 C.E. when he apparently was tried—perhaps before Emperor Nero or one of his representatives—and pronounced innocent. After his release, Paul characteristically remained active. It could have been during this period that he made his planned trip to Spain. (Ro 15:28) According to Clement of Rome, who wrote in about the year 95 C.E., Paul traveled “to the extreme limit of the W[est],” that is, of the Roman Empire. Paul’s three letters dated to the years after his release (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus) reveal that he apparently visited Crete, Macedonia, Nicopolis, and Troas. (1Ti 1:3; 2Ti 4:13; Tit 1:5; 3:12) Some suggest that it was in Nicopolis, Greece, that Paul was again arrested and that he was back in prison in Rome in about the year 65 C.E. This time, it seems that Nero showed no mercy. A fire had devastated Rome the year before, and according to Roman historian Tacitus, Nero falsely blamed the Christians. Nero then initiated a brutal campaign of persecution against them. When Paul wrote his second and final letter to Timothy, he expected to be executed soon, so he asked Timothy and Mark to come quickly. During this time, Luke and Onesiphorus showed great courage and risked their lives to visit Paul and comfort him. (2Ti 1:16, 17; 4:6-9, 11) It was likely in about the year 65 C.E. that Paul was executed. In both life and death, Paul was an outstanding witness to “all the things Jesus started to do and to teach.”—Ac 1:1.

## 28:31

**preaching:** The Greek word basically means “to make proclamation as a public messenger.” It stresses the *manner* of the proclamation: usually an open, public declaration rather than a sermon to a group. The theme of this preaching was **the Kingdom of God**. In the book of Acts, the expression “the Kingdom of God” occurs six times. The first occurrence is at Ac 1:3, describing Jesus’ speaking about this Kingdom during the 40 days between his resurrection and his ascension. The Kingdom of God continued to be the theme that dominated the preaching of the apostles.—Ac 8:12; 14:22; 19:8; 28:23.

**with the greatest freeness of speech:** Or “with all boldness (fearlessness).” The Greek word *par-re-si’a* has also been rendered “outspokenness.” (Ac 4:13) This noun and the related verb *par-re-si-a’zo-mai*, often rendered “speak boldly [with boldness],” occur several times in the book of Acts. Boldness was, from the beginning of Luke’s account to the end, an identifying mark of the preaching done by the early Christians.—Ac 4:29, 31; 9:27, 28; 13:46; 14:3; 18:26; 19:8; 26:26.

**without hindrance:** Or “freely.” The book of Acts ends on this positive note. Although under house arrest, Paul continued to preach and teach openly. Nothing could stop the spread of the Kingdom message in Rome. This is an appropriate finish to the book of Acts. It describes how the holy spirit empowered first-century Christians to begin the greatest preaching campaign in history, spreading the good news of God’s Kingdom “to the most distant part of the earth.”—Ac 1:8.

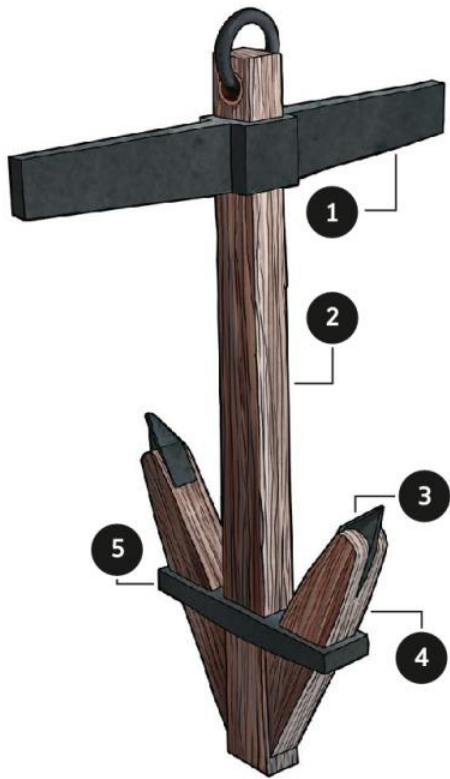


## First-Century Merchant Ship

In the first century C.E., numerous merchant ships of various types plied the waters of the Mediterranean Sea. Some of them were coastal vessels, such as the boat from Adramyttium in which Paul, as a prisoner, sailed from Caesarea to Myra. (Ac 27:2-5) However, the type of merchant ship that Paul boarded at Myra, similar to what is illustrated here, was a large vessel that carried a cargo of wheat and a crew and passengers totaling 276 persons. (Ac 27:37, 38) This ship likely had a mainsail and a foresail and would have been steered by two large oars located in the stern. Such ships often had a figurehead representing a god or goddess.

1. Merchant ship
2. Galilean fishing boat

**Related Scripture(s)** Ac 27:5, 6

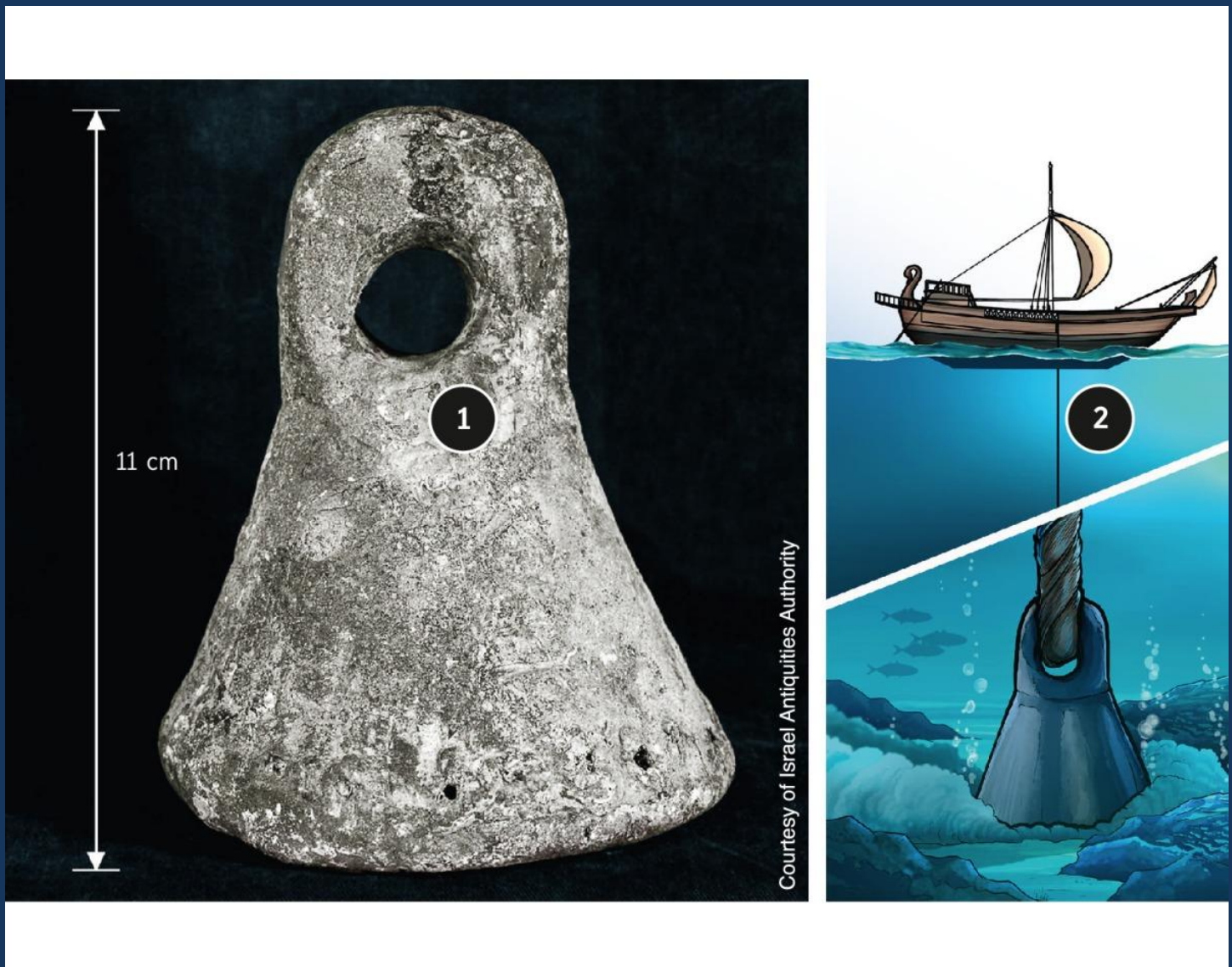


## An Anchor of Wood and Metal

1. Stock
2. Shank
3. Fluke
4. Arm
5. Collar

In the account of Paul's voyage to Rome, the use of anchors is mentioned repeatedly. (Ac 27:13, 29, 30, 40) In ancient times, the first anchors seem to have been stone weights and other simple devices. By the time of Paul's travels, however, more advanced anchors had been developed. Shown here is a drawing of a hook anchor that was common in Roman times. This kind of anchor was usually made of metal and wood. The heavy stock, typically made of lead, weighed the anchor down, and one of the anchor's arms dug into the seafloor. Large boats often had a number of anchors. (Ac 27:29, 30) An anchor discovered near Cyrene, on the African coast, weighs about 545 kg (1,200 lb), giving added meaning to Paul's statement that "we have this hope as an anchor for the soul."—Heb 6:19.

**Related Scripture(s)** Ac 27:13

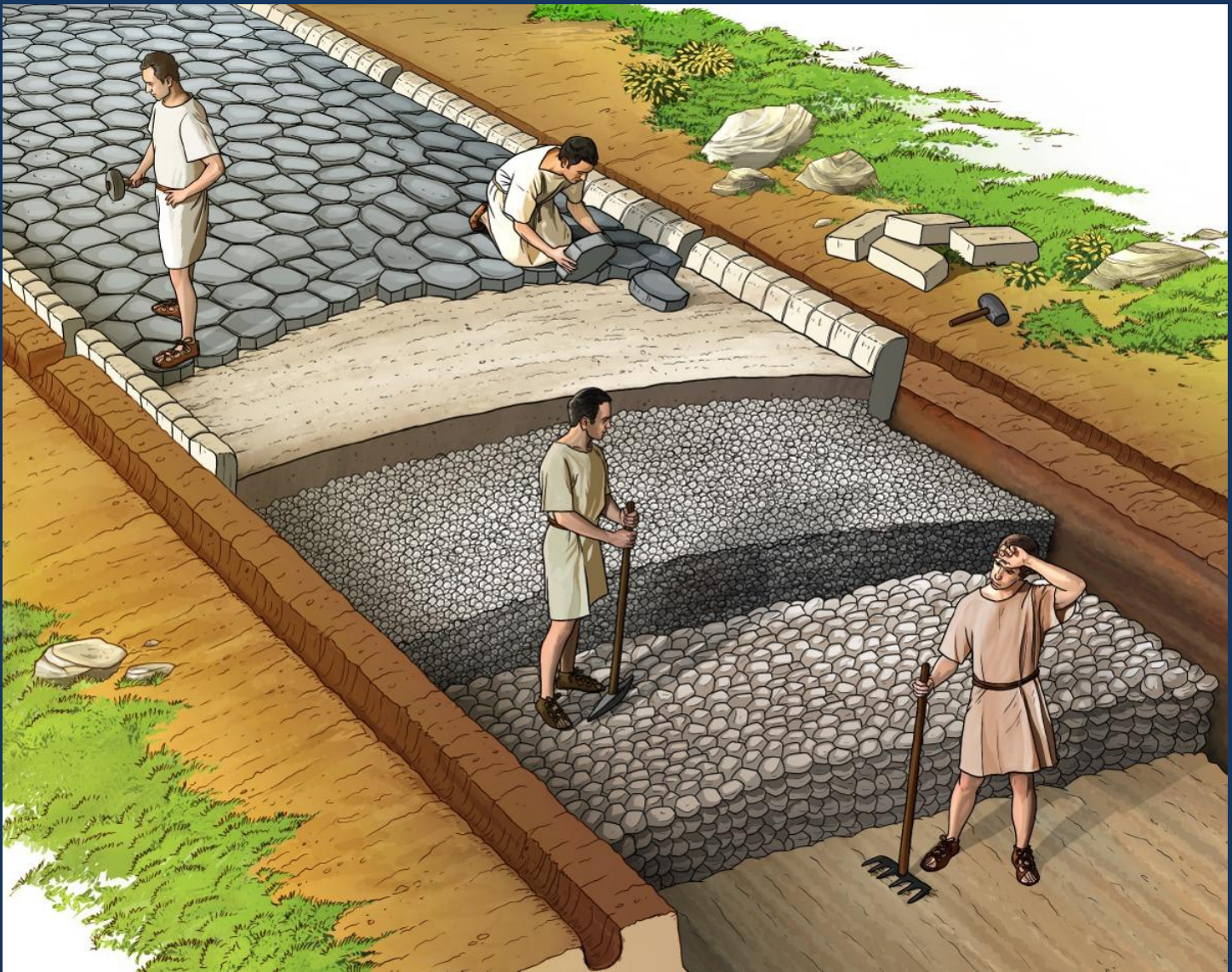


## Sounding Weights

These weights (1), which varied in shape and size, are among the oldest known nautical instruments. They were tied to a rope and thrown over the side of a ship. When the weight hit the seafloor, sailors used the rope to measure the depth beneath the ship's hull (2). The bottom of some weights had a layer of tallow, a soft substance that would pick up fragments, such as pebbles and sand, from the seafloor. When the weight was retrieved, these fragments would be brought to the surface for the sailors to inspect. Though various materials were used, sounding weights were typically made of lead. Appropriately, the Greek verb for “to sound the depth; to make a sounding” used at Ac 27:28 literally means “to heave the lead.”

1. Sounding weight
2. Rope

**Related Scripture(s)** Ac 27:28



## Construction of a Roman Road

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

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

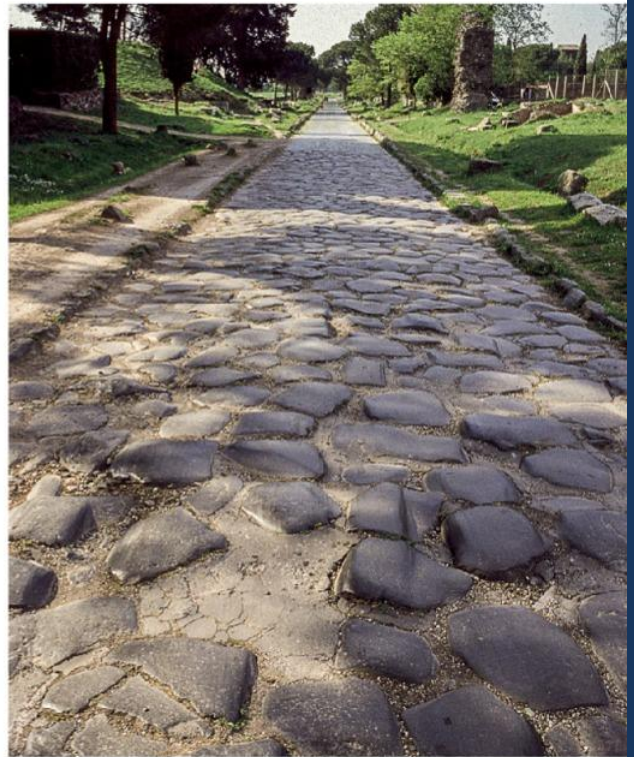


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Source ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?assetId=657536001&objectId=1216056&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?assetId=657536001&objectId=1216056&partId=1))

## Caesar Nero

This gold coin, minted about 56-57 C.E., shows a bust of Nero, who ruled the Roman Empire from 54 to 68 C.E. Nero was the Caesar to whom Paul appealed after his unjust arrest in Jerusalem and subsequent incarceration in Caesarea from about 56 to about 58 C.E. It appears that after Paul was first imprisoned in Rome, about 59 C.E., he was pronounced innocent and released about 61 C.E. However, in 64 C.E. a fire destroyed a quarter of the city of Rome, and some blamed Nero for the disaster. To deflect suspicion, Nero accused the Christians, prompting a wave of violent persecution by the government. It is likely that about this time (65 C.E.), Paul was imprisoned in Rome for the second time and was executed thereafter.

**Related Scripture(s)** Ac 25:11; Ac 28:19



## The Appian Way

This photograph shows part of the Appian Way, or Via Appia, that can still be found in Italy. Although the road is not mentioned directly in the Bible, it was likely the highway that Paul used on his trek to Rome. The earliest portion of this road was built in 312 B.C.E. Construction continued, however, and by about 244 B.C.E., the Appian Way stretched from Rome to Brundisium. (See map.) Brothers from Rome traveled southward to Three Taverns and the Marketplace of Appius, both located along the Appian Way, to meet Paul. (Ac 28:15) The Marketplace of Appius was about 64 km (40 mi) from Rome. Three Taverns was about 48 km (30 mi) from Rome.

1. Rome
2. Three Taverns
3. Marketplace of Appius
4. Appian Way
5. Brundisium (now called Brindisi)

**Related Scripture(s) Ac 28:15**



- Song 129 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“Paul Sails for Rome”:** (10 min.)  
 Ac 27:23, 24—An angel told Paul that all those sailing with him would survive the storm (*bt* 208 ¶15)  
 Ac 28:1, 2—Paul was shipwrecked on Malta (*bt* 209 ¶18; 210 ¶21)  
 Ac 28:16, 17—Paul safely arrived in Rome (*bt* 213 ¶10)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)  
 Ac 27:9—What was “the fast of Atonement Day”? (*nwtsty* study note)

Ac 28:11—What is significant about the detail regarding the ship’s figurehead? (*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 27:1-12 (5)

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 min.) Play and discuss the video.
- **Second Return Visit:** (3 min. or less) Use the sample conversation. (2)
- **Bible Study:** (5 min. or less) *lvs* 165-166 ¶16-17 (3)

**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**

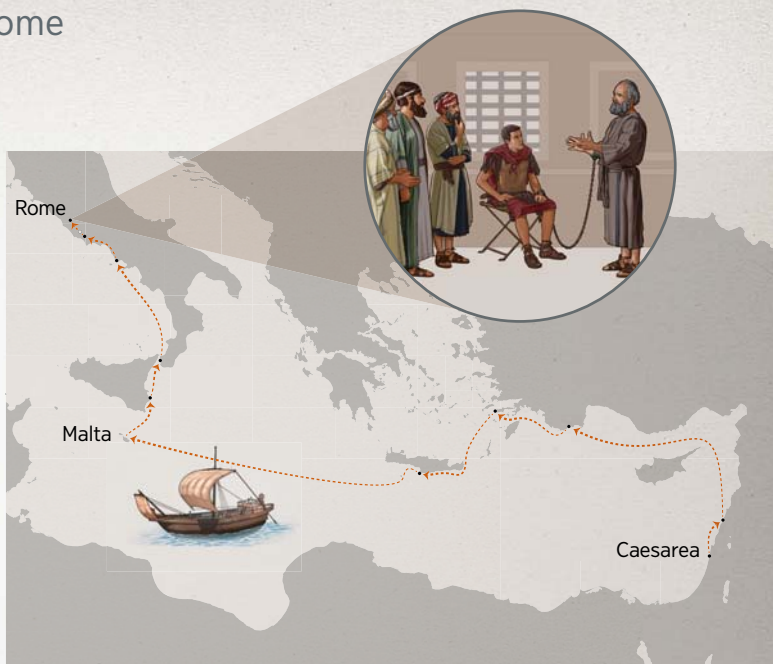
- Song 103
- **“Paul Thanked God and Took Courage”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video “*Iron Sharpens Iron*”—*Excerpt*. Encourage all to view the video in its entirety (video category INTERVIEWS AND EXPERIENCES).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 52
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 93 and Prayer

ACTS 27-28 | Paul Sails for Rome

**27:23, 24; 28:1, 2, 16, 17**

Paul never stopped sharing his faith despite being a prisoner. While on the ship, he witnessed to crew members and fellow passengers. After being shipwrecked on Malta, he no doubt took the opportunity to share the good news with those he healed. Just three days after arriving in Rome, he called together the principal men of the Jews in order to witness to them. And during the two years of his house arrest, he preached to all who visited him.

**What can you do to share the good news despite any limitations you may have?**



**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?

Becky (Publisher 1): Hi Katie, how are you?

Katie (Householder): Oh, hi Becky, hi Susan. I'm good thanks, and you

Susan (Publisher 2): We're doing well, thanks. We really enjoyed our chat last week.

Becky (Publisher 1): We sure did. Do you happen to have that book we left you?

Katie (Householder): Sure, let me get it.

Becky (Publisher 1): We ended with a question found here. How can you become God's friend? To find the answer, would you like to read paragraph 19 for us?

Katie (Householder): OK. It says: "How can you become God's friend? Jesus said: "This means everlasting life, they're coming to know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ." .....You will learn much more about his beautiful qualities as you read about him in the Bible."

Becky (Publisher 1): Thank you. At the bottom of the page, there are a couple of questions to get us started in discussing what we just read. Notice the first question: How can you become God's friend? Based on what we read, how would you answer that question?

Katie (Householder): Well, it seems like we need to learn about him.

Susan (Publisher 2): That's exactly it.

Becky (Publisher 1): Yes. And notice, also: But how can we feel close to God if we can't see him? That question is answered in the next paragraph. Why don't we consider that together the next time we talk?

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



# 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?



## Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

- **Second Return Visit Video:** (5 minutes) Play and discuss the video.
- **Second Return Visit:** (3 minutes or less) Use the sample conversation. (*th study 2*)
- **Bible Study:** (5 minutes or less) /vs 165-166 paragraphs 16-17 (*th study 3*)

<sup>16</sup> Both Jehovah and Jesus generously give **commendation**. We want to imitate them. (Matthew 3:17; 25:19-23; John 1:47) To give commendation that will really encourage someone involves being thoughtful and showing personal interest. “A word spoken at the right time—how good it is!” says Proverbs 15:23. We are encouraged when someone sincerely commends us for our hard work or expresses appreciation for something we have done.—**Read Matthew 7:12**; see Endnote 27.

<sup>17</sup> If you make it a habit to look for the good in others, it will be easier to give sincere commendation. For example, perhaps you notice that someone in the congregation prepares well for his talks or makes an effort to comment at meetings. A young person may take a fine stand for the truth in school, or an older person may regularly share in the ministry. Your words of appreciation may be just what they need. It is also very important for a husband to tell his wife that he loves and appreciates her. (Proverbs 31:10, 28) Just as plants need light and water, people need to feel appreciated. This is especially true of children. Look for opportunities to commend them for their good qualities and efforts. Commendation can build their courage and confidence and can make them try even harder to do what is right.

# 103      *Shepherds—Gifts in Men*

(Ephesians 4:8)

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

*(CHORUS)*

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

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

*(Chorus)*

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

*(Chorus)*

- Song 129 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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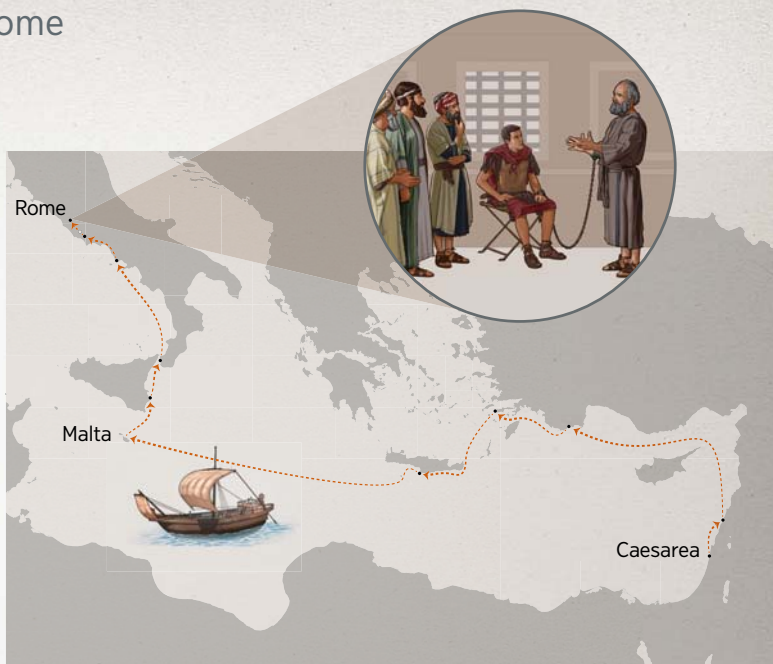
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ACTS 27-28 | Paul Sails for Rome

**27:23, 24; 28:1, 2, 16, 17**

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**What can you do to share the good news despite any limitations you may have?**



## “Paul Thanked God and Took Courage”



When the congregation in Rome heard that Paul was coming, a delegation of brothers journeyed some 40 miles (64 km) to meet him. How did their self-sacrificing love affect Paul? “On catching sight of them, Paul thanked God and took courage.” (Ac 28:15) Although Paul was known for building up the congregations that he visited, on this occasion when he was a prisoner, he was the one who received encouragement.—2Co 13:10.

Today circuit overseers travel from congregation to congregation to build up the brothers and sisters. Like all of God’s people, at times they experience tiredness, anxiety, and discouragement. The next time the circuit overseer and his wife serve your congregation, what can you do to help them take courage, so that there is “an interchange of encouragement”?—Ro 1:11, 12.

- **Support the meetings for field service.** The circuit overseer is encouraged when publishers make sacrifices to benefit fully from the special week of activity. (1Th 1:2, 3; 2:20) Consider auxiliary pioneering during the month of his visit. Could you offer to work with him and his wife in the ministry or take one of them with you on a Bible study? They enjoy working with different publishers, including those who are new or who lack a measure of skill in the ministry.
- **Offer hospitality.** Could you offer sleeping accommodations or a meal? This shows the circuit overseer and his wife that you love them. They do not expect anything elaborate.—Lu 10:38-42.
- **Listen to and apply his direction and counsel.** The circuit overseer lovingly helps us to see how we can improve in our service to Jehovah. At times, he may have to give strong counsel. (1Co 5:1-5) It brings him joy when we are obedient and submissive.—Heb 13:17.
- **Express appreciation.** Tell the circuit overseer and his wife how their efforts benefited you. You can do this in person or by means of a note or card.—Col 3:15.



# 52

## FEEDING THOUSANDS WITH A FEW LOAVES AND FISH

MATTHEW 14:13-21    MARK 6:30-44    LUKE 9:10-17  
JOHN 6:1-13

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- JESUS FEEDS 5,000 MEN

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The 12 apostles have enjoyed a preaching tour throughout Galilee, and they relate to Jesus “all the things they had done and taught.” Understandably, they are tired. Yet, they do not even have time to eat because so many people are coming and going. So Jesus says: “Come, you yourselves, privately into an isolated place and rest up a little.”—Mark 6:30, 31.

They board a boat, probably near Capernaum, and head for an out-of-the-way place east of the Jordan River beyond Bethsaida. Many people, however, see them leave, and others learn about it. Together they run along the shore and are there when the boat lands.

Leaving the boat, Jesus sees the crowd and is moved with pity, for they are as sheep without a





shepherd. So he starts “to teach them many things” about the Kingdom. (Mark 6:34) He also heals “those needing a cure.” (Luke 9:11) As time passes, the disciples say to him: “The place is isolated and the hour is already late; send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food.”—Matthew 14:15.

Jesus replies: “They do not have to leave; you give them something to eat.” (Matthew 14:16) Although Jesus already knows what he is going to do, he tests Philip with the question: “Where will we buy bread for these people to eat?” Philip is the one to ask, for he is from nearby Bethsaida. Still, buying bread is not the solution. There are about 5,000 men. And the total may be double that, counting women and children! Philip responds: “Two hundred denarii [a denarius is a day’s wage] worth of bread is not enough for each of them to get even a little.”—John 6:5-7.

Perhaps to show the impossibility of feeding them all, Andrew comments: “Here is a little boy who has five barley loaves and two small fish. But what are these among so many?”—John 6:9.



It is springtime, just before the Passover of 32 C.E., and green grass covers the hillside. Jesus has his disciples tell the people to recline on the grass in groups of 50 and of 100. He takes the five loaves and two fish and gives thanks to God. Then he breaks the loaves and divides up the fish. Jesus gives these to the disciples to distribute to the people. Amazingly, all the people eat until they are satisfied!

Later, Jesus tells his disciples: “Gather together the fragments left over, so that nothing is wasted.” (John 6:12) They are able to fill 12 baskets with the leftovers gathered!

- ◇ Why does Jesus seek a place of privacy for his apostles?
- ◇ Where do Jesus and the disciples go, and what do they encounter there?
- ◇ What do the disciples urge Jesus to do, but how does he care for the people?

# 93      *Bless Our Meeting Together*

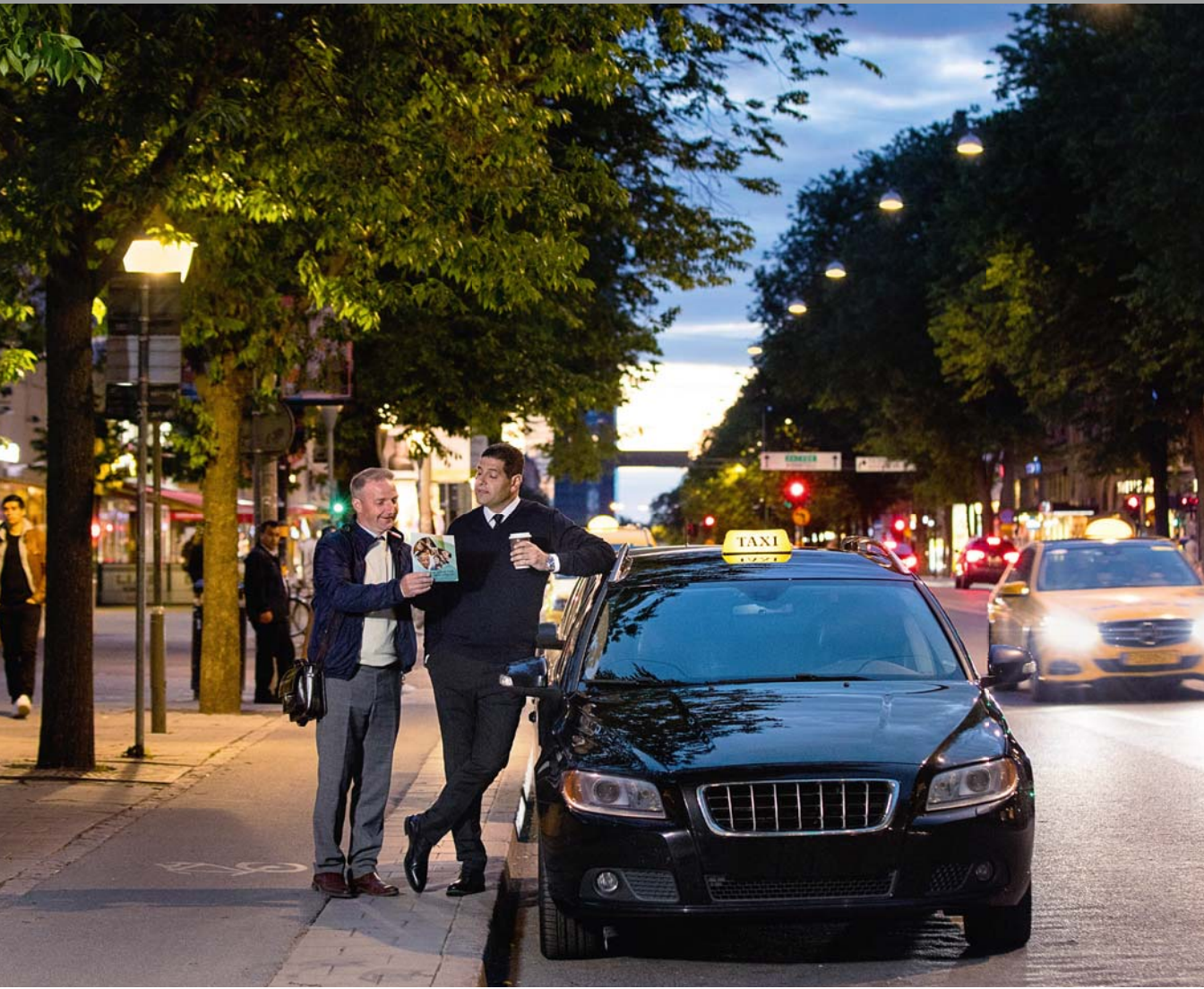
(Hebrews 10:24, 25)

1. Bless us as we meet together,  
    O Jehovah, we now pray.  
    We are thankful for our meetings;  
    May your spirit with us stay.
2. Help us, Lord, refine our worship;  
    With your Word, oh, do us fill.  
    Train our minds and tongues to witness;  
    Love within our hearts instill.
3. Loving Father, bless our meetings;  
    Grant us peace and unity.  
    May our words and may our actions  
    Magnify your Sov'reignty.

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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“Buy Truth and Never Sell It”

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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.

PUBLISHERS

22,418

BIBLE STUDIES

10,027

MEMORIAL

ATTENDANCE (2017)

34,966

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

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## 28 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.

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## 40 WEEK OF JANUARY 21-27

### Who Molds Your Thinking?

## 52 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.



# 56

## *Make the Truth Your Own*

(Proverbs 3:1, 2)

1. The way of the truth is the best way of living,  
But no one can live your life for you.  
So take the advice that Jehovah is giving;  
Believe what he tells you is true.

*(CHORUS)*

*Make the truth your own.*

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

*And then feel the joy*

*Jehovah gives you*

*When you make the truth your own.*

2. The effort you make and the time you are spending  
In service to God and his Kingdom  
Will yield rich results and a life that's unending,  
A life full of good things to come.

*(Chorus)*

3. Compared with our God, we are all little children  
And need his direction and counsel.  
So walk ev'ry day with our Father in heaven;  
Receive his rich blessing in full.

*(Chorus)*



**SONGS:**  
56, 123

### CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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How are Bible study and meditation related to making Jehovah's thoughts our own?

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Jehovah's thinking should have what effect on our actions?

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How can meditating on God's thoughts help us with future decisions?

## Are You Making Jehovah's Thoughts Your Own?

*“Be transformed by making your mind over.”—ROM. 12:2.*

A **SMALL** child receives a gift. His parents tell him, “Say thank you.” The child obeys, though somewhat mechanically. As he grows older, his appreciation for his parents' thinking and for the kindness of others increas-

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**1, 2.** As we develop spiritually, what do we learn to do? Illustrate.

es. Now he expresses thanks more readily, from the heart. Why? Because gratitude has become part of his own thinking.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, when we first came to a knowledge of the truth, we learned the importance of obedience to Jehovah's basic requirements. But as we continue to grow spiritually, we learn more about Jehovah's thinking—his likes, his dislikes, and his way of viewing various matters. By learning to reason similarly and by allowing such thinking to influence our actions and personal choices, we show that we are making Jehovah's thoughts our own.

<sup>3</sup> While learning to think like Jehovah is a delight, it can also be a challenge. At times, our imperfect reasoning might get in the way. For example, we might have difficulty understanding Jehovah's view of moral cleanness, materialism, the preaching work, the misuse of blood, or something else. What can we do? How can we continue to make progress in making God's thoughts our own? And how should doing so affect our present and future actions?

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3. Why can it be challenging to make Jehovah's thoughts our own?

## ADOPTING GOD'S THOUGHTS AS OUR OWN

<sup>4</sup> **Read Romans 12:2.** The apostle Paul here describes what is involved in learning to think like Jehovah. The preceding article helped us to appreciate that in order to “stop being molded by this system of things,” we must refuse to feed on worldly viewpoints and attitudes. But Paul also mentioned the need for us to ‘make our mind over.’ This involves studying God’s Word with a view to grasping his thoughts, meditating on them, and bringing our thinking into alignment with God’s thinking.

<sup>5</sup> Study is more than superficial reading and involves much more than merely highlighting the answers to study questions. When we study, we consider what the material tells us about Jehovah, his ways, and his thinking. We try to understand *why* God commands one thing and condemns another. We also give thought to what changes we need to make in our life and in our thinking. Although all these aspects might not be considered in every session of study, we profit by

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4. What is involved in following Paul’s admonition: ‘Make your mind over’?

5. Explain the difference between superficial reading and study.

spending time—perhaps half of each study period—meditating appreciatively on what we read.—Ps. 119:97; 1 Tim. 4:15.

<sup>6</sup> As we meditate regularly on God’s Word, something extraordinary happens. We ‘prove to ourselves,’ yes, convince ourselves, that Jehovah’s reasoning on matters is perfect. We begin to see things from his point of view, and we come to agree with that viewpoint. Our minds are ‘made over,’ and we develop a new pattern of thinking. Progressively, we make Jehovah’s thoughts our own.

## **OUR THOUGHTS AFFECT OUR ACTIONS**

<sup>7</sup> Let us not conclude that thinking is just mental exercise. Thinking and actions work together. (Mark 7:21-23; Jas. 2:17) This can better be appreciated if we consider a few examples. The Gospels, for instance, give us clear indications of Jehovah’s thinking with regard to material things. God handpicked the human parents who would

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6. What happens when we meditate on Jehovah’s thoughts?

7, 8. (a) What is Jehovah’s view of material prosperity? (See opening pictures.) (b) If we adopt his view, to what will we always give priority?

raise his Son—a couple who were of modest material means. (Lev. 12:8; Luke 2:24) When Jesus was born, Mary “laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the lodging place.” (Luke 2:7) Had Jehovah wanted to, he could in any number of ways have provided better accommodations for the birth of his Son. What mattered to Him, though, was the spiritual environment in which Jesus would be cared for and raised.

<sup>8</sup> From this Bible account about Jesus’ birth, we can appreciate Jehovah’s view of material things. Some parents insist on the best for their children materially, even at the expense of their children’s spiritual health. Clearly, though, Jehovah considers spiritual matters to be of supreme importance. Have you adopted Jehovah’s view? What do your actions reveal?—Read Hebrews 13:5.

<sup>9</sup> Another example is God’s view of stumbling others. Jesus said: “Whoever stumbles one of these little ones who have faith, it would be better for him if a millstone that is turned by a donkey were put around his neck and he were pitched

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**9, 10.** How might we show that we share Jehovah’s view of stumbling others?

into the sea.” (Mark 9:42) Those words express strong feelings! Since Jesus perfectly reflected his Father’s personality, we can be sure that Jehovah feels just as strongly about anyone whose callous actions stumble one of Jesus’ followers. —John 14:9.

<sup>10</sup> Do we share the view of Jehovah and Jesus? Have we made it our own? What do our actions reveal? For instance, suppose we are attracted to a certain style of dress or grooming that is likely to upset some in the congregation or that may well arouse passion in the minds of others. Will our loving concern for fellow believers override our personal preferences in style?—1 Tim. 2:9, 10.

<sup>11</sup> A third example: Jehovah hates unrighteousness. (Isa. 61:8) While he knows that we have some wrong inclinations because of inherited imperfection, he exhorts us to cultivate similar hatred for unrighteousness. (Read Psalm 97:10.) Meditating on why Jehovah detests badness will help us make his view our own, giving us added strength to resist wrongdoing.

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11, 12. How will cultivating God’s view of badness combined with self-control protect us from wrongdoing?

<sup>12</sup> Cultivating Jehovah’s view of unrighteousness will also help us identify certain practices as wrong, even though they are not specifically mentioned in God’s Word. For example, lap dancing is a form of lewd conduct that is becoming more common in the world. Some might excuse such conduct, reasoning that it is not the same as outright sexual relations.\* But do such actions reflect the thinking of God, who abhors every kind of badness? Let us stay far from wrongdoing by cultivating self-control as well as an abhorrence for what Jehovah hates.—Rom. 12:9.

## **GIVING ADVANCE THOUGHT TO FUTURE DECISIONS**

<sup>13</sup> When studying, we do well to consider what bearing Jehovah’s thoughts may have on situations we might face in the future. That way, should we be in a situation requiring an immedi-

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\* Lap dancing is defined as “an activity in which a usually seminude performer sits and gyrates on the lap of a customer.” Depending on the facts of an actual situation, this could constitute sexual immorality requiring judicial action. A Christian who has taken part in such activity should seek help from the elders.—Jas. 5:14, 15.

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**13.** Why should we give advance thought to how Jehovah’s viewpoints may affect our future decisions?



ate decision, we will not be caught completely off guard. (Prov. 22:3) Consider some Bible examples.

<sup>14</sup> By immediately rejecting the attempted seductions of Potiphar's wife, Joseph showed that he had given thought to Jehovah's view of marital faithfulness. (Read Genesis 39:8, 9.) Furthermore, his reply to Potiphar's wife: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" indicates that he had made God's view his own. What about us? Suppose a coworker began manifesting flirtatious behavior. Or what if a sexually explicit message or image was sent to your mobile phone?\* It is far easier to take a stand if we have already sought out and adopted Jehovah's view on such matters and have determined in advance what we will do.

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\* Sending sexually explicit messages, photos, or videos via mobile phone is called sexting. Depending on the particulars, it may warrant judicial action. In some cases, minors who were involved with sexting have been prosecuted as sex offenders. For more information, go to the [jw.org](http://jw.org) website and read the online article "Young People Ask—What Should I Know About Sexting?" (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.) Or see the article "How to Talk to Your Teen About Sexting" in the *Awake!* issue of November 2013, pp. 4-5.

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**14.** What do we learn from Joseph's refusal of Potiphar's wife?



<sup>15</sup> Consider now the example of the three Hebrews known as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their resolute refusal to worship the image of gold erected by King Nebuchadnezzar and their pointed reply to the king showed that they had given thought to what was involved in remaining faithful to Jehovah. (Ex. 20:4, 5; Dan. 3:4-6, 12, 16-18) Suppose your employer asked you to contribute funds for an upcoming celebration connected with false religion. What would you do? Rather than wait for these situations to arise, why not give thought *now* to Jehovah's thinking on

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**15.** How can we, like the three Hebrews, resist pressure to compromise our loyalty to Jehovah?



Did you do research, complete a legal medical document, and speak with your doctor?  
(See paragraph 16)

such matters? Then, should any of these situations occur, you will find it easier to do and say the right thing, as the three Hebrews did.

<sup>16</sup> Giving advance thought to the need to remain loyal can also prove helpful in the event of a medical emergency. While we are firmly resolved to avoid the transfusion of whole blood or any of its four major components, some procedures involving blood require making a personal decision based on Bible principles that indicate Jehovah's thinking. (Acts 15:28, 29) Surely the best time to

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**16.** How can a clear grasp of Jehovah's thinking help us to prepare for a medical emergency?

weigh such matters is not in a hospital, possibly when we are in pain and under pressure to make a quick decision. Now would be the time to do research, complete a legal medical document indicating your wishes, and speak with your doctor.\*

<sup>17</sup> Finally, consider Jesus' quick response to Peter's misguided advice: "Be kind to yourself, Lord." Jesus had apparently given much prior thought to God's will for him and to the Scriptures that applied to his life and death on earth. This knowledge strengthened his decision to maintain his faithful, self-sacrificing course without wavering.—Read Matthew 16:21-23.

<sup>18</sup> Today, God's will for his people is to develop a friendship with him and have as full a share as possible in his work. (Matt. 6:33; 28:19, 20; Jas. 4:8) As in the case of Jesus, well-meaning people might try to sway us from that course. For exam-

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\* Pertinent Bible principles have been discussed in our publications. See, for example, the book *How to Remain in God's Love*, pp. 246-249.

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**17-19.** Why is it important to learn Jehovah's thinking on matters now? Give an example of a situation for which we need to be prepared.

ple, what if your employer offered you a promotion with a substantial increase in salary but the position would interfere with your spiritual activities? Or if you are in school, suppose you were offered an opportunity to move away from home to receive additional education. At that moment, would you need to do prayerful research, consult with your family and perhaps with the elders, and then make a decision? Why not learn Jehovah's thinking on such matters *now* and endeavor to make his thoughts your own? Then, if you are ever presented with such an offer, you may find that it hardly amounts to a temptation. Your spiritual goals are set, your heart is resolved, and all that remains for you is to carry out a decision that you have already made.

<sup>19</sup> You can probably think of other situations that could arise suddenly, unexpectedly. Of course, we cannot prepare for every conceivable possibility. But if we meditate on Jehovah's thinking during personal study, we will be more likely to recall what we have studied and be able to apply it to the specific situation at hand. Let us, then, be mindful of the need to note Jehovah's thinking on matters, make it our own, and

consider how having God’s view will affect our present and future actions.

## JEHOVAH’S THOUGHTS AND YOUR FUTURE

<sup>20</sup> We keenly anticipate the new world. Most of us are looking forward to life without end on a paradise earth. Under Kingdom rule, mankind will be set free from the sorrows that characterize this system of things. Of course, even then, people will continue to exercise free will. Each person will make choices according to his or her preferences and desires.

<sup>21</sup> Of course, such freedom will not be absolute. In matters of right and wrong, meek ones will be guided by Jehovah’s laws and his thinking. This will be delightful, resulting in the greatest joy and abundance of peace. (Ps. 37:11) Meanwhile, we can have a measure of that joy now as we make Jehovah’s thoughts our own.

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20, 21. (a) Why will we enjoy relative freedom in the new world?  
(b) How can we obtain a measure of that joy now?



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*Loyally Submitting  
to Theocratic Order*  
(1 Corinthians 14:33)

1. As Jehovah's people sound throughout the earth  
Truths about the Kingdom and its priceless worth,  
Theocratic order they must all obey  
And remain united, loyalty display.

*(CHORUS)*

*Loyal submission in recognition,  
This to our God we owe.  
He gives protection, tender affection,  
Loyalty to him we show.*

2. God provides his steward and his active force.  
These will ever guide us in our Christian course.  
So may we be steadfast, seeking God to please,  
Loyally proclaiming all his wise decrees!

*(Chorus)*

