

# References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

## JANUARY 7-13

### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | ACTS 21-22

#### **"Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place"**

**(Acts 21:8-12)** The next day we left and came to Caes·a·re'a, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelizer, who was one of the seven men, and we stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> This man had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. <sup>10</sup> But after we had stayed there for quite a number of days, a prophet named Ag'a·bus came down from Ju·de'a. <sup>11</sup> And he came to us and took Paul's belt and tied his own feet and hands and said: "Thus says the holy spirit, 'The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will give him into the hands of people of the nations.'" <sup>12</sup> Now when we heard this, both we and those who were there began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem.

#### **bt 177-178 ¶15-16**

#### **"Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place"**

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

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

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

#### **bt 178 ¶17**

#### **"Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place"**

<sup>17</sup> Imagine the scene. The brothers, including Luke, entreat Paul not to proceed. Some are weeping. Moved by the loving concern they show for him, Paul tenderly says that they are making him "weak at heart," or as some translations render the Greek, they are "breaking [his] heart." Still, his resolve is firm, and as was the case when he met with the brothers in Tyre, he will not allow entreaties or tears to cause him to waver. Instead, he explains to them why he must proceed. What courage and determination he showed! Like Jesus before him, Paul set his face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem. (Heb. 12:2) Paul was not seeking to be a martyr, but if that happened, he would consider it an honor to die as a follower of Christ Jesus.

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

## **bt 178 ¶18**

### **“Let the Will of Jehovah Take Place”**

<sup>18</sup> How did the brothers react? In a word, respectfully. We read: “When he would not be dissuaded, we acquiesced with the words: ‘Let the will of Jehovah take place.’” (Acts 21:14) Those who tried to convince Paul to avoid going to Jerusalem did not insist on having their way. They listened to Paul and yielded, recognizing and accepting the will of Jehovah, even though doing so was difficult for them. Paul had embarked on a course that would eventually lead to his death. It would be easier for Paul if those who loved him did not try to dissuade him.

### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

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

## **bt 184-185 ¶10-12**

### **“Hear My Defense”**

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

being necessary in order to obtain Jehovah’s approval would betray a lack of faith.

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

<sup>12</sup> Paul could have objected that the real problem was, not the rumors about him, but the zeal of those Jewish believers for the Mosaic Law. But he was willing to be flexible, as long as he did not have to compromise godly principles. Earlier he had written: “To those under law I became as under law, though I myself am not under law, that I might gain those under law.” (1 Cor. 9:20) On this occasion, Paul cooperated with the Jerusalem elders and became “as under law.” In so doing, he set a fine example for us today to cooperate with the elders and not insist on doing things our own way.—Heb. 13:17.

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

### **nwtsty study note on Ac 22:16**

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

### **Bible Reading**

**(Acts 21:1-19)** After tearing ourselves away from them and putting out to sea, we ran

with a straight course and came to Cos, on the next day to Rhodes, and from there to Pat'a-ra. <sup>2</sup> When we found a ship that was crossing to Phoe-ni'cia, we went aboard and sailed away. <sup>3</sup> After coming in sight of the island of Cy'prus, we left it behind on the left side and sailed on to Syria and landed at Tyre, where the ship was to unload its cargo. <sup>4</sup> We searched for and found the disciples and remained there for seven days. But through the spirit they repeatedly told Paul not to set foot in Jerusalem. <sup>5</sup> So when our time there was over, we left and started on our way, but they all, together with the women and children, accompanied us until we were outside the city. And kneeling down on the beach, we prayed <sup>6</sup> and said good-bye to one another. Then we went aboard the ship, and they returned to their homes. <sup>7</sup> We then completed the voyage from Tyre and arrived at Ptol-e-ma'is, and we greeted the brothers and stayed one day with them. <sup>8</sup> The next day we left and came to Caes-a-re'a, and we entered the house of Philip the evangelizer, who was one of the seven men, and we stayed with him. <sup>9</sup> This man had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. <sup>10</sup> But after we had stayed there for quite a number of days, a prophet named Ag'a-bus came down from Ju-de'a. <sup>11</sup> And he came to us and took Paul's belt and tied his own feet and hands and said: "Thus says the holy spirit, 'The man to whom this belt belongs will be bound like this by the Jews in Jerusalem, and they will give him into the hands of people of the nations.'" <sup>12</sup> Now when we heard this, both we and those who were there began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> Then Paul answered: "What are you doing by weeping and trying to weaken my resolve? Rest assured, I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord

Jesus." <sup>14</sup> When he would not be dissuaded, we stopped objecting and said: "Let the will of Jehovah take place." <sup>15</sup> Now after these days we prepared for the journey and started on our way to Jerusalem. <sup>16</sup> Some of the disciples from Caes-a-re'a also went with us, taking us to Mna'son of Cy'prus, an early disciple at whose home we were to be guests. <sup>17</sup> When we got to Jerusalem, the brothers welcomed us gladly. <sup>18</sup> But on the following day Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present. <sup>19</sup> And he greeted them and began giving a detailed account of the things God did among the nations through his ministry.

## JANUARY 14-20

### TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | ACTS 23-24

#### "Accused of Being a Pest and of Stirring Up Seditions"

**(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 ¶5-6

#### "Be of Good Courage!"

<sup>5</sup> 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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)** 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,

**(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 Naz-a-renes'. <sup>6</sup> He also tried to profane the temple, so we seized him.

#### **bt 192 ¶10**

#### **"Be of Good Courage!"**

<sup>10</sup> 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)** 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. <sup>11</sup> As you can verify for yourself, it has not been more than 12 days since I went up to worship in Jerusalem; <sup>12</sup> and they found me neither arguing with anyone in the temple nor stirring up a mob, either in the synagogues or throughout the city. <sup>13</sup> Nor can they prove to you the things they are accusing me of right now. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> Because of this I always strive to maintain a clear conscience before God and men. <sup>17</sup> Now after quite a number of years, I arrived to bring gifts of mercy to my nation and to make offerings. <sup>18</sup> 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 <sup>19</sup> who ought to be present before you to accuse me if they actually have anything against me. <sup>20</sup> Or let the men here say for themselves what wrong they found as I stood before the San'he-drin, <sup>21</sup> 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 ¶13-14**

### **“Be of Good Courage!”**

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> 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)** 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, a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am being judged.”

#### **nwtsty study note on Ac 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.

**(Acts 24:24)** 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.

**(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.

#### **nwtsty study note on Ac 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.

## **Bible Reading**

**(Acts 23:1-15)** Looking intently at the San’he-drin, Paul said: “Men, brothers, I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience down to this day.” <sup>2</sup> At this the high priest An-a-ni’as ordered those standing by him to strike him on the mouth. <sup>3</sup> Then Paul said to him: “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed 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?” <sup>4</sup> Those standing by said: “Are you insulting the high priest of God?” <sup>5</sup> 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.’” <sup>6</sup> 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, a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of the resurrection of the dead I am being judged.” <sup>7</sup> Because he said this, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was split. <sup>8</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is neither resurrection nor angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees accept them all. <sup>9</sup> 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—.” <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> But the following night the Lord stood by him and said: “Take courage! For just as you have been giving a thorough witness about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.” <sup>12</sup> 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. <sup>13</sup> There were more than 40 men who formed this oath-bound conspiracy. <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> 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.”

## **JANUARY 21-27**

### **TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | ACTS 25-26**

#### **“Paul Appeals to Caesar and Then Witnesses to King Herod Agrippa”**

**(Acts 25:11)** If I am really a wrongdoer and have committed anything deserving of death, I do not beg off from dying; but if there is no substance to the accusations these men have made against me, no man has the right to hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal to Caesar!”

#### **bt 198 ¶6**

#### **“I Appeal to Caesar!”**

<sup>6</sup> Festus’ desire to indulge the Jews could have put Paul in mortal danger. Therefore, Paul used a right he possessed as a Roman citizen. He told Festus: “I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where I ought to be judged. I have done no wrong to the Jews, as you also are finding out quite well. . . . I appeal to Cae-

sar!” Once made, such an appeal was usually irrevocable. Festus emphasized this, saying: “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you shall go.” (Acts 25:10-12) By appealing to a higher legal authority, Paul set a precedent for true Christians today. When opposers try to frame “trouble by decree,” Jehovah’s Witnesses avail themselves of legal provisions to defend the good news.—Ps. 94:20.

**(Acts 26:1-3)** A-grip’pa said to Paul: “You are permitted to speak in your own behalf.” Then Paul stretched out his hand and proceeded to say in his defense: <sup>2</sup> “Concerning all the things of which I am accused by the Jews, King A-grip’pa, I consider myself happy that it is before you I am to make my defense this day, <sup>3</sup> especially because you are an expert on all the customs as well as the controversies among the Jews. Therefore, I beg you to hear me patiently.

#### **bt 198-201 ¶10-16**

#### **“I Appeal to Caesar!”**

<sup>10</sup> Paul respectfully thanked King Agrippa for the opportunity to present a defense to him, acknowledging that the king was an expert on all the customs as well as the controversies among Jews. Paul then described his past life: “According to the strictest sect of our form of worship I lived a Pharisee.” (Acts 26:5) As a Pharisee, Paul had hoped in the coming of the Messiah. Now, as a Christian, he boldly identified Jesus Christ as that long-awaited one. A belief that he and his accusers had in common—that is, the hope of the fulfillment of God’s promise to their forefathers—was the reason that Paul was on trial that day. This situation left Agrippa even more interested in what Paul had to say.

<sup>11</sup> Recalling his past outrageous treatment of Christians, Paul said: “I, for one, really thought within myself I ought to commit many acts of opposition against the name of Jesus the Nazarene . . . Since I was extremely mad against

them [the followers of Christ], I went so far as to persecuting them even in outside cities.” (Acts 26:9-11) Paul was not exaggerating. Many people knew of the violence he had done to the Christians. (Gal. 1:13, 23) ‘What could have changed such a man?’ Agrippa may have wondered.

<sup>12</sup> Paul’s next words provided the answer: “As I was journeying to Damascus with authority and a commission from the chief priests, I saw at midday on the road, O king, a light beyond the brilliance of the sun flash from heaven about me and about those journeying with me. And when we had all fallen to the ground I heard a voice say to me in the Hebrew language, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? To keep kicking against the goads makes it hard for you.’ But I said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.’”—Acts 26:12-15.

<sup>13</sup> Before this supernatural event, Paul had figuratively been “kicking against the goads.” Just as a beast of burden would injure itself unnecessarily by kicking against the sharp end of an oxgoad, Paul had hurt himself spiritually by resisting the will of God. By appearing to Paul on the road to Damascus, the resurrected Jesus caused this sincere but clearly misguided man to change his thinking.—John 16:1, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Paul did indeed make drastic changes in his life. Addressing Agrippa, he said: “I did not become disobedient to the heavenly sight, but both to those in Damascus first and to those in Jerusalem, and over all the country of Judea, and to the nations I went bringing the message that they should repent and turn to God by doing works that befit repentance.” (Acts 26:19, 20) For years, Paul had been fulfilling the commission that Jesus Christ had given him in that midday vision. With what results? Those who responded to the good news that Paul preached repented of their immoral, dishonest conduct and turned to God. Such ones became good

citizens, contributing to and showing respect for law and order.

<sup>15</sup> Those benefits, however, meant nothing to Paul's Jewish opposers. Paul said: "On account of these things Jews seized me in the temple and attempted to slay me. However, because I have obtained the help that is from God I continue to this day bearing witness to both small and great."—Acts 26:21, 22.

<sup>16</sup> As true Christians, we must be "always ready to make a defense" of our faith. (1 Pet. 3:15) When speaking to judges and rulers about our beliefs, we may find it helpful to imitate the method Paul used in speaking to Agrippa and Festus. By respectfully telling them how Bible truths have changed lives for the better—our own life as well as the lives of those who respond to our message—we may touch the hearts of these high officials.

**(Acts 26:28)** But A-grip'pa said to Paul: "In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian."

#### **bt 202 ¶18**

#### **"I Appeal to Caesar!"**

<sup>18</sup> But Paul had a reply for the governor: "I am not going mad, Your Excellency Festus, but I am uttering sayings of truth and of soundness of mind. In reality, the king to whom I am speaking with freeness of speech well knows about these things . . . Do you, King Agrippa, believe the Prophets? I know you believe." Agrippa responded: "In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian." (Acts 26:25-28) These words, sincere or not, show that Paul's witness had a profound effect on the king.

#### **Digging for Spiritual Gems**

**(Acts 26:14)** And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice say to me in the Hebrew language: 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? To keep kicking against the goads makes it hard for you.'

#### **nwtsty study note on Ac 26:14**

**kicking against the goads:** A goad is a pointed rod used to urge on an animal. (Jg 3:31) The expression "to kick against the goads" is a proverb found in Greek literature. It is based on the image of a stubborn bull that resists the prodding of the goad by kicking against it, resulting in injury to the animal. Saul behaved in a similar manner before becoming a Christian. By fighting against Jesus' followers, who had the backing of Jehovah God, Paul risked causing serious injury to himself. (Compare Ac 5:38, 39; 1Ti 1:13, 14.) At Ec 12:11, "oxgoads" are mentioned in a figurative sense, referring to a wise person's words that move a listener to follow counsel.

#### **nwt glossary**

**Goad.** A long rod with a sharp metal point, used by farmers to prod an animal. The goad is compared to the words of a wise person that move the listener to heed wise counsel. "Kicking against the goads" is drawn from the action of a stubborn bull that resists the prodding of the goad by kicking against it, resulting in injury to itself.—Ac 26:14; Jg 3:31.

**(Acts 26:27)** Do you, King A-grip'pa, believe the Prophets? I know that you believe."

#### **w03 11/15 16-17 ¶14**

#### **Help Others to Accept the Kingdom Message**

<sup>14</sup> Paul knew that Agrippa was nominally a Jew. Appealing to Agrippa's knowledge of Judaism, Paul reasoned that his preaching really involved "saying nothing except things the Prophets as well as Moses stated were going to take place" regarding the Messiah's death and resurrection. (Acts 26:22, 23) Addressing Agrippa directly, Paul asked: "Do you, King Agrippa, believe the Prophets?" Agrippa faced a dilemma. If he said that he rejected the prophets, his reputation as a Jewish believer would be ruined. But if he concurred with Paul's reasoning, he would be taking a position of public agreement with the



apostle and would risk being called a Christian. Paul wisely answered his own question, saying: “I know you believe.” How did Agrippa’s heart move him to answer? He responded: “In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian.” (Acts 26:27, 28) Although Agrippa did not become a Christian, Paul evidently affected his heart to some extent with his message.—Hebrews 4:12.

### **Bible Reading**

**(Acts 25:1-12)** Therefore Festus, after arriving in the province and taking charge, went up three days later to Jerusalem from Caes-a-re’a. <sup>2</sup> And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews gave him information against Paul. So they began to beg Festus <sup>3</sup> as a favor to send for Paul to come to Jerusalem. But they were planning to ambush Paul and kill him along the road. <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> “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.” <sup>6</sup> So when he had spent not more than eight or ten days among them, he went down to Caes-a-re’a, and the next day he sat down on the judgment seat and commanded Paul to be brought in. <sup>7</sup> When he came in, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him, bringing against him many serious charges that they were unable to prove. <sup>8</sup> But Paul said in defense: “Neither against the Law of the Jews nor against the temple nor against Caesar have I committed any sin.” <sup>9</sup> Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, said in reply to Paul: “Do you wish to go up to Jerusalem and be judged before me there concerning these things?” <sup>10</sup> But Paul said: “I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar, where I ought to be judged. I have

done no wrong to the Jews, of which you are also becoming well-aware. <sup>11</sup> If I am really a wrongdoer and have committed anything deserving of death, I do not beg off from dying; but if there is no substance to the accusations these men have made against me, no man has the right to hand me over to them as a favor. I appeal to Caesar!” <sup>12</sup> Then Festus, after speaking with the assembly of counselors, replied: “To Caesar you have appealed; to Caesar you will go.”

## **JANUARY 28–FEBRUARY 3**

### **TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | ACTS 27-28**

#### **“Paul Sails for Rome”**

**(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 <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.’

#### **bt 208 ¶15**

#### **“Not a Soul of You Will Be Lost”**

<sup>15</sup> Likely Paul had been witnessing to many on the ship about “the hope of the promise that was made by God.” (Acts 26:6; Col. 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)** 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.

**bt 209 ¶18**

**“Not a Soul of You Will Be Lost”**

<sup>18</sup> 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.

**bt 210 ¶21**

**“Not a Soul of You Will Be Lost”**

<sup>21</sup> 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)** 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.

**bt 213 ¶10**

**“Bearing Thorough Witness”**

<sup>10</sup> 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)** 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

**nwtsty study note on Ac 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.

**(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.

## nwtsty study note on Ac 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.

## Bible Reading

**(Acts 27:1-12)** 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.