

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JULY 4-10

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 SAMUEL 18-19

“Barzillai—An Example of Modesty”

w07 7/15 14 ¶5

Barzillai—A Man Aware of His Limitations

Undoubtedly, David had greatly appreciated Barzillai's help. It does not seem that the king merely wanted to return the favor by providing material necessities. Wealthy Barzillai did not need that kind of assistance. David may have wanted him at the royal court because of that aged man's admirable qualities. Having a permanent place there would have been an honor, allowing Barzillai to enjoy the privileges of the king's friendship.

w07 7/15 14 ¶7

Barzillai—A Man Aware of His Limitations

One reason for Barzillai's decision may have been his advanced age and the limitations that went along with it. Barzillai may have felt that he would not live much longer. (Psalm 90:10) He had done what he could to support David, but he was also aware of the limitations that advanced age placed upon him. Barzillai did not allow the thought of prestige and prominence to prevent him from realistically evaluating his capabilities. Unlike ambitious Absalom, Barzillai wisely displayed modesty.—Proverbs 11:2.

w07 7/15 15 ¶1-2

Barzillai—A Man Aware of His Limitations

The account of Barzillai highlights the need for balance. On the one hand, we should not turn down a service privilege or avoid reaching out for it because we want a quiet

life or feel incapable of shouldering responsibility. God can make up for our deficiency if we rely on him for strength and wisdom.—Philippians 4:13; James 4:17; 1 Peter 4:11.

On the other hand, we need to recognize our limitations. For example, perhaps a Christian is already very busy in spiritual activities. He realizes that by accepting further privileges, he would risk neglecting such Scriptural responsibilities as providing for his family. In such a situation, would it not be an indication of modesty and reasonableness on his part for him to decline additional privileges at present?—Philippians 4:5; 1 Timothy 5:8.

Spiritual Gems

w20.04 30 ¶19

“Run the Race to the Finish”

¹⁹ If you live with limitations and feel that you are misunderstood, you may be able to draw strength from the example of Mephibosheth. (2 Sam. 4:4) He had to deal with being infirm, and he was misjudged by King David. Mephibosheth did nothing to bring these trials on himself. Yet, he did not allow himself to become negative; he appreciated the positive things in his life. He was thankful for the kindness David had shown him in the past. (2 Sam. 9:6-10) So when David misjudged him, Mephibosheth saw the complete picture. He did not allow David's mistake to make him bitter. And he did not blame Jehovah for what David had done. Mephibosheth focused on what he could do to support Jehovah's appointed king. (2 Sam. 16:1-4; 19:24-30) Jehovah had Mephibosheth's excellent example recorded in His Word for our benefit.—Rom. 15:4.

JULY 11-17

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 SAMUEL 20-21

"Jehovah Is a God of Justice"

it-1 932 ¶1

Gibeon

Throughout the centuries, the original Gibeonites continued to exist as a people, although King Saul schemed to destroy them. The Gibeonites, however, patiently waited on Jehovah to reveal the injustice. This he did by means of a three-year famine in David's reign. Upon inquiring of Jehovah and learning that bloodguilt was involved, David interviewed the Gibeonites to ascertain what should be done to make atonement. The Gibeonites rightly answered that it was not "a matter of silver or gold," because, according to the Law, no ransom could be accepted for a murderer. (Nu 35:30, 31) They also recognized that they could not put a man to death without legal authorization. Therefore, not until David's further questioning did they request that seven "sons" of Saul be handed over to them. The fact that bloodguilt was upon both Saul and his household suggests that, although Saul probably took the lead in the murderous action, the "sons" of Saul may directly or indirectly have shared in it. (2Sa 21:1-9) In that event this would not be a case of sons dying for the sins of their fathers (De 24:16) but would involve the administration of retributive justice in harmony with the law "soul will be for soul."—De 19:21.

Spiritual Gems

w13 1/15 31 ¶14

Christian Elders—'Fellow Workers for Our Joy'

¹⁴ Worldwide, we as Jehovah's people are carrying out our ministry despite the ob-

stacles that Satan and his agents place in our path. Some of us have stood face-to-face with giant challenges, but with full reliance on Jehovah, we took on those "Goliaths" and conquered them. However, at times, the constant battle against the pressures of this world leaves us tired and discouraged. In that weakened condition, we are vulnerable and in danger of being 'struck down' by pressures we otherwise would have dealt with successfully. At such moments, the timely support given by an elder can help us to regain our joy and our strength, as many have experienced. A pioneer in her mid-60's related: "Some time ago, I did not feel well, and field service tired me out. An elder noticed my lack of energy and approached me. We had an encouraging conversation based on a Bible passage. I applied the suggestions he gave me, and I benefited." She added: "How loving of that elder to take note of my weak condition and to give me help!" Yes, it is heartening to know that we have elders who keep a loving eye on us and who, much like Abishai of old, stand ready to 'come to our help.'

JULY 18-24

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 SAMUEL 22

"Rely On Jehovah for Help"

c/ 19 ¶11

Can You Really "Draw Close to God"?

¹¹ It is one thing to read that God is "vigorous in power." (Isaiah 40:26) It is quite another to read about how he delivered Israel through the Red Sea and then sustained the nation in the wilderness for 40 years. You can visualize the surging wa-

ters splitting apart. You can picture the nation—perhaps 3,000,000 in all—walking over the dry seabed, the congealed waters standing like massive walls on either side. (Exodus 14:21; 15:8) You can see the evidence of God’s protective care in the wilderness. Water flowed out of rock. Food, resembling white seeds, appeared on the ground. (Exodus 16:31; Numbers 20:11) Jehovah here reveals not only that he has power but that he uses it in behalf of his people. Is it not reassuring to know that our prayers go up to a powerful God who “is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses”? —Psalm 46:1.

w10 6/1 26 ¶4-6

“You Will Act in Loyalty”

Let us take a closer look at David’s words. The Hebrew term translated “act in loyalty” may also be rendered “act in loving-kindness.” True loyalty is rooted in love. Jehovah lovingly attaches himself to those who are loyal to him.

Note, too, that loyalty is more than just a feeling; it is active, not passive. Jehovah *acts* in loyalty, as David learned firsthand. During the darkest periods of David’s life, Jehovah acted in his behalf, loyally protecting and guiding the faithful king. A grateful David credited Jehovah with delivering him “out of the palm of all his enemies.” —2 Samuel 22:1.

What do David’s words mean for us? Jehovah does not waver or change. (James 1:17) He remains true to his standards and is ever faithful to his word of promise. In another of his psalms, David wrote: “Jehovah . . . will not leave his loyal ones.”—Psalm 37:28.

Spiritual Gems

w12 11/15 17 ¶7

Cultivate the Spirit of a Lesser One

7 God’s example of humility had a tremendous effect on the psalmist David. He sang to Jehovah: “You will give me your shield of salvation, and it is your humility that makes me great.” (2 Sam. 22:36) David attributed any greatness he had in Israel to Jehovah’s humility—to God’s condescending, or humbling himself, to pay attention to him. (Ps. 113:5-7) Is it any different with us? In the way of qualities, abilities, and privileges, what do any of us have that we “did not receive” from Jehovah? (1 Cor. 4:7) The person who conducts himself as a lesser one is “great” in that he becomes more valuable as a servant of Jehovah. (Luke 9:48, ftn.) Let us reflect on how this is so.

JULY 25-31

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 SAMUEL 23-24

“Is Your Giving a Sacrifice?”

it-1 146

Araunah

Araunah apparently offered the place, along with cattle and wood implements for the sacrifice, without charge, but David insisted on paying a price. The record at 2 Samuel 24:24 shows that David purchased the threshing floor and the cattle for 50 silver shekels (\$110). However, the account at 1 Chronicles 21:25 speaks of David’s paying 600 gold shekels (c. \$77,000) for the site. The writer of Second Samuel deals only with the purchase as it relates to the altar

location and the materials for the sacrifice then made, and it thus appears that the purchase price referred to by him was restricted to these things. On the other hand, the writer of First Chronicles discusses matters as relating to the temple later built on the site and associates the purchase with that construction. (1Ch 22: 1-6; 2Ch 3:1) Since the entire temple area was very large, it appears that the sum of 600 gold shekels applies to the purchase of this large area rather than to the small portion needed for the altar first built by David.

w12 1/15 18 ¶8

Learn From ‘the Framework of Truth’

8 If an Israelite’s sacrifice was a *voluntary* manifestation of sincere gratitude to Jehovah or, as in the case of a burnt offering, a request for his approval, then making the appropriate choice of animal would likely present no challenge. The worshipper would be happy to give Jehovah his very best. Christians today do not make the literal sacrifices stipulated by the Mosaic Law; yet they do make sacrifices, in the sense that they use their time, energy, and resources to serve Jehovah. The apostle Paul referred to the “public declaration” of the Christian hope and “the doing of good and the sharing of things with others” as sacrifices that please God. (Heb. 13:15, 16) The spirit with which Jehovah’s people engage in such activities reveals how grateful and appreciative they are for all that God has given to them. So there is a parallel between the attitudes and motivations of those who engage in Christian service today and those who offered voluntary sacrifices in ancient times.

Spiritual Gems

w05 5/15 19 ¶6

Highlights From the Book of Second Samuel

23:15-17. David had such a deep respect for God’s law on life and blood that on this occasion, he refrained from doing what even resembled a violation of that law. We must cultivate such an attitude toward all of God’s commands.

AUGUST 1-7

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD |
1 KINGS 1-2**

“Do You Learn From Your Mistakes?”

it-2 987 ¶4

Solomon

On hearing the sound of the music at Gihon, not so very far away, and the shouting of the people: “Let King Solomon live,” Adonijah and his fellow conspirators fled in fear and confusion. Solomon gave a foregleam of the peace that would mark his rulership by refusing to mar his ascension to the throne by taking revenge. Had matters been reversed, Solomon would very likely have lost his life. Adonijah fled to the sanctuary for asylum, so Solomon sent word there and had Adonijah brought before him. Informing Adonijah that he would continue to live unless bad should be found in him, Solomon then dismissed him to his house.—1Ki 1: 41-53.

it-1 49

Adonijah

However, following David’s death, Adonijah approached Bath-sheba and induced her to act as his agent before Solomon to request

David's youthful nurse and companion, Abishag, as his wife. Adonijah's statement that "the kingship was to have become mine, and it was toward me that all Israel had set their face for me to become king" indicates that he felt he had been deprived of his right, even though he professedly acknowledged God's hand in the matter. (1Ki 2:13-21) While his request may have been based solely on the desire for some compensation for the loss of the kingdom, it strongly suggested that the fires of ambition continued in Adonijah, since by a rule in the ancient East the wives and concubines of a king would only become those of his legal successor. (Compare 2Sa 3:7; 16:21.) Solomon so viewed this request made through his mother and ordered Adonijah's death, which order was promptly carried out by Benaiah.—1Ki 2:22-25.

Spiritual Gems

w05 7/1 30 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of First Kings

2:37, 41-46. How dangerous it is to think that one can step out of bounds with impunity! Those who deliberately deviate from following 'the cramped road leading off into life' will suffer the consequences of that unwise decision.—Matthew 7:14.

AUGUST 8-14

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 KINGS 3-4

"The Value of Wisdom"

w11 12/15 8 ¶4-6

Is He a Good Example for You or a Warning?

⁴At the start of Solomon's kingship, God appeared to him in a dream and

invited him to make a request. Aware of his limited experience, Solomon requested wisdom. **(Read 1 Kings 3:5-9.)** Pleased that the king asked for wisdom rather than for riches and glory, God gave Solomon "a wise and understanding heart"—as well as prosperity. (1 Ki. 3:10-14) As Jesus mentioned, Solomon's wisdom was so outstanding that the queen of Sheba heard of it and made a long trip to experience it for herself.—1 Ki. 10:1, 4-9.

⁵We personally do not expect to receive wisdom miraculously. Solomon said that "Jehovah himself gives wisdom," but he wrote that we should strive to gain that godly quality: "Pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment." Related to that, he used expressions such as "call out for," "keep seeking for," and "keep searching for" wisdom. (Prov. 2:1-6) Clearly, we *can* gain wisdom.

⁶It would be good to ask, 'Am I taking to heart Solomon's example of treasuring divine wisdom?' Economic uncertainties have moved many to concentrate on their job and finances or have influenced decisions about the type and amount of education to seek. What about you and your family? Do your choices indicate that you are treasuring and seeking divine wisdom? Would adjusting your focus or goals allow you to acquire more wisdom? Really, gaining and applying wisdom is for your lasting good. Solomon wrote: "In that case you will understand righteousness and judgment and uprightness, the entire course of what is good." —Prov. 2:9.

Spiritual Gems

w98 2/1 11 ¶15

Jehovah Is a God of Covenants

¹⁵ With Abraham's descendants organized as a nation under the Law, Jehovah blessed them according to his promise to the patriarch. In 1473 B.C.E., Moses' successor, Joshua, led Israel into Canaan. The subsequent division of the land among the tribes fulfilled Jehovah's promise to give the land to Abraham's seed. When Israel was faithful, Jehovah fulfilled his promise to give them victory over their enemies. This was especially true during the rule of King David. By the time of David's son Solomon, a third aspect of the Abrahamic covenant was fulfilled. "Judah and Israel were many, like the grains of sand that are by the sea for multitude, eating and drinking and rejoicing."—1 Kings 4:20.

AUGUST 15-21

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 KINGS 5-6

"Built With Their Hands and Their Hearts"

w11 2/1 15

Did You Know?

The cedars of Lebanon were particularly renowned for the durability, beauty, and sweet fragrance of their wood, not to mention their resistance to attack by insects. Thus, Solomon was using the best of materials for the temple. Today, all that remains of the forests of cedars that once covered the Lebanese mountains are a few small, isolated groves.

it-1 424

Cedar

Such extensive use of cedarwood required the labor of thousands of workers in cutting the trees, transporting them to Tyre or Sidon on the Mediterranean seacoast, forming them into rafts, and floating them down the coast, probably to Joppa. They were then hauled overland to Jerusalem. This was worked out by a contract between Solomon and Hiram. (1Ki 5:6-18; 2Ch 2:3-10) Thereafter the flow of lumber continued so that it could be said that Solomon made 'cedarwood like the sycamore tree for quantity' during his reign.—1Ki 10:27; compare Isa 9:9, 10.

it-2 1077 ¶1

Temple

In organizing the work, Solomon conscripted 30,000 men out of Israel, sending them to Lebanon in shifts of 10,000 for a month, with a two-month stay at home between shifts. (1Ki 5:13, 14) As burden bearers, he conscripted 70,000 from among the "alien residents" in the land, and as cutters, 80,000. (1Ki 5:15; 9:20, 21; 2Ch 2:2) As foremen over the work, Solomon appointed 550 men and apparently 3,300 as assistants. (1Ki 5:16; 9:22, 23) It appears that, of these, 250 were Israelites and 3,600 were "alien residents" in Israel.—2Ch 2:17, 18.

Spiritual Gems

g 5/12 17, box

The Bible—A Book of Accurate Prophecy, Part 1

PRECISE TIMEKEEPING

An example of the value of the Bible's precise timekeeping is demonstrated at 1 Kings

6:1, which points to the time when King Solomon commenced work on the temple in Jerusalem. We read: *“It came about in the four hundred and eightieth year [479 full years] after the sons of Israel came out from the land of Egypt, in the fourth year [of Solomon’s reign], in the month of Ziv, that is, the second month, after Solomon became king over Israel, that he proceeded to build the house to Jehovah.”*

Bible chronology places the fourth year of Solomon’s reign at 1034 B.C.E. Counting back from that date 479 full years brings us to 1513 B.C.E. as the year of Israel’s Exodus.

AUGUST 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 1 KINGS 7

“What We Can Learn From Two Pillars”

w13 12/1 13 ¶3

‘Out of the Mountains You Will Mine Copper’

King Solomon used a vast quantity of copper in furnishing the temple in Jerusalem. Much of it was obtained by his father, David, from his Syrian conquests. (1 Chronicles 18:6-8) The copper “molten sea,” the huge basin used by the priests for washing, had a capacity of 17,500 gallons (66,000 L) and may have weighed up to 30 tons. (1 Kings 7:23-26, 44-46) Then there were the two colossal copper pillars that stood at the entrance of the temple. They were 26 feet (8 m) tall and were topped with capitals some 7.3 feet (2.2 m) in height. The pillars were hollow, with 3-inch-thick (7.5 cm) walls, and were 5.6 feet (1.7 m) in

diameter. (1 Kings 7:15, 16; 2 Chronicles 4:17) It is staggering to think of the amount of copper used in making just these items.

it-1 348

Boaz, II

The northernmost of the two huge copper pillars erected before the porch of Solomon’s glorious temple was named Boaz, possibly meaning “In Strength.” The southern pillar was called Jachin, meaning “May [Jehovah] Firmly Establish.” So, putting the two together and reading from right to left as one faced the E would convey the thought ‘May [Jehovah] firmly establish [the temple] in strength.’—1Ki 7:15-21; see CAPITAL.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 263

Bathing

Physical cleanliness is required of those who worship Jehovah in holiness and purity. This was demonstrated in connection with the tabernacle arrangement and the later temple service. At their installation, High Priest Aaron and his sons bathed before donning the official garments. (Ex 29:4-9; 40:12-15; Le 8:6, 7) To wash their hands and feet, the priests used water from the copper basin in the courtyard of the tabernacle and, later, from the huge molten sea at Solomon’s temple. (Ex 30:18-21; 40:30-32; 2Ch 4:2-6) On the Day of Atonement the high priest bathed twice. (Le 16:4, 23, 24) Those who took the goat for Azazel, the remains of the animal sacrifices, and the sacrificial red cow outside the camp had to bathe their flesh and wash their garments before reentering the camp.—Le 16:26-28; Nu 19:2-10.

AUGUST 29–SEPTEMBER 4

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 1 KINGS 8

"Solomon's Humble, Heartfelt Public Prayer"

w09 11/15 9 ¶9-10

Enrich Your Prayers Through Bible Study

⁹To be heard, prayer must come from the heart. Solomon offered a heartfelt prayer, recorded at 1 Kings chapter 8, before throngs assembled in Jerusalem for the inauguration of Jehovah's temple in 1026 B.C.E. After the ark of the covenant was placed in the Most Holy and Jehovah's cloud filled the temple, Solomon praised God.

¹⁰Study Solomon's prayer, and note its references to the heart. Solomon acknowledged that Jehovah alone knows a person's heart. (1 Ki. 8:38, 39) The same prayer shows that there is hope for a sinner who 'returns to God with all his heart.' If an enemy captured God's people, their pleas would be heard if their heart was complete with Jehovah. (1 Ki. 8:48, 58, 61) Surely, then, your prayers should come from the heart.

w99 1/15 17 ¶7-8

Lift Up Loyal Hands in Prayer

⁷Whether we are praying publicly or privately, an important Scriptural principle to keep in mind is that we should display a humble attitude in our prayers. (2 Chronicles 7:13, 14) King Solomon manifested humility in his public prayer at the dedication of Jehovah's temple in Jerusalem. Solomon had just completed one of the most magnificent buildings ever constructed on the earth. Yet, he humbly prayed:

"Will God truly dwell upon the earth? Look! The heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens, themselves cannot contain you; how much less, then, this house that I have built!"—1 Kings 8:27.

⁸Like Solomon, we should be humble when representing others in public prayer. Although we should avoid sounding sanctimonious, humility can be shown by our tone of voice. Humble prayers are not bombastic or melodramatic. They draw attention, not to the person praying, but to the One addressed. (Matthew 6:5) Humility is also shown by what we say in prayer. If we pray humbly, we will not sound as though we are demanding that God do certain things our way. Rather, we will petition Jehovah to act in a manner that harmonizes with his sacred will. The psalmist exemplified the proper attitude when he pleaded: "Ah, now, Jehovah, do save, please! Ah, now, Jehovah, do grant success, please!"—Psalm 118:25; Luke 18:9-14.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 1060 ¶4 Heaven

Solomon, the constructor of the temple at Jerusalem, stated that the "heavens, yes, the heaven of the heavens" cannot contain God. (1Ki 8:27) As the Creator of the heavens, Jehovah's position is far above them all, and "his name alone is unreachably high. His dignity is above earth and heaven." (Ps 148:13) Jehovah measures the physical heavens as easily as a man would measure an object by spreading his fingers so that the object lies between the tips of the thumb and the little finger. (Isa 40:12) Solomon's statement does not mean that God has no specific place of residence.

Nor does it mean that he is omnipresent in the sense of being literally everywhere and in everything. This can be seen from the fact that Solomon also spoke of Jehovah as hearing “from the heavens, your established place of dwelling,” that is, the heavens of the spirit realm.—1Ki 8:30, 39.