

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

NOVEMBER 7-13

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 KINGS 5-6

"There Are More With Us Than With Them"

it-1 716 ¶4

Elisha

Israel Delivered From Syria. During the reign of King Jehoram of Israel, Syria plans a surprise attack upon Israel. More than once maneuvers of Ben-hadad II are frustrated by Elisha, who reveals to King Jehoram every move of the Syrians. At first Ben-hadad thinks that there is a traitor in his own camp. But when he finds out the real source of his difficulty, he sends a military force to Dothan, surrounding it with horses and war chariots to get Elisha. (PICTURE, Vol. 1, p. 950) Elisha's attendant is struck with fear, but Elisha prays to God to open the attendant's eyes, "and, look! the mountainous region [is] full of horses and war chariots of fire all around Elisha." Now, as the Syrian hosts close in, Elisha prays for the opposite kind of miracle, "Please, strike this nation with blindness." Elisha says to the Syrians, "Follow me," but he does not have to lead them by the hand, indicating that it is mental rather than physical blindness. They do not recognize Elisha, whom they came to take, nor do they know where he is taking them.—2Ki 6:8-19.

w13 8/15 30 ¶2

Elisha Saw Fiery Chariots—Do You?

Though surrounded by enemies at Dothan, Elisha remained calm. Why? Because he had developed strong faith in Jehovah. We too need such faith. Therefore, let us pray for God's holy spirit so that we can display

faith and other aspects of the spirit's fruitage.—Luke 11:13; Gal. 5:22, 23.

it-1 343 ¶1

Blindness

The blindness that was brought on the military force of the Syrians at the word of Elisha was evidently mental blindness. If the entire army had been struck with physical blindness, they would all have had to be led by hand. But the account simply says that Elisha told them: "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me." On this phenomenon William James in his *Principles of Psychology* (1981, Vol. 1, p. 59) states: "A most interesting effect of cortical disorder is *mental blindness*. This consists not so much in insensibility to optical impressions, as in *inability to understand them*. Psychologically it is interpretable as *loss of associations* between optical sensations and what they signify; and any interruption of the paths between the optic centres and the centres for other ideas ought to bring it about." This was apparently the kind of blindness removed by Jehovah when the Syrian army reached Samaria. (2Ki 6:18-20) Such mental blindness also may have been involved in the case of the men of Sodom, since the account shows that, instead of being distressed at loss of the faculty of sight, they persisted in trying to find the door of Lot's house.—Ge 19:11.

Spiritual Gems

w05 8/1 9 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Second Kings

5:15, 16—Why did Elisha not accept Naaman's gift? Elisha refused the gift because he recognized that the miracle of healing Naaman was performed by Jehovah's

power, not his own. It would have been unthinkable on his part to profit from his God-appointed office. True worshippers today do not reach out for personal gain from Jehovah's service. They take to heart Jesus' admonition: "You received free, give free." —Matthew 10:8.

NOVEMBER 14-20

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 KINGS 7-8

"Jehovah Made the Unexpected Happen"

it-1 716-717

Elisha

However, later on, Ben-hadad II invades, not with sporadic marauding forays, but in force and lays siege to Samaria. The siege is so severe that at least one case is reported to the king in which a woman eats her own son. As the offspring of Ahab, the "son of a murderer," King Jehoram swears to kill Elisha. But the rash oath is not carried out. Arriving at the prophet's house with his adjutant, Jehoram states that he has lost all hope of aid from Jehovah. Elisha assures the king that food supplies will be abundant the next day. The king's adjutant scoffs at this prediction, causing Elisha to tell him: "Here you are seeing it with your own eyes, but from it you will not eat." By a noise that Jehovah causes to be heard in the camp of the Syrians, they are led to believe that a great army of combined nations is advancing against them, and they flee, leaving the camp intact with all its food supplies. When the king finds out about the desertion of the Syrians, he puts the adjutant in charge of guarding the gate of Samaria, and there he is trampled to death when the starving

crowd of Israelites rush out to plunder the camp. He sees the food but does not eat from it.—2Ki 6:24–7:20.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 195 ¶17

Lamp

Kings of the Line of David. Jehovah God established King David on the throne of Israel, and David proved to be a wise guide and leader of the nation, under God's direction. He was therefore called "the lamp of Israel." (2Sa 21:17) In his kingdom covenant with David, Jehovah promised: "Your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite." (2Sa 7:11-16) Accordingly, the dynasty, or family line, of rulers from David through his son Solomon was as a "lamp" to Israel.—1Ki 11:36; 15:4; 2Ki 8:19; 2Ch 21:7.

NOVEMBER 21-27

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 KINGS 9-10

"He Acted With Courage, Determination, and Zeal"

w11 11/15 3 ¶12

Jehu Champions Pure Worship

Jehu received a commission when the nation of Israel was in a bad state. The country was under the wicked influence of Jezebel, widow of Ahab and mother of the ruling king, Jehoram. She promoted the Baal cult at the expense of Jehovah's worship, killed God's prophets, and corrupted the people with her "fornications" and "sorceries." (2 Ki. 9:22; 1 Ki. 18:4, 13) Jehovah decreed the elimination of the whole house of Ahab, including Jehoram and Jezebel. Jehu was to spearhead that action.

w11 11/15 4 ¶2-3

Jehu Champions Pure Worship

After refusing to say anything to two messengers sent to him, Jehu met King Jehoram and his ally Ahaziah, the king of Judah, each in his own chariot. Jehoram's question, "Is there peace, Jehu?" was met by the retort: "What peace could there be as long as there are the fornications of Jezebel your mother and her many sorceries?" Alarmed by this response, Jehoram turned to flee. But Jehu was too fast for him! Drawing a bow, he shot an arrow through Jehoram's heart, and the king fell dead in his chariot. Although Ahaziah managed to escape, Jehu later tracked him down and had him killed too.—2 Ki. 9:22-24, 27.

The next member of Ahab's house to be eliminated was wicked Queen Jezebel. Jehu rightly referred to her as "this accursed one." As Jehu drove into Jezreel, he saw her looking down from a palace window. Without wasting words, Jehu commanded the court officials to throw Jezebel down from the window. Jehu then had his horses trample this corrupter of all Israel. Thereafter, Jehu proceeded to eliminate dozens of other members of the house of wicked Ahab.—2 Ki. 9:30-34; 10:1-14.

w11 11/15 5 ¶3-4

Jehu Champions Pure Worship

It is true that Jehu spilled much blood. Yet, the Scriptures present him as a courageous man who freed Israel from the oppressive domination of Jezebel and her family. If any leader of Israel was to succeed in doing this, he had to be a man of courage, determination, and zeal. "It was rough work and was executed with relentless thoroughness," comments one Bible dictionary.

"Gentler measures probably would have failed to eradicate Baal worship from Israel."

No doubt you can see that circumstances faced by Christians today require that they manifest certain qualities possessed by Jehu. For instance, how should we react if tempted to engage in any activity that Jehovah condemns? We should be prompt, courageous, and dynamic in rejecting it. When it comes to our godly devotion, we cannot tolerate any rivalry toward Jehovah.

Spiritual Gems

w11 11/15 5 ¶6-7

Jehu Champions Pure Worship

Jehu may have believed that the independence of the kingdom of Israel from Judah required the religious separation of the two kingdoms. Hence, like former kings of Israel, he attempted to keep them separate by perpetuating calf worship. But this would show a lack of faith in Jehovah, who had made him king.

Jehovah commended Jehu because 'he acted well in doing what was right in God's eyes.' Nevertheless, Jehu "did not take care to walk in the law of Jehovah the God of Israel with all his heart." (2 Ki. 10:30, 31) Considering everything else that Jehu did earlier, you might find this surprising and sad. Yet, it does provide a lesson for us. We can never take our relationship with Jehovah for granted. Every day, we need to cultivate loyalty to God through study of his Word, meditation on it, and heartfelt prayer to our heavenly Father. Let us, therefore, exercise utmost care to keep on walking in Jehovah's law with all our heart.—1 Cor. 10:12.

NOVEMBER 28–DECEMBER 4

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 KINGS 11-12

"An Ambitious, Wicked Woman Does Not Go Unpunished"

it-1 209

Athaliah

Like her mother Jezebel, Athaliah egged on her husband, Jehoram, to do what was bad in Jehovah's eyes during his eight-year reign. (1Ki 21:25; 2Ch 21:4-6) And like her mother, Athaliah wantonly shed the blood of the innocent. When her wicked son Ahab died after a one-year reign, she killed off all the others of the royal line, except the infant Jehoash, who had been hidden by the high priest and his wife, who was Jehoash's aunt. Thereupon Athaliah installed herself as queen for six years, c. 905-899 B.C.E. (2Ch 22:11, 12) Her sons robbed Jehovah's temple of the holy things and offered them up to Baal.—2Ch 24:7.

it-1 209

Athaliah

When Jehoash reached seven years of age, God-fearing High Priest Jehoiada brought the lad out of secrecy and crowned him rightful heir to the throne. Hearing the tumult, Athaliah rushed to the temple and, upon seeing what was happening, cried, "Conspiracy! Conspiracy!" High Priest Jehoiada ordered her taken outside the temple grounds to be executed at the horse gate of the palace; she was perhaps the last of Ahab's abominable house. (2Ki 11:1-20; 2Ch 22:1-23:21) How true it proved to be: "Nothing of Jehovah's word will fall unfilled to the earth that Jehovah has spoken against the house of Ahab!"—2Ki 10:10, 11; 1Ki 21:20-24.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 1265-1266

Jehoash

Thereafter, as long as High Priest Jehoiada lived and acted as father and adviser to Jehoash, the young monarch prospered. Married by the time he was 21, he had two wives, one of whom was named Jehoaddan, and by these Jehoash became father to sons and daughters. In this way the line of David leading to the Messiah, which had come so near to being completely severed, was once again made strong.—2Ki 12:1-3; 2Ch 24:1-3; 25:1.

DECEMBER 5-11

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 KINGS 13-15

"Wholehearted Effort Results in Abundant Blessings"

w10 4/15 26 ¶11

Are You Fully Following the Christ?

¹¹ To illustrate the importance of being zealous in God's service, note an event that took place in the life of King Jehoash of Israel. Concerned over the apparent fate of Israel at the hands of Syria, Jehoash came weeping to Elisha. The prophet instructed him to shoot an arrow out the window toward Syria, indicating victory by Jehovah's hand against that nation. This certainly should have invigorated the king. Elisha next told Jehoash to take his arrows and strike the earth with them. Jehoash struck the earth three times. Elisha was incensed at this, for striking the earth five or six times would have indicated "striking down Syria to the finishing point." Now Jehoash would enjoy only three partial victories. Because he acted with a lack of

zeal, Jehoash experienced limited success. (2 Kings 13:14-19) What lesson can we learn from that account? Jehovah will abundantly bless us only if we do his work wholeheartedly and with zeal.

w13 11/1 11 ¶5-6

“The Rewarder of Those Earnestly Seeking Him”

Whom does Jehovah reward? “Those earnestly seeking him,” says Paul. A reference work for Bible translators notes that the Greek word rendered “earnestly seeking” does not mean “going out to find” but, rather, implies coming to God “in worship.” Another reference work explains that this Greek verb is in a form that suggests intensity and concentrated effort. Yes, Jehovah rewards those whose faith moves them to worship him with wholehearted love and zeal.—Matthew 22:37.

How does Jehovah reward his faithful worshippers? He has promised a priceless future reward that reveals the depth of his generosity and love—everlasting life in Paradise on earth. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Even now, those who earnestly seek Jehovah experience rich blessings. With the help of his holy spirit and the wisdom found in his Word, they enjoy a rewarding and satisfying way of life.—Psalm 144:15; Matthew 5:3.

Spiritual Gems

w05 8/1 11 ¶3

Highlights From the Book of Second Kings

13:20, 21—Does this miracle support the veneration of religious relics? No, it does not. The Bible does not show that the bones of Elisha were ever venerated. It was God’s power that made this miracle possible, as was the case with all the miracles Elisha performed when he was still alive.

DECEMBER 12-18

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 KINGS 16-17

“Jehovah’s Patience Has Limits”

it-2 908 ¶5

Shalmaneser

Domination of Israel. During the reign of King Hoshea of Israel (c. 758-740 B.C.E.), Shalmaneser V advanced into Palestine and Hoshea became his vassal under an imposition of annual tribute. (2Ki 17:1-3) However, at a later time Hoshea failed to pay the tribute and was found to be conspiring with King So of Egypt. (See SO.) For this, Shalmaneser placed Hoshea under detention and thereafter laid siege against Samaria for three years, after which the well-fortified city finally fell, and the Israelites were led into exile.—2Ki 17:4-6; 18:9-12; compare Ho 7:11; Eze 23:4-10.

it-1 414-415

Captivity

In both the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and the southern two-tribe kingdom of Judah, the root cause leading up to captivity was the same: abandonment of true worship of Jehovah in favor of the worship of false gods. (De 28:15, 62-68; 2Ki 17:7-18; 21:10-15) Jehovah, for his part, continually sent his prophets to warn them both but to no avail. (2Ki 17:13) None of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel’s kings ever made a complete purge of the false worship instituted by that nation’s first king, Jeroboam. Judah, her sister kingdom to the S, failed to heed both Jehovah’s direct warnings and the example of the captivity into which Israel had fallen. (Jer 3:6-10) The inhabitants of both kingdoms eventually were carried away into exile, each

nation in more than one principal deportation.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 847

Samaritan

The term “Samaritans” first appeared in Scripture after the conquest of the ten-tribe kingdom of Samaria in 740 B.C.E.; it was applied to those who lived in the northern kingdom before that conquest as distinct from the foreigners later brought in from other parts of the Assyrian Empire. (2Ki 17:29) It appears that the Assyrians did not remove all the Israelite inhabitants, for the account at 2 Chronicles 34:6-9 (compare 2Ki 23:19, 20) implies that during King Josiah’s reign there were Israelites still in the land. In time, “Samaritans” came to mean the descendants of those left in Samaria and those brought in by the Assyrians. Therefore some were undoubtedly the products of mixed marriages. At a still later period, the name carried more of a religious, rather than a racial or political, connotation. “Samaritan” referred to one who belonged to the religious sect that flourished in the vicinity of ancient Shechem and Samaria and who held to certain tenets distinctly different from Judaism.—Joh 4:9.

DECEMBER 19-25

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 KINGS 18-19

“How Our Opposers Try to Weaken Us”

w05 8/1 11 ¶5

Highlights From the Book of Second Kings

18:19-21, 25—Had Hezekiah made an alliance with Egypt? No. Rabshakeh’s

accusation was false, as was his claim to have come with “authorization from Jehovah.” Faithful King Hezekiah relied solely on Jehovah.

w10 7/15 13 ¶3

“Do Not Be Afraid. I Myself Will Help You”

Rabshakeh used cunning reasoning in an effort to plant doubts. He said: “Is [Jehovah] not the one whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah has removed? . . . Jehovah himself said to me, ‘Go up against this land, and you must bring it to ruin.’” (2 Ki. 18:22, 25) Thus Rabshakeh argued that Jehovah would not fight for His people because He was displeased with them. But the opposite was true. Jehovah was pleased with Hezekiah and the Jews who had returned to true worship.—2 Ki. 18:3-7.

w13 11/15 19 ¶14

Seven Shepherds, Eight Dukes—What They Mean for Us Today

¹⁴ The king of Assyria set up camp at Lachish, southwest of Jerusalem. From there, through three envoys, he ordered the city to surrender. His spokesman, whose official title was Rabshakeh, used a variety of tactics. Speaking in Hebrew, he urged the people to betray the king and to submit to the Assyrians, falsely promising to relocate them to a land where they could enjoy a comfortable life. (**Read 2 Kings 18:31, 32.**) Then Rabshakeh asserted that just as the gods of the nations had been unable to protect their worshippers, so Jehovah would be unable to deliver the Jews out of the Assyrians’ clutches. Wisely, the people did not try to respond to the slanderous propaganda, a course often followed by Jehovah’s servants in our day.—**Read 2 Kings 18:35, 36.**

yb**74 177 ¶1**

Part 2—Germany

It is interesting that the SS, who often used the dirtiest tricks to try to get someone to sign the declaration, frequently turned against them once they had actually signed and harassed them more afterward than they had before. Karl Kirscht confirms this: “More than anyone else Jehovah’s witnesses were the victims of chicanery in the concentration camps. It was thought that in this way they could be persuaded to sign the declaration. We were repeatedly asked to do so. Some did sign, but, in most cases, they had to wait more than a year before they were released. During this time they were often publicly reviled by the SS as being hypocrites and cowards and were forced to take a so-called ‘honor walk’ around their brothers before being permitted to leave the camp.”

Spiritual Gems

it-1 155 ¶4

Archaeology

As an illustration, the Bible record states that King Sennacherib of Assyria was killed by his two sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, and was succeeded to the throne by another son, Esar-haddon. (2Ki 19:36, 37) Yet, a Babylonian chronicle stated that, on the 20th of Tebeth, Sennacherib was killed by his son in a revolt. Both Berossus, Babylonian priest of the third century B.C.E., and Nabonidus, Babylonian king of the sixth century B.C.E., gave the same account, to the effect that Sennacherib was assassinated by only one of his sons. However, in a more recently discovered fragment of the Prism of Esar-haddon, the son who succeeded Sennacherib, Esar-haddon clear-

ly states that his brothers (plural) revolted and killed their father and then took flight. Commenting on this, Philip Biberfeld, in *Universal Jewish History* (1948, Vol. I, p. 27), says: “The Babylonian Chronicle, Nabonid, and Berossus were mistaken; only the Biblical account proved to be correct. It was confirmed in all the minor details by the inscription of Esarhaddon and proved to be more accurate regarding this event of Babylonian-Assyrian history than the Babylonian sources themselves. This is a fact of utmost importance for the evaluation of even contemporary sources not in accord with Biblical tradition.”

DECEMBER 26–JANUARY 1

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 KINGS 20-21

“Prayer Moved Jehovah to Intervene”

ip-1 394 ¶23

A King’s Faith Is Rewarded

²³ About the time that Sennacherib first comes up against Judah, Hezekiah falls gravely ill. Isaiah tells him that he is going to die. (**Isaiah 38:1**) The 39-year-old king is devastated. His concern is not only for his own well-being but also for the future of the people. Jerusalem and Judah are in danger of being invaded by the Assyrians. If Hezekiah dies, who will lead the fight? At that time, Hezekiah has no son to assume the rulership. In fervent prayer Hezekiah begs Jehovah to show him mercy.—**Isaiah 38: 2, 3.**

w17.03 21 ¶16

Serve Jehovah With a Complete Heart!

¹⁶ Hezekiah later became sick to the point of dying. He begged Jehovah to remember

how he had walked before Him. (**Read 2 Kings 20:1-3.**) We know from the Scriptures that we are not living at a time when we can look to God for miraculous healings or an extension of our life. Still, as did Hezekiah, each of us can say to Jehovah in prayer: “I have walked before you faithfully and with a complete heart.” Do you believe that Jehovah is capable and willing to sustain you even on a sickbed?—Ps. 41:3.

g01 7/22 13 ¶4

How Can Prayer Help Me?

In Bible times some men of faith did have direct—even miraculous—answers to their prayers. When King Hezekiah, for example, learned that he had a terminal illness, he supplicated God for deliverance. God responded: “I have heard your prayer. I have seen your tears. Here I am healing you.” (2 Kings 20:1-6) Other God-fearing men and women similarly experienced God’s intervention.—1 Samuel 1:1-20; Daniel 10:2-12; Acts 4:24-31; 10:1-7.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 240 ¶1

Leveling Instrument

A leveling instrument may be used to construct a building properly or to test its fitness for preservation. Jehovah foretold that he would apply to wayward Jerusalem “the measuring line applied to Samaria and also the leveling instrument applied to the house of Ahab.” God had measured and found Samaria and the house of King Ahab to be morally bad or crooked, resulting in their destruction. Likewise, God would judge Jerusalem and its rulers, exposing their wickedness and bringing about the destruction of that city. These events actually

occurred in 607 B.C.E. (2Ki 21:10-13; 10:11) Through Isaiah the various wicked braggarts and rulers of the people in Jerusalem were apprised of their coming calamity and of Jehovah’s declaration: “I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the leveling instrument.” The standards of true justice and genuine righteousness would reveal who were really God’s servants and who were not, resulting in either preservation or destruction.—Isa 28:14-19.