

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

MAY 1-7

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 17-19

“See Others as Jehovah Does”

w17.03 24 ¶7

Will You Apply Your Heart to the Things Written?

⁷ What about Asa's son Jehoshaphat? He had many desirable qualities. By relying on God, Jehoshaphat did much good. Yet, he also made unwise decisions. For example, he formed a marriage alliance with wicked King Ahab of the northern kingdom. And despite a warning from the prophet Micaiah, Jehoshaphat joined Ahab in fighting against the Syrians. In the battle, Jehoshaphat narrowly avoided being killed. Then he returned to Jerusalem. (2 Chron. 18:1-32) At that, the prophet Jehu asked him: “Is it the wicked you should be helping, and is it those who hate Jehovah you should love?”—**Read 2 Chronicles 19:1-3.**

w15 8/15 11-12 ¶8-9

Meditate on Jehovah's Enduring Love

⁸ Jehovah wants us to know him as someone who loves us and looks beyond our imperfection. He searches for the good in us. (2 Chron. 16:9) For instance, he did so in the case of King Jehoshaphat of Judah. On one occasion, Jehoshaphat unwisely agreed to accompany King Ahab of Israel in a military venture to recover Ramoth-gilead from the Syrians. Although 400 false prophets assured wicked Ahab of success, Jehovah's true prophet Micaiah foretold certain defeat. Ahab died in battle, and Jehoshaphat barely escaped with his life. Upon returning to Jerusalem, he was

reproved for allying himself with Ahab. Even so, Jehu, the son of Hanani the visionary, told Jehoshaphat: “There are good things that have been found in you.”—2 Chron. 18: 4, 5, 18-22, 33, 34; 19:1-3.

⁹ Early in his reign, Jehoshaphat had directed that princes, Levites, and priests travel through all the cities of Judah to teach his subjects Jehovah's Law. The campaign was so effective that people of the surrounding nations began to fear Jehovah. (2 Chron. 17:3-10) Yes, Jehoshaphat committed a foolish act, but Jehovah was not blind to the good things he had done. This Bible account provides a reminder that despite our human imperfection, Jehovah will have enduring love for us if we wholeheartedly seek to please him.

Spiritual Gems

w17.03 20 ¶10-11

Serve Jehovah With a Complete Heart!

¹⁰ Asa's son Jehoshaphat “kept walking in the way of his father Asa.” (2 Chron. 20: 31, 32) How so? Like his father, Jehoshaphat encouraged the people to search for Jehovah. He did so by organizing a teaching campaign that used “the book of Jehovah's Law.” (2 Chron. 17:7-10) He even went to the territory of the northern kingdom of Israel, to the mountainous region of Ephraim, “to bring them back to Jehovah.” (2 Chron. 19:4) Jehoshaphat was a king “who searched for Jehovah with all his heart.”—2 Chron. 22:9.

¹¹ We can all have a share in the great teaching campaign that Jehovah is having done today. Is it your goal each month to teach the Word of God to others, trying to

move their heart to serve God? By your extending yourself and with God's blessing, you may be able to start a Bible study. Is that a goal that you pray about? Are you willing to accept this challenge, even giving up some of what is commonly viewed as free time? And just as Jehoshaphat went to the territory of Ephraim to help people return to true worship, we can reach out to those who have become inactive. In addition, the congregation elders arrange to visit and offer help to disfellowshipped ones in the congregation territory who may have left their past practice of sin.

MAY 8-14

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

"Put Faith in Jehovah Your God"

w14 12/15 23 ¶8

Facing the End of This Old World Together

⁸ In King Jehoshaphat's day, God's people faced a formidable enemy, "a large crowd" from surrounding areas. (2 Chron. 20:1, 2) Commendably, God's servants did not try to conquer the enemy in their own strength. Instead, they turned to Jehovah. (**Read 2 Chronicles 20:3, 4.**) And they did not do so independently, each as he saw fit or felt inclined. The Bible record tells us: "All those of Judah were standing before Jehovah, along with their little ones, their wives, and their children." (2 Chron. 20:13) Whether young or old, they strove together in faith to follow Jehovah's direction, and Jehovah protected them against their enemy. (2 Chron. 20:20-27) Is this not a fine example of how to face challenges as God's people?

w21.11 16 ¶7

Newly Married Couples—Build Your Life Around Serving Jehovah

⁷ Jehovah spoke to Jehoshaphat by means of a Levite named Jahaziel. Jehovah said: "Take your position, stand still, and see the salvation of Jehovah in your behalf." (2 Chron. 20:13-17) That certainly is not the usual way to fight a battle! However, those instructions were not from a human source; they came from Jehovah. With full trust in his God, Jehoshaphat did as he was told. When he and the people went out to meet the enemy, he placed at the front of his troops, not the most skilled soldiers, but the unarmed singers. Jehovah did not let Jehoshaphat down; He defeated the enemy army.—2 Chron. 20:18-23.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 1271 ¶1-2

Jehoram

At least partially because of the bad influence of his wife Athaliah, Jehoram did not pursue the righteous ways of his father Jehoshaphat. (2Ki 8:18) Not only did Jehoram murder his six brothers and some of the princes of Judah but he also turned his subjects away from Jehovah to false gods. (2Ch 21:1-6, 11-14) His whole reign was marred by both internal trouble and external strife. First, Edom rebelled; then Libnah revolted against Judah. (2Ki 8:20-22) In a letter to Jehoram, the prophet Elijah warned: "Look! Jehovah is dealing a great blow to your people and to your sons and to your wives and to all your goods." Moreover, you, King Jehoram, "will be with many sicknesses, with a malady of your intestines, until your intestines have come

out because of the sickness day by day.”
—2Ch 21:12-15.

It all occurred just that way. Jehovah allowed Arabs and Philistines to overrun the land and take Jehoram’s wives and sons captive. God permitted only Jehoram’s youngest son, Jehoahaz (also called Ahaziah), to escape, a concession made, however, only for the sake of the Kingdom covenant made with David. “After all this Jehovah plagued [Jehoram] in his intestines with a sickness for which there was no healing.” Two years later “his intestines came out” and he gradually died. So ended the life of this wicked man, who “went away without being desired.” He was buried in the City of David, “but not in the burial places of the kings.” Ahaziah his son became king in his stead.—2Ch 21:7, 16-20; 22:1; 1Ch 3: 10, 11.

MAY 15-21

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 22-24

“Jehovah Rewards Courageous Acts”

w09 4/1 24 ¶1-2

Jehoash Left Jehovah Because of Bad Association

IT WAS a terrible time in Jerusalem, the city where God’s temple stood. King Ahaziah had just been killed. It is hard even to imagine what Ahaziah’s mother, Athaliah, then did. She had Ahaziah’s sons—her own grandchildren—murdered! Do you know why?—So that she could become the ruler instead of any one of them.

However, one of Athaliah’s grandsons, the baby Jehoash, was saved, and his grandmother did not even know about it. Would

you like to know how?—Well, the baby had an aunt named Jehosheba, who hid Jehoash in God’s temple. She could do this because her husband was High Priest Jehoiada. So together they made sure that Jehoash was kept safe.

w09 4/1 24 ¶3-5

Jehoash Left Jehovah Because of Bad Association

For six years, Jehoash was secretly kept in the temple. There he was taught all about Jehovah God and his laws. Finally, when Jehoash reached seven years of age, Jehoiada took action to make Jehoash king. Would you like to hear how Jehoiada did this and what happened to Jehoash’s grandmother, wicked Queen Athaliah?—

Well, Jehoiada secretly called together the special bodyguards that kings in Jerusalem had at that time. He told them how he and his wife had saved the baby son of King Ahaziah. Then Jehoiada showed Jehoash to those bodyguards, who realized that he was the rightful ruler. And a plan was made.

Jehoiada brought Jehoash out and crowned him. At that, the people “began to clap their hands and say: ‘Let the king live!’” The bodyguards surrounded Jehoash to protect him. Well, when Athaliah heard all this rejoicing, she ran out and objected. But at Jehoiada’s command, the bodyguards put Athaliah to death.—2 Kings 11:1-16.

it-1 379 ¶5

Burial, Burial Places

Righteous High Priest Jehoiada was accorded the honor of a burial in “the City of David along with the kings,” the only person not of the royal line mentioned as having received such distinction.—2Ch 24:15, 16.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 1223 ¶13

Zechariah

12. Son of High Priest Jehoiada. After Jehoiada's death, King Jehoash turned away from true worship, listening to wrong counsel rather than to Jehovah's prophets. Zechariah, Jehoash's cousin (2Ch 22:11), sternly warned the people about this, but instead of repenting, they stoned him in the temple courtyard. Zechariah's dying words were: "Let Jehovah see to it and ask it back." This prophetic request was granted, for not only did Syria do great damage to Judah but also Jehoash was killed by two of his servants "because of the blood of the sons of Jehoiada the priest." The Greek *Septuagint* and the Latin *Vulgate* say that Jehoash was killed to avenge the blood of the "son" of Jehoiada. The Masoretic text and the Syriac *Peshitta*, however, read "sons," possibly using the plural number to denote the excellence and worth of Jehoiada's son Zechariah the prophet-priest.—2Ch 24:17-22, 25.

MAY 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 25-27

"Jehovah Has the Means to Give You Much More Than That"

it-1 1266 ¶6

Jehoash

Jehoash also hired out a hundred thousand of his troops to the king of Judah to fight against the Edomites. However, on the advice of a "man of the true God" they were dismissed, and although they had been paid a hundred silver talents (\$660,600) in ad-

vance, they were angered at being sent home, probably because of losing out on their anticipated share of the booty. So after their return N they plundered towns of the southern kingdom, from Samaria (perhaps their base of operations) as far as Beth-horon.—2Ch 25:6-10, 13.

w21.08 30 ¶16

"Taste" Jehovah's Goodness—How?

¹⁶ Make sacrifices for Jehovah. We do not need to give up all comforts in order to please Jehovah. (Eccl. 5:19, 20) However, if we were to hold back from doing more in God's service just to avoid making personal sacrifices, we could make the same mistake as the man in Jesus' illustration who created a comfortable life for himself but ignored God. (**Read Luke 12:16-21.**) A brother named Christian, who lives in France, says, "I was not giving the best of my time and energy to Jehovah and my family." He and his wife decided to pioneer. But to reach that goal, they had to leave their jobs. To support themselves, they started a small cleaning business, and they learned to be content with less. Was the sacrifice worth making? Christian says, "We enjoy a more meaningful ministry now and enjoy seeing Bible students and return visits learn about Jehovah."

Spiritual Gems

w07 12/15 10 ¶1-2

Do You Have a Spiritual Mentor?

AT THE tender age of 16, Uzziah became king of the southern kingdom of Judah. He reigned for over 50 years, from the late ninth to the early eighth century B.C.E. From a young age, Uzziah "kept doing what was right in Jehovah's eyes." What influenced him to take an upright course? The

historical record states: “[Uzziah] continually tended to search for God in the days of Zechariah, the instructor in the fear of the true God; and, in the days of his searching for Jehovah, the true God made him prosperous.”—2 Chronicles 26:1, 4, 5.

Not much is known about Zechariah, the adviser to the king, apart from this account in the Bible. Yet, as “the instructor in the fear of the true God,” Zechariah exercised a fine influence on the young ruler to do what was right. *The Expositor’s Bible* observes that Zechariah was obviously “a man versed in sacred learning, rich in spiritual experience, and able to communicate his knowledge.” One Bible scholar concluded about Zechariah: “He was well versed in prophecy and . . . was an intelligent, devout, good man; and, it seems, had great influence with Uzziah.”

MAY 29–JUNE 4

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 28-29

“You Can Serve Jehovah Despite a Difficult Upbringing”

w16.02 14 ¶8

Imitate Jehovah’s Close Friends

⁸ Unlike Ruth, young Hezekiah was born into a nation that was dedicated to Jehovah. But not all Israelites lived up to that dedication. Hezekiah’s father, King Ahaz, is a case in point. That wicked man led the kingdom of Judah into idolatry, even desecrating Jehovah’s temple in Jerusalem. It is hard to imagine Hezekiah’s childhood, for some of his brothers met a horrible death, being burned alive as sacrifices to a false god! —2 Ki. 16:2-4, 10-17; 2 Chron. 28:1-3.

w16.02 14 ¶9-11

Imitate Jehovah’s Close Friends

⁹ Hezekiah might easily have grown up to be a bitter, angry man who turned against God. Others who have endured far less hardship have thought that they had valid reason to become “enraged against Jehovah” or embittered toward his organization. (Prov. 19:3) And some people are convinced that their unwholesome family background dooms them to lead a bad life, perhaps to repeat their parents’ mistakes. (Ezek. 18: 2, 3) Are such notions correct?

¹⁰ Hezekiah’s life record gives us a resounding answer: Absolutely not! There is never a valid reason to become embittered against Jehovah, for he is not the source of the evils that befall people in this wicked world. (Job 34:10) True, parents can exert a strong influence on their children for good or for bad. (Prov. 22:6; Col. 3:21) But this does not mean that a person’s family background determines his course in life. On the contrary, Jehovah has given all of us a precious gift—the ability to choose what we will do and who we will be. (Deut. 30:19) How did Hezekiah use that gift?

¹¹ Although Hezekiah was the son of one of Judah’s worst kings, he grew up to be one of the very best. (**Read 2 Kings 18: 5, 6.**) Yes, his father was a terrible influence, but there were other influences to choose from. Isaiah served as a prophet in those days, as did Micah and Hosea. We can imagine King Hezekiah deeply absorbed in the inspired declarations of such faithful men, allowing Jehovah’s counsel and correction to sink into his heart. So Hezekiah set about righting the terrible wrongs that his father had committed. He did so

by cleansing the temple, atoning for the people's sins, and destroying pagan idols in a vigorous and far-reaching campaign. (2 Chron. 29:1-11, 18-24; 31:1) When he faced daunting challenges, such as the threat of attack on Jerusalem by the Assyrian king Sennacherib, Hezekiah showed profound courage and faith. He relied on God for salvation and strengthened his people by word and example. (2 Chron. 32:7, 8) Later, when Hezekiah needed correction for showing a haughty attitude, he humbled himself and repented. (2 Chron. 32:24-26) Clearly, Hezekiah did not let his past ruin his present or deprive him of a future. Rather, he showed that he was Jehovah's friend and a fine example to imitate.

Spiritual Gems

w12 2/15 24-25

Nathan—Loyal Advocate of Pure Worship

As a faithful worshipper of Jehovah, Nathan enthusiastically endorsed David's plan to construct the first permanent center of pure worship on earth. On that occasion, however, Nathan apparently expressed his own feelings instead of speaking in Jehovah's name. That night, God instructed his prophet to take a different message to the king: David would not build Jehovah's temple. The person to do so would be one of David's sons. But Nathan announced that God was making a covenant with David to the effect that his throne would become "firmly established to time indefinite."—2 Sam. 7:4-16.

God's will did not harmonize with Nathan's judgment with respect to temple construction. Without murmuring, however, this humble prophet acquiesced to Jehovah's purpose and cooperated with it. What a fine example to follow if God should correct

us in some way! Nathan's subsequent acts as a prophet show that he did not lose God's favor. In fact, it appears that Jehovah inspired Nathan, together with Gad the visionary, to direct David in organizing 4,000 musicians in temple service.—1 Chron. 23:1-5; 2 Chron. 29:25.

JUNE 5-11

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 30-31

"Gathering Together Is Good for Us"

it-1 1103 ¶2

Hezekiah

His Zeal for True Worship. Hezekiah demonstrated his zeal for Jehovah's worship immediately on taking the throne at 25 years of age. His first act was to reopen and repair the temple. Then, calling together the priests and Levites, he said to them: "It is close to my heart to conclude a covenant with Jehovah the God of Israel." This was a covenant of faithfulness, as though the Law covenant, still in effect but neglected, was inaugurated anew in Judah. With great energy he proceeded to organize the Levites in their services, and he reestablished the arrangements for musical instruments and singing of praises. It was Nisan, the month for Passover to be celebrated, but the temple and the priests and Levites were unclean. By the 16th day of Nisan, the temple was cleansed and its utensils restored. Then a special atonement had to be made for all Israel. First, the princes brought sacrifices, sin offerings for the kingdom, the sanctuary, and the people, followed by thousands of burnt offerings by the people.—2Ch 29:1-36.

it-1 1103 ¶3

Hezekiah

Since the people's uncleanness prevented their observance of the Passover at the regular time, Hezekiah took advantage of the law that allowed those who are unclean to celebrate the Passover one month later. He called not only Judah but also Israel by means of letters sent by runners throughout the land from Beer-sheba to Dan. The runners met with derision from many; but individuals, particularly from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun, humbled themselves to come, some from Ephraim and Issachar also attending. Besides this, many non-Israelite worshipers of Jehovah were on hand. It was likely a difficult matter for those in the northern kingdom who stood for true worship to attend. They, like the messengers, would meet opposition and ridicule, inasmuch as the ten-tribe kingdom was in a decadent state, sunk in false worship and harassed by the Assyrian menace.—2Ch 30:1-20; Nu 9:10-13.

it-1 1103 ¶4-5

Hezekiah

After the Passover, the Festival of Unfermented Cakes was held for seven days with such attendant joy that the entire congregation decided to extend it seven days longer. Even in such perilous times Jehovah's blessing prevailed so that "there came to be great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for from the days of Solomon the son of David the king of Israel there was none like this in Jerusalem."—2Ch 30:21-27.

That this was a real restoration and revival of true worship and not merely a transient emotional gathering is seen in what followed. Before their return home the celebrants went out and destroyed the sacred

pillars, pulled down the high places and the altars, and cut down the sacred poles throughout Judah and Benjamin and even in Ephraim and Manasseh. (2Ch 31:1) Hezekiah set the example by crushing to pieces the copper serpent that Moses had made, because the people had made it an idol, burning sacrificial smoke to it. (2Ki 18:4) After the great festival Hezekiah ensured the continuation of true worship by organizing the priestly divisions and arranging for the support of the temple services; he admonished obedience to the Law as to the tithes and firstfruit contributions to the Levites and priests, to which the people responded wholeheartedly.—2Ch 31:2-12.

Spiritual Gems

w18.09 6 ¶14-15

"If You Know These Things, Happy You Are if You Do Them"

¹⁴ Another area that reveals the depth of our humility is our willingness to hear people out. James 1:19 says that we should "be quick to listen." Jehovah himself sets the superlative example in this regard. (Gen. 18:32; Josh. 10:14) Consider what we can learn from the interchange recorded at **Exodus 32:11-14. (Read.)** Although not needing Moses' input, Jehovah gave Moses an opportunity to reveal how he felt. What human would listen at length to the reasoning of someone who has displayed faulty thinking and then act on that person's word? Yet, Jehovah listens patiently to humans who call on him in faith.

¹⁵ Each of us does well to ask: 'If Jehovah can stoop down to deal with people and listen to them as he did with Abraham, Rachel, Moses, Joshua, Manoah, Elijah, and Hezekiah, should I not be better at honoring

all my brothers, dignifying them, listening to their ideas, and even acting on their good ideas? Does someone in my congregation or in my family deserve my attention right now? What should I do about that? What will I do about that?’—Gen. 30:6; Judg. 13:9; 1 Ki. 17:22; 2 Chron. 30:20.

JUNE 12-18

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 32-33

“Be a Source of Strength During Times of Distress”

it-1 204 ¶5

Assyria

Sennacherib. Sennacherib, the son of Sargon II, attacked the kingdom of Judah during Hezekiah’s 14th year (732 B.C.E.). (2Ki 18:13; Isa 36:1) Hezekiah had rebelled against the Assyrian yoke imposed as a result of the action of his father Ahaz. (2Ki 18:7) Sennacherib reacted by sweeping through Judah, reportedly conquering 46 cities (compare Isa 36:1, 2), and then, from his camp at Lachish, he demanded of Hezekiah a tribute of 30 gold talents (c. \$11,560,000) and 300 silver talents (c. \$1,982,000). (2Ki 18:14-16; 2Ch 32:1; compare Isa 8:5-8.) Though this sum was paid, Sennacherib sent his spokesmen to demand unconditional surrender of Jerusalem. (2Ki 18:17-19:34; 2Ch 32:2-20) Jehovah’s subsequently causing the destruction of 185,000 of his troops in one night obliged the boasting Assyrian to withdraw and return to Nineveh. (2Ki 19:35, 36) There he was later assassinated by two of his sons and replaced on the throne by another son, Esar-haddon. (2Ki 19:37; 2Ch 32:21, 22; Isa 37:36-38) These events, with the exception

of the destruction of the Assyrian troops, are also recorded on a prism of Sennacherib and one of Esar-haddon.—PICTURES, Vol. 1, p. 957.

w13 11/15 19 ¶12

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

¹² Jehovah is always willing to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves, but he does expect us to do what we can. Hezekiah consulted “his princes and his mighty men,” and together they decided “to stop up the waters of the springs that were outside the city . . . Furthermore, [Hezekiah] took courage and built up all the broken-down wall and raised towers upon it, and on the outside another wall, . . . and made missiles in abundance and shields.” (2 Chron. 32:3-5) In order to protect and shepherd His people at that time, Jehovah used a number of valiant men—Hezekiah, his princes, and the spiritually strong prophets.

w13 11/15 19 ¶13

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

¹³ What Hezekiah did next was of even greater value than stopping up the waters or fortifying the city walls. Concerned shepherd that he was, Hezekiah gathered the people and encouraged them spiritually with the words: “Do not be afraid nor be terrified because of the king of Assyria . . . , for with us there are more than there are with him. With him there is an arm of flesh, but with us there is Jehovah our God to help us and to fight our battles.” What a faith-strengthening reminder—Jehovah would fight for his people! Upon hearing this, the Jews “began to brace themselves

upon the words of Hezekiah the king of Judah.” Notice that it was “the words of Hezekiah” that caused the people to take heart. He and his princes and mighty men, as well as the prophets Micah and Isaiah, proved to be effective shepherds, just as Jehovah had foretold through his prophet.—2 Chron. 32:7, 8; **read Micah 5:5, 6.**

Spiritual Gems

w21.10 4-5 ¶11-12

What Is True Repentance?

¹¹In time, Jehovah answered Manasseh’s prayers. He saw the changes in that man’s heart, as reflected in his prayers. Jehovah was moved by Manasseh’s entreaty and restored him to the throne. Manasseh took full advantage of the opportunity to demonstrate the depth of his repentance. He did what Ahab had never done. He changed his conduct. He actively fought against false worship and promoted true worship. (**Read 2 Chronicles 33:15, 16.**) That surely required courage and faith, for Manasseh had been a bad influence on his family, his nobles, and his people for decades. But now, in his final years, Manasseh tried to undo some of the bad that he had done. Likely, he was a good influence on his young grandson Josiah, who later became a very good king.—2 Ki. 22:1, 2.

¹²What can we learn from Manasseh’s example? He humbled himself, and he did more. He prayed, begging for mercy. And he changed his course. He worked hard to undo the harm that he had caused, and he sought to worship Jehovah and to help others to do the same. Manasseh’s example gives hope to even the worst of sinners. We see powerful proof that Jehovah God is “good and ready to forgive.” (Ps. 86:5)

Forgiveness is possible—for those who are truly repentant.

JUNE 19-25

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | 2 CHRONICLES 34-36

“Are You Benefiting Fully From God’s Word?”

it-1 1157 ¶4

Huldah

When Josiah heard the reading of “the very book of the law” found by Hilkiah the high priest during the temple repair work, he sent a delegation to inquire of Jehovah. They went to Huldah, who, in turn, relayed the word of Jehovah, indicating that all the calamities for disobedience recorded in the “book” would befall the apostate nation. Huldah added that Josiah, because of having humbled himself before Jehovah, would not have to look upon the calamity but would be gathered to his forefathers and be taken to his graveyard in peace.—2Ki 22:8-20; 2Ch 34:14-28.

w09 6/15 10 ¶120

Be Zealous for Jehovah’s House!

²⁰During the restoration work that King Josiah organized, High Priest Hilkiah “found the book of Jehovah’s law by the hand of Moses.” He handed it to the royal secretary Shaphan who, in turn, began to read its contents to Josiah. (**Read 2 Chronicles 34:14-18.**) What was the effect? The king immediately ripped his garments apart in grief and instructed the men to consult Jehovah. Through the prophetess Huldah, God provided a message condemning some of the religious practices that had been carried on in Judah. Yet, Josiah’s good efforts

to remove idolatrous practices were noted, and he remained in Jehovah's favor despite the calamities predicted for the nation as a whole. (2 Chron. 34:19-28) What can we learn from this? Surely our desire is the same as Josiah's was. We want to respond to Jehovah's direction promptly, taking to heart the warning example of what can happen if we allow apostasy and unfaithfulness to encroach on our worship. And we can be confident that Jehovah will note with approval our zeal for true worship, just as he did in Josiah's case.

Spiritual Gems

w17.03 27 ¶15-17

Will You Apply Your Heart to the Things Written?

¹⁵ Finally, what warning can we find in what happened to good King Josiah? Consider what led to his defeat and death. (**Read 2 Chronicles 35:20-22.**) Josiah “went out against” King Necho of Egypt, although that king told Josiah that he had no dispute with him. The Bible says that Necho's words were “from the mouth of God.” Why, then, did Josiah go out to fight? The Bible does not say.

¹⁶ How, though, would Josiah know that Necho's words were from Jehovah? Well, he could have asked Jeremiah, one of the faithful prophets. (2 Chron. 35:23, 25) But there is no record of his doing so. Also, Necho was heading to Carchemish to war “against another house,” not to war against Jerusalem. Moreover, God's name was not involved, for Necho was taunting neither Jehovah nor his people. So it was bad judgment on Josiah's part to battle against Necho. Can we see in this a lesson that we can apply? When faced with a problem, we

do well to consider what Jehovah's will may be in the matter.

¹⁷ If a problem arises, we ought to consider what Bible principles are involved and apply them in a balanced way. In some cases, we may want to consult with the elders. We may have given thought to what we already know about the subject, and we may even have done research in our publications. Yet, there may be other Bible principles to take into consideration, which an elder might help us to analyze. For example, a sister knows that she has the responsibility to preach the good news. (Acts 4:20) However, suppose she plans to go out in the field service on a certain day, but her unbelieving husband wants her to stay home. He says that they have not had much time together lately, and he would like them to do something as a couple. She might consider relevant Bible texts, such as obeying God and the command to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 5:29) But she also needs to think about wifely subjection and being reasonable. (Eph. 5:22-24; Phil. 4:5) Is her husband completely opposed to her going out in service, or is he asking her to do something else just that one day? We need balance as we seek to do God's will and strive to have a good conscience.

JUNE 26–JULY 2

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EZRA 1-3

“Allow Jehovah to Use You”

w22.03 14 ¶1

Do You See What Zechariah Saw?

THERE was excitement in the air. Jehovah God had “stirred the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia” to release the Israelites, who had

spent decades in Babylonian captivity. The king made a proclamation for the Jews to return to their homeland “and rebuild the house of Jehovah the God of Israel.” (Ezra 1:1, 3) What a thrilling decree that was! It meant that the worship of the true God was going to be restored in the land he had given to his people.

w17.10 26 ¶2

Chariots and a Crown Safeguard You

² Zechariah knew that the Jews who moved to Jerusalem were men and women of faith. They were the ones “whose spirit the true God had stirred” to leave behind the security of their homes and businesses. (Ezra 1: 2, 3, 5) They left a land that was familiar to them in order to move to a place most of them had never seen. If the rebuilding of Jehovah’s temple was not important, they would not have made the difficult journey of some 1,000 miles (1,600 km) through a harsh land.

Spiritual Gems

w06 1/15 19 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of Ezra

1:3-6. Like some of the Israelites who remained in Babylon, many of Jehovah’s Witnesses cannot take up the full-time ministry or serve where the need is greater. Yet, they support and encourage those who can and make voluntary donations to further the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.