

- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Stop ‘Seeking Great Things for Yourself’”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 45:2, 3—Baruch’s wrong thinking caused him distress (*jr* 104-105 ¶4-6)
 Jer 45:4, 5a—Jehovah kindly corrected Baruch (*jr* 103 ¶2)
 Jer 45:5b—Baruch preserved his life by focusing on what was most important (*w16.07* 8 ¶6)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 48:13—Why would the Moabites “be ashamed of Chemosh”? (*it-1* 430)

 Jer 48:42—Why is Jehovah’s pronouncement against Moab faith-strengthening? (*it-2* 422 ¶12)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 47:1-7

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *hf*—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *hf*—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 199 ¶9-10—Briefly show the student how to do research on a specific trial he is experiencing.

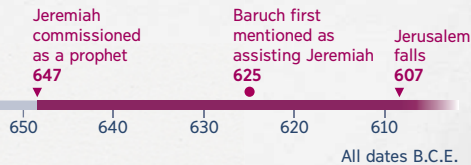
LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 84
- **Young Ones—Do Not Seek Great Things for Yourself:** (15 min.) Play and discuss the video *Young People Ask—What Will I Do With My Life?—Looking Back* (video category TEENAGERS).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* pp. 132-133, chap. 13 ¶1-10
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 61 and Prayer

JEREMIAH 44-48 | Stop “Seeking Great Things for Yourself”

45:2-5

Baruch was likely an educated official in the royal household. Although he worshipped Jehovah and faithfully assisted Jeremiah, he lost his balance at one point. He began “seeking great things,” perhaps additional prominence in the royal court or material prosperity. He needed to adjust his thinking in order to survive the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.



*“Make Sure of the
More Important Things”*
(Philippians 1:10)

1. How great our need today for discernment,
To know the things that are true,
To know which things have greater importance,
To know which things we must do!

(CHORUS)

*Love what is good; Hate what is bad.
Make God’s heart glad;
Oh, what rich blessings it brings when we learn,
When we discern,
And when we do the important things!*

2. And what could be of greater importance
Than sharing Kingdom good news,
To search for those who hunger for truth
And to help them God’s way to choose?

(Chorus)

3. If we take care to do what’s important,
Then true contentment we’ll find.
The peace surpassing all understanding
Will guard our heart and our mind.

(Chorus)

Jeremiah 44-48

44 The word that came to Jeremiah for all the Jews living in the land of Egypt, those living in Mig'dol, Tah'pan-hes, Noph, and the land of Path'ros, saying:
² “This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, ‘You have seen all the calamity that I brought on Jerusalem and on all the cities of Judah, and today they are in ruins, without an inhabitant. ³ It is because of the evil things that they did to offend me by going and making sacrifices and serving other gods whom they had not known, neither you nor your forefathers. ⁴ I kept sending all my servants the prophets to you, sending them again and again, saying: “Please do not do this detestable thing that I hate.” ⁵ But they did not listen or incline their ear to turn back from their evil by not making sacrifices to other gods. ⁶ So my wrath and my anger were poured out and burned in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and they became a ruin and a wasteland, as they are today.’

⁷ “And now this is what Jehovah, the God of armies, the God of Israel, says, ‘Why are you causing a great calamity to yourselves, so that every man and woman, child and infant, will perish from Judah, leaving you without a remnant? ⁸ Why should you offend me with the works of your hands by sacrificing to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have gone to reside? You

will perish and become an object of cursing and a reproach among all the nations of the earth. ⁹ Have you forgotten the wicked deeds of your forefathers and the wicked deeds of the kings of Judah and the wicked deeds of their wives, as well as your own wicked deeds and the wicked deeds of your wives, that were done in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem?

¹⁰ Down to this day they have not humbled themselves, they have shown no fear, nor have they walked in my law and my statutes that I set before you and your forefathers.'

¹¹ "Therefore this is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, 'Here I am determined to bring calamity on you, to destroy all Judah. ¹² And I will take the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to the land of Egypt to reside there, and they will all perish in the land of Egypt. They will fall by the sword and perish by the famine; from the least to the greatest, they will die by the sword and by famine. And they will become a curse, an object of horror, a malediction, and a reproach. ¹³ I will punish those dwelling in the land of Egypt just as I punished Jerusalem, with the sword, with famine, and with pestilence. ¹⁴ And the remnant of Judah who have gone to reside in the land of Egypt will not escape or survive to return to the land of Judah. They will long to return and dwell there, but they will not return, except for a few escapees.'"

¹⁵ All the men who knew that their wives had been making sacrifices to other gods and all the wives who were standing there, who formed a large group, and all the people who were living in the land of Egypt, in Path'ros, answered Jeremiah: ¹⁶ “We will not listen to the word that you have spoken to us in the name of Jehovah. ¹⁷ Instead, we will surely carry out every word that our mouths have spoken, to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her, just as we, our forefathers, our kings, and our princes did in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem when we were satisfied with bread and were well-off, when we saw no calamity at all. ¹⁸ From the time we quit making sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have perished by the sword and by the famine.”

¹⁹ The women added: “And when we were making sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, was it without the consent of our husbands that we made sacrificial cakes shaped in her image and we poured out drink offerings to her?”

²⁰ Then Jeremiah said to all the people, to the men and their wives and to all the people who were speaking to him: ²¹ “The sacrifices that you, your forefathers, your kings, your princes, and the people of the land made in the cities of Judah and in the streets

of Jerusalem—Jehovah remembered them and they came up into his heart! ²² Finally Jehovah could no longer put up with your evil practices and the detestable things you had done, and your land became a devastated place, an object of horror and cursing, without an inhabitant, as it is today. ²³ It is because you have made these sacrifices and because you have sinned against Jehovah by not obeying the voice of Jehovah and following his law, his statutes, and his reminders that this calamity has come upon you, as is the case today.”

²⁴ Jeremiah continued to say to all the people and to all the women: “Hear the word of Jehovah, all you of Judah who are in the land of Egypt. ²⁵ This is what Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says, ‘What you and your wives have spoken with your mouths, you have fulfilled with your hands, for you said: “We will surely carry out our vows to make sacrifices to the Queen of Heaven and to pour out drink offerings to her.” You women will surely carry out your vows and perform your vows.’”

²⁶ “Therefore hear the word of Jehovah, all you of Judah who are living in the land of Egypt: “Here I swear by my own great name,” says Jehovah, “that my name will no longer be called on in an oath by any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt who says, ‘As surely as the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is alive!’ ²⁷ Now I am

watching over them to bring calamity and not something good; all the men of Judah in the land of Egypt will perish by the sword and by the famine, until they cease to exist. ²⁸ Only a few will escape the sword and return from the land of Egypt to the land of Judah. Then all the remnant of Judah who came to the land of Egypt to reside there will know whose word has come true, mine or theirs!”””

²⁹ “‘And this is the sign for you,’ declares Jehovah, ‘that I will punish you in this place, so that you will know that my words promising calamity against you will surely come true. ³⁰ This is what Jehovah says: “Here I am giving Phar'aoh Hoph'ra, the king of Egypt, into the hand of his enemies and of those seeking to take his life, just as I gave King Zed-e-ki'ah of Judah into the hand of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon, who was his enemy and who sought to take his life.”””

45 This is the word that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Bar'uch the son of Ne-ri'ah when he wrote in a book these words dictated by Jeremiah in the fourth year of Je-hoi'a-kim son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah:

² “This is what Jehovah the God of Israel says concerning you, Bar'uch, ³ ‘You have said: “Woe to me, for Jehovah has added grief to my pain! I am weary from my groaning, and I have found no resting-place.””

⁴ “You should say to him, ‘This is what Jehovah says: “Look! What I have built up I am tearing down, and what I have planted I am uprooting—the entire land.
⁵ But you are seeking great things for yourself. Stop seeking such things.””

“For I am about to bring a calamity on all flesh,’ declares Jehovah, ‘and wherever you may go, I will grant you your life as a spoil.’”

46 This is the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations: ² For Egypt, concerning the army of Phar'aoh Ne'cho the king of Egypt, who was along the Eu-phra'tes River and was defeated at Car'che-mish by King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon in the fourth year of Je-hoi'a-kim son of Jo-si'ah, the king of Judah:

³ “Prepare your bucklers and large shields,
And advance to the battle.

⁴ Harness the horses and mount, you horsemen.
Take your positions and put on your helmets.
Polish the lances and put on your coats of mail.

⁵ ‘Why do I see them terror-stricken?
They are retreating, their warriors are crushed.
They have fled in panic, their warriors have not
turned around.
There is terror all around,’ declares Jehovah.

⁶ 'The swift cannot flee, and the warriors cannot escape.

In the north, by the bank of the Eu-phra'tes River,

They have stumbled and fallen.'

⁷ Who is this coming up like the Nile River,
Like the rivers of surging waters?

⁸ Egypt comes up just like the Nile River,
Like rivers of surging waters,
And it says, 'I will go up and cover the earth.
I will destroy the city and those inhabiting it.'

⁹ Go up, you horses!
Drive madly, you chariots!
Let the warriors advance,
Cush and Put, who handle the shield,
And the Lu'dim, who handle and bend the bow.

¹⁰ "That day belongs to the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of armies, the day of vengeance for taking revenge on his adversaries. And the sword will devour and satisfy itself and take its fill of their blood, for the Sovereign Lord, Jehovah of armies, has a sacrifice in the land of the north by the Eu-phra'tes River.

¹¹ Go up to Gil'e-ad to get balsam,
O virgin daughter of Egypt.
In vain you have multiplied your remedies,
For there is no cure for you.

¹² The nations have heard your dishonor,
And your outcry has filled the land.
For warrior stumbles against warrior,
And they both fall down together.”

¹³ This is the word that Jehovah spoke to Jeremiah the prophet regarding the coming of King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon to strike down the land of Egypt:

¹⁴ “Declare it in Egypt, proclaim it in Mig'dol.
Proclaim it in Noph and in Tah'pan-hes.
Say, ‘Take your positions and prepare yourselves,
For a sword will devour all around you.

¹⁵ Why have your powerful men been swept away?
They did not stand their ground,
For Jehovah has pushed them down.

¹⁶ In great numbers they are stumbling and falling.
They are saying to one another:
“Get up! Let us return to our people and our homeland
Because of the cruel sword.””

¹⁷ There they have proclaimed,
‘Phar'aoh king of Egypt is just a meaningless noise
Who has let the opportunity pass by.’

- ¹⁸ 'As surely as I am alive,' declares the King, whose name is Jehovah of armies,
 'He will come in like Ta'bor among the mountains
 And like Car'mel by the sea.
- ¹⁹ Prepare your baggage for exile,
 O daughter inhabiting Egypt.
 For Noph will become an object of horror;
 It will be set afire and left without an inhabitant.
- ²⁰ Egypt is like a good-looking heifer,
 But stinging flies will come against her from the north.
- ²¹ Even her hired soldiers in her midst are like fattened calves,
 But they have also turned back and fled together.
 They could not stand their ground,
 For the day of their disaster has come upon them,
 Their time of reckoning.'
- ²² 'Her sound is like that of a slithering serpent,
 For they come after her in force, with axes,
 Like men cutting down trees.
- ²³ They will cut down her forest,' declares Jehovah,
 'though it seemed impenetrable.
 For they are more numerous than locusts,
 without number.

²⁴ The daughter of Egypt will be put to shame.
She will be handed over to the people of the
north.'

²⁵ "Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, says: 'Now I
am turning my attention to A'mon from No, to Phar'aoh,
to Egypt, to her gods, and to her kings—yes, to
Phar'aoh and all those trusting in him.'

²⁶ "And I will hand them over to those seeking to take
their life, to King Neb-u-chad-nez'zar of Babylon and
his servants. But afterward she will be inhabited as in
times past,' declares Jehovah.

²⁷ 'As for you, do not be afraid, my servant Jacob,
And do not be terrified, O Israel.
For I will save you from far away
And your offspring from the land of their captivity.
Jacob will return and be calm and undisturbed,
With no one to make them afraid.

²⁸ So do not be afraid, my servant Jacob,' declares
Jehovah, 'for I am with you.
I will make an extermination among all the
nations where I dispersed you,
But you I will not exterminate.
I will discipline you to the proper degree,
But I will by no means leave you unpunished.'"

47 This is the word of Jehovah to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Phi-lis'tines, before Phar'aoh struck down Gaz'a. ² This is what Jehovah says:

“Look! Waters are coming from the north.
They will become a flooding torrent.
And they will flood the land and everything in it,
The city and those inhabiting it.
The men will cry out,
And everyone dwelling in the land will wail.

³ At the sound of the pounding hooves of his stallions,
At the rattling of his war chariots
And the rumbling of his wheels,
Fathers will not even turn around for their sons,
For their hands fall limp,

⁴ Because the day that is coming will destroy all the Phi-lis'tines;
It will cut off from Tyre and Si'don every remaining ally.
For Jehovah will destroy the Phi-lis'tines,
Who are the remaining ones from the island of Caph'tor.

⁵ Baldness will come to Gaz'a.
Ash'ke-lon has been silenced.
O remnant of their valley plain,
How long will you keep making cuts on yourself?

⁶ Ah! The sword of Jehovah!
How long will you not be quiet?
Go back into your sheath.
Take your rest and be silent.

⁷ How can it be quiet
When Jehovah has given it a command?
Against Ash'ke-lon and the seacoast,
There is where he has assigned it.”

48 For Mo'ab, this is what Jehovah of armies, the
God of Israel, says:

“Woe to Ne'bo, for she has been destroyed!
Kir-i-a-tha'im has been put to shame and
captured.

The secure refuge has been put to shame and
shattered.

² They no longer praise Mo'ab.
In Hesh'bon they have plotted her downfall:
'Come, let us put an end to her as a nation.'
You too, O Mad'men, should keep silent,
For the sword is following you.

³ There is the sound of an outcry from Hor-o-na'im,
Of destruction and great collapse.

⁴ Mo'ab has been broken down.
Her little ones cry out.

- ⁵ On the ascent of Lu'hith they weep continually as they climb.
And on the way down from Hor-o-na'im they hear cries of distress over the catastrophe.
- ⁶ Flee, escape for your lives!
You must become like a juniper tree in the wilderness.
- ⁷ Because you trust in your works and in your treasures,
You will also be captured.
And Che'mosh will go into exile,
Together with his priests and his princes.
- ⁸ The destroyer will come in on every city,
And no city will escape.
The valley will perish,
And the level land will be annihilated, just as Jehovah has said.
- ⁹ Set up a marker for Mo'ab,
For as she falls into ruins she will flee,
And her cities will become an object of horror,
Without an inhabitant.
- ¹⁰ Cursed is the one who carries out the mission of Jehovah neglectfully!
Cursed is the one who holds back his sword from bloodshed!

¹¹ The Mo'ab-ites have been undisturbed since their youth,
Like wine that has settled on the dregs.
They have not been poured from one vessel into another,
And they have never gone into exile.
That is why their taste has remained the same,
And their aroma has not changed.

¹² “‘Therefore look! the days are coming,’ declares Jehovah, ‘when I will send men to overturn them. They will turn them over and empty out their vessels, and they will smash their large jars to pieces.’¹³ And the Mo'ab-ites will be ashamed of Che'mosh, just as the house of Israel is ashamed of Beth'el, which was their confidence.

¹⁴ How dare you say: “‘We are mighty warriors, ready for battle”?’

¹⁵ ‘Mo'ab has been destroyed,
Her cities have been invaded,
And their choicest young men have been slaughtered,’
Declares the King, whose name is Jehovah of armies.

¹⁶ The disaster on the Mo'ab-ites is coming soon,
And their downfall is approaching quickly.

¹⁷ All those around them will have to sympathize with them,
All those knowing their name.
Tell them: 'O how the mighty rod has been broken, the staff of beauty!'

¹⁸ Come down from your glory,
And sit down in thirst, O daughter inhabiting Di'bon,
For the destroyer of Mo'ab has come against you,
And he will bring your fortified places to ruin.

¹⁹ Stand by the road and watch, inhabitant of A-ro'er.
Ask the man fleeing and the woman escaping,
'What has happened?'

²⁰ Mo'ab has been put to shame and struck with terror.
Wail and cry out.
Proclaim in Ar'non that Mo'ab has been destroyed.

²¹ "Judgment has come to the level land, against Ho'lon, Ja'haz, and Meph'a-ath; ²² against Di'bon, Ne'bo, and Beth-dib-la-tha'im; ²³ against Kir-i-a-tha'im, Beth-ga'mul, and Beth-me'on; ²⁴ against Ke'ri-oth and Boz'rah; and against all the cities of the land of Mo'ab, those far and near.

²⁵ 'The strength of Mo'ab has been cut down;

His arm has been broken,' declares Jehovah.

²⁶ 'Make him drunk, for he has exalted himself
against Jehovah.

Mo'ab wallows in his vomit,
And he is an object of ridicule.

²⁷ Was Israel not an object of ridicule to you?
Was he found among thieves,
So that you should shake your head and speak
against him?

²⁸ Leave the cities and live on the crag, inhabitants of
Mo'ab,
And become like a dove that nests along the
sides of the gorge.'"

²⁹ "We have heard about the pride of Mo'ab—he is
very haughty—
About his arrogance, his pride, his haughtiness,
and the loftiness of his heart."

³⁰ "I know his fury,' declares Jehovah,
'But his empty talk will come to nothing.
They will do nothing.

³¹ That is why I will wail over Mo'ab,
For all Mo'ab I will cry out
And moan for the men of Kir-he'res.

³² With more than the weeping for Ja'zer,
I will weep for you, O vine of Sib'mah.

Your flourishing shoots have crossed the sea.
To the sea, to Ja'zer, they have reached.
Upon your summer fruit and your grape harvest
The destroyer has descended.

³³ Rejoicing and joyfulness have been removed from
the orchard
And from the land of Mo'ab.
I have caused the wine to stop flowing from the
winepress.
No one will be treading with shouts of joy.
The shouting will be different shouting.”

³⁴ “There is an outcry from Hesh'bon clear to
E-le-a'leh.
They raise their voice clear to Ja'haz,
From Zo'ar to Hor-o-na'im to Eg'lath-
she-li'shi-yah.
Even the waters of Nim'rim will become desolate.

³⁵ I will cause to cease from Mo'ab,' declares
Jehovah,
'The one bringing an offering on the high place
And the one making sacrifices to his god.

³⁶ That is why my heart will moan for Mo'ab like a
flute,
And my heart will moan for the men of Kir-he'res
like a flute.
For the wealth he has produced will perish.

- 37 For every head is bald,
And every beard is clipped.
There are cuts on every hand,
And there is sackcloth on their hips!”
- 38 “On all the roofs of Mo'ab
And in all her public squares,
There is nothing but wailing.
For I have broken Mo'ab
Like a discarded jar,’ declares Jehovah.
- 39 ‘How she is terrified! Wail!
How Mo'ab has turned his back in shame!
Mo'ab has become an object of ridicule,
Something terrifying to all those around him.”
- 40 “For this is what Jehovah says:
‘Look! Just like an eagle that swoops down,
He will spread his wings over Mo'ab.
- 41 The towns will be captured,
And her strongholds will be seized.
In that day the heart of Mo'ab's warriors
Will be like the heart of a woman in childbirth.”
- 42 “And Mo'ab will be annihilated from being a
people,
For it is against Jehovah that he has exalted
himself.
- 43 Terror and the pit and the trap are before you,

O inhabitant of Mo'ab,' declares Jehovah.

44 'Anyone fleeing the terror will fall into the pit,
And anyone coming up from the pit will be
caught in the trap.'

'For I will bring on Mo'ab the year of their
punishment,' declares Jehovah.

45 'In the shadow of Hesh'bon, those fleeing stand
powerless.

For a fire will come out of Hesh'bon
And a flame from within Si'hon.

It will consume the forehead of Mo'ab
And the skull of the sons of tumult.'

46 'Woe to you, O Mo'ab!

The people of Che'mosh have perished.

For your sons have been taken captive,

And your daughters have gone into exile.

47 But I will gather the captives of Mo'ab in the final
part of the days,' declares Jehovah.

'Down to this point is the judgment on Mo'ab.'”

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What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

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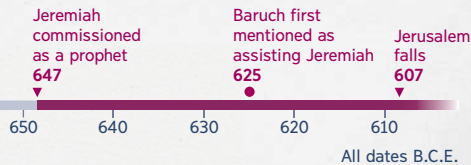
LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

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JEREMIAH 44-48 | Stop “Seeking Great Things for Yourself”

45:2-5

Baruch was likely an educated official in the royal household. Although he worshipped Jehovah and faithfully assisted Jeremiah, he lost his balance at one point. He began “seeking great things,” perhaps additional prominence in the royal court or material prosperity. He needed to adjust his thinking in order to survive the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.



May 22-28

Living as Christians

Jeremiah 45:2, 3—Baruch's wrong thinking caused him distress

Reference: jr 104-105 paragraphs 4-6.

4 As to what Baruch's concerns were, one possibility had to do with fame and prestige. Although Baruch served as a penman for Jeremiah, he might not have been just a personal secretary to Jeremiah. At Jeremiah 36:32, Baruch is referred to as "the secretary." Archaeological evidence suggests that he held the position of a high royal official. In fact, the same title is used for "Elishama the secretary," who was named among Judah's princes. This suggests that Baruch too had access to "the dining room of the secretary" in "the house of the king" as one of Elishama's colleagues. (**Jeremiah 36:11, 12, 14**) Baruch, then, must have been an educated official in the royal household. Seraiah, his brother, held the position of quartermaster to King Zedekiah and accompanied the king on an important mission to Babylon. (Read Jeremiah 51:59.) As quartermaster, Seraiah was likely in charge of supplies and lodging for the king when he was traveling, indeed a high-ranking position.

5 You can understand that a person accustomed to an elevated station might grow weary of recording denunciatory messages against Judah, one after another. In fact, supporting God's prophet might have put at risk Baruch's

position and career. And think of the consequences if Jehovah tore down what he had built up, as we read at Jeremiah 45:4. The “great things” that Baruch had in mind—whether the gaining of additional honor in the royal court or material prosperity—might prove to be in vain. If Baruch was seeking a secure position in the doomed Jewish system of that time, God had reason to restrain him from that inclination.

6 On the other hand, Baruch’s “great things” might have included material prosperity. The nations around Judah relied heavily on possessions and wealth. Moab trusted in her ‘works and treasures.’ Ammon did likewise. And Jehovah had Jeremiah describe Babylon as “abundant in treasures.” (**Jeremiah 48:1, 7; 49:1, 4; 51:1, 13**) But the fact is, God condemned those nations.

Jeremiah 45:4, 5a—Jehovah kindly corrected Baruch
Reference: jr 103 **paragraph 2.**

“Woe, now, to me,” moaned Baruch, “for Jehovah has added grief to my pain! I have grown weary because of my sighing.” You have likely had occasion to make utterances of weariness, whether doing so audibly or just in your heart. Whichever way Baruch did it, Jehovah was listening. The Examiner of human hearts knew what caused Baruch’s troubled state, and through Jeremiah, God kindly corrected Baruch. (Read Jeremiah 45:1-5.) You might wonder, though,

why Baruch was feeling so weary. Was it the assignment he had received or perhaps the circumstances in which he had to perform it? His feelings really bubbled up from the heart. You see, Baruch was “seeking great things.” What were they? What assurance did Jehovah give him if he accepted God’s counsel and direction? And what can we learn from Baruch’s experience?

Jeremiah 45:5b—Baruch preserved his life by focusing on what was most important

Reference: w16.07 8 **paragraph 6**.

Consider the man Baruch, the prophet Jeremiah’s secretary. As Jerusalem was nearing its foretold destruction, Baruch began “seeking great things” for himself—pursuits that had no lasting value. However, the only thing he should have hoped for was to receive what Jehovah promised him: “I will let you escape with your life.” (**Jeremiah 45:1-5; footnote**) God certainly was not going to preserve anyone’s material possessions in a city that was going to be destroyed.

(**Jeremiah 20:5**) As we near the end of this system of things, now is not the time to amass more and more material things for ourselves. We should not expect that any of our possessions, regardless of how treasured or valuable they may be, will survive with us through the great tribulation.—**Proverbs 11:4, footnote; Matthew 24:21, 22; Luke 12:15.**

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Jeremiah 48:13—Why would the Moabites “be ashamed of Chemosh”?

Reference: it-1 430.

The prophet Jeremiah, in foretelling calamity for Moab, indicated that her principal god Chemosh as well as his priests and princes would go into exile. The Moabites would become ashamed of their god because of his impotence, just as the Israelites of the ten-tribe kingdom had become ashamed of Bethel, likely because of its association with calf worship.—**Jeremiah 48:7, 13, 46.**

Jeremiah 48:42—Why is Jehovah’s pronouncement against Moab faith-strengthening?

Reference: it-2 422 **paragraph 2.**

The accurate fulfillment of the prophecies concerning Moab cannot be denied. Centuries ago the Moabites ceased to exist as a people. (**Jeremiah 48:42**) Today what are considered to have been such Moabite cities as Nebo, Heshbon, Aroer, Beth-gamul, and Baal-meon are represented by ruins. Many other places are now unknown.

- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD

- **“Stop ‘Seeking Great Things for Yourself’”:** (10 min.)
 Jer 45:2, 3—Baruch’s wrong thinking caused him distress (*jr* 104-105 ¶4-6)
 Jer 45:4, 5a—Jehovah kindly corrected Baruch (*jr* 103 ¶2)
 Jer 45:5b—Baruch preserved his life by focusing on what was most important (*w16.07* 8 ¶6)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Jer 48:13—Why would the Moabites “be ashamed of Chemosh”? (*it-1* 430)

 Jer 48:42—Why is Jehovah’s pronouncement against Moab faith-strengthening? (*it-2* 422 ¶2)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Jer 47:1-7

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) *hf*—Lay the groundwork for a return visit.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) *hf*—Lay the groundwork for the next visit.
- **Bible Study:** (6 min. or less) *lv* 199 ¶9-10—Briefly show the student how to do research on a specific trial he is experiencing.

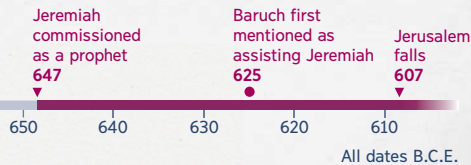
LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 84
- **Young Ones—Do Not Seek Great Things for Yourself:** (15 min.) Play and discuss the video *Young People Ask—What Will I Do With My Life?—Looking Back* (video category TEENAGERS).
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *kr* pp. 132-133, chap. 13 ¶1-10
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
- Song 61 and Prayer

JEREMIAH 44-48 | Stop “Seeking Great Things for Yourself”

45:2-5

Baruch was likely an educated official in the royal household. Although he worshipped Jehovah and faithfully assisted Jeremiah, he lost his balance at one point. He began “seeking great things,” perhaps additional prominence in the royal court or material prosperity. He needed to adjust his thinking in order to survive the approaching destruction of Jerusalem.



permanence. You know that the waves will keep coming, breaking on that beach for countless ages to come. Jehovah says that your righteousness—your course of doing right—can be like that. As long as you endeavor to be faithful to him, he will never let you fail! (Psalm 55:22) Do not such heartwarming promises build up your faith in Jehovah and in his righteous requirements?

“PRESS ON TO MATURITY”

⁹ A second aspect of your building project is revealed in these inspired words: “Let us press on to maturity.” (Hebrews 6:1) Maturity is a wonderful goal for a Christian. Unlike perfection, which for now is beyond the reach of humans, maturity is an attainable goal. Further, Christians find greater joy in serving Jehovah as they mature. Why is that?

¹⁰ A mature Christian is a spiritual person. He looks at things from Jehovah’s point of view. (John 4:23) Paul wrote: “Those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those in accord with the spirit on the things of the spirit.” (Romans 8:5) A fleshly outlook brings little joy, for it tends to be self-centered, shortsighted, and focused on material things.

9, 10. (a) Why is maturity a wonderful goal for Christians? (b) How does a spiritual outlook contribute to joy?

A spiritual outlook is joyous, for it is focused on Jehovah, “the happy God.” (1 Timothy 1:11) A spiritual person is eager to please Jehovah and rejoices even when under trial. Why? Trials present opportunities to prove Satan a liar and to build integrity, delighting our heavenly Father.—Proverbs 27:11; James 1:2, 3.

¹¹ Spirituality and maturity come through training. Consider this verse: “Solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong.” (Hebrews 5:14) When Paul spoke of our perceptive powers being “trained,” he used a Greek word that was likely in common use in the gymnasiums of first-century Greece, for it can be rendered ‘trained like a gymnast.’ Now think of what such training involves.

¹² When we were born, our body was untrained. For example, a baby is barely able to perceive the orientation of its little limbs. Hence, a baby waves its arms randomly, even striking itself on the face, much to the baby’s own dismay and surprise. Gradually, through use, the body is

11, 12. (a) What did Paul say about the “perceptive powers” of a Christian, and what is the meaning of the word rendered “trained”? (b) What training must the body undergo in order to mature and become physically adept?

Reaching Out

(Matthew 9:37, 38)

1. Jehovah knows just what we need
To bring us joy and to succeed.
So he provides so many ways
In which to serve and spend our days.

(CHORUS)

*Reaching out, giving all,
for our God above.*

*And where the need is great, there we'll be,
reaching out in love.*

2. There's work to do in ev'ry land.
Where there's a need, we lend a hand.
By reaching out, we show we care.
We want to help and want to share.

(Chorus)

3. And here at home, in towns nearby,
We plan, we build, new skills we try.
We learn to speak a foreign tongue
And bring good news to ev'ryone.

(Chorus)

- Song 35 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

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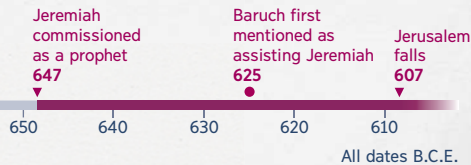
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SECTION 4

KINGDOM CONQUESTS

Legally Establishing the Good News

WHILE preaching from house to house, you hear a siren in the distance. It steadily gets louder. As you start speaking to the next householder, your witnessing partner is distracted when a police car pulls up. An officer gets out and approaches, asking: “Are the two of you the people who have been going door to door talking about the Bible? We’ve been getting complaints!” You answer respectfully, identifying yourselves as Jehovah’s Witnesses. What will happen next?

To a great extent, this depends on history. Over the years, how has the government of the land where you live dealt with Jehovah’s Witnesses? Is there a measure of religious freedom? If so, that likely has a lot to do with the way your spiritual brothers and sisters over the decades have worked hard in “the defending and legally establishing of the good news.” (Phil. 1:7) Wherever you live, pondering the record of the legal victories of Jehovah’s Witnesses can be very faith-strengthening. In this section, we will examine some of that remarkable record. Our victories provide thrilling proof that the Kingdom is a reality, for we could never have achieved so much on our own!

13 Kingdom Preachers Take Their Case to Court

FOCUS OF CHAPTER

As Jesus foretold, his people face legal opposition to their preaching work

IT IS shortly after Pentecost 33 C.E. The Christian congregation in Jerusalem is only a few weeks old. Clearly, Satan sees this as the right time for action. Before the congregation grows strong, he wants to stamp it out. Quickly, Satan maneuvers events in such a way that the religious leaders ban the Kingdom-preaching work. The apostles, however, courageously preach on, and many men and women become “believers in the Lord.”—Acts 4:18, 33; 5:14.

² Enraged, the opposers strike again—this time by jailing all the apostles. However, during the night, Jehovah’s angel opens the prison doors, and by daybreak the apostles are back out preaching! Again they are arrested and taken before the rulers, who

1, 2. (a) The religious leaders succeeded in doing what to the preaching work, but how did the apostles react? (b) Why did the apostles refuse to obey the ban on preaching?

accuse the apostles of breaking the decree against preaching. In response, the apostles boldly declare: “We must obey God as ruler rather than men.” The rulers are so infuriated that they want to “do away” with the apostles. But at that critical moment, the esteemed Law teacher Gamaliel speaks up, warning the rulers: “Be careful . . . Do not meddle with these men, but let them alone.” Surprisingly, the rulers take his advice and let the apostles go. What do those faithful men do? Undaunted, they continue “without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus.”—Acts 5:17-21, 27-42; Prov. 21:1, 30.

³ That court case back in 33 C.E. was the first occurrence of official opposition to the Christian congregation, but by far not the last. (Acts 4:5-8; 16:20; 17:6, 7) In our time, Satan still stirs up opposers of true worship to incite the authorities to place bans on our preaching work. Opposers have leveled a variety of charges against God’s people. One is that we

3, 4. (a) What time-tested method has Satan used to attack God’s people? (b) What will we consider in this chapter and the following two?



The apostles rejoiced “because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of his name”

are disturbers of public order—troublemakers. Another is that we are seditionists; still another, that we are commercial salesmen—peddlers. At the appropriate times, our brothers have gone to court to prove such accusations to be false. What has been the result of these cases? How do court verdicts delivered decades ago affect you personally today? Let us examine a few court cases to see in what ways they have helped “in the defending and legally establishing of the good news.”—Phil. 1:7.

⁴ In this chapter we will focus on how we have defended our right to have the freedom to preach. The following two chapters will examine some of the legal battles that we have fought in our struggle to remain no part of the world and live by Kingdom standards.

Troublemakers—Or Loyal Advocates of God’s Kingdom?

⁵ In the late 1930’s, cities and states throughout the **United States of America** sought to force Jehovah’s Witnesses to obtain some form of legal permit or

5. In the late 1930’s, why were Kingdom preachers arrested, and what action was considered by those taking the lead?

license in order to engage in their ministry. But our brothers did not apply for licenses. A license can be revoked, and they believed that no government had the authority to interfere with Jesus' command for Christians to preach the Kingdom message. (Mark 13:10) Consequently, hundreds of Kingdom preachers were arrested. In response, those taking the lead in the organization considered going to court. They hoped to demonstrate that the State had imposed unlawful restrictions on the Witnesses' right to practice their religion freely. And in 1938 an incident occurred that led to a landmark court case. What happened?

⁶ On Tuesday morning, April 26, 1938, Newton Cantwell, aged 60; his wife, Esther; and their sons Henry, Russell, and Jesse—all five of them special pioneers—set out for a day of preaching in the city of New Haven, Connecticut. Actually, they were prepared to be away for longer than a day. Why? They had already been arrested on several occasions, so they realized that they could be arrested again. Yet,

6, 7. What happened to the Cantwell family?

that prospect did not dampen the desire of the Cantwells to preach the Kingdom message. They arrived in New Haven in two cars. Newton drove the family car loaded with Bible literature and portable phonographs, while 22-year-old Henry drove a sound car. Indeed, as anticipated, within hours they were stopped by the police.

⁷ First, Russell, aged 18, was arrested, and then Newton and Esther. From a distance, Jesse, aged 16, looked on as his parents and brother were led away by the police. Henry was preaching in another part of town, so young Jesse was left by himself. Still, he picked up his phonograph and continued preaching. Two Catholic men let Jesse play a record of Brother Rutherford's lecture entitled "Enemies." But as they listened to the lecture, the men got so angry that they wanted to strike Jesse. Calmly, Jesse walked away from them, but shortly thereafter, a policeman stopped him. So, Jesse too ended up in custody. The police did not charge Sister Cantwell, but they did charge Brother Cantwell and his sons. However, they were released on bail that same day.

⁸ A few months later, in September 1938, the Cantwell family appeared before the trial court in New Haven. Newton, Russell, and Jesse were convicted of soliciting donations without a license. Despite appeals to the Supreme Court of Connecticut, Jesse was found guilty of inciting a breach of peace—of being a troublemaker. Why? Because the two Catholic men who had listened to the record testified in court that the lecture insulted their religion and provoked them. To challenge the convictions, the responsible brothers in our organization appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court—the highest court of the land.

⁹ Starting on March 29, 1940, Chief Justice Charles E. Hughes and eight associate judges listened to the arguments presented by Brother Hayden Covington, a lawyer for Jehovah's Witnesses.*^[1]

^{*}[1] This case, *Cantwell v. State of Connecticut*, was the first of 43 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court that Brother Hayden Covington would handle in defense of the brothers. He died in 1978. His widow, Dorothy, served faithfully until her death in 2015 at 92 years of age.

8. Why did the court find Jesse Cantwell guilty of being a troublemaker?

9, 10. (a) How did the U.S. Supreme Court rule in the case of the Cantwell family? (b) How do we still benefit from that ruling?

When the attorney for the state of Connecticut presented his arguments in an effort to prove that the Witnesses were troublemakers, one justice asked: “Was it not true that the message that Christ Jesus proclaimed was unpopular in his day?” The state’s attorney replied: “It was, and, if I remember my Bible correctly, it also tells what happened to Jesus for proclaiming that message.” What a revealing statement! Unwittingly, the attorney grouped the Witnesses with Jesus and grouped the state with those who convicted him. On May 20, 1940, the Court unanimously ruled in favor of the Witnesses.

¹⁰ What was the significance of the Court’s ruling? It expanded protection of the right to the free exercise of religion so that no federal, state, or local government could lawfully limit religious freedom. Further, the Court found in Jesse’s conduct “no . . . menace to public peace and order.” Hence, the ruling clearly established that Jehovah’s Witnesses are not disturbers of public order. What a decisive legal victory for God’s servants! How do we still benefit from it? A lawyer who is a Witness notes: “The right to exercise our religion freely without fear of unfair

restrictions allows us as Witnesses today to share a message of hope with others in the communities where we live.”

Seditionists—Or Proclaimers of Truth?

¹¹ During the 1940’s, Jehovah’s Witnesses in **Canada** faced fierce opposition. Hence, in 1946, to publicize the State’s disregard for the right to freedom of worship, our brothers there held a 16-day campaign in which they distributed a tract entitled *Quebec’s Burning Hate for God and Christ and Freedom Is the Shame of All Canada*. This four-page tract exposed in detail the clergy-instigated riots, police brutality, and mob violence committed against our brothers in the province of Quebec. “Lawless arrests of Jehovah’s witnesses continue,” stated the tract. “There are about 800 charges stacked up against Jehovah’s witnesses in Greater Montreal.”

¹² Quebec’s Premier Maurice Duplessis, working hand in glove with Roman Catholic Cardinal Ville-neuve, reacted to the tract by declaring a “war with-

11. What campaign did our brothers in Canada carry out, and why?

12. (a) How did opposers react to the tract campaign? (b) Our brothers were charged with what crime? (See also footnote.)

61 *Forward, You Witnesses!*

(Luke 16:16)

1. Firm and determined in this time of the end,
Prepared are God's servants the good news to defend.
The Devil has fought and opposed them.
With Jehovah, they take their stand against him.

(CHORUS)

*Then forward, you Witnesses, ever strong of heart!
Rejoice that in God's work, you too may have a part!
Go tell far and wide that the Paradise is near
And that soon all its blessings will be here.*

2. Servants of Jah do not seek a life of ease;
The world and its rulers we do not try to please.
Unspotted at all times remaining,
Our integrity we will keep maintaining.

(Chorus)

3. God and his Kingdom are mocked and pushed aside;
His great name is slandered, its holiness denied.
Let's share in its sanctification,
And declare it to ev'ry tribe and nation.

(Chorus)

MARCH 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
MAY 1-28, 2017

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

ROMANIA

This elder and his wife find that Sunday after the meeting is a good time to reach sheeplike people in northern Romania. These include two neighbors who are combing the wool from literal sheep in that area.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

4 WEEK OF MAY 1-7

Give Honor to Whom It Is Due

Christians need to have a balanced view of how to show respect and honor. To whom is honor due? Why? This article will help us to answer those questions, and it also highlights the benefits of rendering honor to those to whom it is due.

16 WEEK OF MAY 8-14

Exercise Faith—Decide Wisely!

According to the Bible, we should not be unsteady, unable to decide. But why do we need to make wise decisions? What will help us to do so? And should we at times change a decision that we have made? This article will help us to answer those questions.

PUBLISHERS

40,575

BIBLE STUDIES

25,623

MEMORIAL
ATTENDANCE (2015)

78,300

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

28 WEEK OF MAY 15-21

Serve Jehovah With a Complete Heart!

40 WEEK OF MAY 22-28

Will You Apply Your Heart to the Things Written?

Being imperfect, all of us make mistakes. However, does that mean we cannot please Jehovah? In these two articles, we will discuss the examples of four kings of Judah and the mistakes they made, some of which were very serious. Yet, Jehovah viewed those kings as having a complete heart. Will God view us as having a complete heart, despite mistakes we make?

52 LIFE STORY

I Have Benefited From Walking With Wise Ones

49 *Making Jehovah's Heart Glad*

(Proverbs 27:11)

1. Great God, we've vowed to do your will;
 In wisdom your work we'll fulfill,
 For then we know we'll have a part
 In making glad your loving heart.
2. Your slave, your steward here on earth,
 Declares your greatness and your worth
 And feeds us nourishment when due,
 To strengthen us your will to do.
3. Impart to us your active force,
 That we may keep a faithful course
 And bring forth fruitage to your praise.
 May we make glad your heart each day.



SONGS:
49, 127

**WHAT CAN YOU
LEARN FROM THE
MISTAKES OF THE
FOLLOWING KINGS?**

Asa and
Jehoshaphat

Hezekiah

Josiah

Will You Apply Your Heart to the Things Written?

“These things . . . were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have come.”—1 COR. 10:11.

IF YOU saw someone slip and fall on a path, would you not be careful when walking on that same pathway? By considering the mistakes of others, we may be helped to avoid making the

1, 2. Why will we consider the examples of four kings of Judah?

same errors. This is also true of our spiritual course. We can learn valuable lessons from the mistakes of others, including those recorded in the Bible.

² The four Judean kings who were considered in the preceding article served Jehovah with a complete heart. Still, they made some serious mistakes. What can we learn from their experiences, and how can we avoid a similar course? Meditating on these examples can help us to benefit from the things that were written beforehand for our instruction.—Read Romans 15:4.

RELYING ON HUMAN WISDOM LEADS TO DISASTER

³ Let us first consider Asa and see how God's Word can influence our life. Asa relied on Jehovah when a million Ethiopians came against Judah; yet, he failed to do so when Baasha the king of Israel began to fortify Ramah, a city bordering Asa's domain. (2 Chron. 16:1-3) In the latter case, Asa relied on his own wisdom and bribed King Benhadad of Syria to attack Baasha. Did Asa's tactic

3-5. (a) Though Asa's heart was complete toward Jehovah, what problem did he face? (b) Why might Asa have relied on humans when Baasha came up against Judah?

succeed? “When Baasha heard of it,” the Bible reports, “he immediately quit building Ramah and abandoned his work on it.” (2 Chron. 16:5) So Asa’s strategy worked—at first glance!

⁴ How, though, did Jehovah view Asa’s course? God sent his spokesman Hanani to reprimand Asa for not relying on Jehovah. (Read 2 Chronicles 16:7-9.) “From now on,” Hanani said, “there will be wars against you.” Baasha was turned away; however, Asa and his people experienced wars for the rest of his reign.

⁵ As we noted in the preceding article, God examined Asa’s heart and judged it to be complete with Him. (1 Ki. 15:14) In God’s eyes, Asa’s devotion was basically sound, satisfying divine requirements. Still, he had to reap the consequences of his unwise course. In dealing with Baasha, what led Asa to rely on humans—Ben-hadad and himself—instead of Jehovah? Could he have thought that diplomacy or militaristic maneuvering would deliver a more favorable outcome than would turning to God for help? Could he have given in to such reasoning as a result of receiving bad counsel?

⁶ Will the account about Asa move us to exam-

6. What can we learn from Asa’s mistake? Illustrate.

ine our own course of action? When we face problems that seem too much for us to deal with, it may be easy to see the need to rely on Jehovah. But what do we do when we have to cope with smaller issues of daily life? Do we resort to human thinking by trying to solve them in our own way? Or do we look for Bible principles and try to apply them, thus showing that we rely on Jehovah's way to solve problems? For example, on occasion you may face some opposition from your family regarding attending meetings or an assembly. You ask Jehovah to direct you and help you discern the best way to handle the situation. Or what if you lose your job, and you are having difficulty finding another? When speaking with a prospective employer, would you still inform him that you will be attending weekday meetings regularly? Whatever the problem may be, we do well to heed the words of the psalmist who said: "Commit your way to Jehovah; rely on him, and he will act in your behalf." —Ps. 37:5.

WHAT CAN BAD ASSOCIATIONS DO TO YOU?

⁷ What about Asa's son Jehoshaphat? He had

7, 8. Jehoshaphat made what mistakes, and with what results? (See opening picture.)

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.

⁸ Did Jehoshaphat learn from that experience? While he did continue to show zeal in wanting to please God, it seems that he did not learn from the experience with Ahab and from Jehu’s warning words. Jehoshaphat forged another unwise alliance. It was with an enemy of God, this time with the son of Ahab, wicked King Ahaziah. Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah built ships together, which ended up being wrecked, not accomplishing the purpose for which they were built.—2 Chron. 20:35-37.

⁹ Reading the accounts of Jehoshaphat ought to

9. How can bad association affect our whole life?

move us to examine our own life. How so? Well, overall Jehoshaphat was a good king. He did what was right and “searched for Jehovah with all his heart.” (2 Chron. 22:9) Still, he was not immune to the effect of bad associations. Recall this inspired proverb: “The one walking with the wise will become wise, but the one who has dealings with the stupid will fare badly.” (Prov. 13:20) On the one hand, we may be trying to help interested ones into the truth. Yet, Jehoshaphat’s unnecessary dealings with Ahab almost cost him his life. Similarly, our having unnecessary association with those who do not serve Jehovah involves risks.

¹⁰ What practical lesson can we draw from the experience of Jehoshaphat? A Christian may begin to have romantic feelings for someone who does not love Jehovah, thinking that a suitable mate cannot be found among true Christians. Or a Christian may feel pressure from unbelieving relatives to get married ‘before it is too late.’ Furthermore, some may feel like one sister, who said: “We are hardwired to want love and companionship.” What is a Christian to do? Meditating on

-
10. (a) What lesson about getting married can we learn from Jehoshaphat?
(b) What should we bear in mind when faced with the problem of bad associations?

what happened to Jehoshaphat can help. He usually looked to God for direction. (2 Chron. 18:4-6) But what happened when Jehoshaphat associated with Ahab, who had no love for Jehovah? Jehoshaphat should have borne in mind that Jehovah's eyes look for those whose heart is complete toward him. In our time too, God's eyes are "roving about through all the earth," and he is ready "to show his strength" in our behalf. (2 Chron. 16:9) He understands our situation and loves us. Do *you* have faith that God will fill your needs for love and companionship in a satisfying way? Be sure that at some point, he will do so!

Be aware of
the danger of
becoming
unevenly
yoked with an
unbeliever
(See paragraph 10)



DO NOT LET YOUR HEART BECOME HAUGHTY

¹¹ The lesson we can learn from Hezekiah involves the heart. On one occasion, the Examiner of hearts exposed what was in Hezekiah's heart. (Read 2 Chronicles 32:31.) When Hezekiah became very sick, God gave him a sign indicating that he would recover—a shadow moving backward. Apparently, the princes of Babylon sent emissaries to inquire about that sign. (2 Ki. 20:8-13; 2 Chron. 32:24) Revealing what was in his heart when “left . . . alone,” Hezekiah showed those Babylonians “his entire treasure-house.” This foolish act exposed “all that was in [Hezekiah's] heart.”

¹² The Bible does not tell us just what caused Hezekiah's heart to become haughty. Might it have been his victory against the Assyrians or his being cured by God miraculously? Could it have been because of his “vast riches and glory”? In any case, because Hezekiah was haughty, he “did not respond appreciatively to the good done to him.” How sad! Though he could plead with God that he had served Him with a complete heart, Hezekiah did for a time displease Jehovah. Later, though,

11, 12. (a) How did Hezekiah reveal what was in his heart? (b) Why was Hezekiah spared from God's indignation?

“Hezekiah humbled himself,” so he and his people were spared God’s indignation.—2 Chron. 32:25-27; Ps. 138:6.

¹³ How can we benefit from reading the account of Hezekiah and meditating on it? Remember that Hezekiah’s haughtiness became obvious soon after Jehovah defeated Sennacherib and cured Hezekiah’s deadly sickness. In our case, if we have accomplished something worthwhile, could it be that Jehovah is ‘leaving us alone to put us to the test,’ allowing what is in our heart to surface? For example, a brother may have worked hard to prepare a talk and give it before a large audience. Many praise him for what he has done. How will he react to the praise?

¹⁴ When praised, we do well to apply Jesus’ words: “When you have done all the things assigned to you, say: ‘We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.’” (Luke 17:10) Here again, we can learn from Hezekiah’s experience. A haughty attitude surfaced in that he “did not respond appreciatively to the good done to him.” Our meditating on

13, 14. (a) When might Jehovah ‘leave us alone to put us to the test’?
(b) How can we deal with praise we receive for what we have accomplished?

how much God has done for us will help us to avoid an attitude that Jehovah hates. We can speak appreciatively of Jehovah. He has provided both the Holy Scriptures and the holy spirit that supports his people.

TAKE CARE WHEN MAKING DECISIONS

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

15, 16. Why did Josiah lose God’s protection and his life?

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 reason-

17. When we encounter a problem, how can we avoid making a mistake like the one Josiah made?

able. (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.

MAINTAIN A COMPLETE HEART AND REJOICE

¹⁸ Being imperfect, we too may at times be inclined to make any one of the mistakes committed by the four kings discussed above. We might (1) unwittingly rely on human wisdom, (2) turn to bad associations, (3) become haughty, or (4) make decisions without first considering what God's will is. How kind of Jehovah to see good in us, as he saw good in those four kings! Jehovah also sees how much we love him and how much we long to serve him fully. So he has provided us with warning examples to help us avoid making serious mistakes. Let us meditate on these Bible accounts and be thankful that Jehovah has provided them for us!

18. How can you benefit from considering the accounts of the four kings as set out in this article?

The Sort of Person I Should Be

(2 Peter 3:11)

Db Bbm7 Gb Ebm7

How can I re-pay you, what gift can I give To

Gb/Ab Ab/Gb Db/F F7b9b13/A Bbm7 Eb13sus4 Eb7

thank you, Je-ho - vah, for the life that I live? I

Ebm Ab7/Eb Db/F Gb Ab Bbm9/11 Bbm

look in my heart with your Word as my mir - ror; The

Bridge

Gb Db/F Ebm11 Gb/Ab Ab7 Dbsus4 Db

per - son I see, may you help me see clear - er. My

The Sort of Person I Should Be

Chords: G \flat ma7, Ab/G \flat , G \flat ma7, Ab/G \flat , Fm7, C \flat /D \flat

life I have prom - ised in ser - vice to you, But

Chords: G \flat ma7, Ab/G \flat , G \flat ma7, B \flat m/G, C7sus4, C7, Fm

not from mere du - ty will I do what I do. Whole -

Chords: D $^{\circ}$, E \flat m11, E \flat m, G \flat m/A

souled and whole - heart - ed I serve you by

Chords: D \flat /A \flat , B \flat m/G, G \flat /A \flat , Fm/A \flat

choice; May I be one more who makes you re - jice.

The Sort of Person I Should Be

Ebm7/Ab Ab7 Db Bbm7 Gb Ebm7

Help me to ex-am-ine, and help me to see Just

Gb/Ab Ab/Gb Db/F F7b9b13/A Bbm7 Eb13sus4 Eb7

what sort of per-son you de-sire me to be. Those

Ebm Ab7/Eb Db/F Gb Ab Bbm9/11 Bbm

loy-al to you, you will loy-al-ly trea-sure; May

Gb Db/F Ebm11 Gb/Ab Ab7 Dbsus4 Db

I be a-mong those who bring your heart plea-sure.

