

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Jehovah Never Abandoned Joseph”:** (10 min.)
 Ge 39:1—Joseph became a slave in Egypt (w14 11/1 12 ¶4-5)
 Ge 39:12-14, 20—Joseph was falsely accused and put in prison (w14 11/1 14-15)
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 Ge 38:9, 10—Why did Jehovah put Onan to death? (it-2 555)

Ge 38:15-18—How should we understand the actions of Judah and Tamar? (w04 1/15 30 ¶4-5)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 38:1-19 (5)

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

- **Initial Call Video:** (4 min.) Discussion. Play the video, and then ask the audience: How did the sister make her message understandable to the householder? (th study 17) How might the publisher have introduced a publication from the Teaching Toolbox?
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 121
- **“Be Like Joseph—Flee From Immorality”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Flee From Immorality* (video category TEENAGERS).
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- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 26 and Prayer

GENESIS 38-39 | Jehovah Never Abandoned Joseph



39:1, 12-14, 20-23

During Joseph’s many trials, Jehovah made “everything that he did successful” and granted him “favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison.” (Ge 39:2, 3, 21-23) What lessons can we learn from this account?

- Our trials do not mean that we have lost Jehovah’s favor.—Ps 34:19
- We should try to discern how Jehovah is blessing us and be thankful.—Php 4:6, 7
- We should look to Jehovah to sustain us.—Ps 55:22



33 *Throw Your Burden on Jehovah*

(Psalm 55)

1. "Listen to my prayer," Jehovah.
Let yourself be found by me.
Feel the anguish deep inside me;
Help me unafraid to be.

(CHORUS)

*Throw your burden on Jehovah;
Trust in him to sustain and save you.
He will always give protection.
He is loyal; he is true.*

2. Had I wings just as a dove has,
Far from danger I would fly,
Safe from those who seek to hurt me,
Sheltered from their hateful cry.

(Chorus)

3. Comfort from our God, Jehovah,
Always brings us peace of mind.
He will help us bear our burden.
He is loving; he is kind.

(Chorus)

Genesis 38-39

38 About that time Judah left his brothers and pitched his tent near an A-dul'lam-ite man named Hi'rah. ² There Judah saw the daughter of a certain Ca'naan-ite named Shu'a. So he took her and had relations with her, ³ and she became pregnant. Later she bore a son, and he named him Er.

⁴ Again she became pregnant and bore a son and named him O'nan. ⁵ Yet again she bore a son and named him She'lah. He was in Ach'zib when she bore him.

⁶ In time Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Ta'mar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was displeasing to Jehovah; so Jehovah put him to death. ⁸ In view of that, Judah said to O'nan: "Have relations with your brother's wife and perform brother-in-law marriage with her and raise up offspring for your brother." ⁹ But O'nan knew that the offspring would not be considered his. So when he did have relations with his brother's wife, he wasted his semen on the ground so as not to give offspring to his brother. ¹⁰ What he did was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, so he also put him to death. ¹¹ Judah said to Ta'mar his daughter-in-law: "Dwell as a widow in the house of your father until my son She'lah grows up," for he said to himself: 'He too may die like his brothers.' So Ta'mar went and stayed in her own father's house.

¹² Some time passed, and Judah's wife, the daughter of Shu'a, died. Judah kept the mourning period, and then he went to his sheepshearers in Tim'nah with his companion Hi'rah the A-dul'lam-ite. ¹³ Ta'mar was told: "Here your

father-in-law is going up to Tim'nah to shear his sheep.”

¹⁴ With that she removed her widow's clothing and veiled herself and covered herself with a shawl and sat down at the entrance of E-na'im, which is on the road to Tim'nah, for she saw that She'lah had grown up and yet she had not been given to him as a wife.

¹⁵ When Judah caught sight of her, he at once took her for a prostitute, because she had covered her face. ¹⁶ So he turned aside to her by the road and said: “Allow me, please, to have relations with you,” for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. However, she said: “What will you give me that you may have relations with me?” ¹⁷ To this he said: “I will send a young goat from my herd.” But she said: “Will you give a security until you send it?” ¹⁸ He continued: “What security should I give you?” to which she said: “Your seal ring and your cord and your rod that is in your hand.” Then he gave them to her and had relations with her, and she became pregnant by him. ¹⁹ After that she got up and went away and removed her shawl and clothed herself with her widow's clothing.

²⁰ And Judah sent the young goat by the hand of his companion the A-dul'lam-ite, to get back the security from the hand of the woman, but he never found her. ²¹ He inquired of the men of her place, saying: “Where is that temple prostitute in E-na'im along the road?” But they said: “No temple prostitute has ever been in this place.” ²² Finally he returned to Judah and said: “I never found her, and besides, the men of the place said, ‘No temple prostitute has ever been in this place.’” ²³ So Judah said: “Let her take

them for herself, in order that we may not fall into contempt. At any rate, I have sent this young goat, but you never found her.”

²⁴ However, about three months later, Judah was told: “Ta'mar your daughter-in-law has acted as a prostitute, and she is also pregnant by her prostitution.” At that Judah said: “Bring her out and let her be burned.” ²⁵ As she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law: “I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong.” Then she added: “Please examine to whom these belong, the seal ring and the cord and the rod.” ²⁶ Then Judah examined them and said: “She is more righteous than I am, because I did not give her to She'lah my son.” And he had no further sexual relations with her after that.

²⁷ When the time came for her to give birth, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ As she was giving birth, one put out his hand, and the midwife immediately took a scarlet thread and tied it around his hand, saying: “This one came out first.” ²⁹ But as soon as he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she exclaimed: “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Pe'rez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother came out, around whose hand the scarlet thread was tied, and he was named Ze'rah.

39 Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and an Egyptian named Pot'i-phar, a court official of Phar'aoh and chief of the guard, bought him from the Ish'ma-el-ites who had taken him down there. ² But Jehovah was with Joseph. As a result, he became successful and was put over the house of his

master, the Egyptian. ³ And his master saw that Jehovah was with him and that Jehovah was making everything that he did successful.

⁴ Joseph kept finding favor in his eyes, and he became his personal attendant. So he appointed him over his house, and he put him in charge of all that was his. ⁵ From the time he appointed him over his house and in charge of all that was his, Jehovah kept blessing the house of the Egyptian because of Joseph, and Jehovah's blessing came to be on all that he had in the house and in the field. ⁶ He eventually left everything that was his in Joseph's care, and he gave no thought to anything except the food he was eating. Moreover, Joseph grew to be well-built and handsome.

⁷ Now after these things, the wife of his master began to cast her eyes on Joseph and say: "Lie down with me." ⁸ But he refused and said to his master's wife: "Here my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has entrusted everything he has into my care. ⁹ There is no one greater in this house than I am, and he has not withheld from me anything at all except you, because you are his wife. So how could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?"

¹⁰ So day after day she spoke to Joseph, but he never consented to lie with her or to remain with her. ¹¹ But on one of the days when he went into the house to do his work, none of the household servants were in the house. ¹² Then she grabbed hold of him by his garment and said: "Lie down with me!" But he left his garment in her hand and fled

outside. ¹³ As soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, ¹⁴ she began to cry out to the men of her house and to say to them: “Look! He brought to us this Hebrew man to make us a laughingstock. He came to me to lie down with me, but I began to cry out at the top of my voice. ¹⁵ Then as soon as he heard me raising my voice and screaming, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.” ¹⁶ After that she laid his garment beside her until his master came to his house.

¹⁷ Then she told him the same thing, saying: “The Hebrew servant whom you brought to us came to me to make me a laughingstock. ¹⁸ But as soon as I raised my voice and began to scream, he left his garment beside me and fled outside.” ¹⁹ As soon as his master heard the words his wife spoke to him, saying: “These are the things your servant did to me,” his anger blazed. ²⁰ So Joseph’s master took him and gave him over to the prison, the place where the prisoners of the king were kept under arrest, and he remained there in the prison.

²¹ But Jehovah continued with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him and granting him favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison. ²² So the chief officer of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners in the prison, and everything that they were doing there, he was the one having it done. ²³ The chief officer of the prison was looking after absolutely nothing that was in Joseph’s care, for Jehovah was with Joseph and Jehovah made whatever he did successful.

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39:1, 12-14, 20-23

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May 11-17 / Genesis 38-39

- Song 33 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minute)

Treasures From God's Word

"Jehovah Never Abandoned Joseph": (10 minutes)

Genesis 39:1, 12-14, 20-23

During Joseph's many trials, Jehovah made "everything that he did successful" and granted him "favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison." (Genesis 39:2, 3, 21-23) What lessons can we learn from this account?

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Genesis 39:1—Joseph became a slave in Egypt

Genesis 39:1: Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and an Egyptian named Potiphar, a court official of Pharaoh and chief of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.

w14 11/1 12 paragraphs 4-5

“Now Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and an Egyptian named Potiphar, a court official of Pharaoh and chief of the guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who had taken him down there.” (Genesis 39:1) In those few words, the Bible account helps us to imagine the humiliation of a young man as he was sold once again. He was mere property! We may think of Joseph following his new master, an Egyptian court official, through bustling city streets crowded with bazaars as they head toward Joseph’s new home.

Home! It was a far cry from anything Joseph had ever called home. He had grown up in a nomadic family who dwelled in tents as they moved frequently and tended their flocks of sheep. Here, such wealthy Egyptians as Potiphar lived in elegant, brightly painted houses. Archaeologists report that

the ancient Egyptians were fond of lush, walled gardens with shade trees and quiet pools for growing papyrus, lotus, and other water plants. Some houses sat secluded within gardens, with porches for enjoying the breeze, high windows for ventilation, and many rooms, including a large dining room and quarters for servants.

Genesis 39:12-14, 20—Joseph was falsely accused and put in prison

Genesis 39:12-14: Then she grabbed hold of him by his garment and said: "Lie down with me!" But he left his garment in her hand and fled outside. As soon as she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, she began to cry out to the men of her house and to say to them: "Look! He brought to us this Hebrew man to make us a laughingstock. He came to me to lie down with me, but I began to cry out at the top of my voice.

Genesis 39:20: So Joseph's master took him and gave him over to the prison, the place where the prisoners of the king were kept under arrest, and he remained there in the prison.

w14 11/1 14-15

We know little of what Egyptian prisons were like in those days. Archaeologists have found the ruins of such places—great fortresslike structures with cells and dungeons. Joseph later described the place with a word that literally means “the pit,” which suggests a lightless and hopeless place. (Genesis 40:15, footnote) In the book of Psalms, we learn that Joseph was subjected to further torment: “With fetters they bound his feet; his neck was put in irons.” (Psalm 105:17, 18) The Egyptians sometimes put prisoners in restraints that pinioned their arms behind them at the elbows; others bore iron collars clasped at their necks. How Joseph must have suffered to be so mistreated—when he had done nothing to deserve it!

What is more, this was no brief setback. The account says that Joseph “remained there in the prison.” He spent years in that terrible place! And Joseph did not know if he would ever be released. As those first shocking days dragged into weeks, then months, how did he keep from falling into hopelessness and despair?

The account gives us this reassuring answer: “Jehovah

continued with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him.” (Genesis 39:21) No prison walls, no fetters, no lightless dungeons can keep Jehovah’s loyal love from reaching his servants. (Romans 8:38, 39) We may well imagine Joseph pouring out his agony to his dear heavenly Father in prayer and then receiving the kind of peace and calm that only “the God of all comfort” can provide. (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4; Philippians 4:6, 7) What else did Jehovah do for Joseph? We read that he kept granting Joseph “favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison.”

Genesis 39:21-23—Jehovah continued to be with Joseph

Genesis 39:21-23: But Jehovah continued with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him and granting him favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison. So the chief officer of the prison put Joseph in charge of all the prisoners in the prison, and everything that they were doing there, he was the one having it done. The chief officer of the prison was looking after absolutely nothing that was in Joseph’s care, for Jehovah was with Joseph and Jehovah made whatever he did successful.

w14 11/1 15 paragraph 2

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Digging for Spiritual Gems

Genesis 38:9, 10—Why did Jehovah put Onan to death?

Genesis 38:9, 10: But Onan knew that the offspring would not be considered his. So when he did have relations with his brother's wife, he wasted his semen on the ground so as not to give offspring to his brother. What he did was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, so he also put him to death.

it-2 555

(O'nan) [from a root meaning "generative power; dynamic energy"].

A son of Judah, his second by the Canaanite daughter of Shua. (Genesis 38:2-4; 1 Chronicles 2:3) After Onan's childless older brother Er was put to death by Jehovah for wrongdoing, Onan was told by Judah to perform brother-in-law marriage with Er's widow Tamar. If a son was produced, he would not be the founder of Onan's family, and the firstborn's inheritance would belong to him as an heir to Er; whereas if no heir came, Onan would get the inheritance for himself. When Onan had relations with Tamar, he "wasted his semen on the earth" instead of giving it to her. This was not an act of masturbation on the part of Onan, for the account says "when he did have relations with his brother's wife" he spilled his semen. Apparently it was a case of "coitus interruptus," in which Onan purposely prevented ejaculation of his semen into Tamar's genital tract. For his disobedience to his father, his covetousness, and his sin against the divine arrangement of marriage, not for self-abuse, Onan, himself also childless, was put to death by Jehovah.—Genesis 38:6-

10; 46:12; Numbers 26:19.

Genesis 38:15-18—How should we understand the actions of Judah and Tamar?

Genesis 38:15-18: When Judah caught sight of her, he at once took her for a prostitute, because she had covered her face. So he turned aside to her by the road and said: "Allow me, please, to have relations with you," for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. However, she said: "What will you give me that you may have relations with me?" To this he said: "I will send a young goat from my herd." But she said: "Will you give a security until you send it?" He continued: "What security should I give you?" to which she said: "Your seal ring and your cord and your rod that is in your hand." Then he gave them to her and had relations with her, and she became pregnant by him.

w04 1/15 30 paragraphs 4-5

Judah acted wrongly in that he did not give Tamar to his son Shelah as promised. He also had relations with a woman he thought was a temple prostitute. This was contrary to God's purpose, which was for a man to have sexual relations only in

the marriage arrangement. (Genesis 2:24) In reality, though, Judah did not have relations with a harlot. Rather, he unwittingly took the place of his son Shelah in performing brother-in-law marriage and thus fathered legal offspring.

As for Tamar, her course was not an immoral one. Her twin sons were not considered to be the sons of fornication.

When Boaz of Bethlehem took the Moabitess Ruth in brother-in-law marriage, the elders of Bethlehem spoke favorably of Tamar's son Perez, saying to Boaz: "May your house become like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, from the offspring that Jehovah will give you out of this young woman." (Ruth 4:12) Perez is also listed among the ancestors of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:1-3; Luke 3:23-33.

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Sample Conversation-May 2020

Initial Call

Question: What happens when we die?

Scripture: Ec 9:5a⁵ “For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all...”

Link: Is death the end of it all?

1st Publisher: Good evening. We’re here because we find that many people wonder what happens when we die. There are many different ideas out there. May I ask your viewpoint?

Householder: Well, I’m not sure but we must live on in some way.

1st Publisher: You know a lot of people have said something similar. And it’s understandable we all want to continue living, however, note what the Bible says here at Ec. 9:5. JoAnne, would you please read the beginning of that verse?

JoAnne: Sure. [Reads *Ec 9:5a⁵ “For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing at all...”*]

1st Publisher: Thank you. The dead know nothing at all. Have you ever considered that as a possibility?

Householder: Umm, I've never heard that before.

1st Publisher: You are not alone. Many people are surprised to hear that the Bible says that. If the dead know nothing at all then could they be living somewhere else?

Householder: Well it doesn't seem like it.

1st Publisher: This is actually a comforting thought. It means our loved ones who have died are not suffering since the dead are unconscious. Of course, we may wonder does this mean death is the end of it all. Would you like to know the Bible's answer?

Householder: Yeah, I would.

1st Publisher: I'd like to come back with my husband and show it to you. When would be a good time?



Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations

Joseph relies on Jehovah while imprisoned in Egypt

● INITIAL CALL

○ Question: What happens when we die?

○ Scripture: **Ec 9:5a**

○ Link: Is death the end of it all?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



● **bhs 63 ¶16**

○ FIRST RETURN VISIT

○ Question: Is death the end of it all?

○ Scripture: **Job 14:14, 15**

○ Link: What will life be like when God resurrects our dead loved ones?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



● **bhs 76 ¶14**

○ SECOND RETURN VISIT

○ Question: What will life be like when God resurrects our dead loved ones?

○ Scripture: **Isa 32:18**

○ Link: How will God bring peace to the earth?

FIND THIS SCRIPTURE IN THE TEACHING TOOLBOX:



● **bhs 35 ¶18**

We Need Self-Control

(Romans 7:14-25)

1. We love Jehovah with heart, mind, and soul;
But since we are sinful, we need self-control.
Fleshly desires bring trouble and strife;
Living by spirit brings peace and life.
2. Satan's temptations confront us each day,
And sin's law within us can lead us astray.
Power of truth is greater than sin.
Thanks to Jehovah, our minds can win.
3. Each word and action reflects on God's name,
So we must endeavor to keep free from blame.
In all we do, we make this our goal:
Always maintaining our self-control.

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- We should look to Jehovah to sustain us.—Ps 55:22



Be Like Joseph—Flee From Immorality



Joseph provides a good example for us if we are tempted to commit sexual immorality. Each time the wife of his master tried to seduce him, he refused. (Ge 39:7-10) His reply: “How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?” indicated that he had already given thought to Jehovah’s view of marital faithfulness. Then when the situation became critical, he fled instead of lingering and giving the woman a chance to weaken his resolve.—Ge 39:12; 1Co 6:18.

WATCH THE VIDEO *FLEE FROM IMMORALITY*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- What situation did Jin encounter?

- What discerning question did Jin ask himself when Mee-Kyong asked him to help her with her math homework?

- How did Mee-Kyong’s request affect Jin?

- How did Jin get help?

- What did Jin do to flee from immorality?

- What lessons did you learn from the video?



Flee From Immorality

(raw transcript)

Mom has been working hard lately, but I wish she worked harder for Jehovah. I try to help out where I can.

Oh, by the way, I'm Jin. Every day starts the same. I grab a drink of water; I say hi to Jun (he's in my congregation); and then there's Mee-Kyong. OK. Here we go. I say hello, she says something clever, and I try to leave. So this is different. She's having trouble in math and needs my help.

I don't want to be rude, but if I help her with her homework, how far could the relationship develop? How do you say no to a girl like her?

Why can't I get her out of my head?

Things are always better when Uncle and Auntie are around. Even Mom makes sure she's home for "dinner and broadcast" night.

Uncle wants to work together in service this weekend; maybe that will help clear my head.

Jehovah must be disappointed in me. I couldn't take it anymore. It was difficult, but I told Uncle everything. I felt guilty that I knew I shouldn't, but I liked the attention. We read Genesis 39:7-12. I knew the account about Potiphar's wife, but he mentioned something I hadn't thought of before. He told Potiphar's wife: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" But why did Joseph have to flee?

Joseph fought her every day, but she wasn't going to give up. In her mind, it wasn't a question of if but when. There came a point when he had to flee.

I explained why I was ending the relationship, but she would not give up.

You know the last thing she said to me? That I was a coward. But she's wrong. You're never a coward if you run to Jehovah.

CHRIST IN POWER JUDGES THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

MATTHEW 25:31-46

- JESUS GIVES THE ILLUSTRATION
OF THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS
-

On the Mount of Olives, Jesus has just related the illustrations of the ten virgins and of the talents. How does he end his answer to the apostles' question regarding the sign of his presence and of the conclusion of the system of things? He does so with a final illustration, one about sheep and goats.

Jesus begins by establishing its setting, telling them: "When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne." (Matthew 25:31) He leaves no doubt that he, Jesus, is the central figure in this illustration. He often called himself "the Son of man."—Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 20:18, 28.

When will this illustration find fulfillment? It is when Jesus "comes in his glory" with the angels and



sits down “on his glorious throne.” He had already spoken about “the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory” and with his angels. When would that be? “Immediately after the tribulation.” (Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13: 26, 27; Luke 21:27) So this illustration is to find fulfillment at Jesus’ future coming in glory. What will he then do?

Jesus explains: “When the Son of man comes . . . , all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.”—Matthew 25:31-33.

Regarding the sheep, separated to the favored side, Jesus says: “Then the King will say to those on his right: ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.’” (Matthew 25:34) Why do the sheep receive the King’s favor?

The King explains: “I became hungry and you gave me something to eat; I was thirsty and you

gave me something to drink. I was a stranger and you received me hospitably; naked and you clothed me. I fell sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you visited me.” When these sheep, “the righteous ones,” ask in what way they did those good things, he answers: “To the extent that you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:35, 36, 40, 46) They do not do these good deeds in heaven, for there are no sick or hungry ones there. These must be deeds done for Christ’s brothers on earth.

What of the goats, who are put on the left side? Jesus says: “Then [the King] will say to those on his left: ‘Go away from me, you who have been cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels. For I became hungry, but you gave me nothing to eat; and I was thirsty, but you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger, but you did not receive me hospitably; naked, but you did not clothe me; sick and in prison, but you did not look after me.’” (Matthew 25:41-43) This judgment is merited because the goats failed to treat Christ’s brothers on earth kindly, as they should have done.



The apostles learn that this future time of judgment is to have permanent—everlasting—consequences. Jesus tells them: “Then [the King] will [say]: ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did not do it to one of these least ones, you did not do it to me.’ These will depart into everlasting cutting-off, but the righteous ones into everlasting life.” —Matthew 25:45, 46.

Jesus’ response to the apostles’ question provides much for his followers to think about, helping them to examine their attitudes and deeds.

- ◇ In Jesus’ illustration of the sheep and the goats, who is “the King,” and when is the illustration to be fulfilled?
- ◇ Why will the sheep be judged as meriting Jesus’ favor?
- ◇ On what basis will some people be judged as goats, and what future will the sheep and the goats have?

You Did It for Me

(Matthew 25:34-40)

1. Other sheep Jesus has, and they serve alongside those anointed to be Christ's heavenly bride.
All the things that are done
for their comfort and aid
Are things he considers that must be repaid.

(CHORUS)

*"If you comforted them, you comforted me.
If you did it for them, you did it for me.
Your labors for them were your labors for me.
You did it for them; you did it for me.
If you did it for them, you did it for me."*

2. "Yes, you comforted me in my hunger and thirst,
and whatever my need, you came to me first."
"Tell us, when did we do this?"
these ones will reply.
The King will then answer them, telling them why:

(Chorus)

3. "You've been loyal to me, doing works that are fine,
as you preach alongside these brothers of mine."
So the King will then say
to the sheep on his right:
"Inherit the earth and perfection of life."

(Chorus)

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28 *Gaining Jehovah's Friendship* (Psalm 15)

1. Who is your friend, O God?

Who in your tent may dwell?

Who gains your friendship? Who gains your trust?

Who really knows you well?

All who embrace your Word,

All who have faith in you,

All who are loyal, all who are just,

Living the truth for you.

2. Who is your friend, O God?

Who may approach your throne?

Who brings delight and makes you rejoice?

Whose name to you is known?

All who exalt your name,

All who your Word obey,

All who are faithful, honest in heart,

Truthful in all they say.

3. Throwing our cares on you,

Baring our hearts in prayer,

Drawing us closer, bonding in love,

Feeling your daily care,

We yearn to be your friend.

Long may our friendship grow.

No greater Friend could we ever gain,

No greater Friend we'll know.

Are You Ready to Get Baptized?

“Baptism . . . is also now saving you.”—1 PET. 3:21.

SONG 28

Gaining Jehovah’s Friendship

PREVIEW

Are you thinking about getting baptized? If so, this article has been prepared especially with you in mind. We will discuss some key questions on this important subject. Your answers will help you to decide if you are ready to get baptized.

IMAGINE that a person decides to build a house. He knows what kind of house he wants to build. Should he immediately go out and buy some supplies and start building? No. Before he begins, there is something important that he ought to do—calculate how much the house will cost. Why? Because he needs to know whether he has enough money to finish the house. If he carefully calculates the cost in advance, he is more likely to be successful in completing his new house.

² Has your love and appreciation for Jehovah moved you to think about getting baptized? If so, you are facing a decision similar to that of the man who wants to build a house. Why can we say that? Consider Jesus' words found at **Luke 14:27-30**. (Read.) Jesus was discussing what it means to be his disciple. To be his follower, we must be willing to accept "the expense" involved—the challenges and the sacrifices. (Luke 9:23-26; 12:51-53) So before you get baptized, you need to think carefully about all that is involved. Then you will be better prepared to keep serving God faithfully as a baptized Christian.

-
1. What should a person do before starting to build a house?
 2. According to Luke 14:27-30, what should you think carefully about before getting baptized?

³ Is becoming a baptized disciple of Christ worth the expense? Of course it is! Baptism opens the door to countless blessings—now and in the future. Let us discuss some important questions about baptism. Doing so will help you to answer the question, “Am I ready to get baptized?”

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DEDICATION AND BAPTISM

⁴ *What is dedication?* Before you can get baptized, you must make a dedication. When you make a dedication, you approach Jehovah in earnest prayer and tell him that you will use your life to serve him forever. When you dedicate yourself to God, you “disown” yourself. (Read Matthew 16:24.) You now belong to Jehovah, which is a great privilege. (Rom. 14:8) You are telling him that from now on, you will be focused on serving him and not on pleasing yourself. Your dedication is a vow—a solemn promise made to God. Jehovah does not force us to make such a vow. But when we do, he expects us to fulfill it.—Ps. 116:12, 14.

3. What will we discuss in this article?

4. (a) What is dedication? (b) What does it mean to “disown” oneself, as mentioned at Matthew 16:24?

Two Questions to Be Answered on the Day of Your Baptism

- 1 Have you repented of your sins, dedicated yourself to Jehovah, and accepted his way of salvation through Jesus Christ?
- 2 Do you understand that your baptism identifies you as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in association with Jehovah’s organization?

⁵ *How is dedication related to baptism?* Your dedication is personal and private; it is between you and Jehovah. Baptism is public; it takes place in front of others, usually at an assembly or a convention. When you get baptized, you show others that you have already dedicated yourself to Jehovah.* So your baptism lets others know that you love Jeho-

* See the box “Two Questions to Be Answered on the Day of Your Baptism.”

5. How is dedication related to baptism?

vah your God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength and that you are determined to serve him forever.—Mark 12:30.

⁶ *Is it really necessary to get baptized?* Consider the words found at 1 Peter 3:18-22. (Read.) Just as the ark was visible proof of Noah’s faith, your baptism is discernible evidence of your dedication to Jehovah. But is baptism really necessary? Yes it is. Peter commented on the reason why. First, it is “saving you.” Baptism can save us if we have taken the necessary steps to show that we have faith in Jesus and believe that he died for us, was raised to heaven, and is now “at God’s right hand.”

⁷ Second, baptism leads to “a good conscience.” When we dedicate ourselves to God and get baptized, we enter into a special relationship with him. Because of our sincere repentance and our faith in the ransom, God forgives our sins. We can thus have a good conscience before him.

⁸ *What should be the basis for your decision to get baptized?* As a result of your careful study of the Bible, you have learned much about Jehovah—his

6-7. According to 1 Peter 3:18-22, what are two reasons why baptism is necessary?

8. What should be the basis for your decision to get baptized?



personality and his ways. What you have learned about him has warmed your heart and moved you to love him very much. Your love for Jehovah must be the primary basis for your decision to get baptized.

BEFORE YOUR BAPTISM:

- Come to know Jehovah and Jesus well
- Develop faith
- Repent of your sins and turn your life around
- Dedicate yourself to God

AFTER BAPTISM:

- Read God's Word and meditate on it every day
- Pray continually
- Keep seeking first the Kingdom in your life

⁹ Your decision to get baptized is also based on the Bible truths you have accepted. Consider what Jesus said when he gave the commission to make disciples. (Read Matthew 28:19, 20.) According to Jesus, those who get baptized must do so “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” What did this mean? You must believe with

9. What does it mean to get baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, as stated at Matthew 28:19, 20?

all your heart the Bible truths about Jehovah; his Son, Jesus; and the holy spirit. These truths are very powerful and can deeply touch your heart. (Heb. 4:12) Let us review some of them.

¹⁰ Think back to when you learned these truths about the Father: His “name is Jehovah,” he is “the Most High over all the earth,” and he alone is “the true God.” (Ps. 83:18; Isa. 37:16) He is our Creator, and “salvation belongs to Jehovah.” (Ps. 3:8; 36:9) He has made provision to save us from sin and death and has given us the prospect of everlasting life. (John 17:3) Your dedication and baptism will identify you as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) You will be part of a worldwide family of worshippers who are proud to be called by God’s name and make it known to others.—Ps. 86:12.

¹¹ What a privilege it is to understand what the Bible teaches about the Father! When you accept these precious truths, your heart moves you to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and get baptized.

¹² What was your reaction when you learned the following truths about the Son? Jesus is the second

10-11. What truths about the Father have you learned and accepted?

12-13. What truths about the Son have you learned and accepted?

most important person in the universe. He is our Ransomer. He willingly gave his life for us. When we show by our actions that we have faith in the ransom, we can have our sins forgiven, develop a friendship with God, and gain everlasting life. (John 3:16) Jesus is our High Priest. He wants to help us to benefit from the ransom and to have a close relationship with God. (Heb. 4:15; 7:24, 25) As King of God's Kingdom, he is the one through whom Jehovah will sanctify His name, end wickedness, and bring eternal blessings in the coming Paradise. (Matt. 6:9, 10; Rev. 11:15) Jesus is our model. (1 Pet. 2:21) He set an example for us in devoting his life to doing God's will.—John 4:34.

¹³ When you accept what the Bible teaches about Jesus, you come to love God's dear Son. That love moves you to use your life to do God's will, as Jesus did. As a result, you feel impelled to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and get baptized.

¹⁴ What did you think when you learned the following truths about the holy spirit? It is, not a person, but God's active force. Jehovah used the holy

14-15. What truths about the holy spirit have you learned and accepted?

spirit to inspire the writing of the Bible, and the spirit helps us to understand and apply what we read in it. (John 14:26; 2 Pet. 1:21) By means of his spirit, Jehovah gives us “power beyond what is normal.” (2 Cor. 4:7) The spirit empowers us to preach the good news, fight temptation, deal with discouragement, and overcome trials. It helps us to display the beautiful qualities that make up “the fruitage of the spirit.” (Gal. 5:22) God freely gives his spirit to those who trust in him and sincerely ask him for it.—Luke 11:13.

¹⁵ How reassuring and comforting it is to know that Jehovah’s worshippers can rely on the holy spirit to help them in serving God! When you accept the truths you have learned about the holy spirit, you will feel moved to dedicate yourself to God and get baptized.

¹⁶ You are taking an important step when you decide to dedicate yourself to God and get baptized. As we have learned, you must be willing to accept the expense involved—the challenges and the sacrifices. But the blessings far outweigh the expense. Baptism can save you, and it leads to a good conscience before God. Your decision to get baptized

16. What have we learned so far in our discussion?

must be based primarily on your love for Jehovah God. You must also believe with all your heart the truths you have learned about the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit. After considering what we have discussed so far, how would you answer the question, “Am I ready to get baptized?”

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO BEFORE BAPTISM

¹⁷ If you feel that you are ready to get baptized, you no doubt have already taken a number of steps to build a good relationship with Jehovah.* As a result of your regular Bible study, you have come to know much about Jehovah and Jesus. You have developed faith. (Heb. 11:6) You completely trust in Jehovah’s promises found in the Bible, and you are convinced that your faith in Jesus’ sacrifice can save you from sin and death. You have repented of your sins; you feel deeply sorry for the wrongs you have committed, and you have asked Jehovah for his forgiveness. You have turned your life around; you have firmly rejected your former bad way of

* See chapter 18 of the book *What Can the Bible Teach Us?*

17. What are some of the steps leading to baptism?

life and have begun living in a way that is pleasing to God. (Acts 3:19) You are eager to tell others about your faith. You qualified to become an unbaptized publisher and began preaching with the congregation. (Matt. 24:14) Jehovah is proud of you for taking these necessary steps. You have brought great joy to his heart.—Prov. 27:11.

¹⁸ Before you can get baptized, there are a few other things you need to do. As we learned earlier, you must dedicate yourself to God. Approach him in private, heartfelt prayer, and promise him that you will use your life to do his will. (1 Pet. 4:2) Then let the coordinator of the body of elders know that you want to get baptized. He will ask some elders to meet with you. Please do not be anxious about meeting with them. These dear brothers no doubt already know you and love you. They will review with you the basic Bible teachings that you have learned. They want to make sure that you understand those teachings and that you are aware of the importance of dedication and baptism. If they agree that you are ready, they will inform you that you can get baptized at the next assembly or convention.

18. What else do you need to do before you can get baptized?

WHAT YOU WILL NEED TO DO AFTER YOUR BAPTISM

19 Once you get baptized, what will you need to do?* Recall that dedication is a vow and that Jehovah expects you to keep it. So after your baptism, you have to live up to your dedication. How can you do that?

20 Stay close to your congregation. As a baptized Christian, you are now part of an “association of brothers.” (1 Pet. 2:17) Your brothers and sisters in the congregation are your spiritual family. By regularly attending the meetings, you will strengthen your bond with them. Read God’s Word and meditate on it every day. (Ps. 1:1, 2) After reading a portion of the Bible, take some time to think deeply about what you have read. Then the words will reach your heart. “Pray continually.” (Matt. 26:41) Your sincere prayers will draw you closer to Jehovah. “Keep on . . . seeking first the Kingdom.” (Matt. 6:33) You can do that by making the preaching work a priority in your life. By sharing regularly

* If you have not yet completed your study of the books *What Can the Bible Teach Us?* and *How to Remain in God’s Love*, you should continue studying with a Bible teacher until you finish both books.

19-20. What will you need to do after your baptism, and how can you do that?

in the ministry, you will keep your faith strong, and you may help others to get on the road to everlasting life.—1 Tim. 4:16.

²¹ The decision to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and get baptized is the most important decision you will ever make. It is true that there is expense involved. Is it worth the expense? Absolutely! Any hardships you may face in this old world are “momentary and light.” (2 Cor. 4:17) In contrast, your baptism will open the way to a more satisfying life now and “the real life” to come. (1 Tim. 6:19) By all means, think carefully and pray about your answer to the question, “Am I ready to get baptized?”

21. Your baptism will open the way to what?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What do you need to know about dedication and baptism?
- What do you need to do before you get baptized?
- What do you need to do after you get baptized?

My Prayer of Dedication

(Matthew 22:37)

1. Take my heart and may it love
Truth and wisdom from above.
Take my voice and let it sing
Praises always to my King.
2. Take my feet and take my hands;
Let them serve your wise commands.
Take my silver and my gold.
Nothing, Lord, would I withhold.
3. Take my life and bring it, Lord,
With your will, in full accord.
Take myself, may all I do
Be well-pleasing, Jah, to you.

