

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

SEPTEMBER 6-12

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | DEUTERONOMY 33-34

"Seek Refuge in Jehovah's 'Everlasting Arms'"

it-2 51

Jeshurun

An honorary title for Israel. In the Greek *Septuagint* "Jeshurun" becomes a term of affection, it being rendered "beloved." The designation "Jeshurun" should have reminded Israel of its calling as Jehovah's covenant people and therefore of its obligation to remain upright. (De 33:5, 26; Isa 44:2) At Deuteronomy 32:15 the name Jeshurun is used ironically. Instead of living up to its name Jeshurun, Israel became intractable, forsook its Maker, and despised its Savior.

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Help to Get Back on Our Feet

We may be reminded that many centuries before Ezekiel's day, the prophet Moses stated that Jehovah has not only the power but also the desire to use his strength in behalf of his people. Moses wrote: "God is a refuge from ancient times, his everlasting arms are beneath you." (Deut. 33:27) Yes, we can be sure that if we turn to our God in times of distress, Jehovah will put his caring arms beneath us, gently lift us up, and help us to get back on our feet.—Ezek. 37:10.

w11 9/15 19 ¶16

Run the Race With Endurance

¹⁶ Like Abraham, Moses did not experience the fulfillment of God's promise in his life-

time. With the Israelites poised to enter the Promised Land, Moses was told: "From a distance you will see the land, but you will not go there into the land that I am giving to the sons of Israel." This was because earlier he and Aaron, exasperated by the people's rebelliousness, "acted undutifully toward [God] in the middle of the sons of Israel at the waters of Meribah." (Deut. 32:51, 52) Did Moses become despondent or resentful? No. He pronounced a blessing on the people and concluded with these words: "Happy you are, O Israel! Who is there like you, a people enjoying salvation in Jehovah, the shield of your help, and the One who is your eminent sword?"—Deut. 33:29.

Spiritual Gems

it-2 439 ¶13

Moses

Moses was 120 years of age at the time of his death. Testifying to his natural strength, the Bible comments: "His eye had not grown dim, and his vital strength had not fled." He was buried by Jehovah in a location never since discovered. (De 34: 5-7) Likely, this was to prevent the Israelites from being ensnared into false worship by making a shrine of his grave. Evidently the Devil desired to use Moses' body for some such purpose, for Jude, the Christian disciple and half brother of Jesus Christ, writes: "When Michael the archangel had a difference with the Devil and was disputing about Moses' body, he did not dare to bring a judgment against him in abusive terms, but said: 'May Jehovah rebuke you.'" (Jude 9) Before crossing over into Canaan under the leadership of Joshua,

Israel observed a 30-day mourning period for Moses.—De 34:8.

SEPTEMBER 13-19

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOSHUA 1-2

“How to Make Your Way Successful”

w13 1/15 8 ¶7

Be Courageous—Jehovah Is With You!

⁷ To have the courage needed to do God's will, we must study and apply his Word. That is what Joshua was told to do when he became Moses' successor: “Be courageous and very strong to take care to do according to all the law that Moses my servant commanded you. . . . This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely.” (Josh. 1:7, 8) Joshua followed that counsel, and ‘his way was successful.’ If we do likewise, we will have greater courage and success in God's service.

w13 1/15 11 ¶20

Be Courageous—Jehovah Is With You!

²⁰ It is challenging to pursue a godly course in the face of trials that beset us in this evil and troubled world. However, we are not alone. God is with us. So is his Son, the Head of the congregation. We also have over 7,000,000 fellow Witnesses of Jehovah worldwide. With them, let us keep on exercising faith and declaring the good news while we bear in mind our 2013 yeartext: “Be courageous and strong. . . . Jehovah your God is with you.”—Joshua 1:9.

Spiritual Gems

w04 12/1 9 ¶1

Highlights From the Book of Joshua

2:4, 5—Why does Rahab mislead the king's men who are searching for the spies? Rahab protects the spies at the risk of her life because she has come to have faith in Jehovah. Therefore, she is under no obligation to divulge the spies' whereabouts to men who are seeking to harm God's people. (Matthew 7:6; 21:23-27; John 7:3-10) In fact, Rahab was “declared righteous by works,” including the act of misdirecting the emissaries of the king.—James 2:24-26.

SEPTEMBER 20-26

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOSHUA 3-5

“Jehovah Blesses Acts of Faith”

it-2 105

Jordan

Usually the portion of the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee averages from 1 to 3 m (3 to 10 ft) in depth and is approximately 27 to 30 m (90 to 100 ft) wide. But in the spring the Jordan overflows its banks and is then much wider and deeper. (Jos 3:15) At flood stage it would not have been safe for the Israelite nation of men, women, and children to cross the Jordan, especially not near Jericho. The current there is so swift that in more recent times bathers have actually been swept away. However, Jehovah miraculously dammed up the Jordan, making it possible for the Israelites to cross on dry land. (Jos 3:14-17) Centuries later a like miracle occurred once for Elijah while in the company of Elisha, and once for Elisha alone.—2Ki 2:7, 8, 13, 14.

w13 9/15 16 ¶17

Make Jehovah's Reminders the Exultation of Your Heart

¹⁷ In what way do acts of faith help us to build trust in Jehovah? Consider the Scriptural account of Israel's entry into the Promised Land. Jehovah had instructed the priests carrying the ark of the covenant to march right into the Jordan River. However, as the people made their approach, they could see that the spring rains had caused the river to swell to flood stage. What would the Israelites do? Set up camp on the river bank and wait weeks or longer for the floodwaters to recede? No, they put full trust in Jehovah and followed his directions. The result? The account reads: "As soon as the feet of the priests touched the water, the river stopped flowing, . . . and the priests stood in the middle of the dry riverbed near Jericho while everyone else crossed over." (Josh. 3:12-17, *Contemporary English Version*) Imagine how heartening it must have been to see those raging waters stopped up! Indeed, the Israelites' faith in Jehovah was strengthened because they trusted in his directions.

w13 9/15 16 ¶18

Make Jehovah's Reminders the Exultation of Your Heart

¹⁸ True, Jehovah does not perform such miracles in behalf of his people today, but he does bless their acts of faith. God's active force empowers them to carry out the assigned work of preaching the Kingdom message worldwide. And Jehovah's foremost Witness, the resurrected Christ Jesus, assured his disciples that he would back them up in this important work: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations . . . I am with you all the days un-

til the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19, 20) Many Witnesses who may have had a tendency to be shy or timid can personally attest that God's holy spirit has given them the courage to speak to strangers in the field ministry.—**Read Psalm 119:46; 2 Corinthians 4:7.**

Spiritual Gems

w04 12/1 9 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Joshua

5:14, 15—Who is "the prince of the army of Jehovah"? The prince who comes to strengthen Joshua as the conquest of the Promised Land begins is likely none other than "the Word"—Jesus Christ in his prehuman existence. (John 1:1; Daniel 10:13) How strengthening it is to have the assurance that the glorified Jesus Christ is with God's people today as they engage in spiritual warfare!

SEPTEMBER 27–OCTOBER 3

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOSHUA 6-7

"Turn Away From Worthless Things"

w10 4/15 20 ¶5

Turn Your Eyes Away From Worthless Things!

⁵ Centuries later, the Israelite Achan's eyes seduced him into stealing some items from the captured city of Jericho. God had commanded that all things in that city should be destroyed except for certain things that were to be given to the treasury of Jehovah. The Israelites were warned: "Keep away from the thing devoted to destruction, for fear you may get a desire" and take some items from the city. When Achan

disobeyed, the people of Israel suffered defeat at the city of Ai, and a number of them died. Achan did not admit to his theft until he was exposed. “When I got to see” the items, Achan said, “then I wanted them, and I took them.” The desire of his eyes led to his destruction, along with “everything that was his.” (Josh. 6:18, 19; 7:1-26) Achan desired in his heart what was forbidden to him.

w97 8/15 28 ¶2

Why Report What Is Bad?

One reason for reporting wrongdoing is that it works to preserve the cleanness of the congregation. Jehovah is a clean God, a holy God. He requires all those who worship him to be spiritually and morally clean. His inspired Word admonishes: “As obedient children, quit being fashioned according to the desires you formerly had in your ignorance, but, in accord with the Holy One who called you, do you also become holy yourselves in all your conduct, because it is written: ‘You must be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Peter 1:14-16) Individuals who practice uncleanness or wrongdoing can bring defilement and Jehovah’s disfavor upon an entire congregation unless action is taken to correct or remove them.—Compare Joshua, chapter 7.

w10 4/15 21 ¶8

Turn Your Eyes Away From Worthless Things!

^a True Christians are not immune to the desire of the eyes and of the flesh. Therefore, God’s Word encourages us to exercise self-discipline in connection with what we look at and long for. (1 Cor. 9:25, 27; *read 1 John 2:15-17.*) The upright man Job was one who recognized the strong link be-

tween seeing and desiring. He stated: “A covenant I have concluded with my eyes. So how could I show myself attentive to a virgin?” (Job 31:1) Not only did Job refuse to touch a woman in an immoral way but he would not even allow his mind to entertain such a thought. Jesus emphasized that the mind must be kept clean of immoral thoughts when he said: “Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”—Matt. 5:28.

Spiritual Gems

w15 11/15 13 ¶2-3

Questions From Readers

In ancient times, it was common for attackers to besiege a fortified city. Regardless of how long a successful siege lasted, the victors would plunder the city’s riches, including any remaining provisions. In Jericho’s ruins, however, archaeologists found large supplies of food. In this regard, *Biblical Archaeology Review* states: “The most abundant item found in the destruction, apart from pottery, was grain. . . . This is unique in the annals of Palestinian archaeology. Perhaps a jar or two might be found, but to find such an extensive amount of grain is exceptional.”

According to the Scriptural account, the Israelites had good reason not to plunder Jericho’s grain. Jehovah had commanded them not to do so. (Josh. 6:17, 18) The Israelites attacked in the spring of the year, just after harvesttime when grain supplies were abundant. (Josh. 3:15-17; 5:10) The fact that much grain remained in Jericho indicates that the Israelite siege was of short duration, just as the Bible describes it.

OCTOBER 4-10

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOSHUA 8-9

“Lessons From the Account of the Gibeonites”

it-1 930-931
Gibeon

Dealings With Joshua. In Joshua's time Gibeon was inhabited by Hivites, one of the seven Canaanite nations in line for destruction. (De 7:1, 2; Jos 9:3-7) The Gibeonites were also called Amorites, as this designation appears at times to have been applied generally to all the Canaanites. (2Sa 21:2; compare Ge 10:15-18; 15:16.) Unlike the other Canaanites, the Gibeonites realized that despite their military strength and the greatness of their city, resistance would fail because Jehovah was fighting for Israel. Therefore, after the destruction of Jericho and Ai, the men of Gibeon, apparently also representing the three other Hivite cities of Chephirah, Beeroth, and Kiriath-jearim (Jos 9:17), sent a delegation to Joshua at Gilgal to sue for peace. The Gibeonite ambassadors—dressed in worn-out garments and sandals and having burst, skin wine-bottles, worn-out sacks, and dry, crumbly bread—represented themselves as being from a distant land, hence not in the way of Israel's conquests. They acknowledged Jehovah's hand in what had earlier befallen Egypt and the Amorite kings Sihon and Og. But wisely they did not mention what had happened to Jericho and Ai, as such news could not have reached their “very distant land” before the supposed departure. Israel's representatives examined and accepted the evidence and covenanted with them to let them live.—Jos 9:3-15.

w11 11/15 8 ¶14

“Do Not Lean Upon Your Own Understanding”

¹⁴ Being imperfect, all of us—even experienced elders—need to be on guard against failing to look to Jehovah for direction when making decisions. Consider how Moses' successor, Joshua, and the older men of Israel responded when approached by shrewd Gibeonites who disguised themselves and pretended to have come from a distant land. Without inquiring of Jehovah, Joshua and others went ahead and made peace with the Gibeonites, concluding a covenant with them. Even though Jehovah ultimately supported the agreement, he made sure that this failure to seek his direction was recorded in the Scriptures for our benefit.—Josh. 9:3-6, 14, 15.

w04 10/15 18 ¶14

“Go About in the Land”

¹⁴ Those representatives said: “It is from a *very distant land* that your servants have come in regard to the name of Jehovah your God.” (Joshua 9:3-9) Their clothes and food items seemed to confirm that they were from afar, but really Gibeon was about 20 miles [30 km] from Gilgal. Convinced, Joshua and his chieftains made a treaty of friendship with Gibeon and nearby cities linked with Gibeon. Was the Gibeonite ruse just a means to avoid execution? On the contrary, it reflected a desire to have the favor of Israel's God. Jehovah approved of the Gibeonites' becoming “gatherers of wood and drawers of water for the assembly and for Jehovah's altar,” supplying firewood for the altar of sacrifice. (Joshua 9:11-27) The Gibeonites continued to manifest a willingness to do humble tasks in Jehovah's service. Likely, some of them

were among the Nethinim who returned from Babylon and served at the rebuilt temple. (Ezra 2:1, 2, 43-54; 8:20) We can imitate their attitude by striving to maintain peace with God and being willing to handle even humble assignments in his service.

Spiritual Gems

***it-1* 1030**

Hanging

Under the law given by Jehovah to Israel, certain criminals might be hung upon a stake after being put to death, as “accursed of God,” placed on public display as a warning example. A dead person thus hung was to be taken down before nightfall and buried; leaving him on the stake all night would defile the soil given to the Israelites by God. (De 21:22, 23) Israel followed this rule even if the one executed was not an Israelite. —Jos 8:29; 10:26, 27.

OCTOBER 11-17

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | JOSHUA 10-11

“Jehovah Fights for Israel”

***it-1* 50**

Adoni-zedek

A king of Jerusalem at the time of the Israelite conquest of the Promised Land. Adoni-zedek joined with other petty kingdoms W of the Jordan in a consolidated effort to halt Joshua’s conquering forces. (Jos 9:1-3) However, the Hivite inhabitants of Gibeon made peace with Joshua. In a retaliatory measure designed to stop further desertion to the enemy, Adoni-zedek united his army with those of four additional kings of the Amorites, and

he laid siege against Gibeon and warred against it. Joshua’s spectacular rescue of the Gibeonites and the shattering defeat of these combined forces caused the five kings to flee to Makkedah, where they were trapped in a cave. Joshua himself slew Adoni-zedek and the other four kings before his troops, and hung them upon stakes. Their corpses were finally thrown back into the cave, which came to be their tomb.—Jos 10:1-27.

***it-1* 1020**

Hail

Used by Jehovah. Hail is one of the forces Jehovah has used at times to accomplish his word and to demonstrate his great power. (Ps 148:1, 8; Isa 30:30) The first recorded instance of this was the seventh plague upon ancient Egypt, a destructive hailstorm that ruined vegetation, shattered trees, and killed both men and beasts out in the field but did not affect the Israelites in Goshen. (Ex 9:18-26; Ps 78:47, 48; 105:32, 33) Later, in the Promised Land, when the Israelites, under Joshua, came to the aid of the Gibeonites, who were threatened by an alliance of five kings of the Amorites, Jehovah used great hailstones against the attacking Amorites. On this occasion more died from the hailstones than in battle with Israel.—Jos 10:3-7, 11.

***w04* 12/1 11 ¶1**

Highlights From the Book of Joshua

10:13—How is such a phenomenon possible? “Is anything too extraordinary for Jehovah,” the Creator of the heavens and the earth? (Genesis 18:14) If he chooses to, Jehovah can manipulate the movement of the earth so that the sun and the moon would seem motionless to an earthly ob-

server. Or he can let the movement of the earth and the moon remain undisturbed while refracting the rays from the sun and the moon in such a way that the light from these two luminaries continues to shine. Whatever the case, “no day has proved to be like that one” in human history.—Joshua 10:14.

Spiritual Gems

w09 3/15 32 ¶5

Questions From Readers

The fact that certain books were mentioned in the Bible and that they were usable sources should not lead us to conclude that they were inspired. However, Jehovah God has preserved all the writings containing “the word of our God,” and these “will last to time indefinite.” (Isa. 40:8) Yes, what Jehovah chose to include in the 66 Bible books that we have is just what we need to “be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.”—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

OCTOBER 18-24

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | JOSHUA 12-14

“Follow Jehovah Wholeheartedly”

w04 12/1 12 ¶2

Highlights From the Book of Joshua

14:10-13. Though 85 years of age, Caleb asks for the difficult assignment of clearing out the region of Hebron. The area is occupied by the Anakim—men of unusual size. With Jehovah’s help, this seasoned warrior succeeds, and Hebron becomes a city of refuge. (Joshua 15:13-19; 21:11-13) Caleb’s example encourages us not to shy away from difficult theocratic assignments.

w06 10/1 18 ¶11

Courageous Through Faith and Godly Fear

¹¹Such faith is not static. It grows as we live the truth, “taste” the benefits, “see” answers to our prayers and, in other ways, sense Jehovah’s direction in our life. (Psalm 34:8; 1 John 5:14, 15) We can be certain that the faith of Joshua and Caleb deepened as they tasted God’s goodness. (Joshua 23:14) Consider these points: They survived the 40-year trek in the wilderness, as God had promised they would. (Numbers 14:27-30; 32:11, 12) They were given an active role in the six-year conquest of Canaan. Finally, they enjoyed an abundance of life and health and even received their own personal inheritances. How Jehovah rewards those who faithfully and courageously serve him!—Joshua 14: 6, 9-14; 19:49, 50; 24:29.

Spiritual Gems

it-1 902-903

Gebal

Jehovah included “the land of the Gebalites” among those regions yet to be taken by Israel in Joshua’s day. (Jos 13:1-5) Critics have picked on this as an inconsistency, since the city of Gebal was far N of Israel (c. 100 km [60 mi] N of Dan) and apparently never came under Israelite domination. Certain scholars have suggested that the Hebrew text may be damaged at this verse and consider that the account anciently read “the land adjoining Lebanon,” or ‘as far as the border of the Gebalites.’ However, it should also be observed that Jehovah’s promises in Joshua 13:2-7 were *conditional*. Thus Israel may never have gained Gebal because of its own disobedience.—Compare Jos 23:12, 13.

OCTOBER 25-31

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | JOSHUA 15-17

“Protect Your Precious Inheritance”

it-1 1083 ¶3

Hebron

As Israel's campaign in southern Canaan continued, the inhabitants of Hebron, including their king (evidently Hoham's successor), were devoted to destruction. (Jos 10:36, 37) However, although the Israelites under Joshua broke the power of the Canaanites, it appears that they did not immediately establish garrisons to hold on to their conquests. Evidently while Israel was warring elsewhere, the Anakim re-established themselves at Hebron, making it necessary for Caleb (or the sons of Judah under Caleb's leadership) to wrest the city from their control sometime afterward. (Jos 11:21-23; 14:12-15; 15:13, 14; Jg 1:10) Originally assigned to Caleb of the tribe of Judah, Hebron was afterward given a sacred status as a city of refuge. It also served as a priestly city. However, “the field of the city [Hebron]” and its settlements were Caleb's hereditary possession. —Jos 14:13, 14; 20:7; 21:9-13.

it-1 848

Forced Labor

The use of “forced labor” (Heb., *mas*) was evidently quite common in Bible times, with conquered peoples frequently being constituted slaves. (De 20:11; Jos 16:10; 17:13; Es 10:1; Isa 31:8; La 1:1) As slavish forced laborers, the Israelites, under the immediate oversight of Egyptian chiefs who tyrannized over them, engaged in building the storage places of Pithom and Raamses. (Ex 1:11-

14) Then, upon entering the Promised Land, instead of following through on Jehovah's command to drive out all the Canaanite inhabitants of the land and devote them to destruction, the Israelites forced them into task work, slavish labor. This had the bad effect of luring Israel into the worship of false gods. (Jos 16:10; Jg 1:28; 2:3, 11, 12) King Solomon continued levying the descendants of these Canaanites, that is, of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, for slavish forced labor.—1Ki 9:20, 21.

it-1 402 ¶3

Canaan

Though so many of the Canaanites survived the major conquest and resisted subjugation, it could still be said that “Jehovah gave Israel all the land that he had sworn to give to their forefathers,” that he had given them “rest all around,” and that “not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true.” (Jos 21:43-45) All around the Israelites the enemy peoples were cowed and offered no genuine threat to their security. God had stated earlier that he would drive the Canaanites out “little by little” so that the wild beasts would not multiply in a suddenly desolated land. (Ex 23:29, 30; De 7:22) Despite the superior war equipment of the Canaanites, including war chariots with iron scythes, any failure of the Israelites finally to take certain areas could not be charged to Jehovah's account as a failure on his part to fulfill his promise. (Jos 17:16-18; Jg 4:13) Rather, the record shows that the Israelites' few defeats were due to unfaithfulness on their part.—Nu 14:44, 45; Jos 7:1-12.

Spiritual Gems

w15 7/15 32

Did You Know?

Was ancient Israel as forested as the Bible seems to indicate?

THE Bible states that certain areas of the Promised Land were forested and that trees were “plentiful.” (1 Ki. 10:27; Josh. 17:15, 18) Yet, on seeing the deforested condition of large portions of the land today, skeptics may wonder if that could ever have been the case.

The book *Life in Biblical Israel* explains that “forests in ancient Israel were much more extensive than they are today.” The natural cover of the highlands consisted mainly of Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*), evergreen oak (*Quercus calliprinos*), and terebinth (*Pistacia palaestina*). In the Shephelah, an area that includes the foothills between the central mountain range and the Mediterranean Coast, the sycamore fig (*Ficus sycomorus*) was also abundant.

The book *Plants of the Bible* states that some localities in Israel are now entirely devoid of trees. What contributed to this? Explaining that it was a gradual process, the book says: “Man has persistently interfered with the natural vegetation, mainly in order to expand his farming and pasture area, but also to obtain building materials and fuel for his fire.”