

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

JUNE 1-7

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 44-45

“Joseph Forgives His Brothers”

(Genesis 44:1, 2) Later he commanded the man who was over his house: “Fill the bags of the men with as much food as they can carry, and place the money of each one in the mouth of his bag. ² But you must place my cup, the silver cup, in the mouth of the bag of the youngest, along with the money for his grain.” So he did as Joseph had instructed.

w15 5/1 14-15

“Am I in the Place of God?”

Joseph then sprang his trap. He had his brothers pursued, arrested, and accused of stealing the cup. When it was found in Benjamin's bag, all of them were brought back to Joseph. Now Joseph had a chance to learn what kind of men his brothers were. Judah acted as their spokesman. He pleaded for mercy, even offering that all 11 of them become slaves in Egypt. Joseph countered that Benjamin alone must remain in Egypt as a slave but that all the rest of them must leave.—Genesis 44:2-17.

Judah was moved to respond with an impassioned speech. “He is the only remaining son of his mother, and his father loves him,” Judah said. Those words must have touched Joseph, for he was the older son of Jacob's beloved wife Rachel, who had died while giving birth to Benjamin. Joseph, like his father, evidently cherished memories of Rachel. Perhaps that connection made Benjamin even dearer to Joseph.—Genesis 35:18-20; 44:20.

Judah went on to implore Joseph not to enslave Benjamin. He even offered to become a slave in Benjamin's place. Then he concluded with this

heartrending plea: “How can I return to my father without the boy along with me? I could not bear looking on when this calamity befalls my father!” (Genesis 44:18-34) Here, now, was evidence of a changed man. Not only did he show a repentant spirit but he even showed an admirable degree of empathy, selflessness, and compassion.

Joseph could bear no more. He had to release the emotion that was pent up within him. Dismissing all his servants, he wept so loudly that the sound carried to Pharaoh's palace. Then he revealed himself at last: “I am Joseph your brother.” He embraced his stunned brothers and kindly extended forgiveness for all that they had done to him. (Genesis 45:1-15) He thus reflected the disposition of Jehovah, who forgives generously. (Psalm 86:5) Do we do likewise?

(Genesis 44:33, 34) So now, please, let your slave stay instead of the boy as my master's slave, in order that the boy may return with his brothers. ³⁴ How can I return to my father without the boy along with me? I could not bear looking on when this calamity befalls my father!”

(Genesis 45:4, 5) So Joseph said to his brothers: “Come close to me, please.” With that they came close to him. Then he said: “I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 44:13) Then they ripped their garments apart, and each of them lifted his load back onto his donkey and returned to the city.

Ripping of Garments

A common sign of grief among the Jews, as well as among other Orientals, particularly upon hearing of the death of a near relative. In many cases such ripping consisted of a rending of the garment in front just sufficient to lay open the breast, thus not necessarily a complete ripping of the garment so as to make it unfit for wearing.

The first instance of this practice recorded in the Bible is that of Reuben, Jacob's eldest son, who, upon returning and not finding Joseph in the waterpit, ripped his garments apart, saying: "The child is gone! And I—where am I really to go?" As the firstborn, Reuben was particularly responsible for his younger brother. His father Jacob when told of the supposed death of his son likewise ripped his mantles apart and put on sackcloth in mourning (Ge 37:29, 30, 34), and down in Egypt Joseph's half brothers showed their grief by ripping their garments apart, when Benjamin was made to appear as a thief.—Ge 44:13.

(Genesis 45:5-8) But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life. ⁶ This is the second year of the famine in the land, and there are yet five years in which there will be no plowing or harvest. ⁷ But God sent me ahead of you in order to preserve for you a remnant on the earth and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. ⁸ So, then, it was not you who sent me here, but it was the true God, in order to appoint me as chief adviser to Phar'ao and lord for all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.

w04 8/15 15 ¶15

Hated Without Cause

¹⁵ What can help us not to become consumed with bitterness toward those who hate us

without cause? Remember that our principal adversaries are Satan and the demons. (Ephesians 6:12) While some humans knowingly and deliberately persecute us, many of those who oppose God's people do so out of ignorance or are manipulated by others. (Daniel 6:4-16; 1 Timothy 1:12, 13) Jehovah desires that "all sorts of men" have the opportunity to "be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) Indeed, some former opposers are now our Christian brothers as a result of having observed our blameless conduct. (1 Peter 2:12) In addition, we can draw a lesson from the example of Jacob's son Joseph. Although Joseph suffered greatly on account of his half brothers, he did not harbor animosity toward them. Why not? Because he discerned that Jehovah's hand was in the matter, maneuvering events in order to fulfill His purpose. (Genesis 45:4-8) Jehovah can likewise cause any unjust suffering we may undergo to work out for the glory of his name.—1 Peter 4:16.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 45:1-15) At this Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants. So he cried out: "Have everyone leave me!" No one else stayed with him while Joseph made himself known to his brothers. ² Then he began to weep so loudly that the Egyptians heard it and Phar'ao's house heard it. ³ Finally Joseph said to his brothers: "I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?" But his brothers were unable to answer him at all, because they were astonished on account of him. ⁴ So Joseph said to his brothers: "Come close to me, please." With that they came close to him. Then he said: "I am Joseph your brother, whom you sold into Egypt. ⁵ But now do not be upset and do not reproach one another because you sold me here; because God has sent me ahead of you for the preservation of life. ⁶ This is the second year of

the famine in the land, and there are yet five years in which there will be no plowing or harvest.⁷ But God sent me ahead of you in order to preserve for you a remnant on the earth and to keep you alive by a great deliverance.⁸ So, then, it was not you who sent me here, but it was the true God, in order to appoint me as chief adviser to Phar'aoh and lord for all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.⁹ "Return quickly to my father, and you must say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph has said: "God has appointed me lord over all Egypt. Come down to me. Do not delay."¹⁰ You must dwell in the land of Go'shen, where you will be near me—you, your sons, your grandsons, your flocks, your herds, and everything you have."¹¹ I will supply you with food there, for there are yet five years of famine. Otherwise, you and your house and everything you have will come to poverty."¹² You and my brother Benjamin can now see with your own eyes that I am really the one speaking to you."¹³ So you must tell my father about all my glory in Egypt and everything you have seen. Now hurry and bring my father down here."¹⁴ Then he embraced his brother Benjamin and gave way to weeping, and Benjamin wept with his arms around his neck.¹⁵ And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them, and after that his brothers spoke with him.

JUNE 8-14

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 46-47

"Relief From Famine"

(Genesis 47:13) Now there was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, and the land of Egypt and the land of Ca'naan became exhausted as a result of the famine.

w87 5/1 15 ¶2

Preserving Life in Time of Famine

² The seven years of plenty ended, and the famine began as Jehovah had foretold—a famine not just in Egypt but "over all the surface of the earth." When the famished people in Egypt began to cry out to Pharaoh for bread, Pharaoh told them: "Go to Joseph. Whatever he says to you, you are to do." Joseph sold grain to the Egyptians until their money ran out. Then he accepted their livestock in payment. Finally, the people came to Joseph, saying: "Buy us and our land for bread, and we together with our land will become slaves to Pharaoh." So Joseph bought all the land of the Egyptians for Pharaoh.—Genesis 41:53-57; 47:13-20.

(Genesis 47:16) Then Joseph said: "If your money has run out, hand over your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock."

(Genesis 47:19, 20) Why should we die before your eyes, both we and our land? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we together with our land will become slaves to Phar'aoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die and that our land may not become desolate."²⁰ Joseph then bought all the land of the Egyptians for Phar'aoh because every Egyptian sold his field, for the famine was very severe; and the land became Phar'aoh's.

(Genesis 47:23-25) Then Joseph said to the people: "See, I have today bought you and your land for Phar'aoh. Here is seed for you, and you must sow the land with it."²⁴ When it produces, give a fifth to Phar'aoh, but four parts will be yours as seed for the field and as food for you and for those in your houses and for your children to eat."²⁵ So they said: "You have preserved our lives. Let us find favor in the eyes of my lord, and we will become slaves to Phar'aoh."

kr 234-235 ¶11-12

The Kingdom Carries Out God's Will on Earth

¹¹ **Abundance.** The world suffers from spiritual famine. The Bible warned: “‘Look! The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, ‘when I will send a famine into the land, not a famine for bread or a thirst for water, but for hearing the words of Jehovah.’” (Amos 8:11) Do the citizens of God's Kingdom suffer famine too? Jehovah foretold the following contrast between his people and his enemies: “My servants will eat, but you will go hungry. Look! My servants will drink, but you will go thirsty. Look! My servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame.” (Isa. 65:13) Have you observed the fulfillment of those words?

¹² Spiritual provisions flow to us like an ever-broadening and ever-deepening river. Our Bible-based publications—as well as recordings and videos, our meetings and conventions, and the material published on our Web site—together amount to an ongoing flood tide of spiritual sustenance in this spiritually starving world. (Ezek. 47:1-12; Joel 3:18) Are you not thrilled to see the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises of abundance in your daily life? Do you make sure that you feed regularly at Jehovah's table?

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 46:4) I myself will go down with you to Egypt, and I myself will also bring you back from there, and Joseph will lay his hand on your eyes.”

it-1 220 ¶1

Attitudes and Gestures

Laying hand on eyes of deceased. Jehovah's expression to Jacob, “Joseph will lay his hand upon your eyes” (Ge 46:4), was a way of saying that Joseph would close Jacob's eyes after his death, which was ordinarily a duty of the firstborn son. So it seems that Jehovah here indicated to Jacob that the right of firstborn should go to Joseph.—1Ch 5:2.

(Genesis 46:26, 27) All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him, aside from the wives of Jacob's sons, were 66. ²⁷ Joseph's sons who were born to him in Egypt were two. All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70.

nwtsty study note on Ac 7:14

75 persons in all: Stephen may not be quoting a particular verse from the Hebrew Scriptures when he gives the total number of Jacob's family in Egypt as 75. This figure is not found in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Scriptures. Ge 46:26 says: “All those who descended from Jacob and went into Egypt with him, aside from the wives of Jacob's sons, were 66.” Verse 27 continues: “All the people of the house of Jacob who came into Egypt were 70.” Here the people are counted in two different ways, the first figure apparently including only his natural descendants and the second figure giving the total of those who came into Egypt. The number of Jacob's descendants is also mentioned at Ex 1:5 and De 10:22, where the figure “70” is given. Stephen apparently gives a third figure that includes more of Jacob's extended family. Some suggest that it includes sons and grandsons of Joseph's sons Manasseh and Ephraim, who are mentioned in the *Septuagint* translation of Ge 46:20. Others suggest that it includes the wives of Jacob's sons, who are specifically excluded from the figure given at Ge 46:26. So the figure “75” may be a grand total. This figure, though, may have a basis in copies of the Hebrew Scriptures circulating in the first century C.E. For years, scholars have known that “75” was the figure given at Ge 46:27 and Ex 1:5 in the Greek *Septuagint*. Additionally, in the 20th century, two Dead Sea Scroll fragments of Ex 1:5 in Hebrew were discovered, and they also use the figure “75.” Stephen's figure may be based on one of those ancient texts. Regardless of which idea is correct, Stephen's figure simply reflects a different way of counting the total number of Jacob's descendants.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 47:1-17) So Joseph went and reported to Phar'aoh: "My father and my brothers and their flocks and their herds and all that they possess have come from the land of Ca'naan, and they are in the land of Go'shen." ² He took five of his brothers and presented them to Phar'aoh. ³ Phar'aoh said to his brothers: "What is your occupation?" They replied to Phar'aoh: "Your servants are herders of sheep, both we and our forefathers." ⁴ Then they said to Phar'aoh: "We have come to reside as foreigners in the land because there are no pastures for the flock of your servants, for the famine is severe in the land of Ca'naan. So please let your servants dwell in the land of Go'shen." ⁵ At that Phar'aoh said to Joseph: "Your father and your brothers have come here to you. ⁶ The land of Egypt is at your disposal. Have your father and your brothers dwell in the very best part of the land. Let them dwell in the land of Go'shen, and if you know of any capable men among them, put them in charge of my livestock." ⁷ Then Joseph brought in Jacob his father and presented him to Phar'aoh, and Jacob blessed Phar'aoh. ⁸ Phar'aoh asked Jacob: "How old are you?" ⁹ Jacob said to Phar'aoh: "The years of my wanderings are 130. Few and distressing the years of my life have been, and they are not as long as the years of the lives of my forefathers during their wanderings." ¹⁰ After that Jacob blessed Phar'aoh and went out from before him. ¹¹ So Joseph settled his father and his brothers, and he gave them a possession in the land of Egypt, in the very best part of the land, in the land of Ram'e-ses, just as Phar'aoh had commanded. ¹² And Joseph kept supplying his father and his brothers and the entire household of his father with food according to the number of their children. ¹³ Now there

was no food in all the land, because the famine was very severe, and the land of Egypt and the land of Ca'naan became exhausted as a result of the famine. ¹⁴ Joseph was collecting all the money that was to be found in the land of Egypt and in the land of Ca'naan for the grain that people were buying, and Joseph kept bringing the money into Phar'aoh's house. ¹⁵ In time the money from the land of Egypt and the land of Ca'naan was spent, and all the Egyptians began coming to Joseph, saying: "Give us food! Why should we die before your very eyes because our money has run out?" ¹⁶ Then Joseph said: "If your money has run out, hand over your livestock, and I will give you food in exchange for your livestock." ¹⁷ So they began bringing their livestock to Joseph, and Joseph kept giving them food in exchange for their horses, the livestock of the flock and of the herd, and the donkeys, and he kept providing them with food in exchange for all their livestock during that year.

JUNE 15-21

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | GENESIS 48-50

"Older Ones Have Much to Share"

(Genesis 48:21, 22) Then Israel said to Joseph: "Look, I am dying, but God will certainly continue with you and return you to the land of your forefathers. ²² As for me, I do give you one portion of land more than to your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Am'or-ites with my sword and my bow."

it-1 1246 ¶8

Jacob

Shortly before his death, Jacob blessed his grandsons, Joseph's sons, and, by divine guidance, put the younger Ephraim ahead of the older Manasseh. Then to Joseph, who would

receive the firstborn's double portion of the inheritance, Jacob declared: "I do give you one shoulder of land more than to your brothers, which I took from the hand of the Amorites by my sword and by my bow." (Ge 48:1-22; 1Ch 5:1) Since Jacob had peaceably purchased the plot of ground near Shechem from the sons of Hamor (Ge 33:19, 20), it seems that this promise to Joseph was an expression of Jacob's faith, in which he prophetically spoke of the future conquest of Canaan by his descendants as if already accomplished by his own sword and bow. (See AMORITE.) Joseph's double portion of that conquered land consisted of the two allotments given to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

(Genesis 49:1) And Jacob called his sons and said: "Gather yourselves together that I may tell you what will happen to you in the final part of the days.

it-2 206 ¶1

Last Days

Jacob's Deathbed Prophecy. When Jacob said to his sons, "Gather yourselves together that I may tell you what will happen to you in the final part of the days" or "in days to come" (AT), he meant in that future time when his words would begin undergoing fulfillment. (Ge 49:1) Over two centuries earlier Jehovah had stated to Jacob's grandfather Abram (Abraham) that his offspring would suffer affliction for 400 years. (Ge 15:13) Therefore, in this case, the future time referred to by Jacob as "the final part of the days" could not begin until after the 400 years of affliction ended. (For details on Genesis 49, see the articles on the sons of Jacob under their respective names.) A later application of the prophecy that would involve the spiritual "Israel of God" could also be expected. —Ga 6:16; Ro 9:6.

(Genesis 50:24, 25) At length Joseph said to his brothers: "I am dying, but God will with-

out fail turn his attention to you, and he will certainly bring you up out of this land to the land about which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." ²⁵ So Joseph made the sons of Israel swear, saying: "God will without fail turn his attention to you. You must take my bones up out of here."

w07 6/1 28 ¶10

Elderly Ones—A Blessing to the Young

¹⁰ Older ones can also be a good influence on fellow believers. In his old age, Jacob's son Joseph performed a simple act of faith that had a profound effect on millions of true worshippers who lived after him. He was 110 when "he gave a command concerning his bones," namely, that when the Israelites finally left Egypt, they were to take his bones with them. (Hebrews 11:22; Genesis 50:25) That command served as an added ray of hope for Israel during the many years of hard slavery that followed Joseph's death, providing assurance that their deliverance would come.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Genesis 49:19) "As for Gad, a marauder band will raid him, but he will raid at their heels.

w04 6/1 15 ¶4-5

Blessed Are Those Who Give Glory to God

⁴ Before entering the Promised Land, members of Israel's tribe of Gad requested that they be allowed to settle in the cattle country east of the Jordan. (Numbers 32:1-5) Living there would mean coping with serious challenges. The tribes to the west would have the protection of the Jordan Valley—a natural barrier to military invasion. (Joshua 3:13-17) However, concerning the lands east of the Jordan, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, by George Adam Smith, says: "[They] all roll off, with almost no intervening barrier, upon the great Arabian plateau. Consequently they have been exposed in

all ages to the invasion of the hungry nomads, some of whom swarm upon them every year for pasture.”

⁵ How would the tribe of Gad fare under such unrelenting pressure? Centuries earlier, in his death-bed prophecy, their forefather Jacob foretold: “As for Gad, a marauder band will raid him, but he will raid the extreme rear.” (Genesis 49:19) At first glance those words may seem gloomy. In reality, though, they amounted to a command for the Gadites to strike back. Jacob assured them that if they did so, the raiders would make a humiliating retreat, with the Gadites pursuing their extreme rear.

(Genesis 49:27) “Benjamin will keep on tearing like a wolf. In the morning he will eat the prey, and in the evening he will divide spoil.”

it-1 289 ¶2

Benjamin

The fighting ability of Benjamin’s descendants was pictured in Jacob’s deathbed prophecy in which he said of this beloved son: “Benjamin will keep on tearing like a wolf. In the morning he will eat the animal seized and at evening he will divide spoil.” (Ge 49:27) Benjamite fighters were noted for their ability with the sling, slinging stones with either the right hand or the left and hitting the mark “to a hairbreadth.” (Jg 20:16; 1Ch 12:2) Left-handed Judge Ehud, the slayer of oppressive King Eglon, was of Benjamin. (Jg 3:15-21) It may also be noted that it was “in the morning” of the kingdom of Israel that the tribe of Benjamin, though one “of the smallest of the tribes,” provided Israel’s first king, Saul the son of Kish, who proved to be a fierce fighter against the Philistines. (1Sa 9:15-17, 21) Likewise “at evening” time, as far as the nation of Israel was concerned, the tribe of Benjamin provided Queen Esther and Prime Minister Mordecai, who served to save the Israelites from annihilation under the Persian Empire.—Es 2:5-7.

Bible Reading

(Genesis 49:8-26) “As for you, Judah, your brothers will praise you. Your hand will be on the neck of your enemies. The sons of your father will bow down before you. ⁹ Judah is a lion cub. From the prey, my son, you will certainly go up. He has crouched down and stretched himself out like a lion, and like a lion, who dares rouse him? ¹⁰ The scepter will not depart from Judah, neither the commander’s staff from between his feet, until Shi’loh comes, and to him the obedience of the peoples will belong. ¹¹ Tying his donkey to a vine and his donkey’s colt to a choice vine, he will wash his clothing in wine and his garment in the blood of grapes. ¹² Dark red are his eyes from wine, and his teeth are white from milk. ¹³ “Zeb’u-lun will reside by the seashore, by the shore where the ships lie anchored, and his remote border will be toward Si’don. ¹⁴ “Is’sa-char is a strong-boned donkey, lying down between the two saddlebags. ¹⁵ And he will see that the resting-place is good and that the land is pleasant. He will bend his shoulder to bear the burden and will submit to forced labor. ¹⁶ “Dan will judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. ¹⁷ Let Dan be a serpent by the roadside, a horned snake beside the path, that bites the heels of the horse so that its rider falls backward. ¹⁸ I will wait for salvation from you, O Jehovah. ¹⁹ “As for Gad, a marauder band will raid him, but he will raid at their heels. ²⁰ “Ash’er’s bread will be abundant, and he will provide food fit for a king. ²¹ “Naph’ta-li is a slender doe. He is speaking words of elegance. ²² “Joseph is the offshoot of a fruitful tree, a fruitful tree by a spring, whose branches extend over the wall. ²³ But the archers kept harassing him and shot at him and kept harboring animosity against him. ²⁴ And yet his bow remained in place, and his hands stayed strong and agile.

This was from the hands of the powerful one of Jacob, from the shepherd, the stone of Israel. ²⁵ He is from the God of your father, and he will help you, and he is with the Almighty, and he will bless you with the blessings of the heavens above, with the blessings of the deep below, with the blessings of the breasts and womb. ²⁶ The blessings of your father will be superior to the blessings of the eternal mountains, to the desirable things of the enduring hills. They will continue upon the head of Joseph, upon the crown of the head of the one singled out from his brothers.

JUNE 22-28

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | EXODUS 1-3

"I Will Become What I Choose to Become"

(Exodus 3:13) But Moses said to the true God: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your forefathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' What should I say to them?"

w13 3/15 25 ¶4

Honor Jehovah's Great Name

⁴ **Read Exodus 3:10-15.** When Moses was 80 years of age, God gave him a weighty command: "You bring my people the sons of Israel out of Egypt." Moses responded respectfully with a question, one of profound significance. In effect, Moses asked: 'What is your name?' Considering that God's name was long known, what was the point of Moses' question? Evidently, he wanted to know more about *the person represented by the name*—facts that would convince God's people that He really would deliver them. Moses' concern was warranted, for the Israelites had been slaves for some time. They would likely wonder whether the God of their forefathers *could* deliver them. Indeed, some Israelites had

even taken up the worship of Egyptian gods! —Ezek. 20:7, 8.

(Exodus 3:14) So God said to Moses: "I Will Become What I Choose to Become." And he added: "This is what you are to say to the Israelites, 'I Will Become has sent me to you.'"

kr 43, box

THE MEANING OF GOD'S NAME

THE name Jehovah comes from a Hebrew verb that means "to become." Some scholars feel that in this instance the verb is used in its causative form. God's name is thus understood by many to mean "He Causes to Become." This definition well fits Jehovah's role as the Creator. He caused the universe and intelligent beings to come into existence and continues to cause his will and purpose to become a reality.

How, then, should we understand Jehovah's answer to Moses' question recorded at Exodus 3:13, 14? Moses asked: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your forefathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' What should I say to them?" Jehovah answered: "I Will Become What I Choose to Become."

Note that Moses was not asking Jehovah to reveal his name. Moses and the Israelites already knew God's name well. Moses wanted Jehovah to reveal something faith-strengthening about the kind of God he is, something that may also be reflected in the meaning of his name. Hence, by responding, "I Will Become What I Choose to Become," Jehovah was revealing a thrilling aspect of his own nature: In each situation, he becomes whatever is necessary to fulfill his purpose. For example, for Moses and the Israelites, Jehovah became a Rescuer, a Lawgiver, a Provider—and much more. Thus, Jehovah himself *chooses to become* whatever is necessary to fulfill his promises to his people. However, while the name Jehovah may include this idea,

it is not limited to what he himself chooses to become. It also includes what he causes his creation to become in the accomplishment of his purpose.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 2:10) When the child grew older, she brought him to Phar’ao’s daughter, and he became a son to her. She named him Moses and said: “It is because I have drawn him out of the water.”

g04 4/8 6 ¶5

Moses—Man or Myth?

Is it not farfetched, though, to believe that an Egyptian princess would take in such a child? No, for Egyptian religion taught that kind deeds were a requisite for entrance into heaven. As for the adoption itself, archaeologist Joyce Tyldesley observes: “Egyptian women achieved parity with Egyptian men. They enjoyed the same legal and economic rights, at least in theory, and . . . women could make adoptions.” The ancient Adoption Papyrus actually documents one Egyptian woman’s adoption of her slaves. As for the hiring of Moses’ mother as a wet nurse, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* says: “The payment of Moses’ natural mother to nurse him . . . echoes identical arrangements in Mesopotamian adoption contracts.”

(Exodus 3:1) Moses became a shepherd of the flock of his father-in-law Jeth’ro, the priest of Mid’i-an. While he was leading the flock to the west side of the wilderness, he eventually came to the mountain of the true God, to Hor’eb.

w04 3/15 24 ¶4

Highlights From the Book of Exodus

3:1—What kind of priest was Jethro? In patriarchal times the family head served as a priest for his family. Jethro was evidently the patriarchal head of a tribe of Midianites. Since the Midianites were Abraham’s descendants by

Keturah, they were perhaps exposed to the worship of Jehovah.—Genesis 25:1, 2.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 2:11-25) Now in those days, after Moses had become an adult, he went out to his brothers to look at the burdens they were bearing, and he caught sight of an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brothers. ¹² So he looked this way and that, and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. ¹³ But he went out on the following day, and there were two Hebrew men fighting with each other. So he said to the one in the wrong: “Why do you strike your companion?” ¹⁴ At this he said: “Who appointed you as a prince and a judge over us? Are you planning to kill me just as you killed the Egyptian?” Moses now was afraid and said: “Surely the matter has become known!” ¹⁵ Then Phar’ao heard about it, and he attempted to kill Moses; but Moses ran away from Phar’ao and went to dwell in the land of Mid’i-an, and he sat down by a well. ¹⁶ Now the priest of Mid’i-an had seven daughters, and these came to draw water and to fill the troughs to water their father’s flock. ¹⁷ But as usual, the shepherds came and drove them away. At this Moses got up and helped the women and watered their flock. ¹⁸ When they came home to their father Reu’el, he exclaimed: “How is it that you have come home so quickly today?” ¹⁹ They replied: “A certain Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds, and he even drew water for us and watered the flock.” ²⁰ He said to his daughters: “But where is he? Why did you leave the man behind? Call him, so that he may eat with us.” ²¹ After that Moses consented to stay with the man, and he gave his daughter Zip-po’rah to Moses in marriage. ²² Later she bore a son, and he named him Ger’shom, for he said, “I have become

a foreign resident in a foreign land.” ²³ After a long time, the king of Egypt died, but the Israelites continued to groan because of the slavery and to cry out in complaint, and their cry for help because of the slavery kept going up to the true God. ²⁴ In time God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites; and God took notice.

JUNE 29–JULY 5

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | EXODUS 4-5

“I Will Be With You as You Speak”

(Exodus 4:10) Moses now said to Jehovah: “Pardon me, Jehovah, but I have never been a fluent speaker, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.”

(Exodus 4:13) But he said: “Pardon me, Jehovah, please send anyone whom you want to send.”

w10 10/15 13-14

Excuses—How Does Jehovah View Them?

“I am not good enough.” You may feel that you are not qualified to be a minister of the good news. Some faithful servants of Jehovah in Bible times felt that they were not good enough to handle tasks that Jehovah assigned to them. Take Moses as an example. When he received a specific commission from Jehovah, Moses said: “Excuse me, Jehovah, but I am not a fluent speaker, neither since yesterday nor since before that nor since your speaking to your servant, for I am slow of mouth and slow of tongue.” Although Jehovah reassured him, Moses replied: “Excuse me, Jehovah, but send, please, by the hand of the one whom you are going to send.” (Ex. 4:10-13) What was Jehovah’s reaction?

(Exodus 4:11, 12) Jehovah said to him: “Who made a mouth for man, or who makes them speechless, deaf, clear-sighted, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah?” ¹² So go now, and I will be with you as you speak, and I will teach you what you should say.”

w14 4/15 9 ¶5-6

Do You See “the One Who Is Invisible”?

⁵ Before Moses returned to Egypt, God taught him a vital principle, the same principle that Moses later recorded in the book of Job: “The fear of Jehovah—that is wisdom.” (Job 28:28) To help Moses to acquire such fear and act wisely, Jehovah drew a contrast between humans and Almighty God. He asked: “Who made a mouth for man, or who makes them speechless, deaf, clear-sighted, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah?” —Ex. 4:11.

⁶ What was the lesson? Moses did not need to be afraid. He was sent by Jehovah, who would give Moses whatever he needed to deliver God’s message to Pharaoh. Besides, Pharaoh was no match for Jehovah. After all, this was not the first time God’s servants had been in danger under Egyptian rule. Perhaps Moses meditated on how Jehovah had protected Abraham, Joseph, and even Moses himself during the reigns of past Pharaohs. (Gen. 12:17-19; 41:14, 39-41; Ex. 1:22–2:10) With faith in Jehovah, “the One who is invisible,” Moses courageously appeared before Pharaoh and proclaimed every word that Jehovah commanded Moses to speak.

(Exodus 4:14, 15) Then Jehovah’s anger blazed against Moses, and he said: “What about your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak very well. And he is now on his way here to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will rejoice. ¹⁵ So you must speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with you and him as you speak, and I will teach you men what to do.

w10 10/15 14

Excuses—How Does Jehovah View Them?

Jehovah did not exempt Moses from carrying out the assignment. However, Jehovah did appoint Aaron to assist Moses in handling the task. (Ex. 4:14-17) Moreover, in the years that followed, Jehovah stood by Moses and provided him with whatever he needed to succeed in fulfilling his God-given assignments. Today, you can be confident that Jehovah will move experienced fellow believers to help you too in carrying out your ministry. Above all, God's Word assures us that Jehovah will qualify us for the work he has commanded us to do.—2 Cor. 3:5; see the box "The Happiest Years of My Life."

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Exodus 4:24-26) Now on the road at the lodging place, Jehovah met him and was seeking to put him to death. ²⁵ Finally Zip-po'-rah took a flint and circumcised her son and caused his foreskin to touch his feet and said: "It is because you are a bridegroom of blood to me." ²⁶ So He let him go. At that time she said, "a bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

w04 3/15 28 ¶4

Questions From Readers

Zipporah's expression "you are a bridegroom of blood to me" is an unusual one. What does it indicate about her? By her compliance with the requirements of the circumcision covenant, Zipporah acknowledged a covenant relationship with Jehovah. The Law covenant later made with the Israelites showed that in a covenant relationship, Jehovah can be thought of as a husband and the other party as a wife. (Jeremiah 31:32) Hence, in addressing Jehovah (through his representative angel) as "a bridegroom of blood," Zipporah appears to have been acknowledging her own submission to the

terms of that covenant. It was as if she had accepted a wifely position in the circumcision covenant, with Jehovah God as the husband. In any case, because of her decisive act of obedience to God's requirement, the life of her son was no longer in danger.

(Exodus 5:2) But Phar'aoh said: "Who is Jehovah, that I should obey his voice to send Israel away? I do not know Jehovah at all, and what is more, I will not send Israel away."

it-2 12 ¶15

Jehovah

To "know," therefore, does not necessarily mean merely to be acquainted with or cognizant of something or someone. The foolish Nabal knew David's name but still asked, "Who is David?" in the sense of asking, "What does he amount to?" (1Sa 25:9-11; compare 2Sa 8:13.) So, too, Phar'aoh had said to Moses: "Who is Jehovah, so that I should obey his voice to send Israel away? I do not know Jehovah at all and, what is more, I am not going to send Israel away." (Ex 5: 1, 2) By that, Pharaoh evidently meant that he did not know Jehovah as the true God or as having any authority over Egypt's king and his affairs, nor as having any might to enforce His will as announced by Moses and Aaron. But now Pharaoh and all Egypt, along with the Israelites, would come to know the real meaning of that name, the person it represented. As Jehovah showed Moses, this would result from God's carrying out His purpose toward Israel, liberating them, giving them the Promised Land, and thereby fulfilling His covenant with their forefathers. In this way, as God said, "You will certainly know that I am Jehovah your God."—Ex 6:4-8; see ALMIGHTY.

Bible Reading

(Exodus 4:1-17) However, Moses answered: "But suppose they do not believe me and do not listen to my voice, for they will say, 'Jehovah did not appear to you.'" ² Then Jehovah

said to him: “What is that in your hand?” He answered: “A rod.” ³ He said: “Throw it on the ground.” So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. ⁴ Jehovah now said to Moses: “Reach out your hand and seize it by the tail.” So he reached out and seized it, and it became a rod in his hand. ⁵ God then said: “This is so that they may believe that Jehovah the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you.” ⁶ Jehovah said to him once more: “Put your hand, please, into the upper fold of your garment.” So he put his hand into the fold of his garment. When he drew it out, why, his hand was stricken with leprosy like snow! ⁷ Then he said: “Return your hand into the upper fold of your garment.” So he returned his hand into his garment. When he drew it out of the garment, it was restored like the rest of his flesh! ⁸ He said: “If they will not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, then they will certainly heed the next sign.” ⁹ Still, even if they will not believe these two signs and refuse to listen to your voice, you will take some water from the Nile River and pour it out on the dry land, and the water that you take from the Nile will become blood on the dry land.” ¹⁰ Moses now said to Jehovah: “Pardon me, Jehovah, but I have never been a fluent speaker, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant, for I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.” ¹¹ Jehovah said to him: “Who made a mouth for man, or who makes them speechless, deaf, clear-sighted, or blind? Is it not I, Jehovah?” ¹² So go now, and I will be with you as you speak, and I will teach you what you should say.” ¹³ But he said: “Pardon me, Jehovah, please send anyone whom you want to send.” ¹⁴ Then Jehovah’s anger blazed against Moses, and he said: “What about your broth-

er Aaron the Levite? I know that he can speak very well. And he is now on his way here to meet you. When he sees you, his heart will rejoice. ¹⁵ So you must speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with you and him as you speak, and I will teach you men what to do. ¹⁶ He will speak for you to the people, and he will be your spokesman, and you will serve as God to him. ¹⁷ And you will take this rod in your hand and perform the signs with it.”