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THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE
WEEKS OF:

January 31–February 6

Be Zealous for True Worship

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“Now Is the Especially
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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 7-15

From these articles we can learn how Jesus displayed true zeal, which sets a model for us to imitate. But why is it especially appropriate for us to be zealous in the ministry at this time? How is this a particularly acceptable time?

STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 16-20

We are living in a time when human rulership is failing. This article will help us see why Jehovah selected Jesus Christ to rule mankind and how our submission to Christ will result in countless blessings.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 20-24

Why is it both Scriptural and fitting that music should have a significant role in our worship? This article will help to provide the answer and will assist us to see how we personally can enhance its role.

BE ZEALOUS FOR TRUE WORSHIP

“The harvest is great, but the workers are few.”—MATT. 9:37.

YOU have a document that needs a certain person’s attention by the end of the day. What do you do? You mark it “URGENT!” You are on your way to an important appointment, but you are late. What do you do? You tell the driver, “Please hurry; it’s URGENT!” Yes, when you have a task that must get done and time is running out, you feel tense and excited. Your adrenaline begins to flow, and you work as fast and as hard as you can. That is urgency!

² For true Christians today, nothing is more urgent than preaching the good news of the Kingdom and making disciples of people of all the nations. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) Quoting Jesus, the disciple Mark wrote that this work must be done “first,” that is, before the end comes. (Mark 13:10) That, of course, is the way it should be. Jesus said: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” A harvest cannot wait; it must be brought in before the season is over.—Matt. 9:37.

³ Because the preaching work is of such importance to us, it deserves our giving it as much of our time, energy, and attention as possible. Commendably, many are doing just that. Some have simplified their personal affairs so as to take up the full-time ministry as pioneers or missionaries or to serve at one of the Bethel homes around the world. Their life is very busy. They may have made many sacrifices, and they have many chal-

lenges to meet. Yet, they are richly blessed by Jehovah. We are happy for them. (*Read Luke 18:28-30.*) Others, while unable to join the ranks of full-time proclaimers, devote as much time as possible to this lifesaving work, which includes helping our children to get saved.—Deut. 6:6, 7.

⁴ As we have seen, a sense of urgency is usually connected with a time limit, a deadline, an end. We are living in the time of the end, and there is plenty of evidence—both Scriptural and historical—to prove that. (Matt. 24:3, 33; 2 Tim. 3:1-5) Still, no man knows the exact time when the end will come. When giving the details of “the sign” marking “the conclusion of the system of things,” Jesus specifically said: “Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Matt. 24:36) That being so, some might find it difficult to maintain a sense of urgency year after year, especially if they have been doing so for a long time. (Prov. 13:12) Do you at times find yourself feeling that way? What can help us to develop or maintain a sense of urgency for the task that Jehovah God and Jesus Christ want us to do today?

Consider Our Exemplar, Jesus

⁵ Of all those who demonstrated urgency in their service to God, Jesus Christ is surely the foremost example. One reason for his urgency was that he had much to do

1. How would you describe urgency?
2. What is the most urgent task for true Christians today?
3. How have many responded to the urgent need to preach?

4. Why might some tend to lose the sense of urgency?
5. In what ways did Jesus reflect a sense of urgency in connection with the ministry?

in a span of only three and a half years. Nevertheless, Jesus accomplished more with regard to true worship than anyone else has ever done. He made known his Father's name and purpose, preached the good news of the Kingdom, exposed the hypocrisy and false teachings of the religious leaders, and upheld Jehovah's sovereignty even to the point of death. He spared no effort in traversing the land—teaching, helping, and curing the people. (Matt. 9:35) No one has ever accomplished so much in such a short time. Jesus worked as hard as anyone possibly could.—John 18:37.

⁶ What moved Jesus to work tirelessly throughout his ministry? From Daniel's prophecy, Jesus could have known where he was in relation to Jehovah's timetable. (Dan. 9:27) Thus, as noted, his earthly ministry was to end "at the half of the week," or after three and a half years. Shortly after his triumphant entry into Jerusalem in the spring of 33 C.E., Jesus said: "The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified." (John 12:23) Although Jesus knew that his death was imminent, he did not let that become the focus in his life, the prime reason for working hard. Rather, he focused on using every opportunity to do his Father's will and to show love to his fellow humans. That love moved him to gather and train disciples, sending them out in preaching campaigns. That was so that they would carry on the work he had started and would accomplish even greater works than he did.—*Read John 14:12.*

⁷ One event in Jesus' life forcefully demonstrated what zeal he had. It was early in his ministry, in the Passover season of

6. What was the focus in Jesus' life?

7, 8. How did the disciples react to Jesus' cleansing of the temple, and why did Jesus act that way?



Jesus focused on doing his Father's will and showing love to fellow humans

30 C.E. Jesus and his disciples came to Jerusalem and saw in the temple "those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats." What was Jesus' response, and what impression did it make on his disciples?—*Read John 2:13-17.*

⁸ What Jesus did and said on that occasion fittingly brought to the disciples' mind the prophetic words of one psalm by David: "Sheer zeal for your house has eaten me up." (Ps. 69:9) Why? Because what Jesus did involved a great deal of risk and danger. After all, the temple authorities—the priests, the scribes, and others—were behind the scandalous profit-making business taking place there. To expose and disrupt their scheme, Jesus was pitting himself against the religious establishment of the day. As the disciples correctly assessed the situation, 'zeal for God's house,' or zeal for true

worship, was clearly in evidence. What, though, is zeal? Is it different from urgency?

Urgency and Zeal Compared

⁹ One dictionary defines “zeal” as “eagerness and ardent interest in pursuit of something,” and it offers as synonyms such words as passion, fervor, ardor, and enthusiasm. Surely Jesus’ ministry can be characterized by all these expressions. Hence, *Today’s English Version* renders the verse: “My devotion to your house, O God, burns in me like a fire.” Interestingly, in some Oriental languages, the term for “zeal” is made up of two parts that literally mean “hot heart,” as though the heart were burning. It is no wonder that the disciples recalled David’s words when they saw what Jesus did at the temple. What, though, set Jesus’ heart on fire, as it were, and propelled, or moved, him to act that way?

¹⁰ The word “zeal” in David’s psalm is derived from a Hebrew word that is often translated “jealous” or “jealousy” in other parts of the Bible. The *New World Translation* sometimes renders it “exacting exclusive devotion.” (Read *Exodus 20:5; 34:14; Joshua 24:19*.) One Bible dictionary says of this term: “It is often used in connection with the marriage relation . . . Just as jealousy in husband or wife is the forceful assertion of an exclusive right, so God asserts His claim, and vindicates it, on those who are His sole possession.” Thus, zeal in the Biblical sense is more than fervor or enthusiasm for a certain pursuit, such as many fans show for their favorite sport. David’s zeal was jealousy in the positive sense, that is, an intolerance of rivalry or reproach, a strong urge to protect a good name or to correct an injury.

9. How may zeal be described?

10. What is the meaning of “zeal” as used in the Bible?

¹¹ Jesus’ disciples were not mistaken in associating David’s words with what they saw Jesus do at the temple. Jesus exerted himself not simply because he had a deadline but because he was zealous—or jealous—for his Father’s name and for pure worship. When he saw the reproach and blasphemy heaped upon God’s name, he was rightly zealous, or jealous, and acted to correct the situation. When Jesus saw the humble people oppressed and exploited by the religious leaders, his zeal moved him to bring relief to the people as well as to utter forceful denunciations against the oppressive religious leaders.—Matt. 9:36; 23:2, 4, 27, 28, 33.

Be Zealous for True Worship

¹² The religious scene around us today is similar—if not worse—than it was in Jesus’ day. For example, recall that the first thing Jesus taught his followers to pray for concerned God’s name: “Let your name be sanctified.” (Matt. 6:9) Do we see the religious leaders, especially the clergy of Christendom, teaching people to know God by his name and to sanctify, or honor, that name? On the contrary, they have misrepresented God by such false teachings as the Trinity, immortality of the human soul, and hellfire, making God appear mysterious, unfathomable, cruel, even sadistic. They have also brought reproach on God by their scandals and their hypocrisy. (Read *Romans 2:21-24*.) Furthermore, they have done everything possible to hide God’s personal name, even removing it from their translations of the Bible. They thus hinder people from drawing close to

11. What was it that moved Jesus to exert himself zealously?

12, 13. What have Christendom’s religious leaders today done regarding (a) God’s name? (b) God’s Kingdom?

God and cultivating a personal relationship with him.—Jas. 4:7, 8.

¹³ Jesus also taught his followers to pray for God's Kingdom: "Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matt. 6:10) Though Christendom's religious leaders often repeat that prayer, they have urged people to support political and other human institutions. Moreover, they belittle those who endeavor to preach and bear witness to this Kingdom. As a result, among many who claim to be Christians, God's Kingdom is no longer a topic for discussion, let alone a matter of faith.

¹⁴ In prayer to God, Jesus clearly stated: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) And before leaving the earthly scene, Jesus indicated that he would appoint "the faithful and discreet slave" to provide spiritual food for his people. (Matt. 24:45) Though quick to claim stewardship of God's Word, have the clergy of Christendom proved to be faithful to the Master's trust? No. They have been inclined to label what the Bible says as fable or myth. Rather than feeding their flock with spiritual food, thus bringing them comfort and enlightenment, the clergy have tickled the believers' ears with human philosophy.

14. How have the clergy of Christendom watered down God's Word?

Can You Explain?

- What was it that moved Jesus to work tirelessly throughout his ministry?
- What is the meaning of "zeal" in the Biblical sense?
- What do we see today that should move us to be zealous for true worship?



We have every reason to be zealous for true worship

In addition, they have watered down God's moral standards to cater to the so-called new morality.—2 Tim. 4:3, 4.

¹⁵ Because of all that has been done—supposedly in the name of the God of the Bible—many sincere people have become disillusioned or have completely lost their faith in God and in the Bible. They have fallen prey to Satan and his wicked system of things. When you see and hear about such things taking place day after day, how do you feel? As a servant of Jehovah, when you see the reproach and blasphemy heaped upon God's name, do you not feel impelled to do what you can to right the wrong? When you see sincere and honesthearted people being deceived and exploited, do you not feel moved to bring comfort to the oppressed souls? When Jesus saw people of his day being "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd," he did not just feel pity. He "started to teach them

15. How do you feel about all that the clergy have done in the name of God?

many things.” (Matt. 9:36; Mark 6:34) We have every reason to be zealous for true worship, as Jesus was.

¹⁶ When we view our ministry that way, the apostle Paul’s words found at 1 Timothy 2:3, 4 take on special meaning. (*Read.*) We work hard in the ministry not only because we know we are living in the last days but also because we realize that it is God’s will. He wants people come to a knowledge of the truth so that they too can learn to worship and serve him and be blessed. We are impelled to exert ourselves in the ministry, not primarily because of a time limit, but be-

16, 17. (a) What should impel us to exert ourselves in the ministry? (b) What will we consider in the following article?

cause we want to honor God’s name and help people to come to know his will. We are zealous for true worship.—1 Tim. 4:16.

¹⁷ As Jehovah’s people, we have been blessed with the knowledge of the truth about God’s purpose for mankind and the earth. We have the means to help people find happiness and a sure hope for the future. We can point them to the way to stay safe when destruction comes upon Satan’s system of things. (2 Thess. 1:7-9) Rather than feel frustrated or discouraged because Jehovah’s day seems to be delayed, we should be glad that there is still time for us to be zealous for true worship. (Mic. 7:7; Hab. 2:3) How can we develop such zeal? We will consider this in the following article.

“NOW IS THE ESPECIALLY ACCEPTABLE TIME”

“Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation.”

—2 COR. 6:2.

“FOR everything there is an appointed time, even a time for every affair under the heavens.” (Eccl. 3:1) Solomon was writing about the importance of discerning the time that is most favorable for any worthwhile endeavor—be it farming, travel, business, or communicating with others. Nevertheless, we also need to discern what is the most important work that we must do at any given time. In other words, we must have our priorities straight.

1. Why do we need to discern what is to be done at any given time?

² When on earth, Jesus was keenly aware of the time in which he was living and what he needed to do. Having clearly in mind what his priorities were, he knew that the long-awaited time for many Messianic prophecies to be fulfilled was at hand. (1 Pet. 1:11; Rev. 19:10) There was work for him to do to make clear his identity as the promised Messiah. He had to bear thorough witness to Kingdom truth and to gather those who

2. How do we know that when Jesus was preaching, he was keenly aware of the time in which he was living?

would be future joint heirs with him in the Kingdom. And he had to lay the foundation for the Christian congregation, which would carry out the preaching and disciple-making work to the ends of the earth.—Mark 1:15.

³ That awareness was a positive force in Jesus' life, motivating him to be zealous in carrying out his Father's will. He told his disciples: "The harvest, indeed, is great, but the workers are few. Therefore beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2; Mal. 4:5, 6) Jesus selected first 12 then 70 from among his disciples, gave them specific instructions, and sent them out to preach the stirring message:

"The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." As for Jesus himself, we read: "When [he] had finished giving instructions to his twelve disciples, he set out from there to teach and preach in their cities."—Matt. 10:5-7; 11:1; Luke 10:1.

⁴ Jesus was a perfect model of zeal and devotion for all his followers. This is what the apostle Paul pointed to when he urged his fellow believers: "Become imitators of me, even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) In what way was Paul an imitator of Christ? Primarily in sparing no effort when it came to

3. How did Jesus' awareness of time affect his actions?

4. In what way was Paul an imitator of Jesus Christ?

Paul never forgot his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ

preaching the good news. In the letters Paul wrote to congregations, we find such expressions as "do not loiter at your business," "slave for Jehovah," "always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord," and "whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah." (Rom. 12:11; 1 Cor. 15:58; Col. 3:23) Paul never forgot his encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus and the words of Jesus that the disciple Ananias must have passed on to him: "This man is a chosen vessel to me to bear my name to the nations as well as to kings and the sons of Israel."—Acts 9:15; Rom. 1:1, 5; Gal. 1:16.

"The Especially Acceptable Time"

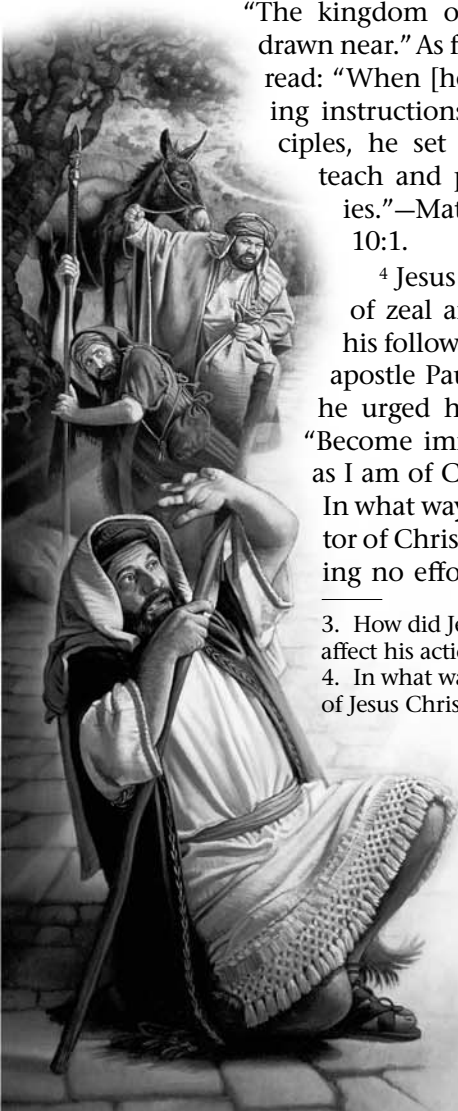
⁵ Reading the book of Acts, we cannot fail to note the courage and zeal that Paul exhibited in carrying out his ministry. (Acts 13:9, 10; 17:16, 17; 18:5) Paul recognized the significance of the time in which he lived. He said: "Look! Now is the especially acceptable time. Look! Now is the day of salvation." (2 Cor. 6:2) Back in 537 B.C.E., it was the acceptable time for the exiles in Babylon to return to their homeland. (Isa. 49:8, 9) But to what was Paul here referring? The context helps us to see what he had in mind.

⁶ Earlier in his letter, Paul spoke about a great honor given to him and his fellow anointed Christians. (Read 2 Corinthians 5:18-20.) He explained that they were called by God for a specific purpose, to carry out "the ministry of the reconciliation," to beg people to "become reconciled to God." That meant restoring friendship or harmony with God.

⁷ Since the Edenic rebellion, all mankind has been alienated and estranged from Jeho-

5. What motivated Paul to carry out his ministry zealously?

6, 7. What great honor has been given to anointed Christians today, and who are working along with the anointed?



vah. (Rom. 3:10, 23) That alienation has plunged mankind in general into spiritual darkness, leading to suffering and death. “We know that all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together until now,” wrote Paul. (Rom. 8:22) But God has taken steps to urge, actually to “beg,” people to come back, or to become reconciled, to him. That was the ministry entrusted to Paul and his fellow anointed Christians back then. That “acceptable time” could prove to be a “day of salvation” for those who put faith in Jesus. All anointed Christians and their companions, the “other sheep,” who are working along with them, continue to invite people to benefit from the “acceptable time.”—John 10:16.

⁸ What makes the call to reconciliation all the more remarkable is that even though the breach was solely one-sided—caused by man’s rebellion in Eden—God himself took the initiative to mend the breach. (1 John 4: 10, 19) What did he do? Paul answered: “God was by means of Christ reconciling a world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses, and he committed the word of the reconciliation to us.”—2 Cor. 5:19; Isa. 55:6.

⁹ By providing the ransom sacrifice, Jehovah made it possible for those who exercise faith to be forgiven of their trespasses and to be restored to friendship or harmony with him. Furthermore, he sent out his emissaries to urge people everywhere to make peace with him while they could. (*Read 1 Timothy 2:3-6.*) Sensing God’s will and recognizing the time in which he lived, Paul tirelessly expended himself in “the ministry of the reconciliation.” Jehovah’s will has not

changed. His hand is still extended in our day. Paul’s words “now is the especially acceptable time” and “now is the day of salvation” still apply. What a merciful and compassionate God Jehovah is!—Ex. 34:6, 7.

Do Not “Miss Its Purpose”

¹⁰ The first ones to benefit from this expression of undeserved kindness were those “in union with Christ.” (2 Cor. 5:17, 18) For them, “the day of salvation” began at Pentecost 33 C.E. From then on, such ones have been entrusted with the task of proclaiming “the word of the reconciliation.” Today, the remnant of anointed Christians are still carrying out “the ministry of the reconciliation.” They recognize that the four angels whom the apostle John saw in a prophetic vision are “holding tight the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow upon the earth.” Thus, it is still “the day of salvation” and “the especially acceptable time.” (Rev. 7:1-3) For this reason, since the early 20th century, the anointed remnant have been zealously applying themselves to the task of “the ministry of the reconciliation” to the far corners of the earth.

¹¹ For example, as noted in the book *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom*, at the turn of the 20th century, “C. T. Russell and his associates strongly believed that they were in a time of harvest and that people needed to hear liberating truth.” What did they do about this? Realizing that they were in a time of harvest, an “especially acceptable time,” these brothers did not content themselves with simply inviting people to come to some religious service. The clergy of Christendom had long

10. What has “the day of salvation” meant for anointed Christians, past and present?

11, 12. How did anointed Christians early in the 20th century show their awareness of the time? (See picture on page 15.)

8. What makes the call to reconciliation remarkable?

9. What did Paul do to show his appreciation for God’s mercy?

been doing just that. Rather, those anointed Christians began to explore other practical ways of spreading the good news. Among other things, they made wise use of the latest technology to advance their work.

¹² To spread the Kingdom good news, that small band of zealous ministers used tracts, pamphlets, magazines, and books. They also prepared syndicated sermons and articles for thousands of newspapers. They broadcast Scriptural programs on national and international radio networks. They produced and used moving pictures with synchronized sound recordings, even before the movie industry released motion pictures for the public that incorporated sound. What was the result of such unflagging zeal? Today, there are some seven million people who have responded to and joined in proclaiming the message: “Become reconciled to God.” Truly, those early servants of Jehovah were fine examples of zeal in spite of limiting circumstances.

¹³ Paul’s statement “now is the especially acceptable time” is still true. We who have tasted Jehovah’s undeserved kindness are grateful that we have been given the opportunity to hear and accept the message of reconciliation. Rather than feeling complacent, we take to heart Paul’s next words:

13. We should take to heart what purpose of God?

Do You Recall?

- What was “the ministry of the reconciliation” entrusted to Paul and other anointed Christians?
- How have the anointed remnant made good use of “the especially acceptable time”?
- How can Christian ministers “be aglow with the spirit”?

“We also entreat you not to accept the undeserved kindness of God and miss its purpose.” (2 Cor. 6:1) The purpose of God’s undeserved kindness is to ‘reconcile a world to himself’ by means of Christ.—2 Cor. 5:19.

¹⁴ The majority of mankind, blinded by Satan, are still alienated from God and ignorant of the purpose of God’s undeserved kindness. (2 Cor. 4:3, 4; 1 John 5:19) However, worsening world conditions have caused many to respond when shown that alienation from God is at the root of human evil and suffering. Even in lands where most people have been apathetic about our preaching work, many are now accepting the good news and taking action to become reconciled to God. Do we, then, appreciate that this is the time for us to apply ourselves even more zealously to sounding out the entreaty: “Become reconciled to God”?

¹⁵ Our task is not simply to tell people that if they turn to God, he will help them with all their problems and they will feel better. Many are looking merely for that when they go to church, and the churches are eager to cater to this desire. (2 Tim. 4:3, 4) That is not the goal of our ministry. The good news we preach is that Jehovah, out of his love, is willing to forgive trespasses by means of Christ. Thus, individuals can break free from alienation and become reconciled to God. (Rom. 5:10; 8:32) “The especially acceptable time,” however, is fast coming to a close.

“Be Aglow With the Spirit”

¹⁶ How, then, can we develop and maintain our zeal for true worship? Some may be

14. What opportunities are opening up in many lands?

15. Rather than preaching a feel-good message, we want people everywhere to know what?

16. What accounted for courage and zeal in Paul’s case?



shy or reticent by nature and may find it difficult to be demonstrative or outgoing. However, it is good to remember that zeal is not just an outward show of emotion or excitement; nor does it depend upon one's personality. Paul pointed out the key when he urged his fellow Christians: "Be aglow with the spirit." (Rom. 12:11) Jehovah's spirit played a major role in the apostle's courage and stamina in the preaching work. From the time he was called by Jesus to his final imprisonment and martyrdom in Rome—a period of over 30 years—Paul's zeal did not waver. He always looked to God, who through the spirit gave Paul needed strength. "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me," he said. (Phil. 4:13) How we can benefit if we learn from his example!

¹⁷ The word translated "aglow" literally means "boiling." (*Kingdom Interlinear*) To keep a kettle of water boiling, we need a steady supply of heat. Similarly, to "be aglow

17. How can we "be aglow with the spirit"?

with the spirit," we need a constant flow of God's spirit. The way to have that is to use all the provisions that Jehovah makes to fortify us spiritually. That means taking seriously our family and congregation worship—being regular in personal and family study, in prayer, and in meeting with our fellow Christians. That will help us to have the "fire" to sustain the "boiling" that will keep us "aglow with the spirit."—*Read Acts 4:20; 18:5.*

¹⁸ A dedicated person is one who is totally focused on an objective and is not easily distracted or discouraged from pursuing that objective. As dedicated Christians, our objective is to do whatever Jehovah wants us to do, even as Jesus did. (Heb. 10:7) Today, Jehovah's will is that as many as possible become reconciled to him. Let us, therefore, apply ourselves zealously—in imitation of Jesus and Paul—to this most important, yes urgent, task to be done today.

18. As dedicated Christians, on what objective should we be focused?

REAP BLESSINGS THROUGH GOD'S SPIRIT-GUIDED KING!

"Upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down."—ISA. 11:2.

"IN A world that is in chaos politically, socially and environmentally, how can the human race sustain another 100 years?" That is what astrophysicist Stephen Hawking asked in 2006. An article in the journal *New Statesman* observed: "We have not abolished poverty or constructed world peace. On the contrary, we seem to have achieved exactly the opposite. It is not as though we haven't tried. We have tried everything from communism to the pure market; from the League of Nations to nuclear deterrence. We have fought too many 'wars to end war' to believe that we know how to end war."

² Such statements come as no surprise to Jehovah's servants. The Bible tells us that humans were not created to govern themselves. (Jer. 10:23) Jehovah alone is our rightful Sovereign. As such, he has the prerogative to set standards for us, to define what purpose our life should have, and to guide us toward that purpose. Moreover, he will soon act on his authority to end mankind's failed attempts at self-government. At the same time, he will destroy all who by rejecting his rightful sovereignty would keep humans enslaved to sin, to imperfection, and to "the god of this system of things," Satan the Devil.—2 Cor. 4:4.

³ In the Paradise new world, Jehovah's

1. What concerns have some voiced about the world's problems?
2. How will Jehovah soon express his rightful sovereignty over the earth?
3. What did Isaiah foretell about the Messiah?

loving sovereignty will be expressed toward mankind by means of the Messianic Kingdom. (Dan. 7:13, 14) Concerning its King, Isaiah prophesied: "There must go forth a twig out of the stump of Jesse; and out of his roots a sprout will be fruitful. And upon him the spirit of Jehovah must settle down, the spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the spirit of counsel and of mightiness, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." (Isa. 11:1, 2) In what specific ways has God's holy spirit qualified the "twig out of the stump of Jesse"—Jesus Christ—to rule mankind? What blessings will result from his rulership? And what must we do to reap those blessings?

Divinely Qualified to Rule

⁴ Jehovah wants his human subjects to grow to perfection under the guidance of one who is a truly wise and compassionate King, High Priest, and Judge. That is why God chose Jesus Christ, whom he by means of holy spirit qualified for those most important responsibilities. Consider some of the reasons why Jesus will fulfill his God-assigned roles perfectly.

⁵ *Jesus has the most intimate knowledge of God.* The only-begotten Son has known the Father longer than anyone else, likely for many billions of years. During that time, Jesus acquired such a thorough knowledge of Jehovah that he could be described as the

4-6. What vital knowledge will enable Jesus to serve as a wise and compassionate King, High Priest, and Judge?

very “image of the invisible God.” (Col. 1:15) Jesus himself said: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.”—John 14:9.

⁶ *Next to Jehovah, Jesus has the most comprehensive knowledge of all creation, including humankind.* Colossians 1:16, 17 reads: “By means of him [God’s Son] all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible . . . Also, he is before all other things and by means of him all other things were made to exist.” Just think about that! Jesus, as God’s “master worker,” shared in all other aspects of creation. Hence, he understands every detail of the entire universe, from subatomic particles to the amazing human brain. Yes, Christ truly is wisdom personified!—Prov. 8:12, 22, 30, 31.

⁷ *Jesus was anointed with God’s holy spirit.* “Jehovah’s spirit is upon me,” said Jesus, “because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah’s acceptable year.” (Luke 4:18, 19) When Jesus was baptized, holy spirit evidently made him aware of things he had learned during his prehuman existence, including what God wanted him to accomplish during his earthly ministry as the Messiah.—*Read Isaiah 42:1; Luke 3:21, 22; John 12:50.*

⁸ Because he was empowered by holy spirit and perfect in body and mind, Jesus was not only the greatest man who ever lived on earth but also the greatest Teacher. In fact, his listeners were “astounded at his way of teaching.” (Matt. 7:28) For one thing, Jesus was able to address the root causes of mankind’s problems—sin, imperfection, and spiritual ignorance. Also, he

7, 8. How did God’s spirit assist Jesus in his ministry?

could see what people really were at heart and deal with them accordingly.—Matt. 9:4; John 1:47.

⁹ *Jesus lived as a human.* His own experience as a human and his close association with imperfect people did much to help qualify Jesus as King. The apostle Paul wrote: “[Jesus] was obliged to become like his ‘brothers’ in all respects, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, in order to offer propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people. For in that he himself has suffered when being put to the test, he is able to come to the aid of those who are being put to the test.” (Heb. 2:17, 18) Because Jesus was “put to the test,” he can sympathize with those who are undergoing trial. Jesus’ compassion was clearly manifest during his earthly ministry. The sick, the disabled, the downtrodden—even children—felt free to approach him. (Mark 5:22-24, 38-42; 10:14-16) The meek and spiritually hungry were also drawn to him. On the other hand, the

9. How is your confidence in Jesus as Ruler enhanced by reflecting on his earthly experiences?

Jesus’ compassion was evident when he resurrected Jairus’ daughter





Jesus Christ is overseeing the greatest preaching campaign in history

proud, the arrogant, and those who did “not have the love of God” in them rejected, hated, and opposed him.—John 5:40-42; 11:47-53.

¹⁰ *Jesus gave his life in our behalf.* Perhaps the greatest proof of Jesus’ suitability as Ruler was his willingness to die for us. (*Read Psalm 40:6-10.*) “No one has love greater than this,” said Christ, “that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends.” (John 15:13) Yes, unlike imperfect human rulers, who often lead privileged lives at the expense of their subjects, Jesus gave his very life for mankind.—Matt. 20:28.

Empowered to Apply the Ransom

¹¹ How appropriate that Jesus as High Priest is the one to take the lead in applying to us the benefits of his ransom sacrifice! In fact, during his earthly ministry, Jesus gave us a preview of what he will do as our Ransomer during his Thousand Year Reign, which we can enjoy if we are faithful. He healed the sick and disabled, raised the dead, fed multitudes, and even controlled the elements. (Matt. 8:26; 14:14-21; Luke 7:14, 15) Moreover, he did these things, not to

10. In what great way did Jesus prove his love for us?

11. Why can we have complete confidence in Jesus as our Ransomer?

flaunt his authority and power, but to demonstrate his compassion and love. “I want to,” he said to a leper who entreated him for a cure.

(Mark 1:40, 41) Jesus will demonstrate that same compassion during his Millennial Reign—but on a global scale.

¹² Christ and his corulers will also continue the spiritual education program that Jesus began some 2,000 years ago. Thus the words at Isaiah 11:9 will be fulfilled: “The earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.” That divine education will no doubt include instruction on how to care for the earth and its countless creatures, as Adam was originally commissioned to do. By the end of the 1,000 years, God’s original purpose as stated at Genesis 1:28 will have been fulfilled, and the ransom sacrifice will have been fully applied.

Empowered to Judge

¹³ Christ is “the One decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.” (Acts 10:

12. How will Isaiah 11:9 be fulfilled?

13. How did Jesus demonstrate his love of righteousness?

42) How comforting, then, to know that Jesus is incorruptible, that righteousness and faithfulness are like a belt firmly girded about his loins! (Isa. 11:5) He demonstrated a hatred for greed, hypocrisy, and other evils, and he censured those who were callous toward others' suffering. (Matt. 23:1-8, 25-28; Mark 3:5) Moreover, Jesus showed that he was not deceived by outward appearances, "for he himself knew what was in man."—John 2:25.

¹⁴ Jesus continues to demonstrate his love of righteousness and justice by overseeing the greatest preaching and teaching campaign in the history of the world. No man, no human government, and no wicked spirit can stop this work from being accomplished to God's complete satisfaction. Thus, we can be absolutely confident that when Armageddon is over, divine justice will have prevailed. (*Read Isaiah 11:4; Matthew 16:27.*) Ask yourself: 'Do I reflect Jesus' attitude toward people in my ministry? Do I give Jehovah my best even if my health or personal circumstances might limit what I can do?'

¹⁵ We will be helped to serve God whole-souled if we keep in mind that the preaching work is his work. He commanded it; through his Son he directs it; and by means of holy spirit he empowers those who share in it. Do you cherish the privilege you have of serving as God's fellow worker along with his spirit-guided Son? Who else but Jehovah could impel more than seven million people, most of whom are considered "unlettered and ordinary," to share the Kingdom

14. In what way is Jesus demonstrating his love of righteousness and justice now, and what should we ask ourselves?

15. Keeping what in mind can help us give God our best?

message with people in 236 lands?—Acts 4:13.

Through Christ, Bless Yourself!

¹⁶ Jehovah told Abraham: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice." (Gen. 22:18) This implies that appreciative ones can confidently look forward to the blessings the Messianic Seed will bring. And they actively serve today with those blessings in mind.

¹⁷ To Abraham's fleshly seed, the nation of Israel, God once said: "All these blessings [set out in the Law covenant] must come upon you and overtake you, because you keep listening to the voice of Jehovah your God." (Deut. 28:2) The same can be said to God's servants today. If you desire Jehovah's blessing, "keep listening" to his voice. Then his blessings "must come upon you and overtake you." What, though, does "listening" involve?

¹⁸ Listening certainly includes taking to heart what is said in God's Word and the spiritual food that he provides. (Matt. 24:45) It also means obeying God and his Son. Jesus said: "Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one *doing the will of my Father* who is in the heavens will." (Matt. 7:

16. Genesis 22:18 implies what about God's blessing?

17, 18. What promise of Jehovah do we read at Deuteronomy 28:2, and what does it mean for us?

What Did You Learn From . . .

- Isaiah 11:1-5?
- Mark 1:40, 41?
- Acts 10:42?
- Genesis 22:18?

21) And listening to God means willingly submitting oneself to the arrangement he has set in place, the Christian congregation with appointed elders, “gifts in men.”—Eph. 4:8.

¹⁹ Among those “gifts in men” are the members of the Governing Body, who act in a representative way for the entire Christian congregation. (Acts 15:2, 6) In fact, our attitude toward Christ’s spiritual brothers is a major factor that will determine how we will be judged during the coming great tribulation. (Matt. 25:34-40) Thus, one aspect of the way we gain a blessing is by giving our loyal support to God’s anointed ones.

²⁰ The “gifts in men” also include members of Branch Committees, traveling over—

19. How can we be in line for a blessing?

20. (a) What is a key responsibility of the “gifts in men”? (b) How can we show that we appreciate these brothers?

seers, and congregation elders—all of whom have been appointed by holy spirit. (Acts 20:28) These brothers’ primary responsibility is to build up God’s people “until . . . all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ.” (Eph. 4:13) Granted, like the rest of us, they are imperfect. Still, we bless ourselves when we respond appreciatively to their loving shepherding.—Heb. 13:7, 17.

²¹ Soon Christ will act against Satan’s wicked system. When that occurs, our lives will be in Jesus’ hands, for he has been authorized by God to guide the foretold “great crowd” to the “fountains of waters of life.” (Rev. 7:9, 16, 17) Hence, let us do our utmost now to submit willingly and appreciatively to Jehovah’s spirit-guided King.

21. Why is it urgent for us to obey God’s Son?

SING TO JEHOVAH!

“I will make melody to my God as long as I am.”—PS. 146:2.

IN HIS youth, David spent countless hours in the fields near Bethlehem tending his father’s flocks. As he watched over the sheep, David could observe Jehovah’s magnificent creative works: the starry heavens, “the beasts of the open field,” and “the birds of heaven.” He was deeply affected by what he saw—so much so that he was moved to compose heart-stirring songs of praise to

1. What motivated young David to compose some of his psalms?

the Maker of these wonderful things. Many of David’s compositions can be found in the book of Psalms.*—*Read Psalm 8:3, 4, 7-9.*

² It was likely during this period in his life

* Interestingly, ten centuries after David’s death, a host of angels announced the birth of the Messiah to shepherds who were keeping watch over their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem.—Luke 2:4, 8, 13, 14.

2. (a) What effect can music have on an individual? Give an example. (b) What can we learn about David’s relationship with Jehovah from Psalm 34:7, 8 and Psalm 139:2-8?

that David perfected his skills as a musician. He became so accomplished, in fact, that he was invited to play the harp for King Saul. (Prov. 22:29) David's music had a soothing effect on the troubled monarch, as good music often has on people even today. Whenever David took up his instrument, "there was relief for Saul and it was well with him." (1 Sam. 16:23) The songs that this God-fearing musician and song writer composed have stood the test of time. Just think of it! Today, more than 3,000 years after David's birth, millions of people from all walks of life and living in all parts of the earth regularly turn to the psalms of David for comfort and hope.—2 Chron. 7:6; *read Psalm 34: 7, 8; 139:2-8; Amos 6:5.*

Music's Honorable Place in True Worship

³ David had talent, and he used his talent in the best way possible—to glorify Jehovah. After he became king of Israel, David arranged for the tabernacle services to include beautiful music. More than one tenth of all the active Levites—some 4,000 of them—were assigned as "givers of praise," with 288 being "trained in song to Jehovah, all experts."—1 Chron. 23:3, 5; 25:7.

⁴ David himself composed many of the songs that the Levites performed. Any Israelites who were privileged to be present on the occasions when David's psalms were sung must have been deeply moved by what they heard. Later, when the ark of the covenant was brought up to Jerusalem, "David . . . said to the chiefs of the Levites to station their brothers the singers with the instruments of song, stringed instruments and harps and cymbals, playing aloud to cause a sound of rejoicing to arise."—1 Chron. 15:16.

3, 4. What arrangements for performing sacred music were made in David's day?

⁵ Why was so much attention given to music in David's day? Was it just because the king was a musician? No, there was another reason, which was revealed centuries later when righteous King Hezekiah revived the services at the temple. At 2 Chronicles 29:25, we read: "He [that is, Hezekiah] had the Levites stationed at the house of Jehovah, with cymbals, with stringed instruments and with harps, by the commandment of David and of Gad the king's visionary and of Nathan the prophet, for it was *by the hand of Jehovah* that the commandment was by means of his prophets."

⁶ Yes, through his prophets, Jehovah directed his worshippers to praise him with song. Singers from the priestly tribe were even exempted from duties that other Levites were required to perform so that they could devote sufficient time to composition and, most likely, to rehearsal.—1 Chron. 9:33.

⁷ You may say, "Where singing is concerned, I most certainly would never have been counted among the experts who performed at the tabernacle!" But not all of the Levite musicians were experts. According to 1 Chronicles 25:8, there were 'learners' as well. It is also worth noting that there may have been some very skilled musicians and singers from among the other tribes of Israel, but Jehovah assigned the Levites to care for the music. We may be sure that whether they were 'experts' or 'learners,' all of the faithful Levites put their heart into the task.

⁸ David loved music and he was skilled at it. But is it talent alone that counts with

5, 6. (a) Why was so much attention given to music during David's reign? (b) How do we know that music was considered to have an important place in worship in ancient Israel?

7, 8. Where singing our Kingdom songs is concerned, what is more important than skill?

God? At Psalm 33:3, David wrote: “*Do your best* at playing on the strings along with joyful shouting.” The message is clear: What counts is that we ‘do our best’ in praising Jehovah.

The Role of Music After David’s Day

⁹ During Solomon’s reign, music was featured in pure worship in a large way. At the inauguration of the temple, there was a full-scale orchestra, with a brass section composed of 120 trumpets. (*Read 2 Chronicles 5:12.*) The Bible tells us that “the trumpeters [who were all priests] and the singers were as one in causing one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah, . . . ‘for he is good, for to time indefinite is his loving-kindness.’” As soon as that joyful sound had gone up, “the house itself was filled with a cloud,” indicating Jehovah’s approval. How thrilling, how awe-inspiring it must have been to hear the sound of all those trumpets along with thousands of singers blending as one!—2 Chron. 5:13.

¹⁰ Music was also used in worship by the early Christians. Of course, first-century worshippers met, not in tabernacles or in temples, but in private homes. Because of persecution and other factors, the conditions under which they met were often less than favorable. Still, those Christians did praise God in song.

¹¹ The apostle Paul exhorted his Christian brothers in Colossae: “Keep on . . . admonishing one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs with graciousness.” (Col. 3:16) After Paul and Silas were thrown into prison, they began “praying and prais-

9. Describe what you might have seen and heard if you had attended the inauguration of the temple during Solomon’s reign.

10, 11. What shows that early Christians used music in worship?

ing God with song,” although they had no songbook to follow. (Acts 16:25) If you were thrown into prison, how many of our Kingdom songs would you be able to sing from memory?

¹² Since music has an honorable place in our worship, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do I show proper appreciation for it? Do I do my best to arrive at meetings, assemblies, and conventions in time to join my brothers and sisters in the opening song, and then do I sing out with feeling? Do I encourage my children not to view the song between the Theocratic Ministry School and the Service Meeting or the one between the public talk and the *Watchtower* Study as a sort of intermission, an opportunity for them to leave their seats unnecessarily, perhaps just to stretch their legs?’ Singing is part of our worship. Yes, whether we are ‘experts’ or ‘learners,’ all of us can—and should—unite our voices to Jehovah’s praise.—Compare 2 Corinthians 8:12.

Changing Times, Changing Needs

¹³ More than 100 years ago, *Zion’s Watch Tower* explained one of the reasons why our Kingdom songs are so important. It stated: “The singing of the truth is a good way to get it into the heads and hearts of God’s people.” Many of the lyrics of our songs are tied to passages of Scripture, so learning the words of at least some of the songs can be an excellent way to sound down the truth into our hearts. Often, a first-time visitor to our meetings has been deeply moved by the heartfelt singing of the congregation.

¹⁴ One evening in 1869, C. T. Russell was returning home from work when he heard

12. How can we show appreciation for our Kingdom songs?

13, 14. What value is there in singing out wholeheartedly during congregation meetings? Illustrate.

singing coming from a basement hall. At that time in his life, he had despaired of ever finding the truth about God. So he had decided to devote himself to his business interests, reasoning that if he made some money, he would at least be able to address the physical needs of people even if he could not help them spiritually. Brother Russell entered the dusty, dingy hall and found that religious services were being held there. He sat down and listened. He later wrote that what he heard that night “was sufficient, under God, to re-establish [his] wavering faith in the divine inspiration of the Bible.” Notice that it was the singing that initially attracted Brother Russell to the meeting.

¹⁵ As time passes, refinements are made in our understanding of the Scriptures. Proverbs 4:18 says: “The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established.” Increased light inevitably leads to adjustments in the way in which we ‘sing the truth.’ For the past 25 years, Jehovah’s Witnesses in many lands have enjoyed using the songbook entitled *Sing Praises to Jehovah*.^{*} In the years since that book was first published, the light has been getting brighter on a number of topics, and some of the expressions used in that songbook have become outdated. For example, we no longer speak of “the new order” but of “the new world.” And we now state that Jehovah’s

^{*} The entire collection of 225 songs was available in over 100 languages.

15. What refinements in understanding made a revision of the songbook advisable?



Do you discourage your children from leaving their seat unnecessarily during the song?

name will be “sanctified,” not “vindicated.” Clearly, from a doctrinal standpoint, there has been a need to bring our songbook up-to-date.

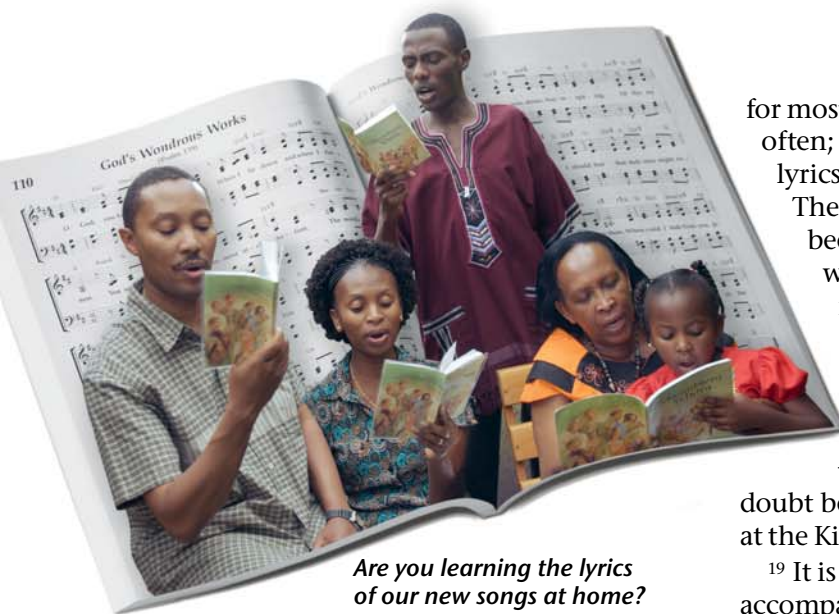
¹⁶ For that and other reasons, the Governing Body approved the publication of a new songbook entitled *Sing to Jehovah*. The number of songs in our new book has been reduced to 135. Because there are fewer songs to learn, it should be possible for us to memorize the lyrics of at least some of the new songs. This is in harmony with Paul’s counsel recorded at Ephesians 5:19.—*Read.*

You Can Show Your Appreciation

¹⁷ Should we allow fear of embarrassment to prevent us from singing out at Christian meetings? Look at it this way: Where the spoken word is concerned, is it not true that “we all stumble many times”? (Jas. 3:2) Yet, we do not allow our less-than-perfect speech to prevent us from praising Jehovah from house to house. Why, then, should

16. How will our new songbook help us to follow Paul’s counsel found at Ephesians 5:19?

17. What thoughts can help us overcome the fear of embarrassment where congregation singing is concerned?



Are you learning the lyrics of our new songs at home?

our imperfect singing voices prevent us from praising God in song? Jehovah, who “appointed a mouth for man,” is pleased to listen as we use our voices to sing his praises.—Ex. 4:11.

¹⁸ The CDs entitled *Sing to Jehovah—Vocal Renditions* have been made available in a number of languages. They feature beautiful orchestral and choral renderings of the new songs. The musical arrangements make

18. Give suggestions for learning the lyrics of the songs.

What Do You Think?

- What examples from Bible times show that music has an important role in our worship?
- What connection do you see between obeying Jesus’ command recorded at Matthew 22:37 and sharing wholeheartedly in singing Kingdom songs?
- What are some ways in which we can show proper appreciation for our Kingdom songs?

for most enjoyable listening. Listen to them often; in that way you will soon learn the lyrics of at least some of our new songs.

The lyrics of many of the songs have been composed in such a way that when you sing one line, you will almost be able to anticipate what comes next. So when you play the CDs, why not try to sing along with the chorus? If you get well-acquainted with the lyrics and the music at home, you will no doubt be able to sing out more confidently at the Kingdom Hall.

¹⁹ It is easy to take for granted the musical accompaniment that we enjoy at our special assembly days, circuit assemblies, and district conventions. A lot of work is involved in its preparation. After the music has been selected, orchestral arrangements must be carefully written for the 64-member Watchtower orchestra to play. The musicians then spend countless hours reviewing the material that they will rehearse and finally record at our studios in Patterson, New York. Ten of these brothers and sisters live outside the United States. All count it a privilege to share in providing beautiful music for our theocratic events. We can show our appreciation for their loving efforts. When the chairman at our assemblies and conventions invites us to do so, let us take our seats promptly and listen quietly to the music that has been so lovingly prepared.

²⁰ Jehovah takes note of our songs of praise. They are important to him. We can make his heart glad by singing out with all our heart whenever we meet for worship. Yes, whether we are experts or learners, let us “sing to Jehovah”—Ps. 104:33.

19. What steps are involved in preparing orchestral renditions of our Kingdom songs?

20. What are you determined to do?