(Pages 5-18, 24-28)

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

April 5-11

'Speak the Word of God With Boldness'

PAGE 5 SONGS TO BE USED: 33, 92

April 12-18

Skillfully Wield "the Sword of the Spirit"

PAGE 10 SONGS TO BE USED: 96, 113

April 19-25

"The Spirit and the Bride Keep On Saying: 'Come!'"

PAGE 14 SONGS TO BE USED: 47, 134

April 26-May 2

Welcome to the Best Way of Life!

PAGE 24 SONGS TO BE USED: 94, 65

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1-3 PAGES 5-18

These articles discuss the part holy spirit plays in our ministry. They show how being directed by God's spirit helps us to speak with boldness, teach with skill, and preach with constancy.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 24-28

Doing Jehovah's will and listening to Jesus is the best way of life. This article draws attention to specific blessings enjoyed by those who dedicate themselves to God and get baptized. It also points out what we must do to stick to the truth.

'SPEAK THE WORD OF GOD WITH BOLDNESS'

"They were . . . filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness."—ACTS 4:31.

THREE days before his death, Jesus told his disciples: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." Before his ascension to heaven, the resurrected Jesus commissioned his followers to 'make disciples of people of all the nations, teaching them to observe all the things he had commanded them.' He promised them that he would be with them "all the days until the conclusion of the system of things."—Matt. 24:14; 26: 1, 2; 28:19, 20.

² As Jehovah's Witnesses, we have an active share in a work that had its beginning in

the first century. No other work is equal in importance to the lifesaving work of Kingdom preaching and disciple making. How vital it is, then, that we be effective in our ministry! In this article, we will see how being directed by holy spirit helps us to speak with boldness when we engage in the ministry. The two following articles will show how Jehovah's spirit can direct us to teach with skill and preach with constancy.

We Need Boldness

³ Our God-given work of Kingdom proclamation is a privilege beyond compare. However, it is not without challenges. While some

^{1, 2.} Why should we strive to be effective in our ministry?

^{3.} Why does sharing in the Kingdom-preaching work require boldness?

people readily accept the good news of God's Kingdom, many prove to be like those living in the days of Noah. They "took no note until the flood came and swept them all away." said Iesus. (Matt. 24:38, 39) Then there are those who ridicule or oppose us. (2 Pet. 3:3) Opposition may come from those in authority, from schoolmates or workmates, or even from close family members. Add to this our own personal weaknesses, such as shvness and fear of being rejected. A multitude of factors can make it difficult for us to exercise "freeness of speech" and speak the word of God with "boldness." (Eph. 6:19, 20) Perseverance in speaking the word of God requires boldness. What can help us to acquire it?

⁴ The Greek word translated "boldness" means "outspokenness, frankness, plainness." That word conveys the idea of "courage. confidence. . . . fearlessness." Boldness does not mean bluntness or rudeness. (Col. 4:6) While being bold, we also want to be peaceable with all. (Rom. 12:18) Moreover, as we preach the good news of God's Kingdom. we need to maintain balance between boldness and tactfulness so that we do not offend someone unintentionally. Indeed, boldness calls for qualities that require much effort to cultivate. This type of boldness does not come from within or from self-reliance. After the apostle Paul and his companions had been 'insolently treated in Philippi,' how did they 'muster up boldness' to speak to those in Thessalonica? "By means of our God," wrote Paul. (Read 1 Thessalonians 2:2.) Jehovah God can dispel our fears and give us similar boldness.

⁵ When challenged by "rulers [of the people] and older men and scribes," the apostles

Peter and John said: "Whether it is righteous in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, judge for yourselves. But as for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." Rather than praying to God for persecution to stop, they and fellow believers made supplication, saying: "Jehovah, give attention to their threats, and grant your slaves to keep speaking your word with all boldness." (Acts 4:5, 19, 20, 29) How did Jehovah respond to their request? (Read Acts 4:31.) Jehovah helped them muster up boldness by means of his spirit. God's spirit can do the same for us. How, then, can we receive God's spirit and be directed by it in our ministry?

Acquire Boldness

⁶ The most direct way to receive God's holy spirit is to ask for it. Jesus told his listeners: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11: 13) Indeed, we should constantly pray for holy spirit. If certain aspects of the ministry—doing street witnessing, preaching informally, or working business territory—intimidate us, we can pray to Jehovah for his spirit and ask him to help us muster up the needed boldness.—1 Thess. 5:17.

⁷ That is what a Christian woman named Rosa did.* One day when Rosa was at her place of work, a schoolteacher she works with was reading a report from another school about the mistreatment of children. The teacher was so disturbed by what she read that she cried out, "What is this world coming to?" Rosa could not pass up such an opportunity to give a witness. What did she

^{4. (}a) What is boldness? (b) How did the apostle Paul muster up boldness to speak to the Thessalonians?

^{5.} How did Jehovah grant boldness to Peter, John, and other disciples?

^{*} Names have been changed.

^{6, 7.} What is the most direct way to receive God's holy spirit? Give examples.



do to get the courage to speak up? "I prayed to Jehovah and asked for his spirit to help me." savs Rosa. She was able to give a fine witness and make a follow-up arrangement. Consider also the case of a five-year-old girl named Milane, who lives in New York City. Milane says: "Before I go to school, my mommy and I always pray to Jehovah." What do they pray for? Courage for Milane to take her stand and speak up about her God! "This has helped Milane to explain her position on birthdays and holidays and refrain from joining in when those occasions are observed," says her mother. Do these examples not show that when it comes to mustering up boldness, prayer works?

⁸ Reflect also on what helped the prophet Jeremiah to acquire boldness. When Jehovah appointed him as a prophet to the nations, Jeremiah replied: "Here I actually do

How can parents help their children acquire boldness?

not know how to speak, for I am but a boy." (Jer. 1:4-6) In time, though, Jeremiah became so persistent and forceful in his preaching activity that many viewed him as a calamity howler. (Jer. 38:4) For over 65 years, he boldly proclaimed Jehovah's judgments. So well-known was he in Israel for his fearless and courageous preaching that some 600 years later when Jesus spoke with boldness, some believed that he was Jeremiah returned to life. (Matt. 16:13, 14) How did the initially reluctant prophet Ieremiah overcome his shyness? He states: "In my heart [the word of God] proved to be like a burning fire shut up in my bones; and I got tired of holding in." (Jer. 20:9) Yes, Jehovah's word exerted power on Jeremiah and impelled him to speak.

⁹ In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul wrote: "The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12) The message, or word, of God can affect us the way it affected Ieremiah. Remember that although men were used to write the Bible, it is not a compilation of human wisdom, for it was inspired by God. At 2 Peter 1:21, we read: "Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit." When we take time to engage in meaningful personal study of the Bible, our minds become filled with the message inspired by holy spirit. (Read 1 Corinthians 2:10.) That message can prove to be "like a burning fire" inside us, so that we will be unable to keep it in.

^{8.} What can we learn from the prophet Jeremiah about acquiring boldness?

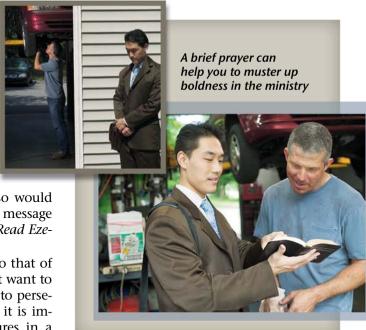
^{9.} Why can the word of God affect us the way it affected Ieremiah?

¹⁰ For personal Bible study to have a powerful impact on us, it should be done in such a way that the Bible's message reaches deep inside us, affecting our inner person. For example, the prophet Ezekiel was given a vision in which he was asked to eat the roll of a book containing a strong message to be delivered to an unreceptive people. Ezekiel was to absorb the message fully

and make it part of him. Doing so would make the task of delivering that message pleasant—like the taste of honey.—*Read Ezekiel 2:8–3:4, 7-9.*

¹¹ We are in a situation similar to that of Ezekiel. Today, many simply do not want to hear what the Bible says. If we are to persevere in speaking the word of God, it is important that we study the Scriptures in a manner that allows us to absorb their message fully. Regularity—not a hit-or-miss approach-should mark our study habits. Our desire should be like that of the psalmist who sang: "Let the sayings of my mouth and the meditation of my heart become pleasurable before you, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer." (Ps. 19:14) How important it is that we take time to meditate on what we read, so that Bible truths sink deep down into the heart! Surely, we should strive to improve the quality of our personal study.*

¹² Another way to benefit from Jehovah's holy spirit is to "consider one another to in-



cite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together." (Heb. 10:24, 25) Exerting ourselves to be in regular attendance at Christian meetings, listening carefully, and applying what we learn are fine ways to be guided by the spirit. After all, does not Jehovah's spirit give direction through the congregation?—*Read Revelation 3:6*.

Benefits of Acquiring Boldness

¹³ Holy spirit is the most powerful force in the universe, and it can empower humans to do Jehovah's will. Under its influence, the first-century Christians accomplished a tremendous preaching work. They preached the good news "in all creation that is under heaven." (Col. 1:23) When we consider that most of them were "unlettered and ordinary," it becomes obvious that they were motivated by a stronger force.—Acts 4:13.

^{*} To get the most from your Bible reading and personal study, see the book *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, chapters entitled "Apply Yourself to Reading" and "Study Is Rewarding," pages 21-32.

^{10, 11. (}a) What should be true of our study habits if we are to acquire boldness in speaking? (b) Name at least one step you plan on taking in order to improve the quality of your personal study.

^{12.} Why do Christian meetings help us to be guided by holy spirit?

^{13.} What can we learn from what the first-century Christians accomplished in the preaching work?

¹⁴ Living in a way that allows holy spirit to direct our lives can also motivate us to carry out our ministry courageously. The combined benefits of constantly praying for the spirit, diligently engaging in meaningful personal study, prayerfully meditating on what we read, and regularly attending Christian meetings can help us to be "aglow with the spirit." (Rom. 12:11) Concerning "a certain Iew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria. an eloquent man, [who] arrived in Ephesus," the Bible says: "As he was aglow with the spirit, he went speaking and teaching with correctness the things about Jesus." (Acts 18:24, 25) By being "on fire with the Spirit," we can demonstrate increased boldness in our house-to-house ministry and when witnessing informally.-Rom. 12:11, The Bible-An American Translation.

¹⁵ Increased boldness in witnessing has a positive effect on us. Our attitude is improved because we appreciate more fully the importance and benefit of our work. Our enthusiasm is enhanced because we find greater joy when we are effective in the ministry. And our zeal is fortified because we have a greater awareness of the urgency of the preaching work.

¹⁶ What if we have lost our zeal for the ministry or our fervor for it is not what it used to be? Then an honest self-examination is in order. Paul wrote: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are." (2 Cor. 13:5) Ask yourself: 'Am I still aglow with the spirit? Do I pray to Jehovah for his spirit? Do my prayers show that I rely upon him to do his will? Do they contain words of appreciation for the ministry entrusted to us? How are my personal study habits? How much time do I take to meditate on what I read and hear? How involved am I in congregation meetings?' Reflecting on questions such as these can help vou identify areas of weakness and take corrective measures.

Let God's Spirit Make You Bold

¹⁷ The resurrected Iesus told his disciples: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) The work that began then is being done on an unprecedented scale today. Close to seven million Witnesses of Jehovah are declaring the Kingdom message in over 230 lands, spending nearly 1.5 billion hours a year in the ministry. How thrilling it is to have a zealous share in this neverto-be-repeated work!

¹⁸ As in the first century, the global preaching work today is done under the direction of God's spirit. If we respond to the spirit's direction, we will display "the greatest freeness of speech" in our ministry. (Acts 28:31) By all means, then, let us be guided by the spirit as we declare the good news of God's Kingdom!

17, 18. (a) On what scale is the preaching work being done today? (b) How can we display "the greatest freeness of speech" in declaring the good news of God's Kingdom?

What Did You Learn?

- Why do we need to be bold in speaking the word of God?
- What helped the early disciples to speak with boldness?
- How may we acquire boldness?
- How does acquiring boldness benefit us?

^{14.} What can help us to be "aglow with the spirit"? 15. How does speaking with increased boldness benefit us?

^{16.} What should we do if our zeal for the ministry has diminished?

SKILLFULLY WIELD "THE SWORD OF THE SPIRIT"

"Accept . . . the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word."—EPH. 6:17.

UPON seeing the spiritual need of the crowds, Jesus told his disciples: "The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." Jesus did not let matters go at that. After speaking those words, "he summoned his twelve disciples" and sent them out on a preaching, or 'harvesting,' tour. (Matt. 9:35-38; 10:1, 5) Later, Jesus "designated seventy others and sent them forth by twos" to do the same work. —Luke 10:1, 2.

² The need for more Kingdom proclaimers is also great today. The worldwide Memorial attendance for the 2009 service year was 18,-168,323. It exceeded the total number of Jehovah's Witnesses by over 10 million. The fields are indeed ripe for harvesting. (John 4: 34, 35) We should, therefore, pray and ask for more workers. But how can we act in harmony with such requests? We can do so by becoming more effective ministers as we zealously share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 13:10.

³ The preceding article discussed how being directed by God's spirit is instrumental in our "speaking the word of God with boldness." (Acts 4:31) That spirit can also help us to be skillful ministers. One way to improve our effectiveness in the ministry is to make good use of the excellent tool Jehovah God

has provided—his written Word, the Bible. It is the product of holy spirit. (2 Tim. 3:16) Its message is inspired of God. Hence, expounding Scriptural truth skillfully in our ministry amounts to being directed by holy spirit. Before considering how we can do so, let us reflect on just how powerful that Word is.

'The Word of God Exerts Power'

⁴ What power God's word, or message, has! (Heb. 4:12) In a figurative sense, the message emanating from the Bible is sharper than any man-made sword, for it figuratively pierces to the dividing of bones and their marrow. Scriptural truth reaches the innermost part of a person and penetrates his thoughts and emotions, exposing what he really is on the inside. That truth can exert its transforming power and can bring about genuine changes in a person. (*Read Colossians 3:10.*) Yes, God's Word can change lives!

⁵ Moreover, the Bible is a book of matchless wisdom. It contains helpful information that can show people how to live in this complex world. The Word of God illuminates not only our immediate steps but also the roadway ahead. (Ps. 119:105) It is a tremendous help when we are dealing with problems or are making decisions about our choice of friends, entertainment, employment, dress, and so forth. (Ps. 37:25; Prov. 13:20; John 15:

^{1, 2.} How should we respond to the need for more Kingdom proclaimers?

^{3.} How does God's spirit play a key role in helping us to become more effective ministers?

^{4.} What transformation can God's message found in the Bible bring about in a person?

^{5.} In what ways can the Bible guide us, and with what result?



You must learn to use "the sword of the spirit" effectively

14: 1 Tim. 2:9) Applying the principles found in God's Word makes it possible for us to get along well with others. (Matt. 7:12: Phil. 2: 3, 4) With the road ahead figuratively welllit, we are able to take into consideration the long-term effects of our decisions. (1 Tim. 6:9) The Scriptures also foretell God's purpose for the future, helping us to pursue a lifestyle that is consistent with that purpose. (Matt. 6:33; 1 John 2:17, 18) What a meaningful life a person can enjoy if he allows godly principles to guide his life!

⁶ Think, too, of what a powerful weapon the Bible is in our spiritual warfare. Paul called God's word "the sword of the spirit." (Read Ephesians 6:12, 17.) When presented effectively, the Bible's message can free people from spiritual bondage to Satan. It is a sword that is saving lives instead of destroying them. Should we not strive to wield it skillfully?

Handle It Aright

⁷ A soldier can wield his weapons effectively in warfare only if he has practiced and has learned to use them well. It is the same with the use of "the sword of the spirit" in our spiritual warfare. "Do vour utmost to present yourself approved to God," wrote Paul, "a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright."—2 Tim. 2:15.

8 What will help us to 'handle the word of truth aright' in our ministry? Before we can clearly impart to others what the Bible says, we need to get the sense of it ourselves. This calls for our giving attention to the context of a verse or a passage. According to one dictionary, "the context of a word, sentence, or text consists of the

words, sentences, or text that come before and after it and help to make its meaning clear."

⁹ Understanding a Scriptural passage correctly requires that we consider the surrounding text. Paul's statement found at Galatians 5:13 illustrates that need. He wrote: "You were, of course, called for freedom, brothers; only do not use this freedom as an inducement for the flesh, but through love slave for one another." What freedom was Paul speaking of here? Was he referring to freedom from sin and death, from bondage to false beliefs, or from something else? The context reveals that Paul was speaking of the freedom that results from being 'released from the curse of the Law.' (Gal. 3:13, 19-24; 4:1-5) He was referring to Christian freedom. Those who appreciated that freedom

^{6.} How powerful a weapon is the Bible in our spiritual warfare?

^{7.} Why is it important to learn to use "the sword of the spirit" well?

^{8, 9.} What will help us get the sense of what the Bible says? Give an example.



How to Use God's Word With Persuasion

- Create respect for the Bible
- Explain the Scriptures
- Reason convincingly so as to reach the heart

slaved for one another out of love. Those who were unloving engaged in backbiting and bickering.—Gal. 5:15.

¹⁰ The word "context" has another meaning. Synonyms for "context" include "background, conditions, . . . situation." To understand the meaning of a scripture correctly, we should consider background information, such as who wrote the Bible book and when and under what circumstances it was written. It is also helpful to know the purpose for which the book was written and, if possible, the social, moral, and religious practices of the day.*

¹¹ "Handling the word of the truth aright" involves more than explaining Scriptural truths accurately. We should be careful that we do not use the Bible to intimidate people. Though we can use the Scriptures to defend the truth, as Jesus did when he was tempted by the Devil, the Bible is not a club with which to browbeat our listeners. (Deut. 6:16; 8:3; 10:20; Matt. 4:4, 7, 10) We should heed

the apostle Peter's admonition: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect."—1 Pet. 3:15.

¹² When handled properly, what can the truth of God's Word accomplish? (*Read 2 Corinthians 10:4, 5.*) Scriptural truth can overturn "strongly entrenched things," that is, expose false doctrines, harmful practices, and philosophies that reflect imperfect human wisdom. We can use the Bible to cut away any ideas that are "raised up against the knowledge of God." The teachings of the Bible can be used to help others bring their thinking in line with the truth.

¹³ Take, for example, the case of a 93-yearold woman who lives in India. From infancy she was taught to believe in reincarnation. When she began to study the Bible through correspondence with her son living abroad, she readily accepted what she was learning about Jehovah and his promises. However, the teaching of reincarnation was so embedded in her mind that she protested when her son wrote her about the condition of the dead. She said: "I just cannot understand the truth of your Scriptures. All religions teach that something inside us is immortal. I have

^{*} Excellent aids in getting background information about Bible books are the publications "All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial," Insight on the Scriptures, and such articles as "Jehovah's Word Is Alive," in The Watchtower.

^{10.} To understand the meaning of the Scriptures accurately, what type of information should we consider, and how may we go about obtaining it?

^{11.} What care should we exercise when explaining scriptures?

^{12, 13.} What "strongly entrenched things" can the truth of God's Word overturn? Give an example.

always believed that the body dies and that an invisible part is reincarnated in other bodies over and over again some 8.400.000 times. How can this not be true? Are most religions wrong?" Can "the sword of the spirit" overturn such a strongly entrenched belief? After further Scriptural discussions on the subject, she wrote some weeks later: "I am finally beginning to understand the real truth about death. It gives me great joy to know that when the resurrection occurs, we will be able to meet our dead loved ones. I hope that God's Kingdom comes soon."

Use It With Persuasion

¹⁴ Using the Bible effectively in the ministry is not just a matter of quoting scriptures. Paul spoke with "persuasion," and so should we. (Read Acts 19:8, 9; 28:23.) To "persuade" means to "win over." The one persuaded is "so convinced that [he] puts confidence in someth[ing]." When we persuade a person to accept a Bible teaching, we are winning him over to place his trust in that teaching. To accomplish this, we need to convince our listener of the truthfulness of what we say. We can do this in the following ways.

¹⁵ Direct attention to God's Word in a way that creates respect for it. When you introduce a scripture, focus attention on the importance of knowing God's thinking on the subject. After posing a question and getting the householder's response, you may want to say something to this effect, 'Let us see how we can get God's mind on the matter.' Or you might ask, 'What does God have to say about this situation?' Introducing the text in this way emphasizes that the Bible is from God and helps build high regard for it in the mind of the listener. Doing so is especially important when we are witnessing to someone who believes in God but is unfamiliar with what the Bible teaches —Ps. 19. 7-10

¹⁶ Do more than just read scriptures; explain them. It was Paul's custom to 'explain and prove by references' the things he taught. (Acts 17:3) A Scriptural text often contains more than one point, and you may need to isolate key expressions that apply to what you are discussing. You may do this by restating the thought-conveying words or by asking questions that will help the householder to recognize them. Then, explain the meaning of that part of the scripture. Once that is done, help your listener to see how the text applies to him personally.

¹⁷ Reason from the Scriptures in a way that is convincing. Using heartfelt entreaty and sound logic, Paul convincingly 'reasoned with others from the Scriptures.' (Acts 17: 2, 4) Like him, endeavor to reach the heart of your listener. 'Draw up' what is in it by using kind questions that reflect personal interest in the individual. (Prov. 20:5) Avoid being blunt. Present arguments in a clear and logical manner. They should be supported by satisfying evidence. Your statements should

What Did You Learn?

- How powerful is the Word of God?
- How can we 'handle the word of truth aright'?
- What can the message of the Bible accomplish as to "strongly entrenched things"?
- How can you improve your persuasiveness in the ministry?

^{14.} What does it mean to persuade our listeners?

^{15.} How can you direct attention to the Bible in a way that creates respect for it?

^{16.} What will help you to explain scriptures properly?

^{17.} How can you reason from the Scriptures in a way that is convincing?

be solidly based on God's Word. It is better to use one text well by explaining and illustrating the point than to read two or three scriptures in rapid succession. Using corroborative evidence can also 'add persuasiveness to your lips.' (Prov. 16:23) At times, it may be necessary to do research and provide additional information. The 93-year-old woman mentioned earlier needed to know why the teaching of an immortal soul (or spirit) is so prevalent. Understanding where that doctrine originated and how it entered most religions of the world was essential to persuade her to accept what the Bible teaches on the subject.*

Continue to Use It Skillfully

¹⁸ "The scene of this world is changing," states the Bible. Wicked men are advancing from bad to worse. (1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Tim. 3:13) So it is vital that we continue to overturn "strongly entrenched things" by using "the sword of the spirit, that is, God's word."

¹⁹ How happy we are to have God's Word, the Bible, and to use its powerful message to uproot false teachings and reach honest-hearted ones! No entrenched thing is stronger than that message. Let us, therefore, put forth earnest effort to wield "the sword of the spirit" skillfully in our God-given work of Kingdom proclamation.

18, 19. Why should we continue to wield "the sword of the spirit" skillfully?

"THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE KEEP ON SAYING: 'COME!'"

"The spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!' . . . Let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free."—REV. 22:17.

WHAT place should Kingdom interests occupy in our lives? Jesus urged his followers to 'keep on seeking first the kingdom,' assuring them that if they did so, God would supply what they needed. (Matt. 6:25-33) He compared the Kingdom of God to a pearl so valuable that upon finding it, a traveling merchant "sold all the things he had and bought it." (Matt. 13: 45, 46) Should we not attach the utmost importance to the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work?

² As we saw in the two preceding articles, our speaking with boldness and our using the Word of God skillfully in the ministry demonstrate that we are directed by God's spirit. That spirit also plays an important part in our having a regular share in the Kingdom-preaching work. Let us see how.

An Open Invitation!

³ An open invitation has been extended to humans by means of holy spirit. (*Read Revelation 22:17.*) The invitation is to "come"

^{*} See the brochure What Happens to Us When We Die? pages 5-16.

^{1, 2.} What place should Kingdom interests occupy in our lives, and why?

^{3.} To what type of water are all humans invited to "come"?

and satisfy one's thirst with a very special type of water. It is not ordinary water composed of two parts hydrogen and one part oxygen. Though literal water is essential for sustaining life on earth. Jesus had in mind a different type of water when he said to a Samaritan woman at a well: "Whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty at all, but the water that I will give him will become in him a fountain of water bubbling up to impart everlasting life." (John 4:14) The extraordinary water that humans are invited to partake of imparts everlasting life.

⁴ The need for such water of life arose when the first man, Adam, joined his wife, Eve, in disobeying the very one who created them—Jehovah God. (Gen. 2:16, 17; 3:1-6) The first couple were expelled from their garden home "in order that [Adam] may not put his hand out and actually take fruit also from the tree of life and eat and live to time indefinite." (Gen. 3:22) As progenitor of humankind, Adam subsequently introduced death into the entire human race. (Rom. 5: 12) The water of life represents all of God's provisions for recovering obedient humans from sin and death and giving them unending perfect life in Paradise on earth. At the very root of these provisions is the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.-Matt. 20:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:9, 10.

⁵ Who originates the invitation to come and "take life's water free"? When all the provisions for life through Jesus become fully available to mankind during Christ's Millennial Reign, they are portrayed as "a river of water of life, clear as crystal." That river is seen as "flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb." (Rev. 22:1) Jehovah the Life-Giver is, therefore, the Source of the water containing life-giving elements. (Ps. 36:9) He is the One who makes that water available through "the Lamb." Iesus Christ. (John 1:29) This symbolic river is Jehovah's means to undo all the harm brought upon mankind by Adam's disobedience. Yes. Jehovah God is the Originator of the invitation to "come."

⁶ Though the "river of water of life" will flow in the fullest sense during the Thousand Year Reign of Christ, it begins to flow in "the Lord's day," which dawned with the heavenly enthronement of "the Lamb" in 1914. (Rev. 1:10) Hence, certain provisions for life became available after that. They involve God's Word, the Bible, for its message is spoken of as "water." (Eph. 5:26) The invitation to "take life's water" by hearing and responding to the Kingdom good news is open to all. But who is doing the actual inviting in the Lord's day?

"The Bride" Says, "Come!"

⁷ The members of the bride class—the spirit-anointed Christians-are the first to extend the invitation to "come." To whom? Well, the bride is not saying, "Come!" to herself. Her words are directed to those who hope to gain everlasting life on earth after "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" has been fought.—Read Revelation 16:14, 16.

⁸ The anointed followers of Christ have been extending the invitation since as far back as 1918. In that year, the public talk

^{4.} How did the need for the water of life arise, and what is represented by that water?

^{5.} The invitation to come and "take life's water free" issues from whom? Explain.

^{6.} When does the "river of water of life" begin to

^{7.} Who in "the Lord's day" were the first to extend the invitation to "come," and to whom?

^{8.} What shows that anointed Christians have been extending Jehovah's invitation from as far back as 1918?

entitled "Millions Now Living May Never Die" offered hope that many will gain life in a paradise earth after the battle of Armageddon. A talk given at the convention of Bible Students at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A., in 1922 urged listeners to 'advertise the King and his kingdom.' This appeal helped the remnant of the bride class to reach more people with the invitation. In 1929, the March 15 issue of The Watchtower contained an article entitled "Gracious Invitation," with Revelation 22:17 as its theme text. In part, the article stated: "The faithful remnant class join [the Most High] in the gracious invitation and say, 'Come.' This message is to be proclaimed to those who have a desire for righteousness and truth. It must be done now." To this day, the bride class continues to extend that invitation

"Let Anyone Hearing Say: 'Come!'"

⁹ What about those who hear the invitation to "come"? They are invited to say, "Come!" in response. For example, the August 1, 1932, issue of *The Watchtower* stated on page 232: "Let the anointed encourage all who will to take part in telling the good news of the kingdom. They do not have to be anointed of the Lord in order to declare the Lord's message. It is a great comfort to Jehovah's witnesses to now know that they are permitted to carry the waters of life to a class of people that may be taken through Armageddon and given everlasting life on the earth."

¹⁰ Pointing to the hearer's responsibility to say, "Come!" *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1934, page 249, stated: "Those of the Jonadab class must go along with those who are of the antitypical Jehu company, that is, the anointed, and announce the message of the

7,313,173 publishers

Keep On Saying, "Come!" 1914 5.100 publishers THE WORLD HAS ENDED HIPPODROME 1918 Many will gain life in Paradise on earth "Advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom 1922 WATCHTOWER 1929 The faithful remnant says, "Come!" 1932 The invitation to say, "Come!" is extended beyond the anointed The Jonadab class is invited to preach 1934 The "great crowd" is identified 1935 2009

^{9, 10.} How have those hearing the invitation been invited to say, "Come!" in response?

¹⁶ THE WATCHTOWER • FEBRUARY 15, 2010

kingdom, even though they are not the anointed witnesses of Jehovah." In 1935, the identity of the "great crowd" mentioned at Revelation 7:9-17 was made clear. That gave tremendous impetus to the work of extending God's invitation. Since then, a growing number of the great crowd of true worshippers—over seven million now—have responded to that invitation. Having appreciatively heard the message, they have made a dedication to God, undergone water baptism, and joined the bride class in actively inviting others to 'come and drink life's water free.'

"The Spirit" Says, "Come!"

¹¹ When preaching in a synagogue in Nazareth, Jesus opened the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read: "Jehovah's spirit is upon me, 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." Then Iesus applied these words to himself, saying: "Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled." (Luke 4: 17-21) Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus told his disciples: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me . . . to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8) In the first century, the holy spirit played a noteworthy part with regard to the preaching work.

¹² How is God's holy spirit involved in extending the invitation to humans in our day? Jehovah is the Source of holy spirit. He uses the spirit to open the hearts and minds of the bride class to understand his Word,

the Bible. The spirit impels them to extend the invitation and explain Scriptural truths to those who have the prospect of living forever in Paradise on earth. What about those who accept the invitation, become disciples of Jesus Christ, and extend the invitation to still others? The spirit is involved in their case too. Having been baptized 'in the name of the holy spirit,' they cooperate with and rely on the spirit to help them. (Matt. 28:19) Think also of the message preached by the anointed and the growing great crowd. It comes from the Bible—the book written under the direct influence of God's spirit. Thus. the invitation is extended by means of holy spirit. We are, in fact, directed by that spirit. How should that affect the extent of our participation in the invitation work?

They "Keep On Saying: 'Come!'"

¹³ "The spirit and the bride" do not merely say, "Come!" The original-language verb used here denotes continuous action. Taking that factor into consideration, the New World Translation reads: "The spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!'" This indicates regularity in extending God's invitation. What about those who hear and accept the invitation? They too say, "Come!" The great crowd of true worshippers is spoken of as 'rendering sacred service day and night in Jehovah's temple.' (Rev. 7:9, 15) 'Day and night service' in what sense? (Read Luke 2: 36, 37; Acts 20:31; 2 Thessalonians 3:8.) The examples of the aged prophetess Anna and the apostle Paul show that 'day and night service' implies constancy and earnest effort in the ministry.

¹⁴ The prophet Daniel also demonstrated the importance of regularity in worship.

^{11.} In the first century C.E., how was holy spirit involved in the preaching work?

^{12.} How is God's spirit involved in extending the invitation in our day?

^{13.} What is indicated by the statement "the spirit and the bride *keep on saying:* 'Come!'"?

^{14, 15.} How did Daniel demonstrate the importance of regularity in worship?

(Read Daniel 6:4-10, 16.) He did not change his spiritual routine—his habit of praying to God "three times in a day, . . . as he had been regularly doing"—even for one month, although that meant being thrown into the lions' pit. How clearly his actions indicated to observers that nothing is more important than regular worship of Jehovah!—Matt. 5:16

15 After Daniel had spent a night in the lions' pit, the king himself went there and cried out: "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you are serving with constancy been able to rescue you from the lions?" Daniel immediately replied: "O king, live on even to times indefinite. My own God sent his angel and shut the mouth of the lions, and they have not brought me to ruin, forasmuch as before him innocence itself was found in me; and also before you, O king, no hurtful act have I done." Jehovah blessed Daniel for serving "with constancy." —Dan. 6:19-22.

¹⁶ Daniel was willing to die rather than neglect his spiritual routine. What about us? What sacrifices are we making or are we willing to make in order to declare the good news of God's Kingdom with constancy? Why, we should not let a month go by without speak-

16. What questions should Daniel's example prompt us to ask about our participation in the ministry?

What Did You Learn?

- The invitation to "come" is extended to whom?
- Why can it be said that the invitation to "come" originates with Jehovah?
- What part does holy spirit play in extending the invitation to "come"?
- Why should we strive to be regular in the ministry?

ing about Jehovah to others! If at all possible, should we not endeavor to participate in the ministry each week? Even if we are very limited physically and can witness for just 15 minutes during the month, we should report this activity. Why? Because, along with the spirit and the bride, we desire to keep on saying, "Come!" Yes, we want to do all we can to remain regular Kingdom publishers.

¹⁷ We should seek to extend Jehovah's invitation at every opportunity, not just at times that we have set aside for the public ministry. What a privilege it is to invite thirsty ones to 'come and take life's water free' during other times, such as while shopping, traveling, vacationing, working, or going to school! Even if authorities restrict the preaching work, we continue to preach discreetly—perhaps by staggering our house-to-house visits or by increasing our informal witnessing.

Keep On Saying, "Come!"

¹⁸ For over nine decades now, the spirit and the bride have been saying, "Come!" to anyone thirsting for life's water. Have you heard their thrilling invitation? Then you are urged to extend this invitation to others.

¹⁹ We do not know how long Jehovah's loving invitation will continue to be extended, but our responding to it by saying, "Come!" makes us God's fellow workers. (1 Cor. 3:6, 9) What a privilege that is! May we show that we value that privilege and "always offer to God a sacrifice of praise" by preaching regularly. (Heb. 13:15) Together with the bride class, let those of us who have an earthly hope keep on saying, "Come!" And may many more "take life's water free"!

^{17.} What opportunities to extend Jehovah's invitation should we not miss?

^{18, 19.} How do you show that you value the privilege of being God's fellow worker?

WELCOME TO THE BEST WAY OF LIFE!

"Both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah."—ROM. 14:8.

JEHOVAH wants us to enjoy the best way of life. People can live in various ways, but only one way is the best. We can do nothing better with our life than conform to God's Word and learn from his Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus taught his followers to worship God with spirit and truth, and he commissioned them to make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; John 4:24) By living in harmony with Jesus' instructions, we please Jehovah and enjoy His blessing.

² When those "rightly disposed for everlasting life" become believers and get baptized, we have sound reasons to say to them, "Welcome to the best way of life!" (Acts 13: 48) During the first century of our Common Era, thousands of people from different nations embraced the truth and gave public evidence of their devotion to God by being baptized. (Acts 2:41) Those early disciples belonged to "The Way." (Acts 9:2; 19:23) This expression was fitting because those who became followers of Christ adhered to a manner of life that centered on faith in Jesus Christ and on imitating his example.—1 Pet. 2:21.

³ The disciple-making work has sped up in

1. Jesus taught what about the best way of life?

2. How did many respond to the Kingdom message in the first century, and what did it mean to belong to "The Way"?

3. Why do Jehovah's people get baptized, and how many have been immersed in the past ten years?



these last days and is now being done in over 230 lands. During the past ten years, more than 2,700,000 people have made the decision to serve Jehovah and be baptized in symbol of their dedication to him. That is an average of over 5,000 individuals every week! The decision to be baptized is based on love for God, knowledge of the Scriptures, and faith in what they teach. Baptism is a milestone in our life, for it marks the beginning of an intimate relationship with Jehovah. It is also a demonstration of confidence that he will help us to serve him faithfully, just as he helped his servants of old to walk in his way.—Isa. 30:21.

Why Get Baptized?

⁴ Perhaps you have taken in knowledge of God, have made changes in your life, and are now an unbaptized publisher. Such progress is commendable. But have you made a dedication to God in prayer, and are you hoping to get baptized? From your study of the Bible, you very likely now know that your life should be focused on praising Jehovah, not on merely pleasing yourself or acquiring material possessions. (*Read Psalm 148:11-13;* Luke 12:15) So, what are some of the blessings and benefits of getting baptized?

⁵ As a dedicated Christian, your life will have the highest purpose. You will be happy because you are doing the divine will. (Rom. 12:1, 2) Jehovah's holy spirit will produce in you such godly qualities as peace and faith. (Gal. 5:22, 23) God will answer your prayers and bless your efforts to conform your life to his Word. Your ministry will be joyful, and living in the way that God approves will strengthen your hope of everlasting life. Moreover, making a dedication and getting baptized will show that you really want to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses.—Isa. 43:10-12.

⁶ By dedicating ourselves to God and being baptized, we make it known that we belong to Jehovah. "None of us, in fact, lives with regard to himself only, and no one dies with regard to himself only," wrote the apostle Paul, "for both if we live, we live to Jehovah, and if we die, we die to Jehovah. Therefore both if we live and if we die, we belong to Jehovah." (Rom. 14:7, 8) God has dignified us by giving us free will. When we firmly decide to pursue this way of life because

4, 5. Mention some of the blessings and benefits of getting baptized.

Your baptism shows that you have chosen the best way of life

we love God, we make his heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) Our baptism is both a symbol of our dedication to God and a public declaration that Jehovah is our Ruler. It shows that we have taken a stand on his side of the issue of universal sovereignty. (Acts 5:29, 32) In turn, Jehovah is on our side. (*Read Psalm 118:6.*) Baptism also opens the way for us to receive many other spiritual blessings now and in the future.

Blessed With a Loving Brotherhood

⁷ The apostle Peter said to Jesus: "Look! We have left all things and followed you; what actually will there be for us?" (Matt. 19: 27) Peter wanted to know what the future held for him and for Jesus' other disciples. To

7-9. (a) What assurance did Jesus give to those who left all things and followed him? (b) How is Jesus' promise recorded at Mark 10:29, 30 being fulfilled?



^{6.} What does our baptism make known?



devote themselves fully to the Kingdompreaching work, they had made important sacrifices. (Matt. 4:18-22) What assurance did Jesus give them?

⁸ According to Mark's parallel account, Jesus indicated that his disciples would be part of a spiritual brotherhood. He said: "No one has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for my sake and for the sake of the good news who will not get a hundredfold now in this period of time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and fields, with persecutions, and in the coming system of things everlasting life." (Mark 10:29, 30) First-century Christians, such as Lydia, Aquila, Priscilla, and Gaius, were among those who provided "houses" and became "brothers and sisters and mothers" to fellow believers, as Jesus had promised.—Acts 16:14, 15: 18:2-4: 3 John 1, 5-8.

⁹ What Jesus said is having greater fulfillment today. The "fields" his followers leave

behind refer to the livelihoods that many, including missionaries, members of the Bethel family, international servants, and others, willingly give up in order to advance Kingdom interests in various lands. Many brothers and sisters have left their homes in order to simplify their life, and it gives us joy to hear their experiences showing how Jehovah has cared for them and how their service to him has made them happy. (Acts 20:35) Moreover, all baptized servants of Jehovah can enjoy the blessing of "seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness" as part of the globe-encircling Christian brotherhood.—Matt. 6:33.

Safe in "the Secret Place"

¹⁰ Dedication and baptism result in another rich blessing—the privilege of dwelling in "the secret place of the Most High." (*Read Psalm 91:1*.) This is a figurative place of safe-

^{10, 11.} What is "the secret place of the Most High," and how can we gain access to it?

ty and security—a condition, or state, of protection from spiritual harm. It is a "secret place" because it is unknown to people who lack spiritual vision and do not trust in God. By living in harmony with our dedication and by exercising complete confidence in Jehovah, in effect we are saying to him: "You are my refuge and my stronghold, my God, in whom I will trust." (Ps. 91:2) Jehovah God becomes our secure dwelling place. (Ps. 91:9) Who could ask for more than that?

¹¹ Gaining access to "the secret place" of Jehovah also implies that we have been blessed with the privilege of having developed a personal relationship with him. This begins with dedication and baptism. Thereafter, we build on our relationship with God by drawing close to him through Bible study, heartfelt prayer, and full obedience. (Jas. 4:8) No one has ever been closer to Jehovah than Jesus, whose confidence in the Creator has never wavered. (John 8:29) Therefore, let us never doubt Jehovah or his desire and ability to help us fulfill our dedication vow. (Eccl. 5:4) The spiritual provisions that God has made for his people are undeniable evidence that he truly loves us and wants us to succeed in serving him.

Treasure Our Spiritual Paradise

¹² Dedication and baptism also open the way for us to dwell in the blessed spiritual paradise. It is a unique spiritual environment shared with fellow believers, who are at peace with Jehovah God and with one another. (Ps. 29:11; Isa. 54:13) The world has nothing that can rightly be compared with our spiritual paradise. This is especially evident at international conventions, where our brothers and sisters from many nations, languages, and ethnic groups come together

in an atmosphere of peace, unity, and brotherly love.

¹³ The spiritual paradise that we enjoy stands in stark contrast with the deplorable conditions in the world today. (*Read Isaiah 65:13, 14.*) By proclaiming the Kingdom message, we have the privilege of extending to others an invitation to enter the spiritual paradise. It is also a blessing to assist those who have recently become associated with the congregation and would benefit from training in the ministry. As directed by the elders, we may be blessed with the privilege of helping certain new ones, even as Aquila and Priscilla "expounded the way of God more correctly" to Apollos.—Acts 18:24-26.

Keep On Learning From Jesus

¹⁴ We have sound reasons to keep on learning from Jesus. In his prehuman existence, Jesus spent untold millenniums working with his Father. (Prov. 8:22, 30) He knew that the best way of life centered on serving God and bearing witness to the truth. (John 18:37) It was clear to Jesus that any other way of life would be selfish and shortsighted. He knew that he would be tested severely and put to death. (Matt. 20:18, 19; Heb. 4:15) As our Exemplar, he taught us how to be integrity keepers.

15 Shortly after Jesus was baptized, Satan tempted him to abandon the best way of life—but to no avail. (Matt. 4:1-11) This teaches us that regardless of what Satan does, we can maintain our integrity. He is likely to focus his attention on those approaching baptism as well as on newly baptized ones. (1 Pet. 5:8) Opposition may come from well-intentioned but misinformed family members. Yet, such tests afford us opportunities to manifest fine Christian qualities, such as

^{12, 13. (}a) What is the spiritual paradise? (b) How may we be able to help new ones?

^{14, 15.} We have what sound reasons to keep on learning from Jesus?

respect and tact, when we answer questions and give a witness. (1 Pet. 3:15) These experiences can therefore have a positive effect on those who listen to us.—1 Tim. 4:16.

Stick to the Best Way of Life!

¹⁶ Some 1,500 years before Jesus walked the earth, Moses exhorted the Israelites to choose the best way of life then possible. He said: "I do take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today, that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him." (Deut. 30:19, 20) Israel proved unfaithful to God, but the three basic requirements for life cited by Moses have not changed. They were restated by Jesus and others.

¹⁷ First, 'we must love Jehovah our God.' We demonstrate that we love God by acting in accord with his righteous ways. (Matt. 22: 37) Second, 'we must listen to Jehovah's voice' by studying God's Word and obeying his commandments. (1 John 5:3) This calls for our regular presence at Christian meetings, where the Bible is discussed. (Heb. 10:23-25) Third, 'we must stick to Jehovah.'

16, 17. (a) What three basic requirements for life are found at Deuteronomy 30:19, 20? (b) How did Jesus, John, and Paul support what Moses wrote?

How Would You Respond?

- What does our baptism symbolize?
- Dedication to God and baptism result in what blessings?
- Why is learning from Jesus so important?
- What will help us to stick to the best way of life?

Regardless of what we must face, let us always exercise faith in God and follow his Son.—2 Cor. 4:16-18.

¹⁸ What a blessing it is to live in harmony with Bible truth! In 1914, this significant statement was published in The Watch Tower: "Are we not a blessed, happy people? Is not our God faithful? If any one knows anything better, let him take it. If any of you ever find anything better, we hope you will tell us. We know of nothing better nor half as good as what we have found in the Word of God. . . . No tongue or pen can tell the peace, the joy and the blessing which a clear knowledge of the true God has brought into our heart and life. The Story of God's Wisdom. Justice. Power and Love fully satisfies the cravings of both our head and our heart. We are seeking no further. There is nothing more to be desired than to get this wonderful Story more clearly before our mind." (The Watch Tower, December 15, 1914, pages 377-378) Our gratitude for spiritual light and truth is unchanged. Indeed, we now have even greater reason to rejoice that we "walk in the light of Jehovah."—Isa. 2:5; Ps. 43:3; Prov. 4:18.

¹⁹ If you want to "walk in the light of Jehovah" but are not yet a dedicated, baptized Christian, do not delay. Do whatever is needed to meet the Biblical requirements for baptism—the unique way to demonstrate gratitude for what God and Christ have done for us. Give Jehovah your most valuable physical possession—your life. Show that you intend to do God's will by following his Son. (2 Cor. 5:14, 15) Without question, that is the best way of life!

^{18. (}a) How did *The Watch Tower* describe the truth back in 1914? (b) How should we feel about the light of truth today?

^{19.} Why should those who qualify for baptism take that step without delay?