

- Song 131 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Does Your Marriage Please Jehovah?”:** (10 min.) [Play the video *Introduction to Malachi.*] Mal 2:13, 14—Jehovah despises marital treachery (*jd* 125-126 ¶4-5) Mal 2:15, 16—Stay loyal to your marriage mate (*w02* 5/1 18 ¶19)
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What has this week's Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week's Bible reading?

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- **Initial Call:** (2 min. or less) 1Co 15:26—Teach the Truth.
- **Return Visit:** (4 min. or less) Isa 26:19; 2Co 1:3, 4—Teach the Truth. (See *mwb16.08* 8 ¶2.)
- **Talk:** (6 min. or less) *w07* 12/15 28 ¶1—Theme: How Do We Bring the Entire Tithe Into the Storehouse Today?


LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 132
- **“What Is True Love?”:** (15 min.) Questions and answers.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.) *jy* chap. 1
- Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)
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MALACHI 1-4 | Does Your Marriage Please Jehovah?

2:13-16

- In Malachi's day, many Israelites obtained a divorce for frivolous reasons. Jehovah did not accept the worship of those who dealt treacherously with their mate
- Jehovah blessed those who treated their mate honorably

 How can marriage mates today remain loyal with regard to their . . . thoughts?

eyes?

speech?



131 “What God Has Yoked Together”

(Matthew 19:5, 6)

1. With dignity and joy,
A threefold cord is bound.
With God and men to witness,
These sacred vows resound.

(CHORUS 1)

*He vowed before Jehovah
To love her from the heart.
“What God has yoked together,
Let no man put apart.”*

2. They both have searched God’s Word
To learn to do his will,
And now they seek his blessing,
Their promise to fulfill.

(CHORUS 2)

*She vowed before Jehovah
To love him from the heart.
“What God has yoked together,
Let no man put apart.”*

MALACHI

1 A pronouncement:

The word of Jehovah to Israel through Mal'a·chi:

2 “I have shown love to you people,” says Jehovah.

But you say: “How have you shown us love?”

“Was not E'sau the brother of Jacob?” declares Jehovah. “But I loved Jacob, ³ and E'sau I hated; and I made his mountains desolate and left his inheritance for the jackals of the wilderness.”

4 “Though E'dom says, ‘We have been shattered, but we will return and rebuild the ruins,’ this is what Jehovah of armies says, ‘They will build, but I will tear down, and they will be called “the territory of wickedness” and “the people whom Jehovah has forever condemned.”’ ⁵ Your own eyes will see it, and you will say: “May Jehovah be magnified over the territory of Israel.””

6 ““A son honors a father, and a servant his master. So if I am a father, where is the honor due me? And if I am a master, where is the fear due me?’ Jehovah of armies says to you priests who are despising my name.

““But you say: “How have we despised your name?””

7 ““By presenting polluted food on my altar.’

““And you say: “How have we polluted you?””

“By saying: ‘The table of Jehovah is something to be despised.’⁸ And when you present a blind animal as a sacrifice, you say: ‘It is nothing bad.’ And when you present a lame animal or a sick one: ‘It is nothing bad.’”

“Try presenting them, please, to your governor. Will he be pleased with you or receive you with favor?” says Jehovah of armies.

⁹ “And now, please, appeal to God, that he may show us favor. With such offerings from your own hand, will he receive any of you with favor?” says Jehovah of armies.

¹⁰ “And who among you is willing to shut the doors? For you will not even light my altar without charge. I find no delight in you,” says Jehovah of armies, “and I take no pleasure in any gift offering from your hand.”

¹¹ “For from the rising of the sun to its setting, my name will be great among the nations. In every place sacrifices will be made to smoke, and offerings will be made to my name, as a pure gift; because my name will be great among the nations,” says Jehovah of armies.

¹² “But you are profaning it by saying, ‘The table of Jehovah is polluted, and its fruit, its food, is to be despised.’¹³ You also say, ‘Look! How tiresome!’ and you sniff scornfully at it,” says Jehovah of armies. “And

you bring stolen, lame, and sick animals. Yes, you bring such things as a gift! Should I accept it from your hand?" says Jehovah.

¹⁴ "Cursed is the cunning one who has a sound male animal in his flock, but he makes a vow and sacrifices a blemished one to Jehovah. For I am a great King," says Jehovah of armies, "and my name will be awe-inspiring among the nations."

2 "And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. ² If you refuse to listen and to take it to heart to glorify my name," says Jehovah of armies, "I will send on you the curse, and I will turn your blessings into curses. Yes, I have turned the blessings into curses, because you are not taking it to heart."

³ "Look! I will ruin your sown seed because of you, and I will scatter dung on your faces, the dung of your festivals; and you will be carried away to it. ⁴ Then you will know that I have given this commandment to you so that my covenant with Le'vi may continue," says Jehovah of armies.

⁵ "My covenant with him was one of life and of peace, which I gave to him, along with fear. He feared me, yes, he stood in awe of my name. ⁶ The law of truth was in his mouth, and no unrighteousness was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and in uprightness, and he turned many back from error. ⁷ For the lips of a priest should safeguard knowledge, and

people should seek the law from his mouth, because he is the messenger of Jehovah of armies.

⁸ “But you yourselves have turned aside from the way. You have made many stumble with regard to the law. You have ruined the covenant of Le'vi,” says Jehovah of armies. ⁹ “So I will make you despised and low before all the people, because you did not keep my ways but showed partiality in applying the law.”

¹⁰ “Do we not all have one father? Was it not one God who created us? So why do we deal treacherously with one another, profaning the covenant of our forefathers?”

¹¹ Judah has dealt treacherously, and something detestable has been done in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah has profaned the holiness of Jehovah, which He loves, and he has taken as a bride the daughter of a foreign god. ¹² Jehovah will cut off from the tents of Jacob anyone who does this, whoever he may be, though he presents a gift offering to Jehovah of armies.”

¹³ “And there is another thing that you do, which results in covering the altar of Jehovah with tears and with weeping and sighing, so that he no longer pays attention to your gift offering or looks favorably on anything from your hand. ¹⁴ And you say, ‘For what reason?’ It is because Jehovah has acted as a witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously, although she is your

partner and your wife by covenant. ¹⁵ But there was one who did not do it, for he had what remained of the spirit. And what was that one seeking? The offspring of God. So guard yourselves respecting your spirit, and do not deal treacherously with the wife of your youth. ¹⁶ For I hate divorce,” says Jehovah the God of Israel, “and the one who covers his garment with violence,” says Jehovah of armies. “And guard yourselves respecting your spirit, and you must not deal treacherously.

¹⁷ “You have made Jehovah weary with your words. But you say, ‘How have we made him weary?’ By saying, ‘Everyone who does bad is good in the eyes of Jehovah, and he finds pleasure in him,’ or by saying, ‘Where is the God of justice?’”

3 “Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will clear up a way before me. And suddenly the true Lord, whom you are seeking, will come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant will come, in whom you take delight. Look! He will certainly come,” says Jehovah of armies.

² “But who will endure the day of his coming, and who will be able to stand when he appears? For he will be like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of laundrymen.

³ And he will sit as a refiner and cleanser of silver and will cleanse the sons of Le'vi; and he will clarify them like gold and like silver, and they will certainly become

to Jehovah people presenting a gift offering in righteousness. ⁴ And the gift offering of Judah and of Jerusalem will actually be pleasing to Jehovah, as in the days of long ago and as in the years of antiquity.

⁵ “I will come near to you for judgment, and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who take false oaths, against those who defraud the hired worker, the widow, and the fatherless child, and against those who refuse to help the foreigner. These have not feared me,” says Jehovah of armies.

⁶ “For I am Jehovah; I do not change. And you are sons of Jacob; you have not yet come to your finish. ⁷ From the days of your forefathers you have turned aside from my regulations and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you,” says Jehovah of armies.

But you say: “How are we supposed to return?”

⁸ “Will a mere human rob God? But you are robbing me.”

And you say: “How have we robbed you?”

“In the tithes and in the contributions. ⁹ You are certainly cursed, for you are robbing me—yes, the entire nation is doing so. ¹⁰ Bring the entire tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house; and test me out, please, in this regard,” Jehovah of

armies says, “to see whether I will not open to you the floodgates of the heavens and pour out on you a blessing until there is nothing lacking.”

¹¹ “And I will rebuke the devouring one for you, and it will not ruin the fruit of your land, nor will the vine in your field be fruitless,” says Jehovah of armies.

¹² “All the nations will have to declare you happy, for you will become a land of delight,” says Jehovah of armies.

¹³ “Your words against me have been strong,” says Jehovah.

And you say: “How have we spoken against you among ourselves?”

¹⁴ “You say, ‘It is of no value to serve God. How have we benefited by keeping our obligations to him and by walking somberly before Jehovah of armies?’ ¹⁵ Now we consider presumptuous people happy. Also, those who practice wickedness are successful. They dare to put God to the test and get away with it.”

¹⁶ At that time those who fear Jehovah spoke with one another, each one with his companion, and Jehovah kept paying attention and listening. And a book of remembrance was written before him for those fearing Jehovah and for those meditating on his name.

¹⁷ “And they will be mine,” says Jehovah of armies, “in the day when I produce a special property. I will

show them compassion, just as a man shows compassion to his son who serves him. ¹⁸ And you will again see the distinction between a righteous person and a wicked person, between one serving God and one not serving him.”

4 “For look! the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the presumptuous ones and all those practicing wickedness will become like stubble. The coming day will certainly devour them,” says Jehovah of armies, “and it will leave them neither root nor branch. ² But on you who honor my name, the sun of righteousness will shine, with healing in its rays; and you will skip about like fattened calves.”

³ “And you will tread the wicked underfoot, for they will be like dust under the soles of your feet on the day when I take action,” says Jehovah of armies.

⁴ “Remember the Law of my servant Moses, the regulations and judgments that I commanded at Ho'reb for all Israel to obey.

⁵ “Look! I am sending to you E-li'jah the prophet before the coming of the great and awe-inspiring day of Jehovah. ⁶ And he will turn the hearts of fathers back toward sons, and the hearts of sons back toward fathers, so that I may not come and strike the earth, devoting it to destruction.”

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December 25-31

Treasures From God's Word

Malachi 2:13, 14—Jehovah despises marital treachery

Reference: *jd* 125-126 **paragraphs 4-5**.

4 During Malachi's day in the fifth century B.C.E., divorce was rampant among the Jews. Malachi told them: "Jehovah himself has borne witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you yourself have dealt treacherously." Because of treacherous dealings on the part of husbands, the altar of Jehovah was covered with the tears of betrayed wives, "with weeping and sighing." And corrupt priests condoned such cruelty!—**Malachi 2:13, 14**.

5 How did Jehovah view the deplorable attitude toward marriage in Malachi's time? "He has hated a divorcing," Jehovah the God of Israel has said," wrote Malachi. He also affirmed that Jehovah 'has not changed.' (Malachi 2:16; 3:6) Do you see the point? God had earlier taken a position against divorce. (**Genesis 2:18, 24**) He did so in Malachi's day. And he still does today. Some people may decide to walk out of their marriage simply because they are not satisfied with their mate. Treacherous though their heart may be, Jehovah searches through it. (**Jeremiah 17:9, 10**) He is aware of any deceit or malicious scheming behind a divorce, however one may rationalize it. Yes, "all things are

naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with whom we have an accounting.” —Hebrews 4:13.

Malachi 2:15¹⁶—Stay loyal to your marriage mate
Reference: w02 5/1 18 **paragraph 19**.

On the positive side, Malachi shows that some husbands were not dealing treacherously with their wives. They ‘had what was remaining of God’s holy spirit.’ (Verse 15) Happily, God’s organization today abounds with such men who ‘assign honor to their wives.’ (1 Peter 3:7) They do not abuse their wives physically or verbally, do not insist on degrading sexual practices, and do not dishonor their wives by flirting with other women or by viewing pornography. Jehovah’s organization is also blessed by having an abundance of faithful Christian wives who are loyal to God and his laws. All such men and women know what God hates, and they think and act accordingly. Continue to be like them, ‘obeying God as ruler’ and being blessed by his holy spirit.—Acts 5:29.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Malachi 1:10—Why must our acts of worship be motivated by unselfish love for God and neighbor?

Reference: w07 12/15 27 **paragraph 1**.

Jehovah took no pleasure in the offerings of the greedy priests, who would charge a fee even for such simple services as shutting doors or lighting altar fires. How important it is that our acts of worship, including what we do in the Christian ministry, be motivated by unselfish love for God and neighbor, never for monetary gain!—Matthew 22:37-39; 2 Corinthians 11:7.

Malachi 3:1—How was this verse fulfilled in the first century and in modern times?

Reference: w13 7/15 10-11 **paragraphs 5-6**.

A Messenger ‘Clears up a Way’

5 Centuries before Jesus gave the illustration of the wheat and the weeds, Jehovah inspired his prophet Malachi to foretell events that are reflected in Jesus’ illustration. (Read Malachi 3:1-4.) John the Baptizer was the ‘messenger who cleared up the way.’ (**Matthew 11:10, 11**) When he came in 29 C.E., a time of judgment for the nation of Israel had drawn close. Jesus was the second messenger. He cleansed

the temple in Jerusalem twice—first at the start of his ministry and second toward the end. (**Matthew 21:12, 13**; John 2:14-17) Hence, Jesus' cleansing work involved a period of time.

6 What is the larger fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy? During the decades leading up to 1914, C. T. Russell and his close associates did a work like that of John the Baptizer. That vital work involved restoring Bible truths. The Bible Students taught the true meaning of Christ's ransom sacrifice, exposed the hellfire lie, and proclaimed the coming end of the Gentile Times. Still, there were numerous religious groups who claimed to be Christ's followers. So a crucial question needed to be answered: Who among those groups were the wheat? To settle that question, Jesus began to inspect the spiritual temple in 1914. That inspection and cleansing work involved a period of time—from 1914 to the early part of 1919.

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Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

Return Visit: Teach the Truth

Reference: mwb16.08 8 **paragraph 2.**

If we discern interest, we can build anticipation for our next visit by leaving a publication or by showing a video from jw.org. We should try to return within a few days to build on the previous discussion. The new presentations and student assignments will be based on chapter summaries found in the book *What Can the Bible Teach Us?* There we can find additional questions and scriptures to help us make return visits or to conduct a study using only the Bible.

Talk: How Do We Bring the Entire Tithe Into the Storehouse Today?

Reference: w07 12/15 28 **paragraph 1.**

Malachi 3:10—Does the bringing in of “all the tenth parts,” or tithing, represent giving our all to Jehovah? The Mosaic Law was abolished on the basis of Jesus’ death, so monetary tithing is not a requirement. Yet, tithing has a symbolic meaning. (Ephesians 2:15) It does not represent the giving of our all. While the tenth part was brought year after year, we bring our all to Jehovah only once—when we dedicate ourselves to him and symbolize our dedication by

undergoing water baptism. From that time on, everything we have belongs to Jehovah. Still, he allows us to choose a portion of what we have—a symbolic tithe—to use in his service. It is whatever our circumstances allow and our heart impels us to use. The offerings we bring to Jehovah include the time, energy, and resources used in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. Also included are attending Christian meetings, visiting sick and elderly fellow believers, and rendering financial support to true worship.

1. This is at last bone of my bone,
Flesh of my flesh; now I'm not alone.
God has provided a partner,
Someone to call my own.

Now we are one; now there can be
Blessings to share for you and for me.
As man and woman together,
We are a family.

Ev'ry day we'll serve our God above.
As he shows the way,
Unfailing love we'll display.

As we have vowed, so may it be.
Seasons of joy, may we come to see.
Oh, may we honor Jehovah,
And may you always be my love.

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What Is True Love?

Jehovah designed marriage to be a permanent bond between a man and a woman. (Ge 2:22-24) Divorce would be an option only in cases of sexual immorality. (Mal 2:16; Mt 19:9) Since Jehovah wants marriages to be happy, he has provided principles that can help Christians to select a mate wisely and to maintain a happy marriage.—Ec 5:4-6.

WATCH THE VIDEO *WHAT IS TRUE LOVE?*, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Why was the correction that Frank and Bonnie gave to their daughter, Liz, both wise and loving?

- Why is it unwise to think that you can change the person you are courting?

- What wise advice did Paul and Priscilla give to Liz?

- Why did problems develop in the marriage of Zach and Megan?

- What spiritual pursuits did John and Liz share in common?

- Why should you get to know “the secret person of the heart” of someone before exchanging marriage vows with that person? (1Pe 3:4)

- What is true love? (1Co 13:4-8)



Where can Christians find additional information regarding dating?

- JW Broadcasting video series *Preparing for Marriage*
- JW.ORG video *Is It Love or Infatuation?*
- *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volumes 1 and 2
- *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Go to “Family Life,” then “Dating and Courtship.”)

Where can married couples find helpful counsel?

- JW.ORG articles (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > HELP FOR THE FAMILY.)
- Brochure *Your Family Can Be Happy*
- Book *The Secret of Family Happiness*
- *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Go to “Family Life,” then “Marriage.”)



SECTION

1

LEADING UP TO JESUS' MINISTRY

“THIS ONE
WILL BE GREAT.”

—LUKE 1:32

1

TWO MESSAGES FROM GOD

LUKE 1:5-33

- THE ANGEL GABRIEL FORETELLS THE BIRTH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST
 - GABRIEL TELLS MARY OF THE COMING BIRTH OF JESUS
-

We can consider the entire Bible to be, in effect, a message from God. Our heavenly Father has provided it for our instruction. Consider, though, two special messages that were delivered over 2,000 years ago. They were delivered by an angel named Gabriel, who “stands near before God.” (Luke 1:19) What were the circumstances under which the angel provided those important messages?

It is about the year 3 B.C.E. Where does Gabriel deliver the first message? In the Judean hills, probably not far from Jerusalem, there lives a priest of Jehovah by the name of Zechariah. He and his wife, Elizabeth, are no longer young, and they have no children. It is Zechariah’s turn to serve as a priest at God’s temple in Jerusalem. While Zechariah is at

the temple, Gabriel suddenly appears near the incense altar.

Understandably, that frightens Zechariah. But the angel calms Zechariah's fears, saying: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your supplication has been favorably heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to name him John." Gabriel adds that John "will be great in the sight of Jehovah" and will "get ready for Jehovah a prepared people."—Luke 1:13-17.

To Zechariah, that seems unbelievable. Why? Because of his and Elizabeth's age. So Gabriel tells him: "You will be silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words."—Luke 1:20.

Meanwhile, the people outside are wondering why Zechariah is taking so long inside. Finally he comes out, but he cannot speak. Zechariah can only make signs with his hands. It is evident that he has seen something supernatural while in the temple.

After Zechariah finishes his service at the temple, he returns to his home. Soon thereafter, Elizabeth becomes pregnant! For five months, while awaiting

the birth of her child, Elizabeth stays at home away from people.

Then Gabriel appears a second time. To whom? To a young unmarried woman named Mary, who lives up north in the region called Galilee, in the city of Nazareth. What does the angel tell her? He says: “You have found favor with God.” Gabriel goes on to tell Mary: “Look! you will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus.” Gabriel adds: “This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, . . . and he will rule as King over the house of Jacob forever, and there will be no end to his Kingdom.” —Luke 1:30-33.

You can appreciate how privileged Gabriel must feel to deliver these two messages. As we read more about John and Jesus, it will be clear why these messages from heaven are so important.

- ◇ Who delivers two important messages from heaven?
- ◇ To whom are the two messages delivered?
- ◇ Why, do you think, are the messages from heaven so difficult to believe?

96 *God's Own Book—A Treasure*

(Proverbs 2:1)

1. There is a book that by its many pages,
 Brings peace and joy and hope to humankind.
Its wondrous thoughts are charged with such great power;
 It brings life to the “dead,” sight to the “blind.”
That precious book is God's own Holy Bible.
 Its words were penned by men whom God inspired,
By men who truly loved their God Jehovah,
 And by his holy spirit they were fired.

2. They wrote a record true of God's creations,
 How by his might this universe appeared.
They also told how man at first was sinless
 But how his Paradise then disappeared.
They further told about a certain angel
 Who challenged God and spurned his sov'reignty.
That challenge led to sin and man's great sorrow,
 But soon will come Jehovah's victory.

3. The time has come with reason for rejoicing:
 Jehovah rules by his anointed King.
So now we preach the good news of the Kingdom
 And share the hope of blessings it will bring.
Within his book are found these cheerful tidings;
 A sacred banquet feast on which to feed.
It offers peace beyond all human thinking;
 This Living Treasure beckons all to read.

(See also 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21.)

NOVEMBER 2017

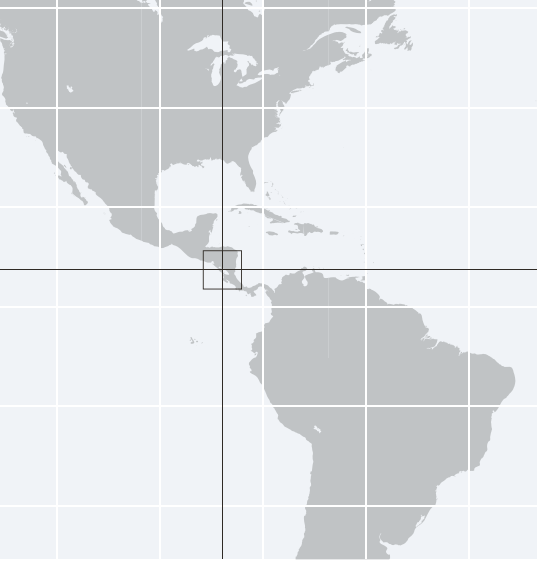
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 25, 2017–
JANUARY 28, 2018

LARGE
PRINT
EDITION



COVER IMAGE:

NICARAGUA

Two Christian sisters share the Bible's message with a merchant in the town of Tipitapa

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Make a Joyful Sound!

For Jehovah's people, singing has always been an integral part of worship. However, some may feel uncomfortable singing in public. How can we overcome the fear of using our voice to sing praises to Jehovah? This article gives us good reasons to sing out joyfully and offers some suggestions for improving our singing voice.

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Are You Taking Refuge in Jehovah?

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Imitate Jehovah's Justice and Mercy

We can learn valuable lessons from the arrangement of the cities of refuge in ancient Israel. In the first article, look for ways that sinners can take refuge in Jehovah today. In the second article, see how Jehovah's example helps us to forgive others, respect life, and act justly.

10 *Praise Jehovah Our God!*

(Psalm 145:12)

1. Praise our God! Praise Jehovah God!
 Make his glorious name known to all!
 Sound alarm, For his day is near,
 Help all people hear his warning call.
 Jehovah decreed that now is the time
 For his Firstborn to rule as King.
 Reach out to all people, tell them the news,
 Tell what blessings our God will bring!

(CHORUS)

*Praise our God! Praise Jehovah God!
 Make his greatness known in all the earth!*

2. Praise our God! Sing it loud and clear!
 With a joyful song, laud his name!
 From the heart, From a grateful heart,
 All his glory boldly we proclaim.
 Though grand is our God and great are his works,
 He is humble and good to all.
 Our merciful Father knows what we need;
 He responds when he hears our call.

(Chorus)



SONGS:

10, 2

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What role does singing play in true worship?

How can you overcome obstacles and sing praises to Jehovah with feeling?

What improvements have been made in the new songbook, and how can you make the best use of it?

Make a Joyful Sound!

“It is good to sing praises to our God.”—PS. 147:1.

A POPULAR lyricist once said: “Words make you think thoughts. Music makes you feel a feeling. But a song makes you feel a thought.” What better thoughts could we “feel” than those that express praise and love for our heavenly Father, Jehovah? It is no wonder that singing is a prominent aspect of pure worship,

1. What does singing enable us to do?

whether we are alone when we sing or we are with the congregation of God's people.

² How, though, do you feel about singing aloud with the congregation? Do you find it embarrassing? In some cultures, men may feel uncomfortable singing in public. This view can affect the whole congregation, especially if those taking the lead find reasons to hold back or to engage in other activities while the rest of the congregation is singing.—Ps. 30:12.

³ If we truly consider singing as part of our worship, we certainly will not want to walk out on or be absent from that part of the meeting program. Thus, each one of us should ask himself: 'How do I view the singing at our meetings for worship? How can I overcome any apprehension that may hold me back from singing out joyfully? And what can I do to express fully the feeling of the songs we sing?'

SINGING—AN INTEGRAL PART OF TRUE WORSHIP

⁴ Faithful worshippers of Jehovah have long used

2, 3. (a) How might some feel about singing aloud with the congregation? (b) What questions will we consider?

4, 5. How extensive were the arrangements for singing in worship in ancient Israel?

music as a way to praise Jehovah. It is noteworthy that when the ancient Israelites were faithfully serving Jehovah, singing was prominent in their worship. For example, in preparation for service at the temple, King David organized 4,000 Levites to provide music of praise. Among these, 288 were “trained in song to Jehovah, all experts.”—1 Chron. 23:5; 25:7.

⁵ At the inauguration of the temple, music and singing played a prominent role. The account tells us: “At the moment when the trumpeters and the singers were praising and thanking Jehovah in unison, and as the sound ascended from the trumpets, the cymbals, and the other musical instruments as they were praising Jehovah, . . . the glory of Jehovah filled the house of the true God.” What a faith-strengthening occasion that must have been!—2 Chron. 5:13, 14; 7:6.

⁶ When Nehemiah led the faithful Israelites in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he also organized the Levite singers with full instrumental accompaniment. When the rebuilt walls were dedicated, the special music presentation contributed greatly to the joy of the occasion. This time, there were “two

6. Describe the special presentation of singing during Nehemiah’s rule as governor in Jerusalem.

large thanksgiving choirs.” Walking in opposite directions, the choirs met on the wall close to the temple area to create a sound that could be heard from far away. (Neh. 12:27, 28, 31, 38, 40, 43) Jehovah was no doubt pleased to hear his worshippers enthusiastically praising him in song.

⁷ With the establishment of the Christian congregation, music continued to be a prominent feature of true worship. On the most important night in human history, Jesus included the singing of songs after the institution of the Lord’s Evening Meal.—**Read Matthew 26:30.**

⁸ First-century Christians set a pattern of praising God together in song. Even though they often met in private homes, the modest surroundings for worship did not diminish their zeal for singing to Jehovah. Under inspiration, the apostle Paul directed his Christian brothers: “Keep on teaching and encouraging one another with psalms, praises to God, spiritual songs sung with gratitude, singing in your hearts to Jehovah.” (Col. 3:16) The songs in our songbook are truly “spiritual songs [to be]

7. How did Jesus emphasize the need for singing in Christian worship?

8. How did the first-century Christians set a pattern of singing in worship?

sung with gratitude.” They are a part of the spiritual food provided by “the faithful and discreet slave.”—Matt. 24:45.

OVERCOMING APPREHENSION ABOUT SINGING

⁹ What if singing is not customary in your family, culture, or environment? With the availability of modern technology, you may enjoy listening to professional singers. Yet, you may feel embarrassed or disappointed when comparing your voice with productions from the entertainment world. That, however, should not interfere with your responsibility to sing praises to Jehovah. Rather, hold your songbook up high, lift your head, and sing with heartfelt expression! (Ezra 3:11; read Psalm 147:1.) Today, in many Kingdom Halls, the words of the songs are shown on screens, which helps us to sing out. It is also of interest that the singing of Kingdom songs has been made part of the Kingdom Ministry School curriculum for elders. This emphasizes the need for elders to take the lead in congregation singing.

9. (a) What might prevent some from singing out joyfully at our meetings and assemblies? (b) How should we sing praises to Jehovah, and who should take the lead? (See opening picture.)

¹⁰ One factor that keeps many from singing with a full voice is fear. It may be fear of standing out or of possibly sounding unpleasant to others. However, we should keep in mind that when we speak, “we all stumble many times.” (Jas. 3:2) Yet, that does not stop us from speaking. So why should we let our imperfect singing voices stop us from praising Jehovah in song?

¹¹ Perhaps we are apprehensive about singing because we are unsure of *how* to sing. Yet, we can improve our singing by applying some basic suggestions.*

¹² You can learn to sing with power and volume by *breathing* properly. Much as electricity powers a light bulb, breathing energizes your voice when you speak or sing. You should sing as loud as you speak or even louder than that. (See the suggestions found in *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, pages 181 to 184, under the subheading “Properly Control Your Air Supply.”) In fact, within

* For more instruction on improving the singing voice, see the December 2014 monthly program on JW Broadcasting (video category FROM OUR STUDIO).

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10. What should we remember if fear inhibits us from singing out?
11, 12. What are some suggestions for improving our singing?

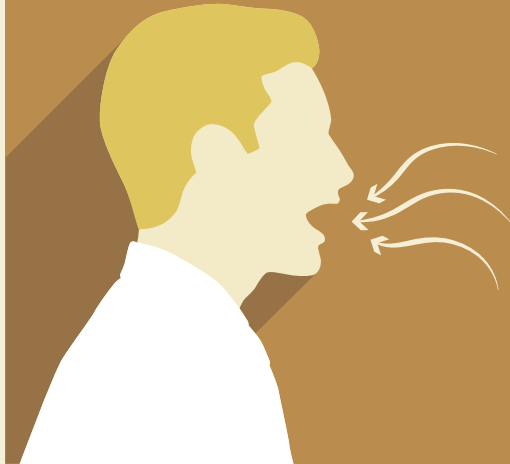
HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR SINGING

(See paragraphs 11-14)

Use good posture



Take a deep breath



the context of singing praises, the Scriptures sometimes direct Jehovah’s worshippers to “shout joyfully.”—Ps. 33:1-3.

¹³ During family worship or even on your own, try the following: Choose one of your favorite songs from our songbook. Read the lyrics out loud in a strong, confident voice. Next, using the same volume, say all the words from a single phrase of

13. Explain how we can increase our confidence in our singing.



the song *in one breath*. Then sing the phrase, using the same vibrant voice. (Isa. 24:14) Your singing voice will become fuller, and that is a good thing. Do not let it scare you or embarrass you!

¹⁴ You will not produce a full singing voice unless you make space in your mouth. So another suggestion is to open your mouth wider than

14. (a) How can opening our mouth wider help our singing? (See the box "How to Improve Your Singing.") (b) What suggestions for overcoming voice problems do you find practical?

you do for normal speaking. What should you do if you feel that you have a weak voice or perhaps a voice that is too high-pitched? You can find practical suggestions regarding these problems in *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, page 184, in the box “Overcoming Specific Problems.”

SING PRAISES FROM THE HEART

¹⁵ There was excitement at the 2016 annual meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of

15. (a) What announcement was made at the 2016 annual meeting? (b) What are some of the objectives of the new songbook?

Practice the songs during family worship
(See paragraph 18)



Pennsylvania when Brother Stephen Lett of the Governing Body announced that a new songbook, entitled “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to Jehovah, would soon be available for use at the meetings. Brother Lett explained that one objective of the revision was to bring the songs into harmony with the revised *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. This required removing or revising lyrics that used expressions no longer found in the *New World Translation* as a result of the 2013 revision. Further, new songs about our preaching work and songs that express our appreciation for the ransom have been included. Also, because singing is an integral part of our worship, the Governing Body wanted to produce a high-quality book that matches the cover of the revised *New World Translation*.

¹⁶ To make “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to Jehovah easier to use, the songs are arranged by subject matter. For example, the first 12 songs relate to Jehovah, the next 8 songs are about Jesus and the ransom, and so on. There is a subject index that will be helpful, for instance, when choosing a song for a public talk.

¹⁷ To help everyone to sing from the heart, some

16, 17. What refinements were made in the new songbook?

lyrics have been revised to improve clarity of thought and to remove words that are no longer in common use. For example, the word “shall” is not widely used today, so it has been replaced. Similarly, the title “Long-Suffering” has been changed to “Exercise Patience,” and the lyrics have been adjusted accordingly. The change of the title “Guard Your Heart” to “We Guard Our Hearts” was most considerate. Why? In the audience at our meetings, assemblies, and conventions are many new ones, interested ones, young ones, and sisters who by singing the words would be put in the awkward position of telling others what to do. So the title and the lyrics were modified.

¹⁸ Many of the songs from “*Sing Out Joyfully*” to *Jehovah* are in the form of a prayer. With these songs, you can express your personal feelings to Jehovah. Other songs will help “to incite [us] to love and fine works.” (Heb. 10:24) Surely we want to become familiar with the melodies, rhythms, and lyrics of our songs. You can do so by listening to the vocal renditions available on jw.org. By practicing the songs at home, you can learn to

18. Why should we become familiar with the songs in our new songbook? (See footnote.)

sing them with confidence and heartfelt expression.*

19 Remember that singing is an important feature of our worship. It is a powerful way to show our love and appreciation for Jehovah. (Read Isaiah 12:5.) When you sing out joyfully, you will also encourage others to sing with confidence. Indeed, all in the congregation—young, old, and newly interested ones—can join in this form of direct worship of Jehovah. So do not hold back in expressing yourself in song. Instead, obey the clear direction from the inspired psalmist: “Sing to Jehovah!” Yes, make a joyful sound!—Ps. 96:1.

* To help us get into the spirit of singing, each of the convention and assembly program sessions opens with a ten-minute music presentation. These orchestral arrangements are composed in such a way that they will prepare our heart and mind for the program to follow. Therefore, we are encouraged to be in our seats from the start and to listen attentively to these music programs.

19. How can all in the congregation directly share in worshipping Jehovah?

Jehovah Is Your Name

(Psalm 83:18)

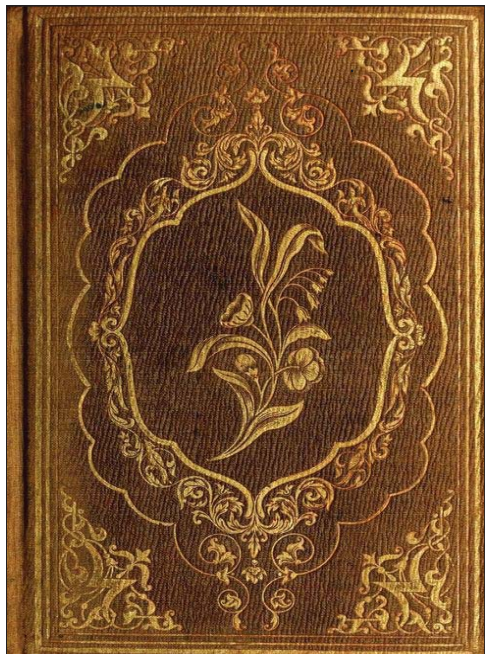
1. The living and true God—
The God of all creation
In ev'ry generation—
Jehovah is your name.
We're honored and we're proud
To be your congregation.
In ev'ry tribe and nation,
Your glory we proclaim.

(CHORUS)

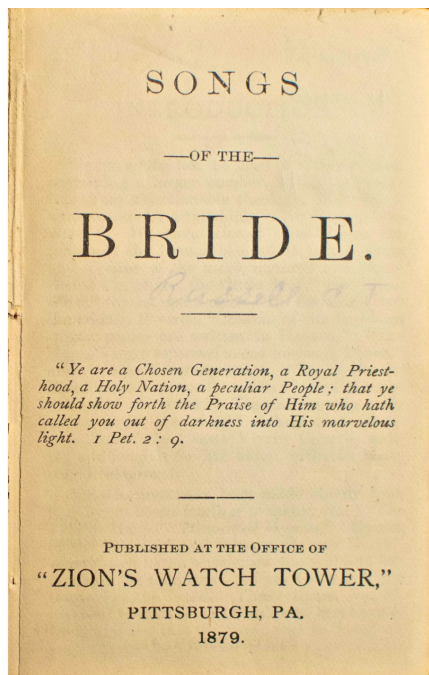
*Jehovah, Jehovah,
There is no God like you.
There's no other in the heavens
Or on the earth below.
You alone are God Almighty,
And this all men must know.
Jehovah, Jehovah,
We have no other God but you.*

2. You cause us to become
Whatever you desire,
To do as you require—
Jehovah is your name.
And Witnesses for you
Is what you've kindly named us.
We're honored you have claimed us—
A people for your name.

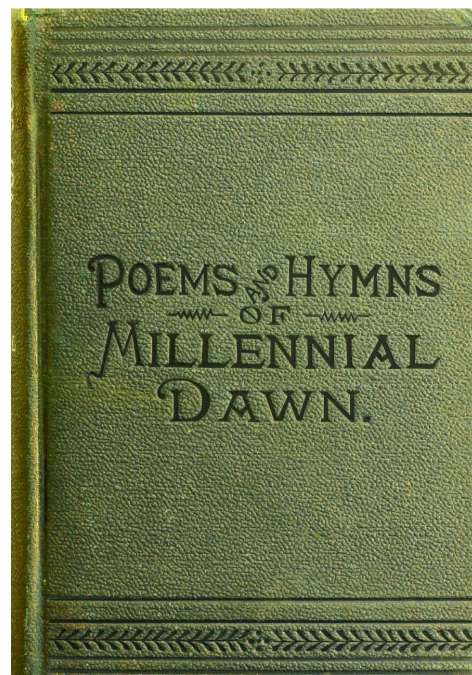
(Chorus)



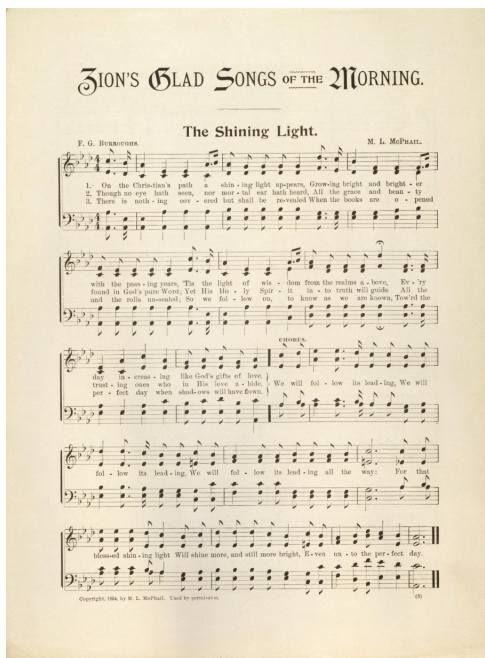
1879 cover



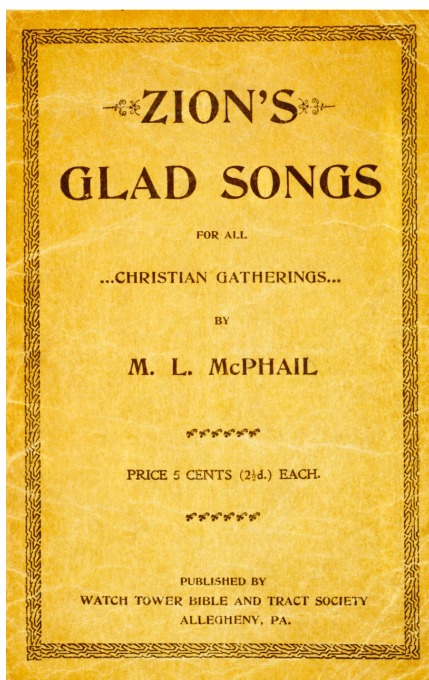
1879



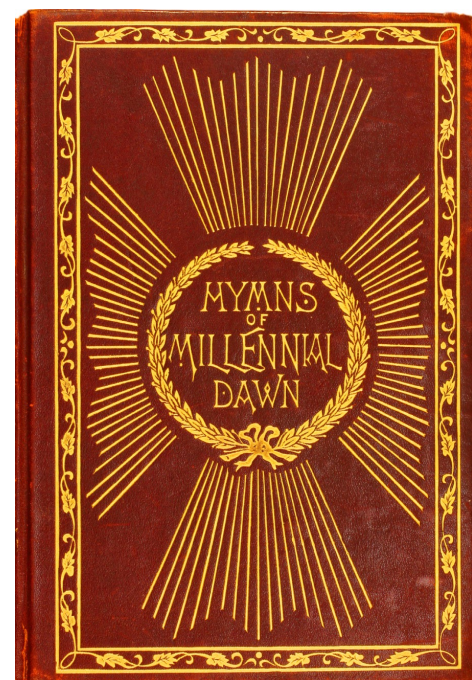
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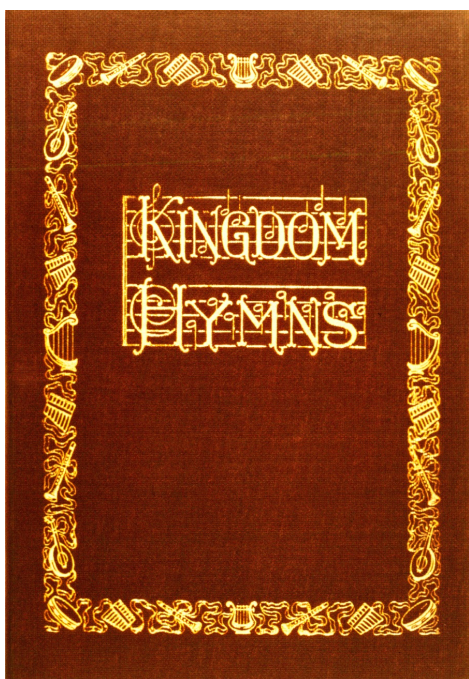
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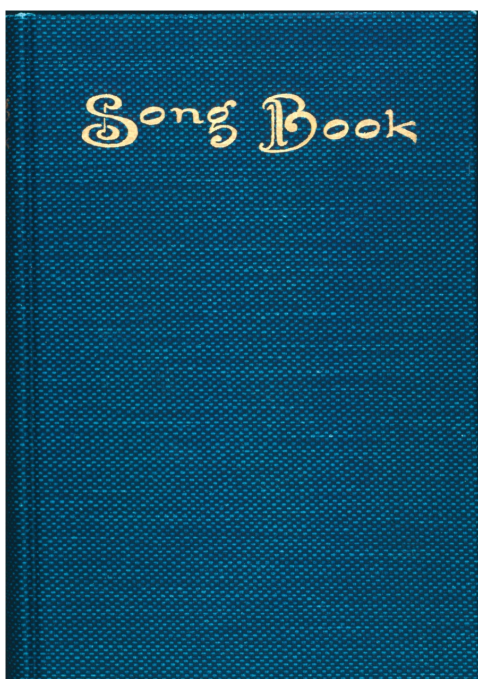
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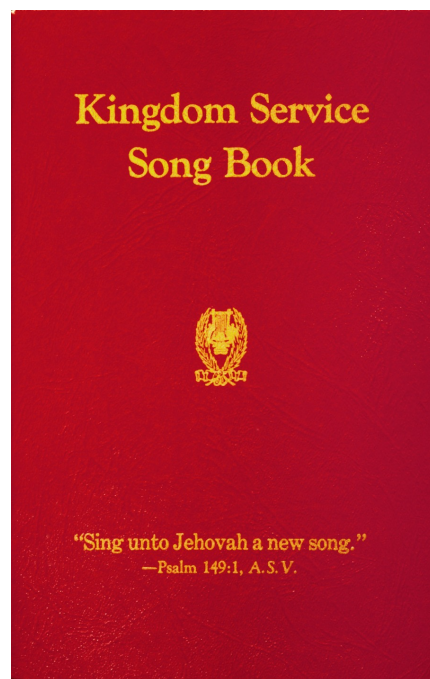
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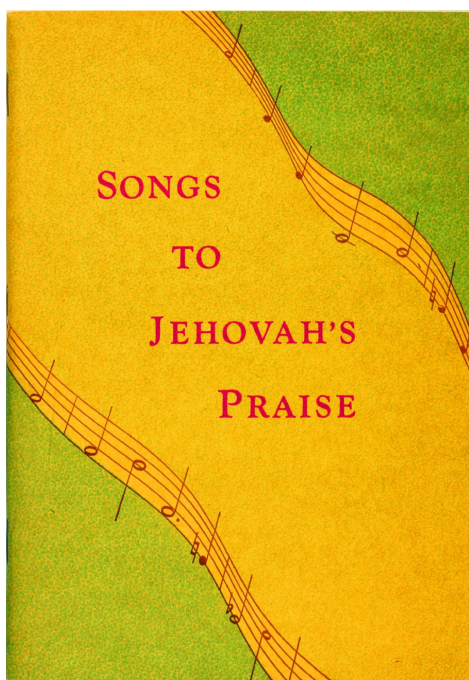
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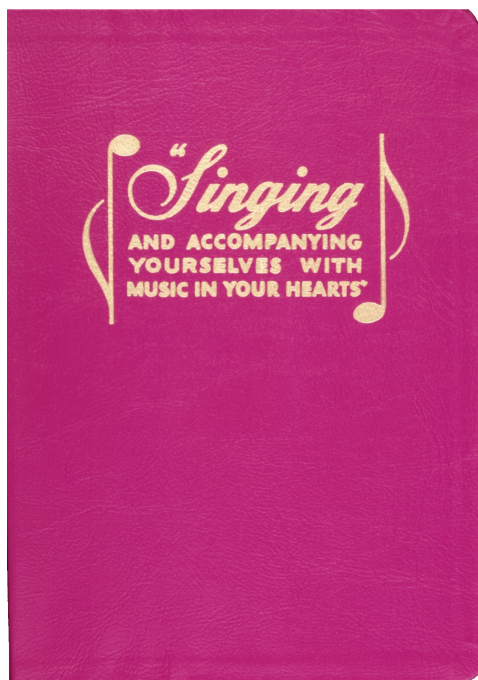
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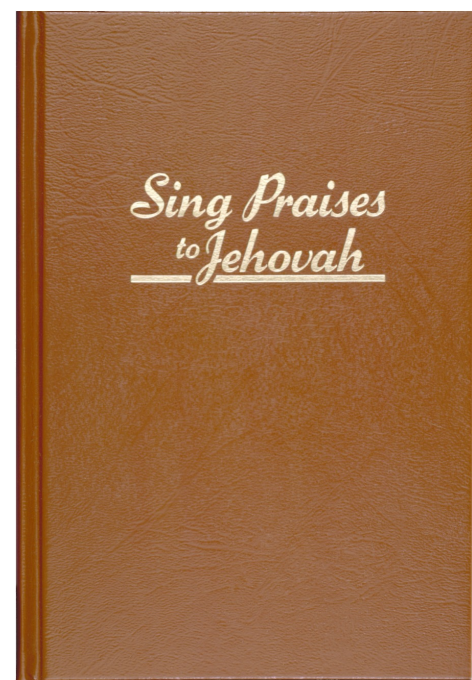
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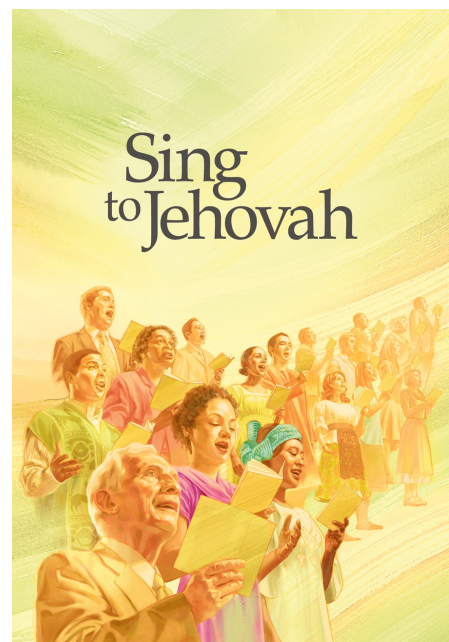
1950



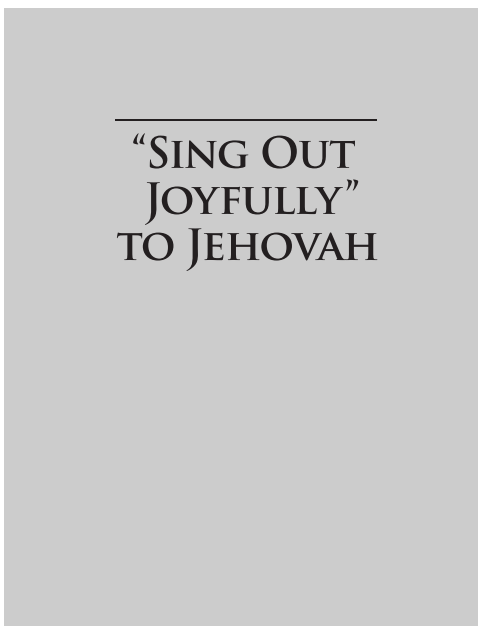
1966



1984



2009



2016

For copies of these see my "Old Publications" folder.