

- Song 146 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- **“Look! I Am Making All Things New”:** (10 min.)
 Re 21:1—“The former heaven and the former earth had passed away” (re 301 ¶2)
 Re 21:3, 4—“The former things have passed away” (w13 12/1 11 ¶2-4)
 Re 21:5—Jehovah’s promise is trustworthy (w03 8/1 12 ¶14)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (8 min.)
 Re 20:5—In what sense will “the rest of the dead” come to life at the end of the 1,000 years? (it-2 249 ¶2)

Re 20:14, 15—What is “the lake of fire”? (it-2 189-190)

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

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

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Re 20:1-15 (5)

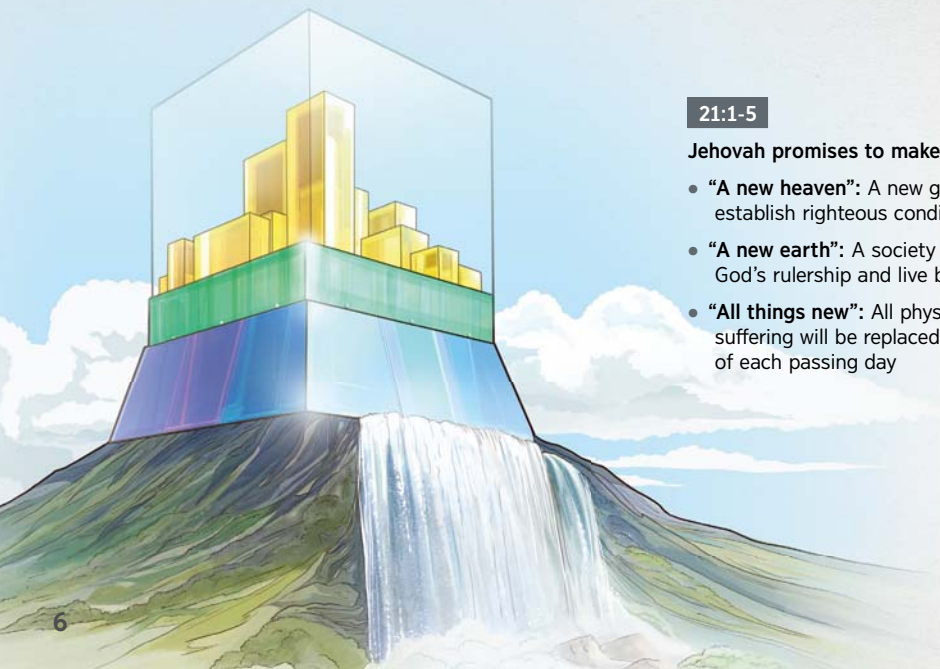
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LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

- Song 57
- **“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Being Adaptable”:** (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video.
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REVELATION 20-22 | “Look! I Am Making All Things New”



21:1-5

Jehovah promises to make all things new.

- **“A new heaven”:** A new government that will establish righteous conditions on earth
- **“A new earth”:** A society of people who submit to God’s rulership and live by his righteous standards
- **“All things new”:** All physical, mental, and emotional suffering will be replaced by the joyous memories of each passing day

“Making All Things New”

(Revelation 21:1-5)

1. “The signs of the times” prove God’s rule has begun.
In glory enthroned sits Jehovah’s Son.
The heavens are cleansed, Satan’s now debased,
And soon on the earth let God’s will take place.

(CHORUS)

*Rejoice! For God’s tent is with men,
And he himself resides with them.
No more will there be pain or worrying,
No sting of death nor any sorrowing.
For God has said: ‘I’m making all things new.’
These words faithful are and true.*

2. Let all men the pure New Jerusalem see,
The bride of the Lamb shining radiantly.
Adorned for her husband in gems so bright,
And only Jehovah will be her light.

(Chorus)

3. This city so grand will become a delight.
Its gates will be open both day and night.
The nations will walk in her glory bright;
The servants of God now reflect that light.

(Chorus)

Revelation 20-22

20 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. ² He seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. ³ And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not mislead the nations anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After this he must be released for a little while.

⁴ And I saw thrones, and those who sat on them were given authority to judge. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed for the witness they gave about Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had not worshipped the wild beast or its image and had not received the mark on their forehead and on their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for 1,000 years. ⁵ (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. ⁶ Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and they will rule as kings with him for the 1,000 years.

⁷ Now as soon as the 1,000 years have ended, Satan will be released from his prison, ⁸ and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma'gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. ⁹ And they advanced over the whole earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and

consumed them. ¹⁰ And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulfur, where both the wild beast and the false prophet already were; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹ And I saw a great white throne and the One seated on it. From before him the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. The dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead in it, and death and the Grave gave up the dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds. ¹⁴ And death and the Grave were hurled into the lake of fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire.

¹⁵ Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire.

21 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more. ² I also saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God and prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. ⁴ And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."

⁵ And the One seated on the throne said: “Look! I am making all things new.” Also he says: “Write, for these words are faithful and true.” ⁶ And he said to me: “They have come to pass! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To anyone thirsting I will give from the spring of the water of life free. ⁷ Anyone conquering will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be my son. ⁸ But as for the cowards and those without faith and those who are disgusting in their filth and murderers and the sexually immoral and those practicing spiritism and idolaters and all the liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur. This means the second death.”

⁹ One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls that were full of the seven last plagues came and said to me: “Come, and I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife.” ¹⁰ So he carried me away in the power of the spirit to a great and lofty mountain, and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God ¹¹ and having the glory of God. Its radiance was like a most precious stone, like a jasper stone shining crystal clear. ¹² It had a great and lofty wall and had 12 gates with 12 angels at the gates, and on the gates were inscribed the names of the 12 tribes of the sons of Israel. ¹³ On the east were three gates, and on the north three gates, and on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. ¹⁴ The wall of the city also had 12 foundation stones, and on them were the 12 names of the 12 apostles of the Lamb.

¹⁵ Now the one who was speaking with me was holding a golden reed as a measure in order to measure the city and

its gates and its wall. ¹⁶ And the city is laid out as a square, and its length is as great as its width. And he measured the city with the reed, 12,000 stadia; its length and width and height are equal. ¹⁷ He also measured its wall, 144 cubits according to a man's measure, at the same time an angel's measure. ¹⁸ Now the wall was made of jasper, and the city was pure gold like clear glass. ¹⁹ The foundations of the city wall were adorned with every sort of precious stone: the first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chal-ce'do-ny, the fourth emerald, ²⁰ the fifth sar-don'yx, the sixth sardius, the seventh chrys'o-lite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrys'o-prase, the eleventh hyacinth, the twelfth amethyst. ²¹ Also, the 12 gates were 12 pearls; each one of the gates was made of one pearl. And the main street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.

²² I did not see a temple in it, for Jehovah God the Almighty is its temple, also the Lamb is. ²³ And the city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God illuminated it, and its lamp was the Lamb.

²⁴ And the nations will walk by means of its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. ²⁵ Its gates will not be closed at all by day, for night will not exist there.

²⁶ And they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. ²⁷ But anything defiled and anyone who does what is disgusting and deceitful will in no way enter into it; only those written in the Lamb's scroll of life will enter.

22 And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² down the middle of its main street. On both sides of the

river were trees of life producing 12 crops of fruit, yielding their fruit each month. And the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.

³ And there will no longer be any curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his slaves will offer him sacred service; ⁴ and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ Also, night will be no more, and they have no need of lamplight or sunlight, for Jehovah God will shed light upon them, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.

⁶ He said to me: “These words are faithful and true; yes, Jehovah, the God who inspired the prophets, has sent his angel to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place. ⁷ Look! I am coming quickly. Happy is anyone observing the words of the prophecy of this scroll.”

⁸ Well I, John, was the one hearing and seeing these things. When I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing me these things. ⁹ But he tells me: “Be careful! Do not do that! I am only a fellow slave of you and of your brothers the prophets and of those observing the words of this scroll. Worship God.”

¹⁰ He also tells me: “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, for the appointed time is near. ¹¹ Let the one who is unrighteous continue in unrighteousness, and let the filthy one continue in his filth; but let the righteous one continue in righteousness, and let the holy one continue in holiness.

¹² “Look! I am coming quickly, and the reward I give is with me, to repay each one according to his work. ¹³ I am the Al'pha and the O-me'ga, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. ¹⁴ Happy are those who wash their robes, so that they may have authority to go to the trees of life and that they may gain entrance into the city through its gates.

¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and those who practice spiritism and those who are sexually immoral and the murderers and the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices lying.’

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, sent my angel to bear witness to you about these things for the congregations. I am the root and the offspring of David and the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ And the spirit and the bride keep on saying, “Come!” and let anyone hearing say, “Come!” and let anyone thirsting come; let anyone who wishes take life’s water free.

¹⁸ “I am bearing witness to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone makes an addition to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this scroll; ¹⁹ and if anyone takes anything away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life and out of the holy city, things that are written about in this scroll.

²⁰ “The one who bears witness of these things says, ‘Yes, I am coming quickly.’”

“Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.”

²¹ May the undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus be with the holy ones.

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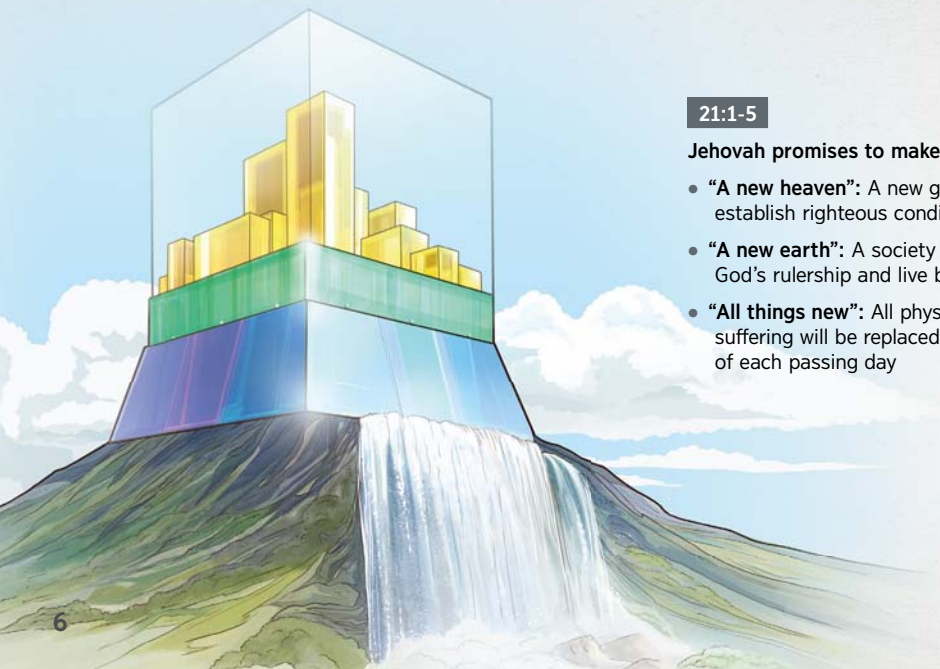
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REVELATION 20-22 | “Look! I Am Making All Things New”



21:1-5

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December 30–January 5 / Revelation 20-22

- Song 146 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 minutes or less)

Treasures From God's Word

"Look! I Am Making All Things New": (10 minutes)

Revelation 21:1-5

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Revelation 21:1—“The former heaven and the former earth had passed away”

Revelation 21:1: And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away, and the sea is no more.

re 301 paragraph 2

Hundreds of years before John's day, Jehovah had said to Isaiah: "For here I am creating new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be called to mind, neither will they come up into the heart." (Isaiah 65:17; 66:22) This prophecy was initially fulfilled when faithful Jews returned to Jerusalem in 537 B.C.E. after their 70 year exile in Babylon. In that restoration, they formed a cleansed society, "a new earth," under a new governmental system, "new heavens." The apostle Peter, however, pointed to a further application of the prophecy, saying: "But there are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to his promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell." (2 Peter 3:13) John now shows that this promise is fulfilled during the Lord's day. "The former heaven and the former earth," Satan's organized system of things with its governmental structure influenced by Satan and his demons, will pass away. The turbulent "sea" of wicked, rebellious mankind will cease to exist. In its place will be "a new heaven and a new earth"—a new earthly society under a new government, God's Kingdom.—Compare Revelation 20:11.

Revelation 21:3, 4—"The former things have passed away"

Revelation 21:3, 4: With that I heard a loud voice from the throne say: "Look! The tent of God is with mankind, and he will reside with

them, and they will be his people. And God himself will be with them. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.”

w13 12/1 11 paragraphs 2-4

“[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 21:4)

What kind of tears will he wipe out? Neither tears of joy nor the tears that protect our eyes. God’s promise refers to tears caused by suffering and sorrow. God will not merely dry off such tears; he will wipe them out completely by removing the causes of unwanted tears—suffering and sorrow.

“Death will be no more.” (Revelation 21:4) What has caused more unwanted tears than the enemy death? Jehovah will release obedient humans from the grip of death. How? By eliminating the real cause of death: sin inherited from Adam. (Romans 5:12) Jehovah will lift obedient humans to perfection on the basis of Jesus’ ransom sacrifice. Then the last enemy, death, will be “brought to nothing.” (1 Corinthians 15:26) Faithful humans will be able to live as God purposed for them to live—forever in perfect health.

“Neither will . . . pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:4) What kind of pain will be no more? All the mental, emotional, and physical pain that has resulted from sin and imperfection and made life miserable for countless millions will be no more.

Revelation 21:5—Jehovah’s promise is trustworthy

Revelation 21:5: And the One seated on the throne said: “Look! I am making all things new.” Also he says: “Write, for these words are faithful and true.”

w03 8/1 12 paragraph 14

We should take seriously what Jehovah tells us in his Word. He is what he says he is, and he will do what he says he will do. We have every reason to trust in God. We can believe it when Jehovah says that he will bring “vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thessalonians 1:8) We may also take Jehovah at his word when he says that he loves those who pursue righteousness, when he says that he will grant everlasting life to those who exercise faith, and when he says that he will eliminate pain, outcry, and even death. Jehovah underscored the reliability of this last promise by giving this instruction to the apostle John: “Write, because these words are faithful and true.”—Revelation 21:4, 5; Proverbs 15:9; John 3:36.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

Revelation 20:5—In what sense will “the rest of the dead” come to life at the end of the 1,000 years?

Revelation 20:5: (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the 1,000 years were ended.) This is the first resurrection.

***it-2* 249 paragraph 2**

In his command to Adam, God implied that if Adam obeyed, he would not die. (Genesis 2:17) So with obedient mankind, when man’s last enemy, death, is brought to nothing, there will be no sin working in their bodies to bring death. To time indefinite they will not need to die. (1 Corinthians 15:26) This bringing of death to nothing takes place at the end of Christ’s reign, which the book of Revelation shows is 1,000 years long. Here it is said of those becoming kings and priests with Christ that they “came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years.” “The rest of the dead” not coming to life “until the thousand years were ended” must be those alive at the end of the thousand years, but before Satan is released from the abyss and brings the decisive test on mankind. By the end of the thousand years, people on earth will have reached human perfection, being in the condition that Adam and Eve were in before they sinned. Now they will really have life in perfection. Those who thereafter pass the test when Satan is released for a short time from the abyss will be able to enjoy that life forever.—Revelation 20:4-10.

Revelation 20:14, 15—What is “the lake of fire”?

Revelation 20:14, 15: And death and the Grave were hurled into the lake of fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire. Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire.

***it-2* 189-190**

Lake of Fire. This expression occurs only in the book of Revelation and is clearly symbolic. The Bible gives its own explanation and definition of the symbol by stating: “This means *the second death*, the lake of fire.”—Revelation 20:14; 21:8.

The symbolic quality of the lake of fire is further evident from the context of references to it in the book of Revelation. Death is said to be hurled into this lake of fire. (Revelation 19:20; 20:14) Death obviously cannot be literally burned. Moreover, the Devil, an invisible spirit creature, is thrown into the lake. Being spirit, he cannot be hurt by literal fire.—Revelation 20:10; compare Exodus 3:2 and Judges 13:20.

Since the lake of fire represents “*the second death*” and since Revelation 20:14 says that both “*death and Hades*” are to be cast into it, it is evident that the lake cannot represent the death man has inherited from Adam (Romans 5:12), nor does it refer to Hades (Sheol). It must, therefore, be symbolic of another kind of death,

one that is without reversal, for the record nowhere speaks of the “lake” as giving up those in it, as do Adamic death and Hades (Sheol). (Revelation 20:13) Thus, those not found written in “the book of life,” unrepentant opposers of God’s sovereignty, are hurled into the lake of fire, meaning eternal destruction, or the second death.—Revelation 20:15.

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Bible Reading: (4 minutes or less) Revelation 20:1-15 (*th* study 5)

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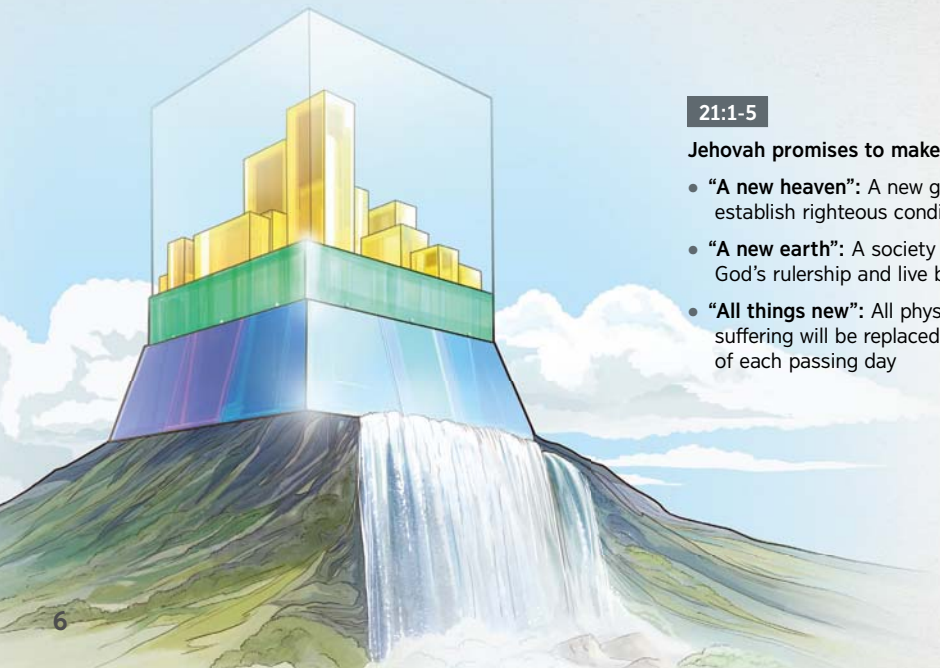
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Our Christian Life and Ministry

MEETING WORKBOOK

Sample Conversations



INITIAL CALL

Question: Where can we find solid advice on how to live a happy life?

Scripture: Ps 1:1, 2

Link: What effect can the love of money and possessions have on our happiness?



FIRST RETURN VISIT

Question: What effect can the love of money and possessions have on our happiness?

Scripture: 1Ti 6:9, 10

Link: What are the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude?



SECOND RETURN VISIT

Question: What are the benefits of maintaining a positive attitude?

Scripture: Pr 17:22

Link: How can a family prosper despite difficulties?



LESSON 12

How Is Our Kingdom-Preaching Work Organized?

Shortly before his death, Jesus announced: “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.” (Matthew 24:14) But how would this global preaching work be accomplished? By following the pattern Jesus set when he was on earth.—Luke 8:1.

We try to contact people at their homes. Jesus trained his disciples to preach the good news from house to house. (Matthew 10:11-13; Acts 5:42; 20:20) Those first-century evangelizers were assigned specific territories in which to preach. (Matthew 10:5, 6; 2 Corinthians 10:13) Similarly today, our preaching work is well-organized, and each congregation is given an assigned area to cover. This enables us to fulfill Jesus’ command to “preach to the people and to give a thorough witness.”—Acts 10:42.

We endeavor to reach people wherever they can be found. Jesus also set the example by preaching to people in public places, such as along the seashore or by a community well. (Mark 4:1; John 4:5-15) We too engage people in conversations about the Bible wherever we can—on the streets, in business places, in parks, or over the telephone. We also witness to our neighbors, workmates, classmates, and relatives when we have an

appropriate opportunity. All these combined efforts have made it possible for millions of people earth wide to hear ‘the good news of salvation.’—Psalm 96:2.

Can you think of someone with whom you would like to share the good news of God’s Kingdom and what that news means for their future? Do not keep this message of hope to yourself. Share it with them as soon as you can!

- What “good news” must be proclaimed?
- How are Jehovah’s Witnesses imitating Jesus’ method of preaching?

[Box/Picture]

FIND OUT MORE

Ask your Bible teacher to demonstrate how you might tactfully share with one of your acquaintances something that you have learned from the Bible.

57 *Preaching to All Sorts of People*

(1 Timothy 2:4)

1. We really want to imitate our God,
To be impartial, as we know he is.
To save all sorts of people is his will;
He welcomes all to come and to be his.

(CHORUS)

*It's the person, not the place;
It's the heart and not the face.
God's message to all people we extend.
So because we really care,
We keep preaching ev'rywhere:
"All sorts of people can become God's friend."*

2. It doesn't matter where they may be found
Or what at first they might appear to be.
What really counts is what they are at heart—
The inner self, the one Jehovah sees.

(Chorus)

3. Jehovah welcomes all who make the choice
To leave the world and all its ways behind.
This we have learned, and this we want to share,
And so we preach to people of all kinds.

(Chorus)

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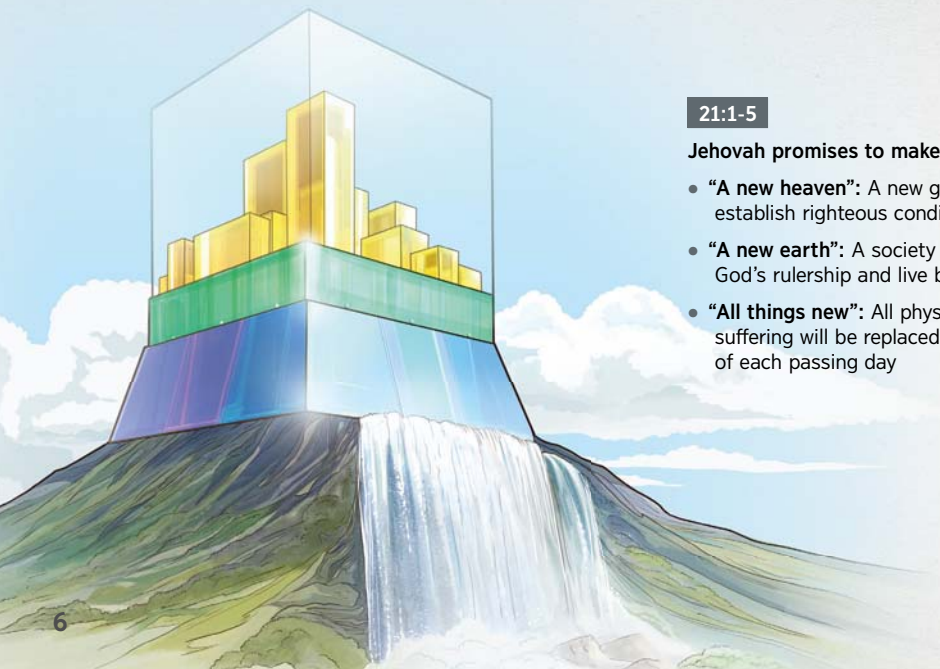
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Jehovah promises to make all things new.

- **“A new heaven”:** A new government that will establish righteous conditions on earth
- **“A new earth”:** A society of people who submit to God’s rulership and live by his righteous standards
- **“All things new”:** All physical, mental, and emotional suffering will be replaced by the joyous memories of each passing day

“Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Being Adaptable”: (15 minutes) Discussion. Play the video.

Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Being Adaptable

Why important: The anointed and the other sheep invite people of all sorts to “take life’s water free.” (Revelation 22:17) This symbolic water represents all of Jehovah’s provisions for recovering obedient humans from sin and death. In order to help people who have diverse customs and religious beliefs, we need to present the “everlasting good news” in a way that appeals to them as individuals.—Revelation 14:6.

How to do it:

- Choose a topic and scripture that will touch the hearts of people *in your territory*. You might select a sample conversation or pick something that you have used with success. What topics and scriptures are well received? Is there a current news item on the minds of people? What would appeal to a man or a woman?
- Include in your conversation greetings and customs that are common *in your area*.—2 Corinthians 6:3, 4
- Be familiar with publications and videos in our Teaching Toolbox to share with someone who shows interest
- Download information in the languages of the people you might meet in your territory

- Adjust your topic to meet the needs of the householder. (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) For instance, what would you say if you learned that the householder recently lost someone in death?

Watch the video, and then answer the following questions:

- What subject did the publisher begin to discuss with the householder?
- What was happening in the householder's life?
- Which of the scripture options was best on this occasion, and why?
- How do you adjust your presentation to appeal to people in your territory?

Improving Our Skills in the Ministry—Being Adaptable

Pub - Good morning.

HH - Good morning.

Pub - My name's Ted, and this is Dan. We've been talking briefly to people in the neighborhood about Jesus. Some think he was just a good man. Others feel he was the Messiah. Still others believe that he never existed. What's your opinion regarding Jesus?

HH - Actually my wife and I are getting ready to go visit our daughter in the hospital.

Pub - Oh, I'm sorry. May we help with anything?

HH - I can't think of anything, but thanks. She had surgery last week. She's been recovering well, but the family's been with her each day since then.

(Publisher soliloquy)

Hmm, the householder is going to visit his daughter in the hospital. I want to read him something from God's Word before I go. Which verse should I read? I could read Matthew 16:16 to make a point about Jesus. It says: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*

Or I could read Acts 24:15. That talks about the resurrection: *"I have hope toward God,... that there is going to be a resurrection."*

Or I could share Isaiah 33:24, about the end to all sickness: *"And no resident will say: I am sick."*

Which verse would be appropriate in this situation?

Pub - Since you're on your way out, I don't want to keep you out the door. But before I go I'd like to share with you an encouraging promise from God's Word.

HH - Okay.

Pub - It's here at Isaiah 33 :24. It says: *"And no resident will say: I am sick."* Wouldn't it be nice to live at a time when there's no more sickness, and no need for hospitals?

HH - Yeah. That would be nice.

Pub - Maybe when we see you again we can discuss that.

HH - Sure. Sounds good.

ILLUSTRATION OF THE WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD

MATTHEW 20:1-16

-
- THE “LAST” WORKERS IN THE VINEYARD
BECOME “FIRST”
-

Jesus has just told his listeners in Perea that “many who are first will be last and the last first.” (Matthew 19:30) He underscores this statement with an illustration about workers in a vineyard:

“The Kingdom of the heavens is like the master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. After he had agreed with the workers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. Going out also about the third hour, he saw others standing unemployed in the marketplace; and to those he said, ‘You too go into the vineyard, and I will give you whatever is fair.’ So off they went. Again he went out about the sixth hour and the ninth hour and did likewise. Finally, about the 11th hour, he went out and found others



standing around, and he said to them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day unemployed?’ They replied, ‘Because nobody has hired us.’ He said to them, ‘You too go into the vineyard.’”—Matthew 20:1-7.

Jesus’ listeners likely think of Jehovah God when they hear mention of “the Kingdom of the heavens” and “the master of a house.” The Scriptures present Jehovah as the owner of a vineyard, which represented the nation of Israel. (Psalm 80:8, 9; Isaiah 5: 3, 4) Those in the Law covenant are likened to workers in the vineyard. Jesus, though, is not illustrating the past. He is describing a situation existing in his time.

The religious leaders, like the Pharisees who recently tried to test him on the subject of divorce, are supposedly laboring continually in God’s service. They are like full-time workers who expect full pay, the wage being a denarius for a day’s work.

The priests and others in this group consider the common Jews as serving God to a lesser extent, like part-time laborers in God’s vineyard. In Jesus’ illus-

tration, these are the men who are employed “about the third hour” (9:00 a.m.) or later in the workday—at the sixth, ninth, and finally the eleventh hour (5:00 p.m.).

The men and women who follow Jesus are viewed as “accursed people.” (John 7:49) For most of their lives, they have been fishermen or other laborers. Then, in the fall of 29 C.E., “the master of the vineyard” sent Jesus to call these lowly people to labor for God as Christ’s disciples. They are “the last” whom Jesus mentions, the 11th-hour vineyard workers.

Finishing his illustration, Jesus describes what occurs at the close of the workday: “When evening came, the master of the vineyard said to his man in charge, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last and ending with the first.’ When the 11th-hour men came, they each received a denarius. So when the first came, they assumed that they would receive more, but they too were paid at the rate of a denarius. On receiving it, they began to complain against the master of the house

and said, ‘These last men put in one hour’s work; still you made them equal to us who bore the burden of the day and the burning heat!’ But he said in reply to one of them, ‘Fellow, I do you no wrong. You agreed with me for a denarius, did you not? Take what is yours and go. I want to give to this last one the same as to you. Do I not have the right to do what I want with my own things? Or is your eye envious because I am good?’ In this way, the last ones will be first, and the first ones last.”—Matthew 20:8-16.

The disciples may wonder about that final part of Jesus’ illustration. How will the Jewish religious leaders, who imagine themselves “first,” become “last”? And how will Jesus’ disciples become “first”?

Jesus’ disciples, whom the Pharisees and others view as “last,” are in line to be “first,” to receive full pay. With Jesus’ death, earthly Jerusalem is to be cast off, whereupon God will choose a new nation, “the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16; Matthew 23:38) John the Baptist pointed to such ones when he spoke about a coming baptism with holy spirit.

Those who have been “last” are to be the first to receive that baptism and to be given the privilege of being witnesses of Jesus “to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:5, 8; Matthew 3:11) To the extent that the disciples grasp the dramatic change Jesus is pointing to, they may foresee facing extreme displeasure from the religious leaders, who become “last.”

- ◇ Why is it logical to understand Jehovah to be “the master of the vineyard,” and who are “the workers” in it?
- ◇ What dramatic change is Jesus pointing to with this illustration?
- ◇ When does this change become evident?

*“Taste and See That
Jehovah Is Good”*
(Psalm 34:8)

1. Our service to God we cherish;
We value our priv’lege to preach.
We buy out the time and give God our best,
For many we still need to reach.

(CHORUS)

*God’s Word invites us: ‘Come taste and see—
See that Jehovah is good.’
Godly devotion brings greatest gain,
We know we’ve done all we could.*

2. For those in the full-time service,
Rich blessings and treasures abound.
By trusting in God to care for our needs,
In all things contentment is found.

(Chorus)

NOVEMBER 2019

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
DECEMBER 30, 2019–FEBRUARY 2, 2020

Study Article 44: December 30–January 5	2
Build Strong Friendships Before the End Comes	
<hr/>	
Study Article 45: January 6-12	15
How Holy Spirit Helps Us	
<hr/>	
Study Article 46: January 13-19	27
Are You Maintaining Your “Large Shield of Faith”?	
<hr/>	
Study Article 47: January 20-26	39
Lessons We Can Learn From the Book of Leviticus	
<hr/>	
Study Article 48: January 27–February 2	52
“Complete What You Started to Do”	
<hr/>	
DID YOU KNOW?	62
What role did stewards play in Bible times?	

COVER PICTURE:

On Atonement Day, the Israelite high priest entered the Most Holy with incense and fiery coals to fill the room with a sweet-smelling aroma. Later, he reentered the Most Holy with the blood of the sin offerings (See study article 47, paragraph 4)

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101 *Working Together in Unity*

(Ephesians 4:3)

1. From a world divided and cold,
 God has brought us into his fold.
 Unity and peace we possess,
 Bringing us happiness.
 Unity we cherish;
 Harmony is sweet.
 In God's work there's much to be done.
 He directs us now through his Son.
 May we serve obediently,
 Working in harmony.
2. As we pray to be of one mind,
 Always tender, loving, and kind,
 Love will grow and praise will increase,
 Giving us joy and peace.
 Peace is so refreshing,
 Bringing such delight.
 As we show true brotherly love,
 God will grant us peace from above.
 With his help, united we'll be,
 Serving him endlessly.

Build Strong Friendships Before the End Comes

“A true friend shows love at all times.”—PROV. 17:17.

SONG 101

Working Together in Unity

PREVIEW

As the end draws near, we all need to strengthen our relationships with fellow believers. In this article, we will examine what we can learn from the experience of Jeremiah. We will also discuss how developing close friendships today will help us in times of trial.

AS WE move deeper into “the last days,” we may face severe adversities. (2 Tim. 3:1) For example, after an election campaign, a country in western Africa was torn apart by social unrest and mob violence. For over six months, our brothers and sisters could not move about freely because they were in a combat zone. What helped them to cope with such hardships? Some found refuge in the homes of brothers living in a safer area. One brother reported: “In such a situation, I appreciated having friends around me. We were able to encourage one another.”

² When “the great tribulation” strikes, we will appreciate having good friends who love us. (Rev. 7:14) So it is urgent that we build strong bonds of friendship now. (Read 1 Peter 4:7, 8.) We can learn much from the experience of Jeremiah, whose friends helped him survive during the time leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem.* How can we imitate Jeremiah?

* Events in the book of Jeremiah are not presented in chronological order.

1-2. According to 1 Peter 4:7, 8, what will help us to cope with adversities?

LEARN FROM JEREMIAH'S EXAMPLE

³ For at least 40 years, Jeremiah lived among disloyal people, including neighbors and possibly some relatives from his hometown of Anathoth. (Jer. 11:21; 12:6) However, he did not isolate himself. In fact, he expressed his feelings to his loyal secretary Baruch and ultimately to us. (Jer. 8:21; 9:1; 20:14-18; 45:1) We can well imagine that as Baruch wrote down Jeremiah's eventful story, the two developed deep affection and respect for each other.—Jer. 20:1, 2; 26:7-11.

⁴ For many years, Jeremiah had boldly warned the Israelites about what was going to happen to Jerusalem. (Jer. 25:3) In a further attempt to move the people to repentance, Jehovah asked Jeremiah to write His warnings on a scroll. (Jer. 36:1-4) As Jeremiah and Baruch worked closely together on this God-given task, which probably lasted several months, they no doubt had faith-strengthening conversations.

3. (a) What could have caused Jeremiah to isolate himself?
(b) What did Jeremiah disclose to his secretary Baruch, and with what result?

4. What did Jehovah ask Jeremiah to do, and how did this assignment strengthen the friendship between Jeremiah and Baruch?

⁵ When the time came for the contents of the scroll to be revealed, Jeremiah had to rely on his friend Baruch to deliver the message. (Jer. 36:5, 6) Baruch courageously fulfilled his dangerous assignment. Can you imagine how proud Jeremiah must have felt when Baruch went to the temple courtyard and did what he had been asked to do? (Jer. 36:8-10) The princes of Judah heard what Baruch had done, and they commanded him to read the scroll aloud to them! (Jer. 36:14, 15) The princes decided to tell King Jehoiakim

5. How did Baruch prove to be a good friend to Jeremiah?

We will need good friends during “the great tribulation”
(See paragraph 2)



what Jeremiah had said. Considerately, they told Baruch: “Go and hide yourselves, you and Jeremiah, and do not let anyone know where you are.” (Jer. 36:16-19) That was good advice!

⁶ King Jehoiakim got so angry when he heard the words written by Jeremiah that he burned the scroll and ordered the arrest of Jeremiah and Baruch. However, Jeremiah was not intimidated. He took another scroll, gave it to Baruch, and as Jeremiah dictated Jehovah’s message, Baruch wrote “all the words of the scroll that King Jehoiakim of Judah had burned in the fire.”—Jer. 36:26-28, 32.

⁷ People who live through a trial together often form a close bond. So we can imagine that as they worked together to replace the scroll destroyed by wicked King Jehoiakim, Jeremiah and Baruch developed greater appreciation for each other’s qualities. How can we benefit from the example set by these two faithful men?

HEART-TO-HEART COMMUNICATION

⁸ We may find it difficult to open up to others be-

-
6. How did Jeremiah and Baruch respond to opposition?
 7. What likely happened as Jeremiah and Baruch worked together?
 8. What might hinder us from making close friends, and why should we not give up?

cause someone might have hurt us in the past. (Prov. 18:19, 24) Or we may feel that we lack the time and energy to cultivate close relationships. However, we should not give up. If we want our brothers to stand by us when trials come, we must learn to trust them now with our thoughts and feelings. That is an important step toward becoming true friends.—1 Pet. 1:22.

⁹ Jesus showed that he trusted his friends by communicating openly with them. (John 15:15) We can imitate him by sharing our joys, concerns, and disappointments with others. Listen carefully as someone talks to you, and you may learn that you have many thoughts, feelings, and goals in common. Consider the example of Cindy, a sister in her 20's. She befriended a pioneer in her 60's named Marie-Louise. Cindy and Marie-Louise work together in field service every Thursday morning, and they talk freely with each other about a variety of subjects. Cindy says, "I enjoy having deep conversations with friends because this helps me to know and understand them better." Friendship thrives in the warm atmosphere of

9. (a) How did Jesus show that he trusted his friends? (b) How can open communication help you to deepen your relationships with others? Give an example.

open communication. Like Cindy, if you take the initiative to have warm and open conversations with others, your friendships with them are likely to grow.—Prov. 27:9.

WORK TOGETHER

¹⁰ As happened in the case of Jeremiah and Baruch, when we work alongside fellow believers and observe firsthand their endearing qualities, we learn from them and draw closer to them. (Read Proverbs 27:17.) For example, how do you feel when you are in the ministry and you hear your friend boldly defend his faith or speak with heartfelt conviction about Jehovah and his purposes? Likely you feel drawn to him even more.

¹¹ Consider two experiences that show how working in the ministry draws people together. Adeline, a 23-year-old sister, asked one of her friends, Candice, to go with her to preach in seldom-worked territory. “We wanted to be more motivated and to enjoy the ministry more,” she says. “We both needed a spiritual boost.” How did they ben-

10. According to Proverbs 27:17, what can result when we work alongside fellow believers?

11-12. Give an example of how sharing in the ministry can help us to strengthen our friendships.

efit from working together? “At the end of each day,” says Adeline, “we discussed how we felt, what touched us about the conversations we had, and how we sensed Jehovah’s direction in our ministry. We both enjoyed these deep discussions and got to know each other even better.”

¹² Laila and Marianne, two single sisters from France, went preaching for five weeks in Bangui, the bustling capital of the Central African Republic. Laila recalls: “Marianne and I experienced difficulties, but thanks to good communication and genuine love, our friendship grew stronger. As I observed Marianne’s flexibility, her love for the local people, and her zeal in the ministry, my admiration for her increased.” You do not have to move to a foreign country to enjoy these benefits. Each time you work in your local territory with a brother or sister, you have the opportunity to get to know that one better and to strengthen your bond of friendship.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE, AND BE FORGIVING

¹³ Sometimes when we work closely with our

13. What challenge might we face when we work closely with our friends?

Good friends work together in the ministry, forgive one another freely, and give help to their brothers and sisters in need (See paragraphs 10, 16, and 18)



friends, we become aware not only of their strengths but also of their weaknesses. What can help us deal with this challenge? Again consider the example of Jeremiah. What helped him to see the good in others and to overlook their failings?

¹⁴ Jeremiah wrote the book named after him, and he likely also wrote the Bible books of 1 and 2 Kings. That assignment no doubt made him especially aware of Jehovah’s mercy toward imperfect humans. For example, he knew that when King Ahab repented of his bad deeds, Jehovah spared him from seeing his entire family destroyed

14. What did Jeremiah learn about Jehovah, and how did this help him?



during his lifetime. (1 Ki. 21:27-29) Similarly, Jeremiah knew that Manasseh did even more to offend Jehovah than Ahab did. Even so, Jehovah forgave Manasseh because he repented. (2 Ki. 21:16, 17; 2 Chron. 33:10-13) Those accounts must have helped Jeremiah to imitate God's patience and mercy in his own dealings with his close friends. —Ps. 103:8, 9.

¹⁵ Consider how Jeremiah dealt with Baruch when he temporarily became distracted in his assignment. Instead of quickly giving up on his friend, Jeremiah helped Baruch by sharing God's

15. How did Jeremiah imitate Jehovah's patience when Baruch became distracted?

kind but frank message with him. (Jer. 45:1-5)
What lessons can we learn from this account?

¹⁶ Realistically, we cannot expect perfection from our brothers and sisters. Therefore, once we have formed close friendships, we need to work hard at keeping those newly formed bonds alive. If our friends make a mistake, we may need to give kind but frank counsel based on God's Word. (Ps. 141:5) And if they hurt us, we need to forgive them. Once we have forgiven them, we must avoid the temptation to bring the offense up again in the future. (Read Proverbs 17:9.) How vital it is during these critical times to focus on the strengths of our brothers and sisters rather than on their weaknesses! Doing so strengthens the bond we share with them, and we will need close friends during the great tribulation.

SHOW LOYAL LOVE

¹⁷ The prophet Jeremiah proved to be a true friend in times of distress. For instance, after the court official Ebed-melech rescued Jeremiah from certain death in a miry cistern, Ebed-melech feared

16. As shown at Proverbs 17:9, what do we need to do to keep our friendships alive?

17. How did Jeremiah prove to be a true friend in times of distress?

that the princes would harm him. When Jeremiah learned about it, he did not remain silent, hoping that his friend would somehow cope on his own. Although Jeremiah was imprisoned, he did what he could by sharing Jehovah's comforting promise with his friend Ebed-melech.—Jer. 38:7-13; 39:15-18.

¹⁸ Today, our brothers and sisters face a variety of challenges. For instance, many suffer from natural or man-made disasters. When that happens, some of us may be able to welcome these friends into our home. Others may be able to help financially. But all of us can ask Jehovah to help our brothers and sisters. If we learn that a brother or sister is discouraged, we may not know what to say or how to react. But all of us have much to offer. For example, we can make time to be with our friend. We can listen sympathetically when he or she speaks. And we can share our favorite comforting scripture. (Isa. 50:4) What matters most is that you are there with your friends when they need you.—Read Proverbs 17:17.

¹⁹ We must be determined to build and maintain

18. According to Proverbs 17:17, how should we respond when a friend is going through hardship?

19. How will building strong friendships now help us in the future?

strong relationships with our brothers and sisters now. Why? Because our enemies will try to divide us by means of lies and misinformation. They will try to turn us against one another. But their efforts will be wasted. They will be unable to break our bonds of love. Nothing they do will disrupt the friendships we have formed. In fact, those friendships will last not only through the end of this system but for eternity!

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 5: This scene depicts what may happen in the future during “the great tribulation.” Several brothers and sisters take shelter in an attic. They find comfort in one another’s companionship during that time of trial.

Pages 10-11: The same brothers and sisters had formed strong friendships well before the beginning of the great tribulation.

HOW DO THE FOLLOWING THINGS HELP TO BUILD STRONG FRIENDSHIPS?

- Heartfelt communication
- Working together in the ministry
- Responding to one another in times of need

24 *Come to Jehovah's Mountain*

(Isaiah 2:2-4)

1. Raise your eyes up and see,
Far above the highest hill.
There stands Jehovah's mountain
Lifted up in this day.

People come from afar,
Ev'rywhere from sea to sea,
Calling to one another,
'Come serve God and obey.'

Now the time has arrived
For the small, a great nation to be.
As we grow and we thrive,
God's direction and blessing we see.

Millions now come to God
And accept his sov'reignty.
Loyal they vow to be
And from his side never stray.

2. Jesus gave the command
 To go forth and preach the word.
Good news about the Kingdom
 Reaches all men today.

Christ now rules from above,
 Urging all to take his side.
Meek ones who hear his voice
 Let God's Word show them the way.

 It brings joy to the heart,
 As the great crowd continues to grow.
And we all have a part,
 As we strive to let ev'ryone know.

Let us lift up the voice,
 Calling out for all to hear,
'Come to Jehovah's mountain,
 Here forever to stay.'

(See also Ps. 43:3; 99:9; Isa. 60:22; Acts 16:5.)

