

- Song 89 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“God Put Abraham to the Test”:** (10 min.)  
 Ge 22:1, 2—God told Abraham to offer up his precious son Isaac (w12 1/1 23 ¶4-6)  
 Ge 22:9-12—Jehovah prevented Abraham from killing Isaac  
 Ge 22:15-18—Jehovah promised to bless Abraham for his obedience (w12 10/15 23 ¶6)
- **Digging for Spiritual Gems:** (10 min.)  
 Ge 22:5—On what basis could Abraham tell his servants that he and Isaac would return to them even though he thought that Isaac was to be sacrificed? (w16.02 11 ¶13)  
  
 Ge 22:12—How does this scripture indicate that Jehovah uses his foreknowledge selectively? (it-1 853 ¶5-6)

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 22:1-18 (2)

**APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY**

- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Expressed With Conviction*, and then discuss study 15 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) *it-1* 604 ¶5—Theme: How Could Abraham Be Declared Righteous Before the Death of Christ? (7)

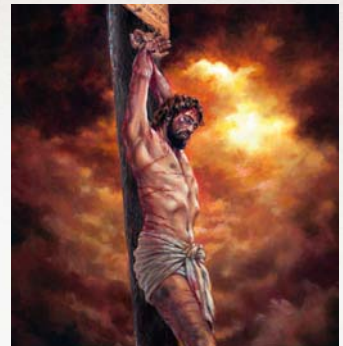
**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 4
- **Protected by Obedience:** (15 min.) Watch the video *Annual Meeting 2017—Talks and 2018 Yeartext—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.)  *jy* chap. 106
- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 16 and Prayer

GENESIS 22-23 | “God Put Abraham to the Test”

**22:1, 2, 9-12, 15-18**

The pain that Abraham suffered as he prepared to sacrifice Isaac helps us to imagine Jehovah’s pain when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, as the ransom. (Joh 3:16) How do Jehovah’s words in verse 2 reflect his own tender feelings?



 **How does Jehovah’s love motivate you?**—1Co 6:20; 1Jo 4:11

# 89 *Listen, Obey, and Be Blessed*

(Luke 11:28)

1. If we have listened to Christ, will we show it?  
His teaching shines as it shows us the way.  
It makes us happy to hear and to know it,  
But we'll be blessed if we know and obey.

*(CHORUS)*

*Listen, obey, and be blessed  
When you hear God's will expressed.  
If you'd be happy and enter his rest,  
Listen, obey, and be blessed.*

2. Our way of life, like a house, gives protection  
When it is built on the rock, not on sand.  
If we apply Jesus' loving direction,  
We'll build a life which on bedrock will stand.

*(Chorus)*

3. Just as a tree rooted deep by the waters  
Gives of its fruit when each season arrives,  
If we obey as God's own sons and daughters,  
We'll all be blessed and enjoy endless lives.

*(Chorus)*

## Genesis 22-23

**22** Now after this the true God put Abraham to the test, and he said to him: “Abraham!” to which he replied: “Here I am!” <sup>2</sup> Then he said: “Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and travel to the land of Mo-ri'ah and offer him up there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will designate to you.”

<sup>3</sup> So Abraham got up early in the morning and saddled his donkey and took two of his servants along with him and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and then he rose and traveled to the place that the true God indicated to him. <sup>4</sup> On the third day, Abraham looked up and saw the place from a distance. <sup>5</sup> Abraham now said to his servants: “You stay here with the donkey, but the boy and I will go over there and worship and return to you.”

<sup>6</sup> So Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. Then he took in his hands the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together. <sup>7</sup> Then Isaac said to his father Abraham: “My father!” He replied: “Yes, my son!” So he continued: “Here are the fire and the wood, but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?” <sup>8</sup> To this Abraham said: “God himself will provide the sheep for the burnt offering, my son.” And both of them walked on together.

<sup>9</sup> Finally they reached the place that the true God had indicated to him, and Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac hand and foot and put him on the altar on top of the wood. <sup>10</sup> Then

Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. <sup>11</sup> But Jehovah's angel called to him from the heavens and said: "Abraham, Abraham!" to which he answered: "Here I am!" <sup>12</sup> Then he said: "Do not harm the boy, and do not do anything at all to him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing because you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me." <sup>13</sup> At that Abraham looked up, and there just beyond him was a ram caught by its horns in a thicket. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son. <sup>14</sup> And Abraham named that place Je-ho'vah-ji'reh. This is why it is still said today: "In the mountain of Jehovah it will be provided."

<sup>15</sup> And Jehovah's angel called to Abraham a second time from the heavens, <sup>16</sup> saying: "'By myself I swear,' declares Jehovah, 'that because you have done this and you have not withheld your son, your only one, <sup>17</sup> I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply your offspring like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand on the seashore, and your offspring will take possession of the gate of his enemies. <sup>18</sup> And by means of your offspring all nations of the earth will obtain a blessing for themselves because you have listened to my voice.'"

<sup>19</sup> After that Abraham returned to his servants, and they got up and went back together to Be'er-she'ba; and Abraham continued to dwell at Be'er-she'ba.

<sup>20</sup> After this it was reported to Abraham: "Here Mil'cah has also borne sons to Na'hor your brother: <sup>21</sup> Uz his firstborn, Buz his brother, Kem-u'el the father of A'ram, <sup>22</sup> Che'sed,

Ha'zo, Pil'dash, Jid'laph, and Be-thu'el.”<sup>23</sup> Be-thu'el became the father of Re-bek'ah. Mil'cah bore these eight to Na'hor the brother of Abraham.<sup>24</sup> His concubine, whose name was Reu'mah, also bore sons: Te'bah, Ga'ham, Ta'hash, and Ma'a-cah.

**23** And Sarah lived for 127 years; these were the years of Sarah's life.<sup>2</sup> So Sarah died in Kir'i-ath-ar'ba, that is, Heb'ron, in the land of Ca'naan, and Abraham began to mourn and to weep over Sarah.<sup>3</sup> Then Abraham got up from before his dead wife and he said to the sons of Heth:<sup>4</sup> “I am a foreigner and settler among you. Give me a property to serve as a burial place in your midst so that I may remove my dead for burial.”<sup>5</sup> At this the sons of Heth answered Abraham:<sup>6</sup> “Hear us, my lord. You are a chieftain of God among us. You may bury your dead in the choicest of our burial places. None of us will hold back his burial place from you to prevent you from burying your dead.”

<sup>7</sup> So Abraham got up and bowed down to the people of the land, to the sons of Heth,<sup>8</sup> and said to them: “If you agree to let me remove my dead for burial, then listen to me and urge E'phron the son of Zo'har<sup>9</sup> to sell me the cave of Mach-pe'lah, which belongs to him; it is at the edge of his field. Let him sell it to me in your presence for the full amount of silver so that I may have a property for a burial place.”

<sup>10</sup> Now E'phron was sitting among the sons of Heth. So E'phron the Hit'tite answered Abraham in the hearing of the sons of Heth, and before all who entered the gate of his city, saying:<sup>11</sup> “No, my lord! Listen to me. I give you both the field

and the cave that is in it. In the presence of the sons of my people, I give it to you. Bury your dead.”<sup>12</sup> At that Abraham bowed down before the people of the land<sup>13</sup> and spoke to E'phron in the hearing of the people, saying: “Listen to me, if you will! I will give you the full amount of silver for the field. Take it from me, in order that I may bury my dead there.”

<sup>14</sup> Then E'phron answered Abraham: <sup>15</sup> “My lord, listen to me. This land is worth 400 silver shekels, but what is that between me and you? So bury your dead.”<sup>16</sup> Abraham listened to E'phron, and Abraham weighed out to E'phron the amount of silver that he had mentioned in the hearing of the sons of Heth, 400 silver shekels according to the weight accepted by the merchants.<sup>17</sup> Thus the field of E'phron in Mach-pe'lah, which was in front of Mam're—the field and the cave in it and all the trees within the boundaries of the field—became confirmed as<sup>18</sup> Abraham's purchased property in the presence of the sons of Heth, before all those entering the gate of his city.<sup>19</sup> After that Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave of the field of Mach-pe'lah in front of Mam're, that is, Heb'ron, in the land of Ca'naan.<sup>20</sup> Thus the field and the cave that was in it were transferred by the sons of Heth to Abraham as property for a burial place.

- Song 89 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“God Put Abraham to the Test”:** (10 min.)  
 Ge 22:1, 2—God told Abraham to offer up his precious son Isaac (w12 1/1 23 ¶4-6)  
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What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

- **Bible Reading:** (4 min. or less) Ge 22:1-18 (2)

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- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Expressed With Conviction*, and then discuss study 15 of the *Teaching* brochure.
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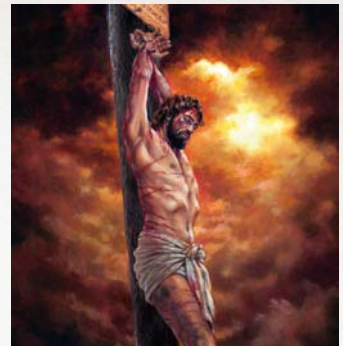
**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 4
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- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
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GENESIS 22-23 | “God Put Abraham to the Test”

**22:1, 2, 9-12, 15-18**

The pain that Abraham suffered as he prepared to sacrifice Isaac helps us to imagine Jehovah’s pain when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, as the ransom. (Joh 3:16) How do Jehovah’s words in verse 2 reflect his own tender feelings?



 **How does Jehovah’s love motivate you?**—1Co 6:20; 1Jo 4:11

## March 2-8 / Genesis 22-23

- Song 89 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 minutes)

### Treasures From God's Word

**"God Put Abraham to the Test":** (10 minutes)

Genesis 22:1,2,9-12,15-18

The pain that Abraham suffered as he prepared to sacrifice Isaac helps us to imagine Jehovah's pain when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, as the ransom. (John 3:16) How do Jehovah's words in verse 2 reflect his own tender feelings?

How does Jehovah's love motivate you?—1 Corinthians 6:20; 1 John 4:11

**Genesis 22:1,2—God told Abraham to offer up his precious son Isaac**

**Genesis 22:1,2:** Now after this the true God put Abraham to the test, and he said to him: "Abraham!" to which he replied: "Here I am!" Then he said: "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and travel to the land of Moriah and offer



him up there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I will designate to you." [End of inserted scripture.]

### **w12 1/1 23 paragraphs 4-6**

Consider Jehovah's words to Abraham: "Take, please, your son, your only son whom you so love, Isaac, and . . . offer him up as a burnt offering." (Genesis 22:2) Notice that Jehovah referred to Isaac as the son "whom you so love." Jehovah knew how precious Isaac was to Abraham. God also knew how He felt about his Son, Jesus. Jehovah loved Jesus so dearly that he twice spoke from heaven, directly referring to Jesus as "my Son, the beloved."—Mark 1:11; 9:7.

Note, too, that Jehovah's request to Abraham included the word "please." One Bible scholar suggests that God's use of this word indicates that "the LORD appreciates the costliness of what he is asking." As we can imagine, that request would have grieved Abraham deeply; in a similar way, we can barely imagine the intense pain that Jehovah must have felt as he watched his beloved Son suffer and die. It was undoubtedly the greatest pain Jehovah had ever experienced or ever will experience.

Really, then, although we may recoil at the thought of what Jehovah asked Abraham to do, we are wise to remember that Jehovah did not allow that faithful patriarch to go through with

the sacrifice. He spared Abraham the worst loss a parent can suffer; he protected Isaac from death. Yet, Jehovah did not shield "his own Son but delivered him up for us all." (Romans 8:32) Why did Jehovah submit himself to such a terrible ordeal? He did so in order that "we might gain life." (1 John 4:9) What a powerful reminder of God's love for us! Are we not moved to show our love for him in return?\*

[Footnote.] \*To learn more about why Jesus' death was necessary and how we can demonstrate our appreciation for it, see chapter 5 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*  
[End of Footnote.]

## **Genesis 22:9-12—Jehovah prevented Abraham from killing Isaac**

**Genesis 22:9-12:** Finally they reached the place that the true God had indicated to him, and Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac hand and foot and put him on the altar on top of the wood. Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. But Jehovah's angel called to him from the heavens and said: "Abraham, Abraham!" to which he answered: "Here I am!" Then he said: "Do not harm the boy, and do not do anything at all to

him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing because you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.”

## **Genesis 22:15-18—Jehovah promised to bless Abraham for his obedience**

**Genesis 22:15-18:** And Jehovah’s angel called to Abraham a second time from the heavens, saying: “‘By myself I swear,’ declares Jehovah, ‘that because you have done this and you have not withheld your son, your only one, I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply your offspring like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand on the seashore, and your offspring will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your offspring all nations of the earth will obtain a blessing for themselves because you have listened to my voice.’”

### **w12 10/15 23 paragraph 6**

For the benefit of sinful mankind, Jehovah God has also made use of oaths by using expressions like “‘As I am alive,’ is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.” (Ezekiel 17:16) The Bible describes more than 40 different occasions when Jehovah God made sworn oaths. Perhaps the best-known example was in God’s dealings with Abraham. Over a period of many years,

Jehovah had made several covenant promises to Abraham that when combined show that the promised Seed would descend from Abraham through his son Isaac. (Genesis 12:1-3,7; 13:14-17; 15:5,18; 21:12) Then Jehovah put Abraham to a severe test, commanding him to offer up his beloved son. Without delay, Abraham obeyed and was about to sacrifice Isaac when an angel of God stopped him. Then God made this oath: "By myself I do swear . . . that by reason of the fact that you have done this thing and you have not withheld your son, your only one, I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves due to the fact that you have listened to my voice."—Genesis 22:1-3,9-12,15-18.

## Digging for Spiritual Gems

**Genesis 22:5—On what basis could Abraham tell his servants that he and Isaac would return to them even though he thought that Isaac was to be sacrificed?**

**Genesis 22:5:** Abraham now said to his servants: "You stay here with the donkey, but the boy and I will go over there and worship and return to you."

### **w16.02 11 paragraph 13**

Before parting from the servants who accompanied them, Abraham said: "You stay here with the donkey, but the *boy and I* will go over there and worship and *return to you.*" (Genesis 22:5) What did Abraham mean? Was he lying to his servants, telling them that Isaac would return when Abraham knew that Isaac was to be sacrificed? No. The Bible gives us some insight into what Abraham was thinking. (Read Hebrews 11:19.) Abraham "reasoned that God was able to raise [Isaac] up even from the dead." Yes, Abraham believed in the resurrection. He knew that Jehovah had revived his reproductive powers and those of Sarah in their old age. (Hebrews 11:11,12,18) Abraham realized that nothing was impossible for Jehovah. So he was confident that whatever happened on that challenging day, his beloved son would be restored to him so that all of Jehovah's promises

could be fulfilled. No wonder Abraham is called “the father of all those having faith”!

### **Genesis 22:12—How does this scripture indicate that Jehovah uses his foreknowledge selectively?**

**Genesis 22:12:** Then he said: “Do not harm the boy, and do not do anything at all to him, for now I do know that you are God-fearing because you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.”

#### ***it-1* 853 paragraphs 5-6**

*Selective exercise of foreknowledge.* The alternative to predestinarianism, the selective or discretionary exercise of God’s powers of foreknowledge, would have to harmonize with God’s own righteous standards and be consistent with what he reveals of himself in his Word. In contrast with the theory of predestinarianism, a number of texts point to an examination by God of a situation then current and a decision made on the basis of such examination.

Thus, at Genesis 11:5-8 God is described as directing his attention earthward, surveying the situation at Babel, and, at that time, determining the action to be taken to break up the

unrighteous project there. After wickedness developed at Sodom and Gomorrah, Jehovah advised Abraham of his decision to investigate (by means of his angels) to “see whether they act altogether according to the outcry over it that has come to me, and, if not, *I can get to know it.*” (Genesis 18:20-22; 19:1) God spoke of ‘becoming acquainted with Abraham,’ and after Abraham went to the point of attempting to sacrifice Isaac, Jehovah said, “For *now I do know* that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.”—Genesis 18:19; 22:11,12; compare Nehemiah 9:7,8; Galatians 4:9.

What spiritual gems from this week’s Bible reading would you like to share regarding Jehovah God, the field ministry, or something else?

**Bible Reading:** (4 minutes or less) Genesis 22:1-18 (*th* study 2)

- Song 89 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

**TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD**

- **“God Put Abraham to the Test”:** (10 min.)  
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- **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching:** (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video *Expressed With Conviction*, and then discuss study 15 of the *Teaching* brochure.
- **Talk:** (5 min. or less) *it-1* 604 ¶5—Theme: How Could Abraham Be Declared Righteous Before the Death of Christ? (7)

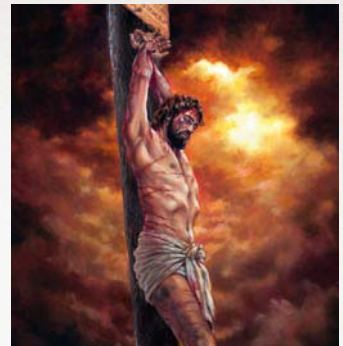
**LIVING AS CHRISTIANS**


- Song 4
- **Protected by Obedience:** (15 min.) Watch the video *Annual Meeting 2017—Talks and 2018 Yeartext—Excerpt*.
- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 min.)  *jy* chap. 106
- Concluding Comments (3 min. or less)
- Song 16 and Prayer

GENESIS 22-23 | “God Put Abraham to the Test”

**22:1, 2, 9-12, 15-18**

The pain that Abraham suffered as he prepared to sacrifice Isaac helps us to imagine Jehovah’s pain when He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, as the ransom. (Joh 3:16) How do Jehovah’s words in verse 2 reflect his own tender feelings?



 **How does Jehovah’s love motivate you?**—1Co 6:20; 1Jo 4:11



# 15

## Expressed With Conviction

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1 Thessalonians 1:5

**SUMMARY:** Show that you firmly believe in the truth and the importance of what you are saying.

### HOW TO DO IT:

- **Prepare thoroughly.** Study the material until you understand how the Scriptural arguments can lead to one logical conclusion. Try to express the main points of your presentation in a few simple words. Concentrate on its value to your listeners. Pray for holy spirit.



Practice your presentation aloud to become fully acquainted with your material and to improve your delivery.

- **Use words that convey conviction.** Rather than repeating the exact wording of published material, use your own words. Choose language that shows you are certain of what you are saying.

- **Express yourself earnestly and sincerely.** Speak with sufficient volume. Where it is not offensive to do so, maintain eye contact with your listeners.



Do not confuse expressing conviction with being tactless, opinionated, or pushy. Even when speaking earnestly, appeal to your listeners in a loving manner.

## Apply Yourself to the Field Ministry

### Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching: (10 minutes)

Discussion. Play the video *Expressed With Conviction*, and then discuss study 15 of the *Teaching* brochure.

- **Talk:** (5 minutes or less) *it-1* 604 paragraph 5—Theme: How Could Abraham Be Declared Righteous Before the Death of Christ? (*th* study 7)

So, also, Abraham's faith, combined with works, was "counted [reckoned, credited, or attributed] to him as righteousness." (Romans 4:20-22) This, of course, does not mean that he and other faithful men of pre-Christian times were perfect or free from sin; yet, by virtue of their exercise of faith in God's promise concerning the "seed" and because they were striving to follow God's commands, they were not classed as unrighteous with no standing before God, like the rest of the world of mankind. (Genesis 3:15; Psalm 119:2,3) Jehovah lovingly accounted them guiltless, when compared with the world of mankind alienated from God. (Psalm 32:1,2; Ephesians 2:12) Thus, God could, by reason of their faith, have dealings with such imperfect men and bless them, doing so while still remaining true to his own perfect

standards of justice. (Psalm 36:10) However, such ones recognized their need for redemption from sin and were awaiting God's due time to provide it.—Psalm 49:7-9; Hebrews 9:26.

## **Living as Christians**

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- **Congregation Bible Study:** (30 minutes) *ly* chapter 106
- Concluding Comments (3 minutes or less)
- Song 16 and Prayer

# 4 “Jehovah Is My Shepherd”

(Psalm 23)

1. Jehovah God is my Shepherd;  
I'll follow where he will lead.  
He knows my hopes and my heart's desire;  
He knows what I truly need.  
To watered pastures he leads me,  
To places secure and blessed.  
And he guides me always with loyal love  
To where I find peace and rest.  
He guides me always with loyal love  
To where I find peace and rest.
2. Refreshing are all your pathways,  
The ways of your righteousness.  
For your name's sake never let me stray  
From walking in faithfulness.  
In valleys deep in the shadows,  
Assured by your staff and rod,  
I will fear no danger of lasting harm,  
For you are my Friend and God.  
I fear no danger of lasting harm,  
For you are my Friend and God.
3. Jehovah, you are my Shepherd;  
I follow where you will lead.  
You strengthen me, and you give me rest;  
You give all I truly need.  
As you most surely are living,  
So sure is my hope in you.  
May your loyal love and your care for me  
Pursue me my whole life through.  
Your loyal love and your care for me  
Pursue me my whole life through.

- Song 89 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (1 min.)

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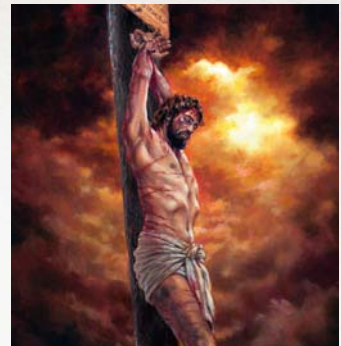
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**22:1, 2, 9-12, 15-18**

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 **How does Jehovah’s love motivate you?**—1Co 6:20; 1Jo 4:11

## TWO ILLUSTRATIONS ABOUT VINEYARDS

MATTHEW 21:28-46    MARK 12:1-12  
LUKE 20:9-19

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- ILLUSTRATION ABOUT TWO SONS
  - ILLUSTRATION OF VINEYARD CULTIVATORS
- 

At the temple, Jesus has just confounded the chief priests and the elders of the people, who challenged him as to the authority by which he is doing things. Jesus' reply silences them. Then he gives an illustration that exposes what kind of people they really are.

Jesus relates: "A man had two children. Going up to the first, he said, 'Child, go work today in the vineyard.' In answer this one said, 'I will not,' but afterward, he felt regret and went out. Approaching the second, he said the same. This one replied, 'I will, Sir,' but did not go out. Which of the two did the will of his father?" (Matthew 21:28-31) The answer is obvious—the first son is the one who in the end did his father's will.



So Jesus tells his opposers: “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going ahead of you into the Kingdom of God.” The tax collectors and the prostitutes initially would not serve God. However, like the first son, they later repented and now are serving him. In contrast, the religious leaders are like the second son, professing to serve God but really failing to do so. Jesus notes: “John [the Baptist] came to you in a way of righteousness, but you did not believe him. However, the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him, and even when you saw this, you did not feel regret afterward so as to believe him.”—Matthew 21: 31, 32.

Jesus follows up that illustration with another. This time, Jesus shows that the religious leaders’ failure goes beyond neglecting to serve God. They are actually wicked. “A man planted a vineyard,” Jesus relates, “and put a fence around it and dug a vat for the winepress and erected a tower; then he leased it to cultivators and traveled abroad. In due season he sent a slave to the cultivators to collect



some of the fruits of the vineyard from them. But they took him, beat him, and sent him away empty-handed. Again he sent another slave to them, and that one they struck on the head and dishonored. And he sent another, and that one they killed, and many others, some of whom they beat and some of whom they killed.”—Mark 12:1-5.

Will those hearing Jesus understand the illustration? Well, they may remember Isaiah’s words of criticism: “The vineyard of Jehovah of armies is the house of Israel; the men of Judah are the plantation he was fond of. He kept hoping for justice, but look! there was injustice.” (Isaiah 5:7) Jesus’ illustration is similar. The landowner is Jehovah, and the vineyard is the nation of Israel, fenced in and protected by God’s Law. Jehovah sent prophets to instruct his people and help them produce good fruitage.

However, “the cultivators” mistreated and killed the “slaves” sent to them. Jesus explains: “One more [the owner of the vineyard] had, a beloved son. He sent him to them last, saying, ‘They will respect my

son.’ But those cultivators said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ So they took him and killed him.”—Mark 12:6-8.

Now Jesus asks: “What will the owner of the vineyard do?” (Mark 12:9) The religious leaders answer: “Because they are evil, he will bring a terrible destruction on them and will lease the vineyard to other cultivators, who will give him the fruits when they become due.”—Matthew 21:41.

They thus unwittingly proclaim judgment upon themselves, for they are among “the cultivators” of Jehovah’s “vineyard,” the nation of Israel. The fruitage that Jehovah rightly expects from such cultivators includes faith in his Son, the Messiah. Jesus looks straight at the religious leaders and says: “Did you never read this scripture: ‘The stone that the builders rejected, this has become the chief cornerstone. This has come from Jehovah, and it is marvelous in our eyes?’” (Mark 12:10, 11) Then Jesus drives home his point: “This is why I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken from you and be

given to a nation producing its fruits.”—Matthew 21:43.

The scribes and chief priests recognize that Jesus “told this illustration with them in mind.” (Luke 20: 19) More than ever, they want to kill him, the rightful “heir.” But they fear the crowds, who consider Jesus a prophet, so they do not try to kill him right then.

- ◇ Whom do the two sons in Jesus’ illustration represent?
- ◇ In the second illustration, who are represented by the “landowner,” “the vineyard,” “the cultivators,” the “slaves,” and “the heir”?
- ◇ What does the future hold for “the cultivators”?

# 16 Praise Jah for His Son, the Anointed

(Revelation 21:2)

1. Jehovah anointed his Son  
To rule over ev'ryone.  
His throne is established on justice,  
That God's will on earth may be done.

*(CHORUS)*

*Praise Jah for his Son, the Anointed.  
Praise Jesus, O you faithful sheep,  
Who loyally follow day after day  
and all his commandments keep.  
Praise Jah for his Son, the Anointed,  
the Ruler of heavenly fame,  
Anointed with exultation and might  
to honor God's holy name.*

2. Christ's brothers are chosen and called.  
God gives them their own new birth.  
This bride class will share in the Kingdom  
And bring Paradise to this earth.

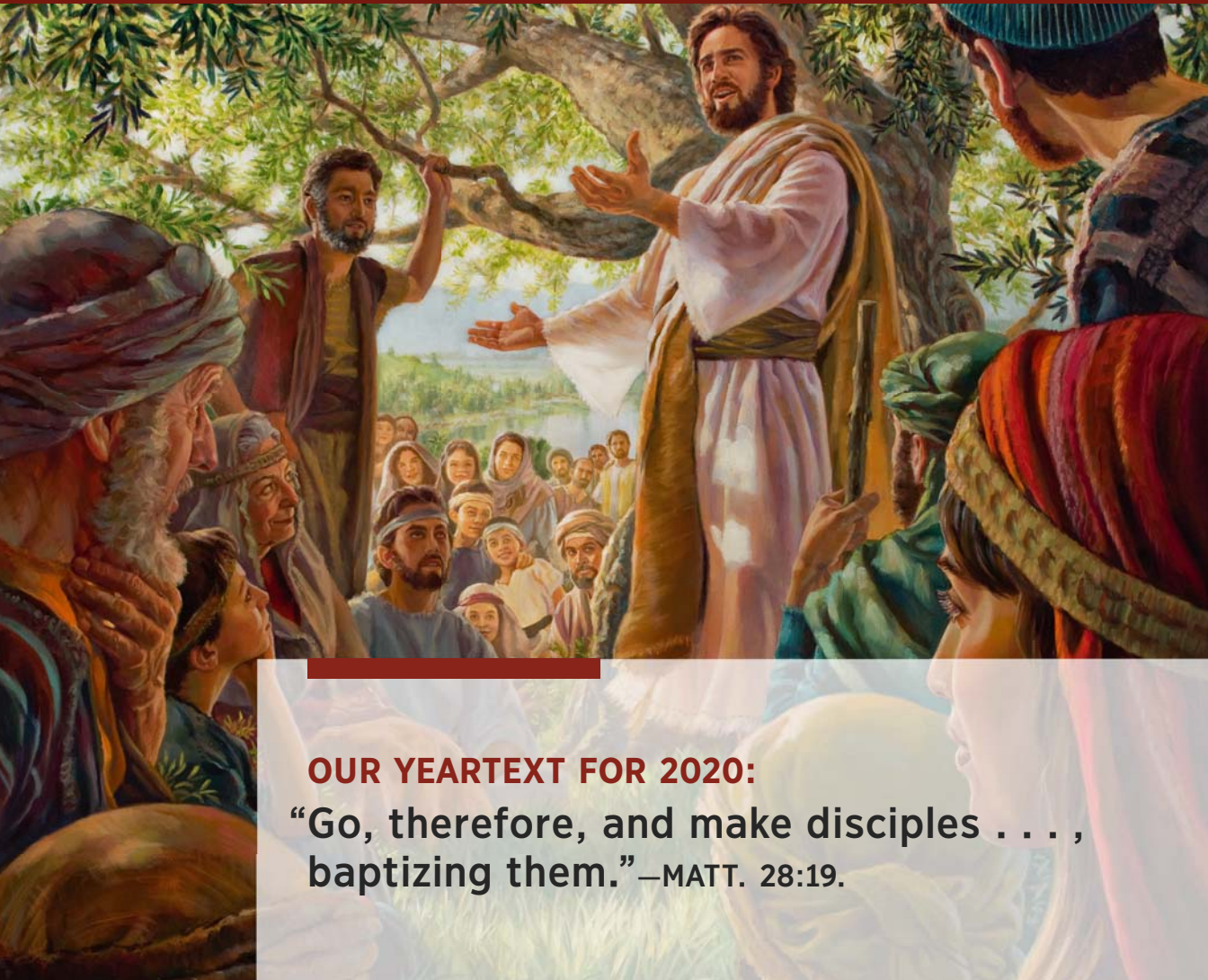
*(Chorus)*

JANUARY 2020

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

LARGE PRINT EDITION



**OUR YEARETEXT FOR 2020:**

**“Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . ,  
baptizing them.”—MATT. 28:19.**



**STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
MARCH 2–APRIL 5, 2020**

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<hr/>	
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<hr/>	
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### COVER PICTURE:

When Jesus met with the apostles and others in Galilee after his resurrection, he instructed them to “go . . . and make disciples” (See study article 1, paragraphs 3-4)

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

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# 79

## *Teach Them to Stand Firm*

(Matthew 28:19, 20)

1. What a joy to teach Jehovah's sheep  
And to see how they have grown.  
We have seen how he has guided them  
As they've made the truth their own.

*(CHORUS)*

*Jehovah, may you hear our prayer  
And keep them in your watchful care.  
In Jesus' name, for them we plead: May they succeed;  
May ev'ry one of them stand firm.*

2. Ev'ry day we said a prayer for them,  
As their faith was under test.  
We made time to teach and care for them;  
They've grown strong, and they've been blessed.

*(Chorus)*

3. May they all maintain their confidence,  
Trust in God and in his Son.  
Through endurance and obedience,  
May their race for life be won.

*(Chorus)*

# “Go, Therefore, and Make Disciples”

## **OUR YEARTEXT FOR 2020:**

*“Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , baptizing them.”*

—MATT. 28:19.

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## **SONG 79**

Teach Them to Stand Firm

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## **PREVIEW**

Our yeartext for 2020 encourages us to “make disciples.” That command applies to all of Jehovah’s servants. How can we reach the hearts of our Bible students so that they become disciples of Christ? This article will show how we can help our Bible students to draw closer to Jehovah. We will also consider how to decide whether we should continue the study or not.



IT IS daybreak, Nisan 16, 33 C.E. With heavy hearts, a group of God-fearing women make their way to the tomb where more than 36 hours earlier the body of the Lord Jesus Christ was laid to rest. When they arrive at the burial site, intending to apply spices and perfumed oils to the body, they are astonished to find that the tomb is empty! An angel tells the disciples that Jesus has risen from the dead, adding: “He is going ahead of you into Galilee. You will see him there.”—Matt. 28:1-7; Luke 23:56; 24:10.

<sup>2</sup> After the women leave the tomb, Jesus himself approaches them and gives the following direction: “Go, report to my brothers so that they may go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” (Matt. 28:10) Jesus must have some very important instructions to give his disciples, for this meeting is the first thing he arranges after his resurrection!

## A COMMAND GIVEN TO WHOM?

<sup>3</sup> Read Matthew 28:16-20. At the meeting that Jesus organized, he outlined the vital work that his disciples would accomplish throughout the first century—the same work that we are accomplishing today.

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1-2. What does an angel tell the women at Jesus’ tomb, and what direction does Jesus himself give them?

3-4. Why can we say that the commission recorded at Matthew 28: 19, 20 was not directed only to the apostles? (See cover picture.)

Jesus said: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”

<sup>4</sup> Jesus wants all his followers to preach. He did not limit this command to the 11 faithful apostles. How can we be so sure? Well, were only the apostles present when the command to make disciples was given on that mountain in Galilee? Recall that the angel said to the women: “You will see him [in Galilee].” So faithful women must also have been present on that occasion. But that is not all. The apostle Paul reveals that Jesus “appeared to more than 500 brothers at one time.” (1 Cor. 15:6) Where?

<sup>5</sup> We have good reasons for thinking that Paul had in mind the very meeting in Galilee described in Matthew chapter 28. What reasons? First, most of Jesus’ disciples were Galileans. So a mountain in Galilee—rather than a private home in Jerusalem—would be a reasonable place to gather with a large number of people. Second, the resurrected Jesus had already met with his 11 apostles in a private home in Jerusalem. If Jesus wanted to instruct only the apostles to preach and make disciples, he could have done that in Jerusalem instead of asking them and the women and others to meet him in Galilee.—Luke 24:33, 36.

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5. What do we learn from 1 Corinthians 15:6?

<sup>6</sup> Note a third important reason. Jesus' command to make disciples was not limited to Christians living in the first century. How do we know? Jesus concluded his instructions to his followers with the words: "I am with you all the days *until the conclusion of the system of things.*" (Matt. 28:20) True to Jesus' words, today the disciple-making work is in full swing. Think of it! Nearly 300,000 people each year get baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses and become disciples of Jesus Christ!

<sup>7</sup> Many who study the Bible progress to baptism. However, some who regularly study the Bible with us seem reluctant to become disciples. They enjoy their studies, but they are not progressing to baptism. If you are conducting a Bible study, we are sure that you want to help your student to apply what he learns and to become a disciple of Christ. This article will discuss how we can reach the student's heart and how we can help him grow spiritually. Why do we need to discuss this topic? Because at some point we might have to decide whether to continue the study or not.

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6. How does Matthew 28:20 show that the command to make disciples applies today, and to what extent is this command being obeyed?

7. What will we now discuss, and why?

## TRY TO REACH THE HEART

<sup>8</sup> Jehovah wants people to serve him because they love him. So our goal is to help our students to understand that Jehovah cares deeply about them as individuals and that he loves them very much. We want to help them to see Jehovah as “a father of the fatherless and a protector of widows.” (Ps. 68:5) As your students come to appreciate God’s love for them, their heart will likely be touched and their own love for him will grow. Some students may find it difficult to view Jehovah as a loving Father because their own father did not show them love and affection. (2 Tim. 3:1, 3) As you conduct the study, then, emphasize Jehovah’s appealing qualities. Help your students to understand that our loving God *wants* them to gain everlasting life, and he is ready to help them to achieve that goal. What else can we do?

<sup>9</sup> *Use the books “What Can the Bible Teach Us?” and “How to Remain in God’s Love.”* Those publications are specially designed to help us reach the heart of our students. For example, chapter 1 of the *Teach Us* book answers the questions: Does God care about us or is he cruel?, How does God feel when people suffer?,

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8. Why can it be challenging to reach the heart?

9-10. What publications should we use when conducting Bible studies, and why those books?

and Can you be Jehovah's friend? What about the *Remain in God's Love* book? That publication will help the student to understand how applying Bible principles can improve his life and draw him closer to Jehovah. Even if you have already studied these publications with others, prepare well for each study, and keep the specific needs of the student in mind.

<sup>10</sup> Suppose, however, that the student is interested in a subject that is discussed in a publication that is not included in our Teaching Toolbox. Perhaps you can encourage him to read that publication on his own so that you can continue to conduct the study in one of our recommended Bible study aids that were just mentioned.

<sup>11</sup> *Start the study session with prayer.* Generally speaking, it is best to begin opening and closing the study with prayer as soon as possible, usually within the first few weeks after starting a regular study. We must help the student to realize that we can understand God's Word only with the help of God's spirit. Some Bible teachers raise the subject of prayer by reading James 1:5, which states: "If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep asking God." The conductor then asks the student, "How can we ask

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11. When should we begin opening and closing the study with prayer, and how might you raise the subject?

God for wisdom?” The student will likely agree that we should pray to God.

<sup>12</sup> *Teach your student how to pray.* Reassure him that Jehovah wants to hear his heartfelt prayers. Explain that in our private prayers, we can really open our heart to Jehovah—expressing feelings that we might hesitate to share with any human. After all, Jehovah already knows our innermost thoughts. (Read Psalm 139:2-4.) We can also encourage our student to ask for God’s help to change wrong thinking and overcome bad habits. Suppose, for example, that someone who has been studying for some time is fond of a certain holiday with pagan origins. He knows it is wrong, but the truth is that he enjoys certain aspects of it. Encourage him to tell Jehovah precisely how he feels and to beg for help to love only what God loves.—Ps. 97:10.

<sup>13</sup> *Invite your Bible student to attend the meetings as soon as possible.* What your student hears and observes at Christian meetings can touch his heart and help him to progress. Show the video *What Happens at a Kingdom Hall?* and warmly invite him to accompany

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12. How would you use Psalm 139:2-4 to help a student to improve the quality of his prayers?

13. (a) Why should we invite our students to attend the meetings as soon as possible? (b) How can we make a student feel more at home in the Kingdom Hall?

you. Offer to provide transportation if possible. It is a good idea to invite a variety of publishers to accompany you on the study. In that way, your student will get acquainted with others in the congregation, and he will likely feel more at home when he attends our meetings.

## **HELP THE STUDENT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY**

<sup>14</sup> Our goal is to help our Bible student to grow spiritually. (Eph. 4:13) When someone agrees to a study of the Bible, he may mainly be interested in how the study will benefit him personally. As his love for Jehovah grows, however, he will likely begin to think about how he can help others, including those who are already part of the congregation. (Matt. 22:37-39) When the time is right, do not hold back from mentioning the privilege of supporting the Kingdom work financially.

<sup>15</sup> *Teach your Bible student what to do when problems arise.* Suppose, for example, that your student, an unbaptized publisher, tells you that he has been offended by someone in the congregation. Rather than take sides, why not explain what his Scriptural options are? He can either forgive the brother or, if he cannot

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14. What can motivate a student to grow spiritually?

15. How can we help a Bible student to respond well when problems arise?

# We want to help our students to become disciples of Christ

How could we make our disciple-making work more productive?



Do not spend time conducting an unproductive study  
(See paragraph 20)







**Start the study session with prayer**  
(See paragraph 11)

**Invite your Bible student to attend the meetings**  
(See paragraph 13)



**Teach your student what to do when problems arise**  
(See paragraph 15)



**There may be others in your territory who are praying for help**  
(See paragraph 20)

let the matter go, approach the person kindly and lovingly with the goal of ‘gaining the brother.’ (Compare Matthew 18:15.) Help your student to prepare what he is going to say. Show him how to use the *JW Library*<sup>®</sup> app, the *Research Guide for Jehovah’s Witnesses*, and *jw.org*<sup>®</sup> to learn practical ways to deal with the situation. The more training he receives before he gets baptized, the better he will get along with others in the congregation afterward.

<sup>16</sup> *Invite others from the congregation—and the circuit overseer when he visits the congregation—to sit in on the study.* Why? In addition to the reasons mentioned earlier, other publishers may be able to give your student help that you are not in the best position to provide. Suppose, for example, that the student has tried to quit smoking but has failed several times. Invite a Witness who overcame the habit, perhaps after experiencing several setbacks, to join you on the study. Your fellow Witness may be able to provide practical advice that the student needs to hear. If you are not comfortable conducting the study in the presence of an experienced brother, invite him to conduct the study on that occasion. In any event, take advantage of the experience of others. Remember, our goal is to help the student to grow spiritually.

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16. What advantages do you see in inviting another publisher to sit in on the study?

## SHOULD I STOP THE STUDY?

<sup>17</sup> If your Bible student is not making steady progress, at some point you will have to ask yourself, ‘Should I stop the study?’ In analyzing the situation, you should consider the person’s aptitude. It takes longer for some people to progress than it does others. Ask yourself: ‘Is my student progressing at a reasonable pace for his situation?’ ‘Is he beginning “to observe,” or apply, the things he is learning?’ (Matt. 28:20) A student may progress slowly, but he should grow at a steady pace.

<sup>18</sup> What, though, if someone who has studied for some time gives little or no indication that he appreciates the study? Consider this scenario: Your student has completed a study of the *Teach Us* book and has perhaps even started the *Remain in God’s Love* book, but he has not yet attended a single congregation meeting—not even the Memorial! And he often cancels the study for trivial reasons. In such a case, you would do well to have a frank talk with the student.\*

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\* Watch the video *Discontinuing Unproductive Bible Studies* on JW Broadcasting®.

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**17-18.** What should you consider when deciding whether you should stop a study?



May it be our determination to focus on improving the quality of our disciple-making work and on helping our students to get baptized (See paragraph 21)

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**19** You might begin by asking him, ‘What do you think will be your biggest challenge in becoming one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?’ The student might answer, ‘I do not mind studying the Bible, but I will never become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses!’ If that is his attitude after he has studied for some time, is there any point in continuing the study? On the other hand, your student may for the first time reveal what is holding him back. For example, he may feel that he could never preach from house to house. Now, knowing how he feels, you will be in a better position to help him.

**20** Sad to say, some students are like the Israelites of Ezekiel’s day. Of them, Jehovah told Ezekiel:

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**19.** What might you say to someone who does not seem to appreciate his Bible study, and what will you need to consider?

**20.** How can understanding Acts 13:48 help us to discern whether to continue conducting a study or not?

“Look! You are to them like a romantic love song, sung with a beautiful voice and skillfully played on a stringed instrument. They will hear your words, but no one will act on them.” (Ezek. 33:32) We may find it hard to tell a person that we will stop studying with him. However, “the time left is reduced.” (1 Cor. 7:29) Rather than spend more time conducting an unproductive study, we need to find someone who gives evidence that he is “rightly disposed for everlasting life.”—Read Acts 13:48.

<sup>21</sup> During 2020, our yeartext will help us to focus on improving the quality of our disciple-making work. It features some of the words Jesus spoke during that momentous meeting on a mountain in Galilee: “Go, therefore, and make disciples . . . , baptizing them.”—Matt. 28:19.

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21. What is our yeartext for 2020, and why is it appropriate?

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### DO YOU REMEMBER?

- Why is it important for us to reach the heart of our Bible students, and how can we do this?
- How can we help our students to progress spiritually?
- What factors might we consider when deciding whether to discontinue a Bible study?

### SONG 70

Search Out Deserving Ones

# 70            *Search Out Deserving Ones* (Matthew 10:11-15)

1. In preaching the Kingdom and teaching the truth,  
Our Lord showed us how to proceed:  
'Search out those deserving and ready to hear,  
Those aware of their spiritual need.  
By greeting the household and wishing it peace,  
Then it may be that peace you'll impart.  
But when they refuse you or turn you away,  
Shake the dust from your feet and depart.'
2. All those who receive you receive him as well,  
Respond when their heart opens wide.  
Their right disposition for unending life  
Will impel them to serve at your side.  
And never be anxious about what to say,  
For Jehovah will help you to speak.  
Your answer when gracious and seasoned with salt  
Will appeal to the humble and meek.