

May 15, 1985

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**You Can Find
True Friends**



The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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TRUE FRIENDS

Why So Hard to Find?



“I WANT to have a million friends.” So goes a popular Brazilian song. But just what *is* a friend? At times the word “friend” is used so loosely that it is applied to practically every acquaintance who is not hostile. A true friend, however, is more than a mere acquaintance. Concerning friendship, Francis Bacon wrote: “It redoubleth joys and cutteth griefs in half.”

To be sure, a true friend is one who adds to your happiness and who, when needed, helps you cope with sorrow. A person without friends, therefore, cannot be completely happy. Millions, though, complain that finding true friends is difficult.

Why True Friends Are Hard to Find

The Bible foretold that today men and women would be “lovers of themselves, . . . self-assuming, haughty, . . . unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of

goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride.” (2 Timothy 3:1-4) No wonder, then, that loyal friends are hard to find! The environment in which people are raised works against their developing the qualities needed in a friend.

But there are other factors. Some people are superficial, concerned only with the surface aspects of life. Others are not willing to make the sacrifices necessary for friendship. “Don’t get involved!” is the advice one hears so often these days. The world’s emphasis on materialism has also taken its toll on friendship. People often prefer possessions—even dogs and cats—to people. Any love they might show to fellow humans tends to be superficial. As one elderly woman observed: “They love, but from a distance.” Even in cultures where profuse hugging and kissing are common courtesies, there may be a lack of real support when dire need strikes.

A lack of time, too, is a common hin-

drance to friendship. In their daily rush, often people are too busy or too exhausted to cultivate friendships. Or some may feel that friends must be treated to lavish entertainment and thus conclude they cannot afford friends!

Shallow Friendships

Many people, nevertheless, claim that they *do* have friends. But how much depth is there to such relationships? Often a person takes an interest in someone because of what that one has to *offer*, not because of what he *is*. Such friendships are therefore likely to be short-lived, for as soon as the "friend" ceases to be useful, he or she is promptly discarded.

Even having things in common is not always a sufficient basis for a lasting friendship. The *Brazil Herald* once told of two close "friends" who enjoyed making the rounds of taverns and drinking heavily on weekends. Once, though, they got into a dispute over which one of them was the better he-man. To prove his claim, one of them emptied his gun into the other. The killer later said that he had murdered his "best friend."

In spite of all the difficulties and obstacles in the way of friendship, however, the fact remains that we all have an innate *need* for friends. Where and how, then, can they be found?

TRUE FRIENDS

How to Find Them

"THE only way to have a friend is to be one," said Ralph Waldo Emerson. Many, though, have chosen the route of solitude. Rather than reaching out and *being* a friend, they cut others off. The result? "People who spend a lot of time by themselves tend to feel 'very passive, unhappy, left out of the world,'" a Brazilian newspaper quoted a researcher as saying. He continued: "When there's nothing else to do, when there's no one to talk to, you turn inwards. It's much easier to get caught up in your problems."

You need not reach such a stage, however. Almost anyone can learn to be a friend and thus gain friends. But how does a person start? A big factor in the ability to make friends is our own person-

ality. An ancient proverb truthfully says: "A man's attraction lies in his kindness." (Proverbs 19:22, *The Jerusalem Bible*) True friendship, therefore, comes to those who express kindness. For example, when we let others know we appreciate them, they are more likely to take an interest in us.

A kind person also *listens* to others. Someone who dominates the conversation or talks excessively about himself will have a hard time finding anyone who is interested in his feelings and aspirations. Kindness also means watching what we say to others. "There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) To illustrate:

You may notice that someone is depressed or consumed with worry. Says a proverb: "Worry can rob you of happiness, but kind words will cheer you up." (Proverbs 12:25, *Today's English Version*) On such an occasion, your healing tongue could win a loyal friend for you.

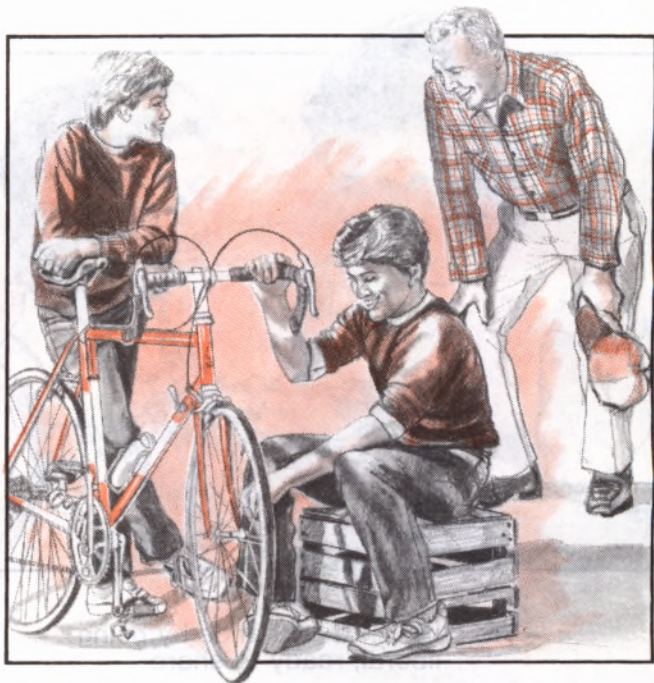
The Value of Loyalty

The writer of Proverbs 18:24 showed deep insight into human relationships when he wrote: "Some friends bring ruin on us, but a true friend is more loyal than a brother." (*The New American Bible*) Yes, who wants a fair-weather friend? But consider the example of David and Jonathan. Jonathan could have had ill will toward David, since Jonathan was the heir to the throne of Israel but knew that David would actually become king. Yet Jonathan showed loyalty, not jealousy, toward David, even risking his life on David's behalf.—1 Samuel 18:1-3; 20:17, 31, 32; 2 Samuel 1:26.

Ruth was another loyal friend. Rather than abandoning her mother-in-law Naomi, she stuck with her. In fact, observers rightly declared that Ruth was 'better than seven sons' to Naomi.—Ruth 1:16, 17; 4:15.

Do you show such loyalty? For example, when you observe flaws in your associates, do you thoughtlessly reveal them to others?

But what if someone dear to you has a serious fault that needs immediate attention? The loyal friend does not hold back from telling the truth out of fear of the other person's reaction. "The wounds inflicted by a lover are faithful," says the Bible. (Proverbs 27:6) This, of course,



True friendship knows no age limit

does not mean that you should be harsh or tactless. Christians in ancient Galatia once needed some outspoken correction. But note how skillfully the apostle Paul handled the situation and then asked: "Well, then, have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?" (Galatians 4:16) A true friend will love you for 'telling the truth,' even if it is corrective counsel.—Proverbs 9:8.

Happiness in Giving

Genuine, lasting friendship does cost something. People who are always striving to get something without giving anything in return will never come to know the happiness Jesus spoke of when he said, "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35; Luke 6:31, 38) Therefore, learn to look at people from the standpoint of what you



We can win true friends by being liberal, ready to share

can do for them, instead of what you can get out of them.

The Bible encourages Christians to be "generous," "liberal, ready to share." (Proverbs 11:25; 1 Timothy 6:18) Your material resources may be quite limited, but what about your *time*? Do you have the habit of always being in a hurry? Friendship takes *time*, and unless a person is willing to make time for others, relationships will not thrive. For example, you may use the well-worn greeting "How are you?" But are you generous enough with your time to stop and be prepared to listen to the answer to this question? Remember that although Jesus Christ was very busy, he always found the time to attend to those who sought him out.—Mark 6: 31-34.

Keeping Our Friendships Alive

Once a friendship has been established, every effort should be made to keep it

alive. True, as you get to know each other, certain weaknesses and flaws will become apparent. Yet you will do well to recognize and accept minor weaknesses. And when in doubt, the noble thing to do is to give your friend the benefit of the doubt, avoiding undue suspicion. 'Put up with one another in love,' counsels Paul. And Peter adds: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins." —Ephesians 4:2; 1 Peter 4:8.

Then, too, how wise it is never to take friends for granted! Even the closest friends need some privacy. Lengthy, frequent, or untimely visits may eventually become wearisome and un-

wanted. Discernment and respect would suggest making arrangements beforehand when at all possible. Proverbs 25:17 counsels: "Make your foot rare at the house of your fellowman, that he may not have his sufficiency of you and certainly hate you."

It is also the course of wisdom to avoid being overly inquisitive, personal, or possessive. Modesty will move us to avoid being dogmatic. Surely, friendship does not give us the right to force our opinions or personal tastes on one another. Indeed, if we are governed by "the wisdom from above," we will be reasonable.—James 3:17.

Be supportive of your friends, following Paul's advice at Romans 12:15: "Rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep." Yes, be willing to share your friends' sorrows, disappointments, joys, and successes. Display a sense of humor, too, being willing to laugh at your own mistakes, not just those of others. Good-

A Friendship That Unites

Jehovah's Witnesses are not only spiritual brothers and sisters but also friends. And since their friendship is based on mutual obedience to the commands of Jesus Christ, it is not limited by national boundaries. (John 15:14) This type of friendship receives God's blessing, which keeps them just as united and secure as a flock of sheep are in their pen.—Micah 2:12.

Often friendship and unity are absent at a construction site. Yet, when Jehovah's Witnesses gather to construct their "quick-build" Kingdom Halls, a healthy spirit of cooperation and camaraderie is seen. For example, Witnesses from the United States, England, and Wales cooperated and shared their methods in building halls. The result?

"I've never seen anything like it in my life," said Roger, a bricklayer from England. "I just couldn't see carpenters working with bricklayers because it never happens in the world. But on a Kingdom Hall site you see brothers working on the roof, while carpenters and bricklayers work underneath with the painters and the carpet layers. All work together. It is wonderful!"

Mike, a father of two, from Wales noted that "everyone can share in that camaraderie." And his friend Malcolm observed why, commenting: "When all the brothers work in unity as one, in God's name, then he blesses that project with his spirit."

natured remarks can even serve to ease tension at awkward moments. Yes, friendship is *work*. But is it not worth the effort?

Finding True Friends

Where, though, can one find true friends? A good place to start would be the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses. These genuine Christians enjoy such good relations that they frequently refer to one another as "the friends," as did their fellow believers of the first century. (3 John 14) Such ones have put away nationalism and racial pride, factors that alienate people. They are endeavoring to

clothe themselves with what the Bible calls "the new personality." This means cultivating such attractive qualities as "the tender affections of compassion, kindness, lowliness of mind, mildness, and long-suffering." (Colossians 3:10-12) You will certainly be able to find desirable friends among people who do this!

By associating with Jehovah's Witnesses, you will also learn how to make friends with Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ. Said Jesus: "You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you." (John 15:14) And Abraham of old was called "Jehovah's friend." Abraham attained that very desirable relationship because of his faith and righteous works, and you can do the same.—James 2:23.

So while it is good to make the effort to cultivate earthly friends, be even more determined to establish friendly relations with our heavenly Friend Jehovah God. He will soon restore Paradise to this earth, allowing all his earthly servants to live in peace and security. Yes, earth's inhabitants will then be surrounded by millions who will eternally prove to be true friends.—Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4; Psalm 37:10, 11.

In Our Next Issue

- **Adam and Eve**
—Myth or Reality?
- **Jesus' Birth**
—Where and When?
- **Subjecting Ourselves to**
Jehovah by Dedication

Cultivating the Finest Friendship in All the Universe

"But you, O Israel, are my servant, you, O Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend."—ISAIAH 41:8.

HOW precious a true friend! But what is the basis for having a genuine friend? What is at the rock bottom of an enduring friendship? It is something that never fails, so that a true friend never fails. What is it? Why, it is the quality that the apostle Paul cited when saying, "Love never fails"!—1 Corinthians 13:8.

² In the Hebrew Scriptures, the noun translated "love" is drawn from a verb meaning "to love." (Deuteronomy 6:4, 5; compare Matthew 22:37.) And in the Greek *Septuagint Version*, the verb translating "you must love" from the Hebrew text is *a-ga-pan'*. However, in that ancient version and in the Christian Greek Scriptures the noun translated "friend" is not based upon that verb but is the Greek noun *phi'los*, derived from a verb meaning "to have affection for." So, according to the original Greek, loving affection is expressed toward a friend or between friends. Even in the English language the word "friend" is drawn from an Anglo-Saxon verb meaning "to love."

1. What is it that causes a genuine friendship never to fail?
2. The verb from which the Greek word for "friend" is derived has what special meaning?

³ The Greek verb from which "friend" is drawn therefore expresses an emotion warmer and more intimate than the love expressed by the verb *a-ga-pan'*, appearing in the Greek text of John 3:16, where Jesus is quoted as saying: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." Thus the love (Greek, *a-ga'pe*) on the part of Jehovah God is broad enough to embrace the whole world of mankind in spite of the sinfulness of the human race. But the only-begotten Son of God told his 11 faithful apostles that they were bound to him by a warmer, more intimate kind of love.

A Precious Kind of Friendship

⁴ Jesus told those apostles that they would continue to be his "friends" if they kept on doing the things that he commanded them to do. Showing that this would include the privileged intimacy resulting from mutual confidence, he said: "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave

3. Compared with God's love for the world of mankind, with what kind of love were Jesus' disciples bound to him?

4. By doing what could Jesus' disciples continue as his "friends," and to what intimacy would this status admit them?

does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:14, 15) In saying that, Jesus applied the term *phi'los* to each one of those apostles.

⁵ According to Proverbs 18:24, the inspired wise man declared: "There exist companions disposed to break one another to pieces, but there exists a friend sticking closer than a brother." Such a friendship is not based upon fleshly relationships; it rests upon an appreciation of the true worth of the one befriended. Yes, fleshly relatives may part company with one another for various selfish reasons, but a solid friend will be unwavering and will adhere to his friendship regardless of the trialsome or difficult conditions, or the heart-searching circumstances that may develop.

⁶ Here we may think of Jonathan, son of

5. The friendship referred to at Proverbs 18:24 rests upon what, and how solid is such a relationship?

6. Of whose strong friendship are we reminded, and how did David later requite that friendship?

rejected King Saul, and of David, whom Jehovah God had chosen and anointed to be Israel's king. Their friendship persisted down to the death of Jonathan on the field of battle. On hearing the sad news, David gave way to the lament recorded in 2 Samuel 1:17-27. Showing how tender his relationship with Jonathan was, David said: "I am distressed over you, my brother Jonathan, very pleasant you were to me. More wonderful was your love to me than the love from women." A friendship like that was not to be forgotten or to go unrequited. It accounted for King David's display of mercy toward Mephibosheth, the surviving son of Jonathan.—2 Samuel 9:1-10.

⁷ That precious kind of friendship has not died off the face of the earth. Today, in this "conclusion of the system of things" when 'the love of the greater number has cooled off,' the warmth of such a loving friendship is strongly felt among

7. (a) Has friendship like that of David and Jonathan died off, especially in this "conclusion of the system of things"? (b) To what expression of intimacy does such friendship admit a person, as Jesus explained to his faithful apostles?

David and Jonathan enjoyed heartfelt, precious friendship. So can you



the dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah God who are giving the worldwide Kingdom witness that Jesus foretold. (Matthew 24:3-14) Friends are inclined to reveal things to one another because of having confidence in one another. Remember that while conversing late at night with the 11 apostles that had stuck with him, Jesus said: "I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:14, 15) Yes, the spiritual things of God's Word that are due to be fulfilled or to be applied would be disclosed first to the true spirit-begotten "friends" of the Master, Jesus Christ. Then these "friends" would have the privilege and responsibility to disclose such hitherto secret things to those wanting to enter into friendly relations with Jehovah God, with whom such secret things originate.

⁸ That is the way Jehovah has proceeded with his spirit-begotten worshipers taken into his new covenant through the Mediator, Jesus Christ. When instituting the Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus said: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf." (Luke 22:20) This was in harmony with Psalm 25:14, which says: "The intimacy with Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him, also his covenant, to cause them to know it." What extraordinary knowledge is imparted to those who come into a friendly relationship with Jehovah God and his Mediator, Jesus Christ!

Those Whom Jehovah Befriends

⁹ Oh, but can we really have the Most

8. To whom does Jehovah accord intimacy with him, and how did Jesus refer to the covenant involved with such intimacy?

9. Is it presumptuous for us to think that Jehovah would take mere human creatures into his friendship, and what Bible texts can we furnish to verify our answer?

High and Almighty God as our personal Friend? Has he really humbled himself to such an extent as to become our Friend? It is not presumptuous to think so. In a letter written to spiritual Israelites before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., James wrote: "The scripture was fulfilled which says: 'Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness,' and he came to be called 'Jehovah's friend.'" (James 1:1; 2:23; Genesis 15:6; Galatians 6:16) In one Hebrew "scripture" to which James there referred we read this appeal made to God by King Jehoshaphat when the security of Jerusalem was threatened by a large-scale invasion: "Did not you yourself, O God of ours, drive away the inhabitants of this land from before your people Israel and then give it to the seed of Abraham your lover ["thy friend," *King James Version*], to time indefinite?" (2 Chronicles 20:7) Here we can note that the basic Hebrew word translated "friend" (*KJ*) means "a lover." Indisputably, Abraham was a lover of Jehovah, the God who called him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and brought him into the Promised Land. As such a lover, Abraham was a man whom Jehovah could befriend, or take into His friendship.

¹⁰ However, at Isaiah 41:8 Jehovah spoke for himself and said these encouraging words to the descendants of Abraham as a nation: "But you, O Israel, are my servant, you, O Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." The Most High God honored this friendship with Abraham by assigning him to be the illustrious forefather of Jesus Christ, the Savior of all mankind, including Abraham himself. This descendant of Abraham was

10. At Isaiah 41:8, who spoke for himself on the matter of friendship, and on the basis of what attitude toward Jehovah was Abraham given a special rating with God?

more than a friend of Jehovah God, for he is God's beloved Son.—John 3:16.

¹¹ From all the foregoing, what conclusion can we draw? That it is possible for human creatures down here on Jehovah's "footstool" to be his friends. (Isaiah 66:1) Of course, our precious friendship with him in this old world will be put to the test, for Satan the Devil, "the god of this system of things," will try to break it up.—2 Corinthians 4:4.

¹² Consider the case of that outstanding man of ancient times named Job, of whom the Christian disciple James said: "Look! We pronounce happy those who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave, that Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful." (James 5:11) Job was no mythical person but actually lived in the land of Uz. The Devil doubted the enduring quality of Job's friendship with God, and Jehovah let Satan put Job to a very severe test. By means of heartbreaking calamities that he brought upon Job, Satan endeavored to make him renounce Jehovah. But Job refused to support the Devil by renouncing God, which would have resulted in Job's dying on Satan's side of the issue of universal sovereignty. To the contrary, Job proved Satan the Devil to be a base liar. On earth, Jesus Christ proved the same thing. But what about us today? Those who treasure Jehovah's friendship are determined to uphold his side of this controversy of universal interest. And they will do so until Satan and his demons are finally abyssed and put to silence before the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ.—Revelation 20:1-4.

11. Why is friendship with Jehovah bound to be put to the test?

12. Like Job of the land of Uz, what should we be determined to do about our own friendship with the Most High?



Abraham was "Jehovah's friend."
Are you?

¹³ No friendship in existence outranks that with the Most High God, Jehovah. Friendship with the only-begotten Son of God ranks next. Such an amicable relationship with them means everlasting life in boundless happiness for us. They rightly demand exclusive allegiance from us. We cannot be hobnobbing with this doomed old world and at the same time be cultivating their friendship. Spiritually speaking, we do not want to be classified as adulteresses, according to James 4:4, which puts the matter point-blank and says: "Adulteresses, do you not know that the friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever, therefore, wants to be a friend of the world is constituting himself an enemy of God." Those words were directed to the spiritual Israelites of the first century C.E., but they also apply to Jehovah's Witnesses living in this 20th-century world, or system of things.

13. How does friendship with Jehovah God and his only-begotten Son rank, and what course must we pursue in order not to be classified figuratively as "adulteresses"?

Shun Friendship That Will Fail

¹⁴ Because of not constituting themselves friends of this corrupt, violent old world, Jehovah's Witnesses are misrepresented, maltreated, and persecuted. So was the greatest witness of Jehovah ever on earth, Jesus Christ, and they are not better than he was. (Revelation 1:5; 3:14) Because they honestly keep adjusting their thinking according to the Word of their finest Friend, Jehovah God, they have been spared the experience described prophetically at Zechariah 13:4-6, where it is written: "It must occur in that day that the prophets will become ashamed, each one of his vision when he prophesies; and they will not wear an official garment of hair for the purpose of deceiving. And he will certainly say, 'I am no prophet. I am a man cultivating the soil, because an earthling man himself acquired me from my youth on.' And one must say to him, 'What are these wounds on your person between your hands?' And he will have to say, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my intense lovers ['friends,' *KJ*].'"

¹⁵ For centuries now, the clergymen of Christendom have worn 'official garments' for the purpose of calling attention to their religious profession and for the self-honoring purpose of distinguishing themselves from the members of their congregations whom they style "the laity." This these clerics do, although there is not a shred of evidence to prove that Jesus Christ and his apostles and the evangelizers he sent out ever wore official religious garments to call attention to their status and to magnify it. Now we are deep into "the conclusion of the system of things"

14. As regards friendship, how do Jehovah's Witnesses avoid having the experience foretold at Zechariah 13:4-6?

15. Why have the clergymen of Christendom worn special garments publicly, and with whom have they made self-seeking friendships?

What Are Your Thoughts?

- ☐ Only by doing what can Jesus' disciples continue to be his friends?
- ☐ How do we know that humans can enjoy Jehovah's friendship, and to whom does he grant intimacy with him?
- ☐ Why is friendship with God bound to be put to the test?
- ☐ With regard to friendship, how do Jehovah's Witnesses avoid experiencing what was foretold at Zechariah 13:4-6?

that began with the end of "the appointed times of the nations," or "the times of the Gentiles," in the year 1914. (Matthew 24:3; Luke 21:24; *KJ*) Long have the clergy tried to be the best of friends with the commercial, military, and political elements of this world. This they have done for their own selfish benefit and without any qualms of conscience. But their selfish friendships of this kind will be short-lived!

¹⁶ The clergy and the laity alike find themselves in a highly scientific age. Worldly relationships are being strained to the limit under the pressure of these times. The clergy, despite their claimed standing with the God of heaven, have gained no favor from him for the commercial, military, and political arrangement of things and are providing no relief for the worsening world situation. Shortly, their worldly "friends" will be brought to the realization that the clergy are worthless, yes, burdensome to them, false in their prophecies of materially better times apart from Jehovah's Kingdom by Christ.

16. (a) According to Bible prophecy, what will worldly "friends" shortly do to the clergy class? (b) Even though in a new status, what final experience will the clergy not escape?

Indeed, those worldly “friends” will finally be moved to give full vent to their loss of confidence, their contempt, yes, their hatred. They will violently destroy the clergy or at least defrock them of their professional official garment and reduce them to an unprofessional, laical position, as explained at Zechariah 13:4-6. But this change of status will not spare them from annihilation with Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion, as foretold

in Revelation chapters 17 and 18. The clergy’s worldly “friends” will fail them utterly.

¹⁷ In the face of this, how important it is to shun selfish friendships of the wrong kind! But how precious the finest friendship in all the universe should be to us! It is worthy of our cultivating it forever.

17. What friendship is worthy of cultivation, and for how long?

The Finest Friendship Endures in an Unfriendly World

“Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that, when such fail, they may receive you into the everlasting dwelling places.”—LUKE 16:9.

“EVEN to his fellowman one who is of little means is an object of hatred, but many are the friends of the rich person.” (Proverbs 14:20) This proverb of King Solomon of Israel did not apply to the greatest man ever on earth, Jesus Christ, the one greater than Solomon. Jesus did not draw Israelites into intimate association with himself by means of material riches; neither did he recognize earthly wealth as the basis for true, enduring friendship.

² It is true that on one occasion Jesus said: “Make friends for yourselves by means of the unrighteous riches, so that, when such fail, they may receive you into

the everlasting dwelling places.” (Luke 16:9) But the “friends” Jesus had in mind were Jehovah God, the Source of all worthwhile possessions, and himself as the Son of his boundlessly rich Father. If we today follow that same counsel, we are brought into the finest friendship that can be enjoyed on earth, that of Jehovah God by means of his self-sacrificing Son, Jesus Christ.

³ Because of their immortal life, these heavenly Ones can remain our firm Friends and can usher us into “everlasting dwelling places.” That is so whether these “everlasting dwelling places” are to be in heaven above with all the holy angels or down here on this earth in Paradise restored.—Luke 23:43.

1. Why did Proverbs 14:20 not apply to Jesus Christ on earth?

2. What friendships did Jesus tell his disciples to make, and for what reason?

3. Into what “dwelling places” can these heavenly Friends usher us?

Admittance Into the Finest Friendship

⁴ The friendship of the Most High God and of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, cannot be bought with money. This fact was emphasized in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in the first-century Christian congregation. Without seeking fame and reputation as they did, we can use our earthly possessions in a way approved by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. (Acts 5:1-11) This is what was meant when Jesus Christ said: "Use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."—Luke 16:9, *New International Version*.

⁵ When Jesus spoke those words, he was not seeking to gain the favor of the tax collectors of the Roman Empire and other sinners. He was not interested in gaining any material wealth for himself on earth, for he had told his disciples to lay up treasures for themselves in the heavens above. Zacchaeus, a Jewish tax collector for the Roman government, decided to act upon this counsel of the Messiah Jesus and openly declared his purpose to do so. In view of this action in support of Kingdom interests, the most notable guest of Zacchaeus declared: "This day salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save what was lost." (Luke 19:1-10) "What was lost" included the tax collector Zacchaeus himself.

⁶ Zacchaeus was admitted into the finest friendship in all the universe, that of the

God and Father of the special guest he was then entertaining. Whether Zacchaeus saw Jesus after His resurrection from the dead and was one of about 120 disciples gathered together in an upper room in Jerusalem on the momentous day of Pentecost of 33 C.E. is not stated in the Bible record. Doubtless, though, Zacchaeus was to be found among the 5,000 spirit-begotten, anointed disciples that were reported on shortly thereafter. (Acts, chapters 2 and 4; 1 Corinthians 15:1-6) But what a contrast we have in Ananias and Sapphira, mentioned earlier! Those two individuals associated with the Jerusalem congregation tried to enhance their reputation among the disciples by falsifying the amount of the contribution that they had made. The punishment that befell them for their dishonesty cost them the finest friendship and serves as a warning to all Christians today.—Acts 4:34-5:11.

⁷ In spite of the unfriendliness of this 20th-century world, Jehovah's Witnesses continue to enjoy the finest friendship in all existence. But why should they be enjoying this rarity whereas the more than a thousand diverse religious systems are not doing so? The evidence shows that it is because the witnesses of Jehovah have done something vital that the religionists of Christendom have not done. For one thing, the Witnesses have come out of false religious systems, for they recognize that these make up the world empire of false religion, designated in the Bible as Babylon the Great. Of course, getting out of some false religion does not automatically put one into Jehovah's organization, for a person could join some other religious system of the world empire of false religion.

7. Despite the unfriendliness of this world, what rarity do Jehovah's Witnesses enjoy?

4. (a) What Bible example shows whether God's friendship can be bought? (b) In what proper way can we use our possessions?
5. What course did Zacchaeus pursue, and with what result?
6. Into what was Zacchaeus admitted, but whose wrong course serves as a warning?

Zacchaeus was taken into the finest friendship in all the universe. Has that been your experience?

⁸ We should note that the divine command to get out of Babylon the Great is addressed to "my people." (Revelation 18:4) According to the Hebrew Scriptures, this divine call is similar to

a command given by God to the exiles of Israel in the land of Babylon. (Isaiah 52:11) Hence, the specification "my people" applies directly to the remnant of the spirit-begotten, anointed disciples of Jesus Christ yet on earth. During World War I of 1914-18, Babylon the Great had taken these anointed ones captive by means of the political, military, and judicial elements of this world in order to put this spiritual remnant out of action. Figuratively speaking, the remnant came into a captive condition, losing freedom of movement in Jehovah's service.

⁹ In Revelation chapter 17, Babylon the Great is pictured as a harlot riding a wild beast with seven heads and ten horns. That symbolic wild beast that goes down into the abyss and comes up again pictures the present-day organization for world peace, namely, the United Nations, the successor to the League of Nations that went into the abyss at the outbreak of World War II. So when Jehovah's people, whom he designates as "my people,"

8. To whom is the command to get out of Babylon the Great directly addressed today?

9. To what extent did Jehovah's Witnesses have to go in getting out of Babylon the Great?



obeyed his call to get out of Babylon the Great, what did they do? They got out not only from under the domination and power of that world empire of false religion but also from under the domination of her political associates, the political elements now embodied in the UN.

¹⁰ The anointed remnant have adopted and maintained strict neutrality with regard to the political and military matters of this system of things. (John 15:19) They undividedly stand for the Kingdom of God by Jesus Christ, established in the heavens at the close of the Gentile Times in 1914. In defiance of the Kingdom, the League of Nations was set up and endorsed by Babylon the Great after the end of World War I in 1918. Hence, this international man-made organization is abominable, disgusting to Jehovah God and also to the faithful remnant of spiritual Israelites on earth. They trust in Jehovah's Kingdom itself and not in any supposed earthly substitute for it. (Matthew 24:15, 16) And so does the modern-day "great

10. With what international organization today do Jehovah's Witnesses have nothing to do, and why so?

crowd," symbolized by the Nethinim and "the sons of the servants of Solomon."—Revelation 7:9-17; Ezra 2:43-58.

¹¹ When Jesus stood on trial for his life before the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, he said: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) So it would be totally wrong for Jesus' "attendants," or disciples, to be friends of this world. Earlier, Jesus had told the first ones of his "attendants," the 11 faithful apostles, that they were "no part of the world" of which Satan the Devil is "the ruler." (John 14:30; 15:19; compare 2 Corinthians 4:4.) This was why the world hated them or was unfriendly toward them. No less so, Jesus' disciples of this 20th century find themselves in an unfriendly world. Despite this, they continue to enjoy the finest friendship in all the universe, that of the God of the righteous world to come, with its "new heavens and a new earth."—2 Peter 3:13.

¹² When a person gets out of Babylon the Great and away from her worldly partners, Big Business and Politics and Militarism, there can be only one other place to go. That is onto the side of the universal organization of the one living and true God, Jehovah. There is no middle ground. This requires that an individual endure the unfriendliness of this world, a factor that makes it so hard for a person to decide to forsake Babylon the Great and the world of which it is a vital part.

11. (a) Why is it wrong for Jesus' disciples to be friends of this world? (b) What attitude does this world take toward Jehovah's Witnesses, but they continue to enjoy what?

12. When a person gets out of Babylon the Great and away from her worldly paramours, on what side only must he take his stand, and what does this entail?

A "New Name" From the Finest Friend

¹³ Our cherished friendship with God makes us happy to be called Jehovah's Witnesses. True, Christ's disciples of the first century had not adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses." But please consider their relationship with the finest Friend of all. Acts 11:26 reports: "It was first in Antioch [Syria] that the disciples were by divine providence called Christians." You will note that the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* says that they were "by divine providence called Christians." The Greek word here rendered "by divine providence called" implies something more than mere random calling. The finest Friend in the universe approved of that name "Christians."

¹⁴ From the term "Christian" has developed the name Christendom, which is applied to the whole realm of professed Christians with its multiplicity of religious sects and denominations. So the title "Christendom" has not been conferred "by divine providence," either through the apostles or 'providentially' according to God's will. Thus the situation today is far different from that in the first century. Only genuine Christians can enjoy the finest friendship in this unfriendly world. So the big question today is, Who are the genuine, real Christians conforming to the inspired Scriptures? Another significant question is, Are Jehovah's Witnesses true Christians having Jehovah God and Jesus Christ as their Friends? In this regard the self-chosen name of God, Jehovah, is at stake.

13. In the first century C.E., what were Jesus' disciples providentially called?

14. What can be said regarding the term "Christendom," and what questions require consideration?

¹⁵ How could Christendom, with its many religions, enjoy friendship with Jehovah? Christendom has pushed the name of Jesus Christ to the fore, almost to the exclusion of his heavenly Father's name, Jehovah. However, in keeping with Bible prophecies, the time has come for Jehovah to make a name for himself. Therefore, his name has to come to the fore. In this behalf, he would use his true witnesses, his chosen people, those enjoying his friendship. At a special first-century meeting held by the apostles and other foremost followers of Jesus Christ, the disciple James said: "Symeon has related thoroughly how God for the first time turned his attention to the nations to take out of them a people for his name."—Acts 15:14.

¹⁶ It would be expected that 'a people for God's name' would be his friends and would uphold the divine name. But what has happened in Christendom? In its popular Bible translations, Jehovah's name has been overshadowed by a title. Why, his name is to be found only four times in the most popular English version of today! (Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4, *King James Version*) Moreover, even in Jewish translations of the Hebrew Scriptures, God's name has been rendered as "the Lord." Such attempted suppression of Jehovah's name is *not* the work of his friends.

¹⁷ In the year 1950, however, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* began to come on the religious scene, and it has reproduced the divine name every

15. In view of what circumstances has the time come for Jehovah to make a name for himself, and what part are the "people for his name" now having in this connection?

16, 17. What has been done about God's name in Christendom's Bible translations, but what is true of the *New World Translation* in this regard?

time it occurs in the original Hebrew Bible text. The *New World Translation* has also restored the divine name to its rightful place in the main text of the Christian Greek Scriptures, the so-called New Testament—yes, 237 times. This is the work of Jehovah's friends.

¹⁸ Of interest to Jehovah's friends are the words of Isaiah 62:2. This verse, addressed to the visible organization of God's dedicated, baptized, spirit-begotten disciples of the Messiah, reads: "And the nations will certainly see your righteousness, O woman, and all kings your glory. And you will actually be called by a new name, which the very mouth of Jehovah will designate." That "name" refers to the blessed condition into which these modern-day anointed disciples have been gathered. Further, in order to be 'a people for God's name,' the remnant of the members of his visible organization should rightly have his name called upon them, should bear that name. This fact was realized in due time. So, in the spirit of Isaiah 62:2, God's spirit-begotten organization, gathered in convention at Columbus, Ohio, in 1931, joyfully adopted the name "Jehovah's witnesses." Following that example, all the congregations of Jehovah's dedicated people adopted that name. And that name has stuck despite worldly predictions to the contrary. At Revelation 3:14 the glorified Jesus Christ called himself "the faithful and true witness." Fittingly, then, from that memorable year of 1931 onward, the congregations of his disciples on earth have providentially espoused that name. Since then, they have endeavored to fulfill their responsibility to live up to that name and make it known. Consequently, Jehovah's name—the peerless name of their finest

18. In the spirit of Isaiah 62:2, what step did God's people take in 1931, and what responsibility have they been fulfilling?



Delighted to have God as their finest Friend, in 1931 Jehovah's Witnesses resolved to be known by his matchless name

Friend—has been brought to the fore throughout the whole earth. And Jehovah has given outstanding evidence that his friendship toward his witnesses has been enduring down to this late date.

¹⁹ Since Jehovah God is for us as his dedicated witnesses, who can really be against us with any success? (Romans 8: 31-34) So we do not fear the unfriendliness of this enemy world. Hence, we carry on as ambassadors or as envoys of the Messianic Kingdom, calling upon sheep-like people to become reconciled to Jehovah God through his royal High Priest, Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:20) Although for this reason the animosity of this world continues to mount against the anointed remnant and their companions, the "great crowd," the finest friendship in all the universe, that of Jehovah God,

19. (a) Why do Jehovah's dedicated witnesses not fear the unfriendliness of this world, and with what privilege will integrity keepers be rewarded at Har-Magedon? (b) For what should all our thanks and praise go to Jehovah?

loyally continues to endure. (Revelation 7:9) It will never be broken off toward us as keepers of integrity toward him. In fact, soon, as at no earlier time, that friendship will be demonstrated during that war of all wars, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty," at Har-Magedon. (Revelation 16: 14, 16) There, face to face with Satan the Devil and his horde of demons and all his visible earthly organization, Jehovah will vindicate His universal sovereignty by His most tremendous victory of all the ages. We, toward whom Jehovah's fine friendship has endured till now, will then be favored with

preservation and with the honor of being eyewitnesses of his superlative triumph by means of the conquering King, Jesus Christ. (Psalm 110:1, 2; Isaiah 66:23, 24) All our heartfelt thanks and praise go to Jehovah God for his enduring friendship! —Psalm 136:1-26.

How Would You Answer?

- ☐ Jesus urged his disciples to make what friendships, and into what "dwelling places" can they thus be ushered?
- ☐ What attitude does the world have toward Jehovah's Witnesses, but what friendship do they continue to enjoy?
- ☐ The 'people for God's name' have been fulfilling what responsibility regarding his name?
- ☐ Why do Jehovah's dedicated witnesses not fear this world's unfriendliness?

Insight on the News

'Hitting a Raw Nerve'

On December 22, 1984, a dramatic incident on a subway car in New York City made headlines. Thirty-seven-year-old commuter Bernhard Hugo Goetz was approached by four youths who, he said, threatened to rob him. Goetz, previously a victim of muggers, pulled out a handgun and shot all four, paralyzing one of them for life.

The shooting touched off a nationwide debate on crime and public safety. "This case hit a real raw nerve," said the co-host of a cable news show. "There is a broad sense of frustration and anger over the state of the criminal justice system." An editorial in *The New York Times* elaborated: "Government has failed [the public] in its most basic responsibility: public safety. To take the law into your own hands implies taking it out of official hands. But the law, on that subway car on Dec. 22, was in no one's hands."

The public's overwhelming interest in the Goetz case revealed feelings shared by many: terror over the threat of being robbed or mugged, and frustration and anger over the fact that more is not being done to ensure public safety. Of course, problems from thieves are not new. (Compare 2 Corinthians 11:26.) What is new is the extent to which crime and other worrisome conditions have made people "faint out of fear and expectation." (Luke 21:26) However, under God's Kingdom government such fear will soon end. In that promised new system, all earth's inhabitants will live in

peace and harmony, and "there will be no one making them tremble."—Micah 4:4.

"Higher" Education

"Most colleges promise to make you better culturally and morally, but it is not evident that they do," says William J. Bennett, the new secretary of education in the United States. "They are not delivering on their promises." There is another reason why he is negative about the state of college education today. "There's a kind of assumption that college graduates are a priestly class and that wonderful things must come to pass when you get a degree," says Bennett. "If my own son . . . came to me and said 'You promised to pay for my tuition at Harvard; how about giving me \$50,000 instead to start a little business?' I might think that was a good idea."

While college may promise a bright future, does it guarantee success? Obviously not. Yet for many people, there is something that does. True Christians today can testify to the cultural, moral, and even financial benefits that they have received from study of God's Word and application of it in their lives. They know, as Paul said, that "all Scripture is . . . beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, . . . that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) A Bible education carries no risk. Tapping wisdom from the God "whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts" leads to genuine success.—Isaiah 55:9.

Abortion Divides

"Nearly 10 years ago," says William V. Shannon of *The Boston Globe*, "a Roman Catholic bishop said to me privately, 'I am concerned that we as a church are driving the wrong way down a one-way street on this abortion issue. . . . Look at Poland. It is probably the most Catholic country in Europe. . . . And yet last year, Polish women had 400,000 abortions. If the Polish bishops cannot stamp out abortion in Poland, which is about 90-per-cent Catholic, how can we hope to do so in this country where we are a minority?'" Continues Shannon: "It was a relevant question then. It is even more relevant today when . . . the number of abortions in [Poland] . . . has climbed to 800,000 a year."

The abortion issue remains a touchy subject for the Vatican, both in politics and within the church itself. In October 1984 a full-page ad in *The New York Times*, endorsed by 24 nuns and 73 other Catholics, stated that the church's condemnation of abortion in all instances was not "the only legitimate Catholic position"—a statement with which the Vatican has taken issue. The ad cited data from a recent survey that indicated that only 11 percent of Catholics disapproved of abortion in all cases. Clearly, the abortion issue divides the church. But God's Word exhorts true Christians to "speak in agreement" and to "think in agreement."—1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11.



Pregnant but Not Married

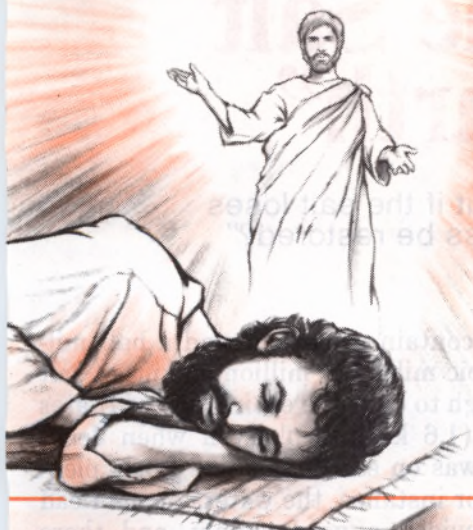
MARY is in the third month of pregnancy. You will remember that she spent the early part of her pregnancy visiting Elizabeth, but now she has returned home to Nazareth. Soon her condition will become public knowledge in her hometown. She, indeed, is in a distressing situation!

What makes the situation worse is that Mary is engaged to become the wife of the carpenter Joseph. And she knows that, under God's law to Israel, a woman engaged to one man, but who willingly has sexual relations with another man, is to be stoned to death. How can she explain her pregnancy to Joseph?

Since Mary has been gone three months, we can be sure Joseph is eager to see her. When they meet, likely Mary breaks the news to him. She may do her best to explain that it is by means of God's holy spirit that she is pregnant. But, as you can imagine, this is a very difficult thing for Joseph.

Joseph knows the fine reputation Mary has. And apparently he loves her dearly. Yet, despite what she may claim, it really seems she is pregnant by some man. Even so, Joseph does not want her to be stoned to death or to be disgraced publicly. So he makes up his mind to divorce her secretly. In those days, engaged persons were viewed as married, and a divorce was required to end an engagement.

Later, as Joseph is still considering these matters, he goes to sleep. Jehovah's

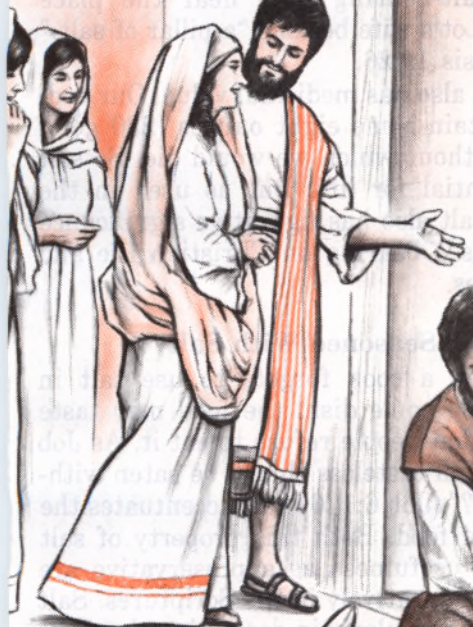


angel appears to him in a dream and says: 'Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she is with child by God's holy spirit. And you should name the child Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

When Joseph wakes up, how grateful he is! Without delay he does just what the angel directed. He takes Mary to his home. This public action serves, in effect, as a marriage ceremony, giving notice that Joseph and Mary are now officially married. But Joseph does not have sexual relations with Mary as long as she is pregnant with Jesus.

Look! Mary is heavy with child, yet Joseph is putting her on a donkey. Where are they going, and why are they making a trip when Mary is about ready to give birth? **Luke 1: 39-41, 56; Matthew 1:18-25; Deuteronomy 22: 23, 24.**

- ♦ What was Joseph's state of mind when learning of Mary's pregnancy, and why?
- ♦ How could Joseph divorce Mary since they were not yet married?
- ♦ What public action served as Joseph and Mary's marriage ceremony?



“You Are the Salt of the Earth”

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its strength, how will its saltiness be restored?”

—MATTHEW 5:13.

SALT is an amazing substance. Chemically, it is composed of sodium, an unusual metallic element, and chlorine, a poisonous gas. The fact that these two dangerous elements can combine to form a beneficial compound is a marvelous provision of the Creator for mankind's good. —Psalm 104:24.

² For one thing, salt is very effective in preventing decay. To illustrate: A certain man put the skins of two slaughtered sheep in the trunk of his car and set off on a long trip in the heat of the African sun. When he finally opened the trunk, there was a repulsive odor and the skins were crawling with maggots! Nevertheless, the fleeces were washed, and salt was rubbed in thoroughly. The effect? They became soft bedside floor mats that were used for years.

³ Clearly, then, salt is invaluable as a preservative. It also has other value. In fact, in ancient China it was prized next to gold. The Latin word for “salt” is *sal*, and in the days of imperial Rome, troops received part of their pay (*salarium*) in salt. From this comes the word “salary.” In most places today, of course, salt is rather common and inexpensive. The

oceans contain some four and a half million cubic miles (19 million cu km) of salt—enough to bury the entire United States a mile (1.6 km) deep! Even when Jesus Christ was on earth, salt was fairly plentiful. For instance, the waters of the Dead Sea provided a good supply, and there were salt-bearing hills near the place where Lot's wife became “a pillar of salt.” —Genesis 19:26.

⁴ Salt also has medicinal value. Our bodies contain some eight ounces (230 g) of salt, without which we would die. So salt is essential for life. But as used in the Bible, salt also has figurative significance that has a bearing on Christian life and activities.

“Seasoned With Salt”

⁵ When a cook forgets to use salt in preparing some dish, the food may taste so flat that people refuse to eat it. As Job said: “Will tasteless things be eaten without salt?” (Job 6:1, 6) Salt accentuates the flavor of food. Both this property of salt and its usefulness as a preservative are applied figuratively in the Scriptures. Salt is used particularly in describing the right kind of speech.

1. What is common salt?
2. How can it be illustrated that salt prevents decay and can be a preservative?
3. What can be said about the value and availability of salt?

4. Why can we say that salt has importance with regard to life?
5. As regards food, what purpose does salt serve?

⁶ The apostle Paul wrote: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one." Another translation reads: "Let your conversation be always gracious, and never insipid." (Colossians 4:6; *The New English Bible*) True Christians spend many hours talking to people about God's Kingdom. Of course, not all of Jehovah's Witnesses are naturally fluent speakers. Yet, if they appreciate the message deeply and speak with conviction and warmth, they can turn the hearts of many people to the truth of God's Word. How vital it is, then, for the speech of Jehovah's servants to be gracious and appealing!

⁷ A Christian's "seasoned" words not only enable the hearer to get the fine flavor of the Bible's message but also tend to preserve the lives of those listening to it. So, just as salt is essential for life, the speech of Jehovah's servants can mean life to those who listen appreciatively to what they say about God's purpose and Kingdom.—Compare John 6:63, 68.

⁸ Accordingly, graciousness should characterize the speech of Christians as they speak to unbelievers. Sometimes hearers of the Kingdom message reply in a harsh or rude manner. But Jehovah's servants must never answer back in that way. Rather, they must always be gracious. What does it mean to be gracious? It means to be kind, pleasing, courteous, and merciful. A Christian's kind, patient way of handling questions, objections, criticism, or bad manners often make a vital difference. As a proverb says, "An answer, when mild, turns away rage." (Proverbs

15:1) Graciousness, courtesy, and tactful replies in the Christian ministry can soften people who, although hard and bitter in manner, really have good hearts.—Proverbs 25:15.

⁹ How, then, should Christians communicate with fellow believers? Ungraciously? Never! Why? Because these dedicated servants of Jehovah are also part of "the flock of God," which is to be treated with tenderness.—Compare 1 Peter 5:2-4; Acts 20:29.

¹⁰ Should a servant of Jehovah use bad language when speaking to workmates who may have irritated him? Would it be proper for a Christian foreman to use unclean speech when workers disappoint him? When Christian husbands and wives are somewhat annoyed, should they scream abuses at each other or at their children? Never! Paul wrote: "Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth . . . Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness. But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you."—Ephesians 4:29-32.

"Have Salt in Yourselves"

¹¹ Since we are imperfect, we all have times when we speak in a manner that is unsuitable for a Christian. As the disciple James candidly admitted: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to

9. How should Christians communicate with fellow believers, and why?

10. What bearing should Ephesians 4:29-32 have on the language used by Jehovah's servants?

11, 12. To "salt" of what kind was Jesus referring at Mark 9:50, and those words would call for what kind of speech and action?

6. How does Colossians 4:6 apply to the ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses?

7. A Christian's "seasoned" words can have what good effect?

8. Why should graciousness characterize the speech of Christian ministers?

bridle also his whole body.” (James 3:2, 8-10) Jesus’ early disciples were no exception to this, and they had to be reproved for failing to speak graciously to one another. For instance, on a certain occasion the disciples argued hotly about who was the greatest among them. Jesus gave the entire group some fine counsel against stumbling others and thus being “salted with fire,” or being destroyed in Gehenna. He then concluded with the words: “Have salt in yourselves, and keep peace between one another.”—Mark 9:33-50.

¹² Obviously, Jesus was not there referring to the small amount of literal salt found in the physical bodies of his disciples. Rather, he was referring to their being considerate, tactful, wholesome, and peaceable in word and conduct—acting in good taste toward others. This is vital so that true Christians can remain at peace with one another.

“The Salt of the Earth”

¹³ Concerning his followers, Jesus also said: “You are the salt of the earth.” (Matthew 5:13) By saying this, Jesus did not mean that his disciples literally were salt. Rather, salt is a preservative, and the message that Jesus’ followers carried to the people would preserve the lives of many. Indeed, his disciples had a preserving influence upon those who listened to their message, preventing spiritual and moral decay among such individuals. There was no question about the fact that the good news declared by Jesus’ followers would preserve life.—Acts 5:20; 13:46-48.

Salt Preserves From Corruption

¹⁴ From Jehovah God’s elevated and pure standpoint, this entire wicked sys-

13. What did Jesus mean when he told his followers, “You are the salt of the earth”?

14. To resist worldly corruption, what is needed?

tem of things must appear much like the sheepskins mentioned earlier. Before the cleansing process and use of salt, they created a bad stench and were crawling with vermin. Well, to some extent, everyone is affected by the conditions in this world, and to resist corruption that reaches into every aspect of life, a person needs courage and must maintain his integrity to God. Only in this way can an individual preserve himself from moral decay. He needs not only graciousness of speech but also the preservative quality that enables him to say no to corruption in all its forms. In his case, there is an urgent need for “salt.”—1 Peter 4:1-3.

¹⁵ A faithful servant of Jehovah must know how to say no to bad practices and temptations. Remember that Jesus said no three times when he was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. (Matthew 4:1-10) And consider the example provided by the prophet Daniel. He learned to say no at a comparatively tender age. When Daniel was a young man in the royal court of Babylon, he and his companions were offered “a daily allowance from the delicacies of the king.” But Daniel and his friends refused. This was not a case of refusing a hospitable offer. Rather, the four young Hebrews insisted on a diet consisting solely of vegetables and water because they were anxious to avoid food prohibited by Jehovah’s Law or defiled by pagan rituals. Real courage was required to take that course. The outcome was rewarding, for at the end of the set period of testing, their physical appearance was better than that of those who had accepted the royal diet. And spiritually those Hebrews enjoyed Jehovah’s blessing and favor.—Daniel 1:5-17.

15. What fine examples were set by Jesus and Daniel?

¹⁶ Jehovah God saw to it that Daniel and his associates were preserved because of 'having salt in themselves.' But we can learn more from Daniel. He was appointed to a high office in the Babylonian government. Under those circumstances he must have had to say no many times, for he was surrounded by pagan people, and the royal court no doubt was full of immorality, lying, bribery, political intrigue, and other corrupt practices. Daniel was under heavy pressure many times. But although he was in the midst of the "world" of that day, he was "no part of the world." (John 17:16) Daniel was a faithful, "well-salted" servant of Jehovah. Why, Daniel's enemies, perhaps irritated because his integrity and honesty reflected badly on them, even tried to destroy him! Nevertheless, they had to admit that "he was trustworthy and no negligence or corrupt thing at all was found in him." (Daniel 6:4, 5) What a fine example!

¹⁷ Like young Daniel and his friends, Christian youngsters today face difficult tests. Especially at school, they have to contend with drugs, tobacco, alcoholic beverages, unclean talk, immorality, cheating, a spirit of rebelliousness, false worship, nationalism, bad associations, false teachings such as evolution, and other powerful influences. It takes a "well-salted" Christian youngster to remain a clean integrity keeper in the face of all that temptation.

¹⁸ Therefore, Christian parents, consider carefully the condition of your family.

16. Why can it be said that Daniel was a "well-salted" servant of Jehovah?

17. What difficult tests confront Christian youngsters today?

18. (a) Christian parents would do well to consider what questions? (b) What is recommended for parents who find it difficult to help their children?



At an early age, Daniel learned to say no

Are all members of it making spiritual progress? Have you prevented worldly corruption from contaminating your own youngsters? Do you know what they do and what they really think and feel about true worship? Do they have a loathing for the unclean things of this world or are they in danger of succumbing to them? (Amos 5:14, 15) If, as parents, you are not close enough to your children to help them, or you find this difficult, why not make it a matter of earnest prayer to Jehovah? Surely, he can help you to overcome this barrier.—1 John 5:14.

¹⁹ As Christian parents, what sort of example are you setting? Do you firmly say no to harmful overeating and heavy drinking and the many forms of immorality and uncleanness practiced around you? Do you say no to bribery, to petty pilfer-

19. What are some things to which Christian parents should say no?

ing, and to the obscene jokes and speech of worldly people? At work or in your neighborhood, are you known as clean, honest, upright individuals? Saying no at the right time is vital to being “the salt of the earth.”

Permanence and Loyalty

²⁰ Doubtless because salt represented freedom from corruption, it was used in Israel’s worship of Jehovah. For instance, all offerings on the altar had to be salted. In the Law given through Moses, it was stated: “You must not allow the salt of the covenant of your God to be missing upon your grain offering. Along with every offering of yours you will present salt.” And “a covenant of salt” was considered to be binding.—Leviticus 2:13; Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:4, 5.

²¹ As witnesses of Jehovah, his servants today are “the salt of the earth.” This requires that they be incorruptible, faithful, and loyal. They must be diligent in cultivating the fruitage of God’s holy spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) The spirit’s fruitage is the source of spiritual, saltlike qualities. But the fact that some have served Jehovah for years is, in itself, no guarantee that they will not fall away. (1 Corinthians 10:12) Jesus himself warned us about this.

²² Remember that just after Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth,” he added: “But if the salt loses its strength, how will its saltiness be restored? It is no longer usable for anything but to be thrown out—

20. How was salt used in connection with worship of Jehovah in ancient Israel?

21. As “the salt of the earth,” what is required of Jehovah’s servants today?

22. What is the significance of the latter part of Matthew 5:13?

side to be trampled on by men.” (Matthew 5:13) Some of the salt used when Jesus was on earth was mixed with foreign matter. Thus if the pure salt was washed away by rain or in some other way, what was left was fit only to be thrown outside, perhaps cast on paths and trampled upon by passersby. Unless the salt was kept in the right condition, it could easily become useless.

²³ As loyal servants of Jehovah and his Son Jesus Christ, then, let us be careful never to ‘lose our strength,’ or pure saltlike qualities. Rather, let us make every effort to cultivate the fruitage of God’s spirit. May we always be gracious in speech, zealously declaring the Kingdom message and thus helping to preserve the lives of others. May we never be overreached by this corrupt world, but may we always keep in mind the depth of meaning and the great privilege associated with Jesus’ words: “You are the salt of the earth.”

23. As Jehovah’s Witnesses, what should be our view of Jesus’ words, “You are the salt of the earth”?

Check Your Memory

- ☐ How can we ‘let our utterances be seasoned with salt’?
- ☐ Why is it vital for Christians to ‘have salt in themselves’?
- ☐ How are Jesus’ followers “the salt of the earth”?
- ☐ What are some things avoided by “well-salted” Christians?
- ☐ In view of Matthew 5:13, what should be the viewpoint of Jehovah’s servants today?

Bible Truth Triumphs Amid Tradition

ONE hundred years ago, the Bible had a prime place in most British households. The *King James Version* of 1611, an established part of the nation's Protestant tradition, was greatly loved and respected. Thus, when Charles T. Russell, the first president of the Watch Tower Society, visited the British Isles for the first time in 1891, he was impressed by the "religious fervor" of the people. He described the country as "fields ready and waiting to be harvested," and saw the urgent need to bring this interest together and to distribute more Bible literature in the country.

To meet this need, Russell opened a book depot in London, and by 1898 there were nine congregations of Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known) meeting in Britain. Two years later, in 1900, the first branch office of the Watch Tower Society was organized in London, and in 1911 it became located at 34 Craven Terrace. The nearby London Tabernacle became the center for many historic assemblies. The evangelizing work prospered throughout the country.

With the outbreak of World War I in 1914, however, the scene was set for change. Support for traditional religion began to wane, the erosion continuing to our day. Who would then have thought it possible that 70 years later the Anglican Church, steeped in tradition with its ancient churches and cathedrals, customs and celebrations, would be losing 75 percent of its congregation before they reach the age of 20? Or that the Church of



Scotland's membership would tumble to less than a million, or about 18 percent of the population? Or that many Welsh chapels would end up as garages, supermarkets, or recreational centers? But such is the picture today.

On the other hand, who would ever have dreamed that Jehovah's Witnesses in Britain would, in 1984, number over 95,000 active preachers? Or that their 1,170 congregations would be engaged in an unprecedented program of Kingdom Hall construction? Yet, the facts are there for all to see. How are we to account for this seemingly paradoxical development? Why are Jehovah's Witnesses prospering in Britain? And what challenges are they facing today?

Power of Bible Truth

Traditions die hard, as the saying goes. Even so, love of Bible truth has enabled

many who had long been staunch church supporters to break free from the grip of such traditions. Others, too, have allowed the power of Bible truth to transform their life. Indeed, in the following experiences, we can clearly see how Bible truth triumphs amid tradition in Britain.

One elderly lady who had been a stalwart member of the Church of England all her life was well known for her love of the Bible. Although she knew and admired a number of Witnesses in her community, she never allowed herself to get involved too deeply when it came to discussing religion with them. But when the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* was scheduled to be considered at a nearby Bible study group, she accepted the invitation to attend and was deeply impressed by what was being discussed. From that first meeting, she became a regular attender there and at the congregation's Kingdom Hall. When the vicar called to inquire about her absence from church, she told him frankly that she would never be going back as she had learned more about the Bible during the past few weeks than she had learned during her 86 years as a member of his church.

"Confession followed talk with Witnesses" was the headline given to the following story by *The West Wales Guardian*. A 30-year-old man was arrested for stealing. He instructed his lawyer to enter a plea of "Not Guilty." Before the court hearing, however, he started to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. The outcome? A statement to the court and a last-minute change of plea to "Guilty"! In summarizing the case, the chairman of the magistrates declared: "We are delighted that you have decided to live by the law of the land." The man's wife, appreciating the profound changes her husband had already made in his life,

exclaimed: "This really is the best way of life!"

Bible Truth Benefits Children

For years, a bone of contention in households where only one of the parents is a Witness has been that the children are deprived, particularly when it comes to traditional religious celebrations. A recent High Court judgment, however, puts this emotional topic in a different perspective by saying, in part:

"There is nothing immoral or socially obnoxious in the beliefs and practice of [Jehovah's Witnesses]. There is a great risk, because we are dealing with an unpopular sect, in overplaying the dangers to the welfare of these children inherent in the possibility that they may follow their mother and become Jehovah's Witnesses."

Rather than being deprived, children of Jehovah's Witnesses often receive commendation because of their Christian training and upbringing. For example, one teacher in Glasgow, Scotland, noted that they "do well in school, not because they are more intelligent, but because, from an early age, they are taught how to sit and listen and how to apply what they learn." He also observed that Witness teenagers tend to be more balanced and therefore, in his opinion, better able to cope with the problems peculiar to the adolescent years.

'Seek First the Kingdom'

What happens when the children grow up? Does the training they receive when young result in any advantage in later life? With three and a half million unemployed people in Britain now, putting spiritual things first in life can be a real test. Yet, as Jesus promised, "seeking first the kingdom" does lead to rich dividends, as borne out by the following experience. —Matthew 6:33.

Quickly built
Kingdom Hall at
Northampton,
England



While trying to decide between the full-time ministry and a secular profession, a young Witness was offered a promising job with an engineering firm with the stipulation that he enroll for special study courses on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. The young man, however, decided to make it clear that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses he attended congregation meetings on those two evenings. "Which will you put first?" the manager wanted to know. Unwilling to compromise, the young man turned down the offer but took part-time employment to support himself and started in the full-time ministry.

Looking back over four years of happy, fruitful activity, the young man, now with foreign missionary service as his goal, has seen many of his contemporaries who went to universities still without employment. Others have become dropouts from society. What of the company that made the offer? Soon thereafter it went into liquidation and is no more.

The full-time ministry, or pioneering, is not just for the young. One Witness, a family man in the north of England, sold his prosperous business and took part-time work in order to pioneer regularly. With his fine lead, three of his four children pioneered straight from school, leaving the remaining daughter keen to join them when her turn comes. The mother

also sets a fine example by serving as an auxiliary pioneer, spending 60 hours or more a month in the preaching work whenever she can.

The auxiliary pioneer work has caught on well in Britain. In May 1984, a peak of 12,108 Witnesses volunteered for this privilege of service. Imagine the enthusiasm in one Scottish congregation when a 23-year-old brother who had been a thalidomide baby born with no arms and only one leg, took the lead and enrolled. With the kind help of the congregation, he is able to witness from door to door.

The Challenge of a Mixed Community

Although Britain is a small country, it is not without its challenges as far as varying traditions, languages, and dialects are concerned. In Wales, for example, most people, though English speaking, are still conversant with their native tongue, Welsh. A few, in more remote areas of the Principality, are solely Welsh speaking. To help them, the Society has recently printed some Bible study aids in the Welsh language, and initial reports indicate that they are being very well received.

Since World War II, there has been a steady influx of British citizens from former colonies. Besides large numbers of

West Indians, reports show that over one million Asians from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh now live in Britain. Their languages have presented a most interesting challenge to Jehovah's Witnesses. Though Bible literature is available in both Gujarati and Punjabi—the two main tongues involved—initial breakthrough is not easy. Witnesses who set their minds to learn the languages and to understand the social and religious traditions of these people are warmly welcomed by the communities.

As a result, the London newspaper *Garvi Gujarat* reports: "Many Gujaratis have broken away from the traditional Hindu Caste System and have now become Jehovah's Witnesses." A similar headline in the *Wembley Midweek* proclaims: "Bible breaking caste barriers." Those who break away, however, are faced with considerable family pressure, especially regarding the tradition of arranged marriage. Confronted with this situation, one young Indian girl witnessed at length to the men who were introduced to her as prospective husbands. Each in turn decided that he did not want to marry her in view of her strong religious faith. Eventually, with her parents' consent, she married an Indian Witness. They are now a united family in Jehovah's service. Today, over 500 Witnesses of Asian background are active across the country, among them 35 full-time preachers!

Building for the Future

In the months just prior to the second world war, the first Kingdom Halls were built in London, in the suburbs of Harrow and Ilford. Now, there are 140 congregations in London alone, including 4 Greek, 2 Italian, and one Spanish, along with Chinese, Gujarati, Japanese, Portuguese, and Punjabi groups. The challenge to acquire new Kingdom Halls, in the face of

the wildly escalating cost of property, is greater than ever.

Speeding things up, however, is the new two-day Kingdom Hall building program. The first such hall in Europe was erected in 1983 in the Midlands town of Northampton. Witnesses experienced in this unique field of construction came from the United States and Canada to oversee the project. At a nearby school, the headmaster gave permission for the pupils to visit the building site at regular intervals to see firsthand what he called "a challenging view of a great community undertaking." But it was more than that. It was an *international* project, with about 500 volunteers from as far afield as Japan, India, France, and Germany.

This spirit of unity is now a source of much comment in Britain. No longer are Jehovah's Witnesses looked upon as an insignificant minority. They are seen as a people with a purpose, building for the future with, as one Church of England clergyman put it, "an efficient organisation as well as burning enthusiasm." He further observed: "They show a detailed knowledge of the Bible. They can quote it and find their way easily about it. Their ordinary members seem to be extraordinarily well trained." Herein lies the reason for their unity and strength: Jehovah's Witnesses use the Bible as sole authority for all that they believe and preach, a fact readily acknowledged today.

In Britain in the 1980's, the Bible is still a best-seller, and respect for it remains. True, there may no longer be the "religious fervor" so readily apparent one hundred years ago. But by holding high the truth of the Bible, Jehovah's Witnesses there are gathering a bountiful harvest. A total of 187,709 persons gathered with them for the 1984 annual commemoration of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ—a peak attendance! With good reason, there-

fore, they remain confident that in this land of tradition thousands more will yet embrace Bible truth to become worshipers

of Jehovah, the God of truth, as this system of things draws to its close.—Matthew 24:3, 14.

Questions From Readers

■ Since it was the two-tribe kingdom of Judah that was taken captive to Babylon in 607 B.C.E., how was it that members of all 12 tribes of Israel returned from Babylon 70 years later?

It appears that there are two primary reasons for this. First, at the time of the splitting of the kingdom of Israel and the subsequent withdrawal of 10 tribes, representatives of all 12 tribes evidently remained in Judah's territory. And second, prior to 740 B.C.E., it is likely that some from all the ten tribes fled to Judah's territory to escape Israel's idolatry.

The division of the united kingdom of Israel took place when Jehovah became displeased with Solomon "because his heart had inclined away from Jehovah." God informed him: "I shall without fail rip the kingdom away from off you, and I shall certainly give it to your servant. . . . Out of the hand of your son I shall rip it away. . . . One tribe I shall give to your son." (1 Kings 11:9-13) Solomon's son Rehoboam, who was of the tribe of Judah, was given the tribe of Benjamin, thus forming the two-tribe southern kingdom.

Although Rehoboam ruled over only two tribes, he continued to reign over some of "the sons of Israel [that is, members of the northern ten tribes] that were dwelling in the cities of Judah." (1 Kings 12:17; see also 2 Chronicles 10:17.) Additionally, when King Jeroboam of the northern kingdom established calf worship and put in office his own priests,

the priests of Jehovah and the Levites who lived in the territory of that kingdom sided with Rehoboam. We read: "The Levites left their pasture grounds and their possession and then came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had discharged them from acting as priests to Jehovah." At that time, representatives from "all the tribes of Israel" joined the priests and Levites and went to Jerusalem. (2 Chronicles 11:13-17) Further desertions by members of various ones of the ten tribes are reported in the reign of King Asa. —2 Chronicles 15:9, 10.

In 740 B.C.E., when the Assyrians overthrew the northern capital city of Samaria, they applied their policy of transplanting populations of conquered areas to reduce the possibility of uprisings. (1 Chronicles 5:6, 26) Thus the northern kingdom of Israel ceased to exist. However, this did not affect those members of the ten tribes who were by then living in the southern kingdom of Judah. These individuals were among those taken captive to Babylon when Judah fell in 607 B.C.E. And some of their descendants would have returned at the time of the restoration in 537 B.C.E. Perhaps even some descendants of those exiled by the Assyrians in 740 B.C.E. also returned at that time.

Interestingly, Ezekiel, in the book bearing his name, mentioned "the house of Israel" far more often than he referred to "the house of Judah," despite his being a prophet to Judah while in captivity in Babylon. Moreover, his prophecy indicated that the two 'houses' would be reunited as one. (Ezekiel 37:19-28; see also Jeremiah 3:18; Hosea 1:11.) With good reason, then, no distinction is made between the two after the Babylonian captivity.

Hence, the ripping away of the ten tribes in 740 B.C.E. did not result in the loss of their identity. They were accounted for in the return from captivity in 537 B.C.E. And regarding the inauguration of the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, the priest Ezra stated: "The sons of Israel, the priests and the Levites and the rest of the former exiles held the inauguration of this house of God with joy. And they presented . . . as a sin offering for all Israel twelve male goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel." (Ezra 6:16, 17) Also indicating that the returning remnant included representatives of all tribes of Israel, not merely Judah and Benjamin, Isaiah wrote: "For although your people, O Israel, would prove to be like the grains of sand of the sea, a mere remnant among them will return." (Isaiah 10:22) Hence, among the returnees were representatives of *all* the tribes of Israel.

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