

THE WATCHTOWER

JULY 15, 1999

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**WHY YOU CAN TRUST
BIBLE PROPHECY**

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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IN SEARCH OF TRUSTWORTHY PREDICTIONS

SOON after the Macedonian king who came to be known as Alexander the Great ascended the throne in 336 B.C.E., he visited the oracle of Delphi, in central Greece. His ambitious plans for the future were nothing less than to conquer much of the world of that time. But he desired divine assurance that his tremendous undertaking would succeed. According to legend, on the day he happened to visit Delphi, it was not permissible to consult the oracle. Not wanting to leave without an answer, Alexander insisted, forcing the priestess to give a prediction. She cried out in frustration: "Oh, child, you are invincible!" The young king took that as a favorable omen—one promising a victorious military campaign.

However, Alexander would have been much better informed about the outcome of his campaign if he had examined prophecies found in the Bible book of Daniel. With remarkable accuracy, they foretold his speedy conquests. Tradition has it that Alexander eventually got an opportunity to see what Daniel had recorded about him. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, when the Macedonian king entered Jerusalem, he was shown Daniel's prophecy—presumably chapter 8 of that book. (Daniel 8: 5-8, 20, 21) Reportedly, because of this, the city was spared by Alexander's destructive armies.

The Bible foretold Alexander's speedy conquests



Cortesía del Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain

An Inherent Human Need

King or commoner, ancient or modern—man has felt the need for trustworthy predictions regarding the future. As intelligent creatures, we humans study the past, are aware of the present, and are especially interested in the future. A Chinese proverb aptly says: “He who could foresee affairs three days in advance would be rich for thousands of years.”

Throughout the ages, millions have attempted to peer into the future by consulting what they perceived as being divine. Take the ancient Greeks as an example. They had scores of sacred oracles, such as those of Delphi, Delos, and Dodona, where they would go to inquire of their gods with regard to political or military developments as well as such private affairs as travel, marriage, and children. Not just kings and military leaders but entire



Alexander the Great

Musei Capitolini, Roma

tribes and city-states sought guidance from the spirit realm through these oracles.

According to one professor, there is now a “sudden proliferation of organizations devoted to the study of the future.” Yet, many prefer to ignore the only accurate source of prophecy—the Bible. They pointedly dismiss any possibility that Bible prophecies contain the very information they are seeking. Some scholars go so far as to equate Bible prophecy with the predictions given by ancient oracles. And modern-day skeptics are usually biased against Bible prophecy.

We invite you to check the record for yourself. What does a careful comparison of Bible predictions and human oracles reveal? Can you trust Bible prophecy more than ancient oracles? And can you reliably build your life around Bible prophecies?

WHY YOU CAN TRUST BIBLE PROPHECY

KING PYRRHUS of Epirus in northwestern Greece was engaged in a long-term conflict with the Roman Empire. Desperately desiring a clue regarding its outcome, he went to consult the oracle of Delphi. But the answer he received could be understood in either of the following two ways: (1) “I say that thou son of Æacus canst conquer the Romans. Thou shalt go, thou shalt return, never shalt thou perish in war.” (2) “I say that the Romans can conquer thee, son of Æacus. Thou shalt go, thou shalt never return, thou shalt per-

ish in war.” He chose to understand the oracle in the former way and therefore waged war against Rome. Pyrrhus was utterly defeated.

Such cases made ancient oracles notorious for being vague and enigmatic. But what about Bible prophecy? Some critics maintain that the prophecies found in the Bible are no better than the oracles. These critics speculate that Biblical predictions were merely shrewd foretelling of future events by very clever and keenly perceptive individuals, usually of the priestly class. Sup-

posedly, just by experience or through their special connections, these men foresaw the natural development of certain situations. By comparing the various characteristics of Bible prophecies with those of oracles, we will be better equipped to draw proper conclusions.

Points of Contrast

The trademark of oracles was their ambiguity. At Delphi, for example, the answers provided were uttered in unintelligible sounds. This made it necessary for priests to interpret them and create verses capable of opposite interpretations. A classic example of this is the answer given to Croesus, king of Lydia. When he consulted the oracle, he was told: "If Croesus crosses the Halys, he will destroy a mighty empire." Actually, the "mighty empire" destroyed was his own! When Croesus crossed the river Halys to invade Cappadocia, he met defeat at the hands of Cyrus the Persian.

In sharp contrast with pagan oracles, Bible prophecies are noted for their accuracy and clarity. A case in point is the prophecy regarding the fall of Babylon, which is recorded in the Bible book of Isaiah. Some 200 years before this event took place, the prophet Isaiah predicted in a detailed and accurate way the overthrow of Babylon by Medo-Persia. The prophecy disclosed that the conqueror would bear the name Cyrus, and it revealed the very strategy of drying up a moat-like river defense and entering a fortified city through open gates. All of this was accurately fulfilled. (Isaiah 44:27-45:2) It was also correctly prophesied that Babylon would eventually be totally uninhabited.—Isaiah 13:17-22.

Consider, too, the explicit nature of this warning declared by the prophet Jonah: "Only forty days more, and Nineveh will be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4) There is no ambiguity here! The message was so dramatic and

straightforward that the men of Nineveh immediately "began to put faith in God, and they proceeded to proclaim a fast and to put on sackcloth." As a result of their repentance, Jehovah did not bring calamity upon the Ninevites at that time.—Jonah 3:5-10.

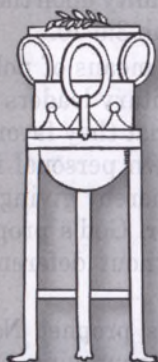
Oracles were used as a means of political influence. Rulers and military leaders often cited the interpretation that they favored in order to promote their own personal interests and undertakings, thereby giving such a "divine cloak." However, God's prophetic messages were given without deference to personal considerations.

To illustrate: Jehovah's prophet Nathan did not hold back from reproving erring King David. (2 Samuel 12:1-12) During the reign of Jeroboam II over the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, the prophets Hosea and Amos delivered stern criticism to the rebellious king and his supporters because of their apostasy and God-dishonoring conduct. (Hosea 5:1-7; Amos 2:6-8) Especially caustic was Jehovah's warning to the king by the mouth of the prophet Amos: "I will rise up against the house of Jeroboam with a sword." (Amos 7:9) Jeroboam's house was annihilated.—1 Kings 15:25-30; 2 Chronicles 13:20.

Most of the time, oracles were given for a price. The one who paid more would receive the oracle he liked. Those consulting the oracles at Delphi paid dearly for worthless information, thereby filling the temple of Apollo and additional edifices with great treasures. In contrast, Bible prophecies and warnings were given without cost and with no partiality whatsoever. That was the case regardless of the position or wealth of the person to whom they were directed, for a true prophet could not be bribed. The prophet and judge Samuel could sincerely ask: "From whose hand have I accepted hush money that I should hide my eyes with it?" —1 Samuel 12:3.

THE ORACLE OF DELPHI

was the most celebrated in ancient Greece.



The priestess sat on a tripod and uttered her oracles

Intoxicating vapors brought the priestess into a state of ecstasy

The sounds that she uttered were believed to contain revelations from the god Apollo

Tripod: From the book *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*; Apollo: *The Complete Encyclopedia of Illustration*/J. G. Heck



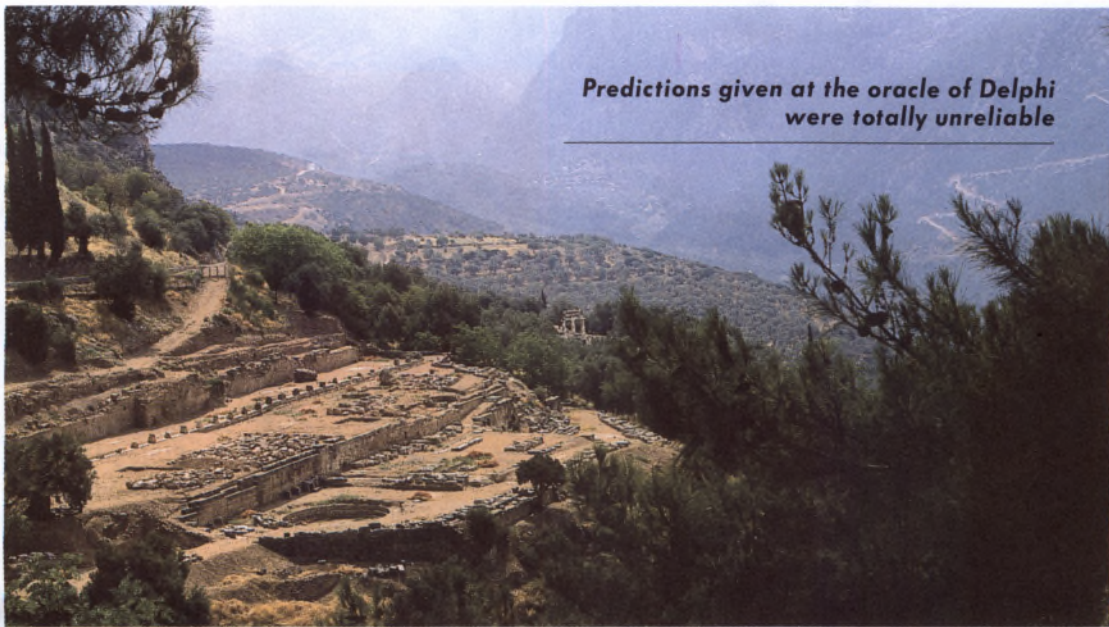
Since oracles were available only at specific places, an individual had to put forth considerable effort to travel there in order to receive them. For the average person, most of those places were extremely difficult to reach because they were situated in such locations as Dodona on Mount Tomarus in Epirus and Delphi in mountainous central Greece. Usually, only the rich and powerful were able to consult the gods at such oracles. Moreover, “the will of the gods” was revealed on only a few days during the year. In striking contrast, Jehovah God sent his prophetic messengers directly to the people in order to proclaim the prophecies that they needed to hear. During the Jews’ Babylonian exile, for instance, God

had at least three prophets serving among his people—Jeremiah in Jerusalem, Ezekiel with the exiles, and Daniel in the capital of the Babylonian Empire.—Jeremiah 1:1, 2; Ezekiel 1:1; Daniel 2:48.

Oracles were generally given in private so that the one receiving them could exploit their interpretation to his own advantage. In contrast, Bible prophecies were often given in public so that all could hear the message and understand its implications. The prophet Jeremiah many times spoke publicly in Jerusalem, although he knew that his message was unpopular among the leaders and the inhabitants of the city.—Jeremiah 7:1, 2.

Today, oracles are viewed as a part of ancient history. They have no practical value for people living in our critical times. No such oracles deal with our day or with our future. In notable contrast, Bible prophecies are part of “the word of God [which] is alive and exerts power.” (Hebrews 4:12) The already fulfilled prophecies of the Bible provide a pattern of Jehovah’s dealings with people and reveal vital features of his purposes and personality. Additionally, important Bible prophecies await fulfillment in the near future. Describing what lies ahead, the apostle Peter wrote: “There are new heavens [the heavenly Messianic Kingdom] and a new earth [a righteous human society] that we are awaiting according to [God’s] promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell.”—2 Peter 3:13.

This brief comparison of Bible prophecy and false religion’s oracles may well lead you to a conclusion similar to that expressed in the book entitled *The Great Ideas*: “So far as the foreknowledge of mortal men is concerned, the Hebrew prophets seem to be unique. Unlike pagan diviners or soothsayers, . . . they do not have to employ arts or devices for penetrating divine secrets. . . .



**Predictions given at the oracle of Delphi
were totally unreliable**

Delphi, Greece

For the most part, their prophetic speeches, unlike those of the oracles, seem to be unambiguous. At least the intention seems to be to reveal, not to conceal, God's plan on such matters as He Himself wishes men to foresee the course of providence."

Will You Trust Bible Prophecy?

You can trust Bible prophecy. In fact, you can build your life around Jehovah and the fulfillment of his prophetic word. Bible prophecy is not a dead record of already fulfilled predictions. Many prophecies found in the Scriptures are now in the course of fulfillment or await realization in the near future. Judging from the past, we can be fully confident that they too will be fulfilled. Since such prophecies focus on our times and involve our very future, we do well to take them seriously.

You can surely trust the Bible prophecy found at Isaiah 2:2, 3: "It must occur in the final part of the days that the mountain of the house of Jehovah will become firmly established above the top of the mountains . . . And many peoples will certainly

go and say: 'Come, you people, and let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, . . . and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths.'" Today, millions of people are indeed embracing Jehovah's elevated worship and are learning to walk in his paths. Will you grasp the opportunity to learn more about God's ways and take in accurate knowledge respecting him and his purposes so as to walk in his paths?—John 17:3.

The fulfillment of another Bible prophecy requires urgent action on our part. Regarding the near future, the psalmist prophetically sang: "Evildoers themselves will be cut off . . . Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more." (Psalm 37:9, 10) What do you think is needed in order to avoid the impending destruction of the wicked, including those who scoff at the Bible's prophecies? The same psalm answers: "Those hoping in Jehovah are the ones that will possess the earth." (Psalm 37:9) To hope in Jehovah means to put implicit trust in his promises and to conform our life to his standards.—Proverbs 2:21, 22.



**You can have
complete
confidence in
Bible prophecy
regarding the
new world**



What will life be like when those hoping in Jehovah possess the earth? Again, Bible prophecies reveal that a glorious future is in store for obedient mankind. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "At that time the eyes of the blind ones will be opened, and the very ears of the deaf ones will be unstopped. At that time the lame one will climb up just as a stag does, and the tongue of the speechless one will cry out in gladness. For in the wilderness waters will have burst out, and torrents in the desert plain." (Isaiah 35:5, 6) The apostle John penned these reassuring words: "He [Jehovah] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will

be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away. And the One seated on the throne said: . . . 'Write, because these words are faithful and true.'"—Revelation 21:4, 5.

Jehovah's Witnesses know that the Bible is a book of reliable prophecy. And they fully agree with the apostle Peter's exhortation: "We have the prophetic word made more sure; and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until day dawns and a daystar rises, in your hearts." (2 Peter 1:19) Our sincere hope is that you will be heartened by the splendid prospects that Bible prophecy holds out for the future!

HELPING PEOPLE TO DRAW CLOSE TO JEHOVAH

"No one comes to the Father except through me."

—JOHN 14:6.

JESUS CHRIST commanded his followers to "make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matthew 28:19) In the last ten years, Jehovah's Witnesses have helped well over three million people to come to God, in time baptizing them in symbol of their dedication to him to do his will. How glad we are to help them to draw close to God!—James 4:8.

² In some lands where many new disciples have been baptized, however, there has not been a corresponding increase in the number of Kingdom publishers. Of course, allowance must be made for those who died, the annual mortality rate being about 1 percent. Yet, in the last few years, quite a number have fallen away for some reason. Why? This and the next article will examine how people are drawn to Jehovah and possible reasons why some fall away.

1. What commandment did the resurrected Jesus give to his disciples, and what has resulted as Jehovah's Witnesses have obeyed it?

2. Though many new ones are being baptized, what has occurred?



The Purpose of Our Preaching

³ In this "time of the end," Jesus' disciples have the commission to spread "true knowledge" concerning "this good news of the kingdom." (Daniel 12:4; Matthew 24:14) Their mission co-

incides with that of the angel who "had everlasting good news to declare as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Revelation 14:6) In this world that is so preoccupied with mundane matters, generally the most effective way to interest people in God's Kingdom and help them to draw close to Jehovah is to tell them about the hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. While this is understandable, those who associate with God's people solely to gain entrance into Paradise do not have their feet firmly set on the narrow road leading to life.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

3. (a) How does the mission entrusted to Jesus' disciples coincide with that of the angel mentioned at Revelation 14:6? (b) What has proved to be an effective way to arouse people's interest in the Kingdom message, but what problem exists?



Although we extend to people the hope of everlasting life in Paradise, our main objective is to draw them to Jehovah

⁴ Jesus stated: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) The angel flying in midheaven declares "everlasting good news" and tells those dwelling on the earth: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters." (Revelation 14:7) It follows that the ultimate purpose of our preaching the good news is to help people to draw close to Jehovah through Christ Jesus.

Our Role in Jehovah's Work

⁵ Writing to fellow anointed Christians,

4. According to Jesus and the angel flying in midheaven, what is the purpose of our preaching work?

5. What statements by Paul and Jesus show that we are doing Jehovah's work, not ours?

the apostle Paul speaks of "the ministry of the reconciliation" and says that God reconciles people to himself on the basis of Jesus Christ's ransom sacrifice. Paul says that it is "as though God were making entreaty through us" and that "as substitutes for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.'" What a heartwarming thought! Whether we are anointed "ambassadors substituting for Christ" or are envoys with earthly hopes, we should never forget that this is Jehovah's work, not ours. (2 Corinthians 5: 18-20) It is really God who draws people and teaches those who come to Christ. Jesus stated: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him; and I will resurrect him in the last day. It is written in the Prophets, 'And they will all be taught by Jehovah.' Everyone that has heard from the Father and has learned comes to me." —John 6:44, 45.

⁶ In these last days, how does Jehovah draw people and open to them the “door of faith”? (Acts 14:27, footnote; 2 Timothy 3:1) A key way is by having his Witnesses proclaim his messages of salvation and of judgment against this wicked system of things. (Isaiah 43:12; 61:1, 2) This worldwide proclamation is sending a tremor through the nations—a portent of the judgmental shattering soon to come. At the same time, people who are “precious” in God’s eyes are being drawn out of this system and are finding security in his “house” of true worship. Jehovah is thus fulfilling his prophetic words recorded by Haggai: “I will rock all the nations, and the desirable things of all the nations must come in; and I will fill this house with glory.”—Haggai 2:6, 7, footnote; Revelation 7:9, 15.

⁷ Jehovah opens the hearts of these God-fearers—“the choicest things of all nations”—that they may “pay attention to the things being spoken” by his Witnesses. (Haggai 2:7, *Jewish Publication Society*; Acts 16:14) As in the first century, Jehovah at times uses his angels to direct his Witnesses to sincere people who have cried out to him for help. (Acts 8:26-31) As individuals learn about the wonderful provisions God has made for them through his Son, Jesus Christ, they are drawn to Jehovah by his love. (1 John 4:9, 10) Yes, God draws people to himself and to his Son by means of His “loving-kindness,” or “loyal love.”—Jeremiah 31:3, footnote.

Whom Does Jehovah Draw?

⁸ Jehovah draws to himself and to his Son those seeking Him. (Acts 17:27) These in-

clude people who “are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done” in Christendom and, in fact, throughout the world. (Ezekiel 9:4) They are “conscious of their spiritual need.” (Matthew 5:3) Indeed, they are the “meek [“humble,” footnote] ones of the earth,” who will reside on the paradise earth forever.—Zephaniah 2:3.

⁹ Jehovah can read a person’s heart. King David told his son Solomon: “All hearts Jehovah is searching, and every inclination of the thoughts he is discerning. If you search for him, he will let himself be found by you.” (1 Chronicles 28:9) On the basis of an individual’s heart condition and spirit, or dominant attitude, Jehovah can see whether he or she is likely to respond to divine provisions for the forgiveness of sins and the hope of everlasting life in God’s righteous new system. (2 Peter 3:13) By means of his Word, preached and taught by his Witnesses, Jehovah draws to himself and to his Son ‘all those who are rightly disposed for everlasting life,’ and these ‘become believers.’—Acts 13:48.

¹⁰ Does Jehovah’s drawing of some and not others involve a form of predestination? Absolutely not! God’s drawing of people is contingent on their own aspirations. He respects their free will. Jehovah places before earth’s inhabitants today the same choice as that set before the Israelites over 3,000 years ago, when Moses said: “I do put before you today life and good, and death and bad. . . . I do take the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you today, that I have put life and death before you, the blessing and the malediction; and you must choose

6. How is Jehovah rocking the nations in a preliminary way, and at the same time, who are finding security in his “house” of worship?

7. How does Jehovah open the hearts of people and draw individuals to himself and to his Son?

8. What kind of people does Jehovah draw?

9. How can Jehovah see if people are “rightly disposed for everlasting life,” and how does he draw these?

10. What shows that Jehovah’s drawing of some and not others does not involve predestination?

life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring, by loving Jehovah your God, by listening to his voice and by sticking to him; for he is your life and the length of your days.”—Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

¹¹ Notice that the Israelites were to choose life ‘by loving Jehovah, by listening to his voice, and by sticking to him.’ When those words were spoken, the people of Israel had not yet taken possession of the Promised Land. They were poised on the Plains of Moab, readying themselves to cross the Jordan River and enter Canaan. While it was natural for them to turn their thoughts toward the “good and spacious” land “flowing with milk and honey” that they would soon receive, the realization of their dreams depended on their love for Jehovah, their listening to his voice, and their sticking to him. (Exodus 3:8) Moses made this clear, stating: “If you will listen to the commandments of Jehovah your God, which I am commanding you today, so as to love Jehovah your God, to walk in his ways and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judicial decisions, *then* you will be bound to keep alive and to multiply, and Jehovah your God must bless you in the land to which you are going to take possession of it.”—Deuteronomy 30:16.

¹² Should the foregoing not teach us something about our preaching and teaching work in this time of the end? We think about the coming Paradise earth and talk about it in our ministry. But neither we nor the disciples we make will see the fulfillment of the promise if we or they are serving God for selfish reasons. Like the Israelites, we and those whom we teach must learn to ‘love Jehovah, listen to his voice,

11. How were the Israelites to choose life?

12. What should the example of the Israelites teach us about our preaching and teaching work?

and stick to him.’ If we remember this when carrying out our ministry, we will actually be collaborating with God in drawing people to him.

God’s Fellow Workers

¹³ Paul illustrated collaboration with God by referring to the cultivating of a field. He wrote: “What, then, is Apollos? Yes, what is Paul? Ministers through whom you became believers, even as the Lord granted each one. I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow; so that neither is he that plants anything nor is he that waters, but God who makes it grow. Now he that plants and he that waters are one, but each person will receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers. You people are God’s field under cultivation.”—1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

¹⁴ As God’s fellow workers, we must faithfully plant “the word of the kingdom” in the hearts of people, then water any interest shown by well-thought-out return visits and Bible studies. If the soil, the heart, is good, Jehovah will do his part by making the seed of Bible truth grow into a productive plant. (Matthew 13:19, 23) He will draw the person to himself and to his Son. In the final analysis, then, any increase in the number of Kingdom proclaimers is due to Jehovah’s work on the hearts of people, making the seed of truth grow and drawing such ones to himself and to his Son.

Building Work That Will Remain

¹⁵ While rejoicing in the increase, we sincerely want to see people continue to love Jehovah, listen to his voice, and stick to

13, 14. (a) According to 1 Corinthians 3:5-9, how do we become fellow workers with God?

(b) To whom must the honor for any increase go, and why?

15. What illustration did Paul use to show how we help others to develop faith?



**Our return visits can be very effective
if we prepare well**



him. We are sad when we see some cool off and fall away. Can we do anything to prevent this? In another illustration, Paul shows how we can help others to develop faith. He writes: "No man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood materials, hay, stubble, each one's work will become manifest, for the day will show it up, because it will be revealed by means of fire; and the fire itself will prove what sort of work each one's is."—1 Corinthians 3:11-13.

¹⁶ In Paul's illustration of the field, growth depends on conscientious planting, regular watering, and God's blessing. The apostle's other illustration highlights the Christian minister's responsibility for what becomes of his building work. Has he built on a sure foundation with quality materials? Paul warns: "Let each one keep watch-

ing how he is building." (1 Corinthians 3:10) Having aroused a person's interest by telling him or her about the hope of everlasting life in Paradise, do we focus our teaching on just the basics of Scriptural knowledge and then lay emphasis principally on what the person must do to get eternal life? Could our teaching consist solely of this: 'If you want to live forever in Paradise, you must study, go to meetings, and share in the preaching work'? If so, we are not building the person's faith on a solid foundation, and what we build may not resist the fire of trials or stand the test of time. Trying to draw people to Jehovah just by the hope of life in Paradise in exchange for a few years spent serving him is like building with "wood materials, hay, stubble."

Building Love for God and Christ

¹⁷ For faith to endure, it must be based on a personal relationship with Jehovah

16. (a) How do the two illustrations used by Paul differ in objective? (b) How could our building work turn out to be unsatisfactory and not fire resistant?

17, 18. (a) What is indispensable if a person's faith is to endure? (b) How can we help a person to have Christ dwell in his or her heart?

God through Jesus Christ. As imperfect humans, we can attain such a peaceful relationship with God only through his Son. (Romans 5:10) Remember that Jesus said: "No one comes to the Father except through me." To help others build faith, "no man can lay any other foundation than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ." What does this involve?—John 14:6; 1 Corinthians 3:11.

¹⁸ Building on Christ as the foundation means teaching in such a way that the Bible student develops a deep love for Jesus through full knowledge of His role as Redeemer, Head of the congregation, loving High Priest, and reigning King. (Daniel 7:13, 14; Matthew 20:28; Colossians 1:18-20; Hebrews 4:14-16) It means making Jesus so real to them that he virtually dwells in their hearts. Our prayer for them should be like Paul's petition in behalf of Christians in Ephesus. He wrote: "I bend my knees to the Father, . . . to the end that he may grant you . . . to have the Christ dwell through your faith in your hearts with love; that you may be rooted and established on the foundation."—Ephesians 3:14-17.

By Way of Review

- ☐ How do we often arouse people's interest in the Kingdom message, but what danger exists?
- ☐ What kind of people does Jehovah draw to himself and to his Son?
- ☐ Upon what did Israel's entry into the Promised Land depend, and what can we learn from this?
- ☐ What role do we play in helping people to draw close to Jehovah and to his Son?

¹⁹ If we build in such a manner that love for Christ develops in the hearts of our students, this will logically result in building love for Jehovah God. Jesus' love, feeling, and compassion are a faithful reflection of Jehovah's qualities. (Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 6:30-34; John 15:13, 14; Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3) So as people get to know and love Jesus, they will come to know and love Jehovah.* (1 John 4:14, 16, 19) We need to teach Bible students that Jehovah is behind all that Christ has done for mankind and that we therefore owe Him thanks, praise, and worship as the "God of our salvation."—Psalm 68:19, 20; Isaiah 12:2-5; John 3:16; 5:19.

²⁰ As God's fellow workers, let us help people to draw close to him and to his Son, helping them to develop love and faith in their hearts. Jehovah will thus become real to them. (John 7:28) Through Christ, they will be able to establish an intimate relationship with God, and they will love him and stick to him. They will set no time limits on their loving service, exercising faith that Jehovah's wonderful promises will be fulfilled in his due time. (Lamentations 3:24-26; Hebrews 11:6) While helping others to develop faith, hope, and love, however, we must build our own faith so that it is like a sturdy ship capable of weathering severe storms. This will be considered in the following article.

* An excellent aid in getting to know Jesus better and through him, his Father, Jehovah, is the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

19. What should be the result of building love for Christ in the hearts of our Bible students, but what must be taught?

20. (a) How can we help people to draw close to God and to his Son? (b) What will be considered in the next article?



ANCHORED BY HOPE, IMPELLED BY LOVE

“There remain faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

—1 CORINTHIANS 13:13.

THE apostle Paul warns us that, like a ship, our faith can be wrecked. He speaks of “holding faith and a good conscience, which some have thrust aside and have experienced shipwreck concerning their faith.” (1 Timothy 1:19) In the first century C.E., seagoing vessels were built of wood. Their seaworthiness depended on the quality of the timber and on skillful shipbuilding.

² What might be called the ship of our faith must remain afloat amid the turbulent seas of humanity. (Isaiah 57:20; Revelation

17:15) So it must be well built, and this depends on us. When the “seas” of the Jewish and Roman worlds were becoming particularly rough for the early Christians, Jude wrote: “Beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God’s love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view.” (Jude 20, 21) Since Jude also spoke of fighting for ‘the faith delivered to the holy ones,’ the expression “most holy faith” may refer to the whole range of Christian teachings, including the good news of salvation. (Jude 3) Christ is the foundation of that faith. Strong faith is

1. What warning does the apostle Paul give us?
2. Why must the ship of our faith be well built, and what does this require of us?



The ship of our faith must be well built in order to withstand the storms of life

needed if we are to cling to the true Christian faith.

Weathering the "Sect Scare" Storm

³ In recent years, there have been several horrendous cases of mass suicides, murders, and terrorist attacks involving esoteric sects. Understandably, many individuals, including sincere political leaders, have shown concern about protecting innocent people, particularly minors, from such dangerous sects. "The god of this system of things," doubtless being behind these heinous crimes, has thus created what some call a sect scare, and he is using this against

Jehovah's people. (2 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:12) Some have exploited this situation to arouse opposition to our work. In certain countries, they have mounted a campaign aimed ostensibly at protecting people from "dangerous sects" but erroneously naming Jehovah's Witnesses and thus accusing us by innuendo. This has made house-to-house witnessing difficult in some European countries and has caused some people who were studying the Bible with us to stop their study. In turn, this has had a negative effect on some of our brothers.

⁴ Far from discouraging us, however, opposition should strengthen our conviction that we are practicing true Christianity. (Matthew 5:11, 12) The early Christians were accused of being a seditious sect, and they were "spoken against" everywhere. (Acts 24:5; 28:22) But the apostle Peter reassured his fellow believers, writing: "Beloved ones, do not be puzzled at the burning among you, which is happening to you for a trial, as though a strange thing were befalling you. On the contrary, go on rejoicing forasmuch as you are sharers in the sufferings of the Christ, that you may rejoice and be overjoyed also during the revelation of his glory." (1 Peter 4:12, 13) Similarly, a member of the first-century governing body wrote: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance. But let endurance have its work complete, that you may be complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything." (James 1:2-4) Just as gale-force winds test the seaworthiness of a vessel, storms of opposition will reveal any weaknesses in our ship of faith.

3. How are some using the "sect scare"?

4. Why should opposition not discourage us?

Tribulation Produces Endurance

⁵ Christians can be sure of their endurance and of the stability of their faith only after weathering storms of tribulation. Our endurance will “have its work complete” in stormy seas only if we are “complete and sound in all respects, not lacking in anything,” including strong faith. Paul wrote: “In every way we recommend ourselves as God’s ministers, by the endurance of much, by tribulations, by cases of need, by difficulties.”—2 Corinthians 6:4.

⁶ The gale-force winds of tribulation that we may experience at times should be considered opportunities to prove that our ship of faith is sound and stable. To Christians in Rome, Paul wrote: “Let us exult while in tribulations, since we know that tribulation produces endurance; endurance, in turn, an approved condition; the approved condition, in turn, hope, and the hope does not lead to disappointment.” (Romans 5:3-5) Steadfastness under trials brings us Jehovah’s approval. This, in turn, strengthens our hope.

Why Some Suffer Shipwreck

⁷ When Paul warned of experiencing “shipwreck,” he had in mind some who

5. How can we be sure that our faith is stable under tribulation?

6. Why should we “exult while in tribulations,” and how does this strengthen our hope?

7. (a) As Paul’s words show, how had some experienced spiritual shipwreck? (b) How have some today deviated from the truth?



had “thrust aside” their good conscience and had lost their faith. (1 Timothy 1:19) Among them were Hymenaeus and Alexander who fell into apostasy, deviating from the truth and speaking abusively. (1 Timothy 1:20, footnote; 2 Timothy 2:17, 18) Today, apostates, who deviate from the truth, verbally beat “the faithful and discreet slave,” in effect biting the hand that had been feeding them spiritually. Some resemble the “evil slave,” implicitly saying, “My master is delaying.” (Matthew 24:44-49; 2 Timothy 4:14, 15) They deny that the end of this wicked system of things is near and criticize the spiritually alert slave class for maintaining a sense of urgency among Jehovah’s people. (Isaiah 1:3) Such apostates succeed in “subverting the faith of some,” inducing spiritual shipwreck.—2 Timothy 2:18.

⁸ Other dedicated Christians have wrecked the ship of their faith by thrusting aside their conscience and indulging in this world’s unbridled pleasure-seeking and its

8. What has caused some to wreck or to scuttle the ship of their faith?

sexual immorality. (2 Peter 2:20-22) Still others scuttle their ship of faith because in their view the haven of the new system of things does not yet seem to be appearing on the horizon. Unable to make time calculations concerning the fulfillment of certain prophecies, and putting "Jehovah's day" off in their minds, they abandon true worship. (2 Peter 3:10-13; 1 Peter 1:9) They soon find themselves back in the murky, troubled waters of the present system of things. (Isaiah 17:12, 13; 57:20) Some who have stopped associating with the Christian congregation still believe that it practices the true religion. However, they evidently lack the patience and endurance required to wait for the new world that Jehovah God has promised. Life in Paradise has not come soon enough for them.

⁹ A few dedicated Christians in some parts of the world appear to have reefed the sails of their ship of faith. The ship is still afloat, but instead of forging ahead in full faith, they have adopted a cruising speed. Drawn by the hope of "Paradise soon," some were prepared to spare no efforts to attain it—zealous in the preaching work and regular in attendance at all meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Now thinking that the realization of their hopes is farther off than they anticipated, they have lowered the price they are willing to pay. This is evident in reduced preaching activity, irregularity at meetings, and willingness to miss parts of assembly or convention programs. Others are devoting more time to recreation and to obtaining material comforts. These facts lead us to consider what

9. What are a few dedicated Christians doing, and what should these facts lead us to consider?



should be the driving force in our lives in line with our dedication to Jehovah. Should our zeal in his service be dependent on the hope of "Paradise soon"?

Hope Compared to an Anchor

¹⁰ Paul pointed out that Jehovah had made a promise of blessings to come through Abraham. Then the apostle explained: "God . . . stepped in with an oath, in order that, through two unchangeable things [his word and his oath] in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to the refuge may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." (Hebrews 6:17-19; Genesis 22:16-18) The hope set before anointed Christians is that of immortal life

10, 11. To what did Paul liken our hope, and why was this comparison appropriate?

in heaven. Today, the vast majority of Jehovah's servants have the splendid hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Luke 23:43) Without such hope, one can have no faith.

¹¹ An anchor is a powerful safety device, indispensable for holding a ship in place and preventing it from drifting. No mariner would venture out of port without an anchor. Since Paul had been shipwrecked several times, he knew from experience that the lives of seafarers often depended on their ship's anchors. (Acts 27:29, 39, 40; 2 Corinthians 11:25) In the first century, a ship had no engine to enable the captain to maneuver as he wished. Except for oar-driven warships, vessels depended primarily on the wind for movement. If his ship was in danger of being driven onto rocks, a captain's only recourse was to drop anchor and ride out the storm, trusting that the anchor would not lose its grip on the seabed. Paul therefore compared a Christian's hope to "an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm." (Hebrews 6:19) When we are assailed by storms of opposition or experience other trials, our wonderful hope is like an anchor that stabilizes us as living souls, so that our ship of faith does not drift onto the dangerous shoals of doubt or the disastrous rocks of apostasy.—Hebrews 2:1; Jude 8-13.

¹² Paul warned Hebrew Christians: "Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God." (Hebrews 3:12) In the Greek text, "drawing away" literally means "to stand off," that is, to apostatize. But we can avoid such utter shipwreck. Faith and hope will enable us to stick to Jehovah even during the worst storms of testing. (Deuteronomy 4:4; 30:19, 20) Our faith will not

12. How can we avoid drawing away from Jehovah?

be like a ship tossed about by winds of apostate teaching. (Ephesians 4:13, 14) And with hope as our anchor, we will be able to weather the storms of life as Jehovah's servants.

Impelled by Love and Holy Spirit

¹³ A Christian will not progress toward the new system if his only motive for serving Jehovah is the hope of living forever on a paradise earth. While keeping his anchor of hope as a stabilizing factor in his life, he needs to add to it and to his faith the impelling force of love. Paul underscored this fact when he wrote: "There remain faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."—1 Corinthians 13:13.

¹⁴ Our motivating force in rendering sacred service should be heartfelt love for Jehovah, in response to his immeasurable love for us. The apostle John wrote: "He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love. By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him. As for us, we love, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:8, 9, 19) Out of gratitude to Jehovah, our primary concern should be, not to gain personal salvation, but to witness the sanctification of his holy name and the vindication of his righteous sovereignty.

¹⁵ Jehovah wants us to serve him because we love *him*, not just Paradise. The Bible encyclopedia *Insight on the Scriptures** states: "Jehovah glories in the fact that his sovereignty and the support of it by

* Published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

13, 14. (a) Why is the anchor of our hope not sufficient in itself? (b) What should be the motivating force in rendering sacred service to Jehovah, and why?

15. How is our love for Jehovah related to the question of his sovereignty?

his creatures is based primarily on love. He desires only those who love his sovereignty because of his fine qualities and because it is righteous, who prefer his sovereignty to any other. (1Co 2:9) They choose to serve under his sovereignty rather than try to be independent—this because of their knowledge of him and of his love, justice, and wisdom, which they realize far surpasses their own. (Ps 84:10, 11)—Volume 2, page 275.

¹⁶ As Christians, we also show love for Jesus in response to his love for us. Paul reasoned: “The love the Christ has compels us, because this is what we have judged, that one man died for all; so, then, all had died; and he died for all that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised up.” (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) Christ is the very foundation upon which our spiritual lives, our faith, and our hope are built. Our love for Christ Jesus bolsters our hope and stabilizes our faith, especially in times of stormy testing.—1 Corinthians 3:11; Colossians 1:23; 2:6, 7.

¹⁷ While our love for God and for his Son is the main impelling force in our lives as Christians, Jehovah provides something else that impels us, energizes us, and gives us strength to go forward in his service. It is his active force, or holy spirit. The Hebrew and Greek words rendered “spirit” basically refer to the dynamic movement of the air, such as wind. Sailing ships like those Paul boarded relied on the invisible force of the wind to get to their destination. Similarly, we need love and the action of God’s invisible active force if our ship of faith is to move us onward in Jehovah’s service.—Acts 1:8; Ephesians 3:16.

16. How is love for Jesus an impelling force in our lives?

17. What dynamic force does Jehovah provide us, and how is its importance shown at Acts 1:8 and Ephesians 3:16?

Onward to Our Destination!

¹⁸ Our faith and love may be severely tested before we reach the new system of things. But Jehovah has provided us with an anchor “both sure and firm”—our wonderful hope. (Hebrews 6:19; Romans 15:4, 13) When we are battered by opposition or other trials, we can endure if we are securely anchored by means of our hope. After one storm subsides but before another one breaks out, let us be determined to fortify our hope and strengthen our faith.

¹⁹ Before mentioning the “anchor for the soul,” Paul said: “We desire each one of you to show the same industriousness [to “speed up,” footnote] so as to have the full assurance of the hope down to the end, in order that you may not become sluggish, but be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.” (Hebrews 6:11, 12) Impelled by love for Jehovah and for his Son and empowered by holy spirit, let us keep the ship of our faith on course until we reach the haven of God’s promised new world.

18. What will enable us to endure any future tests of our faith?

19. How can we keep the ship of our faith on course and reach the haven of God’s new world?

By Way of Review

- ☐ With regard to our faith, what warning did Paul give us?
- ☐ How have some experienced spiritual shipwreck, and how are others slowing down?
- ☐ What godly quality needs to be coupled with our faith?
- ☐ What will enable us to reach the haven of God’s promised new world?

WHOLESOME COMMUNICATION

A Key to a Good Marriage



In 1778, Robert Barron patented a double-acting, lever-tumbler lock that remains the basis of the modern key lock.

His design called for the use of a single key capable of raising the lock's two tumblers together.

SIMILARLY, a successful marriage depends on a husband and wife working together in unison. To unlock and experience the precious joys of a good marriage, one essential is wholesome communication.

What Wholesome Communication Involves

What does wholesome communication involve? One dictionary defines communication as "the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs." Communication therefore involves a sharing of sentiments and ideas. And wholesome communication entails things that are upbuilding, refreshing, virtuous, praiseworthy, and consoling.—Ephesians 4:29-32; Philippians 4:8.

Wholesome communication is made possible by confidence, trust, and mutual understanding. These qualities result when marriage is viewed as a lifelong relationship and there is genuine commitment to make it work. Commenting on such a relationship, 18th-century essayist Joseph Addison wrote:

"Two persons who have chosen each other out of all the species, with the design to be each other's mutual comfort and entertainment, have, in that action, bound themselves to be good-humored, affable, discreet, forgiving, patient, and joyful, with respect to each other's frailties and perfections, to the end of their lives." How happy such a union is! And these jewellike qualities can adorn your marriage, for they can be yours through wholesome communication.

Obstacles to Wholesome Communication

Most couples approach marriage with optimism, even euphoria. For many, however, the euphoria soon evaporates, and the optimism fades. Assuredness may be replaced by a bitter mixture of frustration, anger, hostility, even strong dislike. The marriage then becomes a situation of mere endurance "till death do us part." To improve or sustain the wholesome communication necessary for a good marriage, then, certain obstacles must be overcome.



Turning off the TV allows more time for communication

A real obstacle to wholesome communication can be fear of how a marriage mate would react to certain information or expressed desire. For instance, fear of rejection may arise after one learns that a serious personal disability is developing. How does one explain to a mate that an upcoming procedure will drastically alter one's appearance or ability to function? In such cases, honest communication and thoughtful planning for the future are needed as never before. Verbal assurances of continuing love, along with frequent acts of tenderness, would communicate a personal interest that would help to promote a truly satisfying marriage. In marriage this proverb should find its richest expression: "A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress." —Proverbs 17:17.

Resentment is another obstacle to wholesome communication. It has fittingly been said that a happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers. To fit that description, a married couple would make every effort to follow the apostle Paul's practical advice: "Let the sun not set with you in a provoked state." (Ephesians 4:26) Applying this counsel instead of nursing anger or resentment certainly calls for humble communication. Partners in a good marriage do not persistently succumb to anger, quarreling, and holding a grudge. (Proverbs 30:33) They seek to imitate God, who does not harbor

resentment. (Jeremiah 3:12) Indeed, they forgive each other from the heart.—Matthew 18:35.

A definite obstacle to any kind of communication is the silent treatment. This may involve glum expressions, heavy sighs, robotlike actions, and a one-sided embargo on speech. A marriage mate who acts in this way is communicating some form of displeasure. But vocalizing personal feelings in a frank and winning manner does much more to improve a marriage than does remaining silent and sullen.

Failure to listen well or at all when a mate speaks is another hurdle that must be overcome for good communication in the close quarters of marriage. Perhaps we are too tired or just too busy to muster the mental and emotional energy needed to listen to each other carefully. Arguments may erupt over misunderstood arrangements that one mate thought were clearly spelled out but that the other insists are being heard for the first time. Obviously, poor communication is responsible for such difficulties.

How to Promote Wholesome Communication

How important it is to take time for loving, wholesome communication! Some spend so much time in front of the TV watching other people's lives that they have little time for their own. Hence, turning off the television set is often a necessary step toward wholesome communication.

Just as there is a right time to speak, however, there is a time to keep quiet. The wise man said: "For everything there is an appointed time, . . . a time to keep quiet and a time to speak." Indeed, there are also proper words to say. "A word at its right time is O how good!" notes a proverb. (Ec-

**Wholesome communication
helps bind hearts in lasting love**

clesiastes 3:1, 7; Proverbs 15: 23) So determine when it is the best time to make your point or to express your heart's concern. Ask yourself: 'Is my mate tired or in a relaxed and refreshed frame of mind? Is the subject that I wish to broach potentially explosive? What did my spouse object to in my choice of words when we last spoke about this matter?'

It is good to remember that people react best when they can see how cooperating or complying with a request would benefit *them*. If some stress has developed between mates, one of them might be inclined to say, "Something has been bothering me, and we are going to get it straightened out right now!" Of course, exact wording would depend on the circumstances, but it may be better to say something like this, "Dear, I have been thinking about the matter we discussed earlier and how things might be worked out." Which approach would your mate be more likely to appreciate?

Yes, *how* something is said is very important. The apostle Paul wrote: "Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt." (Colossians 4:6) Endeavor to be gracious in your tone of voice and choice of words. Bear in mind that "pleasant sayings are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and a healing to the bones."—Proverbs 16:24.

For some couples, working together on projects at home can provide a fine atmosphere for communication. Such cooperation can promote a sense of sharing while affording time for wholesome conversation. For other marriage mates, a quiet time alone to-

gether without trying to do some work is better and is more conducive to wholesome communication.

Much can often be learned by taking note of how compatible marriage mates communicate with each other. What has made them that way? Most likely, their harmony and the ease with which they communicate have resulted from personal effort, patience, and loving consideration. They themselves apparently had a lot to learn, for good marriages do not happen automatically. How important it is, then, to consider your partner's viewpoint, to appreciate his or her needs, and to defuse potentially stressful situations with a discreet word. (Proverbs 16:23) If you are married, then, work at being pleasant to live with and easy to apologize to. That will go a long way in making your marriage a good one.

Jehovah God wants people to enjoy happy, lasting marriages. (Genesis 2:18, 21) But the key lies in the hands of those united in wedlock. It takes two loving people who really work together to unlock the door to a successful marriage by mastering the art of wholesome communication.





Philip

A Zealous Evangelizer

THE Scriptures contain many accounts of men and women whose faith is worthy of imitation. Consider Philip, a first-century Christian missionary. He was not an apostle, yet he was used powerfully in spreading the Kingdom message. In fact, Philip became known as “the evangelizer.” (Acts 21:8) Why did Philip have that designation? And what can we learn from him?

Philip appears in the Bible record soon after Pentecost 33 C.E. At that time the Greek-speaking Jews began murmuring against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, claiming that their widows were being overlooked in the daily food distribution. To handle the matter, the apostles appointed “seven certified men.” Philip was among those chosen.—Acts 6:1-6.

These seven men were “certified.” James Moffatt’s translation says that they were “of good reputation.” Yes, at the time of their appointment, they were already known to be spiritual men with practical thinking ability. It is similar with those who serve as Christian overseers today. Such men are not appointed hastily. (1 Timothy 5:22) They must have “a fine testimony from people on the outside,” and fellow Christians should know that they are reasonable and sound in mind.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3, 7; Philippians 4:5.

Evidently, Philip cared well for his assignment in Jerusalem. Soon, however, a wave of bitter persecution broke out and scattered Christ’s followers. Like others, Philip left the city, but his ministry was not over. Before long, he was busy preaching in a new territory—Samaria.—Acts 8:1-5.

Opening Up New Territories

Jesus had foretold that his disciples would preach “both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) By preaching in Samaria, Philip was sharing in the fulfillment of those words. The Jews generally had lit-

tle respect for Samaritans. But Philip did not prejudge these people, and his impartiality was blessed. Indeed, many Samaritans got baptized, including a former magician named Simon.—Acts 8:6-13.

In time, Jehovah's angel directed Philip to go to the desert road that ran from Jerusalem to Gaza. There Philip spotted a chariot carrying an Ethiopian official who was reading aloud from Isaiah's prophecy. Philip ran alongside the chariot and struck up a conversation. Though the Ethiopian was a proselyte with some knowledge of God and the Scriptures, he humbly admitted that he needed help to understand what he was reading. Hence, he invited Philip to get on the chariot and sit with him. After a witness was given, they came to a body of water. "What prevents me from getting baptized?" the Ethiopian asked. Philip promptly baptized him, and the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing. Likely, this new disciple spread the good news back in his homeland.—Acts 8:26-39.

What can we learn from Philip's ministry involving the Samaritans and the Ethiopian official? Never should we assume that individuals of a certain nationality, race, or social status will not be interested in the good news. Instead, we should declare the Kingdom message to "people of all sorts." (1 Corinthians 9:19-23) If we make ourselves available by preaching to all, Jehovah can use us in the work of 'making disciples of people of all the nations' before the end of this wicked system arrives.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Philip's Further Privileges

After preaching to the Ethiopian official, Philip witnessed in Ashdod, "and he went through the territory and kept on declaring the good news to all the cities until he got to Caesarea." (Acts 8:40) In the first century, these two cities had substantial Gentile

populations. On his way north to Caesarea, Philip likely preached in prominent Jewish centers, such as Lydda and Joppa. Perhaps that is why disciples could later be found in these areas.—Acts 9:32-43.

The final mention of Philip occurs some 20 years later. At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul disembarked at Ptolemais. "The next day," says Paul's traveling companion Luke, "we set out and arrived in Caesarea, and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelizer." By this time, Philip had "four daughters, virgins, that prophesied."—Acts 21:8, 9.

Apparently, Philip had settled in Caesarea. But he had not lost his missionary spirit, for Luke calls him "the evangelizer." This expression often indicates one who leaves his home to preach the good news in unworked regions. The fact that Philip had four daughters who prophesied suggests that they followed in their zealous father's footsteps.

Present-day Christian parents should remember that their children are their most important disciples. Even if such parents have had to relinquish certain theocratic privileges because of family responsibilities, like Philip they can remain wholehearted servants of God and exemplary parents.—Ephesians 6:4.

The visit of Paul and his companions gave Philip's family a fine opportunity to show hospitality. Imagine the interchange of encouragement! Perhaps it was on this occasion that Luke gathered the details about Philip's activities, later included in Acts chapters 6 and 8.

Jehovah God used Philip extensively to further Kingdom interests. Philip's zeal enabled him to spread the good news in new territories and to promote a healthy spiritual atmosphere in his home. Would you like to enjoy similar privileges and blessings? Then you would do well to imitate the qualities displayed by Philip the evangelizer.

There Are Living Gems in Namibia!



NAMIBIA stretches nearly 1,000 miles along the southwest coast of Africa. The country's entire coastline consists of sand dunes, rocky hills, and vast gravel plains. Mingled among the stones of Namibia's pebble beaches are gemstones of every conceivable color. Even diamonds are occasionally found there. But the country has something much more precious than these stones. Namibia has living gems—the people of its many national groups.

The earliest inhabitants of Namibia spoke a family of languages called Khoisan. Their speech was known for its click sounds. Among the Khoisan speakers today are the dark-skinned Damara, the light-skinned people of small stature called the Nama, and the famous Bush-

The good news is being preached to all of Namibia's ethnic groups

Namibia is a country of beautiful gemstones

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man hunters. Many black tribes have also come into Namibia in more recent centuries. These fall under three main national groups: the Ovambo (the largest ethnic group in Namibia), the Herero, and the Kavango. Europeans started settling in Namibia during the 19th century. More immigrants arrived after diamonds were discovered on the desert sands.

Namibia's inhabitants are precious because they are part of the world of mankind for which God gave his Son, thus opening the way to everlasting life. (John 3:16) Hundreds of Namibians from many tribes have already responded to the message of salvation. These can be likened to living gemstones because they are among "the desirable things of all the nations" now being gathered to Jehovah's house of worship. —Haggai 2:7.

Spiritual Mining Gets Started

It was in 1928 that a start was made to mine the spiritual gems of Namibia. During that year the South Africa branch of the Watch Tower Society mailed 50,000 pieces of Bible literature to people scattered throughout the country. The following year an anointed Christian from South Africa named Lenie Theron followed up on the interest shown. In four months she traversed the vast country alone, placing over 6,000 Bible study aids in Afrikaans, English, and German. All this work certainly was not in vain.

For example, consider Bernhard Baade, a German miner. In 1929 he received a supply of eggs from a farmer who wrapped each egg in a page from a Watch Tower publication. Bernhard eagerly read every page, wondering who wrote the book. He eventually got to the last page, which gave a German address of the Watch Tower Society. Bernhard wrote for more literature and be-

came the first Namibian to take a stand for the truth.

Full-Time Workers Arrive

In 1950, four missionaries trained at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead arrived in Namibia. The number of missionaries rose to eight by 1953. They included Dick and Coralie Waldron, an Australian married couple who are still serving here faithfully. Many other full-time Kingdom proclaimers from South Africa and abroad have also shared in mining Namibia's spiritual gems. Other missionaries, as well as graduates of the Ministerial Training School, have been sent to Namibia.

Another factor contributing to spiritual growth in Namibia has been the translating and publishing of Bible literature in major local languages, such as Herero, Kwangali, Kwanyama, Nama/Damara, and Ndonga. Since 1990, a fine translation office and home for full-time volunteer workers has been operating in the capital, Windhoek. Karen Deppisch, who has shared with her husband in the full-time evangelizing work in various parts of Namibia, says: "Many are amazed when we offer them literature in their own language, especially when very few books of any kind are available in that particular language."

In Our Next Issue

Curbing the Scourge of Inequality

**"Gird Yourself
With Lowliness of Mind"**

**Peer Pressure—Can It Be
to Your Advantage?**



Can you serve where the need for Kingdom proclaimers is greater?

a test. (Ecclesiastes 9:5) In what way?

A Herero Witness explains: "It was a great challenge to be obedient to the truth. I accepted a Bible study with Jehovah's Witnesses, but it took time for me to apply the things I was learning. First, I had to test whether it would be safe for me not to practice traditional beliefs. For example, I would drive past certain places in Namibia without stopping to put a stone on a grave or raising my hat in a greeting to the dead. Gradually, I became convinced that nothing would happen to me for not worshipping dead ancestors.

How happy I am that Jeho-

vah has blessed my efforts to help my family and other interested ones to learn the truth!"

Polishing the Gemstones

Some of Namibia's literal gems have been polished by the movement of waves and sand over millenniums of time. But, of course, such natural processes do not produce living gemstones. It takes effort for imperfect humans to "put away the old personality" and clothe themselves with a new Christlike personality. (Ephesians 4:20-24) For example, the veneration of dead ancestors is a strong tradition among many tribes of Namibia. Those who do not perform acts of ancestor worship are often persecuted by family members and neighbors. When individuals learn from the Bible that the dead "are conscious of nothing at all," they face

The Need for Spiritual Miners

Before the arrival of the missionaries in 1950, there was only one publisher of the good news in Namibia. The number has steadily increased to a peak of 995. Yet, much work remains to be done. In fact, some regions have hardly been touched. Are you in a position to serve where the need for zealous Kingdom proclaimers is great? Then, please, step over into Namibia and help us find and polish more spiritual gemstones.—Compare Acts 16:9.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 2, 1999

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 2, 1999, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:15 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to

reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Is the 'marking' mentioned at 2 Thessalonians 3:14 a formal congregational process, or is it something that Christians individually do in avoiding unruly ones?

What the apostle Paul wrote to the Thessalonians indicates that the congregation elders have a clear role in such 'marking.' However, individual Christians thereafter follow through, doing so with spiritual objectives in mind. We can best appreciate this by considering Paul's counsel in its original setting.

Paul helped to establish the Thessalonian congregation, aiding men and women to become believers. (Acts 17:1-4) Later he wrote from Corinth to commend and encourage them. Paul offered needed counsel too. He urged them 'to live quietly, to mind their own business, and to work with their hands.' Some were not acting that way, so

Paul added: "We exhort you, brothers, admonish the disorderly, speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak." Clearly, there were "disorderly"* ones among them who needed counsel. —1 Thessalonians 1:2-10; 4:11; 5:14.

Some months later, Paul wrote his second letter to the Thessalonians, with additional comments about Jesus' future presence. Paul also gave further guidance about how to deal with disorderly ones who were 'not working but were meddling with what did not concern them.' Their actions were contrary both to Paul's example as a hard worker and to his clear order about working to support oneself. (2 Thessalonians 3:7-12) Paul directed that certain steps be taken. These steps came

* The Greek word was used regarding soldiers who did not keep rank or follow discipline, as well as for truant students, those who skipped their school classes.

after what the elders had already done in admonishing or counseling the disorderly. Paul wrote:

"Now we are giving you orders, brothers, . . . to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly and not according to the tradition you received from us. For your part, brothers, do not give up in doing right. But if anyone is not obedient to our word through this letter, keep this one marked, stop associating with him, that he may become ashamed. And yet do not be considering him as an enemy, but continue admonishing him as a brother."—2 Thessalonians 3:6, 13-15.

So the further steps included withdrawing from the disorderly ones, marking them, stopping association with them, yet admonishing them as brothers. What would lead the members of the congregation to take those steps? As a help to clarify this, let us identify three situations that Paul was not focusing on here.

1. We know that Christians are imperfect and have failings. Still, love is a mark of true Christianity, calling on us to be understanding and forgiving of others' mistakes. For example, a Christian might have a rare outburst of anger, as occurred between Barnabas and Paul. (Acts 15:36-40) Or because of tiredness, one may speak harsh and cutting words. In such instances, by manifesting love and applying Bible counsel, we can cover over the error, continuing to live, associate, and work with our fellow Christian. (Matthew 5:23-25; 6:14; 7:1-5; 1 Peter 4:8) Clearly, failings of this sort were not what Paul was dealing with in 2 Thessalonians.

2. Paul was not addressing a situation in which a Christian personally chooses to limit association with another whose ways or attitudes are not good—for example, one who seems excessively focused on recreation or on material things. Or a parent may limit his child's association with youngsters who disregard parental authority, play in a rough or dangerous way, or do not take Christianity seriously. Such are simply personal decisions in line with what we read at Proverbs 13:20: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly."—Compare 1 Corinthians 15:33.

3. On quite a different scale of gravity, Paul wrote to the Corinthians about one who practices

gross sin and is not repentant. Such unrepentant sinners had to be excluded from the congregation. The "wicked" man had to be handed over to Satan, as it were. Thereafter, loyal Christians were not to mix with such wicked ones; the apostle John urged Christians not even to greet them. (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 John 9-11) This, however, does not fit the counsel of 2 Thessalonians 3:14 either.

Different from the above three situations is that involving "disorderly" ones as discussed in 2 Thessalonians. Paul wrote that these were still 'brothers,' to be admonished and treated as such. Thus, the problem with the "disorderly" brothers was neither on the level of a mere personal matter between Christians nor of sufficient seriousness that congregation elders had to step in with a disfellowshipping action, as Paul did in connection with the immoral situation in Corinth. The "disorderly" ones were not guilty of grave sin, as was the man disfellowshipped in Corinth.

The "disorderly" ones in Thessalonica were guilty of significant deviations from Christianity. They would not work, whether because they thought Christ's return was imminent or because they were lazy. Further, they were causing significant disturbance by 'meddling with what did not concern them.' Likely the congregation elders had repeatedly counseled them, in line with Paul's advice in his first letter and with other divine advice. (Proverbs 6:6-11; 10:4, 5; 12:11, 24; 24:30-34) Still they persisted in a course that reflected badly on the congregation and that could spread to other Christians. So the Christian elder Paul, without naming the individuals, publicly called attention to their disorderliness, exposing their erroneous course.

He also let the congregation know that it would be appropriate for them as individual Christians to 'mark' the disorderly. This implied that individuals should take note of those whose actions corresponded to the course about which the congregation was publicly alerted. Paul advised that they "withdraw from every brother walking disorderly." That certainly could not mean completely shunning such a person, for they were to "continue admonishing him as a brother." They would continue to have Christian contact at the meetings and perhaps



Christian elders admonish the disorderly and yet view them as fellow believers

in the ministry. They could hope that their brother would respond to admonition and abandon his disturbing ways.

In what sense would they “withdraw” from him? Evidently, this was in a social context. (Compare Galatians 2:12.) Their ceasing to have social dealings and recreation with him might show him that principled people disliked his ways. Even if he did not get ashamed and change, at least others would be less likely to learn his ways and become like him. At the same time, these individual Christians should concentrate on the positive. Paul advised them: “For your part, brothers, do not give up in doing right.”—2 Thessalonians 3:13.

Clearly, this apostolic counsel is no basis for looking down on or judging our brothers who make some minor slip or error. Instead, its objective is to help one who takes a disturbing course that significantly conflicts with Christianity.

Paul did not lay down detailed rules as if trying to create a complicated procedure. But it is plain that the elders should first counsel and try to help a disorderly one. If they do not succeed and the person persists in a way that is disturbing and that has the potential for spreading, they may conclude

that the congregation should be put on the alert. They can arrange for a talk on why such disorderliness is to be avoided. They will not mention names, but their warning talk will help to protect the congregation because responsive ones will take extra care to limit social activities with any who clearly display such disorderliness.

Hopefully, in time the disorderly one will be ashamed of his ways and will be moved to change. As the elders and others in the congregation see the change, they can individually decide to end the limitation they have put on personally socializing with him.

In summary, then: The congregation elders take the lead in offering help and counsel if someone is walking disorderly. If he does not see the error of his way but continues to be an unwholesome influence, the elders may warn the congregation by means of a talk that makes clear the Biblical view—be it of dating unbelievers, or whatever the improper course is. (1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14) Christians in the congregation who are thus alerted can individually decide to limit any socializing with ones who clearly are pursuing a disorderly course but who are still brothers.



Guidance in Choosing Good Associates

YOUNGSTERS look to their peers rather than to their parents for guidance on clothing and music, observes a report in the Reader's Digest. It is therefore vital for parents to know who their children associate with and where.

"It is your responsibility to investigate," says Esmé van Rensburg, senior lecturer in the department of psychology at a South African university. She adds: "The chances are that your child will be annoyed with you, but they will cool down." Then she gives the following tips to parents. Rules should be logical and have definite underlying principles; listen to your child; don't overreact, but keep calm, and know what you want to say. If your child has already developed a friendship with an undesirable associate, focus on the unacceptable behavior the friendship has promoted instead of merely forbidding further association.

Sound advice for parents has long been available in God's Word, the Bible. For instance, it states: "Be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) The Scriptures also give this fine advice on the choice of associates: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) These examples illustrate the wisdom available to those who read the Bible with appreciation and apply what it says in daily life.