

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

UNDER THE EXALTED CHRIST, THE GOSPEL BEGINS TO SPREAD

THE ACTS

† THE BOOK OF ACTS

OF THE APOSTLES

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, Associated

An overview of the Book of Acts, by Given O. Blakely

ACTS 5:31-32

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey Him."

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Lesson #83

COMMENTARY ON: 20:1-12

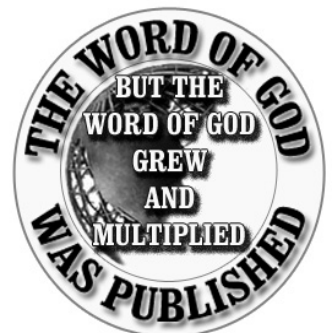
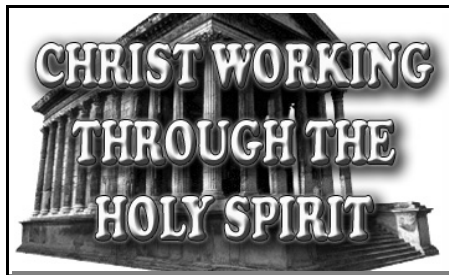
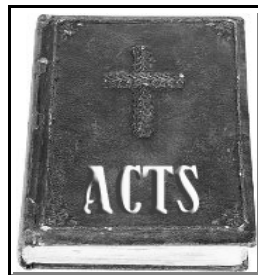
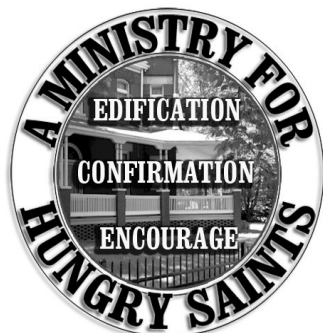
PREACHING AT TROAS

To this point, a marked emphasis has been placed upon ministering to the saints, as well as to the Jews, to whom Jesus was specifically sent first (John 1:11; Acts 3:26; 13:20,33), as well as the rest of the world, or all sinners (John 3:16; 4:42; Acts 26:23; 1 Tim 1:15). Paul ministered to the saints as he traveled, finally arriving at Troas, where he spent seven days. He met with them on the Lord's Day, as they came together to "break bread." This is the occasion when a young man named Eutychus fell from a second story window, and "was taken up dead." Paul raised him from the dead, and even though he had already been preaching for a long time, continued to talk "till break of day." The brethren profited much from his presence, "and were not a little comforted." Something of the mind-set and manners of genuine disciples are made known in this familiar text. It is essential that we glean from it as much as possible, and not be hindered by cherished and empty traditions.

ACTS 17:26-27

"And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us."

"... and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

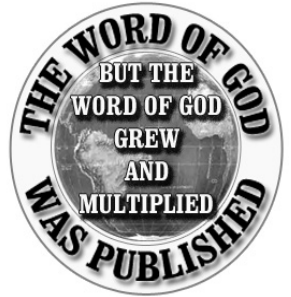


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 83



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE=International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF HOW THE ENTHRONED CHRIST, BY MEANS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, WORKED THROUGH HIS HOLY APOSTLES AND GODLY MEN, TO SPREAD THE WORD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE WORLD, AND TO BRING EDIFICATION AND STABILITY TO MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY.

----- Lexicon and Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----
LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

PAUL PREACHES AT TROAS

20:1 “And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia. ² And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece, ³ And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia. ⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus. ⁵ These going before tarried for us at Troas. ⁶ And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. ⁷ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. ⁸ And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. ⁹ And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead. ¹⁰ And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him. ¹¹ When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed. ¹² And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” (Acts 20:1-12)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMATION OF THE TEXT
To this point, a marked emphasis has been placed upon ministering to the saints, as well as to the

Jews, to whom Jesus was specifically sent **first** (John 1:11; Acts 3:26; 13:20,33), as well as the rest of the world, or all sinners (John 3:16; 4:42; Acts 26:23;1

Tim 1:15). Paul ministered to the saints as he traveled, finally arriving at Troas, where he spent seven days. He met with them on the Lord's Day, as they came

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- AFTER THE UPROAR CEASED (20:1)
- HE GAVE THEM MUCH EXHORTATION (20:2-3a)
- THE JEW LAID WAIT FOR HIM (20:3b)
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- AFTER THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD (20:6a)
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- A POTENTIAL DISTRACTION (20:9-10)
- HE TALKED WITH THEM A LONG WHILE (20:11)
- THEY WERE NOT A LITTLE COMFORTED (20:12)
- CONCLUSION

together to “*break bread.*” This is the occasion when a young man named Eutychus fell from a third story window, and “*was taken up dead.*” Paul raised him from the dead, and even though he had already been preaching for a long time, continued to talk “*till break of day.*” The brethren profited much from his presence, “*and were not a little comforted.*” Something of the mind-set and manners of genuine disciples is made known in this familiar text. It is essential that we glean from it as much as possible, and not be hindered by cherished and empty traditions.

THE MARVEL OF A DISTORTED EMPHASIS

The activities recorded in the book of Acts reflect Divine priorities. There is an undeniable accent in the actions as well as in the message that was preached. It is this emphasis that has been greatly distorted and misrepresented. This distortion is wholly owing to an institutional emphasis that is not at all in harmony with the revealed objective of God Himself. This target is stated with great pungency in Scripture, and, like a diamond, is viewed from several different objectives.

⇨ **CONCERNING PEOPLE.** If we view this from the perspective of the people involved, it is to conform them to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29-30). This is in order that the bride might be presented to Christ “*not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such things*” (Eph 5:27). The process in which these appointments are accomplished is spiritual growth (Eph 4:14; 1 Pet 2:2; 2 Pet 3:18).

⇨ **CONCERNING THE FOE.** Seen from the standpoint of the adversary it is to “*destroy the works of the devil*” (1 John 3: 8).

⇨ **CHRIST’S PRESENT ACTIVITY.** Considered from the viewpoint of Christ’s current activity, it is to bring “*many sons to glory*” (Heb 2:10), and ever live to make intercession for them (Heb 7:25). It can also be summarized as Jesus nourishing and cherishing the church (Eph 5:29).

⇨ **DELIVERED FROM THE WORLD.** From a broad perspective, the Divine purpose is to deliver us “*from this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). That means removing men from the worldly order like Israel was delivered from Egypt. Absolutely no provision is made in Christ for maintaining closeness with the world. This too is a process that spans the entire lifetime of those who are in Christ Jesus They are continually cleansing themselves of all filthiness of flesh and spirit (2 Cor 7:1). The reason for the continuation of this work is that there are ongoing discoveries of spiritual contaminates as the people grow up into Christ in all things.

All of this has a point at which

the various processes begin – an initiation point. That beginning point is the commencement of the salvation of sinners, for which cause Christ came into the world (1 Tim 1:15). This beginning occurs when one is baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27), placed in the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:18), or born again (1 Pet 1:23).

However, the saving of sinners is a process, not a single point in time. Beginning is not the ultimate point or objective. Even as in a race, finishing is the point, for if that is not done, there really has been no point to, or value in, a beginning. Neither, indeed, is there any point to a plant that, after its duration, has yielded no fruit. **Salvation must be brought to completion, or finished, to be effective** (Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23). The status of “*sons*” and “*daughters*” can only be finalized in those who come out from among the defiled, and “*touch not the unclean thing*” (2 Cor 6:17-18). This is required because only one master can be served (Matt 6:24), and a person can be no more like Christ than he is unlike the world.

IN THE BOOK OF ACTS

In the book of Acts, there is a marked emphasis on the perfecting of the saints. **What is taught doctrinally in the epistles is lived out experientially in the chronicles of the early activities of the body of Christ.**

The priority of the saints ought to be obvious. Doctrinally, this is the reason for Christ’s intercession (Heb 7:25), the Holy Spirit’s intercession (Rom 8:26,27), and the ministry of the holy angels (Heb 1:13-14). All of the spiritual gifts are given to the church and for the church (Eph 4:8-16; 1 Cor 12:7). These people are the focus of heaven.

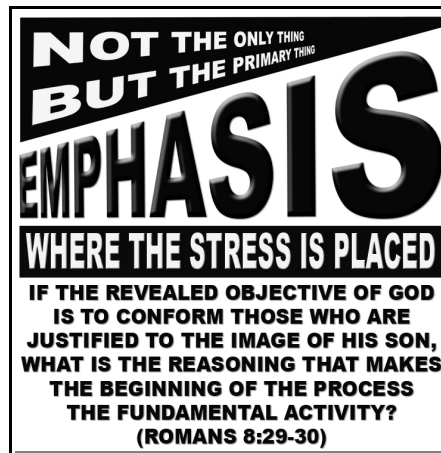
The priority of the saints ought to be obvious. Doctrinally, this is the reason for Christ’s intercession, the Holy Spirit’s intercession, and the ministry of the holy angels. All of the spiritual gifts are given to the church and for the church

This priority is reflected in the chronicles of the ministry of Paul. With Barnabas, he spent a whole year with the church in Antioch (Acts 11:26). He again spent a “long time” with the disciples in Antioch (14:28). He spent a year and six months in Corinth (Acts 18:11). He spent three years in Ephesus, speaking with great soberness to the brethren (Acts 20:31). Paul and those traveling with him spent “many days” with Philip the evangelist (Acts 21:8-10). Additional reports include the following.

- ⇒ PAUL DETERMINES TO VISIT THE BRETHREN IN EVERY CITY WHERE THEY HAVE PREACHED (15:36,41).
- ⇒ JUDAS AND SILAS EXHORT AND CONFIRM THE BRETHREN (15:32).
- ⇒ PAUL AND BARNABAS REMAIN IN ANTIOCH WITH THE CHURCH (15:35).
- ⇒ PAUL AND SILAS GO THROUGHOUT SYRIA AND CILICIA CONFIRMING THE CHURCHES (15:41).
- ⇒ PAUL AND SILAS ESTABLISH THE CHURCHES IN LYSTRA AND DERBE (16:4-5).
- ⇒ PAUL AND SILAS ENTER THE HOUSE OF LYDIA AND COMFORT THE BRETHREN (16:40).
- ⇒ PAUL LANDS IN CAESAREA AND SALUTES THE CHURCH (18:22)
- ⇒ PAUL GOES TO ANTIOCH AND SPENDS SOME TIME THERE WITH THE CHURCH (18:22A-23a).
- ⇒ PAUL DOES OVER THE COUNTRY OF GALATIA AND PHRYGIA STRENGTHENING THE DISCIPLES (18:23).
- ⇒ APOLLOS. SPEAKS IN ACHAIA, HELPING THEM MUCH WHO HAD BELIEVED THROUGH GRACE (18:27).
- ⇒ TAKING THE DISCIPLES WITH HIM, PAUL TEACHES DAILY IN THE SCHOOL OF TYRANNUS FOR TWO FULL YEARS (19:9-12).
- ⇒ PAUL GOES THROUGHOUT MACEDONIA EXHORTING THE DISCIPLES (20:1).
- ⇒ PAUL REMAINS WITH THE BRETHREN IN TROAS FOR SEVEN DAYS (20:6-12).

In this respect, **Paul followed the steps of the Savior, who consistently spent His choice and**

preferred time with His disciples.



Anyone who imagines that the thrust of apostolic doctrine, or the record God has given of His Son, is upon recruiting disciples is not familiar with the Word of God. To be sure, such efforts were found, and are not to be despised. However, when that becomes the thrust of religious activity, those so engaging their efforts are at variance with both the doctrine and example of holy men of old.

The more extended stays of Paul were spent with those who believed. They are the ones to whom he expounded “the riches of His grace,” “the unsearchable riches of Christ,” “the riches of the glory of this mystery,” and “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:7; 3:8; Rom 16:25).

Although I have drawn attention to this previously, I do want to mention it again. **The priority of those to whom Paul preached is consistent throughout the book of Acts.** It is in a particular order. I have already shown the priority of those in Christy Jesus – a priority that is also revealed in all of Paul’s writings. In addition to this, The following may be noted.

- ⇒ **THE JEWS.** This was generally in the synagogues, or some place where they met to pray (9:20,22; 13:5,14; 14:1; 7:1,10,17; 18:4,5,7,8,19; 19:8, 10).
- ⇒ **GENTILE PROSELYTES.** These were generally found in the synagogues,

although there are also examples of teaching them in their homes (13:43; 14:1; 17:4,12; 18:4; 19:10). Peter was used to preach the Gospel to those who gathered at the home of Cornelius to hear words whereby they could be saved (10:1-47; 11:14).

- ⇒ **DEVOUT PEOPLE.** These were devoted to either the Lord, or to some form of religion that was not correct. Yet, they had regard for the concept of Deity, and were more open to the Gospel than many (17:10,17).
- ⇒ **UNTAUGHT GENTILES.** These were Gentiles that gave no particular evidence of interest (14:15; 17:22-32; 4:25).

When Paul referred to his apostleship to the Gentiles, the statement was always made to those who were in Christ Jesus (Rom 1:13; 11:12-13; 15:16,18; Eph 3:1,8; Col 1:27; 1 Tim 2:7). In fact, when Paul taught **believers** who had come from the Gentile quadrant of humanity, he said he was fulfilling his apostleship.

- ⇒ *“For I speak to **you Gentiles**, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, **I magnify mine office**” (Rom 11:13).*
- ⇒ *“Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto **you** in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the **Gentiles**, ministering the gospel of God, that **the offering up of the Gentiles** might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Rom 15:15-16).*
- ⇒ *“For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ **for you Gentiles**” (Eph 3:1).*
- ⇒ *“Whereof I am **made a minister**, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me **for you**, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to **His saints**: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this*

mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Col 1:27).

⇒ *“Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity” (1 Tim 2:7).*

Paul’s primary ministry was to the church – particularly *“all the churches of the Gentiles”* (Rom 16:4). These are the ones to whom Paul made known the mystery that had been revealed to him – the *“unsearchable riches of Christ.”* This is not what he preached to the philosophers of Athens, or to Felix, or Agrippa. Paul’s work was related to that of Jesus: nourishing and cherishing the church (Eph 5:26), shepherding the flock (Heb 13:20), and bringing the sons of God to glory (Heb 2:10).

Although this ministry of Jesus,

There is too much malnourishment in Christendom for this to be effectively denied. It is a very serious condition, for it contradicts the nature of salvation, as well as its intent.

and consequently of Paul as well, is not directly denied by the contemporary church, it is denied in the activities of the professed church leaders. **There is too much malnourishment in Christendom for this to be effectively denied.** It is a very serious condition, for it contradicts the nature of salvation, as well as its intent. It simply is not possible for anything to be right that contrasts with God’s great salvation.

One of the reasons for the remarkable success of the early church was the accuracy of its message. For the most part, the true

Gospel was preached. When distortions were presented, immediate steps were taken to correct the condition (15:1-29).

Jesus had instructed the chief of the twelve apostles, *“Feed My lambs . . . Feed My sheep . . . Feed My sheep”* (John 21:15-17). That is what is being done in the book of Acts. The doctrine is being effectively lived out by those who represented Jesus Christ. This is because they had been reconciled to God, and taught by Him as well.

Now, let us see if we can behold the truth of this in our text.

AFTER THE UPROAR CEASED

“ 20:1 And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.”

For the average American Christian, a focus upon the work of the Lord is the exception. Once a modicum of time has been given to some shallow form of religious activity, life is resumed in, what is conceived to be, its normal mode – taken up with the cares of this world. **This is the fruit of unbelief, which is necessarily fostered by brief and shallow exposures to the things of God.** However, this was not the mode of life for the apostle Paul. For him, interruptions constituted a distraction from the work to which the Lord had called him. These included such things as those just experienced in Ephesus. There were also things like imprisonment, beatings, shipwrecks, and the likes. **However, as confirmed in this text, as soon as they were over, Paul resumed the activities he preferred, which were wholly centered in the**

Lord. Even when he was disadvantaged, like being in prison, he devoted himself to the work of the Lord to the fullest extent possible, writing epistles and teaching those with whom he came in contact.

Lest we miss the significance of this, let me remind you that this is what Paul meant when he wrote, *“For me to live is Christ”* (Phil 1:21). And again, *“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me”* (Gal 2:20). This is living *“unto Him which died for them and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15). This is what is involved in pressing *“toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”* (Phil 3:14), while *“forgetting the things that are behind”* (Phil 3:13). This is the kind of life that is described as living *“by faith”* (Heb 10:38), and walking *“in the Spirit”* (Gal 5:16,25).

I say these things because our day is marked by an enormous

amount of ambiguity concerning what is called “the Christian life.” We now live in an era where not fulfilling baser lusts, or managing to refrain from sinful indulgences with the aid of counseling, and special programs, is considered growing in the Lord and doing His will. However, while it is essential to *“sin not”* (1 Cor 15:34; Eph 4:26; 1 John 2:1), this is not the epitome of spiritual life. You can be a Pharisee and live in such a manner, with the outside clean, yet the inside filled with dead men’s bones (Matt 23:27). True spiritual life is made known when the individual is engaged in the *“good and acceptable and perfect will of God”* (Rom 12:11-2). God has created men *“unto good works”* (Eph 2:10), not merely abstinence from bad ones. Such works are the focus of the expressions of spiritual life. It is that focus that enables the individual to refrain from unlawful involvements.

In Scripture, the lives of believers are not described as merely refraining from sin – although they most

certainly did that. For example, Paul's life in Christ is not described as no longer persecuting the church – or being able to live another day without opposing the saints. What we know about Mary Magdalene is not merely that she was no longer dominated by seven demons. Matthew is not described as being able to consistently refrain from collecting taxes. It is what they **did** toward God that is reported, for that is a proper representation of the manner in which they lived.

AFTER THE UPROAR CEASED

“And after the uproar was ceased . . .” Other versions read, *“had ended,”*^{NIV} *“come to an end,”*^{BBE} *“died down,”*^{CJB} *“was over,”*^{CSB} *“was appeased,”*^{GENEVA} *“had subsided,”*^{MRD} and *“stopped.”*^{IE}

The event that had just passed was described as an assembly that *“was confused,”*^{19:32} *“the uproar,”* *“the noise,”*^{BBE} *“the tumult,”*^{DARBY} *“the disturbance,”*^{NAB} *“the rage,”*^{TNT} and *“the trouble.”*^{IE}

This is the kind of circumstance that is almost, if not altogether, uncontrollable. Many times, force must be used to subdue raging crowds. Recent riots in Iran confirm this to be the case. Mass destruction often attends such protests, with whole sections of towns

being burned down and looted. Modern control methodologies include subduing people with tear gas and fire hoses, clubs, and even gunfire.

Yet, in this text, there was a certain orderliness to the cessation of the tumult. Reason prevailed, which is nearly impossible under such conditions. **This, however, was not owing to human ingenuity, but to the working of the Lord, who does have control over the hearts of men.** He can *“put”* things into the heart of man, including the following.

- ⇨ Wisdom (Ex 35:34; 36:2; 1 Kgs 10:24).
- ⇨ To beautify the house of the Lord (Ezra 7:27).
- ⇨ To rebuild the walls of Jerusalem (Neh 2:12).
- ⇨ To reckon a genealogy (Neh 7:5).
- ⇨ Gladness (Psa 4:7).
- ⇨ Earnest care for the church (2 Cor 8:16).
- ⇨ His laws (Heb 10:16).

⇨ To fulfill His will by giving their kingdom unto the beast (Rev 17:17).

Some may be concerned about this impinging upon the mythical free will of man. However, no such concerns are ever evinced in Scripture. **God does not govern the nations by the will of man, but by His own will.** His power is not theoretic, but is very real and active. What do you suppose God has to do to deliver His people from the snare of the fowler, the evil intents of men, and the hostility of the powers of darkness. In such deliverances, is He hampered by the will of the enemies? Indeed, He is not. He can work overtly, or put it into the hearts of men, to fulfill His will. Who does not know this is the case?

In this text, the subduing of the wrath of man was the work of the Lord. As it is written, *“Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain”* (Psa 76:10). Whether you take this verse to mean that the wrath of man is restrained,^{KJV} or that the Lord restrains His own wrath,^{NRSV} the meaning is substantially the same. Were God not to stop the expression of human indignation against His people, He would destroy its perpetrators. In either case, the tumult was stopped – which is the whole point of the text. Further, the tumult ceased because **He** caused it to cease, doing so through means, but nevertheless, doing it. **This is one of the means employed to work all things together for the good of those who love Him, and are the called according to His purpose.**

Paul did not leave the disciples in Ephesus until this uproar had ceased. He doubtless remained to ensure that they were not diverted from the way, and to provide the necessary comfort and edification required to enable them to stand against the wiles of the devil.

PAUL CALLED HIS DISCIPLES

“ . . . Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them . . .” Other versions read, *“called the disciples to himself . . . embraced them,”*^{NKJV/DARBY/GENEVA/ILT} *“sent for the disciples . . . exhorted them,”*^{NASB} *“sent for the disciples . . . encouraging them,”*^{NIV} *“sent for the disciples . . . and given them comfort,”*^{BBE} *“sent for the disciples . . .”*



speaking words of encouragement to them,"^{NJB} "invited the followers to come visit him. He wanted to encourage them,"^{LIVING} and "sent for the disciples and warned and consoled and urged and encouraged them; then he embraced them."^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated "embraced" is a rather comprehensive one. The lexical meaning of the Greek word is, "of departing take leave of, say good-bye to."^{FRIBERG} This does not denote a wordless parting, with a mere physical embrace – although that was involved. **It was not the manner of Jesus or the apostles to part without words.** Before Jesus left His disciples to lay down His life, He spent an evening delivering words to them (John 13-16). After He rose from the dead, and before He ascended into heaven, He again delivered words to them (Matt 28:16-20; Lk 24:17-46; Acts 1:1-9).

It was also Paul's manner to precede his farewells with meaningful words (Acts 18:21; 20:17-37; 1 Cor 13:11-14). This is the nature of parting among those who are in Christ Jesus. They speak comfortably to one another. The Amplified Bible gives the sense of the text: Paul "sent for the disciples and warned and consoled and urged and encouraged them; then he embraced them."

HE DEPARTED FOR MACEDONIA

"... and departed for to go into Macedonia." Other versions read, "Set out for Macedonia,"^{NIV} "left for Macedonia,"^{NRSV} "went away from them to Macedonia,"^{BBE} "set forward to Macedonia,"^{DOUAY} "set out on his journey to Macedonia,"^{NAB} and "went to the country of Macedonia."^{IE}

Earlier, Paul had "purposed in the Spirit" to go to Macedonia (19:21). He had even sent Timotheus and Erastus into Macedonia before him, doubtless to prepare for his coming (19:22). Having written the book of Corinthians while in Ephesus, he had told them he would pass through Macedonia en route to them (1 Cor 16:5).

ERRONEOUS VIEWS OF PAUL'S MINISTRY

Here, then, we have the work of the apostle of the Gentiles clearly including a determined return to the

churches. This was done in order to establish them in the faith – a ministry to which he consistently devoted himself (Acts 14:22; 15:36,41; 16:5; 18:23).

In my religious academic training, I have never heard a teacher make a point of this, develop it, and draw a conclusion on the matter. Although I exposed my mind to, what I conceived to be, the most accurate teaching, I came away thinking that Paul preferred to labor only where no previous labor had been expended. This was based upon a statement of Paul, made in Romans 15:20: "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation."

Paul did **NOT** say "I have ONLY strived to . . ." as though he determined to limit himself to this ambition.

To the Corinthians

When writing to the Corinthians, Paul said he would not go to other regions in which others had not labored until the church in Corinth had been more firmly established in the faith. "We, on the other hand, will not boast beyond our legitimate province and proper limit, **but will keep within the limits [of our commission which] God has allotted us as our measuring line and which reaches and includes even you. For we are not overstepping the limits of our province and stretching beyond our ability to reach, as**

our field among you may be greatly enlarged, still within the limits of our commission, So that [we may even] preach the Gospel in lands [lying] beyond you, without making a boast of work already done in another [man's] sphere of activity [before we came on the scene]"^{AMPLIFIED} (2 Cor 10:14-16). Where, then, was his priority? Is it not abundantly obvious – and yet there is more.

To the Romans

Further substantiating that Paul did not restrict his ministry to preaching where Christ had not been named, he made known that **he was determined to preach the Gospel to those in Rome, where he had never been, yet where a strong church was already established** (Rom 1:15-16). In that city, not only would he preach the Gospel, of which he was not ashamed (Rom 1:16), but he would also be comforted by the mutual faith of the believers there (Rom 1:12).

To the Colossians

In addition, he also sought to go to Colossae in order to minister to believers whom he had never seen – **to a church that was not established by himself.** He wrote to the Colossians that in so doing, he would be fulfilling his ministry (Col 1:25).

It is time for the church to declare war on shallow thought and empty human traditions. **They are the foundation upon which sectarianism**

It is time for the church to declare war on shallow thought and empty human traditions. They are the foundation upon which sectarianism rests, and, if for no other reason, should be discarded in the scrap-heap of worthless imaginations.

*though we reached not (had no legitimate mission) to you, for we were [the very first] to come even as far as to you with the good news (the Gospel) of Christ. **We do not boast therefore, beyond our proper limit, over other men's labors, but we have the hope and confident expectation that as your faith continues to grow,***

rests, and, if for no other reason, should be discarded in the scrap-heap of worthless imaginations. The consequences that are found in the wake of this blight are staggering. Those who are swept away by this contaminating wave are lacking in faith, hope, and love. They are deficient in spiritual

understanding and insight, and lack stability. They cannot see well, cannot ear with discernment, or speak with eternal benefit.

Maintaining Doctrinal Integrity

In our day a view has arisen that places minimal value upon doctrine, or what is being taught. Some sophists, like the ostrich from whom wisdom has been withheld (Job 39:13-17), say they are not about doctrine, but only about Jesus. Others even decry “doctrine,” equating it with the “the doctrines of men” (Col 2:22). However, God Himself has a “doctrine,” and it is intended to be embraced and declared by men (Deut 32:2). Jesus also spoke of His doctrine (John 7:16), and Paul of his (2 Tim 3:10). Jesus proclaimed the doctrine belonging to God, and Paul declared the doctrine belonging to Christ.

It is no wonder that insightful men have maintained a keen interest in the church, rising up to oppose flawed doctrines, and waging relentless war against the encroachment of charlatans and worldly wisdom. All of those who have been productive in unstopping the wells of truth have had to deal with major misconceptions of God and His great salvation that were resident in the church itself. In fact, false teaching always precedes an unfavorable change in theological emphasis and behavioral degeneration.

An ignorant church cannot

possibly walk in Divine favor. A deteriorating church is a disgrace to Christ and a liability to men. A professed church that is the haven for false teaching is a testimony to the presence of the devil himself, not the Lord’s Christ.

THE PRIORITY OF KINGDOM WORK

I do not consider “Kingdom work” and professed work in the Kingdom to be synonymous. There are some who may imagine their work is in the interest of truth and of the will of the Lord, who are completely wrong in their assumption – like those who taught men had to be “circumcised after the manner of Moses” to be saved (Acts 15:1). Or, those who taught there was “no resurrection” (1 Cor 15:12). Others forbade men to marry, and to abstain from meats (1 Tim 4:3). Still others taught “another Jesus,” “another Spirit,” and “another gospel” (2 Cor 11:4).

None of this was glossed by holy men. This is because “faith comes by hearing” (Rom 10:17), and **when what is willingly heard is corrupt, it has a direct bearing upon faith.** Faith cannot rest on error, and error tends to erode faith. Faith must grow in the soil of the Word of God – particularly the Gospel. It cannot come or be caused to grow through the diagnosis and opinions of men. It cannot thrive on procedure, or be enhanced by some secret routine. Hence, **correction was a constant activity of inspired writers.** That correction was accomplished by comparing what was erroneously taught to the Gospel of

Christ. It is found in Romans (chapters two through four, thirteen and fourteen); First Corinthians (chapters three through fifteen); Second Corinthians (chapters three, eight, and nine), Galatians (chapters three through six), Ephesians (chapters two and four), Colossians (chapter two), First Thessalonians (chapter four), Second Thessalonians (chapters one and two), Hebrews (chapters one through ten), James (chapters two and four), First Peter (chapter two), Second Peter (chapter three), and Jude (chapter one).

A preacher or teacher who leaves error unchallenged is recreant to his duty.

Such a posture simply cannot be excused, for men are to “take heed” how they build upon the proper foundation (1 Cor 3:10). Those who, through their teaching, allow for the placement of improper people within the church, which is the temple of God, **will be destroyed by God.** Thus it is written, “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor 3:17). This is why Paul revisited the churches, keeping track of their progress, and correcting any misconceptions that may have crept in unawares.

By its very nature, Kingdom work is not attended by random activity and a lack of proper and GGod-centered planning.

As set forth in this text, the planning is done through the direction of the Spirit, but it is done.

HE GAVE THEM MUCH EXHORTATION

“² And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came

into Greece,^{3a} And there abode three months.”

WHEN HE HAD GONE OVER THOSE PARTS

“And when he had gone over those parts . . .” Other versions read, “gone over that region,”^{NKJV} “gone through those districts,”^{NASB} “traveled through that area,”^{NIV} “all the towns,”^{NLT} and “from place to place.”^{CEV}

We know from the text that the

purpose for going through this area was to strengthen the churches. Churches in this area included Philippi (16:12-15,30-33,40) Thessalonica (17:1-4,10), and Berea (17:10-13).

Without being redundant, I will once again point out the priority Paul gave to the churches. In a very real sense, the work of the Lord depends upon the body of Christ, for that is the exclusive means through which the Lord works in the accomplishment of God’s “eternal purpose” (Eph 3:11). The church is “His

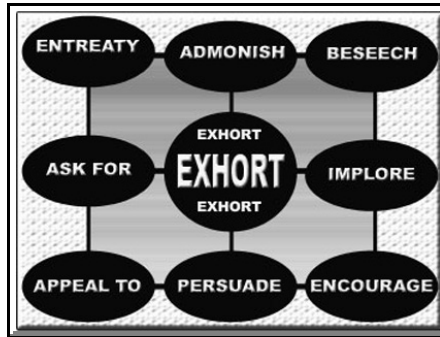


body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph 1:23). **What form of reasoning could justify the neglect or continued deficiency of this body of people?** If the eyes of the Lord are upon them, and open to their cries (), and if Jesus is teaching (1 John 5:20), them and interceding for them (Heb 7:25), if the Holy Spirit is leading them (Rom 8:13-14) and making intercession for them (Rom 8:26-27), and if the holy angels are ministering to them (Heb 1:13-14), **what possible reason can be adduced for men – particular preachers and teachers – neglecting them?** How is it that the modern church is so unformed, and so spiritually ignorant? Why can they not handle the Word of God in a becoming manner, or live above this present evil world? **It is because they are not established in the faith.** They are the victims of flawed, and sometimes completely erroneous, teaching. Even though they will surely give an account for the flock of God, their leaders have not been mindful of them in the manner exhibited in this text. Some people would have us overlook this uncomely situation, but we cannot do so.

GIVEN THEM MUCH EXHORTATION

"... and had given them much exhortation. . ." Other versions read, "encouraged them with many words,"^{NKJV} "given them much teaching,"^{BBE} "Had comforted them with many discourses,"^{MRD} "a long exhortation,"^{PNT} "preaching to the believers,"^{LIVING} "encouraged the disciples in many addresses,"^{MONTGOMERY} "warned and consoled and urged and encouraged the brethren with much discourse,"^{AMPLIFIED} "encouraged the followers with many messages,"^{CEV} "gave constant encouragement, lifting their spirits and charging them with fresh hope,"^{MESSAGE} and "spoke many heartening words to the people."^{PHILLIPS}

The word "exhortation" is translated from the Greek word παρακαλέσας, which, as used here, has the following lexical meaning: "to address, speak to (call to, call on), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction,"^{THAYER} "as speaking authoritatively exhort, urge, encourage,"^{FRIBERG} and "encourage, speak words of encouragement; request, ask, appeal to; console, comfort, cheer up."^{UBS} The word combines gentility and moral force.

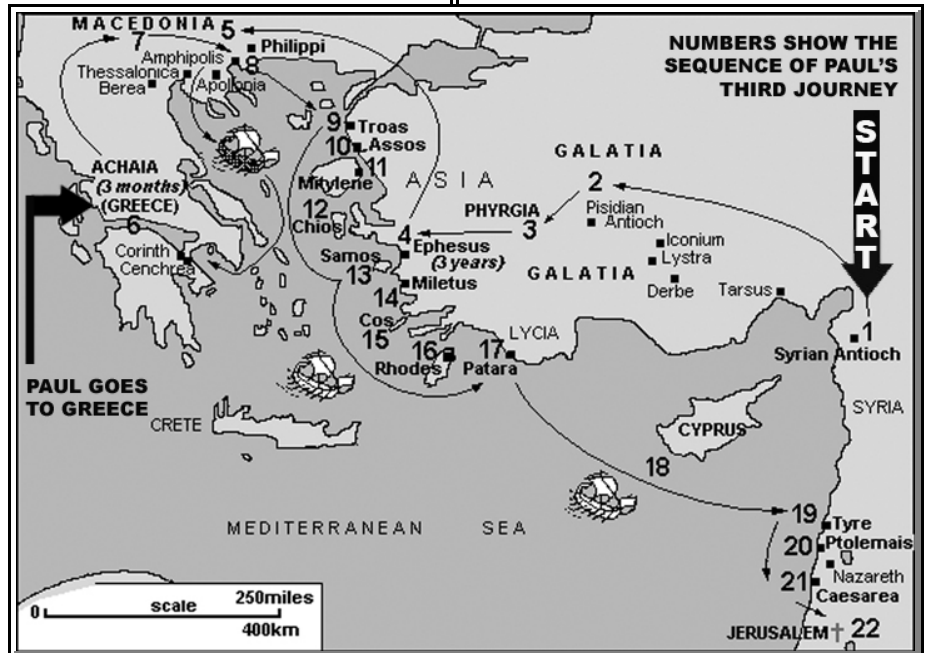


The nature of spiritual life, as well as its maintenance, depends on the strength of one's faith. Faith commences with hearing, and is stirred up and strengthened by the same means. **This is because rationality and reasoning are associated with faith, for one cannot believe without reasoning.** Believing God involves thinking upon what He has said. It requires coming to a conclusion that God is to be trusted, then exerting the will to do so. **Because faith is maintained in a hostile world, and amidst a staggering amount of opposing ideas, believers must be regularly admonished, exhorted, and comforted.** That is simply the manner of the kingdom.

This is the kind of activity in which Paul was involved – building up the saints of God. This is to the soul what

strengthening the grip is to the hand. It enables the child of God to "hold fast" (1 Thess 5:21; Heb 3:6; 4:14; 10:23; Rev 2:25; 3:3). When Christians do not "hold fast," cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart (Acts 11:23), **it is because they are not strong.** The lack of such strength is owing to one of two things: either they have not been properly instructed, exhorted, and admonished, or they have been, and paid no heed to it. Either circumstance is unacceptable.

Notice that Paul did this with "much exhortation," or "many words,"^{NKJV} or "saying much,"^{CJB} or "many discourses,"^{MRD} or "long exhortation,"^{PNT} or "frequent addresses,"^{WEYMOUTH} or "many addresses."^{MONTGOMERY} Whatever may be said to justify brevity and infrequency, there certainly is none of it in this text. **How is it that Paul conducted his ministry in a way that so sharply contradicts the ministerial procedures of our time? It is because he saw things as they really are, and those who fail to pay due heed to the saints do not. It was because he was working "together with God" (1 Cor 3:9), and they are not. It was because he was a messenger sent by God (Rom 10:14), and they are not.** If this seems too harsh, the other theoretic possibility is that the heavenly agenda has been changed – and that simply is not possible.



Paul travels to Macedonia and Greece. When returning he tarried in Troas, meeting with the disciples there by Given O. Blakely

HE ABODE IN GREECE FOR THREE MONTHS

“... he came into Greece, and there abode three months.” Other versions read, “arrived in Greece, where he stayed three months,”^{NIV} and “he went to Greece.”^{GWN}

It is assumed that Paul landed at the port city of Athens after leaving Berea. From there it appears that he journeyed northward, after a stay of three months heading due North. It was some time during this period that Paul wrote his second letter to the Corinthians. It was at this time that Titus brought word to him concerning the church at Corinth. That church had been in a sad state, and Paul had a deep concern for their stabilization in the faith. According to his second letter, Titus delivered a good report, confirming that some progress had been made in response to his first letter (2 Cor 7:6-13). He later sent Titus back to Corinth with the second letter, and also to gather the offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem that they had pledged (2 Cor 8:6-9:15).

sanctified by faith that is in Me”
(Acts 26:16-18).

There was a remarkable consistency in Paul’s life – even though his mission took him through some of the most harrowing experiences suffered by any man – the only exception being our blessed Lord. It is interesting to note that Jesus revealed Paul’s mission at the very threshold of his calling, as the above text confirms. Paul was even told that he would suffer “great things” (Acts 9:16).

One of the weaknesses of so-called evangelistic, or recruitment methodologies of our day, is the glaring absence of what is required to be a disciple of Jesus, and what necessarily follows being baptized into Christ. Consider the following.

⇨ **THE WORLD WILL HATE YOU.** “If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you

“And whosoever doth not **bear his cross, and come after Me**, cannot be My disciple” (Luke 14:27).

⇨ **FORSAKING ALL THAT YOU HAVE.** “So likewise, whosoever he be of you that **forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple**” (Luke 14:33).

⇨ **APPOINTED TO AFFLICTION.** “That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for yourselves know that **we are appointed thereunto**” (1 Thess 3:3).

⇨ **SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.** “If we **suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us**” (2 Tim 2:12).

⇨ **YOU WILL SUFFER PERSECUTION.** “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution**” (2 Tim 3:12).

⇨ **DO NOT MARVEL WHEN YOU ARE HATED.** “Marvel not, my brethren, if **the world hate you**” (1 John 3:13).

It is the rich compensation of faith that offsets these otherwise grievous experiences. There are certain benefits realized by those who forsake all to follow Jesus. The realization of them neutralizes the effects of opposition, persecution, and other forms of enmity from the world. Here are a few of them.

⇨ **THE NATURE OF GOD’S KINGDOM.** “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Rom 14:17).

⇨ **CALLED INTO FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS.** “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord” (1 Cor 1:9).

⇨ **NO TRIAL GREATER THAN OUR ABILITY TO BEAR IT.** “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor 10:13).

One of the weaknesses of so-called evangelistic, or recruitment methodologies of our day, is the glaring absence of what is required to be a disciple of Jesus, and what necessarily follows being baptized into Christ.

PAUL’S PREOCCUPATION

It is refreshing to consider the manner in which Paul lived. It was wholly to fulfill the commission Jesus delivered to him on the road to Damascus. That solemn word is worthy of repetition. “But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee **a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are**

out of the world, **therefore the world hateth you**” (John 15:18-19).

⇨ **SELF DENIAL AND CROSS-BEARING.** “And he said to them all, **If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me**” (Luke 9:23).

⇨ **JESUS SEEN AS ABOVE EVERYONE ELSE.** “If any man come to me, and **hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple**” (Luke 14:26).

⇨ **BEARING UP UNDER THE CROSS.**

There is a Divine fellowship and ministration that is experienced in the midst of suffering, and it cannot be realized in any other context.

- ⇨ **GOD CAUSES US TO TRIUMPH.** *“Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place”* (2 Cor 2:14).
- ⇨ **THE REALIZATION OF GRACE, LOVE, AND COMMUNION.** *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen”* (2 Cor 13:14).
- ⇨ **THE LORD IS OUR HELPER.** *“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”* (Heb 13:6).
- ⇨ **THE POSSESSION OF JOY UNSPEAKABLE.** *“Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full*

of glory” (1 Pet 1:8).

There is a Divine fellowship and ministration that is experienced in the midst of suffering, and it cannot be realized in any other context. It was the awareness of this that moved Paul to forsake all competing interests in order to participate in Christ’s sufferings – i.e. *“the fellowship of His sufferings”* (Phil 3:10).

The understanding of this circumstance is what compelled Paul to “labor more abundantly than they

all” (1 Cor 15:10). Fulfilling his calling was not viewed as a chore, or something that inconvenienced him. He did not see it as unfair, or a requirement to do things that were not expected from other people. While he did live obediently, the commandment of the Lord Jesus was not grievous to him (1 John 5:3). That is why he never complained about his extensive travels, the opposition that he endured from men, and the staggering inconveniences and dangers to which he was exposed. He saw spiritual life correctly, and responded accordingly.

THE JEWS LAID WAIT FOR HIM

“^{3b} And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.”

After being in Greece, Paul prepared to go to Syria, where the church in Antioch was located. He had spent considerable time there, and that was the place from which he and Barnabas had departed for the work to which the Spirit had called them (Acts 13:1-3). Now, however, an obstacle is set before him. It will be interesting to learn how he dealt with the uncomely circumstance.

THE JEWS LAID WAIT FOR HIM

“And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria . . .” Other versions read, *“the Jews plotted against him,”* ^{NKJV} *“a plot was formed against him by the Jews,”* ^{NASB} *“the Jews made a plot against him as he was about to sail for Syria,”* ^{NIV} *“the Jews had made a secret design against him,”* ^{BBE} *“As he was preparing to set sail for Syria, he discovered a plot against him by the unbelieving Jews,”* ^{CJB} *“treacherous plot*

against him having been set on foot by the Jews,” ^{DARBY} *“When Paul was going to board a ship for Syria, he found out that the Jews were plotting to kill him,”* ^{GWN} and *“The Jews having planned to waylay him whenever he might be on the point of taking ship for Syria.”* ^{WEYMOUTH}

Elsewhere Paul referred to the consistent manner in which the Jews opposed him. Five times they had him beaten with thirty-nine stripes (2 Cor 11:24). To the Thessalonians, Paul wrote the Jews *“have persecuted us”* (1 Thess 2:14). The book of Acts makes particular mention of some of these occasions.

- ⇨ Shortly after Paul’s conversion, the Jews had plotted against him. That time, *“the disciples took him by night, and lert him down by the wall in a basket”* (Acts 9:24,25).
- ⇨ When Paul and Barnabas were in Antioch of Pisidia, *“the Jews”* were angered because of the multitude that gave heed to them, *“were filled with envy, and spake against those*

things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming” (Acts 13:45). They even *“stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts”* (Acts 13:50).

- ⇨ In Iconium, the Jews joined with others and conspired to stone Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:5).
- ⇨ At Lystra, *“there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead”* (Acts 14:19).
- ⇨ In Thessalonica the Jews set the whole city on an uproar in open opposition to Paul (Acts 17:5).
- ⇨ When he was in Berea, *“the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and*

stirred up the people" (Acts 17:13).

- ⇨ In Corinth *"the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat"* of Gallio (Acts 18:12).
- ⇨ Later *"more than forty" Jews "bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul"* (Acts 23:12).
- ⇨ Again, when Paul was to appear before Festus, *"the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him [Festus] against Paul, and besought him, and desired favour against him,*

22:18). Apparently his work for that time had been concluded, and thus Paul was relocated, so to speak, to another appointed area.

Oh, the marvelous versatility of faith! It is something that those who live by mere habit never know. This is the weakness of thoughtless living – or living by habits, like a trained animal. Without due regard for what they are doing, such people lose the spiritual sense of seeing and hearing. I do not know how the Lord would direct a people who have been taught to live by the law of redundancy, going through life as though they were on automatic pilot. **Such a person cannot possibly love the Lord with all of their heart, soul, mind,**

steps (Prov 16:9) includes needed warnings as well as the opening of doors of opportunity. Through David the Lord promised, *"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye"* (Psa 32:8). Through Isaiah He said, *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"* (Isa 30:21). Again He promised, *"I am the LORD thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go"* (Isa 48:17).

Child of God, faith can take hold of these words, relieving the trusting one of the tendency to fret about the future. Like David, our *"times"* are in the hands of the Lord (Psa 31:15). See, there are good reasons to trust the Lord, as well as pleasant experiences and benefits.

Behold the alertness of Paul – how that he was able to respond to this danger immediately. That is something that lethargic souls cannot do. Many people go from one trouble to another because they are not alert. Their senses have been dullrf so that they cannot see beyond their present circumstances.

Take due note of the fearlessness of Paul – he was not crippled with fear, but maintained a sound mind, and was able to respond in an appropriate manner. Timorous souls are not able to react to the report of danger in such a way – quickly and effectively. More and more I can see the genius of living by faith. **It brings all of one's powers to their peek capacity, and enables the believer to maintain a sound mind and a straight course.**

Also see how Paul thought of the work of the Lord – not being dominated by merely making provision for personal protection. He did not run to a place of temporary safety, but sought another way to do the work to which Jesus had called him. The work would go on. Such a frame of mind honors the Lord.

HE PURPOSED TO RETURN THROUGH MACEDONIA

" . . . he purposed to return through Macedonia." Other versions read, *"he decided to return through Macedonia,"*

Yet, with all of their plotting and conniving, they were never able to fulfill their ambitions against Paul. He was on a mission from the Lord, and the Lord protected him.

that he would send for him to Jerusalem, laying wait in the way to kill him" (Acts 25:2-3).

Yet, with all of their plotting and conniving, they were never able to fulfill their ambitions against Paul. **He was on a mission from the Lord, and the Lord protected him.**

In this case, the Jews had secretly plotted against Paul, yet he was made aware of it. There were times when Paul knew of certain threats against him, yet the Lord revealed to him *"in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city"* (Acts 18:9-10). In that case, in the interest of a significant number of people the Lord had in that area (they were yet unconverted), the circumstance was governed from heaven to allow Paul to remain. Another time, when he was in Jerusalem, the Lord appeared to him and said, *"Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me"* (Acts

and strength, because they have been taught to love by heartless routine. However, when a person lives by faith, they are more involved in what they do. The eyes of their understanding are opened wide, and things sink down into their ears.

The Scripture does not reveal how Paul knew about this secret plot. Perhaps the Lord revealed it to him, as He did the plot that was made against him in Jerusalem (Acts 22:18). It could be that someone overheard the plot, and informed Paul of it – as his nephew would do at a later time (Acts 23:16). However it was made known to him, it was evidence of the direction of the Lord. Solomon knew this Divine manner and wrote, *"Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber: for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter"* (Eccl 10:20).

When the Scriptures say, *"In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* (Prov 3:6), this kind of direction is involved. The direction of our

NKJV *“he determined to return through Macedonia,”* NASB *“he decided to go back through Macedonia,”* NIV *and “he resolved to go back through Macedonia.”* AMPLIFIED

Actually, this was the long way around. He would backtrack through Macedonia, where he had spent time earlier. However, there were other advantages to going this way. He could visit the brethren again, gaining comfort from them. He would also be able to exhort and admonish the brethren, giving them further advantages.

Thou Shalt Not Tempt the Lord

Although God is the Helper of those who believe, and is their Shield, that does not relieve them of having a due regard for their own lives. There is such a thing as tempting God by thrusting ourselves into uncomely circumstances,

I do not doubt that some people have experienced unnecessary trouble because they have not given due heed to this word. Our text provides an excellent example of not tempting the Lord.

expecting the Lord to bring us out even though we have acted foolishly. This is how Satan tempted Jesus. Having taken the Lord and set Him on the pinnacle of the Temple, he said, *“If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone”* (Matt 4:6). Jesus responded, *“It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God”* (Matt 4:7). This particular

word was given by Moses in Deuteronomy 6:16. Men are not to presume upon the grace of God by getting themselves into difficult circumstances that could easily have been avoided.

I do not doubt that some people have experienced unnecessary trouble because they have not given due heed to this word. Our text provides an excellent example of not tempting the Lord.

ACCOMPANIED INTO ASIA

“⁴ And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.⁵ These going before tarried for us at Troas.”

Couched within the chronicles of the early church we find the nature of *“the body, the church”* of the Lord Jesus Christ. **The church is comprised of an interdependent network of believers.** By “interdependent,” I mean they are complementary of one another, enhancing the ministries and utility of one another. The body of Christ is, in other words, designed to work together in a **common** objective. The isolation of the members from one another is not the normal mode. Even when John was isolated in exile on Patmos, he had communication with the churches. When Paul was in prison, he still communicated with the churches, and received brethren who sought him out. **In Christ, the focus is not on the individual members, but on the whole of the body.** There are times when the group ministers to the individual. However, that

is not the normal mode of operation. The *“one another”* mode is the standard (Rom 12:5,10; 12:16; 13:8; 14:19; 15:5,7,14; 16:16; 1 Cor 11:33; 12:25; Gal 5:13; Eph 4:2,25,32; 5:21; Col 3:13,16; 1 Thess 4:9,18; 5:11; 1 Tim 5:21).

This kind of relationship is found in the text before us. As the work of the Lord was being fulfilled, kindred spirits joined themselves to the work. In this the singularity of their hearts and minds is confirmed.

THOSE WHO ACCOMPANIED PAUL

“And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.”

The thought of accompanying Paul is an intriguing one. The benefits of such an experience can scarcely be imagined. His manners and speech had been cultured by faith, and his involvement in the will of God was consistent and productive.

In this verse we get the picture

of brethren joining him along the way – brethren who had been subjected to his teaching, and had developed an appetite for both his word and work.

SOPATER OF BEREAS. This is the only place in Scripture where this man is mentioned. Berea is the place where the Jews received what Paul said with *“all readiness of mind,”* searching the Scriptures daily to see *“whether these things were so”* (Acts 17:11). Sopater was probably among the many souls who believed, which included Greeks (Acts 17:12). Paul did not stay there, for he was forced to leave by certain Jews who came from Thessalonica and stirred up the people (Acts 17:13-14).

ARISTARCHUS AND SECUNDUS OF THE THESSALONIANS. Aristarchus is mentioned several times in Scripture, including two of Paul’s epistles. He went with Paul to Italy, was a fellow prisoner with Paul, and was called a *“fellow laborer”* (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Col 4:10; Phile 1:24).

Secundus is mentioned only here.

GAIUS AND TIMOTHEUS OF DERBE.

This is the only place **Gaius** of Derbe is mentioned. **Timotheus** is mentioned frequently in Scripture, remaining identified with Paul from the time he joined him (16:1; 17:14,15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4; Rom 16:21; 1 Cor 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor 1:1,19; Phil 1:1; 2:19; Col 1:1; 1 Thess 1:1; 3:2,6; 2 Thess 1:1; 1 Tim 1:2,18; 6:20; 2 Tim 1:2; Phile 1:1; Heb 13:23).

TYCHICUS AND TROPHIMUS OF ASIA. **Tychicus** is mentioned several times. Being sent by Paul, he carried the letter of the Ephesians to that church, and made known Paul's affairs to them, doing the same at Colossae. Paul also may have sent him to assist Titus (Acts 20:4; Eph 6:21; Col 4:7; 2 Tim 4:12; Tit 3:12).

Trophimus is also mentioned two other times. He was from Ephesus, and traveled with Paul. Once, unable to continue traveling with Paul, he was left "sick at Miletum." (Acts 20:4; 21:29; 2 Tim 4:20).

The point here is that none of these men would have been known to us if it were not for the labors of Paul. This is also characteristic of the Kingdom of God. There are certain key individuals, chosen by God, around whom others are gathered. Of old time, this

included men like Moses, David, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Prophets. Prior to Christ, there was John the Baptist, who had disciples. Following Jesus there were Peter, Paul, and other key individuals.

This accents that the work of the Lord is not driven by democratic principles, even though there are times when all agree to do certain things.

THEY WENT BEFORE AND WAITED

"These going before tarried for us at Troas." Other versions read, "waited for us," ^{NKJV} "were waiting for," ^{NASB} "stayed for us," ^{DOUAY} "did remain for us," ^{YLT} and "were waiting for us [including Luke]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Troas is the place where a vision was given to Paul concerning going over to Macedonia (Acts 16:8-11). There must have been some fond recollections of that occasion. This time, however, Paul was headed for Syria, and would come through Macedonia, from which he planned to disembark for Troas, and then on to Syria.

Notice the submissiveness of this cluster of brethren. None of them left the work as John Mark had done earlier

(Acts 13:19), or forsook Paul as Demas did on another occasion (2 Tim 4:10). Here is a sterling example of the submissiveness that is required of believers. As it is written, "submitting yourselves to one another in the fear of God" (Eph 5:21). And again, "be subject one to another" (1 Pet 5:5). Of course, this postulates that the one to whom the brethren subject themselves is being directed by the Lord, and not following his own whims.

The language of the text reveals that Luke is now traveling with Paul – "tarried for us."

Luke first mentions himself as being with Paul in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, when Paul was called into Macedonia. In using the words "we" and "us," Luke refers to himself as being with Paul during the events he records— (16:10,11,12,13,14, 15,16,17; 20:5,6,13,14,15; 21:1,2,3,4,5,6,7, 8,10, 11, 12,14,15,16,17, 18; 27:1,2,3, 4,5, 6,7,15,16, 18,19,20,26,27, 29,37; 28:2,7,10, 11,12,13, 14,15,16). He was a faithful companion to Paul, who once acknowledged, "Only Luke is with me" (2 Tim 4:11). His "perfect understanding" (Lk 1:3) must have brought much consolation to Paul. Luke probably ministered to Paul in the capacity of a physician as well, for Paul referred to him as "the beloved physician" (Col 4:14).

AFTER THE DAYS OF UNLEAVENED BREAD

"^{6a} And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread . . ."

Here it is confirmed that the trip into Macedonia was to visit the

brethren, for, so far as the record is concerned, there was no other reason to be in Philippi. It must have been a blessed occasion to visit Lydia and those with her, perhaps even including the Philippian jailer. As many as three years had passed

since Paul was last there. The Philippian believers, however, had established themselves as faithful brethren from the very first (Phil 1:5).

We are not told how long they spent in Philippi, although it must have been a week or more, judging from the reference to "the days of unleavened bread," which feast was seven days in length (Ex 12:18-20; 13:6-7). The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the Passover Feast, which took place on the fourteenth day of the first month (Lev 23:5). It was followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which was seven days in length (Lev 23:6).

WHY MENTION THIS FEAST?

Why did Luke mention this



Paul travels to Macedonia and Greece. When returning he tarried in Troas, meeting with the disciples there by Given O. Blakely

period – “the days of unleavened bread”? Is it because Paul and company were keeping the Passover Feasts, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread as well? I do not believe this is the case. In instructing the Corinthians, Paul referred to the Lord’s Table as a Feast, and told the people to keep it “with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” (1 Cor 5:8). The preceding verse makes clear that he was speaking with the redemption of Christ in mind, not Israel’s deliverance from Egypt: “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us” (1 Cor 5:7).

Earlier, when Paul is recorded as saying he had to “keep the feast that

cometh in Jerusalem” (Acts 18:21), it is assumed that the Passover was meant. However, it is doubtful that he was speaking of participating in that feast as a Jew. It is rather more likely that he sought to use the occasion to preach Christ, who is “our Passover.”

This seems to be the most reasonable way of considering the matter, for Paul never promoted the Passover Feast itself, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread. He never instructed the disciples of Christ to keep those feasts – which he surely would have done if that was proper.

THE JEWISH MANNER

The Jew were a people cultured by God Almighty. Their entire lives

revolved around their identity with God. They marked time by the feasts God had ordained – and all of those feasts involved a consideration of the Lord and what He had done for them. They did not mark time by the birthdays of people, or some aspect of history that was unrelated to the Lord. Further, the feasts ordained by God for them, were spaced throughout the year so the people could be kept in constant remembrance of His goodness toward them.

I take it, therefore, that the reference to the Feast of Unleavened Bread was a way of marking, or identifying, time, and did not have any reference to the practice or promotion of that day among believers.

HE CAME TO THEM AT TROAS

“^{6b} . . . and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days. ⁷ And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight. ⁸ And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.”

Once again, notice that the accent is placed upon the work of the Lord. Here five days are covered without so much as a syllable about what took place during that time. A generation that has been cultured by novelty and constant distractions finds it difficult to think in such a manner. **Notwithstanding, it is good for the people of God to learn to think, reason, and talk, with main things in mind.** Admittedly, there are relatively few people who even know what is involved in a godly focus. Much of the Christianity of our day deals with fads, novelties, current crises, and the likes. There is not an overriding accent on what is being said. Sadly, it leaves the people in confusion, so that they rarely have any idea concerning the fundamental objective of life. While there are some people who refer to seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt 6:33), you

will be hard pressed to find an individual who has a cogent thought about what that actually means. You rarely hear anyone quote the words of Jesus: “One thing is needful” (Lk 10:42); or the words of David: “one thing have I desired” (Psa 27:4); or the words of Paul: “this one thing I do” (Phil 3:13). That is simply not the

due regard for the living God. They never became absorbed with social, political, or domestic concerns. When such things were mentioned, it was always in association with something that God was doing.

THEY CAME TO TROAS IN FIVE

It is also quite possible that behind the scenes, the wicked one was doing his best to thwart this trip. He was aligned against Paul, and thus fought vigorously against him. However, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, not the devil.

fashionable way for today’s *Christian* to talk. However, this IS the way to live, and it is reflected throughout Scripture – even in the recounting of historical events.

A lot of loose talk and writing is owing to a lack of proper perspective. That is what makes much of it so boring to the one who is absorbed with the Lord. You do not find any writing of Scripture that reflects this kind of mind-set. That is one of the proofs that it is inspired. **Holy men of God wrote with focus, and a**

DAYS

“ . . . and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.”

Earlier, when sailing from Troas to Philippi, the trip took only two days (Acts 16:11-12). They came in a “straight course to Samothracia, in a single day, arriving in the port city of Neapolis the next day. This trip, the winds were apparently not so favorable, making the trip more than twice as long. Yet, Luke

says no more about the matter, for the point was to get to the brethren who were waiting at Troas. That being accomplished, the trip was a resounding success, regardless of how long it took.

It is also quite possible that behind the scenes, the wicked one was doing his best to thwart this trip. He was aligned against Paul, and thus fought vigorously against him. However, the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, not the devil (Psa 37:23). It is true that many of the complexities of life are resolved by a godly focus, and by involvement in the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (Rom 12:2).

UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread . . . ” Other versions read, *“gathered together to break bread,”*^{NASB} *“we met to break bread,”*^{NRSV} *“come together for the holy meal,”*^{BBE} *“we assembled to break bread,”*^{CSB} *“we assembled to break the eucharist,”*^{MRD} *“we met for the breaking of bread,”*^{NJB} *“we gathered with the local believers to share in the Lord’s Supper,”*^{NLT} *“we gathered for a communion service,”*^{LIVING} *“we all met together to eat the supper of the Lord,”*^{IE} *“we gathered together for the fellowship meal,”*^{GNB} *“We met on Sunday to worship and celebrate the Master’s Supper,”*^{MESSAGE} and *“when we were assembled together to break bread [the Lord’s Supper].”*^{AMPLIFIED}

Once again, our attention is turned to a gathering that was centered, or focused, involving all of the disciples in Troas.

The First Day of the Week

This can be literally rendered, *“the first day after the Sabbath,”* which was *“the first day of the week.”* Without a known commandment from the Lord, yet in deference to the Person of Christ and His resurrection, disciples met on the first day of the week. This can doubtless be traced to the time following Christ’s resurrection when He appeared to the disciples at least two times on the first day of the week.

⇒ Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mk 16:9).

- ⇒ He appeared to Mary Magdalene on the first day of the week (Mk 16:9).
- ⇒ He appeared to the women who came to anoint His body on that day (Matt 28:1,9).
- ⇒ He appeared to the two on the road to Emmaus on that day (Lk 24:13-31).
- ⇒ He appeared to the disciples when they were gathered together on the first day of the week (Lk 24:33-49; John 20:19-25).
- ⇒ He appeared again to the disciples on the first day of the week – *“eight days”* following the first appearance (John 20:26-29).
- ⇒ The day of Pentecost (which means “fiftieth”) took place on the first day of the week, fifty days after the Sabbath of the Passover week (Lev 23:16; Acts 2:1).
- ⇒ The brethren in Corinth are said to have gathered on *“the first day of the week”* (1 Cor 16:1).
- ⇒ It is generally acknowledged that this was *“the Lord’s day”* to which John referred, when he received the Revelation (Rev 1:10).

It seems to me that a spiritual mind would gravitate to the first day of the week as a time to honor the Lord. He rose from the dead on that day, and appeared at least two times to His disciples on that day. It is most difficult for me to accept that this would not have shaped their view of gathering together.

They Came Together to Break Bread

It is said of the early believers, *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42). This cannot have been merely meeting together for a common meal, for that is not harmonious with *“the apostles’ doctrine, and fellowship . . . and prayers.”* How is it possible that early disciples merely made a practice of eating a meal together? Was this not the very thing that was happening at Corinth, for which cause Paul severely upbraided them? *“When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord’s*

A STATEMENT MADE LESS THAN 100 YEARS AFTER THE EVENT OF OUR TEXT

“On the day which is called Sunday, all (Christians) who dwell either in town or country come together to one place. The memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read for a certain time, and then the president of the meeting, when the reader has stopped, makes a discourse, in which he instructs and exhorts the people to the imitation of the good deeds of which they have just heard. We then all rise up together, and address prayers (to God); and, when our prayers are ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president, to the best of his ability, offers up both prayers and thanksgivings, and the people assent, saving ‘Amen.’ And then the distribution of the bread and wine, over which the thanksgivings have been offered, is made to all present, and all partake of it.” He adds that the elements are carried to the absent by the deacons, and that collections are made for poor widows, and orphans, and sick, and prisoners.
 JUSTIN MARTYR, 100-165
 Apology given before Marcus Aurelius

supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not” (1 Cor 11:20-22). Further, in delineating the table of the Lord, Paul made a point of saying Jesus *“took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it”* (1 Cor 11:24).

At the point Jesus instituted the Table of the Lord, it was a higher occasion than the Passover. He did not tell the disciples to remember the deliverance of Israel from Egypt – which remembrance occasioned the Passover Feast itself (Ex 13:3; Deut 16:3). That entire evening is covered in detail by John (John chapters 13-17 – 24% of John’s Gospel), The other Gospels focus on the institution of the Supper itself (Matt 26:17-30; Mk 14:22-23; Lk 22:19-20). Paul also provides some of the details (1 Cor 11:23-34). Further, that this was not intended to be an occasion for a mere meal is clarified when Paul wrote to the Corinthians, *“If any man hunger, let him eat at home”* (1 Cor 11:34). That is, eating a common meal together was not to be the **primary** reason for coming together. In all of those

accounts, there is not a single reference to the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Even if the Jews broke bread together, it was not to remember that deliverance.

Jesus was very pointed in what was to be recalled: *"this do in remembrance of Me"* (Lk 22:19). Paul clarifies that in the eating of the bread and drinking the cup, **the remembrance of Jesus was the**

drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body" (1 Cor 11:29). **However, Jesus did not say to remember His disciples, but to remember Him!** If people do not have regard for believers, it is because they do not have due regard for their Lord.

The Reason for Gathering

Our text makes clear that the reason the disciples came together was to *"break bread."* They did not do this

bread is made from grain that has been pulverized, even as our Savior's flesh was bruised. The cup contains the fruit of the vine, which was pressed out of the grape, like the Lord's blood was forced from His veins – particularly by the spear that pierced His side. Like two great hands, faith and hope combine to strengthen the believer. Faith reaches into the past and takes hold of the death of Christ. Hope reaches into the future, and expectantly looks for His return. Thus Paul wrote, *"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come"* (1 Cor 11:26).

While we remain in that posture, we are made more aware of the provisions of redemption as well as the Redeemer Himself. **It is not possible to have a more precise view of God Himself than when we remember Christ, for the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him** (Colo 1:19; 2:9). All of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him (Col 2:3). It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption (1 Cor 1:30). It is He who is *"our hope"* (1 Tim 1:1). Salvation in its totality is *"in Christ Jesus"* (2 Tim 2:10). The love of God that is toward us is in Him (Rom 8:39). Salvation is realized *"through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (1 Tim 3:15). The lives of those whom God has accepted are *"hid with Christ in God"* (Col 3:3).

As we remember Him, all of these realities glow with celestial glory, and the world is thrust into the background. Who better to remember than the Lord Jesus Christ. How is it possible to be any more pleasing to God than when we are focused upon Jesus and attentive to His Word?

Also, we eat at this table every first day of the week. Unlike the Sabbath day, the Lord's day **begins** the week, thereby distinguishing the New Covenant. Under the First Covenant rest came after work – at the end of the week, the seventh day. In the New Covenant we are made adequate for the works unto which God has ordained us by the due recollection of Jesus on the first day of the week.

There is a participation at this table that is not realized at any other



point. *"And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me"* (1 Cor 11:25).

Some say that at this table we remember the body of Christ – i.e. the church: that the members of the body are the ones who are discerned. Thus they explain Paul's words, *"For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and*

because there were commanded to do so, for there is no such commandment. The commandment related to remembering Christ, and it was the Table that provided the occasion for that focused remembrance.

The Rationale of the Lord's Table

There is a certain rationale associated with the table of the Lord. The focused remembrance of Christ sheds light upon the whole of life, and brings Divine resources within our grasp. This is because, although there are tangible items associated with the table, faith and hope are the chief matters. This does not dispense with the form, for the form precisely comports with the reality. The

place. Here is how Paul put it: *“I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”* (1 Cor 10:15-16). Other versions read, *“sharing in the body. . . sharing in the blood,”*^{NASB} *“participation in the body . . . participation in the blood,”*^{NIV} Who is to measure the depth of such statements? Do they not accept the importance of this table? This is something that transcends mere appearance. **To commune, or have fellowship with, the body and blood of the Lord is to realize the benefits that have been made available through them.**

During our time at this table, the illogicality of being worldly minded becomes apparent. Thus Paul wrote, *“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils”* (1 Cor 10:21). This is such an important matter that the church of Corinth was admonished to expel a fornicator from their gathering in order that they might observe the Lord’s Supper properly. The words of Paul are quite poignant. Following his instructions concerning the handling of the transgressor in question, he gave the following exhortation. *“To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth”* (1 Cor 5:5-8) Such language as this could not be received by the average American church. However, it serves to accent the nature of this table, and the necessity of approaching it in a proper frame of mind.

It is most unfortunate that the Christian community is not at all united on the matter of the Lord’s Table. In many places, it is not the reason for gathering – even as the Corinthians who did not gather to eat the Lord’s Supper. For some people, praising is now the

reason for gathering. For others mere human camaraderie is the reason for coming together. For others who actually to partake of the Lord’s Supper little is actually said about the Lord, and a focused remembrance is difficult because of shoddy presentations at the Table.

It has now become fashionable in some places to move the table to the back of the meeting place, where it is no longer prominent. There is also an accent on privacy, with each person going to the

“addressed them,”^{WILLIAMS}

The word translated *“preached”* is a different Greek word than is normal – *διελέγγο*. The lexical meaning of this word is quite diverse: *“to converse, discourse with one, argue, discuss absolutely,”*^{THAYER} *“of a reasoned discussion discuss, discourse with, conduct a discussion,”*^{FRIBERG} *“address, speak,”*^{UBS} *“of a reasoned discussion discuss, discourse with, conduct a discussion,”*^{LOUW-NIDA} *“to converse with; to discourse, to ; to discuss,”*^{LEH} and *“discuss, conduct a discussion; speak, preach.”*^{GINGRICH}

The truth of the matter is that the messages that are being heralded from the pulpits of the land do not awaken a desire for the Word.

table alone and without due regard for the fact that this is a public ordinance.

Some partake of the table once a month, once a quarter, or even once a year. In that way, they reason, the tale will not become common. Their reasoning betrays their carnality. If there is any soul who imagines that Christ’s words can be interpreted to mean such a thing, an alarming level of ignorance at once becomes apparent. Paul upbraided the Corinthians for **not** coming together to eat the Supper (1 Cor 11:20). What do you suppose he would say to those who partake of this table on a quarterly or annual basis? Precisely why are they meeting together on the first day of the week? However, after all of the arguments have been presented for eating at this table infrequently, the disciples at Troas still gathered together on the first day of the week to break bread – and the Holy Spirit saw to it that it was recorded in the Scriptures.

PAUL PREACHED UNTO THEM

“Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow . . .” Other versions read, *“spoke to them,”*^{NKJV} *“began talking to them,”*^{NASB} *“spoke to the people,”*^{NIV} *“was holding a discussion with them,”*^{NRSV} *“discoursed with them,”*^{ASV} *“gave them a talk,”*^{BBE} *“Was discussing Scripture with the people,”*^{GWV} *“preached a sermon,”*^{NJB} *“reasoned with them,”*^{PNT} *“was discoursing,”*^{YLT} and

What did Paul do? Hold a discussion, dispute with the brethren, or deliver a discourse? According to the phrase that follows, it was fundamentally a discourse, which no doubt allowed for discussion, as this was often Paul’s manner.

That the observance of the Lord’s Table was harmonious with preaching and holy discussion is quite apparent. It is also clear that Paul was noted for his insight, and therefore was welcomed by those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness. **The propriety of such gatherings is rapidly diminishing in our society.** There are some few spiritual gatherings who manifest a hearty appetite for the things of God, but they are not easy to find. What was normal in the first century has now become abnormal. That is owing to the nature of what is being preached. **The truth of the matter is that the messages that are being heralded from the pulpits of the land do not awaken a desire for the Word.** Paul would probably not be welcomed in many churches of our land – particularly if he preached as long as he did in Troas.

One begins to sense the vast chasm that is between those early believers and those who profess faith in our time. I find this very disconcerting, for the Lord Himself has not changed, the Gospel message has not changed, and the

need of the saints has not changed.

HE CONTINUED HIS SPEECH UNTIL MIDNIGHT

“ . . . and continued his speech until midnight.” Other versions read, “his message,” ^{NKJV} “kept on talking,” ^{NIV} “prolonged the discourse,” ^{DARBY} “continued the preaching,” ^{TNT} and “prolonged his address.” ^{PHILLIPS}

The word “speech” is translated from the Greek word *λόγος* (from logos). The emphasis of this word is a message, or the declaration of a particular word or teaching. I do not doubt that Paul preached concerning the Table and its implications, as He did in his letter to the Corinthians. In that letter he made known the remarkable number of involvements associated with the table of the Lord.

⇒ +This is a feast that is to be characterized by the purging of

remembrance of Christ (1 Cor 11:24-25).

⇒ In eating the bread and drinking the cup, we are declaring the Lord’s death until He come (1 Cor 11:26).

⇒ Those who eat and drink at this table in an unworthy manner will be charged with the guilt of the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor 11:27).

⇒ No believer is free to ignore this table. Each one must examine himself, then eat of the bread and drink of the cup (1 Cor 11:28).

⇒ The person who fails to do this, eats and drinks damnation, or judgment, upon himself, because he did not discern the Lord’s body (1 Cor 11:29).

⇒ Many people have become weak and sickly, and some have even died,

devoted to the Lord, I do not doubt that there was an abundance of relatively new things that Paul knew they needed to hear. Recall the manner in which he wrote his letters to the churches. That will give you a good idea how he spoke when he gathered with the disciples.

I cannot help but observe that very few Christians have had the privilege of being present where extended preaching took place. I remember a New Year’s Eve celebration held in 1954 in Olney, Illinois. Several notable speakers were part of that gathering, including Leroy Garrett and Carl Ketcherside. There were twelve consecutive speakers, and I was the twelfth, though by far the youngest speaker present. Several hundred people were in attendance for this lengthy session. I cannot conceive of such a thing taking place in our time.

MANY LIGHTS

“And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.” Other versions read, “many lamps,” ^{NKJV} “a number of lights,” ^{BBE} and “numerous lights.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

The meaning of the word “many” includes the idea of sufficient, or adequate. ^{STRONG’S} The Greek word used here (*ικαναι*) is elsewhere translated “large money” (Matt 28:12), “great number” (Mk 10:46), “many” (Lk 7:11), “much people,” Lk 7:12), “many swine” (Lk 8:32), and “many days” (Acts 9:23). **This indicates there were a great number of lights, which implies a room of considerable size, and a significant number of people.** It also suggests that provision was made for everyone to see.

The words “upper chamber” do not refer to a mere room, but to a story – in this case, the third story. Lexically it is defined as follows: “a room in the upper part of a house, sometimes built upon the flat roof of the house.”

Considering how oriental people still seat themselves, the number of people assembled in this upper chamber could easily have exceeded a hundred. Yet, there was an apparent accord as they gathered together and listened to the apostle Paul. It had apparently been some time since he had been there – possibly as

Although these brethren were meeting for the right reason, and were obviously devoted to the Lord, I do not doubt that there was an abundance of relatively new things that Paul knew they needed to hear.

unacceptable manners, and the presence of sincerity and truth.

⇒ Here, we participate in the body and blood of Christ (1 Cor 10:16).

⇒ Believers are one bread, and partake of one bread (1 Cor 10:17).

⇒ We cannot partake of the table of demons and the table of the Lord at the same time (1 Cor 10:21).

⇒ At this table, we can provoke the Lord to jealousy by commitment to the devil’s table (1 Cor 10:22).

⇒ When we do not come together on the first day of the week to break bread, we have gathered for the wrong reason (1 Cor 11:20).

⇒ We are to partake of this table in

because they conducted themselves improperly at this table (1 Cor 11:30).

⇒ If we judge ourselves at this table, examining our own selves, such judgment will not come upon us (1 Cor 11:31).

⇒ When the Lord chastens us, it is in order that we be not condemned with the world (1 Cor 11:32).

⇒ At this table, we are to be considerate of one another (1 Cor 11:33-34).

I have briefly listed these considerations, taken only from First Corinthians, to illustrate how much could be said concerning the Table alone. Although these brethren were meeting for the right reason, and were obviously

long as three years, when he first went to Philippi (Acts 16:11).

I cannot help but note the indications of the level of interest these brethren had in the truth. They came and continued together when it was dark. They ascended to the third story to attend to things pertaining to the remembrance

of the Lord. They made provision for Paul to speak to them. They made sure the lighting was appropriate. They also had an obvious appetite for the Word of the Lord, as well as for those who brought it. There are many professed believers who have never attended such an assembly. The gatherings they attend are generally brief – some as little as a single hour. **It**

ought to be clear that something was present in these brethren that distinguished them from those smitten with the blight of mediocrity. It seems that I cannot get away from observing the corrupted form of Christianity that is prevalent today. That is because it so sharply contrasts Scripture accounts like this one.

A POTENTIAL DISTRACTION

“⁹ And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutyclus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.¹⁰ And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.”

It should not surprise us to read of some kind of interruption taking place on this occasion – some intrusion that could break up the assembly and thereby rob the people of the true benefit of their visitor. Like young Elihu during the time of Job, Paul had come “full of matter” (Job 32:18), and he could not keep silence. He was among kindred spirits, the occasion was a sacred one, and the people were lovers of the truth. **This was an ideal situation in which enlightenment and edification could take place.** There were no rebellious Jews present to argue with Paul. There were certainly no Ephesian silversmiths in the audience to cause a tumult. However, alas, a test will be experienced, and it will be a hard one. It will not be in the moral arena, but will have to do with life in the body. It will not seem to be appropriate, yet it will not interfere with the proceedings of the evening.

A CERTAIN YOUNG MAN NAMED EUTYCHUS

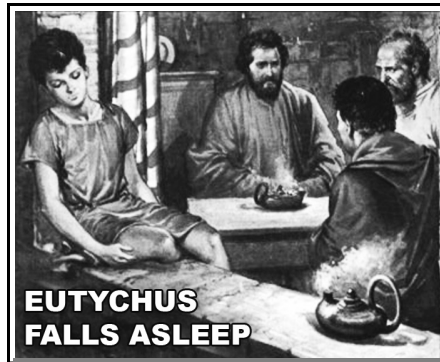
“*And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutyclus . . .*” Other versions read, “*a certain youth,*” DARBY/YLT/WEYMOUTH

The words “*young man*” are translated from a single Greek word (*νεανίας*) that has a rather broad meaning. Here is understood to mean “a young man

beyond the age of puberty, but normally before marriage,” LOUW-NIDA “youth,” LIDDELL-SCOTT or “children, youth,” LEH Eutyclus was not a mature man, nor was he a fledgling youth, or adolescent. He was probably somewhere in his teens. The emphasis of the expression is on “*young,*” not “*man.*”

First, observe the interest of this young man. Although young in years he did have an interest in assembling with the saints, eating at the Lord’s Table, and hearing the preaching of Paul. Also, there was obviously no special interest group for the youth, but they remained identified with the more mature people.

Apparently the room was rather crowded, so young Eutyclus had assumed a position in the window. This also suggests he was rather young.



FALLEN INTO A DEEP SLEEP “. . . *being fallen into a deep sleep . . .*” Remember, Paul had been preaching for a long time – continuing his “*speech until midnight.*” If they met about the sixth hour, as some suppose, the apostle to the Gentiles had been speaking for six hours. However you may

choose to judge the circumstance, it appears as though several hours had passed.

Owing to the weakness of the youthful constitution, Eutyclus fell into a deep sleep. Gradually his awareness of the surroundings were less and less obvious, as all of his cognitive powers began to diminish, and a state of unconsciousness began to dominate him. I assume that this took a while to take place. It is certain he did not purposefully assume a position in which he could fall asleep, for it was in an open window three stories above the ground.

HE FELL DOWN FROM THE THIRD LOFT. AND WAS TAKEN UP FOR DEAD

“*. . . and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.*”

Paul continued preaching, unhindered by the passing of time or the sleeping of Eutyclus. The rest of the people apparently were alert and profiting from what they were hearing, else they would have dismissed the assembly.

At any rate, Eutyclus fell into a deep sleep, and fell from the third story window to the ground. A violent and grievous interruption indeed! The fall must have been at least 20-25 feet [depending on the height of each story], in a limp state, for he was sound asleep.

The composure with which this whole incident was handled is most edifying. The text does not depict any state of crisis, unless it be the sorrow

that attended the lad being “taken up for dead.” Other versions read, “taken up dead,”^{NKJV} “picked up dead,”^{NASB} “When they picked him up, he was dead,”^{CJB} “was dead when they picked him up,”^{GWN} “dropped three stories to his death,”^{NLT} “was lifted up dead,”^{YLT} and “When they got to him, he was dead.”^{IE} The words “taken up for dead” do not mean they thought he may have been dead. Rather, they mean they picked him up as a dead person would be picked up – as opposed to examining the boy to see whether or not he was dead.

It must have taken a few minutes to get to the body, for the people had to descend three stories to get to the ground. Also, it is worthy of note that even though it was midnight, the people were alert enough to know the boy had fallen out of the window. Of course, the absorption of the mind with the things of God does not make a person insensitive of their surroundings, or rob the soul of alertness. **How reasonable is it to imagine that hearing and discussing the things of God would take from a person the natural senses placed in him by God?** The occupation of the mind with things pertaining to life and godliness will elevate the capacities related to the image of God to the optimum level.

Now that the boy has been taken up dead, what will the people do? How will Paul address the situation? Will this conclude the gathering, with the people returning to their homes in a state of sadness, as the brethren did when Stephen was stoned to death by the Sanhedrin (Acts 8:2)? Indeed not! **The exposition of Christ and His salvation is conducive to peace and composure in those who embrace it.** They are made able to better handle earthly crisis, and will perceive more readily the proper thing to do. That is one of the great benefits of salvation, which is by grace through faith.

PAUL WENT DOWN

“... And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.”

Immediately Paul “went down” the three stories. Other versions read

“descending,”^{DARBY} and “had gone down.”^{DOUAY} Whether the people called for him, or he also perceived the event and responded to it is not revealed. I suspect that both are true. He probably saw the lad fall, and then was also apprised that



he was dead, killed by the fall. With news like that, some people would not have come down at all. Others would have rushed to the relative of the boy, if they were there, to console them. But this is not how Paul reacted.

Paul went directly to the boy and “fell on him.” Other versions read, “threw himself on the young man,”^{NIV} “bending over him, took him in his arms,”^{NRSV} “bent over him and embraced him,”^{RSV} “falling on him took him in his arms,”^{BBE} “fell upon him, and enfolding him in his arms,”^{DARBY} “laid himself upon him, and embracing him,”^{DOUAY} and “threw himself on the young man, and put his arms around him.”^{NET}

What a tender scene is this! **It is a most vivid depiction of apostolic composure, faith, and confidence.** It is reminiscent of the time when Elijah raised the widow’s son. When confronting the dead boy the prophet “stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD

my God, I pray thee, let this child’s soul come into him again. And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him, and he revived” (1 Kgs 17:21-22). Something similar happened when the prophet Elisha raised the son of the Shunammite woman, who was not a widow. When coming in the body of the boy, Elisha “lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes” (2 Kgs 4:34-35).

Something like that took place at midnight in Troas, when the saints were gathered together, and Paul was discoursing to them. It was a marvelous display of Divine power, wrought through a man who had counted all but loss to know Christ, the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil 3:7-14).

The individual who does not forsake all to follow Jesus, or who attempts to follow Him at a distance, or perhaps not at all, will never know in this world what he has willingly forfeited – but you may be sure, it will be much. The half-hearted church member, the frivolous youth, and the person enslaved to religious tradition have robbed themselves, shutting off Divine input to a degree they are not, in their present state, capable of comprehending. Unless they repent of their ways, there is really not much hope for them, for their condition is such as grows worse and worse, leading to the blackness of spiritual night. Oh, that God would give such people repentance!

A religion that actually fosters aloofness from God by catering to the flesh, reducing the amount of time the people are exposed to the truth, and allowing for erratic living, **is of the worst possible rank.** It shuts the door to Divine supply, and opens the door to the god of this world. Purported movements and ministries that make people more conscious of this present evil world are to be abandoned with haste. They are lethal.

HE TALKED A LONG WHILE

“¹¹ When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.”

What will this band of disciples do, now that the crisis has passed? Will the interruption be the occasion for concluding the meeting. After all, it is difficult to think of a more tragic circumstance taking place. Beside this, it was then after midnight, and people need their sleep – at least that is the ordinary rule. **But this is no ordinary occasion.** The apostle Paul is present, and he possessed insights into the things of God that no other person apparently had.

I cannot conceive of this whole thing happening among within Christendom. To begin with, the people would not have stayed until midnight, listening to the apostle Paul, or anyone else. Secondly, the fall and death of Eutyclus would have disbanded the meeting, with people saying the boy would never have died if Paul had not preached so long. Thirdly, after he was raised from the dead, the people would surely have confessed that was enough excitement for the day, and would have called for the cessation of the meeting. However, all praise to God, the people at Troas bore no resemblance to the average professing Christian of our time. These were real disciples, with new hearts and spirits, a love for the truth, and commitment to the Savior. **All of the things that are declared to take place in those who are baptized into Christ had actually taken place in them.** The things disciples are admonished to do, they were doing. No person should expect they would respond to either blessing or crisis in the manner to which this generation is accustomed.

HE CAME UP AGAIN

“When he therefore was come up again . . .” Other versions read, *“when he had gone back up,”* ^{NASB} *“he went upstairs again,”* ^{NIV} *“Then Eutyclus went upstairs again,”* ^{GWN} *“he returned upstairs,”* ^{NAB} *“they all went back upstairs,”* ^{NLT} and *“They brought the*

young man inside . . . Paul went upstairs again.” ^{LIVING}

So who went upstairs again? Paul? Eutyclus? Or everyone? There is no doubt but that all of them returned to the third floor to resume their meeting. Eutyclus had good reason to return and give thanks. Paul would continue teaching, and the people would continue listening. During the entirety the whole episode Satan was soundly defeated, God was glorified, and the people edified.

It seems appropriate to me that the disciples, with Paul, would once again break bread – particularly since the Lord had worked so mightily among them. Then, because of the lateness of the hour, they would have eaten for bodily nourishment. Notwithstanding, this is not a matter worthy of disputation.

The hour was late, to be sure, but Paul was going to be leaving the next day (20:7). The people, having an appetite for the truth, and living by every word of God, desired to obtain as much as possible from this apostle, who *“labored more abundantly than they all”* (1 Cor 15:10).

THEY BROKE BREAD AND ATE

“ . . . and had broken bread, and eaten . . .” Other versions read, *“had taken the broken bread,”* ^{BBE} *“breaking bread and tasting,”* ^{DOUAY} *“shared in the Lord’s Supper, and ate together,”* ^{NLT} *“broke bread and took some food,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *“had broken bread and eaten [with them].”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

There are at least three views taken of this passage. Although I do have a view of it myself, it may be of value to mention them.

⇨ That breaking bread and eating refers to two different activities: the first to partaking of the Lord’s Table, and the second to an ordinary meal.

⇨ That both expressions refer to a common meal.

⇨ That the disciples had not yet broken bread because of Paul’s long discourse. When they returned, they did eat at the Lord’s Table, then had a common meal together for refreshment of the body.

It seems appropriate to me that the disciples, with Paul, would once again break bread – particularly since the Lord

had worked so mightily among them. Then, because of the lateness of the hour, they would have eaten for bodily nourishment. Notwithstanding, this is not a matter worthy of disputation.

I do not doubt that Eutyclus was also there. When he ate, it was much like Jairus’ daughter. After Jesus raised her from the dead, He commanded that they give her something to eat (Mk 5:43).

HE CONTINUED TALKING UNTIL THE BREAK OF DAY

“ . . . and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.” Other versions read, *“continued to converse with them,”* ^{NRSV} *“he conversed with them,”* ^{RSV} *“went on talking to them,”* ^{BBE} *“having long spoken,”* ^{DARBY} *“talked with the people,”* ^{GWN} *“discoursed,”* ^{MRD} *“a long conversation,”* ^{NAB} *“talked a long while,”* ^{RWB} *“commented a long while,”* ^{TNT} *“Paul preached another long sermon,”* ^{LIVING} *“Paul spoke to them a long time,”* ^{IE} *“continued a long earnest talk with them,”* ^{PHILLIPS} and *“talked confidentially and communed with them*

for a considerable time.”^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated “talked” can be used to describe talking to or talking with. While there may very well have been some input from the brethren in Troas, it seems to me that the burden

of the conversation was carried by Paul. The length of his talk may have been occasioned by questions or comments from the people. However, considering the caliber and role of the apostle Paul, I can hardly believe that discerning people would fill up the time with their own

words. **He was the one with the most to say.** Notwithstanding, this is one of those texts that appears to allow some latitude for thought, without compromising the significance of the text itself. Let every person be fully persuaded in their own mind.

THEY WERE NOT A LITTLE COMFORTED

“¹² **And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.**” Other versions read, “greatly comforted,”^{NASB} “greatly relieved,”^{CJB} “rejoiced over him greatly,”^{MRD} “immeasurably comforted,”^{NAB} “greatly encouraged,”^{NJB} “comforted in no ordinary measure,”^{YLT} “were not a little comforted and cheered and refreshed and encouraged,”^{AMPLIFIED} and “feeling immeasurable relieved.”^{PHILLIPS}

A worldly reporter would not have written the record in this manner. First, the fall of Eutychus from the third

However, Luke writes up the events in another manner.

- ⇨ Luke places the stress on the gathering itself, and why it convened.
- ⇨ The length of Paul’s first discourse.
- ⇨ The events related to Eutychus.
- ⇨ The return to the meeting.
- ⇨ The length of Paul’s second discourse.

events. The fact that the brethren received no small amount of comfort from the presentation of Eutychus confirmed they were in no way indifferent to him. **However, for them, everything that took place was within the context of the remembrance of the Lord and the preaching of Paul.** That is also the context in which the raising of Eutychus took place.

Concerning the extraordinary comfort the brethren experienced, Young’s Literal Translation seems to capture the meaning of the text: “*and they brought up the lad alive, and were comforted in no ordinary measure.*” The idea is that just as the work performed was extraordinary, so the comfort derived through it was far beyond ordinary limits.

A worldly reporter would not have written the record in this manner. First, the fall of Eutychus from the third story window would have been the featured article.

story window would have been the featured article. Then, after he had been raised from the dead, the attention would have shifted to the comfort that was ministered during the occasion. If there was time and space sufficient, some mentioning might have been made of the guest, and of the lengthy discourses he delivered that day, but it would probably not have been complimentary.

- ⇨ The presentation of Eutychus alive and well.
- ⇨ The extraordinary comfort that was ministered to the brethren.

I gather this is not reported in strict chronological order, but rather in a manner that reflected the priority of the

It does not appear right to me to respond in ordinary ways to extraordinary works and benefits. Giving thanks for all things does not imply the same measure of thanks for everything. True comfort, as well as praise and joy, are governed by discernment, and there is more to be seen in works that are more obviously beyond the boundaries of nature. Those who are given to behold the marvelous works of God are obliged to react accordingly – in a way that is consonant with their nature. Praise and insight are to be wed.

CONCLUSION

From one point of view, the book of Acts contains the records of extraordinary people and unusual works. From another, and more discerning viewpoint, it is the record men and

women living by faith – which is the norm of the Kingdom of God. **If the reports that are given in this volume are of a differing order than those professing believers experience**

today, it is only because there is a difference in the caliber of people. God has pledged Himself to support and direct those who live by faith (Psa 25:9; 32:8; 37:23; 85:13; 121:3,8; 1 Sam 2:3;

Prov 3:5-6; 16:9; Isa 30:21; 48:17; 49:10; Rom 8:14; ; Gal 5:18). What we have in this record are examples of people being led by the Lord. This is because they were on the highway that is characterized by such leading (Isa 35:8). It is because they were relying on Divine direction, having assumed the posture of strangers in this world and citizens of the world to come.

To put it another way, salvation in all of its aspects, and throughout the entire of its scope, is ever *“by grace through faith”* (Eph 2:8). **When men live by faith, they are in the position where they can be led and directed by the Spirit.** This is because faith sensitizes the soul, opens the eyes, and unstops the ears. Ponder how marvelously this is confirmed in the book of Acts.

- ⇔ As the brethren were together with one accord and waiting expectantly for what the Lord had promised, they were filled and led by the Spirit to say what was appropriate for the occasion (Acts 2:1-41).
- ⇔ As they were engaged in the work of the Lord, yet imprisoned, the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought the apostles out, directing them what to do (Acts 5:19-20).
- ⇔ While Philip was involved in the will of the Lord, the angel of the Lord directed him to go toward the south, where he would confront the Ethiopian eunuch. As he went, the Holy Spirit directed him what to do (Acts 8:26-29).

⇔ While Cornelius, an earnest seeker, was praying, an angel of the Lord directed him what to do in order that he and his house could be saved (Acts 10:3-6).

⇔ While Peter was praying, the Lord directed him concerning his response to the men sent to him from Cornelius (Acts 10:9-19).

⇔ When Peter was imprisoned by Herod, the angel of the Lord delivered him, telling him what to do (Acts 12:7-8).

⇔ While the brethren in Antioch were ministering to the Lord, the Holy Spirit directed them concerning the separation of Barnabas and Saul for a special work (Acts 13:2).

⇔ While serving the Lord in Asia, Paul and company were directed by the Lord to go to Macedonia, calling them to preach the Gospel there (Acts 16:9-10).

⇔ When in Corinth, serving the Lord, yet facing opposition, the Lord directed Paul, telling him He had much people in that city, and that no one would seek to hurt him (Acts 18:10).

⇔ While a prisoner on a boat that was in a fierce storm, the Lord directed Paul, informing him that he was in charge of everyone on the ship, and would appear before Caesar (Acts 27:23-24).

It is the manner of the Lord

to direct people as they are engaged in believing and obeying. Thus Abraham was shown where to go after he commenced his journey to an unknown land, as God had commanded him (Gen 12:1). After he set out to offer Isaac as a burnt offering to God, as the Lord commanded, he was directed where to go (Gen 22:2). After Israel had left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, they were directed to the promised land (Ex 12:25). After Saul of Tarsus had gone to a certain place, as the Lord commanded him, he was told what to do (Acts 9:6).

Divine direction is accomplished *“in the way”* – on the proper path. Thus the servant of Abraham, when on an appointed mission to obtain a wife for Isaac, confessed he had been directed by the Lord. *“Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master’s brethren”* (Gen 24:27). Jacob also acknowledged he had been directed when he was *“in the way”* (Gen 35:3). An angel was sent to direct Israel when they were *“in the way”* (Ex 23:20).

This is the kind of guidance we are witnessing in the book of Acts. As the people walked in the newness of life, they were directed. When they were engaged in the will of the Lord, their steps were ordered by the Lord. Many a poor soul has never, or perhaps rarely, experienced Divine guidance because they are not on the proper path. They are walking on the wrong road – a road in which such marvelous guidance cannot be realized. Blessed is the person who can see this.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 8/28/09. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Eighty-third lesson will cover verses 13 through 27 of the twentieth chapter: “MEETING WITH THE ELDERS FROM EPHEBUS, #1 .” Traveling through several areas, Paul comes to Miletus, where he sent for the elders in Ephesus. Upon their arrival, he delivered to them some salient words of comfort and warning. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

The Blakely Family: Given, June, Benjamin, and Eva

406 South Sergeant Street, Joplin, MO 64801

Telephone: (417) 782-3063, Email: Given (GivenB@aol.com) June: (JuneE01@aol.com)

ADAH's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/adah.htm> -- EVA's Webpage: <http://wotruth.com/Eva.htm>

Benjamin (Bensvison@aol.com), Eva (Evablakely@aol.com)

Adah Hutchcraft (adahhutchcraft@hotmail.com), Jason Hutchcraft (hutchcraftj@hotmail.com)

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