

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 #86

COMMENTARY ON: 21:1-9

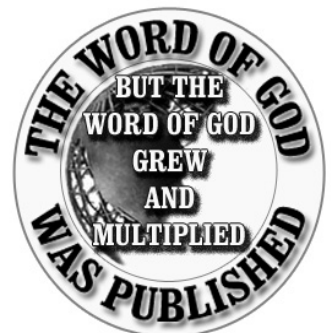
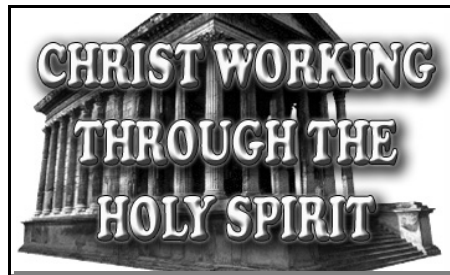
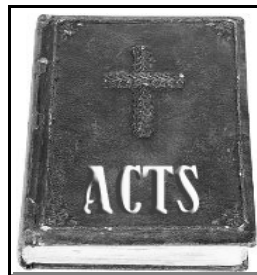
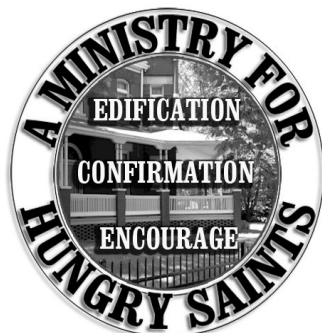
TRAVELING BY SHIP AND MEETING BRETHREN

With godly intention and firm resolution, Paul and company resume their journey to Jerusalem, launching forth from Miletus. Along the way they make some necessary stops, always finding brethren with whom to have profitable fellowship. Some spoke to Paul in the Spirit, pertaining to his trip to Jerusalem. The life of Paul centered in doing the will of the Lord, and following through with his convictions. Neither unpleasantries nor the sweetness of fellowship with the saints deterred him from his objective. During one of the stops, they found a number of brethren, with their wives and little ones, and spent some days with them. When they set out once again on their journey, Paul prayed with the families, who then returned to their homes. After spending another day with brethren during another stop, they resumed their journey. Coming to Caesarea, they spend "many days" at the home of Philip the evangelist, who had four daughters that prophesied. Surely that was a blessed time.

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)

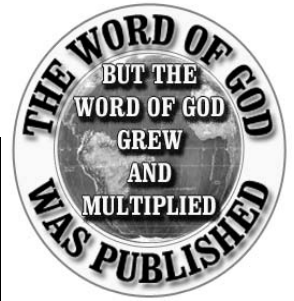


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Acts

Lesson Number 86



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=Literat 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).

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.

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.

TRAVELING BY SHIP AND MEETING BRETHREN

“ 21:1 ”And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara: ² And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth. ³ Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden. ⁴ And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem. ⁵ And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed. ⁶ And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. ⁷ And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day. ⁸ And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. ⁹ And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy”
..... (Acts 21:1-9)

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

With godly intention and firm resolution, Paul and company resume their journey to Jerusalem, launching forth from Miletus. Along the way they make some necessary stops, always finding brethren with whom to have profitable fellowship. Some spoke to Paul in the Spirit, pertaining to his trip to Jerusalem, The life of Paul centered in doing the will of the Lord, and following

through with his convictions. Neither unpleasanties nor the sweetness of fellowship with the saints deterred him from his objective. During one of the stops, they found a number of brethren, with their wives and little ones, and spent some days with them. When they set out once again on their journey, Paul prayed with the families, who then returned to their homes. After spending another day with brethren during another stop, they

resumed their journey. Coming to Caesarea, they spent “*many says*” at the home of Philip the evangelist, who had four daughters that prophesied. Surely that was a blessed time.

LIVING UNTO THE LORD

As we go through this book, we are witnessing individuals living unto the Lord – a posture that is mandated by redemption. As it is written, “*For the love*

Luke gives some details concerning the purposeful trip of Paul, drawing attention to the role of brethren along the way– by Given O. Blakely

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of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again” (2 Cor 5:14-15).

Ponder the individual believers that have been identified in this book with the work of God, bring mentioned by name: Peter, John, Matthias, Stephen, Philip, Ananias, Paul, Mary (the mother of Mark), Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, Judas (Barsabas), Silas, Timothy, Sopater, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius, Tychicus, Trophimus, and others. Independently of the work of God, precisely what do we know of these people? **They are only mentioned in reference to the work of the Lord.** This was the primary aspect of their lives – by way of comparison, everything else was incidental.

This kind of life is the declared objective of life in Christ Jesus, and is stated in a number of ways.

⇒ **YIELDING UNTO GOD.** “Neither yield ye

your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God” (Rom 6:13).

⇒ **BRINGING FORTH FRUIT UNTO GOD.** “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God” (Rom 7:4).

⇒ **PRESENTING YOUR BODIES AS A LIVING SACRIFICE TO GOD.** “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Rom 12:1).

⇒ **LIVING UNTO THE LORD.** “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Rom 14:7-8).

⇒ **GLORIFYING GOD.** “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor 6:20).

⇒ **CREATED TO DO WORKS GOD HAS ORDAINED.** “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph 2:10).

⇒ **MAGNIFY CHRIST IN OUR BODY.** “According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my

body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil 1:20-21).

⇒ **DOING ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.** “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him” (Col 3:17).

⇒ **A UNIQUE PEOPLE FOR GOD, ZEALOUS OF GOOD WORKS.** “Who gave Himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:14).

By implication, these texts apply to every facet of life: personal, domestic, social, occupational, etc. And yet, bringing glory to God is never taught in such a way – i.e. glorify God in your marriage, your business, your school work, your employment, etc. That God is to be glorified in those various relationships is certainly true. Yet, our thinking must not be confined to, nor are we to major in, those aspects of life. **They are too low to have the emphasis.**

TRUE SPIRITUAL LIFE

What we are seeing in the book of Acts is the expression of true spiritual life. This is how people live who are joined to the Lord, and are living by faith. In the aggregate, they are of “one accord,” have fellowship “with gladness and singleness of heart,” and are “of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 2:46; 4:24; 5:12). Any deviation from this was the exception, not the rule – i.e. Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10), Simon, the sorcerer (Acts 8:13, 18-24), and John departing from the work (Acts 13:13; 15:38). **In today’s professed church, the circumstance has been turned around.** Now, the exceptions are those who are really living for the Lord, and the norm is living in a spiritually haphazard manner. The falling away had not yet occurred.

In today’s professed church, the circumstance has been turned around. Now, the exceptions are those who are really living for the Lord, and the norm is living in a spiritually haphazard manner.

If this is a proper representation of the case, then some malfunction has taken place. My persuasion is that this has been caused by a change in the message that is being sounded forth by the modern church. If the Gospel of Christ is God's power unto salvation, then where power is missing, it is owing to either a failure to declare the message, or the failure to believe it. In a sense, both of these have taken place, for the people, being largely discontent with the Gospel itself, have

heaped to themselves teachers after their own lusts, and they have swept in like a flood. **If the message that is preferred and embraced does not produce the kind of lives that are set forth in the book of Acts, then it is a distortion, and not the truth itself.** I do not know how it is possible to avoid this conclusion.

In the context of this departure from the faith, the records to which we are exposed in Acts tend to be viewed as

mere history, with most of the people named being seen as something like heroes, or extraordinary achievers. Where such an attitude is fostered, the only thing of value that is seen in this book pertains to perceived patterns and precedents, Most of which are really nothing more than human imaginations. The book of Acts is not a doctrinal treatise, but a report of the impact of true doctrine upon the lives of those who believe it. It is not an exposition of life, but a record of it.

THE TRIP TO JERUSALEM RESUMES FROM MILETUS

21:1 And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara. 2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth."

Although this may read like nothing more than a report of the resumption of their journey, the record is wrapped up in the cloth of grace. It testifies to the closeness of those who live by faith and take the word of God seriously. **We must never forget that there is a spirit in the text of Scripture as well as words.** The words project the nature of the kingdom, the status of the believers, and the effects of salvation.

AFTER WE WERE GOTTEN FROM THEM

"And it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched . . ." Other versions read, *"departed from them,"* ^{NKJV} *"parted from them,"* ^{NASB} *"torn ourselves away from them,"* ^{NIV/NJB/WEYMOUTH/WILLIAMS/ MONTGOMERY} *"torn ourselves away from the Ephesian elders,"* ^{CSB} *"finally left them,"* ^{GWN} *"separated from them,"* ^{MRD} *"taken leave of them,"* ^{NAB} *"tore ourselves away from them,"* ^{NET} *"after saying farewell to the Ephesian elders,"* ^{NLT} *"after we all said good-bye to the elders,"* ^{IE} *"having withdrawn from them,"* ^{EMTV} *"with the tearful good-byes behind us,"* ^{MESSAGE} *"had*

torn ourselves away from them and withdrawn," ^{AMPLIFIED} and *"being from-pulled from them."* ^{INTERLINEAR}

The word "gotten" is translated from the Greek word ἀποσπασθέντας. The lexical meaning of this word is "to draw off, to tear away . . . having torn themselves from the embrace of their friends," ^{THAYER} "pull or drag away," ^{FRIBERG} "to pull or draw away from or out of - 'to pull out, to draw out, to drag," ^{LOUW-NIDA} "to be dragged away, detached, separated from." ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}



This is an emotionally violent word, denoting the great difficulty involved in parting from the elders of Ephesus. These brethren were united by their faith in Christ and love for one another – and it was a close and secure unity. In them the words was fulfilled, *"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another"* (Rom 12:10).

Paul had interrupted his trip to Jerusalem to spend time with them, and they had left the convenience of Ephesus to have with him. The thing that drove both

their own and Paul's action was a dominating interest in the work of the Lord. Issues involving "all the flock . . . the church of God" (20:28), had been addressed, and they were of a most serious nature.

Although the message was, in a sense, quite stern, yet it is apparent that the elders had received it. This was a real situation, where the grievous reality of coming circumstances was received, being taken seriously. The reluctance of the elders to part from Paul and company confirms that to have been the case. Even though Paul had revealed that some of their own number would pioneer the defection of which he spoke, yet he did not hold these brethren in disdain. His love for them compelled him to speak candidly, yet with a genuine interest in the people of God.

Now, it is the work of the Lord that has dictated their separation. It was a difficult one because of their kindred spirit – but that did not deter the man of God. The work of God is higher than the human relationships – even though they are legitimate, God-honoring, and tender.

This kind of mindset, which is essential in the service of God, has all but been eliminated in the current church scene. The doctrinal emphasis is now on the people, not the Lord Himself and His good pleasure. The stress is being placed upon the desires of the people instead of the good, and acceptable, and perfect will

of God. The situation is so grave that many servants of God are actually criticized for honoring the will of God above their own. Even though Jesus clearly affirmed that one's own person, relatives, or even family, are not to be placed ahead of the Lord (Matt 10:37; Lk 14:26), yet those who take this word seriously are criticized for doing so. The supposition is that preferring Christ means one will neglect his family, not provide for them, or in some way despise them. However, this is not at all what Jesus was saying. He referred circumstances where there was a conflict in which the individual was forced to choose between Christ and others. Where this circumstance rises, He left no question about what is to be done.

The point is that this principle is being lived out in our text. The unity that was forged between Paul and the elders of Ephesus was closer than any unity that

blinded to what God has said about life and godliness. They cannot see what is plainly declared, for God has poured out upon them the spirit of deep sleep, and blinded them, just as He said He would (Isa 29:10-12). The effects the prophet described are as follows.

- ⇨ The people have fallen into a deep spiritual sleep.
- ⇨ The eyes of the prophets, rulers, and seers have been closed so they cannot see.
- ⇨ The words of God's book are sealed, so that the learned and unlearned alike cannot discern what is being said.

All of this is said to have taken place because *"this people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart*

WE CAME WITH A STRAIT COURSE

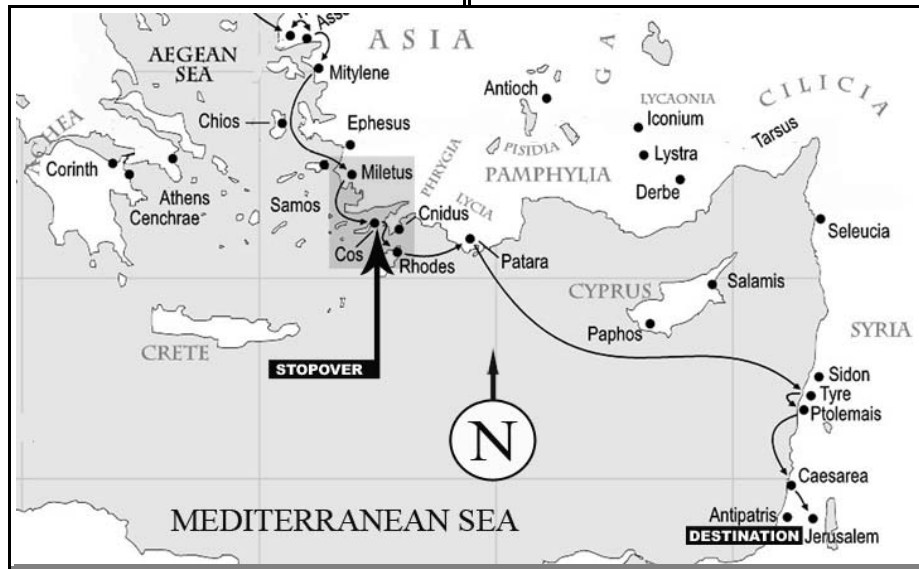
" . . . we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the day following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara." Other versions read, *"sailed strait to Coos,"*^{NIV} *"made a straight run to Cos,"*^{CJB} *"came by a direct route to Cos,"*^{CSB} and *"sailed straight to the island of Cos."*^{GWN}

Having set out from Miletus, the ship headed straight for Cos, a small island in the Aegean Sea. Here is where Paul spent the night, as the port here was an apparent stopover in his trip to Jerusalem. Historians tell us this was a place that was "a museum of anatomy and pathology." A "school of physicians" was there attached to "the temple of Aesculapius."^{MCCLENTOK & STRONG'S} However, as notable as all of that has been to others, it held no interest for Paul. Luke was so thoroughly unimpressed with the uniqueness of this island, he made no mention at all of that for which it was noted. So far as this holy band of men were concerned, it was nothing more than a stopover port en route to the main city – Jerusalem – and the main people – the saints. **The state of a man's character can be measured in part but what it takes to turn his head toward the earth.** So far as the Scriptures are concerned, no man of God was ever taken up with the *interesting* things of this present evil world. While I suppose that a person could draw some unwarranted conclusions from that circumstance, that is still the perspective of Scripture and the nature of its accounts.

There is something else to learned here by inference. The ship on which they sailed took a straight course to Cos, not meandering through the various islands in that vicinity. Paul was not on a site-seeing trip, but was doing the work of the Lord. As was customary with the prophets, Jesus Himself, and the messengers sent into the world by Jesus, **they spent as little time as possible in worldly surroundings.** Search the record and see if this is not the case.

FINDING A SHIP

"And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia, we went aboard, and set forth." Other versions read, *"having found a ship,"*^{NASB} *"we found a ship,"*^{NIV}



can possibly be realized in flesh-and-blood relationships. **Yet, it gave the precedence to doing the will of the Lord. This is the manner of the Kingdom.**

Why Do Religious Men Choose Other Emphases?

Precisely why is it that religious men choose to **emphasize** other matters – marriage, the home, the youth, purported addictions, success, happiness, etc? Quite simply, it is because they are

far from Me, and their fear toward Me is taught by the precept of men" (Isa 29:13).

Jesus affirmed that this circumstance existed during His earthly ministry (Matt 15:7-9). Paul said it existed during the close of his minister (Acts 28:26-27). He also taught that this is why the Jews are in their present state of unbelief (Rom 11:7-10). It exists in our day as well, and it is a most serious situation. In my judgment, we are living in a time of this kind of judgment.

“when we had gotten a ship,”^{PNT} and “At Patera, we found a ship.”^{IE}

Of course, Paul and company were not working on an earthly reservation system. The details of the trip to Jerusalem had not been planned out in a detailed manner, for they did know what a day might *“bring forth”* (Prov 27:1). Neither indeed, did they know how they were going to take the next leg. of their trip – they only knew where they were going. Therefore, they had to find a ship that was headed in that direction, and they expended themselves to find out the availabilities.

There are times when Divine direction is very apparent – like when Paul was called to go to Macedonia (Acts 16:9), and to stay in Corinth (Acts 18:10). There are other times when the people of

There is a sense in which the Kingdom of God is, indeed, like a hidden treasure, found only by those who diligently dig for things of true worth

God must use wisdom, relying on their faith and understanding of the will of the Lord, In the case of the latter, those who actually do live by faith and walk in the Spirit find themselves more competent to make decisions that are God-honoring, even if they do not have all the details.

PARALLEL TO SPIRITUAL LIFE

Life in Christ is not always attended by easy answers and obvious direction. The *“treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* (Col 2:3) are not always on

the surface of life, scattered, as it were, like diamonds on the hard soil of earthly life. Sometimes they have to be *“found”* (Prov 3:13). **There is a sense in which the Kingdom of God is, indeed, like a hidden treasure, found only by those who diligently dig for things of true worth** (Matt 13:44). The same is true of the various facets of Divine direction. That direction frequently takes place while the child of God is discreetly going about to do the will of the Lord. It is then that they are directed by God.

A STOP ALONG THE WAY



“³ Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.” Other versions read, *“when we have sighted Cyprus, we passed it on the left . . . and*

unload her cargo,”^{NKJV} and “sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it.”^{NIV}

There was a time when Paul stopped and preached throughout Cyprus (Acts 13:3–12). Also, earlier, when believers were scattered *“upon the persecution that arose about Stephen,”* some had gone to Cyprus, *“preaching the word to none but Jews only”* (Acts 11:19). Yet, on this occasion, the time was apparently not appropriate to preach in Cyprus. Thus, Paul registered no objection when they sailed past this island, once the home of Barnabas (Acts

4:36). There is no issue made of this, indicating that it was not something with which Paul wrestled, being unsure of what to do. **When the mind of the believer is firmly set on doing the will of God, living is greatly simplified.** On the other hand, those who do not so yield themselves to God will find that life is often disconcerting.

It ought to be noted that doing the will of God involves both sensitivity and discernment, which are linked with practicality. It also requires living by faith and walking in the Spirit.

FINDING DISCIPLES

“⁴ And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.”

While this may appear to be an incidental account, something of the manner of the kingdom is revealed in it. Within the body of Christ there is a certain affection and interdependence

that is actually the work of the Spirit. After all, it is the Holy Spirit who has baptized us *“into one body”* (1 Cor 12:13), and the fellowship that has resulted from that baptism is marvelous.

FINDING DISCIPLES

“And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days . . .” Other versions read, *“looking up the disciples,”*

^{NASB} *“having sought out the disciples,”* ^{RSV} *“having found the disciples,”* ^{ASV} *“Having searched out,”* ^{CJB} *“we searched for the disciples,”* ^{GWN} *“we located the disciples,”* ^{NET} *“we went ashore, found the local believers, and stayed with them a week,”* ^{NLT} *“Having searched for the disciples and found them,”* ^{WEYMOUTH}

Once again, I draw your

attention to the manner of Paul in his travels, particularly as it regards finding brethren (Acts 14:26; 15:3,36; 16:40; 18:23; 19:1; 20:7; 21:4,7,8; 28:14). Now, our text speaks of Paul and company **finding** disciples. That is, they searched them out. These are the people who had been “*added to the church,*” that unique body of people for whom Jesus intercedes, and through whom He works (Acts 2:47).

The priority of the saints of God is apparent in the record of Paul’s travels, as well as all of his writings that have been handed down to us. When he testified of the

- 5:18; Gal 2:16-17; 3:8-24).
- ⇨ The distinction between the Old and New Covenants (2 Cor 3:6-14; 7:22; 8:8-13; 10:16-17; Gal 3:15-17; 4:22-28; Heb 9:15-20).
- ⇨ The reality of “*the old man*” and “*the new man*” (Rom 6:6; Eph 5:22-24; Col 3:9-10).
- ⇨ The inner warfare experienced by those who live by faith (Rom 7:15-25; Gal 5:17).
- ⇨ The spiritual logic that declares the coming conversion of the Jews (Rom 9-11).
- ⇨ The High Priesthood of Christ (Heb 3:1; 4:14-15;

- ⇨ Why men cannot be justified by works (Rom 3:26; 4:2; Gal 2:16; 3:2-5).
- ⇨ The imputation of righteousness upon the basis of faith (Rom 1:7; 3:22-25; 4:5-25; 10:6-10; Phil 3:9).
- ⇨ Extensive teaching concerning baptism into Christ (Rom 6:1-23; Gal 3:27; Eph 4:5; Col 2:11-15).
- ⇨ The comparison of Adam and Christ (Rom 5:14-21; 1 Cor 15:22,45).
- ⇨ Extensive teaching on the resurrection of the dead (1 Cor 15:15-57).
- ⇨ The ministry of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:11-14, 26-27; 2 Cor 3:3-18; Gal 4:6, 29; 5:5, 16-18, 22-24; 6:8; Eph 2:22; Eph 5:9).

The priority of the saints of God is apparent in the record of Paul’s travels, as well as all of his writings that have been handed down to us.

people for whom he cared the most, he referred to his kinsmen the Jews, to whom had been given all of the pre-new covenant benefits (Rom 9:1-5), and “*the churches*” (2 Cor 11:28). It is most striking that in the average church, and among the rank and file ministers, these two qualities are glaringly absent.

It has also been a source of much sorrow to me personally that the contemporary church is fundamentally ignorant of the ministry of Paul, even though his writings comprise over 50% of the New Covenant writings (14 of 27 books, including Hebrews). **The subjects exclusively delineated by Paul are those least familiar to most Christians, and covered the least by the majority of preachers and teachers.** Following is a brief listing of subjects uniquely developed by Paul.

PAUL’S UNIQUE TEACHING

- ⇨ That the church is the body of Christ (Rom 12:4-5; 1 Cor 12:12-27; Eph 1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4,12-16; 5:23,30; Col 1:16; 2:19; 3:15).
- ⇨ The merging of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Eph 2:15-16,19).
- ⇨ The exposition of justification by faith (Rom 3:20-

- 5:5,10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21).
- ⇨ The relation of Abraham to those who believe (Rom 4:1-16; Gal 3:6-18).
- ⇨ The significance of Melchizedec (Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:1, 10-21).
- ⇨ The eternal purpose of God (Rom 8:28; Eph 1:11; 3:11; 2 Tim 1:9).
- ⇨ What took place behind the scenes when Jesus died (Col 1:20; 2:14-15; Heb 2:14; 9:26).
- ⇨ The whole armor of God (Rom 13:12; 2 Cor 6:7; Eph 6:10-18).
- ⇨ Spiritual weaponry (2 Cor 10:4-5; Eph 6:17).
- ⇨ Believers battling with principalities and powers (Eph 6:12).
- ⇨ The fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9).
- ⇨ The works of the flesh (Gal 5:19-21).
- ⇨ The office of a Bishop (1 Tim 3:1-7; Tit 1:7-11).
- ⇨ The office of a deacon (1 Tim 3:10-13).
- ⇨ The exposition of spiritual gifts, and how they are administered (Rom 12:3-8; 1 Cor 12:1-31; 14:1-12; Eph 4:11-16).

- ⇨ The intercession and mediation of Christ Jesus (Heb 7:25; 1 Tim 2:5; Heb 8:6; 9:15; 12:24).
- ⇨ The intercession of the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:26-27).
- ⇨ Predestination and election (Rom 8:29-33; 9:11; 11:5-7,28; Eph 1:5,11; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 2:10; Tit 1:1).
- ⇨ The body being for the Lord (Rom 12:1-2; 1 Cor 6:13-20).
- ⇨ God’s objective for believers (Eph 3:15-30; 4:12-16; Col 1:9-11).
- ⇨ The resurrection body (2 Cor 5:1-5).
- ⇨ The accomplishments of the cross (Eph 2:16; Phil 2:8; Col 1:20; 2:14-15).
- ⇨ Extensive teaching concerning the Lord’s Table (1 Cor 10:21; 11:23-29).
- ⇨ Types and shadows (Gal 4:24; Col 2:17; Heb 8:5; 9:24; 10:1).
- ⇨ Extensive teaching of the grace of God (Rom 3:24; 4:4,16; 5:2, 15-17, 20-21; 6:14-15; ; 11:5-6; 12:3-6; 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 1:15; Eph 2:5-8; 2 Thess 2:16; 1 Tim 1:14; 2 Tim 1:9; Tit 2:11-12; Tit 3:7; Heb 2:9; 4:16; 12:28).

Were Paul to appear on today’s scene, and commence teaching in the churches, most of the people would not have the faintest idea what he was speaking about – even though his writings have been in their possession for many years. If this assessment is true, this is a most unfortunate circumstance. **It**

reveals a fundamental flaw in the fabric of nominal Christendom.

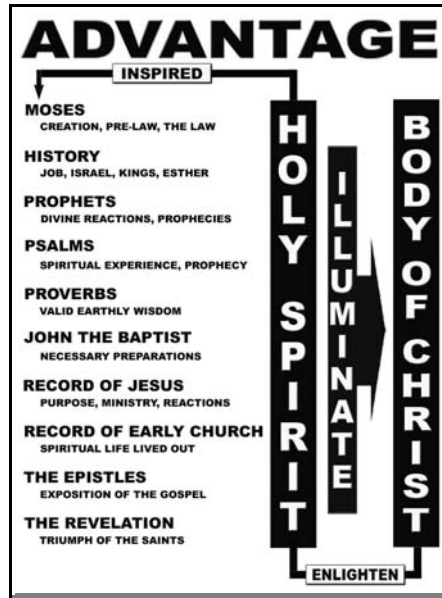
In my judgment, the reason for today's absence of the attitudes and preferences reflected in the book of Acts is found in the manner in which the people were taught, and the substance of that teaching. **When the message delivered to the church focuses upon life in this world, the people are at once put to a disadvantage.** The life that they receive in Christ Jesus is not of this world =it is "eternal life," and it is ultimately adapted for the world to come. When the proper message is not preached and believed, kingdom attitudes and proper perceptions simply cannot be developed.

Were Paul to come to the city in which you live, who do you suppose he would classify as "disciples," and with whom would he prefer to be? I certainly am not seeking an answer to that question, but am rather seeking to provoke a godly assessment of the times and circumstances in which we live. If we are to serve our generation as David served his (Acts 13:36), it seems to me that we should have a sound and proper view of that generation.

WHO SAID TO PAUL IN THE SPIRIT

"... who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem." Other versions read, "kept telling Paul through the Spirit," ^{NASB} "guided by the Spirit," ^{CJB} "the Spirit had the disciples tell Paul," ^{GWN} "speaking in the Spirit," ^{NJB} "prophesied through the Spirit," ^{NLT} and "prompted by the [Holy] Spirit, they kept telling Paul." ^{AMPLIFIED}

Here we confront a seeming contradiction – at least that is what some people think. First, when Paul commenced this trip to Jerusalem he said, "And now, behold, I go **bound in the Spirit** unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there" (Acts 20:22). The phrase "the Spirit" reflects the precision of the Greek language. He did **not** say "my spirit, but **"THE Spirit"** (τῷ πνεύματι), an obvious reference to the Holy Spirit, for this is not how Scripture refers to the human spirit. Nor, indeed, is a person said to be "bound" by his own spirit, or the human spirit.



It seems to me that this text is an elaboration and example of what Paul had said earlier. "And now, behold, I go bound in the Spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20:23). Later, some other disciples will try to turn Paul from going to Jerusalem, and he will answer them with no ambiguity. At that time, those to whom he spoke acquiesced saying "the will of the Lord be done." That account reads as follows. "And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 21:10-13). Further, after he had arrived in Jerusalem, and began to be opposed by the Jews, the Lord Jesus appeared to him and said, "Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11). He did not rebuke Paul for going to Rome.

Rather, that proved to be the very place where things were set in motion for him to go to Rome.

Therefore, I conclude that Paul did not go against the council of the Spirit in going to Rome. Rather, it seems to me that the Spirit moved certain brethren to testify of Paul's apprehension in Jerusalem – something that, prior to this, he had managed to elude. The prophets through whom the word came themselves concluded that this meant Paul was not intended to go to Rome at all. **However, this is not what the case.** This was the conclusion of the prophets, who were used by the Spirit to inform Paul what would happen to him at Jerusalem, for he had said he did not know what awaited him there (20:22).

One of the tests of a true man of God is found in his reaction to opposition. For such a person, faith and commitment become the means through which a proper sense of direction is established. Such was the case with Paul.

AN EXAMPLE OF TAKING UP THE CROSS

Jesus declared, "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him **deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me**" (Matt 16:24). And again, "And whosoever **doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple**" (Luke 14:27). This, then, is a defining matter. Those who follow Jesus must deny themselves, and take up their cross. Elsewhere, Jesus said the intending disciple must "take up his cross **daily**" (Lk 9:23). Those who do not do this are excluded from the disciples – they "cannot" be one; they "cannot" follow Jesus. – i.e. He will not allow them to do so. Because a disciple is, in fact, a learner, the one who does not take up his cross cannot "learn from" Jesus (Matt 11:29). He will not teach them.

Coming to Jesus also required that all competing influences be thrust to the side, and a deaf ear turned toward them. This also includes the matter of personal fleshly interests and preferences. Jesus put it this way, "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). **Thus, even the approach to Jesus** (coming to Him) **has restrictions.** They do not have to do with defilement, or a requirement for cleansing, for if that was the case, no one would be allowed to come to Him. However, it does require the repudiation of any and every thing that would cause that quest to diminish or altogether go away. Remember, all of this has to do with COMING to Jesus, or ENLISTING, as it were, as a disciple.

I am sure that you recognize these requirements exclude a significant percentage of professing Christians. Yet, there is no circumstance of life, or any form of human rhetoric or carnal expertise, that can remove them. They are firmly fixed in place. No one gets into the sheepfold who seeks entrance in any other way. **If a person does not want Jesus more than anything, there is no need to seek Him, for it will be in vain.** If they do not want His forgiveness and tutelage more than the approbation of men, or any form of temporal satisfaction, such a person will not even be allowed to approach unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Such a person may be so unaware of his circumstance that Jesus will have to send him away, even as He did the rich young ruler. *“One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me”* (Mark 10:21). Jesus loved that young man (Mk 10:21a), yet sent him away with a word that discovered his refusal to *“forsake all”* (Lk 14:33), take up his cross, and follow Him.

I am pressing this point because of the rarity of its proclamation from the pulpiteers of the land. Men without the kind of commitment that Christ demands are being allowed to think they are really coming to Jesus, and that He has really received them. However, if we are to believe the words of Christ, uncommitted people have either never really come to Jesus, or they have left Him. If this is not the case, then Christ’s words have no weight at all, nor are any of His other words to be taken seriously.

It is the frame of mind

described by Jesus that is being set forth in the life of Paul, and those who faithfully traveled with him as well. His total commitment to Christ is why he continued his trip to Jerusalem, even though he was duly warned concerning what would befall him there.

Christ’s words are also reflected in apostolic doctrine concerning living by faith. Those who are in Christ are apprised that they are to live with the same commitment that characterized them when they first came to Christ. Doctrinally it is stated in the following ways.

- ⇨ **THE HENCEFORTH FACTOR.** *“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin”* (Rom 6:6).
- ⇨ **A LIVING SACRIFICE.** *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of*

- ⇨ **CRUCIFYING THE FLESH.** *“And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit”* (Gal 5:24-25).
- ⇨ **NOT WALKING IN THE VANITY OF OUR MIND.** *“This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind”* (Eph 4:17).
- ⇨ **SEEKING THINGS ABOVE.** *“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God”* (Col 3:1-3).
- ⇨ **PUTTING TO DEATH ABERRANT DESIRES.** *“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth;*

There is no point in life, or any isolated occasion, when the child of God can depart from this manner of life. These are not teachings that are presented as goals to be finally achieved. They are not directions for special occasions when some quick relief is sought. This the manner of spiritual life.

God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom 12:1-2).

- ⇨ **GLORIFYING GOD.** *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”* (1 Cor 6:20).
- ⇨ **LIVING UNTO HIM.** *“And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15).

- fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry”* (Col 3:5).
- ⇨ **BEING HOLY.** *“As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy”* (1 Pet 1:14-16).

There is no point in life, or any isolated occasion, when the child of God can depart from this manner of life. These are not teachings that are presented as goals to be finally achieved. They are not directions for special occasions when some quick relief is sought.

This the manner of spiritual life. It is what is involved in walking *“in the light as He is in the light”* (1 John 1:7). **This is such a rare kind of living, that, at the time, even some of the disciples and prophets did not associate Paul’s**

attitude with these realities. However, it is apparent from the record that they finally did acquiesce to Paul’s decision, sensing that more was involved than his personal will, or a high level of concern for his own safety.

Notwithstanding, their advise came from their deep love for him, and an appreciation for his presence and teaching. However, they did not see what Paul saw. They were, however, willing to yield to his understanding of the matter.

AFTER PRAYING WITH THE BRETHREN, THEY CONTINUE ON THEIR WAY

“⁵ And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.”

ACCOMPLISHED THOSE DAYS

“And when we had accomplished those days . . .” Other versions read, *“had come to end of those days,”*^{NKJV} *“when our time was up,”*^{NIV} *“when the week was over,”*^{CJB} and *“when our time was over.”*^{NLT}

sight-seeing, but sought out brethren with whom to company.

Throughout the book of Acts, there are repeated texts that emphasize the preference of the saints of God for one another. Whether in times of threat and danger, or in times of favor and peace, they chose to be together.

⇒ *“Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey . . . These all **continued with one accord** in prayer and*

***one accord** in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart”* (Acts 2:46).

⇒ *“And being let go, **they went to their own company**, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them”* (Acts 4:23).

⇒ *“And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where **they were assembled together**; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness”* (Acts 4:31).

⇒ *“Then was Saul certain days **with the disciples** which were at Damascus”* (Acts 9:19).

⇒ *“And when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed **to join himself to the disciples**”* (Acts 9:26).

⇒ *“Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul: and when he had found him, **he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church**, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch”* (Acts 11:25-26).

⇒ *“And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where **many were gathered together praying**”* (Acts 12:12).

⇒ *“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra,*

Do not fail to take note of how Paul preferred to spend his time – with the disciples. He apparently knew how long it was going to take for the cargo of the ship to be unloaded, and due preparations made for the continuance of the journey. He did not spend his time sight-seeing, but sought out brethren with whom to company.

These are the *“seven days”* mentioned in verse four. They were probably the time required to unload the ship, and prepare it for the next leg of its journey. This being the case, the text infers that Paul and company knew the appointed duration of the ship’s stay in Tyre. Armed with this knowledge, they had determined how to spend their time in this ancient city.

Do not fail to take note of how Paul preferred to spend his time – **with the disciples**. He apparently knew how long it was going to take for the cargo of the ship to be unloaded, and due preparations made for the continuance of the journey. He did not spend his time

supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren” (Acts 1:12,14).

⇒ *“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, **they were all with one accord** in one place”* (Acts 2:1).

⇒ *“And **they continued steadfastly** in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts 2:42).

⇒ *“And all that believed **were together**, and had all things common”* (Acts 2:44).

⇒ *“And they, **continuing daily with***

and to Iconium, and Antioch, **confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God**" (Acts 14:21-22).

- ⇒ "And when they were come, and had **gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles**" (Acts 14:27).
- ⇒ "And they went out of the prison, and **entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed**" (Acts 16:40).
- ⇒ "And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, **strengthening all the disciples**" (Acts 18:23).
- ⇒ "And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, **exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace**" (Acts 18:27).
- ⇒ "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**" (Acts 20:7).
- ⇒ "And **finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem**" (Acts 21:4).
- ⇒ "And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and **saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day**" (Acts 21:7).
- ⇒ "And from thence, **when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage**" (Acts 28:15).

That will suffice as a representation of the preference of brethren for one another. **How can it be said that brethren love one another if they do not desire to be with one another?** Precisely what kind of rationale seeks to justify a preference for the ungodly?

If it is true that Jesus works through the various members of the body as they hold steadfastly to Him (Eph 4:15-16; Col 2:19), then how can the work of the Lord be done if they do not have preferred fellowship with one another? And exactly where is an example of the work of the Lord being accomplished independently of frequent recourse to the saints of the Lord?

The current trend of Christians choosing to be with the ungodly is justified by saying they are seeking to win them to the Lord. I think rather that it is owing to their affinity with them.

WE WENT ON OUR WAY

"... we departed and went our way..."

Refreshed by the communion of the saints, Paul and company resume their journey to Jerusalem. Owing to the words of some of the disciples, Paul was now more thoroughly prepared for what awaited him at Jerusalem.

The Philosophy of the Way

The text states the band of holy men "went on our way." Other versions read, "started on our journey,"^{NASB} and "proceeded on our journey."^{NRSV} As used here, the word "way" means, "to pursue the journey on which one has entered, to continue on one's journey."^{THAYER} The idea is that of a **purposed** journey in which a specific objective was to be realized.

There is a view of the work of the Lord that holds a certain disdain for all planning. However, there is a place for godly purposing. For example, early believers were exhorted "that with **purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord**" (Acts 11:23). Purposing has to do with objective more than the means of meeting that objective. Within the context of contemporary Christianity, such an approach to life sounds a bit strange. **The thrust of much teaching**

in our time has more to do with managing problems than achieving an objective.

PAUL'S PURPOSE FOR LIVING

Paul testified to his personal ambitions in Philippians. 3:8-11.

- ⇒ Winning Christ.
- ⇒ Being found in him with the righteousness that comes from God by faith.
- ⇒ Knowing Christ.
- ⇒ Knowing the power of Christ's resurrection.
- ⇒ Knowing the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.
- ⇒ Being made confirmable to Christ's death.
- ⇒ Attaining unto the resurrection of the dead.



Paul made his plans within the framework of those objectives. Ultimately, he had eternity in perspective, and the desire to be found acceptable at that time, having lived out his life for the glory of God. I understand the trip mentioned in this text to have been made within that context.

THEY ALL BROUGHT US ON OUR WAY

"... and they all brought us on

our way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city . . .”

These brethren had taken advantage of Paul’s presence during that seven day layover. It must have been a time of great refreshment, and a heightened awareness of the will of the Lord. With a spirit of thankfulness to God and love for Paul and his brethren, these brethren brought them on their way. They no doubt met some of their needs,

the seaside, and prayed,”^{MRD} and “having bowed the knees upon the shore, we prayed.”^{YLT}

The language suggests that this was a public act, and was located very close to the ship on which they would depart. This being the case, what a testimony this must have been – men, women, and children praying together.

Throughout the book of Acts,

devote themselves “to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.”

⇒ Acts 3:1 – Peter and John go up to the temple at the hour of prayer.

⇒ Acts 4:29-31 – Peter and John, with the church, pray for boldness in preaching and for God to do miracles.

⇒ Acts 6:4-6 – The apostles select seven men to serve the community, so they can devote themselves to prayer and preaching; they appoint them by praying and laying hands on them.

⇒ Acts 7:59-60 – Stephen prays to the Lord Jesus at the moment of his death.

⇒ Acts 8:15 – Peter and John go to Samaria to pray that new believers may receive the Holy Spirit.

⇒ Acts 8:22-24 – Peter tells Simon the Magician to repent and pray for forgiveness; Simon asks Peter to pray for him.

⇒ Acts 9:11 – After encountering Jesus on the road, Saul of Tarsus remains in Damascus praying.

⇒ Acts 9:40 – Peter prays before raising Tabitha back to life.

⇒ Acts 10:2-4 – Cornelius, a Roman centurion, is described as a devout man who prayed constantly.

⇒ Acts 10:9 – While in Joppa, Peter goes up to a roof to pray (cf. 11:5).

⇒ Acts 10:30-31 – Cornelius recounts how an angel appeared to tell him his prayers had been heard.

⇒ Acts 12:5, 12 – While Peter is in prison, the church prays for him.

⇒ Acts 13:3 – The Christians at Antioch fast and pray before sending Barnabas and Saul off on a mission.

⇒ Acts 14:23 – With fasting and prayer, Barnabas and Paul appoint elders for the churches they founded.

⇒ Acts 16:13, 16 – Paul, Silas, and

The whole body of disciples came along, including their wives and children. They knew nothing of segregating these groups, as opportunists are wont to do during our time. The favorable impact of the whole family being exposed to the things of God cannot be overstated.

and ensured that they were not sailing away with unnecessary wants.

The whole body of disciples came along, including their wives and children. They knew nothing of segregating these groups, as opportunists are wont to do during our time. The favorable impact of the whole family being exposed to the things of God cannot be overstated. I was personally reared in this kind of environment, with holy men and women often visiting our home. From a tender age, I was exposed to insightful discussions concerning God’s Word, reports of involvement in the work of the Lord, and the demonstration of the love of the brethren. Throughout the years this has had an incalculable effect upon my spirit, and I am grateful for being exposed to genuine Kingdom life. Today, I lament that so many *Christian* families know little or nothing about such holy relationships.

WE KNEELED DOWN AND PRAYED

“ . . . and we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.” Other versions read, “and there on the beach we knelt to pray,”^{NIV} “going on our knees in prayer by the sea,”^{BBE} “they fell on their knees by

prayer is frequently mentioned. **It confirms the reliance of those early brethren upon the Lord.** I have observed that the further people are from God, the least apt they are to prayer. On the other hand, the more aware they are of the Lord, the more frequently they pray. Such prayer is an outgrowth of faith and perception.

Prayers in the Book of Acts

Prayer played a prominent role in the life of the early church. Corruption had not yet set in to the degree prophesied by Paul, and therefore a more lively awareness of God and the sustaining and directing ministry of Jesus was found among the brethren.

The following listing refers to the various prayers that are recorded in Luke’s record of the early church and spread of the Gospel.

⇒ Acts 1:14 – After Jesus’ ascension, his disciples and family devoted themselves to prayer.

⇒ Acts 1:24-25 – The apostles pray before selecting a replacement for Judas.

⇒ Acts 2:42 – The Jerusalem believers

Timothy go to a place of prayer outside of Philippi.

- ⇨ Acts 16:25 – While in prison overnight at Philippi, Paul and Silas pray and sing hymns.
- ⇨ Acts 20:36 – After speaking to the elders from Ephesus, Paul kneels with them and prays.
- ⇨ Acts 21:5 – On a beach near Tyre, Paul kneels and prays with believers from that city.
- ⇨ Acts 22:17 – Paul tells a crowd of Jews about what happened while he was praying in the Jerusalem temple.
- ⇨ Acts 26:29 – Paul tells King Agrippa that he prays that he and everyone listening will become Christians.
- ⇨ Acts 27:29 – During a storm at sea, the whole crew prays for day to come (so that they might be safe).

We have good reason to doubt the sincerity of any professing Christian who is deficient in the desire to pray, or who does not associate both need and blessing with it.

- ⇨ Acts 27:35 – While on the ship, Paul gives thanks to God for the bread before they all eat.
- ⇨ Acts 28:8 – On Malta, Paul cures the father of the governor Publius by praying and laying his hands on him.
- ⇨ Acts 28:15 – Upon landing on the Italian mainland, Paul thanks God for the believers who meet him.

IN OUR TIME

Our day is marked by a glaring absence of prevailing prayer. In the activities of the church and Christian

organizations, prayer is often more an empty form, than the expression of absolute reliance upon the Lord. **We have good reason to doubt the sincerity of any professing Christian who is deficient in the desire to pray, or who does not associate both need and blessing with it.**

I do not know how you could establish the existence of faith where there is no practical reliance upon the Lord. While it is not our purpose to sit in judgment upon others, it is our business to examine ourselves.

THEY RESUME THEIR JOURNEY

“⁶ And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; and they returned home again. ⁷ And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.”

TAKEN OUR LEAVE ONE OF ANOTHER

“And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship . . .” Other versions read, “we said farewell to one another. Then we went on board the ship,”^{NASB} “After saying good-by to each other, we went aboard the ship,”^{NIV} “bade one another farewell. Then we went abroad the ship,”^{RSV} “We said our last words to one another, and got into the ship,”^{BBE} and “having embraced one another, we went on board ship.”^{DARBY}

Keep in mind that this had apparently not been a previously arranged visit with the brethren. Further, there is no record of Paul having been in Tyre

before. Yet, they had been received hospitably, for the brethren in Tyre were obviously “given to hospitality” (Rom 12:13). They conspicuously “used hospitality without grudging,” or not considering it an inconvenience, or an intrusion upon them (1 Pet 4:9). Ponder the effects of a group of brethren traveling through our area, looking us up, and informing us of their seven-day layover – all the while seeking the fellowship of kindred spirits. I am persuaded that most of the brethren in The Word of Truth Fellowship would find no difficulty in welcoming them into their homes. **However, I am also keenly aware that this is by no means ordinary among professing believers.** This is because their lives have been tailored around themselves, their desires, and various family activities.

However, enough is said of hospitality in apostolic teaching to provoke serious introspection concerning this aspect of our lives (Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9; 3 John 1:5-8). No man

who is not given to hospitality is permitted to be a leader among the people of God (1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7-8). One of the qualifications for the support of a widow by the church is this: “Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints’ feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work” (1 Tim 5:10). Jesus Himself taught that one of the defining characteristics of holy people is being hospitable to His brethren: “I was a stranger, and ye took me in . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (Matt 25:35,40). Those not so characterized were consigned to “everlasting punishment” (Matt 25:32-46). That is certainly an arresting thought.

Taking leave of one another no doubt involved saying some appropriate words. We are not provided the details of their farewell, but we can obtain a fairly good idea among how brethren parted from one another in those early days,

before the corruption foretold by Paul had taken place. Here are some examples of parting words and holy benedictions.

- ⇒ **LIKE-MINDEDNESS AND GLORIFYING GOD.** *“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”*(Rom 15:5-6).
- ⇒ **THE REALIZATION OF AND, PEACE, AND ABOUNDING HOPE.** *“Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost”*(Rom 15:13).
- ⇒ **THE PRESENCE OF GOD.** *“Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen”*(Rom 15:33)
- ⇒ **THE REALIZATION OF THE GRACE OF CHRIST.** *“The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen”*(Rom 16:24; 1 Cor 16:23; Phil 4:23; 1 Thess 5:28; 2 Thess 3:18); Phile 1:25; Rev 22:21).
- ⇒ **THE AWARENESS OF THE MINISTRY OF, AND FELLOWSHIP WITH, THE ENTIRE**

- ⇒ **GRACE REALIZED WITHIN THE HUMAN SPIRIT.** *“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen”*(Gal 6:18).
- ⇒ **THE REALIZATION OF PEACE, LOVE, AND FAITH, AND SPECIAL GRACE TO THOSE LOVING CHRIST IN SINCERITY.** *“Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen”*(Eph 6:24).
- ⇒ **BEING GIVEN ALL PEACE BY ALL MEANS.** *“Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means. The Lord be with you all”*(2 Thess 3:16).
- ⇒ **THE PRESENCE OF JESUS WITH THE HUMAN SPIRIT.** *“The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit. Grace be with you. Amen”*(2 Tim 4:22).
- ⇒ **SPIRITUAL PERFECTION THAT WOULD RESULT IN GOD WORKING WITHIN.** *“Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in*

- ⇒ **PEACE TO EVERYONE IN CHRIST.** *“Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen”*(1 Pet 5:14).
- ⇒ **THE REALIZATION OF GRACE, MERCY, PEACE IN TRUTH AND LOVE.** *“Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love”*(2 John 1:3).

Notice the consistency in these closing words. Take due note of their focus, and of the direction in which they were pointed. **All of them had to do with spiritual stability, the realization Divine benefits, and Divine utility.**

There is consistent mindset revealed that is not anchored to this world, but is rather looking forward to the consummation of all things, and readiness to confront the Lord with confidence. The obvious accent is on spiritual progress, not worldly success. These things are so plain it is a marvel that they can be overlooked. Of course, it is not that men simply overlook them. Rather, because of their willingness to live for self, they have been blinded so they cannot perceive the realities that are so conspicuous to faith. **This blindness is a Divine judgment.** It was affirmed by Isaiah of his own generation, and confirmed by John concerning the generation during Christ’s earthly ministry.

- ⇒ **ISAIAH.** *“For the LORD hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered. And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot; for it is sealed: And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men: Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous*

Notice the consistency in these closing words. Take due note of their focus, and of the direction in which they were pointed. All of them had to do with spiritual stability, the realization Divine benefits, and Divine utility.

GODHEAD. *“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).

- ⇒ **PEACE TO THOSE WHO WALK ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF NEW CREATURESHIP.** *“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God”*(Gal 6:15-16).

you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen”(Heb 13:20-21).

- ⇒ **GRACE BEING WITH EVERYONE.** *“Grace be with you all. Amen”*(Heb 13:25).
- ⇒ **PERFECTION, ESTABLISHMENT, STRENGTH, AND SETTLING.** *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”*(1 Pet 5:10).

work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid" (Isa 29:10-14).

⇨ **JOHN.** *"But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of Him"* (John 12:38).

⇨ **PAUL.** *"And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, Saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive: For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them"* (Acts 28:25-27).

How different the response of the brethren from Tyre to the ministry of Paul. It is obvious the Lord had **not** blinded their minds, with hardened hearts were glad to see Paul leave. These brethren accompanied Paul and those with him to the ship, and congenial words were exchanged as the holy entourage continued on their mission.

THEY RETURNED HOME AGAIN

" . . . and they returned home again."

With joy and sorrow mingled in the cup of human experience, the disciples from Tyre returned home. They had profited from the visit of Paul and company, and yet yielded to the purpose

of God that required them to part.

WE CAME TO PTOLEMAIS

"And when we had finished our course from Tyre, we came to Ptolemais..."

Other versions read, *"finished our voyage from Tyre,"* ^{NKJV} *"completed our voyage from Tyre,"* ^{CSB} *"having finished the voyage by sea,"* ^{DOUAY} and *"The next stop after leaving Tyre was Ptolemais."* ^{NLT}



The suggestion is that the sea voyage part of their journey ended here. It appears that they traveled on land from this point on. Concerning this particular trip, there is no more reference to ships or the sea. All of the maps of Paul's third missionary journey, to which I have access, show that the ship voyage included an additional leg to Caesarea. However, the text does not give that indication. It strongly suggests that the sailing portion of the voyage terminated at Ptolemais.

WE SALUTED THE BRETHREN

" . . . and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day." Other versions read, *"greeted the brethren, and stayed with them one day"* ^{NKJV} *"we had talk with the brothers and were with them for one day,"* ^{BBE} *"we inquired after the welfare of the brethren, and remained a day with them,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *"paid our respects to the brethren and remained with them for one day."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

Once again, before setting forward on their journey, Paul; and the brethren with him connect with some of the saints of God. Being without modern-day methods of communication, it is not

at all probable that they sent a message ahead, telling them they would be arriving there soon.

As used here, the word *"saluted"* means "to pay respects to a distinguished person by visiting him; of those who greet one whom they meet in the way . . . pay one's respects to," of those who show regard for a distinguished person by visiting him." ^{THAYER} Technically it could mean that *"the brethren"* of reference met them, and Paul and company greeted them in a godly manner. It could also mean that the travelers searched out the brethren, and then greeted them with the respect and honor that was common among disciples. I am more inclined to the latter view, which seems to blend better with the report of this whole trip. Notwithstanding, it is not a matter suitable for contention.

What a *"day"* that must have been – when Paul and his companions *"abode with them one day."* It was surely something more than a mere rest stop, for there is something rejuvenating about saints being with one another. What child of God has not experienced the exhilarating effects of kindred spirits?

The Value of "The Brethren"

The word *"saluted"* carries the idea of respect, as previously noted. The doctrinal way of referring to this high regard is *"the love of the brethren."* – something that is the result of obeying the truth. Peter states this in a most succinct manner. *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever"* (1 Pet 1:22-23). **This remarkable preference is traced back to being born again of incorruptible seed.** In other words, the new birth itself involves a certain preference for, and attraction to, the children of God. On this matter John writes, *"Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God"* (1 John 4:7). And again, *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him"* (1 John 5:1).

Thus we read powerful statements like the following:

⇒ **CONFIRMATION OF DISCIPLESHIP.** *“By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another”* (John 13:35).

⇒ **CONFIRMATION OF LIFE.** *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death”* (1 John 3:14).

The existence of this love is the basis for various expressions of how the redeemed are to live.

⇒ **HONOR AND PREFERENCE.** *“Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another”* (Rom 12:10).

⇒ **UNPRETENTIOUS AND FERVENT.** *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently”* (1 Pet 1:22).

Confirming the association of this love with the Divine nature, we are apprised that God Himself teaches His children to love one another. *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another”* (1 Thess 4:9). This is a consistent message that God has delivered to men. *“For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another”* (1 John 3:11). Now that Christ has put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, this love can be carried out, because in Him men receive a *“new heart”* and a *“new spirit”* (Ezek 36:26), and the Law of God is written into their hearts and minds (Heb 10:16).

The very existence of this love confirms that an essential change has taken place in all who are in Christ Jesus. They are drawn to those who are not of the world, and delight in their company – an attitude that reflects the Divine nature itself. It is said of the Lord that He is scanning the entire world, looking for those whose hearts are perfect toward Him (2 Chron

16:9). He looks favorably toward the man who is *“poor and of a contrite heart, at that trembleth at My word”* (Isa 66:2). He takes special note of those who fear Him and speak often with one another (Mal 3:16). The Lord Jesus, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily chooses to be among those who gather together in His name (Matt 18:20).

It is not strange, therefore, that those who have been joined to the Lord have a special attraction to His people. They are, after all, being conformed to the image of His Son (Rom 8:29), and it is no strange thing that His character is found in them.

Without lingering too long on this doctrinal point, it will suffice to say that this kind of love is being lived out in Paul and those with him, as well as in those with whom they stayed. **There was a closeness created in Christ Jesus that was compelling, drawing souls together, and causing them to consistently seek out kindred spirits.** The absence of this kind of *“brotherly love”* is a brightly flashing signal of fundamental deficiency.

THEY STAY A WHILE WITH PHILIP THE EVANGELIST

“⁸ And the next day we that were of Paul’s company departed, and came unto Caesarea; and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.⁹ And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.”

Now, the trip to Jerusalem continues. The stops along the way that were necessitated by the shipping schedule proved to be blessed occasions for Paul and those traveling with him. This is an example of *“redeeming the time,”* or *“making the most of your time”* (Eph 5:16; Col 4:5). Many a naive young believer has fallen into sin simply because they did not use their time properly.

THE NEXT DAY

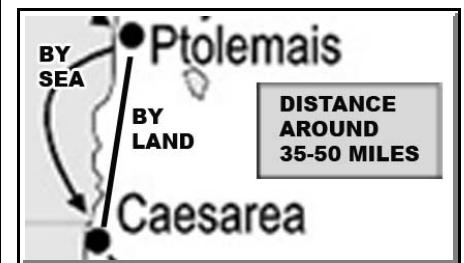
“And the next day we that were

of Paul’s company departed . . .” Other versions read, *“we who were Paul’s companions,”* ^{NKJV} *“we left,”* ^{NRSV} *“Paul and we that were with him,”* ^{GENEVA} and *“Paul and his company.”* ^{YLT}

Luke, who is writing this record, is included in the *“we.”* Others were also included, with the following being identified: *“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”* (Acts 20:4). That is nine in all, including Luke and Paul. Ponder how many you know who could hospitably receive nine people – perhaps for as long as seven days, or even longer. There can be no question about this: a social climate existed in the early church that is like a museum artifact in our time.

CAME INTO CAESAREA

“ . . . and came unto Caesarea. . .” Other versions read, *“came to Caesaera,”* ^{NKJV} *“reached Caesarea,”* ^{NIV} *“went on to Caesarea,”* ^{LIVING} and *“went to the city of Caesarea,”* ^{IE}



This is Caesarea close to Jerusalem, as compared with Caesarea-Philippi, which was 120 miles North of Jerusalem. After Philip had preached in Samaria, preached to the eunuch, and

baptized him into Christ, he continued preaching until he *“came to Caesarea”* (Acts 8:40). After Paul was converted, and his life was threatened, the disciples *“brought him down to Caesarea,”* where they sent him to Tarsus (Acts 9:30). This is the city in which Cornelius lived (Acts 10:1). When Paul first sailed from Ephesus, and before his return there to spend three years, he had gone to Caesarea, from which he went to the church in Jerusalem, saluting the brethren there (Acts 18:22). Paul will have a variety of experiences in this city later on (Acts 23–33; 25:1-13).

I am assuming this trip was made by foot, and not by sea. The distance from Ptolemais to Caesarea was 35-50 miles – a two-day journey. What marvelous fellowship they must have had along the way. Jesus taught His disciples as they were walking in *“the way”* (Matt 20:17; 21:19-22; Mk 10:32-45). It was while Cleopas and his companion were walking on *“the way”* that Jesus joined them and expounded to them such things as caused their hearts to burn (Lk 24:17-27,32). It was as the Ethiopian eunuch was traveling on *“the way”* that Philip taught him, concerning Christ (Acts 8:27-39).

THE HOUSE OF PHILIP

This is a person who has insight into the *“glad tidings”* through which faith *“comes”* (Rom 10:14-17). As Philip did with the Ethiopian eunuch, an **“evangelist” can expound the prophetic words that foretold the coming of a Savior.** They declare more than a message that says “God loved you so much . . .” They speak more of what was accomplished by the Lord Jesus – things that effectively resolved the matter of sin and opened the way to God.

Such proclaimers are not intended to preach only to the lost, although that is a common misconception. Through Paul, the Spirit affirmed the role of an evangelist, together with the other teaching gifts, was given to the church. It also was *“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the*

- ⇒ Their perfecting, or spiritual maturity.
- ⇒ In order to do the *“work of the ministry.”*
- ⇒ For the edifying of the body of Christ.
- ⇒ To come into the *“unity of the faith.”*
- ⇒ To realize *“the unity of the knowledge of the Son of God.”*
- ⇒ To reflect *“the image of Christ”* in their the various roles within the body.
- ⇒ They be *“no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.”*
- ⇒ That speaking the truth in love, they may *“grow up in to Christ in all things.”*
- ⇒ That the body may be *“fitly joined together by that which every joint supplieth.”*
- ⇒ To have *“every part”* working effectively.
- ⇒ That the body might make increase to the *“edifying of itself in love.”*

Philip

Philip is described as *“one of the seven”* – that is, the seven men who were chosen to administer the daily distribution of food to the believing widows in Jerusalem (Acts 6). At that time, he was among those noted for being *“of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom”* (Acts 6:3).

This is the man who *“went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them.”* The result was that *“the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spoke.”* They also saw *“the miracles which he did, For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed”* (Acts 8:7). Great joy filled the city as Philip preached to them *“the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ”* (8:12).

Philip was also directed by a

Such proclaimers are not intended to preach only to the lost, although that is a common misconception. Through Paul, the Spirit affirmed the role of an evangelist, together with the other teaching gifts, was given to the church.

“. . . and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him.” Other versions read, *“Philip the preacher,”*^{BBE} *“Philip the proclaimer,”*^{CJB} and *“Philip . . . a missionary.”*^{GWN}

An *“evangelist”* is *“a bringer of good tidings,”*^{THAYER} and *“one who brings or announces good news.”*^{FRIEBERG} This is one of the gifts that the exalted Christ gave to men – *“evangelists”* (Eph 4:11).

whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love” (Eph 4:12-16).

Just as surely as those who are *“dead in trespasses and sins”* (Eph 2:1) need to hear an insightful proclaimer of the Gospel in order to be saved, so the church needs such insightful proclaimers in order that the following might be achieved:

holy angel and the Holy Spirit to preach to a political official who was the treasurer of the Queen of Candace. He did, and the man was baptized into Christ, going on his way rejoicing (8:26-39). Following that Philip *“preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea”* (8:40).

Now, considerably more than twenty years later, Philip is still noted for being an insightful proclaimer of the Gospel – “Philip the evangelist.” He is an example of spiritual stability and consistency.

It is interesting to note that considerable emphasis is placed on “evangelism” in our time – a word that is not found in Scripture. Instead, mention is made of a person gifted to be an evangelist, who apparently continued to *“stir up”* the gift that was in him (2 Tim 1:6).

Philip is also a notable example of someone who used the office of a deacon well. As it is written, *“For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (1 Tim 3:13). Another version reads, *“For those who perform well as deacons acquire a good standing for themselves and also gain much confidence and freedom and boldness in the faith which is [founded on and centers] in Christ Jesus.”* ^{AMPLIFIED} This is of particular interest to me, having spent my young years thinking that deacons were appointed to pass the Lord’s Supper and the offering plates.

From the standpoint of the individual, being a deacon, or servant of the church is an office in which one proves his competency. In fact, prior to being put into that office, they must have demonstrated their ability to function properly in it. Therefore Paul wrote, *“And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless”* (1 Tim 3:10).

THE FOUR DAUGHTERS OF PHILIP

“. . . And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.” Other versions read, *“four virgin daughters who were prophetesses,”*

^{NASB} *“four unmarried daughters who prophesied,”* ^{NIV} *“four unmarried daughters who had the gift of prophecy,”* ^{NRSV} and *“four unmarried daughters who had the ability to speak what God had revealed.”* ^{GWN}

What a blessing it must have been to be in this home! To my knowledge, it is the only home so distinguished. During the captivity in Egypt, a Jewish man named Amram married a Jewish woman named Jochebed. It is written, *“and she bare unto Amram Aaron and Moses, and Miriam their sister”* (Num 26:59). **I suppose three more notable people have never been born to a single family.** Another cluster of unusual offspring from a single family were Mary, Martha, and Lazarus (John 11:1). James

This is significant, for prophets are a gift given to the church – not to women, or children, but to the church. Further, they rank high in the body of Christ, being the “second” in significance, and outranked only by “apostles.”

and John, apostles of Christ, were brothers, born of the same father and mother (Mk 10:35). Peter and Andrew, also two apostles of the Lamb, were brothers (Matt 4:18). Yet, Philip had *“four virgin daughters who were prophetesses.”* ^{NASB}

This is significant, for prophets are a gift given to the church – not to women, or children, but to the church (Eph 4:11). Further, they rank high in the body of Christ, being the *“second”* in significance, and outranked only by *“apostles”* (1 Cor 12:28). Jesus gave them (Eph 4:8,11). God the Father placed them (1 Cor 12:18). The Holy Spirit distributes this gift (1 Cor 12:4). The Lord administrates it (1 Cor 12:5). God Himself works *“all in all”* (1 Cor 12:6). They are a manifestation of the Holy Spirit, given for the profit of the whole church (1 Cor 12:7). They are a manifestation of Divine distinction – for all are not prophets – and they are a means through which the Head speaks to His body, which is the church.

Here in this text, then, we have a revelation of something that involved the entire Godhead: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. **Philip had four virgin daughters that prophesied.** Admittedly, this does not conform to the theology of some – which means that their theology is wrong. Whatever texts they imagine forbids this kind of operation has simply been misunderstood, for God does not contradict His word.

Did Philip’s daughters prophesy only to women? If so, they had a gift that was not intended to profit everyone in the church – and that idea contradicts the revealed purpose of the gift of prophecy. Or, perhaps they only spoke privately, and not in the assembly. But that too contradicts the clearly stated purpose of all spiritual gifts – especially the gift of

prophecy, which is a superior gift (1 Cor 14:5).

One of the marks of the New Covenant, and the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh was this: *“and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy”* (Acts 2:17). Peter said that this was being fulfilled before the multitude on that memorable day of Pentecost (Acts 2:15,33). This record, therefore, should not surprise us.

Of old time, there were prophetesses – women who prophesied by the Spirit of God. Each one is referred to as a *“prophetess.”*

- ⇨ Miriam (Ex 15:20).
- ⇨ Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth (Judges 4:4)
- ⇨ Huldah, the wife of Shallum (2 Kgs 22:14).

- ⇒ Isaiah's wife (Isa 8:3).
- ⇒ Anna, a widow (Lk 2:36).

Paul told the church at Corinth, "*Ye may all prophesy one by one*" (1 Cor 14:31). Married women who prophesied were to do so as subordinate to their husbands (1 Cor 11:5), which it is assumed were themselves believers.

The texts that forbid women to

speaking in the church, or to instruct men, were by no means ordinary. There are only two such texts, and they both have to do with **learning**, not prophesying (1 Cor 14:3; 1 Tim 2:11-12). Disruption is the thing forbidden in the Corinthian text, and the context of First Timothy strongly suggests it is speaking about the same thing. The woman was **not** told to sit in silence, but to "*learn*" in silence. Further, the context was the assembly of the saints – when all of them were together.

I do not care to remain on this topic, as I have dealt with it elsewhere. I only desire to show at this time that **the existence of four daughters that prophesied is in perfect harmony with the history of God speaking to humanity, with the promise of the New Covenant, and with the things revealed concerning the body of Christ.** God never works out of harmony with what He has said, or in contradiction of His purpose..

CONCLUSION

Thus, what appears to be nothing more than an historical record has life pumped into it, so it can minister to the soul. Ponder the description of all God-inspired writing. "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works*" (2 Tim 3:16-17).

This applies to historical narratives contained in books like Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, First and Second Samuel, First and Second Kings, First and Second Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Jonah, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. This is not to mention the historical reports that are found in the books that major on prophecy and teaching. In such reports Divine reactions to both good and evil are seen. The effects of God's presence, and the personal knowledge of

Him, upon men are also seen. We are exposed to the way people think whose mind is set on the Lord, and the way minds that are not set on the Lord process things. We see how God's promises effect those who believe, and how His Law is considered by those who fear Him. We are exposed to the reactions of both the holy and unholy to Divine working.

How often the church is reminded to ponder the various events related to Israel. In fact, it is written that the things that "*happened*" to them were "*ensamples*," or samplers – a model for imitation. ^{STRONG'S} They were, in fact, "*written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come*" (1 Cor 10:11). It is also true that they "*were written aforetime . . . for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*" (Rom 15:4). In the book of Acts, the greater percentage of the reports are examples of those who lived by faith, whereas Israel's

record largely provides an example of those who do **not** live by faith, and of the consequences of such an approach to life. They also provide us with a sterling example of how God responds to such people, while the book of Acts provides the record of His response to men of faith.

May the Lord deliver men from mere academic approaches to the book, of Acts – or any other book of Scripture. Such an approach is lethal, leading the soul to think incorrectly, and also to place a low value on the Scriptures themselves. **Professing Christians who remain fundamentally ignorant of the Scriptures, refusing to expose their minds to them, have put themselves in a most precarious situation.** They have removed themselves from the means of spiritual sustenance, for man lives "*by every word of God*" (Lk 4:4). That is a circumstance that cannot possibly be avoided or contradicted – and what person of faith would want to do such a thing?.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 11/6/09. We will continue our current series of lessons on the book of Acts. The Eighty-seventh lesson will cover verses 10 through 19 of the twenty-first chapter: "ARRIVING IN JERUSALEM." A certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judaea and prophesied of Paul being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles at Jerusalem. Hearing this, the brethren tried to dissuade Paul from going to Jerusalem. However, with a greater understanding of the matter, Paul refused to draw that conclusion, and told the brethren why he had made his decision. 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.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship:

<http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

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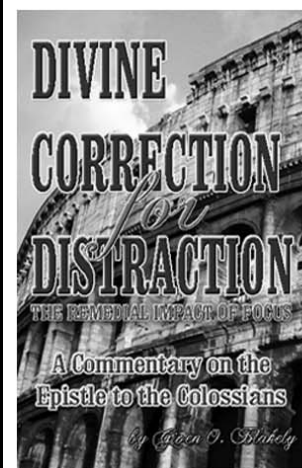
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