

# A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

IN THIS WORLD, WE EXPERIENCE SUFFERINGS: BUT GLORY IS COMING

# SECOND CORINTHIANS

† II CORINTHIANS

An overview of the Book of Second Corinthians, by Given O. Blakely

## Lesson #5

COMMENTARY ON: 1:15-17

### 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4

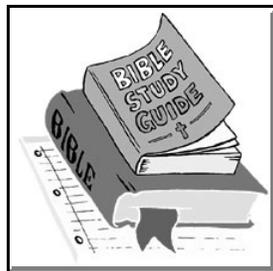
*"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."*

### A SECOND BENEFIT

How important is it that the saints of God are fed – built up and stabilized in the most holy faith? Judging from the average fare that is being served up in the pulpits of the land, one might be led to believe it is not all that important. It is not unusual to find Lord's day gatherings of believers that are tailored for the lost – designed to reach those who are alienated from God. We will find that Scripture nowhere directs such assemblies of believers. The Lord has ordered His kingdom so that mature and grounded believers are the appointed means of reaching the lost. This is not done through teaching certain techniques, but by obtaining a more firm grasp of the eternal realities that are ours in Christ Jesus.

### 2 CORINTHIANS 5:1-2

*"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. for in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven"*



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



## The Epistle of Second Corinthians

### Lesson Number 5



**TRANSLATION LEGEND:** ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ESV=English Standard Version (2001), KJV=King James Version (1611), NKJV=New King James Version (1982), NAB=New American Bible, 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, NLT=New Living Translation, NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), Webster=The Webster Bible 1833, YLT=Young's Literal Translation (1862).  
**LEXICON LEGEND:** FRIEBERG=Friberg Lexicon, UBS=UBS Lexicon, LOUW-NIDA=Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT=Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER=Thayer's Greek Lexicon

----- Bible Translation Codes with Identification -----

# A SECOND BENEFIT

“ 1:15 And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit; <sup>16</sup> And to pass by you into Macedonia, and to come again out of Macedonia unto you, and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea. <sup>17</sup> When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness? or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay,” <sup>KJV</sup> (2 Corinthians 1:15-17)

## INTRODUCTION

There is a kingdom manner to be discerned in the Apostolic writings. They are not merely instructions, corrections, admonitions and the likes. I will go so far as to say it is essential to detect the tone of what Paul says as well as its content; to behold the manner in which he thinks as well as the words that he write.

**In my understanding, Divine inspiration includes more than the illumination of facts, whether in the past, present, or future.** The things that are “revealed” come with the print of Deity upon them. That is, the Lord’s

ways, character, and purpose are reflected in them. The Lord always speaks in strict and unwavering harmony with His Person and purpose. He never speaks out of character or in a manner that conflicts with His “eternal purpose” (Eph 3:11). Although the Lord reveals matters to men, those matters never conform to the manners of “this present evil world” (Gal 1:4). They are **never** intended to deal primarily with life in this world, or to enable God’s people to adapt to this world. **If the Word of God is read as though this world was the primary one, and life here and now was the**

**fundamental life, the message God is sending will be missed.**

Revelation cannot be clarified by sifting it through the wisdom of men. The very fact that what God makes known is a “revelation” ought to make that clear. **Anything that can only be known through revelation cannot, because of that circumstance, be clarified by something that has its genesis with men.** The truth of the matter is that the wisdom of men, in any form, can bring nothing to the table of “spiritual understanding.” If it could, it would be

*It is essential that the saints of God be built up and stabilized in the faith—by Given O. Blakely*

## CONTENTS

- MINISTERING IN CONFIDENCE (1:15a)
- HOLY INTENTIONS (1:15b)
- A SECOND BENEFIT (1:15c)
- INTO MACEDONIA (1:16a)
- OUT OF MACEDONIA (1:16b)
- TOWARD JUDEA (1:16c)
- DID I USE LIGHTNESS? (1:17a)
- DID I PURPOSE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH? (1:17b)

absurd to pray for such understanding (Col 1:9).

### THIS IS RELEVANT TO OUR TEXT

All of this has a bearing on our text. Paul writes as one whose mind has been impacted by Christ. He writes as one who has *“the mind of Christ,”* and has been given to think in harmony with Divine objectives (1 Cor 2:16). He had received mercy *“to be faithful”* – able to handle the truth in a manner that was consistent with God’s purpose in Christ Jesus. **He did not think within an institutional context, or with a particular religious movement in mind – a practice that is altogether too common in our day.** It was not his purpose to enter into the controversy between those in Corinth who said, *“I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ”* (1 Cor 1:12) – siding, as it were, with the ones who said they were *“of Christ.”* **His total aim was to be Christ’s “servant,” not be the pleaser of men** (Gal 1:10).

All of this impacted what and how the Apostle wrote. **He spoke, as it were, with a heavenly dialect, and with a spiritual tone.** His words were in harmony with what God is doing in Christ Jesus. He was not merely correcting problems, or defending his Apostleship – although that was involved. **He was guiding the thinking of the Corinthians into harmony with the Divine nature.** If this harmony of thought is not realized, thinking, no matter how disciplined and trained it may be, will be skewed toward the world, and

thus tend to vanity.

### The Wisdom of This World

The wisdom of this world is not merely unlike the mind of the Lord, **it militates against the spiritual mind.** That is the express statement of the Spirit, and it is to be duly considered by all believers. *“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God”* (Rom 8:5-8). These are not bromidic, or hackneyed, sayings, to be glossed as though they were some mere intellectual novelty.

### The Carnal Mind

The *“carnal mind”* is *“the mind set on the flesh,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“the mind of sinful man,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“the wisdom of the flesh,”* <sup>DOUAY</sup> and *“the outlook of disordered human nature.”* <sup>NJB</sup> It is the mind that is not *“controlled by the Spirit”* <sup>NIV</sup> (Rom 8:6). It is the mind-set that draws from the well of nature, and is from Adam, not Christ Jesus. This is the mind that has not been *“renewed”* (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23), and thus is antithetical to *“the mind of the Lord”* (1 Cor 2:16). It is the mind that is set on *“earthly things”* (Phil 3:19), and thus cannot express the thoughts or aspirations of *“the new man”* (Col 3:10). The *“carnal mind”* is the opposite of a *“sound mind,”* which is given to those who are in Christ Jesus (2 Tim 1:7). It is the mind in which the laws of God have not been written (Heb 8:10).

Do not miss the arresting statements that are made concerning the *“carnal mind,”* or *“the mind of the flesh,”* or *“the natural man.”*

- Those who are *“of the flesh,”* or *“live*

*according to the sinful nature,”* <sup>NIV</sup> set their minds on *“the things of the flesh,”* or, *“what nature requires”* <sup>NIV</sup> (Rom 8:5).

- To be *“carnally minded”* is death, or separation from God (Rom 8:6a).
- The *“carnal mind is enmity,”* or hostility, against God (Rom 8:7a). That is its unchangeable nature.
- The *“carnal mind”* **does not** subject, or submit, itself to the law of God (Rom 8:7b).
- The *“carnal mind”* is **not able to** subject, or submit itself to the law of God. It simply **cannot** do so (Rom 8:7c).
- Those who are *“in the flesh”* (who are those minding the things of the flesh) **“cannot please God”**. It is not possible for them to do so (Rom 8:8).
- The *“natural man”* **does not** receive the things of the Spirit of God (1 Cor 2:14a).
- The *“things of the Spirit of God”* are *“foolishness”* to *“the natural man”* (1 Cor 2:14b).
- The *“natural man”* **cannot** know *“the things of the Spirit of God”* (1 Cor 2:14c).

### This Necessitates the New Birth

Jesus said it was imperative that men be born again: *“Ye MUST be born again”* (John 3:7). It is essential that the individual become a *“new creation”* (2 Cor 5:17), *“born of the Spirit”* (John 3:8), *“begotten of God”* (1 John 5:18), or *“born of God”* (1 John 3:9). Now that Christ has been exalted, **God will not receive a person whose generation can only be traced back to Adam.** Nor, indeed, will He ultimately honor any resource that has come from the realm of nature.

**He spoke, as it were, with a heavenly dialect, and with a spiritual tone. His words were in harmony with what God is doing in Christ Jesus.**

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The new birth is necessary because *“the flesh,”* or *“the natural man,”* cannot be changed. It cannot be improved, reformed, or in any way made essentially better. God has written Adam off, and his generation cannot transfer into *“the world to come.”* Whatever comes from *“nature,”* however lofty it may appear, is impotent in the realm of the Spirit, where *“the things of the Spirit”* are being communicated. The word has gone forth from the King, and cannot be controverted: *“For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die”* – i.e. be cut off from God (Rom 8:13). Those who *“sow to the flesh,”* nurturing nature instead of walking in the Spirit, *“shall of the flesh reap corruption,”* or *“destruction”*<sup>NIV</sup>

**There is not so much as a sentence of Scripture that is the expression of the “carnal mind.”** If something is quoted that was said by an unregenerate person, it is quoted within the context of God’s *“eternal purpose,”* and with a mind to show its hostility against God. If it is something that is technically true (like *“For we are also his offspring”* (Acts 17:28), it is elemental in nature, and requires further elaboration (Acts 17:19-31). Such quotations are never viewed as essential, and are never the means by which the saints of God are grounded.

#### APPLYING THIS TO OUR TEXT

Admittedly, this may all appear to

*“eternal purpose,”* and have the light of the risen Christ shining upon them.

Paul will speak as someone who has forsaken all competing interests *“for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus”* his Lord (Phil 3:8). **He will address the Corinthians as one who is in the process of pressing toward the mark “for the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”** (Phil 3:14). He will write as one who has a desire *“to depart,”* and to be *“present with the Lord”* (2 Cor 5:8). The words to which we will not subject our minds have come from one who **has been “crucified with Christ,”** and is **now living “by faith in the Son of God”** (Gal 2:20). These are the words of a man who glories in the Lord Jesus, by whom *“the world is crucified”* unto him, and he *“unto the world”* (Gal 6:14).

Paul does not write as an expert counselor, but as one who *“has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful”* (1 Cor 7:25). He does not write as one who has been trained to detect debilitating problems, but as one who Jesus has **“enabled,”** who *“counted”* him *“faithful,”* and putting him *“into the ministry”* (1 Tim 1:12). **These words will come from a man whose mind is saturated with Scripture, whose heart is tender toward God, whose conscience is pure and unsullied with selfish objectives, and whose sole intention is to forget the things that are behind him, and stretch forward to the things that are before him** (Phil 3:13). He will not depart from this in his writing.

**The Holy Scriptures have been written with redemption in mind, not the difficulties of people. They are against the background of God’s “eternal purpose,” and have the light of the risen Christ shining upon them.**

(Gal 6:8).

There is a wisdom that *“is earthly,”* **not** coming *“from above.”* Such wisdom is *“earthly, sensual, and devilish”* – or *“earthly, unspiritual, and of the devil”*<sup>NIV</sup> (James 3:15s). **When this wisdom creeps into the church it creates “envying and strife,” which bring in “confusion and every evil work”** (James 3:15b). It is to be avoided at all cost!

be nothing more than a novel bypath. However, we must not allow ourselves the luxury of thinking in such a manner. The things Paul will say in this passage can easily be viewed according to the flesh. To the unlearned they will not appear to be related to the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. However, this is a wholly erroneous assumption. **The Holy Scriptures have been written with redemption in mind, not the difficulties of people.** They are against the background of God’s

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## MINISTERING IN CONFIDENCE

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<sup>4:15a</sup> **And in this confidence.”**

Paul has just stated the objective he intends for himself, and the Corinthians as well: *“that on the day of the Lord Jesus we are your boast even as you are our boast”*<sup>NSRV</sup> (verse 14). Now he builds upon that thought, showing that it has a present and direct bearing on his relationship to them. The Apostle will not allow *“the day of the Lord Jesus”* to

recede into the background when he writes – even if he is confirming his Apostleship. He will put the Corinthians in mind of its inevitability, and of his anticipation of great joy when all of the secrets are made known, and what was spoken in secret is shouted from the housetops (Luke 12:3).

In keeping with the persuasion of faith, Paul is **not** driven by a quest to be

better understood in this world. It is not that he desires to be misunderstood. **However, for him, the compelling knowledge is this: that all things will eventually be unveiled, with nothing being secret any longer.** That is when the sons of God will be manifested (Rom 8:19), and what he has faithfully preached will be vindicated and confirmed.

**Right here we see how foolish**

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it is to court the favor of men. Although this is quite fashionable in religious circles, the seriousness of such a quest is confirmed by Paul's own words. "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? **If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ**" <sup>NASB</sup> (Gal 1:10). At the precise point that a person pursues the approbation of men, he abruptly ceases to serve Christ. I do not believe this is generally perceived in the "church world." It rather appears to me that there is a great social superstructure within the modern church in which the favor of men is a fundamental objective. It is built into the agenda of the nominal church, and nearly dominates the entirety of, what is called, Christian education. **Men appear to be little concerned with how things will appear when the Lord Jesus comes in all of His glory.** This condition is undeniable evidence of the pervasive work of Satan within the professed church. The words of this text are consequently unusually strange to those who are not acquainted with Kingdom manners.

#### IN THIS CONFIDENCE

"And in this confidence . . ."

Other versions read, "I was confident of this," <sup>NIV</sup> "I was sure of this," <sup>NRSV</sup> "being certain of this," <sup>BBE</sup> and "with this assurance" <sup>NJB</sup>

It is as though Paul takes the matter at hand, and carries it forward to the day of Christ, when the counsels of the heart will be made fully known (1 Cor 4:5). Then, the "hidden things of darkness" will be "brought to light." What Solomon said will then be realized, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: **but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment**" (Eccl 11:9). And again, "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl 12:14). Then, "every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it" (1 Cor 3:13). As Jesus told His disciples, "For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, **that shall not be known**" (Luke 12:2).

The "day of the Lord Jesus" is the time when, Paul affirmed, "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom 2:16). Right now, whether it is perceived or not, there is "Nothing in all creation [that] is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account" <sup>NIV</sup> (Heb 4:13). Because this is not obvious to the eye or reasoning of men, they proceed in life just as though it was not the truth. **The Corinthians spoke against Paul as though the revealing day of the Lord Jesus was never going to occur.**

**Men appear to be little concerned with how things will appear when the Lord Jesus comes in all of His glory. This condition is undeniable evidence of the pervasive work of Satan within the professed church. The**

They had spoken as though "here and now," together with their own personal preferences, were all that mattered. However, they were seriously wrong, and Paul is lifting their eyes to a greater horizon than today or tomorrow.

He knows what will take place when the Lord Jesus comes in all of His glory, and is revealed. He knows that in the blazing glory of the Son of God, **there simply will be no secrets.** Everything that is wrong will be seen for what it is, together with everything that is right. This is what is dictating what Paul says. **It directed the course of his preaching, and all of the relationships he cultured.**

I am going to wax bold and affirm that any other way of thinking is unacceptable. **Those who put their ear to the ground of human opinion and preferences will blush with shame on the day of the Lord Jesus.** When Jesus is seen by every eye, those who have shaped their religious careers according to the fickle desires of men will be repentant, sorrowful, and filled with fear. It will then be apparent to them that they actually squandered the resources given to them.

#### The Place of Certitude

There are many weaknesses in a purely academic religion – one that rests upon evidences, polls, statistics, and human preferences. **However, one of the chief weaknesses of academia is that it does not foster confidence, or certitude.** The wisdom of men is in a constant state of flux, changing at every corner. As soon as something seems sure, some new surface-observation appears that mandates a change in thinking. It may be a new way of preaching – like inductive or deductive preaching. It may be a new way of singing – like contemporary versus traditional. There

may be a new focus, like the family or the nation. The educational requirements may change, requiring a Masters degree rather than a Bachelors. There may be a trend to cell groups instead of general assemblies, and counseling may be seen as superior to preaching.

**Who does not know that certitude cannot be found where men are caught in the maelstrom of such changes in public opinion?** Perhaps the polls have not been extensive enough. The statistics may not reflect the proper percentages. The educational masters may have misinterpreted the real need, or what the people really wanted.

All of these observations might be questioned if we were dealing with engineering, accounting, athletics, or the medical profession. However, that is not the issue here. **We are dealing with eternal issues** – the proper equipping of the saints now, and glory in the world to come. The objective is to be "found in Him, not having a righteousness" of our own (Phil 3:9). The aim is for the Son of man to "find faith" in us when He comes (Lk 18:8). To hear Jesus say, "Well done good and faithful servant," will be the **only** acceptable assessment in that day (Matt 25:21).

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If these objectives are not realized, our life will have been lived in vain, and all of our religion will have been for naught.

**It is precisely for this reason that a keen awareness of where things are ultimately heading makes for spiritual certitude, confidence,**

**and assurance.** Proper plans can be made in such confidence – plans that will honor God and benefit His people. In this way we are workers together with God.

## HOLY INTENTIONS

<sup>15b</sup> . . . ***I was minded to come unto you before . . .***”

We profitably participate in the Kingdom of God **by means of our perception, or understanding.** This perception, or understanding, is the result of the Spirit’s working, and is thus referred to as *“spiritual understanding”* (Col 1:9).

Participation in the New Covenant

*will write them also in their understandings.*”<sup>DARBY</sup> *“In their minds I will plant my Laws writing them on their hearts,”*<sup>NJB</sup> and *“I will put my laws in their hearts so they will understand them, and I will write them on their minds so they will obey them.”*<sup>NLT</sup> The word *“minds”* refers to the faculty of understanding, where thoughts are mused and expressed. The word *“hearts”* refers to the seat of spiritual life from which all expressions find their source.

no longer selfish in nature, but had been sanctified by his faith in Jesus and the hope of His return.

### I WAS MINDED

*“ . . . I was minded . . . ”* Other versions read, *“I intended,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“I planned,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“I wanted,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“it was my purpose,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“I purpose,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> *“I had a mind,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> and *“I have been meaning.”*<sup>NJB</sup>

There is a strain of religion that disdains preparations or making plans. Those who embrace this nonsense feel as though they should first be “moved” in some very obvious way by the Spirit of God. If, they imagine, this moving does not occur, they will probably do the wrong thing.

On the surface, this appears to have some merit, but that is only on the surface. **Divine direction is not to be understood as occurring independently of thought.** When we read, *“The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord,”* we are not to imagine the mind is not involved. When, for example, Peter received a vision from heaven concerning the acceptability of the Gentiles, the direction took place *“while Peter thought upon the vision”* (Acts 10:19).

At any rate, here is something that Paul intended to do. Among other things, this means that Paul **considered** what he would do in the future – how he would spend his time, where he would go, and what he would say. He did not leave such thoughts to be spawned by sudden impulses. The truth of the matter is that Paul’s thoughts were centered in what the Lord had called Him to do. **They were an aspect of the fellowship of Jesus into which he, and all other believers, are called** (1 Cor 1:9).

As we will see, these intentions

**Our text shows us how the salvation of God had influenced Paul. It impacted upon how he thought, what he purposed, what he intended to do, where he determined to go, and what he resolved to say or write.**

involves a Divine writing upon the heart, and the placement of certain things within the mind. The nature of this writing reveals something of the nature of the covenant itself. God does not write His love upon the heart. He does not put His mercy into the mind. This writing does impacts upon the emotions, volition, and motives of the individual. **However, it is primarily rational in nature.** This is clear from the dual statement concerning the covenant that Jesus is presently mediating. *“For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts”* (Heb 8:10). And again, *“This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them”* (Heb 10:16). Some other versions read, *“I will put my laws in their hearts, writing them in their minds,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“Giving my laws into their hearts, I*

**Impacting Thought**  
**Among other things, this confirms that our identity with God through Jesus Christ impacts upon the way we think.** Where there is no change in ones thinking, there has been no essential change in their person.

Much of contemporary “Christianity,” including its manner of music, is not conducive to challenging and extended thought. It is too much on the surface – too closely aligned with the fleshly senses. It is actually more Old Covenant than New Covenant.

Our text shows us how the salvation of God had influenced Paul. **It impacted upon how he thought, what he purposed, what he intended to do, where he determined to go, and what he resolved to say or write.** All of these intentions related directly to his Apostleship, bringing benefit to the saints and glory to the Lord. His purposes were

had to do with the spiritual profit of the Corinthians. In this, he was partaking of the Divine nature as revealed in the Lord Jesus. Prior to being *“made flesh,”* the Word is portrayed as saying to the Father, **“I come to do Thy will, O God”** (Heb 10:9). This is precisely what Paul was *“minded”* to do. In the case of the Savior, this kind of thinking involved fulfilling the mission on which the Father was sending Him. In the case of Paul, it had to do with fulfilling the ministry into which Jesus had placed him (1 Tim 1:12).

**Holy purposes are engendered within an awareness of the work to which one has been called by God.** Where this awareness is lacking, purposes will tend to be self-

centered, or extend beyond the perimeter of God’s revealed will.

**TO COME UNTO YOU BEFORE**

*“ . . . to come unto you before. . . ”*

Other versions read, *“to come to you before,”*<sup>NKJV</sup> *“at first to come to you,”*<sup>NASB</sup> *“to visit you first,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“to you first,”*<sup>NRSV</sup> *“to come to you before,”*<sup>BBE</sup> *“to come unto you previously,”*<sup>DARBY</sup> *“to come to you before,”*<sup>DOUAY</sup> and *“to come to you first.”*<sup>NJB</sup>

As the next verse confirms, Paul was planning to go to Macedonia. Here he states that he had intended to stop by Corinth first – or *“before”* he went into Macedonia. This doubtless refers to the time when he wrote First Corinthians. He had intended, it appears, to come to them

personally, dealing with the various issues that had arisen among them. However, he was not able to do so, even though the desire was a noble one.

He now proceeds to explain why he was not able to come. **It was not owing to any fickleness or lack of determination on his part.** It appears that some of the Corinthians had suggested Paul really did not intend to come to them at all. Paul will not permit such accusations to go unchecked. He has already stated that his ministry was consistently associated with simplicity and godly sincerity – wholly without hypocrisy or pretense of any sort (1:12). Now he shares the purpose for which he had intended to come.

**A SECOND BENEFIT**

<sup>15c</sup> **“ . . . that ye might have a second benefit.”**

Here again, a Kingdom manner is expressed. **Newness of life cannot be lived toward self.** It is only functional as the redeemed live *“unto Him which died for them and rose again”* (2 Cor 5:15). Sacrificial living is involved in this manner. In living *“unto,”* or toward, Christ, **we are dominated by His interests, and driven by His agenda.** In such a posture we delight in His way, and find our greatest satisfaction in doing His will. Part of this enjoyment is found in seeking the welfare of Christ’s brethren – aspiring to be a source of blessing to them.

Several texts confirm this to be the way in which our lives are carried out.

- ☛ *“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith **one may edify another**”* (Rom 14:19).
- ☛ *“Let every one of us please his neighbor for **his good to edification**”* (Rom 15:2).
- ☛ *“Let no man seek his own, but every man **another’s wealth**”* (1 Cor 10:24).

☛ *“Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, **but the profit of many, that they may be saved**”* (1 Cor 10:33).

☛ *“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also **on the things of others**”* (Phil 2:4).

☛ *“Rejoice **with them that do rejoice,***

**THAT YE MIGHT HAVE**

*“ . . . that ye might have . . . ”*

Other versions read, *“so that you might,”*<sup>NIV</sup> *“so that you might receive,”*<sup>NAB</sup> and *“I wanted to give you.”*<sup>NLT</sup>

Here is an example of loving one’s neighbor as himself (Lev 19:18; Matt 19:19). However, this goes even further than the requirements of the Lord, which

**Now Paul shares with the Corinthians the purpose for his intentions to visit them. He was not merely seeking relief from the stress of the ministry, so to speak. His aim was not to have a sort of sabbatical, or period of rest and rehabilitation.**

*and weep **with them that weep**”* (Rom 12:15).

Now Paul shares with the Corinthians the purpose for his intentions to visit them. He was not merely seeking relief from the stress of the ministry, so to speak. His aim was not to have a sort of sabbatical, or period of rest and rehabilitation.

did not extend as far as the spirit of the New Covenant. As it is written, *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”* (Gal 5:14). **This had more to do with refraining from uncomely conduct toward ones neighbor – a way of keeping the flesh in check, so to speak.** As it is written, *“For this, Thou shalt **not** commit adultery, Thou*

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shalt **not** kill, Thou shalt **not** steal, Thou shalt **not** bear false witness, Thou shalt **not** covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love **worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law**" (Rom 13:10). Our text reveals a perspective that is much larger than this.

In Christ we not only refrain from things that hurt the brethren, or put them at a disadvantage, **we engage in activities that help them, and bring advantages to them** – "that ye might **HAVE.**"

Much of the religious activity of our day produces effects that are transitory and momentary. The people are not given spiritual substance to

because the Scriptures challenge their readers to think, ponder, muse, and cogitate on them – **and their religion has neither taught nor encouraged them to do such things.**

Where there is a genuine hunger and thirst for righteousness (Matt 5:6), and a fervent desire to feed upon the word of God (Lk 4:4), there will be a desire to bring spiritual advantages to the people of God. When an individual can honestly say, "I have esteemed the words of His mouth more than my necessary food" (Job 23:12), **ministering to the people of God becomes a priority.** When the soul can confess with Jeremiah, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by Thy name, O LORD God of hosts" (Jer 15:16), **a desire is awakened to bless His**

**availing himself of the benefits of redemption, and thus became a participant in what Jesus is doing from the right hand of God.** Each member of the body of Christ has, by Divine placement, been adapted to participate in this ministry to the saints. That is the declaration of Scripture. "But now hath God set the members every one of them **in the body, as it hath pleased him**" (1 Cor 12:18). The body is thus "tempered **together**" (1 Cor 12:24), and "compacted together **by that which every joint supplieth**" (Eph 4:16).

The design of the gifts Jesus has given to the church is clearly revealed in the fourth chapter of Ephesians.

- Equip the saints for the work of ministry (4:12a).
- Edify the body of Christ (4:12b).
- Bring the brethren into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God (4:13a).
- Produce maturity in the saints, which maturity involves attaining to the whole measure of the fulness of Christ (4:13b).
- That God's people be no more children, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine (4:14).
- That the saints will be brought to a point where they speak the truth to one another in love (4:15a).
- That believers may grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15b).
- That the entire body may be joined and held together by every supporting member (4:16a).
- That through the process of edification the body may increase to the edifying of itself in love (4:16b).

**Where these things are not taking place, the grace of God has been frustrated.** This is what Jesus is doing, and is the reason for the revealed objective of the gifts He has given to the church. Where this objective is not been fulfilled, Jesus is not at work, for this is what He is doing. It is to be understood

**Much of the religious activity of our day produces effects that are transitory and momentary. The people are not given spiritual substance to ponder, take with them, and muse upon. There is too much froth – a circumstance that reproachful to Christ and debilitating to the saints.**

ponder, take with them, and muse upon. **There is too much froth** – a circumstance that reproachful to Christ and debilitating to the saints. In Christ Jesus nourishment is absolutely essential. Growth is imperative. Advancement is a requirement. **What is more, spiritual growth cannot be achieved by juvenile means and infantile teaching.** Where there is no depth of experience, there can be no corresponding advancement in maturity.

It simply is not possible to read the letters to the churches and conclude that believers can make any kind of advancement in an environment of religious novelty and childish teaching. Nor, indeed, is it possible to read the words of Jesus to His disciples and arrive at such a conclusion. One of the big reasons why the professed church has a high degree of Scriptural illiteracy is

**people.** It is not possible for the word of Christ to dwell in us "richly in all wisdom" without being mindful of the saints of God (Col 3:16). One cannot ingest the Word of God and have a disregard those who confess they are "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" (Heb 11:13). It simply cannot be done, for the life of God is in His word. As Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life" (John 6:63). **They only have to be taken into the heart to do their work** (Col 3:16).

I am saying that Paul's interest in the welfare of the saints was the direct result of his manner of life. His life was experientially and consciously "hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). **He was**

that there is growth in these processes, but they are to be found among God's people. **If they are not, we have an abnormality on our hands that is not acceptable.**

All of these things are confirmed in the purpose that Paul now affirms.

**A SECOND BENEFIT**  
 "... a second benefit."

**INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL**

**The Nature of Salvation**

This very language exposes us to the nature of salvation. It is not a once-for-all-time experience. Of course, the way in which the Spirit speaks about salvation should lead us to a conclusion that allows for the immediate recognition of the statement before us – "a *second benefit*."

*We Are Not Yet Totally Saved*

In this world, salvation is a work in-progress. Our bodies are the most evident testimony of this fact, for they remain temporal, and salvation is essentially an "eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9). It is also "with eternal glory" (2 Tim 2:10). Until that is experienced in its fullness, there is some work that remains to be done. That is why a prayer for continued Divine working is in order: "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 you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen**" (Heb 13:20-21).

It should not surprise us, therefore, when we read of salvation in the future tense. It is clear that we have not yet experienced its fullness.

- ☛ "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we **shall be saved** from wrath through Him." (Rom 5:9)
- ☛ "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we **shall be saved** by His life." (Rom 5:10)

- ☛ "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be **conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Rom 8:29)
- ☛ "And be not conformed to this world: but **be ye transformed** by the renewing of your mind, passiveness ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

those possessing it. The saved are depicted as *looking* (Tit 2:13), *waiting* (Rom 8:23), *running* (Heb 12:1), *reaching* (Phil 3:13), *striving* (Phil 1:27), *keeping* (Eph 4:3), and *working* (Phil 2:12). They are said to be *fighting* (1 Tim 6:12), *wrestling* (Eph 6:12), *perfecting* (2 Cor 7:1), *resisting* (James 4:7), *seeking* (Colo 3:1), and *hoping* (Rom 8:24-25). Their posture includes being *sober* (1 Pet 1:13), *vigilant* (1 Pet 5:8), *faithful* (Rev 2:10),

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(Rom 12:2)

- ☛ "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor 3:18)
- ☛ "Wherefore He is able also to **save them to the uttermost** that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb 7:25)
- ☛ "Who are kept by the power of God through faith **unto salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time." (1 Pet 1:5)
- ☛ "But **grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.**" (2 Pet 3:18)
- ☛ "But speaking the truth in love, may **grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ**" (Eph 4:15)

*No Passivity In Salvation*

Nothing about salvation suggests passiveness, or a lack of response, in

and *patient* (James 5:7). They are *receiving* (Heb 12:28), *obtaining* (Heb 4:16), and *attaining* (Phil 3:11). They are said to be *laying up treasures* (Matt 6:20), *seeking to know Christ* (Phil 3:10), and have been *called into fellowship with Him* (1 Cor 1:9). Jesus spoke of His people *seeking, asking, and knocking* (Matt 7:7-8). The life of faith is one of *apprehending* that for which we have been apprehended (Phil 3:12). **Spiritual life is intensely active, involving the whole man.**

*A Receiving Mode*

It should be apparent that, in Christ, **we have been placed in the receiving mode.** The life into which we have been called is one of **extensive activity.** We receive *the atonement* (Rom 5:11), *an abundance of grace* (Rom 5:17), *the things of the Spirit of God* (1 Cor 2:14), *edifying* (1 Cor 14:5), *mercy* (2 Cor 4:1), *the promise of the Spirit* (Gal 3:14), *the Word* (1 Thess 1:6), *the love of the truth* (2 Thess 2:10), *the knowledge of the truth* (Heb 10:26), *a kingdom that cannot be shaken* (Heb 12:28), and *the engrafted word* (James 1:21). **None of these things are received inadvertently, or without extending ourselves to obtain them.**

Spiritual life cannot be maintained independently of personal activity and

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involvement. While this may seem apparent, one is hard pressed to find a group of professed believers that actually exhibit this manner. It is as though a blanket of mediocrity has been thrown over the Western church. There are, praise God, exceptions to this rule – but they are truly exceptions. They are also refreshing to find.

*Remaining on the Periphery*  
**Right here a word should be**

**After all of the reasons for maintaining such a position have been put forward, we must demand that any advantages of such a stance be sited. What promises has God made to those who stand far off from Him? Precisely what pledge for good has the Lord made to those who insist on maintaining associations that minimize a need for Himself?**

said about accommodating ourselves to a religion that allows one to remain on the periphery of the Kingdom (if, indeed, such a thing is even possible). When Israel was traveling to the promised land, the Amalekites met them “by the way, and smote *the hindmost*” of them, “*even all that were feeble behind*” them (Deut 25:18). When God chastened Israel for their murmuring, those who “*were in the uttermost parts of the camp*” (outskirts) were consumed (Num 11:1).

After all of the reasons for maintaining such a position have been put forward, we must demand that any advantages of such a stance be sited. **What promises has God made to those who stand far off from Him?** Precisely what pledge for good has the Lord made to those who insist on maintaining associations that minimize a need for Himself? What is there about grace, truth, or faith that causes them to function well in a dead environment? Is this not where the devil is more apt to be found? Is it not where the flesh is most likely to be vaunted into the place of prominence? Is not the world more readily embraced in such places?

*Delivered from the World*

**Salvation extricates us from the condemned realm, and readies us for eternity with Jesus.** It was the will of God that Jesus give Himself “*for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world*” (Gal 1:4). The grace of God empowers us to “*say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope--the glorious appearing of*

*our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ*”<sup>NIV</sup> (Tit 2:12-13). Jesus Himself is “*not of this world*” (John 8:23), and neither is His kingdom (John 18:36). **What possible reason can be adduced for His people being of this world, blending in with it, and being friends with it.** Friendship with this world constitutes one “*the enemy of God*” (James 4:4).

*Divine Provisions*

All of the provisions that are received in Christ Jesus are designed to facilitate our eventual departure from this world into “*the world to come.*” Jesus gives us His own peace and joy in order to make us equal to the challenges of life in this world (John 14:27; 15:11; 17:13). Spiritual weaponry is provided to enable us to overcome the encroachments of the devil (Eph 6:10-18; 2 Cor 10:3-5). Everything pertaining “*to life and godliness*” is given to us to enable us to become mature, stable, and consistent (2 Pet 1:3). “*All spiritual blessings*” are available to us in the “*heavenly places*” into which we have been raised (Eph 1:3). Our spiritual life is maintained by the Word of God, by which we live (Luke 4:4), and which is to dwell richly and productively within us (Col 3:16). We have

been called into the fellowship of God’s Son in order to learn from Him (Matt 11:27), be shepherded by Him (Heb 13:20), and be brought by Him to glory (Heb 2:10). The Holy Spirit is given to us to lead us in the crucifixion of the flesh (Rom 8:13), and produce fruit within us that is consistent with “*the world to come*” (Gal 5:22-23). He also bears witness with our spirits that we are “*the children of God*” (Rom 8:16).

It should be obvious from all of this, and more, that the objective is to make us less like this world, and more compatible with “*the world to come.*” **Rest assured, there will not be a single soul in glory who does not fit into that realm, or who has no appetite for the things of God.** The very thought of such a possibility is absurd in the extreme. It must be remembered that no moral change will be wrought by the resurrection of the dead. **Our bodies will be changed, but our character will not.** The preferences that we have cultured in this world will continue on in the world to come. This is seen in the arresting words of the Revelation: “*He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still*” (Rev 22:11).

**Why Say These Things?**

It might appear that this has little to do with receiving “*a second benefit.*” And, I concede that it should not be necessary to establish the necessity of more and more blessing, consistent growth, and continued advancement in the faith. As I have shown, this thought pervades every aspect of our salvation, and is made abundantly clear throughout Scripture.

**Notwithstanding that situation, a new line of thinking has been thrust upon the church.** It has come from the academic circles, and centers around the professed need of “*winning the lost.*” The fundamental objective of the body is Christ is said to be reaching the world, converting sinners, or bringing people to Jesus. It all sounds reasonable enough, and is buttressed with frequent and poignant references to “*the great commission*” – a term that is not

found in Scripture. The purveyors of this emphasis remind us that Jesus said He same *“to seek and to save the lost”* (Luke 19:10), assuming this meant *“save”* is to simply get the people in the fold. They conveniently ignore the fact that Christ’s quality time was spent with His disciples, and in the places where a covenanted people met. We read, *“And in the day time He was teaching in the temple; and at night He went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives”* (Luke 21:37). He was frequently found in the synagogues (Matt 1 2:9; 13:54; ; Mk 1:21; 3:1; 6:2; Lk 4:16). His quality teaching was always to His disciples (Matt 5:1; 12:49; 13:36; 15:32; 16:13,21; 19:23; 26:1; Lk 22:15).

We are not left to conjecture on the emphasis Jesus placed before His disciples. They were, indeed, to *“preach the Gospel to every creature”* (Mk 16:15) – and *“every creature”* does not mean only those who have **never** heard the Gospel before. They were to *“teach,”* or *“make disciples,”* of *“all nations”* (Matt 28:18), which included baptizing and *“teaching”* them. The expression *“make disciples”* does not equate to *“convert sinners,”* and nothing in Scriptures suggests this to be the case. During the last supper, Jesus told Peter Satan had desired him, to sift him as wheat. The Lord told Peter that He had prayed for him, that his faith would not fail. He then said, *“and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren”* (Luke 22:32). Following His resurrection, Jesus told Peter, *“Feed My lambs,”* *“Feed Mysheep,”* *“Feed Mysheep”* (John 21:15-17).

I am careful **not** to suggest that turning men *“from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins”* is in any way to be neglected. **However, that is neither the whole of the matter nor the emphasis of it.** The objective, as Jesus stated to Paul, is that they may receive *“inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me”* (Acts 26:18). **If that inheritance is not ultimately “received,” nothing else is of any value.** Furthermore, the *“inheritance”* is **not** received this side of death, or while we are in this world. We are told this marvelous inheritance is *“incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven*

*for you”* (1 Pet 1:4). While we remain here, we are *“kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time”* (1 Pet 1:5).

**The thrust of the Apostolic ministry was seeing to it that the saints were built up in the faith in order to the final obtaining of the inheritance.** That is what the Epistles are all about. This is why Paul made return visits to those who had been

certainly correct. While we surely do have a *“treasure”* from heaven, it is presently in an *“earthen vessel”* (2 Cor 4:7). There can be no effective opposition to this reality.

**However, after having said that, I charge that the very people who affirm this are often those who practice the “once saved always saved” heresy.** They have placed their emphasis on, what they have chosen to

**The thrust of the Apostolic ministry was seeing to it that the saints were built up in the faith in order to the final obtaining of the inheritance. That is what the Epistles are all about. This is why Paul made return visits to those who had been turned from darkness to light**

turned from darkness to light (Acts 15:36). A church that is untaught in the *“things of the Spirit of God”* (Rom 8:5; 1 Cor 2:14) is a weak one. It is a church that is closer to the earth, and consequently further from heaven. Such a church can be easily deceived because it is not *“grounded and settled”* (Col 1:23). It may boast of many new converts, but **God is not glorified by congregations of spiritual infants.** That is because His *“great salvation”* is not calculated to produce infants. That is not why the Scriptures have been given. It is not why the Holy Spirit is sent into our hearts, crying *“Abba Father”* (Gal 4:6). It is not why the Lord Jesus is ever living to *“make intercession”* for those who are coming to God through Him (Heb 7:25).

#### **Practicing “Once Saved Always Saved”**

I come from a background that vigorously opposes the idea that once we are saved we are always saved. The Scripture that warn us of falling away (Luke 8:13; Heb 6:6), departing from the faith (1 Tim 4:1), coming short of the promised rest (Heb 4:1), and finally being a *“castaway”* (1 Cor 9:27) have been carefully itemized. The position espoused – namely that as long as we are in this world we are in the place of jeopardy – is

call, *“the great commission.”* They tailor their services for the *“seeker.”* They emphasize *“evangelism”* – another word that is not found in Scripture. What is called *“missions”* – another word not found in Scripture – is also placed among the highest priority. There certainly is nothing wrong, and everything right, about such activities. **However, when they result in the neglect of the saints, a sin of the greatest magnitude has taken place.** Jesus is not interceding for sinners, but for those who are coming to God through Him (Heb 7:25). The Holy Spirit is not interceding for sinners, but for those in whom He is dwelling (Rom 8:26-27). The angels are not sent forth to minister to those who are sinners, but to those who are heirs of salvation (Heb 1:13-14). The Father’s eye is not upon sinners, but upon them who fear him and hope in His mercy (Psa 33:18), and *“upon the righteous”* (1 Pet 3:12a). His ears are not open to the prayers of sinners, but to the *“righteous”* (1 Pet 3:12b).

**How is it, then, that a people called by the Lord’s name could have adopted an agenda other than the one being carried out in heaven?** What has constrained them to move, what is called, *“reaching the lost,”* above the

edification of the body of Christ – when all of heaven, the Holy Spirit within, and the Scriptures are devoted to that objective? Is it really possible for the lost to be “reached” by an unstable and uninformed church? **Can a people who themselves are ungrounded and unsettled really direct the lost to the portal of eternal safety?**

Although it is seemingly unintentional, the people are actually

receive a blessing,”<sup>NAU</sup> “benefit doubly,”<sup>NJB</sup> and “a double blessing.”<sup>NLT</sup>

The word “second” does not denote “double,” or “twice as much,” as some of the translations indicate (RSV, NRSV, GENEVA, NJB, NLT). Nor, indeed, does it mean something inferior to the first, like “second place” or “the next best way.” The idea here is that of **something additional** – that is, “a second time.”<sup>THAYER</sup>

“teaching the Word of God among them” (Acts 18:11). They had a marvelous scope of spiritual endowments. Paul said of them, “*you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Cor 1:7). **Surely a church like this would not require an additional ministry by the Apostle.** Would it not be better to move on to other territories where the Gospel had not yet penetrated, or believers were less stable?

**Although it is seemingly unintentional, the people are actually practicing the “once saved always saved” doctrine. In neglecting the edification and growth of the saints, they are assuming the people of God are safe in an immature state.**

This is not at all the way in which the Apostle thought – even though it is a popular way thinking in our time. That, however, is only because the modern church is noted for spiritual immaturity. Today the church thinks more in terms of professional staff members that not coming behind in any “*gift*.” The average congregation cannot even think in this manner. They prefer to think in terms of highly educated, trained, and paid professionals.

practicing the “once saved always saved” doctrine. In neglecting the edification and growth of the saints, they are assuming the people of God are safe in an immature state. Perhaps they imagine that the saints are to feed themselves, without regard to the assembly, or the other members of the body of Christ. **However, edification is set within the context of the body of Christ – the assembled body of Christ** (1 Cor 14:3,12,26; Eph 4:12,16,29; 1 Thess 5:11; 1 Tim 1:4). If our assemblies do not edify, strengthen, and build up the saints, they have really served no lasting purpose.

While these observations may not be generally acknowledged by the modern church, Paul wrote with them in mind. In fact, it was in view of these realities that he made his plans. This should serve to introduce the marvelous expression that follows.

The word “benefit” is taken from the Greek word χάρις, which is ordinarily translated “*grace*” (John 1:16; Acts 11:23; Rom 1:5; 4:4,16; 5:2; 6:14; 12:6; 15:15; 1 Cor 3:10; 2 Cor 6:1; 8:1; Heb 4:16), or “*favor*” (Lk1:30; Acts 2:47; 7:46). As used here, the meaning of the word is “a token or proof of grace.”<sup>THAYER</sup> Other lexical definitions include “ability, power, enabling,”<sup>FRIBERG</sup> “in order that you might be blessed twice.”<sup>UBS</sup>

Right here we see the nature of “*newness of life*,” **which is to advance, mature, and be more productive.** Paul was not content for people to be “*added to the church*” (Acts 2:47), but joined with the Lord in the good work of perfecting, establishing, strengthening, and settling the saints. As Peter well said, “*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). In our text, the means by which this is accomplished is accentuated – “*a second benefit*.”

**Even though the church at Corinth had abundant gifts, yet they were not established and grounded.** They were addressed as those who were “*still carnal . . . behaving like mere men*”<sup>NKJV</sup> (1 Cor 3:3). There were “*divisions*” among them (1 Cor 1:20; 3:3; 11:18), unwarranted legal suits (1 Cor 6:1-7), brotherly inconsideration (1 Cor 11:21), misconduct at the Lord’s table (1 Cor 11:29-30), and failure to carry out their commitment to needy brethren (2 Cor 8:10).

**Institutionalism causes people to remain content with such conditions, even though they contradict everything about salvation.** Such manners are in no way acceptable, and betray spiritual immaturity, which is a totally unacceptable circumstance in which to continue. Such things leave the door wide open for the devil, and tend to quench and grieve the Holy Spirit. Enough cannot be said about the danger of continuing in such things.

**A SECOND BENEFIT**

“ . . . that ye might have a second benefit . . . ” Other versions read, “*twice receive a blessing*,”<sup>NASB</sup> “*might benefit twice*,”<sup>NIV</sup> “*have a double favor*,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “*have a double pleasure*,”<sup>RSV</sup> “*have a second grace*,”<sup>EBE</sup> “*a second favor*,”<sup>DARBY</sup> “*a second experience of grace*,”<sup>ESV</sup> “*a double grace*,”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “*twice*

**The Corinthian Condition**

The church at Corinth had already enjoyed extensive exposure to the ministry of Paul – over one year and six months. During that time, Paul was not merely available, but was described as

**Confirming**

Among other things, this is why it is imperative for believers to be “*confirmed*,” ratified, or made firm in the faith. This is why Paul and Barnabas went throughout Lystra, Iconium, and

Antioch “confirming the souls of the disciples” (Acts 14:22). **They were administering a “second benefit.”** When Judas and Silas, themselves prophets, also came to Antioch, they “exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them” (Acts 15:32). **They were administering a “second benefit.”** Paul and Silas went “through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches” (Acts 15:41). **They were administering a “second benefit.”**

The purpose of God involves confirming His people “unto the end,” in order that they might “be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 1:8). That cannot be done with only an initial invest of labor among the people. There is a “second benefit” to be had, and that is what Paul had determine to do for Corinth.

#### Edification and Establishment

Because the people of God are in a hostile world, housed within an earthen vessel, and hounded by a subtle adversary, they need to be edified and established. **Remaining juvenile in the faith guarantees a fall.** The “fall” may not be a moral one, apparent to even the casual observer. However, it will be a fall from steadfastness (2 Pet 3:17), which has the same effect upon the soul as a blatant lapse into immorality.

Everything in the assembly is to be “done unto edifying” (1 Cor 14:26). **No person or group of persons is given the license to have a contradicting opinion on the matter.** There are things that may be, technically speaking, “lawful.” However, if they do not edify, they have no place in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor 10:23). When we are “together,” we are to “edify one another” (1 Thess 5:11). The “second benefit” has to do with edification.

Establishment is the result of being edified, or built up. This is a condition in which the people become firm, stable, and unmoveable. Early churches are said to have been “established in the faith” (Acts 16:5). Paul sought to minister to the brethren in Rome in order that they might be “established”—even though their faith was “spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom 1:8,11). Paul sent Timothy

to the Thessalonians to “establish” them (1 Thess 3:2). We are told that it is a “good thing that the heart be established with grace” (Heb 13:9). The Roman brethren were told that God was able to establish them through the Gospel (Rom 16:25). The Thessalonians were told that God was working to the end that their hearts might be established “unblameable in holiness before God” (1 Thess 3:13). **All of this has to do with the “second benefit.”**

#### Grounded

Another view of spiritual maturity is developed in the word “grounded.” This is the end to which Christ dwells in our hearts by faith – that we might be

forthrightly declared that the person who had “no root” in himself only endures “for a time.” He continued, “afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word’s sake, immediately they are offended” (Mark 4:17), and actually “fall away” (Lk 8:13). **Any person who imagines they can remain “without root,” and still make it to heaven, is only deluded.** If they do not become rooted, they will fall away. The King has spoken, and there is no room for any other conclusion! This is why believers need a “second benefit.”

#### Settled

To be “settled” means to steadfast, unmoveable, and able to

**The Lord has made us privy to what He is doing in the saints. It is our business to yield to Divine influences, not resisting the Holy Spirit. The “God of all grace” is bringing us through the crucible of suffering to glory. This suffering is of such magnitude that it cannot be endured by those who are “weak in the faith.”**

“grounded in love” (Eph 3:17). To be “grounded” is to founded, or made stable – like a firm foundation. Being “grounded” is not an option, as though any child of God can continue in a vacillating state, unsure, and floundering about in the sea of doubt. In a straightforward manner, the Spirit informs us of the real situation. “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: **if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel**” (Col 1:21-23). **Forever blot from your mind any idea that God will receive a person who insists on remaining ungrounded.** This too has to do with the “second benefit.”

#### Rooted

Rooting depicts stability as the result of spiritual growth. Jesus

withstand the blasts of hostility that are experienced in this world. We are told that we will be presented without blame to the Lord IF we continue “settled,” and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel (Col 1:23). Life in this world is such as will not permit a person who is not “firm” to maintain an association with the Lord. Those who are “tossed to and fro” will not be able to endure “unto the end,” which is a requirement for being saved (Matt 24:13).

The Lord has made us privy to what He is doing in the saints. **It is our business to yield to Divine influences, not resisting the Holy Spirit.** The “God of all grace” is bringing us through the crucible of suffering to glory. This suffering is of such magnitude that it cannot be endured by those who are “weak in the faith.” **They must become settled in the process of trial.** The Spirit says it this way: “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus,

*It is essential that the saints of God be built up and stabilized in the faith—by Given O. Blakely*

after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you” (1 Pet 5:10). This too has to do with receiving a “second benefit.”

### The Fulness of the Blessing

The hearts of believers attest to this, even though much of the theology and religious manners to which they are subjected deny it. **There is a larger blessing to be received than when we initially come into Christ.** Take, for example, the exemplary church in Rome. They were the only church referred to as “beloved of God” (Rom 1:7). Their faith was spoken of “throughout the whole world” (Rom 1:8). Spiritual dignitaries were among them including “Priscilla and Aquila” who had laid down their necks for Paul, “Epaenetus” who was the firstfruits Achaia, and “Mary” who had bestowed much labor on Paul and his associates. There were “Adronicus and Junia” who were of note among the Apostles, “Amplias” who was especially close to Paul, “Urbane” who was his helper, and “Stachys” who was close to Paul. Then there was “Apelles” who was “approved in Christ,” “Tryphena and Tryphosa who labored in the Lord,” and “Persis who labored much in the Lord” – and several others as well (Rom 16:3-15).

Surely a church of such

shall come in the fulness of **the blessing of the gospel of Christ**” (Rom 15:29). Other versions read, “the full measure of the blessing of Christ,”<sup>NIB</sup> “the fullest blessing of Christ,”<sup>NJB</sup> and “Christ will give me a great blessing for you.”<sup>NLT</sup> That was to Rome what the “second benefit” was to Corinth.

### A Spiritual Gift

This doubtless involved the sharing of spiritual gifts or aptitudes that had been given to Paul. He would thus be saying something similar to what he said to the brethren in Rome: “For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established” (Rom 1:11). Some have supposed this refers to giving the brethren the ability to do supernatural things. However, this is a forced explanation. The end being served by this impartation was the establishment of the brethren in the faith: “to the end that ye may be established.”

Consider that Corinth already excelled in spiritual gifts, coming behind in none of them (1 Cor 1:7). That is, they were “not lacking in any gift” (1 Cor 1:7). **Yet, it had certainly not resulted in their establishment.** In fact, they were upbraided for being “carnal” and “babes” (1 Cor 3:1). An additional gift would not

**restricted by your own affections”**<sup>NKJV</sup> (2 Cor 6:12).

The Corinthians needed a “second benefit,” more firm grounding, and additional maturity. Their affections were too restricted, and their spiritual appetites too small. They sorely needed to be “enlarged” (2 Cor 6:13). **This would only come through the Gospel being ministered by someone who discerned its content and could minister it in the power of the Spirit.**

Elsewhere Paul spoke of the special insight and ministry he had been given. This was the area from which he especially ministered to the saints.

☛ “It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to **visions and revelations** of the Lord . . . And lest I should be exalted above measure through **the abundance of the revelations**, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure” (2 Cor 12:1,7).

☛ “If ye have heard of **the dispensation of the grace of God** which is given me to you-ward: how that **by revelation He made known unto me the mystery**; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand **my knowledge in the mystery of Christ**) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (Eph 3:2-5).

☛ “For though I should boast somewhat more of our **authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification**, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed” (2 Cor 10:8).

☛ “Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the **power which the Lord hath given me to edification**, and not to destruction” (2 Cor 13:10).

The “second benefit” to which

**Their affections were too restricted, and their spiritual appetites too small. They sorely needed to be “enlarged.” This would only come through the Gospel being ministered by someone who discerned its content and could minister it in the power of the Spirit.**

reputation, with such prodigious laborers among them, had reached the apex of spiritual life. Was it not time to turn their attention outside of themselves to others? That is the kind of advice that many our day would give – and with the most pious tones at that! How does Paul, who was acquainted with the needs of the saints and the manners of the Kingdom speak to such a congregation? There is no need to speculate. Here is what he wrote. “And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I

appear to provide them any additional advantages in the Lord.

With the brethren in both Rome and Corinth, **Paul was speaking of ministering the grace that had been given to him.** In his first ministry to them, their condition apparently did not allow for him to minister as fully as possible – like Jesus in Mark 6:5. Later Paul will tell the Corinthians, “You are not restricted by us, **but you are**

Paul alludes included the ministration of these things – the employment of his gifts to communicate the insights he had been given. It was of the same order as the first one he ministered, when he was with them for at least one year and six months.

We have no record of him imparting miraculous spiritual abilities to the Corinthians during that time. It is written that he was “teaching the Word of God among them” during that time (Acts 18:11). Now he affirms that he had desired to do the same thing again.

### MEAGER APPETITES

A word should be said here about meager spiritual appetites. They are altogether too common in the professed church. Just as in nature, a lack of appetite in the spiritual realm indicates bad health – an abnormal situation. If you

are pondering just how a lack of spiritual appetite can be detected, consider the words of our blessed Lord. *“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened”* (Mat 7:7-8). If the individual is not receiving, it is because he is not asking, *“for everyone that asketh receiveth.”* If one is not finding, it is because he is not seeking, for *“everyone that seeketh findeth.”* If the things of God are not being opened to people, it is because they are not knowing, for *“to him that knocketh it shall be opened.”*

**In our time, popular, or contemporary, religion does not allow for the development of a hearty appetite for the “things**

**above.”** Even where an effort is made to deliver the Word of God, such small doses are being served up that a good appetite cannot be developed. In the natural realm, if a person only eats a handful of crackers and drinks a small glass of water, it will not be long until they will be incapable of eating very much. Their capacity to hold food will diminish, as well as their ability to process food.

Only a “second benefit” can assist in recovering from such spiritual malnutrition – and it is needed for advancement to more mature levels as well. This is what Paul wanted to given the Corinthians. **He was not a minister of theological novelties, contemporary fads, or popular demands.** The Lord’s objective had become his own – namely for the saints to grow up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15).

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## INTO MACEDONIA

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<sup>16a</sup> *And to pass by you into Macedonia . . .”*

In Paul’s Christ-directed journeys, he had been led into Macedonia. The events surrounding this occasion are noteworthy, and will add to the tone of this passage.

### The Background

The account in the book of Acts records a change in the direction of Paul’s ministry. As he prepared to embark on, what is commonly called his “second missionary journey,” Paul said to his co-worker Barnabas, *“Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do”* (Acts 15:36). This, of course, was related to the commission he had received from Jesus, which included preparing the saints to receive *“inheritance among those which are sanctified by faith”* in Christ (Acts 26:18). Barnabas *“determined to take with them John, whose surname was Mark.”* Paul did not think it good to do this, for John had *“departed from them in Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work”* (Acts 15:37-38). This departure took place following one of the most dramatic confrontations recorded in the book of

Acts.

John Mark was ministering to Paul and Barnabas as they ministered throughout Salamis, preaching the word of God *“in the synagogues of the Jews”* (Acts 13:5). When they had gone through the whole island, and had come to Paphos, they confronted *“a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus”* (son of Joshua), who was an attendant to the Roman deputy, or proconsul, of that area. The deputy, named Sergius Paulus, was an intelligent man, and *“called for Barnabas and Saul,*

*book of Acts called “Saul”), “filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, “O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time.” And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand”*<sup>NKJV</sup> (Acts 13:5-11).

As a result of this judgment, *“the deputy, when he saw what was done,*

**In Paul’s Christ-directed journeys, he had been led into Macedonia. The events surrounding this occasion are noteworthy, and will add to the tone of this passage.**

*and desired to hear the word of God.”* At this time, the sorcerer, whose name was *“interpreted”* Elymas, or “wizard,” *“withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.”* Paul (who, on this occasion, is for the last time in the

*believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord”* (Acts 13:12). It was then that *“Paul and his company sailed from Paphos to Perga of Pamphylia.”* At that time, *“left them to return to Jerusalem”*<sup>NIV</sup> (Acts 13:13).

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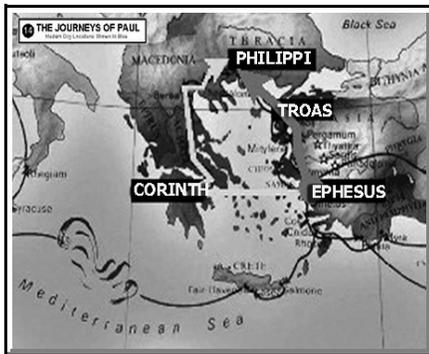
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As a consequence, Paul had chosen Silas to accompany him through Syria and Cilicia to confirm the churches.

As they came to Derbe and Lystra, they found a young disciple named Timothy, who had an excellent reputation among the brethren. He would prove to be a replacement for John Mark, for *“him would Paul have to go with him.”* They went through the cities, delivering decrees for the churches to keep, which had been issued by the Apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 16:4; 15:6,28-29). The result was that the churches were *“established in the faith and increased in number daily”* (Acts 16:5).

After Paul and company had *“gone*



*throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia,”* they *“forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.”* Then, when *“they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to”* <sup>NIV</sup> (Acts 16:6-7). Therefore the group went down to Troas. It was there that a vision appeared to Paul in the night. In the vision *“And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us”* (Acts 16:9). Upon seeing the vision, it is written, *“immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them”* (Acts 16:10).

Upon arriving in Macedonia, they went to *“chief city”* of the region, which was Philippi. After being there for several days, they went out of the city to a river side, where they expected to find a place to pray. Although Paul had seen a *“man”*

in his vision, urging them to come over into Macedonia and help them, it was not a man that they encountered. Instead, they found a group of women who had *“resorted”* to the river side for prayer. This is where the Lord *“opened”* the heart of Lydia so she could respond to Paul’s message (Acts 16:12-14).

**PASS BY YOU INTO MACEDONIA**

*“And to pass by you into Macedonia . . .”* Other versions read, *“to pass by way of you,”* <sup>NKJV</sup> *“to pass your way,”* <sup>NASB</sup> *“to visit you on my way,”* <sup>NIV</sup> *“to go by way of you,”* <sup>NAB</sup> *“I planned to visit you on my way,”* <sup>NIB</sup> and *“through you to pass.”* <sup>YLT</sup>

Now, about 5-7 years later, Paul is planning to go to Jerusalem by means of Macedonia (Acts 19:21-22; 21:5; 1Cor 16:5). In all of this, he did not forget the brethren at Corinth. He determined to go into Macedonia, from Ephesus, **by way of Corinth.** This was the long way to Macedonia, with the more direct route being through Troas. Yet, his heart for the brethren at Corinth moved him to want to come by there first in order to minister to them.

**The plan of Paul to come to Corinth on his way to Macedonia never materialized.** This doubtless left some of the critical Corinthians doubting his sincerity. Therefore, Paul is sharing his honest intentions – intentions that came from his heart.

**THINGS DO NOT ALWAYS GO THE WAY WE DESIRE**

It is good for us to remember that the steps of a good man are not determined by his own will. Rather, *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delighteth in his way”* (Psa 37:23). And again, *“O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is*

*not in man that walketh to direct his steps”* (Jer 10:23). This is precisely why godly men have asked the Lord to direct their paths. *“Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not”* (Psa 17:5). And again, *“Order my steps in thy word: and let not any iniquity have dominion over me”* (Psa 119:133).

**The activities of the heavenly kingdom are not determined by the will of men – even holy and faithful men, such as Paul the Apostle.** For example, time and time again when Paul determined to go to the brethren in Thessalonica, his plans were frustrated. Of this he wrote, *“Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us”* (1 Thess 2:18). When he was intent on going to Rome, he was also hindered. *“Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles”* <sup>NKJV</sup> (Rom 1:13). He even told the brethren in Rome that he was *“much hindered from coming to you”* (Rom 15:22).

**Keep in mind that Paul’s purposes were not built around earthly life and worldly ambitions.** Here was a man who confessed that to live was Christ (Phil 1:21). He did not count his life *“dear”* to himself (Acts 20:24), but was willing to *“gladly spend and be spent”* for the saints of God (2 Cor 12:15). Yet, the affairs of the Kingdom were not driven by his desires. He knew that, and therefore continued to serve the Lord as he was directed from above. He maintained his holy desires for the people of God, but followed the path placed before him while *“looking unto Jesus”* (Heb 12:2).

**As simplistic as it may appear,**

**The activities of the heavenly kingdom are not determined by the will of men – even holy and faithful men, such as Paul the Apostle.**

you do must not allow your spirits to rise and fall according to you're your plans and purposes – whether

they are fulfilled or frustrated. Paul did not cease to serve the Lord because things did not do his way, and neither

should you. Hold on your way, child of God! Hold on your way! Divine direction is part and parcel of your salvation!

## OUT OF MACEDONIA

<sup>16b</sup> . . . and to come again out of Macedonia unto you . . . ”

Why was it necessary for Paul to provide this lengthy explanation? First, he had told the Corinthians in his first epistle to them that he was fully intending to come there, even spending the winter with them. “Now I will come unto you,

and “to return to you again.”<sup>NJB</sup>

Not only had Paul intended to come to them on his way to Macedonia, but to return to them again after that. He was not thinking of a casual visit with the brethren, but of a “second benefit.”

We should learn from this that

to you,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “from Macedonia to come unto you,”<sup>NASB</sup> “from there to come back again to you,”<sup>BBE</sup> “and then to return to you again,”<sup>NJB</sup> and “and again on my return trip.”<sup>NLT</sup>

Paul fully intended to spend time in Corinth, go on to Macedonia, and then return again to Corinth. He doubtless perceived a great need among those people, and was intent upon meeting that need through his insights and spiritual gifts. He was not driven by fleshly acquaintance, but spiritual kinship.

Not being able to personally come, however, he had sent Timothy there to faithfully tell them of his manner of life, which, he said, “agrees with what I teach in every church”<sup>NIV</sup> (1 Cor 4:17). He had also written one of his more lengthy Epistles, dealing with their deficiencies (1 Cor 5:9). This very Epistle is another effort to open the vista of truth to them. He had also sent Titus to them, who went “of his own accord” after Paul exhorted him (2 Cor 8:17).

It should be apparent to us that Paul had a heart for the people of God. He made good plans, yet made himself subject to the will of the Lord. He did not simply abandon his efforts after it became apparent to him that he could not go personally to Corinth. He made provision to send others, get reports concerning them, and write informative letters to them. He was a good steward.

**We should learn from this that true advantages are not realized by brief or momentary exposures to the truth. We may be living in a time of instant this and instant that, but brevity has little or no place in matters pertaining to life and godliness.**

when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia. And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go” (1 Cor 16:5-6). Now, because of his care for them, and in order that his motives not appear erratic and without objective intention, he shares his heart with them.

### TO COME AGAIN

“ . . . and to come again . . . ”

Other versions read, “and to come back to you,”<sup>NIV</sup> “to come back again,”<sup>BBE</sup> “come again,”<sup>GENEVA</sup> “to come to you again,”<sup>NAB</sup>

true advantages are not realized by brief or momentary exposures to the truth. We may be living in a time of instant this and instant that, but brevity has little or no place in matters pertaining to life and godliness. The penchant for transience closes more doors than it opens, and obscures more than it illuminates. A “second benefit” is not apt to come by means of a traditional stopover – particularly when the person is Paul the Apostle.

### OUT OF MACEDONIA UNTO YOU

“ . . . out of Macedonia unto you . . . ” Other versions read, “from Macedonia

## TOWARD JUDEA

<sup>16c</sup> . . . and of you to be brought on my way toward Judaea.” Other versions read, “be helped by you on my way to Judea,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “and by you to be helped on my journey to Judea,”<sup>NASB</sup> “and

then to have you send me on my way to Judea,”<sup>NIV</sup> “and have you send me on to Judea,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “that you might send me on my way to Judea,”<sup>BBE</sup> “to be led forth to Judea by you,”<sup>GENEVA</sup> and “so that you

could set me on my way to Judea.”<sup>NJB</sup>

Paul’s trip to Judea involved carrying funds raised by Gentile Christians for suffering Jewish brethren.

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This collection was mentioned frequently by both Luke and Paul.

- “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, **determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea**: which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:29-30).
- “Now after many years **I came to bring alms** to my nation, and offerings” (Acts 24:17).
- “But now I go unto Jerusalem **to minister unto the saints**. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to **make a certain contribution for the poor saints** which are at Jerusalem” (Rom 15:26).
- “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to **bring your liberality unto Jerusalem**” (1 Cor 16:3).

When he had visited James, Peter, and John, they had asked him to remember the poor Jewish brethren as he went among the Gentiles. “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision. **Only they would that we should remember the poor**; the same which I also was forward to do” (Gal 2:10).

Luke tells us that Paul had sought to get to Jerusalem by the “day of Pentecost,” choosing not to spend much time in Asia (Acts 20:16). There was also a personal risk in him returning to

Jerusalem, yet he was intent upon doing so. “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. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24).

Paul reasoned with the Gentile churches concerning this collection for the distressed brethren in Jerusalem. “For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. **For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things**”

*feel the least they can do in return is help them financially.*”<sup>NLT</sup>

That certainly is not a contemporary way of thinking, but it is sound spiritual reasoning. Paul applied the same logic to the matter of supporting those who preached the Gospel. “If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?” (1 Cor 9:11).

At any rate, we catch a glimpse of great heart and spiritual versatility of Paul. He had a desire to relieve his kinsmen according to the flesh, from which his spiritual moorings were received. He also had a longing for the Corinthians to grow up into Christ in all things. Additionally, he desired that the Corinthians share in his ministry to the saints in Jerusalem by helping him on his way to them. **In all three matters he made holy resolves to see his desires realized.**

**When he had visited James, Peter, and John, they had asked him to remember the poor Jewish brethren as he went among the Gentiles.**

(Rom 15:27). Other version read, “For if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, **they are indebted to minister to them also in material things,**”<sup>NASB</sup> and “Since the Gentiles received the wonderful spiritual blessings of the Good News from the Jewish Christians, they

His intentions were noble, being driven by faith in Christ, and love for the brethren – **two pillars upon which true spirituality rests.** He wanted the Corinthians to see these things, in order that that nothing detract from his ministry.

### DID I USE LIGHTNESS?

“<sup>17a</sup> **When I therefore was thus minded, did I use lightness?**”

The Apostle now shines the spotlight on his objectives. **Even though some of them were not carried out as he had desired, yet they were honorable** – honorable before the Lord.

We have here a most excellent example of self examination - -something that is urged upon us. As it is written, “Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?” (2 Cor 13:5).

### THUS MINDED

“When I therefore was thus minded . . .” Other versions read, “when I was planning this,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “when I intended to do this,”<sup>NASB</sup> “when I wanted to do this,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “If then I had such a purpose,”<sup>BEBE</sup> and “Having therefore this purpose.”<sup>DARBY</sup>

The expression “*thus minded*” refers to the purpose, or plan, Paul had to come to Corinth. The word “*minded*” means, “to deliberate with one’s self, consider, take counsel, resolve, purpose, and determine.” STRONG’S Lexically it means, “to deliberate, take counsel, resolve,” THAYER “deliberate, consider, think about carefully, decide, purpose” FRIBERG and “to take counsel, deliberate, concert measures, to have considered and so to determine or resolve.” LIDDELL-SCOTT

Here is an activity in which the

decision is from the LORD, <sup>NIV</sup> “*The lot is cast into the lap, but the decision is the Lord’s alone,*” <sup>NRSV</sup> “*When the lot is cast into the lap, its decision depends entirely on the LORD,*” <sup>NAB</sup> and “*We may throw the dice, but the LORD determines how they fall.*” <sup>NLT</sup>

**On the surface, life seems to depend upon our own decisions, our purposes, and our own plans.** As I understand it, this is the Divine arrangement in order to bring us into the

vacillation, fickleness,” FRIBERG and “characterized by caprice and instability.” LOUW-NIDA

Did Paul make the promise to come to the Corinthians without giving due regard to what he said? Was it an “off-the-cuff” remark that was made hastily? Was this a purpose conceived in a light and frivolous moment? Indeed not! When he wrote to the Corinthians concerning his intention to come to them, **he did not speak without any qualification** – as though making a rash and hasty promise. Here is what he wrote, “*But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power*” (1 Cor 4:19).

The Apostle conducted his life with an acute consciousness of the Lord Himself, and the priority of His will. This is involved in his confession, “*for me to live is Christ*” (Phil 1:21).

**It is often in the very process of the godly making plans that the Lord works out His purpose. He certainly does not become our servant. However, as we bring our minds and thinking into Kingdom matters, we actually become more conscious of the will of the Lord.**

#### APPLICATION

Much of the disappointment that men experience is owing to making plans that are **not** deliberately and consciously subject to the will of God. James reminded us, “*Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that’*” <sup>NKJV</sup> (James 4:13-15).

Many people are quite willing to quote this verse, **while living in practical contradiction of it.** However, this reflected precisely how Paul lived. It is the way faith constrains men to live. This was not because he was some sort of super-saint who had acquired extraordinary benefits that were not available to all believers. Rather, this is the result of living by faith and walking in the Spirit. This is simply how faith moves a person to make plans.

**Even in such a seemingly incidental thing as making plans to visit the brethren in Corinth, Paul remained acutely aware that the will of God could change what he was purposing.**

future is not known. **Yet, an honest and a good heart is able to make plans that are, of themselves, in harmony with the revealed purpose of God.** Paul desired to go to Corinth and bring them a “*second benefit.*” Until the time of his writing, he was not able to do this. That does not mean the purpose was wrong. It does mean there were other ways through which God could bring that realization to fruition – **and a larger part of the body of Christ benefit from it also.**

There are some who view making plans as a foolish exercise. “After all,” they reason, “if God is not in it, it will not come to pass.” This, however, is not a good way of thinking. Our text is case in point. Paul purposed to do something that would benefit the saints and glorify God – **something specific.** Because he was not able to realize that intention as he planned did not move him to say he was wrong in thinking such a thing. Instead, he will extend himself to affirm **he was right** to purpose such a thing.

#### A Word from Solomon

Solomon once spoke about the role of men in making decisions. “*The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD*” (Prov 16:33). Other versions read, “*The lot is cast into the lap, but its every*

process of the Lord’s will. It is often in the very process of the godly making plans that the Lord works out His purpose. He certainly does not become our servant. However, as we bring our minds and thinking into Kingdom matters, we actually become more conscious of the will of the Lord. In Paul’s case, his involvement was moved into writing an Epistle, through which he sought to bring blessing to the brethren in Corinth. His intentions were noble, and **noble intentions rank high with the Lord.**

Also, in the making of godly plans, we have an occasion to cast our care upon the Lord, knowing that He cares for us. As it is written, “*Casting all your care upon him; for He careth for you*” (1 Pet 5:7). In other words, **we must be willing to release our plans into the hand of the God who cares for us.** But let us follow Paul’s reasoning further. It is most edifying.

#### DID I USE LIGHTNESS

“... *did I use lightness?*” Other versions read, “*did I do it lightly,*” <sup>NKJV</sup> “*I was not vacillating,*” <sup>NASB</sup> “*did I show fickleness,*” <sup>ASV</sup> “*did I seem to be changing suddenly,*” <sup>BBE</sup> “*did I act lightly,*” <sup>NAB</sup> and “*do you think I lightly changed my mind.*” <sup>NJB</sup>

The word “*lightness*” means “levity, or fickleness of mind,” THAYER “a lack of stability,

**DID I PURPOSE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH?**

“<sup>17b</sup> . . . or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh, that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay,”

Now we get to the nitty-gritty of daily life. Paul will affirm that he did not allow the flesh to dominate any part of his life. He did not have secular side of life as well as a spiritual one. To him, there was not national life and spiritual life, or domestic life and spiritual life, or church life and spiritual life.

**DO I PURPOSE ACCORDING TO THE FLESH?**

“ . . . or the things that I purpose, do I purpose according to the flesh . . . ” Other versions read, “Or the things I plan, do I plan according to the flesh,”<sup>NKJV</sup> “Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner,”<sup>NIV</sup> “Do I make my plans according to ordinary human standards,”<sup>NRSV</sup> “Do I make my plans like a worldly man,”<sup>RSV</sup> “or am I guided in my purposes by the flesh,”<sup>BBE</sup> “Or that my plans are based on ordinary human promptings,”<sup>NJB</sup> “Or am I like people of the world,”<sup>NLT</sup> and “or the things that I counsel, according to the flesh do I counsel?”<sup>YLT</sup>

To purpose something in the flesh is to seek personal advantage in this world. It is to plan without regard to the Lord Himself, the people of God, or eternity. Purposes “according to the flesh” accent the temporal, view this world as though it was permanent, and over-estimate personal preference.

Paul’s desire to come to Corinth was not in order to establish himself or procure benefits for himself. He was seeking a “second benefit” for them – and that cannot be sought “according to the flesh.”

The Apostle knew the ramifications of Solomon’s statement: “A man’s heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps” (Prov 16:9). And again, “Man’s goings are of the LORD; how can a man then understand his own way?” (Prov 20:24). He also comprehended the truth expressed by Jeremiah, “O LORD, I

know that the way of man is **not** in himself: it is **not** in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer 10:23). He therefore refused to purpose “according to the flesh,” and so should you.

**Application**

Having been called into the fellowship Christ Jesus (1 Cor 1:9), it is **always out of order to conduct our lives independently of that**

- ☛ Appearance will supplant substance.
- ☛ God and His ways will be relatively unknown.
- ☛ The spiritually immature will be more easily exalted to places of prominence.
- ☛ Religious careers will be promoted.

**In my judgment, we are living in a time that is properly characterized as “a falling away” (2 Thess 2:3). During such a time, a religious environment is maintained that is only on the surface, lacking any depth in either mind or heart.**

“**fellowship.**” This would involve making plans that were not consciously subject to the will of God.

In my judgment, we are living in a time that is properly characterized as “a falling away” (2 Thess 2:3). During such a time, a religious environment is maintained that is only on the surface, lacking any depth in either mind or heart. Only cursory thoughts are given to the things of God, together with brief and spiritually unproductive periods of exposure to the “things of the Spirit of God.”

In such an environment, certain inevitable results will surface.

- ☛ The people will be fundamentally ignorant of the Word of God.
- ☛ The world will, in some measurable degree, appear attractive.
- ☛ The temporal aspects of life will be accentuated.
- ☛ Room will be made for the wisdom of this world.

- ☛ The worldly wise will be sought for assistance.
- ☛ The fleshly family will take the precedence over the body of Christ.

**None of these things played any role in the plans Paul made to come to Corinth.** His sole motivation was the betterment of the people of God, the consequent glorification of Christ, and personal attainment of the prize.

There will be some who will declare such a frame of mind is not possible. They are, however, totally wrong. The truth of the matter is that no mind-set is acceptable.

**YEA YEA, AND NAY NAY**

“ . . . that with me there should be yea yea, and nay nay,” Other versions read, *with me there should be Yes, Yes, and No, No?*”<sup>NKJV</sup> “that with me there should be yes, yes and no, no at the same time?”<sup>NASB</sup> “so that in the same breath I say, ‘Yes, yes’ and ‘No, no,’”<sup>NIV</sup> “ready to say ‘Yes, yes’ and ‘No, no’ at the same time?”<sup>NRSV</sup> “ready to say Yes and No at once?”<sup>RSV</sup> “Yes, today, and, No, tomorrow?”<sup>BBE</sup> “that

**Carnal men make vain promises, even falsifying statements so that their own purposes may be served. Further, those who purpose “according to the flesh” are disappointed in the extreme when their desires are not fulfilled. That is because “the flesh” refuses to take God into account, for as soon as that takes place, “the flesh” begins to die.**

*there should be with me, It is, and It is not?”<sup>DOUAY</sup> “and I have in my mind Yes, yes at the same time as No, no?”<sup>NJB</sup> “Or am I like people of the world who say yes when they really mean no?”<sup>LT</sup> and “do I counsel, that it may be with me Yes, yes, and No, no?”<sup>YLT</sup>*

This is a poetic way of saying “Yes” and “No” are held in reserve until the best personal advantage appears. It is like saying, “Maybe I will, and maybe I will not. It all depends what is to my best personal advantage.” Others might say, “I cannot make any promises now because I do not know everything will turn out.”

**Carnal men make vain promises, even falsifying statements so that their own purposes may be served.** Further, those who purpose “according to the flesh” are disappointed in the extreme when their desires are not

fulfilled. That is because “the flesh” refuses to take God into account, for as soon as that takes place, “the flesh” begins to die. **It is crucified when a preference for the Lord and His will rise to the prominent position in our thinking.**

Paul is affirming that his promise to come to Corinth was **not** determined by a fleshly agenda. It was, in fact, changed by God Himself, who holds both times and seasons in His power (Acts 1:7). Paul saw this, and in faith acquiesced to it. Now he desires that the Corinthians do the same.

#### **Is This Really That Important?**

To the casual observer, all of this might appear quite inconsequential. What difference do the motives of the Apostle really make? A great deal, indeed! **The “flesh” is a bad tree – totally rejected by the Lord.** Consequently, no good fruit

can come from it, for “a corrupt tree” cannot bring forth “good fruit” (Matt 7:17-17). Jesus said it is necessary to “make the tree good, and his fruit good” (Matt 12:33).

**Good results cannot proceed from corrupt motives.** Spiritual results cannot come from fleshly ambitions. This simply cannot happen. Someone might object, citing the example of Joseph’s brothers, to whom Joseph said, “*But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive*” (Gen 50:20). The sophist will argue that this is an example of something good coming from evil intentions. However this is not the case. The intentions of the jealous brothers were frustrated, not implemented. It was God’s purpose that prevailed, not theirs!

**If our motives are bad, so is the purpose conceived by them.** One other thing is worthy of note. If our motives are pure, God will work through them, even though it may not be in precisely the manner in which we have hoped. Paul may have to send Timothy and Titus to bring advantages to Corinth, and he is quite willing to do this. He may have to send a letter instead of coming personally. However, because of his faith in Christ and love for the brethren, he will get the benefit to them.

## **CONCLUSION**

The text we have covered accents the focus that has been placed upon the body of Christ. **This is where God’s attention is concentrated.** These are the people for whom Jesus is interceding. These are the ones for whom the Holy Spirit makes intercession. They are the ones to whom the holy angels are sent to minister. As the Head of the body, Jesus has given certain “gifts” to the church that are designed to build them up, and enable them to minister the truth in love.

**It is a transgression of immense magnitude for any professing Christian to fail to join in this work.** After all, “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). Those “good works” are primarily toward the people of God, and secondarily to the needy of this world. Therefore it is written, “*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith*” (Gal 6:10).

Lest anyone imagine this to be an unwarranted emphasis, the Lord Jesus told us of the day of judgment – a day when all will stand before Him, and an eternal separation will be made of the unrighteous from the righteous. Two

appointed destinies – and only two – are mentioned: (1) Inheriting “the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world.” (2) “Everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.”

**In this teaching, the destiny of each individual will be determined according to their conduct toward the people of God.** The ones on Christ’s “right hand,” described as “sheep,” will be told: “*Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I*

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was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me . . . Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me**" (Mat 25:34-36,40).

Those on Christ's "left hand," described as "goats," will be told: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and

his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me . . . **Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me**" (Matt 25:41-43,45).

The bottom line concerning these two groups is this: "**And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal**" (Mat 25:46).

Now, place our text in the context of those verses, and you will see the sense of it. **In view of the coming separation, a "second benefit" makes lot of sense. It is something worth planning for, and engaging in a heart effort.** These are the "brethren" of Jesus, and our attitude toward them bears directly upon **our** eternal destiny.

The perception of these things will radically alter the purposes and activities of professing Christians. Perhaps you have already found this to be true.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 7/23/2004. In this session, we continue our current series of lessons on the Epistle of Second Corinthians. The sixth lesson will cover verses eighteen through twenty of the first chapter: "NOT YES AND NO." When it comes to the Gospel message, it is not a series of promises and prohibitions. It is not a listing of things we can do and things we cannot do. The Gospel announces promises, benefits, and provisions. In the strength of those, sin becomes repulsive, and the world is seen as a foe. 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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**COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>**

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

**COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>**

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

# **Refreshing Waters Renewal**

## **August 3-5, 2004**

### **Diamond Grove Christian Church**

### **Joplin, Missouri**

**REFRESHING WATERS RENEWAL Website: <http://wotruth.com/renewal.htm>**  
*Theme, Schedule, Speakers, and Maps are available*

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## **Schedule of Speakers**

8/3	10:00 AM	Boyce Mouton	Herein Is Love
8/3	10:45 AM	Gene Hutchcraft	When God Commended His Love
8/3	01:45 PM	Robert Cobb	The Father Loves the Son
8/3	02:30 PM	Ricky Sims	The Great Love Wherewith God Loved Us
8/3	03:15 PM	Testimony	LaVaine Murphy
8/3	07:15 PM	Albert Stoner	How We Perceive the Love of God
8/3	08:00 PM	Jonathan Ingram	We Love Him Because He First Loved Us
8/4	09:45 AM	Tim McCulfor	When the Love of God Is Perfected In Us
8/4	10:30 AM	Testimony	June Blakely
8/4	10:45 AM	Seth Wilson	When the Commandments Are Not Grievous
8/4	01:45 PM	Sermonettes	Jonathan and Paul McCulfor
8/4	02:30 PM	Testimony	Adah Hutchcraft
8/4	02:45 PM	Gordon Souder	God's Love Is Shed Abroad in Our Hearts by the Holy Spirit
8/4	07:15 PM	Jason Hutchcraft	God So Loved the World
8/4	08:00 PM	Given O. Blakely	God Directs Our Hearts Into the Love of God
8/5	09:45 AM	Michael Blakely	Conditional Love
8/5	10:30 AM	Testimony	Barbara Hutchcraft
8/5	10:45 AM	Aaron Hutchcraft	Keeping Yourselves In the Love of God
8/5	01:45 PM	Sermonettes	Jonathan Blakely and Matthew Rodrigues
8/5	02:30 PM	Audience Discussion	Led by Mike Zaucha
8/5	04:00 PM	Unscheduled Personal Testimonies	
8/5	07:15 PM	Bill Dinwiddie	Passing Over the Love of God
8/5	08:00 PM	David Maddack	Nothing Is Able to Separate Us From God's Love in Christ

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