

Spiritual Blessings

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PETER and the SCRIPTURES

John Hutton.

One of the great characters in the Bible is the Apostle Peter who played a very important part in the early church and the spread of the Gospel. In this article I particularly want to look at his attitude to God's Word, the Scriptures, in his last letter.

When Peter wrote his last letter, he was aware that his life and ministry were coming to an end:

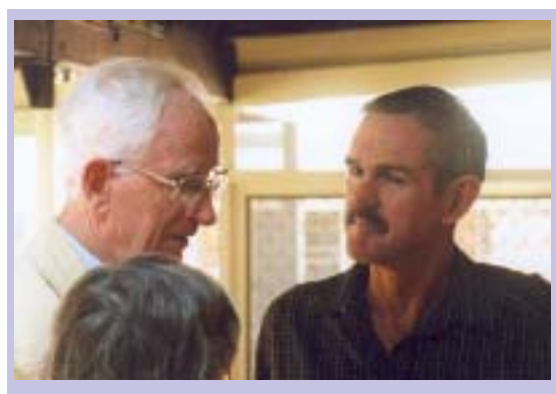
Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.
 (2 Pet. 1:14).

Peter also knew that the time was coming when the truth would be ignored and men would preach their own doctrines even to the point of "denying the Lord that bought them":

But there were false prophets also among the people [O.T.], even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.
 (2 Pet. 2:1).

Paul knew the same thing and warned the Church at Ephesus:

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.
 (Acts 20:28-30).



Share God's Word with friends
 John Craig and Graham Marshall at Bethshan 2001

It is not the subject of this article, but the point needs to be made, that during the period of time covered by the Book of Acts, believers were expecting the Lord's quick return. Because of this expectation, Peter said that the false teachers would "bring upon themselves swift destruction". As the Lord's return was postponed by Israel's failure to repent and the "Revelation of the Mystery" in Ephesians 3, it follows that the work of these false prophets has continued for 2000 Years.

Two important points need to be made. Firstly, the false ones were believers, or pretending to be believers, and secondly, they would be successful:

And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you...(2 Peter 2:2-3).

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If this pernicious work has been going on for 2000 years, is it any wonder that Christendom is in such disagreement as to what its various parts believe, even to the point of denying the Deity of Christ, the credibility of the Bible and the reliability of other fundamental doctrines.

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The President's Word



I recently heard John Hutton, one of our Berean speakers, preach a sermon in which he emphasised the importance of God's Word. He made a point very strongly which struck a chord in my mind, and I think it is something to be carefully considered by us all.

2 Tim. 2:15 is one of the key texts of our Fellowship, and we make much of the study principle of rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But John's point was that, whatever we may believe the correct way to rightly divide the Word of Truth to be, the Holy Spirit is clearly telling us that our attainment of the standing of an unashamed workman revolves around what we do with God's Word.

This challenges us to examine our attitude to the Bible, as well as giving the time and effort necessary to know it well, and understand it as best we can. I have read a number of Bible expositions lately, and while I have not been in full agreement with them, each one has warmed my heart and provoked considerable thought because the attitude of each author was that the Bible is God's Word completely, and it alone can teach us what God would have us know.

Agreement, or otherwise, of every point of interpretation put forward comes second, I believe, to the first great principle, viz. when God speaks to us, and we know without doubt what He has said, we bow in worship and obedience.

While the BBFA exists to promote Bible study and the principle of Right Division, the final test will not be what the Fellowship did, but rather what I did personally with God's Word which He committed unto me. That is what will gain or lose for me the title "Unashamed Workman".

Athol Walter.

Coming Events

Brisbane Weekends

March 16-17

and

June 8-9-10

Location:

The Construction Training Centre,
460 Beaudesert Road,
Salisbury,
AXIS Training entry, QMBA Room.

For a program contact:

charis@idl.net.au
or (07) 3297 1981

Sydney Mini Conference

May 19

10:00 AM

Location:

Community Hall
104 Galston Rd
Hornsby Hts.
Phone: 4996 4455

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The interpretation of Scripture by various authors is not necessarily the one held by the majority of the Fellowship.

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The BBFA Tenets.

1. Full Inspiration of the Scriptures.
2. The Deity of Christ.
3. All sufficiency of Christ's One Sacrifice.
4. The Bible study principle of right division.

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Meetings

**2002
Conference
27-29 Sept.
BETHSHAN
Wye**

Brisbane

Alternate
Sundays
10:00AM

March 16 & 17
2002.

Long Weekend
June 8-10. 2002
(07) 3297 1981

Sydney

3rd Sunday.
From 12:15.
Community Hall
104 Galston Rd
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(02) 4996 4455

Newcastle

Every Monday.
7:30PM
34 Aroona St
Edgeworth.
(02) 4950 6708

Peter and The Scriptures

From Page 1.

Knowing what would happen after his death, Peter says some things about the Scriptures that we would be wise to heed.

As an Israelite, the Apostle Peter would have been brought up with a very special regard for the Scriptures. The Israelites were the guardians of God's Word and I have read that they would even die for its safety and integrity, so it will be to our advantage to learn from those things what Peter says about the Old Testament in his last letter.

Experience versus God's Word.

Peter was one of those three privileged disciples who were present at the Transfiguration of Christ. (Matt. 17:1-8). What an experience that must have been and he talks about it in verses 16-18 of 2 Peter 1:

...we ...were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

Peter saw His majesty; he heard the voice of God and witnessed to others what he saw. Could anyone doubt him?

These were experiences of Peter and any experience can be doubted by someone else, and even by the one who had the experience. For all the wonder of Peter's experience, he had something that was more dependable.

He told his readers in 2 Peter that he and they had something that was more sure than even that great experience of his - the word of prophecy.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy, 2 Peter 1:19.

The oracles of God were more trustworthy to Peter than experience, however great that experience was.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place..

(2 Peter 1:19).

The time was coming, and came, when Scripture was ignored and "an experience" was "more sure". It seems to me that it is so, even today.

Only One Interpretation.

The next verse of chapter one tells us that no prophecy was the invention, creation, or interpretation of the Prophet.

Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. (2 Peter 1:20).

Why?

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. (2 Peter 1:21).

In Acts chapter 27, we are given an account of part of Paul's journey to Rome. Paul was put aboard a ship whose Master had decided, despite warnings from Paul, to make for Phenice. On the way a great wind blew against the ship which could make no headway, so they allowed the ship to go where the wind blew it.

And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let her drive (were driven along - NIV). (Acts 27:15).

Things got much worse. Ropes were tied right around the ship to keep it together and to save the sails and rigging, the sails were let down.

Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail (lowered the tackle - Nestlé) **and so were driven.** (Acts 27:17).

Continued page 8

The Unity and The Measure.

We take up our study at the third item of the seven that makes up the Unity of the Spirit. For the sake of any reader who has not seen the previous studies, we are examining Eph. 4:3-7.

Ephesians

N° 35



**Athol
Walter**

And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
Col. 2:10 -17

I want to emphasise that not only does the Apostle teach about the UNITY of the Spirit, but that each of the seven items that are part of that unity, are in themselves single entities. It is not hard to see that the word ONE is a key word in these verses. We have considered, briefly, items 1 and 2, viz. one body and one spirit, so now we start with item 3.

ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING.

The word HOPE in Scripture is used differently to the way we use it today. Hope to us generally implies uncertainty or doubt. "I hope it will be fine today, but I don't like the look of those clouds." "I hope I win the lottery. I would like to pay off the mortgage and have an overseas trip." We need to have it fixed firmly in our minds that 'hope' as it is used in Scripture has none of those ideas attached.

In Scripture, hope is always connected with a promise or statement of God. Abraham is a classic example. Rom. 4:16 -18 says: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. Who AGAINST HOPE BELIEVED IN HOPE, that he might become the father of many nations, ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH WAS SPOKEN, SO SHALL THY SEED BE."

Abraham had hope in the face of all evidence to the contrary, because he believed that God could and would perform the miracles necessary to make him the father of many nations, even though as far as fathering children was concerned, he was as good as dead. His faith, upon which his hope stood, was firmly founded on what God had said. It must ever be the same with the hope any of us hold.

This leads logically to the next point, namely, that it is not just one hope - a statement which if left unqualified would be meaningless - but the hope of your calling. As part of Paul's prayer for the believer, he asks in Eph. 1:18 that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we might know the hope of His calling. "His" calling in 1:18 becomes "your" calling in 4:4, and it seems to me, must be linked with our being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4).

The hope of our calling, therefore, is linked with the Mystery and the Church which is His Body. The hope for the nation of Israel is the Promised Land and with it "blessings of basket and store". The hope of the believer during the Acts period was the New Jerusalem, with its streets of gold etc. But the hope of the Church which is His Body is to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places far above all ... (Eph. 1:20,21 & 2:6). Col. 3:4 adds a little more detail: "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Titus 2:13 is also to the point: "Looking forward to the happy fulfilment of our hope when the splendour of our great God and Saviour Christ Jesus will appear." (NEB).

The one hope of the Church which is His Body is not linked with the Lord's feet touching the Mount of Olives, or the meeting of the Lord with the Remnant or Overcomers in the air, but with the Lord's manifestation in Glory, an event which precedes the two other phases of His Coming.

ONE LORD

This fourth item, One Lord, is the central point of the seven, and it is not hard to see that it is the key item that underlines and holds the other six together. Without Christ, the One Lord, there is no Body. There would be no Spirit, for among other things, it is the Holy Spirit's task to teach us the things of Christ. We would have no hope, for He is the centre and basis of every hope and calling in Scripture. Our faith finds its only focus in Him, without which it is not faith, but fantasy. The one baptism unites us with Him particularly in relation to His death, burial, resurrection and ascension. And finally, we would know practically nothing of the One God and Father without Christ, because it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is the visible expression of the invisible God.

Much more could be said about this point, but I will mention only one other. Paul was inspired, in Philippians 2:10-11, to quote from Isa. 45:23, ascribing to Jesus Christ what Jehovah said of Himself. I will start from v. 9 of Phil. 2 to get the context: "Wherefore God

also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

I hope that you will compare Isa. 45:23 with Paul's quote in Phil. 2:10 & 11 if you have not already done so.

Paul's use of the quote from Isaiah 45 is enough by itself to convince me that Jesus the One Lord of the New Testament is Jehovah the One Lord of the Old. And this One Lord, who is, amongst other things, the Head of the Church which is His Body, will one day, at the precise moment in God's plan, be acknowledged and worshipped as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. In the meantime, we are given the wonderful, and at the same time rather terrifying, privilege of acknowledging Him as our Lord and Head now, through an adoring attitude of heart and mind and an obedient and submissive life. We must always remember that the title Lord places the servant under the obligation of obedience.

Again, I am conscious of leaving much unsaid, but I must move on, hoping that what has been said will give readers food for thought and further study.

ONE FAITH

A little care must be taken now. I believe the word faith here refers more to the body of Truth delivered by Paul under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, rather than to the fact that the gift of salvation by grace comes to me by faith. The One Faith is the Truth peculiar to the revelation of the Mystery and its associated company, the Church Which is His Body.

In writing to Timothy, Paul urged him to keep that which had been committed to his trust (1 Tim. 6:20), and then to hold fast the form of sound words which he had heard of Paul, and also to keep that good thing which he had heard of Paul (2 Tim. 1:13, 14).

Paul's insistence on the Truth which had come through him is not a case of egotism, but rather an understandable and necessary concern on his part that the special body of truth concerning the Dispensation of the Mystery revealed through him, should not be perverted, watered down or confused with the part of God's Truth that pertained to Israel and the Church of God during the Acts period.

ONE BAPTISM

The sixth item of the seven is one baptism. The subject of Baptism has caused much contention and controversy amongst believers

throughout the centuries, into which controversy I have no wish to enter.

We can leave the baptisms and many washings of the Old Testament aside in this study, although the underlying idea of washing and cleansing should be kept in mind. It is the New Testament baptisms that must be differentiated between when deciding which is the one baptism meant in Ephesians 4.

The New Testament knows a number of baptisms as follows:

1. The baptism of John, which was unto repentance for the remission of sins. (Mark 1:4). Remember also that John said he baptised so that the Messiah should be made manifest to Israel (John 1:31). I think it is true to say that John's baptism also identified the repentant ones with the remnant of Israel.

2. The Baptisms of Water and the Spirit. These two baptisms were in operation during the Acts period. John had forecast the baptism of The Spirit (Matt. 1:11-12, Acts 1:5), and it came with dramatic results in Acts 2. A necessary part or result of this baptism was the accompanying gifts - the signs and miracles that were such an important and integral part of the witness during the Acts witness to Israel. In case anyone thinks I have made a mistake here, Paul tells us in no uncertain terms in Rom. 9 - 11 that the only reason Gentiles were brought into the company of believers at that time was to provoke Israel to jealousy and emulation. All that was done from Acts 1 right through to Acts 28:29 was to reinforce and validate the second offer of Jesus of Nazareth to the nation of Israel as their Messiah.

I hope readers will notice that the last two verses of Acts 28 are not included in the above statement.

Christ Is All.

If, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, we find peace and joy in claiming no righteousness of our own but finding our righteousness in Him; in making no peace of our own but receiving the peace He has made; in trusting in no work of our own but resting in His finished work; in claiming no merit of our own but claiming His merit; in claiming no standing of our own but finding our standing in Him; in finding our death for sin in His death to sin, then let us go all the way that He may be everything and ourselves nothing. Let us find our one baptism in the death baptism of Christ. Let us have nothing of our own but find all in Him.

Let us glory in our identification with Him in His death, burial and resurrection.

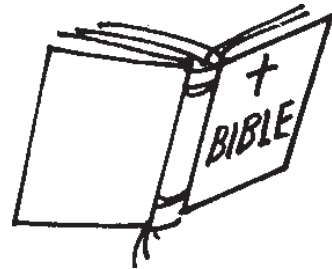
"The Glory of the One Baptism"
Otis Q Sellers

Continued Page 11

Children's Corner

Over the next few issues we are going to look at the Bible.

Why should we study the Bible?



Because it is **God's Word** and because it contains **God's Words** to us.

Open your Bibles and look up Psalm 119 verse 105 (King James Version-KJV) in the old Testament and fill in the missing words.

God's word is "a _____ unto my feet and a _____ unto my path".

Now let us look up the New Testament in the second half of your Bibles at 2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 15 (2 Tim.2:15) in the KJV.

Write this verse down:



Some facts.....

- "Bible" means "The Book".
- About 40 people took about 1600 years to write the Bible.
- There were many writers but one author, God.
- There were many writers therefore there are many books.
- The Bible contains 66 books.
- The Old Testament has 39 Books
- The New Testament has 27 books.

Some Types of Bibles

A. **New International Version** (NIV):

Modern Translation which is easy to read.

B. **King James Authorised Version** (KJV):

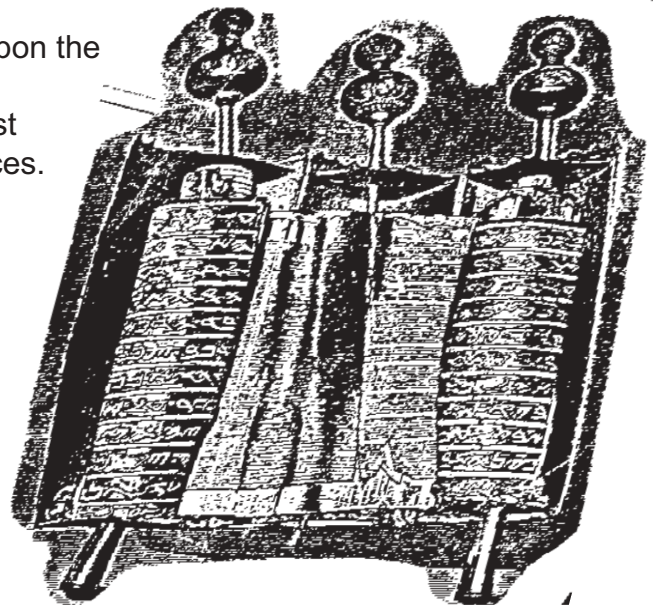
Old Translation which is a bit harder to read. It contains "Thee" and "Thou" and old fashioned verb endings (like cometh) and old words.

C. **The Companion Bible:**

Compiled by Dr. E. W. Bullinger and based upon the King James Version. It is one of the best Study Bibles with background notes on almost every verse, with nearly 200 helpful appendices.

D. **The New International Study Bible:**

This is quite popular and helpful.



UNSCRAMBLE

the letters to find the names of some of the books in the Bible.....

Old Testament.

1. See sing _____
2. Our Money Ted _____
3. Hurt _____
4. Slamps _____
5. Him a jeer _____
6. Nailed _____
7. Like eze _____
8. Pain H haze _____

New Testament.

1. Mesja _____
2. Rsoanm _____
3. Fitsr jhno _____
4. Tmwhtea _____
5. Eeassnihp _____
6. Amkr _____
7. Glasanita _____
8. Ssacilnoos _____

(thanks to M.Penny, Carol Brown, Lyn Mrotek - "Introducing God's Word". MBM October 1997)

Peter and The Scriptures

From Page 3.

Things got even worse, the ship was lightened and the tackle was cast overboard.

For 2 weeks the boat was shunted helplessly up and down the coast.

But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country. (Acts 27:27).

Have you ever been in, or witnessed, a sailing ship that was helpless against the wind. Thankfully, most of us never have, but we will probably have seen such an event on TV or at the movies and been able to get something of the



Sea travel in ancient times.

From "The Bible Story" N°24 August 1964. Fleetway Publications.

helplessness of those on board the ship. Most certainly we have read historical accounts of sailing ships having to lower their sails and be blown wherever the wind decided. After the storm the ship would sometimes be hundreds of kilometres off course. Some 'new lands' were discovered in this way.

Such winds are an irresistible force and the ship on which Paul was being taken to Rome was at the mercy of such an irresistible force.

The phrases 'let her drive' in Acts 27:15, 'so were driven' in 27:17 and

'were driven up and down' in 27:27 are translations of the Greek word '**phero**'.

That same word '**phero**' is translated 'moved' in 2 Peter 1:21, "...holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The Prophets did not write what they wanted to write, or interpret events as they saw them. They were moved by an irresistible force and could write nothing other than what the Holy Spirit told them.

All scripture is given by inspiration of God. (God-breathed). 2 Tim. 3:16.

Although written by men, the words used in the Bible are God's words and we can have nothing but confidence in them. The Bible is a 'sure word' whose author is God Himself and Peter had more confidence in the written Word of God than his own experience at the Transfiguration, however great that must have been.

What about the New Testament?

So far Peter has been referring to the Old Testament Prophets. What about the New Testament writings? Are they Scripture?

At the end of his last epistle Peter mentions the Apostle Paul:

And account that the long-suffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest [twist], as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction. (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Peter was acknowledging the fact that Paul's epistles were not always easy to understand, but that did not absolve his readers from putting them aside and ignoring them or twisting the meaning because that was what unstable and unlearned men had done with all the other Scripture. Most

The Unique Position of The Scriptures

From "The Unfolding Purpose of God"
by Stuart Allen

Every profession has its textbook and the Christian profession is no exception. That textbook is the Bible.

The various branches of Christendom differ radically in many respects, but all of them have to appeal ultimately to the Bible. They must come to terms with it eventually and for one very good reason. They profess to believe, practise and make known the teaching of Christ. The only place where they can discover exactly Who Christ is and what He taught is in the Bible.

Religion has produced many outstanding leaders and teachers and nearly all of them have left some writing on record which sums up their beliefs and achievements; for example, Mahommed, who wrote the Koran, which is the Bible of the Mahommedans. But the greatest Teacher that has ever walked this earth left not one word of writing behind Him! This is remarkable indeed. The only time we read of Christ writing is when a sinful woman was brought to Him and He wrote on the ground with His finger (John 8:6,8).

Consequently, without the Bible, the Book that claims to reveal Christ, we should know practically nothing of Him. History could tell us such a Person once existed, for our calendar is marked A.D.—Anno Domini—in the year of the Lord. But Who is He? And what did He teach? These questions would remain for ever unanswered apart from the Scriptures. So to

Peter and The Scriptures. Continued

importantly, Peter is saying that the Epistles of Paul are Scripture. "Other Scripture"! – What "other Scripture"? The "other Scripture" is the O.T., which the Epistles of Paul are being compared with. If Paul's writings are Scripture, surely the other books and Epistles, which form the N.T., are Scripture as well.

Let us mind what the Apostle Peter had to say about God's Word and be careful that we do not twist the words of God so that they mean what we want them to. The two great safeguards against doing so are to "Rightly Divide the Word of Truth" and to "Compare spiritual with spiritual". **S**

the Scriptures we must go if we want to embark on the greatest of all quests, that of getting to know God, His character and His ways.

At the outset questions are sure to be asked. How can we know the Bible is trustworthy? Is it a worthy revelation of God? Can we accept it as being truth? First of all let us notice the great claim the Bible makes for itself. 2 Timothy 3:16 states "All Scripture is given by *inspiration of God*" (literally God breathed) and one of its titles is *The Word of God*. Thus, although coming through human channels, it makes the stupendous claim of coming from God Himself and being a revelation of His mind and His purposes. Some may feel that this is impossible and asking too much to accept and believe. But before turning away, we would ask such to consider certain facts. These facts we will endeavour to bring before the reader straight away.

The Unity of the Bible.—We must remember that the Bible was not written in a few years. Actually its writing was spread over nearly 2,000 years and all sorts of people were used by God to contribute to it: high, low, rich and poor, ranging from cattle keepers, like Amos, and fishermen like Peter and John, to kings (David and Solomon). Imagine men of themselves arranging to write a book like this spread over such an immense period and allowing every sort of person to make his contribution. What a hotch potch it would be! Yet the Bible is not just an odd collection of books—it is a *unity*, every book pointing in some way to the Lord Jesus Christ and God's revealed plan through Him. Each shows some aspect of His wonderful Person and the work He came to earth to do, that is, to accomplish your salvation and mine.

The witness of Christ Himself.—Here we come to the supreme point. What was the attitude of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Scriptures? Let us quote His own words: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, *but to fulfil*. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, *till all be fulfilled*" (Matt. 5:17,18). "*The Scripture cannot be broken*" (John 10:35). "For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: *for he wrote of Me*. But *if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?*" (John 5:46,47). To His opponents He said "Ye do err, *not knowing the Scriptures*" (Matt. 22:29). How up to date this is! The Lord's constant attitude to the written Word was one of reverence and complete acceptance.



Stuart Allen

Appointed Gifts in the Epistles after Acts 28

Over the years, in past issues of *Spiritual Blessings*, it has been suggested that evidential miracles, such as miraculous healings, speaking in tongues, raisings from the dead, etc have now ceased. We do not wish to put limitations on what God will and won't do, but we now live under the conditions set forth for us in the epistles written after Acts 28

(Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon), and these miracles are not the normal course of events for today.

There are, however, a few passages in these epistles which might be initially confusing regarding our subject at a casual glance, and here I would like to suggest some solutions to apparent problems. Let us now look at the verses in question, all written after Acts 28.

Timothy

Two passages with similar messages are found in Paul's epistles to Timothy:

Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. (1Timothy 4:14)

Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (2Timothy 1:6)

Regarding "the gift which is in thee", we might instantly think of such gifts which abounded in the Acts period, such as miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues and their interpretation, etc (see 1 Corinthians 12:7-11). However, before jumping to a conclusion like this, note that we are not told what gift it was that had been given to Timothy. It is purely speculation to say that it was one of these "evidential" miracles (i.e. marvellous workings which we can see undeniable evidence of).

It seems likely that the "laying on of hands" by Paul and others took place in the Acts period, when he spent some time travelling with Timothy, and that was probably when he received the "gift". This should not cause us undue concern, though. As Stuart Allen writes, "Not every gift of the Spirit was necessarily linked with the testimony to Israel. Some were of enduring value in public service for all time, and though Paul does not specifically mention

what the gift was, it was evidently of this nature." (from "The Early and Pastoral Epistles of Paul" p.289).

In the immediate context of 2 Timothy 1:6, Paul goes on to speak of courage ("for God hath not given us the spirit of fear" v.7). This gift, whatever it was, was to be exercised with fortitude and bravery. What exactly happened to Timothy after these epistles is not recorded for us in history, but tradition suggests that he became a leader of the church in Ephesus, and that he died for his faith around 97 A.D., after boldly confronting those who were taking part in a pagan festival in that city. If this tradition is true, Timothy seems to have triumphed over the timidity which threatened to stifle his gift.

These exhortations to Timothy now lead us to consider a more general passage in Ephesians.

Ephesians

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers... (Ephesians 4:11).

Note that these are roles, rather than gifts as such, and that the purpose was "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). In the former dispensations of the Gospels and Acts, Christ Himself appointed leaders, and those who would carry out His work. Directly after the change at the end of Acts, it was again Christ (now ascended) who appointed leaders and workers, as detailed in Ephesians.

This first book written after the new dispensation began was written to believers under the new dispensation, who were members of....

...the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. (Ephesians 2:19,20).

It is apparent that this was a "once only" appointment for the purpose of laying a foundation, for, in later writings, Paul suggests how leaders might be chosen by a human source. 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9 both outline the appropriate qualities of leaders and workers within the church. The passage in Titus 1:5 is an exhortation from Paul to "appoint elders in every town, as I directed you" NIV, not as the Lord Himself had done earlier in Ephesians 4:11. Similarly, Timothy was also encouraged by Paul to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Timothy 4:5), though not

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Ephesians N^o 35. From page 5

Associated with this water and Spirit baptism are the last few verses of Mark's Gospel. In vv. 15 - 20 we are told that certain things would follow those who believed and were baptized. We have the casting out of devils; speaking in new tongues; taking up of serpents without harm; drinking poison without harm; healing the sick through the laying on of hands. And verse 20 tells us that the believers went forth and all those signs followed. Thus, i.e. in that way, was the Word confirmed.

Now probably the biggest controversy amongst Christian denominations is this very matter of the gifts and signs. An increasing number of believers say that we should have

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Please Explain. continued.

apparently ordained by the Lord to do so. There are also teachers today, yet how many have been divinely appointed by the Lord Himself? It can't be all of them if they are teaching different things. Perhaps the more applicable example for us today is Paul's instructions in 2Timothy 2:2:

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. (2Timothy 2:2)

Summing up then, the divine appointments of the very earliest days of this dispensation were for a particular one-off purpose - the foundation and revelation of the new conditions in force. These appointments were not continuous, so, today, it is more appropriate for us to use the guidelines set forth in such Scriptures as 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus for establishing leaders and teachers within the church.

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these signs today, but in spite of dramatic claims, these signs do not follow believers now. And the reason why they do not is very simple. The Acts period, when these signs flourished right up to the last chapter, was a special appeal by God to Israel in response to the Lord's prayer for their forgiveness as He was being nailed to the stake. (Luke 23:34)

But they rejected their Messiah the second time. The rejection of the Jews in the Homeland reached its climax with the murder of Stephen, and the rejection of the Jews of the Dispersion reached its climax with the negative attitude of the Jewish leaders in Rome as recorded in the last chapter of Acts.

And it was at that point, when Paul quoted from Isa. 6:9 , 10 for the last time that the nation was set aside. **AND THAT IS WHERE THE SIGNS THAT CONFIRMED THE WITNESS TO UNBELIEVING ISRAEL CEASED.** What is more, less than ten years later (it is hard to be precise) the Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, an event the significance of which cannot be over-estimated. As we well know, there has not been a temple in Jerusalem for nigh on 2,000 years. It is not a coincidence by the way, that the temple mount in Jerusalem and the Muslim mosques that occupy it, keep popping up on our TV screens quite regularly.

3. The other baptism that we read of in the New Testament, and which seems to be largely overlooked, is the baptism of the Lord's death and resurrection. In Luke 12:50, the Lord refers to His approaching suffering and death as a baptism. Paul teaches in Romans 6 that the believer is united with the Lord in His death, burial and resurrection.

Ephesians 2 takes the member of the Church His Body a step further. We have not only been united with our Lord in His death, burial and resurrection, but in addition, we have been taken up with Him and seated with Him in that place of power and privilege He occupies, far above all.

Paul, in Col. 2:10-12, deals with the same subject, showing that as the believer is truly circumcised, but not with the outward sign which is nothing more than a shadow, so likewise, the believer in this new dispensation, which followed the setting aside of Israel together with all her hopes, covenants, privileges and promises, is baptised into the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, **WITHOUT THE OUTWARD SIGN.** This, I believe, is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5.

The last item of the seven and the measure of the gift of Christ we must leave to our next study.

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God..hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling,
not according to our works, but according to His own
purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus
before the world began. 2Tim.1:8b-9.

Unique Position of The Scriptures.

from page 9

This is clearly seen if the reader will consult Matthew 4:4,7,10, 11:10, 19:4, 21:13,42, 22:29, 26:31,56. The Scriptures, in His estimation, are divinely authoritative. His attitude then must be ours. We cannot call ourselves true believers in Him if we adopt any attitude to the Word other than His. He said "Thy Word is Truth" (John 17:17) not merely that it contains truth, but is the Truth and the source of all spiritual light and blessing. The Lord Jesus also said "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22). "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the Word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). We wonder how the

reader of these words reacts to their truth? Here is an interview and a judgment in the future that no one can escape who rejects Christ. In view of their absolute certainty, do we feel quite happy? If not, we should think well on these words of the Lord: "He that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life" (John 5:24).

We can approach it therefore with the certainty that it is what it claims to be, the very Word of God, and thus we have something eternally secure upon which to rest our faith. In it we find nothing less than a revelation of the mind and will of God concerning His creation and the human race.

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2 Timothy 2:15 2 Timothy 3:16