

on Macedonia

ACTS 16: 6-10

16:6-10. The story of Paul's turn toward Europe begins with a summary of his travels. The Holy Spirit is responsible for the plotline of church's mission, leading sometimes by divine speech and at other times by heavenly vision. In this case, the Spirit directs Paul by blocking doors in Asia rather than by opening them. Luke's earlier use of the verb *kwluvw* (*kolyo*, "forbidden/kept from") in Acts (8:36; 10:47; 11:17) makes the positive point that God's redemptive plans, worked out in the church's mission, cannot be frustrated (see 11:17)-Gamaliel's ironic point made in different words (see 5:38-39). Yet here God frustrates Paul's plans, which he had announced to Barnabas (15:36) and begun to accomplish with Silas and Timothy's help. Perhaps there is in this text a faint echo of the circumstances of Peter's mission to Cornelius, which also began with resistance to God's plans for the Gentiles and were also challenged and overturned by visionary revelation. The repetition of "Spirit" (*pneu`ma pneuma*) is striking and reconfirms a theological conviction central to Acts: The Spirit guides as well as empowers the church's witness. This is the only occurrence of the expression "Spirit of Jesus" in Acts and probably cues the reader's recollection of Jesus' active role in Paul's conversion and commission (see Acts 9:1-20). There, Ananias received a vision of the Lord's prophecy of Paul's future mission and suffering (see 9:15-16). That earlier visionary appearance of Jesus supplies a subtext to this reference to

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the Spirit of Jesus" and prepares the reader for the following account of Paul's night vision of a certain Macedonian man. Visions call prophets to mission. In Paul's vision, "there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us' " (v. 9). Paul's epiphany is of a human and not a heavenly figure. His actions of standing and begging stress the human urgency of the situation, thereby qualifying the prior emphasis on the Spirit's control of Paul's mission by showing the importance of people's receptivity to the gospel. God does not produce faith in people as though the church is an "imperial juggernaut streaming its way to the ends of the earth." 543 Luke's use of *bohqevw* (*boetheo*, "help") is almost prayer-like and recalls the invocative language of petitions for help in the psalter (e.g., Pss 5:2; 9:35; 12:1; 17:2; 18:6; 36:40; see also Acts 21:28; Heb 2:18; 4:16). The proclamation of the good news is in response to the urgent plea for help. Paul's response is immediate: "We immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim

the good news to them" (v. 10, italics added). The rest of Acts hinges on this text. Luke joins Paul's mission to underscore its dramatic importance. Significantly, "vocation" words used here recall a similar matrix of vocation words used following Paul's Damascus road epiphany (see 9:18-22) and again at his Antiochene recommissioning (see 13:1-4a): Paul "immediately" responds to his calling by proclaiming the gospel and seeking to "convince" his auditors that Jesus is the Messiah. In both of these earlier texts, Paul's mission is superintended by the Holy Spirit. A reflexive reading of these three commissioning stories alerts the reader of this passage to the implied subtext—namely, that the "Spirit of Jesus," who had earlier closed the door to Asia, had now opened another for Paul to go to the people of Macedonia.

#### REFLECTIONS

1. "Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews" (16:3 NRSV). If Barnabas is no longer a suitable colleague for Paul, then Timothy is. Clearly he meets the job description's minimum requirements: He is a "disciple" (16:1) who is "well spoken of by the believers" (16:2). But the details of Luke's description of Timothy would suggest that Paul is more interested that he is the progeny of a "mixed" marriage than in his religious credentials. Timothy is the right person for the work ahead because his ethnic mix envisages the very mixture of Paul's mission. As the church extends into new territories, new missionaries are added to the team to meet the new challenges that will be encountered. Although Acts underlines the importance of certain personal characteristics for those given tasks to perform in service of God's plan of salvation, there remains this pragmatic feature of the effective leader. Paul wanted Timothy as a traveling companion not because of his professional résumé but because he personifies and presumably has a grasp of the tensions between "being Greek" and "being Jewish" that will characterize the Pauline church. When choosing the right people to staff our ministries, congregations must consider issues of character and skill. However, the congregation should also search outside the "professional boxes" of religious culture to find those gifted leaders with instincts and personal histories that seem well suited for the tasks at hand.

2. "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (16:9 NRSV). Luke reports that the Spirit of Jesus both prevented Paul from going in one direction and allowed him to advance in another. Routinely in Acts the Spirit intervenes—we are not always told how-to guide, assist, and inspire the prophets-like-Jesus. In one sense these are images of divine sovereignty—the active presence of a faithful God to ensure that the plan of salvation is realized. In another sense, these are images of divine concern—the active presence of a caring God to move these prophetic agents of salvation to the places where grace is most needed. Paul's commitment to safeguard the faith of new congregations is a complement of this understanding of God's caring presence among

us, helping us enter into and enjoy a strong relationship with God.

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Romans 15:22-

15:22-24. And so-to Spain! This proposal was bound to come as a surprise. All roads led to Rome, and the church there might well have supposed that once the apostle had reached the great capital he would rest content. But Paul has his eyes on a different target. The prophets in whose works he had steeped himself spoke of the faraway coastlands and islands coming to hear of the one God, of their true Lord (Isa 11:11; 41:1; 42:4, 10; 49:1; 51:5; 60:9; see also Ps 65:5-8). Paul no doubt knows that there are islands and coastlands to be found in quite different directions (going south, for instance, or east to India and beyond), and we have no idea whether he knew of Christian missions going there, or whether he ever dreamed of visiting them himself. What we do know is that, being a Roman citizen, he was able to use his citizenship as a help in traveling within the Roman Empire, and that since Rome was itself the capital of much of the world it made sense to go there, following his apparent strategy of taking the gospel to central points and letting it do its work from there. Seemingly the logical next step was to complete the whole circuit of the north side of the Mediterranean Sea. The southern side, too, was a busy center of Roman culture, from Egypt through Libya and Cyrene, including the important province of Africa itself (the prominent tip of contemporary Tunisia, opposite Sicily, centered on Carthage). Perhaps Paul intended to make the return journey from Spain along the southern shore.

We cannot know, and these speculations peter out in frustration. That may well be, actually, what happened to Paul as well. We have no evidence that he ever got farther than Rome, and though later legend did its best to fill in the gaps and have him complete a Spanish mission and return to Rome a second time, there is no compelling reason to accept this.

For the moment he makes four points:

First, this tireless program of activity explains why he has been so long coming to them (cf. 1:13). Elsewhere he can speak of "Satan hindering him" in his desire to visit a church; there is no mention of that here, but rather of fruitful work for the gospel (1 Thess 2:18; cf. the Holy Spirit's hindering in Acts 16:6). He has longed for many years to come to them; now at last the moment has arrived. (Or at least he supposes it has.)

Second, his aims for the eastern Mediterranean have been

fulfilled; he no longer has any room for new work. This sounds extraordinary, given the tiny number of Christians we must envisage compared to the population in general; but Paul thinks of himself as a church-planter, and once he has established churches in the major centers of population and culture he has to rely on them to do for themselves the work of continued evangelism in their neighborhoods. So, with Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens possibly, and Corinth established-not without difficulties and anxieties!-he quite genuinely concludes that it is time to move on.

Third, he intends to make them his base for further operations, all the way to Spain. Verse 24 is important for what it does not say; it does not say that Paul intends to stamp his own apostolic authority on the Roman church, or to take over its leadership in some other way. But he does hope to

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be refreshed in their company for a while (ajpo; mevrou" [apomerous] here has its temporal, not partitive, sense; Paul is not saying that he hopes they will refresh some parts of him). 15:25-29. This leads Paul, with a sense of foreboding that emerges at the end of the chapter, to the immediate task in hand. He was not to know, writing this letter, that his trip to Jerusalem would indeed nearly cost him his life, and that it would be a matter of years, not weeks, before he eventually arrived in Rome (see Acts 20-28). All he knows, at the moment, is that he has put his hand to a particular plow, at considerable personal risk and cost, and that he must not turn back. He has been organizing a collection of money, throughout the churches in the Greek world, to take to the poor church in Jerusalem, whom he here refers to simply as "the saints" (vv. 25-26). Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaea have contributed generously to this-we can see that process going on, with painfully tactful hints and suggestions, in 1 Cor 16:1-4, and especially in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9-and now it falls to Paul and his companions to take the money thus raised as a gift to Jerusalem. Paul does not mention the Galatian churches here, but he does in this context in 1 Cor 16:1. (This might conceivably indicate that the Galatian churches had declined to support the venture, but we should be wary of jumping to conclusions on a point like this.) It is likely that this is in long-term fulfillment of the promise recorded in Gal 2:10: the Jerusalem leaders asked Paul and Barnabas that they would "remember the poor," meaning not poor people in general but the little and poor church in Jerusalem itself. We may compare Acts 11:27-30, where the Antioch church sends Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with famine relief; the relation of this passage to Galatians is disputed. The Paul of Acts 24:17 refers in one of his Roman hearings to his having brought "alms and offerings to my nation."

The collection was motivated, as Paul insists here, by much more

than merely the desire, important in itself, to alleviate poverty. Paul saw it as part of a reciprocal action of Jews and Gentiles, to be understood on the larger map sketched in Romans 3-4; 9-11; and 14:1-15:13. The Gentile Christians, he says, are in debt to the Jewish ones: they have come to share in their spiritual blessings, so it is only right that they should minister to them (the word is leitourgh`sai leitourge sai, cognate with Paul's "priestly" language about himself in v. 16) in material (sarkikov" sarkikos) things; this is one of the few places where the "spiritual/fleshly" contrast in Paul means more or less what it means in our contemporary parlance. But there is more going on than simply redressing a balance, however important (there are echoes here of the to-and-fro movement of 11:11-32). Paul conceives the collection, it appears, as a vital sign and means the unity between the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem (where tensions with the pagan authorities were rising and fierce zealot nationalism brewing) and the Gentile Christians in the wider world. For Gentiles to give money for Jewish Christians was a sign that the Gentiles regarded them as members of the same family; for Jewish Christians to accept it would be a sign that they in turn accepted the Gentiles as part of their family. The collection was thus designed to accomplish, mutatis mutandis, the same thing that Paul had been urging in 14:1-15:13. This, it seems to me, is preferable to the rival account of Paul's motivation, which suggests that he wanted to use the collection as a means of putting Rom 10:19 and 11:13-14 into operation—that is, to provoke non-Christian Jews to "jealousy" and so save some of them—perhaps even, in some grander theories, to precipitate the great event spoken of (so many think) in 11:25-27.<sup>572</sup> Paul's coming with the collection would thus be a new version of the long-prophesied pilgrimage of the nations to Zion.<sup>573</sup> In company with some others, I see no evidence for that.<sup>574</sup> The "great event" turns out to be a figment of the imagination (see the Commentary on 11:25-27); in the present passage Paul is thinking of the effect on Christian Jews, not on non-Christian ones. All he says about unbelieving Jews is that he prays to be delivered from them, not that they will suddenly see the light as a result of his labors. He sees the Jerusalem visit with the collection, however important, as essentially a detour. He has

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a task to complete, and as soon as it is done he will be on his way to Rome. His language for "completing the task" is strange. The NRSV ("have delivered to them what has been collected") and the NIV ("have made sure that they have received this fruit") struggle with what Paul wrote, which literally translated reads "and have sealed to them this fruit" (cf. NJB, "and have given this harvest into their possession"). The basic import is clear: Paul wants to deliver the money safe and sound. But why put it

like this? Some have thought he was referring to a literal "seal"; the money was the fruit of his labor in the Gentile world, and he would deliver it to them under his own seal (so NEB; the REB, however, has backed off from this). He may be envisaging himself as a tenant handing over fruit to the owner; or maybe the "fruit" is his whole work among the Gentiles, which this gift will "seal." Others have suggested that, since sealing is the last act before handing over an article, he simply means "when the matter is complete."<sup>575</sup> In any case, that is the last thing he will do—so far as he knows at present—before coming on, via Rome, to Spain. And (v. 29) he has quiet confidence in God (not in himself) that, when he comes, "the blessing of the Messiah" will accompany him as it always has before.

As with the journey to Spain, we do not know exactly what happened when Paul tried to deliver the money in Jerusalem. Acts, which goes into great detail about that visit, does not mention the money except as part of Paul's speech to Festus (24:17). But the visit, clearly, was anything but a detour. Paul, according to Acts at its most detailed, was beaten up, nearly lynched, put on trial before the high priest, then before successive Roman governors, and kept in prison for two or more years before finally appealing to Caesar, and so getting to Rome courtesy of an armed escort to stand trial in the capital. This was not, perhaps, what he had in mind in 15:28; but, being Paul, it seems unlikely that he would have objected in the long run.

15:30-33. Aware of the dangers he faces, he concludes with a request for prayer. The request itself is made with a solemn formality: "through our Lord Jesus the Messiah, and the love of the Spirit." The prayer itself will be a struggle: "wrestle together with me in prayer to God on my behalf," he urges them (the NRSV's "join me in earnest prayer" does not get the force of sunagwnivsasqaiv moi [synago nisasthai moi]; cf. NIV, "join me in my struggle"; NEB/REB, "be my allies in the fight"; see also Col 4:12). He encourages them to a twofold prayer: first, that he will himself be rescued, snatched out of the hands of unbelievers in Judaea (he is under no illusions as to his reputation as a traitor to the nation, the law, and God); second, that his ministry will be acceptable to God's people—that is, to the Christian Jews in Jerusalem. He envisages this as a difficult and dangerous time, and he speaks of coming on to Rome afterward (v. 31) almost as if he were planning a holiday in order to recover from it. He wants to come to them in joy, through God's will, and be refreshed with and by them. It is a touching moment, and we who know how the story continued after this letter was written can only look in awe at the faith and hope of the man who planned and wrote of such things.

The letter's main content is complete. Paul adds (v. 33) a brief blessing—this time invoking "the God of peace"—and moves on to personal greetings.<sup>576</sup>

But not all scribes left it at that. One very early manuscript<sup>577</sup> inserts the concluding doxology we now think of as 16:25-27 at this point, before continuing with what we call 16:1-23 and then

concluding abruptly. This interesting detail (not the only oddity in that ms) is actually the tip of the iceberg: Metzger's Textual Commentary takes over two pages to describe the complex evidence, and a further page to evaluate it.<sup>578</sup> Some mss have the doxology both here and after 14:23; two ninth-century mss and a derivative fourteenth-century one omit it entirely (though one leaves a space at

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the end of chap. 14 as though there might be something to insert); one fourteenth-century ms has it here and then stops, omitting chap. 16 itself completely. A large number of good mss, though, have it where it stands in printed texts today. Many scholars have regarded 16:25-27 as a post-Pauline addition, but this judgment is reached as much on its content as on its remarkably versatile manuscript location. Since, on the basis of my reading of the rest of the letter, I judge the content to be comfortably Pauline, and since I regard it as likely that Paul would have written a fitting doxology rather than allowed the letter to stop short with a brief blessing such as 15:33 or the spurious 16:24 (see below), I belong to the considerable minority who, on balance, regard the doxology as original, and as originally coming at the end of the letter (see the Commentary on 16:25-27). It is easy to explain the other placings. Scribes faced with a longer than usual list of greetings, involving persons by then unknown, might wish to create a more usable document (i.e., one that could be read out during worship) by bringing the doxology forward. Some of the manuscript displacements are almost certainly due to the influence of the second-century teacher Marcion, who hacked this letter about as he did the rest of (what became) the New Testament, in the interests of producing a text that would validate his particular views (that the God of the Old Testament had nothing in common with the God of Jesus Christ). Some may be due to an early desire, possibly as early as Paul's lifetime, possibly even under Paul's direction, to make copies of this extraordinary letter available to churches other than Rome. T. W. Manson, famously, proposed that chap. 16 was added as a "covering letter" to enable a copy of the letter to Rome, which had stopped at the end of chap. 15, to be sent to a church where he knew far more people than he did in Rome, namely Ephesus.<sup>579</sup> Educated guesses of this sort have been made, and remain appropriate as ways of explaining the complex ms tradition. But they should not be taken as a solid reason for placing 16:25-27 anywhere other than where it is, still less for deleting it altogether.

#### REFLECTIONS

1. Paul combines a strong belief in divine providence with an equally strong recognition that one may not always, in this life, understand what it is up to. Just as in Philemon he speculates on the possible reason why God allowed Onesimus to leave his master

and come to Paul, so here he makes plans with enthusiasm but also with the request for prayer that potential disaster may be averted (see Phlm 15). "Perhaps," he says—a wonderful word for combining a belief in God's overruling mercy with a humility about how much of it we can see. He has seen God do extraordinary things through his preaching of the gospel, and he believes there are more to come; but he knows well enough from previous experience that things seldom turn out exactly as planned, and on one occasion he has had to apologize to a church—or at least explain why an apology was not necessary—because it had looked as though he was changing his plans on a whim (2 Cor 1:15-22). He had Spain in his sights; but with Jerusalem to face before he could turn westward he was not altogether sanguine about the prospects.

That was just as well. According to Acts, Jerusalem was a near-disaster, the trip to Rome happened two years late and under armed guard, and the sea might easily have swallowed Paul and his companions before they ever got to see the Seven Hills. Likewise, we do not know if Paul ever made it to Spain at all, and in the absence of evidence that he did most scholars prefer to play safe and suggest that he probably did not.

If there is a lesson to be drawn from this it is that of Prov 19:21: human minds devise many plans, but it is YHWH's purpose that will be established. Paul would have heartily agreed, even when the human mind in question is that of an apostle guided and equipped by God's Spirit. But this should not lead to a shoulder-shrugging fatalism. On the contrary. One of the most important

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lessons in Romans 15 might be put thus: God allowed Paul to dream of Spain in order that he might write Romans. No matter that Paul probably never reached Spain. What mattered was that he wrote this letter, which has been far more powerful and influential than any missionary visit, even by Paul himself, could ever have been. Perhaps (that word again) half our great plans, the dreams we dream for our churches and our world, and even for ourselves, are dreams God allows us to dream in order that, on the way there, we may accomplish, almost without realizing it, the crucial thing God intends us to do.

2. Paul cheerfully breaks into "priestly" language when speaking of his evangelistic work, in a way that he does not when speaking of presiding in worship, let alone at the eucharist. The time had not yet come, but was not very far off, when devout Christians would draw on Old Testament typology to speak of such things, and for a while the powerful metaphors could make their own points, as could Paul's. The time would come later, though, when the metaphorical status of such language was forgotten, as a new "priestly" class grew up through whom alone valid worship and teaching could be offered; and the time would then come when a large part of the church overthrew all this in the name of Paul



himself. Nor has the world stood still on these matters since the Reformation. Such questions still bedevil the quest for unity Paul himself would so earnestly urge upon us.

But perhaps (once more) the time may come when we shall be able to re-explore Paul's metaphors without the sense of having to revive old factions, restore old policies, or follow an antique drum. Maybe "old men ought to be explorers," and we in the church, creaking and tottering under the weight of unnecessary baggage, could do worse than to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time. Maybe when Protestants rediscover priesthood and Catholics rediscover evangelism then both will rediscover Paul, and the fire and the rose might become one. We can always hope; and, under the rubric of the previous point, working toward that hope might achieve God's ends without us even realizing it.

3. The collection and use of money in the church has always been, and probably will always be, a tense and delicate matter. It is worth pondering how Paul and his companions actually carried the stuff; in the days before paper money, still less international banking and credit transfers, they were taking a huge physical risk, just as in organizing the collection Paul was taking a huge risk to his reputation, as we can see reading between the lines of 2 Corinthians 8 and 9. Paul deemed it worthwhile because he knew that money could be of symbolic as well as practical help. Once someone has given to a cause, they will be far more likely to pray for it. Once somebody has received money from an unexpected source, they will feel themselves far more bonded, more part of the family. Paul had been asked by the Jerusalem apostles to "remember the poor"; they might not approve of half of what he did and said on the mission field, but he was determined never to let them say, "he never kept his promise." The apostolic faithfulness, attempting to bring together Jew and Gentile in one community of love and praise, was meant to mirror the similar faithfulness of God. So with our fund-raising, giving of money, charity work, and indeed famine relief: we have become so sophisticated, so clinical, that we can supply a credit card number from a mobile phone while not taking our eyes off the football game on television. It would not hurt to ask, whenever Romans 15 is read: what are we doing, as a church, as individuals, that will send the symbolic as well as practical message that the church of Jesus Christ is one body, one family, and that if one suffers, all suffer?

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II COR. 8:1-15

8:1-5. In his opening statements about the collection, Paul continues his preference for the plural, no doubt to emphasize the larger movement of which he is surely the leader. Once he gets into the discussion, however, he weaves together statements in the singular and in the plural (e.g., plural: 8:18-22, 24; 9:11; 10:3-7, 11-18; singular: 8:23; 9:1-5; 10:1-2, 8-10). Paul opens his discussion of the collection with one of his formulas of disclosure (1 Cor 12:3; 15:1; Gal 1:11): He wants them to know the grace of God given to the churches of Macedonia. To be sure, all believers know the grace of God in the sense that each is dependent upon God's grace. In this instance, however, Paul wants them to know about the way God's grace has happened in the Macedonian churches. That God's grace is said to be "given" implies God as the giver and is tautologically emphatic. Paul's description of the Macedonian churches is striking. They, like Paul, have experienced both the abundance of their joy and the depths of their poverty. Paul combines three things that would not have surprised most of his ancient auditors: The Macedonian churches have experienced at the same time an "abundance of joy," "the depths of poverty," and "a great test of affliction" (8:2). Affliction and joy within it are a commonplace in Paul. Witness his association of the apocalyptic sufferings of the end time with the pangs of childbirth; the goal toward which the suffering moves is proleptically experienced in the context of affliction (Rom 8:18-25; cf. 1 Thess 5:3). In fact, as recently as 2 Cor 7:4 Paul has declared his own joy in the midst of all his affliction (cf. 6:10; 1 Thess 1:6). "Affliction" (qli'yiv thlipsis) has been a topic of considerable attention in chaps. 1-7, including his Asian crisis (1:4, 8); his anguish in writing the painful letter (2:4); human existence, with its outer nature wasting away (4:17); part of his hardship catalog (6:4); and the suffering that all believers share as they live in

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the world, whose structures have been marred by sin (1:4; cf. 1 Cor 7:31). Likewise, joy and rejoicing in the presence of grief and affliction lace together chaps. 1-9: Believers work to produce and are the source of joy for other believers (1:24; 2:3; 7:7, 9, 13, 16), and they share each other's joy (2:3; 7:13). In 8:1-5 the Macedonian believers are cast as exemplars.<sup>166</sup> Despite their affliction (8:2), the Macedonians had responded to God's grace in kind—namely, in abundance and beyond their power. Their eagerness to be participants in the collection (8:4) sets up a distinct contrast with the yet to be noted reticence of the Corinthians (8:10-12; 9:3-5). Paul takes care to note that the Macedonians "sought" (aujgai;retoi authairetoi, "of their own free will," 8:3) partnership in the collection, a note paralleled

in Paul's honoring the Corinthians' right of self-determination regarding the collection: "I say this not by command" (8:8). The Macedonian response was beyond what Paul had hoped for (8:5; cf. a similar sentiment in Phlm 21). Paul describes this amazing reaction first with respect to the Lord and then to himself: "They gave themselves first to the Lord and, in accord with God's will, to us" (8:5). The Macedonians who "gave themselves...to the Lord and...to us" are already believers when the opportunity to participate in the collection is first presented to them. So the "giving of themselves to the Lord" is not a coming to the faith, but a zealous rededication of themselves in the light of the opportunity presented by the collection. Further, the associated "giving of themselves" to Paul is precisely what he has pleaded, obliquely and then directly, with the Corinthians to do more fully (6:12-13; 7:2-3). This little opening portrait of the Macedonians is but the first of a series that Paul employs in 2 Corinthians 8:1-9 as he seeks to inspire the Corinthians not only to embrace him more fully but also to return to their earlier enthusiasm over the collection, which is now coming to fruition. 8:6. The first mention of Titus in chaps. 8-9 ties up the collection's imminent conclusion with its earlier beginning in Corinth (8:6). Here we learn what the Corinthians knew all along: Titus was the one who, as Paul's agent, had also encouraged them about the collection. Now Paul is sending him back to Corinth to finish and states it in a poignant way: Titus is to complete (ejpiteleo;w epiteleio, "bring to its conclusion or goal"), literally, "this grace" (th;n ca;rin tau;thn ten charin tauten 8:6). "This grace," a euphemism for the collection, can be brought to its goal by people because they, as recipients of grace, must share it with others and by so doing return it to God as grace-filled "thanks" (8:16; 9:15).

8:7. Paul's concluding appeal in this opening section lays out the issue that he will pursue in the rest of this chapter and in the next—namely, why and how the Corinthians can take part in the collection—and capitalizes on his understanding of the hallmark of the Corinthians: They are dedicated to, passionately committed to, "excelling." Their zeal for "excelling" has not always been considered a positive attribute by Paul; in fact, much of 1 Corinthians is devoted to countering their tendency to use nearly every occasion to see if they can one-up each other (e.g., who is wise, who has the freedom to eat what, who has which spiritual gift). Whether positive or not, "excelling" is a characteristic of the Corinthians as Paul understands them, and in 8:7 he attempts to turn it to positive ends: "Just as you excel in all things [with a positively stated list of examples following], so we want you to excel in this grace [the collection, understood]." So the stage for further appeal is set by praise of the Macedonians and their commitment to the collection and by Paul's praise of the Corinthians themselves. Note that the last of Paul's examples of their excelling in everything is "your love for us" (8:7 NIV) or "our love for you" (8:7 NRSV). Strong Greek MSS tradition exists for each translation. Sense in context

argues for the former, in which case Paul would here be, like the earlier-noted Cynic choirmaster, pitching the note just a bit high so that the choir, in this case the Corinthians, whom he wishes were more affectionate toward him (6:11-12; 7:2-3), might come in on the right note.

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#### REFLECTIONS

1. Paul is onto something: Believers do and give because they have been done unto and been given to (1 Cor 4:7; 2 Cor 5:14). As 1 John puts it so succinctly: We love because God first loved us (1 John 4:19; cf. John 13:34). Believers cannot fail to love, because love received prompts love in return.

2. In Paul's world, people did most of their learning by modeling after someone, whether it was in a trade, philosophy, sport, household management, moral reasoning, or whatever. As unsettling as the thought may be today, peer pressure often pushes our children to model themselves after other youngsters whose behavioral patterns leave much to be desired. We can dilate about how terrible that is, probably to little effect. Why not instead realize that we underuse exemplification as a way to enhance moral reflection, seize the opportunity to become better models ourselves, and make public recognition of those whose actions and comportment set a good pattern for us all?

3. Paul's notion that we, recipients of God's grace, must pass it on, that we must finish the circle by redirecting it through us to someone else, is awesome. Think about what it says about human life in its daily routine: It says that every encounter with another person is an opportunity to be a channel of God's grace. In fact, not to think of grace that way is probably to cheat God and certainly to cheat others, because it arrogates grace to us as a sort of possession whose goal and end is us as individuals and not us as community. God's grace is not to be trifled with or to be taken lightly. It comes into the world, finding expression through people. Grace achieves its goal, it becomes the grace it was intended to be, only as it reaches ever more and more people. That is why the collection for the saints was not just an option that the Macedonians or the Achaians might choose to engage in; it was a joyful obligation (as Paul expressed it in Gal 2:10).

4. Paul's description of the Macedonians' giving heartily in the midst of affliction shows his understanding that the life of faith is not an escape. Neither does it hermetically seal us off from distress and difficulty. Grace and joy in the midst of affliction, far from being a sign of God's absence, are instead a sure sign of God's power.

2 Corinthians 8:8-15, No Command but Advice: Finish What You Began

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#### COMMENTARY

8:8. Paul has to walk gingerly with the Corinthians as he tries not only to mend his relation with them but also to reinvigorate

and inspire full participation in the collection, so he quickly clarifies that what he writes is not a command (8:8). The Corinthians should operate as fully out of their own free will as the Macedonians have done (8:3). But also like the Macedonians, whose abundant giving in tough times Paul described as a "test" (dokimh dokime, 8:2), the Corinthians, through Paul's appeal to them, face a test of their own. What was only implicit in 8:1-7 becomes explicit in 8:8-15: Paul wants the Corinthians to test their own love by comparison with the zeal of the Macedonians (8:8). Paul considers himself and other believers who have been through affliction on behalf of the gospel as do;kimov (dokimos, "tried and true," "approved by test," Rom 16:10; 1 Cor 11:19; cf. its opposite, ajdo;kimov [adokimos, "disqualified"], 1 Cor 9:27). At the Lord's supper, believers examine (dokima;zw dokimazo), or test, themselves as to how they relate to the body of Christ (1 Cor 11:28-29). Self-assessment is an important and regular Pauline spiritual exercise.<sup>167</sup> Events and situations put individuals to the test as well, in Paul's view. Paul construes as a test what the Corinthians will do about the collection in the light of the Macedonian enthusiasm for it. Paul leaves the outcome for the Corinthians to decide, but he readily gives his own opinion (gnw;mh gnome), and as these Corinthians already know from one of his earlier letters, Paul thinks his gnome ought to have weight because of his trustworthiness (1 Cor 7:25).<sup>168</sup> Grace—and how it is responded to—like love, is best not commanded but left to the discretion of the person(s) involved (cf. Phlm 8-9). That is why Paul construes the Corinthian decision about this grace as their test. 8:9. As they face their test in this matter, Paul reminds them of the "big story" in its most cursory form, this time told in categories of wealth and poverty. In Philippians, the same story had been told in grander, probably traditional form by Paul, and there cast in terms of loftiness and humility. The Phil 2:5-11 hymn describes the exalted Christ, who humbled himself, took on the form of a slave, died, and was thereafter exalted once again by God. The story about grace in 2 Cor 8:9 is retrofitted into economic categories appropriate to the topic at hand: the collection. The Lord Jesus Christ, though rich, became poor for the sake of the Corinthians, in this telling of it, so that his poverty might be the occasion for them to become rich (cf. 6:10b). As the Corinthians face the test of their love and generosity toward others, Paul reminds them of the big story

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and of the very grace in which they stand. If they understand that the Lord's abundant grace makes them what they are and gives them all that they have, then how will they possibly be able to stifle grace's overflow or rebound from them to others? Once again in this letter fragment, Paul pulls out the weighty arguments to bolster his appeal to the Corinthians. 8:10-12. The Corinthians will not be surprised that Paul has practical suggestions for them. That is in his character; they

have experienced it with him throughout their relationship (cf. 1 Cor 11:22; 14:26-31; 16:2). Accordingly, he first urges them to regain their original enthusiasm for the project (8:7). Paul further argues: Finish what a year ago you started with desire; finish it out of what you have (8:10-12). The latter note, twice sounded and once restated as "not out of what you do not have," shows Paul's careful insistence that he does not now expect them to be put under unreasonable pressure to come up with more funds than is proportionally fitting.

8:13-15. Expanding on this, Paul gives modern readers a window on his sense of fairness and equity in the sharing of goods and proper care among believers. Fairness, equality (ijso;thv isotes, vv. 13-14) seems to be his guideline for an individual's contributions. The principle that "those who have abundance share with those in need" is significantly developed in a reciprocating fashion: The Corinthians' current abundance should meet others' need; others' abundance will meet the Corinthians' need.<sup>169</sup> In 8:13-15 the ideal seems to be cast primarily in economic categories, but when the collection is treated in Romans where once again Paul addresses his deep conviction of the propriety of reciprocity between believers, he sets it up that "material blessings" are shared by the Gentile believers in appreciation of "spiritual blessings" that the Jewish believers have shared with them (Rom 15:27). Paul finds confirmation, or perhaps the ground for his counsel, in Exod 16:18, which functions here as a maxim: "The one with much did not have too much, and the one with little did not have too little" (8:15; the NIV adds the repeated note of "gathering" in an effort to reflect the exodus story from which the quote comes).

#### REFLECTIONS

1. Reciprocity and care among believers are givens for Paul. Whether it has to do with possessions, as here, or with thoughtfulness about others, as in other places (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1), believers are to look after one another. We might readily embrace those sentiments and think that when we have "something extra" we will share it with those less endowed. If we wait to share until we find ourselves with surplus, we may never share because we have been subtly acculturated to think we never have enough. In the process, we readily lose sight of how much is genuinely ample—and accordingly we are sometimes blind as to how much we really have to share. Furthermore, our sharing does not have to be solely or even primarily relegated to our goods or possessions; our time, though we may also feel overdrawn there, is often the dearest giving of ourselves.

2. One church's members decided that, beyond their regular annual financial pledge, they would give to the church's local and international mission budget an additional 10 percent of whatever funds serendipitously happened into their lives. If they found a dollar, they would turn over ten cents of it the next Sunday. If someone paid an old debt that the original lenders had, in effect, written off and expected never to see again, then they would give a tenth of that toward missions. Life is so full of

abundance that pops up in our lives in the most unexpected ways. Why not celebrate that by sharing it with persons in need at home and

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around the world? If nothing else, you and your family might try keeping tabs on that kind of serendipity for a month and see what 10 percent of that figure would be.

3. Paul thinks that believers are rich simply because God, to whom everything belongs, has deigned to share all things with believers (1 Cor 3:21b-23). From that assumption Paul derives a powerful critique of the social and cultural values of his and our times. Paul's is a way of asking what is most important, what really counts, and what really matters. The identity of true richness is worthy of reflection. Jesus' parables touched on that issue in various ways (cf. Luke 12:13-21; 14:15-24; 16:19-31).

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<ÞH0xg xÞxÞhzvg ÞÜ^†dv %

」 %

」 %

」 ↓

O l d    R    p    |    æÿÿÿ  
S t y l e

,    ¸@ †B o o k m a n  
P (ÑP\$    €ÔP

ÒPúNlfŒÔP„ÑP\$ ðPpÔPîNlfŒÔP„ÑP ús g„ÑPŒÔP  
ÿÿÿî↑^ {t gÿÿÿÿÿ €ÿÿ €%ÿ €ÿÿÿÿ □ □ | ( X<sub>1</sub>  
( K , †<sub>1</sub> ÿ B o o k m a  
O l d  
S t y l e ,ÑP H0xg ðÑPðÑPhzvg ÒPî↑^ dv □ %

| %



| %

| %

」 %

」 %

J T ^ Å 6 ë « lF†@f`†@Å •  
 L J ì!! È† ` A C T S 1 6 :  
 6 D J = B > > T T ì† 6 † |  
 «† lF†@f`†@ì† •† L † ì!! È† P - d  
 ( T X ¶ | 6† • | «† lF†@f  
 `†@¶ | •† † L † ì!! È† P 1 0 > ?  
 † † - † %

- L d Å ç · | § Å ç Ì - ! ð €?  
€?

€(

\ | - • J T T \ | 6 J ì | « J lF†@f`†@  
L J ì !! È | P □ < ↓



| T T Å<sub>1</sub> «<sup>l</sup> | lF†@f'†@Å<sub>1</sub>  
L J i!! È† P T < %

L %

L %

L R p - æÿÿÿ · î@ ↓T i m e s N e w  
R o m a n + ÓP□ □ ĐP□ úNlf+ÓP□  
□ĐP□ xÑP□ôĐP□îNlf+ÓP□□ĐP□ ús g□ĐP□+ÓP□ ÿÿÿÿæ  
^\_ {t gÿÿÿÿÿÿ €ÿÿ €•\_   
€ÿÿÿÿ ê □ □ X\_ G · ÿ\* àAx À  
ÿ T i m e s e w o m a n □ÓP□  
<ĐP□H0xg xĐP□xĐP□hzvg ĐP□æ  
^\_ dv □ dv □ %

- R p æÿÿÿ  
R o m a n  
€ÿÿÿÿ ê □ Gã↑wÑ' ]~Fà↑wÔ E E  
. É € hv, □Û| À E

• 2<sup>l</sup>@ ↑T i m e s N e w  
gÿÿÿÿÿÿÿ €ÿÿ €•<sub>1</sub>  
ÿ\* àAx À

icvB , Ñ Û | p \ G ° | E E ` k J € f E J J Î P Ñ d P P Ñ Õ q w ¶ >  
pÿÿÿÆã ÷ w ò à ÷ w F à ÷ ! ÿ ` k J " 7 E " ÿ û ~ E ` k J "  
7 E ` k J - \$ É | Ð P Ñ F à ÷ Ê c v ¶ Ê c v d v Ñ %

(

- R p - æÿÿÿ  
R o m a n  
€ hv, □ Û | Æ E

• î @ ↑ T i m e s N e w  
. É



i cvGã|wÑ` ]~Fà|wÔ E E E `kJ - \$ Ê ¸ îP□ E èäÛ|  
. Ê \* V Ö À E

i cvB p a U | a a U | t i P | w e a a U | ç  
+ a a U | ¼ i P | b i a t E y J a t P S | i ç  
+ e a a U | € h v ÿ ^ i P | ç  
+ d P | e a t A é / p y y y J a t | d v e a a U | H > B | Ž | a  
H > B | Ê c v | Ê c v d v | %

- (

R o m a n  
R p æÿÿÿ  
. Ê \* V Ö À E

• i'@ ↑T i m e s N e w  
E èäÛ|

i cvGã | wÑ ' ] ~ F à | wÔ E E | wè ä Ü | - \$ È à ä Ü | E □ ä Ü |  
. È \* V × À E

icvB pãÛ| äÛ| tîË ̂wãÛ| F  
" äÛ|¼îËbiât E yJâtË§<sup>l</sup>iF  
"ãÛ|€ hv ÿ ^îËF  
"dËË eätÂé/<sup>l</sup>pÿÿÿJât|↓dvãÛ|H>ß|ž<sup>l</sup>!a  
H>ß| Êcv||Écvdv ̂ %

(

- R p - æÿÿÿ  
R o m a n  
. È \* V x À E

• î @ ↑ T i m e s N e w  
E □ à Ü |



i cvGã | wÑ ' ] ~ F à | wÔ E E ↑ w□ äÜ | - \$ ì äÜ | E è äÜ |  
. Ì \* V Ø À E

i cvB p a U | a a U | t i P | w e a a U | ç  
, a a U | ¼ i P | b i a t E y J a t P S | i ç  
, e a a U | € h v ÿ ^ i P | ç  
, d P P | e ä t Ä é / p y y y J a t | d v e a a U | H > ß | ž | a  
H > ß | Ê c v | Ê c v d v | %

- (

90

L (

- ↓

T d Å | v | lF†@f  
 †@Å | | J L J i!! È T 1 6 : 6 2 2 2  
 T T w | - | lF†@f  
 †@w | | L J i!! È P - !  
 T P ~ | \$◀ | lF†@f  
 †@~ | | V L J i!! È ø 1 0 . The  
 s t o r y o f P a u l t s t u r n t o w a r d  
 E u r o p e b e g i n s w i t h a s u m m a r y o f  
 h i s t r a v e l s . T h e  
 2 2 † † † = 2 , † † 2 # 0 † 2  
 ! † 8 - 2 ! † 2 !  
 2 † 2 H , ! 2 † = 2 !  
 2 3 , → 2 , 1 2 † H 2 †  
 , † † 2 N N , # 0 † 3 !  
 † 2 † † !  
 , 2 , † † = 2 , → †

L r e s p o n s i b l e f o r t h e p l o t l i n e o f  
 c h u r c h s m i s s i o n , l e a d i n g  
 s o m e t i m e s b y d i v i n e  
 H o l y S p i r i t i s  
 , ' 2 2 2 ' 2 - † ! 2 ! † !  
 † 2 , † 2 2 2 , † 2 !  
 † , 2 2 " - 2 ! 2 2 † † , , 2  
 2 1 † ' 2 0 , N , ' † 3 0 †  
 2 2 2 , → †



T

L J i!! E speech and at  
 other times by  
 hea' 2 , , 2 t , 2 2 → , t 2  
 , T ~ 0 - à y- lF+f'+@  
 b- 7 L J i!! E ¼ venly vision.  
 In this case, the Spirit directs  
 Paul by  
 l 2 , 2 0 t 2 , 2 2 t →  
 2 t 3 ' t , ' , t t 2 ,  
 t 8 2 ! t 2 !  
 , , ' → 8 , 2 t 3 0 → ↑





T Ĩ Å a x- Ò lF†@f'†@Å »  
 L J ĩ!! È† x God †s  
 redemptive plan H 2 2 ! ' † !  
 , 3 , N 2 , † 2 , 2 T Ô  
 Y- a Q† Ò lF†@f'†@Y- »  
 A L J ĩ!! È† Ð s , worked out  
 in the church †s mission , cannot  
 be frustrated ( see ' † † H 2 !  
 2 , 2 † 2 2 † 2 † 2 , † ,  
 2 2 " , 3 !  
 ' † N ' ' 2 2 † † , , 2 2 2  
 † 2 , † ! ! 3 ' !  
 , , 2 † ! ' - , → ↓

T p Å Ō Ė E lF†@f  
 `†@Å . - L J î!! È X 1 1 : 1 7 )  
 2 2 2 2 ! T T Ė Ō ü E lF†@f  
 `†@Ė . L J î!! È P !! ŷŷ2 T α ü Ō  
 ö

E☐ lF†@f  
 `†@ü<sup>L</sup> .☐ 9 L †  
 i r o n i c p o i n t m a d e i n d i f f e r e n t  
 w o r d s ( s e e  
 5 : 3 8 H , N , , ! ' † !  
 2 2 -  
 † 2 2 2 † N , 2 , † 2 † 2  
 ! ! , ! , 2 → H 2 ! 2 ' † !  
 ' , , † 2 2 3 T T ÷

ô †  
E□ lF†@f`†@÷



.□ L J i!! È† P - ! T , ↑  
Ô † E□ lF†@f'†@†  
.□ ↓ L J i!! È† p 3 9 ) . Y e t h e r e  
G o d 2 2 ! † † H , → 2 , !  
, † H 2 2 → ↓

i Q T 4] Å G 2Ï , lF+f't@Å  
 Paul's plans, which he had  
 announced to Barnabas (15:36)  
 and begun to ! ! 2 ' !  
 ' , ' † 8 , 2 !  
 , † 2 , 2 ' † † I 2 , 2 † 2  
 , † 2 , 2 † , 2 2 2 2 3 , , 2 †  
 3 † B , ! 3 , 2 , ' † !  
 2 2 2 3 ! † , 2 2 † 2 -  
 1 2 2 † 2 → ↓

T ð Å 1 + lF+f't@Å ¶  
 ← L J i!! Èt „ accomplish  
 with Silas and  
 T ↓, , , 2 N 2 ' 2 † H 2  
 † 8 , ' † , 2 2 † = T Ô 2  
 ° É† + lF+f't@2 ¶  
 A L J i!! Èt D imothy † s  
 help. Perhaps there is in this  
 text a faint echo of the  
 N 2 3 0 !  
 , † 2 , 2 † † 8 , !  
 3 , 3 ' † 2 , !  
 , † ' † 2 † 2 ' † , 3  
 † , † !  
 , 2 , † , 2 2 † 2 !  
 † 2 , → ↓

T d<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> - Í† ž lF†@f'†@Å<sub>1</sub> †  
 Y L J i!! È† circumstances  
 of Peter † s mission to Cornelius,  
 which also began with resistance  
 to God † s , † 8 , " † , 2 -  
 , † N † † 2 2 † 2 † C 2 !  
 2 , 2 † † H 1 , 2 † ,  
 ' 2 † 2 - H 2 † " , † ,  
 1 , 2 † H 2 † " , † ,  
 2 , , † 2 † H 2 2 ! † → † ,

T X<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> g† ◀  
 lF†@f'†@Å<sub>1</sub> ú  
 W L †  
 i!! È† ü plans for the  
 Gentiles and were also  
 challenged and overturned by  
 visionary revelation.  
 2 , 2 † ! 2 !  
 † 2 , † I , 2 , † , 3  
 2 † H , ! 2 † , 2 , † , 3 2 ,  
 2 † - 2 2 † 2 2 , ! 2 ! -  
 2 , 2 † 4 0 † 2 ' 2 2 -  
 " 0 → !  
 , 2 , , 2 2 † T T h† "  
 † ◀ lF†@f'†@h† ú L † i!! È† P ◻-  
 †

T            Å    !!  
 "            lF†@f'†@Å    m  
 L            J  
 repetition =    2    ,    È†    h    The  
 3            ,            2    2    T    T    ù†    !!  
 "            lF†@f'†@ù†    m  
 L            J  
 È†    P            i    †    T    ð    ††    !!  
 "            lF†@f'†@††    m  
 F            L            J  
 ( pneu`ma    pneuma )    is    striking    and  
 recon firms    a    theo logical    2    !  
 †    ,    8    2            !            ,    †    !    2    2    ,    3  
 N    ,    †    2    3    ,    2    N    ,    !  
 †    '    '    †    '            "            2            2    1    †    ,    2    2  
 †    "    ,    ,    2    2    !            !  
 N    '    →    ,    †            2    ,    2            2    1            -  
 ,            →            †

T \\_ Å\_ t  
 }† ÷  
 lF†@f'†@Å\_ à  
 x L \_  
 i!! È| ü conviction  
 central to Acts: The Spirit  
 guides as well as empowers the  
 church | s witness .  
 , 2 2 2 , | I , ' , | , = 2 , ! |  
 8 2 ! | 1 2 , 2 , ' | , ' | I ,  
 | | , ' | , N 2 2 H , ! |  
 ' | 2 , → , 2 2 " , 2 !  
 ' | H 2 , ' ' | → ↓

T €<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> ù  
 ?◀ j  
 lF†@f'†@Å<sub>1</sub> S  
 ^ L J i!! È† □ This is the  
 only occurrence of the  
 expression Spirit of Jesus in  
 Acts and probably cues the  
 = 2 ' † ' † 2 , † 2 2 /  
 † 3 , , 3 ! ! , 3 , , † 2 !  
 † 2 , → , 3 2 !  
 , ' , 2 2 † , 8 2 !  
 ( , ' 2 ' , † 2 † H , ' † , 2  
 2 † 2 !  
 2 2 , 2 0 → , 2 , ' † 2 , →  
 ↓



T    `    Å<sub>1</sub> l  
 >L    Ý  
      lF†@f'†@Å<sub>1</sub> Æ  
 L    L    '    i!! È† T    r e a    !    ,    ,    T    X<sub>1</sub> >  
 L    1  
 Å†    Ý  
      lF†@f'†@>L Æ  
 W    L    '    i!! È† ü    d e r † s  
 r e c o l l e c t i o n    o f    J e s u s †    a c t i v e  
 r o l e    i n    P a u l † s    c o n v e r s i o n    a n d  
 c o m m i s s i o n    ( s e e    A c t s    2    -    !    !  
 '    †    "    ,    '    2    ,    ,    2    2    †    2  
 !    †    (    ,    '    2    '    !  
 †    ,    ,    2    ,    →    !  
 2    2    ,    †    2    †    8    ,    2    "    '    †    ,    2  
 2    2    ,    !  
 '    2    2    2    †    ,    2    2    →    ,    2    N    N    '    '  
      2    2    †    !    '    ,    ,    †    H    ,    '    →    ↓

D<sup>L</sup> P T    ˆ    Å<sub>1</sub> ß

1F†@f`†@Ā₁ 9

L L J  
B  
e<sup>L</sup> P

i!! E+ T 9 : 1 2 2 T T E<sup>L</sup>

1F†@f`†@E<sup>L</sup> 9

β+ L J  
P

i!! E+ P - ! T P<sub>1</sub> f<sup>L</sup> β

1F†@f`†@f<sup>L</sup> 9

V L J i!! Èt ø 20 ). There ,  
 Ananias received a vision of the  
 Lord's prophecy of Paul's future  
 mission 2 2 !  
 t t = 2 , " , t t H 2 , 2 , ' '  
 → " , , ' 2 , 2 → , t 2 ' '  
 2 2 t† &-q " WMFC J ↔ <z t 2 !  
 t 2 , → = 2 ! 2 ! ' t 2 !  
 2 2 2 - . 0 t 2 ! t 8 , 2 !  
 ' → ! 2 2 !  
 , t N ' ' 2 2 t †



T Ø Å<sub>1</sub> R

[ -  $\tilde{A}$

1F†@f`†@Ā₁ ↯

† L † i!! È† | and suffering  
( see 9 : 1 5 , 2 2 † ' 2 ! ! - !  
2 1 → ! ' , , † 2 2 3 T T  
\\- R

| -  $\tilde{A}$

lF†@f`†@\- ㄣ

L    J                    î!!   Ê†   P   -   !   T   ~   }-   R

pñ ã



lFt@f't@}- 7

7 L J i!! Èt ¼ 16 ). That  
 earlier visionary appearance of  
 Jesus supplie 3 2 !  
 † † = 2 , † , - ! , ! ,  
 † 2 ' , 2 2 , # 0 → , 2 2 , ,  
 " , 2 - , † 2 ! †  
 ( , ' 2 ' † ' 2 2 2 , T " Ÿ R

◀  $\tilde{A}$

1F†@f`†@ÿñ ↵

0 L J i!! E l s a s u b t e x t t o  
' | , | ' 2 2 , 3 | 2 2 ↑ ↓

T   '   Å<sub>1</sub>   Å

H| 6  
lF†@f't@Å₁  
◀ L ' i!! È| p t h i s r e f e r e n c e  
t o 2 ' † ! , !  
, " , 2 , , † ' 3 T T I| Å





ñ<sub>1</sub>      T    T    Å<sub>1</sub>    8  
©  
lF†@f`†@Å<sub>1</sub>    '  
L        '            î!!    È†    P            -    †

ñ T T Å «  
- ñ f lF†@f`†@Å | ñ L J î! È P



p| Ñ  
 • lF†@f`†@p| x L J i!! È† €  
 < Page 226 Ends > < Page 227 Begins >  
 8 8 , 1 , † 2 2 2 † >  
 2 2 ' 8 8 8 - 2 , † 2 2 2 → B -  
 1 2 ' 9 T T Ò  
 p  
 • lF†@f`†@  
 x L J i!! È† P - †

`†@Å T T Å ʼ ñ ǝ lF†@f  
ë ʼ L J ǝ ð È P - †

T e\_ Å\_ J\_ + u\_ lF+f  
 of Jesus and prepares the Spirit  
 reader for the following account  
 of Paul's night vision  
 ( , ' 2 ' , † , 2 2 † 2 ! †  
 , 2 , " , ' † 2 , † " , , 2 -  
 ! † ! 2 ! † 2 - † ! , , 2 -  
 2 2 2 H 2 1 † - †  
 , , 2 2 2 † 2 ! † 8 - 2 !  
 ' † 2 1 2 † 2 ' 2 2 † †

T ô Å w k è lF+f  
 't@Å Ñ L J î!! È | " o f a  
 c e r t a i n M a c e d o n i a n m a n . 2 !  
 | , | , - ! , 2 | Y , -  
 , 2 2 2 , 2 → N , 2 | T T l  
 w ~ è lF+f 't@l  
 Ñ L J î!! È | P - ↓

T □ Å₁ êÿ - [† lF†@f  
 '†@Å₁ D† L † i!! È† € V i s i o n s  
 c a l l p r o p h e t s t o 2 2 ' † , , †  
 m i s s i o H ' 2 2 ' † , , †  
 2 ! 2 2 2 , ' † 2 † N ' ' 2  
 T € - êÿ âÿ [† lF†@f'†@-  
 D† 5 L † i!! È† , n . I n P a u l s  
 v i s i o n , t h e r e s t o o d a m a n o f  
 M a c e d o n i a 2 † → 2 † 8 , 2 † ' † 2 ' †  
 , 2 2 † † , 2 , ! † † 2 † 2 !  
 † † ' , 2 2 2 † , † O , 2 † 2 !  
 † z , , , 2 2 2 , → †





T P<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> Ð† b† A◀ lF†@f  
 '†@Å<sub>1</sub> \*◀ V L J î!! È† ø epiphany is  
 of a human and not a heavenly  
 figure. His actions of standing  
 and begging  
 , 2 2 2 , 4 0 † ' † 2 !  
 † , † 2 2 N , 2 → -  
 2 2 † 2 2 † , † 2 , , 2 , 2  
 0 † ! 1 3 !  
 , † → H , † , , 2 2 ' † 2  
 ! † ' , 2 2 2 1 → -  
 2 2 † 2 , 2 1 3 1 → †

T ¶ Å C ù ' lF+f'f'Å !  
 L J ì!! È stress the human  
 urgency of the s ' !  
 , ' ' † 2 , † 2 2 N , 2 † 2 "  
 1 , 3 . 1 † 2 ' !  
 † 2 , † ' T ~ ú C b † ' lF+f'f'ú  
 • 7 L J ì!! È ¼ i t u a t i o n ,  
 thereby qualifying the prior  
 emphasis on the  
 , 4 0 → 2 2 , " 0 3 1 †  
 2 , † 3 ! 2 ' !  
 † , N 3 2 , ' ' † 2 2 † 2 ,  
 † †

\ L T t Å ¶ ð ' lF@f't@Å †  
 of Paul's mission by showing the  
 importance of people's  
 receptivity to the 8 2 !  
 ' † , 2 2 ! 2 † 2 !  
 † 8 , 2 !  
 ' † N ' ' 2 2 † 3 / † ' 2 2  
 H 3 1 † 2 , † N 2 2 !  
 , † 2 , , † 2 ! † 3 , 2 2 , !  
 ' † " -  
 , † 2 2 0 † 2 † 2 ,  
 → †

T 8<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> )↓ ·Ï Š↓ lF†@f  
 †@Å<sub>1</sub> f↓ R L † i!! È† ð gospel. God  
 does not produce faith in people  
 as though the church is an  
 imperial  
 1 2 ' 2 , † † H 2 2 † 2 3 , '  
 † 2 2 † 2 ! 3 2 2 , , † !  
 ' , † 2 † 2 2 † 2 , 2 2 , → ,  
 ! , 2 † † ' † , 2 → , N 2 , !  
 , † ↓

T ð ½₁ >↓ →

!! lFt@f  
't@Å, ö↓ ← L J î!! È† „ j u g g e r n a u t  
s t r e a m i n g i t s w a 2 2 1 , !  
3 , 2 † ' !  
, , N 3 1 † ' → H . T î ←  
>↓ ;◀

!! lF!@f't@- ö! @ L J i!! È! Ì y to  
 the ends of the earth. 543 Luke |  
 s use of boh q ev w ( boeth eo ,  
 0 | 2 | 2 , | , 2 2 ' | 2 !  
 | 2 , → , - !  
 , 2 | , 2 2 2 → < 2 2 , !  
 | | 2 ( , | 2 !  
 | 3 2 2 2 , 2 H | !  
 2 2 , 3 , 2 | → ↓





T | Å · ð lF@f't@Å Û ]  
 L J ì È □ p s a l t e r ( e . g . ,  
 P s s 5 : 2 ; 9 : 3 5 ; 1 2 : 1 ; 1 7 : 2 ; 1 8 : 6 ;  
 3 6 : 4 0 ; s e e a l s o A c t s 2 1 : 2 8 ; H e b  
 2 : 1 8 ; 4 : 1 6 ) . 2 ' ' ' ! † !  
 , → 1 † † † 8 ' ' † 2 2 † 2  
 2 2 † 2 2 2 † 2 2 2  
 † 2 2 2 † 2 1 2 1 † ' , 2  
 , † , ' 2 † H , ' † 2 2 2 2  
 2 † H - 2 2 † 2 2 2 !  
 † † † ↓

T d Å ð x e lF@f  
 't@Å N L J i! È T The  
 = 2 , t T J y ð Ç e lF@f  
 't@y L N I L J i! È à p r o c l a m a t i o  
 n o f t h e g o o d n e w s i s i n  
 r e s p o n s e t o t h e u r g e n t p l e a f o r  
 h e l p . 2 !  
 2 , , O , 2 2 t 2 !  
 t , 2 , → 1 2 2 2 t 2 -  
 H , t , t 2 t !  
 , ' 2 2 2 , - t 2 !  
 t 2 2 t 2 , t 2 !  
 t , 2 t 2 T , , t ! 3 !  
 't@È N L J i! È P - ð e lF@f  
 't@È N L J i! È P - ð e lF@f

T P<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> g<sub>1</sub> •† Ø<sub>1</sub> lF†@f  
 '†@Å<sub>1</sub> Å<sub>1</sub> V L J i!! È† Ø P a u l † s  
 r e s p o n s e i s i m m e d i a t e : W e  
 i m m e d i a t e l y t r i e d t o c r o s s o v e r  
 t o M a c e d o n i a , b e i n g 8 , 2 !  
 ' † !  
 , ' 2 2 2 ' , † ' † N N , 2  
 , , , 0 † , - , † N N , 2  
 , , , 2 † 2 † , ! † 2 † Z , , -  
 2 ' ' † 2 2 , ! † 2 † 1 → †  
 2 2 2 , † † 2 , 2 1 → †

T t Å Ú ¶ K lF@f't@Å 4  
 \ L J i!! È J convinced that  
 God had called us to proclaim  
 the good news to them (v. 10,  
 italics added).  
 , 2 2 2 2 , , 2 † 2 , † H  
 2 2 † 3 , 2 † -  
 , , , 2 † 2 ' † 2 † 2 † 2 †  
 2 , H ' † N † 2 , → 2 2 2 2 †  
 2 † † 2 3 † † , , ' † ,  
 2 2 , 2 ! † → †

T d Å M x ¼ lF@f  
 't@Å s J L J i!! È T The  
 = 2 , T X y M µ ¼ lF@f  
 't@y s W L J i!! È ü rest of  
 Acts hinges on this text. Luke  
 joins Paul's mission to  
 underscore its dramatic !  
 , ' 2 !  
 I , ' 2 2 2 , ' 3 2 †  
 2 ' † , 2 † → ; 2 2 , †  
 2 † 8 , 2 !  
 ' † N ' ' 2 2 † 2 † 2 2 2  
 , ! ' , 2 ! , † ' † 2 !  
 , N , , → ↓

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 œ ₁ ]            c₁ †<sup>L</sup>10 □            ü₁            ₁ ]    - -







\ U ^ J c1 | This is the only occurrence of the expression  
 "Spirit of Jesus" in Acts and probably cues the  
 † 2  
 j U L J c1 | real | | ž 2  
 j c W J c1 | der's recollection of Jesus' active role in  
 Paul's conversion and commission (see Acts  
 x U L J c1 | 9:11-  
 x d J c1 | 20). There, Ananias received a vision of the  
 x h V J c1 | Lord's prophecy of Paul's future mission  
 † U † J c1 | and suffering (see  
 9:15  
 † ã J c1 | ^ 2  
 † ç 7 J c1 | 16). That earlier visionary appearance of Jesus  
 supplies  
 † î ð J c1 | s a subtext to  
 " U ◀ J c1 | this reference  
 toe  
 " ç J c1 |  
 i U J c1 |  
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 ; 2  
 ½ , J c1 | <Page 226 Ends><Page 227 Begins>-  
 ½ j J c1 |  
 Ë U J c1 | ~ 2  
 Û U ^ J c1 | the Spirit of Jesus" and prepares the reader for

the following account of Paul's night vision

of a certain Macedonian

2

Visions call prophets to mission

2

n. In Paul's vision, "there stood a man of Macedonia imploring with him and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us' " (v. 9). Paul's

2

epiphany is of a human and not a heavenly figure. His actions of standing and begging

2

stress the human urgency of the

2

situation, thereby qualifying the prior emphasis on the

2

Spirit's control of Paul's mission by showing the importance of people's receptivity to the

2

gospel. God does not produce faith in people as though the church is an "imperial

4 2

juggernaut streaming its

was

G<sub>1</sub>Ú @ c<sub>1</sub>ly to the ends of the earth."543 Luke's use of  
 bohqevw (boetheo,  
 U<sub>1</sub>U ↑ c<sub>1</sub>l"help") is almost  
 prayer|  
 U<sub>1</sub>Ç c<sub>1</sub>ll- t  
 U<sub>1</sub>Ë F c<sub>1</sub>llike and recalls the invocative language of  
 petitions for help in the  
 c<sub>1</sub>U ] c<sub>1</sub>lpsalter (e.g., Pss 5:2; 9:35; 12:1; 17:2; 18:6;  
 36:40; see also Acts 21:28; Heb 2:18; 4:16).  
 q<sub>1</sub>U ◀ c<sub>1</sub>lThe y  
 q<sub>1</sub>j I c<sub>1</sub>lproclamation of the good news is in response to  
 the urgent plea for help.  
 q<sub>1</sub>Å c<sub>1</sub>lPaul's response is immediate: "We immediately  
 ~<sub>1</sub>U V c<sub>1</sub>lPaul's response is immediate: "We immediately  
 tried to cross over to Macedonia, being  
 E<sub>1</sub>U \ c<sub>1</sub>lconvinced that God had called us to proclaim the  
 good news to them" (v. 10, italics added).  
 š<sub>1</sub>U ◀ c<sub>1</sub>lThe ž  
 š<sub>1</sub>j W c<sub>1</sub>lrest of Acts hinges on this text. Luke joins  
 Paul's mission to underscore its dramatic



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‡ | † Commentary on Macedonia † Commentary on  
Macedonia † ACTS 16: 6-10 † Romans 15:22- † II COR. 8:1-15

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Headings ^ ]

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