

Manitoulin Youth Conference

2010

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"Thanks Be Unto God For His Unspeakable Gift"

The Story of the Jerusalem Poor Fund

Part II

Table of Contents - Part II

Section 5 - "We had the sentence of death in ourselves" (2 Cor. 1:9)	1
Section 6 - "Now therefore perform the doing of it" (2 Cor. 8:11)	1
Section 7 - "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy" (Psalm 126:5)	1
Section 8 - "The offering up of the Gentiles" (Rom. 15:16)	1
Conclusion	1

Section 5 - “We had the sentence of death in ourselves” (2 Cor. 1:9)

Reading

Carefully read Acts 18:23-20:2, 1 Corinthians 16

Introduction

We begin the second part of our study by considering Paul’s third journey. During this time, he continues the great work of preaching the gospel, but threaded into the narrative is the story of the collection for the “poor saints” in Jerusalem. In this section, we will attempt to bring out some of those threads. Most of the third journey is spent in the area of Asia, with Ephesus being his home base. While at Ephesus, he encountered fierce opposition to the Truth, yet persevered for over 3 years to ensure that the gospel would take root.

The situation in Corinth deteriorated rapidly from the time Paul established the Ecclesia there. The initial issues were of a moral nature, as a result of the vastly different moral code expected by God than these former Pagans were used to. Adding to the troubles, the Judaizing elements moved in and sowed seeds of division, doubt, and discord within the young and impressionable Ecclesia. Scandalous accusations and connotations were being made and inferred concerning Paul - assailing his apostleship, character, motivations, and actions.

In such a poisoned atmosphere, it is no wonder the initial enthusiasm of the Corinthians for the Jerusalem poor fund waned. In fact, they completely stopped collecting for the fund! We’ll spend a good amount of our time in part II of the workbook considering Paul’s moving appeal in 2 Cor. 8 and 9 to inspire them to complete what they had started.

Paul’s Third Missionary Journey - Acts 18:22 - 21:15

1. After spending time back at his “base” Ecclesia of Antioch, Paul begins his third journey by visiting the Ecclesias in Galatia and Phrygia. The phrase “in order” give us the sense that he methodically went from Ecclesia to Ecclesia. What was his motivation for these visits? What else was he doing? (Hint: 1 Cor. 16:1)
2. In the mean time, where were Aquila and Priscilla?
3. **Optional:** Apollos is a most interesting character. Do a mini character study on Apollos and his “story” (write up on a separate document) Note the descriptive words used to describe his character!
4. Where was Apollos headed? Why do you think he was “disposed” to go there? what was his impact there?

Paul in Ephesus and surrounds - Acts 19

5. If we recall back in Acts 16:6, the Apostles were forbidden to preach in Asia, and providentially guided to Macedonia and on to Achaia. On the return voyage, they did visit Asia, and established a fledgling Ecclesia there, leaving Aquila and Priscilla to continue the efforts. Now Paul is back and is given opportunity and direction to spend several years in the area. What do these events teach us about “the ways of providence”?

6. Read the following passages: Acts 19, 1 Cor. 15:32, 16:8-9, 2 Cor. 1:8-10. How long was Paul in Ephesus and how would you characterize his time there?

7. Paul was undertaking a good work, but God did not make it easy on him. In fact, He made it harder, to the point where they “despaired even of life itself.” This brings up a key reality for our efforts in the Truth. We are going to encounter “fears within, fightings without” and the burning question is... how do we respond? What kept Paul going during this time, and how can we do the same?

“Fighting with Beasts at Ephesus”

“I have said with sincerity, and will say, perhaps, many times over again, because they are the words of sober truth – that God has revived the Truth in our age by Bro. Thomas, and that **the best work a man can put his hand to, in this age, is to defend that work against all assaults** whether the open antagonism of those who call the Truth “blasphemy” or the insidious attacks involved in theories that make the Word of God of none effect.” - R. Roberts (quoted in Christadelphian)

The letters to Corinth - where do they fit in?

It is useful to see where the letters to Corinth fit in our story. The evidence points to a series of communications during Paul’s 3 years in Ephesus and surrounding areas (1 Cor. 16:8). We will attempt to elucidate a straightforward outline from snippets of information given in the scriptures, and for further research direct you to Bro. Barling’s book on “The letters to Corinth” and Bro. Ashton’s book on “The challenge of Corinthians.” We recommend that you take some time to read both letters to Corinth.

8. While at Ephesus, Paul receives a number of reports from the Corinthian Ecclesia. The following passages in 1 Corinthians reveal this: 1:11-17, 5:1-13, 7:1, 16:17

- a. What were some of the sources of these reports?
- b. What were some of the things that he heard? How would this have added to his stress? How would this have ‘confirmed’ the ‘suspicions’ of the Jewish brethren?

c. What do we learn about Paul’s communications to the Corinthians? Is 1 Corinthians really the first letter he has written to them?

9. Here is Bro. Ashton’s suggested sequence leading up to 1 Corinthians:

	EVENTS
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EVENTS	
1	While he is in Ephesus, Paul hears of the moral problems affecting brothers and sisters in Corinth
2	He writes to the Ecclesia with an urgent appeal to deal with their problems. This letter has been lost and is sometimes referred to as the "Hortatory letter" (Exhortation).
3	Further reports reach him at Ephesus that the problems are continuing and deep-seated
4	He also receives a letter from the Ecclesia in Corinth asking questions about a variety of subjects
5	Timothy is sent from Ephesus to Macedonia and Achaia (Corinth). (Acts 19:22, 1 Cor. 4:17, 16:10-11)
6	He writes another letter of appeal, and tries also to answer their specific questions (1 Corinthians), sending it with Titus.

10. Given the character of Apollos, one would have expected his presence in Corinth (Acts 19:1) to have mitigated some of these issues. Why was he not a factor? (Hint: 1 Cor. 16:12)

The fund in 1 Corinthians

11. The fund is directly mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16. Recall that in part I of the workbook, we examined this chapter, and established the principles concerning the fund. (take a moment to look back and review them)

- a. When were the Ecclesias to collect for the fund? What else happened at that time? (Acts 20:7)
- b. This is obviously the scriptural precedent for taking up a "free-will offering" on Sunday mornings. Track down a copy of the "Ecclesial Guide" by Bro. Robert Roberts and read his comments about the place of the collection on Sunday Mornings

12. The churches of apostate christianity as well as many secular socialist "organizations" have developed a broad range of "methods" for raising funds for their benevolent acts. Some of the "methods" include: bingo games, bake sales, fee-based dinners, raffles, variety concerts, and plays. Other "methods" that guarantee a more consistent stream of income involve "sponsoring" whether a family, child, town, or project, where donors commit to a monthly "donation" of a certain, fixed amount.

- a. Are any of these "methods" based on scriptural precedent? (provide references)
- b. Do we see any of these "methods" in use in the Ecclesial world today?
- c. What "methods" were associated with the Jerusalem Poor Fund? Do we see any of *these* "methods" in use in the Ecclesial world today?

- d. Discuss the pros and cons of using outside “methods”, that are not backed by first-century precedent in our works of benevolence. Do the “ends” justify the “means”? Place a “star” next to this question and return to it at the end of our studies. See if you have developed further insight.

Planning to complete the fund - Acts 19:20-22

13. In Acts 19:20-22, the sowing in Ephesus was bearing fruit with the word of God “growing mightily” and “prevailing.”, Paul turns his attention on his larger mission. Where was he ultimately determined to go? Can you find a prior command that explains his determination to go there? (hint: think about the Apostles commission as well as Paul’s commission)
14. Paul is in Ephesus, and as he plans to go to Jerusalem before heading to his ultimate destination, he plans a route that takes him through the areas of Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 19:21). Were these cities on the way to Jerusalem from Ephesus? Do you think that one reason to travel through each of these Ecclesias again was to collect for the fund?
15. Who did he send ahead of him into Macedonia?

From Ephesus to Macedonia - 20:1-2

16. After the uproar in Ephesus, Paul heads to Macedonia. What indicates that he likely went from Ecclesia to Ecclesia in Macedonia?

While in Macedonia, Paul wrote 2 Corinthians (2 Cor. 2:12-13,9:2). Here is a suggestion of the sequence of events leading up to 2 Corinthians. Please read Bro. Ashton’s or Bro. Barling’s book for a full explanation of the pieces of information that lead to this sequence.

EVENTS	
1	While in Corinth, Titus helped to organize the collection for the poor saints in Jerusalem
2	Timothy returned to Ephesus with news of a rapidly deteriorating situation in Corinth
3	Paul made a very short and hurried visit to Corinth, and was strongly opposed by adversaries in the Ecclesia.
4	After returning to Ephesus, Paul wrote a very severe letter to the Ecclesia, probably sending it again with Titus who must have returned to Ephesus.

EVENTS	
5	After sending the letter, Paul was anxious about its effects. He left Ephesus for Macedonia, and met Titus, probably at Philippi, who brought encouraging news about the majority in the Ecclesia (2 Cor. 2:12-13)
6	From Macedonia, Paul wrote the letter we have as 2 Corinthians, and sent it by Titus and two other brethren: one of whom was probably Luke. (2 Cor. 2:12-13, 9:2)

The fund in 2 Corinthians

The background of the situation in the Corinthian Ecclesia, Paul's relationship with the brethren and sisters there, and the charges made against him all have bearing on Paul's passionate appeal in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 concerning the Jerusalem Poor Fund.

17. Review the table on pages 9-14 of Bro. Ron Abel's book (PDF available on website), outlining the charges that the Judaizers had made against Paul, and his response. It is helpful to realize from the outline of events that Paul had only recently been reconciled to the brethren and sisters in Corinth (event 5 above) and so his appeal concerning the fund would need to be presented with great care, in light of the previous charges against him of embezzling the funds.

Scriptural "Agape"

"Agape is complementary to a belief of the Truth, and **if severity is required to establish the Truth then such conduct is in keeping with agape** - how different from the "love" of Evangelical Christianity, in which benevolent acts devoid of a belief of the Truth are applauded as the apex of Christianity." - Bro. Ron Abel "2 Corinthians" pp. 36

In 2 Corinthians 8 and 9, we discover that the charges against Paul have had their impact... the Corinthians have stopped collecting for the fund. And so the Apostle delicately yet powerfully gives them every reason to complete the fund. With that background of the Third Journey, and the Corinthian Ecclesia, let's look at chapters 8 and 9 of 2nd Corinthians in detail.

Further Reading

- "The Letters To Corinth" - Bro. W.F. Barling
- "2 Corinthians" - Study Notes - Bro. Ron Abel
- "The Challenge of Corinthians" - Bro. Michael Ashton
- "The Letter to the Philippians" - Bro. T. J. Barling
- "Philippians" - Bro, Jim Luke
- "The Letter to the Ephesians" - Bro. John Carter
- "Quenching all the Fiery Darts of the Wicked" - Bro. Ron Abel
- "Paul the Apostle" - Bro. W.H. Boulton

Section 6 - “Now therefore perform the doing of it”

(2 Cor. 8:11)

Reading

Carefully read 2 Corinthians 8

Introduction

In the previous section, we continued to build our insight and understanding of the events of Paul’s third journey, and the circumstances surrounding the 1st and 2nd letters to the Corinthians.

Having come to the 2nd letter, we want to now investigate chapters 8 and 9. This section of Scripture forms the essential part of a study of the Jerusalem Poor Fund, where Paul appeals to the Corinthians to restart their collections for the poor saints in Jerusalem, and thus match initial enthusiasm with “performance”.

Let’s take a closer look at these two chapters and the desire of the Apostle to continue this collection with the Ecclesias of Achaia. As Bro. Ron Abel writes, “Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians in these two chapters must be one of the most moving and tactful appeals in all of the Scriptures. It is an appeal worthy of careful study and emulation.”

Three Key Words

Before we get into the verse-by-verse study, we want to pick out some key words that we are going to run across as we read through these two chapters. Key words often give us the main idea of any section of the Bible we are considering.

1. Read through 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 and see if any words are used in this section of Scripture that catch your attention. Jot them down here:
2. **The first key word** is used in **2 Cor. 8:1,4,6,7,9,16,19** and **2 Cor. 9:8,14,15** (Hint: it's not always translated the same way so you'll have to get out your Concordance to double check).
 - a. This key word has two aspects in it's definition. Look up it's meaning in Strong's Concordance and any other Bible study tools and write down it's meaning here.
 - b. How many times is this word found in these two chapters? Do you believe there to be any significance behind that? (Think Jew and Gentile)
3. **The second key word** is used in **2 Cor. 8:2,2,7,7,14,14** and **2 Cor. 9:8,8,12** (Hint: it's not always translated the same way so you'll have to get out your Concordance to double check).
 - a. Look up it's meaning in Strong's Concordance and any other Bible study tools and write down it's meaning here.

4. **The third key word** is used in **2 Cor. 8:4,19,20** and **2 Cor. 9:1,12,13** (Hint: it's not always translated the same way so you'll have to get out your Concordance to double check).
- a. Look up it's meaning in Strong's Concordance and any other Bible study tools and write down it's meaning here.
5. These key words are also used in different parts of Scripture that relate to the Lord Jesus Christ. Look up the following references and match them with each of the key words found in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9. (One of the verses has 2 key words)

REFERENCE	KEY WORD
ACTS 15:11	
ROMANS 5:15	
MARK 10:45	

The lesson of 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

6. As we continue to look at these two inspiring chapters, remember these three key words and the lesson the Apostle is trying to teach each of us. Fill in the three blanks below with the key words to form a complete sentence that truly expresses what our personal response should be from this study.

The spirit of _____ at work in the life of an individual would inspire them to _____ in a spirit of _____ to the needs of others.

2 Corinthians 8:1-12: An appeal for enthusiastic support of the fund

Verses 1-5: The example of Macedonia - the grace of extreme generosity

7. The Apostle Paul begins his appeal to the Corinthian Ecclesia to give generously for the sake of the fund by encouraging them to match the enthusiasm of the Macedonian Ecclesias.
- a. Is this an example of "friendly competition" or "positive peer pressure"? Explain your answer
- b. Was this an effective strategy for Paul to use? Why/Why not?
- c. How could we attempt to use this strategy in our Ecclesias and CYCs? List both pros and cons.

2 Cor. 8:1: "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the Ecclesias of Macedonia; "

8. The Apostle does not bother to explain to the Corinthians the background of the fund. In what chapter has he already done this in 1 Corinthians?
9. Look in another translation for another meaning of "we do you to wit." What does it mean?
10. Which Ecclesias are Paul referring to? (Remember from part I)

2 Cor. 8:2: "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. "

11. This statement presents a contradiction from the human point of view. How could a "superabundance of joy" be experienced during a "severe trial of affliction" and "extreme poverty"?
12. Give two other Scriptural examples of joy being shown during a severe trial. Also compare Phil. 2:25-30 and Phil. 2:4.
13. Look back through a "history book" to see if you can find what was happening in Macedonia at this time that was causing these brethren deep poverty and great trial of affliction.
14. Give another Scriptural example of a person who gave their all, but had very little. What does the word "penury" mean in Luke 21:2? What is the Divine principle in these examples?

2 Cor. 8:3: "For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves;"

15. What does the Greek word for "power" mean in this verse?
16. What do you think motivated them?
17. How was Paul able to bear record? Where was he writing this letter (2 Corinthians) from?

"Willing of Themselves"

There was no pressure on these brethren to give. They were "willing of themselves" and this was really the key to their giving. They gave of their own free will, "quite spontaneously", "voluntarily."

2 Cor. 8:4: "Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints."

Note: In most texts the phrases "that we would receive" and "take upon us" are omitted.

18. Of all the characters from Macedonia that we considered in Part I, whose spirit permeates this description of the Macedonian response?

19. Which word in this verse is the word "charis" or "grace"? In what sense is it being used here?

20. The word fellowship in this verse give us the idea of "participation or sharing." So the brethren in severe trial in Macedonia were really "begging for the favour (grace) of taking part in the relief of the saints." Read this verse in the RSV and the Jerusalem Bible. How often do you beg for the favour of doing work in your Ecclesia? Or around your house? Or within the CYC? What does this tell us about the level of enthusiasm that we need to bring to our Ecclesias?

21. Who was the ministering for? How do you think this applies to Galatians 6:10.

2 Cor. 8:5: "And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God."

22. What does "this they did, not as we hoped" really mean? Is Paul implying that the he was a bit disappointed in their effort? Look up the phrase in Moffatt's translation to get a better sense of the phrase.

23. What was the secret to the success of the Macedonian brethren and sisters? What did they first do before they gave to their brethren?

24. Look up the word "first" used here in Strong's. Give the definition here.

25. What does this tell us about our own personal priorities in relation to the Truth? Compare the following two passages Mark 6:33, Mark 12:29-30. Find at least one more reference that shows what should come first in our life. Who was the ultimate example of giving, even to the laying down of his life?

The Macedonian Example

So the brethren of Macedonia did not just give their money to the poor saints of Judea. The Jerusalem Poor Fund and the principles behind it are about much more than simply money. This is about learning the spirit of the Truth and learning to give ourselves to the work of the Truth. The spirit of giving is fundamental to the work of the Truth and has its start with our own personal dedication to our Heavenly Father. We must first give our own selves to the Lord, and when we learn to put the Truth first in our lives, then everything else will flow off that spirit, including our collections. The Apostle Paul uses a wonderful example for the Corinthians to follow by pointing out the love and dedication of the Brethren of Macedonia. Titus also follows their spirit!

2 Corinthians 8:6-8: An appeal to Corinth for a similar demonstration of their genuine love.

2 Cor. 8:6: "Insomuch that we desired Titus, that as he had begun, so he would also finish in you the same grace also."

26. What does Paul mean by "desired Titus to finish"? See 2 Corinthians 7:6-13.
- Why was a visit by Titus necessary? (The background of chapter 7 tells us of the recent reconciliation between the Apostle and the Ecclesia of Corinth.)
 - It seems as though Titus had already been to visit Corinth by Paul's request. What was the outcome of this visit?
27. What does Paul mean by the term "grace" in this verse? He is really talking about the collection, but he refers to it as "grace". It was not simply a collection of funds, but the motive spirit behind the collection that mattered to the Apostle.
- What does he mean by "the same grace"? (same as what? Or who?) See verse 1. Read verse 6 in the RSV. The work was a work of grace since it involved the providential care of God and was nourished by the power of His Word and His vessel, Titus.

2 Cor. 8:7 Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also.

28. What does Paul mean by the Corinthians "abounding" in every thing? (See 1 Cor 1:17, 12:13)
29. What is Paul trying to get across in this verse? Read from Moffatt's translation to get a good sense of his meaning.

2 Cor. 8:8: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love."

30. Compare 1 Corinthians 7:10. Does the phrase, "I speak not by commandment" imply that Paul doesn't have God's authority (that this advice was not inspired) for what he is saying? Read from the Jerusalem Bible to get a better translation.

31. Who are the "others"? How was Paul trying to inspire the Corinthians in this case? He could not and would not force the Corinthians to donate to the fund for the relief in Judea, but he could show them a wonderful example.

32. We should never compare ourselves to others in a competitive way. Our greatest example is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is him alone whom we should follow, but that doesn't mean we can't surround ourselves with positive, spiritual influences. List 3 ways we can do this in family and Ecclesial life.

2 Corinthians 8:9: The example of Christ – selfless giving for others

2 Cor. 8:9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Just so the Corinthians wouldn't think that they were in competition with the Macedonian brethren, Paul now makes them aware of the greatest example. Even though the Macedonians were a good example, they were only a good example because they were following the example of the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived the principle of selflessly giving his life for others.

33. Compare and contrast how our Lord was/is both "rich" and "poor." (See Hebrews 12: 2-3, Isaiah 53)

RICH	POOR

34. Compare the word used here in verse 9 for “poor” with the one used in verse 2 concerning the Macedonians. Do you think these two examples are powerful enough to make an impact on the Corinthians?
35. “yet for your sakes” - Look up the example of Christ in the following passages. Add others to this list when you run across any. Galatians 1:4, Galatians 2:20, 1 Timothy 2:5-6, Titus 2: 13-14. What is the main lesson of these passages?
36. Our response to these passages should be one of selfless giving for others. Check the following three passages and write down the lesson of each. Romans 12: 8,13, Ephesians 4:28, and Phil. 2:4. How do we give ourselves to the work of the Truth after the example of Christ?
37. Obviously the “riches” which are available to believers by the sacrificial work of Christ are not the riches of silver and gold, i.e. money. Believers are warned against the accumulation of natural riches often in the Bible. Find two references that relate to this. What “riches” are spoken of here? Find two references to solidify your answer.

2 Corinthians 8:10-12: The need to match initial enthusiasm with a practical response.

2 Cor. 8:10: “And herein I give my advice: for this is expedient for you, who have begun before, not only to do, but also to be forward a year ago.”

38. What does the Greek word for “advice” mean here? What does the Greek word for “expedient” mean?
39. What does the Apostle mean that the Corinthians had “already begun a year ago”? See 1 Corinthians 16:1-2.
40. Why did they stop? Back up your answer with a Scriptural reference.

2 Cor. 8:11: “Now therefore perform the doing of it; that as there was a readiness to will, so there may be a performance also out of that which ye have.”

41. What is the difference between “performance” and “readiness”? Define each word from the Concordance.

42. Often when we come back from a study weekend or Bible school we are excited about the Truth and have many big plans about Bible study and CYC. Our motives are often in the right place, but it always seems hard to follow through (the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak). What is the lesson of this verse in regards to this concept? What are some ways to overcome the flesh so that “there may be a performance” when we return from Youth Conference?

2 Cor. 8:12: “For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.”

43. Which is the same word for “readiness” used in this verse? What point is Paul making?
44. Paul had earlier stressed this fact: “and though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor... and have not charity (agape love) it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Cor, 13:3). What is Paul's conclusion therefore on what pleases Yahweh? Only a willing, eager mind? Or only the actions?
45. True or False: From the Divine point of view in regards to the collection, the **amount** of the contribution is not nearly so significant as the **motive** for giving.

2 Corinthians 8:13-24: The need to work together to finish the fund

2 Corinthians 8: 13-15: The example of Israel - the virtues of cooperation and sharing

2 Cor. 8:13: “For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened:”

46. Define the words “eased” and “burdened” from Strong's concordance.
47. Paul is saying that he is not simply trying to reverse the financial situation of the two parties. He is not intending to relieve the Judean brethren while burdening the Corinthinans. Why does the Apostle have to make this statement? Do you think there would be some members in Corinth that would make excuses about why not to give?

2 Cor. 8:14: "But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality:"

48. Define the words "equality" and "want." Read this verse from the Jerusalem Bible.
49. The Apostle Paul is making the point here that in the course of time there might be a situation when these two groups are in opposite circumstances. Sometimes we are in the position of help and sometimes we are in the position to receive. Look up Romans 15:27 and 1 Corinthians 9:11 and write down the spiritual principle. How does this make you think about helping people financially/naturally without helping them spiritually?

2 Cor. 8:15: "As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack."

50. Paul shows his knowledge of the Scriptures by pulling this quote out of Exodus. Where specifically does it come from and what is the context? (Familiarize yourself with this story if needed)
51. Did everyone gather the same amount of manna (see Exodus 16:17)?
52. Why would some be able to gather more than others?
53. Did every person receive the same amount in the end? What happened to the excess portion that some of the children of Israel tried to selfishly keep for themselves? For this principle to work, those who gathered more would need to continue to keep gathering more for how long?
54. How does this apply to the distribution of the Truth in Ecclesial life/CYC?
55. What is another Scriptural example of someone wanting to keep a portion back for themselves? (Think back to part I)
56. Why would this have been a powerful quotation (Exodus 16) for the Apostle to use in the context of asking the Corinthians to donate to their Judean brethren?

2 Corinthians 8:16-19: The example of the delegates – earnest zeal and care

2 Cor. 8:16: “But thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you.”

57. What is the meaning of the word “thanks?” In what sense is it used here?
58. Define the term “earnest care.” Who's care was Titus' the same as? Read this verse in the Moffatt translation.
59. This word “earnest care” is actually a key word of chapter 8. It describes the spirit of the delegates or representatives of the fund. This word “earnest care” or “spoude” in the Greek is translated differently 6 times in this chapter. Locate the word and write down it's different translations here. Do you think this appropriately describes the spirit of Titus and the other delegates of the fund?
60. What does it mean that “God put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus”? Did Titus have a choice in the matter? Did it remove free will? See Phil. 2:12-13. Give two other examples of God working like this in an individual (good or bad) in the Bible record.

2 Cor. 8:17: “For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you”

61. What does the word “exhortation” mean? What was the exhortation that Titus accepted? How is this word translated in verse 6 of this chapter?
62. What does this tell us about the man Titus? Read this verse from the NIV to pick up the phrase “of his own accord.” Titus had already been sent to Corinth by Paul once (see verse 6). Now he is going back to finish the work which he started. How far of a journey was this from Macedonia to Corinth? Does the amount of mileage Titus travelled on foot show us the idea of earnest care and zeal? Compare Titus and Isaiah (Isa. 6:8)
63. How can this spirit of initiative and willingness be actioned in own work for our Ecclesias and CYCs?

2 Cor. 8:18: “And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches”

64. Which brother is this? This phrase has also been translated “his brother” and this translation has the support of the Greek text.

65. Remember the pronouns of Acts 20:4-6? Which Ecclesia would Luke have been the delegate of? Can you support the hypothesis that Titus and Luke were brothers?

2 Cor. 8:19: "And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind:"

66. Was this delegate Paul's personal choice? If not, who chose him?
67. The phrase "to the glory of the same Lord" can also be translated as "the glory of the Lord Himself." This is the whole reason the Apostle was gathering the fund. It wasn't for himself and it wasn't really for the Jerusalem Ecclesia, but instead it was for the Truth's sake and to follow the example of Christ. How can this attitude show itself in our own actions?

2 Corinthians 8:20-21: The example of Paul – guarding against criticism.

2 Cor. 8:20: "Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us:"

68. What was the reason that the delegates had to be chosen to administer the fund with the Apostle Paul?
69. What does the Greek word "blame" mean here? Who were they going to blame if things went wrong?
70. The Apostle Paul was not worried about blame being put on him though. His primary concern was the success of the fund and what it stood for. Do you think the Apostle made the appropriate decision in having chosen delegates? Do we use this same method in our Ecclesias today?

2 Cor. 8:21: "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

71. Which would be more difficult to achieve, "providing for honest things in the sight of the Lord?" or providing for honest things in the sight of men?" Why?
72. Paul had to "provide for honest things in the sight of men" because he was being accused by the Judaizers of stealing the money, among others things. Read 2 Corinthians 12:13-21. Write down all the terms that relate

to money in this section. Paul's opponents had made him look like a common thief, but what is his honest defense?

73. Put yourself in Paul's shoes. How would you feel if after giving over three years of your life to a work of the Truth that all your adversaries did was criticize you? What would have been the easy thing for Paul to have done here? What would have been best for the Truth?

74. This verse (8:21) is a quotation from Proverbs 3:4. Fill out the following chart with scriptural principles regarding our honest conduct. How do we measure up to these principles in daily life?

PASSAGE	PRINCIPLE
Prov. 3:4 (LXX)	
1 Thess. 5:22	
1 Tim. 3:7, 5:14	
2 Cor. 8:20-21	
Rom. 12:17-18	
Col. 4:5	
1 Thess. 4:12	

75. Bro. John Carter commenting on this passage in his book on Romans states, “the spirit of that proverb was that actions that might be misunderstood should be avoided.” Often we can justify our actions by saying, “well, this isn't wrong” instead of asking ourself the question, “Would this action be helpful to both myself and my brothers and sisters?” or even better, “How does this reflect God’s character?” Look up the word “providing” (the Greek word “pronoeo”) in this verse. How does this definition make you think about this Divine principle? Should we question all the possible outcomes of an action before we take action?

2 Corinthians 8:22-23: The example of the delegates – earnest zeal and care.

2 Cor. 8:22: “And we have sent with them our brother, whom we have oftentimes proved diligent in many things, but now much more diligent, upon the great confidence which I have in you.”

76. Look at the list of delegates in Acts 20:4-5. Which delegate do you think Paul is now speaking about?

2 Cor. 8:23: “Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow-helper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ.”

77. **Optional:** Look up “partner” and “fellow-helper”. What do they mean?

78. In what way were the delegates the “messengers of the Ecclesias”?

79. In what way were the delegates the “glory of Christ”?

2 Corinthians 8:24: A final appeal for loving cooperation.

2 Cor. 8:24: “Wherefore shew ye to them, and before the Ecclesias, the proof of your love, and of our boasting on your behalf.”

80. What would be the “proof” of the Corinthian’s agape towards their brethren? Who would recognize the “proof”?
81. List some practical things in the Truth that you find easy to give lip service to, but harder to “perform the doing of it”? How can you overcome this very human tendency?

Section 7 - "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy"

(Psalm 126:5)

Reading

Carefully read 2 Corinthians 9

Introduction

In chapter 9, the Apostle Paul continues his appeal to the brethren and sisters of the Corinthian Ecclesia to rekindle the enthusiasm and zeal they once had for the fund. He appeals to their conscience and example. He also appeals to scriptural principle, and draws a direct line to the prime directive of the Gospel: God Manifestation.

When we consider the principle of reaping and sowing, our mind casts back to the life of Isaac in Genesis 26, who on the heels of an embarrassing lack of faith, repented, and in a remarkable act of faith, sowed during an oppressive drought and "received in the same year an hundredfold: and Yahweh blessed him." How true are the words of the Psalmist in Psalm 126:5-6: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

In this part of his appeal, Paul uses a plethora of Old Testament examples. This serves a number of purposes, including a demonstration that the principles involved are not just Paul's ideas but are consistent with God's word, and the practices of the faithful of old. They also teach that even under the old covenant, Yahweh sought to inspire His people to raise their thinking to the motivation behind their actions. How much more then ought the believers who had a full knowledge of the "unspeakable gift" which the Law foreshadowed, be able to demonstrate the operative principles of the new covenant, by providing for their brethren and sisters in need?

2 Corinthians 9:1-7: The value of a generous contribution to the fund.

2 Corinthians 9:1-2: "An encouraging reminder of their early zeal to minister to others."

2 Cor. 9:1: "For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you:"

1. This verse sounds a bit odd because while Paul is writing to them he says it is superfluous for him to write to them. Paul essentially says in this verse that, "it is not necessary for me to write to you." Why was this not necessary (answer in the next verse)? What was he writing about?

2 Cor. 9:2: "For I know the forwardness of your mind, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia was ready a year ago; and your zeal hath provoked very many."

2. What does the word "forwardness" mean in the Greek?
3. What had brought these collections to a stop in Corinth (2 Cor.8:10)?
4. The Apostle had used the Corinthians as an example to the Ecclesias of Macedonia because a year before this writing they had been very zealous. What does the Greek word for zeal mean (also look at it's root word)? Read this verse from the RSV.

5. What is the Apostle Paul's lesson to the Corinthians here? (Keep in mind that he has already told them how generous the contributions from Macedonia had been.)

2 Corinthians 9:3-5: The need for their collections to be carefully prepared and ready.

2 Cor. 9:3: "Yet have I sent the brethren, lest our boasting of you should be in vain in this behalf; that, as I said, ye may be ready:"

He says in verse 1 that he didn't have to write to them about their motives for giving, but if we follow the context, the Apostle uses a lot of joining words to arrive at verse 3 (yet, lest, therefore, but). So here are the two things he is writing about: 1) the speed of their collections and 2) the size of their contribution.

6. Who are the brethren referred to in this verse? Who was "the brother sent"? (Reference 2 Cor. 8:22, Eph. 6:21, Colossians 4:7, Titus 3:12, 2 Tim. 4:12)
7. How many times in these two chapters does he talk about "his boasting"? Cite the references. What do you think he means by this phrase?
8. Look up the word "ready" in your Concordance. Where else is it used in the Bible? Does it mean more than just to be ready?

2 Cor. 9:4: "Lest haply if they of Macedonia come with me, and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be ashamed in this same confident boasting."

9. The word for "ready" in this verse is different. What is Paul now speaking about?
10. The word for "ashamed" means to disgrace, to cause to blush, and to dishonour. Not only would Paul feel humiliated, but he suggests that the Corinthians would as well.
11. Stop for a moment and put yourself in Paul's shoes. If you had been asked to do something by the CYC or Ecclesial members at your meeting, would you put this much time and energy into it? Paul spent three years of his life organizing this fund. He went over all the Ecclesial world, Ecclesia by Ecclesia, giving them specific instructions on what to do as well as motivated them to do it. What made him so driven? He didn't push off this work on other people or take it lightly! How do we measure to this standard with our responsibilities to our brethren and to our Ecclesias?

2 Cor. 9:5: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereof ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness."

12. Why does Paul need to send the brethren "before" unto them?

13. Paul uses the term “bounty” here in reference to the collection. There are at least eight other terms he uses to describe the same thing in these two chapters. List six of these terms and write down why he doesn't just use the term “money”? (hint: think back to the claims against him)

14. Turn to the example in Exodus 35:21-22. Where did the bracelets, earrings, rings, and all the other jewels come from? What principle then comes out of this Biblical example? When we give our money to a collection on Sunday morning what does it become?

15. Which of the children of Israel participated in this offering? Do you see a similarity with the brethren of Achaia and Corinth?

16. What does the Greek word for “covetousness” mean? Compare other translations to match this to the spirit of Exodus 35.

2 Corinthians 9:6-7: An appeal to give with a joyful, spontaneous liberality.

2 Cor. 9:6: “But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.”

17. The word “but” here is translated as “Mark this” and “But note this.” The Apostle Paul is now going to make a point that he wants the Corinthians to remember and think about. Where else does he paraphrase this verse?

18. Follow the references listed below on “sowing and reaping” and label those that are used in a positive context and which are used in a negative context.

REFERENCE	POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?
JOB 4:8	
PROVERBS 11:18	
HOSEA 10:12	
PROVERBS 22:8	
HOSEA 7:8	
PSALM 126:5-6	

19. Read Galatians 6:8. The lesson is that we reap the same **kind** of seed that we sow. How can you apply this to your daily life? Reference Ecclesiastes 11:6. What kind of seed do you regularly sow, the daily Bible readings and the “pioneer” works (Elpis Israel/Eureka etc.) or television and the internet? What language to you regularly use? What literature or magazines do you find yourself reading? What

Sowing and Reaping

This seems like a fairly simple concept, but it is probably the hardest principle to put in action in our own lives. This is a fundamental law of nature that cannot be changed or overturned and it cannot be changed in our lives either.

music do you have on in the car and in your home?

20. What about the **amount** of seed that we sow? The single greatest reason for a poor harvest is poor sowing. How much time do you spend on things of the Truth as opposed to things of the world? If Christ remains away, we will all have responsibilities in our Ecclesias to preach the Truth (it is not always someone else's job). What are you doing now to prepare for this role?

21. How does this apply to 2 Corinthians 9? Why was Paul using this fundamental law of nature?

22. Why do you think the Apostle says “be not deceived”? Reference the following quotations to look at where else this phrase is used.

REFERENCE	BACKGROUND / CONTEXT
PROVERBS 20:1	
LUKE 21:8	
1 CORINTHIANS 6:9	
1 CORINTHIANS 15:33	

REFERENCE	BACKGROUND / CONTEXT
1 TIMOTHY 2:14	

2 Cor. 9:7: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

23. Look back at Acts 11:29, what principle in the beginning of this verse repeating?
24. How can the phrase "as he purposeth in his heart" apply in your own work for the Truth today? What do you plan to do for the sake of the Truth?
25. Define the Greek words for "grudgingly" and "necessity."
26. This verse comes in part from the context of Deuteronomy 15. Read the chapter and write down at least two of the principles that are similar.
27. The statement at the end of this verse, "for God loveth a cheerful giver" is drawn from the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 22:8, where it says, "God loves a cheerful and liberal man." Why would Paul change the words from Proverbs (Hint: context)?

Sowing and Reaping

So in these first seven verse of chapter 9 we have the Apostle Paul exhorting the brethren of Corinth to careful preparation, sowing generously, sowing bountifully, sowing spontaneously, and sowing liberally. We need to remember that these principles not only influence our collections, but every aspect of the Truth in our lives. May we each be motivated by the spirit of God's grace at work in our own life and give ourselves for the work of the Truth

2 Corinthians 9: 8-15: The Blessings and Benefits Accomplished in the Fund

2 Corinthians 9:8-11: God's power to bless the generous.

2 Cor. 9:8: "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:"

28. Count the number of times "God" is used in chapter 8:1-9:7. Now count the number of times "God" is spoken of in 9: 8-15 (remember the pronouns). What does this tell us about the emphasis of this last section? God is the ultimate example of a giver and it is God's goodness towards us that is our ultimate basis of motivation in the Truth.
29. **Optional:** Count the superlatives used in verse 8. Paul uses these to emphasize the fact that he is now talking about God's power and there can be no limit to what God can do.
30. Locate the three key words from our study used in reference to God. (Verses 8-10) What does this tell you about Yahweh's character? If you look back at the "Key lesson of 2 Corinthians 8 & 9," who are you really following?

31. The 20th Century New Testament translates verse 8 this way, “God has the power to shower upon you every kind of blessing in abundance; so that having in all things and on all occasions a full supply for all your wants; you may be able to do an abundance of good actions of every kind.” This is the principle of God manifestation. God gives to us that we might give to others through our actions. How has this worked in your own life?

2 Cor. 9:9: “(As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever.”

32. A few different verses are now cited in the next couple verses by the Apostle as proof that generous giving in the Truth is always rewarded. What are these verses (Hint: Psalm 112 and Isaiah 55)?

33. Continue to look at Psalm 112. Compare this chapter with Deuteronomy 15. What verse of the chapter seems to parallel 2 Corinthians 9:9?

34. The sense of these passages is that, “the righteous man gives to the poor and in turn, God blesses him for doing so. He can continue to give because God constantly replenishes his resources. How do people in the world generally view giving to others? Do you think they believe that if you give then God will bless you? How does this seem to work in the “real world?”

35. How is the word for “righteousness” used in this verse? (See the RSV margin and Weymouth) How is it used in Psalm 112:9?

REFERENCE	CONTEXT OF “RIGHTEOUSNESS”
DEUTERONOMY 24:10	
PSALM 112:9	
DANIEL 4:27	(Look For parallel ideas)
MATTHEW 6:1	(The word “Alms” = “Righteousness”)

36. After looking at these references in the table above, what is your conclusion of how Paul is using these quotations, is “almsgiving” the same as “righteousness”?

2 Cor 9:10: "Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) "

37. Read Isaiah chapter 55. What is the rain in Isa. 55:10 likened to?
38. God's word doesn't return to Him void, but prospers in the thing whereto He sends it. How does the rain also "prosper"?
39. What are the three results outlined in 2 Cor. 9:10? What sort of fruits of righteousness are going to be increased here? (Read from Moffatt's or Weymouth.)
40. Surely, the Apostle is not going through these principles to tell us that if we put ten dollars in the collection on Sunday morning, we'll somehow make ten or more dollars during the week! What are the ways that we are blessed in return for our giving?
41. There is a current "Evangelical" movement, who preach what is referred to as the "Prosperity Gospel" - that if we are generous with our money, and help the poor, God will bless us with material wealth, because "God wants us to be rich". What scriptural principles would you use to refute this idea? (if you have the time, look up this movement to better understand the scriptures they use as their basis)
42. As opposed to the society around us, if we have been blessed in material things, what is the lesson of Ephesians 4:28? How should we, as followers of Christ, use an increase in riches and temporal blessings?

2 Cor. 9:11: "Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."

43. Notice that verses 9 and 10 are in brackets. Read verse 8, then verse 11. What does Paul mean that we will be enriched in **every thing**?
44. What happens to our focus on self when we make concern for others a habit?
45. What does the Greek word for "bountifulness" mean? What does this tell us about our focus?

46. What are ways we can give with singleness of heart?

2 Corinthians 9:12-14: The benefits of unity and thanksgiving accomplished in the fund.

2 Cor. 9:12: "For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God;"

47. The word "service" in this verse is used almost exclusively of the ritual and sacrificial services of the Tabernacle and the Temple. Reference Romans 15:16. How was the Jerusalem Poor fund a part of Paul's ministry? What was the "offering of the Gentiles"?

48. Identify both a practical and a spiritual need in this verse.

2 Cor. 9:13: "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration they glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men;"

49. This was not just an experiment by the Apostle, what does the word "experiment" really mean?

50. What did the evidence of this ministration cause the Jewish brethren to do?

51. What is the word for "liberal"? How is it translated in 2 Cor. 9:11? What is the meaning of "distribution" in this verse?

52. The lesson of this verse is that the recipients of the fund, the brethren in Judea, will bless God because of their single-minded fellowship unto them. So the Apostle Paul, as he ends his appeal to the Corinthians, tells them the wonderful effect that he believes and prays it will have upon the brethren in Judea in terms of binding them all together through the work of this collection. Reference Matthew 5:16. What does this teach us about the power of our example?

2 Cor. 9:14: "And by their prayer for you, which long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you."

53. Paul tells the Corinthians that they should not only give to supply the natural needs of their brethren in Judea, but that these brethren in Judea would also pray for them because the grace of God was evident in their actions. What does this verse tell us about what Paul is really hoping for?
54. Why would an Ecclesia such as Corinth, so famous for Gentile problems (immorality, idolatry, eating of meats offered to idols, etc), be a good test for the acceptance by the Judean brethren? Do you think Paul planned this?

2 Corinthians 9:15: The example of Yahweh - the unspeakable gift. A final prayer of gratitude.

2 Cor. 9:15: "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."

55. Define the Greek words translated "Thanks", "unspeakable", and "gift."

The Apostle Paul concludes his wonderful appeal by saying that the gift of God is something which is hard to put into words, something that is hard to express. It's inexpressible what God has done for us in what He has **given!**

56. What is "the gift" spoken of by Jesus in John 4:10?
57. Who was the gift given by God in Isaiah 9:6? Give another scriptural reference where a child was dedicated to the work of the Truth.
58. What is "the free gift" spoken of by Paul in Romans 5:15 and Romans 8:31-32?
59. What then is your conclusion on what this final verse means? Is Paul speaking about the "gift" being the Lord Jesus Christ? Or something else?

All of our blessings are based on God's love in giving. Read John 3:16. So whatever we are able to give, we can never match what God gave because God Himself is the perfect example of giving. We will never be able to give what God has given and even if we endeavor all our lives to give for the needs of others, it will only be a small resemblance of the greatness and superiority of what God has given and offered to each of us. So when we give for others, all we are really doing is following the example of Yahweh Himself and uniting with the Apostle Paul in saying, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!"

Section 8 - “The offering up of the Gentiles”

(Rom. 15:16)

Reading

Carefully read Romans 15, Acts 20:2-21:26

Introduction

Did Paul’s appeal to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 work? Did they return to their previous enthusiastic support? It appears that it did work! (see Romans 15:26)

Now, we have reached the point where the fund is ready to be delivered, the bags are sealed to mitigate any further charges against Paul of embezzlement, and the group is ready to go. Paul is determined to make it to Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost. And how fitting, where the 2 leavened loaves representing Jew and Gentile are presented up for an offering, the leaven representing the recognition of the failure of the offerer to fully attain to the principles involved, and therefore their complete dependence on the grace of God.

We began the first part of our workbook with some intriguing questions about the results of the Jerusalem poor fund : “Would it be successful? Would it help stop the defection of Jewish believers, who were in danger of becoming “entangled again with the yoke of bondage”? Would the Jewish believers be able to lay aside their mistrust of their Gentile brethren? For that we will have to wait until the end of our studies!”

Well, we are at “the end of our studies”, and the events which occurred were real events. Were this merely a fictional story, there would be moving scenes of thankfulness and reconciliation after a triumphant and celebratory journey to Jerusalem. Instead, the journey to Jerusalem is thick with foreboding and sorrow, and the conclusion perhaps not what might have been expected.

The initial “seed” idea of the fund started with a prophecy by Agabus, and fittingly, our story concludes with a prophecy by Agabus that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem. The emotional goodbye of Paul and the disciples from the various Ecclesias gives us a window into the raw emotions felt by all, not knowing what would happen - but Paul, typing our Lord Jesus Christ’s response to Peter, set his face like flint and said “what mean ye to break my heart?” for it was his determination to “finish my course” as Christ to the Gentiles.

Paul’s third missionary journey concluded - Acts 20:2 - 21:15

1. We pick up the story of the 3rd journey in Acts 20:2. Trace the locations visited as Paul leaves Ephesus and makes his way to Jerusalem. It might make it easier to make a list of the locations from the following references, then find them on a map: Acts 20:1,2,3,6,13,14,15; Acts 21:1,3,7,8,15.

In Acts 20:2-3, Paul arrives in Greece and spends 3 months in Corinth

The fund in Romans - Paul’s plan’s detailed - Romans 15

2. While at Corinth, Paul writes the letter to the Romans. Optional: prove this from Romans 16:1-2,23

There is no record of the founding of this Ecclesia. Evidently Paul knew many brethren and sisters there, including Priscilla and Aquila who must have returned to Rome sometime during Paul’s third journey (Romans 16:3). The lucid and powerful expositions about God’s righteousness, salvation, and Israel reflect many themes that Paul would have underscored as he faced Jews, Gentiles, and Judaizers.

Chapter 15 of Romans has reference to the fund, and gives us insight into Paul’s motivation and plans.

3. Romans 15:8-12: Jesus Christ, the “minister” of the Jews (“of circumcision”). **Optional:** What does the word “minister” mean in this case?
4. You can see Paul really pressing point the intention of God to include the Gentiles in the hope of Israel as he selects four quotations from the Law and the Prophets. What did the prophets predict concerning the

“response” of the Gentiles to the mercy of God? Is this response evident in the Jerusalem poor fund?

5. Romans 15:16: Paul, the “minister” of the Gentiles. What does the word “minister” mean in this case?
6. Romans 15:16: What is the “offering” of the Gentiles? How would it be acceptable? Is there a secondary application to the delivery of the fund?

Read Romans 15:23-24 in the RSV. Paul has completed his work - He has now covered all the areas, and before he heads to Rome, the culmination of his 3 journeys, the crowning act, is to bring the generosity and grace of the Gentile Ecclesias to Jerusalem.

Romans 15:25-28: The fund

7. In verse 26, we have our proof that the Corinthians responded positively to Paul’s appeal. Notice that Paul doesn’t draw attention to himself. He doesn’t go on about how he organized this huge fund, etc. He doesn’t recount the prodding that was necessary in Achaia. He simply says “it hath pleased them...” What principle do we see in operation here? Can we resolve to do the same in our own circumstances?
8. Look up the word “contribution” what does it mean and how does it bring a new meaning to the work of the fund?
9. Explain Romans 15:27. What point is Paul making here? What bearing should this have on our attitude towards the Jews?
10. Romans 15:28: “sealed them this fruit”. Lookup “sealed” and “fruit” to see what Paul is saying. Do you think this is telling us the bags were personally sealed by Paul? Or just another way of saying “delivered them the fruits of their faith”?
11. Romans 15:30-31 - “service” for “Jerusalem”. What does Paul ask the disciples in Rome to pray for?

Acts 20:4-6: The Ecclesial delegates of the fund

12. From Acts chapter 20, fill out the missing information in this chart:

ECCLESIA	DELEGATE
BEREA	
THESSALONICA	Aristarchus
	Secundus
Derbe	Gaius
Derbe	
Asia	Trophimus
	Tychicus
Philippi	
Corinth	Titus
Corinth	Paul?

13. Some have felt that Paul was the other delegate for Corinth, as their reconciled brother. What evidence is there to support this idea?

Acts 20:13-15 The journey to Jerusalem - Troas to Miletus

The fascinating journey from Troas to Jerusalem is worthy of careful study and reflection. We must content ourselves with picking up only a few of the events. Traveling with all of that money would have been very dangerous for these brethren!

14. Acts 20:5-6. The NASB get's the sense right that these delegates went ahead and the rendezvous point was Troas. As he travelled back through Macedonia, who did Paul pick up at Philippi? (hint: look for the pronoun)
15. **Optional:** Follow Acts 20:13-14 on your map. What was Paul doing? What would have been "on his mind", perhaps?

Acts 20:16-38 Paul's moving exhortation to the Ephesian leaders while at Miletus

Even though he didn't have time to go to Ephesus, he made time for the leaders of the Ecclesia - to deliver a farewell exhortation, and warning of the growing apostacy in their midst.

16. What was Paul trying to get to Jerusalem in time for? Do you see any significance in the fund being delivered at this time? (think back to our previous research)
17. Based on Paul's exhortation in Acts 20:16-38, how do we know the Judaizers have been at work in Ephesus? Give at least 3 examples of Paul refuting the typical claims concerning himself as well as the fund.

18. In Acts 20:22, Paul states: "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there." What does he mean by "bound in the spirit"?

19. In Acts 20:34, Paul tells the Ephesians what "drives" him, in the face of "bonds and afflictions". What is it, and how can we develop the same spirit?

20. In Acts 20:35, Paul concludes his exhortation by pointing out that everything he has done was motivated by a desire to imitate Christ, and in so doing motivate others to do the same: "I have showed you all things, how that so laboring ye ought to support the weak (c.p. Romans 15:1), and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - a. Where is it recorded that Jesus spoke these words? (hint: John 21:25)
 - b. Explain using scripture why "it is more blessed to give than to receive." (Some helpful passages: Ps. 41:1-3, Prov. 19:17, Heb. 13:1-3)

Acts 21:1-6 - The journey to Jerusalem - Miletus to Tyre

21. Have you noticed that on this journey to Jerusalem, in nearly every case, the disciples pray as Paul and his band leave? Do you make it a habit to pray before you or other brethren & sisters embark on a journey?
22. The disciples in Tyre "said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem" (v4) Was Paul disobeying the command of the Spirit by going up to Jerusalem? Explain.

Acts 21:7-14 - The journey to Jerusalem - Tyre to Caesarea

23. In Caesarea, whose house did they stay at? Name at least 2 things he had in common with Paul's mission (Hint: think back to Part 1)

24. Agabus' prophecy. Why is it fitting that Agabus makes an appearance just as the fund is about to be brought to Jerusalem?

25. Who joins with the brethren and sisters of Caesarea to try and convince Paul not to go (v12)?

26. Have you ever placed practical concerns over spiritual ones? How can we with the right motives make the mistake of trying to convince someone from making a spiritually motivated decision? (here's an example: your friend is considering a low-paying career that leaves lots of time for the work of the Truth)

27. Look up “breaking my heart”. What is an alternative rendering (try Youngs Literal Translation)?
28. How was this a journey of personal “atonement” for Paul?

Acts 21:15-17 - The journey to Jerusalem - Caesarea to Jerusalem

29. Look up the word “carriages” (v15) what is being referred to?

Notice v17: “the brethren received us gladly” - is it not amazing to see the spirit of earnest care and genuine hospitality that Paul encountered at every place in his journey to Jerusalem?

Acts 21:18-26: The presentation of the fund

30. When Paul and the delegates brought the fund to James and the elders, where did Paul place the emphasis as to who was behind the amazing events of his third journey, including the collection for the fund?
31. In true Luke style, there is no fanfare about the actual presentation of the money. Acts 24:17 makes it clear that this was the time when the fund was delivered. Describe the response of the brethren as outlined in Acts 21

32. We can imagine Paul breathlessly recounting the powerful work that Yahweh accomplished during his third journey, and the spirit of grace at work amongst the Gentiles and here is the evident token, the “fruit” of their agape love - alms for Jerusalem. Then the brethren from Jerusalem very quickly turn the conversation to all the thousands of Jews who are “zealous of the law”, and bring up the old accusations against Paul that is concerning these Jews, and what he needs to do. Does this sound like the hearts of Jew and Gentile “knit together” to you? Was this the conclusion to the fund that you envisioned? Read this chapter from a few different versions, and try to “put yourself there” and “picture the scene”. Jot down some notes about the conclusion and delivery of the fund.

33. We may never have an experience like Paul, where a work in the truth that we have put years of effort into, and weathered the ups and downs, doesn't work out as plans. Perhaps though, we have had a similar experience on a smaller scale.

a. How do we react when our efforts are not appreciated? What have we learned from Paul?

34. Interpretation of results. Like Paul, we may have a grand goal in mind, and it may be that it is not God's will for now. For instance, we may make a huge investment in time, energy, and resources into a preaching campaign that yields not a single visitor. Was that effort wasted? What are some important scriptural principles around the interpretation of results that can help us straighten our perspective?

The Apostle Paul - Dying to Self

When you are forgotten or neglected or purposely set at naught
And you don't sting and hurt with the insult of the oversight
But your heart is happy being counted worthy to suffer for Christ
Then that is dying to self.

When your good is evil spoken of, when your wishes are crossed
and you refuse to let anger rise in your heart or even defend yourself
But take it in patience and loving silence
That is dying to self

When you are content with any food, any offering, any raiment, any climate
Any society, even solitude, any interruption, as the will of God
That, my brother, is dying to self.

When you lovingly and patiently bear any disorder, any irregularity
Any unpunctuality, any annoyance; when you can stand face to face
With waste and folly and extravagance and spiritual insensitivity
And endure it as Jesus endured it
That, my sister, is dying to self

When you no longer care to hear yourself in conversation
To record your own good works or itch after commendation
When you truly love to be unknown
That's dying to self.

When you can receive correction and reproof from one of less stature than yourself
And can humbly submit inwardly as well as outwardly
Finding no rebellion or resentment rising within your heart
That truly is dying to self.

When you can see your brother prosper and have his needs met
And you can honestly rejoice with him in spirit and feel no envy or question God
While your own needs are far greater and you are in desperate circumstances
That indeed is dying to self.

**Optional - Christ
to the Gentiles:**
The apostle Paul
was truly a type of
the Lord Jesus
Christ. And it is

amazing to see the number of connections and types in Paul's journey to Jerusalem (with the offering of the Gentiles) that parallel the Lord's last days as he headed towards his great

offering. Trace Paul's journey starting in Ephesus and see how many types you can come up with. See if you can find types for Jesus's rebuke of Peter, his struggle in the garden - and determination for God's will to be done, the "daughters of Jerusalem" that wept for him, Jesus prophecy in Luke 18:31, and more! (write up on a separate paper)Conclusion

After all that work - the tireless efforts of the delegates like Titus to bring the gentile Ecclesias on board; the enthusiastic zeal of the Macedonians; the amazing way in which the spirit of Grace had motivated the Gentile brethren and sisters... and all the brethren in Jerusalem are interested in talking about is being "zealous for the Law."? One can feel the enthusiastic spirit being sucked out of the room, as Paul and his little group realizes their work did not have its intended effect. The old fears and fightings were stronger than ever. A lesser man would have completely thrown in the towel. But not the Apostle Paul. The fund was never about him, and so there was nothing to take personally. He would continue the work even while in bonds.

If the practical example of the motivating power of "grace" to inspire love and good works was not enough to get through to these brethren, could anything? The Spirit would motivate the Apostle to author the greatest exposition of the Law since Moses wrote the book of Deuteronomy, (excluding the example and teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ himself). The letter to the Hebrews would powerfully and eloquently demonstrate the superiority of the New Covenant in Christ Jesus (over the Law of Moses) as the true "Hope of Israel" having a better hope; a better mediator; a better High Priest; better Priesthood; better sacrifice; better holy of holies; better and more effectual everything.

The great struggles with both the Jews as well as the Judaizing spirit within the Ecclesia produced the letter to the Galatians, as well as that to the Hebrews. It is hard to imagine fully understanding the type of the Law, and how it fits with the New Covenant without these two letters. Likewise, in the modern history of the Truth, it is sobering to realize that much of our greatest exposition has occurred in the face of controversy. It can be easy to become discouraged when we encounter "fears within, fightings without" let us not be discouraged but realize that it has always been so. We can take comfort as the Apostles did when we fellowship the sufferings of Christ.

In the last days of Judah's Commonwealth, the great falling away had already begun to grow out of the nascent beginnings of the 1st century Ecclesia in Jerusalem. The Judaizing element would not return to the Law of Moses. Instead, they brought the focus on externals and justification by works of law into the Ecclesia. The results are still with us today, in the masses of false Christianity, and the Roman apostacy which will be judged at the return of Christ.

As we await our Lord's return in the waning days of the times of the Gentiles, let us determine to keep alive the pioneering spirit of the Apostle Paul and all those men and women of faith who first gave themselves to the Lord. Who experienced the joys of seeing the transformative power of God's word provoke brethren to respond with love and good works.

The Jerusalem Poor Fund is still in operation today, when brethren and sisters determine to "send relief" - of a willing spirit, being motivated and inspired by Yahweh's Grace. When the example of the Macedonian brethren stirs us to go beyond our means in service to others; When the spirit of Lydia provokes a response of faithful hospitality; When a young brother, in the spirit of Isaiah and Titus says: "Here am I, send me" in the work of the Truth; When an aged brother holds fast to the end; When ordinary and seemingly mundane Ecclesial activities are zealously turned into something so much more - on a spiritual level; Then Yahweh will assuredly reap what has been sown by the Apostle Paul and the brethren and sisters who's faithfulness has been recorded for our benefit. The principle of reaping and sowing doubtless holds true, for: "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." (Psalm 126:5-6)

At the great harvest, it will be seen that the work of the Apostle was not in vain. When he is raised from the dead to "stand in his lot", he'll discover that faithful men and women over the course of two-thousand years have benefitted from his tireless example as they sought to join him in imitating Christ and as it were "minister for Jerusalem" in their own lives and Ecclesias, for the hope of Israel.

More than anyone, Paul recognized that Israel was subject to their "turn" of blindness during the age of Gentile darkness, having . Yet he knew the scriptures: "all Israel shall be saved", when the Gentiles would bring the Jewish "sons from afar" back to Zion. That time when the hearts of Jew and Gentile will be knit as one, when the offering of the Gentiles will be accepted, and the Jews grafted back into their own olive tree, in the bonds of the New Covenant. "When Yahweh turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. [2] Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: *Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift!* then said they among the heathen, Yahweh hath done great things for them. [3] Yahweh hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." (Psalm 126:1-3)

In light of all this, with bursting hearts we surely are able to exclaim: