



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XIX
Issue 474

Another Cook at “Bible Study”

The Misuse of II Timothy 2:15 and the Abuse of Christ's Body

Part 3 of 4

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (KJV).

Scribes – those who write (copying Scriptures and writing about Scripture topics).

γραμματεὺς (*grammateus*)

One easily can see that this Greek word *grammateus* is where we get our English word “grammar.”

- a *writer* (Strong)
- a *writer* (Bullinger)
- *writer* (Knoch)

Teachers – those who make the Scriptures clear to the listener

διδάσκαλος (*didaskalos*)

- an *instructor* (Strong)
- an *instructor* (Bullinger)
- one who *instructs* (Knoch)

I was appointed ... a teacher of the nations (I Timothy 2:7).

I was appointed ... a teacher of the nations (II Timothy 1:11).



My Own Personal Struggles

There was a period in my life where I had misgivings with such callings – with my own calling – because of my rejection of what I had seen in the false religious division of “clergy” and “laity.”

I briefly adopted a viewpoint that allowed no place for the role of teacher: it was an “everyone-a-minister” approach. If there was a meeting, each person was to bring their buckets filled to share and pour out on others.¹

Others, not knowing or understanding God's present truth, misinterpret and misapply I John 2:27,² thus also reaching a false conclusion that there is no place for teachers today. While it is true that all ministry “gifts” and “offices” have ceased, the calling and role of teachers and heralds are divine requirements for today.

The “I-Can't-Help-Its”

I can't help what I do. I've tried to help it; I've tried

1. A concept influenced by Watchman Nee.
2. “The anointing which you obtained from Him is remaining in you, and you have no need that anyone may be teaching you, but as His anointing is teaching you concerning all, and is true, and is no lie, according as it teaches you also, remain in Him” (Concordant Version).

(see *STUDY*, page 4195) ↗

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XIX, No. 474 – January 6, 2015

This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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STUDY (continued from front page)

to quit. I describe what happens to me as, "I have the *I-Can't-Help-Its*."

For those of us called to serve the Body of Christ as teachers, this is extremely humbling.

THE LITERACY OF JESUS CHRIST AND HIS REFERENCES TO READING

Jesus Christ was Literate

Three Scripture passages show that Jesus Christ was literate:

- He knew the letters of the alphabet (John 7:15).
- He could read, as Luke 4:16-30 describes Him reading from the scroll of Isaiah at the synagogue.
- He could write, as John 8:6 tells of Him writing in the dust with his finger.

Jesus Christ Addressed the Subject of Reading to the Classes Who Were Literate

Jesus asked the **chief priests, scribes and elders,**

Have you not read this Scripture ...? (Mark 11:27; 12:10).

He asked a **Mosaic lawyer,**

What is written in the Law? How do you read? (Luke 10:26).

Jesus asked the **Pharisees,**

Have you never read ...? (Mark 2:24-25).

Have you not read ...? (Matthew 12:2, 5).

He asked the **Sadducees,**

Have you not read ...? (Mark 12:18, 26).

JESUS CHRIST AND PAUL READ THE SCRIPTURES AT THE SYNAGOGUES

Jesus Christ's custom was to read the Scriptures publicly at the synagogue.

He went to the synagogue, as His custom was, on the Sabbath day. And He stood up to read ... (Luke 4:16).

Paul had the same custom.

*Now, after the **reading** of the law and the prophets, the chiefs of the synagogue dispatch to them, saying, "Men, brethren, if there is in you any word of entreaty for the people, say it" (Acts 13:15).*

Now, traversing Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. Now, as was Paul's custom, he entered to them, and on three sabbaths he reasons with them from the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-2).

Now the brethren immediately send out both Paul and Silas by night into Berea, who are away, coming along into the synagogue of the Jews. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who receive the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures day by day, to see if these have it thus (Acts 17:10-11).

Now he reasoned in the synagogue on every sabbath and persuaded both Jews and Greeks (Acts 18:4).

ISRAEL'S HOLY AND SOLEMN CONVOCATIONS

The Hebrew Scriptures are filled with examples of the reading of the Law and the Prophets to Israel. Whole days were devoted to it.

A great related passage is Nehemiah 8. Here is an abridgment of :1-9

All the people were gathered and asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses. And Ezra brings the law before the assembly, both of ►

men and women. And Ezra the scribe stood on a tower of wood that they made for the purpose. And he opened the book before the eyes of all the people. And when he opened it all the people stood up, and Ezra blessed Yahweh, the great Elohim. And all the people bowed. And the law of Elohim was **read** with explanation – so as to give the meaning, and they gave understanding. And all the people wept at their hearing the words of the law.

Notice carefully the words of :8, as this is the role of the teacher of Scripture:

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading (KJV).

+ + + +

Other Examples Cited

He took the book of the covenant, and **read** in the audience of the people (Exodus 24:7).

Thou shalt **read** this law before all Israel in their hearing (Deuteronomy 31:11).

Afterward he **read** all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua **read** not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them (Joshua 8:34).

Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, "Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book." And Shaphan **read** it before the king (II Kings 22:10).

The king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests, and the prophets, and all the people, both small and great: and he **read** in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the LORD (II Kings 23:2).

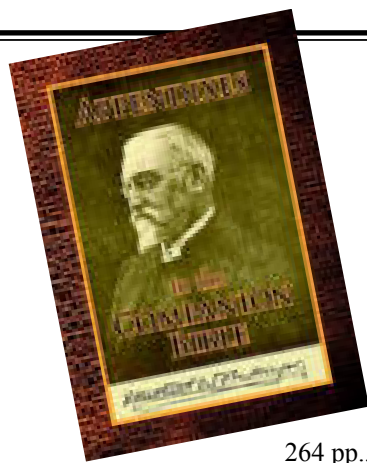
Therefore go thou, and **read** in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD's house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt **read** them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities ... Then **read** Baruch in the book the words of Jeremiah in the house of the LORD, in the chamber of Gemariah the son of Shaphan the scribe, in the higher court, at the entry of the new gate of the LORD's house, in the ears of all the people (Jeremiah 36:6, 10).

PAUL'S INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING READING

Paul has three instructions in his epistles related to reading.

Two refer to his letters being read to the saints.

Whenever the epistle should be **read to you**, cause that it should be read in the Laodicean ecclesia also, and that you also may be reading that out of Laodicea (Colossians 4:16).



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*I am adjuring you by the Lord, that this epistle be **read to all** the holy brethren (I Thessalonians 5:27).*

The student of Scripture must always beware of the tendency to think of themselves as better than or superior to others and look down on them.

One refers to Timothy reading.

Pride works to make us think that we have somehow “arrived” scripturally and spiritually. It embraces a self-confidence that one’s life and knowledge of the truth have already been perfected; that we have attained some level of personal perfection.

*Till I come, give heed to **reading**, to entreaty, to teaching (I Timothy 4:13).*

The fact is that none of us presently possess “all truth” infallibly. We are all on a journey. None of us has a corner on truth.

Here is the *only* instruction in Paul’s letters for an individual to read. Even this one is not so much for Timothy to be reading *for himself*, but *to others*.

Being a Know-It-All

We know this because the remaining two things to which he is to give heed in the passage are *entreaty* and *teaching* – both things that he would not do *to himself*, but *to others*. So, even this instruction is for the Scriptures to be read *to others*.

If any man thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know (I Corinthians 8:2).

INHERENT DANGERS OF STUDY

Ever Learning

Being Puffed Up

Knowledge puffs up, but charity edifies (I Corinthians 8:1).

Always learning and yet not at any time able to come into a realization of the truth (II Timothy 3:7).

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Revelation? or Imitation?

We must be careful of the inherent danger of simply following the teachings of others without verification (seeing if those things be so). We dare not be mimics, parrots and echoes.

Being Nothing

If I should ... be perceiving all secrets and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith ... yet have no love, I am nothing (I Corinthians 13:2).

Without love we come up empty. Love is quintessential. Paul says that we can have everything else, but not having love we would be *nothing* (:2), and that it all would be *profitless* (:3).

He sums it up in :13 to tell us that love is faith's and hope's (or expectation's) superior:

But the greatest of these is love.

Love is indispensable.

BEYOND ACADEMICS

Ours is a call to go beyond merely academics. Studying the Scriptures is not our goal; it is the means to our goal. Our goal is to know Him.³

Paul's passion went beyond simply the academic, he desired to "know Him" (Philippians 3:10). His unceasing prayer for the believer was that God would give them a "spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him" (Ephesians 1:17), that they would "walk worthily of the Lord for all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the realization of God" (Colossians 1:10), and that their love would super-abound in realization (Philippians 1:9).

3. "Him" is a reference to Christ Jesus, Who is the "Image" of His Father (Colossians 1:15), Whose [Christ] very purpose is to unfold Him [God] ("He **unfolds** Him," John 1:18, *Concordant Version*). To know more about the Father, one must know more about the work and ministry of His Son ("He who has seen Me has seen the Father," John 14:9; "neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him," Matthew 11:27). For more information on this theme see, ONE LAYER AT A TIME *The Unfolding of God*, by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. (*Bible Student's Notebook* #423).

LONG-STANDING ASSUMPTIONS

In addition to the misuse of II Timothy 2:15 there are also other long-standing assumptions that have been used to abuse members of Christ's Body. We will consider a few of them.

Scripture Quotation


Many assume that it is always necessary to fill our conversations with Scripture quotations along with the citing of their books, chapters and verses.

Consider Joel and Tom mentioned earlier. Suppose that Joel shares some things with a friend and fills it with Scripture quotations and references. On the other hand Tom shares some things with little or no such quotations and references. Are we to assume that Joel is sharing truth and conversely Tom is not? Of course not.

Acts 17:22-31 records Paul's message to the pagan Athenians on Mars' Hill. It is important to note the conspicuously complete absence of any use of Scripture by him – not even once. Perhaps just as interesting, the only quotation by Paul is one of a heathen poet.

What is so striking about this is that we are often taught that the God-honoring method of communicating with the lost (*i.e.*, "witnessing," "soul winning," "preaching," etc.) is to riddle our "messages" with Scripture references. In some circles, one's spirituality may even be judged based on the amount of Scripture memorized and delivered during such an "evangelistic" opportunity.

(To be continued.)

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A Short Autobiographical Work

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

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