

We've won the lottery

INVISIBLE GIFTS TRUMP ALL THAT IS SEEN

One of the handy things for Israel about the gospel given to Abraham (that is, the gospel of the Circumcision—Gal. 2:7) is that its blessings are visible. Think of the manna falling from heaven, the water flowing from the rock, the pillars of cloud and fire, and the magnificent temple Solomon eventually built for the worship of Yahweh. What sort of land did God promise His people? One flowing with milk and honey; milk from the goat, honey from the bee,



blessings to be poured upon cereal and dripped onto the tongue. Not so the evangel of grace. Our blessings are invisible, and yet they far outweigh the physical blessings of Israel. How is this possible? A man drinking milk can still feel condemned; a woman spreading honey on her biscuit might still consider herself unworthy before God.

In contrast, the evangel of the grace of God brings peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and the knowledge that sin can no longer bring us into His disfavor (Rom. 8:1). It assures us that, whether we are watching or drowsing, we will be living at the same time together with Him (1 Thess. 5:10-11). When Israel disobeyed God, the milk and honey failed. When we disobey God, grace overflows from His celestial treasure house (Rom. 5:20).

Folks, we've won the lottery!

Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2



Two out of three isn't bad.

Money vs. celestial blessings

In Acts, chapter 16, Paul and Silas are in the Macedonian city of Philippi. Things initially go well for them there when they find a devout group of women gathered at a river for prayer. The women receive Paul's evangel of grace, and one of them, Lydia, invites Paul and Silas to lay over indefinitely at her house. (This bit of hospitality will serve Lydia well in the resurrection—at the dais of Christ—when the Savior rewards her for her service.)

Paul and Silas have a bad day soon after, however, when they encounter a maid with a python spirit. I don't know exactly what a python spirit is, but it seems to infiltrate mankind by means of flattery.

This demon recognizes the spirit of God in Paul and Silas and announces loudly through the maid: "These men are slaves of God most high, who are announcing to you a way of salvation!" This circus act is a novelty at first, but it keeps on throughout the week and eventually exasperates Paul. The apostle at last rebukes the spirit, casting it out. The maid is delivered, but her masters—who somehow made a living from the spirit's pronouncements—are incensed. From Acts 16:19—

"Now her masters, perceiving that the expectation of their income was come out, getting hold of Paul and Silas, draw them into the market to the magistrates."



"Where's the money, Paul?"

Note the chief complain of these men: "The expectation of their income was come out." It was all about the money. If Paul's presence in Philippi could have somehow fattened the town coffers instead of decimating them, the masters would have no doubt felt differently about Paul's gospel. As it was, they despised it.

(Continued on page 2)

1 TIM. 6:8



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**"Now, having sustenance and shelter...
...with these we shall be sufficed."**

...otherwise we'll fall into trials and traps and get swamped in extermination and destruction (1 Tim. 6:9), effectively keeping us from having either the time or the peace to sit quietly and read scripture, stare at nature, or contemplate our destiny.

...money vs. celestial blessings

(Continued from pg. 1)

Nothing much has changed. Money is still the criteria by which Paul's message is judged, and the reason for which it is rejected.

Paul's gospel brings believers spiritual blessings. From Ephesians 1:3—

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who blesses us with every spiritual blessing among the celestials, in Christ."

Spiritual blessings are invisible, and invisible things are severely devalued by a world bent on sight. The world says, "Show me what you own, and I'll tell you your worth." Spiritual blessings say, "We declare to you your worth." They forget to even ask what you own.

Paul's problem was that he never looked the part of a prosperous individual. For a time—when he first learned of the new gospel in the Arabian desert through multiple appearances of the risen Christ—Paul was the richest man on the face of the earth. Think about that. He was the first member of the body of Christ; he was the first to understand that God now saw humanity through Christ; he was the first to be informed of the celestial destiny of body saints; he was the first to learn that sin now inspired more grace; he was the first human being to whom it was said: "You are coming here. To heaven. With Me. To My throne. To rule with Me at my Father's right hand." Then Christ told him: "Tell the others."

How do you walk out of that desert the same person you were when you walked in?

You don't.

How can you not seek out the others?

You can't.

Paul was a walking treasure house clothed in tent material; he probably made some of his own garments from canvas remnants.

Here he comes now, trudging down the Philippi Way with another traveler, Silas, the two of them kicking up dust into the wind. In spite of the desolate surroundings, both men seem to travel in a divine sheen. Ask Paul about it and he will describe it as, "A realization of Christ." Nothing can touch it.



Photo by Saul of Tarsus for The Macedonian News

Silas outside Philippi

These are the two richest men on Earth, and yet no one perceives it. Where is their treasure? Flesh and blood cannot reveal it. Paul has a fanny pack, but it's stuffed only with figs and almonds. A flask of water is tied to the pack with a leather cord.

Stop the pair on the road and ask them how it goes; they want to talk, believe me. They want to talk because the treasure they possess is shared via the spoken word. (The small man, Paul, also writes it down.)

"Yet how should they be hearing apart from one heralding? How beautiful are the feet of those bringing an evangel of good!" —Rom. 10:15, 18

Give the small man thirty minutes and he will pass on to you the same information the resurrected Christ gave him in the desert. (The tall one, Silas, will require an hour; he's not as versed.) The information they give you, if you believe it, will impart to you the same sheen—the same invisible shield worn by these common-looking men.

Walking taller than ever, the two move on, wealthy beyond all human imagining. Why they wear no sandals is anyone's guess.

Two days from now, the Philippian magistrates will beat and jail them.

Two millennia from now, the mainstream Christian religion will forget how poor and wrong heaven's greatest message, on earth, appears. ■

What a Revelation!

God knows how much money we don't need

One of the most amazing demonstrations of God's sovereignty over legal tender is recorded in Matthew 17:27.

Some from Jerusalem who collected the temple tax came to Peter and said, "Is not your teacher settling the double drachma tribute?" (Mt. 17:24). Peter wasn't sure, so he just said, "Yes." When he got to where Jesus was, Jesus forestalled him, telling him that the temple tribute should rightly be collected from aliens, not citizens of Israel. "Yet, lest we should be snaring them," Jesus said, "go, cast a fish hook into the sea, and pick up the first fish coming up, and opening its mouth, you will be finding a stater. Getting that, give it to them for Me and you."

On his way to the sea with his pole, Peter must have shook his head and smiled. When he shoved his index finger into the mouth of the first fish and felt the hard coin against the fish's soft innards, he must have closed his eyes and wept.



God knows how much money each of us personally needs. Were it a part of His plan, He could cause this money to grow on our trees, form like crystals in our freezers, or be crapped, gleaming, by our dogs. Instead, He gives us what we need (not necessarily what we want) and arranges things so that we *must* come to Him for our sufficiency.

God knows how much money we need, yes. But He also knows how much we don't need. ■

ARE YOU RICH?

Read
Ephesians 1:3

Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



The fondness for money —

It's not money that's the root of all evils, but rather a fondness for it.

"For the root of all of the evils is the fondness for money, which some, craving, were led astray from the faith and try themselves on all sides with much pain." —1 Tim. 6:10

These are strong words. The strongest word, however, may very well be the weakest-sounding one: "fondness."

When we picture someone loving money, we picture a pirate thrusting his hands into a treasure chest, bringing up two fistfuls of booty, and then watching the doubloons spill over his fat fingers with an accompanying: "Mine, all mine! Arrrrrr!" Who does that?

And yet love is not the issue here in 1 Tim. 6:10. The King James Version has "love," but of course that's a bad translation. The Greek word is not *agape*, but rather, *philarguria*. The English elements are FOND-SILVER. Leave it to the Greeks to develop a single-worded handle for this, the world's most prevalent ill. With "fondness," a whole lot more of us find ourselves snared by the premier sin.

What about the word "craving?" Surely only the likes of Donald Trump and Dr. Evil *crave* money. Let's see. The Greek word is *orgeo*, and its English element is, EXTEND. Are we extending ourselves financially? In other words, are we reaching out to accomplish more than we can afford? Then we're craving money, and the following things will happen. We will be **1)** led away from the faith, and **2)** setting ourselves up for much pain. It is not that these things *might* happen, but that they will happen. It's cause and effect.

Being led away from the faith may be as subtle as shifting one's reli-

ance from God to a savings account, or as dramatic as ignoring Christ to pursue the American Dream. "Much pain" speaks for itself.

The remedy to all this is a realization of 1 Cor. 7:31—

"The fashion of this world is passing by."

Everything man values is going by the wayside. Saints, awake! Pull yourself from the Rat Race. Forsake the world while the forsaking is good and the day of salvation is so acceptable. Live mild and quiet lives in all devoutness. Don't flee to a mountaintop, but *do* have a mountaintop mentality.

Your Savior will be arriving shortly, and only spiritual values will accompany you to heaven. ■



Chicagoland Conference! Sept. 18-20

I don't know if this lady will be there, but I hope that *you* can attend the Chicagoland Conference, September 18-20 in Fox Lake, Illinois. I will be speaking, as will **Dan Sheridan** of Cross and Throne Ministries, *Unsearchable Riches* magazine editor **Dean Hough**, **Tony Nungesser** of the Concordant Publishing Concern, **Jean F. Douglas** of Perfect Grace Ministries, and **Clyde Pilkington** of www.studyshef.com

For lodging information and schedules, go to Dan Sheridan's website at www.pulsevangel.com. Or call him at 847-201-1060. Hope to see you there!