

## Acts 17:1-3

October 26, 1976

Part I (Research material)

You see, through the years, the Word and its depth just began to grow on me gradually. What I'm going to do here tonight, I could not have done thirty years ago. I could have shown you a little of what I was doing, but I could not have done in totality, naturally, what I'm going to do tonight because I've got thirty years more experience in it and learning.

I'm going to try tonight, and this is most unusual when I do this (this is like laying my heart all open and all of you walk all over the thing). I'm going to try to show you how I work the Word before I come to teach you or any of the other people in the Corps at anytime, and about a lot of other things that may enter in.

I would not expect you to be able to do, at the present moment, what I am capable of doing. Not because of my egotistical position, but because, after all, if you've had thirty to forty years working something, and you had only one year; it would seem axiomatic if you keep working that the man who has worked thirty years should have a little more knowledge than the fellow who has just been in it six months or a year. And, of course, when you work long enough you retain some things in your mind, then when you hit the same wording, the same usage of words, the same construction, later in the Word, you don't always have to check it out and refer back to it because of your recall. And, of course, after all of these years and stuff, many times I don't have to go back to checking things if I am just generally teaching.

But, when I teach the Corps, it's usually different, where again I do the one thing that I love to do and that is just to take it word by word and line by line. And I check and I double check if I have any question whatsoever or if I feel that there's more needed or that I maybe could give you more, share more with you. Because, sooner or later, some of you are going to have to come up having, not only a little of the knowledge I have and stuff that I know about the Word, but to develop it even further. I don't know where it's going to go, but I just know that these are some of the things that you have to come to.

And, well, I was asking about this **II Corinthians 4**. We're going to work Acts 17 tonight sometime between now and midnight but I just don't do things like this, because I... Just like now, I'm all nervous about this thing and that's not me. But you see, this is--I just don't do this to myself, because ordinarily, when I want to work the Word, I literally put myself behind closed doors, so to speak, or, as the scripture says, if you want to pray, you go in your closet, in the gospels. (**Matthew 6:6**) I isolate myself. And boy, then I just stay my mind on the Word. Even phone calls or anything else, unless they are emergencies, I just forget about them. And, it's difficult for me to do this in your presence because I'm just not used to it. In other words, I'm just not exposed to this kind of thing. But, I thought if I could show you a little bit, even if I don't do very much with you tonight. At least you will see that this ministry does have some depth in it, beyond anything that almost anybody knows in the ministry except you people who have lived with us and worked with us and seen it. Now, I am thinking, even like my Walter, and kids in the Corps, 1st Corps, who have known me all these years.

### **II Corinthians 4:1-2:**

Therefore 'seeing we have' [having] this ministry, as we 'have' [omit have] received mercy, we faint not;

But have renounced the ‘hidden things of dishonesty’ [shameful secret things], not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth (by manifestation of the Word of God that we teach) commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

And this, of course, as many of you know has just been my love in my heart. “Not handling the Word of God deceitfully,” which indicates that it is possible to do what? Handle it deceitfully. And the very thing that they accuse me of doing is the very thing that’s the opposite of which brought me to the ministry of the integrity and accuracy of the Word. I found it was being handled deceitfully; time and time again they were even doing this without knowledge that they were doing it. They meant well. They were sincere. But sincerity is no guarantee of truth. And we are to study to show ourselves approved to God, not men, by rightly dividing the Word, because it is His Word. And we do not handle the Word of God deceitfully, commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.

And therefore the only way people can ever really know is to sit where you’re sitting, for instance, or to live where you live and make up their mind whether we’re handling the Word deceitfully or whether we are endeavoring to rightly divide it to show ourselves approved unto God and not unto men.

Last Saturday, at the meeting with the Minnesota Harvesters, I opened with chapter 4 and 5 of II Corinthians. It’s very, very timely. As I said, I wouldn’t expect you to be able to do what I can do many times in the Word, as I said, because of my years of working it.

On this particular desk here, I have the basic things that I carry in the motor coach. This is with me all the time except for this particular Bible which happens to be with me wherever I go. This is basic to me. Ninety-five percent or more of the things that I need to cover or handle at anytime with the Way Corps or in a public meeting, I have access to in the motor coach. It’s not very much. But, one of the reasons I do not need much more is because of other things that I have in my mind that are not laid out here on this particular table.

- 1) Greek Text - always available to me
- 2) Bible Dictionary
- 3) Regular Dictionary
- 4) Young’s Analytical Concordance
- 5) Bullinger’s Figures of Speech – this I do not use a great deal unless it’s a real in-depth thing I want to do on figures of speech.
- 6) Bullinger’s Bible - I always have this when I work. One of the reasons I like it, is because Bullinger gives me a lot of Greek words quickly and he gives me access to information quickly.

I have found, in my years of working, that it is a way whereby I can facilitate my working of the Word. I believe Bullinger was one of the great Bible students of all time. Naturally there are a few places where I believe that our spiritual perception has some additions or changes

to make. I've often felt that if men like he and I could have sat together and talked over some of these tremendous things; I wonder if both of us would not have grown immensely. I've never considered myself to be a scholar. I think Bullinger was. Dr. Ginsberg, who collected the work on the Masorah, contributed much toward the acquisition of the materials in figures of speech so this could be compiled and put together as Dr. Bullinger did it. These were scholars, great men of great ability. They were not endeavoring to handle the Word of God deceitfully. They were endeavoring to rightly divide it. I feel that Dr. Bullinger lost the greatness of the Holy Spirit field because of the things he saw in the senses world that he could not reconcile himself with; the shouting, the clapping, the laying on the floor, the speaking in tongues.

7) Bullinger's Critical Greek Lexicon and Concordance

8) The Analytical Greek Lexicon

9) Dake's Annotated Reference Bible – I read it less and less; it's such fine print

This is a small portion of what I have in my personal library:

These six books I have read and re-read to teach the Book of Acts:

1) The Apostle of Reconciliation by Charles Welch. Welch took over after Dr. Bullinger died, in the Berean Publishing Trust. Dr. Welch is dead now.

2) Handbook of Biblical Chronology by Finegan.

3) Life and Epistles of Paul by Conybeare and Howson.

4) Paul of Tarsus, His Life and Teaching.

5) International Revision Commentary on Acts

6) The Acts of the Apostles, Volume 5. - by Philip Schaff, a fine Bible scholar. Schaff and Walker did histories of the Christian Church. When you read these Church histories, you have the occidental view of the best there is. I read this completely before I started teaching Acts to you.

These are different translations of The Bible or The New testament. This makes it possible for me to look at any one of these translations if I run into a complication where the Word doesn't fit. Because, if it's God's Word then, it has to fit like a hand in a glove. It just has to be.

He reads examples:

**Hebrews 2:14** by Rotherham:

...that He might paralyze him that held the dominion of death...

**Romans 5:12, 15-17** from The New English Bible:

It was through one man that sin entered the world and through sin, death and thus death pervaded the whole human race in as much as all men have sinned.

[If I were doing it I would have said "permeated" instead of "pervaded."]

But God's act of grace is out of all proportions to Adam's wrong doing. For if the wrong doing of that one man brought death upon so many, its effect is vastly exceeded by the grace of God and the gift that came to so many by the grace of one man, Jesus Christ.

And again, the gift of God is not to be compared in its effect with that one man's sin, for the judicial action following upon the one offence, issued in a verdict of condemnation but the act of grace, following upon so many misdeeds, issued in a verdict of acquittal.

For, if by the wrong doing of that one man, death established its reign through a single sinner, much more shall those who receive, in far greater measure, God's grace and His gift of righteousness, live and reign through the one man, Jesus Christ.

**I Corinthians 12:3** from The New English Bible:

Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking under the power and influence of the spirit of God, can ever say, "Jesus be cursed." And no one can really say, "Jesus is my Lord" except by and under the power and influence of holy spirit.

That's where I get the "really" from.

New Testament Works:

- 1) Numeric English New Testament by Ivan Panin – when I had time, for about 2-3 years I worked this. Davis did a take-off of Panin. Panin was the brain. What happens with all of these works is; everybody has a theological point to fit it into. So they begin squeezing. When you work the Word of God on the mathematical exactness only, then you have a tendency, if something doesn't quite fit like you think it should, then you work it around to try to get it to fit. We don't do that. We work it from a mathematical point and then when we can't understand it, or it doesn't fit quite where it should, then we drop off of that. Then we start looking for figures and have a lot of these other things that we go around to see how it really could work.
- 2) Alford Greek Testament – he looked over a lot of manuscripts and then came up with what he called his "Critical Greek Text"; the best reading from all the manuscripts that he examined.
- 3) ??? – by Noyse (sp.) – uses the text of Tishendorf (a critical Greek text editor).
- 4) New Testament Greek - Westcott and Hort – this is the one critical Greek text editor that is not covered in the Interlinear, where it gives the different readings at the bottom of the page.
- 5) Word Studies in the New Testament by Vincent, Eerdmans Co. - Vincent is one of the men that quite a few people quote, but you've got to know a lot more than Vincent if you want to rightly divide this stuff. He's okay.
- 6) Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament by Thayer, Zondervan Co. - He gives a lot of background on words.
- 7) Englishman's Greek Concordance of the New Testament, Zondervan. - You have to use the Greek words with this.
- 8) The New Testament, An American Translation by Goodspeed, University of Chicago Press. – Goodspeed was New Testament and Smith Old Testament. They were fine scholars but they

came up at the time of what is known in the theological circles as the “emergence of higher criticism”, therefore their translations were sort of influenced by the “move.”

9) The Living Bible or Paraphrased Bible

10) Young’s Literal Translation of the Bible – this is a very literal translation, being very awkward to read.

We have a phrase that I think covers it the best of all time; a literal translation according to usage. We can give you a literal but basically according to usage; in the light of how it was used then and related to our time. We try to be solid on the integrity of the Word and put it in practical terms that communicate to you or to the people of our particular era.

11) American Standard Version, 1901. In England it was done in 1881 and 1885, and then they brought it to the United States and did it over here. When they did that they had some of the American advisors work, but England didn’t accept all of the American suggestions on translation. So we weren’t allowed to put out one in the United States of America until so many years after the English one of 1881. And then 1885 is when the Old Testament was finished.

12) The Oxford Annotated Bible - it’s the Revised Standard Version. I simply look at it. I haven’t gotten a great deal of help out of it.

By the way, when I read something, I always read the footnotes first, and then I go to the body.

13) The Emphasized Bible - has a real elaborate system of markings, a whole coding system.

14) The Newberry Reference Bible - has certain things that he couches in a language that communicates to me. He handles the verb “to be” pretty accurately. I like the flavor of it at times.

15) Lamsa’s Bible Of course his great work along the line of “My God, my God, why did you spare me is in there. I want to tell you something about Lamsa. Holman published his Bible. Lamsa knew three times as much about the Word of God as they would allow him to publish because Holman is in the sales business. They’ve got to sell Bibles, and Dr. Lamsa, if he could get anything published, he didn’t care who published it. He just wanted his stuff published, and so many times Lamsa would give and do it the way they wanted to do it. That is why his work does not stand as one of the greats. There were just fantastic things that Lamsa knew. I want to say, in behalf of Lamsa, whom I love very much, “I think he was a fantastic scholar of Aramaic and the ability to handle Aramaic beyond anything that is in extant in the world today.” I’m convinced of this. I am only sorry that, again, what I call “the system” closed off a man who had knowledge that would have just blown this thing apart. Dr. Lamsa died a year or so ago. His book Origin of the New Testament will be reprinted in the next year.

16) The Jerusalem Bible – Jews Catholics and Protestants translated this – so you know it’s a mess. This one is the Catholic edition. It’s a revision that I think is the finest Roman Catholic one I own. I use it when I want to check out what the Roman Catholics should be reading.

- 17) The Millennium Bible – introduction:  
“The Millennium Bible being a help to the study of the holy scriptures in their testimony to the second coming of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.”

This was done by Dr. Bederwolf. It just basically highlights those things that in his opinion relate to the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. One of the reasons I had to work this field is because of the ‘pre’ and ‘post’ millennium groups. One group of Christians thinks we’re going through the tribulation and the other thinks we won’t. The “pre-millennial-ists” think you’re going to get “raptured” before. The “post-millennial” think it comes after the thousand years. Millennium means “thousand” and therefore you go through the tribulation period.

I’ve taught you that whenever there is a contradiction in so-called Christian bodies, I usually looked at all of them to understand what they were teaching and then I put them all aside and then just go to the Word and see if that Word doesn’t clarify itself. That’s how I got to the “Christ in you” being the baptism instead of the water, whether it immersion, sprinkling, dipping or dry cleaning. In order to do that, that Bible helped me in the “pre” and “post” millennial type of work.

- 18) The Amplified Bible - This is in the category of an expanded version in that it has extra words added over and beyond. All the extra words are marked in the verse so you can tell what has been added. Kenneth Wuest does an expanded translation but he doesn’t tell you what he adds. It’s a little more difficult to use.

- 19) The New Testament Octapla – It has eight different Bible translations on the two pages; four on each page. This is giving the background of the English bible. It starts with Tyndale; 1525, The Great Bible; 1539, The Geneva Bible; 1560 (which all the lay-people liked because it was in their language and it was in a small size that they could handle.

The Bishops didn’t like it because there were notes in the margins criticizing the hierarchy of the Church, so the bishop came out with another bible in competition with it [the Bishop’s Bible] and they made that the Bible of the Church of England), The Bishop’s Bible; 1568, The Rheim’s Bible (Catholic); 1582, The King James; 1611, The Revised Version; 1881, and The Revised Standard Version; 1960 (which has been revised since). This lets you see the change from one translation to another.

- 20) The New Testament of Gospels and Acts of the Apostles by Barkley

- 21) The New Testament for English Readers – the Alfred text; the English translation of the Greek.

- 22) The Reach Out – the Living Bible in an appealing form; to appeal to young people.

- 23) The Special Arrangement - is where they would take the parallel quotations from the Old and New Testament and arrange it so you could see it. It came out in 1961. From the work:  
“The principle importance of this new work is that it assists in increasing bible knowledge for those with limited time to study. The assembling of more than 1800 correlated parallels and 1600 verse end references represent 7 years of study and research. There are no explanations or interpretations of any kind offered by the compiler of this special arrangement.”  
This is the first one I worked when I got to where we are today; International Headquarters.

- 24) The Numerical Bible by Davis. He used the work of Panin and followed on his heels.
- 25) The New Testament From 26 Translations – that sounds real great until you get into it and you find you don't have 26 complete translations you can work with; just little bits. They give you the different readings, of what they think you ought to read, from 26 translations.
- 26) The Numeric English New Testament – this is where he took the Greek words and gave them so many numbers and added them up and if it didn't fit, he would add some or subtract some until he got it to fit.
- 20) The Resultant Greek Text by Weymouth. This made him like a critical Greek text editor but he's not handled in our interlinear. He was a fine scholar.
- 21) Good News for Modern Man – probably one of the worst news that ever came out. They put a different introduction in these for Catholic use or Protestant use.

Weymouth was English who collaborated with another man from Cambridge but Weymouth did the Resultant New Testament.

Walter Cummins joins Dr. Wierwille:

We also check a lot of Greek versions in order to make it so we don't handle the Word of God deceitfully; like:

- 1) The Englishman's Greek New Testament
- 2) Zondervan
- 3) Nelson
- 4) Westcott and Hort
- 5) Stevens
- 6) Weymouth
- 7) Tishendorf
- 8) Weiss

These were put together by Eberhard Nestle. Then his son, Erwin Nestle, carried on the work. Dr. Aland, in Munster Germany is the one who is carrying it on today. They now have the 26th edition out, which is supposed to be "it" as far as critical Greek work is concerned. Aland, Metzger, Black, Dr. Bruce and Martini - - they took the Nestle-Aland text and reworked it to where they feel they have got as close as you can get with all the available manuscripts. I think they are on the 3rd edition of that.

- 9) Octavia Major by Tishendorf is his 8th critical edition. It has some Greek text on the page and the rest of the page is footnotes from different manuscripts.

I think you're beginning to see that we just don't flip the Word off the top of our lid because we have something to argue about. We have spent years and years and years deepening ourselves in the knowledge of it. When somebody says that we deliberately fabricate stuff, that has to be a lie.

- 10) Hermann Von Soden - did a work similar to Tischendorf's.
- 11) Legg - started a work and only got through Matthew and Mark in his lifetime but he did a lot more manuscript work than either Tishendorf or Von Soden. He did the best of them all as far

as having available information. There's a group in California that's working on Luke now. They've been working on it since the 1940's.

- 12) Aland - the one Walter Cummins worked with in Germany, who reworked Nestle's edition, did the gospels similar to what Legg did but not quite as extensively. He doesn't list as many manuscripts in his edition.

We check out our Greek texts when we're working and if it still doesn't fit, then we look here and find manuscripts which may be newer but may have been copied from manuscripts that are much older than the oldest manuscripts in existence. You can't discard any manuscript evidence, even if it only appears in one or two manuscripts. It still has the possibility of being copied from a much older manuscript.

Nobody has really done an extensive work in the Aramaic or Syriac text like they're doing in Greek. Syriac is the dialect of Aramaic that is most prevalent as far as manuscripts are concerned and it carries the dialect basically that Jesus spoke. These manuscripts are available to us on microfilm. Aramaic sources:

- 1) This New Testament is out of print – so we guard this with our lives.
- 2) This one has two different scripts having basically the same vocabulary; Nestorian and Jacobite.

Our manuscripts are all in Estrangelo, handwritten. Then when we get into printing, we have Nestorian and Jacobite. This is basically because the Church split and they didn't want to look like each other.

- 3) Basic dictionary – taken from a two volume dictionary which has the explanations in Latin. It's called the Syrus Syriacis (Latin).
- 4) We have all the New Testament, except Revelation, and all of the Old Testament on microfilm in Estrangelo Aramaic.
- 5) We also have the Apocrypha in case we want to look at that.
- 6) Book from the Oxford Press - Gospels with critical footnotes that tell you about 46 different manuscripts that they come from. Some of the explanation is in Latin but most of the stuff we can read.

The Pashita Institute in Lyden, Netherlands has a list of Old Testament manuscripts, so I believe if they have Old Testament manuscripts they have New Testament manuscripts. We can get a lot of these from the British museums.

This again is just an exemplification of how we work the Word and that we don't handle it deceitfully. We have to be very very careful that we just don't give you something off the top of our heads. We check it out very very carefully.

We have about 7 grammars that we can check out. Two of them we have on microfilm. One is Everhart and Nestle. We have Theodore Noldeke. Both of these are translations from German. Noldeke is supposed to be one of the best. We have about 5 or 6 different dictionaries. We have Brakelmann's which has Latin explanations. We have Schaff's 1709 lexicon on microfilm with some explanations in Latin also.