

Bethesda

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Newsletter

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Christ's Resurrection & Ascension

*“When He ascended on high,
He led captives in His train
And gave gifts to men”
Ephesians 4:8*

The account of the resurrection of Christ is familiar to us. Let us remind ourselves of its importance. Paul argued in 1 Corinthians 15 that if Christ has not arisen from the dead then our faith is in vain and God made a liar. The resurrection is linked to His ascension since He has ascended on high. The accounts of this are in Luke 24:50, 51 and Acts 1: 9-11. The apostles vision of His being received into heaven also heard the message of the angels that He will return in similar manner to earth again.

At His ascension Christ also defeated the power of Satan and his hosts. They are viewed as captives after battle, Christ leading them disarmed and chained in a victory procession (Col 2:15). For us, Satan is a conquered foe and although he still can tempt and harm us, he is defeated and we can be assured. We are to put on the whole armour of God and be vigilant against his wiles (Eph 6: 10-18).

After His ascension the Lord gave the Holy Spirit to members of the church and also grace-gifts. These

gifts were for evangelism and the building up of believers. There were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Their aim was that “all reach unity of the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Eph 4:11-13).

Our Lord is resurrected, ascended, working among His church and coming back for His own. Let us praise Him and trust Him more.

Lawrence Chan ■

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Assembly News



Birth

14/2/2006 – God's gift of a baby boy, Isaac (2nd child) to Yaw Tong Meng & Wui Lee.

We are grateful to the Lord for His grace and goodness to Wui Lee and her baby. Pray that the Lord will equip Tong Meng and Wui Lee to bring up their two children in His will and way. ■

Bereavement

9/3/2006 Grace Ng Ngah Lee & Rachel Goh on the passing away of their elder brother.

Thank the Lord for having comforted those in their bereavement. Pray that the God of all grace will comfort the bereaved family during this time of their bereavement. ■

Farewell

23/2/2006 – Yoo Tuck Won left us to return back to Korea after completing his studies in Singapore.

15/3/2006 – Denis Yeo, Wei Yean and family left us to settle down in New Zealand

We trust in the Lord for the above brethren who left us for overseas. Pray that the Lord will enable them to settle down and shine for Him. ■



Girls' Brigade Enrolment Service (25 Feb, 1-2.30pm)



Speaker: Tay Kim Swee

Chairperson: Lynette Khong

We rejoice in the Lord with the GB officers at their enrolment service to welcome 6 new recruits and at the same time to witness the 26 GB girls' dedication to the Lord for His purpose and programme. Singing items was presented by the girls. A powerpoint presentation on the Medical and Dental trip to Nepal were shown at the service as the GB had contributed some gift items to the children at New Horizon Academy. Lunch was provided after the service. Our GB was awarded the Gold award for their good attendance and participation by the girls for their GB events among all the Primary schools in Singapore for which we are thankful to the Lord. Let's remember this outreach ministry in our prayers. ■



142nd Sunday School Anniversary & Prize-giving

(12 Mar, 7.30 pm)

Theme: "Follow Me" (John 8:12)

Speaker: Chia Boon Hong

Chairman: Ho Kuang Cheng

Singspiration was led by James Yim.

We praise the Lord for having helped the planning committee at this annual event attended by more than 450 people. Margaret Chia presented prizes to the 256 scholars with 75 receiving Roll of Honour awards. Various song items were presented by the scholars from Ang Mo Kio & Depot Walk. Light refreshments was served after the meeting. The faithfulness of the teachers in teaching and scholars in attending were worthy of praise to the Lord. Let's pray that the precious seed sown in the hearts of the scholars will bear much fruits. ■



The Faith Principle

The religious world as a whole treats church work as a business. Money is solicited; pledges are taken and budgets are made up. Church workers are hired and may be fired. Polls and surveys are taken to discover what the public wants in a church service. Religion is a product to be sold. Success is then measured by how rapidly both building and congregation grow. A mega church is viewed as the pinnacle of success.

It is all a far cry from the simplicity of the New Testament. Jesus Himself modeled a life of simple faith in His Father. He never asked for money and lived a frugal life of dependence upon His God. No one could accuse Jesus of greed or covetousness. “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich” (II Cor. 8:9 NKJ).

Those who believed in Him and His message opened their hearts and homes to Him and met His needs. What a beautiful life of faith it was!

His disciples drank deep of His spirit and emulated His life. When the Lord sent His disciples out to preach, He commanded them: “Freely you have received, freely give. Provide neither gold nor silver nor copper in your money

belts...for a worker is worthy of his food” (Matt. 10:9-10).

He also said, “It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher and a servant like his master” (Matt. 10:25). They too were called on to live a life of simple faith in the living God. Later Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without money, money bag, knapsack and sandals, did you lack anything?” So they said, ‘Nothing.’” (Luke 22:35). Their every need had been met by a loving God.

After the Lord ascended the disciples were left with the commission to evangelize the world, an awesome task (Matt. 28:18-20). The Holy Spirit was given to empower them (Acts 1:8). At first their ministry was in Jerusalem but then persecution scattered



them throughout the Roman world “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word” (Acts 8:4). The task of world evangelism had begun.

All believers were expected to be witnesses to their Lord. It was a dynamic, witnessing Church. Some like the apostles felt the special call of God to devote their full time to preaching the Word (Acts 6:2) and would go out with the commendation of their local churches (Acts 13:1-4).

Paul and Barnabas left Antioch with the blessing of the church but with no financial guarantees or pledges. No doubt an offering was taken to send them on their way but then they were expected to trust God for their needs. At times Paul might work at his trade as a tentmaker to supply his needs (Acts 20:34). But often his needs were met by the gifts of the Lord’s people (Phil. 4:16). This would free him to spend more time preaching the Word.

Elders were appointed in every church to give local leadership (Acts 14:23). These were expected to make their own living while serving the church together (Acts 20:35). Peter warned elders not to serve the Lord for money (1 Peter 5:2). All believers were expected to develop and to use the spiritual gifts which had been given them (Rom. 12:6). No professional clergy class was established under the apostles. Had not the Lord warned them against such a thing? (Matt. 23:8-12).

Churches down through the centuries have always tended to drift toward having a “priest” or “pastor.” Israel under Samuel’s leadership cried out for a king like all the nations around them. Today NT assemblies may look with longing at some of the large churches around them and feel that perhaps they should hire a gifted preacher to be their pastor. Years ago an elder in an assembly in California left that flock and told me, “I am convinced we have been wrong in having elders. We need to hire a gifted preacher and function like the Crystal Cathedral does.” Such an attitude is questioning the wisdom and authority of God’s Word.

What are some of the benefits of the pathway of faith? God can control His servant by drying up the funds and preventing some project he is attempting. The brook dried up for Elijah and God directed him to a different place (1 Kings 17:7). Once when we were considering a move the Lord hindered the sale of our home. He wanted us to stay longer in the city where we were and we recognized His hand in the circumstances.

George Mueller was very conscious of the Lord’s control over his orphanages in God’s financial provision.

Secondly, this pathway of faith and dependence upon God builds faith and character. Trees in the high



mountains are battered by fierce winter winds and bitter cold. Their roots go deep and their branches are strong. Paul affirms that “we also glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance, and perseverance, character, and character, hope” (Rom 5:3-4). Do not rob the Lord’s servants of this opportunity to grow by guaranteeing to them financial security.

Thirdly, this dependence upon God for his finances preserves the worker’s independence of human control. The employer controls the employee. It is vital that the preacher is free to speak the word without compromise. Preachers who are salaried feel the pressure to please the congregation. Job security is important. A Baptist preacher we knew said that he was concerned to leave his church and meet along NT lines but he would look at his little children asleep in their beds. How would he support them? He did finally step out and realized that God could meet his needs. A Presbyterian minister said, when given a gospel tract, “I know that message but I can’t preach it here.” He was the slave of men, not of God.

The prophet (preacher) must be free of human control so he can give God’s message fearlessly. Amos was threatened by the religious authority in Bethel and told to quit preaching. He replied with great boldness that God had called him and given him this message. He refused to be intimidated. “Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord” (Amos 7:16).

Paul could speak boldly to the Galatians, rebuking them for listening to false teaching. “For do I now persuade men or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be the bondservant (slave) of Christ” (Gal.1:10). Slaves are not for hire; they are owned.

A servant of the Lord was threatened twice by elders that they would cut off their financial support. He was thankful that he was depending on the Lord and was not their salaried servant. The preacher must be free to preach the Word of God without fear of men.

Finally, the life of faith is a powerful witness to the existence and providential care of the living God. George Mueller stated that one of the reasons for his great orphanage work was to be a testimony to the power of prayer and the existence of God. Could God provide for the thousands of orphans without solicitation of funds or even hints of need?

Indeed God could and did, in amazing wonderful ways. God does answer prayer.

Earlier Anthony Norris Groves left his dental practice and went out as a missionary to Baghdad and then to India, serving the Lord on a faith basis. His example has inspired thousands of men and women to step out in faith to serve God. The faith principle for serving the Lord is a vital principle in Scripture. Let us beware of settling for less.

Mr Donald L. Norbie ■



Ang Mo Kio RFG

Our first outing for the year 2006 on 24 February was a complete success although we were without a badminton court for half the time!

In our last planning meeting, most if not all felt that more fellowship was needed and we made a very bold move to halve the monthly meetings to outings!

Almost every AMK RFG member turned up on 24 Feb 06 at the Thomson Community Club with children and a baby in tow but due to the quintessential computer online booking for the modern day, the badminton courts were double-booked by a common computer glitch.

In other words, our courts were occupied by others! The CC staff took half an hour to resolve the problem as some members in good Christian perseverance and persistence worked out a solution with them and finally the courts were returned to us for the second hour.

While waiting for our turn, some of us tried out the gym equipment and others caught up with each other's well-being. We wasted no time in maximizing the only hour of badminton play, double-playing on the courts and even on the stage. Every one took part eagerly; most sporting were a grandmother and a young baby who was minded by several sisters while the baby's mother demonstrated her prowess.

The evening was an eye-opener. There are professional players amongst us! This may be the start of a BAMK badminton tournament! Even our next bowling outing may well be converted to another badminton session! As TK said, he had not perspired like that for a long time!

The outing was heartening as all made an effort to participate. Although the skills were very varied, every one made room for the other in brotherly love. It was an encouraging time of getting to know one another as members in God's family in a different light, in a very practical kind of way. There was graciousness, patience and consideration. At the end, we all felt refreshed and bonded and we looked very much forward to our next gathering for Bible study!

Phoebe Teo ■

Report on the Results of the Readership Survey



First of all, the committee would like to express its sincere thanks and appreciation to the 109 assembly members who responded to the recent readership survey. In particular, to those who have given invaluable feedback on how to improve the newsletter.

The survey showed that 82.7% (95) of the respondents read the newsletter and 12.8% (14) do not. And among those who read, 52.3% (57) said they read it from cover to cover while the rest indicated that they either read the feature articles only or the assembly news update or both. Five of the fourteen who do not read said they could not find the time to read it while another two said the print size was too small; several other reasons were given by the non-readers. Nine believers (inclusive of one elder!) indicated that they would be interested to attend a writers' workshop, should the committee organise one.

Interesting suggestions given included the following: Increase font size, improve layout, have a question

and answer section, have a wider spectrum of articles (e.g., include contributions from youths and the sisters), testimonies or write up by elders, deacons and full time workers and members of the assembly, various ministries (e.g., CEP, Sunday School, RFG, etc.) taking turns to highlight their ministry and needs, etc.

While the committee is deeply gratified to take note of the high readership rate and the high proportion who read it quite thoroughly, we also take all the suggestions for improvements very seriously. Among other impending steps for improvements and subject to the elders' approval, we intend to increase the pool of writers by organising a writers' workshop sometime in May or August 2006. Jin Song (mobile: 97879698; email tanjinsong21@yahoo.com) from the newsletter committee is heading this project, so look out for up and coming announcements or contact him directly if you are interested. Jeffrey Yap (yaphics@netvigator.com), although relocated to Hong Kong, has continued to help us with the



layout. He will look into improving the font size and layout. However, the committee welcomes talented and creative saints who wish to help out in this area; interested individuals can contact Jeff or the assembly office (Tuck Keong at 64587474 or bethesda@pacific.net.sg). We will also be recruiting younger members to join the committee and we welcome sponsors to take us from two colour to a full four colour layout.

The committee feels that the Lord can make use of the newsletter to contribute significantly to body life at our assembly. We constantly welcome your suggestions to make it better as a way of serving the Lord, improving communication at the assembly and edifying saints. If you have any suggestion, you do not have to wait till the next readership survey (it might be another few years before we do another one!). Just drop a note to the assembly office or speak to any member of the editorial committee – they are our walking suggestion boxes!!

While we cannot implement every single suggestion, we do promise to consider every one seriously. Needless to say, please contact us if you wish to help the committee on an ad hoc basis in selected areas (without sitting in the committee on a full time basis).

William Koh ■

The Sepulchre

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy and did run to bring His disciples word. Matt. 28:8

They departed quickly from the sepulchre. Who were they? Why did they depart from the sepulchre quickly? How could they be afraid and be filled with joy at the same time?

These are relevant questions facing us this Easter season. To answer these questions, we need to consider three Thoughts, viz.

A. The Tragedy that led to the Sepulchre.

It was not the Tragedy of the Righteous Son of Man having to die on the cross. It was that of Sinful Man, as represented by Pilate and others like him, that sent Him there. Others like him? Yes, others like him. They are still with us to this very day and will still be with us tomorrow. What did Pilate do?

Pilate sent an innocent Man to the Sepulchre!

Three times Pilate declared, I find no fault in this Man. (Jn. 18:38; 19:4, 6)



In the first instance, he was face-to-face with Jesus, the Truth (Jn. 18:37, 38). He was challenged to act on the Truth. It was easy. But what was easy was often the hardest to do. If he found Jesus innocent, just set Him free. No, He would not decide, he would let others do it for him. He seized upon a custom of the day to free a prisoner and asked the crowd, “Will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?” Pilate had the facts before him, but he chose not to stand up to his conviction. He passed the buck to someone else.

How like us it is today. Confronted with the facts that relate to Jesus, yet we dare not stand up for the truth and, like Pilate, sent an innocent Man to be Scourged, Smitten, and to Suffer – ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life (Acts 3:14). I wonder if some innocent man or woman has ever suffered because I have not the courage to stand up to tell the truth. It is tragic.

Pilate thought that scourging Jesus should suffice to please the crowd. The second time he said “Behold, I bring Him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in Him.” (Jn. 19:4)

If so, it would be so easy – Set Him free, Pilate. Set the innocent Man free!

Why tell the crowd, “Behold the Man!” (19:5) and for them in turn to cry out, “Crucify him! Crucify Him!” (19:6)

At this stage, it was cowardice for Pilate to wash his hands of responsibility, and telling the crowd, “Take ye Him, and crucify Him”. For the third time, he declared unashamedly “I find no fault in Him” (19:6) and yet dared not act accordingly. Instead, he performed the most shameless deed in history.

That was the Tragedy of Sinful Man – knowing the Truth, but dared not act accordingly. Instead he sent an innocent Man to the Cross that would finally lead to the Sepulchre!

But it was not enough burying Jesus in the Sepulchre. His enemies made the Sepulchre Sure, Sealing the Stone, and Setting a watch (Matt. 27:66). Why were they so fearful of this innocent Man? At the Sepulchre, Man showed himself for what he was. Man was, and is, an open Sepulchre with all his Sins (Rom. 3:10-18) sending the innocent Son of Man to the Sepulchre. He came to bear away their sins, but they chose to bear their own sins.

That was and is the Tragedy at the Sepulchre!

B. The Triumph at the Sepulchre

This is where we seek to answer the three questions posed above. “They” were the faithful women, namely, Mary Magdalene, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, (Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:1) who



earlier with other women (Mt. 27:55, 56) stayed behind, sitting over against the sepulchre, after Joseph had rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed (Matt. 27:60, 61) on the day of the crucifixion. Then in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. (28:1) After that they departed quickly from the sepulchre.

Why did they do so? Why not? The Sepulchre was now empty. And they were afraid because they could not explain the happenings, but they rejoiced because they accepted the Fact in Faith - He is not here. He is risen as He said. O what a Glorious Triumph at the Sepulchre!

Consider then...

1. The Empty Sepulchre:

In spite of all that Man could do, God could not allow His Son to remain in the Sepulchre. He resurrected Him. This was the Triumph at the Sepulchre!

(They) laid Him in a sepulchre. But God raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:39), freeing Him from the agony of death because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on Him. (Acts 2:24, NIV) Neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. (Acts 2:27)

Thus, Jesus rose again from the dead as He said. Hear, therefore, the triumphant proclamation:

“He is not here: for He is risen...
Come, see the place where the Lord
lay.” (Mt. 28:6)

What a Glorious Victory it was.
Jesus had triumphed over Death
and the Grave –

“O death, where is thy sting? O grave,
where is thy victory?” I Cor. 15:55

2. The new Experience with the Risen Saviour.

- a. Peter who denied his Lord was specially Remembered when the angel told the women to tell His disciples and Peter, (Mk. 16:7) that the Risen Lord would meet them in Galilee.

He was later to be Restored and Recommissioned – Feed My Lambs/sheep. (Jn. 21:15-17)

- b. Thomas who Refused to believe that the Lord had Resurrected finally Recognised Him by His nail prints in His hands and side. He fell down and Revered Him, saying, My Lord and my God. (Jn. 20:28)



- c. We ourselves Rejoice as we are Reassured by the words of Jesus: Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. (Jn. 20:29)
This is the Triumph of the Empty Sepulchre!

C. The Trophies from the Sepulchre

And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy Matt. 28:8

Consider what the women took with them when they left the Sepulchre – their “Trophies” of Fear and Great Joy. According to Strong, “fear” is the Greek word Phobeo [from which we get the English word phobia] which means to frighten, (pass.) to be alarmed; to be in awe of. Thus, the women experienced Fear, but it was...

1. The Fear of Alarm – they Found an empty sepulchre so they were Fearful. Matt. 28:5, 6
2. The Fear of Amazement – they could not Fathom, but they believed in Faith. Matt. 28:5
3. The Fear of Awe – later they accepted the Fact, Fell at His Feet and worshipped. Matt. 28:9

It was not anxious, worrisome fear. It was the Fear of Alarm to discover their Master’s body not in the sepulchre, and Amazed at the Angelic explanation which they Accepted leaving them in Awe.

Thus, the women in faith and anticipation of meeting Jesus experienced Great Joy. Later it was manifested in the other disciples as they too were filled with ...

1. Joy at the sight of the Resurrected Saviour. Cf. Lk. 24:40, 41
2. Joy of the Rising Lord with a promise to Return. Cf. Lk. 24:51, 52; Acts 1:11

And for us, Fear and Joy should also be our Trophies as we consider the Empty Sepulchre this Easter season.

... and did run to bring His disciples word. Mt. 28:8

We should come away from the sepulchre with Reverent Fear in our Walk with God, filled with great Joy to tell others that He is Risen as He said; He is Returning for us as He said; and He will Reward us with Trophies that only He (and none other) can give, as He said:

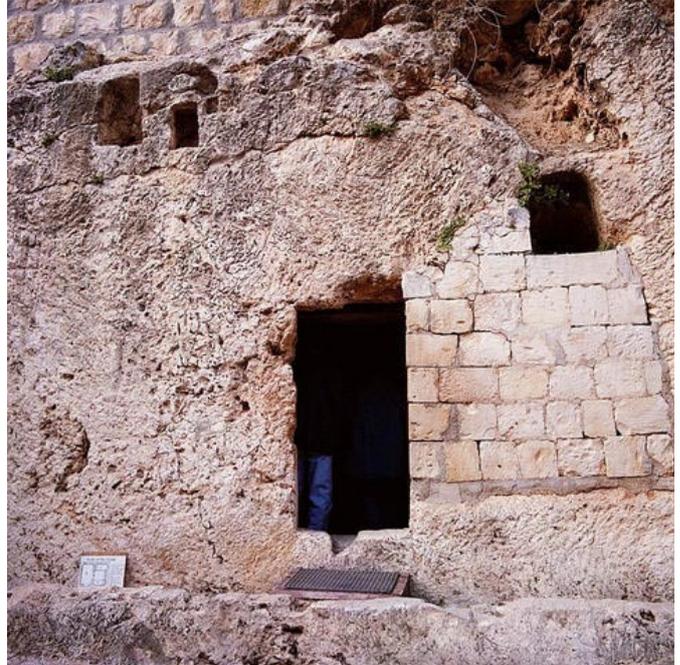


And, behold, I come quickly; and my
reward is with me,
to give every man according as his
work shall be. Rev. 22:12

Hallelujah for the Cross! Hallelujah for the Empty Sepulchre!

**The Sight of the empty
Sepulchre was Alarming,
The Sight of Jesus Standing
outside was Amazing,
The Sight of Jesus Standing now Among us,
Seen only by the eyes of Faith,
is truly Awe-inspiring.
Let us Remember and Revere Him –
our Risen and Returning Lord.**

By Ung Kim Cheng ■



Bethesda Hall (Ang Mo Kio) & Depot Walk 2006 Speakers & Chairmen List

	Morning Ministry		Gospel Service		Tuesday Prayer Meeting		
2006	Speaker (AMK)	Speaker (DW)	Speaker	Chairman	2006	Bible Text	Speaker
2nd Apr	Andrew Kwan	Andrew Sng	Kenneth Khong	Ng Kim Khoon	4th Apr	James 1:22-25	Jesher Loi
9th Apr	Wong Wai Chow	Chong Kim Chow	Lee Kam Wing	Jesher Loi	11th Apr	James 1:26-27	Stephen Chang
16th Apr	Ung Kim Cheng	Tan Chee Hwee	Ung Kim Cheng	Ng Lee Peng	18th Apr	James 2:1-4	Nathan Wong
23rd Apr	Eric Choa	Wong Tuck Keong	Aaron Wong	William Hooi	25th Apr	James 2:5-7	Silas Nair
30th Apr	Eric Ang	Ernest Chew	Silas Nair	William Hooi	2nd May	James 2:8-11	Aloysius Ong
7th May	Sum Siew Tak	Lee Kok Onn	Kurien Kurian	Jason Phing	9th May	James 2:12-13	Yeo Ann Kian
14th May	Lee Kok Onn	Khoo Oon Soo	William Koh	Jason Phing	16th May	James 2:14-17	Tan Ah Lim
21st May	Adrin Loi	Khoo Oon Soo	William Koh	Nathaniel Sim	23rd May	James 2:18-20	Toh Wei Hong
28th May	Tan Kian Huat	Daniel Thein	Collin Leong	Nathaniel Sim	30th May	James 2:21-26	Jeremy Khoo
4th Jun	John Thomas	Andrew Lim	John Thomas	Tan Jin Song	6th Jun	James 3:1-4	Lim Wee Kiat
11th Jun	Tay Kim Swee	John Thomas	John Thomas	Gary Goh	13th Jun	James 3:5-8	Tan Hin Oon
18th Jun	John Thomas	Andrew Premsumdar	John Thomas	Wong Yong Jian	20th Jun	James 3:9-12	Tay Lin Hwee
25th Jun	Andrew Premsumdar	Kan Shik Lum	Felix Lim	William Chew	27th Jun	James 3:13-18	Robert Hmar

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” ~ 2 Timothy 3:16–17 (NASB)