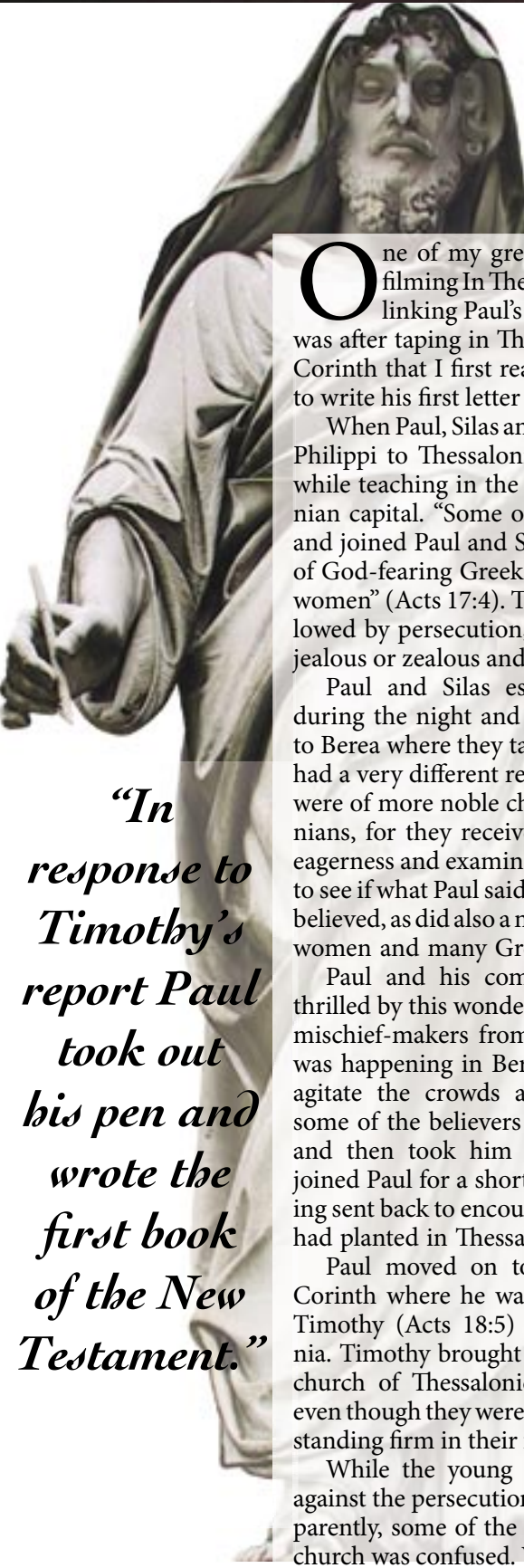


Paul And The Blessed Hope!

By Tony Moore



One of my great joys in researching and filming *In The Footsteps Of Paul* has been linking Paul's travels with his writings. It was after taping in Thessalonica and traveling to Corinth that I first realized what prompted Paul to write his first letter to the Thessalonians.

When Paul, Silas and Timothy journeyed from Philippi to Thessalonica they had great success while teaching in the synagogue at the Macedonian capital. "Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women" (Acts 17:4). This success was quickly followed by persecution, as some of the Jews were jealous or zealous and initiated a riot in the city.

Paul and Silas escaped from Thessalonica during the night and traveled fifty miles inland to Berea where they taught in the synagogue and had a very different reception. "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men" (Acts 17:11, 12).

Paul and his companions must have been thrilled by this wonderful response. But soon the mischief-makers from Thessalonica heard what was happening in Berea and journeyed there to agitate the crowds against Paul. Immediately, some of the believers escorted Paul to the coast and then took him to Athens. Timothy later joined Paul for a short time in Athens before being sent back to encourage the young church they had planted in Thessalonica (see 1 Thess. 3:1-3).

Paul moved on to the great metropolis of Corinth where he was later joined by Silas and Timothy (Acts 18:5) who came from Macedonia. Timothy brought a thrilling report from the church of Thessalonica that was growing, and even though they were being persecuted they were standing firm in their faith in the Lord Jesus.

While the young church had stood bravely against the persecution, they were distressed. Apparently, some of the believers had died and the church was confused. What were the implications

of their deaths? Since they had died before Jesus returned, did that mean they would be excluded when Jesus returned? Would they see their loved ones again? They were sorrowful and confused.

In response to Timothy's report Paul took out his pen and wrote what many scholars consider to be the first book of the New Testament. "Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

Paul sent assuring words to the church that was grieving over the death of some in their community. He continued, "We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever" (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17).

Paul's precious words about the blessed hope of Jesus' defeat of death and His certain return to resurrect those who have died believing in Him have brought hope and comfort to millions of people through the ages. But think for a moment of the circumstances that prompted Paul to write these words. Someone had died in a church Paul had planted in Thessalonica, a church that was just as real as the church you attend. The believers were confused. Did this mean they would never see their loved one again? What were the implications?

While it is important to know the signs of the times and the differences between the pre-tribulation, mid-tribulation and post-tribulation theories of Jesus' coming, I find it most comforting when I remember why Paul first sent this passage on the second coming of Jesus. He sent it to encourage a grieving church when someone in the community of faith had died!

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"In response to Timothy's report Paul took out his pen and wrote the first book of the New Testament."

The Blessed Hope—continued

When I realized this was the first message written in the New Testament it elevated the blessed hope to a new level in my thinking. In light of this you could say that the comforting message of the blessed hope is what prompted the writing of the New Testament! Paul said to “encourage each other with these words” (1 Thessalonians 4:18) and indeed I have. Like me, countless believers through the centuries have found that Paul’s message tempers the pain of loss experienced when a loved one dies and brings strength, courage and hope as we relate to death.

In the video series on Paul I had the privilege of tracing his footsteps for over 13,000 miles. Ultimately Jesus led him to a place outside of Rome, where according to tradition the apostle willingly laid down his life. The Chapel of the Three Fountains was built on a swampy area outside of Rome where citizens were executed by decapitation in the first century.

As I walked down the lovely tree-lined lane to the chapel, I thought of Paul’s final earthly footsteps. For over 13,000 miles he had faithfully followed Jesus and now he was led here. I wondered about his last words to his friends. Then I realized that although we do not have his last words, we do have his last letter and it summarizes his life.

His last letter is generally believed to have been written to his dear friend and son in the



Chapel of the Three Fountains

gospel Timothy. Second Timothy was not written while Paul was under house arrest like the other prison epistles. Circumstances had dramatically changed—now he was in the Mamertine Prison awaiting certain execution. He senses the sands of time passing away and encourages Timothy to come before winter and it is too late. In spite of the ugly shadows the apostle is buoyant in his faith. He encourages Timothy to be faithful to the Lord as a pastor and evangelist and then shares his testimony about what was keeping him going.

“For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in

store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing” (2 Timothy 4:6-8).

The Blessed Hope was the theme of Paul’s ministry from his first letter to his last. This brought hope and encouragement to a grieving church in Thessalonica that had lost some of their members to death. It brought hope and encouragement to a tired apostle who was facing the headman’s axe. And it will bring hope and encouragement to you and me as we face the uncertainties of life in the 21st century.

Coming To An ABC Near Your

In December of 2004 I was approached by Doug Sayles, Vice President of Marketing for the Review and Herald Publishing Association. He told me how impressed he was with our materials on the life of Paul and asked if the Review could distribute the series to the ABC’s. We reached an agreement and you should now be able to find this series in your local bookstore.

SAFE TV Airs series on Paul

KSBN Safe TV is airing our series on Sabbath afternoons. Check their web site for times.

The Gift Of Tongues

For years I have prayed that God would open a door for me to share the good news of the grace of Jesus Christ with the people of the Middle East. I have longed for the gift of Arabic but seem to be language challenged. Now the Lord has opened that door—we are being translated into Arabic and will soon be beamed into the homes of over 300 million Arabic speakers for free!

In addition the series on Paul is being translated into French and Spanish. The Romanian Union is placing Romanian sub-titles on the series and will broadcast it nationwide. We pray that God will continue to open doors so that we can move forward in sharing the Good News of Jesus.

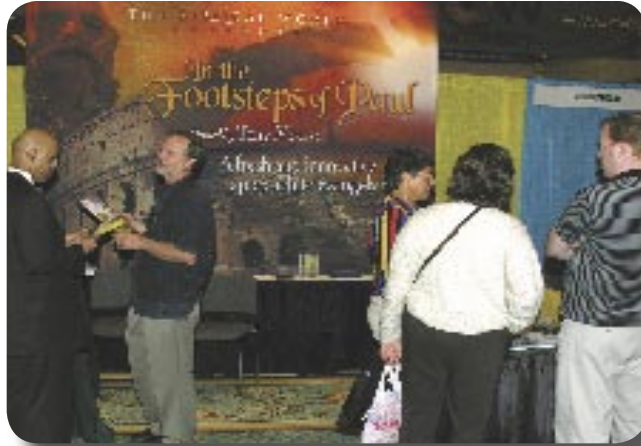
“In light of this you could say that the comforting message of the blessed hope is what prompted the writing of the New Testament.”

A FRESH AND INNOVATIVE APPROACH

The Biblical World Popular At Ministries Convention

At the North American Ministries Convention in Orlando (January 9-12) In The Footsteps of Paul was on display at the Hope Channel booth, the Review Publishing booth and of course at our booth. Ministerial secretaries and evangelism coordinators were very excited about the fresh approach to evangelism that we have taken in the series on Paul. We gave out hundreds of samplers to church leaders and scheduled appointments for ministerial meetings and campmeetings.

I am constantly amazed at the providence of God. A friend visited the Convention with his business partner (a non-SDA Hollywood film producer). The partner was impressed with the series on Paul and expressed his desire to place it on their new TV channel.



Tony & Helen Moore answering questions

He then told me of a Lebanese television associate who had recently launched an Arabic language station available to 300 million people in the Middle East. He asked if he could send a

set of our materials to the founder of this station. On Wednesday he sent the series overnight to this man. Friday afternoon I received an excited voicemail with a strong accent. "I have watched eight episodes of your series on Paul. This is tremendous. It is like manna from heaven! Can we please lip synch your programs into

Arabic and play them on our TV station?"

We have worked out the details and I will soon receive the gift of speaking perfect Arabic and sharing the Good News of Jesus with 300 million people throughout the Middle East!

"In The Footsteps of Paul to be lip-synched and beamed to 300 million Arabic speaking people in the Middle East!"

Witnessing at 34,000 Feet

In January I traveled to Zambia to teach pioneer church planters at Riverside Farm Institute. I was wonderfully blessed by the staff of this school who are giving their lives to improve the life of Africans today, while preparing them for eternity. The 17 church planters I taught are living in areas of Zambia largely untouched by Adventism. Yet in 2004 they baptized over 1,100 people!

There must be something about air travel that loosens people up. Either that or the Lord providentially places me next to interested people on each flight! While checking in for my 10-hour flight from Zambia to London I spoke with two young women from Holland and discovered they had spent three months in the Western province of Zambia studying malaria in pregnant women.

In the departure lounge we visited again and I shared with them about the Paul series. They were very interested and asked many questions. Soon it was time to board the plane and I gave them a DVD Sampler. Near the end of the flight we visited again and they asked more spiritual questions.

After landing I felt impressed that if I saw them again I should give them the entire series.

As I walked down the long corridors of Terminal 4 at Heathrow we met once again and conversed. It was then that I discovered they were medical students with an interest in tropical medicine specialty. I gave them the series and they promised to watch an episode each Wednesday.

While going through immigration in London I spoke with an American businesswoman from Minneapolis. This was her first trip abroad working for her new employer. She asked what I was doing and soon we were talking about Paul. She was intrigued, so I gave her a Sampler DVD. Tears welled up in her eyes—"I prayed very hard before accepting this position that requires me to be away from my home and family so much. I believe that God arranged this meeting," she said. I too had prayed before beginning my journey that God would open my eyes to see people who were open to spiritual things. This lady was open and I praise God that our paths crossed!

Please join me in praying for these seeds that have been planted. Join me in asking God to anoint our eyes to see opportunities to share about his kingdom with the people we meet.

"Tears welled up in her eyes — 'I believe that God arranged this meeting,' she said."

BECOME A CENTURION SUPPORTER TODAY!



Jesus said "I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith" (Matthew 8:10).

Do you believe we need fresh and insightful programs to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ to people living in the 21st century? Do you long for new materials you can use to share the Blessed Hope with your friends, neighbors and colleagues?

The Biblical World was founded to respond to this need by producing clear and compelling programs that will capture the interest of modern people in the Western world. This ministry is committed to reaching people who are not responding to traditional methods or programs.

Your support of The Biblical World will enable this ministry to create new series like **In The Footsteps Of Paul**. Other programs will include The Footsteps of Jesus and Amazing Discoveries In Biblical Archaeology. Become a Centurion supporter by donating a minimum of \$1000 to this ministry and receive a 3-DVD set of **In The Footsteps of Paul**.

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Centurions believe in the mission of The Biblical World and support this ministry by a minimum donation of \$1,000 per year. Their tax-deductible gifts are the financial lifeline that enables us to produce programs like "In The Footsteps Of Paul"

To become a Centurion fill out the information above and mail it to the address below. Your support will enable us to continue producing innovative evangelistic materials designed to communicate the Good News of Jesus as the Christ to people living in your neighborhood.

If you cannot become a Centurion at this time could you support this ministry with a gift of \$25 per month? Your financial and spiritual support of this ministry is critical. Together we can make a difference and impact our world for our Lord Jesus.

Send a donation of any amount and receive a free CD of Tony's powerful message "Such Were Some Of You."

Send your tax deductible donation to:

The Biblical World
PO Box 1384
Chino Hills, CA 91709.

General Conference & A.S.I.

If you attend the General Conference or A.S.I. this summer, stop in and visit our booth.

Fall Tour In Footsteps of Paul

The Biblical World is planning a fall tour In The Footsteps of Paul. Tony Moore will be your host and guide for this life-impacting journey that begins in Athens and traces Paul's footsteps through Greece and Turkey before crossing into Syria where Paul was converted on the Damascus road.

From Damascus you will have the option of returning to the U.S. or continuing to Rome as we complete Paul's earthly journey. Income from Biblical World Tours supports this ministry—contact us for specific dates and details.

In The Footsteps Of Jesus

Tony is writing scripts for an innovative new series on the life of Jesus. The twenty episodes will be filmed on location in Israel and illustrated by actors in Lebanon. Powerful Bible teachings will come to life in this fresh new series.

This series will be available for television release as well as a DVD teaching version. Targeted release date is the fall of 2006. Thank you for your financial support that makes programs like this possible.

Campmeeting Schedule

Tony will be speaking at the Pennsylvania Campmeeting from June 13-17 and at the Redwood Campmeeting in Northern California from July 22-30.