

# GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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## The “ALL” In 2 Corinthians 9:13

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Last week the publication, “*Contending for the Faith*” had its 2006 lectureship at the Spring church of Christ in nearby Spring, Texas. The theme was: “*Anti-ism—From God or Man?*” Grouped in “Anti-ism” were various doctrines ranging from “no – class,” ” to “anti-orphan home.

One topic they included under “Anti-ism” was the “*saints only*” doctrine. The belief that the New Testament church took money from its treasury to help “saints only” or “only Christians” is an erroneous and sinful belief in the minds of these brethren. 2 Cor. 9:13 is the one passage these brethren focus upon to show that non-saints were also helped from the treasury of the church. Their thought is if the contribution was unto “them” -saints or Christians, then the “all” must be another grouping or “all” - non-saints.

One important consideration is that “all” is limited by its context. For example, in the category of songs we are authorized to sing in worship we have “psalms, hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16). Paul might write us a letter commending us for giv-

ing honor in our worship unto “hymns “as we do “all \_\_\_\_\_.” What would you place in the blank? Recognizing the limitation of the context of songs we are authorized to sing, you might put “psalms” or “spiritual songs” but you would be wrong to write “all songs”. Why? You know the “all” is limited by context to include only “spiritual songs” If these brethren are consistent they will say it must be “all songs” as they in the same breath demand you prove it was not “all songs” before they believe your point.

What are the categories under consideration in 2 Cor. 9:13? First, the pronoun “them” is not just referring to “saints”, but saints in Jerusalem, who were Jews. Something more than helping needy saints was being manifested in this contribution. What stood out is Gentile saints were helping Jewish saints. “*For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things*” (Rom. 15:27). This contribution was also manifesting “*glory to God*” recognizing the Gentiles’ “*confession to the gospel of Christ*” which emphasizes Jew and Gentile to now

be “one man” in Christ (Gal. 3:28).

Therefore Paul is recognizing within the category of “saints” Jews and Gentiles exist. The contribution was not just to “all” - saints but in particular “them” who were “saints” of Jewish descent. The “all” is limited by the context for all the seven passages describing this contribution say “saints” were under consideration (Rom. 15:25, 26,31; I Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 8:4; 9:1,12).

I notice that these brethren hear you distinguish between Jews and Gentiles within the grouping of “saints” but will not acknowledge the fact in their rebuttal. They simply say our position is the contribution unto “them” (saints) and unto “all” (saints), making us appear redundant. Again, Paul is commending this contribution for it manifests Gentiles meeting the needs of Jewish saints. just as they help “all” saints. I can prove that saints were helped. I believe these brethren have the obligation to prove that non-saints were helped by this contribution. How do you read?