

# The Book of I Corinthians

## Skeletal outline of I Corinthians:

The Corinthian church remains an example for all times concerning the fact that God does not tolerate sin in His church. The consequence of sin in the body of Christ is disunity (1 Corinthians 1:10). Jealousy and strife are always at the heart of disunity in the church (1 Corinthians 3:3). Spiritual growth is the remedy for any and all problems among brethren, the church, and the home (1 Corinthians 3:1ff).

- I. **A look at the current state of the church (1 Corinthians 1):**
  - A. The Corinthian's are the "*sanctified*" (1:2) and "*called*" (1:2) identified as "*saints*" (1:2).
  - B. Paul's charge is that they be "*unreprovable*" (1:8).
  - C. Paul beseeches the Corinthians to be united in the word of God (1:10).
- II. **Identifying sins that stood in the way of their being "*unreprovable*" (1 Corinthians 1-6):**
  - A. Jealousy and strife revolving around measuring self importance by who taught and baptized them (1:12-16; 3:3-4, 21; 4:6).
  - B. Tolerating sin in the church (5:1ff).
  - C. Brethren defrauding each other in the worldly courts (6:1ff).
  - D. Brethren trying to justify their fornication (6:12-20).
- III. **Paul answers the Corinthian's "*concerns*" that were apparently put in writing to him (1 Corinthians 7-10). The brethren were guilty of unlawful divorce, eating meats sacrificed to idols, and fellowshiping sin:**
  - A. Concerns about marriage, divorce and remarriage (7:1-40).
  - B. Concerns about eating meats sacrificed idols, the use of one's liberties, and fellowshiping error (chapters 6 - 10).
- IV. **More sinful practices of the Corinthian brethren (1 Corinthians 11):**
  - A. 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 exposes their women as being un-submissive.
  - B. 1 Corinthians 11:17ff exposes their ultra-liberal and sinful practices upon the first day of the week assembly by perverting the Lord's Supper. Brethren were having a feast and were drunk with pride upon the first day of the week.
  - C. 1 Corinthians 11:18 expose divisions among the members.
- V. **Errors revolving around spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12-14):**
  - A. A lack of love for each other caused division in the church over spiritual gifts. Many Corinthians viewed speaking in tongues a greater gift. Paul clears the matter up at 1 Corinthians 14:1-3.
  - B. Chaotic assemblies on the first day of the week; i.e., tongue speakers, prophets, and inspired singers were all speaking and singing at the same time. There was no order in the church (14:26-32).
  - C. Women were addressing the assembly of saints in the church (14:33b - 36).
- VI. **False teaching on the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15):**
  - A. Paul writes, "*How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*" (15:12).
  - B. Paul reasons that if the dead will not be raised then let us eat, drink, and be merry because when we die that would be the end of the matter (yet we know better than this) (15:32).
- VII. **Final Exhortations (1 Corinthians 16):**
  - A. Paul reveals his projected itinerary (16:1-12).
  - B. The Corinthians are admonished to stand strong and courageous in the faith (16:13).
  - C. Paul reminds them to remain affectionately connected to each other (16:19-20).

## Introduction to the book of 1 Corinthians

The City of Corinth is located on an isthmus that connects southern Greece to the Peloponnese (Achaia). The connecting isthmus is five miles across. Sailors, coming from Athens or Asia Minor, often stopped in Corinth walking the five miles rather than sailing around the Cape of Malea. Sailing around was, to some extent, a treacherous trip due to the strong Mediterranean winds. Because of the geographic location of Corinth, it was perfect for trade and commerce. Ships, on their way westward, would stop here. Quick population and economic growth was the result.

The city of Corinth was a city of great wealth. Wealth and population explosion gave way to an entertainment industry. The Isthmian games were a main source of entertainment to the Corinthians. The games, similar in nature to the Olympic games of neighboring Olympia, occurred every other year. The apostle Paul referred to these games at 1 Corinthians 9:24-27.

A city with economic success, vast population, and world renown Olympic style games would naturally attract a variety of religious movements. Most cities of this day were devoted to a particular god or goddess. Ephesus was devoted to the goddess Diana. The principle deity worshipped in the city of Corinth was Venus, the goddess of love and licentiousness.

Just to the south of the city was a giant rock formation raising 1800 feet above sea level known as the Acrocorinthus. A temple to Venus was erected on the northern side of this mountain. The temple employed 1000 female prostitutes for the worship of Venus. Barnes notes that many merchants lost everything they had in the city of Corinth “worshipping Venus” (Barnes’ Notes; pp. iv [Commentary on I Corinthians to Galatians]). A common proverb of their day was: “It is not for everyone to go to Corinth.” The city of Corinth reminds us of our modern day Las Vegas, Nevada. It was the “sin city of their day.”

The apostle Paul came here around the year 51AD, preaches the gospel of Jesus Christ, and establishes a thriving church (Acts 18:1-4). Paul’s visit to Corinth was on his second tour of preaching. He had entered the city alone awaiting the arrival of his traveling companions Timothy and Silas who were to strengthen the churches in Philippi and Thessalonica (Acts 17:10-15).

Paul remained in the city of Corinth for about 2 years and then left for Ephesus eventually making it back to Judea (Acts 18:18-19). While Paul was in Corinth, he wrote the epistles to the Galatians and the Thessalonians and upon his second visit he wrote the epistle to the Romans. The epistle to the Corinthians was written by Paul while at the city of Ephesus on his third tour of preaching. 1 Corinthians 16:8-9 states, “*But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*” The date was likely AD 55 to 56.

The letter to the Corinthian brethren was an obvious response to two letters Paul had received during his three year stay in Ephesus (Acts 20:31; 1 Corinthians 16:8-9). Paul refers to a letter he had received from the “*household of Chloe*” explaining the contentions among the brethren there (see 1 Corinthians 1:11). Again at 1 Corinthians 7:1 he alludes to a letter that had reached his hands that was written by the church in Corinth. These two letters outlined the sinful direction the Corinthian church was headed. Paul was well informed of the problems that were occurring among the brethren in Corinth before writing this first epistle. Paul's previous time in Corinth afforded him first hand knowledge of what the brethren were faced with in their every day affairs. The dissolute condition of immorality within the city of Corinth and false teachers brought an evil influence that had far reaching affects among the brethren.

The church in Corinth had come to be divided with many problems in regards to their following the authorized word of God. Today we may refer to such a church as an open fellowship or liberal congregation. The brethren were erroneously dividing themselves based on who had baptized them (1 Corinthians 1:12-16; 3:3-4, 21; 4:6). Some Christians were guilty of tolerating sin in the church (1 Corinthians 5:1ff), defrauding each other in human courts (1 Corinthians 6:12-20), committing fornication (1 Corinthians 6:12-20), and not considering each other's

personal conscience (1 Corinthians 8-10). Furthermore Christian women had lost sight of their God ordained place in public (1 Corinthians 11:1-16) and among God's people in the church (1 Corinthians 14:34-36). The Corinthians had perverted the Lord's Supper by dividing up into social classes (1 Corinthians 11:17ff) and faction was running rampant (1 Corinthians 11:18). The Corinthians were performing spiritual gifts for selfish reasons rather than for the profit of the whole church and thereby causing schisms in the church (1 Corinthians 12-14). The assembly of saints had come to be chaotic (1 Corinthians 14:26ff) and there were false teachers telling people that there would be no resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12).

The apostle Paul could have easily given up on these brethren due to their multitude of problems; however, due to a great love for their souls he systematically deals with each sinful issue. We can do no less today when it comes to the body of Christ. Though a church may have a multitude of "issues" we nonetheless have the responsibility to systematically deal with each one. We can only meet our own personal responsibility. Change must ultimately come from the erring.

## Outline of the book of 1 Corinthians

### Chapter One:

#### I. Paul addresses the local church in Corinth (1:1-9):

- A. *“Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother”* (1:1):
1. As the gospel calls people to be Christians (2 Thessalonians 2:13ff) so Jesus called Paul to be an apostle. Jesus called Paul to be an apostle that he may preach the gospel message to Jew and Gentile (cf. Acts 26:16-18; Galatians 1:15-16).
  2. Many had challenged Paul regarding his apostleship and for that reason he was compelled to defend this fact on many occasions (1 Corinthians 9:1-2; 2 Corinthians 11:4-5; 12:11-13).
  3. What is an apostle?
    - a. *“Apostolos”* is a “delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders” (Thayer's Greek English Lexicon hereafter designated as "Thayer" pp. 68). “A messenger, ambassador, envoy” (Liddell and Scott's Greek English Lexicon hereafter designated as the "LS" pp. 107).
    - b. Qualifications of an apostle of Jesus Christ:
      1. Hand picked by Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:1).
      2. One who had accompanied Jesus during his days on the earth and had seen His resurrected body (cf. Acts 1:21ff).
      3. One who had received authority to reveal the will of God (Matthew 18:18; Galatians 1:11ff).
      4. Consider the fact that an ambassador is “the highest-ranking diplomatic representative appointed by one country or government to represent it in another” (Webster's New World Dictionary pg. 43).
    - c. Paul was an *“ambassador”* (see 2 Corinthians 5:20) who represented Christ and his government to a lost and dying world.
    - d. Interestingly, the saint today is an ambassador for Christ; not an apostle, but those who represent and teach Christ in this world (Matthew 28:18ff).
  4. **Sosthenes**, our brother (a saint), is of unknown identity. There is another Sosthenes mentioned in Acts 18:17. The year was AD 51 and Paul was preaching in Corinth. The unbelieving Jews had arrested Paul and brought him before the Roman Proconsul of Achaia, whose name was Gallio. Gallio dismisses the charges against Paul and thus angering the Jews. Gallio uses his men to force the accusing Jews back, beating many including a man named Sosthenes who appears to be the spokesman for the Jewish Synagogue in Corinth. If indeed the Sosthenes mentioned here in I Corinthians 1:1 is the same one as mentioned in Acts 18 then a conversion must have occurred. The Corinthians would be very familiar with Sosthenes due to the fact that this incident was fresh on their minds (approximately four years had passed). Whoever

Sosthenes is, it is apparent that he was working with Paul in Ephesus and joined in with unity and harmony in admonishing the Corinthian brethren.

- B. *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours”* (1:2).
1. This letter (epistle) is addressed to *“the church of God which is at Corinth.”*
    - a. The word church (*ekklesia*) is “an assembly of the citizens regularly summoned... to call an assembly” (LS 239) (see study # 1; The Church).
    - b. Individuals are “summoned” or *“called”* into the church by the gospel message (again, 2 Thessalonians 2:13ff).
    - c. Collectively then, the saints are termed the church (an assembly of those who have been called out of darkness and into the light of God; cf. 1 Peter 2:9ff).
    - d. As ambassadors for Christ, the apostles preached the government of Jesus and those who willfully submit to the terms of admission into this new government or kingdom (church) are citizens thereof (cf. Ephesians 2:19). Terms of entrance are: (1) Hearing and believing (Romans 10:17), (2) Repenting of past sins (Acts 2:38, 17:30), (3) Confessing the name of Jesus (Romans 10:9-10), (4) Baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), (5) Faithful living (Titus 3:8).
  2. The *“sanctified”* is equivalent to those of the church. To be **sanctified** is to be “separate from things profane and dedicate to God, to consecrate and so render inviolable... Since only what is pure and without blemish can be devoted and offered to God (Leviticus 22:20; Deuteronomy 15:21; 17:1) sanctified signifies to purify and to cleanse externally, to purify by expiation, free from guilt of sin: 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12... to purify internally by reformation of soul” (Thayer 6).
  3. When one is baptized into Christ he or she is sanctified (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:11). Sins are remitted (Acts 2:38). This cleansing of sins is made possible through the blood of Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:21; 26:28). Sanctification is not a moral action, it is a state of being. Since God is light and in Him is no darkness, those who would be in fellowship with him must of necessity be separated from all moral defilements (Isaiah 59:1; 1 John 1:5ff; 2 Corinthians 7:1). This occurs at baptism (Acts 22:16) and is maintained by humble, contrite hearts seeking forgiveness when sin occurs (Psalms 51:1-17; Isaiah 57:15; Acts 8:22f; 2 Corinthians 7:10ff) (see study # 2; Perfection in Christ).
  4. The phrase *“in Christ Jesus”* simply means that our sanctification occurs because of Jesus (cf. Heb. 10:10-14).
  5. Those sanctified are those who are *“called to be saints.”* Every true saint in the universal church has been called into this relationship (fellowship with God) through the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:13ff).
  6. The saint is sanctified and the sanctified are those who *“call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours.”* The phrase, *“call upon”* (*epikaleo*) means to “invoke or appeal” to (LS 292). “To invoke, adore, worship, the Lord, i.e. Christ” (Thayer 239) (see study # 3; Worship). The saint is one who is sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ through faith! This faith motivates one to make appeals to Jehovah God. Without such faith one can in no way be pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). The question that must be answered is, "How can the Corinthians be viewed as sanctified saints of the church of God while being found in sin?"
- C. *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”* (1:3):
1. Revelation 22:21 states, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with the saints. Amen.”*
  2. Grace was intended to be the Lord’s instructions that lead to salvation (cf. Titus 2:11). By God’s grace man is justified from sin (Romans 5:1ff). Paul’s desire was that the Corinthians be recipients of God’s grace through their faith.
- D. *“I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus;”* (1:4):

1. Paul kept the Corinthian brethren in his daily prayers and was thankful for their obedient faith. The obedient had received God's "*grace*" which is the forgiveness of sins through baptism leading to the hope of heaven (see Ephesians 2:8; 1:5-7; Acts 2:38) (see study # 4; Bible Grace).
  2. The spiritual blessing of grace (the forgiveness of sins and the hope of salvation) is "*in Christ*." Jesus provided the opportunity for man's salvation through the cross and therefore salvation is only through or in Him.
- E. "*That in everything ye were enriched in him, in all utterance and all knowledge; even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:*" (1:5-6):
1. Because the Corinthians were recipients of God's grace, they were enriched in Him. Consider 2 Corinthians 8:9, "*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich.*" Every saint that receives forgiveness of sins is rich in God's grace.
  2. This rich state was due to the fact that the Corinthians had a multitude of people who knew and understood the scriptures and ably taught them (utterance and knowledge). Corinth's problems did not revolve around a lack of understanding on anyone's part as we shall look further into later. The "*testimony of Christ*" (the gospel) was firmly established in them by truth confirming miracles.
- F. "*So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus; who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1:7-8).
1. Chapter 12 reveals the multiplicity of spiritual gifts that existed in the church at Corinth. The brethren had all revelation available in clear and concise form so that they had no excuse for a lack of knowledge.
  2. The knowledge of the gospel left the Corinthian Christians waiting, in hope, for the coming of Jesus (second coming as per 2 Thessalonians 4:13ff).
  3. The same word of God that reveals God's gracious message of salvation shall establish or confirm the Corinthians unto the end that they may be "*unprovable*" when Jesus comes to judge the world.
  4. The word "*unprovable*" is "not accused, without reproach, void of offence" (LS 66). The saint of God is justified (acquitted of sins) through the grace of God (cf. Romans 5:1ff). The blood of Jesus is the only thing that can make this possible (cf. Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 10:1ff). Because any sin will separate man from God, (Isaiah 59:1-2; 1 John 1:5ff) saints must continue to pray for cleansing of sins and maintain their fellowship with the father as Peter instructed Simon in Acts 8.
- G. "*God is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord*" (1:9).
1. God will not disappoint anyone who, by faith, calls upon his name invoking forgiveness of past sins.
  2. The gospel of Jesus Christ called us into this glorious fellowship with God and His son Jesus. The saints of God shall share eternal salvation. The only thing that breaks this fellowship between God and man, and saint with saint is sin (1 John 1:5ff; 3:4).

## II. Exhortation to Attain and Maintain Unity (1:10-17):

- A. "*Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1:10).
1. To "*beseech*" (*parakaleo*) is "call on, invoke...to call to, exhort, cheer, encourage" (LS 597).
  2. "*Through*" (*dia*) = "of the instrument or means...through" (LS 184).
  3. "*Name of our Lord Jesus Christ*" = (*onoma*) "to have a name for a thing" (LS 560).
    - a. The idea can mean nothing more than an appeal to the instructions delivered to the apostles and prophets by Jesus (Cf. Ephesians 3:1f).
    - b. The context of the verse indicates that instructions are the subject.
    - c. The apostle Paul said "*whatsoever you do in word or deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him*" (Colossians 3:17).

- d. Paul is calling upon the Corinthian brethren to do something in accordance with the will (authority or instructions) of our Lord Jesus Christ (see study # 5; Bible Authority).
4. That which the apostle is calling the Corinthians to do, (according to the authority of God), is to:
- a. *“Speak the same thing.”* The Corinthian brethren held preachers and instructors of Christ in such high esteem that they considered themselves *“of”* such teachers (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4). Paul encourages the brethren to be of Christ and to walk by His authority alone.
  - b. *“That there be no divisions among you.”* Apparently Judaism had made inroads in the body of Christ in Corinth as it had in other places (cf. Acts 15). There cannot be unity among brethren when those brethren differ in matters of the faith. The Corinthian brethren needed instructions in the realm of adiaphora (matters of indifference; cf. chapter 10). Matters of indifference were mere opinions regarding matters such as what one should eat. Matters such as these should never divide brethren. The **first** of many problems experienced by the Corinthian brethren as exposed by Paul was their lack of unity.
  - c. The Corinthians were, therefore, exhorted to *“be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”*
    1. To be *“perfected together”* (*katartizo*) = “to adjust or put in order again, restore... to put nets to rights, mend them” (LS 414). This phrase suggests that at one time the brethren were united, yet now are in a state of division. The admonition is to repair their thinking and to be one in Christ.
    2. The *“same mind”* would indicate unity and is dependent upon the words of Jesus Christ (gospel).
    3. *“Same judgment”* again indicates a common stand in the authority of Jesus Christ. It is the words of Jesus that must unite Christians (cf. John 17) (see study # 6; Unity of The Saints).
- B. *“For it hath been signified unto me concerning you, my brethren, by them that are of the household of Chloe, that there are contentions among you”* (1:11).
1. The word *“signified”* (*deloo*) simply means “disclose, declare, explain, set forth, indicate, signify” (LS 182).
  2. That which was disclosed to Paul by the household of Chloe (of unknown origin) was the fact that there were *“contentions”* among the brethren in Corinth. Contentions (*eris*) = “strife, quarrel, debate, contention” (LS 314).
- C. Paul explains saying, *“Now this I mean, that each one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ”* (1:12).
1. Remember that Paul is writing the Corinthians from Ephesus (AD 55-56).
  2. Apollos had already arrived in Corinth from Ephesus and preached mightily (Cf. Acts 18:28).
  3. We are not told whether Peter had ever preached in Corinth, just as we are not told about Christ being in Corinth preaching, yet both influences were felt. Here is a great example of how teachings can invade an area without the teacher present (see study # 7; False Teachers). These doctrines spread. The matter here is not that Paul, Apollos, Peter and Jesus were preaching different doctrines, but that the Corinthians were treating these gospel preachers as philosophers and being more converted to the personality than the message.
- D. Further more Paul exclaims, *“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius”* (1:13-14).
1. The body of Jesus was not divided up on the cross and therefore the Corinthians were not to be divided spiritually. To lay claims to Christianity through the name of any other than Christ is to greatly err.
  2. Our only glorying should be in Christ. Paul said, *“unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen”* (Ephesians 3:21). Thus men are to be baptized into the name of Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 28:18ff) and no one else. Paul said he only had baptized Crispus (cf. Acts 18:8) and Gaius (cf. Romans 16:23). If men were going to

claim allegiance to preachers who baptized them Paul wanted no part of it (“*I thank God that I baptized none of you*”).

3. “*Lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name*” (1:15). The Corinthians were suffering from “preacher-itis.” The name of Paul or any other did not carry with it the authoritative power to forgive sins as did the name of Jesus Christ.
- E. “*And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other*” (1:16).
  1. The household of Stephanas was of the first fruits of Achaia (I Corinthians 16:15).
  2. Notice that Paul did not have a perfect knowledge of those whom he baptized. The important thing was his remembrance and knowledge of the teachings of Jesus as an apostle (cf. John 14:26).
- F. “*For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void*” (1:17).
  1. Though baptism is necessary for salvation it was not the purpose of Christ sending Paul. Jesus sent Paul to spread the good tidings of salvation to all who would obtain faith through hearing (Romans 10:17). Baptism would necessarily be included in that message (cf. Acts 2:38).
  2. The gospel message would not be in the “*wisdom of words*” such as grand philosophical arguments that were at the heart of those in and around Achaia (cf. Acts 17:22f). Such words would too include the manner of eloquence it was delivered (cf. 2:1).
  3. If the gospel message was treated as mere philosophy from the mouth of an eloquent speaker its power would be void in the hearts of those who heard it.

### III. **Second problem identified; The Corinthians misunderstood the nature of the Gospel (1:18-21):**

- A. “*For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought*” (1:18-19).
  1. Here is another term for the gospel; i.e., “*the word of the cross*” (see study # 8; The Nature of the Gospel).
  2. To “*perish*” (*apollumi*) is to “destroy utterly, kill, slay, waste” (LS 101).
    - a. The apostle John recorded, “*He that is unrighteous, let him do unrighteousness still and he that is filthy, let him be made filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him do righteousness still: and he that is holy, let him be made holy still*” (Revelation 22:11).
    - b. Jesus divided humanity into two sections; i.e., those who love light and those who love darkness (cf. John 3:18-19). The point being, each will continue in their interest. To those who are heading toward destruction the gospel message is nothing more than a set of rules or a discipline of philosophy. Yet those who claim faith in Jesus Christ understand that the Word of God is much more than a philosophy, it is “*the power of God*” to save (cf. Romans 1:16)!
  3. To illustrate his point, Paul quotes from Isaiah 29:14. The wisdom of the wise was their own creation; what they reasoned to be correct rather than what God revealed to be correct (cf. Isaiah 29:13). In this text, The Assyrian king Sennacherib was besieging Jerusalem and rather than call on help from Jehovah; the supposed wise king made an alliance with Egypt. In this illustration (Isaiah 29); God destroyed the wisdom of the wise as He shall do in every age where men set their ideas above His revelation (see study # 9; Humanism).
- B. “*Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?*” (1:20)
  1. The wise may be the philosopher who’s reasoning is of his own.
  2. The scribe (*grammateus*) = “a secretary, clerk” (LS 168); “A writer, i.e., (professionally) scribe or secretary: town clerk” (Strong’s 1122).
  3. The disputer (*suzetetes*) = “to search or examine together with another... dispute with a person” (LS 757).
  4. How did God make foolish the wisdom of the world? The world seems to think it has the answers to creation, life and human existence yet it is only theory. The Lord’s revelation

reveals the beginning and end of man and therefore proves his deity (cf. Isaiah 46:9-10). Man's wisdom leads to a life void of hope.

5. Paul is making a comparison between the gospel of divine origin and man's immediate human reason.

C. *"For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe"* (1:21):

1. Many things of this earth have been figured out by human wisdom by such minds as Herodotus, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Hippocrates, Pythagoras, Einstein, Freud... etc. The truths of the Gospel; however, come of gospel preaching (Romans 10:17).

2. Contrary to man's "I think and therefore it is truth to me" ideology, the Lord reveals truth through the foolishness of preaching.

3. Paul tells us that this preaching has as its source God (cf. Galatians 1:11-12).

4. Such divine instructions are received by those who hear and learn (cf. John 6:44ff).

#### IV. **A Three Fold Consequence of Gospel Preaching (1:22-25):**

A. *"Seeing that Jews ask for signs...unto Jews a stumblingblock..."* (1:22)

1. Jesus performed many signs while with the Jews that should have produced faith in them (cf. John 20:30-31); however, they continued to ask for signs (Matthew 16:1).

2. No sign was good enough for the unbelieving Jew. Jesus was a stumbling block to them. What is a *"stumblingblock?"*

a. "The movable stick or trigger of a trap, trap-stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall... fig. applied to Jesus Christ, whose person and career were so contrary to the expectations of the Jews concerning the Messiah, that they rejected him and by their obstinacy made shipwreck of salvation" (Thayer 577).

b. "A trap-spring; also genr. A stumbling-block, anything against which one stumbles, and impediment; met. A cause of ruin, destruction, misery, etc., Rom. 9:33; 11:9; a cause or occasion of sinning, Mat. 18:7; Lk. 17:1; scandal offence, cause of indignation, I Cor. 1:23; Gal. 5:11" (Moulton's Greek English Lexicon hereafter designated as, "Moulton" pp. 368).

c. "A trap or snare laid for an enemy" (LS 731).

B. *and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, ...and unto Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God"* (1:22-24):

1. The Gentiles were more apt to consider words of philosophy than words of a crucified king.

2. The Gentile considered such preaching utterly foolish. Why would a god want to die for mortals? The cross went against all human reasoning (John 12:34; Galatians 5:11).

3. Though Jesus made many Jews to stumble in disbelief and many Gentiles to cast out His doctrine counting it foolish, the *"called"* (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14) recognize Jesus and the gospel message of him to be the power of salvation.

C. *"Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men"* (1:25).

1. The prophet Isaiah said, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith Jehovah. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8-9).

2. God has no foolishness neither is there any weakness with Him. The phrase then is a simple indicator regarding the power and wisdom of God.

#### V. **A Call for every Christian to see Clearly who they are and to Put Glory of Life in its Proper Place; i.e., with God (1:26-30):**

A. *"For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:"* (1:26)

1. Who is it that responds to the gospel's call among you brethren?

2. Not many *"wise"* by the world's standards.

3. Not many *"mighty"* heed to the gospel's call.

4. Not many *"noble"* heed to the gospel.



5. Why? Because these mind the things of the flesh being satisfied in life with what they have and see no need for Jesus (cf. Jeremiah 9:23ff).
- B.** *“But God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are:”* (1:27-28):
1. Those individuals who appear to be foolish because they have accepted by faith their justification and access into the grace of God (cf. Romans 5:1-2) are those whom God chose to put to shame the wisdom of the world. Those who possess knowledge of Jesus Christ and cause the hard hearted philosopher to stumble shame the wise of the world. Godly conduct will do this! We are the conscience of the world.
  2. Those who appear weak, base, and despised are the economically weak. These have no formal education, no mansions, no materials of the world that would cause the world to be interested in them.
  3. Though the supposed weak seem helpless they are empowered with great joy and hope in this life and therefore bring to nought the noble things of the world.
- C.** *“That no flesh should glory before God. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”* (1:29-31).
1. The world despises the foolish, weak and base; however, Jehovah God has exalted these by their acceptance of the gospel message.
  2. Since that which appears detestable to the world is truly exalted, God has effectively eliminated any boasting on the part of the world.
  3. God has offered His son, provided the forgiveness of sins through Jesus, and delivered the gospel message for that salvation. Those who are despised have their wisdom from above.
- D.** **Paul has showed what the Christian’s calling is not** (human creeds, traditions of men, science or philosophy... cf. 2 Timothy 1:3) **and now explains what it is.**
1. **Righteousness:** “The state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner’s possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ” (Thayer 149).
  2. **Sanctification:** “Purification, consecration; the effect of consecration: sanctification of heart and life, 1 Corinthians 1:30” (Thayer 6).
  3. **Redemption:** “a releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom” (Thayer 65). The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). One who sins (violates divine law) is under a curse (Galatians 3:10). Jesus redeemed man by paying the awful cost of sin being crucified on the cross (Galatians 3:11ff). We are free from sin (John 8:32).
- E.** Since true wisdom and redemption is in Christ we ought only to glory in Him and no other (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24).
- F.** The call of the gospel to those despised in the world results in salvation by faith. This message is simple and easily understood (2 Corinthians 11:3).

### Synopsis of chapter one:

Paul begins this epistle reminding the Corinthians of their sanctification in the Lord. They enjoyed fellowship in the Lord only through their “*unreprovable*” state (1 Corinthians 1:8). Secondly, Paul calls upon the Corinthian brethren to put away divisions that exist among them that they may maintain their state of sanctification. The household of Chloe had written Paul a letter outlining the current problems at the church in Corinth. The first problem identified was that of elevating one gospel preacher above another. Such activity indicated a misunderstanding of the gospel message. Paul clears this up by identifying such behavior as worldly thinking. The world sees only the here and now where as the saint of God sees with eyes of wisdom into eternity. Therefore, the things of God are despised among those who are rich, strong and filled with the world’s wisdom. Though despised, the perceived weak and ignorant of the world who have accepted the gospel’s call

are the true wise one's. The gospel provides redemption, sanctification and fellowship with God. The wisdom of the world provides only temporal pleasures. Where then should glory be placed? Should we glory in those things that will only last through this life or shall we glory in those things that go on into eternity? Paul answers the question, "*he that glories, let him glory in the Lord*" (1 Corinthians 1:31; cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24).

## Chapter Two:

### I. Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians of the source of the gospel (2:1-5):

- A. "*And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God*" (2:1).
1. Paul first came to Corinth in 51 AD (cf. Acts 18:1ff).
  2. As Paul communicated with the Corinthians regarding the gospel message it was not performed with any grand oratory skills (excellence of speech) and neither was it filled with the wisdom of this world.
  3. That which Paul preached was the testimony of God (divine revelation - wisdom defined).
- B. "*For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified*" (2:2-3).
1. Paul's only interest while in Corinth was to preach Jesus. While others spend their time learning various religious practices and philosophies of men Paul focused on God's divine revelation.
  2. The cross of Christ is again emphasized as the central theme of the gospel (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:18) (see study # 10; The Cross of Christ).
- C. "*And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God*" (2:3-5).
1. Though Paul knew not how the Corinthians would receive the message of the Gospel, he preached (with fear, weakness and trembling). As our voice today quivers with heart thumping trembling we preach to others hoping they will be receptive.
  2. That which separated the message Paul proclaimed from the philosophers of his day was the matter of confirmation. The philosophers persuaded men with swelling oratory and appeals to human wisdom. The apostle Paul persuaded the Corinthians with miraculous manifestations of the spirit.
  3. The purpose of such work was to confirm faith in the Corinthians (cf. Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:3).
  4. The Corinthians had apparently slipped back into their old ways of hearing the tones and talents of speakers rather than looking to the confirming miracles that accompanied the apostles in their preaching.

### II. God's wisdom identified, revealed, and understood (2:6-16):

- A. "*We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, who are coming to nought*" (2:6).
1. This wisdom was spoken by the apostles and prophets (Ephesians 3:1-5).
  2. This gospel is for those who are "*fullgrown*" (*teleios*): "the perfect; i.e. the more intelligent, ready to apprehend divine things, 1 Corinthians 2:6" (Thayer 618). "Perfect, without spot or blemish; of persons, absolute, complete, accomplished, perfect in his or its kind" (LS 797).
  3. The despised of this earth are viewed by God as perfect and therefore enjoy fellowship with him (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; 1 John 1:5ff). This perfection is made possible by the grace of God (cf. Ephesians 2:8; Hebrews 10:1ff).
  4. God's view of his redeemed is "*fullgrown*" man's view of the redeemed is depicted in the words "*despised... weak... foolish*" (1 Corinthians 1:27ff).
- B. "*But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, even the wisdom that hath been hidden, which God foreordained before the worlds unto our glory:*" (2:7)
1. The word "*mystery*" (*musterion*) "the secret counsels which govern God in dealing with the righteous, which are hidden from ungodly and wicked men but plain to the godly, Sap. ii.22.

- In the N. T., God's plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed: Romans 16:25; 1 Corinthians 2:7" (Thayer 420).
2. At a point in the past, God's wisdom remained "*hidden*" but is now revealed for all to know (cf. Ephesians 3:1ff; 1 Peter 1:20).
  3. God "*foreordained before the worlds*" this gospel message for our glory.
    - a. Foreordained (*proorizo*) = "to determine beforehand" (LS 682).
    - b. Though God had predetermined to reveal a saving gospel message to man it was delivered over a long period of time in bits and pieces. It could not be fully understood until completely revealed (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12).
    - c. The revealed message has the power to bring us glory with God.
- C. "*Which none of the rulers of this world hath known; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:*" (2:8)
1. Jesus is indeed the "*Lord of glory.*" This statement assumes the deity of Jesus.
  2. The rulers of this world had no knowledge of Jesus and proved this to be the case by killing him on the cross.
  3. Once again, this verse shows that the wisdom of man is antithetical to that of the wisdom of God.
- D. "*But as it is written, things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him*" (2:9).
1. Paul quotes from two sources: Isaiah 64:4 and 65:17.
  2. The point: Man could never conceive nor perceive the wisdom of God lest it was revealed (see study # 8).
  3. Verse 10 tells us that God has revealed His wisdom and therefore all can know of the efficacy of the saving blood of Jesus Christ.
- E. "*But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God*" (2:10):
1. The word "*revealed*" (*apokalupto*) is a key term. Liddell and Scott define it as "to uncover, to disclose, reveal, to reveal one's whole mind... to be disclosed, made known" (99). "To make known, make manifest, disclose, what before was unknown... of any method whatever by which something before unknown becomes evident... of matters which come to light from things done" (Thayer 62).
  2. Clearly God has revealed His mind (the wisdom of God) and intended for man to understand. Those among us who claim that we cannot all know truth alike speak words of blasphemy against the very revelation of God. (see study # 11; Can We Know Truth Alike?)
  3. The mind of God was revealed "*through the Spirit.*"
    - a. The Holy Spirit is a member of the Godhead (Colossians 2:9) whose work is revealing the mind of God to the apostles and prophets.
    - b. Jesus had proclaimed that this would be the Holy Spirit's work (John 16:13-15) and Paul confirmed these words in Ephesians 3:1-5 (see study # 12; The Work of the Holy Spirit).
  4. As a member of the Godhead, the Spirit is a different individual that shares the same purpose with the Father and Jesus as is indicated by (John 17:21 and here {1 Corinthians 2:10}). The Holy Spirit, as part of the Godhead, "*searches the deep things of God.*" That is, He investigates and understands, by His omniscience, all the knowledge of the Godhead and then reveals these things. The word "God" (Greek - *Theos*) is comprised of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- F. "*For who among men knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of the man, which is in him? Even so the things of God none knoweth, save the Spirit of God*" (2:11):
1. Paul uses an illustration to get across the point of revelation. No man can know what is in my mind unless I tell the matter. Likewise, no man can know the mind of God lest the Holy Spirit revealed the mind of God.
  2. The point is clear, Paul is not saying that the Holy Spirit inhabits the body of God in some mysterious way. Paul is rather saying that we cannot know the things of the Godhead lest the

word of God be revealed by the Spirit. Revelation then is a work of the Holy Spirit (see study # 13; Divine Revelation).

- G. *“But we received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God; that we might know the things that were freely given to us of God”* (2:12):
1. The *“spirit of the world”* appears to be a phrase indicating human reason as opposed to that which has been revealed by the Holy Spirit, *“the spirit which is from God,”* i.e., divine revelation. Paul spoke of this in 1 Corinthians 1:18ff.
  2. Here in we see the purpose of divine revelation and once again it goes against those among us who would say we cannot know truth. The reason: *“that we might **KNOW*** (emphasis mine jcr; cf. study # 11) *the things that were freely given to us of God.”* God has revealed His mind to us through the workings of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-2; 2 Peter 1:21).
- H. *“Which things also we speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words”* (2:13):
1. Apparently the antecedent to the plural pronoun *“we”* and *“us”* (2:10) is the apostles who delivered the teachings of the Holy Spirit to mankind.
  2. Here, once again, is a contrast between human reasoning and divine revelation! (Cf. Rev. 22:10) (see study # 9).
  3. With human reason comes inconsistency of perceived truth. Truth is determined by the individual and therefore truth is different for each individual. The man who follows this ideology has effectively isolated himself from others. Man becomes autonomous and can clamor about any law that violates his perceived truth. Not so with the one who follows one set of divine revelation. We (the saints of God) are united in divine truth!
- I. *“Now the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged”* (2:14).
1. The word *“natural man”* (*psuchikos anthropos*) means *“concerned with the life only, animal.. the natural man”* (LS 903).
  2. Combining this definition with the individual who considers the spiritual words of divine revelation foolishness (cf. here and 1 Corinthians 1:18) it is apparent that the *“natural man”* is one who is dependant upon human reasoning as his rule of life.
  3. The verse makes absolute since then. Why can the *“natural man”* not know divine revelation? Easy, because he has no interest in gaining knowledge of the divine and therefore can in no way know them while in this state of ignorance! Such a one is *“spiritually judged.”* The word *“judged”* (*anakrino*) means *“to scrutinize, i.e. (by implication) investigate, interrogate, determine: -- ask, question, discern, examine, judge, search”* (Strong’s #350).
  4. The point is clear; the non-spiritually minded individual who depends on human reasoning for autonomous truth cannot know divine truth because knowledge of divine truth comes by scrutiny, investigation, interrogation and examination of divine revelation. This is an endeavor that the worldly minded individual will not take the time to do. Who is the true fool then? (again, see study on Humanism). The book of Proverbs contrast the foolish with the wise. It is the foolish who have no desire for righteousness while it is the disposition of the wise to seek after it and apply it to their lives.
- J. *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man”* (2:15):
1. The individual who searches out the scriptures through investigation, interrogation and examination will know divine truth (cf. 2 Timothy 2:15) (see study # 9). Such an individual cannot, in divine reality, be judged of the one who depends upon human reason for self truth. The world may judge the Christian as being a religious fanatic or one who puts false hopes in a future heaven; however, it matters not in all reality.
  2. Humanism reveals the mind of the natural man clearly. The Humanist manifesto II of 1973 states, *“Traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.”*

3. No matter what man may say or come up with it will never change one word of God's. The firm foundation of God will always stand and there will always be men and women who lovingly hold to it (see 2 Timothy 2:19).
- K. *"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ"* (2:16):
1. If we (Christians) have the "*mind of Christ*" we inferentially can know His divine revelation (inference).
  2. The word "*Lord*" (*kurios*) is used in this verse as opposed to "*God*" (*theos*) in verse 12. *Kurios* is defined as "supreme in authority" (Strong's #2962). Liddell and Scott define *Kurios* as "having power or authority over, lord or master of... having authority, authoritative, supreme... the ruling power" (458). *Kurios* is used 687 times in the NT and is applied to the godhead as is *theos* (cf. Revelation 22:5-6, 20-21).
  3. The purpose of the verse is clear. The humanist does not and cannot know the mind of God and can in no way instruct God who created him in truth. Those who examine and investigate the word of God know divine revelation and can in no way be judged by the humanist.
  4. The mind of Christ is the mind of the *Kurios* and therefore we see the deity of Christ!
  5. These things being truth regarding divine revelation, the Christian must not worry about what the humanist thinks about him. Truth reveals the humanist error and he too shall bow before the Lord in the end of times (cf. Philippians 2:10).

## Chapter 2 synopsis:

Paul writes to the Corinthians that they may be "*unreprovable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (1 Corinthians 1:8). The current state of the Corinthian brethren is revealed in chapter one. They were divided due to a faulty view of the gospel message. Paul sets out to clear up the nature of the gospel. The word of God was not to be treated as a set of philosophies delivered by favored individuals (see Acts 17:21). Paul explains that truth is "*not in words which man's wisdom teaches*" (1 Corinthians 2:13). The "*word of the cross*" (1 Corinthians 1:18) will more readily be accepted by the perceived weak, foolish and poor of the world. Those who are despised by the rich and powerful see the true nature of the gospel. The message of the cross was confirmed in their mind by "*demonstration of the Spirit and of power*" (1 Corinthians 2:4). The perfect ("*fullgrown*") (1 Corinthians 2:6) will continue to receive the preaching of Jesus. The glorious gospel "*revealed through the Spirit*" is received of the spiritual man that the world considers foolish and despised (1 Corinthians 2:10ff). Chapter two sets forth the contrast between the true foolish (the natural man) and the wise (the spiritual man). The natural man is only interested in the things of this life. He cannot know the will of God because he rejects investigation, examination and searching of the scriptures. Though the Corinthians had at one time obeyed the gospel unto sanctification many apparently found themselves with the same mind as those of the world regarding the gospel message. Chapter three will reveal more of said symptoms of the overall problem of division in the church in Corinth. That problem is a lack of spiritual knowledge and understanding. Such a condition has always and always will have a destroying effect on God's people (cf. Hosea 4:1, 6).

## Chapter 3

### Foreword to Chapter 3:

1 Corinthians chapters 1 and 2 reveal divisions that existed among the Christians of Corinth due to a faulty line of reasoning. Christians were guilty of viewing the gospel from a worldly standpoint. The saints of God had slipped backward in their objective to press forward in knowledge and understanding of spiritual matters. Whenever one has misplaced values there will certainly be spiritual problems. To have a proper approach to spirituality one must value the wisdom of God over the wisdom of human reason. Solomon wrote, "*Apply thy heart unto instruction, And thine ears to the words of knowledge*" (Proverbs 23:12). Again, he wrote, "*Buy the truth and sell it not...*" (Proverbs 23:23). When I view the wisdom of God as the most precious thing to obtain I will search after it with all my heart. I will be careful not to let the thoughts of man pollute it. It will be the

most important thing to me (see Proverbs 8:18-19; 16:16; 20:15). God's word is intended to be taken alone with no man made changes (see Acts 26:14; 1 Peter 1:24-25). The Corinthians had lost sight of the gospel message and mingled the wisdom of men with it and thereby polluted it. Man must learn to accept the doctrine of Christ as it has been delivered in all its purity and simplicity. Let us conform our minds to it rather than trying to conform it to our way of thinking.

**I. The Problem of Spiritual growth (3:1-9):**

- A. *“And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able”* (3:1-2).
1. Recall that Paul had identified the natural (those unwilling and uninterested in searching out truth) and the "spiritual" man (those willing and interested in searching out the things of God) (see 1 Corinthians 2:14-15).
  2. The aorist tense of the verbs *“could not speak”* point to a previous action. Apparently Paul is referring to the time when he first came to Corinth in 51 AD and preached the gospel making many converts and establishing a church. Now, five years later (AD 56), Paul still cannot speak to the Corinthians about the weightier matters of the gospel. The author of Hebrews said, *“For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food”* (Heb. 5:12). The point is clear, five years was enough time for the Corinthians to grow spiritually; yet, they were stagnating! Let us all press to maturity in the knowledge of Christ rather than letting the years role by in apathy toward the word of God. Five years is plenty of time for each of us to be grounded in truth as we investigate, interrogate, examine, scrutinize and search the scriptures (see appendix # 15; Spiritual Growth for the Christian).
- B. Paul now gives the proof of their lack of spiritual growth saying, *“for ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you jealousy and strife, are ye not carnal, and do ye not walk after the manner of men?”* (3:3).
1. A stinging rebuke yet done with love. The problem: *“ye are carnal.”* The word *“carnal”* (*sarkikos*) is defined as “fleshly and sensual” (LS 723). Apparently Paul is continuing the idea of the *“natural man”* from 1:14. Paul tells the Corinthians that their problem is that they don't have a real interest in the word of God and as such they are in no better shape than the one of the world who is spiritually judged.
  2. The proof of Paul's accusation is their reported works; i.e., *“jealousy and strife.”* Later Paul will reveal the source of their jealousy in the realm of spiritual gifts. Here he also mentions strife. Apparently the Corinthians were approaching the word of God as a status symbol. Those baptized by the more popular preachers and those who had attained the more desirable spiritual gifts looked down on others.
  3. Such behavior exposed their true self, they were *“walk(ing) after the manner of men.”* Simply put, they were worldly minded.
- C. *“For when one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men? What then is Apollos? And what is Paul? Ministers through whom ye believed; and each as the Lord gave to him”* (3:4-5).
1. Paul revisits the initial problem of elevating one man above another as though the Corinthians were no different than those stoics and Epicureans around them who spent their whole day waiting to hear some new doctrine from some new person (see Acts 17:16-22).
  2. Paul exposes the foolishness of being *“of”* a mere man. The glorying needed to be taken away from men and placed back on God where it belonged (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:31).
  3. To replace the misguided zeal, Paul reveals the true nature of any gospel preacher. Each one who labors for the Lord is a *“minister.”* The word minister (*diakonos*) simply means servant. The lowly man of God who preaches to others is simply a lowly servant of the Lord and should in no way be exalted among brethren.

- D. *“I planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase”* (3:6-7).
1. The argument is complete. If it is God who gives the increase as opposed to the teachers planting and watering as servants, naturally God should receive the glory.
  2. As a seed grows by the labor and toil of the farmer so the child of God grows by the labor and toil of the preacher or teacher (see study # 14; The Work of a Preacher). Yet the farmer and the preacher are mere servants. They are not responsible for the actual growth that occurs within the mind of the saint. God gives the increase in the minds of people through the word of God. God is to receive glory because He creates the seed and brings about the growth or life. Likewise, God is the originator of truth (see study # 15; The Sovereignty of God).
- E. *“Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor”* (3:8):
1. The preacher that establishes a church in a new field and the preacher that builds upon that foundation are *“one.”*
  2. This certainly does not mean that Paul and Apollos were one being no more than Jesus and the Father were one being when Jesus said, *“that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us:”* (Jn. 17:21). The point is clear, the oneness is in purpose. The purpose of Paul and Apollos’ preaching was the salvation of souls. The two were united in this one fact (see study # 6).
- F. *“For we are God’s fellow-workers: ye are God’s husbandry, God’s building”* (3:9).
1. Paul and Apollos were *“God’s fellow-workers”* (*sunergos*) in the faith. The Greek word is defined as “working together, joining or helping in work, helping a person in a thing... of the same trade as another, a fellow-workman, colleague” (LS 774). Paul and Apollos shared in the same trade (i.e., the work of preaching the gospel).
  2. The Corinthian brethren were God’s *“husbandry”* (*georgion*) = “farms, tilled land” (LS 163). The Corinthian brethren were also identified as, *“God’s building”* (*oikodome*) = “A late form of *oikodomema*... a building, structure” (LS 546).
  3. Christians are compared to a cultivated field and a building or structure belonging to God. The seed of the gospel ought to land in cultivated fields (mind receptive to the message). The foundation of the building is the truth (Ephesians 2:20).
  4. Paul is saying that he and Apollos shared in the work of preaching which produce a farm or structure identified with God (see study # 16; The Identity of the Christian). They simply went to the fields or construction site and planted the seed or built a building (i.e., the Christian).

## II. Laying the foundation of the building (3:10-15):

- A. *“According to the grace of God which was given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each take heed how he buildeth thereon”* (3:10).
1. The farm or building that was planted or constructed by Paul, Apollos, and Cephas identified them as *“wise masterbuilders.”* The *“masterbuilder”* (*architekton*) is “a chief artificer, master-builder, director of works, architect, engineer” (LS 122). Such an engineer of sound buildings knows that a foundation is important. When Paul labored in Corinth (AD 51), he preached Christ and Him crucified (see 1 Corinthians 2:1-2). Paul took God's grace (the message of justification and sanctification through the blood of Jesus Christ ~ see Romans 5:1-2; Titus 2:11) and built a divinely ordained foundation that the child of God was to be planted or built upon.
  2. After Paul left Corinth there would be other preachers and teachers to *“built thereon.”* That which other teachers built upon was the foundation of truth (Christians who were spiritual would be interested in learning more; i.e., building upon their own personal understanding and knowledge). So Paul said, *“For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”* (3:11; Ephesians 2:20). Once the foundation is laid, let no man lay another foundation of human reasoning! The doctrine of Christ was to be upheld and each Christian built up in the knowledge of that teaching and none other (cf. 1 Peter 2:5; 2 John 9ff).

- B. *“But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble; each man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself shall prove each man’s work of what sort it is”* (3:12-13).
1. Apparently the elements of gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay and stubble represent people that have heard the gospel of Jesus and obeyed (the preacher has added to the building).
  2. *"Fire"* determines whether one has added to their building truth as a precious metal or error identified with a flammable material.
  3. The illustration appears to be clear. Through the fiery trials of life the true Christian shall come forth purified by the fire. Job said, *“But he knoweth the way that I take; When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold”* (Job 23:10). Through the process of time the work of the preacher will be made manifest. As each individual goes through the fiery trials of life some grow in spiritual wisdom and others drop out and are consumed as wood and stubble (cf. the parable of the sower in Luke 8:4-15; Hebrews 12:7-13) (see study # 17; Maintaining Spiritual Interest).
- C. *“If any man’s work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire”* (3:14-15).
1. These two verses indicate the process by which each man is subject to God’s chastening hand (Hebrews 12:7-13). What trials await us we know not; however, trials there shall be (cf. James 1:2). As we preach and make converts, we watch as does God, the spiritual development of that person with great interest. If that person turns out to be gold, silver or a precious stone we rejoice greatly. The apostle John said, *“I rejoice greatly that I have found certain of thy children walking in truth, even as we received commandment from the Father”* (2 John 4).
  2. Those who do not continue in faith are as the wood and stubble and are consumed by the fiery trials of life. They let go of their faith in the time of adversity. Solomon said, *“If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small”* (Proverbs 24:10; cf. Ecclesiastes 7:14; Isaiah 30:20) (see study # 18; The Cause and Effects of Suffering)
  3. The teacher, no matter what the student turns out to be, shall still be saved if they continue in the faith. He or she has done their duty.

### III. A call for the Christian to understand who he is (3:16-23):

- A. *“know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?”* (3:16).
1. Paul further identifies the Christian (earlier he compared them to a farm and building ~ see 1 Corinthians 3:9). Paul, Apollos, Cephas, and other preachers of truth had planted or built what the Corinthians currently stand for (i.e., truth, spirituality, and hope of eternal life). The very truth that makes them what they are puts them in a divine relationship with the heavenly Father (i.e., *"the Spirit of God dwelleth in you"*).
  2. The Corinthian Christians, by way of reconciliation and sanctification (cf. 1:1-9), are now viewed as a *“temple of God.”* The word *“temple”* (*naos*) is “the dwelling of a god, a temple” (LS 524).
    - a. Consider Jesus’ use of the word *naos* (temple) in John 2:18-22. Jesus spoke of his body as a temple. Apparently the context of a building (1 Corinthians 3:9) is still under consideration. The church is made up of living stones and illustrated as a temple that God dwells in (1 Peter 2:5).
    - b. Again, *naos* is defined as “of the spirit-filled body of the Christians, which is said to be a habitation of God, therefore a temple; on occasion it may become the habitation of demons, an idol’s temple... Of spirit filled Christians” (AG 533).
    - c. The picture is one of man's body being associated with an actual temple building which has God dwelling within (much like God's divine presence in the Old Testament Temple) (see 1 Kings 8:10-11).
  3. How does the Holy Spirit dwell within the Christian? Someone may ask ‘how does the Father, Jesus and Holy Spirit dwell as one?’ The answer seems simple. The Father (1 John 2:24; 4:12-16), Jesus (Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27) and the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9-11; 2 Timothy 1:13-14) dwell within the Christian through man's acceptance and guidance in truth



(cf. Galatians 3:2; Ephesians 3:17; 1 John 2:5-6) (see appendix # 16 and # 19; Indwelling of the Holy Spirit).

- B. *“If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye”* (3:17).
1. To “*destroy*” (*phtheiro*) is to “ruin, waste, spoil, destroy” (LS 860). If another “*destroys*” the temple God will “*destroy*” (*phtheiro*) him. Apparently the divisions that had occurred in Corinth had “*destroyed*” the faith of some saints and therefore Paul gives this serious charge. The point being that the saints, identified as a temple of God, may find themselves ruined or spoiled through sin (see study # 20; The Possibility of Apostasy).
  2. The saints, each individual identified as a temple of God, are “*holy*.” The word “*holy*” (*hagios*) is defined as “holy and pure” (LS 5). “Pure, righteous; to separate, consecrate; cleanse, purify, sanctify; regard or reverence as holy; moral purity” (Moulton 3). Paul is helping the Corinthians remember their initial state of sanctification and responsibility to maintain this state of holiness (see 1 Corinthians 1:2) (see study # 16; and # 2; Perfection / Christian's Responsibility to Maintain Holiness).
  3. This verse indicates that man can do the destructive work of Satan (cf. 1 Peter 5:8).
- C. *“Let no man deceive himself. If any man thinketh that he is wise among you in this world, let him become a fool, that he may become wise”* (3:18).
1. Clearly self delusion had taken place in the minds of brethren. Some thought within themselves that they were better off than other Christians because of who they followed and what gift they had.
  2. Paul’s admonition, “*let him become a fool, that he may become wise.*” Not literally foolish, yet foolish in the eyes of the world (cf. 1:26ff).
- D. *“For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness: and again, The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain”* (3:19-20):
1. True wisdom rest with God. Man’s wisdom will never lead to eternal life and is therefore foolish (humanism).
  2. Paul then quotes from Job 5:13, the only time in the entire NT that the book of Job is quoted from saying, “*He that takes the wise in their craftiness.*” God allows man to follow his own reasoning and then fall by their own reasoning. In such a fall, God has “*taken the wise in their craftiness.*”
  3. Secondly, Paul proves his point by quoting from Psalms 94:11, “*The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise, that they are vain.*” Human reason is contrary to divine reasoning and is therefore useless (vain).
- E. *“Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s”* (3:21-23).
1. Herein is Paul's point driven home, “*Wherefore let no one glory in men.*” The preacher is only a servant that plants and waters the seed that God created. It is because of God that man is identified as a holy temple. It is because of God that man can have an eternal home. While preachers plant God gives the increase. All glory consequentially belongs to God.
  2. Instead of thinking that they (the Corinthian Christians) belonged or were “*of*” Paul, Apollos or Cephas they should have noted that "all things" belong them. Paul said, “*all things work together for good to them that love God*” (Romans 8:21). Again, the author of Hebrews said of angels, “*Are they not all ministering spirit, sent forth to minister unto them who shall be heirs of salvation?*” (Hebrews 1:14). Furthermore, the earth serves the needs of the saint of God (food, water, shelter, joy etc.). Life and death serve the Christian in that it causes man to look forward to the remaining life and to death when he shall be in the comfort of the bosom of Abraham. In fact, Paul states that all things present and to come belong to the saint because we belong to Christ and Christ belongs to God.
  3. Don't glory in men when God has given all things to YOU that you may be supplied an entrance into heaven.

## Synopsis of chapter 3

Chapter three identifies, with precision, the problems in the church at Corinth that revolved around the current division. That problem is identified as "*jealousy and strife*" (1 Corinthians 3:3). Paul explains that five years had passed since he had originally come to Corinth, preached the gospel, and established a church there (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). During these five years the Corinthians ought to have grown spiritually; however, they had permitted the misdirected thinking of the world around them to misconstrue the gospel message (i.e., destroy their temple ~ 1 Corinthians 3:16-17). Rather than influencing the society they had lived in toward truth the world around them had influenced them. Paul attempts to remedy the situation by speaking frankly to the brethren. He identifies the problem among the Christians in Corinth as having its foundation in their spiritually immaturity (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). The current jealousy and strife revolved around their putting undue significance to the preacher who had taught them and baptized them. Paul explains to the brethren that the preacher is nothing more than a mere "*servant*" and should not be glorified as should God (1 Corinthians 3:5). The very foundation that their faith was established on was Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Preaching truth builds a right building that has a true relationship with the heavenly Father (1 Corinthians 3:16). The preacher's responsibility is to establish and build upon that foundation alone. Any reasoning apart from the foundation of Jesus Christ is "*the reasoning of the wise*" in the world and not from God (1 Corinthians 3:20). Again, let us therefore glory in God and not men (1 Corinthians 3:21).

## Chapter 4

### Forward to Chapter 4

Paul reminded the Corinthians of their initial sanctification and responsibility to be "*unreprovable*" (1 Corinthians 1:1-9). Such a state puts the Christian in an intimate relationship with the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:16). The apostle has also reminded the Corinthians of their responsibilities to be of the same mind rather than being divided (1 Corinthians 1:10) and to place their hope and glory in God rather than man (1 Corinthians 3:21). Five years had passed since Paul had preached the gospel in Corinth which resulted in the Corinthians belief and obedience. During this time they had permitted the wisdom of the worldly around them to affect their approach to serving God. Many had put their interest and energies in debating who it was better to have been baptized by (1 Corinthians 1:12ff). Paul reminds them that when he first preached to them that it was not with any awe inspiring oratory abilities and neither did he wow them with wisdom from this world (1 Corinthians 2:1-5). The words spoke by Paul were, "*not of this world*" (1 Corinthians 2:6). Paul's words originated from the mind of God (1 Corinthians 2:7-13). Those who put their trust in men and the wisdom of this world could not possibly know these high and spiritual thoughts (1 Corinthians 2:14). Those who were willing to search, investigate, and give their time to knowing the mind of God would certainly find and know it (1 Corinthians 2:15). Unfortunately, the Corinthians were more like the natural man who had no hope of knowing truth rather than the spiritual man who could know the truth (1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Those Corinthians who had put their faith in preachers and teachers who had baptized them needed to understand the proper work and place of these men in relationship to their spiritual welfare. These men were mere planters and those who watered but it is God who gives the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6-15). Paul closes the chapter by saying, "*Wherefore let no one glory in men*" (1 Corinthians 3:21). A great lesson that we can see in the study of 1 Corinthians is the fact that Paul was willing to systematically deal with all the Corinthians error. Today, many give up on a church in a given city stating that there is no way to untangle their mess. Through a spirit of great love for men's souls the Apostle Paul approaches the Corinthians problems one at a time.

### I. Preachers, Ministers or Stewards are to be judged by that which they Preach (4:1-5):

- A. "*Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*" (4:1):
  1. The word "*account*" (*logizomai*) means "to deduct from... to conclude by reasoning... to calculate" (LS 476). While the Corinthians were being tempted to elevate one man over another Paul tells them to rather consider them as "*ministers and stewards*."
  2. The minister (servant of God) is a "*steward of the mysteries of God*."

- a. A “*steward*” (*oikonomos*) is “one who manages a household, generally, a manager, administrator” (LS 546). “The manager of a household; a steward” (Moulton 284).
  - b. The word “*us*” must refer to ministers in general and not only to the apostles. Consider the context (1 Corinthians 1:12, 23; 2:7; 3:4-6, 10, 15, 4:1, 6).
  - c. That which the preacher (minister) is managing as an administrator and steward (one who manages another’s property, finances, or other affairs) is the “*mysteries of God.*” The mystery of God is none other than the gospel message itself (cf. Romans 16:25-26).
  - d. How does the minister manage or act as an administrator of truth? Obviously the minister does so by guarding the purity of truth from human wisdom, opinions, and personal conviction (see 1 Timothy 6:20) (see study # 14).
  - e. An interesting side point is the relationship between the preacher and the elders of a local church. The elders are to shepherd, manage and feed the brethren and the preacher is to manage **only** the word of God. When the elders have found a preacher who manages the word of God properly (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:6) they have found a tool to feed the brethren.
- B. “*Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful*” (4:2).
1. A person of great means may hire a steward to manage his money. Such a case would demand that the steward be trustworthy and have the owners best interest in mind. Likewise God expects this in his preachers of the gospel.
  2. The word “*faithful*” (*pistos*) is “to be trusted or believed: of persons, faithful, trusty, true... trustworthy, worthy of credit” (LS 642).
  3. Two things to consider. When hearing a man preach the listener has the responsibility to determine whether the preacher is trustworthy (i.e., does his words equate to the word of God?). Secondly, the eldership of a local church would be wise to investigate and scrutinize the man that would serve as minister (preacher) or steward of the gospel among the flock they shepherd. The preacher is to manage the gospel message. This man will not try to add gimmicks or alluring tactics but one who simply preaches the whole council of God (1 Corinthians 2:1-2; Acts 20:27) (see study # 14). Neither will this man try to usurp the authority of the elders and manage the flock (other than what his responsibility toward all Christians are) (see study # 14 ~ How does the preacher fit into the local church with the elders?)
- C. “*But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man’s judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self*” (4:3).
1. The word “*judge*” (*anakrino*) is “to examine closely, to question, interrogate... to inquire into a fact, used at Athens in technical sense: 1. to examine magistrates as to their qualification 2. of the magistrates, to examine persons concerned in a suit, so as to prepare the matter for trial” (LS 57). Interestingly, Paul “*judged*” a man in the next chapter (1 Corinthians 5:3). One must take note of the Greek words. The word “*judged*” at 1 Corinthians 5:3 is “*kekrika*” and is defined as “to determine, resolve, decree” (Thayer 360-361). “To bring to a trial, accuse... to pass sentence upon, to condemn” (LS 450-451).
  2. Apparently in the context of this verse, Paul is saying that his actions are on trial by the standard of God’s word and not man’s. Let any and all say what they want; i.e., you are foolish, weak and despised among men; however, the true examination of each man comes of God! Therefore Paul says I cannot even examine my own self apart from the word of God. This is an important point of reason when making a judgment on who a false teacher is. Many men may have various opinions regarding a particular teacher; however, it is the Word of God that makes the true judgment upon the man (see study # 7).
- D. “*For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord*” (4:4).
1. Paul’s point is that if man judges or examines him apart from the word of God their conclusions are faulty. Likewise, as a preacher, I may examine myself and find that I think I’m a pretty good guy; however, my sincerity and conscious matters nothing in light of God’s true judgments. Paul says, I am not acquitted from sins by my own human reasoning (see study # 21; Personal Conscience).

- a. Paul understood that a clear conscious did not justify a man in the eyes of God.
  - b. Before Paul became a Christian he did many things with a clear conscious thinking that it was good (cf. Acts 26:9; I Tim. 1:13).
  - c. One's conscious does not therefore determine the state of the soul. Truth alone justifies (Romans 5:1-2).
2. The real truth is that the Lord Jesus is examining ("*judging*") Paul and all of us and therefore it matters not what others think of you or I. What matters is what the Lord's examination of us produces.
- E. "*Wherefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each man have his praise from God*" (4:5).
1. Paul makes clear the distinction between judging men's hearts and making righteous judgments (see study # 22; Making Judgments).
  2. Human estimation, examination and judgments are worthless when God's standards are not applied. Jesus said, "*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*" (John 7:24). Paul is not saying that we are not to judge any at any time. Such interpretation would prove Paul and Jesus' teaching to be inconsistent (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:3; Matthew 7:15ff).
  3. Apparently the judgments made here are the examinations of various preachers and concluding by human reasoning that one is better than the other and who ever is not "*of*" that preacher is lesser a Christian than I. Such is not spiritual thinking.
  4. Sometimes our righteous judgments are faulty due to our inability to "*make manifest the counsels of the hearts*" but not so with God. God sees into the heart of man and will one day make the right judgments of all humanity.

## II. Paul uses sarcasm to deflate the ego of the Corinthians and cause them to repent of their divisive ways (4:6-13):

- A. "*Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other*" (4:6).
1. The "*these things*" are obviously the "*mystery of God*" that Paul and other preachers had been entrusted with as ministers and stewards.
  2. The entire phrase "*I have in a figure transferred*" is one word in Greek (*meteschematisa*) meaning, "to change the form of a person or thing; to transfer as in a figure" (LS 504). Clearly, Paul says he has spoken these words regarding the nature of the gospel in order to change the Corinthians view of Apollos and himself. Let all glory in God and not in any man.
  3. What the Corinthians and any others need to know is that the preacher teaches the student from the one foundation. The student; therefore, learns not to pedestal-ize the teacher but rather to "*not go beyond the things which are written.*" In other words, let us focus on divine revelation rather than our own reasoning (see study # 5).
  4. Dependence on human reasoning caused the Corinthians to be "*puffed up for the one against the other.*" The issues of division, jealousy, and strife are occurring because they have left the doctrine of Christ for human reasoning.
- B. "*For who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? But if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*" (4:7).
1. The Corinthians had been given many gifts of the Spirit and therefore had areas of spirituality that differentiated them from each other.
  2. Paul ask a question, 'where did you get these gifts?' Have you so soon forgot that it was Paul's preaching of the gospel message upon his first visit in 51 AD that gave you the faith and gifts you now have?
  3. This verse reveals a deeper problem in Corinth. The brethren looked at the preacher with eyes of pride and then turned to themselves in pride. Everyone wants to be the hero, the one with abilities that exceed all other peers, that once in a lifetime figure that has raised above the human suffering and quagmire of earthly living. To be looked upon as great feeds the ego of one who looks to the things of this life alone.

- C. *“Already are ye filled, already are ye become rich, ye have come to reign with out us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you”* (4:8). Paul uses sarcasm in three forms (see study # 23; The Use of Sarcasm to Produce Godliness in Others). What we must see at this point is that the Corinthian's error in judgment regarding elevating one preacher over another and looking to spiritual gifts with pride was a serious issue that worked Paul up.
1. The Corinthians had considered themselves to be *“full.”* The idea is that they felt they were spiritually self-sufficient and in need of nothing seeing they were baptized by a certain preacher and had been endowed with a gift.
  2. Secondly, Paul sarcastically says the Corinthians are *“rich.”*
    - a. Monetarily? NO!
    - b. The Corinthians considered themselves to be rich spiritually (seeing they were baptized by certain well known preacher and had a gift), when in all reality they were very poor (see 1 Corinthians 3:1-4).
  3. Thirdly, he says they had reigned as Kings as they considered themselves completely self sufficient and in need of nothing. They acted as though they no longer needed the man who laid the foundation and built upon the foundation of Christ's church in the city of Corinth.
  4. Paul says in reality you are not all of this but it would be great if you were.
- D. *“For, I think, God has set forth us the apostles last of all, as men doomed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and men”* (4:9).
1. An evolution or metamorphosis has occurred in the minds of these divisive brethren and Paul exposes it. The vainglory of life had left the preachers and inflated the minds of the Corinthians with delusions of greatness. While the apostles suffered at the hands of lawless men who opposed their inspired message the Corinthians lavished in their self perceived success. Many today suffer nothing and go about gloating that they are great Christians with marvelous knowledge while preaching brethren are thrown under the buss so to say (see 2 Timothy 3:12).
  2. The apostles were *“doomed to death”* (*epithanatos*) = “sick to death, at death's door” (LS 292). The cause (*“for”* {*hoti*}) their doomed state *“we are made a spectacle unto the world, both to angels and men.”* *Spectacle* (*theatron*) = “a place for seeing, esp. a theatre” (LS 360). The apostles were on stage for the world and angels to see their fate of death.
- E. *“We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye have glory, but we have dishonor”* (4:10).
1. While the Corinthians lavished in their gifts and their perceived greatness the whole of creation watched the apostles be executed one by one for the cause of Jesus Christ.
  2. The apostles shared in no glory; to the contrary, they were viewed as *“fools, weak and those of dishonor.”* These terms remind us of those Paul described as the true converts of 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. The Corinthians had moved from viewing others as important to seeing themselves as individuals who demanded respect and honor due to who baptized them and the gifts they possessed. They had overlooked the content of the message that brought them into a relationship with God identified as a farm, building, or temple (see 1 Corinthians 3:9, 16).
  3. The apostles were individuals who truly sought the welfare of others through the gospel message. So the sarcasm continues; we are the perceived weak among the carnally minded, however God knows those who are truly His.
- F. *“Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;”* (4:11).
1. The Corinthians had glorified the state of being a Christian as a status symbol saying, ‘I am of ...’ ‘I have such and such gifts.’ While the Corinthians were playing Christian, the apostles were living the Christian life of suffering and hard labor for the sake of souls.
  2. The ministers and stewards of truth were suffering while the Corinthians basked in glory.
- G. *“and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the off scouring of all things, even until now”* (4:12-13).

1. While the Corinthians basked in the radiant glory of each other's teacher and spiritual gifts, the apostles were "*reviled, persecuted and defamed*" being viewed as the "*filth of the world, the off scouring of all things.*"
2. Though viewed as such, they attempted not to repair their reputation for the sake of saving face, but continued in faith proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ that souls may be saved. They worked hard yet were viewed as filth. How can a preacher today complain about moving, not having any health insurance, not having decent clothing for his self or kids and so forth. Is this not the field we entered into (see study # 14)?
3. The Corinthians had lost sight of the message of the cross. While they glorified themselves the ministers and stewards of God's word continued to preach the gospel message. Was Paul's work in Corinth being "burned?" (see 1 Corinthians 3:15). Paul was not going to let this happen!

### III. Concluding remarks regarding this first problem among the brethren in Corinth (4:14-21):

- A. "*I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children*" (4:14).
  1. Paul's intension of using sarcasm and such harsh language was not to *shame* but to get the Corinthians to think right thoughts regarding the gospel, teachers of the gospel, and their own salvation. The word "*shame*" (*entrepo*) means "to turn toward, give heed to, pay regard to, to respect or reverence" (LS 266). Never would Paul make one feel comfortable in his or her sin and neither should any preacher (see study # 14). With a spirit of tenderness, forbearance, patience, and longsuffering the apostle deals with his beloved brethren's error.
  2. Rather Paul sought to "*admonish*" (*noutheteo*). To admonish is to "warn or advise" (LS 536).
  3. Any parent would do the same when his child is in harms way. We would not comfort them in their folly but warn them of the danger. The brethren at Corinth were as Paul's "*beloved children.*" He was not going to let his work among them burn up or be identified as vain. People's souls were at stake and Paul was a lover of men's souls.
- B. "*For though ye have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel*" (4:15).
  1. Paul was not desiring the Corinthians to call him their father; however, their faulty view of teachers demanded this statement. Catholics today call the priest "father" which is a contradiction of the command Jesus gave in Matthew 23:9.
  2. By father, Paul meant he "*begot them through the gospel.*" Paul had planted and watered the seed of the gospel and the Corinthians had obeyed; it is in this fashion that Paul was their father in faith.
- C. "*I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me*" (4:16).
  1. As the spiritual father of the Corinthians, through preaching the gospel message, Paul admonishes them to "*imitate*" or mimic those things which he does and says. The Corinthians were being misled by the mindset of the world round about them. Paul is bringing them back to the original foundation of truth that they heard and obeyed.
  2. Here is the authority of God in writing. The apostles spoke the mind of God (the commandments of God; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37) and therefore man is to follow what the do and say (cf. Philippians 4:9) (see study # 5).
- D. "*For this cause have I sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church*" (4:17).
  1. Seeing that the Corinthians had fallen from truth that was initially delivered to them Paul writes this letter and intends to send Timothy to them. Evidently Paul expected this letter to reach Corinth before Timothy arrived (see Acts 19:22 and 1 Corinthians 16:10). Paul was in Ephesus intending to visit the brethren in Corinth. It is very likely that when Timothy came he delivers the second epistle to the Corinthians and edifies the brethren as Paul mentions here.
  2. The truths of the gospel were preached universally to all churches. One church did not have a monopoly on truth. Church autonomy is not violated therefore when a preacher of one area preaches truth in another area. Every local church is to be united by the truth of God's word (see study # 24; Church Autonomy).

- E. *“Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will; and I will know, not the word of them that are puffed up, but the power”* (4:18-19).
1. Possibly some of those who said they were *“of Apollos”* or *“of Cephas”* (1 Corinthians 3:5) were saying that Paul was too fearful to come back to Corinth.
  2. Paul’s coming; however, would not be in persuasive words of human reasoning but in the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- F. *“For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power”* (4:20).
1. Whether the kingdom of God referred to here is the church (Colossians 1:13-14) or the future abode of the saints (2 Peter 1:11) is not designated.
  2. Clearly; however, the church and heaven are established in and by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to save men's souls (Romans 1:16).
- G. *“What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?”* (4:21).
1. Recall that Paul was their "father in the faith" (1 Corinthians 4:15). As the one who initially preached the gospel to them and came to be in a sense their father he now asks how he should come to them as a parent. The unruly child is due to rod of correction. The *“rod”* (*rhabdos*) is *“a stick as a means of punishment”* (AG 733). As children in faith who are unruly, only the rod would bring them back to a right mode of thinking. Solomon said, *“Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beat him with the rod, he will not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from Sheol”* (Proverbs 23:13-14).
  2. The Corinthians manner of life shall determine the nature of Paul’s visit. Would they continue to elevate one man over another? Would they continue to permit the reasoning of this world to govern their spiritual service to God? Would they continue to be divided? Would they continue to look to themselves as someone great due to having a particular man baptized them and having various gifts? The results of this teaching letter would determine how Paul's next visit would be.
  3. Paul would not physically beat them but he would beat them with his words of truth (see 2 Timothy 4:1-5). Any preacher worth his salt must beat with the word of God as a rod of correction at times if brethren are to change. Sometimes the preacher needs to be beat! Truth must prevail in the hearts of all (see study # 14).
  4. The obedience of the Corinthians would find Paul’s visit in gentleness.

#### Synopsis of chapter 4

The brethren in Corinth had divided themselves based upon who initially baptized and preached to them. They also had received spiritual gifts which they permitted to induce an air of self importance. Chapter 4 illustrates the progression of carnal thinking. The Corinthian's association with certain ministers and their gifts brought them to self aggrandizement rather than humility and mutual service to other lost men. Chapter 4:1-6 sets out to *“transfer”* the interest of the Corinthians from the preacher and self back to the Lord and his word. The significance of preachers cannot; however, be altogether diminished. Paul said, *“that in us ye might learn not to go beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other”* (1 Corinthians 4:6). To have the Corinthian's mind to be transferred from carnality to spirituality Paul had to deflate their over inflated estimation of themselves. They had begun to think too highly of themselves due to who baptized them and their own personal spiritual gifts. Paul uses sarcasm to puncture the view of self aggrandizement. The Brethren had began to view themselves as spiritually sufficient when in all reality they were in deep poverty in relation to spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and direction. Paul closes the chapter with tender words of care and concern saying, *“I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children”* (1 Corinthians 4:14). There had to be a change in their spiritual growth, the existing divisions and their view of gospel preachers. Paul’s aim was to uproot human reasoning and get their minds back on the gospel of Jesus Christ. Therefore they are admonished, as we, to look, listen and emulate the life and teachings of the apostles (1 Corinthians 4:16-17). Paul did not want to have to return to the Corinthian brethren with the *“rod”* of correction (1 Corinthians 4:21). The book, to this point, illustrates the importance of ministers and stewards of truth to continue working with brethren in truth (see study # 14).

## Chapter 5

### Prologue

The error of contentions and jealousy plagued the Corinthian Christians (1 Corinthians 1:11; 3:3). The brethren had considered the man who had taught them and baptized them as somewhat of a status symbol that elevated some over others (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4). Paul refers to this line of thinking as the "*wisdom of the world*" (1 Corinthians 2:6) and being "*carnal*" (1 Corinthians 3:3). Rather than growing in spiritual wisdom the Corinthians had permitted the carnal thinking of their surroundings to dictate their approach to serving God (1 Corinthians 3:1ff; Acts 17:16ff). Paul explains that the ministers and stewards of God's word are simple planters or laborers but it is God that created man and gives man hope through the gospel message (1 Corinthians 3:8ff). The Corinthians needed to remember their intimate relationship with God through their obedience to the gospel; i.e., they represented a temple which houses God (1 Corinthians 3:16). Paul appears to bring into the discussion of the Corinthian's error of contention and jealousy the idea self aggrandizement through the various gifts they received through the apostles (see 1 Corinthians 4:7). Some of the Corinthians actually thought of themselves as greater than others due to who baptized them and what spiritual gift they possessed. Paul, through sarcasm, deflates the egos of these brethren. Again, the apostle reminds the Corinthians that they have the responsibility to follow the example and teachings that Paul set forth and taught while among them (1 Corinthians 4:16-17). The next problem in line to deal with is the sin of tolerating brethren who refuse to repent of sinfulness (chapter 5).

#### I. Instructions regarding the un-repenting sinner of the church (5:1-5):

A. *"It is actually reported that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles, that one of you hath his father's wife"* (5:1).

1. The household of Chloe had "*signified*" (declared or disclosed) to Paul that the church in Corinth was having problems with contentions and jealousy (1 Corinthians 1:11; 3:3). Now Paul discusses a matter that others are talking about:

a. The word "*actually*" (*olos*) is "wholly, altogether, 2. on the whole, speaking generally, in short, in a word" (LS 553). The Greek word *olos* is found only three other times in the scriptures (Matthew 5:34; 1 Corinthians 6:7; 15:29) and in all four uses the word appears to indicate "on the whole or altogether." It is probable that Chloe's household was not the only one reporting the sin of this chapter and therefore Paul's point is that many are saying this thing about the tolerance of sin in Corinth.

b. The Corinthians' reputation was that of being contentious, jealous, and now tolerant of sin among its members.

2. The sin they were tolerating was "*fornication*" (*porneia*) "prostitution, unchastely, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse" (AG 693). The *porneia* under consideration is identified as a form of incest in the last clause of vs. 1 "*one of you hath his father's wife.*" Paul's language in verse one indicates the utter heinousness of the sin... "*such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles...*" "Even Roman law forbade unions of this kind; they are naturally abhorrent. One does not need Christianity to repudiate them."<sup>1</sup> Man by his very nature understood that such sexual unions were wrong (see Romans 1:26-28) (see study # 25; Man's Nature).

3. Recall that at the end of chapter 4 we had noted the seriousness of the sin the Corinthians were in. Paul is chastising the brethren as any good minister or steward of the word of God would (again, see 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

B. *"And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you"* (5:2).

1. Rather than "*mourning*" in horror that one among them was in sin the Corinthians were "*puffed up*" (*pephusiomenoi*) "to bear one's self loftily, be proud" (Thayer 660). "Inflated by his

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<sup>1</sup> Lenski, R. C. H. Commentary on the New Testament (1 and 2 Corinthians) pg. 207



- fleshly mind” (AG 869). “To be inflated with pride, to be proud, vain, arrogant” (Moulton 431).
2. The reaction to the sin is not surprising. Paul has admonished the Corinthians up to this point to rid themselves of human reasoning. A second case in point of their rejecting divine revelation and using human reasoning is found in their attitude toward the sinner of this chapter (see study # 26; Attitudes Toward Truth).
  3. Human reasoning may say, “let us not be controversial,” “let us not judge another,” “let us be loving toward all and all will give account for their own evil deeds,” “let that congregation make their own judgment in the matter,” and a multitude of other human reasoning may come into play. The Lord said; however, of tolerating sinners in the church, “*I have this against thee, that thou sufferest (tolerates the sins of) the woman Jezebel, who calleth herself a prophetess; and she teaches and seduces my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols*” (Rev. 2:20).
  4. The attitude of pride may be identified as a misunderstanding of Paul’s instructions to the Corinthians in a previous lost epistle (cf. comments on 1 Corinthians 5:9-10).
  5. Rather than being inflated in their fleshly minds over the matter they should have “*taken away* (the fornicator) *from among you.*” To “*take away*” (*exairo*) is to “to lift up, lift off the earth” (LS 268); “To lift up or take away out of a place; to remove one from a company” (Thayer 221). The objective of this chapter will be to illustrate the space that must exist between the erring Christian who will not repent and the faithful of God.
- C. “*For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already as though I were present judged him that hath so wrought this thing*” (5:3).
1. Paul was in Ephesus as he writes (1 Corinthians 16:8) and therefore “*absent in body.*”
  2. Paul’s being “*present in spirit*” indicates the universality of the gospel of Jesus Christ (see study # 8). If Paul was “*present in spirit*” with the Corinthians would not the Corinthians be “*present in spirit*” with Paul in Ephesus? Truth unites all Christians in all places. Church autonomy has no government over truth. Truth is not bound to only one church (2 Timothy 2:9) (cf. appendix # 24). Truth is what unites all brethren for all time (John 17:20-21).
  3. Paul has called upon the Corinthians to emulate “*my ways which are in Christ*” (1 Corinthians 4:17; cf. Philippians 4:9) so that the Corinthian brethren could certainly reciprocate the “*judgment*” of a sinner in another congregation without violating that church’s autonomy. This is not to say that we would force another church to pull the trigger of discipline because only they know their efforts in the area of longsuffering and teaching (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14). The point is that a judgment is made regarding the sin! The judgment of when to discipline is up to that local church and its elders (see study # 22).
  4. Some brethren want to pick and choose what parts of apostolic example they want to follow. When it comes to the Lord’s Supper they want to follow the example of Acts 20:7; however, when it comes to making judgments regarding sin in the lives of others they cry, “your not an apostles” or “your not a member of that local church.”
- D. “*in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (5:4-5).
1. Here is a direct command from an apostle (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37) (see study # 5).
  2. The phrase, “*in the name (en to onomati) of our Lord Jesus*” is an indication of or by the authority of Jesus. *Onomati* is “by name” (LS 560); “the name of the author of a commission, delegated authority, or religious profession” (Moulton 289).
  3. By the authority of Jesus Christ the Corinthians were to “*gather together*” (*sunago*) “to bring together, gather together, collect, convene” (LS 766) with Paul’s “*spirit*” (according to truth that Paul has delivered regarding the matter) “*with the power of our Lord Jesus*” (authority)...
  4. Let us first consider the gathering. It is an authorized assembly for the purpose of discipline against the un-repenting sinner (see study # 27; Church Discipline). When all see the proceeding all shall fear (1 Timothy 5:19), the error is exposed (Ephesians 5:11) and all now know who the sinner is (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

5. In such an assembly the sinner is “*delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*”
  - a. To “*deliver*” (*paradidomi*) “to give or hand over to another, transmit... to give a city or person into another’s hands... to deliver up, surrender to; give up to justice” (LS 595).
  - b. The sinner is handed over to Satan for the “*destruction of the flesh.*” The word “*destruction*” (*olethros*) is “ruin, destruction, death” (LS 551). The current state of the flesh is ruin; however, the future state of the spirit remains hopeful through repentance. Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). One so separated is “ruined” in the eyes of God in that he or she has no fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-7). Satan’s rule is over darkness and is alienated from Jehovah God so that one who chooses ruin is made to know that he lives in the flesh as one of Satan’s (see study # 28; The Work of the Devil) (here he is seen as the ruler of those who have fallen from grace).
  - c. Such horrid reality must drive one to repent that he or she may be reconciled to God through the blood of Jesus Christ (cf. Peter’s admonition to Simon in Acts 8).
6. Apparently this event is an official act (work) of the assembled congregation so that the sinner may be saved “*in the day of the Lord Jesus*” (that is when the Lord comes to judge men for their deeds done in the flesh; cf. Revelation 20:10-15). The clear division of man is seen here in that he is flesh and spirit. While in the flesh the sinner belongs to Satan; yet, the spirit is intended to be saved only through contrite humility (cf. Isaiah 57:15).
7. At this point the instructions are to take away the sinner from among you and deliver his soul to Satan for the destruction of the flesh.

## II. Instructions regarding the rest of the congregation who are tolerating the sin rather than exposing and disciplining the sinner (5:6-8):

- A. “*Your glorying is not good. Know ye know that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?*” (5:6).
  1. The Corinthians had “gloried” over the circumstances of fornication rather than putting the sinner away. Such action was a worldly, fleshly, or carnal way of reasoning (see 1 Corinthians 2:6; 3:3) (see study # 29; Approach to Truth). Your human reasoning that says tolerate and leave alone is contrary to divine revelation.
  2. Divine reasoning reveals that “*a little leaven leavens the whole lump.*”
    - a. “*Leaven*” (*zume*) is “yeast, leaven... a little yeast ferments the whole lump of dough 1 Corinthians 5:6; Galatians 5:9, shown by its repeated use to be a proverbial saying, serves to picture the influence of apparently insignificant factors in the moral and religious sphere” (AG 340).
    - b. That which seemed by human reasoning to be insignificant was a big deal with God (see study # 26)! The word “*leaven*” is often used to describe sinful doctrines contrary to the teachings of Jesus (cf. Matthew 16:6-12). The Pharisees were known to teach as their doctrines the precepts of men (cf. Matthew 15:9).
  3. The whole lump apparently represented the church as a whole. Their tolerating the sins of the fornicator was an indication of an attitude foreign to divine revelation.
- B. “*Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened. For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ.*” (5:7).
  1. “*Purge out*” (*ekkathairo*) “to cleanse out: with acc. Of the thing cleansed, to clear out ditches, etc. to be purified... of dirt removed, to clear away” (LS 238).
  2. Paul is saying cleanse your mind of human reasoning and doctrines (cf. Matthew 16:6-12).
  3. The “*new lump*” would be free from the contaminates of leaven or sinful men. It would also include being free of the doctrines and reasoning of men.
  4. “*Even as ye are*” (Christians cleansed by the blood of Jesus and sanctified). Paul says, get busy and be what you are supposed to be! They are “*unleavened*” (A—NM-P) Adjective—Nominative Masculine – Plural (Friberg 519). Apparently the adjective “*unleavened*” (clean and separate from sinners and human reasoning) represents what they are in relation to being a new lump in the future. So that at present they “*may be a new lump*” IF they purge out the old leaven. The Corinthians cannot be leavened and unleavened at the same time!
  5. “*For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ.*”

- a. To understand the allegory used in this verse we must take our minds back to Exodus 12 and the last plague God sent to Egypt. That last plague was the death of the first born of all Egypt. Death was to come not only to the firstborn among men but among their flocks as well. The Hebrews were not to be affected by this last plague if they would follow God's instructions. They were to take an unblemished lamb, male, one year old on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the first month. Four days later, the 14<sup>th</sup>, they were to kill the lamb and spread its blood over the door post of their house. When God came to kill the firstborn in Egypt, He would see the blood and pass over that house (Exodus 12).
  - b. The Israelites were to celebrate this event in subsequent years and it was called the "*Passover*" and subsequent "*Feast of Unleavened Bread*." On the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month of the year, the people of God were to rid their house of leaven (day 10-14) and eat un-leaven bread for the next seven days (Exodus 12:18ff).
  - c. The un-leavened bread represented their being free or separated from sin. The allegory now makes sense. If Christ (the sacrificial Lamb) has already been killed, how is it that there is leaven among you? This is a call to put sin and sinners away (i.e., space that they may be clean and the sinner shamed).
- C. "*wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth*" (5:8).
- 1. The allegory of the Feast of Passover continues. To keep the feast was to purge out all leaven (sin). Paul names "*malice and wickedness*" and contrast it to the un-leaven bread of "*sincerity and truth*."
  - 2. "*Malice*" (*kakia*) "moral badness; defect" (LS 392) and "*wickedness*" (*poneria*) "baseness; wickedness" (LS 661).
  - 3. The call is to put away sinfulness and no longer tolerate it among the brethren. Put away human reason and be sincerely (purely) dependant upon the truth.

### III. A previous epistle written to the Corinthians admonishing them regarding their relationship to fornicating brethren (5:9-13):

- A. "*I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;*" (5:9).
- 1. 2 Corinthians 7:8 states, "*For though I made you sorry with my epistle, I do not regret it:*" This is a reference to the I Corinthian epistle.
  - 2. The epistle alluded to in I Corinthians 5:9 is a lost epistle that we have no record of. Herein we find and pinpoint the problem of the Corinthians. Paul had said in this lost epistle, "*have no company with fornicators.*" The phrase, "*have no company with*" is one word in Greek (*sunanamignumi*) meaning "to mix up together, to keep company with, be intimate with" (Thayer 601). "To mix up together: to be associated with others" (LS 767).
  - 3. The Corinthians had been commanded to not mix and mingle with fornicators as though there were no wrong in their lives.
- B. "*not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous and extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world:*" (5:10).
- 1. The inference is that the Corinthians were not mixing and mingling with sinful people of the world yet treating brethren who were fornicators as though all were ok. They had the issue mixed up.
  - 2. If we are not to mix, keep company or associate with any and all who are un-repenting sinners Paul says, "*then must ye needs go out of the world.*" The world is filled with these types and therefore it is impossible to avoid them. Quite to the contrary, we would not want to avoid them anyway, but rather teach them (Matthew 28:19).
- C. "*but as it is, I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat*" (5:11).
- 1. Twice now Paul said, "*I wrote unto you*" (5:9, 11) and both verses are alluding to that previous epistle. With the admonition at hand the apostle has now warned these brethren twice.

2. As we study this verse, 1 Corinthians 5:5 (“*that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*”) must be kept within our minds. The object of all disciplinary action is correction (cf. Proverbs 13:24).
  3. There is an apparent distinction made between the erring Christian and the erring of the world (non-Christian).
    - a. Consider 2 Peter 2:20-22, “*For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the last state is become worse with them than the first. For it were better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after knowing it, to turn back from the holy commandment delivered unto them. It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had washed to wallowing in the mire.*”
    - b. The heart of the erring child of God is hardened further against the gospel in this second state than it was before the first obeyed the gospel. It will be more difficult to bring them to truth now than when in their first lost state.
  4. Total and entire social associations are to cease with such a one (“*no company*” and “*with such a one, not to eat*”). The apparent reason for the separate treatment is:
    - a. First and foremost the sinning brother is to feel the shame of this social separation from other brethren (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:14). Under such pain of shame, it may be that he is driven to repent (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:5).
    - b. That the church remain pure and clean (undefiled) through associations between some brethren who would be tempted to mix and mingle with the un-repenting man’s sins (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 5:26-27).
    - c. That no place is given to the unregenerate of the world to blaspheme the name of God. A church comprised of un-repenting sinners is a church that the world sees no difference between their lives and the members of the church’s lives. ‘Why then should they change;’ one may say, or ‘they are all hypocrites there.’
  5. It seems apparent that the phrase “*any man*” would include any Christian any where who would persist in such sinful living (see 1 Timothy 1:20). Paul wrote in the previous lost epistle that very thing. One must concede; however, that the context of the previous epistle is not revealed. Paul is dealing with a local church’s problem in I Corinthians 5. It seems doubtful that discipline was at the heart of the matter in his previous epistle. Paul writes, “*And if any man obeys not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed*” (2 Thessalonians 3:14) and again said, “*I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren*” (1 Thessalonians 5:27). All brethren of all times are to read and adhere to the principles of God’s divine revelation and those who do not (who are Christians) are to be totally avoided for the three causes stated above. The fact; however, that in I Corinthians 5 we have an assemblage of people in a congregation for the purpose of administering the said discipline helps us understand that I Corinthians 5 is speaking of church work and not an individual’s work in the universal church.
- D. “*For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves*” (5:12-13).
1. The apparent context demands that the judging under consideration is disciplinary judging (putting away the un-repenting one). If this were not true than Paul contradicts himself in I Corinthians 6:2.
  2. Those who are members of the body of Christ are the ones under consideration. How can I “*put away*” or “*withdraw*” from one of the world who is not even in the church? Paul’s point is that God will discipline these individuals; our concern, in the area of discipline, is with erring brethren.
  3. Finally, Paul returns to the original admonition regarding the un-repenting fornicator in the church, “*put away the wicked man from among yourselves.*” The space must be there for his soul to be saved.

## Synopsis of Chapter 5

Paul could have very well been discouraged after reading a letter from Chloe's house along with hearing various reports from others regarding the multiplicity of the Corinthians error. One today may feel that it would be impossible to untangle the erroneous mess that churches get themselves in. Paul; however, with a spirit of love sets out to systematically deal with each of the Corinthian problems. The brethren of the church in Corinth had not only come to be "*puffed up*" in relationship to who baptized them and their spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 4:6, 18-19) but also in their tolerance of a brother living in fornication (1 Corinthians 5:2). They actually "*gloried*" in the fact that they had done nothing with the fornicating brother. The apostle speaks frankly and to the point instructing them how to remedy the situation and maintain their state of being "*unreprovable*" before the Lord. They were to put the fornicator (and all other persistent sinners) away from them and not have company with him until he repented of his wickedness.

Paul has effectively laid the ground work for further accusations against the Corinthian brethren. Not only are they guilty of elevating one preacher above another and have developed a sense of self sufficiency and arrogance through spiritual gifts, but they are tolerating sin in the church. The cause is clear; a lack of spiritual understanding and carnal approach to serving God (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). I Corinthians 5 helps us understand the process by which we must "*put away*" the wicked members from us.

I Corinthians 5 sets forth instructions for official church discipline in the sense that the work is done by the authority of Jesus Christ as all the brethren are "*gathered together*" for the act (1 Corinthians 5:4). Further instructions regarding discipline in the local church is given in I and II Thessalonians. The apostle Paul instructs the Thessalonians in the area of erring brethren saying, "*And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the fainthearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all*" (1 Thessalonians 5:14). Six months to one year later Paul again writes, "*Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which they received of us*" (2 Thessalonians 3:6). Once more Paul said, "*And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed*" (2 Thessalonians 3:14). From these passages, it is clear that the faithful have a responsibility to try to teach the erring out of their sin. The period of teaching out of sin is called "*longsuffering*." Longsuffering has its limits. The Lord never intended the church to be "ever-suffering" as is indicated in the admonition to the church in Thyatira (Revelation 2:20ff). That church "*suffered*" the woman Jezebel to the point that she carried away other disciples with her false teaching (see study # 30; Longsuffering).

To say that these passages apply only to the local church can cause Christians to neglect the commands to be ever watching for brethren who introduce false doctrines into the church of Jesus Christ. It is clear that the judiciary process of discipline is to occur only on the local level (1 Corinthians 5:4, 12); however, there are duties for each individual Christian on the universal level toward the erring. Such erring brethren are to be "*resisted to the face*" as Paul did Peter (Galatians 2:11). Such erring are to be taught and warned regarding their error (Acts 15:24-31; 16:4; 20:26; Jude 22-23). Every Christian should be on constant guard against the erring (Acts 18:27; Revelation 3:2) exposing their sins as we have opportunity (Ephesians 5:11) and never "*receiving*" such a one into our fellowship (Acts 18:27; Romans 14:1ff; 2 Timothy 3:1-9).

How many times have we seen visitors from other areas question the preacher's preaching on various issues such as Romans 14, creation, being a "watchman," marriage, divorce, and remarriage etc. Will we say, "you are not a member of our church and therefore I will not talk to you about the matter.?" Here in is the negative side of the Corinthian's problem in Corinth. They avoided the fornicator and thought all was well (said conclusion is drawn from 1 Corinthians 5:9-11). If we cannot make judgments on those who are not members of our local church until they become members of our church then we have violated the very principles of this chapter. The reason this un-repenting brother was to be "*put away*" was threefold. First, that the sinner would be saved through shame (1 Corinthians 5:5b). Second, that the church maintain its distinction from the world (remove leaven of sin) and no place is given for blasphemy (II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:26-27). If the un-repenting is "*received*"

among us before repentance we have affectively eliminated the instructions of I Corinthians 5. A church that would therefore “*receive*” an un-repenting sinner is in error!

A lack of spiritual understanding was destroying the Corinthian church. One may say that a lack of spiritual understanding has ever destroyed God’s people (cf. Isaiah 6:10; Hosea 4:6).

## Chapter 6

### Foreword

Paul continues to systematically deal with the sin in the church of Corinth. The Corinthians were guilty of divisions and contention (jealousy and strife) (1 Corinthians 1:11; 3:3). Furthermore, the Corinthians were guilty of tolerating sinful men who were named as members of their local congregation (1 Corinthians 5:1ff). Chapter 6 examines the next problem in line. The Corinthian Christians were taking each other to human courts to sue each other. Secondly, chapter 6 exposes the sin of fornication that had existed among the brethren. Paul would not quit on these brethren. As a loving father he would continue to expose all their dark deeds that they may be presented before Jehovah in holiness.

#### I. The Problem of litigation’s (6:1-8):

- A. “*Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?*” (6:1)
1. Evidently, many of the Corinthian brethren were habitually taking other brethren through the legal process of a trial before non-Christian judges for the purpose of defrauding them (6:7).
  2. Chapter five reveals the brethren’s refusal to exercise discipline and in chapter six, Paul exposes their unwillingness to get involved in brethren’s disputes.
  3. The word “*dare*” (*tolmao*) is “to undertake, take heart either to do or bear anything terrible or difficult, . . . to have the courage, hardihood, effrontery, cruelty, or the grace, patience, to do a thing in spite of any natural feeling, to venture, dare to do” (LS 812).
  4. Apparently the Corinthian Christians were acting against their consciences regarding taking a brother to the courts of the unrighteous for gain. Their minds were corrupt.
  5. The word “*neighbor*” is an apparent adjective (accusative; Friberg 520) acting as a predicate describing the brethren (subject of sentence; “*any of you*” {saints}).
- B. “*Or know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?*” (6:2).
1. The word “*judge*” (Greek ~ *krinousin*) is a future tense active verb (Friberg 520). The word “*judge*” (*krinousin*) = “a standard or means by which to judge criterion; a court of justice, a cause, controversy” (Moulton 241). The saints will judge the world in that their lives represent the standard of truth. The standard will be that which determines whether one is acceptable or unacceptable before God (John 12:48). As the queen of Sheba and the people of Nineveh who repented of their sins will stand against the unrighteous in the day of judgment even so will the faithful saints of God for all time (see Matthew 12:41-42).
  2. Seeing that the saints will stand as representatives of the highest law and judge the world why then would one want a court system that operates on human reasoning to make judgments regarding a brother? The saints are commanded to make “*righteous judgments*” in this life (John 7:24). We are to weigh the actions and words of all individuals with the word of God (1 John 4:1). Christians ought to be able to judge in these matters (See study # 31; Making Judgments).
- C. “*Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*” (6:3)
1. The saint is one with truth and thereby stand in metonymy to truth as does Christ (see Colossians 1:25-27). The righteous shall stand as judges to the world and angels as stated above.

2. How shall we (saints) judge the angels? That angels will undergo judgment as do men is apparent from Jude 6 and 2 Peter 2:4. Again, the glorified saints of God will stand as a representative of God's standard and thereby judge the world as the queen of Sheba and people of Nineveh.
  3. If Christians are to judge in these high matters, should we not be able to judge things pertaining to "*this life*?" The Christian ought to be able to handle any disputes that arise among its members (Matthew 18:15-17).
- D. "*If then ye have to judge things pertaining to this life, do ye set them to judge who are of no account in the church?*" (6:4)
1. Paul is reasoning with the Corinthian brethren. He has effectively demonstrated their high position in the grand scheme of things (they are to judge the unrighteous and the angels at the end of time with Christ). Judgments will be made then and are to be made now. They (the saints) are qualified judges who are lethargically sitting back and making no judgments.
  2. Those of "*no account*" (*exoutheneo*) are "to set at nought" (LS 276); "to make of no account, to despise utterly" (Thayer 225). The Corinthian brethren have effectively 'passed the buck' so to say to the unrighteous (those who have no part in the church).
  3. Why? Again, it goes back to their carnal minds that are underdeveloped spiritually (cf. 3:1ff). A few verses down and we will see that they were wanting to be compensated for their losses and the only way they saw to do this was to turn to the civil courts of the land. They had lost sight of the need for their fellow brethren to repent of their sinfulness. They were selfishly looking at what they had lost on this earth rather than looking at the loss of a brother.
- E. "*I say this to move you to shame. What, cannot there be found among you one wise man who shall be able to decide between his brethren, but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?*" (6:5-6)
1. Again, the Corinthian Christians should have been ashamed of themselves for such behavior. Rather than lamenting in great sorrow over the fornicator among them in I Corinthians 5 they were puffed up (5:2). Now, rather than judging a brother among themselves, they have allowed the unjust to judge their matters again violating NT principles (sin!).
  2. Paul shames them in all four of their sins to this point that has led to disunity in the church (1 Corinthians 1:10) [elevating preachers (1 Corinthians 1:12-16; 3:3-4; 4:6); jealousy (1 Corinthians 3:3; 4:7); tolerating sin in the church (1 Corinthians 5) and now defrauding each other in the courts of the unjust (1 Corinthians 6)]. Paul is practicing what he preaches (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:14).
- F. "*Nay, already it is altogether a defect in you, that ye have lawsuits one with another. Why not rather take wrong? Why not rather be defrauded?*" (6:7).
1. The word "*defect*" (*hettēma*) is defined as "loss, as respects salvation" (Thayer pg. 281). Vines says "In 1 Corinthians 6:7 the reference is to the spiritual loss sustained by the church at Corinth because of their discord and their litigious ways in appealing to the world's judges....The preceding adverb '*altogether*' shows the comprehensiveness of the defect; the loss affected the whole church, and was '*an utter detriment*'" (pg. 277).
  2. Their loss or defect was in their defrauding each other before the worldly courts (vs. 8) which gave the world a chance to blaspheme the name of God.
  3. The word "*defraud*" (*apostereo*) means "To rob, despoil, bereave or defraud one of a thing... to be robbed or deprived of" (LS 107). Brethren were greedy for gain.
  4. The phrase "*take wrong*" ("*be wronged*" {NM 669}) (*adikeisthe*) is "to do one wrong, to wrong, injure... to wrong one in a thing... to be wronged" (LS 13). Obviously Paul is invoking Jesus' teaching in Matt. 5:38-42 (one who wants your coat let him take it, one who wants to go one mile go two miles...). Sometimes our legal rights must be forfeited for the sake of a brother's soul (see study # 32; Attitude Toward Brethren).
  5. Their sin is identified, "*Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren*" (6:8). Two issues: 1. They should have had brethren judge the matter at hand rather than the world's courts. 2. They should be willing to take the wrong done to them rather than seeking to defraud a brother.

II. Evidently the Corinthian Christians felt they were in no danger by exercising their rights to defraud their brethren through the Civil Court System (6:9-11):

A. “Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God” (6:9-10).

1. The “*unrighteous*” (*adikos*) and those who “*wrong*” (*adikeo*) others are equivalent. *Adikos* is “of one who breaks God’s laws, unrighteous, sinful” (Thayer 12). Apparently the saint of God can fall from grace (see study # 33; The Possibility of Apostasy).
2. The kingdom of God is usually intended as the church; however, here it is used to indicate heaven as in 2 Peter 1:11. Those who will not be in heaven are the:
  - a. “*Fornicators*” ( *pornos*) “a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator” (Thayer 532).
  - b. “*Idolaters*” (*eidololatrias*) “any one, even a Christian, participant in any way in the worship of heathen” (Thayer 174).
  - c. “*Adulterers*” (*moichoi*) “Adulterer” (Thayer 417 and AG).
  - d. “*Effeminate*” (*malakoi*) “fainthearted, effeminate, cowardly” (LS 486). “Effeminate, of a catamite, a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness” (Thayer 387). “Soft, effeminate, esp. of catamites, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually” (AG 488). The word catamite means “a boy kept by a pederast (one who engages in anal intercourse, esp. with a boy; lover of boys)” (AHD 247). The word Effeminate means “having qualities or characteristics more often associated with women than men; unmanly” (AHD 439) (see appendix # 34; “Homosexuality”).
  - e. “*Abusers of themselves with men*” (*arsenokoitai*) (“sodomites” {NM 669}). “Lying with men” (LS 119). “A male who practices homosexuality, pederast, sodomite” (AG 109). “One who lies with a male as with a female, a sodomite” (Thayer 75). Both the “*effeminate*” and “*abusers of themselves with men*” cannot possibly be equivalent terms. Why would Paul say the same thing twice using two different Greek words? It seems obvious that the “*abusers*” are the homosexuals and the “*effeminate*” are the soft and having characteristics of a woman (see study # 34; Homosexuality).
  - f. “*Thieves*” (*kleptai*) “a thief” (LS 436).
  - g. “*Covetous*” (*pleonektai*) “one who has or claims more than his due, greedy, grasping, arrogant” (LS 645).
  - h. “*Drunkard*” (*methusoi*) “drunken” (LS 493; AG 499). “Intoxicated” (Thayer 396). Closely associated with *methusma* (“intoxicating drink... drink that leads to lawlessness” AG 499).
  - i. “*Revilers*” (*loidopoi*) “railing, abusive” (LS 477). “Reviler, abusive person” (AG 479). “To denounce with abusive language. To use abusive language” (AHD 1058) (see study # 35; The Use of Foul Language).
  - j. “*Extortioners*” (*arpages*) “seizure, rapine, robbery, rape” (LS 119). “Robbery, plunder... of forcible confiscation of property in a persecution” (AG 108).
3. Let no one be “*deceived*.” Whether the world or liberal brethren think that the unrighteous shall be in heaven does not change the word of God. Such individuals “*shall* (not) *inherit the kingdom of God*.”

B. “*And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God*” (6:11)

1. Seems odd to think of a church comprised of former homosexuals, pedophiles, drunkards and thieves; however, this is exactly what Paul said (see study # 36; No Sin is too Heinous for God to Forgive).
2. Now the Corinthians were “*washed*.” This is an obvious reference to their being baptized. Luke used the same verb (*apolouo*) in Acts 22:16 saying, “*and so why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on his name.*”



3. The Corinthians had been "*Sanctified*" (cf. notes on 1:2). To be sanctified is to be "separate from things profane and dedicated to God, to consecrate and so render inviolable... Since only what is pure and without blemish can be devoted and offered to God (Leviticus 22:20; Deuteronomy 15:21; 17:1) sanctified signifies to purify and to cleanse externally, to purify by expiation, free from guilt of sin: 1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 5:26; Hebrews 10:10, 14, 29; 13:12... to purify internally by reformation of soul" (Thayer 6).
  4. The Corinthians had been "*Justified*" (*dikaioo*) "to hold or deem right, think fit, demand... to deem righteous, justify" (LS 202). "To declare, pronounce, one to be just, righteous, or such as he ought to be, to declare guiltless one accused or who may be accused, acquit of a charge or reproach" (Thayer 150).
  5. The Corinthians were "*washed, sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.*" By the authority and teachings of Christ are men made perfect!
- C. Summary of verses 1-11: Paul shames the Corinthians for brethren's willingness to not only defraud each other but for their overall attitude of letting those of the world decide matters for them. Paul names this as a "*defect*" (6:7) in them. Such conduct is sinful (6:8-9). Paul reminds the Corinthian brethren that the unrighteous will in no way enter into the kingdom of God (6:10). He then catalogues sins in which the Corinthians themselves were once guilty of before being "*washed, sanctified and justified in Christ Jesus*" (6:11). It seems apparent that Paul's point is that if they do not maintain this state of sanctification and justification then they shall surely lose it. There was no difference in the sins of their past that they had been forgiven for and these new sins of defrauding brethren.

### III. Paul refutes the arguments made by Christians to justify their fornication (6:12-20):

- A. "*All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any*" (6:12).
- B. Are the "*all things*" here all inclusive of all acts whether moral or immoral?
1. If the "*all things*" stated are sinful and un-sinful acts then Paul has contradicted himself from 6:9-12. Remember, the "*unrighteous*" (those who break God's law) shall not inherit the kingdom of God.
  2. What are the "*all things*" then?
    - a. God has commanded certain things such as baptism and worship.
    - b. God has prohibited activity as well such as fornication, adultery, and extortion.
    - c. God's authoritative law is delivered by direct commands, examples, inference and silence. There are things that God commands one to do and things that God prohibits one from doing. There are also areas of man's life that would be recognized as a liberty (i.e., we are free to do an event and it does not get us closer or put us further from God).
  3. The all things of vs. 12 fall under the category of matters of liberty or indifference (things such as circumcision {1 Corinthians 7:19}, eating meats sacrificed to idols {1 Corinthians 8:4, 9}, being a vegetarian or setting aside special days for worship {Romans 14:1-5}).
  4. Though the Christian has liberties he is not to cause another brother to stumble in sin by practicing the liberty (see 1 Corinthians 8:9). The determining word is "*expedient*" (*sumphero*) "to help, be profitable, be expedient" (Thayer 597). "To confer a benefit, be useful or profitable... expedient" (LS 764). "Appropriateness to the purpose at hand. Something that is a means to an end" (AHD 477). Certainly sinful conduct is not 'helpful or profitable' to the Christian. Neither is sinful conduct 'a means to the end.' Christian liberties are therefore under consideration here.
  5. There are obvious limitations to our liberties for Paul said, "*I will not be brought under the power of any.*" A liberty that controls us is no longer a liberty to us. Taking a prescription drug for a sickness is an expediency; however, the moment I become controlled by the prescription drug is the moment it becomes unlawful. Clearly the expedient must be lawful (see study # 37; Liberties and Expediency).
- C. "*Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall bring to nought both it and them. But the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.*" (6:13).

1. The word “*meats*” is food in general. The stomach craves food and so the one is dependent upon the other for survival. Each of these, food and the belly, have a limited existence.
  2. Apparently the Corinthian brethren were using this scenario to justify their fornication. Paul clears this up saying that **fornication is not a natural liberty to satisfy the inner desire for sex**. As food is for the belly, fornication is not for the body. The fallacy of said argument is called a “slippery slope” (should one event occur, so will other harmful events) or another known as the “fallacy of the undistributed middle” (A is based on B fallacy). These arguments appear to be logical; however, in reality they are proved false upon a closer examination. Someone may say, “My body hungers for food so I feed it. My body craves sex, so I satisfy it. Fornication must therefore be lawful.”
  3. Paul’s argument against the Corinthians falls in two aspects: 1. The body and fornication are not designed for each other as food and the belly. 2. The body will not be brought to nought as food and the belly (cf. Romans 12:1-2; 1 Corinthians 15:20). Paul said, “*and God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us through his power*” (1 Corinthians 6:14) (God has something more glorious in store for the eternity of the body; cf. study # 39; The Christian’s Resurrection / Glorification).
  4. The principle of liberties and expedient matters is defined. While fornication may be expedient for the needs of the body it is not lawful to do. Therefore, fornication cannot be viewed as a liberty. This formula ought to be considered before practicing anything and referring to it as a liberty or expedient. Ask yourself these questions. First, does the matter under consideration violate any of God's law? Do my actions or the object under consideration aid in a lawful thing or unlawful thing? (see study # 37).
- D. “*Know ye not that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ, and make them members of a harlot? God forbid*” (6:15).
1. How are our bodies “*members*” of Christ? The word “*members*” (*melos*) is “a limb within my body frame” (LS 496). The Christian is depicted as a part of the body of Christ in a figurative sense. As my arms are two of many limbs upon my body so Christians are individual parts of the body of Christ (cf. illustration of chapter 12).
  2. Should the Christian join himself to a “*harlot*” (“A woman who sells her body for sexual uses; a prostitute, a harlot, one who yields herself to defilement for the sake of gain” {Thayer 532})? If so, he has effectively taken away himself from Christ. This verse indicates the reality of sin separating one from God (Isa. 59:1-2) (see study # 39; Sin Separates One from God).
  3. The point is clear, one who “*take(s) away*” (*[airo]* “to lift and take away, to remove” {LS 23}) is the one who participates in unlawful sexual acts with and immoral woman or man.
  4. Paul answers his own question saying, “*God forbid.*” Let no one take a member of the body of Christ and join it to a harlot.
- E. “*Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? For, the twain, saith he, shall become one flesh*” (6:16).
1. Paul now explains the “*God forbid.*” The “*member*” that was once a part of the body of Christ is now taken away from Christ and made a member of the harlot due to the sin of fornication. The two are “*joined*” (*kollao*) “to glue, cement; to join one metal to another... generally, to join fast together; to cleave to” (LS 441). *Kollao* is the root word of *proskollaw* found in Matthew 19:5 where the Lord said, “*for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*”
  2. Paul then quotes from Genesis 2:24 to illustrate his point further. The phrase “*or know ye not*” appeals to their common knowledge of what transpires during a sex act. Two become one. This is further explained in verse 17.
- F. “*But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit*” (6:17).
1. The word “*but*” compares and contrast what happens in a sexual encounter with what happens when one is identified as a member of the body of Christ. The word “*spirit*” has been used before in this study (1 Corinthians 2:12; 4:21; 5:3) and is continued again in this study (1 Corinthians 14:15-16; 16:8). Apparently the word has to do with a disposition dictated by a standard. Therefore I am “*joined unto the Lord in one spirit*” because I live by His divine

- standards. I am one in purpose with the Lord. Paul said, "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colosians 1:27).
2. To "*join*" is to cleave or be glued to the Lord! As two people come to be one through the sexual act even so two (Jesus and a member of his body) are one in purpose. Jesus said, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6).
  3. Conclusion: To be joined to the Lord in one spirit is to be one in purpose with the Lord. To join oneself to a harlot is to be one with her and her ungodliness. One cannot be joined to the Lord and joined to a harlot at the same time. As Jesus and the Father were one in purpose so the Christian is one with Christ in purpose (John 17:17, 20-22) (see study # 40; Fornication).
- G. "*Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that commits fornication sinneth against his own body*" (6:18).
1. To "*flee*" is to "run away from" (Strongs 5343). Joseph is an example of one who ran from Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39).
  2. Why flee? Because fornication is a sin. The sin is differentiated from "*without the body*" and "*against*" the body.
    - a. "*Every*" (*pas*) = "With numerals it marks an exact number" (LS 611). Paul is not saying that every sin a man can possibly commit is "*without the body.*" He is rather saying that there are specific sins that are "*without the body*" and there are specific sins that are "*against his own body.*"
    - b. "*Without*" (*ektos*) = "outside; external things, beyond" (LS 245).
    - c. "*Against*" (*eis*) = "to express relation, to or toward; in regard" (LS 231).
  3. The word *ektos* is found nine times in NT:
    - a. Matt. 23:26, "*Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside (ektos) of them may be clean also.*" The Pharisees were careful to cleanse the outside of the cup; yet that which mattered the most (the inside) was left dirty. The point is, if the outside looks clean then all will perceive that the inside is clean. *Ektos* is used in this case to indicate the external appearance to men who cannot read hearts versus the true inner heart of man.
    - b. "*By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless (ektos) ye have believed in vain*" (1 Corinthians 15:2; Cf. Acts 26:22). Those things 'outside' the teachings of Christ are vain.
    - c. "*I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out (ektos) of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven*" (2 Corinthians 12:2-3). To be "*out of the body*" would be 'outside or beyond.' Apparently this would be in spirit and not in flesh.
    - d. "*Against an elder receive not an accusation, except (ektos) at the mouth of two or three witnesses*" (1 Timothy 5:19; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:5, 15:27). 'Outside' of two or three witnesses do not bring an accusation against an elder in the church.
  4. Each of the above verses that use the word *ektos* indicate 'outside' a point of reference. Sin occurs; however, the immediate body is not affected. Sins "*without the body*" are sins that do not involve the body. It seems to me that things such as cursing, sinful thoughts, and any action that does not immediately involve my body is a sin "*without the body.*" A sin "*against*" the body would be an infraction 'toward or regarding' the body. This sin would be a sin that uses the body in a way that does not glorify God. This would be a sin involving using the body as a tool to sin, that is, the body is used in the act of sin. If I murder another I have used my body as a tool to sin (I have sinned against the body). If I harm another with my body I have sinned against my body. Likewise if I harm my own body I have sinned against my own body (see study # 41; The Sin of Abusing our Bodies; fornication; smoking, drinking alcohol, doing drugs, etc... cf. notes on expediency above). I may ask is smoking, drinking alcohol, or doing drugs is a liberty. Would it be expedient to my body to participate in. No, how could smoking aid the body? The issues are thereby not a liberties unless done for the benefit of the physical body (i.e., prescribed for health reasons). The obvious outcome is that abusing our bodies is not right.

5. Let us consider that the body is not for fornication as food for the belly (6:13). The body is for the Lord (6:13). The body will one day be resurrected (6:14). Our bodies are members of Christ (6:15). Our bodies are a temple of the Holy Spirit (6:19). Our bodies belong to Christ since He purchased us with His own blood (6:19-20). The conclusion: “*glorify God in your body*” (6:20). I can bring God glory by not fornicating, drinking, smoking, doing drugs and so forth. (note: There are expressly forbidden sins against the body that the word of God denounces such as fornication and drinking; however, smoking is nowhere mentioned in our Bibles. I do understand that in some rare cases smokers live to be in their 90’s with no ill effect from their smoking. The available research indicates that smoking is detrimental to the body. This being the case, I do not see how one can justify smoking in relationship to giving God glory with their bodies).
- H. “*Or know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have from God? And ye are not your own; for ye were bought with a price: glorify God therefore in your body*” (6:19-20).
1. How is our body a temple of the Holy Spirit? The word “*temple*” (*naos*) “the dwelling of a god, a temple; the inmost part of a temple, the cell, in which the image of the god was placed” (LS 524). The indwelling of the Holy Spirit (HS) is indicated here (cf. Romans 8:9-11; Galatians 3:2; 2 Timothy 1:13-14). The HS, Christ and the Father dwell within the Christian through faith (Galatians 3:2, Romans 10:17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 3:17) (see study # 19). Our bodies serve as a temple in which the word of God is held dear and precious. We are one with the godhead through His word. How can we take this sanctified body and use it as a tool to sin?
  2. This body that will be resurrected belongs to Christ as he purchased us with His sacrifice on the cross. We were slaves to sin and Jesus purchased us out of slavery and so we belong to Him (John 8:31ff).
  3. If we belong to Christ (the one who has purchased us out of slavery and saved us from the awful consequences of sin) then we are to glorify Him and no one else (1 Peter 1:18-19).
  4. The Lord has pronounced fornication to be a violation of divine law. The Lord has also explained this by saying that the body is to be used for glorifying God and not for fornication. To participate in fornication goes against what God designed present and future for the body. We ought to praise the Lord doing good works (Hebrews 13:15-16; 2 Corinthians 9:13). When we do things with our bodies we ought to ask ourselves, ‘is this what God designed the body for?’

## Synopsis of chapter 6

The Corinthian **defect** of unloving litigations against each other was not to be tolerated. Neither could the Corinthians justify the sin of fornication by reasoning that it was a body need equal to the need for food. Paul concludes by giving five facts about man's bodies. First, the body is for the Lord therefore we are admonished to “*glorify God in our bodies*” (6:20). Secondly, our bodies shall be “*raised*” (6:14). Thirdly, the Christian's body is a “*member of Christ*” (6:15). Fourthly, the Christian is one with the Lord (6:17). Lastly, the Christian's body is a “*temple of the Holy Spirit*” (6:19). Such a holy state of the human body demands that man meet the responsibility of holiness in thought and deed.

## Chapter 7

The date of this epistle has been placed at 55 - 56 AD. Nero (Nero Claudius Caesar) was the Roman Emperor. During the later reign of Claudius (Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus) (51 AD), all Jews were commanded to depart from Rome (Acts 18:2). Growing tension existed between the Romans and the Jews. The Jews insisted that Jehovah God is the only God whereas the Romans viewed their emperors as deity and demanded all Rome to worship them. “Those who confessed [i.e., to being Christians] were arrested, and then as a result of their information a large number were implicated not so much on the charge of incendiarism

as for hatred of the human race. They died by methods of mockery; some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and then torn by dogs, some were crucified, some were burned as torches to light at night... Whence [after the scenes of extreme cruelty] commiseration was stirred for them, although guilty of deserving the worse penalties, for men felt that their destruction was not on account of the public welfare but to gratify the cruelty of one [Nero] (Ann. XV. 44)."<sup>2</sup> The tension between Romans and Christians is likely the "*distress*" under consideration at 1 Corinthians 7:26 during the days of Nero. This chapter deals with marital obligations in view of the distress upon the Christians.

## I. Marital obligations:

- A. "*Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman*" (7:1).
1. Apparently there was a correspondence occurring between Paul, the household of Chloe, and the brethren in general at Corinth (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:11; 5:9; 7:1, 25; 8:1). Another question the Corinthians had for Paul was in the area of marital relationships. Paul tells the Corinthians that due to the current distress it would be good not to "*touch*" a woman. To "*touch*" (*haptomai*) a woman is to "fasten one's self to, adhere to, cling to. Of carnal intercourse with a woman, or cohabitation" (Thayer 70). "To fasten, bind fast... join" (LS 112).
  2. Due to the "*present distress*" (1 Corinthians 7:26), man ought to control his passions and delay getting close to a woman for the purpose of marriage.
  3. Paul does not put a universal law on forbidding marriage in I Corinthians 7. If this were the case he has contradicted his other writings on the subject (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:9; Ephesians 5:31; 1 Timothy 4:3). Due to the "*distress upon*" the Corinthians, Paul admonishes them to **not get married at the current time**.
- B. "*But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband*" (7:2).
1. Paul, recognizing the powerful and natural urge for sexual intercourse, advises that in some cases it would be better to marry than to fornicate.
  2. If one must get married to avoid the sin of fornication, let him or her so do. However, the marriage is to be one man for one woman for life and so Paul said, "*let each man have his own wife...*" While we consider the apostles instructions regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage in this chapter we must also consider the Lord's teaching on the subject. Our conclusion can be none other than this: Paul's teaching does not contradict the Lord's on this subject.
- C. "*Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband*" (7:3).
1. The Corinthians are encouraged to marry because fornication is a sin against the body (1 Corinthians 6). When married, the husband and wife are to "*render each other their due.*" To "*render*" (*apodidomi*) is to "give up or back, restore, return, esp. to render what is due, to pay, as debts, penalties, submission" (LS 97). "To pay off, discharge, what is due... things promised under oath; conjugal duty" (Thayer 61).
  2. His or Her "*due*" (*opheilo*) is "to owe" (Thayer 469). "To owe, have to pay or account for, to be debtor to another... to be in debt... to be bound, to be obliged to do a thing" (LS 580).
  3. That what the husband is to render unto the wife is a sexual relationship because it is both his and her debt to each other. The context demands that the sexual relationship is under consideration. The author of Hebrews said, "*let marriage be had in honor among all, and let the bed be undefiled: for fornicators and adulterers God will judge*" (Hebrews 13:4). An important part of marriage is the sexual union between a male and female. God has obviously ordained this and here reminds the two that it is their dues to each other. A healthy marriage will make sexuality a part of their relationship (see study # 44; Healthy Marriages).
- D. "*The wife hath not power over her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power over his own body, but the wife*" (7:4).
1. A mutual "*power*" exists between the husband and wife in the realm of sex. The word "*power*" (*exousiazo*) is to "exercise over" (LS 276). "To be master of the body, i.e. to have

<sup>2</sup> S. Angus and A. M. Renwick. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Vol. 3; pg. 522

- full and entire authority over the body, to hold the body subject to one's will" (Thayer 225-226).
2. Earlier the apostle Paul stated that the body is not for fornication but for the Lord. Now he reveals that this same body belongs to one's spouse in the realm of sexual relationships. This continues to reinforce the idea of Jesus' teaching on marriage. The two are one in that they belong to each other and have authority over each other's bodies (cf. Matthew 19:4ff.) (see study # 42; Marital Duties).
- E. *"Defraud ye not one the other, except it be by consent for a season, that ye may give yourselves unto prayer, and may be together again, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency"* (7:5).
1. To *"defraud"* (*apostereo*) is "to rob, despoil, bereave or defraud one of a thing... to be robbed or deprived of" (LS 107). The same word was used in 6:7 regarding the sinful conduct of taking one another, as brethren, before the courts of the unbelieving.
  2. Paul's instructions are for the husband and wife to not withhold the act of sexual intercourse from each other. To do so would be to *"defraud"* or sin against one's mate by robbing that person of that which is due.
  3. The exception to the rule is *"consent for a season."* *"Consent"* (*sumphonos*) "harmonious, accordant, agreeing; thing agreed upon, compact, by mutual consent, by agreement" (Thayer 598). This agreement to not have sexual relations is to be for a *"season"* (*kairos*) "a fixed and definite time; for a certain time only" (Thayer 318).
  4. The purpose of such an agreement would be to spend time in prayer and meditation with the Lord. The time is to be limited and the husband and the wife are to *"be together again"* after the time of prayer.
  5. The reason the two are to come together again in sexual union is that *"Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency."*
    - a. The word *"incontinency"* (*akrasia*) means "incontinence, want of self control" (LS 29). Because of the current distress, Paul has given his judgment regarding abstaining from marriage. Those under consideration in this section are those who cannot avoid fornication through *"incontinency."* So Paul says, because of your incontinency (one of the very reasons you had to get married even though it was not good timing) you need to come together with your wife again.
    - b. The devil takes the opportunity of incontinency and turns sexual desire for the mate into lust for others (see study # 28). Therefore, to defraud your mate of sexual intercourse is to defraud and cause them to sin. The defrauder sins and the lustful one sins. Withholding sexual intercourse in a marriage is a sinful conduct that leads the other spouse sinning. This is what happens in a marriage that is dissolved for reasons other than adultery. The spouse that put away his or her mate *"maketh her an adulteress"* (see Matthew 5:32) (see study # 43).
- F. *"But this I say by way of concession, not by commandment"* (7:6).
1. The word *"concession"* (*suggnome*) means "acknowledgment, confession...to acknowledge that... II. A fellow-feeling with another, a lenient judgment, allowance. 2. Pardon, forgiveness. 3. of acts, admit of excuse, are excusable" (LS 752).
  2. There is an *"allowance"* for a stoppage in the sexual intercourse that occurs within the marriage bond not a commandment to do this thing. All make the judgments based on their own marriage.
- G. *"Yet I would that all men were even as I myself. Howbeit each man hath his own gift from God, one after this manner, and another after that"* (7:7).
1. How would Paul desire all men be as he? It seems that the next clause helps answer the question in regards to the entire context up to this point.
  2. The *"gift"* that each posses that differs from each other is in the realm of continency. Apparently Paul had the gift of continency (self control in the realm of sexual desires) whereas many do not. Paul *"would"* that other men would be as he in this area; however, he understands that this is not the case.

3. This ought to be a lesson to all of us regarding the various abilities we each have regarding self control in the realm of sexual intercourse and any other matter. Our areas of strength are likely another brother's area of weakness. Let us take each other into consideration in these areas lest we cause each other to sin.

## II. Advice to the unmarried and widows in light of the current “*distress*” (7:8-9):

- A. “*But I say to the unmarried and to widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I*” (7:8).
  1. Paul’s judgment, because of the current distress to the Christians, was that they abstain from even getting married.
  2. A marriage would only add to their distress in that a family would now be involved in the hardship, where as a single man or woman may be able to bear the afflictions (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:28).
  3. With the current distress being the over riding theme; we understand that Paul is not contradicting the admonition to widows in 1 Timothy 5:14 when he said, “*I desire therefore that the younger widows marry, bear children, rule the household, give no occasion to the adversary for reviling.*”
- B. “*But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn*” (7:9).
  1. Paul admonishes them to let “*continency*” be their guide.
  2. If they were of an incontinency nature; they had better marry that they burn not up in their lust and commit fornication.

## III. Advice to the married in light of the current “*distress*” (7:10-11):

- A. “*But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, that the wife depart not from her husband*” (7:10).
  1. In vs. 8-9 Paul spoke of the option of getting married which depended on one’s own continency; however, to the married, Paul gives commands; not options.
  2. To “*depart*” (*chorizo*) is “in local sense, to separate, part, sever, divide one thing from another” (LS 899). “Separate (oneself), be separated of divorce” (AG 890). “To be separated” (NM 672). “To separate, divide, part, put asunder. To separate one’s self from, to depart; to leave a husband or wife: of divorce, 1 Corinthians 7:11, 15” (Thayer 674). “To sunder, sever, disunite, to dissociate one’s self, to part, 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 15” (Moulton 441).
    - a. The word “*depart*” (*chorizo*) is used 12 times in the NT with reference to marriage and divorce in Matthew 19:6, Mark 10:9; 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, 15.
    - b. Clearly the word means divorce due to its "severing, sunder, and disunite" definition.
  3. Paul appeals to the teaching of our Lord regarding marriage (Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18)
  4. Marriage is intended to last till death (1 Corinthians 7:39). The current distress is no excuse for divorce (see study # 45; Situational Ethics). If the current distress was not cause for divorce than not other issue, other than adultery, may be used as an excuse for divorce.
- B. “*(But should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife*” (7:11).
  1. This is an interesting verse that demands some thought. Paul takes into consideration that some will divorce even though it is the Lord's command that they do not. Note that a married couple who gets a divorce for one's unfaithfulness, and then the unfaithful gets married again, this person is identified as living in sin (Matthew 19:1-10). On the other hand, a married couple who divorces for some unknown cause yet does not marry again are not living in sin (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:10; Matthew 19:9).
  2. If a divorce does occur there are two options for the couple:
    - a. Let her remain unmarried.
    - b. Let her be reconciled to her husband. To “*reconcile*” (*katallasso*) is to “change a person from enmity to friendship, reconcile” (LS 410).
  3. The conclusion is that if a divorce occurs for reasons other than adultery it is sinful; however, the divorced may remain as they are due to the current distress.

4. Please note that it is not the situation (the current distress) that permits the initial divorce (i.e., situational ethics are denounced at Proverbs 28:21). Paul addresses two who divorce and his teaching no doubt takes into consideration Jesus' teaching (# 45).

**IV. To the “rest” (the believing married to the unbelieving) (7:12-16):**

- A. *“But to the rest say I, not the Lord: if any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband”* (7:12-13).
  1. The “rest” is identified as those brethren married to an unbeliever. There were obvious cases where Christians were married to non-Christians.
  2. The word “hath” addresses the issue of a brother already married to an unbeliever. The question as to whether or not a believer may marry an unbeliever is not addressed here.
  3. The instructions do not differ from the above scenarios. Departing is sinful unless adultery is involved. This helps us understand that divine marital laws are just as applicable to the unbelieving as to the believing.
- B. *“For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy”* (7:14).
  1. The Christian was not at liberty to divorce an unbelieving mate for just any reason. Paul explains that if the unbeliever is content to dwell with the Christian then let the two remain together.
    - a. The unbelieving mate is “sanctified” by the Christian mate. Thayer defines the word “sanctified” as used here as follows: “it is used in a peculiar sense of those who, although not Christians themselves, are yet, by marriage with a Christian, withdrawn from the contamination of the heathen impiety and brought under the saving influence of the Holy Spirit displaying itself among Christians” (Thayer 6).
    - b. In a mixed marriage the unbeliever is in a constant atmosphere of Christianity and is in this fashion set apart from the world. However this sanctification will not save the unbeliever (Mark 16:16)
  2. If it were the case that the unbeliever would not be sanctified by the believer then the children of such a marriage would be considered “unclean.” Under the Mosaic Law, Moses forbade mixed marriages with the idolatrous people of Canaan (see Exodus 34:16; Deuteronomy 7:3-4; Joshua 23:12}). To mix the two made them unclean. Ezra and Nehemiah denounced the mixed marriages of their day and we learn that the children born of such a relationship were unclean (Ezra 10:1-3, 10-11, 44; Nehemiah 13:30-31).
  3. Paul’s argument is that since the children are “holy” rather than being “unclean” then so is the “unbelieving husband (or wife)” in a marriage bond. The laws have changed! Under the Mosaic Law it was sinful to be married to the unbelieving idolaters of Canaan yet under the law of Christ no such law is given. The child can be considered “holy” and “clean” when they are raised in a godly environment and encouraged to obey the gospel.
- C. *“Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace”* (7:15).
  1. The unbeliever may not be content in the marriage relationship. Paul says “let them depart” but let not the Christian be the initiator of the divorce. The Christian is to hold to the law of the Lord on marriage (let no man put asunder - Matthew 19:6 / that the wife NOT depart from her husband - 1 Corinthians 7:10):
    - a. In this situation the Christian is not “under bondage” (i.e., the situation of the unbeliever putting away an innocent and faithful spouse for no good reason).
    - b. Bondage in the Greek here is *douloo* which means “to make a slave of, enslave, to be enslaved; to make one’s slave, make subject to oneself, enslave” (LS 210). *Douloo* is found eight times in the NT. The word appears to mean giving yourself over to one as a servant in these verses (cf. Acts 7:6, Romans 6:18, 22; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 9:19; Galatians 4:3; Titus 2:3; 2 Peter 2:19).
    - c. The believing understands the lawless nature of the divorce; yet, the unbeliever has no respect for the law of Christ. In “such a case” (the case of the unbelieving being discontent



to live with the believing) the believer is not obligated to stay in the relationship as some type of slave. Paul said, *“let them depart.”* One can only do so much to avert a divorce. The unbelieving cares not for the laws of marriage as does the believer.

- d. Note that the word *douloo* does not mean marriage bond! However in vs. 27 & 39 of this same chapter, the word *deo* is used and it does represent a marriage bond. Note that *douloo* does not equal *deo*.
- e. Therefore Paul is not saying in verse 15 that the Christian who is now divorced for the reason of discontentment on the part of the unbelieving can now get remarried. He is simply saying he or she is not to be a slave in this condition. Let the unbeliever depart. You cannot stop them from doing this.

C. Verse 16 proves this: If a Christian did decide to force the marriage and became enslaved in the relationship it may all be for nothing. Paul says you do not know whether or not that person will change. *“For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”* (7:16).

V. **Paul’s answer to the question: ‘should I divorce a woman who is an unbeliever?’ (7:17-24):**

A. *“Only, as the Lord hath distributed to each man, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all the churches”* (7:17).

- 1. The context before verses 17-24 and after have to do with the marriage relationship. The conclusion drawn from verses 17-24 must therefore have marriage as its objective.
- 2. The word *“distributed”* (*merizo*) is to “divide, distribute; to divide among themselves” (LS 499). Apparently, God’s providence plays a part in whether we have continency or incontinency. Paul refers to this as a *“gift”* (1 Corinthians 7:7). If I have not continency let me be married and remain married if I have continency then it is best if I hold out on marriage until the present distress passes.

B. *“Was any man called being circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God”* (7:18-19).

- 1. Circumcision is not a matter of the law of Jesus Christ and therefore has nothing to do with my eternal abode. Therefore, as one was called by the gospel to salvation in either circumcision or uncircumcision let him so remain. There is no reason to change one’s state of being if it does not affect the soul.
- 2. “The removal of circumcision was often secured by a surgical operation which allowed the foreskin again to project... Jews who followed the Greek mode of living and built a gymnasium at Jerusalem ‘hid the circumcision of their genitals, that even when they were naked they might appear to be Greeks,’ Josephus, *Ant.* 12,5,1.”<sup>3</sup>
- 3. What does circumcision have to do with the principle of remaining in a lawful marital relationship with God?
  - a. The point being that the relationship with God and the Christian does not change due to circumcision.
  - b. The relationship between God and the Christian would change in an unlawful marriage relationship.
  - c. If one were called to be a Christian by the gospel message in marriage they are not to now divorce just because their spouse is not a Christian (cf. 7:14). Paul thus puts being married to an un-believer on par with obeying the gospel in a state of being circumcised or not circumcised. In other words, being married to an unbeliever is a matter of *adiaphora* as is the case with circumcision. Do not, therefore, seek to be divorced from the unbelieving. If a divorce occurs, let it be on the part of the unbeliever because that which is truly important to the Christian is *“keeping the commandments of God.”* Such a line of thought destroys the modern false doctrine of getting a divorce for the kingdom of God’s sake (i.e., some teach that if my spouse hinders me from serving God I can lawfully divorce her) (see study # 43).

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<sup>3</sup> R. C. H. Lenski. Commentary on the New Testament; I and II Corinthians pg. 300

- d. So Paul said, *“let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called”* (7:20).
  - 1. The Christian is to abide (take up residency) in the gospel message.
  - 2. If the marital relationship is lawful, remain in it!
- C. *“Wast thou called being a bondservant? Care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord being a bondservant, is the Lord’s freedman: likewise he that was called being free, is Christ’s bondservant”* (7:21-22).
  - 1. As circumcision does not affect one’s fellowship with God neither does being free or slave (Galatians 3:26-27).
  - 2. A slave is not to use the gospel as a plea for his social freedom. No change is really necessary. The real truth is that the Christian is both free (from sin; John 8:31-32) and a slave because we are *“bought with a price; become not bondservants of men”* (7:23).
  - 3. Again, the marital status is dictated by law. Do not become loosed from the unbelieving for the sake of the gospel message. Such action would be working against the law as would one who seeks justification through circumcision or freedom from slavery.
  - 4. So Paul said, *“Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God”* (7:24).
    - a. The apostle John said, *“whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son”* (2 John 9).
    - b. Paul’s point is that one is to abide in lawful living no matter what one’s marital status.

**VI. Marital decisions made based on the current distress (7:25-35):**

- A. *“Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy”* (7:25).
  - 1. Paul ‘shifts gears’ and returns to the idea of the *“current distress”* of verse 26 (cf. introduction comments to this chapter).
  - 2. The first group spoken of regarding marital relationships are the virgins (women who have never had sexual relations and are not married but eligible to be married).
  - 3. Due to the current distress it is Paul’s *“judgment”* that they remain unmarried. Notice that Paul makes a distinction between judgments and the commandments of God. If God had commandments regarding whether or not a virgin can marry Paul would have certainly upheld the command. Again, the matter of virgins marrying during the current distress was a matter of indifference. If they so chose to marry they did not sin (see study # 22).
  - 4. Paul said, *“I think therefore that this is good by reason of the distress that is upon us, namely, that it is good for a man to be as he is. Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife. But shouldest thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Yet such shall have tribulation in the flesh: and I would spare you”* (7:26-28).
    - a. Paul is dependant upon his readers understanding of the law of Christ regarding marriage and the instructions previously given up to this point.
    - b. If no *“sin”* occurs in said marriages it is inferred that the two who marry do so lawfully.
    - c. To be *“loosed”* (*luisis*) is “a divorce” (Strong’s Greek Dictionary #3080). “A loosing, parting, dissolution” (LS 481). “A divorce” (AG 482). “Loosen, unbind, unfasten... to infringe” (Moulton 255). Moulton also illustrates the fact that *luo* (*luisis*) is used at I Corinthians 7:27 to indicate a “release from the marriage bond, a divorce” (Moulton 255). Jesus used the same term to indicate those who “break” a commandment of God (cf. Matthew 5:19ff). Marriage and divorce are under consideration in this chapter. Paul is not considering people separating due to an argument or another reason with no intention of divorce.
    - d. To be *“bound”* (*deo*) unto a wife is “of binding by law and duty, w. dat. Of the person to someone: of a wife to her husband Romans 7:2; of a husband to his wife 1 Corinthians 7:27” (AG 178). To bind, tie, fasten; put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc. to be bound to one, of a wife, Romans 7:2; of a husband, 1 Corinthians 7:27” (Thayer 131). “To bind by a legal or moral tie, as marriage, Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:27, 39”

(Moulton 89). The binding and loosing are put in juxtaposition to each other for the point of lawful marital relationships.

- e. Inference therefore demands that one who has been *“loosed from a wife”* yet remarries without committing sin is one who is the innocent party in an adulterous event (cf. Matthew 19).
  - f. To change the state one is currently in can lead to further difficulties (that is simply Paul’s judgment). Paul’s judgment is to spare them from further tribulation and distress.
- B. *“But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep, as though they wept not; and those that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy, as though they possessed not; and those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away”* (7:29-31):
1. The *“time”* mentioned here must be the *“current distress”* of verse 26 (follow the context). The Lord shortened the time of distress that it would not be beyond what the saints could bear.
  2. Distress often brings out the true character in individuals. The over-riding point in context is that the Christian is to place the law of God above all else.
  3. The **Christian is given a full range of liberties regarding marriage in this context**. Now Paul draws on his former teaching regarding liberties (see study # 37). He previously said, *“all things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful for me; but I will not be brought under the power of any”* (1 Corinthians 6:12). A liberty that has gained *“power”* over an individual now becomes a stumbling block.
  4. 1 Corinthians 7:29-31 illustrates the fact that neither wives, material things nor the world are to stand in our way of serving Christ. Jesus said, *“If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple... So therefore whosoever he be of you that renounceth not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”* (Luke 14:26-36).
  5. This interpretation is supported by 1 Corinthians 7:32-34; *“But I would have you to be free from cares. He that is unmarried is careful for the things of the Lord, how he may please the Lord: but he that is married is careful for the things of the world, how he may please his wife, and is divided. So also the woman that is unmarried and the virgin is careful for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married is careful for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”*
  6. The point is obvious. The single person has an advantage over the married person in the *“current distress.”* The single would not have the burden of family (wife and children) to feed, clothe and protect. Paul is not saying that it is sinful to so care for the wife. His point that the married have responsibilities that the unmarried do not.
- C. *“And this I say for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is seemly, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction”* (7:35).
1. The word *“seemly”* (*euschemon*) = “to promote decorum (Appropriateness of behavior or conduct; propriety)” (Thayer 263) (see study # 46; Matters of Propriety).
  2. It is a matter of propriety (because of the current distress) that one remain as he or she is.

## VII. Final advice to parents and virgins in light of vs. 26 (7:36-38):

- A. *“But if any man thinketh that he behaveth himself unseemly toward his virgin daughter, if she be past the flower of her age, and if need so requireth, let him do what he will; he sinneth not; let them marry”* (7:36).
1. In this society, the right of giving the daughter in marriage belonged to the father. If he decided not to give her he may act *“unseemly”* towards his virgin daughter. The word *“unseemly”* (*aschemoneo*) means “to disgrace oneself, to be put to shame” (LS 127).
  2. Apparently the shaming and disgrace would occur due to the fact that she is *“past the flower of her age”* (*huperakmos*) which is defined as “past the bloom of youth” (LS 834). “Beyond the bloom of life, past prime” (Thayer 640). “It may apply either to the woman past one’s prime, past marriageable age, past the bloom of youth or to the man in love and irresistible” (AG 839).

3. Though the current distress yields Paul's judgment to remain unmarried, a virgin girl who has attained an age that is undesirable for marriage yet now she has found one willing to marry her, can marry and not be in sin. This may help her in two ways. First, she may finally marry. Secondly, she will keep herself from the sin of fornication.
- B. *"But he that standeth steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power as touching his own will, and hath determined this in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, shall do well"* (7:37):
1. Again, this verse shows that the unmarried girl was completely controlled by the father. Giving the daughter to a man in marriage was solely his decision.
  2. The father is made "*steadfast*" in his decision to not allow marriage based upon the "*having no necessity*." Clearly, the girl does not desire to be married and secondly she has continency in the realm of sexual needs.
  3. Such a man in this condition "*does well*" to keep his virgin daughter. He has made said judgment based on his knowledge of his daughter.
- C. *"So then both he that giveth his own virgin daughter in marriage doeth well; and he that giveth her not in marriage shall do better"* (7:38).
1. Clearly it is not sinful for the woman past the flower of her youth to marry if she desires and lacks continency.
  2. Paul's judgment is that the one who is steadfast against allowing his daughter to get into a relationship that is only going to cause the lady grief does better.
  3. Modern marriages have a father "giving" his daughter in marriage. This is where such ideas originate.

#### VIII. The bond of marriage (7:39-40):

- A. *"A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord"* (7:39).
1. Verse 39 is stated in view of verses 36-38. The virgin who does decide to marry must realize that it is a lifelong commitment. The only way out is for the husband to die (or adultery as Jesus taught in Matthew 19) (see study # 43).
  2. It is interesting to note that Paul would make such a statement at this point of the chapter. The point is obvious. God's command is for man and woman to remain married. 1 Corinthians 7 is not a chapter for the divorced to turn to and gain liberty to remarry for causes other than adultery.
  3. Once again, the word "*bound*" means "of binding by law and duty, w. dat. Of the person to someone: of a wife to her husband Rom. 7:2; of a husband to his wife 1 Corinthians 7:27" (AG 178). To bind, tie, fasten; put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc. to be bound to one, of a wife, Romans 7:2; of a husband, 1 Corinthians 7:27" (Thayer 131). "To bind by a legal or moral tie, as marriage, Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:27, 39" (Moulton 89).
  4. The scriptures are clear regarding the reasons for loosing (divorcing) the bonds of marriage. Those reasons are two in number; i.e., death or adultery. Jesus said, "*Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery*" (Matthew 19:9). The reason adultery occurs in said condition is because the original man and woman are still bound to each other. If they are loosed they have two options; i.e., reconcile or remain divorced (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:11).
  5. In the case of a woman's husband dying, Paul (through the Holy Spirit) gives liberty for that person to remarry because the original bond is now gone through death. The stipulation in such case is that the marriage is to be "*in the Lord*."
    - a. The phrase, "*in the Lord*" (*en kurios*) is found 50 times in the NT.
    - b. The phrase is associated with individual coming to believe "*in the Lord*" by the gospel message (Acts 18:8; Ephesians 1:15).
    - c. The phrase is associated with preaching (closely associated with authority) (Acts 14:3).
    - d. The phrase is associated with giving glory to God (closely associated with authority) (1 Corinthians 1:31; 2 Corinthians 10:17).

- e. The phrase is associated with the authority of God in the remaining 35 verses (cf. Romans 14:14; 16:2, 8, 11, 12, 13, 22; 1 Corinthians 4:17, 7:22, 39; 9:1, 2; 11:11; 15:58; 16:19; 2 Corinthians 2:12; Galatians 5:10; Ephesians 2:21; 4:1, 17; 5:8; **6:1**, 10, 21; Philippians 1:14; 2:19; 2:24, 29; 3:1; 4:1, **2**, 4, 10; **Colossians 3:18, 20**; 4:7; 1 Thessalonians 3:8, 4:1; **5:12**; 2 Thessalonians 3:4, **12**; Philemon 1:16, 20; **Revelation 14:13**).
  - f. All 50 uses of the phrase, “*in the Lord*” belong to the authority list. To believe in Jesus is to follow His commands (cf. John 3:36; Romans 5:1-4). To Glorify Jesus is to follow his commands (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24). Lastly, all true preaching “*in the Lord*” will consider the teachings of Jesus alone (2 John 9-11).
  - g. Acts 4:7 helps us. Luke records, “*And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power, or in what name, have ye done this?*”
  - h. Clearly 1 Corinthians 7:39 belongs in the authority list. This simply states that if a woman has lost a husband to death she may remarry by the authority (in accordance with the teachings) of Jesus Christ. She may not marry a man who is divorced from his wife because he was guilty of fornication. She may not marry a man who divorced his wife for a cause other than adultery. She may marry a man who has either never been married before or has been married and divorced (being the innocent party in a case of adultery as Jesus taught in Matt. 19) or one who has survived a dying wife. I understand that some believe that the widow is only to marry one who is “in Christ” (a Christian). I disagree, because Paul used “*in the Lord*” not “one in Christ.” Either assessment does not cause one to sin. If it is one’s conviction, as a widow, to only marry another Christian that is well; however, as the study above indicates, it is clear that the widow is to marry by the authority of Jesus Christ.
- B.** “*But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment: and I think that I also have the Spirit of God*” (7:40).
1. One must remember that Paul’s “*judgment*” is based upon the current distress of 7:26.
  2. The matter of marriage will not cause one to lose their soul. God has ordained the marriage laws and Paul is not setting those laws aside. He is merely giving his judgment in the area due to the current hardships.

## Synopsis of I Corinthians 7

Chapter 7 deals with marital instructions to singles, married, divorced, and widows in light of the current Roman persecutions that were making life as a Christian very difficult (1 Corinthians 7:26). The law of Jesus Christ is at the zenith of Paul’s interest as he advises each case (1 Corinthians 7:15, 28, 39). Matthew 19 looms in the background as a foundation stone upon which all Paul’s admonitions are considered. Let’s review each case:

### The Singles:

The single man and woman are advised not to marry in light of the current distress (7:1, 8). Paul has not placed law upon the singles but his judgment (7:25). If this class makes a decision to marry they have not sinned (7:28). The determining factor is whether or not they have continency (7:2, 9) and secondly, in the case of the daughter, whether or not the father deems it appropriate (7:36-37).

### The Married

Because the sin of fornication is a tool of the Devil (7:5), the married are encouraged to perform their sexual duties for each other (7:2-6). Paul discourages divorce among married couples (7:10, 27). Becoming a Christian does not give one liberty to divorce a mate (7:12-24). In the case of divorce and remarriage for lawful reasons, Paul exclaims that sin does not occur (7:28). Again, continency is to be the guide; “*for it is better to marry than to burn*” (7:9).

## The Divorced

Should a divorce occur, the innocent party of adultery has the right of remarriage (Matthew 19:9). Paul's admonition; however, is that the divorced remain divorced due to the current distress (7:26-27). If a lawful marriage comes about, sin has not occurred (7:28). Paul is simply giving his judgment in the matter to save individuals from further heartache (7:28b, 35).

## The Widows

The widow is no different than the single, married, and divorced in light of the current distress. Paul admonishes them to stay as they are (widowed) (7:8, 40). The determining factor once again is continency (7:9).

## Facts about the marriage bond:

Though the chapter deals with marriage in light of the current distress (7:26), much truth is revealed regarding the nature of marriage. First we find responsibility in marriage regarding the sexual union (7:2-4; Heb. 13:4). Secondly, we find divorce regulated, i.e., permitted but not advised in certain cases (cf. 7:15). Thirdly, we are introduced to a marriage 'eligible' status among single, divorced, and widowed people. Widowed individuals may remarry "*in the Lord*" (7:39). The divorced may remarry and not sin (7:28). The overriding determination of the eligible status must consider the Lord's instructions in Matthew 19 among those who have been divorced. The single is one who has never been married and is certainly eligible.

## Conclusion:

Marriage is intended to be for life (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39). A "*bond*" occurs when a man and wife are joined in marriage. That "*bond*" is broken only by the act of adultery (Matthew 19:9) or death of a spouse (Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39). The lesson we learn from this chapter is that fornication is sinful, those who lack continency must marry, perform their sexual duties to toward their mates and let it be the guide as to whether one is 're-married.' The second lesson we learn from I Corinthians seven is the fact that God's marriage bond is intended to remain unbroken.

## Chapter 8

### Eating of Meats sacrificed to idols.

#### I. "*We all have knowledge*" (8:1-8):

A. "*Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth*" (8:1).

1. The letter that the Corinthian brethren composed (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1) not only had questions about marriage but about "*things sacrificed to idols.*"
  - a. Much of the confusion over what to eat and what not to eat stemmed from the marring of OT and NT teaching. Jesus had said, "*there is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him... this he said, making all meats clean*" (Mark 7:14-23).
  - b. A principle that continues in the NT is the regulations regarding the eating of blood. Moses had commanded that blood not be eaten (Leviticus 17:10-11) and so the Law of Christ demands the same (Acts 15:20, 29).
  - c. If one were to read Revelation on eating meats sacrificed to idols the conclusion would be that it is sinful to do (Revelation 2:14, 20). Again, at the Jerusalem conference the apostles and elders of Jerusalem wrote, "*For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols...*" (Acts 15:28-29).

- d. Pagan priest sacrificed animals to their perspective deities just as the Jews sacrificed to Jehovah God. The meats from the sacrifices were not wasted but often times sold in the markets. The question this chapter deals with is this; Is it sinful for a Christian to eat meats sacrificed to idols? Secondly, would it be sinful to enter a idol's temple and eat the meats within? While looking at the teaching of Acts 15 and Revelation 2 one would conclude that any one eating meats sacrificed to idols would be in sin. Yet Paul states in I Corinthians 8 and 10 that eating meats sacrificed to idols is not a sin so long as one does not violate their conscience. Paul said in Romans 14:15, "*For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*"
  - e. The study will indicate that it is not man's conscience that must be met but rather God's will. God's will is that idols are nothing and therefore eating meats sacrificed to a nothing god means nothing (unless you believe that it does). God's law reigns supreme; however, man's conscience also is to be considered. The rule appears to be that one's conscience on a given subject equates to law so long as that conscience act does not cause him to violate the standard of God's will. Matters of incidents, personal judgment, and expediency are ok so long as they do not violate God's laws (see study # 37). Let us therefore carefully examine these chapters.
2. "*We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*"
- a. The knowledge (*gnosis*) was in the realm of knowing that there is really only one true God and that an idol was really non-existent (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:4).
  - b. Every true Christian believes in one true God; however, some have a greater understanding of the one true God than others. Such abilities could lead the intelligent informed brother to be arrogant and lacking love. The arrogant with knowledge looked down upon the lesser informed brother rather than lovingly "*edifying*" the brother. The word "*edify*" (*oikodomeo*) is to "build a house... metaphorically, to build up" (LS 546). "Strengthen one another" (AG 558).
  - c. Antithetically speaking, one who does not love (*agape*) is one who tears down rather than building up and strengthening others.
  - d. An important thing to note here is that Paul uses the phrase, "*concerning things sacrificed to idols:*" two times (1 Corinthians 8:1a and 8:4a). Sandwiched between these two statements are instructions regarding man not knowing what he thinks he knows.
- B. "*If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know;*" (8:2).
- 1. The brother who believes he has wisdom and knowledge regarding eating things sacrificed to idols really "*knows not yet as he ought to know.*"
  - 2. The point is that some people THINK they know things yet they really don't. When we compare the statements before us with 1 Corinthians 8:7 it is apparent that though all men thought they had knowledge they really didn't. Today, most brethren would consider themselves the "strong brother" of 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14; however, many of these brothers are telling us that it sinful to eat at restaurants and buy products from companies that support sinful things. Their convictions have gotten the better of them and though they believe themselves to be spiritually strong they are spiritually weak because they let their conscience deem what is right rather than God's standard.
- C. "*But if any man loveth God, the same is known by him*" (8:3).
- 1. If God knows me and I know God I am obviously in spiritual fellowship with the Father. Spiritual matters are important to me:
    - a. To be known of God is to be in fellowship with God (1 John 1:3-7).
    - b. To be known of God is to follow the commandments of God (1 John 5:3).
    - c. To be known of God is have God in us (dwelling in us in that we are one with God in purpose through His commandments; cf. John 17:21-23; 1 John 4:4).
    - d. To be known of God is to be able to differentiate, by use of the word of God, the spirit of error and the spirit of truth (1 John 4:6).

2. Apparently Paul speaks of an attitude in this verse. The one with true knowledge and wisdom is the one who will understand truths and apply these truths with love toward self and others. Questions will be solved in this man's mind by saying, 'what saith the scriptures.'
- D. *"Concerning therefore the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that no idol is anything in the world, and that there is no God but one"* (8:4).
1. Here is the completion of the "eating meets sacrificed to idols" sandwich. Before Paul discusses the right or wrong of the question he prefaces his argument with three facts:
    - a. Not all brethren know what they ought to know even though they think they know.
    - b. Love of each other and of God should govern all my decisions.
    - c. I should be spiritual minded about all questions before me.
  2. Now, Paul is ready to answer the question of whether or not eating meats sacrificed to idols in the temple of idols is wrong.
  3. Among the Christians there is a common knowledge that an idol is not really anything and that Jehovah God reigns supreme as the one true God. The prophet Isaiah pointedly stated that an idol is an object made by the hands of man, carried by the hands of man, and worshiped by the hands of man. They know nothing, see nothing, understand nothing, and say nothing because they are nothing but an image carved out of mindless stone, clay or metal (cf. Isaiah 44-46).
  4. Regarding God, Isaiah records, *"Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me"* (46:9).
  5. Paul's point is that every Christian believes the fact that there is really only one true God. This is the foundation of his argument!
- E. *"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him"* (8:5-6).
1. Note that Paul has included "all" Christians at 1 Corinthians 8:1, 4, and 6. All Christians understand this and by faith believe it.
  2. Though the pagans had a deity for many earthly things such as the moon, stars, sun, wind, sea etc. there is in all reality only one true God. This one true God is the creator of all things (Psalms 33:6-9; 148:4-5). Isaiah said, *"For thus saith Jehovah that created the heavens, the God that formed the earth and made it, that established it and created it not a waste, that formed it to be inhabited: I am Jehovah; and there is none else"* (45:18).
  3. God created all things with or by Jesus Christ. Jesus was the agency in which creation occurred (cf. John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).
  4. Finally Paul states that "we" (Christians) are "unto him and through him." Christians are "unto" Christ in that we are servants of the Lord. Christians are "through" Christ in that we are redeemed by Christ.
- F. *"Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled"* (8:7).
1. Paul has said that "we all have knowledge" (1 Corinthians 8:1) yet now says, "there is not in all men that knowledge."
  2. First appearance seems to be a contradiction; however, one must understand the context of this series of verses. Remember, the Corinthians are asking, 'is it lawful for me to eat meats sacrificed to idols?' Such a question reveals the fact that not all really had a true knowledge of the one true God.
  3. Some Christians were "used until now to the idol" (*sunetheia eos apti*) is "habitual intercourse, acquaintance, society, intimacy. Habit, custom..." (LS 776). Many Christians had lived in a society where multitudes of deities were worshiped and accepted as real (see Acts 17:16). By habit and society, they too had come to know other deities. Their conversion to Christianity was a complete 180 degree turn from where they were (i.e., not sure or even believing in idols). These brethren's new found zeal obviously caused their conscience to be bothered if told they were permitted to continue to eat the meats sacrificed to these idols in



their temples. They were convicted of the wrong and wanted no part of this now. They would have their "*weak conscience defiled*" if they ate meats sacrificed to idols.

- a. The "*conscience*" (*suneidesis*) is "a conscious that cannot come to a decision or a conscience of guilt" (AG 786). The conscience is "with knowledge" "**awareness**" (AHD 312). The conscious of a man determines the right or wrongness of an activity (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:2).
  - b. "*Weak*" (*asthenes*) is "without strength, weak, **feeble**, weakly... too weak to bear labor" (LS 123). "Inferior" (Thayer 80).
  - c. "*Defiled*" (*moluno*) is "to stain" (LS 518). "Stain, defile, make impure, soil. Unsoiled garments as symbol of a spotless life Rev. 3:4" (AG 526-7). "To make filthy or dirty; pollute. To render impure; **corrupt**. To profane or sully. To make unclean or unfit for ceremonial use; desecrate" (AHD 375). "To stain, sully; to defile, contaminate morally" (Moulton 272). "To be unclean" (Vines 278). To understand what it means to be defiled we must turn to the OT. God's people were defiled when conducting themselves in sin (Ezekiel 36:17; 37:23; Hosea 5:3).
4. Here were some whose awareness of the reality of the one true God was feeble and thereby corrupted by entering an idol temple to eat meats sacrificed to that idol. Those Christians who were socially and habitually attached to pagan deities defiled (sinned) against their knowledge of what was right and wrong to do.
- G. "*But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better*" (8:8).
1. Again, the question is, "Can we eat meats sacrificed to idols in the temple of idols?" Apparently this question was a source of contention among the brethren. Some believed it to be sin others did not. Paul thereby gives divine instruction regarding the matter. All who are spiritually minded will have the same approach to any question. What is God's will?
  2. To "*commend*" (*paristemi*) is "to set before the mind, present, offer, bring home to the mind; to make good, prove, shew" (LS 609). Being presented to God in a commendable state is not contingent upon whether I eat certain foods or not.
  3. Paul said that "*the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Rom. 14:17). Eating was a liberty as was circumcision (cf. I Cor. 7:19).
  4. The answer to the question is thereby simple. Yes, it is ok to eat meats sacrificed to idols in the temple of idols because the idol doesn't really exist. The food is the same food before it was sacrificed as after it was sacrificed. The food did not change and therefore it doesn't matter if you eat it or don't eat it.

## II. A proper view toward liberties (8:9-13):

- A. "*But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak*" (8:9).
1. Clearly the context states that eating meats sacrificed to idols is really not a sinful event for the one who understands that there is truly only one deity (Jehovah God).
  2. How then can we reconcile this with what Paul had been a part of in Acts 15 and John commands in Revelation 2?
    - a. The thought is truly clear. Eating meats sacrificed to idols was indeed sinful for the one who considered, by social habit, the reality of the idol (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:14-33).
    - b. Therefore if and when he partakes of food that had been sacrificed to idols, it defiles his conscience and to him it is sinful (Romans 14:23).
    - c. A judgment is then to be made regarding one's conscious. A conscious trained and unencumbered by doubts regarding other deities was at liberty to eat meat sacrificed to idols. Not so with the weak conscious.
  3. Though the matter really was an issue of liberty, Paul warns the informed brother that he, through a lack of love, can be a "*stumbling block*" to others by exercising his "*liberties*" at the expense of another's soul.

- a. A “*stumblingblock*” (*proskomma*) “an obstacle” (LS 693). “a means of inducing to sin” (Moulton 350).
  - b. “*Liberty*” (*exousia*) “power, authority, license” (LS 276). “Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission” (Thayer 225) (see study # 37).
4. Paul had previously said, “*All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient*” (1 Corinthians 6:12). He again makes the same statement in 10:23. The point is that in some cases wisdom, judgment, and love for brethren must dictate whether or not I exercise a certain liberty. If I am bent on exercising my liberty I may cause others (the weak) to stumble and thereby jeopardize their souls. Such an attitude indeed lacks love and would be sinful on my part (Romans 14:15).
- B. “*For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?*” (8:10).
- 1. Paul gives a scenario where the strong in faith cause the weak in faith to sin.
  - 2. The strong realize that there is not many gods but one God, Jehovah, and therefore eating meats sacrificed to idols even in the pagan temples was not a sinful act.
  - 3. Chapter 10 reveals the fact that it would not be expedient to enter the pagan temple; however, Paul is simply getting the point across about each considering each other in chapter 8.
  - 4. The weak brother may see the strong brother in the temple eating meats sacrificed to idols and do the same thing. The difference is in the conscience of each man. The strong eats without offence to this conscious whereas the weak eats with offence and thereby sins. In such a case, the strong has contributed to the sin of the weak and thereby sins himself.
  - 5. The strong has “*emboldened*” the weak to eat that which violates his conscience of right and wrong. To “*embolden*” (*oikodomeo*) is to “build” (LS 546). The building encouragement is directed in the wrong path (the original thought of 1 Corinthians 8:1).
- C. “*For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died*” (8:11).
- 1. Yes, I have knowledge and understanding regarding the matter of *adiaphora*; however, with this knowledge I cause another brother to stumble into sin because of his lack of knowledge.
  - 2. This brother perishes, that is, he is lost in sin because of my understanding of matters of indifference. What this tells us is that even in matters of indifference we should use lawful judgment as to whether or not to practice it lest we cause a brother to stumble into sin (see study # 37).
  - 3. To disregard others is to sin. “*And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ*” (8:12).
- D. “*Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble*” (8:13).
- 1. Again, what mattered was the keeping of God’s commands and being concerned about others soul (1 Corinthians 7:19; Romans 14:17).
  - 2. Such conduct displays true love for brethren (cf. 1 John 2:9; 4:11).

### Synopsis:

The Jerusalem conference of Acts 15 and John’s statements in Revelation 2:14, 20 exposed the sinfulness of eating meats sacrificed to idols. When one reads I Corinthians 8 and 10 it would appear that Paul has contradicted the clear teaching of Jesus on this issue. Romans 14:23 seems to be the connecting link to understanding the relationship between Acts 15, Revelation 2 and I Corinthians 8 and 10. It reads, “*But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” Clearly the matter of eating meats sacrificed to idols was an issue of *adiaphora*. Paul said, “*But food will not commend us to God: neither, if we eat not, are we the worse; nor, if we eat, are we the better*” (I Cor. 8:7). Whether one eats meats, sets aside a special day of the week for study or is circumcised really does not affect the soul (cf. Rom. 14:1-5; I Cor. 7:19) (see appendix # 37). These areas are termed “*liberties*” or matters of *adiaphora* (I Cor. 8:9). Yet if one were to violate his conscious by eating meats sacrificed to idols, to him it would be sin. Many Gentiles were raised in pagan societies that habitually worshipped various deities and thereby it was a

way of life until they obeyed the gospel. Removing the falsehood of lesser deities from their hearts was a slow process. The stronger brother may also find himself in sin by pressing his liberties to the point of causing the weak brother to stumble in sin. Such activity displays a lack of love for a brother. Paul had previously said, *“All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient”* (I Cor. 6:12). He again makes the same statement in I Corinthians 10:23. The point is that in some cases wisdom, judgment, and love for brethren must dictate whether or not I exercise a certain liberty.

One must not confuse a liberty with a matter of *“the faith”* (Jude 3). Liberties do not effect the soul unless one is *“brought under the power”* of the activity (I Cor. 6:12) (see appendix # 37). Whether or not one *“keeps the commandments of God”* does affect the soul (cf. I Cor. 7:19). We may hear a brother tell us that we ought not name false teachers from the pulpit because it causes others to stumble. Again, some are saying we ought not talk about New Testament watchmen because the term causes some brethren to stumble. Such remarks illustrate a lack of spiritual understanding. Such a brother has failed to differentiate between a liberty and matters of the faith. We are to hold fast to doctrine and be willing to contend for it (Jude 3). A stumbling block refers to one inducing another to sin. How can one lead another to sin when the doctrine of Christ is taught and practiced (cf. II Jn. 9)? Jesus taught that it would be so because the truth hardens some and makes disciples of others (cf. the Parable of the Sower at Matt. 13:13-15).

When the apostles called the names of false teachers and identified their erring doctrines we have what is termed apostolic example (cf. I Cor. 11:1 etc.). Paul said that he was not guilty of the blood of any man and thereby proved himself to be a watchmen of brethren’s souls. Here again we have apostolic example (cf. Acts 18:6; 20:26 compared to Ezek. 3:18-19; 33:8-9). When the apostle Paul said, *“The things which ye both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you,”* he gave a command (Phil. 4:9; cf. I Cor. 14:37). Such a statement makes apostolic example binding and authoritative. *“These things do”* is a direct command! Some brethren want to follow only ‘partial’ apostolic examples such as partaking of the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week. When names of beloved false teachers are called they want to opine ‘stumbling block.’

To give a spiritually immature brother his way by setting aside matters of doctrinal differences is to accentuate and promote unity in diversity. When such a brother presses us with such human reasoning may God give us the strength of the apostle Paul and *“give place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you”* (Gal. 2:5).

## Chapter 9

### I. Paul’s own life; an example of one giving up rights for the sake of others (9:1-3):

- A. *“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?”* (9:1).
1. Chapter nine seems to be an explanation of Paul’s selfless statement in 1 Corinthians 8:13.
  2. Paul was *“free”* in the sense that he had the same **liberties** as any other Christian. As an *“apostle,”* Paul could have truly pressed his liberties and made others bend to his scruples; yet he chose to give up any of his liberties so that souls would be saved.
  3. Apparently some in Corinth were rejecting Paul’s apostleship. None of the following statements would make sense regarding liberties if Paul was not an apostle. Therefore he defends his apostolic office by saying that he had *“seen Jesus our Lord”* (a qualification for apostles cf. Acts 1:22) (see study # 47; The Apostles).
  4. The Corinthian church was a result of Paul’s labors and they really had no grounds to discount his words.
    - a. The Corinthians had spiritual gifts that were administered to them by Paul.
    - b. Only an apostle of Jesus Christ had the power to transfer the gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8). The fact that Paul laid his hands on the Corinthians and gave them spiritual gifts is a sign of his apostleship.
- B. *“If to others I am not an apostle, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord”* (9:2).
1. Those faithful brethren in Corinth knew assuredly that Paul was an apostle.

2. These faithful brethren were the “*seal*” (*sphragis*) of Paul’s apostleship. The word “*seal*” is “the impression of a signet-ring, a seal” (LS 786). The seal of the king’s ring carried the weight of authority. It represented the validity of a matter. The fact that the Corinthian church was established and brethren were “*in the Lord*” through baptism made for a valid argument regarding the apostleship of Paul (cf. Galatians 3:26-27).

C. “*My defense to them that examine me is this*” (9:3).

1. Paul has now given a proper defense, as in a legal trial, regarding his apostleship.
2. The “*this*” seems best to describe the previous two verses where Paul defends his apostleship.

## II. Paul had rights as an Evangelist, apostle and Christian; however, he waived those rights for the benefit of Others (9:4-12):

A. “*Have we no right to eat and to drink? Have we no right to lead about a wife that is a believer, even as the rest of the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working?*” (9:4-6).

1. Again, let us remember that liberties are under consideration. Though many would not see it to be lawful to support a gospel preacher or the apostles Paul reminds them that just because he preaches does not negate his right (or liberty) to eat and drink.
2. Paul also had the right to “*lead about a wife that is a believer.*” Though many had wives Paul did not take advantage of this liberty.
3. Paul said that he had a right (liberty) to “*forbear working*” as one who labors in the kingdom of God. The preachers of the gospel had a right to not work at secular employment but to be supported by the brethren. Verse 14 of this chapter states, “*Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel*” (see study # 14).

B. “*What soldier ever serves at his own charges? Who plants a vineyard, and eats not the fruit thereof? Or who feeds a flock, and eat not of the milk of the flock?*” (9:7).

1. Three Illustrations to get across the point that it would have been a liberty of Paul's to take wages from the brethren; however, he did not do this:
  - a. Soldiers do not serve for free.
  - b. Farmers plant with the expectation of a return from their crop.
  - c. The laborer among animals receives wages for his work.
2. It has ever been lawful for a worker to be paid his wages for labor. Paul said, “*Do I speak these things after the manner of men? Or saith not the law also the same?*” (9:8).
  - a. Paul quotes from (Deuteronomy 25:4) saying, “*For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it assuredly for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written: because he that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking*” (9:9-10). This was an issue of cruelty because while the ox was muzzled during laborious work it could not eat.
  - b. The Gentiles were of this practice; however, the Lord commanded that the Hebrews allow their ox to eat while treading out the corn.
  - c. If it is cruel to make an ox work and not let him eat, then it is a cruel act to make an evangelist labor with no compensation.

C. “*If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?*” (9:11).

1. The evangelist is pictured as a sower sowing seed in the ground. The evangelist was preaching and teaching to the Corinthian brethren and were due their just compensation of the brethren’s “*carnal things.*”
2. “*Is it a great matter...*” puts emphasis upon the Corinthian's attitude toward paying evangelist. Paul may have been killing two birds with one stone here. The thrust of the apostle's point is liberties (areas where it does not get one closer to God if we do or do not do them). To receive wages for the work of a preacher may be done or not done. Those preachers who received wages were doing so because it is indeed a work.

D. “*If others partake of this right over you, do not we yet more? Nevertheless we did not use this right; but we bear all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ*” (9:12).

1. Another proof that he had the right to receive compensation was that other preachers at Corinth had already been receiving compensation for their labors.
2. At this point one may expect Paul to demand compensation; however, this was not his intention for bring all this up.
3. Why didn't the apostle use their right to receive compensation for their labor? So that the gospel plan of salvation be not hindered. It may be that some weak brethren would find an occasion to stumble in this area. Some may have believed that if Paul, Silas and Timothy would have taken wages from them then their motive for preaching was money rather than a love for people's souls. Rather than pressing his rights, Paul gave them up for their sakes.

**IV. Two last illustrations to drive his point home (9:13-14):**

- A. *"Know ye not that they that minister about sacred things eat of the things of the temple, and they that wait upon the altar have their portion with the altar?"* (9:13).
1. Under the Mosaic Law, the priest who labored in teaching, sacrificing, changing the showbread and keeping the candlesticks lit were authorized to take wages in the form of parts of the animal sacrifices (cf. Numbers 18:8-20).
  2. While others tribes farmed, the priests were about the business of the altar and temple.
- B. *"Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel"* (9:14).
1. Clearly Paul authorizes a local preacher, who is doing the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy 4:1-5), to receive wages from the brethren. This work is not only in proclaiming gospel truths to the lost but to the brethren as well (see 1 Corinthians 9:11) that all may be edified in the knowledge of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12) (see study # 14).
  2. The word "*ordain*" (*diatasso*) is "to make arrangements, to arrange for oneself, get things arranged; to be appointed" (LS 195). Jehovah God made arrangements for those who would be preachers of the gospel and appointed for them a means of wages through the brethren. Each local church must make judgments based on contributions as to what the local preacher may be compensated.
  3. When Jesus sent out the 12 apostles to preach the gospel He said, *"Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff: for the laborer is worthy of his food"* (Matthew 10:9-10). These men brought the blessings of the gospel to people and the people were to share their blessings with the messenger (again, cf. 9:11).

**V. Paul's drive came from his being obligated to the Lord to preach (9:15-23):**

- A. *"But I have used none of these things: and I write not these things that it may be so done in my case; for it were good for me rather to die, than that any man should make my glorying void"* (9:15).
1. Paul's glory was in the fact that the Corinthians had obeyed the gospel through his teaching (1 Corinthians 2:1-5; 9:2).
  2. Though the Lord had "*ordained*" (9:14) that such preachers be compensated and "*other*" (9:12) preachers in Corinth had received such compensation, Paul would not take it.
  3. Paul would rather die than to have a brother in Christ stumble in this area of receiving wages. Clearly the receiving of wages from a local church or not receiving wages was a matter of judgment rather than a doctrinal must. Some preachers, like Paul, were tent makers (Acts 18:3) and still others receive wages from churches that they are not even a member of (Philippians 4:15).
  4. Apparently Paul perceived that there were brethren at Corinth that would be offended by him taking wages from them so he did not do it for their soul's sake.
  5. Paul is not trying to prove a case for receiving wages but he has in mind the soul and love of a brother in mind (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:13). Though it was his right to receive wages and though it was his right to eat any meats he was willing to forgo those rights for the sake of others souls. This is brotherly love personified. So, if eating meats sacrificed to idols was offensive to some Paul would not do it. If being compensated for his work as an evangelist caused some to stumble in offense he would not take it.

- B. *“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; for woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel”* (9:16).
1. To demand wages from the brethren would have been to glory in the position of an evangelist. Paul’s purpose for preaching was not monetary gain but to gain souls of men.
  2. Woe would be pronounced upon Paul or any others if the gospel is not preached. Each may find himself guilty of the blood of men (cf. Ezekiel 3:16-21; Acts 18:5-6; 20:26).
  3. *“Necessity is laid upon me”*
    - a. The Lord had hand picked Paul for this work (Acts 9:15-16).
    - b. Paul intended to be obedient to the Lord’s command (Acts 26:16-19)
- C. *“For if I do this of mine own will, I have a reward: but if not of mine own will, I have a stewardship intrusted to me”* (9:17).
1. The apostle Paul was compelled by Jesus to be an apostle and preacher (cf. 3ab above).
  2. Paul would have had great feelings within for helping others obey the gospel had he done this voluntarily along with receiving wages as was his right (reward). Paul’s work; however, was of necessity. Because it was of necessity by the Lord, he recognizes that the gospel message has been entrusted to him by the Lord to care for and distribute.
- D. *“What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel”* (9:18).
1. Paul’s outlook of a reward appears to be different that others view. The preacher certainly has the right to receive wages and that point has been established above. These men enter into the work of evangelist voluntarily and receive their just rewards (inward satisfaction for saving souls and compensation for doing so).
  2. Paul’s reward was that he gain the souls of men rather than receiving wages, he would rather preach without the chance of a brother saying, ‘Paul, your only doing this for money.’ Paul, therefore, chose not to demand his *“right in the gospel”* of receiving wages for preaching.
  3. This whole section is accentuating 8:13 regarding giving up rights for the sake of other’s souls. Paul said, *“let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor’s good”* (1 Corinthians 10:24).
  4. The word *“right”* (*exousia*) means *“freedom of choice, right to act, decide, or dispose of one’s property as one wishes”* (AG 277). The word *exousia* is used in other passages in this fashion (cf. 2 Thessalonians 3:9; John 10:18; 1 Corinthians 7:37; 8:9; 9:4ff; Hebrews 13:10; Revelation 13:5; Romans 9:21). The Christian has the "right" (freedom of choice, right to act, decide) when participating in things lawful but not necessary. There are many areas that we use our judgment to accomplish God's will. It is our judgment to use more than one cup when serving the Lord's Supper, conducting Bible classes, using song books, pitch pipes, and so forth. While these expediencies are not demanded the Christian has the right to use these things because they do not violate any other laws of God. If a brother is conscientiously bothered by the use of these things we may want to stop and do something different. If; however, a brother demands that we stop due to his perception of the liberties being sinful we must stand our ground (Galatians 2:3-5) (see study # 37).
- E. *“For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more”* (9:19).
1. Paul said in 9:1 that he was free and again in verse 19 he states that he is free. Paul's liberty, as others liberty, was to eat meats sacrificed to idols, lead about a wife, and receive wages for his preaching. Paul voluntarily gave up these things in many cases so as to not offend others.
  2. Paul voluntarily brought himself under bondage to others in that he humbly submitted to others spiritual weakness in areas of indifference that he may help them in the long run.
- F. *“And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law”* (9:20).
1. This verse teaches a valuable principle that must be understood correctly in view of all scriptures. The Jews held stringently to dietary laws expressed in the Pentateuch (cf. Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14). Circumcision was a vital part of Jewish culture and law as well (Genesis 17:11).

2. At a time when men and women were in a state of change from the Law of Moses to the Law of Christ many held tightly to that Law that had been a part of their heritage and society for as far back as they could remember. The road to the Law of Christ was not easy for many though the OT scriptures foretold of its coming (Jeremiah 31:30ff).
  3. Paul's objective was to help these Jews see their need for Christ, due to their sin, and thereby "gain" the many.
  4. If Paul would come into a city and eat swine's flesh, show disdain for circumcision and the Sabbath, the minds of the Jews would have been turned away from him. Since neither of these issues were a matter of salvation Paul did whatever others were doing for propriety sake (cf. Acts 18:8; 21:26). Yet when one would teach that these dietary laws, circumcision, or any other part of the Mosaic Law was essential to salvation, Paul rigidly opposed it as a false doctrine (cf. Acts 15; Galatians 2:2-4; 5:3f).
  5. Paul wanted to be less offensive that he may gain the many. A great example of this spirit is that Paul had Timothy circumcised so as not to offend any Jews that they may come in contact with while preaching (Acts 16:3). Note; however, that when the doctrine of Christ was at stake, Paul cared not that he offended. In fact, he pressed the matter diligently even if it meant loosing his life (Acts 21:13).
  6. The Lord Jesus practiced this same approach; however, when one presses these liberties and binds them as Law Jesus in no way accommodated such false teaching but aggressively opposed the teaching (Luke 11:37-54) (see study # 37).
  7. What this verse demands is that every Christian make a distinction between matters that are essential to salvation and those that are not. Matters of indifference should in no way be pressed on others; yet when doctrine (the teachings of Jesus {2 John 9}) is at stake, let us aggressively defend the truth as did Jesus and the apostles.
  8. Again, some principles revealed in I Corinthians ought to be stated here: "*All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient...*" (1 Corinthians 6:12). "*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but keeping the commandments of God*" (1 Corinthians 7:19). "*But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak*" (1 Corinthians 8:9). "*Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good*" (1 Corinthians 10:24).
- G. "*To them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law*" (9:21).
1. Paul's consistency of behavior is illustrated in this verse. Since keeping some aspects of Mosaic Law such as dietary laws, circumcision, and the Sabbath would not have hindered Paul's objective of heaven neither would not doing these things among the Gentiles obstruct his heavenly goal. Paul abstained from Jewish law around the Gentiles as he practiced them around the Jews that he may gain the many. We may practice some things around some and not do so around those we know it offends.
  2. Paul was not a lawless individual. The apostle writes, "*but under law to Christ*" (see study # 8). The teachings of Jesus were binding and essential (2 John 9). What this verse teaches is that there is a law to follow (the Law of Christ). So many do not understand that there is a clear distinction between liberties, expedients, and law (see study # 37). Some confuse lawful living with destroying the grace of God and making the cross of Jesus Christ of none effect. Dick Soule writes regarding 1 Corinthians 9:21, "Paul is simply stating that while he behaves as one not under the (Mosaic) Law when with Gentiles, he is not autonomous" (Ekklesia Then & Now 3.1; The Law of Christ). Commenting on Galatians 5:1-4; 6:2; 1 John 2:3-6), Mr. Soule said, "This certainly doesn't sound like Paul thinks of the 'Law of Christ' as a new set of rules... These are certainly challenging words from the pen of the Apostle John... but do these represent a 'new law'? I think not – these are certainly the principles that Jesus taught us to live by, but they are not law in the same sense as the Mosaic Law... It was never Jesus' intent to replace one law that was impossible for people to live up to with another one that was even more impossible!" (ibid.).

3. Confusion rules in such statements and there is an obvious misunderstanding of an elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ. We understand that there is no way that man can be saved by law keeping (any law) (Romans 3:20). No amount of law keeping could ever erase one sin (Romans 10:4-5). This causes all sinners (Romans 3:23) to see the grandiose event of the cross as a world-wide and unlimited time essentiality for mankind. No, not one person could save himself apart from the gracious sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross (Hebrews 10:1-14). That elementary principle that is misunderstood in said case is the fact that all sin (Rom. 3:23), sin is not only identified by law (Romans 4:15; 7:7-8; Galatians 3:23-24) but is identified as lawlessness (1 John 3:4). When the law of Christ is violated the event is termed sin. Sin separates man from Jehovah God (Isaiah 59:1-2; Luke 13:3,5; John 8:21-24; 1 John 1:5ff etc.). Reconciliation occurs only through the blood of Jesus (Colossians 1:22). The life of Jesus is what God graciously offered to mankind that they may receive forgiveness for the one thing (sin) that separated them from fellowship with the Godhead (cf. John 3:16). No one individual deserved this gracious offer but God through His richness in mercy and kindness provided grace and salvation (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24). Justification occurs then by faith in Jesus Christ and herein the Christian has access to that grace God offers (Romans 5:1-3). Notice; however, that it is sin that is in the way of fellowship with God (1 John 1:5-6). Man is justified (acquitted of sin) through faithful obedience to the words of Jesus (Romans 5:1ff). The word justification itself reveals law; for if there were no law to follow, the New Testament Christian would need not be justified (acquitted from a lawless deed). Here in we see the elementary principle of the doctrine of Christ. Man sins and needs forgiveness and that forgiveness is only through Jesus. Yes, the Mosaic Law demanded perfection (Galatians 3:10) yet so does the Law of Christ (Matthew 5:48; 1 Peter 1:14-16).

4. The author of Hebrews proves that we are currently under the Law of Christ when he said, *“For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law”* (Hebrews 7:12).

H. *“To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some”* (9:22).

1. Certainly Paul did not become a lawless man of fornication and murderer to save the fornicators and murderers.
2. Those areas of liberty are under consideration and the weak brother is understood to be the one who does not have knowledge of certain liberties and thereby abstains from such for conscience sake (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:7; Romans 14:1ff).
3. Paul used wise judgment as to when to exercise or abstain from exercising a liberty for the sake of individual people he was with. His objective remained constant; that objective was to gain souls.

I. *“And I do all things for the gospel’s sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof”* (9:23).

1. To be a joint partaker with other saints is to be understood in the realm of salvation and heaven. Paul would have hindered his own chances of making it to heaven if he was inconsiderate of others in the realm of Christian liberties (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:11-12; Romans 14:15).
2. Paul was not just being a good o’l boy by giving up such liberties rather than pressing them. He did so for the sake of the souls involved including his own.

VI. **The heavenly goal and prize through self Denial (9:24-27):**

A. *“know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain”* (9:24).

1. A very familiar scenario is given by Paul. The athletic contest in and around Corinth were well known. Every four years the Olympics were held at Olympia and every two years the Isthmian games would be held.
2. Though many may enter an event there is only one who shall win. Each contestant has the same goal of victory; however, only one will win the crown.
3. As the athlete prepares for the one championship race even so the Christian is to strive to attain the heavenly reward (see study # 47; Victory in Jesus).



- B. *“And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible”* (9:25).
1. To *“strive”* (*agonizomai*) = “to contend for a prize, esp. in the public games... to fight... generally, to struggle, to exert oneself” (LS 11).
  2. *“Exercise self-control”* (*egkrateuomai*) = “mastery over a person or thing; self-control” (LS 222).
  3. During the struggle for the victory the athlete has mastery over his body. Likewise, during the struggle for the incorruptible crown of life the Christian must have mastery over self. We know that we have certain liberties; however, these liberties may not be expedient to exercise at all times. The Christian is master of his own mind. He meditates in prayer giving no place to the devil. He or she takes every opportunity to confess sins that they may remain in the light of God (1 John 1:5-7).
  4. Life is a stringent endurance race that produces a crown of victory for the faithful Christian who is in control of their heart (Revelation 2:10). The apostle Paul said, *“through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God”* (Acts 14:22). Jesus said, *“Enter ye in by the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many are they that enter in thereby. For narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it”* (Matthew 7:13-14).
- C. *“I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected”* (9:26-27).
1. *“Uncertainly”* (*adelos*) = “to be in the dark about a thing” (LS 12). Paul knew full well what his goal was. He was not running as one lost not knowing where to go. The finish line was clear!
  2. *“Fight”* (*pukteuo*) = “to practice boxing, box, spar... to strike with the fist on the head” (LS 710). As a boxer delivers blows they are calculated and have a direct target in mind. So Paul struggles with precision in his Christian life rather than as one who would beat the air aimlessly.
  3. To *“buffet”* the body (*hupopiazō*) is to “have a black eye, metaph. To bruise, mortify, N.T. : also, to annoy greatly, wear out” (LS 850). To buffet is to “discipline (one’s body and physical appetites) by self-denial and austerity” (AHD 815). This disciplining of the body was necessary that Paul keep his self from falling away from the grace of God. To be *“rejected”* (*adikimos*) = “not standing the test, spurious, properly of coin,... metaph. Of persons, rejected as false, disreputable, reprobate” (LS 13). Paul kept his attitude toward liberties and expedient matters in check lest he lose his own soul (see Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:12).

## Synopsis of I Corinthians 9

Christian liberties are introduced in chapter 6 when Paul said, *“All things are lawful for me; but not all things are expedient...”* (6:12). Chapter seven briefly touches upon the subject of liberties when Paul said, *“Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing; but the keeping of the commandments of God”* (7:19). Liberties are dealt with in full at chapter eight as Paul discusses the issue of eating meats sacrificed to idols. The fact that liberties exist is firmly fixed in chapters six and seven. Chapter eight introduces another idea regarding liberties that is fully developed in chapter nine. That idea is the fact that the Christian may sin while using a liberty. Paul said, *“But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to the weak”* (8:9). The word *“liberty”* means to have freedom or power of choice. Matters that do not affect my salvation are termed matters of liberty (*adiaphora* or matters of indifference).

There are times in a Christian’s life when said liberties may have to be forfeited for the sake of others. Paul displays a heart of one who truly loves souls when he said, *“What then is my reward? That, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel without charge, so as not to use to the full my right in the gospel”* (9:18). Paul had many *“rights”* (liberties) as a Christian; however, he would never press those rights on others to the point of causing them to sin. To the Romans he said, *“Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died”* (Romans 14:15). Chapter nine is a chapter of admonition to all saints. Paul uses his own self as an example of one

willing to give up all rights or liberties for the sake of others. Paul had the right to lead about a believing wife, forbear working, and receive compensation for his work as an evangelist; however, he forfeited those rights that others would be saved.

The thought of sin on the part of the individual practicing a liberty is now fully developed in chapter 9. Heaven was the goal at hand for self and others. If while practicing a liberty I cause a brother to forfeit his salvation through sin, then I have also been rejected of God for my part in that brother's sin (9:27). The message is that while we make our trek toward heaven, only those who discipline their selves to consider others, in relationship to the gospel truths, shall be in heaven.

Often people want to know how far Christians should permit the weak brother to dictate our actions. Paul answers this question at Acts 15:1ff when it was said that the Jews who had obeyed the gospel yet clung to many Mosaic Laws demanded people to be circumcised. The apostle Paul said at Galatians 2:3-5 that we would give way to their subjection not even for a moment. The answer to the question is simple. When brethren claim that our liberties are sinful then we must stand our ground lest they be found to bind where God has not bound or loose where God has not loosed.

## Chapter 10

- I. With the possibilities of falling from grace mentioned in 9:27; Paul admonishes the Corinthians to be knowledgeable of the events transpiring in the OT (10:1-13):**
- A. *“For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea”***
1. The word "*for*" connects the thoughts of chapters 6-9 with chapter 10. Liberties and expedient matters are left to the judgments of man. Those who practice liberties at a weaker brother's expense cause not only the weak brother to sin but the strong brother as well (again, Romans 14:15 and 1 Corinthians 8:12 is under consideration). Paul is now going to paint a picture of the Christian's responsibility to remain free from sin even when practicing a lawful liberty.
  2. The word "*all*" is used five times from verse 1-4. The significance of this word is that it antecedes "*all*" God's people (not just a select few that had problems with liberties or some who had no problem with liberties).
  3. That which they were not to be ignorant of was the OT scriptures. Just because one is good standing with God does not mean that he or she could loose that position through sin. Paul said that even he could (1 Corinthians 9:27). Whether strong or week one could sin and find themselves "*rejected*."
  4. *“All were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea”*
    - a. While Israel traveled from Egypt they were led at night by fire and in the day by a cloud by the Lord (Deuteronomy 1:33).
    - b. Exodus 14 records the event of Israel passing through the Red Sea by the power of God and the Egyptians were defeated as the walls of water collapsed upon them.
- B. *“and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea”* (10:2).**
1. What the act of following Moses through the Red Sea and following the Lord through the cloud by day and fire by night did was to symbolically take the Israelites out of the control of Pharaoh of Egypt and into the authority of Moses and Jehovah God.
  2. The Christian's baptism takes them out of darkness (servitude to sin) and places them under the ownership of Jesus Christ (Acts 20:28).
  3. Paul's point, as developed in this chapter, is that baptism alone does not save you. Man must maintain good works.
- C. *“and did all eat the same spiritual food; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ”* (10:3-4).**
1. All ate of the spiritual food (the Manna) (Exodus 16).
  2. All drank of the same spiritual drink (the waters of Merribah) (Exodus 17:6).
  3. The song of Moses is recorded in Deuteronomy 32. At Deuteronomy 32:4, Moses refers to Jehovah God as "*The Rock*." Paul tells us here that Jesus Christ is deity. Jesus was that Rock

that nourished Israel through their wilderness wanderings. Here then we see the pre-existence and deity of Jesus (see study # 49; The Deity of Christ).

4. That which brought ALL God's people together was their common reception of God's mercy.
- D. *"Howbeit with most of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness"* (10:5).
  1. *"All"* of vs. 1-4 is now put into contrast with *"most"* of vs. 5. All were God's people but most of them did not please Him. All were recipients of God's mercy yet all were not grateful and faithful.
  2. God caused Israel to wander in the wilderness of Zin for 40 years because of their disobedience. The Lord swore in His wrath that not one of the unfaithful Israelites would enter into Canaan (Deuteronomy 1:34-39)
  3. God did not allow Moses to enter Canaan because of his and Aaron's sin at Kadesh-barnea (Numbers 20:2-13). The point being they had disobeyed His commands. The only ones that did not fall into this *"most"* category was Joshua and Caleb along with all who were under the age of 20 years old.
  4. Let us keep the context before us: Liberties and expedients are lawful so long as they are not exercised at the expense of another brother's faith (see study # 37). The strong brother who does not consider his weaker brother's conscience in the matters of liberty and expedients is in sin himself. Sin is serious!
- E. *"Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted"* (10:6).
  1. If the Corinthians would be unable to exercise self denial in the case of their liberties they too faced the same fate as the Hebrews.
  2. Paul admonishes them to not lust after things that may cause self or a brother in Christ to fall.
  3. Baptism, Christ's watchful protection, and partaking of the Lord's Supper will not shield the saint from sin.
- F. *"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play"* (10:7).
  1. Israel decided to make a god after seeing that Moses delayed coming down off Mt. Sinai (Exodus 32:6). They persuaded Aaron to fashion a golden calf.
  2. Results: 3000 Israelites lost their lives by the sword of the Levites (Exodus 32:28). They had violated God's laws of idolatry (Exodus 20:1-6).
- G. *"neither let us commit fornication as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand"* (10:8).
  1. At the council of Balaam, both Midian and Moab sent whores to seduce the Israelites (Numbers 25:9)
  2. Results: 23-24,000 people lost their lives; the conviction of Phinehas, Eleazar's son, stopped the plague of God.
- H. *"Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents"* (10:9).
  1. After learning that the Edomites would not let Israel cross Edom they had to take the long southern course around Edom. The way was difficult and they began to complain about the manna (Numbers 21:5-6).
  2. God sent snakes to bite them and kill them.
  3. The results: *"much people of Israel died"* (Numbers 21:6)
- I. *"Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer"* (10:10).
  1. There were two occasions of the whole congregation murmuring against God
    - a. Numbers 14 they all murmured against God when the 12 spies had returned and gave the report.
    - b. Secondly they all murmured after leaving Kadesh-barnea and being led astray by the rebellion of Korah (Numbers 16:41).
  2. The results again were devastating: all people 20 years and older who complained when the spies brought back the report of Canaan wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and died. In

the case of Korah's rebellion, counting all the 250 princes, family of the Danites that were involved, and Korah's family; 15,000 people died because of their rebellion.

- J. *"Now these things happened unto them by way of example; and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come"* (10:11).
1. *"Admonition"* (*nouthesia*) = "warning" (LS 536). *Noutheteo* is "to put in mind, to admonish" (LS 536). Studying the OT helps us improve our understanding and thinking about God and how He desires us to keep His precepts (see study # 50; Why Study the Old Testament?).
  2. We now are living in the last days, the end of the ages (cf. Acts 2:17; 3:24; 1 John 2:18).
- K. *"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"* (10:12).
1. This is a very important *circular* part of the argument. Circular in that Paul had stated, *"If any man thinketh that he knows anything, he knows not yet as he ought to know"* (1 Corinthians 8:2). Most believe they are the "strong brother" who has all understanding. Through time and experience many expose themselves as truly the weaker brother because of their convictions regarding liberties and expedient matters. Then again you have the truly stronger brother who understands liberties and expedient matters yet does not consider his weaker brother's conscience.
  2. Whether weak or strong Paul admonishes all to take careful heed lest you fall in sin. The weak brother may sin by pressing a liberty (binding or loosing where God has not bound or loosed) and the strong brother may sin by not considering the weaker brother's conscience. Though each man is fully persuaded in their minds that they are right it is truly God's laws that judge right from wrong (see study # 37 and # 51 the possibility of Apostasy).
- L. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it"* (10:13).
1. Consider this word study:
    - a. *"Temptation"* (*peirasmos*) "a trial" (LS 616).
    - b. *"Taken"* (*lambano*) is "to take hold of, grasp, seize... to take by violence, carry off as prize or booty" (LS 463).
    - c. *"Bear"* (*anthropinos*) "belonging to man, human...human affairs, man's estate...suited to man" (LS 71). God is true to Himself and provides man with the forgiveness of any sins (that is His promise to the humble and contrite; cf. Isaiah 57:15; 1 John 1:8-9).
    - d. *"Suffer"* (*eao*) "to let, suffer, allow, permit" (LS 219).
    - e. *"That ye are able"* (*dunamai*) "to be able, capable, strong enough to do... to be able, i.e., to dare or bear to do a thing" (LS 212).
    - f. *"Escape"* (*ekbasis*) "a way out, egress... a going out of, escape from" (LS 236).
    - g. *"Endure"* (*hupophero*) "to carry away under, esp. to bear out of danger. To bear or carry by being under, to bear a burden... used metaphorically to endure" (LS 849).
  2. Paul addresses both the strong and weak brother here. The weak may be tempted to bind where God has not bound or loose where God has not loosed yet he is challenged to not do so. The strong may be tempted to participate in a lawful liberty even if it may not always be the wisest decision (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:9). A common trial takes place within the mind. That trial may be in the form of one saying, 'I can participate in this; however, my brother is offended in the matter. What shall I do?' God has provided the way of escape through His instructions (don't do it if it wounds your brother's conscience {1 Corinthians 8:12-13}). The way that God does not permit this trial to be more than the strong can handle is through His divine instructions. The one who has knowledge shall make a wise decision based on revelation. The way of escape is therefore His divine instructions. The learned will not falter yet the unlearned will sin.

## II. Back to the subject of eating meats sacrificed to idols (10:14-22)

- A. *"Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry"* (10:14).
1. The word *"idolatry"* (*eidololatreia*) is from the root word *eido* and Latin Video. It is defined as "a form, shape, figure; image or statue; hence, an idol, image of a god" (Moulton 117). The word *eido* is used in 2 Corinthians 5:7, *"for we walk by faith, not by sight."* Liddell and Scott

define *eido* as “to see, perceive, behold” (227). The act of worshipping an image based upon human perception is idolatry. The Christian does not worship based upon “*sight (eido)*” but upon “*faith*” (divine revelation). Many today are looking for a feel good see something religion. The word of God; however, is a system of instructions for Godly living.

2. Though the immediate context of I Corinthians 8-10 is eating meats that have been sacrificed to false gods by means of worship, there is other “*idolatry*” that ought to be considered. Idolatry comes in a variety of forms other than worshipping false gods. One may exclaim with vigor that they would not participate in idolatry, yet have no problem with worshipping God in unauthorized ways. Consider Isaiah 46:12 in its context of idolatry. Those idolaters of Judah were “*stouthearted, that are far from righteousness.*” I Samuel 15:23 states the nature of idolatry as well. “*For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim. Because thou has rejected the word of Jehovah, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*” The rebellious are stouthearted and stubborn as is evidenced by their rejection of the authority of God. Saul did what he thought was best rather than what God commanded and so it was with Judah in the days of Isaiah. Many today want to do what they think best rather than following God’s divine standard. Children’s church, theatrics, food fest, and games to name a few are ways some churches are attempting to raise attendance (see study # 51; Modern Idolatry).
3. The admonition is to “*flee*” from this way of life and thinking and follow only the divine standard of God’s word. **\*The word “*wherefore*” takes into consideration all of the sins of Israel mentioned in verses 1-13 and therefore idolatry is associated with unauthorized practices.**

B. “*I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say*” (10:15).

1. Paul makes an appeal to the Corinthian brethren’s ability to reason. The word “*judge*” (*krino*) is to “consider” (AG 451).
2. The chapter has revealed the purpose of the OT. Those people of God who rebelled against the Lord’s authority were punished and so will those who reject God’s authority today.
3. Now Paul commands Christians to flee from idolatry and its influence. These commands and admonitions are found in the context of one who would press his liberties to the point of causing another brother to sin against his conscience in the matter.
4. Paul now calls upon the brethren to reason with him regarding the sinfulness of their actions in relation to fellowship. The problem gets even deeper. One who would press his liberties to the point of sin is out of fellowship with God because he may be fellowshiping error.

C. “*The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ?*” *The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?*” (10:16).

1. The “*cup*” (*poterion*) = “cup, drinking vessel... the cup stands, by metonymy, for what it contains” (AG 695). An examination of the use of the word *poterion* in relation to the Lord’s Supper clearly identifies the substance of the cup rather than the cup itself (metonymy = “A figure of speech in which an attribute or commonly associated feature is used to name or designate something, as in *The pen is mightier than the sword*” (AHD 792). The cup designates the contents, i.e., the fruit of the vine which is a representation (not literal) of the blood of Jesus Christ (see study # 52; The Lord’s Supper). The cup is a “*blessing*” because it represents the freedom from sins through the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. When Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper in Matthew 26, He said in regard to the bread and cup, “*this is my body... and this is my blood...*” (26:26-29) though He were still alive.
2. Paul states a fact, i.e., when Christians partake of the cup (fruit of the vine representing Christ’s blood shed for the remission of sins) it is a “*communion of the blood of Christ.*”
  - a. Communion (*koinonia*) means, “Fellowship, partnership, participation, communion” (Moulton 235). Liddell and Scott define the word as, “Communion, association, partnership, fellowship” (LS 440-441).
  - b. Who is “partnering or participating” in the blessings of the blood sacrifice of Jesus represented in the cup and the bread (body)? Paul uses the plural pronoun “*we.*”

Christians (those who have given heed to the gospel call (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; I Pet. 2:9). Fellowship (partnership and participation) therefore occurs during the Lord's Supper.

- D. *"Seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread"* (10:17).
1. The word "*seeing*" reminds us that we are being reasoned with (cf. 10:15).
  2. The "*bread*" of the first clause is a representation of the body of Christ (cf. Matthew 26:26ff). The body of Christ is a phrase used to indicate the church of Christ (cf. Ephesians 1:22-23). When the "*many*" come together on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper there is a communion (fellowship or sharing) taking place. That common oneness that we share is in our being united in purpose with the Word of God (cf. Jesus' prayer in John 17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-2; Philippians 1:27). The many are one as they partake of the one bread.
  3. Practical Application: How can I partake of the Lord's Supper with a group of people calling themselves Christians yet not following the authority of God? Many brethren worship with institutional brethren while on vacation stating that they do not give of their means to support their error. Others state that the erring brethren they worship with know that they have differences. What do these things matter? The Lord clearly shows us here that when one participates in sharing (fellowship) with one; **they become one with them!** Again, I can say all day long that I am not a teacher of error; however, when I continue to preach that churches are authorized to support orphan homes I am a false teacher. To have communion with the false teacher is to be one with such in purpose whether you want to admit that fact or not. Clearly this verse indicates that there is one way and one mind that is acceptable to the Lord. To do anything other than expose the error (Ephesians 5:11) is to have fellowship with it or them and to be one with that error.
- E. *"Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they that eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?"* (10:18).
1. Another example is given: The descendants of Abraham (Israel after the flesh) made sacrifices to Jehovah God for sin offerings and various other oblations. When these sacrifices were conducted both priest and the one offering the sacrifice were allowed to eat a portion of the sacrifice (cf. Leviticus 8 and Deuteronomy 12; 1 Corinthians 9:13).
  2. What transpired under such events? The one offering and the priest had communion (fellowship) with the altar. Again, to participate in idolatry is to have communion with evil is the point.
- F. *"What say I then? That a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything?"* (10:19).
1. In I Corinthians 8:4-5, Paul's point was that eating meats sacrificed to idols was a non-issue because the idol is really nothing.
  2. Chapter 10 sets forth the sinfulness of communing with others at the table and altars of idolaters.
  3. Chapter 10:19 is stated to thwart the accusation that Paul is contradicting himself. He re-states the fact that an idol is nothing. This issue really does not revolve around the idol itself. The real issue is fellowship, idolatry, and authority. One who participates, shares or fellowships in the sinful unauthorized practices of idolatry is in error. To eat meats sacrificed to idols at the idols temple with idolaters participating in idol worship is to commune or share with them in their unauthorized practices. There was obviously a difference in eating the meats in the temple and eating the meats in the idol's temple while worship was going on. One could not possibly participate in their worship!
- G. *"But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons"* (10:20).
1. To participate in the sacrificial meals of pagan deities was to have communion, fellowship, or sharers with demons.
  2. Some brethren apparently were unintentionally sinning in this case.
  3. Eating the meats sacrificed to idols was a liberty; however, when participation in cultish activities occurred, even though one knew within that the deity was false, sin occurred.

4. Paul gives the reason for this conclusion in verse 21.
- H. *“Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and the table of demons”* (10:21).
  1. Note that *“the cup”* is used figuratively here (people do not drink the literal cup). Our one cup no classes brethren believe the cup to be of great significance yet the Lord places the significance upon the contents of the cup (see 1 Corinthians 10:16) (see study # 53; Should We Use One Cup Only on the Lord's Supper?). To drink the cup of the Lord is to be one with the Lord and his people. To drink and partake of the cup and table of demons is to be one with demons.
  2. Jehovah God has set the limits of fellowship. We cannot claim oneness with God and His people yet partake of evil and unauthorized practices (see study # 54; Fellowship)!
  3. The lines of true discipleship will not be marred. We are either in fellowship with God or not (cf. 1 John 1:5,6).
- I. *“Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”* (10:22).
  1. If I claim fellowship with God yet walk in darkness (practice unauthorized acts) I *“provoke the Lord to jealousy”* (compare this passage to 1 John 1:5-7).
    - a. The OT pictures Jehovah God as a jealous God because His people were likened unto a spouse to Him (cf. Exodus 20:5; 34:14).
    - b. Isaiah and Hosea illustrated the unfaithfulness of Judah and Israel by likening them to an unfaithful wife that caused Jehovah anguish and jealousy (Isaiah 1:21; 57:3-8; Hosea 9:1).
  2. Such *“provoking”* of Jehovah God to jealousy is prompting His anger (cf. Deuteronomy 32:21). A Christian who does such activity must consider himself very powerful and able to stand against the wrath of God and so Paul states, *“are we stronger than he (God)?”* The answer is obvious.

### III. Paul makes practical applications to his teaching on the subject of eating meats sacrificed to Idols (10:23-33):

- A. *“All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify”* (10:23).
  1. This is parallel to what he had previously said in 6:12 (see comments on this outline); however he adds one thing: *“not all things edify.”*
  2. The word *“edify”* (*oikodome*) = “a building or structure” (LS 546). “A builder, architect... to build a house; to build... to repair... to advance a person’s spiritual condition, to edify... a spiritual structure, as instanced in the Christian body... religious advancement” (Moulton 284).
  3. Paul’s point is that even though a circumstance is lawful to participate in it may not edify all involved. Wisdom must be used in Christians of all ages when participating in areas of liberty and expediency. Point being that we would not want to cause a brother in Christ to stumble over our liberties (vs. 24 and 8:13) (see study # 37).
- B. *“Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor’s good”* (10:24).
  1. The liberty under consideration, eating meats sacrificed to idols, may be lawful; however, the Christian must ask “will it edify” all involved?
  2. To have any other mind is to be selfish and to lack brotherly love. Paul told the Roman brethren, *“For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died”* (Romans 14:15) (see study # 57; Selflessness).
- C. *“Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, eat, asking no question for conscience’ sake; for the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof”* (10:25-26).
  1. The *“shambles”* (*makellon*) is “the meat market” (LS 484). The Christian would find himself shopping in Corinth for groceries at the meat market with a variety of choices. Paul’s admonition is to ask no question regarding the origin of the meat but to buy and eat. Clearly, some of the meat that came to the market was left over from a pagan sacrifice. Everyone knew it.
  2. No questions were to be asked with the intent of determining if the meat was sacrificed to idols for the sake of conscience. Here was a case where the Lord did not demand an action to be

done according to knowledge (conscience). The knowledge of the source of the meat was not needed because meat in and of itself is clean. Reason: *“for the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof.”*

- a. The animal’s flesh was part of the *“fullness”* (*pleroma*) of the earth. “Of number, the sum, total” (LS 647). The earth was comprised of many things, meat was a part of that sum total.
  - b. The sum total of all the earth and its contents *“is the Lord’s”* and is therefore clean. Clearly, it was not the meat itself that was unclean. That which was unclean and sinful was the unauthorized idolatry. Many drugs are considered *“the fullness”* of the earth; however, what men do with these drugs is sometimes unauthorized (see study # 55; Drugs and Alcohol).
- D. *“If one of them that believe not biddeth you to a feast, and ye are disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake”* (10:27).
1. To be *“disposed”* (*thelo*) to go is “to will, wish, purpose; to be wont or accustomed” (LS 225).
  2. You are the guest, eat what is put before you asking no questions regarding the source of the meat because *“the earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof”* (cf. 10:26b).
  3. The word *“conscience”* (*suneidesis*) is once again used and means an awareness of one’s duty and surroundings through knowledge (see study # 21).
- E. *“But if any man say unto you, this hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience’ sake: conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other’s; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience?”* (10:28-29).
1. The scenario is pressed further: What if while you are sitting at a meal with the unbeliever he tells you that the meat served is from the sacrifice to a pagan deity?
  2. In this situation, the Christian is bound by love and influence not to eat. Not because the meat is unclean but because the server or host needs to understand that making sacrifices to idols is wrong and unauthorized.
  3. If the understanding brother eats the meats sacrificed to idols knowingly (he knows that all meats are clean regardless if they have been sacrificed to idols) while others have this common knowledge he may give the impression that he indorses idolatry and said unauthorized practices (the logic and application of this verse may be used in many activities that are not sinful in themselves yet to participate in it would give the non-Christian a wrong signal regarding the greater spiritual picture).
- F. *“If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?”* (10:30).
1. This verse pre-supposes the consequences of the strong Christian eating the meats set before him even though the meat’s origin has been made known.
  2. If the strong goes ahead and gives thanks for the food and eats it knowing that it is of the fullness of the earth he does no good in this situation. He is *“evil spoken of”* because even the unbelieving Gentiles would see his hypocrisy.
- G. *“whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (10:31).
1. The determining factor as to whether or not I partake of a liberty or do anything (*“whatsoever”*) is whether or not the action will bring glory to God (see also 1 Corinthians 6:20) (see study # 5).
  2. Jesus tells us that glory is brought to God by the Christian bearing fruit and abiding in the commandments of God (John 15:5-10).
  3. One who does not abide by the authority of God brings God no glory. To bring God glory is to cause others to speak well of the Lord through our fruits!
- H. *“Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God:”* (10:32).
1. The Jews, Greeks, and Church involved all classes of humanity. Paul would not be a stumbling block to any of these (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19)
  2. No liberty was worth closing the door of opportunity to the Jews and Greeks nor worth causing a weak brother in Christ to stumble.
- I. *“Even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many”* (10:33).



1. To seek his own prophet would be to participate in liberties no matter what others thought.
2. Rather than selfishly casting away all other's conscience on matters of these liberties and shut the door of opportunity, Paul would rather give up the liberty and help the needy souls and thus profit them.
3. These chapters reveal the greatest love and concern for others.

### Synopsis of I Corinthians chapter 10

The objective of I Corinthians 10 is to illustrate by OT examples and God's supreme authority that participating in a liberty at the cost of a brother's conscience amounts to sin. Paul meticulously compares the issue of practicing a liberty at a brother's soul's expense to sinful conduct. Though "*the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof*" applies to the condition of the meat, it is not expedient in all circumstances to partake of the liberty (1 Corinthians 10:23-25). A Christian who participates in a sacrificial meal with non-believers who are worshipping their deity is such a circumstance. Such activity would be having "*communion*" (fellowship or sharing) with an unauthorized practice. Though the meat is clean, the circumstances around the meat are not. Eating the meat is not the real issue. The issue is in fellowshiping error (1 Corinthians 10:14-22).

The thought is clearly established; i.e., I cannot be a good influence on one for righteousness sake while participating in their sinful deeds (1 Corinthians 10:30) (see study # 56; The Christian's Influence). Such actions have a three fold effect. First, I have showed my convictions to be weak and thereby I lose my integrity among the unbeliever. Secondly, I have sinned against God and breeched my fellowship with Him. Thirdly, I have fellowshiped error rather than expose it. When saints come together in one spirit to partake of the Lord's Supper we are in "*communion*" with each other (1 Corinthians 10:16). Likewise, when I partake of sinful conduct with someone else I am in "*communion*" with their sin and thereby am one in purpose with them in this sin (1 Corinthians 10:17). Rather than fellowshiping the sin and sinner (2 Corinthians 6:14) we are commanded to expose their sin and remain separate (Ephesians 5:11; 2 Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1).

A practical application may be made. The brother who participates, fellowships (shares) or communes with another in worshipping God through unauthorized efforts has in effect worshipped demons (1 Corinthians 10:20; 1 Samuel 15:23; Isaiah 46:12). If I worship with the Baptist, Catholics, Presbyterians, Mormons, or even liberal brethren I have now become one with them in purpose because I share in their error rather than expose it. What this truly tells us is that sins committed unintentionally are still sins (see study # 8). The motive of the sinner is not discussed (cf. 1 John 3:7-8) (see study # 7). The issue is whether truth is upheld and abided in (1 John 3:9-10). The brother who worships with an institutional church that supports human organizations is one with them no matter what he proclaims their sin to be. The strong in Corinth knew the errors of idolatry and that there was truly only one God; however, they apparently participated in their unauthorized acts of worship and are labeled as sinners (1 Corinthians 8:1-5). Just because one is a baptized believer does not mean that we are immune from sinful choices. Such a choice will result in a falling away from the living God. That which determines true fellowship with God is one's stand in truth. The Lord will not permit the lines of fellowship to be marred.

## Chapter 11

### (Addendum)

I Corinthians 11:1 seems to end the discussion of I Corinthians 8-10 by Paul saying, "*be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.*" It was Paul's aim to bring glory, not shame, to the name of Jehovah God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Paul said, "*wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble*" (1 Corinthians 8:13). He also said that he "*buffets my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected*" (1 Corinthians 9:27). Paul, by divine inspiration, reveals the possibility of both strong and weak brother sinning. The objective of the section is achieved.

### I. God's revelation regarding the woman's place in the home and society (11:1-6):

- A. "*Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you*" (11:2).

1. The word "*praise*" (*epaino*) = "to praise, commend, applaud" (Moulton 149). This Greek word is identified as an active verb in the present tense which indicates ongoing action (Friberg 532). As long as the Corinthians would remember all of Paul's actions (1 Corinthians 11:1) and "*hold fast the traditions*" he would praise, commend, and applaud them. When we get to verse 17 of this chapter he will say, "*But in giving you this charge, I praise you not...*" Paul could not praise, commend, or applaud the Corinthians because they were in sin.
  2. The word "*traditions*" (*paradosis*) = "what is delivered, the substance of the teaching or instruction" (Thayer pg. 481). That which was delivered (see 1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:3) is the revelation of God, the gospel (cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:15, 2 Timothy 1:13; 1 John 1:3).
- B. "*But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God*" (11:3).
1. The word "*but*" is in contrast to the praise, commending, and applauding that the apostle would like to give to the Corinthians yet he will not due to their error. Apparently there were women who had the gift of prophecy and prayed regularly (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:5). Another problem is therefore revealed among the Corinthians. Their women were exercising dominion over men (see 1 Timothy 2:8ff) (see study # 58; Women of the Bible).
  2. Christ is the "*head*" (*Kephale*) of man: "Used metaphorically as anything supreme, chief, prominent; of persons, **master**, lord: of Christ, the lord of the husband (1 Corinthians 11:3) and Christ as lord of the church (Ephesians 4:15, 5:23; Colossians 2:19)" (Thayer pg. 345). "Superior, chief, principal, **one to whom others are subordinate**" (Moulton 229). "Denotes superior rank" (AG 430). "The one who **holds the position of leadership and authority**" (ISBE; Vol. 2; pp 640).
  3. The man is head (*Kephale*) of the woman. Therefore just as Christ is supreme, chief, or master of the Husband and Church, even so the husband is likewise master, chief, or supreme to the woman. "Of a husband to his wife (1 Corinthians 11:3)" (Thayer pg. 345). See also 1 Timothy 2:12-15.
- C. "*Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with her head unveiled dishonoreth her head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven*" (11:4-5).
1. The "*veil*" (*katakalypto*) = "to cover up... having covered his head...having veiled oneself" (LS 407).
  2. "Generally speaking, among the Greeks only slaves were covered, and the uncovered head was a sign of freedom. The Romans reversed this. The free man wore the pileus, the slave went bareheaded... The Romans were accustomed to pray while they were veiled. The Jews had the same custom, and we should not forget that Paul was originally a Jew. This veiling expressed reverence, the proper feeling of unworthiness to appear before God with an open face. Maimonides says: 'Let not the wise men, nor the scholars of the wise men, pray unless they be covered.' The Jewish covering was called the tallith."<sup>4</sup>
  3. "The Greek custom was to pray with the head uncovered."<sup>5</sup>
  4. Even today the Jews cover the head... "As a gesture of respect to God, the head is covered during prayer, either with a hat or a skullcap (kippah; Yiddish yarmulke). Pious Jews wear a head covering at all times, recognizing God's constant presence."<sup>6</sup>
  5. For an excellent discussion of the history of this custom, see Mike Willis' commentary on I Corinthians pages 313-318 as he sums up much of Ron Halbrook's unpublished paper titled "1 Corinthians 11:2-16: A Text Viewed in Its Biblical Context, In Early Church History, and In Modern Times Among Churches of Christ." I would like to briefly summarize my reading of this text here for the benefit of those who do not have this work.

<sup>4</sup> Lenski, R.C.H. Commentary on the New Testament (I and II Corinthians) pp. 434-435

<sup>5</sup> Farrar, F. W. The Pulpit Commentary Vol. 19 Corinthians pp. 361

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Two era's of history important to this study:

A. Nicene time period:

1. Included historical writings from men such as Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement.
2. These men, in their historical writings, all referred to head covering by women as customs of their day
3. Their hypothesis was that since it was customary for the woman to wear the veil in public for a show of modesty and subjection, they ought to wear them in the assembly of the saints as well.

B. Post-Nicene era:

1. Included historical writings from Ambrose, Jerome, Chrysostom and Augustine.
2. These Post Nicene writers record a change in the custom of the day of wearing the head covering to being a religious practice.

From these writings it is evident that the wearing of the veil by women began as a custom of the society they lived in and eventually made its way into the church. However we do not find in scriptures direct commands, necessary inference nor apostolic examples binding the wearing of veils on women of their day and therefore neither do we find binding authority for this practice in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What we find is the apostle Paul stating that *“if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God”* (1 Corinthians 11:16).

6. Obviously both men and women were prophesying in Corinth. The stipulations were that the woman was not to do so with her head un-veiled. Why was this?
  - a. Because the veil was a **symbol** of subjection.
  - b. Paul had just mentioned God's order i.e. Christ, man then woman in rank
  - c. If the woman was to not wear her veil she was not showing subjection according to the customs of the society in which she lived. This was a general subjection to men and not a woman's subjection to her husband.
7. If we examine this passage in juxtaposition to 1 Corinthians 14:34 we find that Paul cannot be referring to their first day of the week assembly here.
  - a. Women were not permitted to speak in the assembly, they were and are required to keep silent and learn at home (see also 1 Timothy 2:12).
  - b. If she were to go against this custom she was resisting the customs of their society and showing a defiant attitude towards the man.
8. It was as shameful as shaving her head shaved.
  - a. Here is a prime example of the fact that this is a custom Paul is referring to.
  - b. No where in the OT or NT do we find laws forbidding the shaving of a woman's head yet Paul says it is shameful for her to do so. Why Paul? Because society views a woman with a shaved head as “odd or shameful.” This principle is brought about in Isaiah 3:16-24.

D. *“For if a woman is not veiled, let her also be shorn: but if it is a shame to a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be veiled”* (11:6).

1. Here is the logical conclusion regarding the veil.
2. If the woman will not wear the veil she may as well shave her head. If she would not wear the covering then why not shave off all of her covering (hair included)? This is an interesting concept in God's word because it is an incident that illustrates God's displeasure yet not a clear sin against His divine laws (see study # 64; Things God Permits yet Discourages One from Practicing).

II. **An appeal once again to God's order of his creation (11:7-16)**

A. *“For a man indeed ought not to have his head veiled, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man”* (11:7).

1. Though wearing a veil in public was a custom of propriety, the Lord took the matter seriously when it comes to the man. Here is what we know about the veil (head covering):
  - a. The veil was an apparent symbol of subjection.
  - b. Secondly, to wear the veil brought honor to the woman and dishonor to the man (11:4-5).

- c. Thirdly, the man was not to be veiled because he is the image and glory of God. The woman was to be veiled because she is the glory of the man.
- 2. Man is both the image and glory of God.
  - a. Genesis 1:26-27 states, *“And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”*
  - b. “Man is the image of God by virtue of his spiritual nature... by the breath of God man became a living soul... the man endowed with free self-conscious personality possesses, in his spiritual as well as corporeal nature, a creaturely copy of the holiness and blessedness of the divine life.”<sup>7</sup>
  - c. Man is too the glory of God. As one who reflects the image of God, man has been given *“dominion”* over all creation (Genesis 1:26). This authority over God’s creation is a reflection of God and his glory. The Psalmist said of man, *“thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownest him with glory and honor. Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet”* (Psalms 8:5-6; Hebrews 2:6-8).
  - d. Within this creation of things subject to man’s dominion is the woman. She is termed the *“help meet”* (Genesis 2:18). After the fall of man in the garden, the Lord said to the woman, *“I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee”* (Genesis 3:16).
- 3. The woman is the glory of man as the man is the glory of God. This statement is examined closely in the next two verses. When therefore the woman wears the veil she publicly proclaims her compliance with God’s order of creation.
- B. *“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man: for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”* (11:8-9).
  - 1. Paul continues to reason with the Corinthians regarding the veil. The woman is the glory of the man. The man has dominion over the woman. Thirdly, Paul states that the woman is of the man and not the other way around. God created the man first and then He made the woman for the man and from man (cf. Genesis 2:21ff).
  - 2. Woman was made as a *“help meet”* for the man. Again, God’s creative order indicates that it would be a shameful thing for a man to veil his head. The man who veils his head has not taken God’s order of creation seriously and likewise the woman who will not veil her head in subjection has not taken God’s order of creation seriously.
- C. *“For this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels”* (11:10).
  - 1. Notice that the veil is a *“sign of authority on her head.”* The word *“authority”* (*exousia*) is “power or authority to do a thing” (LS 276). Clearly the veil authorized the woman to pray and prophecy in public (yet never in the assembly of the saints; i.e., 1 Corinthians 14) (see study # 58).
  - 2. If the woman disregarded the custom of propriety she openly steps outside the area of God’s created order and is acting without authority. Paul uses angels as an example of those who do not keep their authorized places and the consequences thereof (cf. Jude 6, 2 Peter 2:4).
- D. *“Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord”* (11:11).
  - 1. The word *“without”* (*choris*) means “separate from, apart or aloof from, far from... independent of, without reckoning, not to mention, besides” (LS 899).
  - 2. Though the man ranks over the woman and each have their designated place assigned by God they are not independent of each other.

<sup>7</sup> Keil, C. F., Delitzsch, F. Commentary on the Old Testament; Genesis, pg. 39

3. God created the woman because he saw that *“it was not good that man should be alone... but for man there was not found a help meet for him”* (Genesis 2:18-20). Man needs the woman and the woman needs the man. Neither one may now exist without the other. This relationship exists *“in the Lord,”* that is, by the Lord’s will man needs the woman and the woman needs man. Clearly Paul is pointing to a divine sovereign decision made by the Lord. That sovereign choice was that woman would be the glory of man and serve as his help meet (helper, assistant, or aid to perform all the work of the home).
- E. *“For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of God”* (11:12).
    1. Though woman originated from man, man now comes of a woman through birth.
    2. God was the one who began the whole process and thereby Paul said, *“but all things are of God.”*
  - F. *“Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto God unveiled?”* (11:13).
    1. Again Paul uses the word *“judge”* as he did at 1 Corinthians 10:15 to mean **consider** or reason with me.
    2. That which the apostle ask all to consider is whether or not it is *“seemly”* for a *“woman to pray unto God unveiled.”*
      - a. The word *“seemly”* (*prepo*) means “that which is seemly, fitness, propriety, Lat. Decorum” (LS 668). Propriety is defined as “Conformity to prevailing customs and usage’s” (American Heritage Dictionary pg. 994).
      - b. Aside from God’s order, Paul asks whether or not it would be in compliance with propriety and decorum of their society for the woman to pray without the veil. The answer to the question is obvious, No.
  - G. *“Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him?”* (11:14).
    1. To this point we find that the woman ought to wear a veil in public when praying or prophesying to illustrate subjection to the man because:
      - a. God’s order in creation puts man above the woman.
      - b. Propriety
      - c. Nature
    2. The word *“nature”* (*phusis*) is compared to propriety. *Phusis* is defined as “the nature, natural qualities, powers, constitution, condition, of a person or thing, of the mind, one’s nature, natural bent, powers, character... nature, i.e. the order or law of nature, to be made so by nature, naturally...” (LS 876).
    3. In the context, it is apparent that the word *“nature”* has to do with God’s order in creation, i.e., man is the head of the wife and the wife is in subjection to the man. Man is the image and glory of God where as woman is the glory of man. Man has authorized dominion. If it is a dishonor for a man to wear a veil according to God’s order then it stands to reason that it is a dishonor for man to wear long hair covering his head. The clear distinction between male and female must be apparent.
    4. The idea of nature or the natural order of things is found throughout the Bible. Paul had appealed to the natural order of things at Romans 1:26ff. see also Proverbs 16:31 and many others (see study # 59; The Natural Order of Things).
  - H. *“But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering”* (11:15).
    1. A woman’s long hair covers her head and is thereby a *“glory to her”* in that she exemplifies her role in life with joy.
    2. Her *“hair”* and *“a covering”* are equivalent. If the hair serves as a covering why should she be offended in wearing the veil that serves the same purpose?
    3. Often the question arises as to *“how long”* or *“how short”* must the hair be on a man and woman. There is no standard length (i.e., a man’s hair must be no longer than 2” and a woman’s 8”) yet we know that the opposite of long is short.

- I. *“But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God”* (11:16).
1. To be *“contentious”* (*philoneikos*) is to be “eager for strife” (LS 864).
  2. Clearly some in Corinth would not go along with the decorum of their day because they were fond of strife (see study # 64). To these Paul states that the practice of woman wearing a veil is not binding, it is simply a *“custom.”* The word custom here is *sunethei* in the Greek:
    - a. “Habitual intercourse, acquaintance, society, intimacy... habit, custom, habituation, the customary use of a phrase” (LS 776).
    - b. “From a compound of 4862 and 2239; mutual habitation; custom (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible).
    - c. “Custom” (Thayer pg. 604).
    - d. The word custom is defined as “a practice followed as a matter of course among a people” (American Heritage Dictionary pg. 357).
    - e. This exact word is used only one other place in the Bible (cf. John 18:39). Reading John 18:39 in its context will leave the reader with no doubts whatsoever that this issue of wearing a veil was only a custom peculiar to this time period and not ours. We must, therefore, reject the binding of some brethren on women to wear veils. Even if veils were a matter of propriety in our modern day and age Paul said, *“But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”*

### III. The Purpose of Coming Together as an Assembly (11:17-22):

- A. *“But in giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse”* (11:17).
1. Again, the “charge” has been delivered at 1 Corinthians 11:2. Paul could not praise, commend, or applaud the Corinthian brethren for the following reasons.
  2. The brethren assembled themselves together on the first day of the week for *“the worse”* as opposed to *“for the better.”*
    - a. For the worse is represented in the factions that existed (11:18), division between poor and rich (11:21) and perversion of the Lord’s Supper (noted as LS) (11:20ff).
    - b. To gather for the better would be an atmosphere of edification and glorification of God (Hebrews 10:22-25).
- B. *“For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it”* (11:18).
1. The *“first of all”* begins the explanation of the Corinthians coming together for the worse of verse 17. The word church (*ekklesia*) is here used as the first day of the week assembly during which the five acts of worship are conducted. Not all assemblies are the same. Sometimes the brethren assembled during the week for Bible studies (see Acts 19:9) (see study # 65; Assemblies of the Saints). As the brethren assembled together, there were *“divisions”* (*schisma*) that existed. *Schisma* is defined as “division of opinion” (LS 787).
  2. Notice that Paul had *“heard”* this from other brethren (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:1). Question: is it an authorized practice to communicate about the problems of other churches? I aver that it is not gossip but authorized (cf. Romans 16:1ff). If a church tolerates the error within how shall we fellowship them (1 Timothy 5:22). Furthermore, how shall we know who to fellowship and who not to if we are not communicating with one another about the soundness of a church. For this cause Paul told the Roman brethren, *“First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world”* (Romans 1:8). The word out on the Roman church was their faith, the word out regarding the churches in Corinth was their division and contentions (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:10) (see study # 60; Church Autonomy).
  3. Apparently so much talk was circulating about the church in Corinth that Paul didn’t know what to believe and what not to believe. He concludes saying, *“and I partly believe it.”* Later Paul will give us instructions regarding the manner that we communicate about the state of others (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:1). Such revealing of facts is solely out of love (care and concern) for souls.

- C. *“For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you”* (11:19).
1. The Greek word *dei* for the English “*must*” is used in 1 Timothy 3:2ff. Paul said the “*bishop must be...*” giving all the qualifications. *Dei* is defined as “needful... binding on one to do a thing” (LS 175).
  2. That which is necessary is that factions occur among brethren. A “*faction*” (*haireisis*) is “a taking... means for taking a place... a taking for oneself, a choosing, choice... a choice, deliberate plan, purpose... a sect” (LS 22).
  3. Within the body of Christ, those approved (*dokimos* = “one who is of tried faith and integrity” {Thayer 154}) of God (in fellowship) and those out of fellowship with God will be made manifest by their deeds and words. The apostle John spoke of these saying, “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out that they might be made manifest that they are all are not of us*” (1 John 2:19) (see study # 61; Faction).
  4. Within the body of Christ there will always be those who do not follow the doctrine of Christ and those who want to form clicks looking down their nose at others as was occurring in Corinth. These collect together because they share the one mind as do the faithful children of God (Revelation 17:13). Paul tells us to admonish these disorderly with longsuffering and patience (1 Thessalonians 5:14); however, if they will not repent we must mark them and turn away from them (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14).
- D. *“When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord’s supper: for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken”* (11:20-21).
1. Here is an inference to what takes place in the first day of the week assembly, i.e.; the Lord’s supper is taken.
  2. Paul states; however, that at this assembly, “*it is not possible to eat the Lord’s supper.*” Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper (LS) in Matthew 26:26ff. This supper is to be partaken every first day of the week (Acts 20:7) because each week has a first day (cf. Exodus 20:8).
  3. Why was it not possible? “*For in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another drunken.*”
    - a. The entire assembly had been perverted into some sort of feasting time. The picture painted of this church is truly ultra liberal. Brethren were bringing food and intoxicating wine and getting “*drunk*” (*methuo*). The word *methuo* is defined as “to be drunken with wine... metaphorically of persons, to be drunken or intoxicated with passion, pride, etc.” (LS 493).
    - b. It may be that the more affluent brethren had things to bring to the feast and eat whereas the poorer brethren had not and were therefore hungry. It is difficult to determine whether the Corinthians were physically drunk or drunk with pride over their welfare above others. Either case indicates a heart that is perverted.
- E. *“What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and put them to shame that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I praise you not”* (11:22).
2. Clearly we see here that it was not a function of the church or the assembly to eat and drink. The brethren were to eat and drink in their homes. The assembly was for singing (Ephesians 5:19), praying (1 Timothy 2:8), preaching (Acts 20:7ff), partaking of the LS (Matthew 26:26ff; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23ff) and giving as one has been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1ff).
  3. To eat and drink at the assembly was to “*despise the church of God and put them to shame that have not.*”
    - a. To “*despise*” (*kataphroneo*) is to “think down upon, i.e., to look down upon, think slightly of... to regard slightly, despise... to be thought little of” (LS 418). These liberal minded brethren took the church of God as a mere means of gathering people together for a party and thereby showed their disdain for the church that Jesus purchased with His blood.

- b. Those who had little were belittled and shamed by the rich brethren in this party atmosphere. They brought their abundance of food early, ate it all before the poor arrived and refused to share (cf. 11:33). This verse lends strong evidence to the metaphorical use of “*drunken*.”

4. For this conduct Paul states, “*I praise you not.*”

#### IV. The seriousness of partaking the Lord's Supper (11:23-34):

- A. “*For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread:*” (11:23).
  - 1. By divine revelation Paul received instructions regarding the LS and delivered these teachings to the disciples (Galatians 1:11-12).
  - 2. The very night that Judas would betray the Lord with a kiss, Jesus instituted the LS (Matthew 26:26ff).
  - 3. The bread that Jesus took was unleavened (Exodus 12:15ff; Matthew 26:1, 17).
- B. “*And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, this is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me*” (11:24).
  - 1. A prayer was said to God by Jesus on behalf of the unleavened bread, He broke it, and then gave the reason for the disciples partaking of it. Note that when we partake of the LS today we do not have Christ saying a prayer for us and neither do we have Christ actually breaking the bread for us (see study # 53).
  - 2. The bread was a representation of Christ body, not the literal body. The sacrificial body of Jesus was and is “*for you*” (cf. Hebrews 10:1).
  - 3. The body and blood of Jesus served as a perfect Passover lamb that would provide a way of God’s wrath to pass over a sinful people (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7).
  - 4. A memorial of remembrance is to take place each and every first day of the week. The word “*remembrance*” (*anamnesis*) is “a calling to mind, recollection” (LS 59). Brethren were to assemble each first day of the week and partake of the LS to recall what Jesus did on the cross.
- C. “*In like manner also the cup, after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me*” (11:25).
  - 1. The content of the cup is a representation of “*the new covenant in my (Jesus’) blood.*” The cup itself was not drunk and neither does the cup itself equal the new covenant. As the cup represents the blood of Christ so the cup represents the new covenant (see study # 53).
    - a. After Jesus broke the bread and passed the loaf around, He passed the cup of wine around stating “*for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins*” (Matthew 26:28).
    - b. Blood was to be shed that the new covenant (Law of Christ) be made effective (Isaiah 2:3; Jeremiah 31:31; Hebrews 9:13-22).
  - 2. As the bread was not the literal body of Christ, even so the fruit of the vine was not the literal blood of Jesus. These emblems were to be taken to “*remember*” what Christ did on the cross that the new covenant would be effective.
- D. “*For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord’s death till he come*” (11:26).
  - 1. “*As often*” would be every first day of the week until the Lord comes again or we die.
  - 2. To “*proclaim*” (*kataggello*) “*the Lord’s death*” is to make a “proclamation” (LS 404).
  - 3. When the saint partakes of the LS, he makes a public proclamation of faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. This shall be done until we die or “*till he come.*”
- E. “*Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord*” (11:27).
  - 1. Those brethren in Corinth who turned the Lord’s Supper into a common meal served with drunken pride partook in an “*unworthy manner*” (*anaxios*). *Anaxios* is defined as “unworthy, not deemed or held worthy of... worthless” (LS 59).
  - 2. The brethren in Corinth treated the LS as though it were “worthless” by the manner in which they partook. Clearly they were not remembering the Lord’s blood and body sacrifice.



3. Such condition of heart makes one “*guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.*” The word “*guilty*” (*enochos*) is “held in, i.e., liable to, subject to... liable to the penalty of death” (LS 265).
  4. Clearly Paul states that to partake of the Lord’s Supper in such a way is sinful (Romans 6:23). One is spiritually dead while doing so. Christ died for the remission of the sins they were now committing and thereby they are guilty of the Lord’s body and blood.
- F. “*But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup*” (11:28).
1. The context thus far indicates a perversion of the LS by the Corinthians by treating it as a common meal served with intoxicating pride.
  2. Secondly, such treatment of the serious nature of the LS deemed their efforts as “*unworthy*” (worthless). Such sinful worship to Jehovah God is deemed worthless to the Lord (cf. Isaiah 1:11ff).
  3. Thirdly, their efforts are termed sinful and they were guilty before the Lord for such superficial manner in which they partook.
  4. Paul’s efforts are directed toward getting the Corinthians to see their error. One who would partake of the LS is to “*prove*” himself before he eats and drinks the emblems. To “*prove*” (*dokimazo*) is to “assay or test metals, to see if they be pure... of persons, to put to the test, make trial of, scrutinize... then, to approve” (LS 208).
- G. “*For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body*” (11:29).
1. One who would partake of the LS in an unworthy manner receives “*judgment*” upon himself because he is in sin. The word “*judgment*” (*krima*) is “a sentence of condemnation” (LS 450). Without repentance, Paul’s audience was doomed. I aver that the Corinthians could change their practices regarding the LS and still be condemned. It must be that repentance includes prayer for forgiveness. A spirit of humility will not only seek to change but beg God’s forgiveness (cf. Luke 18:9-14; 1 John 1:9).
  2. Now Paul clearly states the issue of sin and manner of unworthiness on the part of the partaker. One who does not “*discern*” the body and blood of Jesus partakes in an unworthy manner. To “*discern*” (*diakrino*) is “to separate one from another: to part combatants... to part and join different parties... to distinguish” (LS 189).
  3. The brethren who would not make a clear distinction between the body and blood of Jesus and a common meal were guilty! When one partakes of the LS, he is to “*remember*” the body and blood of Jesus and not treat it as though he were taking a snack (they had their homes to do that in). Whether that remembrance is done with one or two cups matters not. What matters is the remembrance of the body and blood (see study # 53).
- H. “*For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep*” (11:30).
1. “*For this cause*” undoubtedly points back to the “*judgment*” of condemnation against the guilty one who partakes of the LS in an unworthy manner by not making a distinction between the body and blood of Jesus and a common meal.
  2. Paul states that the consequence of such action is that many brethren are “*weak, sickly and not a few sleep.*” By partaking of the LS in an unworthy manner the Corinthians portrayed themselves to be spiritually weak and sick the end result without prayer and repentance is spiritual death. Physical illness and death have no part in this verse.
- I. “*But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged*” (11:31).
1. Once again Paul admonishes the brethren to “*discern*” (*diakrino*) ourselves. Verse 29 commanded a *diakrino* (make a distinction) of the body and blood of Jesus and a common meal. Here, Paul commands a distinction to be made of ourselves before partaking to avoid sin.
  2. Making the proper distinction of the body and blood of Jesus avoids the consequential condemnation of sin (to be “*judged*” {*krino*}).
- J. “*But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world*” (11:32).
1. To be judged is to not discern ourselves and thereby partaking the LS in an unworthy fashion.

2. Such a state of condemnation leads us to *“chastening of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.”*
    - a. The word *“chastening”* (*paideuo*) is “to bring up or rear a child... to train, teach, educate... to teach one a thing... to be taught a thing... to have any one taught, cause him to be educated... to correct, discipline, to chastise, punish” (LS 584).
    - b. The statement means that the Lord either educates the sinner through the process or the sinner is punished in some manner through the process. It seems to me that when we sin, the word of God points out to us our sin by our own study or by means of a caring brother and thereby we are “educated.” We are moved to repent through this knowledge and thereby spared the *“condemnation of the world”* (cf. 1 John 2:15-17). I see no discipline or punishment in this context. Where does the word of God say that we are punished or disciplined with each occurrence of our sin? We are not punished or disciplined now but will be without education, confession and repentance (cf. Hebrews 4:11-12).
- K. *“Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another”* (11:33).
1. In light of the thought that I can be condemned by my not discerning the body and blood of Jesus and turning the LS into a common meal Paul admonishes all to wait for each other.
  2. Earlier they were partaking of the LS as though it were a common meal and not waiting upon each other to partake. Paul now admonishes the assembly to come together for the purpose of partaking the LS properly discerning the body and blood of Jesus.
  3. Question: Does this mean that the saints can only serve the LS one time on Sunday (at a time when we have all waited for all else to be present?). Clearly the waiting has to do with the wealthy purposely assembling at times unknown to the poor and having their great feast because they felt higher than the poor saints. This does not address the issue of time nor frequency of the LS. Time and frequency served is thereby a liberty of the Christian. The general command to partake is given and we are left at liberty as to what time of day to do so on the first day of the week (see study # 62; What about Serving the Lord's Supper Twice on Sunday?).
- L. *“If any man is hungry, let him eat at home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come”* (11:34).
1. We can conclude by inference that the Corinthian brethren had a place of assembly away from the home.
  2. The home was the place for common meals. Brethren were admonished to not partake of common meals at the assembly! There is purpose in this verse. A purpose for the first day of the week assembly was spiritual not social.
  3. To turn the assembly into a social or recreational atmosphere is to fall under the condemnation of sin (see study # 63; The Spiritual Nature of the Church).
  4. Apparently there were other errors associated with the Corinthian's partaking of the LS because Paul said he would *“set in order* (the rest) *whensoever I come.”* What these other errors are we are not told.

## Synopsis of I Corinthians Chapter 11

I Corinthians 11:1 ends the discussion of 1 Corinthians 6-10 regarding liberties and matters of expedience. Paul said, *“be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.”* Paul's aim was always to bring glory, not shame, to the name of Jehovah God (1 Corinthians 10:31). Paul said, *“wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble”* (1 Corinthians 8:13). If the Corinthians (and all Christians today) would follow the example of Paul we would save our soul and the souls of others.

The apostle now moves to another issue in the church at Corinth; i.e., the role of women in society and the Lord's Supper. An established fact in the Word of God is man and woman's standing in the eyes of God. The man has been designated "head" (superior or supreme) of God's creation (1 Corinthians 11:3, 8-9). Any woman who rejects God's order in His creation is to understand the shame involved (1 Corinthians 11:5-6). A woman could have a gift from the Holy Spirit as did a man; however, she was not at liberty to express her gift publicly

in such a manner that would indicate her liberation from man and God's design for her. Both male and female cannot exist without each other, and each part must respect their authorized roles in society (1 Corinthians 11:11). Apparently some of the Corinthian Christian women had lost sight of their role and were liberating themselves from God's order. It is possible that the stronger Christian women may have believed that they were at liberty to boldly display their gift. Paul reveals God's mind on the matter.

A custom of this Roman-Greco society was to wear a veil to indicate subjection. Paul recommended that the Christian women wear this veil for propriety's sake and thereby indicate their submission to men when prophesying and praying. One must understand that the wearing of veils by women was a simple custom of their day (1 Corinthians 11:16 comp. with John 18:39). Propriety in our society today does not demand a veil to be worn indicating subjection. This being true, women nonetheless are commanded to illustrate God's divine role of subjection in His creation. The woman must value the distinction she has from the man that comes from her hair. The man, too, must recognize God's distinction between male and female. A man who would want to appear as a woman is an abomination to God, and likewise a woman wanting to appear as a man is an abomination to God. Moses said, "*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God*" (Deuteronomy 22:5). Though customs change, the Word of God does not regarding the woman's subjection to the man because of God's order (1 Corinthians 11:8-9).

Another problem discussed in I Corinthians 11 was that factious parties had formed (1 Corinthians 11:18). A separation of the brethren occurred in the first day of the week assembly. One set of brethren came early, ate food, and drank in pride for the Lord's Supper (LS). Another set of brethren came later and had nothing. The Corinthian brethren were ultraliberal in their worship to Jehovah God. Paul set out to refocus their minds regarding the seriousness of partaking of the LS. When one partakes of the LS, he is "*remembering*" (1 Corinthians 11:24) and "*discerning*" the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:29). One who partakes the LS without remembering and discerning the Lord's body and blood does so in an "*unworthy*" manner (1 Corinthians 11:27) and is guilty of "*despising the church of God*" (1 Corinthians 11:22). Such a state of spiritual sickness leads to spiritual death (1 Corinthians 11:30). The remedy is repentance through study and understanding of the word of God ("*chasten*") (1 Corinthians 11:32). Paul concluded the chapter by reiterating that the nature of the assembly is spiritual and not social (1 Corinthians 11:34).

## Chapter 12

**Addendum:** The Corinthian Christians had coveted the gift of speaking in tongues. Apparently this gift was viewed in higher esteem than other gifts due to the fact that many pagan converts had made their way into the church. These pagans once worshiped idols and spoke ecstatic utterances thinking that they were controlled by the respected idol deity. Those who had the gift of tongues exalted themselves over others as though they were superior or closer to God than others. Chapters 12-14 deal with the issue of gifts. Paul sets these gifts in their proper order and gives the purpose for their use. While the function of gifts are discovered throughout God's word {i.e., to prove that God is the one and only Lord (Isaiah 46:9-10), confirm the words spoke by the miracle worker as being of a divine origin (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4), produce faith in those who witnessed the gifts (John 20:30-31; Acts 8:4ff), and to display God's mercy (Matthew 14:14)} these listed functions are not the objective of 1 Corinthians chapter 12. The Corinthians had lost sight of God's intentions for gifts and thereby needed to be brought back to the objective by going back to the basics. 1 Corinthians 12 identifies gifts and instructs the Corinthians to see that their objective is not to benefit individuals only but rather the whole church (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). Paul explains to the Corinthians that the church is not comprised of one member but many. Whatever individuals in the church do ought to be done in consideration of others.

### I. Paul addresses the question of spiritual gifts (12:1-3):

A. "*Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant*" (12:1).

1. What is a "*spiritual gift*?" The words "*spiritual gift*" is a transliteration of the Greek word "*pneumatikon*." Nestle and Marshall translates the word "*spiritual matters*" (NM 689). The

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia translates the Greek word as "Spiritual things" (volume 4, pp. 602). The spiritual matters will be revealed as "*gifts*" at verse 4.

2. A "*gift*" (*charismaton*) is a word that simply means "favor" (LS 883). Thayer states that a "*gift*" is "a gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own; in 1 Corinthians 12:4 it denotes extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit" (Thayer pg. 667). The gifts were God's favor to the Christians to prove to the world that God is the one and only Lord (Isaiah 46:9-10), confirm the words spoke by the miracle worker as being of a divine origin (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4), produce faith in those who witnessed the gifts (John 20:30-31; Acts 8:4ff), to display God's mercy (Matthew 14:14), and as this chapter reveals to edify and unify the local church (see study # 69).
  3. There are 13 gifts mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12-14 (for a summarization see 1 Corinthians 12:28). The apostle Paul did not want the Corinthians to be "*ignorant*" of the gift's purposes. Apparently the Corinthians had lost sight of the objective of these gifts. "The fundamental error of the Corinthians was a defective anthropology that relinquished earthly human responsibilities in favor of heavenly experiences" (ISBE v. 4, pp. 604). The emphasis was taken away from God's real objectives for gifts and placed upon the self importance of individuals. Again, the Corinthians were thinking like the world (see 1 Corinthians 14:4 etc.).
- B. "*Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might be led*" (12:2).
1. Through these "*spiritual matters*" (gifts), God was made manifest (Isaiah 46:9-10). The idols or gods worshipped, on the other hand, had no such manifestation because they were "*dumb*" (speechless) (1 Corinthians 10:20; Psalms 115:4-7).
  2. The Gentiles were "*led away unto those dumb idols*" by the devil (cf. 1 Corinthians 10:20). God is not "*dumb*" but rather intelligent as the creator of all things. The Corinthians need not be ignorant of God's will for these gifts.
- C. "*Wherefore I make known unto you, that no man speaking in the Spirit of God saith, Jesus is anathema; and no man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit*" (12:3).
1. One who would claim that Jesus is "anathema" can only do so through ignorance and a spirit of "dumbness." The living God moves man to speak divine things for divine purposes. The ignorant and dumb do things for selfish purposes that have no real backing other than that of Satan (again, note 1 Corinthians 10:20).
  2. A conclusive test is now given to the Corinthians that they may determine who is performing gifts according to divine influence and who was not. The apostle John gives a test as well that all may know who is truly in fellowship with God when he said, "*In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother*" (1 John 3:10).
  3. Paul's test is likewise simple. If one were to call Jesus "*anathema*" he is certainly not doing so of God. The word "*anathema*" (*anathema*) means "anything devoted to evil, an accursed thing" (LS 55). Jesus is not devoted to evil and neither is our Lord accursed. Remember, the idol is dumb and cannot speak. Those so speaking are not being governed by God. There is only one left to blame; i.e., Satan (1 Corinthians 10:20).
  4. Conversely, one who would claim, "*Jesus is Lord*" is in the Holy Spirit. The apostle John said, "*Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesses not Jesus is not of God: and this is the spirit of the antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it cometh; and now it is in the world already*" (1 John 4:2-3).
  5. Apparently there were false teachers and or selfish brethren in Corinth posing as spiritual yet proclaiming false doctrines. Paul is clearly telling the Corinthian brethren that we can determine whether a teacher is false by his doctrine. The "spirit of truth and spirit of error" is clearly distinguishable through the doctrines brought forth (1 John 4:6). Therefore a man

speaking from God or against God would be known by his words (cf. Deuteronomy 13:1-5) (see study # 7).

## II. Characteristics of God's gifts to man (12:4-11):

### A. "*Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit*" (12:4).

1. The word "*diversities*" (*diairesis*) = "a dividing, division, of money... in the reckoning of the votes on either side" (LS 187). "A distinction arising from a different distribution to different persons" (Thayer 137). As there are different denominations of currency (i.e., 1's, 5's, 10's, 20's, 100's) even so there are differing gifts.
2. The word "*gifts*" is discussed above (**favor**). These different "*gifts*" were "*distributed*" to different people (believers) by the Holy Spirit. The recipient of said gifts did not earn them. It was by the grace of God (through the Holy Spirit) that these gifts were "*distributed*" for the confirmation of his word, learning, and unity.
3. **Though there are different gifts (plurality) there is only one Holy Spirit.** There were not gods responsible for each gift man possessed. Paul begins to explain to the Corinthians the oneness of the church as opposed to the multi-directional Corinthians paths of selfishness, faction, and division. These things are not as God would have the church function.

### B. "*And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord*" (12:5).

1. The word "*ministrations*" (*diakonia*) is "the office of a *diakonos* (servant, deacons, members of the church etc. jcr)" (LS 189). "The ministration or **service of all** who, endowed by God with powers of mind and heart peculiarly adapted to this end, endeavor zealously and laboriously to promote the cause of Christ among men, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, elders, etc." (Thayer 137). "A **function**, ministry, or office in the church" (Moulton 92).
2. Clearly, the *diakonia* represents the service or function of these spiritual gifts as compared to bishops, preachers, teachers and all who would serve in proclaiming the gospel. Each individual is distributed a gift for the purpose of confirming and learning the word of God. **Though there are differing functions (plurality) for each gift there is but one Lord Jesus Christ.** The point being that just because an individual had a different gift with a different function than other members does not mean that this individual is separate from the one church or the one God!

### C. "*And there are diversities of workings, but the same God, who worketh all things in all*" (12:6).

1. The word "*workings*" (*energima*) = "Work, produce, **effect** w. acc. of the thing" (AG 265). "Action, operation" (LS 261). **Though there are differing effects or outcomes (plurality) to be performed by members of the body of Christ there is but one same God.**
2. Interestingly, Paul has compared the oneness of the godhead (i.e., the Holy Spirit, Jesus, and God the Father) with the plurality of gifts, their functions, and effects or outcomes upon man. Though there are many men and women with various functions within the church there is only one God. The church is an organization with a single objective yet many members to achieve that objective. Just as a business has structure and organization to obtain its goals so the church. While a business has laborers, managers, supervisors, presidents, and a CEO the church has elders, deacons, preachers, and members (Philippians 1:1). The church in the beginnings also had members with gifts to achieve its objective.

### D. "*But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal*" (12:7).

1. Each of the above mentioned servants are distributed the "*manifestation of the Spirit...*" The word "*manifestation*" (*phanerosis*) from the root word *phaino* is defined as "to bring to light, make to appear, to shew forth, make known, reveal, **disclose**, shew... to **make clear**, explain, expound... to come to light, be seen, appear" (LS 854). "An outward evidencing of a latent principle, active exhibition" (Moulton 422). Each individual who receives a gift has received a clear disclosure of revelation.
2. This clear disclosure of revelation is evident to all and is to **profit all** rather than a few (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:31). One God, many members, and all are to disclose their gifts to profit all. All are intended to be one through the gifts as the godhead is one. Paul's point is that unity ought to be the outcome as the Holy Spirit distributes a plurality of gifts with a plurality of functions.

- E. Nine spiritual gifts are given to achieve profit to all:
1. *“For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom...”* Wisdom (*sophia*) is “sound judgment, intelligence, practical wisdom (prudence and discretion / jcr)...” (LS 737). Individuals were given the gift of wisdom (and all other gifts) by being *“moved* (tell or announce) *by the Holy Spirit”* (2 Peter 1:21). The Holy Spirit simply told these people what to say and do.
  2. *“Word of knowledge.”* Knowledge (*gnosis*) is “a knowing, knowledge” (LS 167). This gift is distinguished from the *“word of wisdom”* in that information (knowledge) is in contrast with judgment and practicality of knowledge. The one with this gift had knowledge and the one with wisdom made application of that knowledge.
  3. *“To another faith...”* This would not be the faith of Romans 5:1. This is a miraculous faith that enabled one to *“remove mountains”* (1 Corinthians 13:2; Matthew 17:20).
  4. *“And to another gifts of healing in the one Spirit”* (12:9). The gift of *“healing”* (*iama*) would be “to heal, cure, make one recover” (LS 374). Such a one helped the physically sick and diseased that all may know the reality of Jehovah God. Note once again the significance of the various gifts yet the *“one Spirit.”* The gifts, though many, contributed to the public and brethren's understanding of the one God's will.
  5. *“And to another workings of miracles...”* (12:10). This individual ‘produced’ (cf. verse 6 above) *“miracles”* (*dunamis*). *Dunamis* is “power, might, strength: then, generally, strength, power, ability to do a thing... power, might, authority” (LS 213). At Matthew 22:29, the Word of God said, *“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”* The word translated power is the same translated miracles in 1 Corinthians 12:10. Jesus tells us that these powers include healing the sick of diseases (Mark 6:5; Luke 9:1), inspired teaching (Luke 1:17), removal of unclean spirits (Luke 4:36), raise the dead (John 11) and so forth.
  6. *“And to another prophecy...”* (12:10). *“Prophecy”* (*propheteia*) is “the gift of interpreting the will of the gods,... in N.T., the gift of expounding scripture, of speaking and preaching” (LS 704). A *propheteuo* is one who “speaks and preaches under the influence of the Holy Spirit” (LS 704). Later Paul will reveal the importance of prophecy over tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5).
  7. *“And to another discernings of spirits”* (12:10). The word *“spirits”* has to do with one’s character or disposition in the NT. It is often used of one’s attitude toward truth (John 4:23, 1 Corinthians 5:3; 6:17; 1 John 4:1, 2, 6). I know a man’s character, regarding truth, by what he teaches and practices. Others may claim that a false teacher’s character is good; however, God refers to his character as that of *“error”* (1 John 4:6). The one with the gift of *“discerning”* (*diakrisis*) spirits is one who is able to make a “separation, dissolution... a decision, judgment” regarding who is of error and who is of truth (LS 189) (see study # 7).
  8. *“To another divers kinds of tongues”* (12:10). The word *“divers”* (*genos*) is “race, stock, family... a race... a caste of animals, a breed” (LS 162). The word *genos* is used 21 times in the NT and for the most part indicates one’s nationality. This helps us understand what the gift of tongues was all about. The word *“tongues”* (*glossa*) is defined as “a tongue, language” (LS 166). Clearly, the language spoken was of differing nationalities. One who had the gift of tongues was able to speak a language of another race of people without ever studying the language.
  9. *“And to another the interpretation of tongues”* (12:10). As one had the gift of speaking a language from other kindred so some were able to miraculously understand the language and expound the meaning to others in a native tongue of the audience even though they had no formal training in the language.
- F. *“But all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will”* (12:11).
1. Each of the nine gifts mentioned above were all given to individuals by the Holy Spirit for divine functions that all may profit. Though there are nine gifts listed there is only one godhead. Though there are many members with many gifts there is yet one church. The Lord never intended man to separate by gifts.

2. The personality and individuality of the Holy Spirit is seen here in that He distributed gifts to individuals *“as he will.”* The Holy Spirit made a judgment as to who was to receive what gift (see study # 66, The Godhead).

### III. The Church of Christ compared to a body (12:12-31):

#### A. *“For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ”* (12:12).

1. The scope of spiritual gifts was that they were to profit and edify all in the church (see 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:12) and that all may learn (1 Corinthians 14:31). The guiding principle behind gifts at this time was their profitability to those hearing or seeing them and not to the individual performing them. This section of 1 Corinthians shall review the idea that the church is to be united in truth (revealed by gifts) rather than elevating self over others based on a gift. The Corinthians were obviously separating themselves by the gifts they had. It may be that those who spoke in tongues had their followers and those who healed the sick had their followers and so on. Such an event is contrary to the objective of gifts (i.e., unification of the body).
2. The *“one”* of the *“body”* is both literal and figurative. One indicates the singular status of the church of Jesus Christ and secondly it represents the purpose of all the *“many members”* that comprise it.
  - a. The one church (body of Christ) is indicated by a number of scriptures (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4 etc.).
  - b. The one purpose of the *“many members”* is indicated by a number of scriptures as well (Palms 133:1; John 17:21; 1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-7; Philippians 1:27) (see study # 6).
3. The idea of verse twelve is that in the human body we have many parts; i.e., the hands, feet, arms, legs, head, various organs etc.; however, an individual is one. Just because there are many body parts does not make a person *“many.”* The whole of the human body functions together for the betterment of the single unit. Even so, Paul said, *“is Christ.”* The body of Christ, the church, is like the human body in that all members function together for one purpose; heaven (1 John 2:25; 5:12-13 etc.).
4. The significance of the oneness of the godhead as contrasted with the many gifts and members of the body cannot be underestimated. The spiritual gifts that the Corinthians had were never intended to elevate or benefit one person only. There are many gifts for many members of the body and they are to be used to help the one body. Christians are not to look at themselves as separate and distinct from the other members of the body. The Corinthian's gifts were to make the whole body healthy and strong rather than the individualized into parties or factions.

#### B. *“For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit”* (12:13).

1. Notice that the same Greek phrase *“in one Spirit”* (*en pneumatic*) was mentioned in 12:3, 9). Verse three revealed a test as to who was truly speaking and teaching truth versus those who were not. Those speaking truth did so by the instructions of the Holy Spirit. Verse 9 indicated gifts that were distributed by the Holy Spirit. Revelation and distribution of gifts was a work of the Holy Spirit. Apparently, Paul continues the idea here of the work of the Holy Spirit in relation to revelation. By revelation (instruction) man is *“baptized into one body.”*
2. Divine revelation reveals a fact here regarding the consequence of baptism. Following divine revelation, regarding the instructions for baptism, one finds himself *“in one body.”*
  - a. Paul told the Galatian brethren, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ. There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one man in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:27-28). One who is baptized by divine instructions is now *“in Christ.”*
  - b. To be *“in Christ”* is to be in fellowship with God and to abide in His truths (1 John 1:3, 5-6; 2:6, 24; cf. Galatians 3:27).
  - c. The phrase *“were baptized”* is one word in Greek, (*hebaptisthemen*). Friberg conjugates the word as a “verb-indicative-aorist-passive - - first person – plural” (535). The aorist

tense of the verb is “a verb tense originally used in classical Greek that usually denotes past action without indicating completion, continuation, or repetition of this action” {AHD 117}. Clearly, baptism is a one time act (see study # 67; Baptism). Those baptized are no longer separated from God and the body of Christ but are now members of the one body of Christ. Why would one individual who has been baptized into the body of Christ do something that would not benefit the body as a whole?

3. “*And were all made to drink of one Spirit.*” This entire phrase is represented by one Greek word (*hepotisthemen*) and is in the aorist tense (Friberg 535). There seems to be a connection between the “*drinking of the one Spirit*” and “*baptism*” due to the fact that both are in the aorist tense. Apparently, as one examines the work of the Holy Spirit in divine revelation, the meaning here is that divine instructions revealed the need for baptism at one point in one’s past. Such a one obeyed that divine revelation and now is to continue in faith. This person did (past action) drink of the “*one Spirit*” with drink involving a partaking of divine instructions.
  4. Note again the significance of the oneness of the godhead, the saints, and the church. To take a gift from God and not use it for the one body would be to go against God's divine will (see Acts 16:16ff for an example of this).
- C. “*For the body is not one member, but many*” (12:14).
1. Many are baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins and they are then added to the body of Christ (the church) (see Acts 2:38-42). The forgiven sinner is no longer separated from the Lord but rather joined to the church. Once a part of the many in the world that obedient person is now a part of the one body of Christ (see Ephesians 2:1-5; 18-20; Colossians 1:13-14).
  2. By divine revelation those who are in the one body are one in purpose (John 17:14-25). The members agree and are united in this one divine revelation. Though there are many members that comprise the church universal, they are one in purpose.
  3. As the human body with its various parts (members) function together to achieve its goal of health so the spiritual body is made up of many members who have functions to achieve for the spiritual health of the whole body (cf. Titus 1:13; 2 Timothy 1:13; 4:3). The intimate relationship of the members of the body of Christ is magnified here. Christians are all part of each other and should do all things that would benefit the whole rather than self.
  4. When a member of the body of Christ has a different approach to divine authority they have the potential of making a local body unhealthy (see 2 Timothy 2:16-18) (see study # 70; A Healthy Body of Christ).
- D. “*If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body. And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; it is not therefore not of the body*” (12:15-16).
1. These two verses give us insight into the ongoings at the church in Corinth. Apparently there were brethren who did one of two things. First, they were attempting to elevate self over others in the body as though they were not part of that one body. Paul says, “No matter how forcefully or confidently a hand, ear, or eye says they are not a part of the body they are nonetheless part of the body.” Secondly, some of these brethren who were dividing along the lines of differing gifts were making some brethren feel that they were worthless for not having a specific gift. We are introduced here to the fact that some gifts were elevated above other gifts in the minds of the Christians. A member who said, “I have not the gift of tongues, therefore I am not a significant part of the body” is making a mistake.
  2. Paul tells us what makes one a part of the body in verse 13; i.e., baptism for the remission of sins. While sin separates man from God baptism joins a man to the body of Christ. A baptized believer is a part of the body whether he has a certain gift or not. A member today is in fellowship with God whether he leads singing or not... etc. The Corinthians had apparently lost sight of the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God and began looking selfishly to spirituality.
- E. “*If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?*” (12:17).



1. The physical body is dependant upon all of its members to function. Likewise, the spiritual body is dependant upon all of its members to function.
  2. The church of Jesus Christ has a work to do; i.e., evangelize the lost, edify the saints and provide care for its own needy. This work can only be accomplished when each member is doing their part. God has organized the church so that its functions can be accomplished (Philippians 1:1). Each part of the body of Christ, like our human bodies, are important in relationship to achieving the work of the church. Such a statement infers that each member is responsible for this work. Not all may lead singing or preach yet they must find what they can do and do it with all their heart for the benefit of the whole.
- F. *“But now hath God set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased him”* (12:18).
1. A fact is now given. God “*set*” each member in the place he has “*as it pleased him.*” The word “*set*” (*tithemi*) is to “put, place... to put or plant it in his heart... to deposit... to place to account, put down, reckon” (LS 806).
  2. One gets “*in the body*” through the act of baptism as mentioned above. The Holy Spirit distributed gifts to individuals “*as he will*” (1 Corinthians 12:4, 11). As the Holy Spirit distributed gifts as he willed even so God adds to the church those who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (i.e., sets them in the body).
- G. *“And if they were all one member, where were the body?”* (12:19)
1. The body is comprised of many members doing their own function. If the whole body were an eye how would it get about? If every member had the gift of tongues where would be the interpretation of those tongues? If every member today did one thing how would other works be accomplished? The beauty of the diverse gifts during these days was that it accomplished the unified purpose of the church.
  2. The body is not one member but many who are one in purpose. The purpose of spiritual gifts was to establish faith (Mark 16:20) and teaching or edification (1 Corinthians 14:31) that the whole body may be healthy (sound in the faith - Titus 1:13; 2:1).
  3. We must note that though miraculous gifts do not exist today there are nonetheless gifts of each member of the body in relationship to talents. There are song leaders, men who pray publicly, preachers, deacons, elders, and so forth. Each person does what they can to benefit the whole (see Ephesians 4:11ff). The preacher is not more important than those who pray. The elders are not more important to the body than the deacons. When brethren begin putting levels of importance upon certain parts of the body they loose sight of God's will to use each of these talents and offices to benefit or profit all!
- H. *“But now they are many members, but one body”* (12:20).
1. The antecedent to “*they*” would be the body parts in the illustration and people in the church (those baptized and added to the church).
  2. There are many people in the church yet one church. Paul continues to hammer away at the oneness of all things spiritual. One Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and Church. Many with one purpose!
- I. *“And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary:”* (12:21-22).
1. Evidently there were some in Corinth who felt that their gift was superior to others and they were even dividing themselves up according to their gifts (see 1 Corinthians 14:18-20). Paul’s point in using the human body illustration was to show the Corinthians that just as the human body depends on its parts such as the foot, hand, ear and eyes even so the body of Christ has members with varying gifts that function together as a whole.
  2. The Corinthian Christians needed to understand that as each member of the body did their part they functioned as a whole. Each member is needed no matter what their work in the church achieving its divine work may be. Each member is significant and needed. No one is better and no one is lesser in importance. Those who divide themselves up according to gifts are working contrary to God's divine will for the gifts. How can one take the gifts of God and use them for a purpose that opposes the very one who gave them?

- J. *“And those parts of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness”* (12:23).
1. To be “*less honorable*” (*atimos*) is “less honorable... not deemed worthy of... deprived of privileges... without price or value” (LS 129). To “*bestow*” (*peritithemi*) is “to place round, to put round oneself, put on, to bestow, confer upon” (LS 633). Those people in the church who seem insignificant or without value actually are bestowed abundant honor and value. The moment we get to thinking that we are greater than others or that others are insignificant is the moment the germ of disunity begins.
  2. The “*uncomely*” (*askemon*) parts is “misshapen, unseemly (not in good taste), shameful... of persons, to be indecorous (lacking propriety or good taste)” (LS 127).
  3. Paul’s point: Human reason may conclude that a member of the church is feeble, unnecessary and without value if they do not have the abilities or gifts that I have. Paul’s point continues to be that the body is ONE and as a unit, all are needed no matter how insignificant and weak one may seem.
- K. *“Whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked”* (12:24).
1. Those who are “*comely*” (not lacking, strong and apparently valuable) seemingly have no needs of the supposed weak members. Appearance is deceptive!
  2. *“God tempered the body together giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked.”*
    - a. To “*temper*” (*sugkerannumi*) is to “mix up with, commingle or blend with, temper by **mixing** with... to mix together, commingle... to make a mixture of both... to temper, compose... to be commingled, **blended together**... of friendships, to be formed by **close union**, to form a close friendship... of persons, to be closely attached to...” (LS 755).
    - b. The Corinthians may have viewed the gift of tongues as most prized and valuable; however, God placed it last in the list of gifts (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30). The teachers were set forth in the front of the list. The member of the body that seems to lack in gifts is actually given more abundant honor due to the “mixing and blending together” of all members. The members of the body of Christ, with their individual gifts, are depicted as being blended together in a homogenous mixture so that one could not tell the difference in one from the other.
- L. *“That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another”* (12:25).
1. The word “*schism*” (*schisma*) is “a cleft, a rent in a garment... **division of opinion**, schism (a separation or division into factions - AHD 1097)” (LS 787) (see study # 61; and # 70). Now Paul plainly states the issue. If the Corinthians would recognize God’s divine intention for gifts; i.e. to prophet all through teaching, they would be blended together as one. “*Ignorance*,” however, was currently ruling their hearts in relationship to gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:1). Rather than being one the church had “*schism*.”
  2. Each member is to rather have the “*same care one for another*.” This phrase helps us understand what type of division Paul is speaking of in its context. Apparently there were brethren who were separating themselves by gifts. The word “*care*” (*merimnao*) is “to care for, be anxious about, **think earnestly upon**, scan minutely... to be careful to do” (LS 499). Each individual is to think of each other, no matter what gift they possessed, the same.
  3. Why? Because as the body is one it shares in one purpose. All members of that body will do their part to see that the function of the body is accomplished. No one views any task as more or less important. Each is to do their given part.
- M. *“And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it”* (12:26).
1. When all members of the body view each other (care) as significant then this unity will hurt when one part hurts and rejoice when one member rejoices.
  2. Herein is a commentary on the oneness of the church. Unity in the body of Christ exists in perfect form when all members are following the teachings of Jesus Christ and are in agreement with its interpretation. So close are the saints that when one member suffers all

- suffer and when one member is valued highly, we are all valued. There is a sharing of the suffering and good because the members are united as one.
3. Schism has no place in such an environment (see study # 6). When brethren individualize themselves or seek a following they bring trouble to the church.
- N. *“Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof”* (12:27).
1. The Corinthian brethren were part of the body of Christ, the church, through baptism.
  2. It was not just one or two that made up the church but *“severally members thereof.”* One or two ignorant or selfish brethren within a congregation of God's people makes up a faction (see study # 6). Church members are blended together as one and they do all things for the benefit of the one body rather than for their self.
- O. *“And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues”* (12:28).
1. Paul, once again, uses the phrase God hath *“set....”* The meaning of this word was examined in 12:18; i.e., “put, place... to put or plant it in his heart... to deposit... to place to account, put down, reckon” (LS 806). Here the deposit or planting is clearly identified as *“apostles, prophets...”* These gifts were distributed that the church may function according to God's standards. Note that it was the Holy Spirit that distributed the gifts and thereby we see the deity of the Holy Spirit here as he is referred to as *“God”* (see study # 68; Deity of the Holy Spirit).
  2. A closer look at the gifts mentioned here:
    - a. *“Apostles”* (*apostolos*) = “a messenger, ambassador, envoy” (LS 107). As one who represents another one government to another the apostles went forth from the kingdom of God to the world. These men represented Christ's kingdom in the world ruled by Satan (cf. Ephesians 6:20). Their work was to reveal the mind of God (cf. Ephesians 2:20; 3:5).
    - b. *“Prophets”* (*propheteia*) (cf. comments on 12:10).
    - c. *“Teachers”* (*didaskalos*) is “to teach (i.e., instruct) a person, or teach a thing” (LS 198).
    - d. *“Miracles”* (*dunamis*) (cf. comments on 12:10).
    - e. *“Gifts of healings”* (*iama*) (cf. comments on 12:9).
    - f. *“Helps”* (*antilepsis*) is “One who aids, assists, or helps” (Moulton 33). This same Greek word is used at Luke 1:54 to illustrate the spiritual aid God grants to man for salvation through the blood of Christ. The word is also used at Acts 20:35 to denote financial aid granted to the needy. It is an apparent gift to aid one spiritually and financially.
    - g. *“Governments”* (*kubernesis*) is “to act as pilot or helmsman... used metaphorically as to guide, govern” (LS 454). The governing gift may very well be the elder or bishop Paul had in mind.
    - h. *“Divers kinds of tongues”* (*gene glosson*) different tongues for different nationalities (cf. 12:10).
- P. *“Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?”* (12:29-30).
1. The answer to these rhetorical questions is no. God has, through the Holy Spirit, distributed various gifts to individuals *“as he will”* or as *“it pleased him”* (1 Corinthians 12:11, 18). The function of these gifts was to produce faith, edify, and unify the body as a whole (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:17-18).
  2. If all people were apostles how would the church function? If all people were miraculous healers how would the church be one in purpose? If all spoke in tongues where would the interpretation be? We need each other in the church!
- Q. *“But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you”* (12:31).
1. The word *“desire”* explains the Corinthian problem. Their desire was for certain gifts not that all may profit in the one body of Christ but rather that they may gain personal or individual profit.
  2. Noticeably this verse helps us understand that though each member had gifts that differed from another and all were necessary, all were not equal. There were *“greater gifts.”* Paul list the greater gifts in order when he said, *“first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers...”* (1

Corinthians 12:28). Those who had the gift of teaching divine revelation were greater because they delivered information that was of utmost importance to the salvation of souls that all could hear and understand.

3. Paul concludes saying, “*and moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.*” The way of love is the “*greatest*” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

## Synopsis of I Corinthians 12

Another problem in the church of Corinth is introduced in chapter 12. We do not see the accusations until chapter 14; however, the exposed Biblical facts, regarding spiritual gifts, are first given. Paul begins by setting forth facts regarding the purpose of miracles. First, God alone is deity and so proves by His servants performing miracles in His name (cf. Isaiah 46:9-10; 1 Corinthians 12:1-2). Secondly, spiritual gifts are designed to promote unity in the body of Christ, the church (1 Corinthians 12:12-27). As there is one God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and church even so the members of the body must be one in purpose. Other objectives of miracles are addressed elsewhere (i.e., confirmation of truth [Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:3-4] and edification [1 Corinthians 14:12, 31]) (see study # 69; The Purpose of Miracles). Paul's objective, at this point of the study, was to get the attention of certain erring Corinthian Christians away from themselves and back on the church as a whole. When one looks to self importance and self opinions the end result is a faction rather than unity (see 1 Corinthians 12:25) (see study # 61). Apparently there were Christians in the church at Corinth separating from each other due to the specific gift they possessed. Said separations were not healthy for the church and identified as a “*schism*” (1 Corinthians 12:25). Those who had participated in this disorder were “ignorant” in relation to the function and objective of gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:1).

1 Corinthians 12 list thirteen spiritual gifts. The focus of this chapter is to expose the unifying effects of spiritual gifts. Christians are “*baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free...*” (1 Corinthians 12:13). This one body is the church (1 Corinthians 12:27-28 compared to Ephesians 1:22-23). Though by human reasoning men may judge certain members of the body of Christ as lesser in regards to a specific spiritual gift, God reveals that all are equally significant. Rather than fussing over who has the more **desired** gift, the brethren in Corinth needed to see that they were all to use their distributed gift for the betterment of all (1 Corinthians 12:7, 31). Chapter 12 is followed by chapter 13; the chapter of love. If only the Corinthians could open their minds to the function of the spiritual gifts the church would be unified. At this point; however, they lacked love for one another in relation to these gifts.

## Chapter 13

### Prelude

The problem revolving around spiritual gifts, though not precisely identified to this point, is apparent. The Corinthians were elevating gifts and individuals who possessed certain gifts above others. Any time an individual or a group of individuals separate themselves from the whole body there will be trouble in the church (see 1 Corinthians 12:14). Eventually such selfish ambition will lead to schism in the body (1 Corinthians 12:25).

The objective of 1 Corinthians 12 is to identify the gifts and their purposes. The fundamental objective of gifts were to “*profit all*” (1 Corinthians 12:7). Those Corinthians who did not approach spiritual gifts from this perspective had lost sight of their identity within the church. Paul reminds the Corinthians that they were added to the church through baptism for the forgiveness of their sins (1 Corinthians 12:13). When one is baptized into the one body of Christ (the church) they are no longer many but one (in purpose and identity) (1 Corinthians 12:27). To divide along lines of gifts goes against God's divine will for gifts. All things done must take into consideration the welfare of the body that the saint is a part of. Things done contrary to the one body are not healthy for the body as a whole (see 1 Corinthians 12:25). To do things for reasons other than profiting the whole body is to be ignorant, selfish and lack love for other parts of the body (1 Corinthians 12:1).

**I. Without love, gifts were useless (13:1-3):**

**A.** *“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become a sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal”* (13:1).

1. Paul speaks of tongues first to illustrate the inverted level of importance and the apparent interest the Corinthians had in this spiritual gift. The word *“tongues”* (*glossa*) is defined as “a tongue, language” (LS 166). The languages of men varies from race to race (cf. comments on 1 Corinthians 12:10). The language of angels is clear communication as well (cf. Genesis 16:7ff).

2. Without love being the motivation for speaking in tongues the gift would be useless. When one, through ignorance, separates from the body they were baptized into so that they may form a schism based upon an individual gift they *“have not love”* (see 1 Corinthians 12:1, 25, 31).

a. Love (*agape*) is defined as “brotherly love, charity; the love of God for man and of man for God, N.T.” (LS 4).

b. The apostle John gives us clear commentary on what this love is (cf. John 15:12ff). John said, *“God is love”* (1 John 4:8, 16). God’s love is made manifest in the fact that He sent His Son, Jesus, for the propitiation of our sins (1 John 3:16, 4:10). Christians are commanded to love as God loves (1 John 4:17). God loved in that he provided a way for man to rid himself of sin. Christians are to care for brethren in such a way that helps them get rid of the sin in their lives (cf. Acts 20:26). The Corinthians had this opportunity by delivering the gospel of our salvation. Secondly, God cares for the physical well being of His people and so must we (1 John 3:17). The prophet Isaiah records, *“In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old”* (Isaiah 63:9 see also Exodus 19:4) (see study # 71; Bible Love).

3. The Corinthians, who practiced their spiritual gifts without this love as its motivation, were as a *“sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.”*

a. *“Sounding”* (*echeo*) is “to sound, often of metal...of the grasshopper, to chirp... to let it sound” (LS 356). The *“brass”* (*chalkos*) is defined as “called in reference to its color. Copper was the first metal wrought for use... hence *chalkos* came to be used for metal in general; and, when men learnt to work iron, chalkos was used for *sideros*, and *chalkeus* came to mean a blacksmith. *Chalkos* also meant bronze (i.e., copper alloyed with tin), not brass (i.e., copper alloyed with zinc, which was a later invention), and this was its sense when applied to arms” (LS 881). Paul’s use of a *“sounding brass”* is obviously intended to mean an annoying or unnatural sound made with the metal.

b. *“Clanging”* (*alalazo*) is to “raise the war-cry, to shout the shout of victory... to cry or shout aloud...” (LS 32). “To utter other **loud sounds**; to wail, to tinkle, ring” (Moulton 14). The *“cymbal”* (*kumbalon*) is “a cymbal” (LS 456) (“One of a pair of concave brass plates that are struck together as percussion instruments” AHD 360). Again, the idea is an annoying loud sound that disturbs the peace.

4. In an orchestra, a percussion instrument serves its purpose among the strings, woodwinds, and brass instruments. Take the percussion or brass (trombone or French horn) out and the loud noise is useless. Likewise, one that speaks tongues that others do not understand, is useless and lacks love. If the tongues speaker properly understood the function of the tongues, out of love, he would speak with an interpreter for the purpose of edifying all hearers (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:12). Paul’s point is that the single instrument or gift can only serve its designed purpose when acting together with the whole body (see 1 Corinthians 12:14).

**B.** *“And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing”* (13:2).

1. If love (a care and concern for my brother’s physical and spiritual wellbeing) is not the motivation for the Corinthians exercising their gifts then their efforts amount to *“nothing.”* The word *“nothing”* (*oudeis*) is “naught, good for naught... to be good for nothing... being nobodies... to make of no account” (LS 576).

2. The spiritual gifts of prophecy, knowledge, and faith were discussed in 12:8-10. As a single instrument is good for nothing, so the one who exercises gifts for a single motivation of pride. Those Corinthians who were divisive and formed schisms with the use of their gift were actually "*nothing*" though they and others thought they were something special.
- C. "*And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing*" (13:3).
  1. To "*bestow*" (*psomizo*) is to "employ in feeding others... to feed with sops or tid-bits" (LS 903). What if I do such a good work without love as its motivation? Am I doing this to be recognized by others as generous rather than doing it because I see a real need? Is my personality such as that of needing a pat on the back for all the good works I do? There is obviously wrong with such pictures of man.
  2. "*If I give my body to be burned*" through persecution in order that I may bring myself glory it prophets me nothing. Here were brethren who may have displayed a great spirit of conviction and zeal yet they lacked love and thereby their profit is "*nothing*" in relation to God's will to profit the whole church.
  3. When spiritual and physical benevolence is achieved without love it profits nothing in relationship to the church as a whole (1 Corinthians 12:7).

## II. Sixteen Character traits of Love (13:4-8)

- A. "*Love suffereth long*" (13:4). "*Suffers long*" (*makrothumeo*) = "to be longsuffering (Patiently enduring wrongs or difficulties" {AHD 742})" (LS 485). This word is found nine times in the New Testament and generally means to be patient with those in error as the Lord is with us (2 Peter 3:9). The one who truly loves will not just give up on a brother who is in sin but rather is willing to study about the matter.
- B. Love "*is kind*" (13:4). "*Kind*" (*chresteuomai*) is "to be good and kind" (LS 895). "Friendly, generous, or warmhearted nature... showing sympathy or understanding" (AHD 701). Jehovah God is a loving and kind God (cf. Jeremiah 9:23ff). Such goodness and kindness led to sending His Son Jesus into the world that we might have the opportunity to be saved from our sin (John 3:16). Christians are commanded to be just as kind and good. Think about the souls and well being of others.
- C. "*Love envieth not*" (13:4). The word "*envieth*" (*zeloo*) = "to rival, vie with, emulate... in bad sense, to be jealous of, envy. To esteem or pronounce happy, admire, praise" (LS 344). This word describes the condition of the Corinthian brethren. They were rivals and jealous of each other in the realm of spiritual gifts. Such conduct revealed their true lack of love for brethren and cause for the existing schisms (1 Corinthians 1:10; 11:18; 12:25). Real love does not envy others but it rejoices when others rejoice and hurts when brethren hurt (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:26).
- D. "*Love vaunteth not itself*" (13:4). To "*vaunt*" (*perpereuomai*) is to "boast or vaunt oneself" (LS 635). A Christian who truly loves his fellow brother will not boast or vaunt himself above his brother. All the Christian's efforts are in elevating the brother rather than self (cf. Philipians 2:3). The Corinthian that boasted of his abilities in the area of tongue speaking lacked love (a true care and concern for his brother's physical and spiritual well being). All were to open their eyes and note these truths. Those who formed parties based upon gifts did not truly love the Lord.
- E. Love "*is not puffed up*" (13:4). To be "*puffed up*" (*phusioo*) is to be "puffed up" (LS 877); "inflated with pride, to be proud, vain, arrogant" (Moulton 431). When one views his brother's soul with great value and is desirous to do any and all things to benefit that brother, where is the room for arrogance and inflated pride? The tongue speaking Corinthians apparently felt that they were superior in some way to a brother that did not have this ability (cf. Proverbs 6:16-19). When the church acts as one there is no place for a part of the whole to act as though it were more significant than the other parts (see 1 Corinthians 12:21ff).
- F. Love "*does not behave itself unseemly*" (13:5). The phrase "*behave itself unseemly*" is one Greek word (*aschemoneo*) meaning "to disgrace oneself, to be put to shame" (LS 127). What brings shame and disgrace to someone? The spirit of pride, self importance, and schisms in the realm of gifts certainly would be disgraceful because such attitudes are antithetical to gifts in the first place.

- G. Love “*seeks not its own*” (13:5). To “*seek*” (*zeteo*) is to “to search after, search out... to search or inquire into, investigate” (LS 344). The word “*own*” (*heautou*) is “of himself, herself, itself, etc.; itself by itself, absolutely” (LS 219). Here is one who seeks to please self alone. One who wants all actions to benefit self alone. One who so acts has lost sight of the whole body (1 Corinthians 12:13-14). Again, such a disposition is antithetical to the love of God and is therefore against the love of a Christian.
- H. Love “*is not provoked*” (13:5). To be “*provoked*” (*paroxuno*) is to be “to urge, prick or spur on, stimulate... to anger, provoke, irritate, exasperate” (LS 610). What kind of brother would purposely irritate or exasperate another brother? The answer is, one who does not truly love (have a care and concern for a brother’s physical and spiritual well being). Again, what kind of brother would allow himself to be irritated or exasperated at another brother? Truly love suffers long!
- I. Love “*taketh not account of evil*” (13:5). The phrase, “*does not reckon* (taketh not account)” (*logizetai*) is to “count, reckon, calculate, compute... to set down to one’s account, charge to one... to conclude by reasoning, infer that a thing is...” (LS 476). Here is the brother who is quick to point a finger at another in the body and blame them for some wrong. Christians are to be careful not to make quick judgments about their brethren. We ought to think the very best of our brethren until proven guilty. Those brethren who have repented of sins committed are to be forgiven rather than another keeping a ledger of other's sins.
- J. Love “*rejoiceth not in unrighteousness*” (13:6). That which brings me joy is the faith of my brethren (cf. 2 John 4; 3 John 4). One who truly loves will find no joy in another Christian falling from grace.
- K. Love “*rejoices with truth*” (13:6). Truth brings true joy to the man and woman who loves his brethren and works to promote unity for the betterment of the whole body.
- L. Love “*bears all things*” (13:7). To “*bear*” (*stego*) is to “to cover closely, so as to keep water either out or in: to keep water out, to keep off rain from oneself... to keep off, fend off weapons... later, to bear up against, endure... to contain oneself, hold out... generally to contain” (LS 743). When a brother sins against me, my love will not permit me to let the world know of the matter but to work the sin out with my brother and thereby contain the matter. A brother who continues in his error and even teaches it; however, must be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18).
- M. Love “*believes all things*” (13:7). Until proven wrong, a loving brother gives one who is at fault the benefit of the doubt. This does not state that the loving brother is to be gullible nor foolish but that we simply hear, and believe one unless two witnesses expose otherwise (2 Corinthians 13:1). I am to always believe and hope the best for my brethren in the body of Christ.
- N. Love “*hopes all things*” (13:7). To “*hope*” (*elpizo*) is to “hope for, look for, expect” (LS 251). It is the desire and expectation of one who truly loves to think the best of a brother before we ascribe evil and sin to one.
- O. Love “*endures all things*” (13:7). To “*endure*” (*hupomeno*) is to “stay behind, survive... to await another, to await his attack, bide the onset... to abide their presence... to be patient under, abide patiently, submit to... to stand one’s ground, stand firm... endure patiently... to submit or dare to do a thing” (LS 845). The Christian who loves the souls of his brethren will “*endure*.” Such a one will take the wrongs of others patiently while standing his or her ground in discussion about a matter. The attributes of love revealed here help us identify those who are causing the true schisms in the church. Those who are overzealous spiritual bullies who seek to cause all to conform to their individuality and personal convictions are guilty of schisms in the body. The Corinthian brethren who formed factions in the church tried their hand at this and Paul exposes them. Let truth and the unity of the church be the motivating factor that moves our zeal.
- P. “*Love never faileth*.” (13:8). To “*fail*” (*ekpipto*) is to “depart from, digress... to fall off, **come to naught**” (LS 242). There appears to be a play on words here. Love is sandwiched in between gifts. Those who do not perform actions within the church that are motivated by love for brethren are identified as those who are “*nothing*” (i.e., good for nothing / see 1Corinthians 13:1-3). While the man or woman who seeks to form schisms in the church, due to a lack of understanding of God's purpose for gifts, comes to nothingness this is not the case with love. Schisms will have their doom and end yet love is eternal.

- Q. The apostle John said, “*but whosoever keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected*” (1 John 2:5). The love of God is a care and concern for the spiritual well being of His creation. Whenever I keep God’s commandments by loving my own soul and the soul of brethren, “*verily hath the love of God been perfected.*” The word “*perfected*” is in the perfect tense which indicates the present state of one based on past actions. I am now perfect (without the guilt and due punishment of sin) because I previously confessed those sins in a spirit of humility unto God and asked for forgiveness (cf. 1 John 1:9). As long as I have this type of character, I will not “*fail*” (depart or digress from truth and come to naught). The ultimate failure in life is to depart and digress from truth. As long as the Christian exercises a disposition of genuine care and concern for brethren our efforts will not come to naught!

### III. Love and Spiritual gifts contrasted (13:8)

- A. “... *but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away*” (13:8).
1. Note that the same three gifts were mentioned at the beginning of this chapter (see 1 Corinthians 13:1-3). Sandwiched in between these gifts (mentioned here again) is love. The obvious conclusion is that **these three gifts stand as a representation of gifts as a whole**. Gifts, as a whole, will one day “*be done away*” with.
  2. The phrase “*they shall be done away*” is one word in the Greek (*katargethesontai*) (“to be abolished, cease” {LS 413}). Prophecies, and gifts as a whole, will one day be abolished and cease to exist. The verb *katargethesontai* is future tense (Friberg 538) indicating **the act will happen at a later date**. At some point in the future gifts given by the Holy Spirit to man will be abolished or cease to happen.
  3. Tongues shall “*cease*” (*pausontai*). The Greek verb *pausontai* is future tense as well. The word “*cease*” means “causal, to make to cease: of persons, to bring to an end, check, make an end of” (LS 614). **Tongues will one day in the future cease to exist**.
  4. “*Knowledge*” shall be “*done away*” (*argethesetai*). Again, the Greek verb *argethesetai* (NM text 693), *katargethesontai* is future tense (Friberg 538).
  5. The natural question would be when will prophecies, tongues, and knowledge (i.e., gifts) be abolished or cease to exist?
- B. “*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part*” (13:9).
1. The word “*for*” naturally brings this thought along as a representation of the **present time** as opposed to what shall take place in **the future**. Do not lose sight of the fact that Paul is explaining to the Corinthians the fact that gifts will one day, in the future, come to an end. The immediate purpose of this argument is to show the Corinthians the immediate value of gifts so that they will stop using gifts for the wrong reasons. Secondly, we have a text that explains gifts as they relate to man today (year 2011).
  2. To “*know*” (*ginosko*) is “knowledge; knowledge of an especial kind and relatively high character” (Moulton 80). The word is used of the word of God at 1 Timothy 6:20 where Paul said, “*O Timothy, guard that which is committed unto thee, turning away from the profane babblings and oppositions of the knowledge which is falsely so called.*” The obvious conclusion is that some were given the gift of knowledge whereas others had to gain knowledge of truth through actual study. “*Prophecy*” is “the gift of expounding scripture, of speaking and preaching” (LS 704). The apostle Peter explains the process at 2 Peter 1:19-21.
  3. Both **knowledge and prophecy** have to do with divine revelation, the word of God, truth or gospel of Jesus Christ. It is no coincidence that Paul used the three gifts of knowledge, prophecy, and tongues due to their direct relationship with the gospel message and the coming to an end of gifts. The truth (gospel), was at the present time possessed by the Corinthians and the world in an “*in part*” (*ek meros*) manner. The meaning of *ek meros* is “a part, share... one’s portion, heritage, lot... **a part, as opposed to the whole**” (LS 499). Clearly Paul proclaims to the Corinthian brethren the relationship between inspired knowledge and prophecy to the “*once for all*” delivered gospel (Jude 3).
    - a. Piece by piece and bit by bit the gospel of Jesus Christ was being revealed by the aid of spiritual gifts.



- b. An example of this would be the full disclosure of the Gentiles' part in the kingdom of God (see Acts 10:13-16, 34-35).
- c. The information of 1 Corinthians 14-16 illustrate this point. **Paul continues to add to divine revelation.** As new revelation was being proclaimed (*ek meros*) it was being confirmed by the signs that followed (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:3-4). Men and women were being edified (1 Corinthians 14:12) and God was revealed as the one true deity (Isaiah 46:9-10) all of which promoted unity in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).
- d. We naturally conclude that there is a direct correlation between spiritual gifts and the process of divine revelation. The gifts confirmed the reality and validity of any new revelation (see study # 69). The natural conclusion would thereby be that when all revelation was completed gifts would come to an end (they would no longer be needed).
- e. **Consider this equation:** Note that when Revelation was made complete there would be no more need for gifts.

**Now** (present day as Paul wrote to the Corinthians) = **(Gifts + Revelation) = in part**

**Then** (a time in the future when all revelation had been revealed) = **(Revelation) = Perfect or Complete**

- C. *“But when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away”* (13:10).
  - 1. We have identified the *ek meros* (“*in part*”) to be the ongoing revealing of the word of God in its incomplete stage and thereby directly associated with gifts. Spiritual gifts are connected to the “*in part*” by establishing divine revelation as divine truth.
  - 2. There will be a time in the future (cf. Friberg 538) when the “*in part*” shall be “*done away*” (*katargethesontai*) (“to be abolished, cease” {LS 413}). As the gifts were identified as being abolished in the future at 1 Corinthians 13:8 now we find a direct correlation being drawn between the “*in part*” and gifts. Divine revelation was being delivered by gifts and this will be “*done away*” when “*that which is perfect is come.*” Now we have the answer to our question; i.e., when will spiritual gifts cease to exist:
  - 3. When will spiritual gifts end? Paul said, “*when that which is perfect is come.*”
    - a. What is “*that which is perfect?*” The word “*perfect*” (*teleios*) is “having reached its end, finished, complete... perfectly, absolutely, thoroughly” (LS 797).
    - b. Notice the correlation between *ek meros* (in part or portion) and *teleios* (complete). Seeing that there is a direct correlation between in part and perfect the figures are directed at truth. Truth is currently (during the days of Paul writing the Corinthians) in part (not whole yet). When truth is wholly delivered it will be considered “*perfect*” (i.e., finished and complete). When the gospel of Jesus Christ has been completed and finished gifts will come to an end. Gifts would end because their objective was to confirm the words spoken by the one having the gift as of divine origin (Mark 16:20).
    - c. Brethren would be edified in the complete word when it was completed (see 2 Timothy 3:16-17). All would see the reality of Jehovah God through the completed divine revelation. There would be no need for any more confirming spiritual gifts because the word of God would be complete. Unity is achieved by the completed revelation. Anyone adding to divine revelation, after it had been completed, were not doing so by the authority of Jehovah God (see both Mosaic and Law of Christ at Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Revelation 22:18).

**IV. Paul uses two illustrations to prove that Spiritual gifts would cease when God’s completed revelation had been revealed (13:11-13)**

- A. *“When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things”* (13:11).
  - 1. The first illustration compares childhood to adulthood. Childhood would be likened unto the age of gifts. Children need help in the early days of life that they may grow up to be men and women (Children do not know many things and must be taught). Likewise, the infant church

needed divine guidance and help as they grew spiritually. Miracles gave the infant church that spiritual sustenance that confirmed truths and established faith in their minds.

2. Adulthood is compared to a time in the future when man would not need a guiding hand to teach them the difference between right and wrong and so forth. As adults, the people of God would have the completed revelation at their disposal. All that God intended for man to know was given and they would be able to spiritually sustain themselves without the aid of gifts. Adults faith and conviction is formed through the completed revelation of God. Such individuals have no need for a miracle to convince them of the truths that have already been delivered.
- B.** *“For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known”* (13:12).
1. *“Now”* represents the days of the *ek meros* (partial revelation confirmed by spiritual gifts). Paul compares these days as seeing in a *“mirror darkly.”* The word *“darkly”* (*ainigma*) is “a dark saying, riddle, to propose a riddle” (LS 21). The word dark means “not easily understood; hard to make clear; obscure” (Webster’s New World College Dictionary pg. 367). The word riddle is “any puzzling, perplexing, or enigmatic saying; enigma” (ibid. pg. 1233). Because many of the pieces of divine revelation had not been exposed, Christians could not fully understand God’s will for them. People would not be able to fully know truth until all was delivered. When a puzzle has all of its pieces the picture is clear and there are no mysteries. The *“now”* in this illustration represents a time of obscure and unclear direction for people.
  2. The *“but then”* statement is in contrast with the *“now.”* *“But then”* equals the days of the *teleios* (complete revelation) and the *“now”* represents the *ek meros* (partial revelation being revealed by spiritual gifts).
  3. *“Now”* (days of incomplete revelation) we cannot fully understand *“but then”* we shall fully know! Here is an excellent verse that reveals the fact that Christians living today can and must know all revealed truth (see study # 72; Can we Know ALL the Truth?).
- C.** *“But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three: and the greatest of these is love”* (13:13).
1. The word *“abideth”* helps us identify the *“but now”* statement. Up to this point in our study, the *“now”* represents the days of *ek meros* (partial revelation in the process of becoming complete through spiritual gifts).
  2. The word *“abide”* (*meno*) is “to stay, stand fast, abide... to stay at home, stay where one is, not stir...” (LS 498). Though spiritual gifts will pass away, *“faith, hope and love”* will remain.
  3. Faith is produced by the word of God (Romans 10:17). As divine revelation is revealed, faith continues to be produced. A consequence of this faith is *“hope.”* One is confident, through divine revelation, that a heavenly home awaits the faithful (cf. 1 John 2:25; 4:13). Faith and hope therefore abide along with love (a care and concern for the physical and spiritual well being of others).
  4. Paul states; however, that love is greater than faith and hope. Why?
    - a. The word *“greater”* (*meizon*) is “greater” (Moulton 261). This indicates the level of importance in relation to faith and hope.
    - b. Clearly the reason that love is greater than faith and hope is that love is an act of the reality of one’s faith and hope. Love acts for the betterment of others. One only looks to the betterment, both physical and spiritual, of others because of an acceptance of the reality of Jehovah God.

### Synopsis of I Corinthians 13

Gifts without love were truly worthless. When an action has a specified purpose and that purpose is not met what good is the action? Even so, gifts exercised without the salvation (profit) of the souls of other people as its motivation was truly useless. There would come a day, Paul explains, when gifts would be done away with; however, love will always remain. Gifts were never intended to continue on throughout time. Love; however, last forever. The Corinthians needed to learn their true purpose as God’s people and put away their childish attitudes toward the gifts.

When the completed revelation of God had come, gifts would forever be gone (1 Corinthians 13:9-10). Where would this leave the Corinthians? A proper view toward the gifts would leave them in a state of continuation. Gifts would end and Christians would continue to teach out of the same motivation and love for the souls of men (to profit all). If, however, an individual only performs gifts for selfish purposes, when the gift is gone where would that leave this person? Truly love is to be the motivating factor in every Christian's life.

All Christians today ought to take note that the revelation of God is now complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19). There are absolutely no reasons for the Holy Spirit to distribute gifts of prophecy, knowledge, tongues and so forth. Those who claim to have gifts today are lying and the truth is not in them. While there is no doubt God continues to work in men's lives through providence there is equally no doubt that no man is being moved by the Holy Spirit to perform miracles.

## Chapter 14

The apostle Paul encourages the Corinthian brethren to open their eyes to the damage they were causing within the local church. Some brethren were placing greater emphasis on the gift of speaking in tongues and many were elevating the tongue speaker above others. The very gifts that they used to divide themselves over would one day cease to exist. The Corinthians needed to re-examine their spiritual priorities. Now was the time to recalibrate their direction and service to the Lord. Paul instructs the Corinthians to do all things through love which in turn will bring about the greatest effects of the gifts they possessed.

### I. The superiority of the gift of prophecy (14:1-25):

#### A. *"Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy"* (14:1).

1. Chapter 13 exposed a flaw in the Corinthians who exercised their Holy Spirit given gifts without love (care and concern for others). Those who performed gifts for reasons other than to profit all were doing so without God's seal of approval (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). Secondly, they needed to understand that gifts would cease to exist when the completed revelation of God was made known. This being the case they were to conduct themselves presently in a spirit of love toward others. Gifts would one day end yet love abides eternally (1 Corinthians 13:8, 13).
2. Paul now admonishes the Corinthian brethren to pursue love; however, this pursuit is not to be to the exclusion of gifts. Consider the Bible in Basic English's wording of 1 Corinthians 14:1, "*Go after love; still desiring to have the things which the Spirit gives, but most of all that you may have the prophet's power.*" While love is the "*greatest*" due to its eternal nature Paul nonetheless continues to encourage the Corinthians to pursue gifts due to the fact that revelation had not yet been finished or completed.
3. Gifts served their purpose as stated in the synopsis of I Corinthians 13. Though Paul commands that the Corinthians "*desire earnestly spiritual gifts,*" we understand that **this is not a command for NT Christians today** due to the completion of divine revelation (see study # 69). The Corinthians lived in the "now" and we live in the "then" (days of perfect or completed revelation).
4. Paul introduces the superiority of prophecy by saying that they should desire "*prophecy.*" The word "*prophecy*" is defined as "the gift of interpreting the will of the gods,... in N.T., the gift of expounding scripture, of speaking and preaching" (LS 704). The apostle Peter defines prophecy as men being miraculously "*moved*" by God to speak divine revelation (see 2 Peter 1:19-21). Verse two gives the reason for such a desire.

#### B. *"For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God; for no man understandeth; but in the spirit he speaketh mysteries"* (14:2).

1. Again, the word "*tongue*" (*glossa*) is defined as "a tongue, language" (LS 166). One who had the gift of speaking another language that others did not understand without an interpreter was communing only with God. To speak in tongues with no interpreter would be to lack love and display a spirit of selfishness, arrogance, and desire to be seen of men as great (glory of men).

It comes to be somewhat fascinating to note that apparently these Corinthians were able to perform these Holy Spirit given gifts even when done with a wrong attitude. The gift, in other words, did not depend upon their faith. Many today claim that if you cannot speak in tongues or perform miracles then your faith must be little; however, we see here that these brethren performed gifts in ways that God did not approve. Apparently once one had the gift they were at liberty to use the gift as they judged fit. Many Corinthians judgment of their gifts were wrong.

2. *“But in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”* As one is guided by the Holy Spirit to perform the gift of tongues (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:11) he speaks *“mysteries.”* To speak a *“mystery”* (*mysterion*) is “a mystery or secret doctrine; any mystery or secret... mystic implements, in N.T. a mystery, a divine secret, something above human intelligence” (LS 523). The doctrines taught by the unknown tongue were without benefit to the hearer and thereby was a message of mystery or divine secret. God never intended for some to have truth and others not to have it as though there were “divine secrets” that only some could have. The gospel is indeed for all as we sing (see study # 11).
- C. *“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation”* (14:3).
1. Note the word, *“But”* as it places prophecy in contrast to speaking in tongues that no one understands. Paul had said that the Corinthians ought to, *“Desire earnestly the greater gifts...”* (1 Corinthians 12:31). The desired greater gift is now revealed to be that of prophecy. Paul now explains why prophecy is a greater gift than speaking in tongues.
  2. Those who prophecy do three things that benefit or profit all (again, note 1 Corinthians 12:7):
    - a. **First**, those who prophecy speak *“edification”* unto men. The Greek word for edification is *oikodome* and it means, “A building or structure” (LS 546). “A builder, architect... to build a house; to build... to repair... to advance a person’s spiritual condition, to edify... a spiritual structure, as instanced in the Christian body... religious advancement” (Moulton 284). “The act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness; with a gen. Of the person whose growth is furthered...” (Thayer 440). When a man or woman prophesied they promoted spiritual growth and advancement of others (an act of love).
    - b. **Secondly**, the prophet brought *“exhortation”* to his hearers. The Greek word for exhortation is *paraklesis* which is defined as “a calling to one’s aid, summons... a calling upon, appealing, to one; entreaty, deprecation, an exhortation, address, encouragement” (LS 597). “Encouragement” (Thayer 483). Consider the use of *paraklesis* in Romans 15:4; 2 Corinthians 7:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 etc. Interestingly, the apostle John used the Greek word *parakletos* being transliterated *“Advocate”* to describe the merciful work of Jesus in the forgiveness of our sins (1 John 2:1). Moulton defines the Greek word as “instruction... a persuader, one who incites others... cheering and supporting influence” (Moulton 303). When a prophet spoke divine revelation these words helped, aided, encouraged, and instructed people. Again, such an act is a display of love because it illustrates care and concern for people's spiritual well being.
    - c. **Thirdly**, the prophets words were *“consolation.”* The Greek word for consolation is *paramuthia* which means “Any address, whether made for the purpose of persuading, or of arousing and stimulating, or of calming and consoling; i.e. consolation, comfort: 1 Corinthians 14:3” (Thayer 485). “An address, exhortation... an assuagement (to make less burdensome or painful), abatement...” (LS 600). Consolation are words that sooth a heavy burden or pain. Prophecy did this for people and thereby it was an act of love.
    - d. The content of all gospel preaching today must be done so that brethren are edified, exhorted, and consoled (see study # 14).
- D. *“He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church”* (14:4).
1. Paul is building a case for the superiority of prophecy. Prophecy provides edification, exhortation, and consolation not only to the individual performing it but to the church.
  2. The Corinthians were to learn that gifts were designed for the profit of all in the church (1 Corinthians 12:7). Those with gifts were to promote unity and personal growth for the whole

body. When they came to this understanding then they would understand why the gift of prophecy was superior to the tongue speaker who had no interpreter. While the appearance of speaking in tongues must have been impressive it actually served little to no purpose as far as the entire body was concerned.

- E. *“Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophecy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying”* (14:5).
1. This verse indicates the overall interest in the Corinthians wanting to speak in tongues. Paul’s statement helps us understand that the gift of speaking tongues was not to be dismissed; however, it needed to be placed in a proper perspective within the minds of the Corinthian Christians.
  2. Prophecy is a **greater gift** due to the fact that the church, as a whole, is edified where as a tongue without an interpreter benefits no one except one who understands the language being spoken (see 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1). The objective of tongues was two fold. First, it would no doubt create a sense of awe when the one heard a man speak in a language he had no former training in. Secondly, the people who actually spoke the language of the miraculous tongue would be benefited (edified, exhorted, and consoled) yet no one else. The tongues, without interpreters, benefited only those who understood the language spoken.
  3. When tongue speaking occurred with interpretation, it was on par with prophecy. A parallel today would be like a man standing before an English speaking congregation and teaching a class using Spanish. While it may sound neat to hear another language the English speaking brethren would not be edified, exhorted, and consoled. What purpose then would the Spanish speaking brother serve?
- F. *“But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophesying, or of teaching?”* (14:6).
1. *“Profit”* to the entire body of Christ continues to be the overall objective of gifts (see 1 Corinthians 12:7). Note that the profit one receives from gifts is understanding of spiritual matters brought about by tongues, knowledge, prophesy, and teaching all of which equals *“revelation.”* Gifts as a whole are directly associated with revelation (see study # 69). This is important to understand because Paul said that these gifts would one day in the future be done away with (see chapter 13). Complete revelation is now revealed and thereby there is no need for spiritual gifts such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, performing various miracles and so forth. Those today who claim to have the power of the Holy Spirit to do these miraculous gifts are lying (see study # 69).
  2. Paul reasons with the Corinthians: If the apostle Paul came and spoke to you Corinthians in a language that no one understood and no interpreter was present, where would be the edification, exhortation and consolation? Furthermore where would be the authentication of the deity of God and His word if no one understands what you are saying? No *“profit”* occurs unless that which is spoken is understandable! This illustrates a fact. The word of God is designed to be understood (see study # 11 and # 72).
- G. *“Even things without life, giving a voice, whether pipe or harp, if they give not a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain voice, who shall prepare himself for war?”* (14:7-8).
1. This appears to be commentary on 1 Corinthians 13:1. Without a *“distinction in the sounds”* the instrument will only give off un-comprehended sounds.
  2. The ear of an army is trained to react to certain blast of the trumpet; however, if the trumpet sounds in unfamiliar tunes, *“who shall prepare himself for war?”*
  3. *“So also ye, unless ye utter by the tongue speech easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? For ye will be speaking into the air”* (14:9). Like an unfamiliar sound of an instrument so the tongue speaker who speaks an unfamiliar language. No one will understand and no one can possibly respond. Such efforts are likened unto throwing words into the air and letting them drift away. No one can grasp these words and thereby they benefit no one.

- H. *“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification. If then I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh will be a barbarian unto me”* (14:10-11).
1. The word “*voices*” (*phone*) is “a sound, tone, properly the sound of the voice, mostly of men... to utter an articulate sound... any articulate sound as opposed to inarticulate.... The faculty of speech, discourse... language... **a kind of language, dialect**” (LS 877).
  2. The word dialect and articulate sounds of the voice fit well here. Throughout the world there are various dialects of language that benefit those who comprehend and speak that language. Each voice is significant in their respective societies.
  3. If, however, one comes from another part of the world speaking a different dialect than I am familiar with it shall prophet me nothing.
  4. The person would sound as a “*barbarian*” to me and I to he. The word “*barbarian*” (*barbaros*) is defined as “not Greek, **foreign**, originally all that were not Greeks, specially the Medes and Persians... so the Hebrews called the rest of mankind Gentiles. From the Augustan age however the name was given by the Romans to all tribes which had no Greek or Roman accomplishments” (LS 146). Again, if I attempt to preach the gospel in English to a Spanish only speaking man he will gain absolutely no insight or understanding of the word of God through my English.
- I. *“So also ye, since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church”* (14:12).
1. The issues comes to be more and more clear. The Corinthians were clearly “*zealous of spiritual gifts*.” Paul was not trying to kill this zeal but rather redirect the Corinthian's objective with gifts. The problem existed in their approach and use of the gifts. Paul states clearly the objective of these gifts by saying, “*seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church*” (again, this is a reiteration of the 1 Corinthians 12:7 statement).
  2. Here we find love being the motivating factor for all. A love for man’s souls is to be our motivation to preach and teach. The one with the gift of tongues should stop and ask themselves, “Am I performing these tongues to spiritually edify others or to look great in the eyes of men?”
- J. *“Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret”* (14:13).
1. Apparently the tongue speaker could not always interpret what he was saying and depended upon another to do that work (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:10).
  2. Prayer was to be conducted by the tongue speaker that he may be able to interpret for the sake of edification of others. “Others” is the issue with these gifts!
- K. *“For If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful”* (14:14).
1. It is inferred that the prayer of a tongue speaker is not understood by the tongue speaker himself and no one else in such a case (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:15).
  2. In such a case, the tongue speaker is praying with his “*spirit*” (purpose dictated by understanding of truth; cf. 1 Corinthians 5:4; 6:17; 1 John 4:1, 6 etc.).
  3. The inverse of this would be that “if I pray in a tongue with understanding, my spirit prays and my understanding is fruitful.”
  4. One’s purpose or character (spirit) is not directly related to one’s understanding of truth. This verse simply proves that one may go through the motions of religious activities without understanding what he is doing and Paul calls the activity “*unfruitful*.” No matter how sincere the person praying with no understanding is; his efforts remain unfruitful. Likewise, no matter how sincere the false teacher, if his doctrine is erroneous, he remains unfruitful (see study # 7).
- L. *“What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also”* (14:15).
1. “*What is it then*” = (*ti oun estin*) (“*So what should I do*” (NICV).
  2. Rather than praying only in spirit, Paul proclaims that he should “*pray with the spirit and with the understanding*.” This verse explains a fact. My understanding of truth should be in plum with my purpose and character. Understanding and purpose are thereby connected now by the one who walks in truth and motivated by love.

3. Singing is used here as well. Singing is to be done “*with the spirit*” as well as “*with understanding*.” What purpose would singing do if I have no idea as to the meaning of my songs of praise to God? (see study # 73; Singing with an Understanding Heart)
  4. Note that this singing took place “*in the church*” (cf. context and 14:19, 23, 26). Singing took place when the saints assembled themselves together (i.e., Sunday, Monday, Wednesday... etc) (see study # 75).
- M. “*Else if thou bless with the spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the unlearned say the Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified*” (14:16-17)
1. Not only will this unknown tongue not benefit self, but anyone else hearing the praying who is “*unlearned*” in the tongue will not benefit.
  2. To say “*amen*” (*amen*) is to say, “*verily, of a truth, so be it, certainty*” (LS 43). How can the one who does not understand the language (the “*unlearned*”) say the words are ‘so be it,’ ‘of a truth’ or have ‘certainty’ of the truth thereof? Again, where is the edification? Once again this indicates a truth regarding our prayers (they should be spoken and understood in truth). We do not just utter words of no meaning or of confusion and if it were so how could anyone say “*amen*?” Our worship to God and our preaching must be done wherein all may understand and be edified, exhorted, and consoled (see study # 14 and # 75).
- N. “*I thank God, I speak with tongues more than you all: howbeit, in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I might instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue*” (14:18-19).
1. Paul was one who spoke with tongues too; however, when “*in the church*” (a phrase that indicates the whole of the brethren assembled - see 1 Corinthians 14:23) Paul’s desire was to speak words of understanding for the purpose of instructing others. Notice in these past few verses Paul speaks of events occurring, “*in the church*.” There was praying, singing, and preaching taking place “*in the church*” (see study # 75; The Worship of the Church). The thrust of our worship services to the Lord revolves around spiritual growth and understanding.
  2. Here is the real issue of gifts. Edification, exhortation and consolation (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:3) could not occur unless the instructions were given in an understandable language. Here we see a part of the work of the church revealed. We assemble to worship Jehovah God and to learn; i.e., exhort, edify, and console one another! (see study # 74; The Work of the Church). Truth can be understood alike else where would be the instruction?
- O. “*Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men*” (14:20).
1. The context of Paul’s address is to the brethren here. Christians are commanded to “*not be children in mind.*”
    - a. A “*child*” (*paidion*) is a “*little or young child*” (LS 585). Earlier Paul had said, “*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things*” (13:11). To be a “*child in mind*” is to “*think as a child.*” Solomon said, “*Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him*” (Proverbs 22:15). Paul was ready to drive this foolishness from the Corinthian brethren with a rod (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:21). The rod would be the word of God used in a way that would either drive the foolishness out of the Corinthian brethren or drive the foolish away. The obvious allusion is to the Corinthians desire to speak in tongues for selfish benefits is to be “*childlike in mind.*”
    - b. If a man spoke a tongue with no interpreter for the sake of being viewed as holier than others he was indeed being “*a child in mind.*” When grown adults exercise the mind of a child it is identified as “*malice.*”
  2. “*... yet in malice be ye babes.*” The word “*malice*” (*kakia*) means “*badness in quality; defects; cowardice, sloth; moral badness, wickedness, vice; ill-repute*” (LS 393).
    - a. The Corinthians child like behavior with the gift of tongues placed them in a classification known as defective, ill-repute and vice (an ill character or heart; corrupt habits).
    - b. The malice of the Corinthians was in the fact that some performed their gifts for show rather than for the purpose of instructing other Christians. They had a heart problem.

- c. Thought: the Corinthian's lack of understanding, regarding the purpose of spiritual gifts, led them to have a character of "*malice*." Likewise, man's lack of understanding today leads to many character flaws. If character flaws exist, it is certainly due to spiritual immaturity. With this verse then, we see that one who would say that 'one who continues to teach false doctrine cannot be labeled a "*false teacher*" (2 Peter 2:1) unless he has a character flaw,' has really got his facts backward. One who continues to preach false doctrines, though truth has been revealed to him, has exposed his heart to all who know him. He has rejected truth and displayed the "*mind of a child*" which is clearly identified in adults as "*malice*." **It was not the character flaw that revealed the Corinthian's heart of malice; it was their practices!** Likewise, it is not the character of one that reveals his false doctrine; it is his doctrine! When one teaches false doctrine this exposes his true character. The one who would protect such a one is just as guilty as the false teacher (2 John 9-11) (see study # 7).
3. "... *in mind be men*." Though the Corinthian brethren had been Christians now for five years, they had not grown spiritually (cf. notes on 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Paul admonishes them to obtain, by study and meditation, a mind that is mature.
- P. "*In the law it is written, By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers will I speak unto this people; and not even thus will they hear me, saith the Lord*" (14:21).
1. Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11 indicating that the writings of the major prophets were termed "*law*." (cf. Luke 16:16). Clearly the "*law*" is the entire OT (cf. Luke 16:16; John 10:34; 15:25; Romans 3:19-20) (see study # 76; The Law of God).
  2. The prophet Isaiah had pronounced the end from the beginning regarding the coming of the Assyrians at Isaiah 28 and therefore proved that the word was from God (cf. Isaiah 46:9-11). "*Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to the unbelieving: but prophesying is for a sign, not to the unbelieving, but to them that believe*" (14:22). When these signs, such as tongues, were performed the one witnessing them would have faith produced (Mark 16:20). When other signs, such as prophecy, was performed it was not the unbelieving that benefited but the believing (Christians). Christians who heard words of prophecy were edified, consoled, and exhorted.
- Q. "*If therefore the whole church be assembled together and all speak with tongues, and there come in men unlearned or unbelieving, will they not say that ye are mad?*" (14:23).
1. Paul examines a worship service, i.e., "*the whole church be assembled together*..." During these worship services men would proclaim the word of God through tongue speaking or prophecy. The inference of this verse is that the tongue speaker has no interpreter. An unbelieving visitor who comes to the assembly not knowing the language will get absolutely nothing out of the study. It would be like inviting an English only speaking man to a Spanish speaking congregation. What will he get out of it? Will he be persuaded to be converted?
  2. Here is a picture of the "*whole church being assembled*" (local church) and brethren are speaking in a tongue that no one understands. First, there is not edification, exhortation or consolation occurring. Secondly, Paul said, that both the unlearned (one who has no former training in the language) and the "*unbelieving*" (one who is not a Christian) will consider the assembly to filled with mad men.
  3. Please note that when the "*whole church be assembled together*" that there were "*unbelieving*" (non-Christian people) who were permitted and encouraged to be there too. Christians today ought to invite the unbelieving to our assembly that they may learn the gospel.
- R. "*But if all prophecy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all. He is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest; and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed*" (14:24-25).
1. To be "*reproved*" (*elegcho*) is "to be convicted, shamed" (LS 249). The very words of truth spoken in a clear to understand manner will convict (or judge) the sinner and expose "*the secrets of his heart*" (see study # 77; The Power of the Gospel). Those secret sinful practices will be exposed as sinful and he will do one of two things. Such a one will either "*fall down on his face*" in shame and repentance or continue on in sin. The point being that one who does



not understand a word that is being said has no way of even choosing between right or wrong. Likewise if God's people cannot understand truth alike today then where is the shaming for sinful practices? One could simply say, 'that's your interpretation.'

2. An interesting point of truth is revealed here. When one preaches the gospel to the lost, we are to expose their sin and help them see their need for forgiveness (cf. Acts 2:37ff) (see study # 14). This is what the Mosaic Law did for those OT worthies that waited upon the coming of the Messiah (cf. Galatians 3:19-29). Another interesting fact is that we ought to note that we are to be encouraged to invite the unbelievers to our assembly (see study # 78; Personal Work).

## II. God is not the author of confusion (14:26-39):

A. *"What is it then, brethren? **When ye come together**, each one hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a revelation, hath a tongue, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying"* (14:26).

1. The "*coming together*" under consideration is the "*whole church assembly*" (1 Corinthians 14:23). The verse gives us a picture of the worship service in the early church. Apparently individual Christians delivered inspired songs to the congregation and there was singing in general in the congregation (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). A "*psalm*" (*psalmos*) is "a twitching or twanging with the fingers, of a bow. Mostly of musical strings: the sound of the harp. Later, a song sung to the harp, a psalm" (LS 900)... "Impulse, touch, of the chords of a stringed instrument; in NT a sacred song, psalm" (Moulton 441). This word is found at I Corinthians 14:26 in relation to the first day of the week worship service (see study # 43; NT Worship). Interestingly, the Greek Septuagint translates the Hebrew word *mizmor* to the Greek *psalmos* and is the title for the Book of Psalms "meaning either 'song' or 'instrumental music.'"<sup>8</sup> Apparently singing songs was a part of the first century church's worship. Note that the Greek word *psalmos* is a noun (Friberg 598). A noun is a person, place, or thing. The "thing" under consideration then is a song (whether that song is sung with an instrument or with the voice alone matters not as far as the Greek word is concerned). If the Greek word were a verb then the action of playing an instrument or singing a song would be under consideration. Since the noun is under consideration the subject is the song as opposed to the action of singing. We have no inspired singers today as we have no inspired prophets today. Our instructions are to "*sing and make melody with your (our) hearts to the Lord*" (Ephesians 5:19) and to preach from study (2 Timothy 2:15). We are plucking the strings of our heart as we sing (see study # 79; Musical Instruments in the Assembly?).
2. Whatever gift was exercised; whether a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue or interpretation of the tongue, the motivation for said gifts was that all be edified (enhanced knowledge of God through the effort). There would be no benefit to any if no one understands what is said or sung.
3. The big picture here is the assembly of the saints. The assembly is where edification, consolation, and exhortation would occur among members of the one body. Secondly, the assembly would be where lost sinners could hear the power of the gospel and be made to feel the shame of their sin and consequentially be baptized for the remission of sins. Preaching today must point up sin (see study # 14).

B. *"If any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most three, and that in turn; and let one interpret: but if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence **in the church**; and let him speak to himself, and to God"* (14:27-28).

1. Since there was a multitude of gifts that may be performed in any one assembly, Paul limits tongue speaking to two or three "*and that in turn.*" The phrase, "*in turn*" (*meros*) is "one's turn, his turn of duty as messenger... in turn, by turns" (LS 498). One by one the two or three tongue speakers were to speak in the assembly and only if there was an interpreter present.
2. If there were no "*interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.*" To keep "*silence*" (*sigato*) is to "be silent or still, to keep silence... hush. Be still... to hold silent, to keep secret, to be kept silent or secret" (LS 728). Without an interpreter the tongue speaker would only cause confusion. Since the object of the gifts is edification of

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<sup>8</sup> N. H. Ridderbos and P. C. Craigie. The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, Vo. 3, pp. 1030.

the whole assembly (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:7 and 14:12), the tongue speaker is to remain silent in the assembly if there is no interpreter.

- C. *“And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern”* (14:29).
1. As the tongue speakers took turns so the prophets were to take turns and at the most three would speak.
  2. The audience was to *“discern”* (*diakrino*) which means “to separate one from another... to settle, decide, of judges” (LS 189). The congregation was to listen to the teachings and test the validity of the message. That which they used as the testing stone was the other divine revelation that had been delivered up to this point. Christians today ought to give the same test to speakers in the assembly (cf. Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 12:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21; 1 John 3:10; 4:1, 6) (see study # 80; Test the Spirits).
- D. *“But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence. For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets; for God is not a God of confusion, but of peace”* (14:30-33).
1. Again, a picture is given of their assembly. The congregation sat down while the teacher stood and taught. While one prophet taught, another may receive a revelation at the same time. Paul instructs the one speaking to give way to the prophet that has received new revelation.
  2. Again, each was to take their turn rather than everyone singing, speaking in tongues, and prophesying all at the same time. The purpose for the order was that *“all may learn and be exhorted.”* The assembly was not only a praise session but a learning session (cf. John 6:44). A picture of the early church worship would have been a stark contrast to what we now experience. When we worship God on Sunday or Wednesday or whatever day there remains the singing and teaching yet the gifts are no longer a part of the worship (see study # 75).
  3. Verse 32 is interesting: it says that the prophet was in control of the revelation that came over them. Therefore if a man were to go out of control not speaking in turn all would identify him as a false teacher. This is why Paul says *“God is not the author of confusion.”* Those charismatic non-denominational churches that have men explode in uncontrolled tongues or prophecy are faking it and here is the proof.
- E. *“As in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but let them be in subjection, as also saith the law”* (14:33b-34).
1. Evidently some of the women were speaking up in the assembly in the Corinthians churches and this was another source of confusion. We have already noted that some women were given the gifts of prophecy (see 1 Corinthians 11:5). Their only limitations to speaking to this point have been in relationship to the veils of 1 Corinthians 11. The prophetess was permitted to speak words of divine revelation apart from the *“whole church being assembled together”* (1 Corinthians 14:23).
  2. Here we see a picture of people singing solos, speaking tongues, prophesying, and women speaking up and preaching all at the same time. Again, this was an ultraliberal church (cf. comments on 1 Corinthians 11:21). Paul admonishes the women to **keep silent in the churches** in the same context that he told the tongue speaker (1 Corinthians 14:28) and prophet (1 Corinthians 14:30). Their silence was in relation to teaching out of turn for order’s sake. The women; however, had zero time for preaching, exhorting, consolation, and edification to the assembly of saints and thus Paul commands total silence in this area.
    - a. The word *“silence”* is (*sigato*) meaning to “be silent or still, to keep silence... hush. Be still... to hold silent, to keep secret, to be kept silent or secret” (LS 728).
    - b. The woman was therefore forbidden to address the assembly and was to remain in *“subjection, as also saith the law.”* The word *“subjection”* (*hupotasso*) is “to place or arrange under, to post under, to subject, to be obedient” (LS 848).
      - 1b. The Law proves this statement: Genesis 3:16 *“he* (the husband) *shall rule over thee”*
      - 2b. Paul makes the same argument in 1 Timothy 2:11-14. This is not a subjection of wives to husbands this is a subjection of women to men in general when it comes to the assembly of the **whole church**.

3. Some have difficulties harmonizing 1 Corinthians 11 and 14. Seems simple really. The woman of 1 Corinthians 11 was prophesying and praying without a veil in public, not the "whole church assembly." The woman of 1 Corinthians 14 was prophesying and praying in the assembly with or without the veil and Paul termed it unacceptable. Again, erring one cup no class brethren tell us that we are in sin due to our women teaching a Bible study of children or other women. What these brethren fail to understand is that women who teach a Bible study of un-baptized children or other women are NOT ADDRESSING THE ASSEMBLY OF THE WHOLE CHURCH. No woman may address the whole assembly without violating God's direct command here (see study # 81; The Role of Women in the Church / see also study # 82; The Bible Class Issue).
- F. *"And if they would learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home: for it is shameful for a woman to speak in the church"* (14:35).
1. When the whole church, in any given location, is assembled together women are not to speak out. The woman may not ask a question in the assembly, the woman may not teach a man, the woman is not to say anything other than blending her voice with the saints in song to fulfill the command of all to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).
  2. Paul has under consideration here, *"the assembly of the whole church"* or *"in the church."* Whether this assembly be on Sunday, Monday, Wednesday matters not. What matters is that the *"whole church is assembled together."* Under such an assembly the woman is not to speak a word.
  3. Often the question comes up: "May a woman speak in a Bible study with other men present?" Again, the issue of 1 Corinthians is **a whole church assembly**. if the whole church assembly is together she may not speak a word whether that be Sunday, Monday, or Wednesday. On the other hand, if the whole assembly has not come together she may speak while taking into consideration her divinely appointed position of submission to the man (cf. 1 Corinthians 11 all and 1 Timothy 2:11-14). The woman who violates the submission principles of these two mentioned verses by exercising authority over the man has sinned.
  4. The assembly of the whole church has been defined as the place of the first day of the week worship that includes the five acts of worship. Another assembly of the whole church often takes place during the midweek (i.e., Wednesday by custom of many churches). Whenever the whole assembly is together the woman may not speak. A Bible study time is not such an assembly because the whole church is not assembled. The church today divides itself into Bible classes of all ages and sometimes genders to have private studies appropriate to age and gender so that the church is edified. Our no class brethren believe we are in sin for dividing the church into classes on Sunday and Wednesday. Note; however, that part of the work of the church is to edify the saints (Ephesians 4:11 ff). If the whole church comes together on the first day of the week to participate in the five acts of worship and no woman participates in a speaking role then we have satisfied God's will. If the church, for the sake of edification of its members, divides into classes before the whole assembly comes together on Sunday where is the condemnation? The "no class" brethren claim that there is no authority for a divided class situation and thereby any assembly of the saints would be the *"whole assembly."* There were times when the NT Christians assembled apart from the "whole assembly" (we call these assemblies "classes") so that brethren could be edified (see Acts 19:9) (see study # 82). It may be objected that the Acts 19:9 assembly was a "divided assembly" but what really does that prove? Shall we condemn matters of expediency, practicality, and appropriateness on the bases of not finding one example, inference, or command to have a divided Bible class? If so, then it would be sinful to use a pitch pipe, song book, trays in the Lord's Supper, and have a church building. Matters that are expedient are matters that lawfully aid in one accomplishing the commandment of God. The commandment of God is that the church would be edified and the expedient is a Bible class for all ages. There is no sin here. Actually the Bible does not address the expedient matters such as taking a car to preach the gospel and thereby accomplishing the great commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The Bible says absolutely nothing of Bible classes, song books, pitch pipes, trays on the LS and so forth. The Bible simply gives the command and

we are charged with keeping the command and accomplishing it in a lawful manner. It is unfortunate that there are over zealous brothers and sisters today who attempt to bully the brotherhood with their personal convictions. When these brethren begin to bind where God has not bound and loose where God has not loosed they bring reproach to the name of Jehovah God and cause some to stumble in sin (see Galatians 2:3ff) (see study # 82).

5. One may say that since a Bible study is not the “whole church being assembled,” why can’t a woman lead the study? The answer is found in the general subjection of women to men and is therefore not authorized by God.
- G. *“What? Was it from you that the word of God went forth? Or came it unto you alone? If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant”* (14:36-38).
1. Though the Corinthian church had these errors happening (women addressing the assembly and prophets and tongue speakers talking at the same time) they were not to conclude that just because they did these things they were right.
  2. The Corinthian brethren were to conduct themselves by the authority of God (Colossians 3:17) and not by their own will just as all other churches were to do. Remember that Paul said, *“As in all the churches of the saints...”* (14:33b).
  3. These regulations that Paul placed upon the women, tongue speakers, and prophets were not Paul’s opinions, but *“the commandment of the Lord.”*
  4. Those *“ignorant”* were those who sought spiritual gifts to be magnified by others rather than exercising the gift of the Holy Spirit in love. These brethren were *“ignorant”* and so Paul enlightens them (see 1 Corinthians 12:1). Those who desired to remain ignorant, due to a hard hearted disposition that enjoyed the attention tongues brought to them, rather than wanting to profit all brethren were to remain ignorant. Such individuals will be reserved for everlasting fire (see Matthew 13:10-12; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12).
- H. *“Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. But let all things be done decently and in order”* (14:39-40).
1. Paul’s plea for the Corinthian brethren was that they understand the purpose of the gifts (i.e., confirmation, edification, exhortation, and consolation that the whole body may be profited). What we must continue to consider as we look through these three chapters (i.e., 12-14) is that the “whole body / church” is what is under consideration (see 1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:23). The true issue with the no class brethren is really not whether a woman may speak out and teach but rather is there authority for “classes” (see study # 82).
  2. Though Paul has placed a level of importance of prophecy over tongue speaking and regulated their uses in the assembly he assures them that they should continue to desire these gifts.
  3. As the Corinthians received their gifts by the Spirit they were admonished to be orderly with them. Likewise, our assemblies should be orderly rather than chaotic (see study # 75).

## Synopsis of I Corinthians 14

Paul specifically states the objective of gifts when he said, *“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation”* (1 Corinthians 14:3). Tongue speaking without interpretation could in no way achieve this function. Paul is resolute in his writing so that the Corinthians be aware of the importance of their audience’s understanding of tongues. Those brethren who spoke in tongues for show and human exaltation were *“children in mind”* (1 Corinthians 14:20).

Secondly, chapter 14 gives us a picture of the church’s assemblies when the *“whole church was assembled together”* (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:18, 23, and 26). There was preaching, singing, and praying occurring. These acts of worship were performed on Sunday, Wednesday, or any other day of the week. While the preaching, praying, and singing occurred in Corinth; however, there was chaos. Tongue speakers were talking at the same time with no interpreter, prophets were speaking out of turn, inspired singers were singing, and women were

addressing the assembly. It is no wonder that Paul said that if a visitor came into the assembly they would think all were “*mad*” (1 Corinthians 14:23).

Paul states that “*God is not a God of confusion, but of peace*” (1 Corinthians 14:33). Again, the apostle states, “*But let all things be done decently and in order*” (1 Corinthians 14:40). It was not orderly for tongue speakers to speak at the same time as another tongue speaker and neither was it orderly for one to speak without an interpreter (1 Corinthians 14:27). It was not orderly for the prophets to speak at the same time but in order and in turn (1 Corinthians 14:29).

Though the Corinthians practiced their gifts in a chaotic fashion, this did not set truth for the churches universal (1 Corinthians 14:36). Paul made sure his point of order was understood when he said, “*let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord*” (1 Corinthians 14:37).

## Chapter 15

### Addendum

The apostle Paul has systematically dealt with the following issues within the Corinthian church:

- Divisions among the brethren in relationship to who taught and baptized them (1 Corinthians 1:12-16; 3:3-4, 21; 4:6).
- Tolerating sin in the church (1 Corinthians 5:1ff).
- Brethren defrauding each other for worldly gain (1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
- Brethren trying to justify their fornication (1 Corinthians 6:12-20).
- There were apparent issues revolving around marriage, remarriage, and divorce (1 Corinthians 7 all).
- Brethren were not considerate of each other's conscience regarding eating meats sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 8-10).
- Women prophetess were speaking out in public without considering the propriety of their day (1 Corinthians 11:1-16).
- The Corinthians had perverted the Lord's Supper by dividing up into social classes (1 Corinthians 11:17ff).
- There were factions within the church (1 Corinthians 11:18).
- The Corinthians were performing spiritual gifts for selfish reasons rather than for the profit of the whole church (1 Corinthians 12-14).
- The Corinthian's assemblies were chaotic and women were addressing the assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:26-36).

Paul now deals with false teaching revolving around the resurrection of the dead. The apostle writes, “*How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*” (1 Corinthians 15:12) Such a doctrine being peddled by brethren alarmed the apostle Paul. The resurrection of the dead was the thrust of the gospel message and a source of hope (see Acts 24:15; 26:8; Romans 1:1-4). Evidently there were some in Corinth who believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, yet denied the general resurrection of all mankind (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:12-14). Just before entering Corinth, on his second tour of preaching, Paul encountered skeptics when he preached on the resurrection to those in Athens (cf. Acts 17:32). Paul reminds the Corinthians (those skeptics who rejected the idea of the resurrection of the dead), that he had preached the gospel to them which included instructions regarding the resurrection of the dead (cf. Acts 18; Paul visits and preaches at Corinth for the first time).

#### I. The Gospel message (15:1-11):

- A. “*Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, by which also ye are saved, **if** ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain*” (15:1-2).

1. *“Gospel”*: (*euangelion*): “originally denoted a reward for good tidings; later, the idea of reward dropped, and the word stood for the good news itself...In the NT it denotes the good tidings of the Kingdom of God and of salvation through Christ, to be received by faith, on the basis of His expiatory death, burial, resurrection and ascension” (Vines 497) (see study # 85; The Identity of the Gospel Message).
  2. In the year 51 AD, the apostle Paul made His way through Macedonia and came southward to Achaia and the city of Corinth. Paul *“preached”* the saving message of the gospel to the Corinthians and many *“received”* it. To *“receive”* (*paralambano*) is to “receive by hearsay or report, to ascertain” (LS 598). Having ‘ascertained’ or learned of the gospel message, Paul now states, *“wherein ye stand”* (*histemi*) [“to be in a certain state or condition” (LS 385)]. This ‘state or condition’ is a perfect tense verb indicating the Corinthians present state based on a past action. Their present state is that they are *“saved”* based upon their past action of obeying the gospel; however, this current salvation applies only to those who *“hold fast the word which I preached unto you.”* To *“hold fast”* (*katechete*) is to “have in possession, possess, occupy; to continue a life; to master, understand...” (LS 421-422). Clearly this passages teaches, by implication, that those who are saved are those who continue in the instructions of the gospel message. Therefore, many will hear the gospel and obey; however, some of those will not *“hold fast”* to the message (see study # 20).
  3. The one who will not *“hold fast”* has *“believed in vain”* (*pisteuo eike*). The word *“believed”* is in the aorist tense indicating past action without indicating completion or repetition. Salvation was obtained at a point in the past; however, its present state is based on continued action (holding fast the word of God). This past faith is now *“vain”* (“without plan or purpose; rash” {LS 227}) for the one who has now rejected the way of truth. Truth saves only those who truly desire salvation (Romans 1:16).
  4. Paul begins to build his case for the resurrection of the dead. The initial gospel message that the Corinthians heard and received included instructions regarding the resurrection of the dead. Something had changed in the minds of some of the Corinthians in relationship to their understanding of this resurrection.
- B. *“For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures;”* (15:3-4).
1. Paul delivered to the Corinthians exactly what he had received by revelation through Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23; Galatians 1:11-12). The message Paul delivered was, *“That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures”*
    - a. The OT foretold of this expiatory sacrifice of Christ (Isaiah 53 & Psalms 22)
    - b. NT authors understood that those of old foretold of this event (cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:19; Luke 24:44-46; Matthew 1:21)
  2. *“and that he was buried”*
    - a. This confirms the reality of Christ death.
    - b. He was dead and buried in a tomb (John 19:38-42)
  3. *“and he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures”*
    - a. “Whether Paul had seen either of the Gospels we do not know, but this item is closely identified with the fact of Christ’s resurrection. We have it in Peter’s speech (Acts 10:40) and Jesus points it out as part of prophecy (Luke 24:46). The other expression occasionally found ‘after three days’ (Mark 10:34) is merely free vernacular for the same idea and not even Matthew 12:40 disturbs it. See Luke 24:1 for record of the empty tomb on the first day of the week (the third day)” (A. T. Robertson’s Word Pictures in the New Testament Vol. 4; pg. 187).
    - b. Luke records Jesus saying, *“Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem”* (Luke 24:46-47).

- C. *“And that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles”* (15:5-7).
1. If any of the Corinthians believed not what Paul had just proclaimed, he gives them proof of the death, burial and resurrection of the Lord.
  2. First of all, Peter had seen the risen Lord (Luke 24:34)
  3. The Lord had appeared to *“the twelve”* disciples or apostles (John 20:19-23)
  4. The Lord appeared to *“above five hundred brethren at once”* (some of whom were still alive) (Paul states this to say: why don’t you ask these men for yourselves). It may be that these five hundred brethren were those of Galilee (compare Matthew 26:32 and 28:7ff).
  5. *“Then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles”*
    - a. Apparently this was a different appearance than the one mentioned above in Galilee.
    - b. This James must have been the Lord’s brother (John 7:5; Galatians 1:19; 2:9).
    - c. Jesus appears to all the apostles before his ascension into heaven (Acts 1:4ff).
- D. *“And last of all, as to the child untimely born, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God”* (15:8-9).
1. Lastly, the resurrected Lord appeared to Paul while on the road to Damascus (Acts 22:6-11). No other appearance of the resurrected Lord was made to any other.
  2. To be *“untimely born”* (*ektroma*) is to be a “child untimely born, an abortion” (LS 246). “Premature birth; untimely birth, miscarriage. So Paul calls himself, taking up an insult as a term of contempt... monster, horrible thing...” (AG 246).
  3. The Lord appears to Paul in a resurrected glorious state and Paul views himself as somewhat of a monster that was undeserving of such a sight. Verse nine may help us with the understanding of verse eight. Paul viewed himself as least among the apostles, as far as worth goes, due to his earlier persecution of the church (Acts 26:9-11). As a child that does not come about at the right time in his mother’s womb, so Paul’s spiritual birth as a Christian came about suddenly at the appearing of the Lord Jesus. Paul was breathing threats of death against Christians when Jesus tore Paul from this womb of death.
- E. *“But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me”* (15:10).
1. Though Paul had done some awful things in his past, as we all have, he realizes that it is by the grace of God that he is now a Christian. If Paul, one who persecuted the church in his sinful days, can be saved; what does that say about everyone else? (cf. 1 Timothy 1:12-16) (see study # 36).
  2. As a show of his appreciation; Paul worked (labored: hard work and toil) that others may receive salvation just as he (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:22). Paul’s labors exceeded the other apostles as one extremely zealous and filled with love for the souls of men (see Romans 1:14-16).
- F. *“Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed”* (15:11).
1. Finally, Paul says whether it was his own self or the other apostles preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ, you Corinthians had believed this.
  2. That which they believed was the central theme of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus had been crucified, buried, and raised from the dead. The witnesses give their testimony.

**II. Paul expresses surprise and shock that some among them were actually saying there was no resurrection of the dead (15:12-19):**

- A. *“Now if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”* (15:12).
1. Paul has set out to prove the general resurrection of all mankind by establishing the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the start of I Corinthians 15.
  2. There were false teachers in Corinth teaching that Jesus had been raised; however, mankind as a whole will not be raised.
  3. Said doctrines were the course of Hymenaeus and Philetus (2 Timothy 2:17ff).

4. The past tense of “*preached*” indicates that this was the message Paul had previously preached to the Corinthians in 51 AD (cf. Acts 17:32). They had heard the message of Christ and his death, burial, and resurrection yet now they were changing their minds.
- B. “*But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain*” (15:13-14).
1. Paul gives the consequences if said false teaching on the resurrection are true. If there is no resurrection, then Christ never arose. Christ's resurrection from the dead is directly connected to all of humanity's resurrection. How could it be that Christ was raised from the dead, proclaimed that all of humanity will experience the same thing, and yet it not be true?
  2. If these false teachers were correct; i.e., there will be no resurrection of mankind, then all the “*preaching*” on the resurrection of Christ is useless.
  3. The Corinthian's faith is in vain if there is no resurrection. The word “*vain*” (*kenos*) is “empty; vain; no purpose... void, destitute, bereft” (LS 427). Such a state of being placed their initial obedience to the gospel message a matter of vanity (see 1 Corinthians 15:2).
- C. “*Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we witnessed of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead are not raised*” (15:15).
1. The antecedent to “*we*” must be those who both proclaimed the gospel to the Corinthians and witnessed his resurrected body. These men testified about the resurrection of Christ. The resurrection of Christ is so closely connected to man's general resurrection that the entirety of humanity's resurrection is identified as “*God that raised up Christ.*”
  2. If said teaching were not true, Paul proclaims that they all are “*false witnesses of God.*”
    - a. A “*false witness*” is very similar to a false teacher. The word “*false*” (*pseudo*) = “to cheat by lies, beguile... to be deceived, mistaken on or about a thing... mistaken in opinion... of statements, to be untrue” (LS 901). A “*witness*” (*martures*) is “to be a witness, to bear witness, give evidence, bear testimony... to testify that a thing is” (LS 488). Here is one who delivers lying or deceptive testimony about a matter. If there is no such thing as a general resurrection of all dead then Paul and the others who claim to have witnessed Christ resurrection are liars and everyone's faith in vain.
    - b. Whether one is beguiling, deceiving, lying, or mistaken in his opinions the witness is said to be false if the testimony is not true. **That which determines who may be labeled a false witness is truth.** Clearly one sees that it matters not what the consequences of said false testimony is as far as the label goes, it is the testimony itself that determines whether one is a “*false witness.*” Paul's motive was to save souls; however, if said testimony is false (when laid aside truth) it mattered not what his motives were for teaching. If the message is false it is false and that is all there is to it (see study # 7).
- D. “*For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised: and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins*” (15:16-17).
1. Since Jesus proved that resurrection occurs by His own resurrection, all will be raised. Yet, if one would say that “*the dead*” in general are not raised, Paul has effectively proved that it is an impossibility for Christ to have been raised from the dead. Paul's logic is that if one has been raised then all will be raised, if none will be raised then the One (Jesus) has not been raised (see appendix # 38).
  2. If it is true that Jesus was not raised then “*your faith is vain* (without purpose); *ye are yet in your sins.*”
    - a. Faith that does not believe in the resurrection is a vain faith because the Christian's hope is in the resurrection of the dead. Said resurrection; however, which will not occur if Christ has not been raised. If it be that man is not raised then the entire gospel message is a lie.
    - b. The forgiveness of man's sins has ever been contingent upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Paul spoke of the unwavering faith of Abraham and concluded saying, “*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was reckoned unto him; but for our sake also, unto whom it shall be reckoned, who believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up for our trespasses, and was raised for our justification*” (Romans 4:23-25).



- E. *“Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable”* (15:18-19).
1. To *“fall asleep”* is to have died (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13ff). The condition of the dead is that they were *“in Christ.”* To be *“in Christ”* is to be in fellowship with the Lord by abiding in His truths (1 John 1:3, 5-6; 2:6, 24; 5:20; cf. Galatians 3:27).
  2. Those who have died with the hope of heaven through the forgiveness of their sins have really only *“perished”* (*apollumi*) [“destruction” (LS 113); “to utterly destroy,; to kill, to bring to nought, make void” (Moulton 45)] if it be that Christ has not been raised from the dead.
  3. It seems to this writer that the *apollumi* spoken of here by Paul is a state of being non-existent. Though the Christian’s hope is an eternal existence in the presence of God through the gospel message of the resurrection of the dead, it truly does not exist if Christ has not been raised. The very gospel message that was originally preached to the Corinthians involved these teachings. Had *“some”* of the brethren forgot the very message they originally obeyed?
  4. If such a state of non-existence is the consequence of this life then truly the Christian who conducts himself in restraint of the passions of the flesh has indeed lived and is living a *“pitiable”* life (cf. 15:32b). The word *“pitiable”* (*eleeinos*) is “piteous (sorrow or grief aroused by the misfortune of another) to behold” (LS 249). Paul’s point is that it sure is a sad site to view a Christian who has lived a faithful life because the dead are not truly raised as they so hope. If the dead are not raised then why obey the gospel and live a Christian life of suffering and sorrows? It reminds us of the question we would ask the Baptist. If once your saved your always saved then why go to church, give of your means, restrain yourself from anything ungodly, etc.? (see study # 20).

### III. Christ has been raised from the dead and the Christian is not a pitiful sight to behold (15:20-28):

- A. *“But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep”* (15:20).
1. With a bold affirmation, Paul makes the contrast that Jesus has indeed been raised from the dead and is the *“firstfruits of them that are asleep.”*
  2. The argument continues. If Christ has not been raised neither will anyone else. Since Christ has been raised, he is the *“firstfruits”* of all the dead. The word *“firstfruits”* (*aparche*) is defined as “the beginning of a sacrifice, the primal offering (of hairs cut from the forehead), the firstlings for sacrifice, first-fruits...” (LS 89). “The first act of a sacrifice; hence, the first-fruits, first portion, firstling, Romans 8:23, et al.” (Moulton 36). It may be that the best commentary on the use of the word *“firstfruits”* in relation to the resurrection of the dead may be found in I Corinthians 16:15. Paul said, *“Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints...”* It is clear that the first of many Christians made in Achaia were of the house of Stephanas. Likewise, the first of many resurrected to die no more was Jesus Christ.
    - a. Both the just and the unjust shall be raised (cf. Acts 24:15).
    - b. Those who lived their lives as God desired them to will inherit eternal life (Matthew 25:31-40; Revelation 21:1-7).
    - c. Those who lived their lives as they pleased, not giving regard to the authority of Christ, will inherit eternal damnation (Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 21:8).
    - d. Both the just and unjust will live into eternity, one in bliss with God and the other in eternal torments.
- B. *“For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead”* (15:21).
1. Because of Adam’s sin all mankind suffers death (physical death as opposed to spiritual death; cf. Romans 5:12ff). Genesis 2:17 states, *“In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”* The very nature of Adam changed on the day in which he sinned against God. He was changed from a living being to a dying being. God said, *“behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil; and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever...so he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim, and the flame of a sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”* (Genesis 3:22-24). Adam died at the age of 930 (Genesis 5:5).

2. One man (Adam) caused all others of mankind to physically die. Likewise, one man (Jesus) will cause all mankind to be resurrected from that dead state. So Paul said, *“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive”* (1 Corinthians 15:22). While man dies physically due to Adam's sin all who die will one day live again due to Christ sacrifice and resurrection (see Romans 5:12ff).
- C. *“But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at his coming”* (15:23).
1. God is the God of order (1 Corinthians 14:33, 40). Paul now states the *“order”* of the resurrection. Since all will be raised (Acts 24:15) there will be order in the resurrection.
  2. Christ is the first of all who was resurrected to die no more (1 Corinthians 15:20).
  3. Secondly, those who belong to Christ will be raised when Jesus comes again.
    - a. Those who belong to Christ are Christians (those who have been purchased by the blood of Jesus; cf. Acts 20:28). Here are members of the church who have been baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38).
    - b. The dead in Christ will rise first and then those who are alive at His coming will join those who were dead in the resurrected state (Matthew 25:31-40; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
    - c. The spiritually dead will then be resurrected unto eternal damnation (Matthew 25:41-46; Revelation 20:11-15).
- D. *“Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power”* (15:24).
1. After all have been resurrected and judged, *“then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father.”*
    - a. The word *“end”* (*telos*) is defined as “the fulfillment or completion of anything... i.e., its consummation, issue, result, end... to put a finish to a thing...” (LS 799).
    - b. At this point, *“The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up”* (2 Peter 3:10) (see study # 83; Order of Events in the End of Time).
    - c. Each resurrected soul will go to their respective eternal habitation. Since Christ's work as high priest is complete (Hebrews 7:26-28) (i.e., making intercession for mankind's sins), He now will deliver the kingdom of God back to the heavenly Father. All souls (the kingdom of God) will now rest under the authority and protection of heaven (i.e., the kingdom of heaven).
  2. At this point, Jesus will have already *“abolished all rule and all authority and power.”*
    - a. All people and powers that oppose the doctrine of Christ and work in league with Satan will be done away with (i.e., abolished in hell forever).
    - b. *“For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet”* (15:25).
      - 1a. The word *“till”* in vs. 25 is “a preposition; it has the force of a conjunction, until, to the time that...things that actually occurred and up to the beginning of which something continued” (Thayer pg. 91).
      - 2b. This can only mean that Christ is currently reigning as King and will do so until he abolishes death. The word *“reign”* is a present tense verb in Greek indicating ongoing action. Jesus will continue to reign until every force of Satan is cast into the lake of fire (cf. Revelation 20:12ff).
      - 3c. *“The last enemy that shall be abolished is death”* (15:26). At this time, man will be released from the curse of Adam (death through sin) and we will die no more. Man will be like Christ, immortal. The word *“abolished”* (*katargeo*) is similar to the word *“perish”* of I Corinthians 15:18 in that *katargeo* means “to make of none effect” (LS 413). Death will no longer have any power over mankind.
- E. *“For, He put all things in subjection under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put in subjection, it is evident that he is excepted who did subject all things unto him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subjected to him that did subject all things unto him, that God may be all in all”* (15:27-28).

1. The word “*subjection*” is a perfect tense verb indicating past action to the now fixed point in time. God placed all authority in the hands of Jesus after he had redeemed man from sin by the resurrection of his body (Matthew 28:18). The “*all things*,” however, did not include God Himself.
2. When Jesus hands over the kingdom of God to *theos*, He (Jesus) shall take his rightful place in the godhead that “*God may be all in all*.” Clearly the Son of God is subject to “*God*” (see study # 66). *Theos* is equated to the godhead which is comprised of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
3. There are grave consequences therefore when one states, “*there is no resurrection of the dead*.” If there is no resurrection of the dead then one truly mocks at the eternal purpose of God and His Son Jesus. The eternal plan of God had everything to do with the resurrection of Jesus and mankind.

#### IV. **Baptism for the dead???? (15:29-34):**

- A. “*Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead?*” *If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?*” (I Cor. 15:29).
  1. One of the fundamental beliefs of the Mormon church is the doctrine of baptism for the dead (vicarious baptisms). The following are statements of belief by members of the LDS church take from (H. David Burton; [www.mormons.org](http://www.mormons.org)).
    - a. “Baptism for the dead is the proxy performance of the ordinance of baptism for one deceased. [Joseph Smith](#) taught, “If we can baptize a man in the name of the Father [and] of the Son and of the Holy Ghost for the [remission of sins](#) it is just as much our privilege to act as an agent and be baptized for the remission of sins for and in behalf of our dead kindred who have not heard the gospel or fullness of it” (Kenney, p. 165).
    - b. The first public affirmation of the ordinance of baptism for the dead in the Church was Joseph Smith's funeral sermon for Seymour Brunson in Nauvoo in August 1840. Addressing a widow who had lost a son who had not been baptized, he called the principle “glad tidings of great joy,” in contrast to the prevailing tradition that all un-baptized are damned. The first baptisms for the dead in modern times were done in the Mississippi River near Nauvoo. [Revelations](#) clarifying the doctrine and practice have been given from time to time: This was a New Testament practice (1 Cor. 15:29; cf. D&C 128; see [Baptism for the Dead: Ancient Sources](#)).
    - c. In an article by Elder Bruce R. McConkie; we further see their beliefs: “There is no death, and there are no dead, unto the Lord -- all are alive unto him. “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32), our Lord said with reference to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had long before died as men count death, but who were alive as the Lord views things in his eternal perspective. Since the Lord views man's progress from the pre-existent state to an eventual inheritance in one of the degrees of glory as one continuing course, it is not material (from the eternal perspective) whether the opportunity to accept the gospel of salvation comes in this mortal sphere or in the spirit world hereafter. Sometime after birth into this life and before the resurrection and judgment, every living soul will hear the gospel message and be judged by his reaction thereto. The millions who pass to the spirit world without receiving an opportunity during mortality to hear the truths of salvation will receive their chance subsequent to what men call death. The great principles and procedures whereby the saving truths of the gospel are offered to, accepted by, and made binding upon the departed dead, comprise the doctrine of salvation for the dead. Pursuant to this doctrine the principles of salvation are taught in the spirit world, leaving the ordinances thereof to be performed in this life on a vicarious-proxy basis. By accepting the gospel in the spirit world, and because the ordinances of salvation and exaltation are performed vicariously in this world, the worthy dead can become heirs of the fullness of the Father's kingdom. Salvation for the dead is the system where under those who would have accepted the gospel in this life had they been permitted to hear it, will have the chance to accept it in the spirit world, and will then be entitled to all the blessings which passed them by in mortality. (Doctrines of Salvation, vol. 2, pp. 100-196.) *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 673 ([www.mormons.org](http://www.mormons.org)).

3. Let us consider these things in light of 1 Corinthians 15:29 which states: *“Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?”*
  - a. The first rule in proper exegesis of scripture is to follow context.
  - b. What is the context surrounding vs. 29?
    - 1b. Christ is the first fruits of all the resurrected dead.
    - 2b. All rule and authority will be put under Christ even death.
    - 3b. The only one not subjected to Christ is God.
    - 4b. All those who have died will also be raised when Christ comes again.
    - 5b. The context is one of order!
    - 6b. **If this order is false, then why be baptized is what Paul is saying:**
  - c. The word *“else”* = “if all that is stated in the preceding is not fact” (Lenski pg. 688).
  - d. *“What shall they do that are baptized for the dead”* *“hoi baptizomenoi huper ton nekron.”* The Greek phrase is literally translated *“what will they do the ones being baptized on behalf of the dead? If actually dead persons are not raised”* (NM 701). The key word is *“for”* (*huper*; Gk). Liddell and Scott’s Greek-English Lexicon defines *huper* as “in behalf of... for the sake of a person or thing” (833). If we are baptized for the sake of or on behalf of dead people being raised from the dead and the dead are not really raised then the question is, “why be baptized” at all? Paul is simply writing in a rhetorical form as he is known for (Cf. the book of Romans).
  - e. The thought is why even be baptized if the resurrection is not true? Will you be baptized to be numbered among the dead who will never raise? The Greek reads a bit different as to how we express ideas in the English but suffice it to say that Paul can certainly not be speaking of a “vicarious baptism” on the part of one Christian for another due to the fact that he had also said at Romans 14:12, *“So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.”* A “vicarious baptism” takes away personal responsibility, a thought that is foreign to the NT scriptures (cf. Revelation 20:12).
  - f. The point is further carried out in 1 Corinthians 15:30-32
- B. *“Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by that glorying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doeth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”* (15:30-32).
  1. If the dead will not raise why risk our lives preaching the message of resurrection? If the dead are not raised why not just eat, drink and live it up because when we die that is all there is to existence!
  2. However, because of the reality of the resurrection of the dead, Paul preached in hazardous situations and daily risked his own life to so preach to others.
  3. Paul even fought with beast at Ephesus because of his teaching of the resurrection of the dead. It may be that this was literal beasts such as one being thrown to the lions as was Daniel (cf. 2 Timothy 4:17). Secondly, it may be that Paul was delivered from beastly men such as Demetrius in Ephesus (cf. Acts 19:23ff). Why go through such heartaches and pain in life if there is no such thing as the resurrection of the body?
- C. *“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals”* (15:33).
  1. Paul knew there was more to life than mere death and thereby states, *“be not deceived.”* To be *“deceived”* (*planao*) is to “to lead astray, mislead, deceived... to wander about as in a labyrinth... to wander in speaking, digress” (LS 643).
  2. The context demands that Paul’s admonitions are pointed at the brethren being deceived and led astray by false teachers who were teaching that there is no resurrection of the dead. Here it is clear that the false teacher is doing the deceptive work of Satan though he would never admit to doing such work (see study # 7).
  3. Don’t make companions of false teachers who believe and teach doctrines that are opposed to the gospel of Jesus Christ. These people have the ability to lead people astray.

- D. *“Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of God: I speak this to move you to shame”* (15:34).
1. *“Soberness”* (*eknepho*): “to return to one’s self from drunkenness, become sober” (Thayer 198). This passage clearly teaches the intoxicating effects of false teaching (see study # 7).
  2. Paul desired that the Corinthians would sober up from the intoxicating effects of the false teaching regarding the resurrection of the dead. Those who had taken the erring doctrine regarding there being no resurrection were in sin. These sinners were to feel the sting of shame for their departure from truth and return to their original hope.

V. **Dealing with the objections of these false teachers (15:35-49):**

- A. *“But some one will say, How are the dead raised? And with what manner of body do they come?”* (15:35)
1. Paul anticipates questions that will arise in the minds of those who have rejected the teaching of the resurrection of the dead.
  2. Some may say, *“How are the dead raised?”* and *“with what manner of body do they come?”* The word *“manner”* (*‘and with what sort of body’* {NM 701}) (*poio*) (cf. LS 652) (see study # 38).
  3. Many of the ideas presented in divine revelation seem impossible with men; however, with Christ all things are possible (see Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:16-19, 26-27; Matthew 19:26). Man would consider the dying and decaying of the body and conclude that there is no way that such a condition could be restored.
- B. *“Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die:”* (15:36).
1. The word *“foolish”* (*aphron*) = “without sense... senselessly” (LS 140). The Corinthians lacked sense in the area of understanding the resurrection. These same individuals who planted seeds in the ground, watched the seed rot and germinate are not asking *“how,”* and *“with what manner.”*
  2. A seed sown in the ground first dies then it is quickened (made alive). Jesus used this illustration at John 12:24 saying, *“Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit.”* What appears to be dead is actually awaiting a more glorious body.
- C. *“And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind; but God giveth it a body even as it pleased him, and to each seed a body of its own”* (15:37-38).
1. A man plants a bare seed in the ground in hopes of a full bloomed plant. Man does not plant a mature plant into the ground with hopes of regeneration but the seed.
  2. By the nature of the created universe a plant will reproduce after its own kind (Genesis 1:11-12). Such procedure is created by God and pleases God. It is by the work of God that a seed germinates and slowly grows into a plant that produces seed itself.
  3. Verses 35-38 answer the *“how.”* The bodily resurrection will occur as a seed that has been planted into the ground. It first appears to die and rot and then comes life in the spring. Likewise, our bodies will die, rot in the earth, and yet at the appointed time God will bring forth the new resurrected body as he miraculously brings forth the new plant from the seed.
- D. *“All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one flesh of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes”* (15:39).
1. The **second question** that those who would deny the resurrection will ask is: *“with what type or kind of body will this be?”* Paul answers the objection by stating that there are four types of flesh. The word "flesh" (*sarx*) = "the flesh or muscles of the body... flesh as opposed to the spirit" (LS 724). God was not limited to only one physical flesh in his creation:
    - a. Flesh of men
    - b. Flesh of beast
    - c. Flesh of birds
    - d. Flesh of fish

2. There are also two types of bodies. Paul states, *“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another”* (15:40).
  - a. *“Celestial”* (*epouranios*) = “in heaven, heavenly... the gods above... the phenomena of the heavens” (LS 309). The word *epouranios* is used eighteen times in the NT and every occurrence is translated “*heavenly*” except here in 1 Corinthians 15:40 where the Greek word is translated “*celestial*.” The author of Hebrews appears to give a summation of the meaning of “*epouranios*” saying, *“but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly (epouranios) Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect...”* (Hebrews 12:22-23). Clearly the word translated “*celestial bodies*” is the heavenly beings such as angels, God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit all summed up in the word “*spirit*.” Man occupies a fleshly body on this earth that will act as a seed when it dies and then, in the resurrection, it shall germinate into a spirit, heavenly, or celestial body like that of God and angels.
  - b. *“Terrestrial”* (*epigeios*) = “Existing upon the earth” (Thayer 236). This is the flesh of man spoken of above.
  - c. Each of these bodies have their own glory i.e. the 4 types of flesh and the two bodies (celestial verses terrestrial). The word “*glory*” (*doxa*) = “the external appearance, glory, splendor, effulgence” (LS 209). Each of these, i.e., terrestrial and celestial have a different external appearance and different glory (splendor). The word “*body*” (*soma*) = “the body of a man... body, as opp. To the soul... a body, i.e., any material substance” (LS 788). The celestial body (spirit body like God and angels) will be eternal material substance.
- E. *“There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory”* (15:41).
  1. As differing fleshs have different external appearances (glory) even so the entities in the heavens have different appearances.
  2. The sun, moon, and stars all differ in external appearance and are the results of God’s creation. God has given all things their own glory (appearance) and each serves its designed purpose.
- F. *“So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body”* (15:42-44).
  1. As the flesh of men, beast, birds, fish, terrestrial, celestial, sun, moon, and stars all differ in external appearance even so will the resurrected body. The glory or external appearance of man's resurrected body will be different than when it was terrestrial (earthly).
  2. Man dies and is “*sown*” into the ground at burial. The state of death for man is termed “*corruption*” (*phthora*) = “mortality, death, the decay of matter” (LS 861). Clearly the illustration of the seed being sown in corruption is being alluded to here. Man dies, he decays as a seed, and comes forth a new plant. Man will therefore be resurrected as “*incorruption*” (*aphtharsia*) = “incorruptibility; genitive, unending existence; (figuratively) genuineness:--immortality, incorruption, sincerity” (Strong’s 861).
  3. Secondly, the resurrected dead body of mankind will be sown in “*dishonor*” (*atimia*) and raised in “*glory*” (*doxa*). The word “*atimia*” means “dishonor, disgrace...” (LS 129). It is likely that the word *doxa* is used here to indicate the ‘splendor’ of the resurrected body as opposed or in contrast to the dishonor of the rotting and decaying dead body. Such a body will never die again and is thereby of greater glory.
  4. Thirdly, the physical dead body is buried in the ground in “*weakness*” (*astheneia*) and it will be raised in “*power*” (*dunamis*). The Greek word “*astheneia*” = “want of strength, weakness, feebleness, sickness... sickness, a disease” (LS 123). *Dunamis* = “power, might, strength... ability to do a thing” (LS 213). Again, another contrast is given between the dead decaying body in the earth at death and the resurrected body. The resurrected body will be one of

- unending existence, splendor (magnificent richness or glory; pomp; grandeur) and now defined as a state of great strength, might and power.
5. Finally, Paul says that the physical dead body is sown as a “*natural body*” (*psuchikos*) and “*raised a spiritual body*” (*pneumatikos*). The Greek word *psuchikos* is defined as “of the soul or life, spiritual... concerned with the life only, animal... the natural man.” The Greek word *pneumatikos* means “non-carnal, i.e. (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (daemoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious:--spiritual” (Strong’s 4152). “Of spirit, spiritual” (LS 649). “Spiritual, pertaining to the nature (kind or type) of spirits (soul)” (Moulton 331). This contrast indicates the limited nature of the physical body as opposed to the immortal state of the resurrected body being spiritual. It seems to me that the word “*spiritual*” is a **summation of all the attributes of the resurrected body enumerated above** (; i.e., everlasting beauty and strength [incorruption, glorious, and power] all of which equates to “*spirit*” body).
  6. Now Paul draws the conclusion saying, “*If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body*”: If a natural body (one that is subject to decay, feeble, subject to sickness) was created by God even so God will make that same body spiritual (immortal, magnificent, and filled with strength). Said statement reminds us of what Paul said regarding the comparison of Christ's resurrection with that of mankind's resurrection. **The two are so closely related that the obvious conclusion is that you cannot have one without the other.** Likewise, Paul now states that if there is a physical body there is of necessity is a spiritual body (i.e., you cannot have one without the other). If the physical body exist our natural conclusion should be that a spiritual and eternal body exist). God indeed has the power to do so. Jeremiah said, “*Ah Lord Jehovah! Behold, thou hast made the heavens and the earth by thy great power and by thine outstretched arm; there is nothing too hard for thee...*” (Jeremiah 32:17).
- G. “*So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit*” (15:45).
1. Paul makes a comparison of the beginnings man’s flesh to the end of Man’s flesh (cf. vs. 47) (quote taken from Genesis 2:7)
    1. The first man, Adam, was earthy and made this way by God (Genesis 2:7).
    2. The Second man, Christ, is a life giving spirit (One that gives the physical body an eternal body; for all mankind {just and unjust} {John 5:28-29}).
    3. Like Adam we all presently have a fleshy body with an eternal soul and like Christ, we shall all one day occupy a spiritual body fit for eternity.
- H. “*Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is of heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly*” (15:46-49).
1. Here is order in God’s creation. All mankind exist in the natural (physical and corruptible) state first and then, as a seed planted in the ground germinates, we are resurrected to newness of life.
  2. Like as Adam lived in the natural state first, even so we live in the natural state first. Adam was formed of the dust of the ground and we are all of Adam in this physical state (cf. Genesis 2:7). Jesus; however, is not created of dust as man. Jesus is God (cf. John 1:1 etc.). As God, He is the creator (cf. Colossians 1:16). As creator He is the one through whom all men will be made alive (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:21-23).
  3. Paul now answers the second question, i.e., “*what*” shall the resurrected body be like (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:35). Paul states, “*And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.*”
    - a. Since Jesus is the “*firstfruits*” of us all in the resurrected state, the word of God clearly states that we shall be as He is.
    - b. As we presently “*bear the image*” of Adam, so we will bear the image of Jesus (the “*heavenly*”).

**3a.** The word image is *eikon* in Greek is “a **likeness**, image, portrait, an **image in a mirror**... a semblance... **similitude**” (LS 228). “An image, figure, likeness; the image of the Son of God, into which true Christians are transformed, is likeness not only to the heavenly body (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:49; Philippians 3:21), but also to the most holy and blessed state of mind, which Christ possesses: (Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18)” (Thayer 175).

**3b.** Paul’s says we are going to be just like Jesus. The above passages further clarify this in that we will be immortal, filled with power and splendor. One interesting thought is that when Jesus appeared to those mentioned at 1 Corinthians 15:4-10 in the resurrected state he had a human body form and they recognized who he was (see John 20:14-28). Our conclusion can only be that we will have a similar body to that which we have now yet it will be magnificent, mighty, and eternal (i.e., celestial, spiritual, or heavenly).

**VI. Paul now answers the question of ‘when.’ When will all this take place? (15:50-58):**

- A.** “*Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption*” (15:50).
1. To “*inherit*” (*kleronomeo*) is to “receive a share of an inheritance, to inherit a portion of property... to be an inheritor or heir” (LS 436).
  2. Clearly flesh, blood, and corruption, (the physical man of Adam) does not belong in heaven. Heaven is an eternal and immortal abode and thereby corruptible flesh has no place there. Verse 39 spoke of the various fleshs that were “*terrestrial*” (of the earth and corruptible). Said flesh has no place in eternity. The celestial body (heavenly) is fit for eternity.
  3. The scriptures often speak of the “*kingdom of God*” as the church (cf. Mark 1:15, 9:1; Luke 10:9-11). Here; however, the “kingdom of God” is revealed to be the heavenly abode of the righteous. We may define the church in the here and now as those terrestrial bodies undefiled by sin through the blood of Christ who, if they continue in faith, will comprise the church (kingdom of God) in heaven with a celestial body (see study # 1).
- B.** “*Behold, I tell you a mystery: we all shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*” (15:51-52).
1. The word “*behold*” (*idou*) means “lo! Behold! See there! There! Take it!” (LS 375). Paul expresses his desire for the Corinthians to hear, understand, and **hope**. Those who taught that there was to be no resurrection were zapping the hope out of people.
  2. He tells them “*a mystery*” (it was a mystery and now he reveals the hidden things of the resurrection). “*We all shall not sleep* (die), *but we shall all be changed.*” The antecedent to the plural pronoun “*we*” includes Paul and all of humanity. The fact that Paul includes himself in the “*we*” indicates that he did not know when this would occur but he knew, by revelation, what would occur at that time.
    - a. There will be some of humanity that does not see death (cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18).
    - b. When this change from a terrestrial to a celestial body shall occur No man knows (cf. Matthew 24:36-44); however, the trumpet of God shall sound and mark the time (1 Thessalonians 4:16).
    - c. At that point a “*change*” (*allasso*) will occur in mankind’s bodies (both dead and living). The Greek word *allasso* is “to make other than it is, to change, alter” (LS 37). When false witnesses were hired to speak against Stephen in Acts 6-7; they said, “*for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us*” (Acts 6:14). To “*change*” the customs or laws given by Moses would be to change the Jews way of life. Likewise, when man shall experience the change that shall occur when resurrected he will be different than he was in the mortal state. Man will move from the terrestrial state to the celestial. He will be fitted for eternity with beauty and might. This change shall occur instantaneously, i.e., “*in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.*”
  3. Paul tells us the when as best as he is able, “*for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*”



- a. *“Incorruption”* (*aphtharsia*) = “incorruptible, immortal, imperishable, undying, enduring” (Moulton 61).
  - b. The body that was subject to corruption and decay will be fitted for eternal existence in that day.
- C. *“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality”* (15:53).
1. *“Corruption”* (*phthora*) = “mortality, death, the decay of matter” (LS 861).
  2. The word *“must”* (*dei*) indicates binding necessity (1 Timothy 3:2). This will surely occur because the scriptures cannot be broken (John 10:35).
- D. *“But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?”* (15:54-55):
1. The current and future state of man is illustrated in two ways. First, man will go from a corruptible state (death and decay) to an incorruptible state (unending existence). Secondly, man is said to go from a mortal state to an immortal state.
  2. When this transformation occurs in the resurrection, Paul states that Isaiah’s prophecy will have been fulfilled. Isaiah said, *“death is swallowed up in victory”* (Isaiah 25:8). Victory swallows death and it will be no more (cf. Revelation 20:14).
  3. Furthermore, Paul quotes from Hosea 13:14 saying, *“O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?”* The prophet foretold of a resurrection of the dead so that at the point in which it occurs one would exclaim, ‘where is thy sting o’ death?’ Death stings as a scorpion while man is in the terrestrial state; however, once the transformation of resurrection occurs, death and Hades will be cast into hell and will never more exist. If the scorpion is gone, so is its sting!
- E. *“The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law: but thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (15:56-57).
1. Because man sins he dies physically and spiritually just as the first man Adam (Genesis 2:17; 1 Corinthians 15:21-22). The death sting is due to sin and the power of that sting of death is the law. Law defines sin as transgression (1 John 3:4). If there were no law then no sin would exist (Romans 4:15). If no law or sin existed there would be no death.
  2. Law does exist; however, and thereby sin exist and so does death. The power of sin has been destroyed by the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Mankind is set free from the law and sin through the blood of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 7:1ff). When man now sins, he can ask for forgiveness if he has been made to be in Christ (Galatians 3:27). This is the *“victory through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (see study # 48).
- F. *“Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord”* (15:58).
1. Paul gives the concluding admonition based on the fact that there will be a day when man is resurrected from the dead and given an immortal, magnificent, and mighty celestial body.
  2. To be *“stedfast”* (*hedraios*) is to be “sitting, sedentary, ... sitting fast, steady, steadfast” (LS 225). Closely related is the word *“unmovable”* (*ametakinetos*) i.e., “immovable” (LS 43); “firm” (Moulton 18).
  3. The child of God is to stay firm in the faith and *“abound in the work of the Lord”* come what may in life because there is indeed a day of resurrection. What is the work of the Lord? (see study # 84; The Work of the Individual Christian)
    - a. The work of the Lord is participating in the work of the church (edification of members, teaching the lost, providing care for needy saints, and exercising discipline when necessary).
    - b. The work of the Lord is meeting your individual spiritual responsibilities. Such responsibilities are helping the needy, studying the word of God, preaching to the lost, and edifying your fellow brethren.
  4. Such *“labor”* will not be done in *“vain”* (useless) because there will be a day we are resurrected from the dead. We cannot get depressed, despondent, discouraged, downtrodden, and give up

on our hope. Neither can we eternally afford to let a false teacher remove our hope through his lies.

5. Here are the facts: We will be raised from the dead no matter what the condition of our soul. If the just and unjust are raised with a celestial body we may draw some natural conclusions. The ungodly will have this immortal, magnificent, and strong eternal body that will suffer for ever in hell. The godly will have a celestial body in heaven with the Lord for all eternity. Paul is encouraging every man and woman of all times to never loose hope but to continue to press forward in faith. The day of the Lord is coming.

## Synopsis of I Corinthians 15

Jesus said, *“Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment”* (John 5:28-29). Likewise, as the apostle Paul gave his defense before Felix, he said, *“... there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust”* (Acts 24:15).

Some brethren in Corinth were teaching that there would be no resurrection of the dead (1 Corinthians 15:12). These teachers apparently believed Jesus had been raised yet they rejected the general resurrection of mankind. Paul proves the general resurrection of the dead by proving Jesus’ resurrection, who is the *“firstfruits of them that are asleep”* (1 Corinthians 15:20). Paul’s reasoning is that if Christ was raised then so must all mankind be raised as well (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). The consequences of no resurrection would be disastrous. If there was not to be a general resurrection of the dead then it stands to reason that Christ never was raised (1 Corinthians 15:13). Secondly, the apostle’s preaching is void of reason (1 Corinthians 15:14) and they are found as *“false witnesses”* (1 Corinthians 15:15). Thirdly, the faith of the Corinthians is useless (1 Corinthians 15:14). Fourthly, all are still in their sins (1 Corinthians 15:17). Fifthly, those who have died have perished never to be alive again (1 Corinthians 15:18). Sixthly, the Christian therefore has no real hope (1 Corinthians 15:19) and we may as well *“eat and drink, for tomorrow we die”* (1 Corinthians 15:32). The dead, however, will be raised as was Jesus. I Corinthians 15 gives answers to three questions:

### First: How will the Dead be Raised?

Paul first compares the terrestrial body of corruption and dishonor to a seed that is planted in the ground. The seed decays and appears to be dead; however, in due time the seed produces a new plant (1 Corinthians 15:35-38). Likewise, the dead body will be resurrected.

### Secondly: What type of Body will the Resurrected Have?

The apostle Paul gives seven descriptive ideas as to what the resurrected body will be like. **First**, the terrestrial body will be raised incorruptible (eternal) (1 Corinthians 15:43). **Secondly**, the resurrected body will be raised in *“glory”* (i.e., the external appearance of splendor). **Thirdly**, Paul explains that the resurrected body will be *“raised in power”* (i.e., power and might). **Forth**, the resurrected body will not be natural but rather *“spiritual”* (this word appears to sum up all the six descriptive ideas of the resurrected body). **Fifthly**, the resurrected body shall *“bear the image of the heavenly”* (i.e., the resurrected body will be like and similar to the Lord’s body, angels, and heavenly things - see Matthew 22:30; Philippians 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2). **Sixthly**, Paul further defines the resurrected body by saying that *“flesh and blood will not inherit the kingdom of God.”* The **seventh** point to note about the resurrected body is that it will be totally different than the natural physical bodies that we now occupy. Paul thereby terms it a *“change”* in relationship to what we are among the living on earth. Considering the fact that Christ was recognized by those who saw him in the resurrected state as a person having bodily form we gain greater incite into what this resurrected body will be like (see Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:36-42; John 20:19-29).

### Thirdly: When will the Resurrection Occur?

Paul did not know when the resurrection would occur and neither has anyone else in the history of man (cf. Matthew 24:36-44). Rather than answering the question of when, Paul gives details as to what will transpire when the resurrection does happen. First, total victory over Satan and death will be achieved by Christ (1 Corinthians 15:24-28). Secondly, the trumpet of the Lord shall sound (1 Corinthians 15:52; 1 Thessalonians 4:16) and all the dead shall rise (1 Thessalonians 4:13-18). Third, mankind will be changed to a state of immortality at the blink of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

## Chapter 16

### Preface to Chapter

Paul has effectively dealt with the errors of the brethren in Corinth. He has concluded his words of admonition to these brethren with a detailed discussion on the resurrection of all mankind. Such words are designed to infuse hope and excitement in the saint.

Chapter 16 adds no new area of Corinthian error. This final chapter very typically approaches the brethren with words of encouragement and gives the location and date of this epistle (1 Corinthians 16:8-9).

#### I. The Collection for the Saints (16:1-4):

- A. *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come”* (16:1-2).
1. Paul left Antioch of Pisidia during the year 53 AD and headed west to Galatia on what is referred to as the third tour of gospel preaching (Acts 18:23). He then traveled to Ephesus (Acts 19:1). Three months were spent reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue and making disciples (Acts 19:8). Paul spent two additional years *“reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus”* in Ephesus which would bring the date to 55 AD (Acts 19:9-10). At some point during Paul’s stay in Ephesus, he gained intelligence that the brethren in Jerusalem were in financial need. Paul began spreading the word of their needs first to the Galatian brethren (1 Corinthians 16:1), then to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:1ff), and finally to all Macedonia and Achaia (Romans 15:26-27).
  2. These verses illustrate to us how funds were collected in the NT church.
    - a. A common treasury existed (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 4:14-16; 1 Timothy 5).
    - b. The funds were collected on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2). Though this is the first mention of a first day of the week collection we have no record of its beginning or its ending.
    - c. Each was to give as he had *“prospered”* (1 Corinthians 16:2) and *“purposed”* because *“God loves a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7). Today, we continue to lay by in store as we have prospered on the first day of the week. The funds are moved to a common treasury and the work of the church is supported by these funds (see study # 87; The Worship of the Church - Giving).
- B. *“And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me”* (16:3-4):
1. The *“bounty”* would be the funds collected for the needy saints. These funds would be sent by the hands of those of the individual church that they were collected and hand delivered to the needy saints in Jerusalem. Here is an apostolic example of needy saints being helped by the church. Some of our institutional friends would have us collect funds from a multitude of churches, send the collection to one church and then that one church would distribute all funds to the needy and that not to the saints alone but the needy of the world (see study # 86; Institutionalism). One thing that must be noted is that the current distress in Judea was not limited to the saints of God but rather all were feeling the sting (see Romans 15:25-27).
  2. Paul is willing to accompany these brethren to Judea if the need arises.

## II. Paul's intentions to go to Macedonia (16:5-12):

- A. *"But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia; but with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may set me forward on my journey whithersoever I go. For I do not wish to see you now by the way; for I hope to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit."* (16:5-6).
1. Paul's intentions were to come to Achaia and Macedonia to collect funds from the gentile churches for the needy saints in Judea.
  2. Around the year 57 to 58 AD (after three years in Ephesus), Paul traveled north to Troas and awaits the arrival of Titus (2 Corinthians 2:12-13). Not finding Titus, Paul traveled across the Aegean Sea and then to Philippi. It is very likely that Paul finds Titus here and then pens the second epistle to the Corinthian brethren (cf. 2 Corinthians 7:5-8) (~ 58 AD; only two years after the first letter; cf. 2 Corinthians 9:2).
  3. Heading southward through Macedonia, Paul eventually comes to Corinth and remains for three months (Acts 20:1-3). It is most probable that Paul penned the letter to the Romans at this time (cf. Romans 15:25; 16:1).
  4. It seems as Paul is not sure as to whether he would be accompanying the representatives of the gentile churches to Judea or not at the writing of this letter in Ephesus. His itinerary becomes clearer once arriving in Corinth at 58 to 59 AD. According to his writing to the Romans he knew then that he would be traveling back to Judea before seeing the Roman brethren (cf. Romans 15:22ff).
  5. Each church may have had their own representative to carry the collected relief back to Judea and Paul accompanied them on the trip (cf. Acts 20:4).
- B. *"But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries"* (16:8-9).
1. This verse gives us the current location of Paul as he writes 1 Corinthians and helps with dating the epistle. Paul had come to Ephesus on his third tour of preaching around 55 AD (cf. Acts 19:1ff).
  2. The Passover feast occurred on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the first month (Leviticus 23:5). Between the Passover and Pentecost (50 days after Passover) was the Feast of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6). The mention of Pentecost does not infer that Paul was keeping the Mosaic feast but rather it was used as a benchmark of time. The statement reveals how near Paul was to visiting the brethren in Corinth and was sure to be encouraging to some.
  3. A great door of opportunity to preach the gospel was Paul's good hindrance from coming to the Corinthians sooner. A multitude of Asian brethren were obeying the gospel and Paul wanted to remain as long as necessary (Read Acts 19:10, 26 to get the picture).
  4. While Paul was preaching he ran into troubles (*adversaries*). Paul's encounter with Demetrius over his preaching against idolatry is one such case of adversaries he dealt with while in Ephesus (Acts 19:23ff). There were times, while in Ephesus, that Paul feared for his life due to the intense persecution of adversaries (2 Corinthians 1:8). It may be that Paul refers to his being thrown to wild beast in Ephesus as Roman civil punishment (1 Corinthians 15:32).
- C. *"Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do: Let no man therefore despise him. But set him forward on his journey in peace, that he may come unto me: for I expect him with the brethren"* (16:10-11).
1. Paul had sent Timothy ahead of him to Corinth (1 Corinthians 4:17). Erastus accompanied Timothy on this trip (Acts 19:22).
  2. At some point Titus had been sent to Corinth as well and brought back a report to Paul which prompted the second epistle to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 7:5ff). At the introduction of 2 Corinthians (1:1) Timothy is apparently now with Paul in Macedonia (possibly Philippi). From these clues it seems likely that Timothy never made it to Corinth but Titus did.
  3. Paul commands that "*if*" Timothy make it that he "*be with you without fear*" and secondly no one is to "*despise*" him. The word "*despise*" (*exoutheneo*) is to "set at naught" (LS 276); "To make light of, set at naught, despise, contemn, treat with contempt and scorn, disregard; of

small account” (Moulton 148). Why would Paul write such a command in relationship to Timothy? Paul's writing to Timothy may give us a clue.

4. Later, Paul would tell Timothy to “*let no man despise thy youth*” (1 Timothy 4:12).
  - a. As we take our minds back to the beginnings of this epistle and the reason for its writing one may easily determine why Paul wrote this statement about Timothy.
  - b. First, Timothy was obviously very young. Such youth would be reason for some not to give a serious ear to him. Secondly, the Corinthian brethren were guilty of many things and had false teachers among them. Paul knew that these brethren had the capacity to abuse the young man and thereby gives his commendation. Those of conviction would need to stand with this young man and not leave him to fight any doctrinal battles alone (see 1 Timothy 4:12).
- D. “*But as touching Apollos the brother, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren: and it was not at all his will to come now; but he will come when he shall have opportunity*” (16:12).
  1. The phrase, “*as touching*” indicates that the Corinthians had made it known to Paul that they would like to have Apollos come back to Corinth to visit them (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:1).
  2. Apollos had earlier been in Ephesus around 54 AD (Acts 18:24 – 19:1). Apollos may have been the one who hand delivered the letters from the Corinthians to Paul as mentioned 1 Corinthians 1:11 and 7:1.
  3. It is likely that Paul intended for Apollos and “*the brethren*” to hand deliver the first epistle to the Corinthians; however, Apollos was not willed to do so at that time (see 1 Corinthians 16:12). Who “*the brethren*” were that delivered the first epistle to the Corinthians is unknown. It is possible that “the brethren” included Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (see 1 Corinthians 16:17-18) as well as Titus (see 2 Corinthians 7:7-15).
  4. When Paul received and read the Corinthian letters, Paul would have urged Apollos to return to Corinth; however, he had further work to do elsewhere.

### III. Final exhortations and salutations (16:13-24):

- A. “*Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong*” (16:13).
  1. To “*watch*” (*gregoreuo*) is “to be awake” (LS 169); “to be awake, to watch, to be watchful, attentive, vigilant, circumspect” (Moulton 82). Paul had earlier told the Corinthians to “*Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not...*” (1 Corinthians 15:34). The Corinthians, as well as all Christians, should be aware of their surroundings. False teachers, factions, and false practices were making inroads into the body of Christ and thereby Paul tells them to “*watch*” (see also 1 Thessalonians 5:6). Christians today need to open their eyes to church problems rather than putting them out of sight and out of mind.
  2. **Secondly**, Paul admonishes them to “*stand fast in the faith.*” To “*stand fast*” (*steko*) is to “to stand” (LS 746); “to make a stand, set, place” (Moulton 203). The exact word is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 where Paul said, “*So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours.*” Rather than retreating in time of conflict, Paul admonishes the brethren to take a stand in the faith (gospel truths) (see also Colossians 2:5).
  3. **Thirdly**, Paul admonishes the brethren to “*quit you like men.*” This English phrase is represented by one word in the Greek (*andrizomai*). *Andrizomai* is “to make a man of; to come to manhood, behave like a man” (LS 65). This is the only use of the Greek word in the NT. Following the context of watching for enemies of truth, standing fast against them, and now the Christian is to take such a stand in a courageous manly way. The workers of error are not weak but persistent, boisterous, and at times they are in the majority. To stand against error takes a spirit of manliness (i.e., strength, conviction, resilience, and a willing spirit to defend truth with courage knowing that God is with you).
  4. **Fourthly**, Paul encourages the Corinthians to be “*strong.*” Let fears of the workers of Satan flee the Christian. Each Christian is to be filled with strength for the battle at hand. The picture is almost complete. The Christian is to be armed to the teeth with the gospel message being driven forward by hope of eternal salvation (cf. Ephesians 6:10-19 for a commentary of

1 Corinthians 16:13). The victory belongs to those who put their trust in the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:57-58; 1 John 4:4; 5:4).

- B. *“Let all that you do be done in love”* (16:14). Love completes our picture of Christian duty and responsibility in the face of sin in the church. The aforementioned battle of faction and disunity in the church can only be battled correctly if love is the motivation. Just as Paul demanded love to be the motivation behind spiritual gifts even so he now explains that love must be the motive for every act of defending truth. We are to care for the physical and spiritual well being of brethren because we love their souls and for no other reason (1 John 3:16; 4:10-17). Now we find that even in battle against the ungodly influences of faction, disunity, and sin in general the Christian's every move is to be motivated by love (see study # 71). If there be any other motivation such as envy, strife, or jealousy it is not the work nor battle of the Lord's.
- C. *“Now I beseech you, brethren (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints), that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth”* (16:15-16).
1. Stephanas was mentioned in 1 Corinthians 1:16 as having been baptized by Paul. Stephanas and his house were the *“firstfruits of Achaia.”* Like as Jesus is the firstfruits of all mankind who will be resurrected to die no more even so Stephanas and his house were the first to obey the gospel in this area (i.e., Achaia).
  2. Stephanas and his house had *“set themselves to minister unto the saints.”* To *“set”* (*tasso*) is “to draw up in order of battle, to form, array, marshal, both of troops and ships... to be appointed to a service” (LS 793); “To devote, to a pursuit” (Moulton 398). This self appointment of devotion indicates the willingness and zeal on the part of Stephanas and his house to pursue souls in the great battle with Satan by preaching the gospel. Stephanas' work would be *“unto the saints”* (i.e., edifying and building them up to withstand Satan and his tools of worldliness) (see study # 14; Preacher's Work of Edification).
  3. Those who so devote themselves to preaching the gospel are to be *“submitted”* to just as the wife is subject to the husband (Ephesians 5:22); all are subject to civil government (Romans 13:1), the servant is to the master (Titus 2:9), and all Christians to each other (Ephesians 5:21). Such submission is in the area of helping the work and the worker in any way that is needed that the gospel message may be delivered to the lost, saints edified, and that effective warfare may be waged against false teachers and their sympathizers.
- D. *“And I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied. For they refreshed my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such”* (16:17-18).
1. Apparently as Paul is in Ephesus these three men come to Paul bringing him news of Corinth. It appears that these three men, along with Titus and possibly Apollos, comprise *“the brethren”* Paul speaks of at 1 Corinthians 16:12 (i.e., those who brought the two letters from Corinth to Paul - one from the house of Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11) and the letter mentioned in 1 Corinthians 7:1).
  2. The *“refreshment”* that Paul received of these three could not have been in the activities of the church as a whole since there were many active errors. There are, as I see it, three things that may have refreshed Paul's soul in relationship to the Corinthians. **First**, Paul was refreshed by simply hearing from the brethren he so loved even though there were troubles. **Secondly**, not all the Corinthian brethren were caught up in all these troubles. Many would have been doing all they could do to unite the brethren in truth. **Thirdly**, Paul may have been refreshed by the fact that the Corinthians were obviously concerned about their spiritual direction. Such concern was poured out in the two letters Paul received and thereby there was hope for all.
- E. *“The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house. All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand”* (16:19-21).
1. Note that Paul was not repulsed by the Corinthians even though many were in sin. He was confident that their love of God, His truths, and promises of eternity would outweigh their love of this world.

2. Here is a passage that helps us understand the relationship between churches in the NT. Churches were locally organized and autonomous; however, they had fellowship and communicated together in truth (see study # 24).
  3. The word “*churches*” of Asia is a plural noun (i.e., more than one church - seven churches of Asia revealed in the book of Revelation). Paul had established an active relationship with a multitude of churches in Asia (cf. Acts 19:26). If these churches were to “*salute*” the church in Corinth there must have been communication between each other (i.e., a knowledge of each other). The word “*salute*” (*aspazomai*) means “to welcome kindly bid welcome, greet” (LS 124). NT churches were not isolationist but rather they communicated with each other in truth.
    - a. Here is fellowship defined in the realm of the erring. Other churches were allowed by Paul to ‘greet’ or “*salute*” the brethren in Corinth even though they were guilty of a multitude of sins (cf. Skeletal Outline of I Corinthians in the Introduction of this study).
    - b. No such greeting may be extended toward those who continue in said sins (cf. 2 John 9-11). Apparently the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5 was in a different situation than the brethren as a whole at Corinth. Though brethren were defrauding one another in the civil courts (1 Corinthians 6:7), lacking love (1 Corinthians 12-13), teaching false doctrines on the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12) and a multitude of other sins they were apparently viewed in a different light than the un-repenting fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5. If this is not so, how could Paul extend a “*salutation*” (1 Corinthians 16:21) along with “*all the brethren*” (1 Corinthians 16:20) to an un-repenting church? What was different than the sin of I Corinthians 5 and the others mentioned in this book? The difference must have been in their accepting the sinner as a whole congregation with tolerance rather than exposing his sins (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:2). Secondly, it may be said that 1 Corinthians 5 would apply to every sinner mentioned in 1 Corinthians if there were no repentance. I would conclude then that the fifth chapter serves as a benchmark chapter against all those who would persist in their sins without repentance and prayer for forgiveness. They must not be ignored due to the fact that their souls are in jeopardy.
    - c. Paul would not contradict the teachings of another apostle in this area (cf. 2 John 9-11). The two are clearly saying the same thing. Patience and longsuffering (i.e., teaching of truth) must be applied to the erring before one is delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Corinthians 5:5). We must conclude then that Paul was sending salutations to the brethren as a whole. They had transgressed in many areas; however, with proper teaching and attitude toward truth, they would exercise the discipline against the fornicator of 1 Corinthians 5 and root out all the other errors mentioned in this epistle if the need arise.
  4. Included in those who saluted the Corinthian brethren was Aquila and Priscilla of Ephesus. Paul first met these two faithful Christians in Corinth (Acts 18:1ff).
  5. Paul then commands that the brethren “*Salute one another with a holy kiss.*” The apostle Paul would later write to the Roman brethren saying, “*Salute one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ salute you*” (Romans 16:16). Again, the word “*salute*” means to greet, welcome, or wish well. The context of the chapter indicates that this is not a general act of affection to those of the world but rather a symbol that illustrates one’s standing with God and fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. The Christian could not possibly greet, welcome into their fellowship, or wish one well who was lost in sin. If God does not receive one how can we (1 John 1:5-7)? The way in which brethren greeted each other in the early church was with a literal kiss (cf. Acts 20:36-38). Paul terms it a “*holy kiss*” because it was distinguished from a kiss one might give as a display of affection toward a mate or one’s own children.
- F. “*If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha*” (16:22).
1. Interestingly Paul does not use the Greek word *agape* but *phileo* here. The Greek word *phileo* means “to love, regard with affection... to treat affectionately or kindly, to welcome a guest” (LS 862).
  2. Paul makes a clear statement regarding the one who has no affection toward Jesus Christ. Such a one is cursed to eternal damnation unless he changes. The “*holy kiss*” of mutual brotherly

affection and fellowship could not be extended to such a one because he or she does not share in that common affection for God.

- G. *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.”* (16:23-24).
1. Paul would that the Corinthians experience the grace of God through their obedience (cf. Romans 5:1-4).
  2. The love of Paul was the love of souls no matter where their residence may be (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:28).

### **Synopsis of I Corinthians 16**

Paul gives instructions regarding a collection for the needy saints in Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:1-4). Secondly he gives his projected itinerary. Paul’s desire is to apparently supervise the final collection and send this money, with local church representatives, to Jerusalem and then head toward Rome (1 Corinthians 16:6). The reading of Romans 15:25-27, which was written approximately one year latter than 1 Corinthians, indicates that Paul would have to go back to Jerusalem with the collected funds.

The encouragement is primarily found at 1 Corinthians 16:13-14 where Paul states, *“Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. Let all that ye do be done in love.”* This five fold admonition summarizes the position Paul advocates in the faithful Christians at Corinth in light of all the current problems. These brethren are commanded to *“watch”* or be attentive to the errors around them and not to be deceived or misled by any (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33). Secondly, they are to *“stand fast”* or take a stand against the error around them rather than being tolerant or even taking part in it (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:1ff). Thirdly, Paul admonishes the brethren to be manly, i.e., courageous in this stand against error (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:2-3). Fourthly, the faithful Corinthians are to be *“strong.”* The faithful Corinthians were to let the sword of God’s word be wielded in strength (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:14-17). Lastly, Paul commands that all these efforts against error must be conducted with a spirit of *“love.”* Love takes into consideration the betterment of man’s physical and spiritual well being (cf. 1 John 3:16-17; 4:10-17). When those who are in error see your genuine concern for their soul it may be that they will at least try to study with you about your differences.

Paul concludes the letter with admonitions of fellowship and greetings. One cannot help but note the tender affection that the early saints had for each other as we read this final chapter. The churches of Jesus Christ in this first century obviously communicated with each other. They knew of each other's troubles (1 Corinthians 16:1ff) and their faithfulness or lack thereof (1 Corinthians 16:19). This communication was not universal organization; yet, a union together in truth. All faithful saints are united in truth and organized locally. For this cause Paul could say, *“ALL the brethren salute (greet) you. Salute one another with a holy kiss”* (1 Corinthians 16:20).