

First Corinthians

A Commentary

By: R. F. Knox, Jr



First Corinthians (A Commentary)
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(CD on First Corinthians included)

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A Preface

When this commentary on First Corinthians was first read by this writer, he was especially impressed with the detail and attention to the inspired phrases and phraseology paid by the author, R.F. Knox, Jr. In this volume, “Bobby” has made every effort to compose a fair treatment of the Biblical text both in referencing and comparing various commentators **and** Bible versions, especially the King James, American Standard (1901), and the New King James.

The church of Christ at Corinth had problems with a large number of doctrinal matters, and this commentary delves into the Corinthian’s errors **and** the erroneous use of the epistle by modern Bible students. At each point of error, brother Knox explains in much detail what the problem is and its Biblical answer. Modernists like to point to those involved in the restoration of New Testament Christianity and to mock such efforts by asking whether one is trying to restore the error-plagued church at Corinth. What such modernist fail to recognize is that there **must** have been a model or pattern which New Testament Christians could follow or the apostle Paul would not have written to Corinth demanding that those early Christians correct their errors. This commentary does **not** agree with modernism and brother Knox makes it clear that he believes that First Corinthians is “God-breathed” and thus originated in the mind of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

The standard of Biblical and grammatical excellence attained in this commentary has caused this writer to opt for the commentaries inclusion as a textbook at Memphis School of Preaching. This commentary can find a place in any serious student of the Bible’s library.

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
Dean of Students
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Acknowledgments

How does one acknowledge all of the many people who have contributed in either a direct or indirect way to this book? Past teachers, students in Bible classes, commentators, sermons delivered by various preachers; all have contributed to this book. Among those who mean so much to this writer were his teachers at Memphis School of Preaching (Richard Curry, Roy J. Hearn, Frank Young, J.A. McNutt, E.L. Whitaker, and John Renshaw); and one from Alabama Christian School of Religion (Curtis Cates). Regarding these teachers, it must be admitted that this writer's favorite was Frank Young who taught me much even after graduating. His counsel was asked for and valued on many occasions, and even though he would not put his work into writing (He believed if one made a doctrinal mistake and learned of it later, GOD would forgive, but the brethren never would.), he encouraged this writer to take pen in hand and write for publication (Commentary on Jude).

A special thanks is also due to the many tireless hours spent by Ginny Knox, Linda Cruz, Harold "Skip" Andrews, and Keith A. Mosher, Sr. as they proofread and made many valuable suggestions. Also, Peter DeGraff for making the master for the PDF file. No book can be published without such diligent efforts by friends like these.

A special acknowledgment is due to this writer's wife (Virginia R. Knox). "Ginny" has stood beside this writer through thick and thin, encouraging and gently correcting where it was needed. Toward the end of this work she joked about this writer loving First Corinthians more than her because of the long hours spent completing the manuscript. Without her by my side this work could not have been accomplished. I love you, Ginny, thank you for being my friend and mate.

R.F. (Bob) Knox, Jr.

Introduction to First Corinthians

Corinth

"Corinth was located on the southwest end of the isthmus that joined the southern part of the Greek peninsula with the mainland to the north. The city was located on an elevated plain at the foot of Acrocorinth, a rugged hill reaching 1,886 feet above sea level. Corinth was a maritime city located between two important seaports: the port of Lechaion on the Gulf of Corinth about two miles to the north and the port of Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf about six miles east of Corinth."

(Thus, the Corinthians controlled the trade routes from north to south as well as those between these two ports. It is no wonder it became a rich and powerful city.)

Located at the foot of Acrocorinth and at the southwest end of the isthmus, Corinth was relatively easy to defend. The Corinthians controlled the east-west trade across the isthmus as well as trade between the Peloponnesus and the area of Greece to the north. The city experienced rapid growth and prosperity, even colonizing Syracuse on Sicily and the Island of Corcyra on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. Pottery and bronze were exported throughout the Mediterranean world.

For a century (about 350 to 250 B.C.) Corinth was the largest and most prosperous city of mainland Greece. Later, as a member of the Achaean League, Corinth clashed with Rome. Finally, the city was destroyed in 146 B.C. L. Mummius, the Roman consul, burned the city, killed the men, and sold the women and children into slavery. For a hundred years the city was desolate.

Julius Caesar rebuilt the city in 44 B.C., and it quickly became an important city in the Roman Empire" (Holman Bible Dictionary, R.E. Glaze, computer version). In the days of the Apostle Paul, this city is believed to have had a population of around half a million people. Today its population is about 20,000.

How Did the Church Get its Start in Corinth?

McGarvey and Barnes believe Apollos was working in Corinth before Paul got there; thus starting the congregation. A study of Acts 18:1-18 in conjunction with First Corinthians 3:6, will show that Paul established this congregation.

Why Was the Epistle Written?

The Corinthians had written a letter to Paul asking him questions regarding the many problems they were having in the church (See notes on 7:1). Corinth was an extremely evil city, and its influence had affected the church (McGarvey, p. 48). They needed to be corrected, and re-established in the doctrines of Christ.

Where Was the Epistle Written From?

When one considers First Corinthians 16:8-9, there can be no doubt Paul wrote this letter from Ephesus. Apollos would preach in Ephesus and Corinth following Paul (1 Cor. 3:6).

When Was the Epistle Written?

McGarvey states it was written a little before Pentecost in A.D. 57 (p. 49). Willis believes it was written in either A.D. 55 or 56 (p. 7). Barnes believes it was written in the spring of A.D. 56 or 57 (p. 7). Macknight believes it was written either in late A.D. 56, or early 57 (p. 11). Robertson believes it was in the spring of either A.D. 54 or 55 (p. 65). Lipscomb believes it was written in A.D. 57 (p. 17).

As with all the books of the New Testament, the date really does not matter; as long as they were not written after the first century. If the date were that important, it would have been included in each epistle.

First Corinthians — Chapter One

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| I Cor. 1:1 "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of GOD, and Sosthenes our brother," | "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of GOD, and Sosthenes our brother," (ASV) | "Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of GOD, and Sosthenes our brother," (NKJV) |
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Paul begins by affirming his apostleship. This defense was made necessary because of those who tried to attack his apostleship. He affirms that he is a called apostle of Jesus Christ. The record of Paul's call is in Acts chapter nine, when he was on the road to Damascus to persecute Christians. Notice, in making this claim that Paul is stating the same thing he did in Galatians 1:1; **"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and GOD the father, Who raised Him from the dead);"**

Thus, he emphasizes the fact that he did not take this honorable office upon himself, nor did any man appoint him to the position; rather he was chosen for this office by GOD through His Son (cf. Rom. 1:1).

Sosthenes is thought by some to be the same as the traveling companion of Paul (Acts 18:12-17). Since that Sosthenes caused the Jews to rise up against Paul, and then suffered a beating for the uprising; this would be an amazing turn of events for him now to follow the Christ, and work with the one whom he had previously persecuted. But at best one cannot say with any certainty who this Sosthenes was, other than his being a brother in Christ. Why does Paul mention him at the beginning of this epistle? Probably, as he did in a number of his other epistles, Sosthenes is mentioned as one whom the people at Corinth knew well. Whoever he was, he agreed with Paul's writings in this letter.

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| I Cor. 1:2 "Unto the church of GOD which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our lord, both theirs and ours:" | "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:" (ASV) | "To the church of GOD which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:" (NKJV) |
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SANCTIFIED: **(4.T)** – *"To separate, set apart"* (Young's, p. 834). *"To render or acknowledge to be venerable, to hallow...to separate from things profane and dedicate to GOD, to consecrate and so render inviolable"* (Thayer, p. 6). *"To make holy, sanctify...those who are sanctified, is a reference to Christians in general"* (Zodhiates, p. 69); *"Make holy, consecrate, sanctify"* (Bauer, p. 8).

SAINTS: **(4H)** – *"To set apart, separate"* (Young's, p. 831). *"Set apart for GOD, to be, as it were, exclusively His"* (Thayer, p. 6-7); *"Its fundamental idea is separation, consecration, devotion to the service of Deity, sharing in God's purity and abstaining from earth's defilement"* (Zodhiates, p. 70); *"Pure, perfect, worthy of God...of human beings consecrated to God"* (Bauer, p. 9).

LORD: **(6D4H)** – *"Lord, sir, master"* (Young's, p. 619). *"He to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has the power of deciding; master, lord"* (Thayer, p. 365). *"Might, power. Lord, master, owner"* (Zodhiates, p. 900).

"Unto the church of GOD which is at Corinth," denotes ownership. The church belongs to GOD. Man does not own the church. Man did not design it, pay the price for it, nor establish it. The church is the called out body of Christ, as the term is commonly used in the New Testament. But it should be remembered, the word **"church"** can refer to any called out group, good or bad (Cf. Acts 19:32, 39, 41 — **"assembly"**).

Notice there are several designations given in this passage for those who make up the church. The first of these calls those in the church **"sanctified."** But notice where sanctification is to be found: it is **"in Christ."** The Scriptures teach that one gets **"into Christ"** through baptism (Gal. 3:26-27; Rom. 6:3-4).

Those who are the **"church of GOD,"** who are **"sanctified,"** are also called **"saints."** Notice, all in every place who call upon the name of Jesus are called saints. Thus, this is not a title for special Christians, but rather one for all Christians. It is not a title bestowed on someone after he dies, but rather one bestowed on those who are alive.

One should further notice Jesus Christ is to be the **"Lord."** The Lord has the right to tell His servants what

they must do, and their obligation is simply to obey.

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| I Cor. 1:3 "Grace be unto you, and peace, from GOD our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." | "Grace to you and peace from GOD our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (ASV) | "Grace to you and peace from GOD our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." (NKJV) |
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GRACE: **ΠΑΡΕΛΛΗΛΟ**-- *"Grace, graciousness"* (Young's, p. 431); *"Good-will, loving-kindness, favor"* (Thayer, p. 666); *"Of the grace, favor and goodwill of GOD and Christ as exercised toward men"* (Zodhiates, p. 1469); *"Graciousness, attractiveness...favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill"* (Bauer, p. 877); *"Undeserved acceptance and love received from another, especially the characteristic attitude of GOD in providing salvation for sinners"* (Holman's CD Bible Dictionary).

PEACE: **ΕΙΡΗΝΗ**-- *"Peace, unity, concord"* (Young's, p. 736); *"The tranquil state of a soul assured of its salvation through Christ, and so fearing nothing from GOD and content with its earthly lot, of whatsoever that is"* (Thayer, p. 182); *"Peace, meaning health, welfare, prosperity, every kind of good"* (Zodhiates, p. 519); *Peace, harmony"* (Bauer, p. 227).

Notice the dual wish for these brethren. First, he wishes they might have the unmerited favor of GOD (grace), and second, he wishes peace from GOD and Jesus Christ our Lord. This peace can only come when man has been reconciled to GOD. So many have the idea that GOD'S grace is wholly conditional upon His desire to favor one. But a simple question should dispel this thought. If GOD arbitrarily favors one and does not favor another, then He would be a respecter of persons, would He not?

"Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that GOD is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34-35). From this passage it is clear GOD'S grace and peace rest upon those who **fear Him**, and **work righteousness**; for those are the people He accepts.

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| I Cor. 1:4 "I thank my GOD always on your behalf, for the grace of GOD which is given you by Jesus Christ;" | "I thank my GOD always concerning you, for the grace of GOD which was given you in Christ Jesus;" (ASV) | "I thank my GOD always concerning you for the grace of GOD which was given to you by Christ Jesus," (NKJV) |
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The grace which GOD bestows is used as a general term here, and may refer to their salvation, continuing gifts of health, et cetera, or even to the miraculous gifts which He had bestowed on them. He thanks GOD for the grace **"which is given."** This is in the aorist tense, which signifies something which was given in the past; possibly their salvation or the miraculous gifts (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version). Notice in the previous verse he prayed they should have the grace of GOD and here he talks about the grace of GOD they had received in the past. The question

should be asked, *"What about the present?"*

Notice also that the grace he speaks of here is **"in Jesus Christ"** (ASV). GOD'S grace can only be found in Christ in this age; i.e., the grace which is manifested toward the saved. There are senses in which GOD'S grace is bestowed upon all men — sunshine, rain, etcetera. There is also the sense in which He has provided the means of salvation for all men. But here the sense is concerning those blessings which are bestowed upon those who are **"in Christ."**

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| I Cor. 1:5 "That in every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge;" | "that in everything ye were enriched in Him, in all utterance and all knowledge;" (ASV) | "that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge," (NKJV) |
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ENRICHED: **ΠΟΡΕΥΩ** -- *"To make rich"* (Young's, p. 302); *"To make rich, to enrich,...to be richly furnished"* (Thayer, p. 519); *"Make rich"* (Bauer, p. 674).

What they were enriched in, seems to be in **"utterance"** and **"knowledge."** With the spiritual gifts they had received, there can be no doubt they had the

truth, and as Willis points out, they had had many great teachers to guide them, as is evidenced by verse twelve (Paul, Apollos, Peter). Considering this guidance their

actions, later revealed, are totally inexcusable. They had the knowledge, but they had not acted according to knowledge. This should sound a warning that when one has the

knowledge of GOD, and is aware of GOD'S teaching, and one does not act according to that knowledge, one is no better than any sinner.

Observe where their riches are to be found. Like "grace," their riches are found "in Him" (ASV). The utterances or teachings of true men of GOD ultimately have come from Jesus. The Lord came to this earth, in part, to reveal GOD'S will to fallen mankind. Truly one is made rich in Him.

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| I Cor. 1:6-7 "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:" | "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (ASV) | "even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ," (NKJV) |
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There can be no doubt that miraculous gifts are involved in this text. The testimony of Christ was confirmed unto them, in part, through these miraculous gifts. It was always the purpose of miraculous events to confirm the message of GOD. Notice what Jesus said:

"And these signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of GOD. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:17-20).

As the apostles went forth they were going to be able to perform these miracles, "confirming the word with signs following." Notice also the word of GOD was taught, and then the signs followed. Not only was the testimony of Christ confirmed by the miracles, but it was also confirmed by those who were eyewitnesses of Him.

"For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him" (Heb. 2:2-3, emphasis mine RK).

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD" (I Cor. 2:1).

Thus, the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them by

those who had heard His testimony, and by the miracles which confirmed the truth of their message.

Thee Corinthians were not lacking in any ability to perform miracles. One reads later, the Corinthians were endowed with an abundance of miraculous gifts (chapter 12). And they had had the best of teachers, Paul.

"Waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ," is a phrase denoting their hope, and the hope of all Christians. The word "coming" is translated in the ASV as "revelation." The word "coming" (**•B@V8LR4**), means "To reveal. Revelation, uncovering, unveiling, disclosure. One of three words referring to the Second Coming of Christ" (Zodhiates, p. 225).

They, as all Christians, were looking forward to the fulfillment of all hopes. The Christian's hope is not placed in some transient earthly thing; rather it is in the revelation of the Lord. **"Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is"** (I John 3:2).

When He comes again, one will see Him as He actually is, and shall be like Him. That is the dream and hope of Christians. Christians wait for the Lord's revelation, because that event marks the beginning of the Christian's eternity with GOD; he will finally be able to go home. **"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"** (Phil. 3:20, NKJV).

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of GOD" (Col. 3:1).

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| I Cor. 1:8 "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." | "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye be unproveable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (ASV) | "Who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." (NKJV) |
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CONFIRM: **ἰσχυροῦ** -- "To make firm, strong or sure" (Young's, p. 196); "To make firm, establish, confirm, make sure:...of men made steadfast and constant in soul" (Thayer, p. 99); "Sure, fixed. To make firm or reliable so as to warrant security and inspire confidence, to strengthen, make true, fulfill" (Zodhiates, p. 331); "Make firm, establish...of things confirm the preaching...of persons establish, strengthen" (Bauer, p. 138).

BLAMELESS: **ἀκατακατά**-- "Not accused or called in" (Young's, p. 97); "That cannot be called to account, unprovable, unaccused, blameless" (Thayer, p. 44); "Not merely unaccusable but unaccused, free from any legal charge" (Zodhiates, p. 168); "Blameless, irreproachable" (Bauer, p. 64); "Unimpeached" (Expositor's, p. 761).

There is widespread debate on the "who" in the first part of this passage. Does it refer to GOD the Father or GOD the Son? It does not matter. The point is that Deity is capable of making one strong until the very end of one's life or to the end of time. How does Deity do this? It is done through the testimony which is confirmed (v. 6). Part of what is taught here is that GOD has done everything He can to give one the strength needed to gain the eternal reward.

"That ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" The "day of our Lord," in the New Testament, always refers to the judgment day. GOD has

provided all one needs by way of confirmation, so man can stand before GOD blameless on that day. Zodhiates says the word "**blameless**" emphasizes; "Not merely unaccusable but unaccused, free from any legal charge" (Zodhiates, p. 168).

This does not mean they had not sinned, as further study will show. But it means they cannot be accused of wrong because of the forgiveness of GOD.

"GOD so forgives the sinner that he is not only innocent, he is also unable to be accused" (Willis, p. 20).

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| I Cor. 1:9 "GOD is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." | "GOD is faithful, through whom ye were called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (ASV) | "GOD is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." (NKJV) |
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FAITHFUL: **πίστις** -- "Faithful, steady" (Young's, p. 325); "Trusty, faithful; of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties:...of GOD, abiding by His promises" (Thayer, p. 514); "To win over, persuade. Worthy of belief, trust, or confidence" (Zodhiates, p. 1164); "Trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith" (Bauer, p. 664).

FELLOWSHIP: **κοινωνία** -- "Fellowship, communion" (Young's, p. 341); "Fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse...the share which one has in anything, participation" (Thayer, p. 352); "To share in. Fellowship with, participation" (Zodhiates, p. 873); "Association, communion, fellowship, close relationship" (Bauer, p. 438); "Fellowship; close mutual relationship; partnership" (Littrell).

"GOD is faithful." It would seem to this writer that this is a reminder to the Corinthians to pay strict attention to the promises GOD has made, on the grounds of GOD'S always being faithful. He can be depended on to fulfill all of His promises. **"Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it"** (I Thess. 5:24). Why is He faithful? He is faithful because He cannot lie:

"In hope of eternal life, which GOD, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2).

Notice what GOD has done: He has called Christians into fellowship with His Son. He has called Christians to be joint participants, to share with his Son

the work of seeking the lost. This text has just spoken about being confirmed unto the end, of being blameless in the day of judgment. This text speaks of the eternal joy and blessings which one will have in heaven, enjoying heaven with our Lord Jesus. GOD has called Christians to enjoy eternity with Him and His Son. The call begins to take effect when one obeys the Lord in baptism. One now has the promise of eternal life, and someday, if one remains faithful, eternal life will be a reality. But one must remain faithful to Him who has called us.

"If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the

truth: But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another,

and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:6-7).

Notice one is not only to have fellowship with GOD, but when one has fellowship with Him, then one also has fellowship with all those who have fellowship with Him. If one does not have fellowship with GOD, then the faithful one should not have fellowship with that person.

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| <p>I Cor. 1:10 "Now I beseech you, brethren, by 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 perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (NKJV)</p> |
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BESEECH: B'D'G'8X -- "To call to one's side" (Young's, p. 90); "To Address. speak to, (call to, call on),...to admonish, exhort" (Thayer, p. 482); "To the side of, to call....To call upon someone to do something, to exhort, admonish" (Zodhiates, p. 1105); "Call to one's side, summon...appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage...request, implore, appeal to, entreat" (Bauer, p. 617).

DIVISION: FPFμ -- "A rent, cleft, schism" (Young's, p. 261); "A division, dissension" (Thayer, p. 610); "To split, tear. A schism, division, tear, as in mind or sentiment, and so into factions" (Zodhiates, p. 1353); "Tear, crack...division, dissension, schism" (Bauer, p. 797).

PERFECTLY: 6'J'D\A T -- "To fit thoroughly, adjust" (Young's, p. 745); "To render fit, sound complete,...ethically, to strengthen, perfect, complete, make one what he ought to be" (Thayer, p. 336); "The fundamental meaning is to put a thing in its appropriate condition, to establish, set up, equip, arrange, prepare, mend" (Zodhiates, p. 842); "Put in order, restore...put into proper condition, complete, make complete" (Bauer, p. 417); "This comes from a versatile Greek word, meaning 'to adjust the parts of an instrument, the setting of bones by a physician, or the mending of nets.' The general meaning would appear to be 'put the broken unity back together'" (Coffman, p. 14).

In the first nine verses, Jesus is referred to nine times. This emphasis serves to focus the minds of the Corinthians on Christ as Paul begins his admonitions. Then, beginning with verse ten, he deals with the subject of division and the other problems they have.

"I beseech you" Though this phrase can carry the idea of pleading, and this idea is included in the meaning, this phrase should probably carry the idea of exhorting them to faithfulness in unity, as the text seems to demand.

"By the name of..." This phrase shows the basis, or authority, for the exhortation He is offering. Where does Paul get his authority to exhort them, and to condemn their actions? He gets it from Jesus Christ who made him an apostle (v. 1).

"That ye all speak the same thing" This does not mean they are to be robots, but rather that they teach the same doctrine. The style and vocabulary of the speaker would allow for differences in presentation, but not in content. Need would allow the speaker to present a lesson in one community, which in another community is

not needed at that time. Different subjects may be taught to different groups of listeners but when the same subject is taught, wherever it may be, the doctrine must always be the same. **IT MUST ONLY BE GOD'S WORD!** **"Speak thou the things which become sound doctrine"** (2 Tim. 2:1). Further, one can know one is teaching the same thing Christ and His apostles taught because there is an objective standard by which to judge one's teachings. Jesus said,

"If ye continue in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

"That there be no divisions among you" One could illustrate this by the rent which occurs in a torn garment. When the tear begins, if it is not stopped, it may soon cause the garment literally to become two parts. Division must be stopped as quickly as possible, and repairs made so the congregation may be whole. *"The existence of the differing ideas in the church which threaten to disrupt the fellowship of the church cannot be*

ignored or tolerated" (Willis, p. 27).

GOD expects His people to be one with each other, and thus He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane:

"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me" (John 17:20-21).

This lesson was very much needed by the Corinthians as they had divided over preachers, et cetera. It can be emphasized that this was not the fault of the preachers in this case — they were not encouraging this as there is no condemnation of them. It is all right to have favorites, but one cannot make the favorite one's authority, nor divide into a party behind a favorite preacher.

Willis may be able to give some insight as to why they were dividing themselves to follow various speakers. He says,

"From what I can read about ancient Grecian life, the democratic society had a tendency to polarize around great teachers to form schools which followed each particular teacher" (Willis, pp. 23-24).

Coming from this kind of background, one can see how it might follow that they would divide themselves in this way. They obviously had too great a regard for preachers.

"These divisions were over the preachers (1 Cor. 1:12 - 4:21), immorality (1 Cor. 5:1-13), going to law before the heathen (1 Cor. 6:1-11), marriage (1 Cor. 7:1-40), meats offered to idols (1 Cor. 8:1

- 10:33), conduct of women in the church (1 Cor. 11:1-16), the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:17-34), spiritual gifts (1 Cor. 12-14), the resurrection (1 Cor. 15:1ff)" (Author Unknown).

"Perfectly joined together." Zodhiates tells us, *"The fundamental meaning is to put a thing in its appropriate condition"* (Zodhiates, p. 842).

One might liken this joining to a jig-saw puzzle where each piece must be placed in the proper position for the next piece to be properly placed. Coffman's comment would then seem to be appropriate:

"The general meaning would appear to be 'put the broken unity back together'" (Coffman, p. 14).

The rent was beginning in the congregation. They were to stop their present course of action, and knit the separated pieces back into one whole unit.

They were to be joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. **"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"** (1 Pet. 4:1).

When one is Christ-like he will have the same goals as Jesus. He will desire to speak as He spoke, and act as He acted. One must learn to think like Christ. Such can only promote unity among believers, and not the attitudes which the Corinthians were developing. Zerr notes, *"The mind means the faculty of reason, and judgment denotes the conclusions arrived at with the mind"* (Zerr, p. 2).

One should remember that Jesus desired unity, and prayed for unity, among His followers (John 17:20-21). GOD has never desired anything for man which is impossible to attain.

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| I Cor. 1:11 "For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." | "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." (ASV) | "For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you." (NKJV) |
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DECLARED: ***OST** -- *"To manifest"* (Young's, p. 239); *"To make manifest: to make known by relating, to declare; to give one to understand, to indicate, signify"* (Thayer, p. 131); *"To make manifest, known. Used trans. and spoken of things past, to tell, relate"* (Zodhiates, p. 412); *"Reveal, make clear, show"* (Bauer, p. 178).

CONTENTIONS: ~~S₄H~~ -- *"Strife, contention, wrangling"* (Young's, p. 200); *"Metaphorically, it means love of strife"* (Zodhiates, p. 654); *"Strife, discord, contention"* (Bauer, p. 309).

One interesting note about this passage is that it does not say Paul received his information from Chloe, but rather from those of her household. Further, Willis points out there may very well have been slaves of her household who presented this information to Paul. Notice also **"household"** is plural, i.e., he received this information from more than one person.

"This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (2 Cor. 13:1).

"Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (1 Tim. 5:19).

This report of the conditions in Corinth seems to be from

the motive of concern for the congregation there. Litrell thinks

“those of Chloe were possibly the three named in 16:17-18: Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus” (Littrell, p. 154).

Who is this Chloe? Such information is not given.

This text is the only place her name is mentioned, and nothing more can be learned of her.

One of the important things one can learn from this passage is that when Paul made the charge of their being

contentious, he did it by naming the source of his information. This was not just a matter of *“I have heard,”* but rather *“this is how I have heard about this matter.”* This action on Paul’s part would seem to set a pattern for all those concerned about truth, and who have no desire to be involved in gossip. The report had been given by more than one witness, it apparently contained credibility, and the charge was made revealing the source of the information.

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| I Cor. 1:12 "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." | "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." (ASV) | "Now I say this, that each of you says, I am of Paul, or I am of Apollos, or I am of Cephas, or I am of Christ." (NKJV) |
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Paul immediately tells them what his subject is and upon what he bases his charge of contentiousness. Some were dividing themselves into followers of various men. The three mentioned, who were purely human, are Paul, Apollos and Peter. Paul and Peter were both powerful speakers, and from Acts 18:24, one can know that Apollos was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures.

With regard to the phrase, **"and I of Christ,"** there are two prominent thoughts which need review. Some believe this was a party division just like the divisions of the Corinthians who followed Paul, Apollos and Peter. If so, the followers were wrong in their attitude. This division could have occurred, as Lipscomb stated, from a partisan spirit causing the Corinthians not to follow these great teachers of truth. This divisiveness is caused today by those who claim the *“red letters”* of their Bible were actually spoken by Christ and therefore are absolutely binding. On the other hand, they either imply or state the rest of the Bible is not necessarily binding because Jesus did not say the other words. These folks need to study passages like Second Timothy 3:16-17.

It should be remembered the teachers themselves were not promoting these divisions, and the people should have listened to the teaching of all of them. Jesus said,

"He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me" (Luke 10:16).

So, if they were distancing themselves from these teachers, they would then be participating in the same party spirit as the others.

The other view of this is that Paul has made this statement (**"and I of Christ"**) about himself. If this is the case then Paul would be saying *“you have divided yourselves up as being followers of these men, one of which being myself; but I want you to understand I am simply a follower of Christ.”* This would be an effective reprimand for their divisiveness. It is left up to each reader to determine his own line of thinking with regards to this matter; for verse thirteen will show the way things ought to be, regardless of the interpretation placed on this verse.

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| I Cor. 1:13 "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" | "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?" (ASV) | "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?" (NKJV) |
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These three questions are rhetorical in nature: each one demands a negative answer. If Christ is not divided, then why should His followers be divided? Christ did not teach His own doctrine, but taught what His Father delivered to Him.

“Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of GOD, or whether I speak of Myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory

that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him” (John 7:16-18).

One has no right to teach a doctrine which is divisive in nature and contrary to that which Christ received from His Father. To do so is to cause division in the body of Christ.

Paul then asks, **"was Paul crucified for you?"** By putting himself into this question he shows his humility. He shows he seeks no glory for himself, but rather points to Christ. Christ died for man, and He is the One to whom man owes his allegiance, not to some human

being who simply teaches what Christ taught.

Neither is one to be baptized in the name, or by the authority, of any man. One is to be baptized into Christ:

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death" (Rom. 6:3)?

"The question, 'Were you immersed into the

name of Paul?' shows that Christians are to call themselves by the name of the one into whose name they were immersed" (Litrell, p. 154).

This would effectively rule out any denominational name. The Corinthians were not to be Paulites, Apollosites, or any other "ite," and neither is any man today to be known by any other name than Christian. And please note, there are no hyphenated Christians found in the Bible.

Jesus said, **"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"** (Matt. 28:19).

No man has the power to save, so why be baptized into a man's name?

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| I Cor. 1:14-15 "I thank GOD that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; Lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." | "I thank GOD that I baptized none of you, save Crispus and Gaius; lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name." (ASV) | "I thank GOD that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name." (NKJV) |
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In light of the situation of preacher-itis in Corinth, Paul was glad he had not personally immersed more than a few. He does, however, name two he had baptized: Gaius and Crispus. Gaius may be the same one who is mentioned in Romans 16:23. It is doubtful he is the same as the one found in Acts 19:29; 20:4. Crispus is thought by some to be the former ruler of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts 18:8). But one has very little knowledge of these

men, and cannot pinpoint these matters with certainty.

Why was Paul thankful he had not personally baptized any more of them? He was thankful because it meant no one could say he had baptized in his own name, or by his own authority. Paul was not interested in gaining a personal following; he wanted people to follow Christ: **"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ"** (I Cor. 11:1).

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| I Cor. 1:16 "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." | "And I baptized also the household of Stephanas: besides, I know not whether I baptized any other." (ASV) | "Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other." (NKJV) |
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The word **"household"** in this passage, is used by many to try to prove infants were indeed baptized in the early church. Before considering this thought further, it must be seen that there are several instances where **"households"** were baptized.

"We are told that the nobleman 'believed, and his whole house' (John 4:53); that Crispus 'believed in the Lord with all his house' (Acts 18:8); that the jailer 'rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in GOD' (Acts 16:34); that Cornelius 'feared God with all his house' (Acts 10:2); and that 'the house of Stephanas...is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have set themselves to minister unto the saints' (1 Cor. 16:15)" (Lipscomb, p. 29).

One needs to understand that the term household may refer to a number of different things in the New Testament. Notice the following information as supplied by Holman's Dictionary:

"In the New Testament, many derivatives of oikos (literally, 'house') are used to refer to the members and affairs of a household. Consequently, the terms 'house' and 'household' are often used interchangeably in translation. The term may delineate an immediate family, as well as those employed in the service of that family (Matt. 13:57; 24:45; John 4:53; Acts 16:31). Descendants of a particular nation may also be described as a house or household as in Matthew 10:6 and Luke 1:27,69. 'Household' or 'house,' moreover, may point to the property or the management of the affairs and belongings of a family or clan (Acts 7:10)" (Holman CD Bible Dictionary).

Since the household may refer to the servants, it could signify that the master/mistress of the house and their servants are implied. It could also refer to all those who are old enough to "believe," "rejoice greatly," "fear GOD," et cetera. The burden of proof that there were children involved here, or anywhere else where a

household is spoken of, rests on those who make the assertion. Since they cannot prove their assertion, and since the action of baptism demands only those who can believe and obey as the subjects of baptism (Mark 16:16), then it is safe to assume no infants were baptized.

"Household is from OIKOS, and in the King James Version it has been rendered by house 102 times, home 4, household 3, temple 1" (Zerr, p. 3).

Regarding Stephanas, one learns more information about him in chapter sixteen, verses fifteen through eighteen. Suffice it to say here, these mentioned in our text were dedicated servants of the Lord.

Lest any others were overlooked, he says **"I know not whether I baptized any other."** This statement is quite interesting. Though Paul was quite interested in as many people obeying the Gospel as

possible, he does not seem concerned about keeping track of how many people he actually immersed. It would seem to this writer that some in the church today should be more concerned about doing the Lord's will, as Paul was, than about the numbers. Let Christians do all they can to encourage the growth of the kingdom and leave the numbers in GOD'S hands.

"I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with GOD: ye are GOD'S husbandry, ye are GOD'S building" (1 Cor. 3:6-9).

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| I Cor. 1:17 "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." | "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." (ASV) | "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect." (NKJV) |
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It is amazing that some will take this passage and try to say baptism is not important. What amazes one, is not so much their making such a statement, but that so many who try to use this passage in this erroneous way will appeal to verse sixteen to say infants should be baptized. You cannot have it both ways; it is either important or it is not. Paul has clearly shown the importance of baptism in his life and writings.

"And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on Him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:1-5).

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should

walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

"For ye are all the children of GOD by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).

The charge given to Paul was to preach the Gospel, particularly to the Gentiles. Others could do the actual act of baptizing believers, but not all could preach the Gospel. There is no way anyone can preach the Gospel found in the New Testament without speaking about baptism. The only way to do so is to leave out what GOD has commanded (Mark 16:15-16; Rev. 22:18-19).

Question: Were the apostles commanded to immerse people? Obviously, all who teach the Gospel have an obligation to immerse penitent believers who desire the action, or to help them find someone who will immerse them. Paul is not teaching there was no command to immerse, but rather it is not important **who** does the immersing. Being immersed by the preacher does not make one more of a Christian than being baptized by someone else. In fact, the one doing the baptizing does not even have to be a Christian.

"Not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." Should one not use wisdom in the words one employs to proclaim Christianity? All would all agree such should be the case. Paul is speaking of the wisdom of men. For instance, man's wisdom would tone down the message to make it more appealing to people, instead of telling the truth they need. Man's wisdom will beat around the

bush, instead of directly confronting a problem. Man's wisdom relies upon great swelling words, which often leave the listener wondering what has been said.

"Dio Chrysostom described the Greek wise men thus: 'They croak like frogs in a marsh; they are the most wretched of men, because, though ignorant, they think themselves wise; they are like peacocks, showing off

their reputation and the number of their pupils as peacocks do their tails'" (Coffman, p. 17).

"A sermon may be well organized, rhetorically excellent, stylishly delivered, 'beautiful' and worthless" (Coffman, p. 18).

Paul will explain what he means by the cross of Christ being made of none effect in the next verse.

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| <p>I Cor. 1:18-19 "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of GOD. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of GOD. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent." (NKJV)</p> |
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PERISH: •B 89µ4-- *"To loose, loose away, destroy"* (Young's, p. 746); *"To destroy i.e. to put to out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin:...render useless, cause its emptiness to be perceived"* (Thayer, p. 64); *"To destroy, cause to perish, trans.; Spoken of things figuratively (1 Cor. 1:19, meaning to bring to naught, render void the wisdom of the wise, quoted from Isaiah 29:14)"* (Zodhiates, p. 230); *"Ruin, destroy"* (Bauer, p. 95).

FOOLISHNESS: µTD -- *"Folly"* (Young's, p. 361); *"Foolishness"* (Thayer, p. 420); *"Foolish. Folly, foolishness, absurdity"* (Zodhiates, p. 1001); *"Foolishness generally of worldly wisdom"* (Bauer, p. 531).

POWER: *b<µ4H-- *"Ability, power"* (Young's, p. 765); *"Strength, ability, power; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth"* (Thayer, p. 159); *"To be able. Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem duna - have the meaning of being able, capable."* (Zodhiates, p. 485); *"Power, might, strength...ability, capability"* (Bauer).

WISDOM: F@N -- *"Wisdom, skill"* (Young's, p. 1060); *"Wisdom, broad and full intelligence; used of the knowledge of very diverse matters, so that the shade of meaning in which the word is taken must be discovered from the context in every particular case....opposed to this wisdom is -- the empty conceit of wisdom which men make a parade of, a knowledge more specious than real of lofty and hidden subjects"* (Thayer, p. 582); *"Wisdom, skill, tact, expertise in any art....Specifically of the learning and philosophy current among the Greeks and Romans in the apostolic age intended to draw away the minds of men from divine truth, and which stood in contrast with the simplicity of the gospel...the wisdom of the world"* (Zodhiates, p. 1300-1301); *"Wisdom, the natural wisdom that belongs to this world. In contrast to God's wisdom and the wisdom that comes from God"* (Bauer, p. 759).

WISE: F@H -- *"Wise, skillful"* (Young's, p. 1060); *"Wise, i.e. skilled in letters, cultivated, learned; of the Greek philosophers (and orators)"* (Thayer, p. 582); *"Skilled in learning, learned, intelligent, enlightened, in respect to things human and divine....Specifically as to the philosophy current among the Greeks and Romans"* (Zodhiates, p. 1302); *"Wise, learned of human intelligence and education above the average, perh. related to philosophy"* (Bauer, p. 760).

UNDERSTANDING: Fb<, F4H-- *"A sending together, intelligence"* (Young's, p. 1014); *"A running together, a flowing together: of two rivers,...understanding"* (Thayer, p. 604); *"To comprehend, reason out. Comprehension, perception, understanding. The word denotes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them"* (Zodhiates, p. 1342); *"The faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness...insight, understanding"* (Bauer, p. 788).

PRUDENT: FL<, J H-- *"Intelligent"* (Young's, p. 783); *"Intelligent, having understanding, wise, learned"* (Thayer, p. 604); *"To reason out, perceive, understand. Intelligent, sagacious, discerning... comprehension"* (Zodhiates, p. 1342); *"Intelligent, sagacious, wise, with good sense"* (Bauer, p. 788).

The contrast seen in these passages is between the lost and the saved. The wise, i.e., those who rely upon human wisdom, consider the cross to be foolishness. Why? Human wisdom glorifies arrogance, pride, physical power, financial success, et cetera, as the things which lead to success in life. But the cross signifies humility, meekness, and submission.

One of the interesting aspects of verse eighteen is the usage of verbs. These verbs are in the present tense, which indicates a continuing action, and in this case a continuing progression. It is not a matter of having been lost or saved, and nothing can be done about it through future actions. Those who are perishing are continually moving toward their final destruction; they are getting worse and worse. On the other hand those who are saved are also in a continuing process. One must continue to grow in Christianity if one would be saved; it is not a one time, once and for all action. The idea of continual growth is often seen in the Scriptures. Both the lost and the saved can turn and go in the opposite direction and change their final destinations if they so choose.

"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:2).

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and for ever. Amen" (2 Pet. 3:18).

Those who are perishing are those who are being destroyed; they are being rendered useless and worthless (See definitions for perish above.). The ultimate power to save resides in GOD and His wisdom. Paul proceeds to give an example of the difference between the wisdom of men and the power of GOD by quoting Isaiah 29:14.

To understand this quotation, one must go back and understand the context surrounding it. *"The context of the Isaiah passage was the siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrian Sennacherib. The wise men of that day counseled that deliverance would come through political alliances but GOD destroyed the wisdom of the wise. The alliances caused Judah nothing but trouble; Sennacherib invaded the land and sieged the city. Deliverance came, not from the political counselors, the wise men, but from the Lord. Jehovah sent an angel into the camp of the Assyrians who smote 185,000 of the soldiers; Assyria was forced to lift the siege of the city"* (Willis, p. 42).

The above statement should serve to illustrate man's inability to save himself by his own thinking (wisdom). Instead, man has to rely upon what the world looks at as foolishness to save him -- the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is good for man to grow in wisdom, but the only wisdom which will save is that which comes from GOD.

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (James 3:13-17).

"The gospel does not fit the thinking of the worldly - wise - worldly-minded people" (Littrell, p. 156).

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| <p>I Cor. 1:20 "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not GOD made foolish the wisdom of this world?"</p> | <p>"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?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not GOD made foolish the wisdom of this world?" (NKJV)</p> |
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Lipscomb believes the wise are the Greek philosophers, the scribes are the Jewish learned men or lawyers, and the disputers of the age were Epicureans, Stoics and others who loved to dispute (Lipscomb, p. 32). Coffman believes the wise are the worldly wise, the scribes are the experts in Jewish religion, and the disputers are made up of all these classes of people (Coffman, p. 19).

The truth of this passage can be seen by looking at the many philosophies which have developed, even within one's own lifetime. "Wise-men" will come up with some philosophy for rearing children, and then a few years later

will come up with a different one. One may look at any area where men rely upon their own abilities to think and reason, leaving GOD out of the picture, and see the same thing. Wisdom is good, and knowledge may help one in many ways in the world in which one lives; but the **"wisdom"** which makes one think he does not need GOD is really not wisdom at all — it is the foolishness of the world! The Bible still correctly states;

"the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).

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| I Cor. 1:21 "For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." | "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." (ASV) | "For since, in the wisdom of GOD, the world through wisdom did not know GOD, it pleased GOD through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe." (NKJV) |
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Again, one sees the world by its own wisdom did not know, and in fact refused to know, GOD. The implication seems to be that GOD intentionally planned for His means of saving man to seem as foolishness to the proud and vain of this world. This does not mean a man cannot use his intellect to determine there is a GOD:

"Because that which may be known of GOD is manifest in them; for GOD hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse"

(Rom. 1:19-20).

Man may look around him and know there must be a GOD, but man cannot look around him and know the attributes of GOD, or what GOD requires from him, through his own intellect. Man needs revelation from GOD to do that.

"Because that, when they knew GOD, they glorified him not as GOD, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:21-22).

Paul is not saying preaching is foolishness; i.e., when one truly preaches the word of GOD. All other preaching is indeed foolish if one relies upon what is taught by man to provide the means of being saved. Instead, Paul is using this phrase to mirror the thoughts of the worldly wise in their evaluation of the Gospel of Christ. The worldly wise think it is foolish to listen to GOD'S instructions as a guide for life. Consider the foolishness of men who think their wisdom is so much greater than GOD'S revealed will; they add to GOD'S way in adding the instrument to worship, or teaching baptism is not necessary for salvation, et cetera.

The only way man may reach GOD today is through listening to His revealed will. Indeed, GOD is still calling man to obedience. He is not doing this in the same way he did in the past (Heb. 1:1-2), but rather through the Gospel.

"Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14).

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel" (1 Cor. 4:15).

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| I Cor. 1:22-23 "For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;" | "Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumblingblock, and unto Gentiles foolishness;" (ASV) | "For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness," (NKJV) |
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STUMBLING BLOCK — **ἄκροβατία** — "A trap, gin, stumbling block" (Young's, p. 943); "The movable stick or trigger ('trigger') of a trap, trap-stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall" (Thayer, p. 577); "The trigger of a trap on which the bait is placed, and which, when touched by the animal, springs and causes it to close causing entrapment....In the NT *skandalon* is used figuratively in a moral sense. It is concerned mainly with the fact that it produces certain behavior which can lead to ruin" (Zodhiates, p. 1292); "Trap" (Bauer, p. 753).

The Jews seemingly always required signs of those who claimed to be messengers of GOD, and often did so of Jesus (Cf. Matt. 12:38; 16:1; Mark 8:11-12). However, they would not believe the signs they were given. The Greeks sought after philosophy along the lines of the popular way of thinking.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through

philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

The word rudiments is translated better in the NKJV – “basic principles.”

To both groups, the cross of crucifixion was revolting. The Jews could not envision their conquering Messiah dying on a cross. The Greek thinking was that

only the worst of criminals were put to death on a cross. To the Jews as a whole, the cross was a stumblingblock. The Greeks, which depended on their own wisdom, thought it was simple foolishness.

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| I Cor. 1:24 "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD." | "but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD." (ASV) | "but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of GOD and the wisdom of GOD." (NKJV) |
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The "called" of this passage are all those, regardless of nationality or race, who listen to GOD'S message and obey it.

How is it that Christ is the power of GOD? It is through His crucifixion, His blood being shed for all of man's sins. Thus the preaching of Jesus Christ and His cross will save mankind.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

"Whereunto He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus

Christ" (2 Thess. 2:14).

That is why Paul said, **"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures"** (I Cor. 15:1-4).

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| I Cor. 1:25 "Because the foolishness of GOD is wiser than men; and the weakness of GOD is stronger than men." | "Because the foolishness of GOD is wiser than men; and the weakness of GOD is stronger than men." (ASV) | "Because the foolishness of GOD is wiser than men, and the weakness of GOD is stronger than men." (NKJV) |
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Here one sees Paul again using the language of the philosophers and Jews who argued against any system which had as its power the crucifixion of Christ. There is truly no "foolishness" nor "weakness" in GOD. But for argument's sake, if there were any foolishness or weakness in GOD, then it would be far superior to any wisdom or strength the worldly might possess.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. 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).

One should be careful to remember Paul is still discussing the cross, and the sacrifice which was made on it.

"The Gentiles looked upon the death of Christ on the cross as a means to salvation as foolishness; the Jews considered the death of the 'Messiah' as proof that he was not the Messiah; instead, it was proof of His weakness" (Willis, p. 49).

But the fact remains, GOD did on the cross what man could not do for himself — He provided the way to

escape the bondage of sin with forgiveness of the same.

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| I Cor. 1:26 "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:" | "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:" (ASV) | "For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (NKJV) |
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CALLING: ~~68-F4H~~- "A call, invitation: to a feast; in the N.T. everywhere in a technical sense, the divine invitation to embrace salvation in the kingdom of GOD, which is made especially through the preaching of the gospel" (Thayer, p. 349-350). "In the NT, metaphorically, a call, invitation to the kingdom of GOD and its privileges, i.e., the divine call by which Christians are introduced into the privileges of the gospel" (Zodhiates, p. 868); "Call, calling, invitation" (Bauer, p. 435).

This passage does not point at a single individual, but rather at the group as a whole. Paul is saying, look around you at those who have accepted the call of GOD to salvation. Those whom the world would think of as being wise, how many of these does one find who are Christians? The answer is, probably not many. The mighty would represent those who were in positions of power, influence, et cetera. How many of them have listened to and accepted GOD'S call to salvation. Again the answer is, not many. The noble are those who by privilege of birth, the high born in society, have influence because of money, power, et cetera. How many of them answer the call GOD puts forth? Again the answer is, not many. By simple observation of congregations around the country, one finds this to be true. Generally speaking, those who are willing to accept the gospel are usually those who are not born into privilege; having little power or influence in the affairs of

this world, nor considered by the world to be wise.

Yet, notice Paul uses the words "not many." It is not that none of those in these positions will accept GOD'S call, but not many of them will. The worldly wise and powerful are not generally good candidates for conversion. But notice some of the Biblical exceptions to the rule Paul has just set forth:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Treasurer of Queen Candice (Acts 8:27). 2. Proconsul of Crete, Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-12). 3. Judge of Athens, Dionysius (Acts 17:34). 4. Rulers of the synagogue, Crispus and Sosthenes (Acts 18:8, 17). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Chamberlain of Corinth, Erastus (Rom. 16:23). 6. Women of nobility in Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17:4, 12). <p>(List supplied in Coffman's Commentary, p. 22.)</p> |
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| I Cor. 1:27 "But GOD hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and GOD hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" | "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;" (ASV) | "But GOD has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and GOD has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty;" (NKJV) |
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CONFOUND: ~~6'J"4FPb<T~~ -- "To put to shame utterly" (Young's, p. 197); "To put to shame, make ashamed" (Thayer, p. 331); "To shame, make ashamed, confound, dishonor, disgrace" (Zodhiates, p. 830); "Dishonour, disgrace, disfigure...put to shame" (Bauer, p. 410).

The word confound is used to show how GOD has shamed those who think they are wise by the world's standards. By using the humble fishermen of Galilee as His apostles, Jesus put to shame those who considered

themselves to be wise by their success.

"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled;

and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

Stephen is another example, as the Jews **"were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake"** (Acts 6:10). Where did they get their learning and wisdom? They got it by sitting at the feet of Jesus. In both cases they decided to get rid of these humble messengers. It is also interesting to notice only two of the apostles, Matthew and Paul, seemed to be men of influence, education and power.

Consider other areas where the world is confounded by things they consider to be foolish, yet GOD'S power is manifested in these things. For instance: baptism (Mark 16:15-16), the gospel (Rom. 1:16), singing only (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) and regular attendance (Heb. 10:25). All of these things, and many more, are considered by the worldly wise to be unnecessary and powerless, unable to accomplish the great task GOD has given for them to accomplish. Yet, in the end, GOD'S wisdom will be exhibited on a grand scale. Many who are looked down upon by the **"wise men,"** the **"mighty,"** and the **"noble"**

(v. 26) are going to be revealed as the truly wise, mighty and noble of the earth. **"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth"** (Matt. 5:5); and it is they who, having **"the peace of GOD, which passeth all understanding"** (Phil. 4:7), are truly wise. The world could not understand the peace the martyrs of the first century exhibited as they were killed for Christ; nor can the world understand the peace Christians have today, who are satisfied simply to do things the way GOD desires them done.

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| I Cor. 1:28 "And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath GOD chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:" | "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:" (ASV) | "and the base things of the world and the things which are despised GOD has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are," (NKJV) |
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BASE: •(, <ZH-- *"Ignoble"* (Young's, p. 71); *"Those who among men are held of no account"* (Thayer, p. 6); *"Ignoble, base, one who does not live up to the expectation of his stock, race or nation"* (Zodhiates, p. 69); *"Not of noble birth...more commonly base, low, insignificant"* (Bauer, p. 8).

DESPISED: !>@2, <XT -- *"To think nothing of, set at nought"* (Young's, p. 249); *"To make of no account, to despise utterly"* (Thayer, p. 225); *"To despise, treat with scorn"* (Zodhiates, p. 606); *"Despise, disdain...reject with contempt...treat with contempt"* (Bauer, p. 277).

This passage is very similar to verse twenty-seven, in that it shows GOD has taken the things and people the world considers to be of no consequence, and made them the higher order. Thus His system, and also the Savior, is opposite of what the world would expect. As Willis stated,

"The fact that GOD has chosen the things which are held in low esteem by the world is evidence that the gospel cannot be considered a humanly devised system of philosophy" (Willis, p. 52).

The things the world despises are held in high esteem by GOD and His people. The opposite is also true: the things

the world holds in esteem are rejected by GOD and His people as worthless in obtaining salvation.

"Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see" (John 1:46).

"When they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

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| I Cor. 1:29 "That no flesh should glory in His presence." | "that no flesh should glory before GOD." (ASV) | "that no flesh should glory in His presence." (NKJV) |
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The world views those of high birth or accomplishment as the ones fit for the greatest honor. Unfortunately there are those in the church who feel the conversion of someone society considers to be important as greater than the conversion of one of low degree. Yet, it is basically the common people who gladly answer the call to follow GOD on His own terms, and thus gain salvation. It does not matter what position one holds in this life; if one is a Christian, it is because GOD has extended His grace to

him. It is He who has provided the only sacrifice which can save. Man has no grounds upon which to boast. No human being can hold his head high in the presence of GOD.

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| I Cor. 1:30 "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of GOD is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:" | "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from GOD, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption:" (ASV) | "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from GOD; and righteousness and sanctification and redemption;" (NKJV) |
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WISDOM: **F@N** -- "Wisdom, skill" (Young's, p. 1060); "Wisdom, broad and full intelligence...the wisdom of God which is operative and embodied as it were in Jesus" (Thayer, p. 581); "In respect to divine things, wisdom, knowledge, insight, deep understanding, represented everywhere as a divine gift, and including the idea of practical application...Metonymically of the author and source of this wisdom" (Zodhiates, p. 1301).

RIGHTEOUSNESS: ***45' 4Fb<O**-- "Rightness, justice" (Young's, p. 819); "In the broad sense, the state of him who is such as he ought to be, righteousness; the condition acceptable to GOD" (Thayer, p. 149); "Just, righteous. Justice, righteousness...In both the OT and NT, righteousness is the state commanded by GOD and standing the test of His judgment (II Cor. 3:9; 6:14; Eph. 4:24). It is conformity to all that God commands or appoints" (Zodhiates, p. 458); "Uprightness, consecration, sanctification" (Bauer, p. 9).

SANCTIFICATION: **(4'Fμ`H**-- "Separation, a setting apart" (Young's, p. 834); "Consecration, purification" (Thayer, p. 6); "To sanctify...separation unto GOD" (Zodhiates, p. 69); "Holiness, consecration, sanctification" (Bauer, p. 9).

REDEMPTION: **•B@8JDTF4H**-- "A loosing away" (Young's, p. 800); "A releasing effected by payment of ransom; redemption, deliverance, liberation procured by the payment of a ransom" (Thayer, p. 65); "To let go free for a ransom...The recalling of captives (sinners) from captivity (sin) through the payment of a ransom for them, i.e., Christ's death" (Zodhiates, p. 232-233); "Buying back a slave or captive, making him free by payment of a ransom...redemption, acquitted, also the state of being redeemed" (Bauer, p. 96).

"But of Him," i.e., through GOD'S manifold blessings, "ye are in Christ Jesus." If GOD had not seen fit to shed His mercy and grace upon mankind, where would one's salvation be found? The answer is obvious, there would be none to be found. GOD has provided man with the opportunity to be "in Christ," an opportunity which provides blessings which Paul next enumerates.

It is Christ who is made by GOD to be wisdom to man.

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are called,

both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of GOD, and the wisdom of GOD'" (vv. 23-24).

The wisdom of GOD is manifested in His Son. This wisdom is true wisdom, unlike the wisdom exhibited and sought after by the Jews and Greeks. A Christian's wisdom rests in that which has been revealed from above, and in Him, not in one's own thinking.

"Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" (John 14:9).

Notice then what is to be found in Christ Jesus: (1) righteousness, (2) sanctification, and (3) redemption. All

“righteousness” from the human standpoint is to be found in Christ. One is not righteous because of one’s own goodness or abilities to obey the laws of GOD. One is judged to be righteous because Jesus is righteous, and one is “in Him.” The word **“righteousness”** here, *“refers, not to justice or uprightness in one’s life, but to legal justification. Christ is the basis on which we stand approved before the bar of GOD because through Him our sins have been blotted out”* (Willis, p. 54).

In Christ one also has the blessing of **“sanctification.”** To be sanctified is to be set apart for something, in this case to be set apart for the work of the Lord. Again, one does not earn this privilege through years of study, thus earning some degree. It is GOD who

“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD’S” (1 Cor. 6:20).

“Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. 7:23).

sets one apart in His Son where one finds purification. One is set apart to follow His instructions, not the instructions of the world. One is to be different from the world in which one lives. As noticed above, Jesus is the source of legal justification. Here He is the source of moral purity.

In Christ one also has the blessing of **“redemption.”** To be redeemed is to be bought back from captivity; a price must be paid. One could not pay the price himself, so Christ paid it. The redemption price from sin is too high for any mortal to pay. In Christ the price has been paid through His sacrifice, and one is set free from the shackles of sin.

In short, everything one needs is in Christ:

“Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

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| I Cor. 1:31 “That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” | "that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (ASV) | "that, as it is written, He who glories, let him glory in the LORD." (NKJV) |
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GLORIETH: **6"LPV@i" 4--** *“To boast”* (Young's, p. 400); *“To boast, glory, exult, both in a good and bad sense”* (Zodhiates, p. 854); *“Boast, glory, pride oneself...boast about, mention in order to boast of, be proud of something”* (Bauer, p. 426).

This quotation is from Jeremiah 9:23, and simply means man owes everything to GOD. Used in the current text it signifies that the blessings just spoken of (wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption) come from Jesus our Savior. Notice the whole quotation from Jeremiah:

“Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in

the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jer. 9:23-24).

Whatever worthwhile achievements are made by any man, it must be recognized that they are all attributable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

“He alone can guide with wisdom, clothe with righteousness, sanctify man to His service, and redeem him from his iniquities and from death” (Lipscomb, p. 38).

“Having shown that no man has any ground for boasting in himself, he said, ‘Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord’” (Willis, p. 55).

First Corinthians – Chapter Two

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| <p>I Cor. 2:1 "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD."</p> | <p>"And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of GOD." (ASV)</p> | <p>"And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of GOD." (NKJV)</p> |
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EXCELLENCY: *ἑπρεοχή* -- "A holding over or beyond" (Young's, p. 317). "Elevation, pre-eminence, superiority...with distinguished eloquence or wisdom" (Thayer, p. 641). "To surpass, be prominent. Prominence, eminence....Generally of things meaning superiority, excellence" (Zodhiates, p. 1416); "Projection, prominence" (Bauer, p. 841); "Preeminence, rising above" (Robertson, p. 82); "To overtop, outdo" (Expositors', p. 775).

Greek rhetoric required a speech to be flowery, filled with knowledge about anything and everything concerning the world in which a Greek lived. Many times Greek speeches did not educate, but only entertained. Such speeches were not always focused on the particular subject at hand, but were meant to sound good. It was man's wisdom which was glorified by such rhetoric. It was just this kind of speech and wisdom which Paul said he did not bring to them, nor had he ever approached people in this way. He did not use language which made it difficult for people to understand what he was saying. He did not use the wisdom which proceeded from men to prove his words were from GOD, nor to persuade them of their truthfulness or necessity.

Instead, Paul came declaring, proclaiming, and announcing the testimony of GOD. He testified not of some new philosophy, but rather regarding that which had taken place in the past (historical fact). He came giving testimony (μάρτυς) "concerning GOD, i.e. concerning what GOD has done through Christ for the salvation of men" (Thayer, p. 392). He did not come trying to impress them with how much he knew, or how well he could present what he knew. He simply brought them the good news which came from GOD through His Son.

"I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort

with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

The above passage records a great deal about the attitude of Paul: he was humble. This is the kind of man GOD chose to reveal His message, and it is still the kind of man He wants today. The men needed today to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers, are men like Paul who are willing to sacrifice themselves, considering themselves as nothing more than a voice teaching GOD'S words to mankind. He was not interested in proclaiming his own thoughts, simply **"the testimony of GOD."**

The Corinthian's faith was to be built on the power of GOD, not on the abilities of its proclaimers.

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD" (Rom. 10:17).

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

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| <p>I Cor. 2:2 "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."</p> | <p>"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul was resolved to know but one thing among them, **"Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."** The philosophies of the world did not matter to him; the only thing he recognized as being worth knowing, worth passing on to those with whom he came in contact, was the message of

Jesus Christ. Why? Because this message is the only one capable of saving man from his sins. The phrase **"save Jesus Christ"** is inclusive of all man needs to know about Christ. One can easily see Paul taught them more about Christ than just His crucifixion. For example, they must

have been taught about repentance, confession, baptism, et cetera, or they could not have been addressed as brethren (v. 1). Paul is simply stating *"he would rely upon no earthly wisdom for power in his preaching"* (Coffman, p. 30).

By speaking of the crucifixion, Paul demonstrates he is not ashamed that Jesus died the most shameful death known to the world of his time. Paul recognized the power was in the blood shed on this cross, and there was nothing

else which should be preached. If man is not converted by that power, then there is no other power capable of bringing him to salvation.

"Notice that Paul refused to compromise the gospel to fit the people of His time. Despite the pressures of Jews who clamored for a popular and kingly Messiah and the pressures of the philosophers who wanted a sophisticated new system of thought, Paul neither compromised the gospel nor accommodated it to their way of thinking" (Willis, p. 61).

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| I Cor. 2:3 "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." | "And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling." (ASV) | "I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling." (NKJV) |
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WEAKNESS: • σθένεια -- *"Strengthlessness"* (Young's, p. 1040). *"Want of strength, weakness, infirmity...to do things great and glorious, as want of human wisdom, of skill in speaking, in the management of men"* (Thayer, p. 80); *"Weakness, of bodily weakness...of any kind of weakness...of the frailty to which all human flesh is heir...of timidity"* (Bauer).

TREMBLING: τρόμος -- *"A trembling, fear"* (Young's, p. 1000). *"A trembling, quaking with fear: with fear and trembling, used to describe the anxiety of one who distrusts his ability to meet all requirements, but religiously does his utmost to fulfill his duty"* (Thayer, p. 630). *"Fear and trembling, expressing great timidity or profound reverence, respect, dread"* (Zodhiates, p. 1395); *"Trembling, quivering from fear"* (Bauer, p. 827).

The Greek philosophers exhibited haughtiness and self-confidence so as to appear arrogant when they presented their philosophies to the world. But Paul was not at all like that when he presented the message of Jesus, for he recognized the grace which GOD had given him in allowing him to present this gospel. He further recognized the power of the message he presented was not in himself, but in what had been delivered to him by GOD for proclamation. Paul's enemies said **"his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible"** (II Cor. 10:10), but, in reality, Paul was **strong** in the Lord's message.

This passage *"suggests Paul's recognition of human weakness and his realization that the salvation of so many persons was dependent upon so feeble an instrument as himself"* (Coffman, p. 30). *"In this great center of worldly learning, he trembled lest he might not do the work justice."*

However, he determined to depend solely on the Lord's help and wisdom" (Zerr, p. 5).

Those who exhibit an attitude such as Paul has here, could not help but rely upon GOD for their strength. This is the individual who is truly looked upon as being great in the eyes of GOD, no matter what the world may think of him. Nothing else matters!

The words, **"fear"** and **"trembling,"** seem to point to a complete picture of Paul at this time. Inwardly he felt the fear, possibly because of the way he had been treated in the past when proclaiming the Gospel. Outwardly this fear was manifested through the bodily action of trembling.

"It is a human touch to see the shrinking as he faced the hard conditions in Corinth. It is a common feeling of the most effective preachers. Cool complacency is not the mood of the finest preaching" (Robertson, p. 83).

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| I Cor. 2:4 "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:" | "And my speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:" (ASV) | "And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," (NKJV) |
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ENTICING: πειθός -- *"persuasive"* (Young's, p. 303). *"To persuade. Persuasive, winning"* (Zodhiates, p. 1133); *"persuasive words of wisdom"* (Bauer, p. 639).

DEMONSTRATION: • πόδειξις -- *"A showing or pointing out"* (Young's, p. 244). *"A making manifest, showing forth...a demonstration, proof: a proof by the Spirit and power of GOD, operating in me, and stirring in the minds of my hearers the most holy emotions and thus persuading them, I Cor. 2:4 (contextually opposed to proof by rhetorical arts and*

philosophic arguments, -- the sense in which the Greek philosophers use the word" (Thayer, p. 60). "Manifestation, demonstration, proof" (Zodhiates, p. 221); "to show forth" (Robertson, p. 83); "The technical term for a proof drawn from facts or documents, as opposed to theoretical reasoning" (Expositors', p. 776).

Some have thought the difference between the words **"speech"** and **"preaching,"** may have been that the former dealt with what he taught privately and the latter with what he taught publicly. Paul seems, simply, to be emphasizing the message.

Paul says his words are not **"enticing"** words built upon human wisdom. The word "enticing" (πειθούς), is not found anywhere else in the New Testament. The words he used were not the

"kind of oratory that was adapted to captivate and charm; and which the Greeks so much esteemed" (Barnes, p. 30).

It must always be remembered, Paul sought only to manifest the wisdom of GOD, to glorify GOD, never man or man's wisdom, or his own ability.

What Paul spoke was **"in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."** The words Paul used were not those of the Greek orators, yet they were filled with power (δύναμις) -- *"Strength, ability, power"* (Thayer, p. 159). Where did this power come from if it was not his own? It came from the words which GOD supplied him: **"All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works"** (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

"I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

The words he spoke had the power of GOD behind them. They were demonstrated as true by the manifestation of the Spirit; probably by the miracles which accompanied him.

"They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20; cf. Heb. 2:3).

Paul is stating that between presentation and content, it is the content which is truly important. It is not how one presents the message of Christ which is of utmost importance. The important thing is that he presents the truth with whatever ability he has. Why did not Paul use the popular modes of speech of his day for the proclamation he made? The answer is in the next verse.

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| I Cor. 2:5 "That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD." | "that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of GOD." (ASV) | "that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of GOD." (NKJV) |
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Paul shows the faith they have is to be built upon what has been given by GOD. Their faith should not be built on the limited wisdom, nor the oratory ability, of any human being. As S. Lewis Johnson, Jr. points out, *"What depends upon a clever argument is at the mercy of a clever argument"* (Wycliffe Bible Commentary, Chicago: Moody Press, 1971, p. 594). Paul has previously shown, and is showing, that their faith has a firm foundation, and rests upon the facts and proofs which GOD has demonstrated.

"The wisdom of man is changeable, and if this faith was based on such a foundation, it would fall as soon as the wisdom of man was exposed" (Zerr, p. 5).

"A faith which rests in (human, R.K.) wisdom is always in a precarious position because it is able to be overturned by a better philosophy" (Willis, p. 64).

Wisdom is not wrong, but in matters of religion, only

GOD'S wisdom will stand the test of time.

"The word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12).

"For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for

Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5).

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| <p>I Cor. 2:6 "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought:"</p> | <p>"We speak wisdom, however, among them that are fullgrown: yet a wisdom not of this world, nor of the rulers of this world, who are coming to nought:" (ASV)</p> | <p>"However, we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing." (NKJV)</p> |
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PERFECT: τέλειος -- *"Ended, complete, perfect"* (Young's, p. 745). *"Brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect...the more intelligent, ready to apprehend divine things"* (Thayer, p. 618). *"Goal, purpose. Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing"* (Zodhiates, p. 1372); *"Having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect"* (Bauer, p. 809); *"Complete, whole, mature, perfect, fully developed - the end product"* (Littrell, p. 160).

NOUGHT: καταργέω -- *"To make useless, without effect"* (Young's, p. 703). *"To render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative...to cause a person or a thing to have no further efficiency; to deprive of force, influence, power"* (Thayer, p. 336). *"To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective...to cease, to be done away"* (Zodhiates, p. 841-842); *"Make ineffective, powerless, idle...abolish, wipe out, set aside"* (Bauer, p. 417).

It should be remembered in this text that the contrast under consideration is the *"wisdom of GOD"* versus the *"wisdom of men."* The wisdom Paul says he speaks is the wisdom which comes from GOD: not human wisdom, which is extremely fallible. This is true of the philosophers and rulers of the world as well; they look to human wisdom instead of divine wisdom. But it is most tragic when looking to human wisdom is done in religion.

Paul says he speaks this wisdom from GOD to those who are **"perfect."** Who are the perfect? They are the full-grown, the mature. It should be emphasized all Christians have the potential of being full grown and mature in Christ. But it is up to each individual as to whether he grows into that maturity. Those who rely upon human wisdom to guide them in religious matters will never be mature.

Paul hastens to point out the wisdom of which he is speaking is not the wisdom of the world, whether it be the great philosophers or the rulers of this world who have

risen to great power. Why? Because their wisdom comes to nought; it is proven again and again to be worthless, ineffective, and powerless, and is eventually done away. This can easily be seen in the fact that all of these philosophies, and all of the rulers, soon pass from existence. Also, notice how often the philosophies about secular things of this world are revised, such as in science and medicine.

"Human wisdom, like its authors, is doomed to lose its power over the minds of men. Anywhere the gospel and human reasoning come into conflict, the gospel will come out victorious. The princes of this world and their philosophies are in a continual process of 'coming to nothing'" (Willis, p. 69).

Debates used to be common with denominationalists, but by and large they stopped debating because truth always prevailed.

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| <p>I Cor. 2:7 "But we speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which GOD ordained before the world unto our glory:"</p> | <p>"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:" (ASV)</p> | <p>"But we speak the wisdom of GOD in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which GOD ordained before the ages for our glory," (NKJV)</p> |
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MYSTERY: μυστήριον -- *"What is known only to the initiated"* (Young's, p. 682). *"A hidden purpose or counsel; secret will:...In the N.T., GOD'S plan of providing salvation for men through Christ, which was once hidden but now is revealed"* (Thayer, p. 420). *"Some sacred thing hidden or secret which is naturally unknown to human reason and is only known by the revelation of GOD"* (Zodhiates, p. 1000); *"Secret, secret rite, secret teaching, mystery"* (Nauer, p. 530).

HIDDEN: •ποκρύπτω -- *"To hide away"* (Young's, p. 479). *"To hide:...in the sense of concealing, keeping secret"* (Thayer, p. 63). *"To hide away, conceal"* (Zodhiates, p. 228); *"Hide, conceal by digging...hidden, kept secret"* (Bauer, p.

For the word **"mystery,"** Webster's first definition of this word is, *"Something not fully understood or understandable"* (Webster, p. 781). In this time this is the way one is to understand the word. But the original word for mystery in the Bible refers to:

"Some sacred thing hidden or secret which is naturally unknown to human reason and is only known by the revelation of GOD" (Zodhiates, p. 1000).

Not only was the **"mystery"** unknown to human reasoning, but it cannot be discovered by human reasoning. Man can only understand GOD'S plan if GOD chooses to reveal it to him; and He did.

"Α μυστήριον (mystery) is, therefore, something unknown to man — shut out from his comprehension — which is made known only through divine revelation" (Willis, p. 70).

GOD devised this plan before the existence of the first

human being on the earth. The word **"world"** here is the Greek word for *"ages."* Before time began, GOD had formulated His plan, and then revealed it bit by bit as man was capable of ascertaining it. But also notice, **"that which was ordained before the world,"** this great mystery, was for **"our glory."** The only understanding of this which can be surmised, is with relationship to eternity. Faithfulness to GOD and dependence upon His wisdom, will lead one to be glorified in the last day.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

Christians shall see the Lord of glory and shall be made like Him. On the other hand, the princes of this world are coming to nought.

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| I Cor. 2:8 "Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." | "which none of the rulers of this world hath known: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory:" (ASV) | "which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." (NKJV) |
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Who are the princes of this world who did not know the Lord? As already pointed out, they are the philosophical leaders of the world. But there is an exception to this — the civil leaders of the Jews. Jesus clearly showed that they knew who He was in the parable found in Matthew, chapter twenty-one. There He portrayed the Jews as the husbandmen, who said, **"This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance. And they caught Him, and cast Him out of the vineyard, and slew Him"** (Matt. 21:38-39). On the other hand, Littrell believes

"The 'rulers of this age' include Satan and his forces. The secrecy of God's wisdom was, at least in part, to keep Satan and his forces in ignorance of God's eternal purpose in Christ, and his death on the cross" (Littrell, p. 160).

Willis tells us, *"In first century usage, 'Lord of glory' would have meant 'Jehovah' to the average Jew"* (Willis, p. 73). In other words, the one crucified was GOD. Considering this, one sees if the rulers of this world (primarily the Roman authorities) had known of the wisdom of GOD, they would not have crucified the Son of GOD. Is it not strange that those religious leaders who had prior knowledge of the coming Messiah, when they saw Him, and knew who He was, crucified Him?

On the part of the Roman authorities, Jesus was crucified out of ignorance.

"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted His raiment, and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).

Those who cast lots for the garments of Jesus were the Roman soldiers gathered at the foot of the cross.

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| I Cor. 2:9 "But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, | "but as it is written, Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, | "But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which |
| the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him." | Whatsoever things GOD prepared for them that love him." (ASV) | GOD has prepared for those who love Him." (NKJV) |

The quotation in verse nine here is from Isaiah 64:4 and when Isaiah wrote it the Gospel had not yet been revealed. The Gospel, plan, however is **now** fully known

(v. 10).

When taken out of its context, this verse has been used to speak of heaven. But that is an abuse of this verse (cf.

vv. 7-8, 10). It is true that human beings cannot even begin to understand what heaven is really like, nor the beauties which are found there. But that is not what this passage is all about. The proof of this is found in the next verse, when Paul says **"GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."** They **have been** revealed, not they **shall be**

revealed.

"Eye," "ear," and "heart" (mind), have to do with the physical attributes of a human being. Through the physical, natural senses man cannot begin to recognize or understand the blessings which are found in Christ. Through these senses one cannot begin to understand GOD'S plan for man, nor His mercies, grace, et cetera. The only way one can understand these things, is if GOD reveals them to one. Paul is saying these things which were formerly unknown to man, formerly a mystery to mankind, have now been revealed by GOD to us.

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| I Cor. 2:10 "But GOD hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD." | "But unto us GOD revealed them through the Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD." (ASV) | "But GOD has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yea, the deep things of GOD." (NKJV) |
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The Spirit obviously would know the mind, the will of GOD, which man cannot know unless it is revealed to him. That was the purpose of the Spirit, to reveal the mind of GOD to mankind.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:12-15).

GOD did this through the apostles and prophets of old, who wrote these things down so man could have them as a guide throughout all the generations to come. The things man could not figure out for himself regarding salvation were revealed by the Spirit. Yet, even the Spirit did not speak of Himself, but rather He spoke that which He heard from the Father.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come" (John 16:12-13).

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| I Cor. 2:11 "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of GOD knoweth no man, but the Spirit of GOD." | "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." (ASV) | "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of GOD except the Spirit of GOD." (NKJV) |
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It is impossible for one to read the mind of another, knowing all of his feelings and thoughts. But **my** spirit knows **me** thoroughly. The only way **I** can know the feelings and thoughts of another is through that one revealing them to **me** with words. Since **I** cannot know the thinking of another human being without his revealing these things to **me**, it is even more certain **I** cannot understand the mighty thoughts of GOD without a revelation by words from Him.

Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is intimately qualified to reveal the mind of GOD to man. He is the Spirit of GOD, thus He knows all there is to be known and can transmit this information to man. He did this through the apostles and prophets.

"The things within GOD are not accessible through man's senses nor through his reasoning abilities; just as one cannot know the things of a man except that man in some way communicates them to him, even so no one can know the things of GOD unless He communicates them to us in

some way" (Willis, p. 77).

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| <p>I Cor. 2:12 "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of GOD; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from GOD, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by GOD." (NKJV)</p> |
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The spirit of the world: what is it, or to what does it refer? There are those who think this may apply to Satan; but since it is nowhere else used in this way, the thought should be rejected. In the context, it seems to refer to the thinking and reasoning of mankind.

"What Paul had in mind here was the secular, materialistic thinking of unregenerated man" (Coffman, p. 36).

Paul is saying what they received, and gave to their hearers, did not come from the thinking and philosophies of men. But rather their words came from the Spirit of GOD.

What was the purpose of this revelation? **"That we might know the things that are freely given to us of**

GOD." GOD has not left us in the dark, to try and figure out the salvation which He is willing to give. He has freely given man this knowledge through His Son, the Holy Spirit, and the inspired apostles and prophets. Notice the past tense is used here, as the text shows the original was a past action, accomplished once. This agrees well with Jude 3:

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

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| <p>I Cor. 2:13 "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."</p> | <p>"Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." (ASV)</p> | <p>"These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual." (NKJV)</p> |
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COMPARING — συγκρίνω — *"To join together fitly, compound, combine"* (Thayer, p. 593); *"To join together, combine, compose. Literally, to compare one thing with another by noting similarities and differences"* (Zodhiates, p. 1322); *"Bring together, combine...compare"* (Bauer, p. 774); *"Combine, to join together fitly"* (Robertson, p. 88); *"Wedding kindred speech to thought...forming them into a correlated system"* (Expositors', p. 782).

The first part of this verse is a declaration of verbal inspiration. There have been those over the years who have advocated that GOD gave the thoughts to these men and they put them into their own words. The purpose of such an accusation is indeed sinister; for it leaves room for the possibility they may have made a mistake in the way they perceived the thought. But let us ask, as did Coffman: *"How may any idea be conveyed without the use of words?"* (p. 37). Obviously, the answer is that no idea can be.

The Holy Spirit taught with **words** and the apostles spoke with **words**. No less and no more.

On another occasion Paul wrote:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall

That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:16-17).

Peter wrote, **"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost"** (II Pet. 1:20-21).

One is also reminded of the Lord's words in Matthew 10:19-20;

speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."

The Bible makes it extremely clear it comes from the

mouth of GOD; it does not come from man, it is not an interpretation of thoughts.

"Comparing spiritual things with spiritual." The American Standard Version reads, *"combining spiritual*

things with spiritual words." The spiritual truths which GOD has given to man have been combined, or put together, in the words which the Spirit proclaimed through the apostles and prophets. Words are the instruments which express ideas.

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| I Cor. 2:14 "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of GOD: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." | "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." (ASV) | "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." (ASV) |
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NATURAL — ψυχικός — *"Having the nature and characteristics of the ψυχή, i.e., of the principle of animal life...governed by the ψυχή, i.e. the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion"* (Thayer, p. 677-678); *"the part of the material life held in common with the animals, as contrasted with spirit"* (Zodhiates, p. 1495); *"An unspiritual man, one who lives on a purely material plane, without being touched by the Spirit of God"* (Bauer, p. 894); *"An unregenerated man"* (Robertson, p. 89); *"Perhaps the best translation is 'the unspiritual man'"* (Earle, p. 219); *"Unspiritual, uninspired; worldly"* (Littrell, p. 161).

Who is the natural man? He is the one who relies upon his natural faculties to try to find religious truths. He is the one who is interested (or more interested) in fulfilling his physical appetites and passions, and is thus not interested in spiritual things.

"The natural man is simply the man who is not guided by revelation" (Willis, p. 81).

Look at the context. Does this mean the average man cannot understand the things GOD has delivered through His apostles? Absolutely not! This context speaks of the way GOD'S word was delivered to mankind. It was not delivered directly to the common man, rather GOD delivered it through His Son and the Holy Spirit to the apostles and prophets to be delivered to the common man. Paul later wrote that one can understand, just as he did:

"Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4).

The Calvinists teach that a man cannot believe (have faith) until GOD works directly on his heart with the Holy Spirit. They try to use this passage to prove their point, even though their interpretation of this passage contradicts other passages. Note the comments of Willis on this:

"John distinctly stated that his gospel was written

to create faith (John 20:30-31); Paul affirmed that anyone reading his writings concerning the 'mystery' could understand them (Eph. 3:1-5), and, therefore, commanded men to understand the will of the Lord (Eph. 5:17). Did he demand the impossible? Other passages link faith with the preaching of GOD'S word rather than to the miraculous operation of the Holy Spirit on the heart of man (Cf. Luke 8:11; Acts 11:13-14; 15:6-7; I Cor. 1:21; John 17:20-21; Rom. 10:13-17)" (Willis, p. 81).

Why are the **"things of the Spirit of GOD," "foolishness"** to the natural man? They are foolishness to him because he does not accept revelation. He looks at the physical realm, and if it does not make "scientific sense," he rejects it. For instance, a man dying on a Roman cross to become king does not make sense to the natural man.

Why cannot the natural man know the spiritual? He cannot know the spiritual because he is trying to find such things through human wisdom, and he can never find them in this way. These things can only be learned and understood by those who are willing to accept revelation from the Holy Spirit. Today, the Bible is that revelation.

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| I Cor. 2:15 "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man." | "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man." (ASV) | "But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one." (NKJV) |
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JUDGETH: • ναρκίνω -- *"To judge strictly, afresh"* (Young's, p. 557). *"To judge of, estimate, determine (the excellence or defects of any person or thing)"* (Thayer, p. 39). *"To discern, judge"* (Zodhiates, p. 152); *"Question, examine...examine and judge, call to account"* (Bauer, p. 56); *"Qualified to sift, to examine, to decide rightly"* (Robertson, p. 90).

The spiritual man, i.e., the one who accepts the revelation of GOD, is capable of truly looking into all matters. He is the person who can truly see and understand the importance of all matters and how they relate to the overall picture of life. While the spiritual man can see the importance of all matters, discerning and judging all things rightly, he who is not spiritual, the natural man, can make

no true judgment on the spiritual man. Such a one cannot understand what motivates the Christian not to do certain things, but rather calls them evil. To the natural man, those who live Christian lives are wasting their lives; their beliefs and actions seem foolish. Though he may rail against the spiritual man, condemning his beliefs, his judgments carry no weight.

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| <p>I Cor. 2:16 "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ."</p> | <p>"For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." (NKJV)</p> |
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"Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him" (Isaiah 40:13; cf. Rom. 11:34)?

The whole thrust of this chapter shows that human wisdom is unable to know the things of GOD; it cannot know spiritual things. Man must rely upon revelation in order to know the things of GOD. Lipscomb translated the first part of this passage as

"Who hath known the mind of the Lord that he should teach it (that is, teach the truth)" (Lipscomb, p. 39).

The natural man cannot instruct the spiritual man in religious matters.

Having the mind of Christ signifies knowing what He desires and requires of man. This was accomplished through revelation. In spiritual matters, what right does the non-religious man have to try to instruct the spiritual man?

He cannot: he has nothing to offer. Why not? The non-Christian is not qualified to offer anything of value to the Christian's faith. Nor is the non-Christian qualified to condemn the Christian.

Some, like Littrell, believe the passage speaks only of those men who were directly inspired by GOD. The last sentence of this verse says, **"We have the mind of Christ."**

The word **"we"** is inclusive of all who truly seek spiritual truths.

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify GOD, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 15:6).

"I beseech you, brethren, by 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 perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10).

"Let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27).

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (1 Pet. 4:1).

First Corinthians — Chapter Three

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| <p>I Cor. 3:1 "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ."</p> | <p>"And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ." (ASV)</p> | <p>"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ." (NKJV)</p> |
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They had been baptized and were thus Christians, as the word **"brethren"** denotes. But to be spiritual is more than simply believing with initial obedience. Though they had accepted the Gospel, they had not grown as they should, and leaned more toward the carnal than the spiritual. To be spiritual one must not only accept the gospel, but apply it to one's life.

"The spiritual were those who, after conversion, had continued to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, no longer continuing as 'babes in Christ.' The carnal were those who were continuing to live like the unconverted, full of envy, jealousy and strife" (Coffman, p. 41).

The Corinthians were allowing the things of the world to have more sway over them than they should have. That

is why there are so many problems in this congregation. They were like babes in Christ who were in the process of being weaned away from the world, but had remained infants instead of maturing in the faith.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of GOD; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. 5:12-14).

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| <p>I Cor. 3:2 "I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able."</p> | <p>"I fed you with milk, not with meat; for ye were not yet able to bear it: nay, not even now are ye able;" (ASV)</p> | <p>"I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able;" (NKJV)</p> |
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Babies are fed milk because they do not have the ability to consume solid foods. As they grow, their diet is changed to fit their needs and their ability to digest. The same thing holds true in the spiritual realm. Even the Lord's disciples, in particular the twelve, went through stages of development:

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now" (John 16:12).

Consider how infants understand only the gratification of physical needs — hunger, diaper change, etc. This is all they know how to appreciate. The Corinthians were still so involved with the physical cares of life they did not know how to appreciate the spiritual. They had not grown, and Paul rebukes them for not being able to accept the more advanced teaching they needed. It is not known how long they had been Christians, but it had been long enough to deserve Paul's rebuke. Unfortunately, some remain babies

all of their lives. Babies must totally depend upon someone else to feed them and to carry them from place to place. In a very real sense, the spiritual babe needs this as well. But there comes a point in time when every Christian ought to be able to advance and take care of himself and eventually be mature in the faith. One often pities those whose bodies grow, but whose mental abilities do not. The Christian who matures physically, but not spiritually, is not only to be pitied, but faces judgment before GOD. Since Paul spoke by the Holy Spirit, this passage and others (Cf. Heb. 5:12-14; 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18) show GOD will not be pleased with those who do not grow as they should.

"The Corinthians were, therefore, Christians who had not made the effort to learn Christ's word and to put it into practice in their lives; they were unspiritual — too much this world minded" (Willis, p. 92).

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| <p>I Cor. 3:3 "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"</p> | <p>"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?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?" (NKJV)</p> |
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Here is the proof of Paul's assertion. He knew they were carnal, or allowing the desires of the fleshly man to

control them, because of their actions of **"envying," "strife,"** and **"divisions."** Envy [ζ-λος — "Zeal"

(Young's, p. 303)], is used in both a good and bad sense in the Bible. Correct zeal leads to growth and Christian maturity. But their zeal had led to strife and eventually divisions, such as were occurring among them at that very time. Their zeal caused a party spirit.

"The progression would be from zeal which has gotten out of hand, to contentions which degenerated into strife finally consummating in a division" (Willis, p. 95).

When acting in such a way, he says they **"walk as men."**

They walk, or act, like unconverted men of the world instead of spiritual men. They are not controlled by GOD'S revelation, but by human passions. These actions can only result in division. The word "divisions" is found three times in this letter. Notice it is first found as a warning that there should not be divisions among them (1:10). Next, one finds the progression which leads to divisions (3:3), and finally, one sees the plain accusation of their active involvement in divisions (11:18).

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| <p>I Cor. 3:4-5 "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?"</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?" (NKJV)</p> |
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Apparently, the people were splitting primarily into two major parties; those who followed Apollos, and those who followed Paul; (Those who followed Peter seemed to be a small group, since Paul primarily uses himself and Apollos as the contrast.) But in doing so, Paul said they showed they were carnal; they followed the ways of the flesh rather than GOD'S way.

Paul then asks a question which is designed to cause them to realize that neither he nor Apollos, nor any other human being, are to be followed in religious matters. They had put Paul and Apollos on pedestals in each of their respective groups, and in doing so they were leaving Christ out of the picture. Paul informs them they are simply **"ministers."** The word **"minister"** comes from the word *διάκονος*, which is used to designate the office of a deacon, or to simply refer in a general sense to a servant. Here it represents the idea of a servant. *"Men are mere servants; no one worships a servant" (Willis, p. 97).* One should remember the warning given by Paul in Romans 12:3,

"For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as GOD hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Certainly Paul knew his true position in the scheme of all things spiritual — he was just a servant.

But notice they were **"ministers by whom they believed."** One does not just wake up one day believing, as the Calvinists teach. There is nothing miraculous in obtaining faith as is seen in this passage. These people came to have faith because Paul, Apollos and others had taught them the Gospel of Christ. It is this way with all men today; all men obtain faith because they have been taught — **"even as the Lord gave to every man."**

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD" (Rom. 10:17).

"For after that in the wisdom of GOD the world by wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21).

"He showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:13-14).

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| I Cor. 3:6-8 "I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that | "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 | "I planted, Apollos watered, but GOD gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but GOD who gives the |
| watereth; but GOD that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." | increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: but each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor." (ASV) | increase. Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor." (NKJV) |

Paul says he planted and Apollos watered. What did they plant and water? They planted the seed which is the word of GOD (Luke 8:11). It must be remembered that a Christian's obligation is to take the Gospel into all the world (Mark 16:15; Matt. 28:19). One should also remember that the seed has within itself the power to produce, and to save:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

The saving seed comes from GOD, so men have the charge to plant His seed in the hearts of men, and to water the seed. Thus, once planted in the proper soil, GOD gives the increase because the life is within the seed.

Verse seven shows that no matter who plants and waters, they are nothing in comparison to GOD who gives the increase. This does not mean these evangelists were literally worth nothing. This statement is a comparison between them and GOD. A side lesson: One must be careful not to put one preacher on a pedestal above others. For that matter, he should not be put on a pedestal compared to all other faithful Christians. All are simply servants.

Why does a man plant a seed? He plants it with the hope it will grow into a healthy plant. Why does a man

water the seed he has planted? He waters it for the same purpose. In other words, both Apollos and Paul were trying to accomplish the same thing. They worked with each other, not against each other.

Paul says the one who watered and the one who planted **"are one."** This signifies their unity. They were not divided, nor warring against one another for dominance. Such being the case, why were those at Corinth choosing sides as if they were? How ridiculous to make a division which does not exist among those who proclaim GOD'S truths. They were united in serving Christ, and the Corinthians should also have been.

"They are one in mutual love and respect for each other, one in purpose, one in status as GOD'S servants, and one in their reliance upon the Lord who would reward both" (Coffman, p. 44).

Yet, each one will be judged independently from the other on that great day: **"Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor."** Paul would receive a reward according to his labor, and so would Apollos and all others who labored in the fields of the Lord. Willis interestingly points out the reward comes from labors, not results (Willis, p. 102). GOD gives the results; all man can do is labor in the vineyard. Man cannot make a judgment as to which evangelist is worth more than another, only GOD can give the true picture of such a thing.

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| I Cor. 3:9 "For we are labourers together with GOD: ye are GOD'S husbandry, ye are GOD'S building." | "For we are GOD'S fellow-workers: ye are GOD'S husbandry, GOD'S building." (ASV) | "For we are GOD'S fellow workers; you are GOD'S field, you are GOD'S building." (NKJV) |
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"We are laborers together with GOD." There is little doubt this speaks of the apostles, but also of all those who proclaim the Gospel in the role commonly called preachers. This context includes Apollos who was not an apostle in the official sense of "the twelve." Those in this capacity work with GOD in the sense of doing and teaching what He directs them to do and say.

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace

"Since the oneness of Paul and Apollos had just been mentioned, it is natural to assume that the meaning here is 'fellow-servants' under GOD" (Coffman, p. 45).

of GOD in vain" (II Cor. 6:1).

"Ye are GOD'S husbandry" In this analogy, the

Corinthians are the field wherein GOD labors through Paul, Apollos, et cetera.

"Ye are GOD'S building" has reference to the church.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an

holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

Notice the possessive nature of these: It is GOD'S laborers, GOD'S husbandry (cultivated field), and GOD'S building (church). Everything ultimately belongs to Him!

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| <p>I Cor. 3:10 "According to the grace of GOD which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon."</p> | <p>"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 man take heed how he buildeth thereon." (ASV)</p> | <p>"According to the grace of GOD which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it." (NKJV)</p> |
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The grace of GOD given to Paul was the ability and opportunity given to him for the purpose of proclaiming the gospel of Christ to a dying world. Those who preach need to keep in mind GOD has given them a wonderful privilege in proclaiming His truths.

Gospel Proclaimed — Gospel Received — Stand in the Gospel — Saved if kept in memory.

As a wise masterbuilder, Paul knew the most important thing for any building is a solid foundation. The foundation he laid was the truth of Jesus Christ:

"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:1-4).

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of GOD. For

I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Cor. 2:1-2).

Notice also the connection this has with Ephesians 2:20-22;

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

In this passage the church is proclaimed as being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the corner stone. The corner stone is the most important part of the building, for if it is not right, the building will not "square-up." The apostles and prophets were the foundation in the sense that they taught the truths of GOD'S word upon which the rest of the building could be constructed.

As a wise masterbuilder, Paul had laid the foundation as GOD had instructed him; others then came upon the scene and continued to construct the building. Paul warns them in the latter part of this verse to be careful how they build the building of GOD. What is taught must be in harmony with the foundation truths which have been laid.

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| <p>I Cor. 3:11 "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."</p> | <p>"For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (NKJV)</p> |
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There is only one foundation upon which the church may be properly built, and that is Jesus Christ. If one does not build upon Him as the Savior, the author and finisher of

"Literally, 'alongside (para) the one laid (keimenon),' already laid (present middle participle of keimai, used here as often as the perfect passive of tithemi in place of

our faith, then the building is not the church of our Lord. Robertson tells us, **"laid"** is

tetheimenon)" (Robertson's Word Pictures, p. 96).

Another foundation cannot be laid and have the same building. There are many who have tried to build on the foundations of human creeds, laying them beside Christ,

but the only true religious foundation has been laid for mankind by Christ.

What is the foundational truth upon which the Lord's church is built?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living GOD. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:16-18).

The foundational truth upon which our Lord's church is built, is that He is the Christ, the Son of the living GOD.

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a

wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24-27).

What is the rock the wise man built upon? It is the rock of Matthew 16:16-18, the truth that Jesus is the Son of GOD. This is the foundational truth upon which the church is built.

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| I Cor. 3:12 "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;" | "But if any man buildeth on the foundation gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, stubble;" (ASV) | "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw," (NKJV) |
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"As the apostle is speaking of the Christian church, consisting of the believers of all nations, of which church Christ is the foundation, it is evident that the materials built on this foundation (gold, silver, etc.) cannot represent the doctrines, but the disciples of Christ...In no passage of scripture is the temple or church of GOD said to consist of doctrines, but of the disciples of Christ, who are called living stones built up of a spiritual house or temple (1 Pet. 2:5-6)" (James Macknight, p. 52).

It seems clear there are two classes of people portrayed by these six items: (1) The faithful disciple, and (2) unfaithful disciple. The first group will not be destroyed by fire, whereas the second will be burned by it. There is no way to avoid the comparison of the judgment, where those declared to be unfit for the eternal kingdom are cast

"Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not

into the lake of fire. Why? They did not endure. The context shows Jesus as the foundation to be built upon. But some will clearly not build wisely. This text is not like the builder of Matthew 7:24-27. There, one builds on the foundation of Christ while the other builds according to human wisdom. In our present text, both groups began building on the correct foundation — Jesus Christ. But one did not build correctly, therefore, that work did not endure.

In the next few verses one can find one who labors, but his work is destroyed, yet he is saved. Christians have the responsibility to teach the lost, but the hearer also has a responsibility. If the teacher does his job he may be saved, even if those he teaches fail in life's journey to reach the goal of heaven.

the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from Me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from

his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul" (Ezek. 33:2-9).

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| <p>I Cor. 3:13 "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is." (NKJV)</p> |
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The first thing to notice is that it is **"every man's work"** which is under discussion with regard to the trying fire. This affirms that the items listed in verse twelve refer to people. In the physical world, fire only purifies gold, silver, and precious stones; but it destroys wood, hay, and stubble. The word **"day"** in this passage refers to the judgment day. Yet, there are those who think it means a day of trial here on earth. It is admitted that the truth taught here could apply to either, though the evidence points to final judgment. For fairness' sake, notice passages which point to both positions:

"And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not GOD, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:7-8).

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you" (1 Pet. 4:12).

Other passages could be cited, but these seem to make the point.

Whether the passage speaks of the trials of this life or the judgment which is to come, both will show what kind of man one really is. One of the accusations Satan made against Job was, as long as everything was going well, then Job would faithfully serve GOD, but let the trials of this life come, and GOD would see the real Job.

"Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear GOD for nought? Hast not Thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land" (Job 1:9-10).

Often the most difficult things one faces in life show one's true character. One must be like Job. When the trials come, one must not waver in devotion to GOD. Job said, **"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged GOD foolishly" (Job 1:21-22).**

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| <p>I Cor. 3:14 "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward."</p> | <p>"If any man's work shall abide which he built thereon, he shall receive a reward." (ASV)</p> | <p>"If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward." (NKJV)</p> |
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Every man must build "his building" on the foundation of the Lord. Christians are all to help build the church on the proper foundation. Christians are to be a living stone in this building:

"Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on

spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to GOD by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:5).

When fire tests the building, those who have built properly will be like the gold tested by fire. Its shape will change, but it will be purified.

immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory" (1 Cor. 15:51-55)?

Notice he speaks of the promised reward. While this may first refer to one's individual reward in heaven, there may be another related application of this passage. What a wonderful reward to see in heaven those whom one has taught the gospel!

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming" (1 Thess. 2:19)?

"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved" (Phil. 4:1).

The crown is spoken of in Revelation as one's reward:

"Fear none of those things which thou shalt

suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

Also, **"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown"** (Rev. 3:11).

It would seem obvious the "work" of this passage points to those to whom one has taken the gospel, and primarily to those who obey it and remain faithful.

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| I Cor. 3:15 "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." | "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as through fire." (ASV) | "If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." (NKJV) |
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The Calvinists have long tried to use this verse to prove that despite one's sins, one will still receive the reward of heaven. This is contrived because of their doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy. But the passage does not teach such, for such would be a clear contradiction to passages like First Corinthians 9:27,

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway;" or First Corinthians 10:12, **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."**

In context, this passage is discussing the efforts of Christians (teachers, preachers, et cetera) in teaching others. A preacher may spend years with a congregation which

departs from the faith, but if he is faithful in his proclamation of truth and manner of life, he will be saved. Yet, he will suffer the loss of seeing his efforts lose their reward. This would apply to any Christian who puts effort into converting someone. One may obey the gospel, and yet years later turn from salvation, but if the Christian has done his part well, he will have eternal salvation while the other is lost. When one sees those whom he has endeavored to help toward heaven living unfaithful lives, it cannot help but gender a feeling of loss to faithful Christians. Each will have his work tested. Thankfully, none will lose the reward of heaven based on the actions of those taught. Consider Noah preaching for one hundred twenty years; yet, only eight souls were saved when the judgment of the flood came upon them.

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| I Cor. 3:16 "Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?" | "Know ye not that ye are a temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?" (ASV) | "Do you not know that you are the temple of GOD and that the Spirit of GOD dwells in you?" (NKJV) |
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This passage has often been applied to the individual Christian, but here it deals with the body as a whole, the church. (The individual Christian is dealt with in First Corinthians 6:19-20.) The church is compared to the temple which had as its inner sanctuary the dwelling place of GOD.

"The main idea to be conveyed is that the church is just as holy as Solomon's Temple was. During **"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an**

Christ's day, a person could be put to death for defiling the Temple. The Corinthians needed to be warned of the same danger with reference to the Church" (Willis, p. 115).

Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of this building which is built as a spiritual habitation of GOD.

holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are

builed together for an habitation of GOD through the Spirit" (Eph. 2:20-22).

temple (church) GOD has given. Any attack on the church is an attack on its founder, Jesus Christ (cf. Acts 9:1-4).

It seems clear Paul is warning the brethren not to harm the

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| I Cor. 3:17 "If any man defile the temple of GOD, him shall GOD destroy; for the temple of GOD is holy, which temple ye are." | "If any man destroyeth the temple of GOD, him shall GOD destroy; for the temple of GOD is holy, and such are ye." (ASV) | "If anyone defiles the temple of GOD, GOD will destroy him. For the temple of GOD is holy, which temple you are." (NKJV) |
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DEFILE — φθείρω — *"To corrupt, to destroy"* (Thayer, p. 652); *"To corrupt, destroy. Trans. to destroy, punish with destruction, bring to a worse state"* (Zodhiates, p. 1442); *"Ruin or corrupt...destroy"* (Bauer, p. 857); *"This old verb means to corrupt, to deprave, to destroy"* (Robertson, p. 99). The words **"defile"** and **"destroy"** in the English version are the same original word in this passage (φθείρω).

It is good to remember what the Corinthians were guilty of doing. Through their divisions, which were fostered by party spirits, they were in danger of destroying the church. Here is a strong warning not to destroy the church, through either wrong actions or wrong teachings. Paul says GOD will destroy the destroyer.

dividing the church are destroying it. This is because the church of Jesus Christ is a living organism, not just an organization. You can divide a pie into six pieces without destroying it; you are just preparing to serve it. This is because a pie is an organization. But if you divide a dog in two, you have destroyed him, because he is an organism. The Corinthian church was being divided into four cliques or parties (1:12). Thus it was in danger of being destroyed" (Earle, p. 221).

Notice also there can be no mistake that the church is not the building: **"which temple ye are."**

Earle's comments are interesting as an illustration here. He says,

"What he means here, then, is that those who are

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| I Cor. 3:18 "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise." | "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." (ASV) | "Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise." (NKJV) |
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DECEIVE — ἡπατάω — *"To deceive"* (Thayer, p. 221); *"To deceive completely, beguile, seduce, meaning to lead out of the right way into error"* (Zodhiates, p. 600); *"Deceive, cheat someone...deceive oneself"* (Bauer, p. 273).

"Let no man deceive himself" Self deception is the biggest problem into which every human being falls. When one thinks of deception, he often thinks of how terrible it was for some older person to fall prey to some con-artist's deception. But the greatest deception is not one which is fostered by another, but the one created with regard to self.

5:21)!

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself" (Gal. 6:3).

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the LORD, and depart from evil" (Prov. 3:5-7).

"Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

"Self-conceit causes men to depend upon their own wisdom and strength instead of that of GOD, and leads them to ruin financially and spiritually" (Lipscomb, p. 55).

"Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isaiah

When human beings truly desire something, they are easily deceived. Pride causes some to deceive themselves into believing they are something or someone they are not. A desire for a certain event to take place causes some to

believe miracles still take place today. Notice how many have been deceived by men like Benny Hinn into believing he has miraculous powers and can heal them. They want to believe someone can heal them, so they deceive

themselves; they are looking for hope, albeit a false hope.

If one truly wants to be wise in the sight of GOD, it is not going to be through his knowledge of this world or the things of this world. It will not be through the philosophies and vain deceits of this world.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

Dummelow paraphrased this passages thusly:
"Do not deceive yourselves; but if there be any of you priding himself on his worldly wisdom, let

him quickly unlearn it, that he may learn the true wisdom" (J.R. Dummelow, p. 898).

If one is to be truly wise, he must give up the standards the world has set as being wise. The Gospel cannot be judged by the philosophies of the world. One's *"understanding of any subject must begin with what GOD'S revelation says on the subject"* (Willis, p. 119). One might add, it ends with what GOD'S revelation says on the subject.

To be wise in GOD'S eyes will mean one is a fool in the view of the world.

"The church's wise are the world's fools, and vice versa" (Expositors, p. 794).

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| I Cor. 3:19 "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with GOD. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." | "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with GOD. For it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness:" (ASV) | "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with GOD. For it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness;" (NKJV) |
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FOOLISHNESS — μωρία — *"Foolishness"* (Thayer, p. 420; Bauer, p. 531); *"Folly, foolishness, absurdity"* (Zodhiates, p. 1001);

CRAFTINESS — πανουργία — *"Craftiness, cunning"* (Thayer, p. 476); *"Shrewdness, cunning, craftiness, unscrupulousness; the word signified the employment of any or all means necessary to realize an end"* (Zodhiates, p. 1092-1093); *"Cunning, craftiness, trickery, lit. 'readiness to do anything'"* (Bauer, p. 608).

This passage is quoted from Job 5:13 and is the only quotation in the New Testament from the book of Job. It was spoken by an uninspired man, and misapplied to Job, but Paul testifies to the general truth of the statement.

What the world considers to be wisdom is ultimately shown by GOD to be foolishness. This is often seen in the schemes man devises to accomplish something, which ultimately lead him to harm. For example:

"Man, in his wisdom, cries out for freedom; his definition of freedom corresponds more closely to the concept of license than to freedom. When GOD gives man up to act out his ways, he degenerates to the point that he receives in his own body the just recompense of his error (Cf. Rom. 1:24-32)" (Willis, p. 120).

Adam Clarke also gives an example of how this is accomplished:

"The pagans raised up persecution against the Church of Christ in order to destroy it; but this

became the very means of quickly spreading it over the earth, and of destroying the whole pagan system. Thus the wise men were taken in their own craftiness" (Clarke, p. 206).

"Be not deceived; GOD is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

The wisdom of man built a tower (Babel) so they would not be scattered over the earth. The thing they tried to avoid, the thing they feared, GOD did, by changing their languages.

It is the "wisdom of men" which leads men to consider GOD'S Word in the light of their own thinking. They judge His Word by their own reasoning. When men do this they then feel free to reject any part of the Bible which does not follow "their wisdom." Thus, denominationalism is born, the very thing which this text says is wrong!

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| I Cor. 3:20 "And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain." | "and again, The Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise that they are vain." (ASV) | "and again, The LORD knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile." (NKJV) |
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VAIN: μάταιος -- *"Vain, unprofitable, useless"* (Young's, p. 1020); *"Useless, to no purpose, foolish"* (Thayer, p. 393); *"To no purpose, in vain. Vain, empty, fruitless, aimless. It is building houses on sand, chasing the wind, shooting at stars, pursuing one's own shadow"* (Zodhiates, p. 948); *"Idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth"* (Bauer, p. 495);

"Void of results" (Willis, p. 121); "Useless, foolish, from mate, a futile attempt" (Robertson, p. 100).

Again, the worldly wise are those who look to worldly reasoning to find answers to religious matters. The brethren in Corinth were not doing things according to GOD'S pattern, instead they were causing division, and would eventually destroy the church at Corinth. Man's way of thinking is foolishness; it serves no purpose and is aimless. This is not only true in the church, but often spills into society when man thinks his way of handling certain situations is better than the laws and principles of the Bible.

"Human thought is fruitless in the sense of not producing anything of spiritual value that redeems man from sin, but that it is likewise ineffectual in devising any worthwhile solutions of the secular, political, economic and social problems which plague the entire world"

(Coffman, p. 54).

An example, one of many, is the welfare state which has been devised by many governments. Often those who could work are living on government handouts instead of following the Biblical injunction "**that if any would not work, neither should he eat**" (2 Thess. 3:10). Fraud is abundant, and the country cannot afford it; all because men refuse to recognize GOD'S way as best, thinking their feeble thoughts are better than His.

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. 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).

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| I Cor. 3:21 "Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are yours;" | "Wherefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours;" (ASV) | "Therefore let no one boast in men. For all things are yours:" (NKJV) |
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Paul earlier showed that one man is no better than another. Neither he nor Apollos was superior to the other. They had not died for the salvation of man. Since this is the case, then why look to some man as if he were the greatest thing going, and to "his" wisdom as being superior to all others? Instead, all knowledge has been given, and points only to Christ as the one in whom Christians should glory. Jesus said when men seek the glory of men they have their reward:

"Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward" (Matt. 6:2).

When men seek the glory of men, they will receive praise from those men, but not from GOD.

Why choose sides with men when all things belong to Christians in Jesus Christ?

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| I Cor. 3:22-23 "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." | "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." (ASV) | "whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come; all are yours. And you are Christ's, and Christ is GOD'S." (NKJV) |
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How is it all things belong to Christians and benefit them? It is only through Christ this is true. Notice also, since Christians belong to Christ and Christ belongs to GOD, then Christians belong to GOD as well. The Corinthians needed to realize they were limiting themselves when they looked to one of these teachers as their head. All around one, even those things to come, can only be used properly by Christians, because they follow GOD'S laws. Thus, they alone truly know how to benefit from these worldly things. They are Christians because they belong to Christ.

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist" (Col. 1:16-17).

"But to us there is but one GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. 8:6).

First Corinthians — Chapter Four

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| <p>I Cor. 4:1 "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD."</p> | <p>"Let a man so account of us, as of ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of GOD." (NKJV)</p> |
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MINISTER: **βηρέτης** — "An under rower, assistant" (Young's, p. 663); "An under rower, subordinate rower....any one who aids another in any work; an assistant" (Thayer, p. 642); A subordinate, servant, attendant, or assistant in general. The subordinate official who waits to accomplish the commands of his superior" (Zodhiates, p. 1418); "Servant, helper, assistant, who serves a master or superior" (Bauer, p. 842); "Under-rowers, subordinate rowers of Christ" (Robertson, p. 102); "The usage of hup' ret's is clear; it always refers to a service of any kind which in structure and goal is controlled by the will of him to whom it is rendered; implied, also, is the idea of acceptance of subordination -- willing obedience" (Willis, p. 127).

STEWARD: **οἰκονόμος** — "A house manager, steward" (Young's, p. 934). "The management of a household or of household affairs; specially, the management, oversight, administration, of others' property; the office of a manager or overseer, stewardship" (Thayer, p. 440). "An administrator, a person who manages the domestic affairs of a family, business, or minor, a treasurer, a chamberlain of a city, a house manager, overseer, steward" (Zodhiates, p. 1032); "(house) - Steward, manager" (Bauer, p. 560); "The steward or house manager was a slave under his lord, but a master over the other slaves in the house, an overseer over the rest" (Robertson, p. 102).

Paul had just corrected them because of the false position in which they held preachers. Now he will present a proper estimation they ought to have had with regards to preachers. To emphasize this, he begins by using two words which are similar, but with slightly different meanings. The "**minister**" is a servant (**βηρέτης**), whereas a "**steward**" (**οἰκονόμος**) is an agent who holds a position of oversight over another person's goods.

Paul is saying those who are ministers of Christ are subordinate to Him. Further, men serve Him because they have chosen to serve Him. He further designates ministers as stewards of the mysteries, i.e., the Gospel which was formerly hidden, but is now revealed to mankind. It is thus the responsibility of ministers to dispense the Gospel to the world, and to take care how they do it, for they will be held accountable in how faithful they have been to this charge.

"My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that

we shall receive the greater condemnation"
(James 3:1).

Note this instruction was for ministers in general, for the context had dealt with Apollos, around whom one of these parties, or factions, was being built. He was not an inspired man, and had to be taught the Gospel more perfectly (Acts 18:24-26). Such could not be said of the apostles.

While this passage deals particularly with the class called preachers, or public proclaimers of the Gospel, one should realize all Christians are to be ministers of Christ. All are to be assistants in the work of spreading the Gospel, which is the work of the church. Not only should one's words teach the precious message of salvation in Christ, the life one lives must teach as well. One must ask himself what kind of influence he is having on one's relatives, friends, associates, and the world in general.

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| <p>I Cor. 4:2 "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."</p> | <p>"Here, moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful." (NKJV)</p> |
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"The most important virtue of GOD'S servant is fidelity. GOD does not require eloquence, results, etc; He requires faithfulness. The preacher's task is not to originate new schemas of thought — to

A good example of this is found in the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30). GOD expected each servant to use faithfully all he was given. The two talent servant was not expected to produce five talents; BUT, he was expected to use what he had and show an increase. This is well illustrated by the one talent man who returned only

invent new philosophical systems; his task is to faithfully propagate the revelation of GOD. After all, the power lies in the message and not in the messenger boy" (Willis, p. 129).

what he had been given. He did not use what he had, so he lost everything!

Christians are simply servants who have been given the task to spread GOD'S Word in the world in which one lives. They have no right to teach their own words or thoughts; only His truths may be proclaimed to the world.

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| I Cor. 4:3 "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." | "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." (ASV) | "But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by a human court. In fact, I do not even judge myself." (NKJV) |
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Paul speaks of three areas of judgment in this verse: (1) the Corinthian's judgments, (2) the world's judgments, and (3) his own judgments. He concludes that none of them is worth very much; and thus none of them would hinder him in any way from his work. Preachers (and elders) need to develop a thick skin so far as criticisms are concerned. Many times criticisms are not meant to help those criticized, but are rather an attempt to silence the speaker of truth, or at the very least to get him to tone down his speech (compromise). Yet, one should always consider the criticism offered, evaluate it, and go from there remembering always one's first priority is to be faithful to GOD. As Paul points out in a later verse, all will have to answer to Him who judges correctly in all matters.

It does not matter what another human being thinks of a Christian or his efforts, nor does it matter what one thinks of himself. All that really matters is what GOD thinks of us. What is His judgment concerning one's teaching and actions? Paul is not concerned about what these brethren think of him; his only concern is what GOD thinks of him. This should be the way all Christians think,

and if they do, there will be far less compromising of truth in every area of life.

"Men are not capable of judging other men, except through the application of the Word of God" (Stancliff, Vol. 5, p. 62).

Why could Paul not judge his usefulness to the Lord? He could not do so because **"it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"** (Jer. 10:23). Man tends to think of himself more highly than he ought, i.e., thinking he is truly accomplishing good or great things when just the opposite may be true. Consider Abraham and Sarah when they sought to help GOD by using Hagar to have a son (Gen. 16). They thought they were doing good, but they were not doing what GOD wanted them to do.

If Paul pleased GOD in all matters, there could be no **legitimate** criticism offered by any man. Those who criticize the style, the words used, et cetera, should be dismissed just as Paul dismissed the criticism of these Corinthians. One should remember their criticisms were not based on a *"thus saith the Lord."* If they had been, then Paul would have indeed paid attention to them.

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| I Cor. 4:4 "For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." | "For I know nothing against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord." (ASV) | "For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord." (NKJV) |
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The KJV is not as clear in this passage as the ASV and NKJV (note above). Paul's conscience was clear. He did not know of anything regarding his life, but especially in this passage his teachings, which were contrary to the will of GOD. He did not know of anything in his life which would cause him to be condemned by GOD. But does a pure, clean conscience justify him before GOD? Paul understood it did not. Paul said in Acts 23:1, **"I have lived in all good conscience before GOD until this day."** Yet, he had persecuted the church, blasphemed, et cetera. When he was doing those things he honestly thought he was doing the right things; his conscience had been clear.

But while doing those things he stood condemned before GOD, as evidenced by the events recorded in Acts nine. Ignorance does not justify wrong behavior or thoughts.

If Paul were to stand justified before GOD it would not be on the basis of any human judgment, not even His own. If he stood justified before GOD, it was going to be based on the judgment of GOD, the only judgment which truly matters. The same is true for all Christians. (We need to be careful not to rationalize our actions and thoughts so as to excuse them. We must simply think and do as the Bible directs us in that which is right.)

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| I Cor. 4:5 "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of GOD." | "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." (ASV) | "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from GOD." (NKJV) |
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The word "**judge**" refers to the final judgment, "*krino* -- the final judgment" (Willis, p. 133). It is speaking of a final judgment on a person, which no human being has the ability to do. In this context, it has obvious reference to those who are teachers and the judgments being rendered toward them with regard to superiority. How could they judge in such matters? Their judgments are only human opinion. Further, those whom they may have thought were great men, might turn out not to be such at "the final judgment." All of those things which may be hidden from others, even the thoughts hidden deep within our hearts, will one day be revealed by the One who has absolute knowledge of all things. It is then that Christians will see the true worth of every individual, not from the eyes of human beings, but from the penetrating eyes of the Creator.

"For the word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not

manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:12-13).

The last phrase of this verse deals only with those who are faithful. GOD will not praise the wicked on that day; He will only give them their just reward of eternal punishment.

Notice also, this passage does not condemn all judging. Judgments must be made in order to determine whether one is "**walking disorderly**" (2 Thess. 3:6), but these are not judgments based purely on human reasoning. It can accurately be determined when one walks disorderly whether one's actions and teachings are contrary to GOD'S Word. In such cases, GOD has already judged their actions, and condemns those involved in them. Further, if Paul was condemning all judgments, then what about the judgment he makes in the fifth chapter regarding the man guilty of fornication? It should be remembered their judgments were causing division among brethren where no division should exist. This is so because they judged by human reasoning instead of by GOD'S Word.

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| <p>I Cor. 4:6 "And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Now these things, brethren, I have figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that you may learn in us not to think beyond what is written, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against the other." (NKJV)</p> |
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One should remember the contention caused in this congregation did not come from Paul, Apollos, Peter, or the Lord. They were not behind these divisions, nor did they encourage them in any way. Instead, members of the congregation had started these divisions and were pursuing them.

Paul uses himself and Apollos to teach them a valuable lesson here. He and Apollos had not gone beyond what was written in the Word of GOD. They had both faithfully presented not the philosophies of men, but only the Word

What the Corinthians who caused these divisions were doing was puffing themselves up with pride. They were not building up those whom they professed to be following; Paul, and the others. By dividing into parties, each group was claiming superiority to all other groups, thus, dividing the body. Paul and Apollos did not do this with each other, nor with any other teacher of the Gospel.

of GOD. It is not the man who delivers the word who is so important — it is the Word which is delivered. He and Apollos were not vying with each other to see who was greater; they both recognized the Word had been given to them, and it was that Word which was vital to those who heard it, not those who spoke the Word. They were inferior to the Word which they proclaimed. They could not save, but the word they spoke could lead men to salvation.

They simply looked at themselves as being "**ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of GOD.**" They were fellow servants for the cause of Christ.

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| <p>I Cor. 4:7 "For who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not</p> | <p>"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?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (NKJV)</p> |
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received it?"

If one person were different from another, what made him different and in what way was he different? It would seem the distinction being made here may have something to do with spiritual gifts. One having one gift and another having another — who made them different? **The one who gave them the gift.** Everything the Corinthians had (and we have) has been given by GOD. Does one have knowledge of divine things? Where did it come from? — GOD. In the Corinthian's case, the spiritual gifts (miraculous) also came from GOD. Later in this epistle (Chapter 12), it becomes evident some of these people were vaunting themselves even against Paul, and it is likely their spiritual gifts came through the laying of his hands upon them.

They were glorying and exalting in these gifts and abilities as if they had somehow developed them, but in reality all came from GOD. If they had obtained these things through their own hard work, then they would have had room to boast. But all they had came from GOD, so where was their right to feel superior to any other member of the church? It simply did not exist.

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:17-18).

I Cor. 4:8 **"Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us: and I would to GOD ye did reign, that we also might reign with you."**

"Already are ye filled, already ye are become rich, ye have come to reign without us: yea and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you." (ASV)

"You are already full! You are already rich! You have reigned as kings without us; and indeed I could wish you did reign, that we also might reign with you!" (NKJV)

The irony in this passage is self evident. They perceived themselves rich, probably in knowledge and miraculous gifts. It is as if they felt they had it all and did not need anything else from the apostle (Cf. Rev. 3:14-22). In fact, it seems their attitude might indicate they thought they had progressed beyond the apostle. They seem to have become conceited and arrogant in the position they held, failing to recognize their great need in spiritual matters, and for him.

they were what they thought themselves to be. The hint seems to be that the reigning he speaks of, could not take place now, but in a future state. If they were reigning, then he would be reigning, too; this must be a reference to heaven.

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us" (II Tim. 2:12).

The last part of this verse shows the good will Paul had toward them, and also his own humility. He truly wished

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. 22:12).

I Cor. 4:9 **"For I think that GOD hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men."**

"For, I think, GOD hath 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." (ASV)

"For I think that GOD has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men." (NKJV)

SPECTACLE — θέατρον — *"A theatre, a place in which games and dramatic spectacles are exhibited, and public assemblies held...a public show"* (Thayer, p. 284); *"Theater, a place where drama and other public spectacles were exhibited and where the people convened to hear debates or hold public consultations...Figuratively, a spectacle, public show"* (Zodhiates, p. 720); *"Theater, as a place for public assemblies...what one sees at the theater, a play, spectacle"* (Bauer, p. 353).

There is a contrast between the view the Corinthians had of themselves and the way it really was with the apostles.

Greeks usually concluded the day's sporting activities by bringing in condemned men (epithanatoi) to fight the gladiators or wild beasts. The men were unarmed and, therefore, had no chance of survival; should they somehow

Most believe Paul uses a figure of speech to *"describe the apostles' lowly position. The*

survive one contest, they would have to fight in the next one. They had no hope of survival" (Willis, p. 142).

Paul is saying it is as if GOD purposely designed for the apostles to suffer so severely and finally to die. As one looks back in time, one sees the apostle John is the only one of the apostles reputed, by tradition, to have died a natural death.

While the Corinthians thought of themselves as being in great favor of men, blessed with all these spiritual blessings, the apostles were made a spectacle in their suffering and death to the whole world. Notice the angels are observing this as well. They are concerned with what is going on in this world, as is also indicated in First Peter 1:12; and possibly Hebrews 12:1.

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| I Cor. 4:10 "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise in Christ; we are weak, but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." | "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." (ASV) | "We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!" (NKJV) |
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FOOLS — μωρός — *"Foolish...without learning or erudition"* (Thayer, p. 420); *"Silly, stupid, foolish, from which the English word 'moron' is derived"* (Zodhiates, p. 1001); *"Foolish, stupid"* (Bauer, p. 531).

Coupled with what has already been said, this verse is a clear indication the Corinthians who opposed Paul were not really faithful. Faithful teachers are thought of as fools by the worldly because of their strict adherence to the gospel, but these Corinthians were being treated as if they were somebody special. The true servant of GOD will never be looked upon with favor, nor treated well, by the world in which they live. The world gives honor to the dishonorable, but despises those who receive honor from GOD. Therefore, those who claim to be Christians, but hold such favored positions are generally proven to be faulty in their service to GOD. **"The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"** (Matt. 10:24-25).

How was our Lord treated by the world, and even by religious leaders? Christians cannot expect it to be any different. If one is praised by all men, then something is dreadfully wrong with one's religious position.

"They thought themselves to be wise because they had combined philosophy with Christianity; they were smarter than Paul! Of course, Paul was speaking sarcastically and ironically" (Willis, p. 144).

"The three antitheses of this verse have referred to teaching, demeanor, and worldly position. In each, the Corinthians assumed themselves to be greater than the apostles. In reality, they were not" (Willis, p. 145).

Notice the comparisons made between objecting Corinthians and true teachers such as Paul. In mental capacity they thought of Paul as a moron (cf. Greek above), while they viewed themselves as wise. Physically they thought of the true teachers as being weak while they were muscle bound. Regarding public perception, they thought of the true teachers as despised (and the world will despise true teachers of GOD), while they were lavished with honor.

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| I Cor. 4:11 "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place;" | "Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place;" (ASV) | "To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless." (NKJV) |
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"All of these terms refer to genuine, bitter hardships, involving insufficient food and clothing, beatings and chastisements by enemies

of the truth, and that lonely itinerancy which was the invariable mark of apostolic preachers. The false teachers in Corinth suffered none of these

injuries or discomforts" (Coffman, p. 67). "Gumn 'teu Ccan mean 'to be naked' but, in this context, it means 'to be poorly clad, or destitute of proper and sufficient clothing.' Paul did not go around naked; rather, he was shabbily dressed because of his destitution" (Willis, p. 145). BUFFETED: "The idea is that the apostles had their physical bodies abused because of their profession of faith" (Willis, p. 145).

Notice something peculiar in this statement of

suffering; i.e., **"have no certain dwelling place."** One of the hardest things about being a preacher in any century, is the uncertainty of where one will live, or be next — it is one of the hardest things for a preacher's family to endure. And yet preachers do not move nearly as often as those of that age, and especially the apostles.

"And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head" (Matt. 8:20).

They could have lived like everyone else, but because they proclaimed the Gospel to the world, they suffered great loss and destitution. The Gospel message was that important then, and it is still that important today. It is not really known what suffering for the cross of Christ means today, especially in America.

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| I Cor. 4:12 "And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:" | "and we toil, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;" (ASV) | "And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure;" (NKJV) |
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Metz informs that:

"The Greek despised all manual labor, regarding it as the duty of slaves or people mentally unfit for anything else" (Donald S. Metz, p. 343).

All Paul is saying is said to show a contrast between the apostles and the factious leaders in Corinth.

Notice how Paul dealt with those who mistreated him.

If they reviled him, speaking harshly against him, he blessed them. He followed the example of Jesus:

"Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but

committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:23).

When he was persecuted, he suffered it. He did not go to the streets to protest the action rendered toward him; nor did he take up arms. Instead Christ restrained (**"suffer it"**) Himself from retaliating when He was persecuted. How easy it would have been for Him to have struck dead all who persecuted Him, and one might even think rightly so since He is GOD being persecuted by His own creation. But He allowed it and continued in His Father's business.

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| I Cor. 4:13 "Being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." | "being defamed, we entreat: we are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things, even until now." (ASV) | "being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now." (NKJV) |
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To be defamed, is to be slandered. The original word is βλασφημέω, from which comes the English blaspheme — *"to speak against."* Instead of retaliating in like fashion, they entreated or made earnest petitions to those who mistreated them. This may mean they made appeals on

The apostles were often treated as the filth of the world. Coffman believes this deals with the clean up in the arena after the prisoners had died. Lipscomb believes this deals with the refuse swept up in a house, or other leftovers from purification of any kind. The **"offscouring"** of the world seems to refer to the idea of *"scum, trash, rubbish, filth"* (Willis, p. 148).

"The apostles were men on whom the world vented its scorn and contempt. By accepting this reproach, they were voluntary sacrifices; but

behalf of those who mistreated them. It also may include the idea of appealing to these people's sense of honor and fair play. And quite probably it included a plea for repentance.

their lives were not wasted. Because they

sacrificed their lives in preaching the gospel, the good of all was attained. Men are saved through the blood of Jesus Christ because of their sacrifice" (Willis, p. 148).

they preached a crucified and risen Savior. What a contrast is seen in the Corinthians who did **not** sacrifice and who reviled Paul. Are Christians today willing to sacrifice all honor, pride, and material things for the cause of Christ?

This is how the world treated the apostles. Why? Because

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| I Cor. 4:14 "I write not these things to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you." | "I write not these things to shame you, but to admonish you as my beloved children." (ASV) | "I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you." (NKJV) |
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There is no doubt Paul's words would cause some of the Corinthians to feel shame, but that was not his main intent. He wrote them to correct the wrong in which they were involved, and to cause them to see themselves as they really were instead of what they thought they were.

The text says he was warning them as a loving father. When one is warned, that one is shown his wrong, the why of his wrong, and the consequences of one's error. The teacher then sets before the one in error the right way and encourages him to pursue the right course. This is done because one does not want any harm to come to the one having the problem. Instead of trying to shame them, Paul's purpose is to warn them and bring them back to a correct relationship with the heavenly Father, and with himself as their "father in the faith." Why? Because he loved them! One also should tell others the truth because one loves them, even though the truth sometimes causes shame and hurt feelings.

"Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).

It is better for feelings to be temporarily hurt now, than to

suffer eternal fire.

"For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby" (Heb. 12:6-11).

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| I Cor. 4:15 "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." | "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." (ASV) | "For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." (NKJV) |
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"The paidagōgos ("instructor," R.K.) was usually a slave whose duty it was to superintend the youth in his charge. He conducted the boy to and from

school, though he generally was not the teacher; too, he superintended the conduct of the child" (Willis, p. 150).

Though this individual might become quite attached to the child, he was still inferior to the father of the child, and the child would hold the father in higher esteem. Paul uses this term to refer to those who were making themselves instructors among the Corinthians and turning them away from a true appreciation for Paul and what they had been faithfully taught by him. None of these **"instructors"** would have the same care and love for them as did Paul. (It should also be pointed out, the term **"father"** is not being used here as a religious title, but rather to signify a relationship between the Corinthians and Paul.)

Notice they were begotten by, or through, the Gospel. Consider other passages which teach the same thing:

"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

"For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." The term **"begotten;"** implies a birth.

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which

by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet.1:23-25).

As Lipscomb points out, when the above passages are combined with John 3:3-5, it becomes very obvious how the Holy Spirit causes this new birth to take place (Lipscomb, p. 68). It is not some miraculous awakening of one's heart, but simply the acceptance of GOD'S Word coupled with obedience.

"The teaching of GOD'S Word to man causes the bagatelle (dia tou euaggelion...ego...egennesa) in the same way as the implanting of the seed of man in a woman causes a begettal" (Willis, p. 151).

Notice the actual birth does not take place immediately; it takes some time (different for each individual). But as the seed of GOD (Luke 8:11) is allowed to grow in the heart, the new birth is only a matter of time.

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| I Cor. 4:16 "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." | "I beseech you therefore, be ye imitators of me." (ASV) | "Therefore I urge you, imitate me." (NKJV) |
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Paul is not issuing a blanket statement which directs them to follow his example in everything, no matter what. This can be seen from his statement in chapter eleven, verse one: **"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."** Paul only expected people to imitate his example, and words, as he mirrored GOD'S Word in his life and speech. Notice some of Paul's other statements regarding **"following:"**

"Be ye therefore followers of GOD, as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

"And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much

affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia" (I Thess. 1:6-7).

Paul would never have men follow a man for the sake of following a man (1 Cor. 1:10-13), but he did encourage folks to follow others as they in turn followed Christ. Paul was an example of a sacrificial servant they could imitate. Compare his manner of life to these Corinthians' selfish desires to please themselves (cf. their attitudes toward eating meats offered to idols, attending the feast). Paul was willing to sacrifice all for the cause of Christ, an example to be followed in any age.

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| I Cor. 4:17 "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church." | "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." (ASV) | "For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church." (NKJV) |
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Timothy is called Paul's son, not in the sense of a physical child, but through his spiritual conversion. It is apparent from this, and other passages on the same subject, Paul had something to do with the teaching and conversion of Timothy (Acts 16:1-2).

Paul attests to Timothy's being a faithful servant. What a compliment to receive from an apostle! But notice,

What was the purpose of Paul's sending Timothy to them? It was to bring to their remembrance the life of Paul and his teachings, confirming that Paul's life and teachings were **"in Christ."** In other words, to testify that Paul lived the life he taught; and what he taught was only what Christ would have him to teach. What Paul taught one congregation to do, he taught all to do.

"But as GOD hath distributed to every man,

Paul does not say Timothy is faithful to him, but rather to the Lord. Again, this statement is designed, along with others, to destroy the party attitude which was so prevalent among the Corinthians. They were aligning themselves with men and acting as their followers. Paul says, *"here is my son in the faith, one for whom I have great love, yet he is faithful to Christ — not me."*

as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches" (I Cor. 7:17).

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye" (I Cor. 16:1).

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| I Cor. 4:18 "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you." | "Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you." (ASV) | "Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you." (NKJV) |
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Because Paul was sending Timothy to them at this time, and not coming in person, some might get the idea Paul was not going to come because he feared them. It is probably the case some were already saying this. The idea of being **"puffed up,"** carries the idea of being proud because of a victory. Some might think they had won the

victory against Paul in their many assertions about him, and their teachings versus his. They were like the child who acts like he is "tough," and brags about how much stronger he is than another, but only because the other person is not in his presence.

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| I Cor. 4:19 "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power." | "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." (ASV) | "But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power." (NKJV) |
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Paul states his intention to visit with them at some time in the future; but he has learned the Lord may not intend for him to come to them (cf. Acts 16:6-10). It is with this in mind he says **"if the Lord will."** Christians need to keep this concept in mind as they endeavor to do anything. It may not be GOD'S will for Christians to do some particular thing or work. He may have something else in mind for His children to do.

Paul's attempt to go to Bithynia to proclaim the Gospel, but the Spirit of GOD would not let him go at that time (Acts 16:7).

"If the Lord will."

"With Paul this expression was far more than a mere form. It was a recognition both of the providential and spiritual government of the Lord. He recognized that the accomplishment of any purpose depended on His will and felt that his life was in His hands" (Lipscomb, p. 70). "Paul's purpose of going to Corinth to set things in order was dependent only upon the divine pleasure. These words have the effect of 'unless providentially hindered'" (Coffman, p. 69).

When Paul speaks of coming to them with power, it should be noted in the context he is talking about the power of speech. He would not come speaking and relying upon the excellency found in the words and wisdom of men for the force (power) behind his words. Instead, he would rely upon the power which is found in GOD'S Word. The powerful Word of GOD would put these false teachers in their place (Rom. 1:16).

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt 7:28-29).

Regarding the phrase *"providentially hindered,"* this refers to GOD keeping one from doing something. It is often used with regard to someone's missing services because they are sick, et cetera. Question: Since GOD commands Christians to assemble, would He make one sick so one could not attend? One can easily see the fallacy of claiming providential hindrances for missing services. A good illustration of true providential hindrance would be One could cite the case of Elymas (Acts 13:11) who opposed the words of Paul, as an example. (Consider carefully the words of Jesus to His apostles in Mark 16:17

There are those who think the **"power"** spoken of here refers to miraculous powers which would confirm the words Paul spoke. As Lipscomb states it;

"The test that one's apostleship was from God, and that GOD approved him, was manifested in God's presence in enabling him to work miracles" (Lipscomb, p. 70).

-20 with regard to this matter, and then draw conclusions about this passage. The reader is urged to consider carefully this context as one re-evaluates these positions.)

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| I Cor. 4:20 "For the kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power." | "For the kingdom of GOD is not in word, but in power." (ASV) | "For the kingdom of GOD is not in word but in power." (NKJV) |
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The kingdom of GOD, i.e., the church, derives its power from the Word of GOD. If **"power"** referred to

miracles, then miracles would need to have continued until this present time in order for the church to be powerful; but such is not the case. This kingdom is so powerful it can never be destroyed:

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it"
(Matt. 16:18).

And it is all built upon the power of GOD'S Word.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:

for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"
(Rom. 1:16).

"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of GOD" (I Cor. 1:18).

The power of the kingdom does not rest upon the words of men. The kingdom rests upon the power of GOD'S Word which transforms the lives of those who make up His kingdom.

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| <p>I Cor. 4:21 "What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"</p> | <p>"What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?" (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul is giving the Corinthians a choice. They can continue in their disobedience, and the false teachers can continue in their arrogance. If they do, then he will come with a rod of sternness and rebuke. Or, they can choose to obey GOD, changing their actions and attitudes which will allow him to come to them in gentleness. Willis has an interesting comment along these lines which bears repeating:

"Members (of the church) should realize that they determine on what subjects and with what disposition a preacher shall preach by their own conduct. If a congregation wants gentle sermons, the members must be obedient to GOD'S word; otherwise, they should get strong lessons" (Willis, p. 156).

First Corinthians — Chapter Five

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| <p>I Cor. 5:1 "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles; that a man has his father's wife!" (NKJV)</p> |
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FORNICATION — πορνεία — *"Fornication, whoredom"* (Young's, p. 368). *"Illicit sexual intercourse in general"* (Thayer, p. 532); *"To commit fornication or any sexual sin. Fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin"* (Zodhiates, p. 1201); *Prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse"* (Bauer, p. 693). Notice the translation as seen in the NKJV.

"It is reported commonly..." The action about to be described was something which was well known, and could not be disputed; in fact, it was known everywhere. The Corinthians were allowing fornication to be practiced among them. Fornication is a broad term which includes any kind of illegal sexual conduct; illicit not according to the laws of man, but according to GOD. The particular area of fornication under consideration is incest if the woman is his mother – the text does not say she it.

Consider that this was a sin which was abhorred among the inhabitants of Corinth (Gentiles). The Corinthians were known to be quite immoral, but they would not tolerate the sin of incest; yet the church in Corinth was tolerating it. It is obvious the church had a bad reputation in a city otherwise quite corrupt. What a terrible example, and obviously counter-productive to the Lord's cause.

Notice the phrase which describes the incest — **"that one should have his father's wife."** The verb **"have"** is

interesting from the standpoint many say you cannot *"live in sin."*

"It is from the Greek word ECHO, and two full pages are used in the lexicon of Thayer in his definitions and explanations. The definitions include, 'to have; to hold in the hand; to have possession of; to hold fast, keep; to regard, consider, hold as; to own, possess.' Thus the word can be seen to refer to the attitude of a man toward something, without necessarily considering what legal or moral principles are involved. In the present passage, Thayer explains the word to mean, 'to have (use) a woman (unlawfully) as a wife'" (Zerr, p. 10).

This man was unlawfully using his mother/stepmother as his wife. In condemning this relationship, Paul is obviously saying they are continuing in a sinful practice, and the Corinthian church was tolerating it. If that is not *"living in sin,"* what, pray tell, is it?

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| <p>I Cor. 5:2 "And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you."</p> | <p>"And ye are puffed up, and did not rather mourn, that he that had done this deed might be taken away from among you." (ASV)</p> | <p>"And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you." (NKJV)</p> |
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To be puffed up is to be proud. How can a congregation of the Lord's people be proud over something as disgusting as this; not that one sin is any different than another? Yet, if one observes congregations of the Lord's people today tolerating sin, is it any less heinous? For example, congregations which permit divorced and remarried people without Biblical grounds to have fellowship, are they not congregations in the same position as the Corinthians? If the members refuse to say and/or do anything, allowing those people to continue in sin, are they not in the same position as the church condemned in Corinth? For that matter, any congregation which allows a In a proper state of mourning, they should have withdrawn fellowship from him. It is important to observe when

member to be openly involved in sin without doing anything about it, seems to have this attitude of pride and arrogance ("puffed up").

The word "mourned," *"is the word used to describe one's sorrow over death"* (Willis, p. 161). Instead of being puffed up, they ought to have mourned the fact this soul was now in a lost condition. They ought to have mourned the fact the Lord's church was being held up to scorn because of their acceptance of such sin. **"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted"** (Matt. 5:4).

discipline is exercised, it should never be done with any attitude other than mourning. There is nothing to rejoice

about in such instances. When a soul is lost, only grief should be felt by all loyal servants of the master. Consider also that the continued purity of the church makes discipline a necessity. The Gentiles around them would not consider being involved in such a sin, and their opinion of the church would be tainted by the congregation allowing such evil to go unrebuked. It is one thing to suffer the slings and arrows of the world just because one is a Christian; it is quite another to suffer their ridicule because of the guilt of sin.

"Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify GOD on this behalf" (I Pet. 4:15-16).

Note also that it is never said the woman in this case should be removed from their midst. This seems strongly to indicate that she was not a Christian.

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| <p>I Cor. 5:3 "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed,"</p> | <p>"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," (ASV)</p> | <p>"For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed." (NKJV)</p> |
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Even though Paul was physically absent from them, he could make an accurate judgment in this case based on the commonly reported evidence. The Bible condemns one's making judgments on the motives and thoughts of another, but demands judgments on the actions of one when those actions clearly violate GOD'S laws.

good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by

"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 he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6).

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

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| <p>I Cor. 5:4-5 "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the lord Jesus."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (NKJV)</p> |
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DESTRUCTION — *Ḅεθορος* — "Ruin, destruction, death" (Thayer, p. 443); "Ruin, destruction. Used of divine punishment...The fundamental thought is not annihilation by any means, but unavoidable distress and torment" (Zodhiates, p. 1036); "Destruction, ruin, death" (Bauer, p. 563).

The action about to be enjoined is to be done **"in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,"** i.e., by the authority of Christ. Whatever is done in the name of someone is done by that one's authority.

involved. The whole congregation must submit to GOD'S will in this matter, and take part in this action. Distasteful? Yes! Yet, if one is to develop the mind of Christ, one must learn to love the things GOD loves and hate the things He hates. The Psalmist says,

"When ye are gathered together." The action is to involve the whole church. This is not something which is to be done in secret, but the whole church must be **"I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way"** (Psalm 119:127-128). Again he tells us, **"Through Thy precepts I get**

understanding; therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104).

"To deliver such an one unto Satan." It would seem this can only have reference to the fact that one either belongs to GOD and is in His family, or else belongs to

Satan and his family. If one is excluded from the fellowship of the family of GOD, there is only one place he can then have fellowship. Why is this one to be delivered to Satan? He should be delivered for the destruction of the flesh. There are those who believe this means Satan could kill him. But if such were the case, how could one later be saved in the day of the Lord? When one dies in sin his eternal fate is sealed (The rich man and Lazarus illustrates death sealing our eternal destiny; Luke 16:1-31). Note Romans 1:24-27, where GOD gives those who refuse to follow Him over to their own lusts and desires — He just lets them go. The penalty they pay may indeed cause them to repent, for they receive within **"themselves that**

recompense of their error which was meet." Physical suffering can often cause reassessment of life in such a way as to bring repentance.

The main purpose of this disciplinary action was to give this man an opportunity to be saved from his sin. Later one will notice it also serves the purpose of keeping the church as a whole from being infected with sin. But it must be emphasized, the goal of discipline is always to bring the sinner into a right relationship with GOD.

"The day of the Lord Jesus" is no doubt the judgment day.

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| I Cor. 5:6 "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" | "Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (ASV) | "Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?" (NKJV) |
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GLORYING — καύχημα — *"That of which one glories or can glory, matter or ground of glorying"* (Thayer, p. 342); *"The result of boasting, a boast...It also refers to the object of boasting, ground of glorying, exultation"* (Zodhiates, p. 854); *"Boast, object of boasting"* (Bauer, p. 426).

It may be that their glorying involved all of the spiritual gifts which they had. They may have thought something along this line:

"We have all of these spiritual gifts and abilities, so we can tolerate this sin and it will have no effect upon us."

They seem to have had the idea so commonly expressed today: *"Why are you so upset, a little sin will not have any further consequences?"*

This concept of **"glorying"** would then fit with what follows in the rest of the passage: **"Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"**

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9).

Leaven is yeast. Paul uses yeast to illustrate the influence that tolerated sin will have on a congregation.

Everyone who has ever baked knows the influence yeast has on the dough into which it is introduced. It only takes a very small amount to eventually change the nature of the whole lump of dough. Sin in the Lord's church works the same way. If one sin is tolerated, it will not be long until another, and then another is also tolerated. Thus, the moral standard of the whole group is lowered. Christians should also see the responsibility for division from those who tolerate sin in the church. Such persons are responsible for the spread of sin and will give an accounting for this on the day of the Lord.

"Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32).

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| I Cor. 5:7 "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:" | "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:" (ASV) | "Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us." (NKJV) |
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PURGE — ἵκκαθαίρω — *"To cleanse out, clean thoroughly"* (Thayer, p. 195); *"To purge out, meaning to cleanse thoroughly"* (Zodhiates, p. 540); *"Clean out, cleanse"* (Bauer, p. 240); *"To cleanse out, to clean completely. Aorist tense of urgency, do it now and do it effectively before the whole church is contaminated"* (Robertson, p. 113-114).

The old leaven is the sin which they had formerly allowed in their lives. This sin was to be eradicated, eliminated, from their lives so they could be a new lump in

Christ because Christ had been sacrificed as the Passover Lamb.

The passover took place among the Israelites on the

night in which they were released from Egyptian bondage. Death was going to come upon the first born of all those who would not follow GOD'S instructions. The passover lamb was slain and the blood applied to prevent death. Today, Christ is the passover Lamb, slain so His blood can be applied to cleanse one from sins, so that one does not suffer the "second death."

fire. This is the second death" (Rev. 20:14).

Under the Jewish system, all leaven had to be eliminated before the passover lamb could be slain and eaten, before its benefits could be enjoyed. Today, our passover Lamb has already been slain, and Christians must now eliminate the leaven of sin from their lives before the benefits of His sacrifice may be enjoyed.

"And death and hell were cast into the lake of

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| <p>I Cor. 5:8 "Therefore 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."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (NKJV)</p> |
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MALICE — κακία — *"Malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure"* (Thayer, p. 320); *"Wickedness as an evil habit of the mind"* (Zodhiates, p. 807); *Depravity, wickedness, vice"* (Bauer, p. 397).

Before the Jew could keep the passover feast he had to eliminate all leaven from his house. In this passage the church was told to keep the feast. But what feast? It is certainly not the passover feast instituted by Moses. There is only one other feast this could be — The Lord's Supper. This feast is kept when the whole church comes together (cf. verse four).

In order to live faithful Christian lives, one must put away all former sins, and refuse to adopt any new ones. Instead, one must live a life of sincerity, without flaw. One must depend upon the truth of GOD'S Word to direct one in all affairs.

This passage seems to indicate two attitudes. First, one should immerse himself in sincerity and truth; cf. John 4:24, and second, one should avoid malice and wickedness.

The difference between leavened and unleavened bread is evident to all who compare the two. The Christian's life should stand in sharp contrast to that of the non-Christian.

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| <p>I Cor. 5:9 "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators:"</p> | <p>"I wrote unto you in my epistle to have no company with fornicators;" (ASV)</p> | <p>"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people." (NKJV)</p> |
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The epistle spoken of here has not been preserved through the providence of GOD. Over the years GOD has, through His providence, always made sure of a preserved Bible. But, not everything which was written or said either by Jesus or His designated spokesmen (inspired writers) is preserved (John 20:30-31). This is a case in point; an epistle written by Paul is no longer in existence (cf. Col. 4:16 for perhaps another example of a lost letter). The books in the Bible are there because GOD wanted them there, and those writings He did not deem necessary for Christians nor did He inspire them.

its instructions. From the context, it appears some were saying a Christian could not have any contact with anyone who was sexually immoral. But, the earlier letter was in reference to those in the church who were guilty of fornication.

Evidently, one of the topics of this lost letter was fornication. And apparently there was a misunderstanding of what had been said, or an outright perversion regarding

"Not to company" comes from *sunanamignumi* meaning

"to mix together." It was used to refer to mixing various ingredients in a prescription and to different weeds growing up among the grain. In the passive, it referred to human intermingling. The prohibition forbade social intermingling with fornicators in the church" (Willis, p. 172).

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| <p>I Cor. 5:10 "Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world."</p> | <p>"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:" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the</p> |
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To answer those who thought one could have no association with anyone guilty of fornication and other sins, Paul says if this were the case then they would have to remove themselves from the world. Consider, if Christians could have no social contact with sinners, then how would anyone become a Christian? These Corinthians had been all of these things and more, and Paul had come and taught them the Gospel. This consideration alone should have shown them the fallacy in their thinking.

Notice Paul adds the covetous, idolaters, and railers to the list of the sexually immoral. Those who are guilty of sin in the church must be dealt with in such a way that social contact is taken away from them until they are willing to repent. But those outside the church need to be taught the Gospel in order to have the opportunity of obeying it. Therefore there must be **some** social contact. But notice the word "**some**" is emphasized and then note Paul's warning in First Corinthians 15:33: "**Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.**"

Those of the world should never be a Christian's best friends. Those in the church should fulfill this need. A Christians contact with the sinful world should be for the

purpose of reproofing and rebuking their sin in order for them to gain salvation.

By implication, this passage also forbids withdrawing from society in monasteries and convents. Notice the words of Jesus when He told His disciples,

"Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:13-16).

How can Christians be the salt of the earth and light of the world if one has no contact with it? How can men see one's good works, and be caused to glorify GOD if one has no contact with them?

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| <p>I Cor. 5:11 "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; not even to eat with such a person." (NKJV)</p> |
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"**Not to keep company**" bears the weight of saying there is to be no social contact. This does not prohibit being polite to one who has been withdrawn from when he is met on the street, et cetera, nor does it prohibit an attempt to speak to him for the purpose of encouraging him to repent. It deals with doing things with them in a social context. If the church withdraws from an individual, but then individuals within the church continue to be involved with them in social activities, the discipline will not have its desired effect. The sinner will consider himself to be equal with the Christian associating with him, and thus see no need to make any changes in his life. In fact, he is equal with that particular Christian, for they have sinned in

The prohibition goes so far as to say, "do not even eat with this person." In those times, more so than now, eating with someone showed social acceptance as much or more so than anything else which could be done.

"The disfellowshipped person is to be socially ostracized" (Willis, p. 175).

keeping company with the withdrawn one, and need to be disciplined themselves.

Paul clearly shows these instructions pertain to one who "**is called a brother.**" In other words, one who once was faithful but is no longer such.

Notice several more sins are added to the list here, thus affirming the sins listed in these passages represent any sin which one will not repent of, as the context indicates. Remember, this one was not commanded to be withdrawn from simply because he had sinned (v. 1), but because he continued to be involved in this sin. The withdrawal is intended to get him to stop sinning.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:17).

"If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house,

neither bid him GOD speed: For he that biddeth him GOD speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10-11).

One who has been withdrawn from fits into the same category as the false teacher, for his actions and/or words can only lead others to destruction, not salvation.

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother" (2 Thess. 3:14-15).

As John William Russell stated, this prohibition means one is to

"have no familiar intercourse with one that is named a brother but is false to his profession; withdraw from all associations indicating brotherhood" (John William Russell, p. 410).

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| I Cor. 5:12 "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?" | "For what have I to do with judging them that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within?" (ASV) | "For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?" (NKJV) |
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The role of the church is not to pass judgment on those who are without, i.e., not members of the church. GOD has already judged and condemned the alien sinner.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of GOD" (John 3:18).

Notice in all of this, nothing is said of the woman, the **"father's wife."** It is believed by most she was not a Christian. The church is to issue disciplinary restrictions to those who are unfaithful Christians, not the world over whom they have no jurisdiction. If she were a Christian, then surely the same teaching would apply to her, as well as the son.

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| I Cor. 5:13 "But them that are without GOD judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person." | "But them that are without GOD judgeth. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves." (ASV) | "But those who are outside GOD judges. Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person." (NKJV) |
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In this passage, GOD, is basically saying, *"In the church you take care of the business I have assigned you and I will take care of the rest."*

"Those in the fellowship of the church are subject to the discipline of the congregation" (Zerr, p. 12).

a place; to remove" (Thayer, p. 221); *"To take up out of any place, to lift up from, remove...to expel or excommunicate"* (Zodhiates, p. 598); *"Remove, drive away"* (Bauer, p. 272).

PUT AWAY — ἵξαιρω — *"To lift up or take away out of*

The church is to withdraw itself from those who will not be faithful to the will of GOD. This is a Christian's responsibility; GOD will take care of the rest.

First Corinthians — Chapter Six

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| <p>I Cor. 6:1 "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?"</p> | <p>"Dare any of you, having a matter against his neighbor, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?" (NKJV)</p> |
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UNJUST — —δικος — *"Descriptive of one who violates or has violated justice"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"Unjust, unrighteous....Lacking the imputed righteousness of faith and the inherent righteousness wrought by the Spirit of God"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Unjust...doing contrary to what is right"* (Bauer, p. 18).

There can be little doubt Paul is speaking about problems between two brethren in this passage. When problems arise among brethren, why should these things be taken before the **"unjust?"** Cannot brethren take care of these matters? Brethren should be able to handle these things because Jesus has given a pattern for taking care of such matters.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican" (Matt. 18:15-17).

The Lord's plan is simple. If one feels he has been wronged he should go and try to work this matter out with the one he feels has wronged him. If this does not work, he should take someone else along to witness the discussion (preferably someone in whom both parties trust). But if

brethren cannot settle a dispute between themselves, then it should be taken to the church.

The term **"unjust,"** does not seem to look at the judicial system of those who are not Christians, but the people themselves. No matter how good a judicial system might be, it does not compare to the standards of morality which Christians should uphold. From this standpoint one can see why it would be much better to handle these matters among brethren. Why would Christians want to move from the highest standard for judging to one of lower caliber (human courts)?

Another consideration, and minor in comparison to what has already been mentioned, would be the danger presented by taking their matters before the heathen courts; i.e., the fact Christians would be exposed to persecution because of the general attitude toward Christians. It was not unusual during those times for Christians to be punished by civil authorities simply because they were Christians.

The term **"dare"** is emphatic in its rebuke of those who would take their cases between brethren before the courts of unbelievers. In this time one might say, *"How dare any of you..."*

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| <p>I Cor. 6:2 "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"</p> | <p>"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?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" (NKJV)</p> |
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The point of this verse is, if the saints are going to judge the world, then they are fully capable of judging matters between themselves because they have a divine, infallible law guiding them. Using this law and the principles it sets forth, and adding to it an attitude of submission, they ought to be able to handle all problems which arise among them.

How and when it will be that saints (Christians) will judge the world is a matter of speculation. Not much is revealed about this subject, and it appears to be one of those things which one must accept by faith. Notice the

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit

following passages regarding this subject:

"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of My Father" (Rev. 2:26-27).

with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame,

and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21, see 1 John 3:1-3 here).

Apparently, they were taking the very smallest of matters before outsiders, when they should have been handling them themselves.

The rabbis taught

"It is forbidden to bring a matter of right before idolatrous judges...Whosoever goeth before them with a law-suit is impious, and does the same as though he blasphemed and cursed; and hath lifted his hand against the law of Moses our teacher, — blessed be he" (Quoted by Expositor's, p. 814).

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| I Cor. 6:3 "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?" | "Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more, things that pertain to this life?" (ASV) | "Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?" (NKJV) |
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JUDGE — κρίνω — *"To judge...to pronounce an opinion concerning right and wrong...to be judged, i.e. summoned to trial that one's case may be examined and judgment passed upon it...to pronounce judgment, to subject to censure...of those who act the part of judges or arbiters in matters of common life, or pass judgment on the deeds and words of others"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"To separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good. In the NT, it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Separate, distinguish, then select, prefer...judge, think, consider, look upon...reach a decision, decide, propose, intend"* (Bauer, p. 451).

"For if GOD spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;" (II Pet. 2:4; emphasis mine, R.K.).

"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, He hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6; emphasis mine, R.K.).

From these passages one learns that there is going to be a day of judgment for the angels. It will take place at the same time judgment takes place, or shortly thereafter.

Exactly how the saints fit into their judgment is not specified, and again should be left as a matter of faith which GOD will fully reveal at some future point. But again, the point is made if one will judge in such matters, one ought to be able to take care of petty matters among members.

In viewing this passage, Willis has this interesting thought:

"Does this not reveal that we saints who are created in the image of GOD will occupy a place higher than that of angels in heaven" (Willis, p. 183)?

Whether Willis' question is true or not, it will not matter at all to those who succeed in living faithful lives.

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| I Cor. 6:4 "If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church." | "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?" (ASV) | "If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?" (NKJV) |
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LEAST ESTEEMED — ἡξιοθενέω — *"To make of no account, despise utterly"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"To despise, treat with scorn"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Despise, disdain someone...reject with contempt...treat with contempt"* (Bauer, p. 277).

There are those who believe this is saying they ought to take the lowest person among them and let him be the judge in these matters. This latter interpretation has a problem when the next verse is considered; for there Paul tells them to take the wise among them as their judges.

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you Exouthene means 'to despise, disdain.' The participle refers to those who are contemptible or despised. It is used here to refer to the heathen judges. The pagans are those who occupy no

seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3).

Willis offers the following thoughts on this passage, basing his thoughts on the term **"least esteemed."**

place in the church and are considered by the church to be lost....Consequently, the heathen are the ones intended by 'counted as nothing' (exouthen menous); they are the people whose

judgment and standards the church has set aside as without value by their rejection of paganism and adoption of Christianity" (Willis, p. 184).

When Willis' thoughts are considered, they make sense, especially when the fact is considered that Christians should never have feelings of disdain for their brethren. Again, this makes more sense than does the first idea.

There is also the possibility this is said with biting sarcasm. If such is the case, it may be saying, "Are not the least of you better judges of matters between yourselves than the best unconverted judge of the nations in which you live?"

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| <p>I Cor. 6:5 "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren?"</p> | <p>"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," (ASV)</p> | <p>"I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?" (NKJV)</p> |
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SHAME: ἰντροπή -- "A turning in, shame" (Young's, p. 872). "Shame: to arouse your shame" (Thayer, p. 219); "Shame...shame from a sense of one's wrong action or motive having been made manifest" (Zodhiates, p. 595); "Shame, humiliation" (Bauer, p. 269); Expositor's says it literally is, "for a shame to you" (p. 815).

What they were doing was so obviously wrong, shame was the only result possible when this truth was pointed out to them.

"They boasted of their knowledge and spiritual gifts and acted as if there was not a prudent and

intelligent person among them competent to settle their differences" (Lipscomb, p. 84).

Did they not trust one person among them to judge righteously?

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| <p>I Cor. 6:6 "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers."</p> | <p>"but brother goeth to law with brother, and that before unbelievers?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!" (NKJV)</p> |
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UNBELIEVERS — ἀπιστος — "Unfaithful, faithless, (not to be trusted, perfidious)" (Thayer, CD Rom Version); "Not worthy of confidence, untrustworthy....Denotes one who disbelieves the gospel of Christ, an unbeliever, infidel" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); "Unbelievable, incredible...faithless, unbelieving" (Bauer, p. 85).

It is bad enough brethren would go to law with (against) their brethren for a judgment, i.e., they could not settle it privately among themselves. But it was even worse to take these cases before unbelievers. This is one

of the great points of this passage. The airing of Christians' "dirty laundry" before unbelievers would cause them to think less of the church.

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| <p>I Cor. 6:7 "Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?"</p> | <p>"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?" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another. Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated?" (NKJV)</p> |
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FAULT — ὀπίσθημα — "A diminution, decrease: i.e. defeat...loss, as respects to salvation" (Thayer, CD Rom Version); "Being inferior, a state worse than another or former state, defeat, meaning to be brought into a worse state, diminution, degradation, hence failure, fault" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); "Defeat" (Bauer, p. 349).

DEFRAUD — ἀποστερέω — "To defraud, rob, despoil" (Thayer, CD Rom Version); "To deprive, wrong, or defraud another of what belongs to him. In the mid., ἀποστερέομαι, to suffer oneself to be defrauded, as spoken of persons" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); "Steal, rob" (Bauer, p. 99).

To go to law entails a lawsuit. Paul is saying going to law with a brother in such situations is a fault, a wrong, it is

a defeat! How are Christians defeated? They are defeated because lawsuits destroy a sense of co-operation and may lead to greater conflict. Because such leads to the world looking upon those who should desire peace as those who trouble their own kind. It is hard to convince the world of its need to obey the Gospel and be a part of the church when all it sees is fussing and fighting among brethren. The spiritual loss sustained in such law suits is tremendous. It would be better to suffer the loss of property, et cetera, than to disgrace the church in these lawsuits. Their attitude was totally contrary to what Jesus taught.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say

unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matt. 5:38-42).

"Law says, 'You shall have your rights;' the law of Christ says, 'Defraud not your neighbor of his rights.' The law says, 'You must not be wronged;' Christ says, 'It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong'" (Lipscomb, p. 85).

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| I Cor. 6:8 "Nay, ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." | "Nay, but ye yourselves do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren." (ASV) | "No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you do these things to your brethren!" (NKJV) |
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WRONG — • δίκη — *"To act unjustly or wickedly, to sin,..to be a criminal, to have violated the laws in some way...to do wrong...to do hurt"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"To do wrong, hurt, damage....Trans.: to act unjustly, to do wrong to or injure someone"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Do wrong of any violation of human or divine law...be in the wrong...do wrong to someone, treat someone unjustly"* (Bauer, p. 17).

This passage shows an intentional act being committed. The context shows that doing wrong to another is always evil, but notice the last phrase of this passage — **"and that your brethren."** The implication is, as bad and wrong as it is to defraud another, it is even worse when it is your brethren — Christians defrauded by Christians. There is to be a special relationship between brethren, caring for one another above all others.

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10; emphasis mine, R.K.).

attitudes, for not having the brotherly love they ought to have.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of GOD to love one another" (1 Thess. 4:9).

"Let brotherly love continue" (Heb. 13:1).

Again, one sees Paul shaming them for their actions and

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| I Cor. 6:9 "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind," | "Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men," (ASV) | "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites," (NKJV) |
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FORNICATORS — πόρνος — *"A man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire...a male prostitute...a man who indulges in unlawful sexual intercourse, a fornicator"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"A whoremonger or male prostitute"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"One who practices sexual immorality...the (sexually) immoral persons in this world"* (Bauer, p. 693).

EFFEMINATE — μαλακός — *"Effeminate...of a catamite...of a boy kept for homosexual relations with a man..of a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness...of a male prostitute"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"Figuratively it means*

effeminate or a person who allows himself to be sexually abused contrary to nature”(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“Soft, effeminate, esp. of catamites, men and boys who allow themselves to be misused homosexually”*(Bauer, p. 488).

ABUSERS OF THEMSELVES WITH MANKIND — • ρσενοκοιτης — *“One who lies with a male as with a female, sodomite, homosexual”*(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“A man who lies in bed with another male, a homosexual”*(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“A male who practices homosexuality, pederast, sodomite”*(Bauer, p. 109).

The term **“unrighteous”** refers to any and all acts which are contrary to the will of GOD. It does not refer only to those acts mentioned in this text, but includes them.

Unrighteousness is anything GOD has determined not to be right. Those who are unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD. In the Scriptures the term **“kingdom of GOD”** can refer to one of two things; (1) the church, or (2) Heaven. In this particular context it applies to heaven.

Before making the list in this text, he warns the Corinthians not to be deceived.

“Plana means 'to lead astray, cause to wander.' The passive is 'to be led astray; deluded; deceived” (Willis, p. 188).

How could they be deceived? It could happen by listening to false teachers who gradually lead others to believe some particular action is all right. Another way people are often deceived is by the commonness of some act. The act may be so prevalent, one may become desensitized to the horror and revulsion one once felt toward such an action; and thus accept this action, and maybe even begin practicing it.

One must always remember that if GOD has declared something to be sin, the practice of that thing, or acceptance of it, will render one unacceptable for eternity in heaven.

“Who knowing the judgment of GOD, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Rom. 1:32).

Fornicators were discussed above and the comment here is that fornication is any sexual action, whether one is married or unmarried, which is illegal according to GOD'S Word. But the word translated **“fornication”** in this

passage is not the usual word for fornication; rather, as noticed above, it refers to a male prostitute, i.e., one who charges for his sexual services.

Idolatry specifically involves bowing down in worship to an object which has been made by the hands of men. It may also include anything which one places in a superior position to GOD, and does not necessitate an actual physical bowing down to an object.

Adultery specifically deals with one who is married and is unfaithful. In this context it deals with immorality, but it should also be recognized that when one is unfaithful to a physical mate, he has also become unfaithful to GOD. Thus, physical adultery involves spiritual adultery as well (cf. James 4:4).

EFFEMINATE: *“The word (malakos) literally means those who are soft and effeminate; those who have lost their manhood and who live for the luxuries of recondite pleasures; the word describes what we can only call a kind of wallowing in luxury in which a man has lost all resistance power to pleasure”* (Barclay as quoted by Willis, p. 189). *“Macknight wrote that this word is translated from a Greek word meaning 'catamite,' the technical word for 'a boy used in pederasty.' Those wretches who suffered this abuse were likewise called pathics, and affected the dress and behavior of women.' Catamites were the passive partners in sodomy”* (Coffman, p. 87).

“Abusers of themselves with mankind” is simply the homosexual.

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| I Cor. 6:10 “Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD.” | "nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD." (ASV) | "nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of GOD." (NKJV) |
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COVETOUS — πλεονέκτης — *“One eager to have more, esp. what belongs to others...greedy of gain, covetous”*(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“One who wants more, a person covetous of something that others have, a defrauder for gain”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“One who is greedy for gain, a covetous person”*(Bauer, p. 667).

REVILERS — λοιδορος — *“A railer, reviler”*(Thayer and Zodhiates, CD Rom Versions); *“Reviler, abusive person”*(Bauer, p. 479).

EXTORTIONERS — ρπαξ — *“Rapacious, ravenous...a extortioner, a robber”*(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“A rapacious person or animal, as wolves. Rapacious, given to rapacity or extortion, an extortioner”*(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version);

"Rapacious, ravenous of wolves...better swindler or rogue" (Bauer, p. 109). Rapacious — *"given to plundering. 2. inordinately greedy; predatory. 3. (of animals) subsisting by the capture of living prey; predacious"* (Webster's Talking Dictionary, CD Rom).

The list continues with thieves (or robbers), and then the covetous. To be covetous is always a matter of greed. It often involves a person who desires more and more of this world's *"things,"* but not for the correct purpose. There is nothing wrong with accumulating this world's goods if one does not have in mind the selfish use of them. With regard to the thief, Paul said,

"let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).

Why did the Lord condemn the rich man of Luke 12:16-21? It was not because of what he had, but because he was selfish with what he had.

DRUNKARDS: There are none of these in the society any more — they are now called *"alcoholics."* This *"new"* designation tries to make their actions a disease, and therefore releases them from any accountability. The truth is they are drunks, and it is sinful to indulge in such activities.

A reviler is one who speaks against another with damaging and hateful words.

Extortioners are *"sneak thieves."* They usually resort to some kind of trickery to take what belongs to another. They steal secretly and deliberately. They do this through a scam, adjusting accounting books (embezzling), et cetera.

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| I Cor. 6:11 "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our GOD." | "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." (ASV) | "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our GOD." (NKJV) |
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This passage shows some of the Corinthians had been involved in these sins, but no longer participated in them. This is an important consideration when refuting modern attitudes toward homosexuality. There are those who try to justify homosexuality by saying they are born this way and thus cannot help what they are. It is then argued, they cannot change, i.e., give up their homosexuality. But notice, Corinthian Christians who had been practicing homosexuality had given up the practice. But these verses reveal that the homosexual is condemned by GOD, and cannot enter heaven (v. 9). Verse eleven indicates that they had changed, given up this sinful practice, and were now acceptable to GOD. One is not born a homosexual; he becomes one, just as is the case with any other sin

which may be mentioned. A just GOD cannot demand a person change from what he was made to be; yet, GOD demands one give up homosexuality in order to be saved; therefore, homosexuality is a learned sin. The key as to whether one gives up homosexuality is whether one loves GOD enough to obey Him.

They were washed in the watery grave of baptism in order to be cleansed (Acts 22:16). They were sanctified, or set aside for holy use by GOD, and justified by the authority of Jesus and the Spirit of GOD. They had changed their lives by obedience to GOD. They were no longer rank sinners, but were now acceptable in the sight of GOD. They were now His children, not the children of the devil.

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| I Cor. 6:12 "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." | "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." (ASV) | "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any." (NKJV) |
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EXPEDIENT — συμφέρω — *"To bear or bring together...to bear together or at the same time...to carry with others...to collect or contribute in order to help...to help, be profitable, be expedient"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"To bring together in one place (Acts 19:19); used in an absolute sense or with a dat. following, to be profitable, advantageous, to contribute or bring together for the benefit of another"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Bring together something...help, confer a benefit, be advantageous or profitable or useful"* (Bauer, p. 780).

BE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER — ἰξουσίαζω — *"To have power or authority, use power..to be master of any one, exercise authority over one...to be master of the body...to have full and entire authority over the body...to hold the body"*

subject to one's will...to be brought under the power of anyone”(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“To have or exercise power in the sense of permitting (1_Cor. 7:4), meaning that one has no separate power or liberty over his own body to use it as he will”*(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“Have the right or power for something or over someone”*(Bauer, p. 279).

Comments on verse ten are begun by first noticing some thoughts by various writers, and then making some observations.

“There is a lawful use of all appetites, desires, and lusts; but none of them must obtain the mastery over us” (Lipscomb, p. 88).

“The original word for expedient is defined 'profitable' in Thayer's lexicon. A thing could not be profitable that was not lawful, but it might be lawful and not profitable” (Zerr, p. 13).

Is it an absolute that literally **all** things are lawful? The answer is no. Fornication is never lawful, nor is adultery, murder, et cetera. There are some things in which GOD'S law says one may never participate, in any manner. Thus, Paul cannot be saying absolutely everything is lawful for Christians to do; otherwise there would be no laws — only chaos. As Zerr points out, the word **"expedient"** means **"profitable."** There are some things in which it may be lawful for one to participate, but which are not profitable for one; they do not promote spiritual growth. Obviously, Paul speaks about a realm where there

is no command to do or not do something, but rather something which is permitted by GOD. An example of this might be marriage; one is allowed to marry, but not commanded to do so. Yet, marriage is controlled by laws which GOD gave. For example, one cannot marry one who does not scripturally have the right to marry, neither can one have multiple marriage partners. One has liberty to marry, but it may not be profitable for one to marry; for instance, it may not be best to marry during a time of persecution (1 Cor. 9:26). Marrying a non-Christian is legal, but it may hinder, rather than promote one's Christian growth.

Paul then goes on to say that none of those things about which he is writing can be allowed to become one's master. While one may have the liberty to do some particular thing, one must not allow even legal things to enslave. For instance, there is liberty to eat many foods, but one cannot become a slave to those foods, lest one become a glutton. One must not become a slave to those things which are lawful for one to do. To do so would be just as sinful as doing those things which GOD has directly commanded men not to do.

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| <p>I Cor. 6:13 "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but GOD shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body."</p> | <p>"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:" (ASV)</p> | <p>"Foods for the stomach and the stomach for foods, but GOD will destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body." (NKJV)</p> |
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FORNICATION — πορνεία — *“Illicit sexual intercourse...adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc....sexual intercourse with close relatives...sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman”*(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *“Fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“Prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse”*(Bauer, p. 693).

“Apparently, some in Corinth were arguing that the natural processes must be satisfied. For example, one hungers so he eats. One should not deprive himself of food. Similarly, one's body has the natural process of sexual desires; these should be satisfied just as naturally as a desire for food. Hence, fornication is morally neutral” (Willis, p. 196).

But Paul is going to show there is a difference between the eating of meat, and the defilement of the body through fornication. The word **"belly"** here stands for the digestive tract of which food was given to provide nourishment for the body. The stomach was made for the digestion of food.

"But GOD shall destroy both it and them" At the

second coming of Jesus, the physical world in which one lives shall be destroyed. The body which one shall have in heaven will have no need of physical foods, nor a stomach to digest them.

"Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body." Food and the stomach were designed for each other, but the same is not true of the body and fornication. Their argument may be that they were made this way, i.e., the desire for sexual pleasure is right just like desiring food. But though one has a natural desire, if that desire goes beyond GOD's limitations for it, that person has sinned.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a

living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD" (Rom. 12:1-2).

Bodies are to be raised from the grave and changed into incorruptible (permanent) bodies which shall live eternally. This is true both of those who live lives contrary to GOD'S will and those who live according to His will. For those who serve GOD now, the reward will be life with Him forever (eternity).

"Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (I Cor 15:50-53).

"The body is for the Lord" is a reference to the marriage relationship which exists between the Lord and those who belong to Him.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:23-25).

As such, Christians must keep their bodies in service to Him, and not to the lust of the flesh, no matter what those desires may be.

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| I Cor. 6:14 "And GOD hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." | "and GOD both raised the Lord, and will raise up as through his power." (ASV) | "And GOD both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power." (NKJV) |
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Man's resurrection is confidently affirmed here, and the evidence for it is found in the resurrection of Jesus.

"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. 15:19-20).

"And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, Which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:19-20).

Since man will be resurrected, he must prepare to meet his Lord, and the only time to make this preparation is now.

"Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto GOD; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:9-11).

The stomach was created to satisfy a temporal need and food is in the same category. But the body was created to live for eternity. The body of man is to be raised to immortality. Just as Jesus had a bodily resurrection from

the grave, so also will all have a bodily resurrection from the grave. Notice, nothing is said of the soul's or spirit's being raised, only the body.

"This Jesus hath GOD raised up, whereof we all are witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

"Knowing that He which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you" (2 Cor. 4:14).

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| I Cor. 6:15 "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? GOD forbid." | "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." (ASV) | "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not!" (NKJV) |
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How are men the members of Christ? When one is baptized into Him, he then becomes a member of His body.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

The argument seems to rely upon attempting to draw the picture of the Lord doing what is immoral. Any decent person would be horrified to picture our Lord joining Himself to a harlot. This being the case, should not one feel the same way toward a member of the Lord's body

doing such a thing? The answer is obviously, "YES!" The body (individual) should never be used to do what GOD says is wrong.

"So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. 12:5).

"For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Eph. 5:30).

Further, society should think of one who commits adultery as a horrible affront and an insult to the person's mate. There is a husband-wife relationship with Christ, and when one commits spiritual fornication one violates the spiritual marriage relationship one has with Him.

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| I Cor. 6:16 "What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith He, shall be one flesh." | "Or know ye not that he that is joined to a harlot is one body? for, The twain, saith he, shall become one flesh." (ASV) | "Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For the two, He says, shall become one flesh." (NKJV) |
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HE WHICH IS JOINED — κολλάω — *"To glue, to glue together, cement, fasten together...to join or fasten firmly together...to join one's self to, cleave to"* (Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"To adhere, cleave to, be glued to"* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *"Join closely together, unite...bind closely, unite someone with or to someone"* (Bauer, p. 441). Expositors' says the word *"indicates that sexual union constitutes a permanent bond between the parties. What has been done lives, morally, in both; neither is henceforth free of the other"* (Expositors', p. 820).

In his word studies, Willis shows this is not a one time action of fornication, but rather a continuous action. As the act is repeated, the fornicator becomes more like the harlot in the way he thinks and acts.

Becoming **"one flesh"** refers to the sexual union which takes place between two people, whether this be in a GOD ordained marriage, or an unholy union which is described in this text.

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| I Cor. 6:17 "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." | "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." (ASV) | "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him." (NKJV) |
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In this verse an analogy is drawn to the verse before it. If the physical union of the fornicator with the harlot makes them one body; then it naturally follows when one is spiritually joined to the Lord, he is one with the Lord.

"The oneness of spirit with Christ must be viewed as imbibing His commandments into one's self so

thoroughly that one begins to think and act as He did" (Willis, p. 201).

As one remained spiritually pure, seeking those things which are above (Col. 3:1), one becomes like the Savior he serves.

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| I Cor. 6:18 "Flee fornication. Every | "Flee fornication. Every sin that a | "Flee sexual immorality. Every sin |
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| sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." | man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." (ASV) | that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body." (NKJV) |
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FLEE: φεύγω -- "To flee" (Young's, p, 355). "To flee away, seek safety by flight" (Thayer, p. 651); "To escape, flee from....To flee, to run or move hastily from danger because of fear" (Zodhiates, p. 1440). "To seek safety in flight; flee from; avoid" (Willis, p. 201); "Flee, seek safety in flight" (Bauer, p. 855).

"Flee fornication." The Bible generally teaches that one is to stand strong against sin.

"Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil....Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore" (Eph. 6:11, 14).

But fornication is unlike other sins, and one is told to run away from it. The best example of this is found in Joseph, who ran from the presence of Potiphar's wife, rather than commit fornication (Gen. 39:12).

Our bodies belong to the Lord. When one sins against his own body he sins against his spiritual nature also.

Lipscomb makes these comments about fornication which should probably be considered:

"The oneness of the body of two persons that cohabit is more than a formal union. How much of the real nature and being of a man does a

woman partake of in intercourse with him and especially in carrying children begotten by him in her womb with a circulation of blood through her whole body, and how much he is affected by her will likely never be definitely determined, yet there is more in becoming one than we usually think" (Lipscomb, p. 93).

How is it fornication is a sin against the body, and all other sins are **"without the body?"** Does not drug use, for example, harm the body? Perhaps a clue to understanding this is found in Robertson's words:

"Even gluttony and drunkenness and the use of dope are sins wrought on the body, not 'within the body' in the same sense as fornication" (Robertson, p. 122).

Is the Holy Spirit emphasizing the harm such a sin brings to the soul? Is it the moral decay which is stressed in comparison to that caused by other sins?

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| I Cor. 6:19 "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of GOD, and ye are not your own?" | "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;" (ASV) | "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from GOD, and you are not your own?" (NKJV) |
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TEMPLE — ναός — "In Class. Gr., mostly equivalent to the syn. word *hierón*, the entire area of a temple which included the inner temple (though sometimes *naós* referred only to the interior and most sacred part of a temple where the image of a god was set up)" (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The word **"temple"** signifies a dwelling place. The body is here called a dwelling place for the Spirit of GOD. As such, it must be kept holy, pure and clean. Fornication defiles this temple.

This verse refers to the congregation as a whole, whereas the immediate text refers to the individual.

How does the Holy Spirit dwell in Christians?
"Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD" (Eph. 6:17).

"That He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That

"Know ye not that ye are the temple of GOD, and that the Spirit of GOD dwelleth in you?" (I Cor. 3:16).

Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love" (Eph. 3:16-17).

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD" (Rom. 10:17).

(My personal belief is He dwells in us to the extent His Word, the Scriptures, dwell in us.)

An important phrase in this passage is **"ye are not your own."** Christians do not belong to themselves, they

belong to Christ. As such, Christians are not their own masters; they have a master who has the right to direct all their steps. Christians belong to Him!

"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live

unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. 14:7-8).

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| <p>I Cor. 6:20 "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD'S."</p> | <p>"for ye were bought with a price: glorify GOD therefore in your body." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify GOD in your body and in your spirit, which are GOD'S." (NKJV)</p> |
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GLORIFY — δοξάζω — *"To praise, extol, magnify, celebrate...to honour, do honour to, hold in honour..to make glorious, adorn with lustre, clothe with splendour"*(Thayer, CD Rom Version); *"The consequential meaning from the opinion which one forms is to recognize, honor, praise, invest with dignity, give anyone esteem or honor by putting him into an honorable position....To ascribe glory or honor to anyone, praise, celebrate"*(Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

The price which has been paid for Christians is the blood of Christ.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Pet. 1:18-19).

The importance of this is that Christ owns us!
"Just as a slave who has been purchased is not his own master to do with his life whatever he desires but is subject to his new master, so also the Christian is not his own to do with his body whatever he desires. Instead, he is the servant of

Jesus Christ, the Lord who bought him" (Willis, p. 204).

Because the Lord owns Christians, what they do should bring honor and glory to him. It is much like a master builder. Much of the work is done by the carpenters under his authority, but when the project is complete it is he who receives the praise for a job well done. Christians must live lives which honor and glorify the name of their master — Jesus Christ.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of GOD, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto GOD, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of GOD" (Rom. 12:1-2).

It is not just one's body which belongs to GOD, but one's spirit as well.

First Corinthians — Chapter Seven

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:1 “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.”</p> | <p>‘Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.’ (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” (NKJV)</p> |
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TOUCH — *πτομαι* — “Carnal intercourse with a woman, or cohabitation” (Thayer, p. 70); “To connect, bind. To apply oneself to, to touch... ‘to touch a woman’ is not to be taken literally, but is a euphemism for sexual intercourse” (Zodhiates, p. 245); “Touch, take hold of, hold” (Bauer, p. 102).

The book of Corinthians is divided into two basic sections. In chapters one through six, Paul deals with those things which were commonly reported, or commonly known, problems in Corinth. In chapters seven through sixteen, Paul deals with specific questions the Corinthians had asked him in a letter which is no longer available. It would perhaps be helpful to see the actual questions which were written to him, but they are obviously not necessary, for if they were, the Holy Spirit would have directed Paul to include them in this letter.

One should also keep in mind, Paul’s instructions regarding marriage are expressed because of the persecution they were presently going through or about to go through. This seems evident from verse twenty-six of this chapter:

“I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be.”

By keeping in mind the setting in which the Corinthians were being troubled, it would have indeed been better not to be married. Yet, keep in mind, the unmarried state is never commanded for those who have a legal right to marry. According to God’s law, who has the right to marry? (1) Those who have never been married, (2) Those whose mate has died, and (3) The innocent mate of the one who has committed fornication.

“It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” The word **“touch”** is a euphemism for the sexual act (in particular as it relates to marriage) and may indeed stand for marriage itself.

“Epictetus used this word to denote one’s marrying” [James McKnight, p. 98].

“In this context touch refers to marriage” (Leon Morris, p. 105).

In the first few verses of this chapter, the question seems to revolve around whether it is expedient (not right nor wrong) for the Corinthians to get married. Their original question may have considered the present ordeal they were going through, or it may simply have been based on the misconception that celibacy is to be desired above marriage. Paul tells them it would be better not to marry at this time.

Paul never taught marriage was an evil to be avoided. As Willis points out,

“This sentence must be understood in the context of the sum total of what the scriptures teach about marriage. Among the pertinent facts are the following: (1) At creation, God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone’ (Gen. 2:18). Marriage originated from God; it is a divine institution. (2) The author of Hebrews said, ‘Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled’ (13:4). The marriage relationship is not to be looked upon as less spiritual than any other relationship. (3) The person who forbade marriage was fallen away from the faith (1 Tim. 4:1-3). (4) The following verse shows that marriage is recommend-able. (5) Paul compared the relationship of Christ and the church to a husband and wife relationship (Eph. 5:22-33). From these facts, we deduce that we cannot interpret this passage in any way that minimizes or depreciates marriage” [Mike Willis, p. 208].

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:2 “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”</p> | <p>“But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.” (NKJV)</p> |
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FORNICATION — *πορνεία* — “Prop. Of illicit sexual intercourse in general” (Thayer, p. 532); “Fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin” (Zodhiates, p. 1201); “Prostitution, unchastity, fornication, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse” (Bauer, p. 693).

HER OWN — *ἑαυτοῦ* — “Pertaining to one’s self, one’s own; used univ. of what is one’s own as opp. to belonging to

another" (Thayer, p. 296); "Properly one's own. As pertaining to a private person and not to the public, private, particular, individual, as opposed to public, open, and common" (Zodhiates, p. 755); "Belonging to an individual in contrast to what is public property or belongs to another: private, one's own, peculiar to oneself" (Bauer, p. 369).

GOD has placed within mankind the desire for sexual contact. But GOD has also placed a fence around the sexual act. The fence, or law He gives, states that sexual unions may be enjoyed only within the confines of marriage. Any sexual act found outside of marriage is illegal, and is simply called "fornication," and such separates one from GOD.

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of GOD, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify GOD in your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD'S" (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

Fornication is to be avoided at all costs!

What is the legal release for these passions which GOD has instilled in mankind? Marriage!!! In making this statement, the Holy Spirit, through Paul, upholds the

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| 1 Cor. 7:3 "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband." | "Let the husband render unto the wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband." (ASV) | "Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband." (NKJV) |
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RENDER — • ποδίδωμι — "To pay off, discharge, what is due" (Thayer, p. 61); "To give or do something necessary in fulfillment of an obligation or expectation" (Zodhiates, p. 222); "Give away, give up, give out...fulfill one's duty to someone" (Bauer, p. 90).

DUE — Ἰφείλω — "To owe...the good will due" (Thayer, p. 469); "To owe, to be indebted...what is owed, debt, due" (Zodhiates, p. 1080); "Owe, be indebted...the good will that one owes, a euphemism for marital duties" (Bauer, p. 598).

BENEVOLENCE — εὖνοια — "Good-will, kindness" (Thayer, p. 260); "To favor. Benevolence, goodwill" (Zodhiates, p. 680).

LIKEWISE — Ὁμοίως — "Likewise, equally, in the same way" (Thayer, p. 445); "Like, or equal degree or manner and denoting perfect agreement, similarly, in like manner" (Zodhiates, p. 1045); "Of the same nature, like, similar" (Bauer, p. 567).

Because of the question regarding marriage, and apparently the thinking of some that marital relationships might be wrong, Paul now deals with the obligations

"Notice that Paul places the demands of both parties on an equal basis. Recognition of the sexual rights of both parties is essential for a happy marriage. The sexual desires of the man are not more important than those of the woman; neither party has the right to withhold intercourse from the other. When a couple enters

teaching of the entire Bible on the monogamist relationship of marriage. He states every man should have his own wife, and every wife her own husband. As Willis points out,

"A woman does not have 'her own husband' if she must share him with another woman" (Willis, *ibid*, p. 210).

The same is also true regarding the husband. The Bible never endorses polygamy or polyandry ("The practice of having more than one husband at one time" Webster, p. 657).

In the beginning GOD made one woman for one man (Gen. 2:21-25). If multiple mates were desired for mankind, GOD would have created women for Adam, or men for Eve. GOD created a woman for a man. Further, this relationship was to be for life as is verified by Jesus in Matthew 19:3-9. Mankind often divorces just for the sake of starting over, or finding a new mate; but GOD condemns such actions.

husbands and wives **owe** each other. Willis, who has written a good and concise paragraph on this subject, states:

a marriage relationship, they obligate themselves to each other, among other things, to gratify the sexual desires of the other. Failure to fulfill one's obligation in marriage might cause the partner to seek sexual gratification outside the marital relationship (cf. Matt. 5:32). In the event that this happens, the one who withheld sexual intercourse

is not an innocent party”(Willis, IBID, p. 211).
The points brother Willis makes are right on the mark. A

good principle to note here would be found in Philippians 2:3.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

When husbands and wives learn to look at their mates as better than they, many of the marital problems which are because of selfishness, in every area of marriage, will disappear.

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| 1 Cor. 7:4 “The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.” | “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.” (ASV) | “The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” (NKJV) |
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POWER — ἰξουσιάζω — *“To have power or authority, use power... To be master of any one, exercise authority over one...to be master of the body, i.e., to have full and entire authority over the body, to hold the body subject to one’s will”* (Thayer, p. 225-226); *“Authority, right and power. To have or exercise power in the sense of permitting (1 Cor. 7:4), meaning that one has no separate power or liberty over his own body to use it as he will”* (Zodhiates, p. 607); *“Have the right or power for something, or over someone who is in authority. Specifically the right or power to do with something as one sees fit”* (Bauer, p. 279); *“Implies moral power, authority”* (Expositor’s, p. 823).

This passage shows the perfect subjection shared in a marriage relationship. Before marriage, one has power over one’s own body, but after marriage this power is now shared by the married couple. This does not mean one may use the other for his pleasure in any way he sees fit. The constraints of Christ’s law and love for the other comes into play as well.

argument was that what one does with his body he does to the Lord. One does not have the right to choose to do something with one’s body which violates His laws. In the present text, of chapter seven, Paul argues further that the bodies of married couples belong to each other and the scriptures show that the relationship to Christ is that of husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-33). He is our husband and Christians are His **“wife.”**

At chapter six, verses nineteen and twenty; the reading is that Christian’s bodies belong to the Lord. Paul’s basic

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| 1 Cor. 7:5 “Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.” (NKJV) |
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DEFRAUD — •ποστερέω — *“To defraud, rob, despoil...to withhold themselves from one another, of those who mutually deny themselves cohabitation (1 Cor. 7:5)”* (Thayer, p. 68); *“To deprive, wrong, or defraud another of what belongs to him”* (Zodhiates, p. 238); *“Steal, rob someone...do not deprive each other of marital rights”* (Bauer, p. 99).

CONSENT — σύμφωνος — *“Harmonious, accordant, agreeing;... thing agreed upon, compact”* (Thayer, p. 598); *“Symphonious, blending of voices or musical instruments. Figuratively, consonant, accordant”* (Zodhiates, p. 1331); *“Harmonious...by agreement”* (Bauer, p. 781).

TIME — καιρός — *“A measure of time; a larger or smaller portion of time...a fixed and definite time”* (Thayer, p. 318); *“Season, opportune time...Appointed time, set time, certain season, equivalent to a fixed and definite time or season”* (Zodhiates, p. 805); *“Point of time as well as period of time”* (Bauer, p. 394).

TEMPT — πειράζω — *“To try or test one’s faith, virtue, character, by enticement to sin...to solicit to sin, to tempt”* (Thayer, p. 498); *“To try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt, test by soliciting to sin”* (Zodhiates, p. 1135); *“Try, make trial of, put to the test”* (Bauer, p. 640).

INCONTINENCY — •κρασία — “Want of self-control, incontinence, intemperance” (Thayer, p. 23); “Lack of strength, want of power to regulate one’s appetites, intemperance, incontinence” (Zodhiates, p. 114); “Lack of self-control, self-indulgence” (Bauer, p. 33); “Signifies non-mastery of appetite” (Expositor’s, p. 823).

“Defraud ye not one the other.” Our English word “defraud,” comes from •ποστερέω, which Thayer defines, “To defraud, rob, despoil...to withhold themselves from one another, of those who mutually deny themselves cohabitation (1 Cor. 7:5)” (Thayer, p. 68).

Zodhiates says it is, “To deprive, wrong, or defraud another of what belongs to him” (Zodhiates, p. 238).

Bauer is even more blunt, saying it is to, “Steal, rob someone...do not deprive each other of marital rights” (Bauer, p. 99).

Considering the context, the Holy Spirit instructs that it is wrong to withhold sexual relations from one’s marriage partner. The absence of sexual relations in marriage is abnormal; it indicates a problem of some kind. Such is not condoned by GOD, but rather condemned. (Those who would withhold sex to punish a mate, or to try to get their own selfish way in some matter, are clearly sinning. This also indicates that the thought of sexual union being right only for the purpose of procreation is wrong.)

The Holy Spirit now gives an exception to the general rule; “**Except it be with consent for a time.**” This separation, then, is an exception to the general rule in marriage. This separation from sexual union in the marriage is to be with “**consent;**” a mutual agreement between the two parties. One partner in the marriage cannot decide to refrain for a given period of time, but must consult with his mate regarding this matter, and they must both agree to this time of restraint.

The word “**consent**” is interesting, coming from the Greek word σύμφωνος (See definitions above). As seen from the definition the idea comes from the realm of music.

When two people sing or play an instrument, either

one or both being off key, the sounds produced are grating to the human ear. But when both sing or play in harmony, their efforts are a thing of beauty. In harmony such an important abstinence must be agreed upon.

Further, the word “**time**” in this passage refers to a set time, a definite time. This agreement is not to be some indefinite time, it is to come to an end at a specific time.

What would be a GOD approved purpose for abstinence? Paul refers to prayer and fasting as an illustration of this. The specific details of just what the fasting and prayer should be about are left to the intelligent decision of the marriage partners. It could be a period of piety, or illness (whether severe or minor), et cetera. Should a person take a job which causes great periods of absence from his mate without the permission of his mate? A lack of communication between married people often leads to a lack of knowledge regarding the real needs of mates.

Now notice, after this time of separation from marital relations, they are to “**come together**” again. This is a euphemism for sexual relations. In all of this, such relationships are only lawful in marriage. But why is separation from sexual intercourse a temporary measure? Because Satan will use such abstinence as a weapon against the parties involved. Satan is constantly looking for any weakness he may exploit to get one to sin against GOD.

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

The word “**incontinency,**” comes from •κρασία; which refers to a lack of control or strength (See definitions above.). Some are stronger in this area, some are weaker. For a mate arbitrarily to decide to withhold sexual relations from his/her mate, may contribute to the weakness of the mate, and end in adultery. There would be no innocent party in such a situation.

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| 1 Cor. 7:6 “But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.” | “But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment.” (ASV) | “But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.” (NKJV) |
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PERMISSION — συγγνώμη — “Pardon, indulgence” (Thayer, p. 592); “To think alike, agree with. Concession, permission, leave” (Zodhiates, p. 1319); “Concession, indulgence, pardon” (Bauer, p. 773); “Only here in N.T., though in the papyri for pardon. The word means ‘knowing together, understanding, agreement, and so concession” (Robertson, p. 125).

This passage is difficult from this standpoint and this standpoint only: is he speaking of what he has just said or what he is about to say? Probably he refers to what he is

about to say, but it really does not matter.

This passage has often been abused by those who would like to eliminate certain passages in “Paul’s

writings.” Those who attempt this accuse Paul of interjecting his personal thinking into the scriptures. This allows some to then discard certain passages which they do not like, soothing their consciences by arguing that surely GOD would not require this thing, but Paul must have interjected this thought purely on his own. Such thinking means one cannot know GOD’S will in any area. If it is true GOD has spoken in some areas and not in others, then how can anyone be sure where He issued guidelines and where it is the mere thinking of a human being? Jesus said:

“Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

And the Holy Spirit said through Paul;

“All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD,

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The word **“permission”** needs to be looked at carefully. It comes from the Greek word, συγγνώμη; with the following definitions:

“Pardon, indulgence” (Thayer, p. 592); *“To think alike, agree with. Concession, permission, leave”* (Zodhiates, p. 1319); *“Concession, indulgence, pardon”* (Bauer, p. 773).

The question which needs to be asked is, who gave Paul permission to write this? Does not permission to write something mean it is endorsed by the one who grants permission? Further, with whom was Paul thinking alike or agreeing with? Since this is GOD’S word the only conclusion one can draw, is: that GOD was in agreement that this should be written. NOTHING APPEARS IN THE BIBLE WHICH GOD DID NOT WANT THERE (cf. John 14:15-26).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:7 “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of GOD, one after this manner, and another after that.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from GOD, one in this manner and another in that.” (NKJV)</p> |
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GIFT — κάρισμα — *“A gift of grace, an undeserved benefit”* (Zodhiates, p. 1471);

The circumstances surrounding this statement must be considered. The Corinthians were going through a period of great distress. Considering this, it would be advisable, if possible, for one not to be married. Marriage would indeed make the troubles they endured even greater. But not all people have the same abilities, the same gifts. For those who did not have the self-control which would allow them to remain unmarried, Paul has shown it was all right for them to marry. It should be remembered, Paul speaks about self-control in this context, and it is probably the self-control which is the foremost lesson to be learned here.

Paul was not married at the time this letter was written.

“Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas” (1 Cor. 9:5)?

Some have reasoned Paul must have been married at some time in the past, or else how could he talk about marriage in such a knowing way if he had not? It is then speculated his wife may have left him when he converted to Christianity, or she may have died. All of this is based on the knowledge he had of marriage and the ties of marriage. But when did an inspired man have to have personal knowledge of any subject in order to deal with it? Men may speculate as to whether Paul was ever married, but it is just speculation, and thus has no bearing on what is said in this text.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:8 “I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.”</p> | <p>“But I say to the unmarried and to widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;” (NKJV)</p> |
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Is it Paul’s advice that folks should not get married, i.e., it is always better to remain unmarried? Notice what he advises widows in First Timothy 5:14;

“I will therefore that the younger women

marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”

In this text he encourages all widows not to marry, but in

First Timothy, his advice is for the younger widows to marry (The word widow in chapter seven refers simply to a widow, no matter what the age.). Does Paul contradict himself? The answer is no, for this advice was because of a particular circumstance which existed at Corinth (Cf. v. 26). Under these circumstances of extreme persecution, it would be better not marry, not to carry additional weights

of responsibility. Under certain circumstances, the lack of family would make it easier to flee a persecution.

“And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath day: For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be” (Matt. 24:19-21).

The proof that Paul is not saying one should never marry is seen in the following verse, where he again endorses marriage.

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge” (Heb. 13:4).

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| 1 Cor. 7:9 “But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” | “But if they have not continency, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” (ASV) | “but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.” (NKJV) |
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CANNOT CONTAIN — ἡγκρατεύομαι — *“To be self-controlled, continent; To exhibit self-government, conduct one’s self temperately”* (Thayer, p. 167); *“To be continent, temperate, to have self-control”* (Zodhiates, p. 500); *“Control oneself, abstain from something”* (Bauer, p. 216); *“Hold themselves in, control themselves”* (Robertson, p. 126); *“To exercise self-control”* (Earle, p. 228).

BURN — πυρόω — *“To burn with fire, to set on fire, to kindle”* (Thayer, p. 558); *“To ignite, set on fire...Figuratively, to burn, be inflamed as with anger, to be incensed (2 Cor. 11:29); with lust (1 Cor. 7:9)”* (Zodhiates, p. 1255-1256); *“Set on fire, burn up”* (Bauer, p. 731); *“To be set on fire, to burn”* (Earle, p. 228).

If the unmarried, whether never married or widowed, cannot control their sexual passions; they should get married. This is the essence of this passage. The term **“to burn”** does not deal with eternal damnation. It is true,

those who give in to their passions will be eternally lost, if they do not repent and seek forgiveness; but this passage does not deal with that truth. Here it deals with the idea of desire which is so strong it will probably lead to sin.

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| 1 Cor. 7:10 “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:” | “But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband” (ASV) | “Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.” (NKJV) |
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COMMAND — παραγγέλλω — *“To transmit a message along from one to another, to declare, announce...To command, order, charge”* (Thayer, p. 479); *“To tell, declare. To pass on an announcement, hence, to give the word to someone nearby, to advance an order, charge or command”* (Zodhiates, p. 1100); *“Give orders, command, instruct, direct of all kinds of persons in authority”* (Bauer, p. 613).

DEPART — χωρίζω — *“To separate, divide, part, put asunder...to leave a husband or wife: of divorce”* (Thayer, p. 674); *“To put apart, separate, sever...Mid. Meaning to separate oneself, to depart from a person”* (Zodhiates, p. 1490); *“Separate (oneself), be separated of divorce”* (Bauer, p. 890).

Beginning with this verse one answer to another question is given regarding marriage. Paul’s answer will be unlike what is found in verses one through nine, because those verses dealt with a choice, either of which was right before the Lord (i.e., there was no command to get married

or remain single.) The question Paul answers now receives a command to counteract the action some seem to have thought necessary. In the previous verses, they had liberty to make a choice between two lawful actions. In this section they are commanded not to act in an unlawful

manner regarding marriages already in existence.

Barnes gives two lines of reasoning why some may have thought they should separate from their mates:

“(1) That their troubles and persecutions might be such that they might judge it best that families should be broken up; and (2) Probably many supposed that it was unlawful for a Christian wife or husband to be connected at all with a heathen and an idolater” (Barnes, p. 114).

The latter is probably a perversion of,

“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness” (2 Cor. 6:14).

This is another of those verses which is perverted to try to say Paul spoke some things which had no Divine authority behind them; and are thus matters of option rather than rules of conduct, et cetera. It should be remembered the apostles were the ambassadors of the Lord.

“For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:20).

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to GOD” (2 Cor. 5:20).

An ambassador is *“an official envoy...an authorized representative or messenger”* (Webster, p. 28). It is the apostles who were the official representatives of Christ, having the authority to bind His desires, His laws upon humanity. The Lord was speaking to the apostles when He said;

“I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19; emphasis mine, R.K.).

“For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Gal. 1:12).

When Paul, or any of the other apostles, spoke regarding the duties of mankind or Christians, their words are just as

“Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matt. 19:8-9).

binding as the Lord's while He walked on this earth. Why would their words be loosed or bound in heaven? Because it was heaven which gave those words to them in the first place! It was heaven which gave them the authority to speak these words.

“The distinction is between that which the Lord addressed directly, and that which Paul had received by revelation. In some instances, Jesus had addressed the point directly; then it is not just Paul speaking, but the Lord. In other cases, the Lord did not speak to the point directly, but Paul is doing so as an inspired apostle! In either case, the speaking is law, and binding” (Bill Jackson, p. 61).

“What Paul said on this occasion becomes inspired commentary on our Lord's commandment regarding divorce and remarriage” (Willis, p. 220).

This passage also shows the fallacy of those who make claims about the *“red letter”* editions, i.e., those editions which highlight the words of Jesus. They wrongly claim the words in red are more important than the rest of the New Testament. What Paul wrote here is not *“red lettered,”* yet they are the Lord's words, and just as binding as if He personally proclaimed them.

Note the commands of Lord regarding marriage: **“It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery”** (Matt. 5:31-32).

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery” (Mark. 10:11-12).

“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and

marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery” (Luke 16:18).

Paul upholds the Lord’s command — you do not divorce your mate except for the cause of fornication (sexual immorality). To do anything else has been a violation of GOD’S commands from the very beginning.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:11 “But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.”</p> | <p>“(but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.” (NKJV)</p> |
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DEPART — χωρίζω — *“To separate, divide, part, put asunder”*(Thayer, p. 674); *“To put apart, sever...meaning to separate oneself, to depart from a person”*(Zodhiates, p. 1490); *“Separate (oneself), be separated of divorce”*(Bauer, p. 890).

UNMARRIED — —γαμος — *“Unmarried”*(Thayer, p. 3); *“Unmarried. Used only in 1 Cor. Chapter seven to refer to those who are not currently married, whether they have never been married or were once married and have been widowed or, by extension, divorced”*(Zodhiates, p. 64); *“An unmarried man or woman”*(Bauer, p. 4).

RECONCILED — καταλλάσσω — *“To change, exchange, as coins for others of equal value; hence to reconcile (Those who are at variance)...let her return into harmony with her husband”*(Thayer, p. 333); *“To reconcile...In 1 Cor. 7:11, katallasso is used in the matter of marital relationships. If a wife decides to leave her husband for reasons other than his unfaithfulness, she should remain unmarried. But in case there is a necessary change in him, she should then be reconciled to him. The change here is in the one at fault just as man is at fault in the case of the God-Man relationship (2 Cor. 5:18-19)* (Zodhiates, p. 835-836); *“Reconcile”*(Bauer, p. 414).

PUT AWAY — •φίημι — *“To send away; to bid to go away or depart”*(Thayer, p. 88); *“To send forth or away, let go from oneself...To dismiss...of a wife, to put her away”*(Zodhiates, p. 299); *“Let go, send away...in a legal sense divorce”* (Bauer, p. 125).

One of the first things noticed here is the equal status of the male and female regarding marriage. The passage is very plain: if one departs (divorces) his mate, then that one cannot marry another. Paul does not deal with the one exception which Jesus gave in Matthew 19. Paul was looking at the situation where one divorced his mate for a reason other than fornication. A *“legal separation”* is not under consideration here. The Greek words in this text do not point to a mere separation, but the putting away, i.e., the divorce of one’s mate. (Note the definitions of the Greek terms listed above.)

If the marriage is dissolved for any reason other than fornication, there are only two alternatives for the couple: (1) They either remain unmarried, or (2) They reconcile to each other. One of the things this passage also seems to indicate is that if there is a divorce, nothing should be done which would hinder a reconciliation at a further date. For instance, a marriage by one of the two would make it difficult to be reconciled to each other.

Marriage CANNOT be dissolved except by death or fornication (Matt. 19:6).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:12-13 “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul is still speaking by permission — see the comments on verse six. In connection with this, his words in First Corinthians 14:37 should be remembered.

“If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of

the Lord.”

It must never be forgotten, this is an **inspired** apostle speaking.

In the first part of this chapter, Paul dealt with questions posed regarding marriage between Christians. Now he deals with the rest, and it is apparent, the rest are Christians who are married to non-Christians. Also, in the former verses Paul could refer directly to the words spoken by Jesus regarding marriage and divorce. But while Jesus was upon the earth, the church was not in existence. In Paul’s time, there are now those who are Christians and they are married to non-Christians. Does the fact their mates are non-Christians give them the right to divorce simply because they are not Christians? These passages, when carefully considered, show marriage is not a Christian covenant. Therefore, the marriage laws GOD has given are for all of mankind!

When the Lord was preparing His apostles for His crucifixion, He told them:

“I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself;

but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:12-15; cf. John 14:26).

Notice carefully: there was information they still needed, but they were not ready (prepared) for it yet. So how would the Lord impart this knowledge to them? By sending the Holy Spirit to **“guide you into all truth”** (John 16:13). What would the Holy Spirit tell them? What He heard from the Father, the same source from which Jesus got his information.

“Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things” (John 8:28).

Paul is an inspired apostle, so what he says here is just as binding as if the Lord Himself had directly said these things.

What instructions are given by GOD through Paul? If one is married to a non-believer one cannot divorce him because he is not a Christian. The only ground GOD recognizes for divorce and remarriage is fornication! This indicates GOD’S marriage law is for all people, Christian and non-Christian. The notion of any of GOD’S laws not applying to someone who is not a Christian is absurd.

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| 1 Cor. 7:14 “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” | “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.” (ASV) | “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.” (NKJV) |
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UNBELIEVING — *—πιστος* — “Unfaithful, faithless (not to be trusted, perfidious)” (Thayer, p. 57); “Not worthy of confidence, untrustworthy...Denotes one who disbelieves the gospel of Christ, an unbeliever, infidel” (Zodhiates, p. 214); “Faithless, unbelieving” (Bauer, p. 85).

SANCTIFIED — *—ιάζω* — “To make, render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate” (Thayer, p. 6); “To make clean, render pure...In 1 Cor. 7:14, the perf. tense *hegiastai*, has been sanctified, refers to an unbelieving husband or wife who is sanctified by a believing spouse” (Zodhiates, p. 69); “Make holy, consecrate, sanctify” Bauer, p. 8); “To set apart, to hallow, to sanctify” (Robertson, p. 128).

UNCLEAN — *•κάθαρος* — “Not cleansed, unclean; in a ceremonial sense, that which must be abstained from according to the Levitical law, lest impurity be contacted” (Thayer, p. 21); “Unclean by legal or ceremonial standards” (Zodhiates, p. 108); “Impure, unclean” (Bauer, p. 29).

HOLY — *—γιος* — “Of sacrifices and offerings; prepared for God with solemn rite, pure, clean,...in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy” (Thayer, p. 7); “Pure, clean, ceremonially or morally clean, including the idea of deserved respect, reverence...Metaphorically it means morally pure, upright, blameless in heart and life, virtuous, holy” (Zodhiates, p. 70);

“Dedicated to God, holy, sacred, i.e., reserved for God and His service...of human beings consecrated to God, holy”(Bauer, p. 9).

The word **“sanctify,”** is often used to describe the relationship one has in Christ, the relationship which causes one to belong to Christ— a Christian. If that is the only way this word is used, then one could conclude that the marriage of a believer, i.e., a Christian, makes the non-believer a Christian, simply by the association of marriage.

Another way of saying this would be the unbeliever is saved by the righteousness of the marriage partner. This can easily be shown to be a false position, one which clearly is contradicted by other passages with clear meanings.

“This passage cannot be teaching that one person can be saved through the righteousness of another for these reasons: (1) Ezek. 18:20 reveals that every person is personally responsible before God and that neither righteousness nor sin can be transferred. (2) Every person must give account for his own deeds to God (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10). (3) No man can be saved without personal faith in Jesus (Mark 16:16)”(Willis, p. 226).

“Sanctified,” as noted earlier, means: *“To make, render or declare sacred or holy, consecrate”*(Thayer, p. 6); *“To make clean, render pure...In 1 Cor. 7:14, the perf. tense hegiastai, has been sanctified, refers to an unbelieving husband or wife who is sanctified by a believing spouse”* (Zodhiates, p. 69); *“Make holy, consecrate, sanctify”* Bauer, p. 8).

The question must be, *“What has been rendered sacred or holy, clean, or pure?”* The context is talking about marriage; and the obvious question which had been asked of Paul, *“Should a believer put away his mate in order to be pure?”* These people may very well have been considering the Mosaic regulations which forbade the people of GOD from marrying an infidel (Ex. 34:16; Deut. 7:3-4; Josh. 23:12). The law also demanded GOD’S

children divorce the unbeliever (Ezra 10:3-44; Neh. 13:30-31); and even put away the illegitimate children (Ezra 10:3, 44; Neh. 10:31). Paul is showing these regulations do not exist under the new covenant. The unbeliever does not make the believer unclean, i.e., unfit for service to GOD, unfit for communion with GOD.

Again, the emphasis must be made. The word **“sanctified,”** in this context is talking about the marriage relationship, i.e., the relationship of the marriage partners. Paul has already told them (vv. 12-13), the Christian is not to divorce the non-Christian; here he has told them why. Again note Hebrews 13:4:

“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers GOD will judge.”

As long as two people have the right to marry, according to GOD’S laws, then GOD sanctions their marriage. Who has the right to marry? (1) One who has never been married, (2) One whose mate has died, and (3) The innocent party whose mate has committed fornication.

Notice also the argument Paul advances concerning children. In essence, he says if marriage to an unbeliever is considered wrong in GOD’S sight so as to mean they must separate, then this makes the children born into that “marriage” illegitimate. Marriage to a non-believer is not illegitimate, therefore the children born of such a union are not illegitimate. Paul says such children are **“holy.”** (This debunks the false theory children are born sinners.) It has already been shown above, that each person is personally responsible for his own actions; not the actions of another.

One will not be put in prison, or executed, because of the murders committed by Hitler, or anyone else. But if one personally murders someone, then he will be held accountable (cf. Ezek. 18:20; Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:15 “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but GOD hath called us to peace.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But GOD has called us to peace.” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNDER BONDAGE — δουλόω — *“To make a slave of, reduce to bondage”*(Thayer, p. 158); *“To be a slave, to serve”* (Zodhiates, p. 484); *“Make someone a slave, enslave, subject”*(Bauer, p. 206); *“To enslave”*(Robertson, p. 128).

This passage is in a context in which marriage is declared to be right, even between a Christian and a non-Christian. Christians are told not to seek a divorce because their mates are non-Christians. It is within this context one finds this verse. Though the Christian does not seek a

divorce, what if the unbeliever insists on one? What if the unbeliever says, *“You have a choice to make: me or Christ.”* The Christian must choose to faithfully follow Christ, so the unbeliever says he wants a divorce. How should the Christian receive such a demand? Paul says, let

the unbeliever depart.

Further, Paul says the Christian is **“not under bondage in such cases.”** Not under bondage to what? The laws of marriage? The word bondage, comes from the word δουλόω, which refers to making one a slave, to serve (cf. Definitions above). The idea here is that the Christian is not to make himself a slave to his mate. In fact, the phrase **“not under bondage”** is the negative of the Greek perfect tense meaning that the couples were **never** under a certain bondage to each other. They were married, but were never so bound to each other that the believer had to leave Christ for the unbeliever (v. 16).

“The believer is not so bound, or enslaved, or tied to that person that effort should be put forth to FORCE his/her remaining, and most certainly not so bound or enslaved that for sake of the companion the Christian then gives up his/her faith”(Bill Jackson, p. 63).

That Jackson’s reasoning is sound is found in the fact that the action then taken toward the unbeliever is, **“let him depart.”**

Why should one let the unbeliever depart? Because GOD has **“called us to peace”** with Christ. What ensues if the believer tries to beg, threaten, or compel, the unbeliever into staying? Only strife will come from such action. If the unbeliever is determined to end the relationship, even though the Christian has done all he/she can to be a Christian mate, then let him/her go.

“To force oneself on an unbelieving mate who did not want to continue the marriage relationship would be to cause nothing but hatred and strife which are contrary to the peaceful nature of the Christian calling...God has not called us to

involve ourselves in a relationship in which we beg and plead, fight and strive to maintain a marriage which the non-believing mate does not want to keep. Hence, if he decides that he does not want to maintain the marriage, let him go” (Willis, p. 231-232).

There are those who believe **“not under bondage,”** opens the door for the deserted party to marry again. But Note that this text does not talk about remarriage. In Matthew 19:9, the Lord gave an exception which allowed divorce and immediately talked about remarriage in such a way as to show there are no grounds for another marriage unless fornication had been committed. **That is the law of the Lord!** Fornication is the only reason a person, the innocent party, can marry again. This text speaks of the reason the unbeliever would leave the Christian, and it is not fornication, but simply because the mate has become a Christian. Paul says let him go, but says nothing about another marriage taking place. Further, notice the principle laid down in verse five. If a separation takes place, except for the one exception of Matthew 19:9, the couple must leave the door open to come together again. The Christian must seek the welfare of the unbeliever. By remaining unmarried, the Christian provides a way for the unbeliever to return to a marriage which was/is lawful in GOD’S sight, one which GOD condones. The possibility exists the unbeliever may be converted.

To hold the position this passage allows another marriage to take place because of desertion cannot be positively proven, or conveniently implied. Therefore, such a position is always shrouded in doubt to some degree. **“Whatever is not of faith is sin”** (Rom. 14:23), and Christians must **“walk by faith”** (cf. 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:17). Where in this context is it stated or implied another marriage may be entered? The principle of Romans 14:23 needs to be applied:

“He that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Rom. 14:23).

Christians are not commanded to live with someone who does not want to live with them. Force is not sanctioned but peace is.

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| 1 Cor. 7:16 “For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” | “For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife?” (ASV) | “For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?” (NKJV) |
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The meaning of this verse seems somewhat uncertain. There are two basic ideas. The first is, whatever it takes, without violating GOD’S law, to maintain the marriage allows the hope of converting the mate. The second idea

flows from the last verse, which states **“Let him depart...GOD hath called us to peace.”** A house full of turmoil is not conducive to winning a mate to Christ. It should be noted that all of the instructions Paul gave on this subject, culminates in the hope of converting the mate. If

one determines to leave the believing mate, after reasonable pleas for him/her to remain, i.e., trying to work the situation out, then let him/her go. Why? Surely to harass the one desiring to leave into staying will only cause more bitterness, and a hardening of the heart toward Christianity. On the other hand, if the attempt to save the marriage fails, if there is no hostility regarding the separation, the opportunity may exist at some future date to convert the unbeliever. The door has been left open for possible dialogue and for the conversion of the mate. One

cannot leave Christ and lead his mate to the Lord at the same time.

“Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear” (1 Pet. 3:1-2).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:17 “But as GOD hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But as GOD has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.” (NKJV)</p> |
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GOD does not make a law, and then later contradict Himself with another law. Many have tried to use the above verse to justify an adulterous marriage, saying when they were baptized it now made the adulterous marriage legal in GOD’S sight. Nothing could be further from the truth. GOD has clearly shown who has the right to be married. When one is involved in adultery, baptism does not make that marriage pure and clean; if continued in after baptism, this marriage is still adultery and shows the person did not truly repent. Christians cannot remain in such an adulterous union and be pleasing to GOD. The professional “hit man” learns the truth, and is baptized. May he continue in the state he was in when the gospel called him? In other words, may he continue to be a murderer because baptism made his sin right in GOD’S sight? Obviously, no sane person would say he may continue to stay in the same relationship he was in before. Neither may a person remain in an unscriptural marriage because that was where he was when he obeyed the gospel. That which is sin before baptism is still sin after baptism and must be discontinued for one to be pleasing to GOD.

The context of verse seventeen is about marriage but **“all”** refers to many other relationships one might have in life. There are those who seem to think becoming a

“It is helpful to remember that for all the situations dealt with in this chapter, from the unmarried virgin to those believers united with unbelievers, the unscripturally divorced and remarried – those in adultery – are NOT dealt with in the chapter. It is presumptuous handling of the Word to insert them into the context” (Jackson, p. 65).

“In the days of Tertullian (160-240 A.D.), ‘manufacturers of idols...claimed this principle as justifying their continuing to earn a living in this way.’ Some among us today want to use this passage to justify the continuance of a marital

Christian will free them from undesirable situations. An example of such happened in Texas in the year 2000. A woman had committed some horrible crimes against society and was convicted and sentenced to death. But while awaiting her execution in prison, she “found religion.” Arguments were then made that she had reformed her life and because she was now a practicing Christian, she ought to be spared. She even stated because she was a Christian, she would accept death if she must be executed when the actual hour came. But when the hour for her execution came she protested vehemently on the grounds she did not deserve to die since she had changed. Becoming a Christian, in the true sense of the word, never releases a person from the consequences of past actions. Becoming a Christian does not nullify a marriage which is entered into according to GOD’S laws. It does mean a marriage which was adulterous before baptism must be ended: because it is still adulterous. No sin can enter heaven. Consequences must be paid. In Paul’s day, if one were a slave, baptism did not mean he was automatically freed from that relationship, et cetera. If it did, there would not have been a slave in all the world as they would all have obeyed the Gospel. Regarding this subject of slavery, one might study the book of Philemon.

relationship which the Scriptures label as adulterous. Consistency would demand that the bigamist, murderer, or thief be allowed to continue his sinful activities on the same grounds as are used to justify the adulterer in continuing his adulterous relationship” (Willis, p. 234-235). Repentance demands every sinful activity be stopped. **“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of GOD? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor**

extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of GOD. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our GOD” (1 Cor. 6:9-11; emphasis mine, R.K.).

“**Were**” indicates a cessation of the activities which were deemed unholy. People should not deceive themselves into believing because they have been baptized they can continue doing things GOD has declared are wrong.

Considering verses seventeen through twenty-four are surrounded by passages which deal with social issues that in themselves are right, so what is the main thrust of Paul’s message in these verses? The answer is **faithfulness!** Regarding the questions they have asked him (cf. v. 1), he

shows one may be faithful to GOD whether he is married or not married, or a widow. One can be faithful to GOD if his mate is an unbeliever or a believer. One can be faithful to GOD if he is a servant or a master; if he is circumcised or uncircumcised. One can even be faithful to GOD if one’s mate leaves him. The outward conditions which surround one never dictate whether one may be faithful to GOD. Outward situations may make it more difficult to remain faithful, but faithfulness to GOD is a decision one makes which decision can be kept regardless of situations in which one finds himself. Thus, Paul also enjoins faithfulness in those human relationships which are not sinful within themselves.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:18-19 “Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of GOD.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of GOD is what matters.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul will now begin to illustrate his call to faithfulness to GOD and human circumstances (Which must be again emphasized as in accordance with GOD’S laws.).

Circumcision is the first illustration. Circumcision is often, but not always, used in the New Testament to indicate one was born in the flesh as a Jew; while uncircumcision referred to a Gentile (all other nations). It was a common practice of this era for Jews to have surgery which made it appear they had never been circumcised. This is spoken of in First Maccabees 1:15, and also by Josephus (cf. Willis’ comments, p. 236 for direct quotations). But man’s physical situation, whether circumcised or not, means nothing to his spiritual well being under the law of Christ. Under the law of Moses, this could not be said; but under Christ’s law there is no requirement for this procedure.

Whether one is circumcised or not does not determine

“In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love” (Gal. 5:6).

“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:20-21 “Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it</p> | <p>“Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called. Wast thou called being a bondservant? Care not for it: nay, even if thou canst become free, use it rather.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.” (NKJV)</p> |
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one’s faithfulness to GOD. What does gain GOD’S endorsement? What determines whether one is faithful to GOD? Faithfulness is determined not by an outward sign on the body, but by whether one lovingly keeps the commands of GOD.

“Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21).

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9).

any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature” (Gal. 6:15).

rather.”

Paul continues his teaching that becoming a Christian does not necessarily mean one's outward situation will be changed. In dealing with the circumcised and uncircumcised, he dealt with national distinction, and thus shows nationality means nothing as to whether one can be a faithful Christian. In these verses he deals with servants and masters, i.e., with the social position one may occupy. And again, Paul emphasizes one can be a faithful Christian whether he is considered to be at the lower end of society or on the upper end. Paul insists that if one is a servant he should not be overly concerned about it, so far as his relationship to Christ is concerned. He is no less a Christian in that position than if he were the leader of a country. On the other hand, if he has the opportunity to become free, then take it. With personal freedom come more opportunities to serve the Lord and to accomplish the teaching of His word.

Yet, the slave should not use his servitude as an excuse to forsake his responsibilities to the Lord. No matter what condition one finds himself, he can teach people the Gospel of Christ and can help spread the borders of Christ's Kingdom. This is well illustrated in the life of Paul. He was sent to Rome in chains as a prisoner, yet he faithfully fulfilled his obligation to proclaim the risen Christ to anyone within earshot. To the Philippian brethren Paul said,

“All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household” (Phil. 4:22).

Again, many have tried to pervert the Corinthian passage here in order to authorize their ungodly marriages. They claim this passage teaches if they were called by the Gospel (cf. 2 Thess. 2:14) in an unscriptural remarriage (cause other than fornication), then they can and must remain in this marriage. Again, nothing is ever said in this context about remarriage. Second, take their argument and apply it to other areas of life. If a person is a thief, then according to the false reasoning presented above, that person should remain a thief and in fact **must continue to**

be a thief. What about the person who has never been married? If the false reasoning used by those to support their illegal marriages is applied, then such a person **could never marry anyone.**

The Bible always demands when one becomes a Christian, that that person must give up any practice which GOD calls sin! Note again First Corinthians 6:9-11, where a catalog of sins is listed, and in which the apostle shows a Christian had to put such things away. Notice carefully, the list contains the category of **“adulterers.”** Some of them had been adulterers, but when they became Christians they had to cease their adultery because to continue in such would bar them from inheriting the kingdom of GOD.

Regarding physical servitude, notice the following passages:

“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of GOD and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort” (1 Tim. 6:1-2).

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing GOD: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:22-24).

“The secret is to live for eternity, not for the present. Look for that ‘city with foundation whose builder is God’ (Heb. 11:10)” (Littrell, p. 190).

1 Cor. 7:22 **“For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant.”**

“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.” (ASV)

“For he who is called in the Lord while a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called while free is Christ's slave.” (NKJV)

This text is meant to be an encouragement, particularly to those who were in a position of physical bondage. Which is worse: being a physical slave or a slave to sin? When one becomes a Christian, he gains freedom from the bondage of sins.

“When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in

those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to GOD, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life” (Rom. 6:20-22).

It is interesting to notice in these passages, one is made free in order to become voluntary slaves. A slave must obey his master and one must submit to Christ as His servant.

When one submits himself in obedience to Christ, he may remain a physical slave, but he has gained the greatest freedom of all — freedom from sin. On the other hand, one who may be free, i.e., not under physical bondage to any man, in Christ becomes a slave. It should be pointed out, this slavery is voluntary in nature, because the one submitting himself understands the great blessing of eternal reward which follows such submission.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of GOD is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

Notice the import of this passage with regard to relationships. The verse is not dealing with physical relationships, because in physical relationships one either **is** a Jew or Gentile; one **is** either a slave or free; one **is** either male or female. What this passage shows, is **in Christ**, national, social, and physical distinctions do not matter.

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| 1 Cor. 7:23 “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” | “Ye were bought with a price; become not bondservants of men.” (ASV) | “You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.” (NKJV) |
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Paul reminds his readers they had been bought with a price. The price paid was the blood of Christ.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of GOD, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

Paul’s argument seems to be, since you have been bought with a price by the Lord, and thus belong to Him, then do not let yourself become a servant (slave) of men. But, this latter idea should be considered with what he has already stated in verse twenty-one. There he declared one may be a servant of man, in the social setting, yet be free in

“Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take

the spiritual setting. When one becomes a slave in the physical setting, he loses his autonomy which is not to be lost to any man! **WE BELONG TO CHRIST.** False teachers (and the ungodly world in which one lives) will always try to get Christians to submit their wills to the thinking of either the false teacher or the masses. Though Christians may be servants in the social setting, spiritually they belong to Christ; and, thus, spiritually are free. When man desires a Christian to do what is contrary to the will of Christ, that Christian must respectfully decline.

Regarding this, it is interesting to notice the many instructions given to servants in the New Testament. How do they apply to Christians today? The servant passages can be applied in the work place and **loyalty** to the employer. Yet, he does not have the right to expect one to violate his relationship with Christ. Christians serve their employers without violating GOD’S laws. Remember Jesus’ words:

thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. 6:33-34).

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| 1 Cor. 7:24 “Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with GOD.” | “Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with GOD.” (ASV) | “Brethren, let each one remain with GOD in that state in which he was called.” (NKJV) |
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This is the third time in eight verses that Paul has made this basic statement (cf. vv. 17, 20). The NKJV here reads,

“Brethren, let each one remain with GOD in that state in which he was called.”

The only way one may “remain with GOD” is through

obedience to His will, which certainly means one cannot live or be involved in practices GOD says are sin.

“In every lawful relationship, marriage or economic, one can obey the Lord and live for the Lord while in that relationship” (Jackson, p. 67).

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| 1 Cor. 7:25 “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of | “Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: but I give | “Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I |
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| the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful." | my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be trustworthy." (ASV) | give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy." (NKJV) |
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FAITHFUL — πιστός — *Trusty, faithful; of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official duties*" (Thayer, p. 514); *Worthy of belief, trust, or confidence*" (Zodhiates, p. 1164); *Trustworthy, faithful, dependable, inspiring trust or faith*" (Bauer, p. 664).

With regard to the words, **"no commandment,"** see the notes on verses six and ten. Paul again makes it clear that this is a subject on which Christ in His personal ministry had not spoken. As His inspired apostle, Paul is now able to give advice to them, which if found in command form would make the action(s) he described binding. Here, the Spirit allows for one either to marry or not, while pointing out the dangers involved during this time of distress.

"Moffatt points out that Paul's careful discrimination between a saying of the Lord and his own injunction tells strongly against those who maintain that the early church was in the habit of producing the sayings it needed and then ascribing them to Christ" (Leon Morris, p. 109).

Verse forty of this chapter should also be considered in these matters, where Paul expressly claims inspiration in what he has written.

Paul's judgment is based on what? First, the mercy

GOD had been shown in calling him to be an apostle (and the apostles were inspired of GOD). Second, because of Paul's faithfulness, he is enabled to make this judgment. The word faithful is defined above, showing those who are labeled as such are trustworthy in their transactions: *"Worthy of belief, trust, or confidence"* (Zodhiates, p. 1164).

Paul is addressing questions which have been asked by the Corinthians. Considering the context, the question seems to be along these lines:

"Considering the distress in which we live in, is it right for us to allow our daughters to marry?"

Regarding the word **"virgins"** in this passage, one discovers that the original word (παρθένος) is feminine gender. But the same word is also used to designate a male who has never known a woman (Rev. 14:4). Thus, the word is used interchangeably for chaste males and females.

Notice also the next verse where the generic term **"man"** is used, being the word for mankind.

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| 1 Cor. 7:26 "I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be." | "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." (ASV) | "I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress; that it is good for a man to remain as he is:" (NKJV) |
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GOOD — καλός — *Expedient, profitable, wholesome*" (Thayer, p. 322); *Constitutionally good without necessarily being benevolent; expresses beauty as a harmonious completeness, balance, proportion*" (Zodhiates, p. 814); *Of quality, in accordance with the purpose of something or someone:...it is pleasant, desirable, advantageous*" (Bauer, p. 400).

DISTRESS — •νάγκη — *Calamity, distress, straits*" (Thayer, p. 36); *Necessity, compelling force, as opposed to willingness...distress affliction*" (Zodhiates, p. 146); *Distress, calamity*" (Bauer, p. 52).

The instructions he gives on this occasion must be understood as being only for this particular time, or any other time where there is a sore persecution of the saints.

"All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Some persecutions consist only of minor oppressions, such as making fun of positions held, or excluding one from

another's companionship, et cetera. But the persecution spoken of by Paul in Corinth, seems to have been like those in which Paul participated as Saul of Tarsus. Christians were being separated from their families by imprisonment and being put to death because of their loyalty to Christ. In such times, it is "better" to remain unmarried.

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| 1 Cor. 7:27 "Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife." | "Art thou bound unto a wife? Seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? Seek not a wife." (ASV) | "Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife." (NKJV) |
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BOUND — δέω — “To bind, tie, fasten...to be bound to one” (Thayer, p. 131); “To bind...used metaphorically when spoken of the conjugal bond, to be bound to anyone” (Zodhiates, p. 411); “Bind, tie..of binding by law and duty, with dative of the person to someone” (Bauer, p. 178).

LOOSED — λύσις — “A loosing of any kind of bond, as that of marriage; hence once in the N.T. of divorce” (Thayer, p. 384); “To loose, dissolve. A loosening of or from any tie or constraint. Spoken of the conjugal tie, it means separation, divorce” (Zodhiates, p. 930); “Release, separation, (in marriage) a divorce” (Bauer, p. 482); “Present active imperative with negative μή, ‘Do not be seeking release’ from the marriage bond” (Robertson, p. 132).

This passage closely follows advice which has already been given in this chapter regarding marriage. To be **“bound,”** is to be fastened to another, and it is used this once in the New Testament to refer to the marriage relationship. The present distress does not give one the right to divorce a mate. Christians and non-Christians are not to untie the knot which binds two people in marriage because of distresses, no matter what the **“distress”** might be. On the other hand, one who is not married at this time ought not to seek a change in status, because of the

particular difficulties such would bring. Whatever difficulties they faced, they must have been very severe.

“To seek to be loosed from a wife would be sinful as the direct violation of 7:10-16; to marry would not be sinful (v. 28). Therefore, the advice of this verse is directly parallel to that of vs. 7, 17, 20, 24 – to remain in the marital state one was in when he heard the call of the gospel” (Willis, p. 247).

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| 1 Cor. 7:28 “But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you.” | “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.” (ASV) | “But even if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.” (NKJV) |
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TROUBLE — θλίψις — “A pressing, pressing together, pressure; in bibl. And eccles. Grk. metaphor., oppression, affliction, tribulation, distress, straits” (Thayer, p. 291); “To crush, press, compress, squeeze, which is from *thlao*, to break. Tribulation, trouble, affliction” (Zodhiates, p. 736); “Oppression, affliction, tribulation” (Bauer, p. 362).

Paul now makes certain they understand what has just been said is advice, which they may take or discard. In either case, whether they marry or remain single, they have not sinned. But if they do marry, they need to understand they will have more trouble because of marriage in this time of distress than if they were single. As a married man or woman, they may be tempted to desert Christ because of their affection for, and desire to save, their mates from hardship. Freedom from marriage restraints allows one to

move quickly from place to place during a time of persecution. When one is single he has only his own safety with which to be concerned.

Paul adds the phrase, **“but I spare you.”** There are those who believe this is said to indicate he will not go into the details of those things which would be suffered during this time of persecution. The other alternative, and the one most probable, is this advice would spare them many heartaches, if followed.

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| 1 Cor. 7:29 “But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none;” | “But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none;” (ASV) | “But this I say, brethren, the time is short, so that from now on even those who have wives should be as though they had none;” (NKJV) |
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SHORT — συστέλλω — “To place together; to draw together, contract” (Thayer, p. 608); “To wrap up, contract” (Zodhiates, p. 1349); “Draw together, limit, shorten” (Bauer, p. 795).

When Paul says **“the time is short,”** is he speaking of the length of the present persecution, i.e., this time will be shortened; or is he speaking of the length of life in this world? If he is speaking about the current distress, he may be saying they would go through a time when they will be as though they were single. Such could be the case

if one or both mates were imprisoned; and thus separated from each other. If he is speaking about the coming judgment and eternal life, then he may be reminding them the marriage relationship is temporary, since there are no marriages in heaven.

“For in the resurrection they neither marry,

nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD in heaven” (Matt. 22:30).

Whichever thought one has on this, the main message

seems to be not to allow one’s affections for another human being to be greater than one’s affection for GOD.

“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish” (Luke 14:26-30).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:30 “And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not;”</p> | <p>“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;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“those who weep as though they did not weep, those who rejoice as though they did not rejoice, those who buy as though they did not possess,” (NKJV)</p> |
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Of this verse, Jackson states,
“It is a picture of ‘distress,’ and ‘trouble,’ which will so preoccupy the mind of man that if he is free from family care, it is the better course for him” (Jackson, p. 69).

It would seem the temporary nature of all of things is in view. It constantly amazes how one can be sad one moment and very soon be joyous; weeping and not

weeping, et cetera. This life is indeed short, so one must learn to deal with its affairs with the realization there is something more important than the affairs of this life — an eternity awaits. None of the things in this world is permanent. Viewed as such, one can develop an attitude toward material concerns which will cause him to covet heaven above all else.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:31 “And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away.”</p> | <p>“and those that use the world, as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.” (NKJV)</p> |
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ABUSING — καταχράομαι — *“To use much or excessively...to use fully”* (Thayer, p. 338); *“To use immoderately, abuse”* (Zodhiates, p. 848); *“To make full use of, use to the uttermost, use up”* (Earle, p. 229).

FASHION — σχημα — *“Fashion, external form, appearance”* (Zodhiates, p. 1352); *“Bearing, manner, deportment”* (Bauer, p. 797).

PASSETH AWAY — παράγω — *“To pass by, go past:...Metaphor to pass away, disappear”* (Thayer, p. 480); *“To lead along, near, to lead by or past...Metaphorically with the meaning of to disappear, perish”* (Zodhiates, p. 1101); *“Be brought past, pass away, disappear”* (Bauer, p. 613); *“Passes along ‘like a moving panorama (movie show)”* (Robertson, p. 134).

There is a saying, *“Nothing lasts forever.”* In essence, Paul is saying the same thing. Observe how quickly things change in this world, governments, styles, relationships, et cetera. One is to use the things of this world, but one must not use them immoderately (cf. Definitions above). To use them immoderately is to allow them to have an influence which can cause one to lose his soul. If a mate is

one’s most important possession, and more important than one’s relationship with GOD, there is no hope. The same is true with all relationships on this earth with anyone or anything. This world and all which is in it are **TEMPORARY!**

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of GOD abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15-17).

“But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10-12)?

Littrell thinks the fashion of this world which is about to pass away was probably the political system of the time. If this is the case, this could refer to the Jewish system with the destruction of Jerusalem, or it could refer to the Roman political system which fostered the persecution of that time.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:32-33 “But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife.”</p> | <p>“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,” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things of the Lord; how he may please the Lord. But he who is married cares about the things of the world; how he may please his wife.” (NKJV)</p> |
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CAREFULNESS — •μέριμνος — *“Free from anxiety, free from care”* (Thayer, p. 32); *“Without care or anxiety”* (Zodhiates, p. 133); *“Free from care”* (Bauer, p. 45).

CARETH — μεριμνάω — *“To be anxious; to be troubled with cares”* (Thayer, p. 400); *“To care, be anxious, troubled, to take thought,...by implication it means to care for or take care of”* (Zodhiates, p. 961); *“Have anxiety, be anxious, be (unduly) concerned...care for, be concerned about something”* (Bauer, p. 505).

“I would have you without carefulness.” Christians must be free from the anxieties with which the world concerns itself. In essence, the word carefulness refers to worry which is beyond reason, as can be seen from this context. One should be concerned with providing the needs of one’s family, yet at the same time one should not be so concerned about these things that he loses his faith and trust in GOD. Jesus promised,

“Seek ye first the kingdom of GOD, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

Many times mankind goes overboard in material matters, letting concern for providing the things which are actually needed to become a desire for an over abundance of worldly goods. This desire for more and more things takes precious time and thought away from the Lord and His service.

It must be remembered these words of advice are being given by Paul with regard to that present distress. It would

be much more difficult for a man to serve GOD during such a time because it would be more difficult to provide for his family. GOD says:

“If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8).

A married Christian, **must** do the best he can to provide for the **needs** of his family.

“And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful” (Mark 4:19).

Even though marriage requires one to show love and affection toward one’s mate, GOD must still first. Too many have allowed the affections felt for their mate to cause them to lose their souls. Because of these affections, and a desire to keep peace, many have compromised their faith. This can be seen, for example, in those who will attend denominational services with a non-Christian mate.

One must be careful to give the Lord what is His, and then one's mate what is his or hers.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:34 “There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“There is a difference between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman cares about the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she who is married cares about the things of the world; how she may please her husband.” (NKJV)</p> |
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This verse simply shows the opposite of verses thirty-two and thirty-three, i.e., the married and unmarried woman. What is true for the male is also true of the female regarding relationships with one another and the Lord.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:35 “And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“And this I say for your own profit, not that I may put a leash on you, but for what is proper, and that you may serve the Lord without distraction.” (NKJV)</p> |
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SNARE — βρόχος — “A noose, slip-knot, by which any person or thing is caught, or fastened, or suspended: to throw a noose upon one,...by craft or by force to bind one to some necessity, to constrain him to obey some command” (Thayer, p. 106); “A snare, a noose” (Zodhiates, p. 349); “Put or throw a noose on someone to catch or restrain him” (Bauer, p. 147); “Brochon is a noose or slip-knot used for lassoing animals...Papyri have an example ‘hanged by a noose’” (Robertson, p. 135); “Noose or lasso by which a wild creature is snared” (Expositors’, p. 836).

COMELY — εὐχάμιον — “Of elegant figure, shapely, graceful, comely, bearing one’s self becomingly in speech or behavior...of morals: to promote decorum” (Thayer, p. 263); “Well-fashioned, well-formed, comely...meaning decorum, propriety” (Zodhiates, p. 685); “Proper, presentable” (Bauer, p. 327); “Shapely, comely, from sch ‘ma, figure” (Robertson, p.135); “Elegant, graceful, comely” (Earle, p. 229).

ATTEND — εὐτρόσεδρος — “Sitting constantly by; assiduous...that ye may be constantly devoted to the Lord and his cause” (Thayer, p. 261); “An assessor, a constant attendant” (Zodhiates, p. 681); “Constant” (Bauer, p. 324); “Constantly attendant or waiting on” (Earle, p. 229).

WITHOUT DISTRACTION — • περιπάστως — “Without distraction, without solicitude” (Thayer, p. 56); “Without distracting or distracting care in regard to earthly things” (Zodhiates, p. 212); “Without distraction” (Bauer, p. 84).

What Paul had been saying (verses 1-34) was meant to promote the well being of the Corinthians; he never desired harm to come to them or anyone else who served the Lord. He reminds them that these thoughts are not commands of GOD; he is **not** commanding them to live a celibate life. Though Paul would desire all Christians to be celibate (because of the present distress) he cannot

command it, for such an order would be contrary to the normal expectations of this life. It should be remembered, GOD created man and then a woman for the man because it was not good for the man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). Further, the Holy Spirit directed Paul to condemn those who forbid marriage;

“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the

latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which GOD hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth” (1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Marriage is honorable (Heb. 13:4). If his directives here were commands which must be obeyed, then the majority would be caught in a trap because they could not contain their sexual desires. These people would be tempted and could succumb to fornication which would be a sin. History has shown those living in monastic societies which forbid sexual relations, instead of producing purity, inevitably became moral cesspools.

Paul is simply stating a truth which must be considered. During a time of extreme persecution,

marriage would bring many hardships upon a Christian which would not exist for an unmarried Christian. Paul urges them to pursue a course which is “**comely**,” i.e., one which is morally upright; whether such a course be through voluntary celibacy or marriage. Yet, he points out the unmarried have an advantage in service to the Lord because they have fewer distractions in His service (cf. Luke 10:38-42 and definition of “**attend**” above). In Luke 10:40, the word “**encumbered**” is περισπάω:

“To draw different ways at the same time, hence to distract with cares and responsibilities. In the NT, only in the passive, figuratively meaning to be drawn around in mind or to be distracted, preoccupied with cares or business” (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version).

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:36 “But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry.”</p> | <p>“But if any man thinketh that he behaveth himself unseemingly 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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes. He does not sin; let them marry.” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNCOMELY — • σχημονέω — *“To act unbecomingly...towards one, i.e., contextually, to prepare disgrace for her”* (Thayer, p. 82); *“To behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner...to be disgraced, suffer reproach”* (Zodhiates, p. 284); *“Suffer something disgraceful, indecent... behave disgracefully, dishonorably, indecently”* (Bauer, p. 119); *“The verb signifies either to act unbecomingly or to suffer disgrace”* (Expositor’s, p. 836).

FLOWER OF HER AGE — βέρακιος — *“Beyond the bloom of life, past prime”* (Thayer, p. 640); *“Beyond or past the flower of one’s age or life, past the usual age for marriage”* (Zodhiates, p. 1413); *“Past one’s prime, past marriageable age, past the bloom of youth”* (Bauer, p. 839). *“The Englishman’s Greek New Testament renders this verse as follows: ‘But if anyone thinks he behaves unseemly (improperly) to his virginity, if he be beyond his prime, and so it ought to be, let him do what he wills, he does not sin; let them marry.’”* (Zerr, p. 17).

Verse thirty-six has often been perverted in newer versions of the Bible to signify some immoral act, by ignoring the Greek manuscripts which overwhelmingly show this is speaking about a father and his daughter. An example of this is found in the NIV, which reads,

“If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married.” (The NIV goes on to pervert the next two verses as well.)

This passage can only be understood by looking at the customs of that time. In the ancient near east the father had absolute authority over his daughters, or any other unmarried person over whom he was guardian (including slaves). If he determined the daughter should marry, she married, and if he determined she should not marry, she did

not. This custom still exists in many parts of the world. Paul is not addressing a boyfriend in this passage, but answering a question with regard to a father’s responsibility toward his daughter.

“It was socially discreditable, both among Greeks and Jews, to keep one’s daughter at home, without obvious reason, for any long period beyond adult age” (Expositor’s, p. 836).

The question then becomes, *“How could the father behave himself uncomely, i.e., disgracefully or dishonorably, toward his daughter?”* To answer this, one must again go back to the culture and customs of the time this was written, customs which are not found in our culture. Notice the following comments:

“By forbidding the daughter to marry, some men would be acting dishonorably toward their daughters. In both Jewish and Greek societies, an

unmarried person was looked down upon. Ecclesiasticus 42:9 describes the attitude of those days as follows: 'A daughter is a treasure that keeps her father wakeful, and worry over her drives away rest: Lest she pass her prime unmarried...' (Willis, p. 255).

Forbidding marriage to a daughter who was old enough to marry would cause great shame to come upon her in that ancient society.

"And need so require." This phrase, in context indicates the father's desire (need) to let his daughter marry. Considering the context and regarding marriage,

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| 1 Cor. 7:37 "Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well." | "But he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power as touching in his own heart, to keep his own virgin daughter, shall do well." (ASV) | "Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but has power over his own will, and has so determined in his heart that he will keep his virgin, does well." (NKJV) |
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This verse is very similar to the one which precedes it. It still speaks of the father who does not give his daughter in marriage, as does the next verse. The father who has determined that the best course of action, because of the present distress, is for his daughter to remain single, is the one under discussion. But there is a condition laid upon this, i.e., **"having no necessity."** There is no outside reason why he must let her marry. She can maintain purity without being married. Further, the customs of the time play into this. Marriages were often arranged by the parents for their

one clearly sees Paul has been instructing all to marry so as not to enter into an immoral situation. If a father's daughter is one of those who cannot control her desire for a husband and intimacy which would come with it, then let her marry even in that time of great hardship. By allowing her to marry, the father has not sinned.

Consider the instructions given in verse twenty-eight with this passage.

"Neither the one who goes ahead and marries nor the one who allows the marriage is guilty of sin. Paul is not dealing with sin and no sin; he is dealing with expediency" (Willis, p. 256).

children at a very young age. If such an agreement had been made it must be honored; the father could not escape such an obligation. Tamar and Judah were both guilty of sin, yet Judah said,

"She hath been more righteous than I; because I gave her not to Shelah my son" (Gen. 38:26).

But if there were no legal obligations involved, the father could decide for his daughter's greatest happiness not to allow her to marry. Under such circumstances the father does not sin, and does well.

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| 1 Cor. 7:38 "So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." | "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." (ASV) | "So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better." (NKJV) |
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Here is a kind of summary statement. The decision to marry is left up to the parties involved, and either decision is right so far as God's law is concerned. This passage is

also proof that the discussion so far had centered around the actions of the father — **"he that giveth her in marriage."**

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| 1 Cor. 7:39 "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." | "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." (ASV) | "A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord." (NKJV) |
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"For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband" (Rom. 7:2).

The first thing to notice in this verse is the permanency of marriage. GOD never intended for divorce to take place

between His creatures, but allows such only for the exception of Matthew 19:9. Indeed, GOD determined marriage should be *"until death do us part."*

Next Paul notes who the Christian widow may marry, i.e., whom she has the right to marry. There are two possibilities as to the meaning of the phrase **"only in the**

Lord.” Bill Jackson points out the two possibilities:
*“(1) The widow is free to marry, but **only in the Lord;** that is, only to a Christian, or (2) She is free to marry, but **only in the Lord;** that is, only within the will of the Lord”* (Bill Jackson, p. 72).

Which of these is the right understanding? Does this refer to the particular time of distress they were going through, and not to a general rule? Or is its meaning similar to passages where is found the same phrase, **“in the Lord,”** as in Ephesians 6:1 and Colossians 3:18? (The phrase **“in the Lord”** is found forty-six times in the New Testament, and is an interesting study. I leave it to the reader to determine which of these views he holds, but it is my studied opinion it means within the will of the Lord.) During this time of

severe persecution, if a Christian widow/widower married a non-Christian they foolishly brought more problems upon themselves.

The subject of church discipline may help in understanding **“only in the Lord.”** If the phrase **“in the Lord”** means a Christian, then if a Christian’s mate dies, and he/she marries a non-Christian, then the Christian must have the fellowship of the church withdrawn from him/her.

If the phrase means marry within the will of the Lord, the Christian, whose mate dies, then marries a non-Christian who then hinders her from being faithful, must have fellowship withdrawn from her.

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| <p>1 Cor. 7:40 “But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of GOD.”</p> | <p>“But she is happier if she abide as she is, after my judgment: and I think that I also have the Spirit of GOD.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment; and I think I also have the Spirit of GOD.” (NKJV)</p> |
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The last phrase of this verse shows no doubt, upon Paul’s part, that the words he has spoken are the will of GOD. This is a clear declaration of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Not one of the many commentators I read disagree with the above statements. At the very least, the advice Paul has given in this chapter on marriage has been approved by the Holy Spirit.

“We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of GOD. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual” (1 Cor. 2:12-13).

First Corinthians — Chapter Eight

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| <p>1 Cor. 8:1 “Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.”</p> | <p>“Now concerning things sacrificed to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.” (NKJV)</p> |
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PUFFED UP — φυσιώω — *“To inflate, blow up, blow out, to cause to swell up; trop. To puff up, make proud: 1 Cor. 8:1; pass. To be puffed up, to bear one’s self loftily, be proud”* (Thayer, p. 660); *“To inflate, blow or puff up. In the NT spoken only figuratively of pride or self-conceit”* (Zodhiates, p. 1459); *“Blow up, puff up only fig. Puff up, make proud or arrogant”* (Bauer, p. 869).

EDIFIETH — οἰκοδομέω — *“To build a house, erect a building...to build (up from the foundation)”* (Thayer, pp. 439-440); *“Building a house, builder. To build, construct, erect”* (Zodhiates, p. 1030); *“Build, erect”* (Bauer, p. 558); *“Build a house, and so more generally build”* (Earle, p. 230).

In this chapter, Paul deals with another question, or possibly several questions, on the subject of idols. These questions seem to be as follows: (1) Can Christians attend banquets in idol temples? (2) In a friend’s home, can Christians eat meat sacrificed to idols? and (3) Can a Christian purchase meat offered to an idol?

Before dealing with the text which answers the above questions, a look at the cultural background in Corinth will be helpful. These Corinthian Christians had generally grown up as pagans offering sacrifices to idols. These ancient sacrifices often involved animals, but not all of the animal was sacrificed. Instead, like the Jewish sacrifices, part of the animal was often given back to the one who sacrificed and a feast was held for their friends and relatives. Another portion of the animal was given to the priests to sustain them, and of course some part was offered in actual sacrifice. What was given to the priests, if proper giving was taking place, was often more than they and their families could consume. The extra meat was often sold in the market to provide funds for the priests’ other needs. During special feast times, the offerings were so large in number the markets were flooded with these meats. It is easy to see how those who had come out of idolatrous worship might be tempted to return to this sinful practice. It appears that the instructions given in Acts 15:28-29 regarding the meats offered to sacrifices had not yet reached them; or they arrogantly believed they were mature enough to withstand the temptation to go back into idolatry.

“For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do

well. Fare ye well” (Acts 15:28-29; Emphasis mine, R.K.).

This idolatrous background is, thus, the source of the above questions posed to Paul. His answers have eternal application.

The phrase, **“we know that we have knowledge,”** is probably a quote from the Corinthians in the letter which asked these questions. Considering the context, they seem to be saying they had a knowledge that idols were not really gods but only the product of men’s hands. Paul then warns them to be careful regarding a problem which some have when they gain knowledge. Knowledge (here opinion) can be a dangerous thing in the hands of those who become arrogant over their knowledge. They may begin to think because they have more knowledge than others in some area that they have become superior to them. Therefore, Paul is saying knowledge without love is worthless (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-4). Knowledge which leads to arrogance will tear down relationships; whereas knowledge coupled with love will build up (edify).

NOTE: *“Oida spoke of the possession of knowledge, ginosko of the acquisition of knowledge. Oida described complete and final knowledge; ginosko, reflecting a former state of ignorance, described knowledge as incomplete and developing. Oida expressed knowledge grasped directly or intuitively by the mind, but ginosko expressed knowledge gained by some intermediate means such as experience, instruction, or observation. Oida, then, might be translated simply I know;’ ginosko, I come to know, I learn, I ascertain”* (Donald W. Burdick, New Dimensions in New Testament Study, p. 344).

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| <p>1 Cor. 8:2 “And if any man think</p> | <p>“If any man thinketh that he knoweth</p> | <p>“And if anyone thinks that he knows</p> |
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| that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." | anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know;" (ASV) | anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." (NKJV) |
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When one thinks he knows it all, he really does not know all he needs to know — his education is lacking, he does not really know as he ought.

"Knowledge is proud that it has learned so much. Wisdom is humble that it knows no more"
(Attributed to Kay by Leon Morris, Tyndale Commentary, p. 125).

Those spoken of here thought they knew what was

right; they thought their knowledge was sufficient. Some use this verse to claim truth is relative. But no such thing is taught. Instead, this is "knowledge" that eating meat offered to idols is alright for Christians at **all** times and that such "knowledge" is human opinion (scruples). This passage does not deal with what one **knows** about truth (John 8:31-32).

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| 1 Cor. 8:3 "But if any man love GOD, the same is known of Him." | "but if any man loveth GOD, the same is known by Him." (ASV) | "But if anyone loves GOD, this one is known by Him." (NKJV) |
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Who is the man who develops proper knowledge? He is the one whose **"delight is in the law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night"** (Psalm 1:2). But how can one delight in the Lord's law, if he does not first delight in the Lord? The Holy Spirit has been discussing incomplete knowledge in this text. How does one accumulate proper, complete knowledge? By first loving GOD. When man truly loves GOD, he will love those GOD has made in His image and will look to their best interests. In their ignorance he will nourish them, he will attempt to bring them to understand truth as he understands it. Look at the example of the apostle Paul. He knew more than any of these men, yet he did not act in a **"puffed up"** way toward them. He attempted to nourish them and increase their knowledge to a proper level.

To be known by GOD is to be acknowledged by Him as His child.

"The really important thing is not that we know God, but that He knows us" (Leon Morris, Tyndale Commentary, p. 105).

The verb **"love"** in this passage is present tense, which signifies one who keeps on loving. The object of love in this passage is GOD; that is, man's continuing to love GOD.

"If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

"He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him" (John 14:21).

"If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him. He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me" (John 14:23-24).

"For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

The above passages clearly show that one cannot claim to know and love GOD if one refuses to obey Him. The one whom GOD knows is the one who proves his love through obedience.

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| 1 Cor. 8:4 "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other GOD but one." | "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." (ASV) | "Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other GOD but one." (NKJV) |
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Paul refers to the question which was apparently asked, *"Is it all right to eat meat used in worship to an idol?"* Regarding the idols, he says **"we know that an idol is nothing."** He does not say there is no such thing as an

idol, but rather it does not represent any real god. Thus, his language is actually referring to the gods these images supposedly represent. All Christians know there is only one GOD, and He cannot be represented by anything which

is upon this earth. There is no image which can be designed by man which truly represents Him. This truth is seen in GOD's commands to the Israelites long ago:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Ex. 20:4-5).

For a good description of idols, read Isaiah 44:9-20.

The fact that a man has knowledge of the one true GOD and that the images made by man are not gods, nor do they represent any true gods, is still incomplete knowledge. Such knowledge does not really make a man wise, it does not mean he has full knowledge. The Corinthians thought they had full knowledge on this subject because they fully understood there is only one GOD; and these images did not really represent any god. What they failed to realize was the danger familiarity with these idols and those who served them could bring. They failed to realize the influence their actions in these matters might have on their brethren.

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| 1 Cor. 8:5 "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,)" | "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many;" (ASV) | "For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords)," (NKJV) |
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This verse is simply a recognition of the pagan worship of many so-called gods. The terms **"heaven and earth"** may be an allusion to the pagan ideas of separating the gods into ranks and categories. Many times those of higher order were considered to be the gods who ruled in the heavens, while those of lesser orders were thought to

reside and rule on earth. This may possibly be the designation being considered by the use of the word **"gods"** and **"lords"** in the latter part of this verse. Paul does not say these gods actually exist, as can be seen from the next verse.

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| 1 Cor. 8:6 "But to us there is but one GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." | "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." (ASV) | "yet for us there is one GOD, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through Whom we live." (NKJV) |
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Christians recognize there is only one Father and one Lord. One is in the Father, i.e., one is in His family. Further, one is in the family by Christ, which entrance is accomplished through His death for mankind. The world may have many gods, but such is not the case with Christians.

the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in GOD, who created all things by Jesus Christ" (Eph. 3:9).

"By whom are all things" is a phrase that can be better understood through the following references.

"All things were made by Him; and without Him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

"For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him" (Col. 1:16).

"To make all men see what is the fellowship of

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds" (Heb. 1:2).

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| 1 Cor. 8:7 "Howbeit there is not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat it as a thing offered unto an idol; and their | "Howbeit there is not in all men that knowledge: but some, being used until now to the idol, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled." | "However, there is not in everyone that knowledge; for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is |
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| conscience being weak is defiled." | (ASV) | defiled." (NKJV) |
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CONSCIENCE — συνείδησις — *"The soul as distinguishing between what is morally good and bad, prompting to do the former and shun the latter, commending the one, condemning the other; conscience"* (Thayer, p. 602); *"It denotes an abiding consciousness whose nature it is to bear inner witness to one's own conduct in a moral sense...Particularly, a knowing of oneself, consciousness; and hence conscience, that faculty of the soul which distinguishes between right and wrong and prompts one to choose the former and avoid the latter"* (Zodhiates, p. 1339); *"Moral consciousness, conscience"* (Bauer, p. 786).

WEAK — •σθενής — *"Weak, infirm, feeble"* (Thayer, p. 80); *"Without strength, powerless...Implying a want of decision and firmness of mind, weak-minded, i.e., doubting, hesitating, vacillating in opinion of the faith"* (Zodhiates, p. 273-274); *"Weak, powerless...morally weak"* (Bauer, p. 115).

DEFILED — μολύνω — *"To pollute, stain, contaminate, defile"* (Thayer, p. 417); *"To defile, besmear or soil as with mud of filth"* (Zodhiates, p. 995); *"Stain, defile, make impure, soil"* (Bauer, p. 526); *To stain, pollute"* (Robertson, p. 139).

The conscience is a valuable tool; but only if it has been trained by a proper standard. The conscience condemns when one does something wrong and commends where one does what is right. But what if the conscience has been trained by the wrong standard? For instance, the cannibal has been trained by the standard of his community, which states it is all right to kill another human being in order to consume his flesh. When a cannibal does so, he believes what he is doing is right, therefore his conscience does not condemn him. His standard is wrong, thus his conscience does not condemn his action.

The accepted standard of authority in one's life determines the commendation or condemnation the conscience issues. For Christians, the standard of authority is the Bible. and their consciences will condemn when the Bible rules are violated.

Is it wrong for a person to do something which is right, if he thinks the thing is wrong? And if one answers yes, why is it wrong? Applebury notes:

"The person who persists in doing what he believes to be wrong, even though it might not be wrong, is in danger of reaching the state in which

his conscience no longer functions as a warning against wrong doing. In this way his conscience is stained or defiled" (Applebury, p. 148).

As seen in the definition above, to defile the conscience, is to pollute, stain, and contaminate it.

"If our heart condemn us, GOD is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things" (1 John 3:20).

"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

What is it which allows one to overcome a weak conscience, or a conscience which has been trained wrong?

True *"knowledge has to overcome inheritance and environment, prejudice, fear, and many other hindrances"* (Robertson, p. 139).

The knowledge GOD has given through His Son gives the ability to overcome any weakness and any false teaching, as long as one has an honest heart which will accept and nurture it (Luke 8:15).

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| 1 Cor. 8:8 "But meat commendeth us not to GOD: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse." | "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." (ASV) | "But food does not commend us to GOD; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse." (NKJV) |
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This passage seems to be the argument of those who were trying to justify eating food offered to idols. If it were only a matter of eating or not eating meat, they would have been correct. There is nothing inherently wrong with eating food which is wholesome. The eating of food, or the refusal to eat certain foods, does not make Christians acceptable or unacceptable to GOD. It should be carefully noticed in this context, while it is not wrong in and of itself to eat these meats, they are in effect told not to eat them

because of the consciences of their weaker brethren.

"Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matt. 15:11).

"But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:
These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man"
 (Matt. 15:18-20).

"For meat destroy not the work of GOD. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing

whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before GOD. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:20-23).

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| <p>1 Cor. 8:9 "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak."</p> | <p>"But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak." (ASV)</p> | <p>"But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak." (NKJV)</p> |
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LIBERTY — ἰξουσία — *"Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission"* (Thayer, p. 225); *"Permission, authority, right, liberty, power to do something. As exesti denies the presence of a hindrance, it may be used either of the capability or the right to do a certain action"* (Zodhiates, p. 606); *"Freedom of choice, right to act, decide"* (Bauer, p. 277); *"A grant, allowance, authority, power, privilege, right, liberty"* (Robertson, p. 140).

STUMBLINGBLOCK — πρόσκομμα — *"A stumbling-block, i.e. an obstacle in the way which if one strike his foot against he necessarily stumbles or falls; trop. That over which the soul stumbles, i.e., by which it is impelled to sin"* (Thayer, p. 547); *"Figuratively, a cause of falling, an occasion of sinning"* (Zodhiates, p. 1233); *"Stumbling, offense...lit. Obstacle, hindrance of a rough road"* (Bauer, p. 716); *"To cut against, to stumble against"* (Robertson, p. 140).

A warning is now given to those who realized food was simply food. They believed they had liberty to eat if they so chose. Paul warns them that the liberty which they claim must not be used if it causes a brother to stumble. The idea of a stumbling block, is of an object in the road which would cause a person to fall when he came in contact with it. It is used metaphorically in this passage to designate something which, when the brother who does not have full understanding comes in contact, causes him to fall spiritually.

Something in and of itself may not be wrong, but if doing it causes a brother's conscience to be defiled, one must abstain from that action. Is it wrong to drink water? No. Is it inherently wrong to drink water from a beer bottle? No, the bottle is just glass. But it can still be wrong for one to drink water from the beer bottle, though there is nothing inherently wrong with either object, because it They were simply told to **"abstain from meats offered to idols."** Paul gives the full explanation in the present context. The world they lived in was full of this kind of idolatry, where **the eating of such meat was considered devotion to the idol to which it was dedicated.** Further, Jewish converts had been trained all their lives not to eat such meats. Since the Corinthians realized the mere eating of these meats meant nothing toward spirituality, one way

gives the impression to those who do not know what is in the bottle that the one drinking condones the imbibing of alcoholic beverages. The same principle can be applied to many things.

In Acts, the church was given some instructions without explanation as to why certain things should be avoided. Some of those things are self evident, but notice the list:

"It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well" (Acts 15:28-29).

or the other, they were a matter of indifference. Yet, they were guilty of taking a matter of indifference and causing their weaker brethren to stumble. Paul says doing such is wrong!

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| <p>1 Cor. 8:10 "For if any man see thee which hast knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not the</p> | <p>"For if a man see thee who hast knowledge sitting at meat in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he</p> | <p>"For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is</p> |
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| conscience of him which is weak be emboldened to eat those things which are offered to idols; | is weak, be emboldened to eat things sacrificed to idols?" (ASV) | weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?" (NKJV) |
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EMBOLDENED — οἰδομέω — *"To build a house, erect a building; to build (up from the foundation)...even to do what is wrong"* (Thayer, pp. 439-440); *"To build, construct, erect...In a bad sense, to embolden"* (Zodhiates, pp. 1030-1031).

Notice the first part of this verse; **"If any man see thee."** During those times, it was not unusual for a religious service to be conducted where these animals were offered in sacrifice; then after the worship services were over, a meal would be served which had nothing to do with the service (Much like our *"pot-lucks"* of this time). The Corinthians were arguing, it appears, that they could attend such because they did not consider this anything more than a common meal. In their minds they were showing no devotion to the idol.

"Paul did not take the time at this point to consider whether or not the strong had the right (exousia) to eat meats sacrificed to idols in the idol's temple because it was irrelevant to his argument. In 10:14-22, he forbade the very conduct here imagined on the part of the strong" (Willis, p. 271).

Paul is saying, *"You may think you can do this without any sin on your part, but have you considered, even if it is not sin for you, the effect it will have on your brother whose scruple is different?"* The argument is, one's actions may embolden a weak brother to become involved in sin. The word **"embolden,"** is the same word often

translated as **"edify"** which means to *"build up."* One's action may build him up or strengthen him to do what would violate his conscience, and what would in fact be sin for him. If a brother who has a problem with alcohol sees one drink water from a beer bottle, he, like anyone else, would assume, without further evidence that that one was drinking beer. He might then reason, that because *"Bob is a preacher and has studied his Bible for many years, if there was anything wrong with drinking alcoholic beverages Bob would not do it. Therefore, if Bob thinks it is not wrong, then I can drink alcohol."* Under such circumstances, Bob would be encouraging this person to do what would destroy his soul by Bob's inappropriate behavior; and he would be sinning in doing such!

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to GOD. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Rom. 14:12-14).

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| 1 Cor. 8:11 "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" | "For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died." (ASV) | "And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?" (NKJV) |
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Their claim was that they knew the idols did not really exist and there was only one GOD. Using that knowledge they then assumed the eating of these meats which had been offered to idols meant nothing, and could not harm them spiritually. Paul is asking whether they would take the knowledge they claimed and use it in such a way as to cause their brother in Christ to perish, i.e., be lost. In asking this question, Paul reminds them Christ died for the weak (as to his fragile conscience) brother, just as He had for them. Why would anyone desire to do those things which would destroy a brother's soul? In a very real sense, Paul is shaming them for their inconsiderate attitude toward their brethren. This points out the need for Christians to be concerned, not just for their own soul's eternal safety, but also the safety of all brethren, and indeed all people.

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| 1 Cor. 8:12 “But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.” | “And thus, sinning against the brethren, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ.” (ASV) | “But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.” (NKJV) |
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Here is a truth which should be considered carefully by Christian and non-Christian alike. When a person sins against a Christian, he is sinning against Christ, i.e., whatever the wrong action toward the Christian is, it is the same as if it were being done directly to Christ himself.

This principle is easily seen in the words of our Lord: **“The King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me....Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me”** (Matt. 25:40, 45).

This principle was also proclaimed when the Lord spoke to Saul on the road to Damascus. Paul was **“breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord”** (Acts 9:1). The Lord asked him, **“Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me? And he said, Who art Thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks”** (Acts 9:4-5). He could not have physically persecuted Christ because He was in heaven, but rather he persecuted Him through persecution of His followers.

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| 1 Cor. 8:13 “Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.” | “Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble.” (ASV) | “Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.” (NKJV) |
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The simplest act of eating meat is not wrong. But this meat had been offered to an idol and might lead the weak brother then to participate in idolatry. The Bible does not teach one to give in to any demand of a person because the person says *“this offends me.”* Rather, those things which would lead a person to sin are the things which one ought to be willing to sacrifice for the well being of the brother’s soul. If a person would say *“I am a vegetarian and it offends me if you eat meat,”* should one stop eating meat so as to not offend the other?

First, such a person does not understand the word offend, which meaning is clearly seen in this passage — it means to cause to sin, to violate the will of GOD. Eating meat does not violate the will of GOD, and in fact GOD has condoned the eating of meat in the general sense.

“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which GOD hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of GOD is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving” (1 Tim. 4:3-4).

“The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into “It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother

your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things” (Gen. 9:2-3).

Second, the person is abusing GOD’S word to try to get his way in a matter which is right, but optional.

“On the other hand, there is such a thing as a brother who is not nearly so weak as he thinks, but who has been in the kingdom for years and is a crank and a fanatic. He has a tender conscience, he claims; and he tries to use it to control everybody else. His favorite passage is what Paul said about meats, which he applies to anything he wants to keep other people from doing. Of course, we shall just have to get along with this fellow as best we can” (DeHoff, Sermons on First Corinthians, p. 71)!

If what is being done might lead someone into religious error, then one must give up the thing, but not in matters of personal opinion. So Paul says, if eating meat offered to an idol will cause my brother to be led into idolatry, then he would no longer eat those meats, because he did not want to be the instrument which leads his brother into religious error.

stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (Rom. 14:21).

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even

Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached Thee fell on Me.” (Rom. 15:1-3).

First Corinthians — Chapter Nine

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:1 “Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord?”</p> | <p>“Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord?” (NKJV)</p> |
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All of these questions are worded in such a way as to demand the answer, “yes.” Paul is making a clear affirmation regarding these things which deal with his apostleship, which apparently was under attack by some of the Corinthians.

Paul begins his defense of his apostleship by simply affirming it. There may have been those who said Paul had not been with the Lord during his public ministry, therefore he was not truly an apostle. Acts one contains a clear qualification for an apostle:

“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection” (Acts 1:21-22).

This key qualification was seeing Jesus after His resurrection. When Luke was chosen to record the acts of the apostles, he was shown the conversion of Saul (Paul). Three times he mentions the fact the Lord appeared to Saul (Acts 9:3-6; 22:5-11; 26:12-20). But what about the teaching the apostles received during the earthly ministry of Jesus? There is a clue to this in Galatians:

“When it pleased GOD, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days” (Gal. 1:15-18).

At the time the Lord personally called Saul to be an apostle, Paul says he did not hesitate to accept the personal invitation. He states he did not go up to Jerusalem immediately, but went into Arabia. Why did Paul go into Arabia upon his conversion? And why is there a three year period from his conversion before he went up to Jerusalem to see the apostles? How long did the Lord teach the men who would be His apostles? Was it not about three years?

Further, consider what happened when Saul went up to meet with the apostles in Jerusalem and found that the brethren in Jerusalem wanted nothing to do with him, because they were afraid of the great persecutor (Acts 9:23-28). Another question: if Paul had spent his time in Damascus proclaiming the Gospel for three years, would this have given the apostles and brethren in Jerusalem time to know he truly had been converted? Learning of his conversion and stand for the truth would have been a most joyous occasion to persecuted Christians.

“They had heard only, That he which persecuted us in times past now preacheth the faith which once he destroyed. And they glorified GOD in me” (Gal. 1:23-24).

The studied conclusion is that Saul had been trained (taught); and, considering Acts 1:21-22, his training had been by the Lord Himself (Gal. 1:11-12). Where did this training take place? Was it while he was in Arabia or in some hidden location in Damascus?

The next question Saul asks is, **“Am I not free?”** Considering the context of the meats and the discussion on freedom, it seems Paul is saying he has the same rights as any other Christian. But he will go on to show that he did not always take advantage of his rights when not doing so would benefit the brethren.

He next asks, **“Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord.”** One should remember this is a rhetorical question, which demands “Yes” as its answer. This is related to his apostleship, but apparently is a statement they cannot deny.

Fourth, he asks, **“Are ye not my work in the Lord?”** It was Paul who brought them the truth. Were they Christians? If so, how had they gained the knowledge needed for them to become Christians?

“Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15; cf Acts 18:8).

Involved in his work among them would naturally be the miraculous gifts of an apostle.

“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds” (2 Cor. 12:12).

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| 1 Cor. 9:2 "If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." | "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." (ASV) | "If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord." (NKV) |
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SEAL — σφραγίς — *"A seal...that by which anything is confirmed, proved, authenticated, as by a seal, (a token or proof) (Thayer, p. 609); "A seal as impressed upon letters or books for the sake of privacy and security....Figuratively, a promissory token, pledge, proof"(Zodhiates, p. 1352); "Seal, signet...that which confirms, attests, or authenticates with the gen. of that which is confirmed or authenticated"(Bauer, p. 796).*

In effect, Paul says others may reject me as being an apostle, but surely you cannot deny this fact. Why could he make this statement? He goes on to say they were the seal of his apostleship. A seal is an item which confirms, proves or authenticates something as being genuine. For instance, a notary public will seal a document testifying that that one is the person who signed the document. Such is proof the document is the real thing. Birth certificates often have a seal required for the document to be accepted as lawful. Paul is not saying that the fact the Corinthians exist as Christians is the proof he is an apostle. If their simply being Christians proved he was an apostle, then what about Philip at Samaria? Simply teaching and converting people is not a sign of apostleship.

What then is it about them which is the seal of Paul's apostleship? Could the answer be that he had bestowed miraculous abilities upon them?

"In every thing ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:5-7).

Paul also stated they were not inferior to any of the churches, which seems to imply that all the miraculous gifts had been given them.

"What is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong" (2 Cor. 12:13).

Only an apostle could give others the ability to perform miracles. Paul had evidently imparted miraculous abilities to the Corinthians, and since they had received them of him, they were living proof of his apostleship (2 Cor. 12:12).

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| 1 Cor. 9:3 "Mine answer to them that do examine me is this," | "My defence to them that examine me is this." (ASV) | "My defense to those who examine me is this:" (NKJV) |
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ANSWER — • πολογία — *"Verbal defense, speech in defense"(Thayer, p. 65); "To give an answer or speech in defense of oneself"(Zodhiates, p. 232); "Defense...a speech of defense, reply"(Bauer, p. 96); "A speech in defense"(Earle, p. 230).*

EXAMINE — • ναρκίνω — *"By looking through a series of objects or particulars to distinguish or search after. Hence, to investigate, examine, inquire into, scrutinize, sift, question"(Thayer, p. 39); "To discern, judge"(Zodhiates, p. 152); "Question, examine,...of judicial hearings, with acc. of the person examined"(Bauer, p. 56).*

This verse simply shows the determination of Paul to defend his apostleship. Many preachers today, and formerly this one as well, need to learn the lesson here. So often when attacked by brethren, preachers will not defend themselves or the work they have done because of a fear of causing disruption in a congregation or being thought of as one who brags. When they do this, instead of keeping peace, they cause more disruptions. This is accomplished

because those who bully the preacher are encouraged to continue their nit-picking by his lack of defense (And usually no one else will step in to defend him.). Just as Paul did, preachers today need to defend the work they do when brethren like those in Corinth attack them.

This verse can be applied either to Paul's previous defense, or it can apply to what follows. Possibly it refers to both.

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| 1 Cor. 9:4 "Have we not power to eat and to drink?" | "Have we no right to eat and to drink?" (ASV) | "Do we have no right to eat and drink?" (NKJV) |
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POWER — ἰξουσία — *"Power of choice, liberty of doing as one pleases; leave or permission"(Thayer, p. 225);*

“Permission, authority, right, liberty, power to do something...it may be used either of the capability or the right to do a certain action”(Zodhiates, p. 606); *“Ability to do something, capability, might, power”*(Bauer, p. 278); *“Right, privilege, authority”*(Earle, p. 230).

One of the arguments which may have unfolded among Paul’s critics is that, because he did not accept support from the Corinthians, that this was an admission by him that he did not deserve such support because he was not an apostle. The text is naturally leading to the fact he had a right to expect them to support him in his labors, but had chosen to take care of his own needs through his personal labor.

“Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel” (1 Cor. 9:14).

“His question in this verse is not, ‘Do we have the right to eat all kinds of meats (whether they were sacrificed to idols or not)?’ Rather, the question is, ‘Do we have the right to eat and drink at the church’s expense?’”(Willis, p. 282-283).

Paul is discussing what he and other preachers have a right to expect from the brethren, and he points out that these are GOD ordained rights.

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| 1 Cor. 9:5 “Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?” | “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?” (ASV) | “Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?” (NKJV) |
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SISTER — • δελφή — *“Sister;...one connected by the tie of the Christian religion”*(Thayer, p. 10); *“A sister in the common faith, a Christian woman”*(Zodhiates, p. 79); *“Sister...fig. of a sister in the faith”*(Bauer, p. 15).

Paul now shows the right of those who serve the Lord in the role of proclaiming His truths to receive support not only for themselves, but also for their families if they have them.

The terms **“sister”** and **“wife”** have been viewed with curiosity by many to mean a wife who is a Christian. Though the lexicons give this as the idea when referring to this verse, as noted above, they also show the **“sister”** can be a physical sister. To try to make the argument then that the term sister here only refers to a Christian is rather weak.

Paul’s argument is the right to support family, those for whom they have an obligation to provide. Over the years some tried to use this passage to insist on the propriety of taking a Christian woman with them on mission trips, etc. It would seem there would be great danger in this by possibly giving the wrong impression. Gossip is a terrible fault of many, but Christians ought to do everything they can not to provide an appearance of evil.

It would seem to this writer the point being made is the right to expect the church to provide for all of the needs of the minister of Christ.

An assumption which seems to be safely drawn from this passage is that at least most of the other apostles were

married. Further, the Lord’s brothers are mentioned in this passage. Apparently, they were well known in the church, playing significant roles in the body of Christ. Recall Jesus’ brother’s unbelief at the beginning of His ministry (John 7:5), but now view them as well known in the church — what a remarkable transition the power of the Gospel had in their lives! One should also note that those brothers were included as also having wives. It is not just those who are apostles who had the right of support from the brethren, but others as well.

Those who claim to be the successor of Peter on the throne in Rome claim they cannot be married, yet Peter was beyond doubt a married man. During our Lord’s ministry, He healed Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4:38). How can a person have a mother-in-law without having a wife? If it be argued Peter was married, but when he became an apostle he put her away to fulfill the duties of this office, then he would have violated the commands of the Holy Spirit in First Corinthians chapter seven. Further, this passage was written many years after the death and resurrection of Jesus, and Peter is obviously being accompanied in his work by a wife. Truly, the Holy Spirit anticipated the errors of false religion.

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| 1 Cor. 9:6 “Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?” | “Or I only and Barnabas, have we not a right to forbear working?” (ASV) | “Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?” (NKJV) |
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Paul had labored in Corinth making tents physically to support himself (Acts 18:3). Some think the latter

reference implies Barnabas was also a tent maker, but such cannot be proved. Paul claims the right to be supported by the church in his labors for the Lord. But for some unknown reason, there seems to have been a good reason why he did not take support from them. That he took support from other churches is well documented.

“Have I committed an offence in abasing myself that ye might be exalted, because I have preached to you the gospel of GOD freely? I robbed other churches, taking wages of them, to do you service. And when I was present with you, and wanted, I was chargeable to no man: for that which was lacking to me the brethren which came from Macedonia supplied: and in all things I have kept myself from being burdensome unto you, and so will I keep myself” (2 Cor. 11:7-9).

“Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did not communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and

again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to GOD” (Phil. 4:14-18).

The Corinthian objectors seemed to accept the right of the other apostles and even the Lord’s brothers to accept aid from the church. Why did they seem to think Paul and Barnabas were excluded from this right?

Interestingly, Barnabas is mentioned here. This was well after the dispute he and Paul had regarding John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). At that time they had parted company, but now Paul speaks of him in a manner which suggests respect for a faithful worker in the Lord’s service. This shows their original disagreement was over policy and not a personal matter, nor was it a matter of sin to follow either course they pursued.

The implication of this passage shows Barnabas also refused to accept wages from the church to perform his labors. It is not positive whether this means only among the Corinthians or from all congregations of the Lord’s people. Barnabas gave up his property to promote the Lord’s work (Acts 4:36-37). It would fit his nature well to support himself in his endeavors.

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:7 “Who goeth a warfare any time at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?”</p> | <p>“What soldier ever serveth at his own charges? who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?” (NKJV)</p> |
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Three illustrations are now used to demonstrate the worker’s right to receive wages. These are all examples which no one would deny, and which are interesting when applied to Christianity. A soldier fights for his country, for his ruler; and because he does, he is supplied with his needs. The preacher fights for his master as a good soldier, and thus GOD has made arrangements for his needs to be taken care of by the brethren.

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before

Those who plant the vineyard and thus care for it, are entitled to eat of the produce. The Lord’s church is spoken of as being a vineyard (Luke 20:9-16), and Christians are taught to labor in the vineyard (Matt. 21:28). The preacher who labors to promote the health and welfare of the crop (congregation) ought to be supported by them if they are able.

The third illustration is of the shepherd who cares for the flock’s needs, leading them to food, protecting them against attack from wolves, et cetera. This is very much

on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare” (1 Tim. 1:18).

Timothy was also told:

“Endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier” (2 Tim. 2:3-4).

the role a preacher takes in trying to provide nourishment the sheep need in spiritual matters, in trying to protect them from the wolves of religious error.

The disciples of Christ, GOD’S children, are often referred to as sheep in the Scriptures (Matt. 25:32-33).

“He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of

Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep”
(John 21: 16-17).

Though the preacher provides spiritual nourishment for the flock, he is not a pastor unless he has been chosen by the flock to fill the dual roles of preacher and pastor (elder). If a man does serve in both roles, he may not be the only pastor or elder. The Bible always speaks of a plurality of pastors or elders in any congregation (Phil. 1:1).

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:8-9 “Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth GOD take care for oxen?”</p> | <p>“Do I speak these things after the manner of men? or saith not the law also the same? 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,” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain. Is it oxen GOD is concerned about?” (NKJV)</p> |
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“Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn” (Deut. 25:4).

“For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:18).

“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matt. 10:9-10).

Paul now shows they cannot say this is simply human reasoning because of the physical examples he has given. He now quotes from the law to show the principle is clearly dictated by GOD. He quotes Deuteronomy 25:4, showing even the laboring dumb beast deserves the fruit of

his labors. Question: if GOD desires the dumb animal to partake of its labors, what about His desire for the highest of His creation?

“Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?...if GOD so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith” (Matt. 6:26, 30)?

Notice, Paul says, **“saith not the law the same also?”** Where does the law of Moses specifically say, “You will pay My minister a living wage?” It does not. Principles are often given which support other direct arguments. GOD says the dumb animal is worthy of his hire or labor — GOD’S servant is also worthy of the same!

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:10 “Or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope.” (NKJV)</p> |
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All of the Bible is written for the sake of man, i.e., for his well being. GOD demands humane treatment for animals and the same applies for mankind, His highest creation. He is simply emphasizing the right of the worker to gain reward for his labors whether it be the animal or

man who performs the labor.

“The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits” (2 Tim. 2:6).

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| 1 Cor. 9:11 "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" | "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things?" (ASV) | "If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?" (NKJV) |
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Which of the two things mentioned in these passages is most valuable? Is it the spiritual gifts Paul imparted to them, or the material (carnal) gifts they gave to him? There is no question the spiritual is **far** more valuable.

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" (Mark 8:36)?

*"The word **megas** emphasizes just how disproportionate the work of sowing (what is given: the gospel) is to that which is reaped (what is received: financial support). There is really, therefore, no just compensation for the communication of the gospel to someone"*(Willis, p. 289).

Physical food is needed to live in this world, but as Jesus pointed out to Satan, **"Man shall not live by bread**

alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD" (Matt. 4:4). What proceeds from the mouth of GOD sustains the soul which lives for eternity, while the material soon passes away.

"As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more" (Psalm 103:15-16).

"All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

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| 1 Cor. 9:12 "If others be partakers of this power over you, are not we rather? Nevertheless we have not used this power; but suffer all things, lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ." | "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." (ASV) | "If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ." (NKJV) |
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Apparently other teachers were being supported by them. Paul makes the argument, if it is right for them to receive this support, what about him? Paul had established them in the faith; he was their father in the faith. His position as an apostle would further enhance his claim for support when compared to the claim of these *"Johnny-come-lately"* teachers.

At this point, with their understanding being earlier enlightened, and examples presented which they could not deny, they probably thought Paul would ask them to support him. But Paul reminds them he has never taken support from them, nor would he now. As pointed out earlier, he had supported himself and taken support from others to accomplish the mission in Corinth.

Paul says he would willingly **"suffer all things."** It should be remembered this is said in reference to his work of proclaiming the Gospel among them.

"Ministers, like physicians, lawyers, and farmers, should be allowed to attend mainly to the great business of their lives, and to their appropriate work. No physician, no farmer, no mechanic, could accomplish much, if his attention was constantly turned off from his appropriate

"To fully support one's self and to preach, too, meant that one had to labor night and day. That would be no easier for Paul than for us to do" (Willis, p. 290).

Regarding the work of a minister, and considering this context, the following comments were made:

"No minister, Paul in particular, can do his best in presenting the gospel if he has to give too much time to the task of making a living, or, as it often happens, to living on what he makes. On the other hand, no man should enter the ministry as a means of gaining a livelihood. When churches awake to their opportunities and privileges, the minister and the missionary will be more adequately supported"(Applebury, p. 164).

business to engage in something else. And how can the minister of the gospel, if his time is nearly all taken up in laboring to provide for the wants of his family?"(Barnes, p. 159)

In some way, his taking support from the Corinthians would have hindered the work there, but he could take

support in other places, and from other places, and he did. for support from the Corinthians.
 Rather than hold back the work, he gave up his right to ask

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:13 “Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?”</p> | <p>“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?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Do you not know that those who minister the holy things eat of the things of the temple, and those who serve at the altar partake of the offerings of the altar?” (NKJV)</p> |
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MINISTER — ἰργάζομαι — *“To work, labor, do work: it is opposite to inactivity or idleness”* (Thayer, p. 247); *“To work, labor”* (Zodhiates, p. 648); *“Work, be active”* (Bauer, p. 307).

PARTAKERS — συμμερίζω — *“To divide at the same time, divide together; to assign a portion...to divide together with one (so that a part comes to me, a part to him)”* (Thayer, p. 596); *“To share with another. In the NT, only in the middle, to divide or share with someone”* (Zodhiates, p. 1327); *“Share with someone or something”* (Bauer, p. 778).

Paul now turns to another example of the right of those who work (“minister” – see above) regarding holy things. No one, neither pagan nor Israelite, would deny the right of those who worked at the tabernacle/temple the right of partaking of those things which were offered in sacrifice. This standard was accepted by all. GOD’S law in the Old Testament contains His demand for sustaining His workers (Lev. 6:16, 26; 7:31-38; Num. 18:8-20).

The word **“partakers”** (συμμερίζω) is interesting, because it means to divide between either someone or something. When the priests and workers worked at the altar, they divided the offerings between themselves and the altar. The altar consumed the offering, just as the workers consumed the offering. The division of the portions was designated by GOD, nevertheless it was divided.

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:14 “Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel.”</p> | <p>“Even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.” (NKJV)</p> |
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ORDAINED — διατάσσω — *“To arrange, appoint, ordain, prescribe, give order”* (Thayer, p. 142); *“To arrange throughout, to dispose in order as trees, troops. In the N.T. to command”* (Zodhiates, p. 443); *“Order, direct, command”* (Bauer, p. 189).

Note some other passages which lend one knowledge of the command enjoined here:

“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matt. 10:9-10).

“In the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7).

“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all

The subject under consideration in this passage is one which preachers often avoid. They do not want to be perceived as working for money, or thought of as asking for money. Since the truth of the above passages has not been taught the way it ought to be, many preachers have been forced into poverty, or into a position where they could not pay their debts. Some have had to give up the work of preaching to pay the bills because of stingy and

good things” (Gal. 6:6).

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward” (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

untaught brethren. Further, young people are not encouraged to preach, because many brethren realize their children will not make as much money preaching as they could doing something else.

(A side note to the above thoughts. Many people do not want to see their children become preachers, or their daughters marry preachers, because they see the way preachers are often

treated by brethren who are not willing fully to consider truth, nor accept such into their lives. They see preachers being picked at and criticized by brethren who are not interested in truth or who simply want things done their way. They do not want this for their own children. No wonder today the church suffers a shortage of faithful Gospel preachers.)

So many brethren look at the preacher as a hired man they can order around to fulfill their desires. They forget his orders come from GOD, and he is under divine command to preach what they need, for he answers to GOD for his preaching and teaching.

“I charge thee therefore before GOD, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort

with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry” (2 Tim. 4:1-5).

Paul has shown in this context and passage that the preacher has a right to expect adequate support for his labors. He has mentioned the priests of the Old Testament who were supported by the commands of GOD through the offerings made at the altar. Here he says it is **“ordained”** that preachers should live by the Gospel they preach, i.e., they should be fully supported by the congregation.

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:15 “But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.”</p> | <p>“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 glorifying void” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But I have used none of these things, nor have I written these things that it should be done so to me; for it would be better for me to die than that anyone should make my boasting void.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Beginning with this verse, Paul provides an explanation as to why he had not taken or demanded support from the Corinthians. Of the phrase, **“But I have used none of these things,”** Barnes makes this note:

“Though my right to a support is established, in common with others, both by reason, the nature of the case, the examples in the law, and the command of the Lord Jesus, yet there are reasons why I have not chosen to avail myself of this right, and why I have not urged these claims” (Barnes, p. 162).

Paul forcefully declares that his purpose in writing about the right of preachers to receive support from those among whom they work has nothing to do with himself. In fact, he tells them he has not received support from them in the past, neither will he receive it in the future. Willis correctly says,

“Though the exact rendering of the Greek might

be disputed, the thought of Paul is clear enough: Paul would rather die than to be robbed of his independence” (Willis, p. 294).

The independence of which Paul spoke is indeed desirable, but not all preachers have the abilities Paul had; in fact, most do not. With the independence Paul spoke of, the brethren cannot feel they own the preacher, and independent preachers are treated quite differently by brethren in those circumstances. When a preacher is fully supported, there are often those in a congregation who feel they have a right to dictate how long he should preach, what he should teach, et cetera, even to the point of trying to make him compromise principles and truth. Many preachers, who are supported by brethren, endure constant pressure. Preachers must not give in to such controlling brethren, but instead, do the work of an evangelist, making full proof of their ministry (2 Tim. 4:5).

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (NKJV)</p> |
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NECESSITY — • νάγκη — *“Necessity, imposed either by the external condition of things, or by the law of duty, regard to one’s advantage, custom, argument”* (Thayer, p. 312); *“Necessity, compelling force...moral necessity”* (Zodhiates, p. 146);

“Necessity, compulsion of any kind, outer or inner, brought about by the nature of things, a divine dispensation, some hoped-for advantage, custom, duty, etc” (Bauer, p. 52).

LAID — ἵπικειμαι — *“To lie upon or over, rest upon, be laid or placed upon”* (Thayer, p. 239); *“To rest upon, to be laid upon...metaphorically meaning to be laid upon, imposed upon, e.g., necessity”* (Zodhiates, p. 628); *“Be imposed, be incumbent”* (Bauer, p. 294).

No matter how willingly Paul presently preached the Gospel, he had not intended to as Saul of Tarsus. The necessity of Paul’s preaching was because of the fact the Lord had imposed this obligation upon him. It was the Lord who called him and gave him his marching orders (Acts 26:16-18). Before Paul was saved, the Lord told Ananias,

“He is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15).

The Holy Spirit directed the church in Antioch to send him on his missionary journeys (Acts 13:1ff). Since this work was imposed upon him (see definition of necessity above), he had no grounds upon which he could boast (**“glory”**). In fact, he says a woe (*“disaster”* — οὐχί), would be placed upon him if he refused to preach; presumably from the Lord Himself. This **“woe”** would be the loss of his soul for failing to obey GOD’S command. Do not forget Paul was directly commanded by the Lord to preach, and to refuse a direct command from GOD is to sin so as to lose one’s soul.

Those who preach full time today must feel the constraint to preach, a constraint which would make them miserable doing anything else.

Another compelling reason for Paul’s proclaiming the Gospel, was his former persecution of the saints. When he realized how wrong he had been, this would compel him diligently to work for the cause he had formerly tried to destroy.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting” (1 Tim. 1:15-16).

The original word for **“necessity”** in this passage speaks of a compelling force which may be either external or internal. In Paul’s case, it would seem both were involved.

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| 1 Cor. 9:17 “For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.” | “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.” (ASV) | “For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.” (NKJV) |
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DISPENSATION — οἰκονομία — *“The management of a household or of household affairs; specifically, the management, oversight, administration, of other’s property; the office of manager or overseer, stewardship”* (Thayer, p. 440); *“To be a manager of a household. The position, work, responsibility or arrangement of an administration, as of a house or of property, either one’s own or another’s”* (Zodhiates, p. 1031); *“Management of a household, direction, office”* (Bauer, p. 559); *“A dispensing”* (Earle, p. 231).

Considering the context of this passage, it seems the word **“reward”** is used in the sense of glorying or boasting. Paul seems to say if he had volunteered for the work of teaching the Gentiles, then there **might** be room for some boasting. But such was not the case — he had been commanded to do this work. He is therefore nothing more than a slave. (The word **“dispensation”** would be better translated as it is in the ASV and NKJV — *“stewardship”* (see lexicon studies above.) The slave’s responsibility is to fulfill the desires of his Master. But how does he fulfill them? Does he do so willingly or because he has no choice? Some do a job only because they have to and no more than they have to. Paul went beyond the call of duty,

suffering many privations in fulfilling his obligations because he first loved GOD. This reminds Bible students of what Paul said in Second Corinthians 8:1-5, about the Macedonians. Paul also writes:

“I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need” (Phil. 4:12).

This showed his love for and willingness to obey the commands of his Lord; he was not just going through the motions. Do some, at least subconsciously, believe in trying to do the least they think they can to get to heaven? If they do, Paul shows such inaction will not get them

there. How sad it would be on the day of judgment, to have known the truth, and be rejected because one did not

give full effort into serving one's Lord from a heart filled with love.

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:18 “What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“What is my reward then? That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my authority in the gospel.” (NKJV)</p> |
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ABUSE — καταχράομαι — *“To use much or excessively or ill. To use up, consume by use, to use fully”* (Thayer, p. 338); *“To use immoderately, abuse”* (Zodhiates, p. 848); *“This word differs little, if at all, from the simple verb use”* (Bauer, p. 420); *“To use to the full extent”* (Willis, p. 298).

The personal joy and reward Paul received was in proclaiming the Gospel to people without receiving anything from them. In doing so no one could charge him with using his rights to the fullest extent. It is right, and even a command of GOD, for preachers to receive their living from the brethren they teach (v. 14).

Yet in refusing to accept their aid there was danger to the church. Notice Paul's regret along these lines:

“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds. For what is it wherein ye were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? forgive me this wrong” (2 Cor. 12:12-13).

Interestingly, the word **“wrong”** in the above passage comes from •δικία, the definition for which follows: “A

deed violating law and justice, act of unrighteousness” (Thayer, p. 12); *“Injustice. What is not conformable with justice, what ought not to be, that which is wrong”* (Zodhiates, p. 84); *“Wrongdoing”* (Bauer, p. 17). What could later be determined to be so wrong about Paul's actions in this passage? First, Paul had just shown it was GOD'S decree for those who preached the Gospel to live by the Gospel. Brethren are not to get a *“free ride;”* they must learn to sacrifice. If brethren do not see a need to give they will not give. Budgets should challenge the brethren! Though Paul felt good about the sacrifice he was making for them, he later understood the wrong he had done in this selfless act. There is a lesson. One may think the thing presently done is right because one feels good about it; but later one may discover one's course was wrong.

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:19 “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.”</p> | <p>“For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;” (NKJV)</p> |
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FREE — ἰλεύθερος — *“Free, exempt, unrestrained, not bound by an obligation”* (Thayer, p. 204); *“Capable of movement, the free one. In the absolute sense, free, unconstrained, unfettered, independent. One who is not dependent upon another, for the most part in a social and political sense”* (Zodhiates, pp. 566-567); *“Independent, not bound”* (Bauer, p. 250).

Willis states;

“By reminding us that he is a freeman, Paul returns to the subject mentioned in v. 1 – ‘Am I not free?’ Like every other Christian, Paul was free. He had the right to eat whatever he chose to eat, he had the right to lead about a believing wife, and the right to be supported by the church.

Paul was a free man in possession of the same rights as everyone else. However, rather than insisting upon his rights as many do, Paul enslaved himself to all men in order that he might gain more than he would have gained otherwise” (Willis, pp. 298-299).

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:20 “And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law;”</p> | <p>“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;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law;” (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul, as much as it was possible, conformed to the customs and manners around him. He did not conform to their customs as a manner of compromise as many do today, but conformed to those things which were matters of opinion. Those things which were not matters of faith, which did not place him under bondage to **“the law,”** were things in which he could be involved. Neighbors often practice those things which in and of themselves are not wrong, and Christians practice the same things. Neighbors wash their automobiles, mow their grass, and wash their dishes. Will Christians stop washing their cars and dishes and quit mowing their grass because the neighbors do these things? But what if the neighbors wash the car while drinking beer? That is a different story. A Christian could wash the car in all good conscience knowing he has not violated the law of Christ, but he could not drink the beer.

Paul became like the people around him as much as possible without compromising the truth, and without becoming involved in their sins. The one purpose he had in doing so was to win more souls to Christ.

“It should be clear that Paul does not here, nor does he ever, state that he could engage in sinful things in the hope that he would win those participating in the sin. He speaks of those areas wherein he has Christian liberty, judgment and expediency that he might exercise, and he does so with the object in mind of influencing others toward truth”(Bill Jackson, p. 86).

“Nothing is ever gained by provoking opposition for the mere sake of opposition”(Barnes, p. 167), or to simply be different.

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| 1 Cor. 9:21 “To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to GOD, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law.” | “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.” (ASV) | “to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward GOD, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;” (NKJV) |
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“To them that are without law,” has reference to the Gentiles, just as the former verse spoke of the law of the Jews. Since Paul was Jewish by birth and born in a Gentile city, he could relate to both. He could, and did, join them in those things which were right, but those things which were wrong he could not do, and would not do, because such would violate the law of Christ.

These two verses (20-21) are many times used by those who talk of Christian liberty as permission to do anything they want. This is not the case at all, for Paul plainly states he lived under law. Not under the law given. If one were without any law, then he could do whatever he pleased. He would be a law unto himself and he would not have any say over what others did. The New Testament also teaches one to care for another. If there were no law by which one were to abide, then might would make right. Notice Romans 14:19,

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”

by Moses, but under law to Christ — the law of Christ. This is another passage which denotes the passing of the law, and the establishment of the new and better law.

This passage shows Paul *“would not leave room to have it supposed for a moment that he disregarded all law”*(Barnes, p. 167).

Paul also spoke of the law he lived under in Galatians 6:2, **“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”**

EDIFY — οἰκοδομή — As used in Romans 14:19, it is speaking of *“spiritual advancement”* the original word meaning *“the act of building; a building.”*(Bauer, p. 558).

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| 1 Cor. 9:22 “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” | “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.” (ASV) | “to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (NKJV) |
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WEAK — •σθενής — *“Weak, infirm, feeble”*(Thayer, p. 80); *“Without strength, powerless”*(Zodhiates, p. 274); *“Weak, powerless”*(Bauer, p. 115).

The weak man in this passage is not the natural, the unconverted man. The weak about whom he speaks can be

seen in chapter eight. It deals with the brother who has left the sinful practice of idolatry, and cannot consume the meat which had been offered to idols, because of his weak conscience. What is the example Paul gave of the weakness of which he speaks in this passage? He would act like the weak man in refusing to eat meat as well. This passage clearly deals with becoming like those who are weak, but only in areas where one can. Christians can **never** do those things which are evil in and of themselves, and then try to justify their actions by saying Paul taught such in this passage. Notice carefully the passage; Paul does not say he became weak, he says, "**became I as weak.**" All along, Paul has been speaking of giving up his rights in order to help those who are in danger of violating their consciences and entering into sin.

"He accommodated himself to the prejudices and preferences of men so far as he could without sacrificing truth and righteousness, in order to win them to Christ. In other words, he sacrificed his personal rights and personal liberty of action rather than to insist upon them when they stood in the way of winning any man, or set of men, to the Lord"(Lipscomb, p. 136). *"He accommodated*

himself to all men as much as possible through the waiving of his personal rights in order that he might reach as many as possible with the gospel" (Willis, p. 303).

IT IS NEVER RIGHT TO DO WRONG!!!! It is absolutely ridiculous to think one can join a man in his sins and win him to Christ or strengthen him in his weakness after he obeys the Gospel.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify GOD in the day of visitation....For so is the will of GOD, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (1 Pet. 2:11-12, 15).

Note: (1) A Christian can be in danger of losing his soul; (2) The effort must be made to save souls; (3) The doctrine of universal salvation cannot be true.

"If all are to be saved, why should he deny himself, and labor, and toil, to save 'some'" (Barnes, p. 168)?

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| 1 Cor. 9:23 "And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." | "And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof." (ASV) | "Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you." (NKJV) |
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Considering the context, and especially what follows, Paul is discussing the rewards of following the course of the Gospel. Self sacrifice is evident, and also evident is the fact one must sacrifice personal rights in order to gain the eternal reward. Paul states he had given up his personal

rights in order to receive the reward, and implies Christians must do the same thing when needed.

"Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth" (1 Cor. 10:24).

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| 1 Cor. 9:24 "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain." | "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? Even so run; that ye may attain." (ASV) | "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it." (NKJV) |
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Barnes (in his commentary) has a list of four major sporting events which took place among the Greeks on pages one sixty-nine and seventy of his commentary, which pages are well worth reading. The games to which Paul refers to the Isthmian games which were held just outside of Corinth.

Paul is telling Christians to look at what it takes to become a champion in human endeavors, and emulate this in the race for heaven. Those who run in physical races spend long hours in training, often giving up a great deal of social activity. They deprive themselves of certain things which in and of themselves are not wrong, all for the purpose of winning a corruptible crown. That is the way each one must prepare for heaven. One must spend long

hours **studying** and **applying** the Gospel to one's life; and this often bears a cost which one must be willing to pay in order to receive the promised crown of victory.

"The point of comparison is the effort put forth by the runner in order to win his prize as the type of effort the Christian must exert to win his incorruptible crown of life"(Willis, p. 305).

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who

for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of GOD” (Heb. 12:1-2).

“Without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to GOD must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him” (Heb. 11:6).

The Jehovah’s Witnesses state only one hundred and forty-four thousand will gain the reward of heaven, thus saying not everyone can win the crown. Paul is not saying only one can win in the Christian race to heaven. A Christian is not competing with one another for the crown, wherein only one can win. All **may** win the crown, but not all **will** win this crown.

“Whosoever will, let him take the water of life

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:25 “And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.” (NKJV)</p> |
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STRIVETH — •γωνίζομαι — *“To enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games. To contend with adversaries, fight. To contend, struggle, with difficulties and dangers...to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive, to obtain something”* (Thayer, p. 10); *“To contend for victory in the public games...It also came to mean to take pains, to wrestle in an award contest, straining every nerve to the uttermost towards the goal”* (Zodhiates, p. 78); *“Engage in a contest...to fight, struggle”* (Bauer, p. 15).

TEMPERATE — ἡγρκατεύομαι — *“To be self-controlled, continent; to exhibit self-government, conduct one’s self temperately”* (Thayer, p. 167); *“To be continent, temperate, to have self-control”* (Zodhiates, p. 500); *“Control oneself, abstain from something”* (Bauer, p. 216); *“Exercises self-control”* (Earle, p. 231).

CORRUPTIBLE — φθαρτός — *“Corruptible, perishable”* (Thayer, p. 652); *“Subject to corruption, corruptible”* (Zodhiates, p. 1442); *“Perishable, subject to decay or destruction”* (Bauer, p. 857).

“Every man that striveth.” The word **“striveth”** comes from a word which first means to *“enter a contest.”* A person cannot win a crown until he first enters the contest; this is plain common sense. The same is also true in the spiritual sense. Many do not participate in the race to heaven, and thus have no hope of gaining the promised crown — they cannot hope for victory in something in which they have not participated. Another idea involved in the definition of **“striveth”** is the contending, the struggle involved in the contest. For Christians, this recalls the temptations which must be faced and overcome. Such are not easily overcome, and great struggles of self-control are involved, just as with an athlete.

The athlete struggles for the **“mastery”** of his sport.

freely” (Rev. 22:17).

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28).

Coffman offers the following analogies and contrasts in this passage:

“Analogies are: (1) to win, a man must contend legally, being properly enrolled in the contest,...(2) discipline is required (Heb. 12:1); (3) some win; while others do not win; (4) a host of spectators views the contest (Heb. 12:1); (5) patience is necessary; (6) the winner receives the prize. The contrasts are: (1) only one may win an earthly race; all may win the heavenly; (2) the earthly reward is but a trifle; the heavenly reward is eternal life” (Coffman, p. 139-140).

To become the very best he must be temperate, i.e., he must control his appetites. These appetites not only concern themselves with the food he eats, but also pleasures which may be enjoyed. The athlete knows he must give up some things in order to compete, in order to have the opportunity to win the race. Notice, Paul points out he must be temperate in **“all things.”** Not **most** things, not **some** things; but **all things**.

Why are these athletes willing to give up so much? They are willing because they seek a crown and the prestige which goes with the crown. The word **“crown”** in this passage is not the word which signifies the crown of a ruler, but rather the crown of victory (στέφανος). Barnes relates, depending on the particular games in which they

were involved, that the crowns were made up of *“olive, pine, apple, laurel, or parsley”* (Barnes, p. 171). The day the garland was placed upon the victor’s head the wreath was probably fresh; but it did not take very long for its color to fade and the decay process to begin. Further, the prestige of his victory would last, at best, only until the next victor was crowned.

The physical crowns of this life soon lose their glory, but not the crown for which the Christian strives. Christians strive for a crown which does not decay:

“And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away” (1 Pet. 5:14).

It is called the crown of life:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him” (James 1:12; cf. Rev. 2:10).

It is referred to as a crown of righteousness:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

This is the crown for which Christians strive, one which is given by GOD, does not decay and does not lose any of its glory, nor its prestige.

If men are willing to sacrifice so much, and endure the rigors of intensive training to receive a corruptible crown, how much more should Christians willingly sacrifice to gain the incorruptible crown? The home in heaven is worth everything one might sacrifice in this life.

“For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away” (Luke 9:25)?

“Paul’s point is that if men of this world can so control themselves, and exert themselves, and all for a perishable crown, then how much more should those belonging to God exert themselves, and control themselves, to gain that heavenly and incorruptible prize – eternal life!” (Jackson, p. 89)

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| 1 Cor. 9:26 “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:” | “I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air:” (ASV) | “Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.” (NKJV) |
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UNCERTAINLY — • δῆλως — *“Uncertainly”* (Thayer, p. 11); *“Uncertainly, irresolutely, without attending to the prescribed marks or lines, without exposure to the spectators who are there to judge the race or the performance”* (Zodhiates, p. 80); *“Uncertainly...not as one who has no fixed goal”* (Bauer, p. 16).

BEATETH THE AIR — δέρω — *“To flay, skin:...to beat, thrash, smite”* (Thayer, p. 129); *“To skin, flay”* (Zodhiates, p. 406); *“Beat the air of unskilful boxers, who miss their mark”* (Bauer, p. 175).

PRESS TOWARD — διώκω — *“To run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after;...to press on”* (Thayer, p. 153); *“To follow or press hard after, to pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, to go after with the desire of obtaining”* (Zodhiates, p. 474); *“Pursue, strive for, seek after, aspire to something”* (Bauer, p. 201).

The imagery is striking in this passage. Paul has been talking about the discipline necessary in order to attain the goal of heaven. Now he speaks of the desire and determination needed to accomplish this goal.

The first illustration continues the thought of a runner in the games. Paul says, *“I am not uncertain in my efforts.”* Zodhiates shows this word refers to one who does not attend (observe) the prescribed marks or lines, and Bauer shows it is one who does not have a fixed goal. If a runner does not know the boundaries to which he must adhere, then he will be all over the track. One who runs the race knows he must stay in his lane or be disqualified. In addition, the one who runs all over the track runs inefficiently; he will be forced to go a greater distance than the one who runs straight to the finish line. Many have observed a football player who runs fifty yards to advance the ball ten yards. If one does not know where or what the goal is, how can one win the race?

The next example he uses is that of a boxer. The term **“beateth the air,”** refers to a boxer who is unskilled, and because of his lack of skill flays at his opponent in such a way the skilled boxer easily dodges his attack. The attacker only catches empty air. This verse is not referring to shadow boxing, but to an unskilled boxer (See definition of the original word above.).

Paul is saying his endeavors have not been without direction. He knows the rules, the goal, and has developed his skills so as not to waste his time. Rather he has effectively run the race and fought the battles.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all

them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

The idea of giving his best is inherent: he did not wander aimlessly in his race, he did not strike at his enemy (sin and Satan) in a haphazard manner, but with the skilled ability of a boxer who has trained and learned the required lessons.

These passages emphasize the strenuous effort needed to obtain the ultimate goal of heaven – the crown of righteousness and life.

“Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief” (Heb. 4:11).

“My beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58).

The resolute attitude of Paul should also be noticed. Paul was determined to be the servant GOD wanted him to be. There was no doubt in the mind of Paul regarding the course he had chosen to follow. Without any doubt, having prepared himself, with his eye firmly on the goal; he was determined to gain the victory. Like Paul,

“We must be resolved to win and have no thought of defeat, of failure, or of doing something better” (Lipscomb, p. 140).

One must truly, with all one’s heart, desire to reach the goal of heaven. A lack of determination to obey GOD no matter what has led to many soul’s being lost to the wiles of the devil.

“I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14).

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| <p>1 Cor. 9:27 “But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” (NKJV)</p> |
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KEEP UNDER — **ἑκπαύζω** — *“That part of the face which is under the eyes; a blow in that part of the face; a black and blue spot, a bruise; prop. to beat black and blue, to smite so as to cause bruises and livid spots...like a boxer I buffet my body, handle it roughly, discipline it by hardships”* (Thayer, p. 646); *“To strike under the eyes, beat the face black and blue, give a black eye. In the NT generally to mistreat, trans. Spoken of the body, to subject to hardship, mortify”* (Zodhiates, p. 1430); *“Strike under the eye, give a black eye to...symbolically treat roughly, torment, maltreat (of the apostle’s self-imposed discipline. But the expression is obviously taken from the language of prize-fighting”* (Bauer, p. 848); *Under, from **ὑποπιάζω**, to discipline, coerce, buffet, strike, to place under arrest; to seize”* (Littrell, p. 202).

BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION — **δουλαγωγέω** — *“To lead away into slavery, claim as one’s slave,...to make a slave and treat as a slave i.e., with severity, to subject to stern and rigid discipline”* (Thayer, p. 157); *“To bring into servitude or subjection”* (Zodhiates, p. 482); *“Enslave, bring into subjection”* (Bauer, p. 205); *The simplest translation is ‘make it my slave’* (Earle, p. 232).

CASTAWAY — **δόκιμος** — *“Not standing the test, not approved; properly of metals and coin,...which does not prove itself to be such as it ought”* (Thayer, p. 12); *“Unapproved, unworthy, spurious, worthless. In a passive sense meaning disapproved, rejected, cast away”* (Zodhiates, p. 85-86); *“Not standing the test, then unqualified, worthless, base”* (Bauer, p. 18); *“Rejected after testing”* (Earle, p. 232).

Paul is continuing the metaphor of a boxer, saying **“I keep under my body.”** The term **“keep under”** comes from **ἑκπαύζω**, which is defined above. It is the action of the boxer who blackens the eyes of his opponent, which action Paul refers to himself. He is not saying he literally stood and hit himself in the eyes, or physically abused himself by beating himself; but uses this metaphor to refer to the discipline exercised to beat down passions which might cost him his soul. Considering the text as an example, he might strongly desire meat for his meal, but knowing the damage it would cause to those who were weak, he would absolutely control these passions. Thus, this metaphor is used to show the

discipline which one must exercise to gain the crown.

Next he says he brings his body **“into subjection.”** The word **“subjection”** comes from **δουλαγωγέω**, and means to enslave using the stern discipline already alluded to in the first part of this passage. He brings his body, i.e., the desires of the body, into servitude or subjection to his will, which is primarily concerned with accomplishing the will of GOD. Paul understood the need carefully to control one’s actions in every area of life, a lesson all would do well to imitate.

Why did Paul exercise severe discipline? He did it so he would not be lost. Look at all the effort Paul had expended in trying to spread the Gospel in his numerous

mission journeys. Consider all the abuses and trials he had endured, a considerable list of which is found in Second Corinthians 11:23ff. The thought seems to be, *“When I have given all this effort and suffered all these trials, what a terrible thing it would be for the teacher to be lost.”* Consider the hypocrisy of one who taught, but then did not do what he taught. The word **“castaway”** comes from •δόκιμος, which is primarily used regarding metals (gold, silver, etc.), which did not stand up to the test of purity, and were thus discarded as being worthless. When the time of reckoning came, Paul did not want to be considered as worthless.

“He proclaimed the message of Christ in such a manner that he would not be disqualified, that is, be lost. He was careful to observe the rules of the game and to keep the goal in mind so as not to become disqualified after preaching to save others” (Applebury, p. 170).

In the light of what Paul teaches here, consider the teaching which many believe regarding the impossibility of apostasy (also known as *“perseverance of the saints”*). Paul clearly shows he, an apostle, could in the final analysis be lost; he could fall from grace if he did not exercise great care in obeying GOD.

In writing to Christians, Paul said of them, **“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace”** (Gal. 5:4).

First Corinthians — Chapter Ten

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:1 “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;”</p> | <p>“For I would not, brethren, have you ignorant, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,” (NKJV)</p> |
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IGNORANT — •γνοέω — *“To be ignorant, not to know”* (Thayer, p. 8); *“Not to recognize or know”* (Zodhiates, p. 73); *“Not to know, be ignorant”* (Bauer, p. 11).

Paul has warned apostasy is possible, even for an apostle. Now he will illustrate this possibility by reminding them of the Israelites who were led out of Egypt.

Paul says he does not want them to be ignorant, i.e., without knowledge, of this possibility and the history involved here. Many of the Corinthians were Gentiles who might not fully know the history of Israel. They needed to understand the covenant relationship which existed between Israel and GOD to understand the great blessing GOD had showered upon these people. Israel had received all of these blessings, yet refused to obey GOD and were consequently not allowed to enter the promised land; the same thing can happen to Christians regardless of the blessings they have received.

The phrase **“all our fathers”** refers to the ancestors of the Jews. Since Paul was talking to brethren, i.e., Christians; then it shows the relationship Christians have with the faithful of bygone ages. Faithful Christians are just as much the children of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, et cetera, as were their literal flesh and blood relatives.

Abraham is the father of **all** the faithful.

“And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also” (Rom. 4:11).

The church is the Israel of GOD.

“And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD” (Gal. 6:16).

The cloud spoken of is the one which shielded Israel by day, and was like a pillar of fire by night. This cloud is used to symbolize the care and blessings GOD gave to Israel as He guided them from Egypt through the desert to the promised land. Likewise the sea mentioned here is the Red Sea through which they were guided when the Egyptians threatened to destroy them. GOD then used the sea which He opened for them to destroy their enemies. Truly GOD had blessed them as His people.

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:2 “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;”</p> | <p>“and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” (NKJV)</p> |
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BAPTIZED — βαπτίζω — *“To dip repeatedly, to immerse, submerge...In the N.T. it is used particularly of the rite of sacred ablution, first instituted by John the Baptist, afterwards by Christ’s command received by Christians and adjusted to the contents and nature of their religion, viz. an immersion in water, performed as a sign of the removal of sin, and administered to those who, impelled by a desire for salvation, sought admission to the benefits of the Messiah’s kingdom”* (Thayer, p. 94); *“Immerse, submerge for a religious purpose, to overwhelm, saturate, baptize”* (Zodhiates, p. 309); *“Dip, immerse, mid. dip oneself, wash (in non-Christian literature also plunge, sink, drench, overwhelm)”* (Bauer, p. 131).

Baptism is an immersion, a submersion, an overwhelming. As the Israelites voluntarily passed through the sea, they were surrounded. They had the sea bed under their feet, walls of water to the right and left, and the cloud of GOD above them; thus they were immersed, submerged, so to speak. Notice the following analogies:

Egypt = the land of sin.

Pharaoh = Satan.

Pursuit of Israel = Attempt to stop one from leaving

“All Israelites enjoyed the blessing of being

the old life to enter a new one.

Baptism in the Red Sea = Rite of passage from one state to another; which also places one under the authority of another (Moses then, Christ today).

Wilderness wandering = Time of probation.

Crossing of Jordan = Death (separation, end of probation).

Canaan = Reward realized (heaven).

baptized unto Moses...The significance of this is

that their following the cloud and passing through the sea made them disciples of Moses. The cloud and the sea did for them, in reference to Moses, what baptism does for us in reference to Christ. It placed them under obligation to recognize his divine commission and to submit to his authority. This Israelite 'baptism' separated the Israelites from the bondage of Egypt just as Christian baptism separates one from sin and brings one under the authority of Jesus Christ" (Willis, p. 317).

If the Corinthians thought their blessings would protect them and save them from destruction, they might have viewed baptism in such a light. They may have thought baptism ensured their salvation, i.e., a kind of once saved, always saved position. If so, Paul reminds them the Israelites were baptized, yet most of them who left the land of sin (Egypt) died in the wilderness because of their disobedience. The fact that one has been baptized does not mean his entrance into heaven is an accomplished fact. There are many in the church who seem to think once they are baptized there is nothing else they need to do except attend a "few" services. What a sad place judgment day will be for these folks.

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| 1 Cor. 10:3 "And did all eat the same spiritual meat;" | "and did all eat the same spiritual food;" (ASV) | "all ate the same spiritual food," (NKJV) |
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"Meat" refers to food, and "spiritual" in this passage seems to refer to the source of their blessings. Whether one speaks of physical food, the manna, or whether one speaks of the teaching which is sometimes referred to as food, there is only one source of all true blessings — they come from GOD through His Son Jesus Christ.

The symbolism of this passage may have to do with the Lord's Supper, since the Holy Spirit will lead Paul into a discussion of such in the next chapter. But it would seem

in this immediate context, whether physical or spiritual food is intended, the real import is in the fact GOD provided for **all** of their needs. The Israelites of old were truly blessed, just as the Corinthians had been blessed, yet most of them died in the wilderness. The lesson seems to be, because you have GOD'S blessings upon you, do not think you will automatically continue to receive His blessings. This may indeed be part of the problem the Corinthians had.

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| 1 Cor. 10:4 "And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." | "and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of a spiritual rock that followed them: and the rock was Christ." (ASV) | "and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ." (NKJV) |
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This verse closely follows the thought of the previous one, in that all comes from GOD through His Son, whether it be physical or spiritual blessings.

Regarding the "Rock" spoken of in this passage, some commentators believe Paul believed the Jewish legends about the rock which gave water in the wilderness.

"The rabbis said that it was round, and rolled itself like a swarm of bees, and that, when the tabernacle was pitched, this rock came and settled in its vestibule and began to flow when the princes came to it and sang, 'Spring up, O well; sing ye unto it'" (F.W. Farrar, p. 332).

It may be true Paul thought of this legend, but it is highly

doubtful he actually believed it. If the rock had followed them in their journeys, there would not have been a need for a second miraculous outpouring of water (cf. Ex. 17; Num. 20). The Holy Spirit makes it plain the "Rock" of which He spoke was Christ.

Important evidence is found in this passage regarding the work of Christ in the Old Testament before He came to this world in the fleshly robes of a mortal man. Indeed He often appears in the Old Testament. This should not surprise us, for the GODHEAD has indeed been working together from the very beginning. It was this GODHEAD which sustained and nourished Israel of old, just as They do the New Israel — the church.

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| 1 Cor. 10:5 "But with many of them GOD was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." | "Howbeit with most of them GOD was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness." (ASV) | "But with most of them GOD was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness." (NKJV) |
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MANY — πλεῖστος — "Most" (Thayer, p. 515); "The greatest, very great, the most" (Zodhiates, p. 1167).

OVERTHROWN — καταστρώννυμι — "To strew over (the ground); to prostrate, slay, cf. our to lay low" (Thayer, p. 337);

“To spread down, or over throw. Used of persons in 1 Cor. 10:5, meaning they were scattered as corpses in the desert, were destroyed”(Zodhiates, p. 846); “Lay low, kill”(Bauer, p. 419); “To stretch or spread down as of a couch, to lay low (Euripides), as if by a hurricane”(Robertson, p. 152).

Note the word **“all”** appears in all of the first four verses of this chapter, and twice in verse one. The emphasis is, every single one of the Israelites enjoyed the same blessings from GOD. They **all** were under the cloud, they **all** passed through the sea, they **all** were baptized unto Moses, they **all** ate the same spiritual meat and **all** drank the same spiritual water. If one continues the thought, they **all** received the same promises, and they **all** had the same opportunity. Now watch the contrast: they did not all enter the promised land; and most of them were refused entrance because they sinned against GOD.

“Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against Me” (Num. 14:29).

Discounting the Levites, only two men of the original fighting force were allowed to enter the promised land: Joshua and Caleb (Deut. 1:34-38).

What happened to those who had received the grace of GOD in abundance, and who then fell from His grace? They were **“overthrown;”** literally *“scattered”* in the wilderness. As they traveled in the desert (uninhabited, lonely place), they buried an entire generation. They could have **all** entered the promised land long before they did (Num. 14), but they had to wait in the wilderness until an entire generation could be replaced by a new one.

Regarding grace, one might ask this question: *“Were Adam and Eve in the grace of GOD?”* If the doctrine *“You cannot fall from grace,”* is true, then why does not the garden of Eden still exist? Adam and Eve fell from grace and were driven from the paradise of GOD!

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| 1 Cor. 10:6 “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” | “Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” (ASV) | “Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.” (NKJV) |
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EXAMPLES — τυπικᾶς — *“By way of example (prefiguratively)”* (Thayer, p. 632); *“A type, i.e., something caused by strokes or blows...A prototype, pattern”* (Zodhiates, p. 1399); *“Typologically, as an example or warning”* (Bauer, p. 827).

LUST — ἰπιθυμητής — *“One who longs for, a craver, lover, one eager for”* (Thayer, p. 238); *“One who desires, longs, or craves for something”* (Zodhiates, p. 627); *“One who desires”* (Bauer, p. 293).

The phrase **“these things”** appears from the context to refer to all which happened with the Israelites or their history. GOD desires that one learn from the past, and this is why the Old Testament is so valuable. One should learn from the mistakes of others so as not to repeat one's sins. Likewise, one should learn from the good examples which are set before one, and copy them.

“A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels” (Prov. 1:5).

On the other hand:

“A fool despiseth his father's instruction: but he that regardeth reproof is prudent” (Prov. 15:5).

The term **“examples,”** refers to the impression which is caused by striking a blow on an object. By looking back at the actions of Israel and the reaction to them by GOD, Christians can learn valuable lessons which help him live in The word **“desired”** in this text, is the same one in the Corinthian text – **“lust.”** The term **“lust”** (*“desire”*) is used in both a good and an evil sense, and such is illustrated in

such a way as to please GOD.

“The fall of the Israelites serves as ‘examples to us,’ showing us that we can fall from grace, as they did” (Littrell, p. 204).

The context is about to give Christians a few examples as warnings of how they should not behave.

The word **“lust”** indicates a strong desire for anything. People generally think of this word only as it is used in this text, as something which is evil. But is all “strong desire” evil? Jesus said,

“many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them” (Matt. 13:17).

Galatians 5:17;

“For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary

the one to the other: so that ye cannot

do the things that ye would.”

The evil things which were strongly desired by the Israelites will be used as examples to the Corinthians (and us). The warning being, *“Do not desire the evil things they desired, lest you fall short as they fell.”*

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| 1 Cor. 10:7 “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.” | “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.” (ASV) | “And do not become idolaters as were some of them. As it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” (NKJV) |
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PLAY — παίζω — *“To play like a child; then univ. to play, sport, jest; give way to hilarity, esp. by joking, singing, dancing”*(Thayer, p. 473); *“To play or sport as a child. To play by singing, leaping, dancing, as connected with worship”* (Zodhiates, p. 1089); *“Play, amuse oneself, dance”*(Bauer, p. 604).

“And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me. And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To morrow is a feast to the LORD. And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play” (Ex. 32:1-6).

When one goes back to Exodus 32:1-6, one sees the progressive nature of their sin. First the offerings were made and then they sat down to eat of the feast provided from these sacrifices. The next step was the rising up to play. The word **“play”** is defined as *“singing,” “leaping”* and *“dancing”* in both the Hebrew and Greek. This “playing” before the idols was often of a licentious nature; and it is significant the word **“naked”** is used to describe them as they worshipped the idol (Ex. 32:25).

It is also significant they thought they were doing something right, i.e., they thought they could continue to

worship GOD by indulging in idol worship (Ex. 32:5). The Corinthians thought they could indulge in the feast of the idols of Corinth without being affected by them. They seem to think they were so strong they could withstand the danger. They needed to remember several truths:

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). *“Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals”* (ASV). *“Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits”*(NKJV).

The Corinthians thought they could be around these feasts, the worship of such and the licentiousness surrounding them, without its affecting them. But they needed to remember,

“Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats: For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee” (Prov. 23:6-7).

No one can be around such activities without thinking about these things and being influenced to become more like the participants. This is a great warning for man today.

Some seem to think their associates and some of the things in which they participate, will not affect them for evil. But the lesson here is to remember the Israelites who thought their actions would not affect their standing with GOD, but it surely did.

“Although neither the Israelites nor the Corinthians considered their conduct to be idolatrous, both were guilty of it”(Willis, p. 323).

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| 1 Cor. 10:8 “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three | “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.” | “Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;” (NKJV) |
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FORNICATION — πορνεύω — *"To prostitute one's body to the lust of another...to give one's self to unlawful sexual intercourse; to commit fornication"* (Thayer, p. 532); *"To commit fornication, to play the harlot"* (Zodhiates, p. 1202); *"To prostitute, practice prostitution or sexual immorality generally"* (Bauer, p. 693).

Paul was not dealing with something which might come upon them, or which was happening somewhere else; he was dealing with a problem among the Corinthians themselves (cf. chapter five). The original word for **"fornication"** in this passage is not the usual word πορνεία which is found elsewhere. The word in this text seems to be a little more specific, whereas πορνεία stands for sexual immorality in general (Adultery, bestiality, etc.). Here, the word used indicates the idea of playing the harlot, or prostituting one's self.

The particular event spoken of in Israelite history in this passage is found in Numbers chapter twenty-five. Balaam, at the request of Balak, had tried to curse Israel, but GOD would only allow him to bless Israel. Finally Balaam gave advice to Balak which caused the Israelites much harm. The women of Moab were used to entice the men of Israel into idolatry through prostituting themselves with them. Israel sinned and was punished with the death of twenty-three thousand in one day. The specifics here seem to be quite important. The critics of the Bible will use the events of Numbers chapter twenty-five and the present text to scream "CONTRADICTION." But is there really a contradiction, or is there a possible answer in the text in Corinthians? Paul specifically states in **one day** twenty-three thousand fell while Moses speaks in general terms of how many died in the whole event. This fits Jewish tradition which

"ascribed 1,000 deaths to the action of the judges

described in Numbers 25:5" (Donald Guthrie, p. 1064].

It might also be, since the Jews were fond of rounding off numbers, the true number may have been between the two figures stated. (This writer prefers the former explanation.)

History shows fornication was a great problem among the Corinthians during this time. Temple prostitution was rampant; as Barnes points out, in one temple alone there were a thousand prostitutes (Barnes, p. 184 — This was just one of a large number of temples in the city.)

"To Corinthianize was a term synonymous among the ancients with licentiousness" (Barnes, p. 184).

Some of the Corinthian Christians were advocating they could go to these feasts where they would be surrounded by prostitutes. The danger of this should be clearly seen as a danger of being tempted to engage in fornication. The Corinthians seem to have had the idea they could get close to sin without its having an affect upon them; they thought they were strong enough to withstand the temptations placed before them. **"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"** (1 Cor. 10:12). How many Christians today think the same way they did? The number of those who try to get as close to sin as they can without *"actually"* sinning is great! When a person purposefully places himself in a position where he is tempted, he has sinned.

1 Cor. 10:9 **"Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents."**

"Neither let us make trial of the Lord, as some of them made trial, and perished by the serpents." (ASV)

"nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;" (NKJV)

TEMPT — ἰκπειράζω — *"To prove, test, thoroughly"* (Thayer, p. 198); *"Try, prove, tempt, put to the test"* (Zodhiates, p. 551); *"Put to the test, try, tempt"* (Bauer, p. 243).

TEMPTED — πειράζω — *"To try whether a thing can be done; to attempt, endeavor...to try, make trial of, test: for the purpose of ascertaining his quality, or what he thinks, or how he will behave himself"* (Thayer, p. 498); *"To try, to prove in either a good or bad sense, tempt, test by soliciting to sin"* (Zodhiates, p. 1135); *"Try, attempt...make trial of, put to the test, to discover what kind of person someone is"* (Bauer, p. 640).

When man is tested it is for the purpose of finding out whether he will obey GOD or the devil. But when man tempts GOD, it is for the purpose of finding out if He really will keep His promises. When man tests GOD, it is sometimes with doubt as to whether GOD really means

what He says. Will GOD shed forth His grace even when man goes beyond the limits He has set for him?

Notice the definitions of the two words **"tempt"** and **"tempted"** in this passage. The second word seems to have the idea of a purposeful effort, such as, *"Let one see what*

GOD will do if one does this or that.” There is a good example of this kind of thinking from the account of the devil’s tempting Jesus. He attempted to get Jesus to try the goodness of GOD, particularly His saving ability.

“Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of GOD, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy GOD” (Matt. 4:5-7).

First Satan questioned the deity of Jesus and then challenged Him to prove His deity with a simple test. He even quoted scripture to show GOD had promised to protect His Son (Psalm 91:11-12). The danger from which GOD promised to keep His Son was the harm brought about by His enemies. GOD did not promise to keep him from self inflicted harm contrary to the laws of nature or His express will. If Jesus had jumped off the temple, He would have been testing GOD to see if He would protect Him even if He did something wrong. Again, it is pointed out, many try to push their desires to the very limit, somehow believing GOD will not punish them.

These are the same kinds of people of whom Peter spoke: **“Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of GOD the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished” (2 Pet. 3:3-6).**

In tempting Deity one finds an attitude of daring GOD to do something. One should never forget there is a limit to the longsuffering of GOD.

The example Paul gives here is found in Numbers 21:4-9;

“They journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way. And the people spake against GOD, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

What was their sin? They complained about the provisions GOD gave them, and even went so far as to accuse GOD of planning their murder all along. Truly they tried His patience over and over in the wilderness until He said, *“Enough is enough,”* and brought their overdue punishment upon them.

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:10 “Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer.”</p> | <p>“Neither murmur ye, as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.” (NKJV)</p> |
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MURMUR — γογγύζω — *“To murmur, mutter, grumble, say anything in a low tone...of those who discontentedly complain”* (Thayer, p. 120); *“A onomatopoeic word derived from the sound made when murmuring or muttering in a low and indistinct voice with the idea of complaint. To murmur, mutter”* (Zodhiates, p. 379); *“Grumble, murmur as a sign of displeasure...speak secretly, whisper”* (Bauer, p. 164).

“And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would GOD that

we had died in the land of Egypt! or would GOD we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not

better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt” (Num. 14:1-4).

The context is GOD’S command for them to take the land of Canaan; but after seeing the giants in the land, they cried they could not keep GOD’S command. They whined and complained against GOD, accusing Him of bringing them out to this deserted land so they could be killed with the sword of these heathen peoples. The very thing they feared the Anakims would do is now imposed upon them by GOD Himself (minus the sword).

“Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked Me see it” (Num. 14:22-23).

Consider also, they not only murmured against GOD, they also murmured against His faithful servants. Can His faithful servants expect anything less today, or in any generation?

Murmuring is a sin of attitude; an attitude which constantly complains, whines, and objects to everything. As Coffman points out, and any preacher can attest to, murmurers are found in every congregation of the Lord’s people. Why do people murmur? They do so because they are dissatisfied with the way things are, and like Korah of old (Num. 16), think they should be in charge. Murmuring

shows a discontented and rebellious spirit.

“Do all things without murmurings and disputings” (Phil. 2:14). This passage is interesting when we understand the word **“disputings”** is from διαλογισμός, *“The thinking of a man deliberating with himself...A thought, inward reasoning...a deliberating, questioning, about what is true...when in reference to what ought to be done, hesitation, doubting”*(Thayer, p. 139); *“Thoughts and directions...in the sense of dispute, debate, contention”* (Zodhiates, p. 434); *“Thought, opinion, reasoning, design...doubt, dispute, argument”*(Bauer, p. 186).

It deals with what GOD has commanded, and shows one should not even question what He tells one to do — **JUST DO IT!**

Jackson observes, *“Murmuring denotes a spirit of discontent, a bad-mouthing, a griping and a grumbling. It, basically, reveals a lack of faith, since the murmuring does not solve any difficulties, but is substituted for the faithful action that would solve problems. An unhappy, murmuring spirit will create some problems, imagining some of them, and will add to any existing problems...Murmuring solves nothing”* (Jackson, p. 96).

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:11 “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.” (NKJV)</p> |
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ADMONITION — νουθεσία — *“Admonition, exhortation”*(Thayer, p. 429); *“Admonition, warning, exhortation...any word of encouragement or reproof which leads to correct behavior...there is the appeal to the conscience, will, and reasoning faculties”*(Zodhiates, p. 1017); *“Admonition, instruction, warning”*(Bauer, p. 544); *“To correct the mind, to put right what is wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude”*(Willis, p. 329).

The first part of the above verse is a repetition of the thought of verse six, reminding that these events are types.

One is to learn from such events the general governing principles of GOD’S dealings with mankind: He rewards those who are faithful to him, and punishes those who rebel

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” (Rom. 15:4).

“This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created

against Him. Thus, the events were recorded to warn succeeding generations; to teach them and exhort them to faithfulness (cf. above definition of **“admonition”**).

shall praise the LORD” (Psalm 102:18).

“Upon whom the ends of the world are come.” The word **“world”** in this passage is the word **αἰών**, which is more properly translated in the ASV and NKJV as *“ages.”* It should be observed *“ages”* is in the plural, which implies there were several ages, but in this context, shows one this

is the last of these ages. This phrase corresponds well with the passages which speak of this dispensation of time, since Pentecost, as being the *“last days”* of prophecy.

“This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days” (Acts 2:16-17).

“GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by

the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the worlds” (Heb. 1:1-2).

Considering this, what then should one make of the doctrine which espouses there is yet another age when Christ will come to this earth and institute an earthly kingdom? Obviously, in this passage, Paul shows such a doctrine to be false.

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| 1 Cor. 10:12 “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” | “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” (ASV) | “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” (NKJV) |
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STANDETH — ἑστημι — *“To stand, i.e., continue safe and sound, stand unharmed”* (Thayer, p. 307-308); *“To stand...as opposed to falling”* (Zodhiates, p. 785); *“Stand firm”* (Bauer, p. 382).

FALL — πίπτω — *“To fall from a state of uprightness, i.e., to sin”* (Thayer, p. 511); *“Used in an absolute sense, to fall into sin, transgress, to sin”* (Zodhiates, p. 1160); *“Fall in the religious or moral sense, be completely ruined”* (Bauer, p. 660).

This verse is a warning for Christians not to think they are so strong they cannot fall from grace. Some of the Corinthians apparently felt they were strong enough to eat the meats in the temples of these idols without sinning — they were sadly mistaken. The truth is, when a person thinks he is so strong he can place himself in a situation of temptation and not sin, he has already sinned. A good New Testament example of this is Peter. In Luke 22:33, he forcefully declared,

“Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death.”

In Matthew 26:33, he stated,

“Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.”

Peter was extremely confident he would not abandon the Lord, and therein he had already lost the battle, for the Lord told him,

“I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me” (Luke 22:34).

When one thinks he is strong he is actually weak; but when one considers himself as weak and sinful, one who

needs to rely upon GOD for strength, then he is stronger than he thinks. Paul stated this principle, saying,

“I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Cor. 12:10).

“Though He was crucified through weakness, yet He liveth by the power of GOD. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of GOD toward you” (2 Cor. 13:4).

Man must learn to rely totally upon GOD for the strength he needs to overcome this world. With Jeremiah one must learn to say,

“I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps” (Jer. 10:23).

Only then can Christians say,

“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13).

Christians must ask the question based on this context, is it possible some of these Corinthian Christians believed they **could not fall**?

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| 1 Cor. 10:13 “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but GOD is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” | “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 will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it.” (ASV) | “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but GOD is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation |
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TEMPTATION — πειρασμός — *“An experiment, attempt, trial, proving...spec. The trial of man’s fidelity, integrity, virtue, constancy, etc.: also an enticement to sin, temptation, whether arising from the desires or from outward circumstances”* (Thayer, p. 498); *“Trial, temptation, a putting to the test, spoken of persons only. When God is the agent, peirasmos is for the purpose of proving someone, never for the purpose of causing him to fall. If it is the devil who tempts, then it is for the purpose of causing one to fall”* (Zodhiates, p. 1135); *“Test, trial...temptation, enticement to sin”* (Bauer, p. 640).

SUFFER — ἵάω — *“To allow, permit”* (Thayer, p. 163); *“To permit, to let be”* (Zodhiates, p. 494); *“Let, permit”* (Bauer, p. 212).

ESCAPE — ἔκβασις — *“An egress, way out”* (Thayer, p. 193); *“A going out, spoken of a way to escape”* (Zodhiates, p. 536); *“A way out, end”* (Bauer, p. 237); *“(Way of escape) is ‘a way out of a defile,’ ‘a mountain pass”* (Willis, p. 332); *“The way out”* (Earle, p. 232).

TO BEAR IT — ὑποφέρω — *“To bear by being under, bear up (a thing placed on one’s shoulders); trop. To bear patiently, to endure”* (Thayer, p. 645); *“To underpin, bear up from underneath, support, sustain”* (Zodhiates, p. 1430); *“Bear (up under), submit to, endure”* (Bauer, p. 848).

Every man has weaknesses, therefore every man will be tempted to do what is contrary to the will of GOD, i.e., to sin against the GOD of heaven. No one is exempt from these temptations, especially Christians. But where do the temptations originate? Who is their author? The Holy Spirit, through James, gives one great insight regarding the source of temptation:

“Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of GOD: for GOD cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:12-15; cf. Gen. 3).

Temptation, i.e., the solicitation to sin, does not come from GOD. He **never** tries to get one to do what is wrong.

When the solicitation to sin comes and one sins, it is because one’s own desires were for the thing which is wrong, and one did not fight the desire as he should. When one looks at the book of Job, one quickly sees Satan is the one who attempts to get one to violate GOD’s will. Satan

“The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations” (2 Pet. 2:9). Notice, it is the godly person the Lord delivers from temptations.

“The Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil” (2 Thess. 3:3). Whom will the Lord keep from evil? Is it the one who makes no effort to avoid sin, or the one who constantly strives to obey Him?

“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the

did everything he could to get Job to renounce GOD; and he will do all he is allowed to try to destroy Christians.

Paul says these solicitations to sin come upon all men, but notice the words of encouragement then offered to us. First he says, **“GOD is faithful.”** Because GOD is faithful in all His dealings, Christians have an assurance they can defeat Satan; an assurance they can overcome the invitations they receive to sin.

“Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” This passage does not teach GOD will not allow one to fall. GOD will only provide for those who help themselves. There is no protection for a temptation to which one purposely exposes himself. GOD allows one to be solicited, but at the same time He controls the extent of the trial one may face. Job is a good example of this. When Satan desired to test (tempt) Job, GOD put limitations upon what Satan could do. Christians have the assurance in this passage that GOD is in control. However, people should not become complacent, thinking they can just drift through life and GOD will protect them. When man relies upon GOD for strength, and is willing to do whatever is necessary to avoid sin, then these temptations can be defeated.

“flesh is weak” (Matt. 26:41). Indeed, the Lord shows one has to watch and pray to avoid temptations. Man has a part in this matter. If man refuses to do his part, then he has no protection.

“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Heb. 13:5). In context, He never leaves those who faithfully try to follow Him.

“Will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” This passage teaches one there is no excuse which will justify one’s

giving in to sin.

There is no excuse for unfaithfulness to GOD. GOD provides this way of escape through knowledge and application of His word. Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted (Matt. 4:1-10). Satan appealed to the **“lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life”** (1 John 2:16), to try to get Jesus to sin; the same avenues he uses against man today. How did the man Jesus escape the temptations offered by Satan? In each case He appealed to the Scriptures — **“It is written”** (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10); then He refused to do what Satan wanted Him to do. Notice the powerful combination here: *“GOD said, and I will not violate what GOD said.”* Notice the example of Joseph in Egypt. Joseph knew GOD condemned adultery and was determined to obey GOD; he was determined not to **“sin against GOD”** (Gen. 39:9). GOD provided the guidance Joseph needed and Joseph did his part in refusing the temptations Potiphar’s wife placed before him. Further, when she tried to force the issue, he took the next step in **running** from her. Was Joseph afraid of Mrs. Potiphar? No, he was afraid of sinning; so instead of flirting with sin, he got as far away from the temptation as he could. The illustration of Joseph fits well with the next verse in this context.

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| 1 Cor. 10:14 “Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry.” | “Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” (ASV) | “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.” (NKJV) |
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FLEE — φεύγω — *“To flee away, seek safety by flight”* (Thayer, p. 651); *“To escape, flee from...With apo, from, with an acc. Following, to flee from sin, to avoid it earnestly”* (Zodhiates, p. 1440); *“Flee from, avoid, shun”* (Bauer, p. 855).

This verse shows one that all which had been said in this context points back to the Corinthians thinking they were able to go to these feasts without affecting their faithfulness to GOD. Paul shows in this context, going to these feasts is to be guilty of idolatry! Christians need to learn there are some things from which they need to completely stay away. In our modern times, the equivalent of what Paul tells the Corinthians not to do, would be attending denominational worship services, their VBS, meetings, et cetera. It has been observed by this writer that those who attend denominational affairs of any kind, are

the ones who think they are too strong to be affected (cf. v. 12), and who are generally those who really do not take stands where they ought.

Paul says **“flee,”** *“Seek safety by flight”* (Thayer, p. 651), *“avoid it earnestly”* (Zodhiates, p. 1440), *“avoid, shun”* (Bauer, p. 855). Christians are not to have **anything** to do with false worship (whether it be the denominational world, or brethren who have sold out).

“Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:21).

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| 1 Cor. 10:15 “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.” | “I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say.” (ASV) | “I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.” (NKJV) |
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WISE — φρόνιμος — *“Intelligent, wise”* (Thayer, p. 658); *“Prudent, sensible, practically wise in relationships with others”* (Zodhiates, p. 1455); *“Sensible, thoughtful, prudent, wise”* (Bauer, p. 866).

JUDGE — κρίνω — *“To separate, put asunder; to pick out, select, choose”* (Thayer, p. 360); *“To separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good. In the NT, it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case”* (Zodhiates, p. 888); *“Separate, distinguish, then select, prefer...judge, think, consider, look upon...reach a decision, decide, propose, intend”* (Bauer, p. 451).

Paul believes the Corinthians are intelligent enough to understand what he has said, and primarily, what he is

about to say. They can understand and apply the illustrations he offers them.

Too many people like to flirt with sin. They will get

just as close to the line as possible, thus making it much easier for Satan to pull them over the line into sin and separation from GOD. Paul says, *“Get away from it, shun idolatry, get to a safe place.”*

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:16 “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”</p> | <p>“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?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” (NKJV)</p> |
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COMMUNION — κοινωνία — *“Fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse;...the share which one has in anything, participation”* (Thayer, p. 352); *“Fellowship with, participation”* (Zodhiates, p. 873); *“Association, communion, fellowship, close relationship”* (Bauer, p. 438); *“A partaker, sharer”* (Earle, p. 233).

The cup is the fruit of the vine of the Lord's table, and the bread is the bread of the table. The word **“blessing,”** (εὐλογία)

“basically means ‘to speak well.’ However, it is modified by Jewish influence to mean ‘to call down God’s gracious power upon’ by which the object is consecrated for particular usage” (Willis, p. 336).

The verse deals then with an act of consecration, and might be interpreted *“The cup of consecration for which we ask blessings...”*

The point is, when one partakes of these items in the Lord's Supper he has fellowship (communion; see definition above) with others and with the Lord. The meaning should not have escaped the Corinthians. When they went to the temples of false gods and partook of their

feasts, they were indeed showing *“fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation, intercourse”* (Thayer, IBID) with the idols; just as a Christian has fellowship with Christ when he partakes of the emblems on the table.

The fruit of the vine calls to the Christian's mind the blood which Christ shed for mankind so they may receive forgiveness of sins through His sacrifice. The bread represents, or calls to mind, His body which hung upon the cross.

Some have questioned the order of these items in this passage, but a simple explanation exists since Paul was about to spend more time discussing the bread than the fruit of the vine. Thus, he mentioned the fruit of the vine first in order to concentrate more on the bread.

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:17 “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.”</p> | <p>“seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body: for we all partake of the one bread.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For we, though many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Each individual who shares in partaking of the bread at the Lord's table is united in fellowship with Him, and with each other. The conditions for this to be true are (1) one must be a Christian, and (2) one is not partaking in an unworthy manner. Paul is striving to get them to see the unity of the body, made up of many individuals, because they partake of the same sacrifice through the bread. They should then be able to see their unity with the false gods when they ate at the feasts of these gods.

This is not an indication there should be only one loaf

at the Lord's table. The bread is **one**, because it represents the **same** body.

Considering the Greek, Willis states, *“A better construction is to understand the phrase **hoti heis artos** to be the dependent clause of **hen soma hoi polloi esmen** with this resulting translation: *‘We, the many, are one body, since there is one bread’*” (Willis, p. 338).*

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:18 “Behold Israel after the flesh: are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?”</p> | <p>“Behold Israel after the flesh: have not they that eat the sacrifices communion with the altar?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?” (NKJV)</p> |
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PARTAKERS — μετέχω — *“To be or become partaker; to partake”* (Thayer, p. 406); *“To have together with others, to*

partake of, share in”(Zodhiates, p. 973); *“Share, have a share, participate w. gen. of the thing in or of something”*(Bauer, p. 514).

When Paul speaks of fleshly Israel, he makes a distinction between those physically born of the seed of Abraham, and the spiritually born Israel which is the church. All Christians are the true, the spiritual, Israel today.

“In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of GOD” (Gal. 6:15-16).

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

In order to reinforce his argument, Paul calls upon them to look back at the sacrifices the Israelites made at their altar. When a Jew brought his sacrifice to the altar, the entire sacrifice was prepared, but only certain parts of it were offered on the altar. The rest of it was eaten by the priests, and the one who made the offering. The sacrifice was shared by the Lord, the priests, and the one making the offering (cf. Lev. 7:15-19; 8:31; Deut. 12:18). They all had fellowship in this matter simply from the eating of the

things offered on the altar which belonged to GOD. Paul’s argument, as seen in this text, is the simple act of eating made them a partaker of the sacrifice to GOD, regardless of their intent.

“The question is not as to the intention of the actor, but as to the import of the act, and as to the interpretation universally put upon it”(Lipscomb, p. 155).

“Paul thus removed the evaluation of idol worship altogether from the consideration of any ‘intention’ in the heart of the worshiper, the act itself being universally understood as worship either of God or of idols”(Coffman, p. 158).

The Corinthians had argued they were not worshipping these idols, they were simply eating a feast at the temple. Paul says they were guilty of false worship even though it was not their intent. When they ate sacrifices which had been offered to idols in the very temple of the idol, they became **“partakers”** of that worship.

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| 1 Cor. 10:20 “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to GOD: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to GOD, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons.” (NKJV) |
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DEVILS — δαιμόνιον — *“A spirit, a being inferior to God, superior to men”*(Thayer, p. 123); *“Generally, a god, deity, spoken of the heathen gods (Acts 17:18); used with the Jewish meaning of a demon, an evil spirit, devil, subject to Satan (Matt. 9:34), implying him to be a fallen angel...lurked in the idols of the heathen...(1 Cor. 10:20)”*(Zodhiates, p. 392); *“Demon, evil spirit, of independent beings who occupy a position somewhere between the human and the divine”*(Bauer, p. 169).

Since an idol is, in reality, nothing, how is it that sacrifices to them are sacrifices to demons (evil spirits)? The answer is in the fact one either serves GOD or serves the devil. Idolatry is simply a tool of Satan to draw men away from true worship to GOD.

“No Christian would intentionally offer worship to or become a partner of demons. The fact that the act was done unintentionally does not altar the nature of what was done. Some today want to charge that sin is an attitude of heart; hence, one cannot mistakenly sin so as to be eternally lost. Yet, in this passage, Paul asserts that one can unintentionally become a partner with evil spirits

Paul had just shown that to partake of the altar under the Jewish dispensation showed one to be in fellowship with GOD to whom the altar belonged. Likewise, one who partook of the Lord’s Table was exhibiting fellowship with Christ who instituted it.

and unintentionally worship Satan. One can sin against God unintentionally and be held personally accountable for it”(Willis, p. 341).

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| 1 Cor. 10:21 “Ye cannot drink the | “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, | “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord |
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| cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils." | and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons." (ASV) | and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons." (NKJV) |
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Paul is showing it is a moral impossibility to serve both the Lord and demons. An excellent commentary on this passage is Matthew 6:24.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve GOD and mammon."

"Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for He is an holy GOD; He is a jealous GOD; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake the LORD, and serve strange gods, then He will

turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that He hath done you good" (Joshua 24:19-20).

"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with GOD? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of GOD" (James 4:4).

Paul clearly shows it is a moral impossibility for one to be a part of two religious organizations at the same time. One either serves GOD or he serves Satan!

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| 1 Cor. 10:22 "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" | "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than He?" (ASV) | "Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?" (NKJV) |
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"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy GOD am a jealous GOD, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me" (Ex. 20:4-5).

"They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not GOD; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities" (Deut. 32:21).

Barnes paraphrases verse twenty-two here, saying: *"Shall we, by joining in the worship of idols, provoke or irritate God, or excite Him to anger"* (Barnes, p. 193)?

Willis paraphrases the first part of this passage; *"Is it your goal to provoke the Lord to jealousy*

by turning aside to idols" (Willis, p. 342)?

The scriptures show Christians are married to Christ; they are His bride (Eph. 5:22-33); and the Old Testament frequently used the same illustration, Israel being the bride of GOD (cf. Hosea). This seems to be the imagery which is drawn upon to illustrate for the Corinthians how their fellowship with demons is evil, through the feasts they attended. The picture is of an unfaithful wife who provokes her husband to jealousy by her faithlessness.

Paul next asks the question, **"Are we stronger than He?"** Is any man stronger than GOD, so as to think he can withstand Him when one provokes Him? When He becomes angry enough to punish man, does one think he can overcome GOD?

"Neither may he contend with him that is mightier than he" (Eccl. 6:10).

"Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker" (Isaiah 45:9)!

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| 1 Cor. 10:23 "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not." | "All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify." (ASV) | "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify." (NKJV) |
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EXPEDIENT — συμφέρω — *"With reference to the object, to bring together:...with a reference to the subject, to bear together or at the same time; to carry with others; to collect or contribute in order to help, hence to help, be profitable, be expedient"* (Thayer, p. 597); *"To bring together in one place; used in an absolute sense or with a dat. following, to be profitable, advantageous, to contribute or bring together for the benefit of another"* (Zodhiates, p. 1330); *"Bring together t*

something...help, confer a benefit, be advantageous or profitable or useful” (Bauer, p. 780).

EDIFY — οἰκοδομέω — “To build a house, erect a building” (Thayer, p. 439); “Building a house, builder. To build, construct, erect...Metaphorically, to build up, establish, confirm” (Zodhiates, p. 1030); “Build, erect” (Bauer, p. 558); “To instruct and improve esp. in moral and religious knowledge: ENLIGHTEN” (Webster, p. 263).

Consider the comments on 6:12. As in 6:12, this passage would condone only those things which are morally indifferent. If something is morally wrong, it is always morally wrong. It is never right to lie, steal, et cetera!

Paul is saying, “It may be lawful for me to do some particular thing, but it might not be for the best interest of those who are around me.” For a thing to be expedient means that thing is “profitable.” Even if there is nothing wrong with a thing, if it does not benefit anyone it is not expedient. In religious matters, what does not benefit one should not be done. One’s actions must not be judged with only a view to what one **can** do; but viewing them as to whether they benefit or harm others.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others” (Phil. 2:3-4).

The primary object in Paul’s life ought to be the prime object of a Christian’s life. Paul’s chief objective was to build up the church (edify) and thus glorify GOD. Therefore, if an action does not edify (build up) the church

(the brethren), do not do it.

“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another” (Rom. 14:19).

In studying this text, one should always remember that Paul’s ultimate goal was the same as the Lord’s — to save souls.

“The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

Since the saving of souls is primary, though a thing in and of itself may not be morally wrong, Paul would not do it if it caused his brother to stumble. This does not mean he would not proclaim the truth because doing so would hurt another’s feelings. That would be the opposite extreme, and would be wrong. Paul’s goal is to save souls, and the only way to accomplish this is to proclaim the whole counsel of GOD (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Let the seed of GOD’S word fall on all the different soils, and GOD will give the increase in the **honest hearts** (Luke 8:3-15). Jesus taught the people and it did not matter who was in the audience; those with the honest hearts followed Him, those with dishonest hearts tried to destroy Him.

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| 1 Cor. 10:24 “Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth.” | “Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good.” (ASV) | “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.” (NKJV) |
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The word **“wealth”** is not in the original text, yet the meaning comes through loud and clear.

This passage speaks of enhancing the spiritual well being of others and that Christians have a responsibility to edify the brethren. Paul’s words should help Christians realize that they cannot selfishly do whatever they want to do. Jesus taught that one must deny self in order to be His disciple; Paul is echoing those sentiments here.

“Spiritual good is unlike material good, the more we seek the good of others, the more we promote our own” (Lipscomb, p. 158).

This does not mean one should not take care of himself or his family. One must take care of one’s spiritual needs, but in doing so one must not cause someone else to stumble through neglect of his needs. First Timothy 5:8 says:

“if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”

“If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23).

If one looks only to one’s own spiritual welfare, while ignoring the spiritual welfare of those around him, then that one is selfish.

First Timothy 5:8 deals with providing the physical necessities of life for those one loves. But look carefully at the principle behind this passage. To be worse than an infidel is not to provide the physical things necessary for life (1 Tim. 5:1-6). Also one is to provide spiritual necessities.

“Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).

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| 1 Cor. 10:25 “Whatsoever is sold in | “Whatsoever is sold in the shambles, | “Eat whatever is sold in the meat |
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| the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake:" | eat, asking no question for conscience' sake," (ASV) | market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;" (NKJV) |
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SHAMBLES — μάκελλον — *A place where meat and other articles of food are sold, meat-market, provision-market* (Thayer, p. 386); *"A market place for meat, fish, and all manner of provisions. A butcher's row where all kinds of provisions were displayed for sale"* (Zodhiates, p. 938); *"Meat market, food market"* (Bauer, p. 487).

The **"shambles"** refers to the public market.

When sacrifices were made to idols, sometimes the meat was taken to the public market and sold. Since Paul had shown them they should not partake in the feasts of the idols (v. 21), there were some who apparently were concerned about the meat sold in the market. There was the chance it had been offered to idols, so what should they do about it?

Paul's answer seems to indicate they should not make investigations into the origin of the meats they bought. If they did it could needlessly trouble their conscience: *"Do not ask questions; eat it."* When it came to meat sold **indiscriminately** in the market place, they were not to go overboard by refusing to buy it because it **might** have been offered to an idol.

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| 1 Cor. 10:26 "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." | "for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (ASV) | "for the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." (NKJV) |
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"The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalm 24:1).

All things in this earth belong to GOD no matter how inappropriately many may use them, or attribute them to another source. Since all GOD made was **"very good"** (Gen. 1:31), then all was proper for human consumption. Since these meats were made to benefit man, and since they really could not belong to an idol, it was proper for them to be consumed for the nourishment of the body. The nature of the meat had not been changed, even when it was offered to idols, it was still simply meat.

when its nature is changed into an alcoholic beverage, it is no longer fit for human consumption, and to partake of it would be sinful. That which is in its natural form, as GOD created it, may be legitimately used by man for food.

"For every creature of GOD is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of GOD and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5).

An example of what GOD made which was good, but then altered by man into something evil, would be the grape. From the grape, pure juice is obtained, which is perfectly acceptable for use in nourishing the body. But

One might wonder, then, about the laws regarding food under the Mosaic dispensation. Indeed GOD set restrictions regarding what they could eat, and called those foods, which were forbidden, unclean. But why were they considered unclean? As Zerr rightly states the case, it *"was for the purpose of ceremonial training and not because of any literal unfitness in them"* (Zerr, p. 23).

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| 1 Cor. 10:27 "If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake." | "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." (ASV) | "If any of those who do not believe invites you to dinner, and you desire to go, eat whatever is set before you, asking no question for conscience' sake." (NKJV) |
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The previous verse (26) seems to have dealt with the home of the Christian; now a social gathering held by one who is not a Christian is discussed. If a friend, or an acquaintance, invites one to a meal, and one is inclined to

go, then eat what is set before one without question. But there is an exception to the eating of meat in the home of a friend, as seen in the next verse.

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| 1 Cor. 10:28 "But if any man say unto you, This is offered in sacrifice unto idols, eat not for his sake that showed it, and for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the | "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:" (ASV) | "But if anyone says to you, This was offered to idols, do not eat it for the sake of the one who told you, and for conscience' sake; for the earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness." (NKJV) |
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| fulness thereof:" | | |
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The man spoken of in the beginning of this verse, is probably a fellow guest; whether Christian or non-Christian, would be hard to discern. It could also refer to the host. Whomever this person was has no bearing on the lesson taught. The possibility exists it was more than just the brethren who would point this out. The verse says, "**if any man say unto you**" (Emphasis mine, RK). The one who served the idol might be proud of the fact that the meat he offered at his banquet came from the altar of the idol he served. The idolater might also tell the Christian

where this meat came from in order to test the Christian, or gain his approval.

If this person, whoever it might be, should specifically point out these meats had been offered to idols, **do not** eat them **because of their conscience**. One should never weaken or cause a brother, or anyone else, to stumble over a **non-essential** or **non-doctrinal** matter. (All doctrinal matters must be attended to no matter who or how many might stumble at them.)

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| 1 Cor. 10:29 " Conscience, I say, not thine own, but of the other: for why is my liberty judged of another man's conscience? " | "conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience?" (ASV) | "Conscience, I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?" (NKJV) |
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Why should one not eat the meat offered in such cases? One does not eat because of the conscience of another.

The phrase, "**For why is my liberty...**," perhaps carries the following idea:

"I am free; I have liberty to partake of that food, if I please; there is no law against it, and it is not morally wrong: but if I do, when it is pointed out to me as having been sacrificed to idols, my liberty - the right which I exercise - will be misconstrued, misjudged, condemned (for so the word κρινεται seems to be used here) by others" (Barnes, p. 197).

Why would any Christian intentionally hurt the conscience of another human being? This is obviously the

case of either a non-Christian looking to see what action the Christian would take; or the remark of a Christian who believed eating such would cause one to be a partaker of idolatry. Why would one allow the former to think he endorsed his idolatry? What about a modern day application of this? Will one let his children go, or go ourselves, to a denominational VBS, meeting, et cetera; thus, sending a message their actions are approved and that there is no difference between them and the Lord's church?

What about in the work place where dirty jokes are told? Does a Christian enjoy such jokes or does he let the joke-teller know that he does not approve of such and that these things are offensive to the Christian? Or is **nothing** done because one is afraid of hurting the other's feelings instead of standing for the right of the Lord's way?

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| 1 Cor. 10:30 " For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? " | "If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?" (ASV) | "But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?" (NKJV) |
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GRACE — χάρις — "*Thanks (for benefits, services, favors); properly: χάριτι, with thanksgiving*" (Thayer, p. 666); "*Gratitude, thanks*" (Zodhiates, p. 1471; Bauer, p. 878).

The term "**grace**" in the KJV would more accurately be translated, as shown in the Greek study above, as "*thanks*" or "*thanksgiving*." If Paul participated in eating meat which he recognized came from GOD's blessings upon man, and in turn he gave thanks to GOD for it; then why should he be spoken evil of for doing such? The implication is he would be spoken against by some.

As Willis correctly states,

"Why should the strong Christian go ahead and

exercise his liberties when the only thing which would come from it would be that others would speak evil of him for eating the meats sacrificed to idols? Because no good would come from it, i.e., no one would be edified (v. 23), the strong Christian should not eat the meats sacrificed to idols" (Willis, p. 350). As Willis also points out, "*The freedom to eat meats sacrificed to idols is also a freedom not to eat them*" (IBID).

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| 1 Cor. 10:31 " Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, | "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory | "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory |
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| do all to the glory of GOD." | of GOD." (ASV) | of GOD." (NKJV) |
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GLORY — δόξα — *“Opinion, estimate, whether good or bad, concerning some one; but in prof. writ. generally, in the sacred writ. Always, good opinion concerning one, and resulting from that, praise, honor, glory”*(Thayer, p. 155); *“A look at the root word of doxa, i.e., dokeo, to think or suppose, is necessary. Etymologically, the word primarily means thought or opinion, especially favorable human opinion, and thus in a secondary sense reputation, praise, honor (true and false), splendor, light, perfection, rewards (temporal and eternal)...In the NT, spoken also of that which excites admiration or to which honor is ascribed”*(Zodhiates, p. 478); *“Fame, renown, honor”*(Bauer, p. 203).

Here is the great principle by which Christians are to govern their lives. Everything done should be to bring honor (**“glory”**) to GOD. All one does should be done for the purpose of causing all, Christian and non-Christian, to give honor to GOD. This was indeed the great principle which governed the life of Jesus. He said, **“The Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him”** (John 8:29). Jesus is the ultimate example in all things (1 Pet. 2:21); and Christians must follow His example of doing only

those things which please the Father.
“If in so small matters as eating and drinking we should seek to honor God, assuredly we should in all other things”(Barnes, p. 198).
 It would not bring honor to GOD in this case, or any other, selfishly to follow one’s own desires to the end his actions caused another to stumble. One must carefully consider his actions in every area of life so as not to hinder the work of the Lord.

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| 1 Cor. 10:32 “Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of GOD:” | “Give no occasions of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of GOD:” (ASV) | “Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of GOD,” (NKJV) |
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OFFENCE — • πρόσκοπος — *“Actively, having nothing for one to strike against; not causing to stumble;...metaphorically not leading others into sin by one’s mode of life”* (Thayer, p. 70); *“Not taking or giving offense.... Trans., not causing others to stumble, not giving occasion to fall into sin”*(Zodhiates, p. 244); *“Undamaged, blameless...giving no offense”* (Bauer, p. 102).

This context deals with actions; the actions of a Christian. This passage is often abused by those who say one cannot say anything which will be offensive to anyone; but that is a perversion of this verse. An example of this would be John 3:16.

“For GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

If one cannot say anything which would be offensive to people, then one cannot quote the above passage to people. The atheist does not believe in GOD; to teach such would be offensive to him. The Jew does not believe Christ is the Son of GOD; to teach such would be offensive to Him. In fact one can eliminate almost every word in this verse from being spoken by such a misapplication of the present text.

The proclamation of the Gospel is going to be offensive to some people; and the rejection of GOD’S Word will even lead many to sin against Him. If such were not the case, then why did Jesus warn that Christians would be persecuted for being His followers?

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you” (Matt. 5:11-12).

Jesus clearly states Christians will suffer persecution, and things will be said about them which are lies. How can this be if one never does or says anything which is offensive to anyone? Keep in mind, Jesus says the blessed person is the one who is reviled, persecuted, and spoken evil of **FALSELY**.

“If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will

also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also” (John 15:18-20; emphasis mine, R.K.).

Why did the world hate Jesus? He never did anything wrong. They hated Him because of the message He brought from His Father. It was a message of truth which condemned the sins of man.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).

The whole context of First Corinthians ten deals with actions. A Christian's example should not lead others to sin or continue in sin.

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| <p>1 Cor. 10:33 “Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”</p> | <p>“even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” (NKJV)</p> |
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To show how far one might go with this course of action, Paul points to his own life, and of course, to Christ Himself in the next verse (11:1). The Scriptures show Paul was the kind of man who would give up everything in order to save his own soul and the souls of those with whom he came in contact (2 Cor. 11:23-28). The one thing he would not do is compromise truth in order to accommodate anyone (Gal. 2:5).

Christians ought to glorify GOD by not causing anyone to stumble. Christians are not alive simply to gain blessings for themselves, but to gain them for their fellow man as well. How can one accomplish this if one is

unnecessarily offensive to others? Jesus did not go about offending people for no reason. Neither did He go about offending people through carelessness. But when He was offensive, and He was at times, it was over a doctrinal point from which there could be no retreat!

“Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me” (Matt. 11:6).

Paul shows the example of one who is willing to give up personal freedoms in order effectively to serve Christ. Paul's an example of being a true **servant** of Christ; a **bondservant** of Christ.

First Corinthians — Chapter Eleven

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| 1 Cor. 11:1 “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” | “Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.” (ASV) | “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” (NKJV) |
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FOLLOWERS — μιμητής — *“An imitator”* (Thayer, p. 415); *“An imitator, follower”* (Zodhiates, p. 986); *“Imitator...of the person imitated”* (Bauer, p. 522).

In the chapter divisions created by men, this verse most likely should have been included in the last chapter. As noted above, the word **“follower”** indicates someone who imitates another; this could be in speech or action, or both. Paul says he has patterned his life after the example Christ gave. In Paul’s case, one knows this is both in word and deed.

“Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me” (1 Cor. 4:16).

“Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Phil. 3:17).

“Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost” (1 Thess. 1:6).

It is to be emphasized that Paul says, **“Be an imitator of me as I imitate Christ.”** One might also notice this emphasizes the opposite as well, i.e., *“Do not imitate my example if my example does not imitate the life of Christ.”* What are Christians to imitate according to this context? Paul has been showing one must be self-sacrificing; one cannot selfishly seek his own enjoyment, his own will. **One must learn to be a servant!** A servant does the will of another.

Again, what was the example of Jesus?

“I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I

judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me” (John 5:30).

Jesus Himself filled the role of a servant. He did not seek His own will or ease; but rather gave up His rights in order **“to seek and to save that which was lost”** (Luke 19:10). Christians should carefully consider what a glorious sacrifice He made.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of GOD, thought it not robbery to be equal with GOD: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8).

“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 be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

“Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of GOD and our Father” (Gal. 1:4).

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| 1 Cor. 11:2 “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.” | “Now I praise you that ye remember me in all things, and hold fast the traditions, even as I delivered them to you.” (ASV) | “Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.” (NKJV) |
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ORDINANCES — παράδοσις — *“A giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing, i.e., tradition by instruction, narrative, precept, etc.”* (Thayer, p. 481); *“A tradition, doctrine or injunction delivered or communicated from one to another, whether divine or human”* (Zodhiates, p. 1104); *“Tradition, of teaching, commandments, narratives et al.”* (Bauer, p. 615).

The primary objective of the Corinthian letter is to condemn false practices and teachings among the Corinthians. But where possible, Paul praises them for the things they were doing right. First, he praises them for

Second, Paul praises them for keeping the **“ordinances,”** or **“traditions.”** There are two kinds of

remembering him. The fact they remembered him is illustrated in their writing him when questions arose among them.

“traditions” one should keep in mind. The first are those traditions which are condemned. As an example:

“Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of GOD by your tradition?...And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of GOD of none effect by your tradition” (Matt. 15:2-3, 6).

The tradition which the Scriptures condemn is that which originates in the minds of men. Such tradition, when it contradicts the word of GOD, is sinful. Not all traditions of men are sinful; but those are which deal with religion and are contrary to GOD’S will. The second kind

of traditions, and that for which Paul praises the Corinthians, are the commands of GOD given orally to them by inspired men.

“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 he received of us” (2 Thess. 3:6).

Paul had previously given them instructions about a number of things, but now some of the instructions given were being corrupted. As an example, corruptions during the Lord’s Supper were addressed by Paul. He praises them where he can, but then condemns them where they are wrong.

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| 1 Cor. 11:3 “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.” | “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.” (ASV) | “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is GOD.” (NKJV) |
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HEAD — κεφαλή — *“The head...Metaphor anything supreme, chief, prominent; of persons, master, lord”*(Thayer, p. 345); *“The head, top, that which is uppermost in relation to something...Metaphorically of persons, i.e., the head, chief, one to whom others are subordinate ”*(Zodhiates, p. 860); *“Head...in the case of living beings, to denote superior rank ”*(Bauer, p. 430).

The instructions in verses 3-16 with regard to the **“covering”** are difficult, and deserve careful examination.

A standard for authority is set forth in this passage, which creates an orderly way of doing things. In society as a whole, practical experience shows if no one has a position of authority, i.e., if all can decide what they want to do without an authority over them, nothing but confusion will exist. An office, for example, cannot function smoothly and efficiently if no one is in control. The same thing is true in religion. Thus, this passage sets forth a chain of authority, which is: GOD over Christ, Christ over man, and man over woman.

It must be remembered, this passage is not to be taken out of its context. The context indicates a woman’s praying and prophesying. The text describes the customs of the day with regard to the way a woman dressed, showing either a prostitute or unchaste woman compared

to the chaste woman. The “head covering” at the time this passage was written was a sign of submission and chastity.

Another area which should be considered in this passage is the subject of inferiority. The roles GOD has given all, the position each is to have, does not mean one is inferior to the other. Christ is not inferior because He submitted Himself to His father, i.e., allowed His Father to direct His life. Neither is the woman inferior to her husband, because she is in submission to him. This passage has been abused by many, in essence, to make woman the slave of man. Observations over the years lead to the belief men who have an inferiority complex are the ones who chiefly promote the wrong application of this passage. One must understand each gender has been given a role by GOD, but the fulfillment of each role does not signify inferiority or superiority.

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| 1 Cor. 11:4 “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head.” | “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head.” (ASV) | “Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.” (NKJV) |
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PROPHESYING — προφητεῦσθαι — *“To utter forth, declare, a thing which can only be known by divine revelation...to break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels: or, under the like prompting, to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others ”*(Thayer, p. 553); *“To tell forth God’s message, hence the noun prophetes, prophet, is the proclaimer, one who speaks out the counsel of God with the clearness, energy, and authority which spring from the consciousness of speaking in God’s name and having received a direct message from Him to deliver...A prophetes, both in the OT and NT, is not primarily one who foretells things to come, but who (having been taught of God) speak out*

His will" (Zodhiates, p. 1244); *"Proclaim a divine revelation...prophetically reveal what is hidden...foretell the future, prophesy"* (Bauer, p. 723).

COVERED — κατα — *"Down from, down...a veil hanging down from his head"* (Thayer, p. 326-327); *"Down from, down upon, down in"* (Zodhiates, p. 822); *"Down from something"* (Bauer, p. 405).

DISHONOURETH — κατασχύνω — *"To dishonor, disgrace...to put to shame, make ashamed"* (Thayer, p. 331); *"To shame, make ashamed, confound, dishonor, disgrace"* (Zodhiates, p. 830); *"Dishonor, disgrace, disfigure...put to shame"* (Bauer, p. 410).

The word, **"man,"** in this verse is not the generic word for *"mankind,"* but rather the one which signifies male in contrast to female or child. This is also seen in the context where it is used (v. 4) in comparison to the female (v. 5).

The veil, or head covering, of Paul's day was an emblem which signified submission, particularly to another human being. In the worship service, the man in Paul's day who covered his head with cloth, or who wore long hair like a woman, was a disgrace to himself and to his head, Christ. The customs and significance of the time cannot be ignored in this verse, or those which follow. The male is to be in subjection to those leading the worship, but to no other human being.

A side note here is that reference should be made to the clear distinction seen between the male and female. A

male should not dress so as to be confused with a female; nor should a female dress so as to be confused with a male.

This passage definitely deals with the way one appears in worship. One can show disrespect by what he or she wears, or does not wear. (Question: *"How do we appear in worship to the GOD of heaven? And if we were to receive an invitation to meet the President of the United States, how would we dress?"*) Respect and honor are shown in worship by the way one dresses as well as what he says and thinks.

The skull cap worn today by Jewish males when they pray, is a practice not in existence in Paul's day. Skull caps are not mentioned in the Old Jewish covenant but are of human origin.

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:5 "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved." (NKJV)</p> |
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UNCOVERED — • κατακάλυπτος — *"Not covered, unveiled"* (Thayer, p. 21); *"Uncovered...a woman without head covering"* (Bauer, p. 29).

Whatever and wherever the praying and prophesying of verse four took place, the same view must be held of the praying and prophesying of verse five, in order to be consistent. One should go back and observe the definition for prophesying in verse four before proceeding; for there is no doubt prophesying includes teaching. There is no doubt women have been allowed by GOD to assume the role of teaching. In both Old Testament, and New Testament times, there are a number of examples of women who fulfilled this role: Miriam (Ex. 15:20), Deborah (Judges 4:4), Huldah (2 Kings 22:14), and Anna (Luke 2:36).

Paul will later decree that a woman cannot ask questions of the prophets in the public assembly; i.e., in the worship assembly (1 Cor. 14:34). This then leads to the inquiry: *"What is the point Paul is making here?"* It is not the speaking, for as noted above, both male and female were doing the same thing. Instead the difference revolves

On the day of Pentecost, Peter told the Jews,

"It shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17-18).

That this came to pass is clearly seen in Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28) and Philip's virgin daughters (Acts 21:19).

around the way the male and female were *"dressed."* His instructions seem to deal with two aspects: modesty and subjection. In the Corinthian society, it was a mark of immodesty for women of proper upbringing not to wear a **"veil"** (Whether this be a piece of cloth which covered the entire head and face except the eyes, or whether it

represented her long hair). Hering tells us,

"It is certain that among Jews, as among the Greeks moreover, it was, for one reason or another considered as lacking in decency for a woman or girl of good family to appear bareheaded in public" (Jean Hering, p. 105).

Many other scholars agree with this basic assessment. In many eastern societies today the veil is still worn for such purposes.

Jackson says *"There is sufficient documentation that prostitutes and other lewd, vulgar women in Corinth would show themselves to be what they were by closely-cropped hair, and that the custom of proper women was to be veiled in public"* (Wayne Jackson, pp. 106-107).

This passage, in its context, records Paul's dealing with the deportment of those who prayed and prophesied, and not the place **where** this was done. The woman was told to dress in such a way as not to bring shame upon herself or

her husband. She was to dress, and thus act, in such a way as befitted her submission to her husband (v. 3). Is there a lesson for modern day Christians in Paul's instructions here to the Corinthians? Coffman rightly observes,

"Any time that Christian men or women adopt styles, whether of clothing or hair, which are widely accepted as immoral, anti-social, anti-establishment, or in any manner degrading, such actions constitute a violation of what is taught here" (Coffman, p. 172).

Willis relates that Paul *"was commanding Christians to recognize the social customs of their day and not to obnoxiously violate those customs, provided, of course, that the customs were not violations of God's word"* (Willis, p. 368).

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:6 "For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered." (NKJV)</p> |
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SHAME — *αἰσχρὸς* — "Base, dishonorable" (Thayer, p. 17); *"Shameful. It occurs in 1 Cor. 11:6 referring to the shame that a woman brings upon herself if she cuts off or shaves her hair, because such was the custom of lewd women, especially the prostitutes serving at the temple of Aphrodite on Acrocorinth. A decent woman always was distinguished by hair which covered the head well, a sign of decorum and propriety"* (Zodhiates, p. 101); *"Ugly, shameful, base"* (Bauer, p. 25).

It was customary for men to shave their head after fulfilling a vow (Acts 18:18; 21:24). But this is never said to be the action of a woman. Instead it was considered an act of baseness, an act of shame, for a woman to shave her head. Why was it a shame for women of Paul's day to have their hair cropped short or shaved? *"The unveiled woman in Corinth was a prostitute. Many of them had their heads shaved. The vestal virgins in the temple of Aphrodite who were really prostitutes had their heads shaved. The women who had their heads uncovered were the prostitutes"* (J.Vernon McGee, p. 122).

Thus, if a Christian woman shaved her head, she gave the Women are not to draw attention to themselves by the way they dress or undress! Women are not to reveal themselves in such a way as to appear as a base or lewd woman would. There are far too many women who have lost their sense of shame, revealing their bodies to men by the woman's wearing short skirts, low cut blouses, or bare middles. Some mothers, who surely must know what appeals to men, still allow their daughters to dress so as to

appearance of being a base or lewd woman. No husband would want or allow his wife to be thought of as a prostitute. A woman who did this would be declaring she was not in submission to her husband. Christians, whether male or female, must not give people a wrong impression regarding their morals!

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (1 Tim. 2:9-10).

appeal to the baser nature of men. Even fathers are letting their daughters wear such clothing!

There is not much difference between the words **"shorn"** and **"shaven"** with regard to their original meanings. It may be the word **"shorn"** is used to signify the short cut of hair, whereas the **"shaven"** signifies the entire removal of the hair.

One of the things which could easily happen in Corinth

is the conversion of one of the temple prostitutes. If such conversion took place, and since the shaved head was a symbol of an immoral woman, how would she attend worship services? She would wear a veil

or cloth until her hair grew back. Thus, she would appear as a woman who recognized her role of subjection.

One of the things one should notice is the word **“if;” “if it be a shame...”** The word **“if”** is a conditional conjunction. What is the condition of this passage? It is the custom which would declare the action under consideration to be immoral in the context. In their society, if a shaved head was **not** a sign of immorality, then the Holy Spirit would not have commanded Paul to write these words. The point which needs to be strongly emphasized, is that in any society where some particular custom is a sign of immorality, the Christian must not participate in that action in any way!

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:7 “For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of GOD: but the woman is the glory of the man.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of GOD; but woman is the glory of man.” (NKJV)</p> |
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OUGHT — ἵφειλω — *“To owe...to be under obligation, bound by duty or necessity, to do something; it behooves one; one ought; used thus of a necessity imposed either by law and duty, or by reason, or by the times, or by the nature of the matter under consideration”* (Thayer, p. 469); *“To owe, to be indebted...Metaphorically, to be bound or obligated to perform a duty, meaning I ought, must, followed by the inf. Of what is required by law or duty in general”* (Zodhiates, p. 1080); *“Owe, be indebted”* (Bauer, p. 598-599).

One of the reasons for the woman to be covered is given in this passage, with more following in verse eight. The man should not cover his head because he is the image and glory of GOD. The term **“image”** is not the distinguishing characteristic, as

“GOD created man in His own image, in the image of GOD created He him; male and female created He them” (Gen. 1:27).

The distinction made revolves around the word **“glory.”** Man is declared to be the glory of GOD, whereas woman is declared to be the glory of man.

A study of the account of creation, easily shows that man and woman were not created at the same time; they were created on the same day, but not at the same time. Adam was created first, as will be noticed in verses eight and nine (cf. 1 Tim. 2:12-13); but notice the idea of glory.

In Genesis, the record is that GOD created Adam and brought all the animals for Adam to name. This demonstrates Adam was placed in a position of authority; a position to bring honor and glory to GOD. Adam was GOD’S representative of authority on earth. The woman was created from man, for man, and brings glory to him. He rules as king while she abides by his side as his queen. But man holds the authority as vested in him by GOD.

When GOD created the woman, He created her for man, not the man for the woman. Further, He said He was making a helpmeet for the man; one who fit his needs, thus one who took a subordinate role to him. This became even more pronounced after the fall when GOD said to the woman,

“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16).

The male represents GOD in authority or rulership, thus being the glory of GOD. But, when man refuses to recognize his submissive position to GOD and refuses to accept the headship GOD has given him, he no longer brings glory to GOD; he no longer is the glory of GOD. Regarding this, Hodge states,

“She is not designed to reflect the glory of God as a ruler. She is the glory of man. She receives and reveals what there is of majesty in him. She always assumes this station; becomes a queen if he is a king, and manifests to others the wealth and honor which may belong to her husband” (Charles Hodge, p. 210).

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:8 “For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man.”</p> | <p>“For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man:” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For man is not from woman, but woman from man.” (NKJV)</p> |
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man.”

“The LORD GOD caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD GOD had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:21-23).

Paul now begins showing **why** woman is the glory of man, and should be in subjection to him; she came from man. Man was made first, the woman made second. The

man did not come from the woman, but rather the woman came from the man. If the man had not existed, there would never have been a woman.

“I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:12-14).

1 Cor. 11:9 **“Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.”**

“for neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man:” (ASV)

“Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.” (NKJV)

Why was woman created? For the man, to complement him, because it was not good for the man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). Man needed a companion, just as the animals had companions. This does not make woman inferior to man intellectually, morally, or spiritually. Rather it shows the role woman is to play in GOD’S scheme of things. Consider, if man had not been created,

there would be no need for woman.

“The facts of creation reveal that (1) woman was taken out of man, (2) that she was given to man, (3) that she was created for man, and (4) that she was intended to be the glory of man”(Coffman, p. 173).

1 Cor. 11:10 **“For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels.”**

“for this cause ought the woman to have a sign of authority on her head, because of the angels.” (ASV)

“For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.” (NKJV)

POWER — ἰξουσία — *“Power...A sign of a husband’s authority over his wife”*(Thayer, p. 225); *“Power over persons and things, dominion, authority, rule”*(Zodhiates, p. 606-607); *“The word is not dynamis, ‘power,’ but exousia, ‘authority’”* [Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament, (Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass, 2000), p. 233].

The term **“because of the angels”** in this passage has given commentators, admittedly, many problems over the years. It is a most difficult passage.

This text obviously deals with subjection: Christ to the Father, man to Christ, and woman to man. The text also deals with the public assembly. The word **“power,”** in this passage, has often been said to mean *“a symbol of power,”* i.e., the authority another has over her. The word appears to signify the authority held by the wearer. Modesty and subjection are important in this text, and must be considered in any thoughts here.

How is it a woman may pray and/or prophesy in a proper way; i.e., one which pleases GOD (v. 5)? It must be done with modesty and in recognition of the submissive position she occupies. A woman who is in rebellion to her husband’s authority cannot possibly serve GOD acceptably. Likewise, a woman who dresses in an immodest manner cannot properly serve GOD, for she

shows her rebellion to his authority. These things are true in any area of her life.

What do the angels have to do with this? There are several possibilities as to the meaning. First, these are the heavenly angels (messengers) of which Paul speaks. Second, they report to GOD; thus the woman must recognize her actions are not going unnoticed, and will be reported to GOD. Third, there may also be a warning to women not to step out of the role which GOD has designed for them. Some of the angels in heaven decided to step out of the role GOD gave them, only to suffer His wrath and condemnation.

Whatever is meant in this passage, it seems clear the woman has some power which she can exercise; yet, this power must be regulated according to all GOD has said regarding her role in this life and the church.

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| 1 Cor. 11:11 “Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord.” | “Nevertheless, neither is the woman without the man, nor the man without the woman, in the Lord.” (ASV) | “Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.” (NKJV) |
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NEVERTHELESS — πλὴν — *“Beyond, besides, further; it stands adverbially, at the beginning of a sentence, serving either to restrict, or to unfold and expand what has preceded: moreover, besides, so that, according to the requirements of the context, it may be rendered but, nevertheless”* (Thayer, p. 517); *“More than, over and above; hence, besides, except, but, however, only that...As an adv., at the beginning of a clause, meaning much more, rather, besides, passing over into an adversative participle, i.e., but rather, but yet, nevertheless”* (Zodhiates, p. 1175); *“Only, nevertheless, however, but”* (Bauer, p. 669).

WITHOUT — χωρὶς — *“Separately, apart”* (Thayer, p. 675); *“Separately from, without”* (Zodhiates, p. 1490); *“Separately, apart, by itself”* (Bauer, p. 890); *“Separate from, apart from...Husband and wife are to be ‘one flesh,’ not independent of each other”* (Earle, p. 234).

Unfortunately, there are those in every generation who would look at Paul’s words in this context and say woman is inferior to man, and the real interest GOD has is in the man. To combat this particular error, Paul now shows the dependency of male and female upon each other in GOD’s plan. Though GOD has given a particular role for each to play (male as leader, female as follower), neither is inferior. Think of a basketball team. Each player on a team has a role, and one of those players may be thought of as the star; the one who scores a lot of points. But by himself he cannot win a single game. His role is different from every other player on the team; but all are vitally necessary to accomplish the goal. As long as each of the players fulfills his role as dictated by the coach, the team will function as a well-oiled machine.

In the spiritual realm, GOD has given each gender of His creation a role to assume. As long as each one assumes the role given him, then the church and family will function as He intended. It is only when people pervert His way of doing things that trouble arises. Paul

is showing that women are not inferior to men; women simply have a different role to assume.

When man acts as though woman is inferior and treats her as nothing more than property (chauvinism), he has sinned. When woman rebels against the authority man has been given by GOD (feminism), she has sinned.

“Male chauvinism is no more biblical than feminism. Both are perversions of God’s plan” (MacArthur, p. 260).

The dependence each has for the other is the point Paul makes in this section. By themselves, a man or woman is incomplete; they are made to function together as a unit. If one were all which was needed of the species, then GOD would have made only one sex.

“Either sex alone is half itself...each fulfills defect in each, and always thought in thought, purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow...the two-celled heart beating, with one full stroke, life” (Tennyson).

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| 1 Cor. 11:12 “For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of GOD.” | “For as the woman is of the man, so is the man also by the woman; but all things are of GOD.” (ASV) | “For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from GOD.” (NKJV) |
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Paul has shown there are roles each person should play, yet to keep man in his place, so he does not become a dictator, a chauvinist, he shows the dependence of both men and women on GOD and each other. In the beginning woman originally came from man, but since that time, every man has been born of a woman. Without each other they could not exist. But further, since it was GOD who created both, neither could live without Him. Both must answer to GOD; both are dependent upon Him.

In GOD’s eyes a soul is a soul; there are no female souls and male souls. On one occasion the Sadducees came to tempt Jesus (Matt. 22). They put forth the story of a woman who had been married to seven brothers, each one having died in turn. They then asked whose wife she would be in the resurrection (Never mind the fact they did not believe there would be a resurrection.).

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of

GOD. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of GOD in heaven” (Matt. 22:29-30).

One may either be male or female here on earth, but in heaven there will be no sexual distinctions; all will simply be eternal beings.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor

female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

When Paul states, **“all things of GOD,”** he clearly demonstrates no one has the right to abuse, or even question, the wisdom of GOD as He has instituted His laws regarding the roles each is to assume.

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| 1 Cor. 11:13 “Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto GOD uncovered?” | “Judge ye in yourselves: is it seemly that a woman pray unto GOD unveiled?” (ASV) | “Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to GOD with her head uncovered?” (NKJV) |
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JUDGE — κρίνω — *“To be of opinion, deem, think”*(Thayer, p. 360); *“To separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, chose out the good. In the N.T. it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after considering the particulars of a case”*(Zodhiates, p. 888); *“Judge, think, consider, look upon...decide for yourselves”*(Bauer, p. 451).

COMELY — πρέπω — *“To stand out, to be conspicuous, to be eminent; to be becoming, seemly, fit”*(Thayer, p. 535); *“To be eminent, distinguished, to excel. In the NT usually in the impersonal form prepei, it means becoming, proper”*(Zodhiates, p. 1210); *“Be fitting, be seemly or suitable”*(Bauer, p. 699).

Paul now appeals to the Corinthians to use common sense as they reason about this matter. The people of Corinth considered a woman who wore her hair like a man (cropped, or shaven) to be a prostitute. Considering this: how could a woman with short hair, thought to be a harlot, have any credibility when she prayed to or taught about a GOD who condemned fornication? Paul asks if it is comely (becoming, fit, proper) for the woman to pray in violation of the customs which would brand her as immodest. He knew they could know what was right and proper by answering this question. A side question is, *“Should we follow all customs of the land in which we live in order not to be offensive to others?”* The answer is, **“no.”** Some things are always wrong in the sight of GOD, no matter what the customs of one’s country. (The custom of Sodom was homosexuality; if one had lived in Sodom

should one have accepted the custom as practiced by them? Remember, they became angry at Lot for refusing to indulge in their customs.) Immodest apparel is very much the custom of America, but Christians must not allow such to be incorporated into their dress.

Another idea from the word **“comely”** (πρέπω) is seen in the definition above; it is the idea of drawing attention to oneself. Thayer shows the word also refers to *“To stand out, to be conspicuous.”* Paul instructs the woman to be modest and not to call undue attention to herself. Several writers speak of sex appeal in these passages; they base this on the obvious references to modesty. For the woman to wear her hair in a cropped or shaven fashion was to invite men to partake of her sexual favors. Women should be properly dressed wherever they may be; in worship or out in society, and be aware of custom.

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| 1 Cor. 11:14-15 “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” | “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering.” (ASV) | “Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.” (NKJV) |
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NATURE — φύσις — *“The nature of things, the force, laws, order, of nature; as opposed to what is monstrous, abnormal, perverse”*(Thayer, p. 660); *“Nature...also means the constitution and order of God in the natural world”*(Zodhiates, p. 1459); *“Nature as the regular natural order”*(Bauer, p. 869);

GLORY — δόξα — *“Magnificence, excellence, preeminence, dignity, grace”*(Thayer, p. 156); *“Spoken of honor due or rendered, i.e., praise, applause”*(Zodhiates, p. 478).

SHAME — •τιμία — *“Dishonor, ignominy, disgrace”*(Thayer, p. 83; Zodhiates, p. 286); *“Dishonor, disgrace, shame”*

(Bauer, p. 120).

Paul now appeals to custom to show a distinction must be made between a man and a woman. If it were not the case that GOD makes universal distinctions between males and females, then there would be no application for this passage, and it would never have been written. There is a distinction made in almost every part of the world by different customs, distinctions which brand a person as either male or female.

The distinction is clear in this passage: for a man in Corinth to wear his hair long was a shame, but the woman who wore it long was honored by such; she was praised. The opposite would then be true as well. One of the interesting things noticed in this study is that man is the glory of his head (Christ), while woman is the glory of her head (man). In verse sixteen, the woman's hair is said to be her glory. In other words, man brings glory to his head (Christ), woman brings glory to her head (man), and long hair brings glory to the woman. It causes her to be honored in the role she has been given in this life, because it signifies her modesty and submissiveness; it signifies her acceptance of the role which GOD has given her. However, "long" hair was a cultural issue not an eternal one.

"φύσις can also mean 'second nature' learned from long habit. If the word means something like naturally in this verse, then Paul is in error because 'naturally' my hair grows long and I have to keep it cut to keep it short (See Eph. 2:3 and 'nature')" (Keith Mosher, Sr.; Greek Instructor at MSOP).

Regarding hair and its growth, this interesting note was found:

"Men and women have distinct physiologies in many ways. One of them is in the process of hair growth on the head. Hair develops in three stages —formation and growth, resting, and fallout. The male hormone testosterone speeds up the cycle so

that men reach the third stage earlier than women. The female hormone estrogen causes the cycle to remain in stage one for a longer time, causing women's hair to grow longer than men's. Women are rarely bald because few even reach stage three. This physiology is reflected in most cultures of the world in the custom of women wearing longer hair than men" (MacArthur, p. 262).

The distinction Paul is making between the male and female is that it is a disgrace for a man to appear like a woman (in either dress or hair), and likewise, it is a disgrace for a woman to appear as a man (in either dress or hair) according to the **"nature"** of the day or rather the habit or custom of the time. Notice the following comments on this subject:

GOD *"wants men to be masculine, to be responsibly and lovingly authoritative. He wants women to be feminine, to be responsibly and lovingly submissive"* (MacArthur, p. 262).

"It is disgraceful in a man to be like a woman, and in a woman to be like a man" (Hodge, p. 213).

"Masculine women and effeminate men are alike objectionable. Let each sex keep its place" (McGarvey, p. 113).

"The distinctiveness between the two demands that the woman's hair be long – long enough not to militate against her femininity – and that the man's, in contrast, be short – short enough that his masculinity is not mocked nor in doubt" (Jackson, p. 110).

"Women have always worn their hair longer than men; in cases in which a man's hair is longer than that of the woman have been the exception and not the rule. Thus, nature has distinguished between the sexes so far as the hair is concerned" (Willis, p. 375).

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:16 "But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of GOD."</p> | <p>"But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of GOD." (ASV)</p> | <p>"But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of GOD." (NKJV)</p> |
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CONTENTIOUS — φιλόνηκος — *"Fond of strife, contentious"* (Thayer, p. 654); *"Fond of contention or disputing, contentious, a lover of disputation"* (Zodhiates, p. 1446-1447); *"Quarrelsome, contentious"* (Bauer, p. 860); *"Fond of strife"* (Robertson, p. 162).

Many a person has falsely appealed to this verse to give them license to mix the sexes in either duty or

appearance. Why would Paul have spent so much time arguing the propriety of distinctiveness for the sexes and

their role, and then say it does not matter? The church belongs to GOD, and it is GOD who made the clear distinction of the sexes and their roles. The person who tries to blur the roles will suffer the consequences at the judgment day of GOD.

In this verse, Paul first points out there are some who will be contentious in this matter. The word **“contentious,”** means one who is *“fond of strife,” “a lover of disputation.”* This is a person who loves to argue. Greek society was known as one which loved to spend its time arguing different viewpoints on various subjects. They did not argue so much to learn truth as they did simply for love of the battle. It is obvious Paul anticipated those who would argue it did not matter if they violated the customs of the time, it did not matter how they dressed or acted, because they had been baptized into Christ — their status as Christians gave them liberty.

Paul has clearly shown that the distinction and role of the sexes is important, and a matter which will either please or displease GOD. Thus, his statement in verse sixteen leads to the conclusion there is no law which demands this. But since this custom exists, and it does not violate GOD’S laws, then they must follow the custom. This same truth would hold today for Christians in whatever nation they may find themselves. Notice again Paul’s reference to this concept:

“For though I be free from all men, yet have I

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:17 “Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.”</p> | <p>“But in giving you this charge, I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.” (NKJV)</p> |
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DECLARE — παραγγέλλω — *“To transmit a message along from one to another, to declare, announce. To command, order, charge”*(Thayer, p. 479); *“To pass on an announcement, hence, to give the word to someone nearby, to advance an order, charge or command”*(Zodhiates, p. 1100).

There is a lot of discussion in commentaries as to whether this verse is speaking about what precedes it, or what follows it. It seems to apply to both passages. But it certainly applies to verses eighteen and following.

To **“declare”** in this passage, actually means to

The phrase **“come together”** signifies the assembling of the saints. What were Christians to accomplish when they came together in the assembly? First and foremost, they were to accomplish the worship of GOD. But there is, so to speak, a side benefit in Christians assembling together. Worship rendered to GOD should also edify one, i.e., build one up in the faith. As Lipscomb stated,

“The object of the weekly meeting was to unite them more closely to the Lord, and in doing this, to draw them into closer union with each other” (Lipscomb, p. 170).

made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to GOD, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Cor. 9:19-22).

One’s whole goal in life is to seek and save that which is lost, thus following the supreme example of the Savior (Luke 19:10). If one, without just cause (violation of GOD’S law), flaunts the customs of people one is among, then that one will not win them to Christ. Such action will repel people and will cause them to reject the messenger and message of salvation. Where it is **possible** and **lawful**, a Christian must do everything he can to win people to Christ; not be offensive to them.

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (1 Cor. 10:24).

command them. Further, he says he cannot praise them. Paul has praised them for certain actions. He no doubt wishes he could commend them regarding their worship services, but he cannot.

“How is it then, brethren? when ye come

together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26; emphasis mine, RK).

Instead of being edified, instead of gaining spiritual strength, they were actually bringing harm to themselves

because of the error they had allowed to creep into their worship services.

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

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| 1 Cor. 11:18 "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it." | "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that divisions exist among you; and I partly believe it." (ASV) | "For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it." (NKJV) |
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CHURCH — ἐκκλησία — "A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; and assembly" (Thayer, p. 195-196); "It was a common term for a congregation of the *ekkletoi* (n.f.), the called people, or those called out or assembled in the public affairs of a free state, the body of free citizens called together by a herald which constituted the *ekklesia*. In the NT, the word is applied to the congregation of the people of Israel" (Zodhiates, p. 541). "Assembly...assemblage, gathering, meeting" (Bauer, p. 240).

DIVISIONS — σχίσμα — "A cleft, rent...metaph. a division, dissension" (Thayer, p. 610); "A schism, division, tear, as in mind or sentiment, and so into factions" (Zodhiates, p. 1353); "Division, dissension, schism" (Bauer, p. 797); "Old word for cleft, rent...Example in papyri for splinter of wood" (Robertson, p. 162-163).

The subject of division is a continuous theme in Corinthians, which Paul began dealing with in chapter one (1:10ff). Division was caused by a party spirit with regards to whom they followed, but was also manifested in the attitudes of some with regards to eating meats offered to idols, et cetera. This division seems to be based on social and/or economic status.

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

"I partly believe it." This is not a statement of doubt. Their divisions had been reported to him by dependable

witnesses; and Paul was inspired. He could absolutely know if the reports given to him were true or false. It may be he is trying to be charitable to them; i.e., to say maybe the reports he received were not as bad as he was led to believe. But it seems more reasonable to believe that this is a form of stating he did not want to believe the reports; i.e., that they would act in this way with regards to their abuse of the Lord's Supper.

The word **"church"** is a called out body, which has been called out of the general population into an assembly. This word is never used in the New Testament to signify the place of meeting (building, et cetera), but always those who met (Matt. 16:18).

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| 1 Cor. 11:19 "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." | "For there must be also factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." (ASV) | "For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you." (NKJV) |
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HERESIES — αἵρεσις — "Dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims" (Thayer, p. 16); "Heresy, a form of religious worship, discipline, or opinion. In contrast to *schisma*, schism which is actually tearing apart, *hairesis* may represent a divergent opinion but still be a part of the whole. One can hold different views than the majority and remain in the same body, but he is a heretic. However, when he tears himself away (*schizo*), then he is schismatic. Heresy may lead to schism which is when actual tearing off and separation occur" (Zodhiates, p. 98); "Dissension, a faction" (Bauer, p. 24).

APPROVED — δοκιμος — "Accepted, particularly of coins and metals; hence univ. proved, tried: in the N.T. one who is of tried faith and integrity" (Thayer, p. 155); "Proved, receivable, tried as metals by fire and thus be purified" (Zodhiates, p. 476); "Approved (by test), tried and true, genuine" (Bauer, p. 203).

This sentence begins with the necessity of heresies. Thayer gives a precise definition of the word "heresy:" "Dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims."

Notice, it is dissension which comes from different **opinions and aims**. Different opinions are not condemned in this passage; nor are different aims condemned. It is the

binding of opinions which causes the division which is condemned. Many feel that they must get everybody else to accept their opinions. When this happens, division occurs. And, as noted in verse eighteen, such is condemned and those who have caused the division should be marked. GOD has never sanctioned division based on opinions.

Also note the word **“must”** in this passage. The differences of opinion and aims which take place, will eventually show who is faithful or unfaithful. GOD does not cause the division nor does He foster the opinions which become divisive. But when they come, He allows them to exist among His people for the purpose of causing a distinction to be made between those who stand with Him, and those who will not.

Another way of saying this is when these matters of opinion cause division, it purifies the church. The word **“approved,”** signifies what has been accepted because the object under consideration has been tried (See definitions

above).

Suppose a person believed that the best way to evangelize was to use tracts sent into people’s homes. A second person believed the best way to evangelize was to call people on the telephone. Many other ideas could also be presented, but these should suffice for this discussion. Can the two individuals keep their opinions and maintain fellowship? Obviously, yes. But what happens when one of these people thinks his way is the only way one can evangelize? A sinful division will take place based on opinions. When such takes place, the person who tries to force his opinion on others and causes division, has sinned. They could have dwelt in harmony, each holding his opinion, and each doing the Lord’s work. This division causing based on opinions is apparently what was happening at Corinth. A final split had not taken place yet, but they were well on their way if their party spirits were allowed to continue.

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| 1 Cor. 11:20 “When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper.” | “When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper:” (ASV) | “Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.” (NKJV) |
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They had come together, which shows a gathering of Christians (the church), the assembling together. One of the purposes of their gathering was to partake of the Lord’s Supper. In other words, this was a worship service on the first day of the week, the **“Lord’s Day”** (Rev. 1:10). Even though they intended to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and even though they physically partook of the items instituted by the Lord for this Supper, they were not actually doing so in an acceptable manner to the Lord. Some would argue their intent was good, and they actually partook of the items, therefore they did partake of the Lord’s Supper. While physically this could be said; spiritually, they did not partake of the supper. This shows it is physically possible to do as the Lord teaches while not actually doing what pleases Him.

Hodge says they were mingling the Lord’s Supper with a common meal, which later became known as a *“love feast.”* He offers the following sources for his information: (1) **Augusti’s Antiquities of the Christian Church**, I. P. 299; (2) **Pool’s Synopsis on Matt. 26:26**; and (3) **Coleman’s ancient Christianity**, p. 443 (Hodge, p. 219).

Paul condemns their mixing the two things together. It would not be wrong for the congregation to gather before worship and to eat together; nor to gather afterwards and eat. But they were mixing the two together without Divine authorization. In the following verses Paul will show more reasons why what they were doing was wrong. Their attitude, translated into actions, made it impossible for them properly to partake of the Lord’s Supper.

Would not the above mentioned principle regarding mixing things together also apply to music in the church and the Lord’s Supper. The Old Testament clearly shows things which are not alike should not be used at the same time (Deut. 22:10). Regarding music, singing and the instrument are not alike. In this text a common meal is not the same as a spiritual meal.

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| 1 Cor. 11:21 “For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken.” | “for in your eating each one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken.” (ASV) | “For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.” (NKJV) |
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DRUNKEN — μεθύω — *“To be drunken”* (Thayer, p. 396); *“Generally to drink wine or strong drink more freely than usual without any reference to whether one gets drunk or not. To be drunk, get drunk, and by implication to carouse”* (Zodhiates, p. 955); *“Be drunk”* (Bauer, p. 499); *“Signifies to be drunk with wine (from methu mulled wine; hence, Eng.,*

mead, honey-wine; originally it denoted simply a pleasant drink" (W.E. Vine, Expository Dictionary of N.T. Words, p. 341); *"Drunk, from methuo, to be intoxicated; to be drunk"* (Littrell, p. 217).

The feast they were holding, whether it be before the Lord's Supper, or mingled with the Lord's Supper, was an abuse of the supper. First, their actions were not authorized! Second, when Christians gather together in worship, it should be a time which unites them, draws them closer to their Lord and each other. What was happening in Corinth would not draw them closer together in Christian fellowship; instead this feast was a wedge pushing them farther apart. (Note: there is nothing wrong with eating a *"fellowship meal"* before or after worship services. But if such is done, all ought to be able to partake in equal fashion, regardless of who brought what.)

Whether some of the participants were actually getting intoxicated or not (see definitions above), the point is, some of them were over-indulging, while others did not have enough or had nothing. This is not the spirit of Christian sharing which should exist; it is not the spirit of Barnabas and the church in Jerusalem (Acts 4:34-37). The

picture being drawn seems to mean that some (rich) brethren were bringing their food but not sharing it with others (the poor). Speaking of great need by brethren, Paul later told the Corinthians,

"For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality" (2 Cor. 8:13-14).

Littrell believes they may have been trying to imitate the events surrounding Jesus' instituting this memorial supper. There, the Lord and His apostles partook of a common meal and then partook of this **"supper"** [(cf. Matt. 26:19-29; Mark 14:17-25; Luke 22:14-20), Littrell, p. 217]. If such is the case, it seems clear from the context, Paul was calling for a separation of the two "suppers."

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:22 "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of GOD, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of GOD and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you." (NKJV)</p> |
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DESPISE — καταφρονέω — *"To contemn, despise, disdain, think little or nothing of"* (Thayer, p. 338); *"To hold in contempt, to think lightly of, despise"* (Zodhiates, p. 848); *"Look down on, despise, scorn, treat with contempt...care nothing for, disregard, be unafraid of"* (Bauer, p. 420).

SHAME — κατασχύνω — *"To dishonor, disgrace:...to put to shame, make ashamed"* (Thayer, p. 331); *"To shame, make ashamed, confound, dishonor, disgrace"* (Zodhiates, p. 830); *"Dishonor, disgrace, disfigure...put to shame"* (Bauer, p. 410).

By their actions, they are guilty of doing two things: (1) Despising the church (holding it in contempt and thinking little of it), and (2) shaming and dishonoring the poor among them. Paul is telling them that if they are going to partake of a common meal, it is better for them to do it at home than to think so little of the public gathering as to combine a common meal with the Lord's table. Further, when they had common meals they were dishonoring and putting to shame the poor. It was not Christian love they were showing for their poor brethren when they gorged themselves with their food while the poor would be forced to look on in hunger. If they could not show love, why have a *"love feast?"*

Paul distinctly lets them know he could not praise them for their selfish, uncaring attitude toward the brethren. But foremost, he could not praise them for their

abuse of the Lord's Supper, and thus the worship period.

Over the years, many have tried to use this passage to say one cannot eat on the church property. As an example, Willis states:

"Many twentieth century churches have not taken seriously what Paul wrote in this verse. He is not only condemning the refusal of the rich to share with the poor, he is forbidding altogether the practice of eating a common meal at the public assembly. I wonder why this verse does not say as much to those who have 'fellowship dinners' in the twentieth century as it said to those in the first century. This verse prohibits the perverting of the congregational assembly into an occasion for a

common meal" (Willis, p. 395).

There are several things which should be noticed. First, by speaking of *"fellowship dinners,"* Willis makes it very clear he is talking about those meals commonly held after worship services. There may be a very few congregations who actually have a meal **during the worship assembly** as the Corinthians were apparently doing, but why would those who want to forbid *"fellowship dinners"* misunderstand that these dinners are not a part of and have nothing to do with the worship service previously held. Since Christians had already come together to worship GOD, a convenient time exists **after the worship service** to gather for a common meal; an opportunity to strengthen the bonds which are in Christ.

Third, those who would forbid *"fellowship dinners,"* or the equivalent of *"love feasts"* in the first century, seem to fail to see the approval of *"love feasts"* by the inspired Jude.

"These are spots in your feasts of charity ("love feasts" in ASV and NKJV, RK), when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without

fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots"

(Jude 12).

Note also that:

"The public assembly was not designed as an occasion to satisfy one's hunger; it was an occasion to offer worship to Almighty God"(IBID, emphasis mine, RK).

Willis is right in his observation here, but fails to make a distinction between what happens in the worship assembly and outside it. It would also seem there is some kind of sanctity associated by some brethren, for the *"church building."* The Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul, was not forbidding *"love feasts,"* i.e., fellowship meals (in this time). Rather, he was condemning the abuse of such meals in either making them a part of the worship service or in using them to shame their poor brethren. The above passages dealt with the abuse of the Lord's Supper; but Paul now discusses the proper observance of the Lord's Supper.

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| 1 Cor. 11:23 "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took bread:" | "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;" (ASV) | "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread" (NKJV) |
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"I have received of the Lord." Paul is claiming he received the information he transmits to them directly from the Lord. There are a number of occasions where the Lord is said to have communicated directly with Paul.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace" (Acts 18:9).

"And saw Him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning Me" (Acts 22:18).

That which Paul has previously taught them (**"which also I delivered unto you"**) did not come from traditions handed down, it did not come from the apostles teaching him these things — it came directly from the Lord to him. This was probably accomplished in the time he spent with the Lord in Arabia.

"When it pleased GOD, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and

"And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of Me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome" (Acts 23:11).

"I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days" (Gal. 1:15-18).

They had perverted the Lord's supper, but they could not claim it was from ignorance. Paul said he **had** delivered the knowledge of it to them, signifying previous teaching. Paul now draws them back to the institution of the supper they were abusing. He pulls them back to a sad night, made so by the fact Jesus told His apostles he was being betrayed. The word **"betrayed"** in this passage reflects the idea of *"being betrayed."* Paul is saying while the process of betraying Him was in progress, Christ instituted this memorial supper. This coincides well with

what is read in the Gospels. Judas had already covenanted with the Jewish leaders to betray Jesus, before that last supper was eaten.

“Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, And said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the passover” (Matt. 26:14-17)?

The sorrow attendant with the announcement Jesus made of His betrayal (Matt. 26:22) is in stark contrast with the feast the Corinthians were observing. The Lord’s Supper is a solemn time of remembrance, not a time of frivolity at a common meal.

On the night He was betrayed, Jesus took bread. What kind of bread was it? It is not known (was it wheat, rye, et cetera?); but what the nature of the bread was is known.

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:24 “And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of Me.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” (NKJV)</p> |
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THANKS — εὐχαριστέω — *“To be grateful, feel thankful...to give thanks”* (Thayer, p. 263); *“To show oneself grateful, to be thankful, to give thanks”* (Zodhiates, p. 687); *“Be thankful, feel obligated to thank...give thanks, render of return thanks”* (Bauer, p. 328).

REMEMBRANCE — • νύμνησις — *“A remembering, recollection: to call me (affectionately) to remembrance”* (Thayer, p. 40); *“Remembrance. In remembrance of me’ means that the participant should remember Christ and the expiatory sacrifice of His death. The memory of the greatness of the sacrifice should cause the believer to abstain from sin”* (Zodhiates, p. 155); *“Reminder, remembrance of something”* (Bauer, p. 58).

Note the action of Jesus. He took the bread, gave thanks for it (and what it symbolized), broke it, and **“For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.”**

The outer body was indeed broken through the piercing action of the nails and spear. But further, the action involved is the breaking of the bread so it may be shared by all. Over the years, some have also advocated the bread must be broken by the one who serves at the table before it may properly be partaken of. But as Zerr points out,

“Whether the one presiding breaks the bread (so as to place it on a number of plates), or the attendants break off a piece to serve to each participant, or he breaks it off himself, the bread is sure to be ‘broken,’ and that is all that is

On that night Jesus was celebrating the last authorized passover meal of all time.

“Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten...Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters” (Ex. 13:3, 7).

Leaven (yeast) was considered a corrupting agent, and was not allowed even to be in the house during the passover feast. This is the bread Jesus used to draw Christian minds back to the perfect sacrifice offered for sins. It is no accident Jesus waited until Passover to institute this memorial supper and using this bread with its particular nature to represent Himself to believers of all time.

distributed it to the disciples for consumption. Some have said this does not fit with John 19:36.

required” (Zerr, p. 26).

“Take, eat; this is My body.” This phrase has certainly been abused by any number of people over the years. Some have declared that these emblems (bread and fruit of the vine) actually become the physical body and blood of Jesus. This consideration needs to be made; Paul pointed **back** to the time Jesus instituted this supper to

teach the disciples. When Jesus instituted this supper, did the apostles actually partake of His physical body and blood, or did they realize these items were being used in a figurative sense? Obviously, they knew they did not eat His physical body. They knew literally to partake of physical blood was against the law under which they lived. It is obvious that these are symbols of His body and blood meant to cause Christians to remember the sacrifice He made for mankind's sins.

"For you" are words which ought to cause gratitude to

flow from Christian hearts. Jesus did not die for any selfish reason; He died for man's benefit. The whole picture Paul paints was a rebuke to the selfish perversion of the supper which had been engaged in by the Corinthians. One's participation in this supper is to cause one to remember the sacrifice made, serving as a way to keep one from forgetting the great love He has shown. The letter of the law would involve only the action; the spirit of the law involves the action and the motive of love behind it because of the sacrifice He made.

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:25 "After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in My blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." (NKJV)</p> |
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"After the same manner" (*"In like manner"*). Just as had been done with the bread, so He did with the fruit of the vine (cup). Jesus and His disciples partook of the bread and fruit of the vine after they had **"supped."** This shows there was a clear distinction between the partaking of these emblems and the Passover meal which they had eaten. The Corinthians must separate the Lord's memorial supper from any other meal.

"This cup is the New Testament in My blood." The cup, that is, the contents of the cup, was the symbol of the **New** testament or covenant which was sealed with the blood of Christ. This covenant is new in reference to the covenant given through Moses. Denominational men, it is interesting to note, understand that the old covenant of Moses was replaced by the new one under Christ. But having made this recognition, they often go back to the Old Testament to try to justify some action today (such as instrumental music in worship). The fruit of the vine is representative of the new covenant Jesus has given, and should cause all Christians to remember all He has done; not just the shedding of His blood, but the system of faith His shed blood instituted.

What was in the cup? Over the years some have tried to say this was fermented grape juice. But to make such an assertion shows ignorance of the Bible. The Lord's supper was instituted at the Passover meal, and no leaven could

Why did they partake of this fruit of the vine? They did so for the same reason they partook of the bread: **"In remembrance of Me."** What does it mean to remember the Lord? Is it just casually thinking about the sacrifice

even be in the house during this memorial feast. Since leaven is more commonly known in our time as yeast, the liquid in the cup could have been nothing more than unfermented, pure, grape juice. Alcoholic grape juice requires a fermentation process which absolutely requires yeast.

"As oft as ye drink it." Some assert the frequency of partaking of this supper is left up to Christians. But the Bible does show the example of the apostles and brethren of the first century.

"Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight" (Acts 20:7).

The early disciples met on the first day of the week, and there is a first day in every week; therefore, the disciples of Christ meet every Sunday (the first day of the week by our calendar), to partake of this feast. Further, First Corinthians 16:1-2, indicates the Corinthians were in the habit of meeting on the first day of the week for worship.

He made? Or is it to concentrate on the suffering He endured? Or is it to think of and remember all He did, which of necessity includes the blood He shed for the remission of sins?

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:26 "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come."</p> | <p>"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes." (NKJV)</p> |
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SHOW — καταγγέλλω — *“To announce, declare, promulgate, make known; to proclaim publicly, publish”* (Thayer, p. 330); *“To declare plainly, openly, or aloud. To announce, proclaim. In the sense of to laud, celebrate”* (Zodhiates, p. 827); *“Proclaim”* (Bauer, p. 409).

In studying this passage, it is important to notice the word **“show,”** which comes from καταγγέλλω. This word means a proclamation, an announcement of something which is very important for the purpose of keeping something ever before the minds of men.

The Lord’s supper is an unbroken link between two events: the death of Christ and His second coming. Every time one partakes of this supper, he is proclaiming His life, not just His death; for a death suggests there was formerly a life. Considering His death reminds one of why He came to this earth, to seek and to save that which was lost, to offer Himself so lost mankind could have forgiveness of sins. But, as this passage shows, the celebration of this

supper should also remind one that He is coming again.

When the supper was instituted they could actually look at the Lord, and when He comes again one will see Him as He is (1 John 3:1-3. Until then, this memorial feast, this proclamation of His sacrifice, intensifies one’s realization of what He has done for mankind.

If He died and is coming again, then He lives because there has been a resurrection. Those who say one should not speak of the resurrection of Jesus with regards to this passage have not taken this implication into consideration. If He did not come forth from the grave, He could not come again. Since He is coming again, then He must presently be alive. Christians remember and serve a **risen** Savior.

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:27 “Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNWORTHILY — • ναξίως — *“In an unworthy manner”* (Thayer, p. 40); *“Unworthily, irreverently, in an unbecoming manner, treating the Lord’s Supper as a common meal without attributing to it and its elements their proper value”* (Zodhiates, p. 156); *“In an unworthy or careless manner”* (Bauer, p. 58).

GUILTY — ὄνοχος — *“One who is held in anything, so that he cannot escape; bound, under obligation, subject to, liable...guilty, worthy of punishment”* (Thayer, p. 217); *“To hold in or to be ensnared. Held in, contained in....Bound by sin or guilt, guilty of sin and subsequently obliged to punishment on that account”* (Zodhiates, p. 592); *“Mostly as a legal term liable, answerable, guilty”* (Bauer, p. 267).

The action under consideration is the partaking of the emblems of the Lord’s supper, which represent Christ and His death. The action considered also deals with the way one partakes of this supper. Many have referred to this passage as an **excuse** for not partaking of the Lord’s Supper. They say they are not worthy to partake of the

supper because of their sins. If such were the case, why did they not take care of this matter, and then partake of the supper? But the passage does not deal with the attributes of the person partaking. If it did, then no human being could rightfully partake of this memorial.

As noted above, the word **“unworthily,”** indicates an irreverent and careless manner. The Corinthians were treating the emblems (bread and fruit of the vine) as if they were simply ordinary food. They did not carefully consider the meaning of these emblems, nor did they treat this occasion with the solemnity with which it should be characterized. Further, the word **“unworthily”** is an adverb signifying the manner in which something is done, not the character of the one doing the action. When one partakes of the Lord’s Supper, he **must** be thinking about the Lord and what He did. It **must not** be a ritualistic endeavor, but rather one in which one’s heart strings pull one back to that time, considering carefully the significance of His sacrifice. Christians cannot partake of these emblems in a frivolous manner, thinking about

anything and everything except the Lord’s death.

What are the consequences of partaking of these emblems in an unworthy manner? One is guilty of the blood and body of the Lord. But what does this mean?

Since the body and blood are used in this passage to refer to His death, it means one is guilty of that death. These are Christians to whom this was written. Before baptism all were guilty; all deserved punishment because their sins crucified the Son of GOD. But when one is baptized, one is forgiven from those sins (Acts 2:38) and one is no longer subject to the penalty of sin. But as Christians, one can so sin as to become just as guilty and deserving of

punishment as one was before he had his sins washed away. It is possible for Christians again to become guilty of crucifying Christ.

“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of GOD afresh, and put Him to an open shame” (Heb. 6:6).

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| 1 Cor. 11:28 “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.” | “But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.” (ASV) | “But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.” (NKJV) |
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EXAMINE — δοκιμάζω — *“To test, examine, prove, scrutinize (to see whether a thing be genuine or not), as metals”* (Thayer, p. 154); *“To try, prove, discern, distinguish, approve. It has the notion of proving a thing whether it is worthy or not”* (Zodhiates, p. 475); *“Put to the test, examine”* (Bauer, p. 202).

Everyone is to examine, to test, to scrutinize himself before partaking of the supper. What is he to examine? Is this examination held to determine whether he is worthy of partaking of this supper? This is not the case, for if one’s partaking revolves around whether one is worthy then no one could partake. What one is to scrutinize is one’s attitude, one’s motive, for partaking of this supper. It is the manner in which one partakes which can condemn.

Notice the word **“and.”** One must both eat the bread and drink the cup. One cannot leave either out of the picture. Considering this, it is possible to partake of the one properly and not the other. Between partaking of the bread and drinking of the cup, does one’s mind wander to those things of a worldly nature? Christians must be aware this is a serious time which must have their full and undivided attention as they consider the meaning of this supper.

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| 1 Cor. 11:29 “For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” | “For he that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body.” (ASV) | “For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.” (NKJV) |
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DAMNATION — κρίμα — *“A decree:...judgment; i.e., condemnation of wrong, the decision (whether severe or mild) which one passes on the faults of others”* (Thayer, p. 360); *“Judgment, sentence, the reason for judgment...more often a sentence of punishment or condemnation, implying also the punishment itself as a certain consequence”* (Zodhiates, p. 888); *“Judicial verdict...mostly in an unfavorable sense, of the sentence of condemnation, also of the condemnation and the subsequent punishment”* (Bauer, p. 450).

DISCERNING — διακρίνω — *“To separate, make a distinction, discriminate...to distinguish or separate a person or thing from the rest, in effect i.q. to prefer, yield to him the preference or honor”* (Thayer, p. 138); *“To separate throughout, completely, used tran....By implication, to distinguish, make a distinction, cause to differ”* (Zodhiates, p. 431); *“Separate, arrange...make a distinction, differentiate”* (Bauer, p. 185).

If the system of religion developed by man comes in conflict with clear teaching, those men often pervert the meaning of the text. Example: In this text, Hodge says the following about the word **“damnation;”**

“The word damnation, used in our version, originally and properly means simply condemnation, and not hopeless and final perdition, which is its modern and popular sense. In the original the word is κρίμα without the article, and therefore simply judgment, not the judgment” (Hodge, p. 232-233).

Whether the word **“damnation”** or *“condemnation”* or *“judgment”* is used, makes no difference. Why does Hodge make the above statement? He does so because he believes and follows the Calvinistic doctrine of *“final perseverance of the saints.”* This doctrine basically states, no matter what happens, those who are Christians will end up in heaven. This doctrine teaches a Christian cannot so sin as to be eternally lost, and if someone is lost, it is proof he never was a Christian. It cannot be denied that this passage is being addressed to Christians, but when Calvinistic doctrine is contradicted by the Bible, Calvinists deny the

Bible and keep their doctrine.

If a Christian does not partake of the memorial feast properly and in the right manner, that Christian stands condemned by GOD. As Willis correctly states, the word κρίμα

“refers to a judgment of God or God’s condemnation; whether it is temporary or eternal depends upon whether the sinner repents and seeks forgiveness” (Willis, p. 404).

The Bible record is,

“If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:7-10, emphasis mine, RK).

What if one stops **“walking”** in the light (present tense, continuous action)? If one stops walking in the light,

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| 1 Cor. 11:30 “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” | “For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep.” (ASV) | “For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.” (NKJV) |
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WEAK — •σθενής — *“Weak, infirm, feeble”* (Thayer, p. 80); *“Without strength, powerless...infirm, sick, sickly, diseased”* (Zodhiates, p. 274); *“Weak, powerless”* (Bauer, p. 115).

SICKLY — —ρρωστος — *“Without strength, weak, sick”* (Thayer, p. 75); *“Infirm, sick, invalid...Used in ancient Greece to indicate moral weakness or slackness”* (Zodhiates, p. 258); *“Sick, ill, lit. powerless”* (Bauer, p. 109).

SLEEP — κοιμάω — *“To cause to sleep, put to sleep...metaph. And euphemistically i.q. to die”* (Thayer, p. 351); *“To cause to lie down to sleep...Spoken of the sleep of death, to die”* (Zodhiates, p. 872); *“Sleep, fall asleep...fall asleep, die, pass away”* (Bauer, p. 437).

Those who hold the Calvinistic position, refer to this passage as being physically weak, sick, and dead. They must do this in order to fit their doctrine. But it should be considered, Paul was speaking of a spiritual feast, the partaking of emblems which symbolized the death of the Lord. The application here is to that which is spiritual. The Corinthians were taking what was to represent the spiritual and giving it a physical application: a time of gluttony and irreverence. They were spiritually weak and sick because they did not make a proper division between the physical and spiritual. This spiritual sickness led many to die spiritually.

“Whenever people partake of the Lord’s Supper

saying he has no sin which will condemn him, in essence he calls GOD a liar. How can a just GOD refuse to condemn such a person? Calvinism deceives itself into denying a Christian can so sin as to be lost; but notice the implication of the above passage for one who does not confess his sin. If a Christian does not repent of his sins, confessing them before the throne of GOD, praying for forgiveness, then that person will be lost for eternity (cf. Acts 8:22).

“Not discerning the Lord’s body.” To discern, is *“to separate, to make a distinction”* (Thayer, IBID). The argument has been made that this refers to the Lord’s flesh or to the church or to both. Whichever way one may interpret it, the results are no different. The Corinthians who were partaking of the bread and cup were not considering either the Lord nor the Lord’s church in their eating. They did not distinguish between the solemnity of the meaning of the Lord’s supper and a common meal. Because of their improper thinking they indeed despised the church of GOD, as they despised the One who brought it into existence through His sacrifice.

unworthily, they are always spiritually ill or spiritually dead; this is a universal truth applicable to all people of all times” (Willis, p. 405).

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| 1 Cor. 11:31 “For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be | “But if we discerned ourselves, we should not be judged.” (ASV) | “For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.” (NKJV) |
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JUDGE — διακρίνω — *“To separate, make a distinction, discriminate...to learn by discrimination, to try, decide”*(Thayer, p. 138); *“To separate throughout, completely...by implication, to distinguish, make a distinction, cause to differ...figuratively it means to distinguish, discern clearly, note accurately”*(Zodhiates, p. 431-432); *“Make a distinction, differentiate...judge correctly”*(Bauer, p. 185).

JUDGED — κρίνω — *“To judge...of the judgment of God or of Jesus the Messiah, deciding between the righteousness and the unrighteousness of men:...contextually, used specifically of the act of condemning and decreeing (or inflicting) penalty on one”*(Thayer, p. 361); *“To separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good. In the NT, it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case...in the sense of to pass judgment upon, condemn”*(Zodhiates, p. 889); *“Judge, decide, hale before a court, condemn, also hand over for judicial punishment...punish on the basis of the law”*(Bauer, p. 451-452).

Interestingly, the two words translated **“judge”** and **“judged,”** come from two different words in the original. The first word **“judge,”** comes from διακρίνω, which deals with a decision made after examining the facts (v. 28). Paul has presented the Lord’s will as to what should be partaken of in the supper, and shown them the attitude with which it is to be partaken. If they had looked at the facts, which had been presented to them even before this letter, properly discriminating between their own selfish acts and what had been commanded, there would be no need for GOD’s judgment to come upon them.

The second word **“judged,”** comes from κρίνω, which is a legal judgment. It deals with distinguishing between right and wrong in a courtroom setting, which if found guilty demands punishment based upon the law. In this context, the Corinthians had not discriminated between a common meal and a spiritual one; they mixed the two together, thus violating GOD’s law. If they had discriminated properly between the two, and in this case, corrected their error, there would have been no need for

GOD to condemn them.

Some have thought this refers to actual physical sickness, and even death, brought by GOD upon them because they had so abused this memorial supper. But the context speaks of the ability to escape punishment.

“It is simply not true that we will escape physical illnesses and death by properly examining ourselves. However, it is true that we will escape God’s condemnation with reference to the Lord’s Supper if we ourselves properly discern the Lord’s body and partake of the Supper with the respect due to a feast with its nature and design”(Willis, p. 406).

One should consider GOD’s judgment with punishment (rebuke) had been delivered upon the Corinthians through the writing of this letter.

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| <p>1 Cor. 11:32 “But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.”</p> | <p>“But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” (NKJV)</p> |
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CHASTENED — παιδεύω — *“In classical Greek properly to train children:...to chastise or castigate with words, to correct...used of God, to chasten by the infliction of evils and calamities”*(Thayer, p. 473); *“Originally to bring up a child, to educate, used of activity directed toward the moral and spiritual nurture and training of the child, to influence conscious will and action...to correct, chastise”*(Zodhiates, p. 1088); *“Bring up, instruct, train, educate...discipline with punishment”*(Bauer, p. 604).

CONDEMNED — κατακρίνω — *“To give judgment against, to judge worthy of punishment, to condemn”*(Thayer, p. 332); *“To pronounce sentence against, condemn, adjudge guilty...of the last judgment”*(Zodhiates, p. 833); *“Condemn to destruction”*(Bauer, p. 412).

When the Lord looks at one’s deeds, as He did the Corinthians’ perversion of the Lord’s Supper, and renders one guilty, then one is to be chastened by the Lord. The word **“chastened,”** comes from παιδεύω, which indicates

the training a father gives to his children, to educate and give discipline. The Father, through Paul, was educating the Corinthian brethren. Why was He educating them? He was doing so because they had sinned against GOD, thus

needing to change their thinking and then their course of action. With education, and compliance with the instruction GOD gives, comes escape from the condemnation the ungodly world will receive at the last day (judgment day). This must be the intent of all discipline, to help someone learn the truth so he can avoid eternal condemnation.

Regarding the idea of **“chastening,”** and how it relates to the father teaching his child, notice:

“Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, GOD dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons” (Heb. 12:5-8).

“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes” (Prov. 13:24).

If GOD did not love His children, He would not chasten them in order to correct their errors before greater harm came to them. One who does not love his children will let them do whatever they desire, even if it hurts them or causes them to lose their lives. Calvinists, however, pervert this **“chastening”** of the Lord:

“God sends individual chastening to push offenders back toward righteous behavior, and

sends death to some in the church to encourage those who remain to choose holiness rather than sin. Even if the Lord were to strike us dead for profaning His table, it would be to discipline us, to keep us from being condemned. The thought is powerful. We are kept from condemnation not only by decree, but also by divine intervention. God chastens us to keep us from falling from salvation, and will even take our life, if need be, before that could happen” (John MacArthur, Jr., p. 275).

Question: If GOD would cause someone's death to keep them from going too far away from Him, is that not being a respecter of persons? Further, did GOD kill Ananias and Sapphira to keep them from going too far in their sins, so as to keep them from being eternally lost? Or, did He strike them dead as a punitive action for their sins? Consider Judas Iscariot who was one of the apostles (Acts 1:17), of whom it is said, **“by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place”** (Acts 1:25). Would MacArthur say Judas died before he could sin so greatly as to be eternally lost? To be consistent with his Calvinistic doctrine MacArthur would have to make such an affirmation. As seen in the references above, it cannot be said Judas was not saved at one point; but, he murdered the Son of GOD and went to his own place (eternal punishment). Question: *“If it is impossible for a Christian to sin so as to be eternally lost, why send any chastisement at all?”* The principle of Divine economy does not allow GOD to do what is unnecessary.

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| 1 Cor. 11:33 “Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.” | “Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, wait one for another.” (ASV) | “Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.” (NKJV) |
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Paul began this series of instructions condemning the mixing of the Lord's Supper with a common meal. He then gave them instructions with regards to the proper way and attitude they were to have when partaking of the supper. Therefore, the following thoughts must deal with the Lord's Supper, again referring to the separation of the common from the profane. When they were gathered for worship, this was not a time to be involved with the common. There was nothing wrong with their having a common meal together — separate and apart from the worship assembly.

When they came together to partake of the Lord's Supper, they were to tarry, i.e., wait for each other. This does not mean one had to wait to begin the worship service until everyone arrived. Slothfulness in gathering for

worship would be denied by the principles of Romans 12:11. What it does mean is they were to wait on their brethren, i.e., share with their brethren.

“Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11).

How can one be **“fervent in spirit”** and have a lax or ho-hum attitude about gathering for worship? On time is not the same as *“when I get there.”*

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| 1 Cor. 11:34 “And if any man | “If any man is hungry, let him eat at | “But if anyone is hungry, let him eat |
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| <p>hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come."</p> | <p>home; that your coming together be not unto judgment. And the rest will I set in order whensoever I come." (ASV)</p> | <p>at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come." (NKJV)</p> |
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Again, the separation is clearly made. Paul has discussed the public assembly, and the turning of it, by some, into a common meeting. The common must be separated from the spiritual. To avoid making the Lord's supper into a common meal because of their hunger, they were to eat at home before they came together. This in no way can be construed to prevent the congregation from getting together to have a common meal **as long as they do it outside the worship assembly**. Some, in their efforts to teach one cannot eat in the building, conveniently seem to forget *"love feasts"* are clearly

condoned in Jude twelve. Paul **does not** condemn them for eating a common meal together. He condemns them for mixing the two together in the worship assembly.

"And the rest will I set in order when I come." This phrase indicates there were other matters either with the Lord's Supper or their worship which also needed correcting. In effect, he tells them to start making the changes necessary with these instructions, and the other things which needed to be corrected would be handled when he was able to come to them.

First Corinthians — Chapter Twelve

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| 1 Cor. 12:1 “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” | “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant.” (ASV) | “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant.” (NKJV) |
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IGNORANT — • γνοέω — *“To be ignorant, not to know...not to understand...to err, sin through mistake”* (Thayer, p. 8); *“Not to recognize or know. To be ignorant of, unacquainted with”* (Zodhiates, p. 73); *“Not to know, be ignorant...not to understand”* (Bauer, p. 11). MacArthur says the word “agnostic” comes from this Greek word (MacArthur, p. 282).

The term, **“now concerning,”** indicates a change in subject matter. He has dealt with their abuse of the Lord’s table, now he turns to the abuse surrounding spiritual gifts.

Though the word “gifts” is not found in the original language in this verse, there is no doubt the subject of these three chapters (12-14) is the spiritual gifts listed later in this chapter. It may be this word is used here as a contrast between the spiritual and the carnal.

Since this verse is the introduction to the subject of spiritual gifts, it would seem wise to recall just how one could receive a spiritual gift in the first century. Acts chapter eight is probably the best example of how the reception of the miraculous was accomplished but other passages may also be consulted to confirm this truth (Acts 19:2-7; 2 Tim. 1:6).

Philip went to Samaria, preaching the Gospel where a great number responded to it (Acts 8:5-18). Simon the sorcerer responded and attempted to buy an ability which the apostles had. Simon had noticed that the people received the Holy Spirit only through the laying on of the apostles’ hands (Acts 8:17). Philip had not been able to impart miraculous gifts to anyone, even though he could perform miracles (v. 6). Since there are no apostles still alive today, then there can be no miraculous gifts today. No matter how much people may profess to believe the Bible, if they advocate anyone can perform miracles today, they have either not read the Acts eight passages, or they really do not believe the Bible.

Paul seems to have prepared some ground work for the thoughts about the gifts when he earlier states:

“these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?”

now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:6-7).

Some of the Corinthians were filled with pride, thinking they were better than others because of the particular gift they had been given. It may also be assumed some felt inferior because they did not have a gift, or had one of the gifts which the Corinthians considered inferior to others (1 Cor. 14:1ff).

Paul did not want them to be ignorant, i.e., without knowledge or understanding, but to understand the purpose of these gifts and how they related to the infancy and edification of the church. He wanted them to know the necessity of each member, with whatever gift they may have had — all were important (even if they did not have a miraculous gift).

Consider another thought on this word **“brethren.”** The comment was recently heard that, *“If you are not faithful, then you are not a Christian.”* These brethren were not being faithful in these chapters, nor had they been in the previous chapters. Yet, Paul refers to them as brethren, a synonym for members of the body of Christ — CHRISTIANS. They were erring Christians, not faithful Christians. The name Christian is a family name, designating all those who have been baptized for the remission of sins. When one becomes a Christian he is always a Christian. Just like a physical family, he may be disinherited for bringing disgrace on the family, on the name Christian; yet, he is still a Christian. Speaking of brethren who were refusing to obey the writings of the apostles, Paul said,

“If any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother” (2 Thess. 3:14-15; emphasis mine, RK).

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| 1 Cor. 12:2 “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” | “Ye know that when ye were Gentiles ye were led away unto those dumb idols, howsoever ye might led.” (ASV) | “You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.” (NKJV) |
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DUMB — —φωνος — “Voiceless, dumb, without the faculty of speech” (Thayer, p. 90); “Voiceless, dumb, not having the power of speech....Metaphorically, meaning unexpressive, i.e., without expression, not having the power of voice” (Zodhiates, p. 304); “Silent, dumb” (Bauer, p. 128).

Notice the wording of the first phrase in this verse: **“Ye know that ye were Gentiles.”** To whom was Paul writing? The Corinthians. Physically they were still Gentiles, so it is clear he uses the word Gentile to refer to one not being a Christian — the unconverted.

Paul does something here which he does in several other places (Rom. 6:17; Eph. 2:11-12; Titus 3:3; et cetera); he reminds them of where they had been spiritually. In doing so, he reminds them of how much better off they are now than they had been. They needed to appreciate their new status with GOD: they were now the new Israel. Whether they had any of the spiritual gifts or not, they needed to realize they were part of the body of Christ, and in Him they had all spiritual blessings.

“Blessed be the GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

The Holy Spirit designates the idols they formerly had served as being **“dumb.”** This does not mean they were stupid, but rather they were voiceless, speechless, without the ability to communicate anything. They could not teach anyone anything except the futility of manufacturing a god to which they then bowed. The Bible gives several clear pictures of what an idol really is:

“Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them” (Psalm 115:4-8).

“What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake;

to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it” (Hab. 2:18-19).

The term, **“even as ye were led,”** brings to mind the picture of an ox which is led about by the ring in his nose. In a sense, it is directed by brute force wherever it is led by its master, and is entirely under the master's control. Yet, the ring itself is small compared to the one being led by it. As one writer has so ably stated the case,

“There is something pathetic about idol worship. The heathen are pictured, not as freely following the gods their intellects have fully approved, but as under constraint, helpless, men who know better” (Leon Morris, p. 245).

People can be blind and follow blind leaders:

“If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch” (Matt. 15:14).

When men do not use the ability which GOD gave them to reason, they will quickly and easily be led to that which will destroy them. The question may be asked, *“How are people led away, or who leads people into idolatry?”* To those who have studied Genesis chapter three, there is no doubt. From the beginning the devil has been behind all sin, and was the one who influenced Eve and led her into the idolatry of humanism (making man his own god). Just as with Eve, he still uses an agent (He used a serpent to beguile Eve and uses friends, family members, life situations, et cetera, today.) to guide people toward his goal of destructive rebellion against GOD.

When man abandons GOD, he will always replace Him with something he considers supreme (cf. Rom. 1). When man turns from GOD, he stops using logic.

“No system of paganism consults the freedom and independence of the mind of man; but it is everywhere characterized as a system of power, and not of thought; and all its arrangements are made to secure that power without an intelligent assent of the understanding and the heart” (Barnes, p. 226).

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:3 “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of GOD calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of GOD calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.” (NKJV)</p> |
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ACCURSED — • νόθεμα — *“In the Sept. is generally the translation of the Heb., a thing devoted to God without hope of*

being redeemed, and, if an animal, to be slain (Lev. 27:28-29); therefore a person or thing doomed to destruction, Joshua 6:17; 7:12, etc.; a thing abominable and detestable, an accursed thing" (Thayer, p. 37); "A gift given by vow or in fulfillment of a promise, and given up or devoted to destruction for God's sake; therefore, given up to the curse and destruction, accursed" (Zodhiates, p. 148); "What is 'devoted to the divinity' can be either consecrated or accursed. The mng. of the word in the other NT passages moves definitely in the direction of the latter" (Bauer, p. 54).

The Corinthians were being given a way to test those who came among them, and who claimed to be inspired. The Spirit of GOD would never cause anyone to speak disrespectfully of Jesus, and certainly never to curse Him. The Spirit would only lead people to honor and glorify Jesus. Jesus tells us,

"When He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 16:13-14).

The idols just mentioned could not and would not cause men to speak respectfully of Jesus. In all probability the priests of these idols were denouncing Christ in the name of their dumb idols. Only the Spirit of GOD would acknowledge Jesus and cause men to do so. No one can acknowledge Christ to be the Son of GOD without being led by the Spirit to such a conclusion. Obviously in their time, the Holy Spirit could and did lead by direct influence.

Today one is still led to acknowledge Jesus by the Holy Spirit, but only through the infallible word which He has given. Without the New Testament one could know almost nothing about Jesus Christ (little has been given outside of the scriptures by way of history concerning Him).

"Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

"All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

One of the principles involved in verse three is the testing of those who come among Christians claiming to be Christians. Just because someone says he is a Christian does not make him so, nor does it make one faithful to Him. It would seem some were claiming they were being led by the Spirit, yet they cursed the Lord! How can any one, and how were they told to distinguish between those who were truly being led by the Spirit? It was by what the false teachers said!

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of GOD: because

many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of GOD: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of GOD: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of GOD: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (1 John 4:1-3).

"Take heed that no man deceive you" (Matt. 24:4).

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of GOD upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6).

Today, one is led by the Spirit's words, the New Testament; and one can determine whether one is actually spiritual or not. As MacArthur states,

"A Christian today cannot receive new revelation. The only way to be sure if something is spiritual is to be sure it is scriptural. If it agrees with Scripture, a new revelation from the Spirit is unnecessary; if it does not agree with the Scripture, a new revelation cannot be from the Spirit and is false" (MacArthur, p. 286).

The term **"Lord"** needs to be understood as more than the idea of a ruler. When used with Jesus it is the equivalent of an absolute ruler, i.e., GOD. To say Jesus is Lord is to say He is GOD (Phil. 2:5-11)!

Another principle to be considered is whether one has literally to say words which speak of Jesus as being accursed in order to receive the condemnation spoken of in this passage. Or, would this include those who act as if Jesus is accursed, but would never literally say such words?

"Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful

works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:depart from Me, ye that work

iniquity” (Matt. 7:21-23).
Actions sometimes speak louder than words.

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| 1 Cor. 12:4 “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” | “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (ASV) | “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (NKJV) |
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DIVERSITIES — διαίρεσις — *“Division, distribution. Distinction, difference; in particular, a distinction arising from a different distribution to different persons”* (Thayer, p. 137); *“Division, distribution, classification or separation”* (Zodhiates, p. 428); *“Apportionment, division”* (Bauer, p. 183); *“Distinctions, differences, distributions”* (Robertson, p. 168).

GIFTS — χάρισμα — *“A gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own...in the technical Pauline sense χαρίσματα [A.V. gifts] denote the 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, p. 667); *“A gift of grace, an undeserved benefit...In the NT used only of gifts and graces imparted from God”* (Zodhiates, p. 1471); *“A gift (freely and graciously given), a favor bestowed”* (Bauer, p. 878); *“A favour bestowed or received without any merit”* (Robertson, p. 168).

The word **“diversities,”** means *“distributions.”* There was a distributing of gifts to different people, all did not receive the same gift(s). This does not deal with the fact of different gifts being available, but the fact they were spread out among the brethren. The gifts they had were received without any merit on their own. They had not earned them; therefore, they had no grounds upon which to boast one above another.

Each gift had a particular end in mind; each was profitable in its own realm for the unity of the church. These were supernatural wonders which had the purpose of confirming the word of GOD, and building up (edifying) the church.

“They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen” (Mark 16:20).

No gift ranks above another in value, nor would it then make the holder of the gift above any holder of another gift. The point being emphasized is they all came from the same source; they were not given to cause division, but

rather to produce unity. Interestingly, these verses in chapter twelve three through five also are a clear picture of the GODHEAD. *“All the gifts were given by the same Spirit; all the services were rendered under the direction of the same Lord; and all the effects produced by divine power were from the same GOD”* (T.R. Applebury; p. 223).

“They are all equally gifts of the Spirit, modes of serving the Son, and effects due to the efficiency of the Father” (Hodge, p. 243).

Notice First Corinthians 14:1, where they were told to desire the gift of prophecy above tongues. Prophecy deals with the ability to teach, but the text does not imply that those who could teach were above the rest of the people, nor does it rank the teacher above those who could speak in tongues. The one who spoke in tongues could relay a message given by another, but both the teacher and the one who could interpret were vitally important.

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| 1 Cor. 12:5 “And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord.” | “And there are diversities of ministrations, and the same Lord.” (ASV) | “There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.” (NKJV) |
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ADMINISTRATIONS — διακονία — *“Service, ministering, esp. of those who execute the commands of others”* (Thayer, p. 137) *“Service, attendance, ministry...Ministry, ministration, i.e., the office of ministering in divine things, spoken chiefly of apostles and teachers”* (Zodhiates, p. 429).

Each one has his own service to render through the gift(s) he is given. Although each has his own particular work to perform, the gifts each had originated from the

same source. Whatever gift or ability one may have, it is to be used in the Lord's service, for the Lord came to **serve** mankind so man could gain salvation (Matt. 20:28).

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:28).

“Made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7).

“Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another” (Gal. 5:13).

“Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ” (Col. 3:24).

An example of different areas in a given work may be helpful to illustrate that differing abilities do not mean one is above another. In the area of teaching, one may have the ability to teach young children, but another cannot. Another person may be able to teach teenagers, whereas the first cannot. While still another may have the ability to teach in a college, whereas the first two could not. The fact that one cannot do what the others can does not make that one inferior. Each is vitally important in his own area of expertise.

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| 1 Cor. 12:6 “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same GOD which worketh all in all.” | “And there are diversities of workings, but the same GOD, who worketh all things in all.” (ASV) | “And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same GOD who works all in all.” (NKJV) |
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OPERATIONS — ἔργον — *“Thing wrought; effect, operation”* (Thayer, p. 215); *“Effect, working...In the NT, used only in 1 Cor. 12:6, 10 of the results of the energy of GOD in the believer. Though energema is translated ‘operations,’ it is actually the results energized by God’s grace”* (Zodhiates, p. 589); *“Activity”* (Bauer, p. 265).

The idea of the word **“operations,”** is the *“effect”* generated by these miracles with which the text deals. The Spirit bestows the gifts by which the Lord is served; but the One who brings about the effect is GOD. The purpose of each gift is designated by GOD, and it is through Him the energy of these gifts accomplishes His purpose.

Two main ideas as to the meaning of this passage have emerged:

1. *“It may be, possible, that Paul here refers to the works of God mainly for mere illustrations, and by the word ‘operations’ means the works which God has performed in creation and providence. His works are various. They are not all alike, though they come from the same hand. The sun, the moon, the stars, the earth are different; the trees of the forest, the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, the inhabitants of the*

deep are different; the flowers, and shrubs, and herbs are different from each other; yet, however much they may vary, they are formed by the same hand, are the productions of the same God, and are to be regarded as proofs of the same wisdom and power” (Barnes, p. 228-229).

3. David Lipscomb best expresses the second thought: *“It is the same God, who having exalted the Lord Jesus, and having sent the Holy Spirit, works all these things”* (Lipscomb, p. 181).

The major point of this passage is that all these gifts have the same source of power. They all come from GOD! Notice the concept of the GODHEAD in this context: **“the same Spirit”** (v. 4), **“the same Lord”** (v. 5), and **“the same GOD”** (v. 6).

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| 1 Cor. 12:7 “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” | “But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit to profit withal.” (ASV) | “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all.” (NKJV) |
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With the amount of emphasis these chapters expend on showing the source of these gifts, no one should have put himself down or built himself up because he had or did not have some spiritual gift. But, from the context, it is

They did not have these gifts through any ability of their own; they were given to them by the Holy Spirit. They were therefore not to be used to promote self or to benefit self, but to instruct and profit the whole church.

obvious some of the Corinthians were promoting themselves as being superior to others because of the gifts they were given.

These gifts were to be used to help the church become strong in the faith, to be able to withstand the forces of evil.

“The principle established by Paul with reference to miraculous spiritual gifts is just as applicable

to non-miraculous, natural endowments. We each have different abilities to work in the local congregation but each ability we have comes

from God to be used in His service. None of us should esteem himself better than another because he possesses any one ability; rather, he should use that ability in service to God. It was given to him as a stewardship entrusted to him”(Willis, p. 421).

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| 1 Cor. 12:8 “For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;” | “For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit:” (ASV) | “for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit,” (NKJV) |
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WISDOM — σοφία — “Wisdom, broad and full intelligence” (Thayer, p. 581); “Wisdom, skill, tact, expertise in any art...deep knowledge, natural and moral insight, learning, science, implying cultivation of mind and enlightened understanding” (Zodhiates, p. 1300).

KNOWLEDGE — γνῶσις — “Knowledge...by itself, signifies in general intelligence, understanding” (Thayer, p. 119); “word of knowledge’ meaning the faculty of unfolding and expounding theoretically the deeper knowledge or fundamental principles of the Christian religion, equivalent to what in Luke 11:52 is called the ‘key of knowledge” (Zodhiates, p. 379).

The gifts all came from the same source and were for the good of the whole body, not just a few individuals upon whom they were bestowed. The bickering which is evident among them over these gifts should therefore cease immediately. This unity is emphasized by the words **“by the same Spirit.”** Both were useful and necessary or they would not have been given by the Spirit.

“The word of wisdom” — Webster says the word **“wisdom”** means:

“1:a accumulated philosophic or scientific learning: KNOWLEDGE b: ability to discern inner qualities and relationships: INSIGHT c: good sense: JUDGMENT 2: a wise attitude or course of action” (Webster, p. 1025, cf. definitions above). *“Wisdom, then, refers basically to applying truths discovered, to the ability to make skilful and practical application of the truth to life situations”* (MacArthur, p. 298).

One should notice that the passage says **“Word of wisdom,”** which indicates what is spoken. Thus,

Lipscomb states this **“word of wisdom”** is the Gospel itself. Barnes says it is not only the obtaining of the “comprehensive views of the scheme of redemption,” but also the ability to teach it so others are enabled to understand it. McKnight says this is the

“doctrine of the Gospel, communicated by inspiration,” which enabled *“them to direct religious faith and practice infallibly”* (James McKnight, p. 195).

“Knowledge” — *“The fact or condition of knowing something with familiarity gained through experience or association — the sum of what is known: the body of truth, information, and principles acquired by mankind”* (Webster, p. 469, cf. above definitions).

The one given the **“word of knowledge”** was miraculously given the ability to know the truths which GOD desired to be imparted to mankind.

The difference in these two words seems to be that the wise man had the ability to apply the knowledge which was delivered to the various situations.

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| 1 Cor. 12:9 “To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit;” | “to another faith, in the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings, in the one Spirit;” (ASV) | “to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit,” (NKJV) |
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HEALING — ἰαμα — “A means of healing, remedy, medicine” (Thayer, p. 295); *“healing”* (Zodhiates, p. 752; Bauer, p. 368).

What is the faith about which this passage speaks? It cannot be the faith one must have in GOD to please Him. **“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD”** (Rom. 10:17). The “common faith” all Christians have is not something which is miraculously given to them.

If it were, then why do not all men believe? Further, if the common faith is a miraculous endowment, and all men do not believe, then this would make GOD a respecter of persons. **“GOD is no respecter of persons”** (Acts 10:34). Obviously the faith spoken of in this passage has

something to do with the miraculous realm. This probably deals with the faith which allowed those who had miraculous abilities to perform the tasks given them.

Next listed is the miraculous ability to heal someone of a disease or affliction. One of the marks of miraculous Biblical healing is the instantaneous nature of such healing.

This is a far cry from the modern "FAKE healers." The purpose of miraculous healing was not for selfish purposes.

If such healing had been done for selfish reasons surely Paul would have performed a miracle to heal his beloved Timothy (1 Tim. 5:23). Neither were these gifts given in order to make Christians well for the sake of simply making them well (Trophimus, 2 Tim. 4:20; or Paul himself, 2 Cor. 12:7-9). The Bible clearly explains why miracles existed in the first century — to prove that the message given by His messengers was authentic, i.e., it came from GOD Himself. **"They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following"** (Mark 16:20).

MacArthur makes some interesting and valuable

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:10 "To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues:"</p> | <p>"and to another workings of miracles; and to another prophecy; and to another discernings of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues." (ASV)</p> | <p>"to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues." (NKJV)</p> |
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MIRACLES — δύναμις — *"Strength, ability, power; univ. inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth"* (Thayer, p. 159); *"Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem duna — have the meaning of being able, capable"* (Zodhiates, p. 485); *"Power, might, strength...ability, capability"* (Bauer, p. 207); *"A miracle is a supernatural intrusion into the natural world and its natural laws, explainable only by divine intervention"* (MacArthur, p. 301).

PROPHECY — προφητεία — *"Prophecy, i.e., discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; esp. by foretelling future events"* (Thayer, p. 552); *"A prophet of God, therefore, is simply one who speaks forth God's Word, and prophecy is the proclaiming of that Word"* (MacArthur, p. 303).

DISCERNING — διάκρισις — *"A distinguishing, discerning, judging"* (Thayer, p. 139); *"A distinguishing, discerning clearly, i.e., spoken of the act or power"* (Zodhiates, p. 432); *"Distinguishing, differentiation of good and evil"* (Bauer, p. 185); *"Robertson and Plummer make this comment: The gift of discerning, in various cases (hence the plural) whether extraordinary spiritual manifestations were from above or not; they might be purely natural, though strange, or they might be diabolical"* (Ralph Earle, Word Meanings in the New Testament, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass., 1986, p. 235).

INTERPRETATION — ἑρμηνεία — *"Interpretation (of what has been spoken more or less obscurely by others)"* (Thayer, p. 250); *"Interpretation, explanation"* (Zodhiates, p. 655); *"Translation, interpretation"* (Bauer, p. 310); *"The word hermeneia is derived from hermeneuo which occurs in John 1:38, 42; 9:7; Heb. 2:7. In every case, it is used to mean 'to translate from one language to another.' The noun hermeneia refers to 'translation' from one language to another"* (Earle, p. 235).

TONGUES — γλῶσσα — *"The tongue, a member of the body, the organ of speech...a tongue, i.e., the language used by a*

statements here. He states:

"The gifts of healing, like the other sign gifts, were temporary, given to the church for authenticating the apostolic message as the word of God. The Great Commission call does not include a call to heal bodies but only the call to heal souls through the preaching of the gospel....He did not exercise the gift of healing except as necessary to confirm the power of the gospel, not to make Christians healthy" (MacArthur, pp. 300-301).

These gifts were temporary (to get the church through its infancy stage), and they were given for a specific purpose (to cause the unbeliever to accept the messengers as preaching GOD'S powerful word).

Notice again, these gifts all came from the same Spirit.

They were all meant to benefit the church and its work, thus producing unity, not division, among Christians. The Corinthians were using these gifts to promote factions.

particular people in distinction from that of other nations” (Thayer, p. 118); “Tongue. An organ of the body...Metaphorically, speech or language...In the phrases glossaia heterais, tongues (“of” ?? – RK) others or different, meaning different than their own native tongues. Also glossaia kainais, qualitatively new, to speak languages not known to them before, means to speak in or with tongues other than their own native tongue” (Zodhiates, p. 375); “Tongue...language” (Bauer, p. 162). (The notes of Charles Hodge on tongues are extremely valuable; pages 248-252.)

“**The working of miracles**” is distinguished in this verse from that of the miraculous healings in the previous verse. This may be making a difference between miracles of mercy (healing, etc.), and the other miracles, such as striking Elymas blind (Acts 13:8-11), or the striking deaths of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10). Interestingly, the Greek word translated “miracles,” is the word for power, as noted above. The passage should read “the working of powers,” with the understanding these were supernatural actions which were performed.

“**To another prophecy**” regards the supernatural ability to teach. The work of a prophet was to proclaim the truth of GOD. In doing this he could use the past, the present, or the future. Most seem to think, in our time, prophecy deals with foretelling the future. But a study of GOD’S Word shows the prophets spent relatively few of their words telling of the future. Instead, they taught the people the lessons they needed to know in order to please GOD, and much of what they said was reminding the people of past lessons or truth taught by GOD. (Notice all of the quotations and references in the New Testament from the Old Testament.)

“**To another discerning of spirits**” is the ability to determine whether something was from GOD or man. The word discern means to judge something, often to judge in order to see if there is a difference between two things. While this would include “miracles” which were done, it would primarily deal with what was taught. Those endowed with the ability to discern spirits were those who could determine whether a teacher was a false teacher or one delivering a message from GOD. John tells Christians to “**try the spirits whether they are of GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world**” (1 John 4:1). What a man says in religious matters should be judged to be either the word of GOD or simply the words of a man. If they are the words of man, i.e., not in accordance with GOD’S word, then such a man is a false

Since this chapter, and the next two, speak of “**tongues**,” a detailed look at the subject of “**tongues**” is given here. First, the concept of “**tongues**” is defined in Acts 2:4-11. The apostles “**began to speak with other tongues**” (Acts 2:3). Now what does this mean? Does the context define what they were doing? The Jews who were gathered on this occasion marvelled because those who were speaking were all Galilaeans (v. 7). Why should the fact of their being Galilaeans amaze these Jews? It was because they were not from the regions of the world where the languages they were speaking were spoken. In other

teacher! He should then be marked as such.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:17-18)

“And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed” (2 Thess. 3:14).

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him GOD speed: For he that biddeth him GOD speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 10-11).

Consider the practical aspect of this gift in the time it was given. They did not have the written word of GOD to make these judgments, so how could they know if a speaker was proclaiming GOD’S truth to them, or his own doctrine? Today, this gift is not needed because Christians have the written word of GOD by which such judgments can be made.

“**To another divers kinds of tongues**” is a reference to the different languages spoken by mankind. There have been many in recent years who have tried to make this mean words which no one can understand, i.e., languages which human beings do not speak in some part of the world. Consequently, they have come up with a gibberish which they call “*tongues*.” Interestingly, notice some of the synonyms of gibberish: babble, gobbledygook, nonsense, drivel, prattle.

words, they had not grown up speaking these languages, and had never studied them. They were simple fishermen, for the most part, who had probably never traveled outside of Canaan. The Jews from these other nations asked, “**How hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?**” (v. 8). The text then goes on to list the nations from where they came; and then states, “**we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of GOD**” (v. 11). There can be no doubt the apostles were speaking in the languages spoken in other nations.

Second, the crowd understood the words being spoken

to them by the apostle. Tongues of the Bible could be understood by those (who knew the language) who heard them spoken so that the hearer could learn truth in his own **language**. The evidence of this is seen in the context when Paul tells the Corinthians,

“I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying” (1 Cor. 14:5).

The purpose of what comes from the mouth should be used to edify (build up) the church. That which cannot be understood cannot edify (build up) anyone! *“Ecstatic”* sound-making defined as *“speaking in tongues”* by the modern world hardly *“builds up”* another but it only excites the senses.

Third, notice the following passage:

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. 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. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified” (1 Corinthians 14:14-17).

Notice that the word **“unknown”** in this chapter is not found in the original. Second, Paul states there is no understanding for those who hear prayer or hear singing which is done in another tongue; the point being that understanding is the thing desired by those who hear and by the Spirit Who made the gift possible. Notice also, Paul shows that one who cannot understand what is being uttered cannot say **“Amen”** to what he hears if he does not understand what has been said. Why is this so? Who would want to say **“Amen”** if the speaker said something which was false? If one cannot understand what a person has said, one cannot endorse it with an amen because one might be endorsing false teaching. Third, even if the person speaking in another language is saying things which are right and proper (v. 17), if the person hearing the

“To another the interpretation of tongues.” This gift and its usage are rather easily understood. Someone who can speak two different languages is then able to help two people with different languages understand one another. But the question might be asked, if they could speak in the languages of others by miraculous means, why would one need an interpreter? Perhaps the speaker could speak the language, but might not be able to understand it himself. In other words, the man might be able to think of what needed to be said, but when the words came from his mouth GOD

utterance is not edified, then the one speaking has wasted his breath. Again, Paul is stating that words must build a person up (in Christ), or else one might as well be quiet. To illustrate what Paul says, it would be silly to think one has helped someone by speaking to them in English when all they understand is the Chinese language!

Fourth, notice verses ten and eleven:

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification. Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me” (1 Cor. 14:10-11).

Notice, the voices of the world have signification, i.e., there is meaning behind them. If one cannot understand the language of another, one immediately recognizes that one is a foreigner, one not of one's own nation. The speaker may understand what he is saying, but the hearer will not. (Have you ever tried to communicate with someone who speaks none of your language? If you have, you know nothing gets accomplished.) Consider how GOD stopped the people from working on the tower of Babel (Gen. 11). GOD caused those ancient people to speak different languages which made it impossible to work together. (One might note this is beginning to take place in America where so many refuse to recognize one legal language, and everything official is being put into several languages. What is going to happen in America based on a study of the tower of Babel?)

Fifth, the gift of tongues was given to convince unbelievers, not believers.

“Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe” (1 Cor. 14:22).

So often when those who pawn off their modern ecstatic utterances as **tongues** are challenged, they reply the tongues are only for believers and have no meaning to unbelievers. Obviously, such an answer is contrary to the word of GOD! It is evident that the word **tongue(s)** refers to language(s).

formed them into another language, the language of the hearers. This seems to be the possible case of Paul when the people of Lystra were crying out that Paul and Barnabas were gods, but Paul did not seem to understand them until the priests began to prepare sacrifices to be made to them (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14 and Acts 14). Second, there may have been the need for interpreters because there were several people of different nations gathered, but only one who had the ability to speak but in a language they did not understand. On the day of Pentecost, all of the apostles

were speaking, saying the same thing, but each in a language someone in the audience could understand. For them, there was no need of an interpreter; but in the other

example stated, there would definitely be a need for interpreters.

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:11 “But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”</p> | <p>“but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as He will.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” (NKJV)</p> |
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It is again emphasized that these gifts, though different in nature from one another, all came from the Holy Spirit. Since they were gifts, and since they were given to whomever the Spirit decided to give them, then no one had a reason to boast about the gift he had. No one could say any one gift was better or inferior to another. Paul will illustrate this in the verses following by showing the

importance of every part of the physical human body for the good of the whole. A person may think the little toe is not as important as the big toe on his foot, but let the little toe be cut off and see what it does to one’s balance. In the infant stage of the church, all of these gifts were important for the well being of the church as a whole; none of them was inferior to another.

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:12 “For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul compares the usage of gifts to the usage of various members of the human body. While he speaks of *“unity with diversity,”* he is not speaking of it in the way people do today. Usually when people today speak of *“unity in diversity,”* they mean, *“You do it by your set of rules and we will do it by our set of rules and yet we are all one.”* Paul’s argument in this context shows such to be false reasoning.

This is accomplished through commands given by the head with co-operation from the various parts of the body. Consider the following concept: the head tells the right foot to walk east one hundred yards, and at the very same time tells the left foot to walk west one hundred yards. If such were to happen there would be a struggle between the two to gain dominance over the other to accomplish its assigned task. Further, if one witnessed such a sight, one would know something was dreadfully wrong.

The Bible shows Christ to be the head of the church, and the church is His body.

The *“unity with diversity”* spoken of in the above passage deals with the different functions of each member of the body. All are under the same head, and all are to function so as to benefit the body.

“Hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23).

“For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another” (Rom. 12:4-5).

“He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18).

McGee tells this interesting story which illustrates the principle here.

The head is connected to the body, thus they make one unit, one entity. Each part of this unit must function in harmony with the rest of the body on any given mission.

“On one occasion, after I had spoken at a baccalaureate service in a prep school in Atlanta, Georgia, I went to a doctor’s home for dinner. He asked me if I knew which was the most important part of my body while I had been speaking. I guessed it was my tongue. No, he said, ‘the most important part of your body today was a member that no one was conscious of. It was your big toe. If you didn’t have a couple of big toes, you

wouldn’t have been able to stand up there at all.” He went on to say, *“I have thought a great deal about that. Suppose when I would go somewhere to preach, my big toe would rebel and say, ‘Look here, I refuse to go. I’ve been going with you for years and you have never called attention to me. People see your lips and tongue and your face, but they don’t ever see me. Why don’t you ever take off your shoe and sock and let them get a*

look at me sometime?’ Well, now, I don’t think folk would be interested in seeing my big toe — it is not very attractive. In fact, it is unattractive, yet it is an important part of my body”(J. Vernon McGee, p. 144-145).

Just as the physical body is to act as a harmonious whole, so also is the church, the spiritual body of Christ. Each part of both bodies has its part to play, and all are important in accomplishing the work assigned by the Lord.

For instance, if one takes another’s arm from the rest of the body, it soon withers away and dies. But what about the body which is left? Is there no ill effect upon it because it

is missing this member? The body is affected in many different ways, making it harder for it to function efficiently. Those with two good arms and hands may try buckling their belts or tying their shoes with only one hand and they will discover how much easier such tasks are with **two** hands. Another illustration of this principle can be seen in John, chapter fifteen (vv. 1-8). There, Jesus spoke of the vine and the branches. What happens when the branch is removed from the vine? It withers away and dies, but the vine remains, yet it does not have the production it once had.

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:13 “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body; whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” (NKJV)</p> |
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The subject of this verse is the body; and those in the body are to be united. But how does one get into the body? Paul insisted that:

“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:3-4; emphasis mine, RK).

It is the last step of submission in the watery grave of baptism which causes one to be added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

What part then does the Holy Spirit play in this, i.e., how can it be said **“by one spirit are we all baptized into one body”**? Each member of the GODHEAD is involved in the process of one’s salvation, and there is perfect unity in the role each has played as there was for each in imparting first-century miraculous gifts. The Holy Spirit gave the instructions which caused one to know what to do in order to be saved. Thus, it can be said the Father baptized, the Son baptized, and the Holy Spirit baptized — the emphasis in this particular passage being upon the role

“Many commentators have understood en pneumati to refer to the Holy Spirit as the element in which the Corinthians were baptized. However, there are only two cases of baptism in the Holy Spirit recorded in the New Testament — on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) and the household of Cornelius (Acts 10). The reference to Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 10 is revealing from another aspect. The men who accompanied Peter to Cornelius’ house were quite surprised to witness what they saw there, not only because it

of the Holy Spirit. The gifts mentioned in the text were given by the GODHEAD through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit. Thus, there is to be ONE BODY, even though there were various gifts given to the members of the body.

“The unity of the Godhead makes it correct to refer to any action ordained and commanded by God, the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit; and when the action is obeyed, it is proper to say that any one of them did it”(Coffman, p. 203).

Bible students will recall that the Hebrews writer spoke of sacrifices offered **by** the law (Heb. 10:8). How did the law offer sacrifices? When the law’s instructions were followed, the law was said to be the instrumentality of that which was offered. In like manner, one is baptized **by** the Holy Spirit when one follows the Spirit’s instructions for baptism.

Regarding the false doctrines of those who try to make this verse refer to Holy Spirit baptism, like the events of Acts chapter two and Acts chapter ten, note the excellent comments of Willis:

happened to a Gentile, but also because it was similar to what had happened in the beginning (Acts 11:15), indicating that what happened there was out of the ordinary and not a part of the normal process of salvation or conversion. Holy Spirit baptism was not the one baptism (Eph. 4:4) administered by the apostles in fulfillment of the Great Commission; that was water baptism (cf. Acts 8:36). To mention something which was given to an exclusive few instead of to all Christians would destroy the very point being

made in this context. Hence, I reject any explanation which treats the Holy Spirit as the element in which one is baptized”(Willis, p. 429).

He goes on to discuss the idea of “element” as follows:

*“The phrase en pneumatī has already occurred in this chapter (12:3, 9). In those places, the phrase meant ‘under the influence of the Spirit.’ En pneumatī does not refer to the Spirit as an element in v. 3 or in v. 9; rather, the Spirit is understood to be the person who gave the power to work the miraculous gift. Hence, the idea is ‘under the influence of the Holy Spirit.’ I suggest the same idea is intended in this verse. The Corinthians were all led to be baptized into one body **under the influence of the Holy Spirit**. The influence of the Holy Spirit was manifest in the proclamation of God’s word (hence, the Jews who resisted the message of Stephen in Acts 7:51 were resisting the Spirit). Thus, the word of the Spirit led them to be baptized into one body (cf. Gal. 3:3)”*(Willis, p. 429-430).

“Whether we be Jews or Gentiles. Whether we be bond or free,” emphasizes all, no matter what their background, can be united in Christ, the one body, the one church. This unity is, of course, conditioned upon an obedient response to the message of the Spirit.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

“Have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” The imagery here is a liquid which is consumed. What has the Spirit given? The word of GOD (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:20-21). How does one drink into one Spirit? Through imbibing the water of life, one is united with all other believers.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Rev. 22:17).

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| 1 Cor. 12:14 “For the body is not one member, but many.” | “For the body is not one member, but many.” (ASV) | “For in fact the body is not one member but many.” (NKJV) |
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Unity was missing at Corinth, yet unity was the desired result. It seems some did not feel needed in the body because they did not have the gifts others had. It should be remembered, no one had all the gifts (except the apostles), and probably many had no gift at all (c.f. 2 Cor. 12:12). What some failed to realize is that all the gifts were necessary to promote the good of the whole, and even the good of those who had no gift.

(Years ago, while I was coaching an eighth grade basketball team, there was one young man on the team who thought the team revolved around him. In many ways he felt he did not need the rest of the team, and his arrogance was causing a problem with co-operation. While he was quite talented, he needed to learn the lesson the

Corinthians had not. The **team** needed the talents of all its players. To teach him that lesson, I held a scrimmage, putting him by himself as one team, and a whole team against him. After about five minutes of total frustration, he learned one must have others to rebound, block out, pass, shoot, et cetera.) Many in the church need to learn the same lesson especially those who think they are not needed because they do not have the abilities someone else has. Each one’s ability is needed for the church to operate as GOD intended.

Paul will illustrate this further by speaking of individual parts of the human body, and how one by itself does not make up the whole body.

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| 1 Cor. 12:15-17 “If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?” | “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. If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling?” (ASV) | “If the foot should say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?” (NKJV) |
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Each one needed to hear Paul as he told them every one had his role to play, and when all used what GOD gave

them, the welfare of the whole would be accomplished — they would all be blessed. Maximum efficiency only comes to any organization when all its members work together.

There may have been the feeling among some of them, as is found in this age, that all should be equal. In other words, anything one has should be had by all. *“It is not fair they have more gifts than I do,”* or *“It is not fair because their gifts are better than mine.”* There is a difference between equality and unity. People need to reason correctly on this matter. The Lord insists that everyone does not have the same ability (Matt. 25:14-30). Why did the Lord give five talents to one, but only two to another? It was because the two talent man was not capable of handling five talents at that time. Notice also the condemnation received by the one talent man because he did not use what had been given him. Is it possible some of the Corinthians were in danger of not using the gifts they were given because they thought of themselves as being inferior to those who had other gifts?

Unity can be achieved, even though no two people are equal in their abilities. People will never be *“equal,”* but when one uses the abilities GOD gave him, the whole can be benefitted through efficient operation. Notice verses four through six of this chapter and the unity expressed in them. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have functions

which differ, but they are united into perfect unity of purpose and accomplish the total goal by each performing His function.

Also notice Galatians 3:28.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Was Paul talking about a completely equalized state? No, he was talking about a unified state in Christ. Were the Jews and Greeks suddenly made exactly equal? No, but they were unified in the body of Christ. When Paul says **“there is neither male nor female,”** was he saying that upon obedience to Christ one becomes a unisex person? No, but he was showing the unity of the church and the importance of man’s soul to GOD. It should be pointed out, the only sense in which there is equality in Christ, is the value of the soul. One soul is just as valuable to the Lord as any other — each one is worth more than all the world.

When Christ prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17), did He pray for His disciples to all be equal (v. 11)? If he did, then His prayer was not answered. Why did Peter and then Paul in succession seem to take precedence over the others? Was it because of spirituality or their talents? No, it was because of their abilities. Christ did not pray for equality but rather for unity. Christians can have unity as each uses the abilities he possesses for the good of the whole.

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| 1 Cor. 12:18 “But now hath GOD set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him.” | “But now hath GOD set the members each one of them in the body, even as it pleased Him.” (ASV) | “But now GOD has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.” (NKJV) |
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Continuing to use the physical body as a comparison to the spiritual body (church), the Spirit insists that GOD designed the body or church. Note David here:

“I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well” (Psalm 139:14).

When men fuss over the abilities they and others have, they should stop and consider who gave those abilities. Further, to refuse to use the abilities GOD has given because one does not possess an ability someone else has, is rebellion. To refuse to use any ability GOD has given,

no matter what the reason, is rebellion against one’s Maker. Yes, the physical body has been fearfully and wonderfully made to accomplish great tasks for the Lord; and so has the spiritual body.

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| 1 Cor. 12:19-20 “And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.” | “And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now they are many members, but one body.” (ASV) | “And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.” (NKJV) |
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Much of the idea involved in these verses is the idea of **team work**. If each member of the body does not fulfill its role, then the body as a whole will not function as GOD

intended. This is true in both the physical and spiritual realms. Jesus prayed:

“And now I am no more in the world, but these

are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are" (John 17:11).

"That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me. And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one" (John 17:21-22).

What if all the men in a congregation were song leaders? Where would instruction come from, et cetera? **All active** members play a role for the good of the whole, and are, thus, absolutely necessary for the good of the whole.

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| 1 Cor. 12:21 "And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." | "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." (ASV) | "And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." (NKJV) |
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It appears some of the "gifted" Corinthians had the idea they did not need the other members of the congregation, or at the least, those who did not have some miraculous gift. They overestimated their own importance,

and undervalued the importance of each member of the body. Each part of the body depends on all others to work harmoniously, with profit. Pride can have no place in the body of Christ, for it will destroy the body.

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| 1 Cor. 12:22 "Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary:" | "Nay, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary:" (ASV) | "No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary." (NKJV) |
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FEEBLE — ἀσθενής — *"Weak, infirm, feeble...weaker and inferior"* (Thayer, p. 80); *"Without strength, powerless...Including the idea of imperfection"* (Zodhiates, p. 274); *"Weak, powerless"* (Bauer, p. 115).

In reality, those organs such as the heart, lungs, brain, et cetera, are extremely feeble, weak, without strength. They are so feeble they need protection, thus the brain is encased with liquid and hard bone shell; the heart and lungs are overlaid with muscle and the bones of the rib cage; thus, these weak members of the body are protected by the stronger members. If these organs were exposed to the air they would be extremely vulnerable to disease. These "vital" organs, when exposed, are easily subject to

damage of a physical sort; they are more feeble, yet extremely necessary. Without them the rest of the body would perish.

Often are heard comments like, *"I do not know what I would do if I lost my arm, leg, hand, et cetera."* Yet, the fact is, when such happens the person usually continues to live. People live without powerful arms which help make a living; but remove the feeble heart or lungs, and one will definitely die.

Consider also the role of the little toe, or the thumb. Evolutionist say that the little toe is small because it is not really needed and eventually will disappear. But if one takes away the little toe, he will quickly learn how important it is for balance. Try this simple test; stand up, close your eyes, then stand on one leg and feel your little toe digging in to maintain balance.

- that those members of the church which are most retiring and feeble apparently; which are concealed from public view, unnoticed and unknown - the humble, the meek, the peaceful, and the prayerful - are often more necessary to the true welfare of the church than those who are eminent for their talent and learning" (Barnes, p. 235).

The truth the Holy Spirit is trying to convey is how important members of the church are who may not appear to human eyes to be important. The weaker members, the less visible members, the less forward of the body are sometimes more important to the welfare of the body than those most visible. This must be recognized by those who are in leadership positions. Barnes indicates that:

A side note, regarding a principle seen in these passages: Often members of the church are heard to say one or more of the acts of worship are more important than the others (especially the Lord's Supper), even ranking them. **All of the acts of worship are of equal importance!** Take any one or more of them away and see if GOD accepts one's worship on Sunday.

"Perhaps the idea is - and it is a beautiful thought

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:23 “And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness.”</p> | <p>“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;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unrepresentable parts have greater modesty;” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNCOMELY — σχήμων — *“Deformed, indecent, unseemly”* (Thayer, p. 82); *“Uncomely, indecent”* (Zodhiates, p. 284); *“Shameful, unrepresentable, indecent”* (Bauer, p. 119); *“Schneider notes that it ‘always refers to what may be known from without.’ Aschemon is defined by Thayer as meaning ‘indecent, unseemingly’ – what is usually covered up, so that it cannot be seen”* (Ralph Earle, *Word Meanings in the New Testament*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Mass., 2000, p. 235).

COMELINESS — εὐχημοσύνη — *“Charm or elegance of figure, external beauty, decorum, modesty, seemliness”* (Thayer, p. 262-263); *“Comely, honorable. Decorum, comeliness”* (Zodhiates, p. 685); *“Propriety, decorum, presentability of clothing”* (Bauer, p. 327); *“Greeven says that the adjective literally means ‘of good external appearance’”* (Earle, p. 235-236).

The point of this verse, in the physical realm, seems to carry the idea of making those areas of the body which are usually not associated with beauty, more pleasing to the eye. This is usually accomplished through the clothing one wears. The word **“bestow,”** carries the idea of *“put on,”* and is so translated in Matt. 27:28.

For example, how many think their feet are pretty? Probably not very many, if any; so one wear shoes or sandals, et cetera.

Those parts of men’s bodies which would be dishonorable, for modesty’s sake, are clothed so as not to bring shame on the whole body. The fact that all of these are less comely does not mean they can be done away with.

One does not despise those members of one’s fleshly body which are not so comely; instead one recognizes the need for them. Thus, one spends more time and money in adorning them so as to make them more attractive.

This leads to the spiritual lesson. Those members of the church who are sometimes considered as being on the

lower rung of the social ladder, or less favored because they have less ability than another, should not be looked upon as being despised, or lowly. The body of Christ is dependent upon all of its members in order to function perfectly. Coffman tells us,

“Eisenhower reprimanded a general in the army for speaking of a soldier as just a private, adding that ‘The private is the man who wins the war’” (Coffman, p. 206). *The treatment we give to the less honorable parts of our physical body should be our example for learning how to treat the less honorable members of the church. We do not despise or disrespect these parts of our bodies; rather, on these we bestow more attention in our habits of dress. Similarly, the church should not show disrespect to less honorable parts of the body. Instead, we should give them more of our attention”* (Willis, p. 437).

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| <p>1 Cor. 12:24 “For our comely parts have no need: but GOD hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked:”</p> | <p>“whereas our comely parts have no need: but God tempered the body together, giving more abundant honor to that part which lacked;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,” (NKJV)</p> |
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TEMPERED — συγκεράννυμι — *“To mix together, commingle; to unite”* (Thayer, p. 592); *“To mix together, intermingle with. In the NT figuratively to join together so that one part counterbalances another”* (Zodhiates, p. 1320); *“Mix (together), blend, unite”* (Bauer, p. 773). Willis says this word *“was sometimes used to refer to the way an artist blended together a multitude of colors to form one picture”* (Willis, p. 437); Robertson tells us, *“Plato used this very word of the way God compounded the various elements of the body in creating soul and body”* (p. 173).

GOD did not make men’s bodies in such a way that one part is more needed than another, but he tempered the body together to produce a perfect harmony. In many

cases man gives those uncomely parts more honor by giving them more attention.

So it ought to be in the church: those who are weak

need the extra attention and protection that the weaker parts, and less comely parts, of the physical body need.

Those who take the lead are often given honors, and do not need more; whereas, those behind the scenes often deserve honor but are given little.

GOD'S wisdom is revealed in the way He has designed both bodies (physical and spiritual) for all the various parts to work in unity. All blend together to make a beautiful picture.

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| 1 Cor. 12:25 “That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” | “that there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.” (ASV) | “that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.” (NKJV) |
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SCHISM — σχίσμα — *“A cleft, rent;...metaph. A division, dissension”* (Thayer, p. 610); *“A schism, division, tear, as in mind or sentiment, and so into factions”* (Zodhiates, p. 1353); *“Division, dissension, schism”* (Bauer, p. 797).

CARE — μεριμνάω — *“To be anxious; to be troubled with cares...to care for, look out for, (a thing); to seek to promote one’s interests”* (Thayer, p. 400); *“To care, be anxious, troubled, to take thought...by implication it means to care for or take care of”* (Zodhiates, p. 961); *“Have anxiety, be (unduly) concerned...care for, be concerned about”* (Bauer, p. 505); Jesus used this word in talking about our anxiety (Matt. 6:27, 31).

Why should these more uncomely parts be given extra attention? It should be done so there will be no schism in the body. If the physical body began opposing itself because one part thought it was better than another, or more important than another, thinking it could get along without the *“unseemly part”* — then there would be division, conflict, and death.

The same is true of the spiritual body of Christ. Each member, no matter the number of abilities he may possess, (whether it be many or few) is important to the unity of the whole. If members of the body get the idea they are better than other members, or the other members are not needed, then these attitudes will lead to division as already seen at

Corinth, and which Paul had already condemned (1:10; 3:3; 11:18).

What is the cure for schisms? **“Members should have the same care for one another.”** The word **“care”** comes from μεριμνάω, which indicates the anxiety one feels for the well being of another. One should desire the well being of another in the same way one seeks his own well being. As Barnes states it,

“No member of the church should be overlooked or despised; but that the whole church should feel a deep interest for, and exercise a constant solicitude over, all its members” (Barnes, p. 236).

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| 1 Cor. 12:26 “And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.” | “And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (ASV) | “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.” (NKJV) |
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SUFFER — πάσχω — *“To be affected or have been affected, to feel, have a sensible experience, to undergo;...used in either a good or bad sense;...in a bad sense, of misfortunes, to suffer, to undergo evils, to be afflicted”* (Thayer, p. 494); *“To suffer, to be afflicted by something from without, to be acted upon, to undergo an experience...Used of good, meaning to experience, to have happen to oneself, to receive...Used of evil, meaning to suffer, be subjected to evil”* (Zodhiates, p. 1127); *“Experience, be treated of everything that befalls a person, whether good or ill...its usage developed in such a way that πάσχω came to be used less and less frequently in a good sense, and never without some clear indication, at least from the context, that the good sense is meant”* (Bauer, p. 633).

HONOURED — δοξάζω — *“To praise, extol, magnify, celebrate...to honor, do honor to, hold in honor...to make glorious, adorn with lustre, clothe with splendor”* (Thayer, p. 157); *“To glorify. The consequential meaning from the opinion which one forms is to recognize, honor, praise, invest with dignity, give anyone esteem or honor by putting him into an honorable position”* (Zodhiates, p. 481); *“Praise, honor, magnify...clothe in splendor, glorify”* (Bauer, p. 204).

When part of the physical body is hurt or diseased, the whole body suffers. The whole body will come to the aid of that member, because it recognizes that the dependency and welfare of the whole depends on each of its members. An injury means the body cannot do what it formerly was capable of accomplishing. If a part of the body is diseased, the whole body begins sending antibodies to help fight the disease. Why is this done? It is done because the disease left unattended, will spread from one member to another until the end result could be death. The body tries to protect itself.

In the church there is a need to have such care for one another. When one is suffering sorrow, the rest of the body will try to help the ailing member to overcome whatever trial or tribulation is being faced. Those are the

times when brethren need each other more than any other, and each can help the other overcome his suffering.

On the other hand, if one of the members is deemed to deserve special honor, the whole body is to rejoice with it. This leaves no room for envy and the division such can cause. One should rejoice with those who have more abilities, as those abilities are used for the Lord's service. One should rejoice with those who obtain a position of influence which could advance the Lord's cause, whether it be in the Lord's body or a secular position. One ought always to desire the best for brethren, and be happy with them when they obtain good things.

In Corinth, much jealousy existed among those who had miraculous gifts. Jealousy destroys their ability to rejoice with another over his good fortune.

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| 1 Cor. 12:27 "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." | "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof." (ASV) | "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually." (NKJV) |
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Paul continues his discourse to the Corinthians, offering a summation of these thoughts by saying that they individually make up the body of Christ. One finds a similar sentiment in the following passages:

"And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

"He is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence....Who now rejoice in My sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church" (Col. 1:18, 24).

The body, the church, belongs to Christ and those who make up the body are the church. As members of this body, each one has his/her function, and each function is necessary to the efficient operation of the whole. When unity is understood by the members, just as it is in the human body, then there will be no jealousies, petty arguments, or fighting against one another simply because one can do what another cannot.

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| 1 Cor. 12:28 "And GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues." | "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." (ASV) | "And GOD has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues." (NKJV) |
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APOSTLES — • πóstολος — *"A delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders"* (Thayer, p. 68); *"Used as a substitute, one sent, apostle, ambassador"* (Zodhiates, p. 238); *"Delegate, envoy, messenger"* (Bauer, p. 99); *"The Greek noun apostolos comes from the verb apostello, which means 'send with a commission, or on service.' So apostolos is 'a messenger, one sent on a mission'"* (Earle, p. 236).

PROPHETS — προφήτης — *"An interpreter of oracles or of hidden things. A fore-teller, soothsayer, seer. In the New Testament one who, moved by the spirit of God and hence his organ or spokesman, solemnly declares to men what he has"*

received by inspiration” (Thayer, p. 553); “In the NT prophetes corresponds to the person who in the OT spoke under divine influence and inspiration. This included the foretelling future events or the exhorting, reproving, and threatening of individuals or nations as the ambassador of God and the interpreter of His will to men. Hence the prophet spoke not his own thoughts but what he received from God, retaining, however, his own consciousness and self-possession” (Zodhiates, p. 1244); “Prophet as proclaimer and interpreter of the divine revelation” (Bauer, p. 723); “The Greek prophetes comes from the verb prophemi, which means ‘speak forth.’ So it signifies ‘one who acts as an interpreter or forth-teller of the Divine will’ (A-S, p. 390). Contrary to popular usage today, the biblical meaning of ‘prophecy’ is not foretelling, but forth-telling. Put in simplest terms, the prophet is one who speaks for God” (Earle, p. 236).

TEACHERS — διδάσκαλος — “A teacher; in the N.T. one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man...of those who in the religious assemblies of Christians undertook the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit” (Thayer, p. 144); “Instructor, master, teacher” (Zodhiates, p. 449).

MIRACLES — δύναμις — “Strength, ability, power; univ. Inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature, or which a person or thing exerts and puts forth” (Thayer, p. 159); “Power, especially achieving power. All the words derived from the stem duna having the meaning of being able, capable” (Zodhiates, p. 485); “Power, might, strength, force...ability, capability” (Bauer, p. 207).

GIFTS OF HEALING — There are two words which need to be noticed here, the first of which is GIFTS — χάρισμα — “A gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own” (Thayer, p. 667); “A gift of grace, an undeserved benefit...In the NT used only of gifts and graces imparted from God” (Zodhiates, p. 1471); “A gift (freely and graciously given), a favor bestowed” (Bauer, p. 878).

HELPS — • ντίληψις — “Mutual acceptance, a laying hold of, apprehension, perception, objection of a disputant, etc...In bibl. Speech aid, help” (Thayer, p. 50); “Literally the receiving of remuneration. It came to mean a laying hold of anything, the holding of that which one has, perception, apprehension. In NT Gr., used like the verb antilambanomai, to receive in return for, render assistance, help” (Zodhiates, p. 192-193).

GOVERNMENTS — κυβέρνησις — “A governing, government...wise counsels” (Thayer, p. 364); “Government, a governing in relation to the churches” (Zodhiates, p. 897); “Administration; the pl. indicates proofs of ability to hold a leading position in the church” (Bauer, p. 456); “It comes from the verb meaning to guide or steer. In classical Greek it referred to the piloting of a boat. Then it was used metaphorically for ‘government.’ Beyer writes that, in view of its literal meaning and attested usage, The reference can only be to the specific gifts which qualify a Christian to be a helmsman to his congregation, i.e., a true director to its order and therewith of its life” (Earle, p. 237).

“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph. 4:11-12).

Generally speaking, where lists are found in the New Testament, the most important item is placed first and the least last. When one considers the context of this passage, he finds the Holy Spirit is still addressing the problem of division in the Corinthian church. The Spirit points out that GOD is the one who has established these functions in the church, and it was GOD through the Holy Spirit who endowed the members of the body to function according to His purpose. As the list is studied, one needs to remember some of these functions have been done away. Notice also the position of **“tongues”** even in the age of miracles — **it is last in importance.**

First in importance to the early church was, of course,

the apostle. This is true because **they** were the ambassadors of Christ.

“Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though GOD did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to GOD” (2 Cor. 5:20).

“For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak” (Eph. 6:20).

These apostles lived with Him and listened to His teaching. To be an apostle, one had to (1) be chosen by the Lord, (2) have been with the Lord from the time of the Lord's baptism, and (3) have been a witness of His resurrection (Acts 2:21-24). Those who fit this particular office were the twelve chosen by the Lord in Matthew 10:2-4. Added to this list was Matthias who replaced the traitor Judas (Acts 1:26), and Paul the apostle chosen by the Lord out of due time (Gal. 1:15-17). These are the men

chosen to hold the specific office of an inspired apostle.

Generally speaking, there are others who were called apostles (one sent). Men like Barnabas (Acts 14:4), Silas and Timothy (1 Thess. 2:6), et cetera. But they did not fill the **office** as noted above and in the present text. Today, various groups claim to have apostles among them. Apostles had to be eyewitnesses of Jesus and the fact of His resurrection (Luke 24:48; John 15:27; Acts 1:21-22; 22:14-15; 26:16). Can a church today have apostles among them when one examines the New Testament evidence and compare it with their qualifications? **NO!!!** The apostles, in fact, are still in charge in the church (Matt. 19:28).

The apostles were directed by the Holy Spirit in the words they spoke, and were thus giving the people of all generations the infallible word of GOD. A side note: *"Were the apostles infallible?"* The truths they taught were and are infallible since the Holy Spirit was guiding them. But their personal lives were not infallible, as Galatians 2:11 shows.

Prophets are those who were inspired to make the will of GOD known to mankind. Probably, as Lipscomb noted, after this was done it was made known by the apostles (Lipscomb, p. 193). These inspired men were enabled to proclaim these truths by inspiration, and sometimes were even allowed to look into the future (Acts 21:10-11).

A teacher is one who communicates knowledge he has to another, i.e., a student. In the absolute sense, GOD is the

GIFTS OF HEALING — There are two words which need to be noticed here (See definitions above.), GIFTS and HEALING. The specific words used here fit well the point being made regarding the abuse of the miraculous gifts given to the Corinthians. Some of the Corinthians were boasting about the gifts they had as compared to the gifts possessed by others; yet, they needed to understand there was no room for boasting because these gifts had been **given** to them, even though they did not deserve them; i.e., they had not done anything to earn them. One might liken this to those today who have been given an honorary Ph.D. They cannot boast of the time, effort, et cetera, they put into getting the piece of paper upon which the degree is sanctioned. Just so, the Corinthians should not boast because the ability to heal various ailments or deformities had been given to them, and as will be pointed out in the next chapter, were at best temporary.

The original word **"helps"** is not found in anywhere else in the New Testament. Barnes says it refers to *"aid, assistance, help; and then those who render aid, assistance, or help; helpers"* (Barnes, p. 238). This word seems to be used in a general sense, and would seem to refer to aid given to those in need.

"Abbott-Smith thinks that here it is used for the ministrations of deacons" (p. 41). Cremer says that the word is taken by the Greek expositors

great teacher; but here the Holy Spirit was talking about those within the church. There is nothing to indicate these teachers necessarily had to be inspired, but, because of the context, they seem to have been.

Teachers are still necessary today. Teaching others about GOD and His desires for our lives is the most important thing Christians can do, other than obeying the Gospel call.

"It is a calamity when the preacher is no longer a teacher, but only an exhorter" (Robertson, p. 174).

The word translated **"miracles"** in the KJV is the same word translated **"power"** in Romans 1:16. This word refers to ability and capability. Interestingly, this word follows the idea of teaching, and probably refers to what is called miracles. But also remember the power is in the word of GOD (Rom. 1:16), which in and of itself has the power to convert souls, to change lives.

Assuming the word δὐνάμις, as used in this location refers to miracles, it would be quite appropriate. Miracles, in and of themselves are really quite useless, but the purpose of miracles was to confirm the word of GOD (Mark 16:20), and the messenger of the word as being GOD's representative. Miracles were never used for selfish purposes, and do not occur today because the powerful word has been fully given (1 Cor. 13).

uniformly as answering to deacons (implying the duties towards the poor and sick)' (p. 386)" (Earle, p. 237).

Lipscomb says of the word **"governments,"** *"Wise counselors, and advisors of the weak and erring"* (Lipscomb, p. 192).

Coffman states, *"This reference to church government should not be downgraded nor overlooked. Church organization was not something men contrived and added in the post-apostolical era"* (Coffman, p. 207). It would seem this passage deals with the officials and/or government of the church through them. If such is the case, then it would seem to indicate elders and deacons.

DIVERSITIES OF TONGUES — Different tongues (languages). From this chapter, one learns that one of the chief problems at Corinth was the glorification of those who could speak different languages. The ability to speak in these languages was held up as the pinnacle of gifts, and thought to be more important than any of the other aids given by the Holy Spirit. But notice where the Holy Spirit placed tongues in this list. Also notice where tongues are placed in the list of verses 8-10.

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| 1 Cor. 12:29-30 “Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?” | “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?” (ASV) | “Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?” (NKJV) |
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The questions in these verses, considering their context, all require negative answers. Even the wording requires a negative answer. Willis states, *“The m which introduces these rhetorical questions demands the negative answers”* (Willis, p. 441).

It is a simple matter of fact, not everyone was qualified for the same work. Today, everyone is not qualified to do the same work either. But just as then, all are necessary, each doing what he has the ability and qualification to do to fulfill the work required of the church.

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| 1 Cor. 12:31 “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.” | “But desire earnestly the greater gifts. And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you.” (ASV) | “But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.” (NKJV) |
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COVET EARNESTLY — ζηλόω — *“To burn with zeal...to desire earnestly, pursue”* (Thayer, p. 271); *“To be zealous, filled with zeal, zealously affected whether in a good or bad sense...to desire zealously”* (Zodhiates, p. 699); *“In a good sense strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly”* (Bauer, p. 338).

BEST — κρείττων — *“More useful, more serviceable”* (Thayer, p. 359); *“Better, i.e., more useful, more profitable”* (Zodhiates, p. 886); *“More prominent, higher in rank, preferable, better...more useful, more advantageous, better”* (Bauer, p. 449).

MORE EXCELLENT — υπερβολή — *“Properly a throwing beyond. Metaph. Superiority, excellence, pre-eminence...beyond measure, exceedingly, preeminently”* (Thayer, p. 640); *“To throw beyond, surpass...with the meaning of par excellence”* (Zodhiates, p. 1414); *“Excess, extraordinary quality or character”* (Bauer, p. 840).

The Syriac version renders this passage: *“Because you are zealous of the best gifts, I will show to you a more*
 Is it wrong to covet, or earnestly desire something? Not necessarily. The fact that covetousness is often practiced in a wrong way does not always make it wrong. It would be wrong for one to covet his neighbor’s wife, but absolutely correct for one to covet knowledge of GOD’s word. Implied in the idea of covet is the attempt to obtain what one covets.

excellent way.”
only in my being present with you.” The word translated *“zealously”* comes from the same word being studied in our present text. It means *“to be the object of the zeal of others, to be zealously sought after”* (Thayer, p. 271).

At the time Paul wrote this, there was a need for the miraculous, and so it was right for them to desire such gifts. In fact, Paul applauds their desire. But it was not right for them to desire these gifts in order to lord it over another, or to envy those who had a particular gift. How could this apply today since no one has any miraculous abilities? Paul has just spoken of those who teach. It is not wrong to desire to have the knowledge another person has, but it would be wrong to envy it. It is not wrong to desire to be an effective teacher, but it would be wrong to envy (in the evil sense of the word) such a person’s ability. Notice Gal. 4:18, **“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”** A more literal reading of this passage would be, *“But right (it is) to be zealous in a right (thing) at all times, and not*

Paul “did not say that it was wrong to desire high endowments. But he showed them an endowment which was more valuable than all the others; which was accessible to all; and which, if possessed, would make them contented, and produce the harmonious operation of all the parts of the church. That endowment was LOVE” (Barnes, p. 241).

When one considers Paul was telling them to desire those things which were more useful, and considers the following chapters, and then looks at the miraculous gifts, one can learn something which is very important. As will be pointed out in chapter fourteen, some of these gifts edified the body, i.e., they built the body up in faith. But notice, some of the gifts did not in and of themselves edify the body. By themselves some of those gifts were useless unless another gift was used with them. For instance, speaking in other languages did not edify the whole body

unless there was someone to interpret what was being said. (This fact is made very clear to me each year when I journey to Indonesia to teach. Without an interpreter, my teaching is useless.) On the other hand, the gift of prophesy edified the church. Many of the miraculous gifts were for the purpose of authenticating the speaker's message as words which came from GOD, not merely some man's imaginations (Mark 16:20).

The words of this passage lead into the next chapter, introducing something which is far greater than miraculous abilities — love. Why is love greater than miraculous abilities? It is greater because love would destroy the jealousies and divisions which haunted the church in Corinth. Love is greater because the miraculous gifts were temporary, and love is eternal. Even when all physical things are totally annihilated (2 Pet. 3:10-12), love will continue for the redeemed.

Introduction to First Corinthians, Chapter Thirteen

The word **“charity”** does not carry the same meaning in our society today which it did in when the KJV was translated.

Today society generally uses this word to signify help given to those who are less fortunate than they. But even in Webster’s Seventh Collegiate Dictionary, one finds the first meaning of this word **“charity”** is *“love”* (Webster, p. 140).

The word **“charity”** in the text of First Corinthians chapter thirteen means *“love,”* but what kind of love? The word *“love”* can be a very vague term, especially in this society and is quite often abused in implying one thing but meaning another. (For example, I often say *“I love hamburgers,”* meaning, I prefer hamburgers above many other foods.) One needs to examine his use of the word love, and be more careful how he uses it in the future.

Many often think of love as being the key to all of their relationships. It might be, and should be, but is not necessarily the way it is. What kind of love is the key to one’s relationships being as they should be? Many people believe the Holy Spirit is addressing this chapter to the relationships between human beings. But if such is the case, why does the Holy Spirit use •γάπη in this text? The primary word for love which is used of human relationships is φιλέω; the relationship of having affection for one another.

The primary objective of the Bible is to mold one’s attitude so he will have a proper relationship with GOD. Once there is a proper relationship with GOD, then all other relationships will be as GOD would have them. The most important thing one can do in this life is love GOD, and it must be the same kind of love GOD has exhibited toward mankind. This is **agape** love, a love which is self sacrificing. GOD sacrificed His only begotten Son; He took man’s place on the cross. When

one learns truly to love GOD with a sacrificial love, then all of one’s human relationships will fall into place. If one does not truly love GOD, then all of one’s deeds, no matter how kindly affectioned they may be, are **WORTHLESS**; for they will not lead one to eternity with GOD.

“Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:36-40).

Loving one’s fellow man is important, but first and foremost, one must love GOD. One’s actions must first of all be motivated by love for Him.

Notice the growth process in regard to love in the following passage:

“And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity” (2 Pet. 1:5-7).

Agape love is the last virtue found in the growth process of this list. It is the pinnacle of love which is to be striven for, the kind of love which is spoken of in First Corinthians chapter thirteen. One should remember that one must strive to grow in all of these virtues all the time. It is not a matter of perfecting one and then moving on to the next one in the list, perfecting it and then moving to the next, et cetera.

First Corinthians — Chapter Thirteen

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| <p>1 Cor. 13:1 “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”</p> | <p>“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.” (NKJV)</p> |
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TINKLING — •λαλάζω — *“To repeat frequently the cry...to ring loudly, to clang”* (Thayer, p. 25); *“The military shout of the Greeks before a battle. To shout, to utter a loud sound....To make a disagreeable, inarticulate noise, spoken of a cymbal, to tinkle, clang”* (Zodhiates, p. 118); *“Cry out loudly”* (Bauer, p. 34); *“Alalazon is a participle of the verb alalazo (only here in NT). It comes from a battle cry of that day, ‘alala!’ So it literally means ‘raise a war cry.’ Obviously ‘tinkling’ is too tame a translation”* (Earle, p. 238).

It must be remembered this chapter is not arbitrarily inserted here without meaning to the context. The context

of both chapters twelve and fourteen, which flank this chapter, deal with the abuse of miraculous gifts by the

Corinthians. They had been boasting about their gifts, and had apparently created a “pecking” order for these gifts, with the ability to speak in languages they had not learned, placed at the very top; i.e., they considered this gift to be the greatest. But as has already been pointed out in two lists in chapter twelve, the Holy Spirit placed this gift last. In this chapter, these languages are placed first, apparently because the Corinthians thought of them as such. But the Holy Spirit will show they mean absolutely nothing without love. In fact, none of the miraculous gifts would benefit the one who had them unless he had love.

Those who would claim these “tongues” are unintelligent sounds of ecstasy have a major problem, for the Holy Spirit says **“tongues of men.”** Paul is saying, that even if he could speak every language known to man in the most eloquent way, without love this gift would be meaningless. Further, Paul says even if he could speak the language of angels, if he did so without love, his speech would be worthless. (A side note of importance: any time one sees the angels speaking in the Bible, it is always with an intelligent message spoken in the language of those to whom it was addressed. It was never the gibberish those who claim to “speak in tongues” use today!)

The word **“charity”** in the KJV is commonly translated as “love” in other versions of the Bible. But the word **“charity”** comes closer in English to the actual meaning of “agape” than does the word “love.” In English, one “loves” apple pie but is hardly ready to sacrifice oneself for the pie. Willis states,

“There are four different Greek words which are rendered by our one English word ‘love.’ Eros, a word not found in the New Testament, refers to passion; the English word ‘erotic’ is derived from this Greek word. It is a base word denoting a passion which is selfishly seeking satisfaction; it refers to sexual love. The word storgein is natural affection; it refers to the love which a parent naturally has for his children or any close relation has for another. The word philein is a friendly love; it is a love which consists of the glow of the heart kindled by the perception of that object which affords us pleasure. Hence, it is used to refer to the kind of love which friends who have very much in common have for each other. The word agape refers to a higher kind of love; it speaks of a love which is awakened by a sense of value in an object which causes one to prize it; it springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object” (Willis, p. 447-448).

In observing the above thoughts on love, it is obvious that love here, (•γάπε) is love which is based on the will; i.e., one chooses to love the object of one’s affection. With

“Without love, he is nothing but a loud noise; he

regard to GOD, one either chooses to love GOD or He does not. (If he does not choose to love GOD, he chooses to hate GOD — there is no middle ground.) Two questions arise then: *“Can one know if he loves GOD or not?” “Is there a test which can be given which determines whether one loves GOD?”* Jesus said, **“If ye love Me, keep My commandments”** (John 14:15). John adds: **“this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and his commandments are not grievous”** (1 John 5:3); and again, **“this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it”** (2 John 6). Biblical love is keeping the commands of GOD. This kind of love is not simply an emotion, but is rather a conscious decision which then produces emotion. True love is an act of the intellect.

Agape love will translate into a love for one’s fellow man, because one determines to love him in spite of his failings. This is the kind of love GOD has shown for mankind. Since He knows the value of a soul, He consciously has chosen to love His creation, even though man’s actions are often despised by Him.

Another aspect of agape love is its love for GOD’s Word:

“Therefore I love Thy commandments above gold; yea, above fine gold. Therefore I esteem all Thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way” (Psalm 119:127-128).

Further, if one speaks the truth of GOD’s Word without love he is a **“tinkling cymbal”** or useless noise. Imagine someone standing on a street corner and simply beating cymbals together. Not only would such a sound be annoying, but it would have no benefit to the one doing the clanging.

Of “sounding brass and tinkling cymbals,” Smith’s dictionary says they were used *“as an accompaniment to other instruments.”* By themselves they expressed no distinct note or useful sound. The comparison is the same with regard to spiritual matters. Without the other instruments the cymbals had no musical meaning. Without love the ability to use tongues had no practical spiritual significance. It was the truth of GOD which was important. Without a love for truth which was understandable, and given to save souls, tongues were worthless in the spiritual realm — they were just so much noise.

has no real essence. He might draw attention to

himself but he is, nevertheless, nothing!" (Willis, p. 449).

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| <p>1 Cor. 13:2 "And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." (NKJV)</p> |
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PROPHECY — προφητεία — *"Prophecy, i.e., discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden"* (Thayer, p. 552); *"A prophesying or prophecy...meaning the prophetic office, the prophetic gift, spoken in the NT of the peculiar charisma or spiritual gift imparted to the primitive teachers of the church"* (Zodhiates, p. 1242); *"Prophecy...the utterance of the prophet, prophetic word, prophecy"* (Bauer, p. 722).

MYSTERIES — μυστήριον — *"A hidden thing, secret, mystery...a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding"* (Thayer, p. 420); *"A secret, or esoteric knowledge"* (Zodhiates, p. 1000).

One of the points to notice in this chapter is the significance of the word **"all."** Paul is using the word to signify the totality of something, indicating there is nothing else which can be gained; there is nothing left to gain. In essence, he is saying if it were possible for one to have all knowledge, so there would be nothing left to know, and one had not love, then that one would be nothing (worthless, inconsequential).

Prophecy was the divine gift by which GOD imparted revelation to mankind. When one looks into the scriptures, it is discovered that no one prophet possessed all of the divine revelation of GOD. Each individual which GOD used as a prophet had a part of the revelation, but not all of it.

"Understand all mysteries." The idea of mysteries here is not that one cannot know something. Instead, mysteries refers to those things which are not known by man unless GOD reveals them to him. Once this information was revealed to man it could be understood by those who desired to know. There were things GOD kept hidden from man because man did not yet have the ability to appreciate them.

"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of GOD which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of GOD; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. 1:25-26).

GOD accomplished this revelation through the use of types, shadows, metaphors, parables, in the Old Testament times.

"GOD, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by

the prophets" (Heb. 1:1).

The knowledge spoken of in First Corinthians thirteen here refers to the miraculous knowledge mentioned in First Corinthians twelve, verse eight. Again, Paul emphasizes that if it were possible for one to have every bit of knowledge, and there was no more to be gained, without love that one is nothing.

Faith is belief, but does the mere fact that one believes something necessarily benefits one? Of course the answer is no! A great example of this is Balaam, who was a prophet and who believed GOD (Num. 22). But though Balaam had faith, his end was destruction (Num. 31:8). Balaam believed GOD, but he did not love GOD. As Willis said,

"Notice the difference between the gift which the person possessed and what he is" (Willis, p. 451).

When one applies this principle taught here to the Corinthians, one sees many of them with gifts, but as individuals they were not what they were supposed to be.

No matter what miraculous gift a Corinthian had, no matter what non-miraculous ability one may possess today, if these gifts were not used in conjunction with love, they were worthless. The word "nothing" (οὐθέν) in this verse carries the absolute negative, and shows there is no chance of being worth anything, no matter what one does.

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| 1 Cor. 13:3 “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” | “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.” (ASV) | “And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.” (NKJV) |
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Willis says the word **“bestow,”** means,
“To feed by putting a bit or crumb of food into the mouth...in this passage, it seems to bear the meaning ‘to give away all of one’s property bit by bit’”(Willis, p. 451).

Other writers such as Hodge, Coffman, et cetera; agree with this basic idea. The Holy Spirit, through Paul, shows that if one gives away every bit of one’s possessions to help others, even though this is a noble thing, if it is not done because of love, there is no eternal benefit. An example which illustrates this is Ananias and Sapphira in Acts chapter five. They pretended to give away all the proceeds from the land they sold. Why did they do this? It was because they wanted the praise of men. They had observed the liberal giving of Barnabas and the recognition he received, and they wanted the same thing. No doubt they gave a large sum, yet such giving did not benefit them (Acts 5:1-10).

Paul mentions here the ultimate in self sacrifice: giving one’s life. Burning is considered by many to be the worst way one can die. Nero made burning a popular way to murder Christians. Barnes remarks that:

“Nero is the first who is believed to have committed this horrible act; and under his reign, and during the persecution which he excited, Christians were covered with pitch, and set on fire to illuminate his gardens”(Barnes, p. 244).

Regarding sacrificing one’s life for another, Jesus said, **“Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”** (John 15:13).

There have been many in this world who have given

their lives for another because they had individual love for another. There have been husbands/wives who have given up their lives for their mate and soldiers who have given their lives for companions; but what did such profit them?

The answer is, **“Nothing;”** unless they first had a love for GOD. Merely giving one’s life for another has no lasting value. Consider Paul’s aim in these passages. It is to show these things have no value to GOD without love. It is GOD one is to please and who will reward one eternally.

Through the ages, many have maintained there is a special and automatic reward for giving their material possessions away, or for giving their lives for a cause or so another person might live. Shepherd tells us,

“At one period martyrdom became fashionable, and Christian teachers were compelled to remonstrate with those who fanatically rushed to the stake and the arena. It is possible that many suffered through vainglory rather than the love of Christ”(Shepherd, p. 196).

“The loveless person produces nothing, is nothing, and gains nothing”(MacArthur, p. 336).

“Profit, or benefit, from God is the object we all desire, and yet without love and regardless of sacrifice otherwise, we gain nothing of God! Without love then, says Paul, I am noise, I am nothing, and I profit nothing””(Jackson, p. 131).

There is no lasting profit to anything one does, if one’s love for GOD does not prompt the actions.

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| 1 Cor. 13:4 “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,” | “Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,” (ASV) | “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;” (NKJV) |
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SUFFERETH LONG — μακροθυμέω — *“To be of long spirit, not to lose heart...To persevere patiently and bravely in enduring misfortunes and troubles:...to be patient in bearing the offences and injuries of others; to be mild and slow in avenging; to be long-suffering, slow to anger, slow to punish”(Thayer, p. 387); “To suffer long, be long-suffering, as opposed to hasty anger or punishment”(Zodhiates, 939); “Have patience, wait...be patient, forbearing”(Bauer, p. 488); “Long tempered...is patient or long-suffering”(Earle, p. 238); “To be long tempered”(Expositor’s, p. 899).*

KIND — χρηστεύομαι — *“To show one’s self mild, to be kind, use kindness”(Thayer, p. 671); “To be kind, obliging, willing to help or assist”(Zodhiates, p. 1481); “Be kind, loving, merciful”(Bauer, p. 886); “Useful, gracious, kind”(Robertson, p. 177); “Gentle, benign, kind”(Littrell, p. 234).*

ENVIETH — ζηλόω — *“To burn with zeal...to be heated or to boil with envy, hatred, anger”* (Thayer, p. 271); *“To be zealous, filled with zeal, zealously affected whether in a good or bad sense...to envy, be moved with envy”* (Zodhiates, p. 699-700); *“In a good sense strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly...in a bad sense be filled with jealousy, envy toward someone”* (Bauer, p. 338).

VAUNTETH — περπερεύομαι — *“To boast one’s self”* (Thayer, p. 507); *“To brag or boast”* (Zodhiates, p. 1153); *“Boast, brag”* (Bauer, p. 653); *“Braggart, boastful”* (Expositor’s, p. 899).

PUFFED UP — φυσιόω — *“To inflate, blow up, blow out, to cause to swell up; trop. To puff up, make proud”* (Thayer, p. 660); *“To inflate, blow or puff up. In the NT spoken only figuratively of pride or self-conceit”* (Zodhiates, p. 1459); *“Become puffed up or conceited, put on airs”* (Bauer, p. 869); *“To puff oneself out like a pair of bellows”* (Robertson, p. 178).

One of the primary thoughts which must be kept in mind here is that Paul is dealing with problems in the Corinthian church. This is not just an exposition on love. Rather, Paul is showing them they do not love because they are exhibiting negative qualities and are not exhibiting positive ones. Paul is showing the Corinthians that if they truly loved GOD, they would not violate GOD’S instructions regarding their miraculous gifts. Related to this is their love for their brethren. Did they truly love their brethren? Then why did they envy, boast, et cetera?

“We have not in this chapter a methodical dissertation on Christian love, but an exhibition of that grace as contrasted with extraordinary gifts which the Corinthians inordinately valued” (Hodge, p. 269).

“Charity suffereth long and is kind.” The idea behind the term **“long suffering”** is not retaliating for wrong which is done to one. This attitude was completely foreign to the mind of the ancient Greeks.

“In the Greek world self-sacrificing love and non avenging patience were considered weakness, unworthy of the noble man or woman. Aristotle, for example, taught that the great Greek virtue was refusal to tolerate insult or injury and to strike back in retaliation for the slightest offense. Vengeance was a virtue” (MacArthur, p. 338).

What if GOD acted the way the Corinthians were acting, and were as short tempered as they seem to have been? One should be happy that GOD is

“longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9).

The longsuffering person will go about his business and let **“Charity envieth not.”** Envy is the idea of burning zeal, or jealousy. Envy/jealousy is not happy when others have obtained something they do not have, or have reached a level of attainment they have not reached. Sometimes envy then takes another step and wishes evil toward the person who has obtained something or some honor. Love

GOD take care of the wrongs done to him,

“for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Rom. 12:19).

The word **“kind”** in this passage, means to use kindness, to be obliging, to be willing to help or assist another, to be merciful. A longsuffering person is willing to take the time to help another, and exercise kindness toward another. The kindness shown here is the active good will one shows toward another, even his enemies. Kindness is not just a feeling; true kindness is an action. True kindness is not soft spoken words, but an actual manifestation shown through actions. Being kind does not simply desire another’s welfare, it works toward his welfare. When one sees the envy and jealousy manifested by the Corinthians, there is no doubt they were acting harshly toward their brethren. Contrast their actions with those of GOD after whom one is to model his life.

“But after that the kindness and love of GOD our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour” (Titus 3:4-6).

“For the Corinthians, kindness meant giving up their selfish, jealous, spiteful, and proud attitudes and adopting the spirit of loving-kindness” (MacArthur, p. 340).

for another will cause Christians to rejoice when another gets a promotion, obtains some good thing, or gains some goal or attainment. Love would never desire to take something good away from another. When one looks at the Corinthian church one sees envy over spiritual gifts. Paul is showing them their attitude was wrong and they needed

to learn truly to love their brethren, which when accomplished, would end the envy they felt for each other.

When envy ended and love took over, they would better be able to see the necessity of all these gifts to help them grow into the church GOD would have them to be.

“A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones” (Prov. 14:30). When bones rot, the body will collapse because the superstructure is not strong enough to sustain it. **“Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?”** (Prov. 27:4)

Love will prompt one to be like Jonathan who was a king’s son; but his love for David caused him not to envy David’s successes, but to rejoice in them. Jonathan knew David would replace him as the next king, yet he helped David escape his father’s wrath (1 Sam. 18). Love promotes the well being of another, even when it causes a disadvantage for the person exercising it. Love will prompt Christians to be like John whom great crowds followed, but when his disciples became jealous of Jesus’ popularity, told them, **“He must increase, but I must decrease”** (John 3:30).

Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Vaunteth simply denotes bragging (See definitions above.).

Why does a person boast or brag of attainments? Is it not for the purpose of saying, *“Look what I have, do you not wish you had the same thing?”* Bragging can, and often does, encourage envy in others. The braggart is always pointing to himself, and will generally think only of

himself and his own wants and desires. He is not concerned with the welfare of another, because he can only think of his own welfare. Man must learn not to glory in himself, but in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:31).

“Love does not seek to win admiration and applause” (Hodge, p. 269).

Neither does love puff itself up. This is the idea of pride and conceit which causes one to have an inflated value of his own worth. A puffed up person usually does not give credit where credit is due. He usually thinks all of his achievements and all he has gained are because of his own abilities. Man often forgets every ability he has was given by GOD. The Corinthians were boasting as if they had devised these miraculous gifts. Paul told the Corinthians,

“Brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?” (1 Cor. 4:6-7)

All of mankind needs to realize everything one has comes from GOD.

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Prov. 11:2).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).

“A man’s pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit” (Prov. 29:23).

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| 1 Cor. 13:5 “Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;” | “doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;” (ASV) | “does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;” (NKJV) |
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UNSEEMLY — • σχημονέω — *“To act unbecomingly”* (Thayer, p. 82); *“To behave in an ugly, indecent, unseemly or unbecoming manner”* (Zodhiates, p. 284); *“Behave disgracefully, dishonorably, indecently”* (Bauer, p. 119); *“Not indecent”* (Robertson, p. 178); *“Indecorous behavior – open to censure”* (Littrell, p. 234).

EASILY PROVOKED — παροξύνω — *“To make sharp, to sharpen...to irritate, provoke, rouse to anger”* (Thayer, p. 490); *“To sharpen or whet. Metaphorically, to sharpen the mind, temper, or courage of someone, to incite, to impel. In the NT, it means to provoke or rouse to anger or indignation”* (Zodhiates, p. 1122); *“Urge on, stimulate, esp. provoke to wrath, irritate”* (Bauer, p. 629); *“Irritation or sharpness of spirit”* (Robertson, p. 178); *“Sharpen, incite; sharp, contention angry, dispute”* (Littrell, p. 234).

THINKETH NO EVIL — λογίζομαι — *“To reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over; hence to take into account, to make account of; metaph. To pass to one’s account, to impute”* (Thayer, p. 379); *“To put together with one’s mind, to count, to occupy oneself with reckonings or calculations”* (Zodhiates, p. 922); *“Reckon, calculate”* (Bauer, p. 475); *“Taketh not account of evil...to count up, to take account of as in a ledger or note-book”* (Robertson, p. 178); *“Does not put on record or account the wrong”* (Littrell, p. 234).

Love **“Doth not behave itself unseemly.”** Rather than act in an ugly, indecent, disgraceful and dishonorable manner; love will cause one to act in a way in which one will not be ashamed. To act seemly is to act with good manners; it is to act as a lady or a gentleman. What does it ultimately mean to act as a lady or a gentleman? It means one abides by the directions GOD has given as to how one is to act and treat one’s fellow man, even how one is to think about them. It means to act in an honorable way at all times. Peter, in fact, commands courtesy (1 Pet. 3:8). Barclay translates this, *“Love does not behave gracelessly”* (MacArthur, p. 344).

Love **“seeketh not her own.”** This deals with selfishness; love is not selfish. Love is not interested in “What is in it for me?” Notice here the admonition of Paul to the Philippians:

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:3-5).

If the foregoing principle were practiced, it would eliminate selfishness. Jesus desired the cup of suffering to pass from Himself if it were possible, and then stated, **“nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done”** (Luke 22:42). Too many times Christians do what they want to do. Paul apparently had a choice between departing this life and staying here on earth. Listen to what he said:

“I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith” (Phil. 1:23-25).

He apparently had a choice and chose the lesser of the two in order to benefit others, not self.

Love **“is not easily provoked.”** Another way of saying this, *“is not quick tempered.”* One who is easily provoked is one who allows every little thing to make him angry. Love will cause him to control anger when wrong has been done to him or he has been slighted, or even when he only thinks something has been done against him. The person who is easily provoked is the one who has a quick temper. Anger flashes from him like a bolt of lightning. Does this mean one can never get angry over anything? Such is not the case: **“Be ye angry, and sin not”** (Eph. 4:26).

Further, Paul tells Christians that love does not rejoice in iniquity (v. 6). There is such a thing as righteous indignation. Yet, too many times “righteous indignation” is the excuse used to justify a quick temper. But then one needs to ask the question, what is righteous indignation? It is getting angry over what makes GOD angry (Mark 3:5). When one sees children hooked on drugs at birth, one ought to get angry. When one hears of abortions being done, one ought to get angry, et cetera.

The anger dealt with here is uncontrolled wrath over things done to one. Jesus never became angry because of personal attacks waged against Him by an enemy. He was angry when His Father’s house was desecrated by the sellers and money changers (Matt. 21). But where is the example of His flashing anger over a personal insult, or even when they physically tortured Him in preparation for His death on the cross?

Love **“thinketh no evil.”** When one looks at the meanings of the original word here, there are a variety of thoughts one can entertain. For instance, one who loves does not count up or keep a tally of the evils done to him. Or, one who loves does not keep rehashing wrongs which have been done to him. In the technical aspect of this word, one finds it is an accounting term which basically was used to keep accounts of a business (Willis, p. 457). To keep such records of evil will prompt resentment and possibly even revenge.

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| 1 Cor. 13:6 “Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;” | “rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth;” (ASV) | “does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;” (NKJV) |
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REJOICETH — χαίρω — *“To rejoice, be glad...to rejoice exceedingly”* (Thayer, p. 663); *“To rejoice, be glad”* (Zodhiates, p. 1465); *“Rejoice, be glad”* (Bauer, p. 873).

INIQUITY — •δικία — *“Unrighteousness of heart and life”* (Thayer, p. 12); *“Injustice. What is not conformable with*

justice, what ought not to be, that which is wrong” (Zodhiates, p. 84); “Wrong doing...unrighteousness, wickedness, injustice” (Bauer, p. 18).

Second word REJOICETH --συγχαίρω — “To rejoice with, take part in another’s joy” (Thayer, p. 593); “To rejoice together, to share in another’s joy” (Zodhiates, p. 1322); “Rejoice with, feel joy with” (Bauer, p. 775).

TRUTH — •λήθεια — “Verity, truth. What is true in any matter under consideration” (Thayer, p. 26); “Truth, reality; the unveiled reality lying at the basis of and agreeing with an appearance; the manifested, the veritable essence of matter” (Zodhiates, p. 120).

Love does not rejoice in iniquity, nor does it rejoice in anything which GOD declares to be wrong. Paul dealt with this sentiment in Romans 1:32. Not only is it wrong for someone to commit sin, but it is also wrong for one to rejoice in the sin committed by another, even though he himself has not literally committed this sin. An example of this can be offered with regard to marriage. Two people are involved in a tough marriage where they may wish the marriage would end. One of those people commits adultery, and the other rejoices because he/she can now end the marriage. Love does not rejoice, but rather causes a person who truly loves GOD to be saddened, actually to feel pain of heart, because he sees sin in another. Love does not rejoice in the vices of others, nor does it rejoice when evil overtakes another.

Truth in this passage is the absolute truth of GOD’s word (“the truth”). Those who love GOD always rejoice in truth and all which truth encourages in the actions of others. John **“rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father”** (2 John 4).

One of the interesting things in this passage is the two words rendered “rejoiceth.” The first of these words comes from a Greek word which simply deals with rejoicing — love does not rejoice over anything which is wrong. The second word comes from a Greek word which means, “To rejoice with, take part in another’s joy. To rejoice together, to share in another’s joy.” (See above references.)

Love and truth mutually rejoice with each other. Love for GOD always rejoices with truth.

Notice the contrast between “iniquity” and “truth” in this passage. They are at odds with each other; they are mutually exclusive. In every generation there are those who advocate that love will cover up error. Love does not cover up evil, but rather will expose it. Christians are told to **“have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them”** (Eph. 5:11). I found

the comments of MacArthur interesting here, as he said,

“Love cannot tolerate wrong doctrine. It makes no sense to say, ‘It doesn’t make a great difference if people don’t agree with us about doctrine. What matters is that we love them.’ That is the basic view of what is commonly called the ecumenical movement. But if we love others it will matter a great deal to us whether or not what they believe is right or wrong. What they believe affects their souls, their eternal destinies, and their representation of God’s will, and therefore should be of the highest concern to us. It also affects the souls and destinies of those whom they influence. Love is consistent with kindness but it is not consistent with compromise of the truth. Compromising the truth is not kind to those whom we mislead by our failure to stand firmly in the truth” (MacArthur, p. 351).

There are those who would object to the above statements, based on First Peter 4:8, which reads:

“above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.”

But the question needs to be asked, *“How does love cover a multitude of sins?”* It is certainly not by ignoring those sins, which is the way many want to interpret the above passage. If that is how sins are covered, then GOD did not need to send His Son into this world, and His Son would certainly have never pointed out the sins of the Pharisees, et cetera (Matt. 23). Love causes one to obey the commands of GOD, and when obedience to His commands takes place, then one’s sins are covered, never to be remembered again! GOD did not ignore the sins of the world, but sent His Son to shed His blood so that man could be cleansed from sin.

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| 1 Cor. 13:7 “Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” | “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” (ASV) | “bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” (NKJV) |
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BEARETH — στέγω — *“To protect or keep by covering, to preserve:...to cover over with silence; to keep secret; to hide, conceal”* (Thayer, p. 586); *“To cover. In the NT, to cover over in silence”* (Zodhiates, p. 1310); *“Cover, pass over in silence, keep confidential”* (Bauer, p. 765).

BELIEVETH — πιστεύω — *“To think to be true; to be persuaded of; to credit, place confidence in”* (Thayer, p. 511); *“To believe, have faith in, trust”* (Zodhiates, p. 1160); *“Believe (in) something, be convinced of something, with that which one believes (in) added”* (Bauer, p. 660).

HOPETH — ἰλπίζω — *“To hope (in a religious sense, to wait for salvation with joy and full of confidence)”* (Thayer, p. 205); *“To hope, expect with desire”* (Zodhiates, p. 570); *“Hope, hope for”* (Bauer, p. 252).

ENDURETH — ὑπομένω — *“To endure, bear bravely and calmly: absol., ill-treatment”* (Thayer, p. 644); *“To remain under, i.e., to persevere, endure, sustain, bear up under, suffer, as a load of miseries, adversities, persecutions or provocations with faith”* (Zodhiates, p. 1424); *“Remain instead of fleeing, stand one’s ground, hold out, endure in trouble, affliction, persecution”* (Bauer, p. 845). Hodge tells us, *“The word (ὑπομένω) is properly a military word, and means to sustain the assault of an enemy”* (Hodge, p. 271). MacArthur tells us, *“ὑπομένο was a military term used of an army’s holding a vital position at all costs”* (MacArthur, p. 355); *“Perseveres”* (Robertson, p. 179).

Love **“bears all things.”** This statement is not speaking of a *“cover-up”* for Christ never taught one to cover over evil in order to hide it from view and pretend nothing ever happened. Instead, when one considers the context one gets a picture of one who does not publicize every little error someone makes. One gets a picture of one who, upon seeing error, does not publicize it immediately, but instead works quietly with the sinner to correct the error. Love ought to cause one to begin at that point, and then after due patience and effort, if there are no results, the sin must of course be made public.

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican” (Matt. 18:15-17).

This passage is speaking of private matters which **eventually** become public, for **if** it were dealing only with public matters it would be inconsistent with other teachings of the New Testament. Where public sin is evident, it ought to be taken care of as publicly as it was committed.

Consider the idea of *“covering.”* Only when sin is repented of and forgiveness is granted does GOD cover the sin and it is never to be brought up again (1 John 1:9). When GOD forgives a sin it is remembered no more. Could the reason some people bring up the past sins of others is because they do not forgive others of their sins?

“But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all,...” (Gal. 2:14).

What did Paul do “before them all?”

“But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed” (Gal. 2:11).

Notice the public rebukes of the Pharisees and scribes by Jesus. Their actions were public, known by all, and his rebuke was public. Notice also the man guilty of incest in First Corinthians chapter five. All knew the guilt; he was to be dealt with before all.

Also consider one who has committed sin, but has repented and is now trying to live a righteous life. For instance, someone had been a thief, but long ago repented. One of the meanings of the original word here, is *“to protect or keep by covering.”* It would be the truth to say he had been a thief, but why would one want to bring this to the attention of others? Why do people like to bring up the past evils of another? It is in the past; he is no longer a thief, and to bring up the past serves no useful purpose. Such a one should be protected from further harm by his loving brethren. They should encourage him. Such a brother needs a shoulder to lean upon for strength, not a tongue to lower him in the eyes of others.

“For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (Matt. 6:14-15).

Love **“believeth all things.”** This is not teaching that

one should believe and accept everything which occurs. One is not to be gullible. It is not saying one should not make any distinction in the things which are to be believed.

“Calvin remarked that the Christian is not to be so stupid as to cast aside wisdom and discernment so as to let people find it easy to cheat him; he does not forget how to distinguish white from black” (Willis, p. 458).

One is not to believe a falsehood is truth. And this certainly does not say one should abandon efforts to determine what is true or false.

With regard to GOD’s Word, it is the disposition to believe it because GOD said it. With regards to our fellow men, it is saying one will put the best possible construction upon their words and actions. One will not prejudge their motives, but rather will consider their motives as good, honorable, and according to GOD’s truth, until **proven** otherwise. This attitude would eliminate many of the problems of harboring ill will which result because of imagined slights at the hands of others in either words or actions.

“When love has no evidence to the contrary, it believes the best about its fellow man” (Willis, p. 458-459). Think what this would do to gossip if one always asked, *“Do I have proof for what I am saying about this person?”* Or, if one asked, *“Will you write down what you are saying and sign it?”* Love demands believing the best about another when there is no proof he is evil. *“Hatred believes the worst; love believes the best”* (MacArthur, p. 354).

One of the great examples of a lack of belief in another concerns Job. His “friends” were convinced his suffering was the result of some sin because they did not really love him. If they truly were his friends they would have observed his life, and realized there were only minor things in his life with which they could find fault. Nothing he had done could warrant the kind of misery he was going through. Yet, they accused him of being a sinner who deserved what he was getting, and was in need of repentance. If they had really loved him, they would not have accused him of sin because they had observed the exemplary life he had lived among them in the past.

Love **“hopeth all things.”** Hope exists only when there is a desire coupled with an expectation of receiving what is hoped for. Hope is an attitude which says no matter how bad things may appear, they may not really be as awful as they seem. How many watching in stunned silence, saw the World Trade Center towers in New York collapse on 9-11-2001? One hoped the thousands inside had escaped, but because of the evidence one knew many were dead. As this is being written, many of the victims’

families of this murderous plot are still making statements of hope regarding their loved ones who were inside. Hope is much like the attitude of the parents of a little boy who wandered away from the picnic area and drowned in the lake. Until his body was produced, the parents feared the worst, yet maintained a **hope** he had wandered into the nearby woods and was still alive. Hope is an attitude which believes there is an explanation which will clear up misunderstanding and show the words and actions of another to be based on good intentions.

With regards to those caught up in sin, hope will expect them to repent. When belief in the goodness of someone is proven to be wrong, hope says someday they will repent.

“When love has no evidence, it believes the best and when the evidence is adverse, it hopes for the best” (Willis, p. 459).

Love **“endureth all things.”** True love for GOD will cause one to persevere in spite of any attack one suffers. What was it which caused Jesus to go to the cross, after He prayed for the cup of suffering to be taken away from Him?

It was His love of the Father, and mankind, which caused Him to obey until the end. What was it which caused Paul to give up everything — power, prestige, family, everything, in order to obey GOD? It was his love for the Father. When one truly loves GOD, there is no obstacle which can keep one from reaching heaven. One can endure everything the devil throws at him.

True love not only persists in the face of all trials; it also forgives those who injure it.

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven” (Matt. 18:21-22).

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| 1 Cor. 13:8 “Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.” | “Love never faileth: 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.” (ASV) | “Love never fails. But whether there are prophecies, they will fail; whether there are tongues, they will cease; whether there is knowledge, it will vanish away.” (NKJV) |
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FAILETH ---καταργέω — *“To cause to cease, put an end to, do away with, annul, abolish”* (Thayer, p. 336); *“To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective,...to destroy, cause to cease, do away with”* (Zodhiates, p. 842); *“Abolish, wipe out, set aside...cease, pass away”* (Bauer, p. 417).

CEASE — παύω — *“To make to cease or desist, to restrain a thing or a person from something”* (Thayer, p. 496); *“To stop, pause, make an end”* (Zodhiates, p. 1132); *“Stop, cause to stop, quit, relieve”* (Bauer, p. 638).

VANISH AWAY — Same as “faileth.”

The first thing one notices in this passage is that love will never end. True love never does end, not even with the cessation of this world, for love is eternal.

Note now the trio of words, **“prophecies,” “tongues,”** and **“knowledge.”** It is easy to understand what these words signify, i.e., what kind of knowledge, et cetera, when one looks at the context. The context speaks of miraculous gifts throughout chapters twelve through fourteen. The gifts spoken of here are the same as those spoken of in chapter twelve (12:8-10). It is not necessary to give the complete list as found in chapter twelve; rather these three are used to represent the whole. The thing one particularly notices here is that these gifts are going to end. (The particular time when they will end will be discussed in verse ten.)

One of the big mistakes many folks make, is to apply this verse and the rest of this chapter to heaven. Some say these things will not be necessary in heaven, but are necessary here. They apply these terms, (prophecies, tongues, knowledge), in the most general of circumstances, ignoring the fact the context speaks of miraculous gifts. To be consistent they state these things will not be needed in heaven; but here is where they get into trouble. Is there no knowledge in heaven? Notice the following passage:

“When He had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of GOD, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth”

(Rev. 6:9-10)?

In this passage one is given a glimpse into heaven itself, which speaks of the saints which were killed for being Christians. Did they **know** the Lord had not avenged His saints? Did they know where they were? Did they know who the Lord was? Certainly they had knowledge of the circumstances around them, and even knew the murderers on earth had not yet paid the price for their sins against GOD. Therefore the argument stating these things apply to heaven is false!

Further, the language used with these words indicates these things will cease; they will **all** cease, and it will be at the same time — **“when that which is perfect is come.”** MacArthur, at least, seems to recognize a problem exists here. He tries to explain away the logical implications by saying tongues ceased with the apostolic age, but the other miracles did not cease. MacArthur states,

*“The cessation of **tongues**, however, is not mentioned in relation to the coming of the perfect. They will have ceased at an earlier time. That is why they are not stopped by the same thing that stops the other two gifts. As was discussed in some detail under 12:8-10, I believe that gift ended with the apostolic age”* (MacArthur, p. 359).

It must be repeated, the text will allow for nothing else than to show the miraculous gifts which are mentioned throughout these three chapters are these things which will pass away (12-14).

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| 1 Cor. 13:9-10 “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, | “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is | “For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that |
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| then that which is in part shall be done away." | in part shall be done away." (ASV) | which is in part will be done away." (NKJV) |
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PART — μέρος — "A part due or assigned to one...one of the constituent parts of a whole" (Thayer, p. 400); "A part, side" (Zodhiates, p. 962); "Part, in contrast to the whole" (Bauer, p. 505).

PERFECT — τέλειος — "Brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; perfect" (Thayer, p. 618); "Finished, that which has reached its end, term, limit; hence, complete, full, wanting in nothing" (Zodhiates, p. 1372); "Having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect" (Bauer, p. 809); "The completed; the perfected; that which is brought to its mature growth or development" (Littrell, p. 236).

Notice the contrast in these two verses: The part or part of the whole is in contrast with what is complete (perfect). He states that knowledge and prophecy, which both have to do with giving information, are "in part." Since these are found in the context of miraculous gifts, one is forced to recognize them as miraculous gifts. The whole subject under consideration is the Corinthians' abuse of miraculous gifts. What was the purpose of miraculous gifts? Mark reports, that

"they (apostles, RK) went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).

Miracles were to confirm the word they spoke as being the word of GOD.

But what was given in part was to be done away with, "when that which is perfect is come." But what is the "perfect?" A key to understanding this passage is found in Ephesians 4:11-14, where the subject of miraculous gifts is again addressed.

"And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:11-15).

These people were given these abilities for the perfecting and strengthening of the saints. They were given these gifts until the time came when there could be unity of faith through the knowledge of Christ which would make them perfect in the fullness of Christ. Notice the goal

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting

— the perfect man. Consider then Second Timothy 3:16-17.

"All scripture is given by inspiration of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of GOD may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

What has the ability to make the man of GOD perfect? "All scripture!" During the miraculous age the disciples only had a partial system to deliver all truth. But the day came when the revelation of GOD would be given by a perfect system. When the written word was completed, there was no more need for the miraculous, because the word of GOD was now preserved for man. It should be remembered, GOD does not do for man what man can do for himself.

Jude tells us,
"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3).

Jude, what has been delivered to the brethren? "The faith" Not "your faith," but "The faith!" Jude, how many times has it been delivered? "Once, one time" (πᾶς), once and for all time; never to be delivered again. How does faith (belief) come? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of GOD" (Rom. 10:17). Speaking of GOD's word, James calls it the "perfect law of liberty" (James 1:25).

"That which is perfect" in the Corinthian text is THE WORD OF GOD!

the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure,

making wise the simple" (Psalm 19:7).

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| <p>1 Cor. 13:11 "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul has not gone to another subject here, but is still talking about miraculous gifts. A child's speech, understanding and thoughts are accurate as far as they go; yet they are inadequate. Paul is showing the miraculous gifts belonged to the infancy stage of the church, before the church was full grown. The church can be full grown only as it allows the word of GOD to direct it. During the infancy stage of the church, it needed guidance toward maturity, just as a small child needs guidance to come to the maturity of manhood. But once a child becomes a man, it is no longer proper for him to speak, understand, and think like a child. If he continues to speak, understand and think like a child, then one realizes there is something wrong with him. During the infancy state of the church it needed miraculous gifts for guidance and for proof that

those who taught were indeed speaking GOD's Word. But once the word of GOD was written down, there was no longer a need for the miraculous. So like a boy growing into manhood, the childlike ways are laid aside for the pursuits of manhood. Stancliff writes:

"The spiritual gifts were given to bring about the perfect law of liberty. The perfect law of liberty provided guidelines by which imperfect children could grow toward the perfect image of GOD; that is, Jesus Christ. Having properly matured, they would be prepared to meet the perfect Lord when He appeared. They would be ready to receive new and perfect spiritual bodies and to enter into the joys of a perfect home in heaven" (Stancliff, p. 205).

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| <p>1 Cor. 13:12 "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known." (NKJV)</p> |
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GLASS — ὄρατρον — "A mirror" (Thayer, p. 253); "A looking glass, mirror...Mirrors in Bible times were usually made of polished metal" (Zodhiates, p. 660).

During the miraculous age, knowledge was delivered by a yet incomplete system; but in the mature age, when that which is perfect (complete) is come, all one needs to know about spiritual matters is in written form.

"According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Pet. 1:3).

When one looks into the mirror of GOD'S word, one sees oneself as he actually is.

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and

"Then shall I know even as I also am known." Here is a passage upon which those who believe this text speaks of heaven rely. But one should consider something here

not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:21-25).

In the infancy stage of the church, during the miraculous era, they did not have a written or perfect system of truth. As such they were incomplete; it was as if they were looking into a distorted mirror which did not give them a clear image. They could not see the whole clearly.

which is important. How often do people see themselves in a distorted view, because they are looking at themselves with prejudicial glasses, or because they are comparing

themselves with others, and thinking how good they are?

But a stranger, or a friend, may clearly see one as he really is. Often this is the case. When one looks into the perfect law of liberty, one sees himself as he actually is, i.e., as he is actually known by those around him — and more importantly, as he is known by GOD.

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| 1 Cor. 13:13 “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” | “But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” (ASV) | “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” (NKJV) |
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FAITH — πίστις — *“Conviction of the truth of anything, belief, in the the N.T. of a conviction or belief respecting man’s relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and conjoined with it”* (Thayer, p. 512); *“Faith. Subjectively meaning firm persuasion, conviction, belief in the truth, veracity, reality or faithfulness (though rare). Objectively meaning that which is believed, doctrine, the received articles of faith”* (Zodhiates, p. 1162); *“Faith, trust”* (Bauer, p. 662).

HOPE — ἰλπίς — *“Expectation of good, hope; and in the Christian sense, joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation”* (Thayer, p. 205); *“Hope, desire of some good with expectation of obtaining it”* (Zodhiates, p. 570); *“Hope, expectation, prospect”* (Bauer, p. 252).

LOVE — •γάπη

This verse is where the commentators who do not want to give up their false views on miracles get themselves into great difficulties, even contradicting themselves as well as the Bible. These false teachers say the **“faith,” “hope,”** and **“love”** of this verse are greater than the miraculous gifts mentioned earlier, because they believe the miraculous ends at heaven, being done away with when the eternal existence begins; but faith, hope and love will continue in heaven. Love is greater than hope and faith because love controls the other two, not because love outlasts the other two.

After the miraculous spiritual gifts have ended, there will always be the need for faith, hope, and love; their need will last as long as the world exists.

This chapter has been devoted to rebuking the unloving Christians of Corinth because they had abused the spiritual gifts which were given to help the whole body

grow into completeness in Christ (Eph. 4:1-15). They needed to put away their petty jealousies, bragging and childishness, and grow to maturity. Paul shows them that the spiritual gifts are limited to a specific time (until **“that which is perfect is come”**). After these gifts have ended, then they will still have faith, hope and love, which are needed until the end of time. And yet, of this triad, love is greater, superior by far, to the other two (faith and hope).

Love for their fellow Christians would have solved many of the problems which existed at Corinth. Therefore, Paul is urging them to develop the love which will bind them together in the body of Christ. He urges them to stop fussing over these temporal and fleeting gifts and unite in love which outlasts everything else. Regarding this concept, the following chart by Willis is extremely helpful in illustrating these ideas (Willis, p. 466).

| Things existing NOW During the "in part" Time | Future of each item | Things existing THEN During the Period after "the perfect" had come |
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| 1. Prophecy 2. Tongue-speaking 3. Word of knowledge 4. Faith 5. Hope 6. Love | shall fail shall cease shall vanish away Abides Abides Abides | Items 1-3 not to exist in this time period 4. Faith 5. Hope 6. Love |

"WHY LOVE IS THE GREATEST THING"

"Love is the fulfillment of the law, which was never true of faith (Rom. 13:10).

Love outranks faith in the power to motivate men.

Love includes obedience (John 14:15), which is not true of faith or hope.

Love is the heart of the Great Commandment to love God and one's neighbor (Mark 12:28-31).

Love shall abide eternally, whereas both faith and hope will not, except in some exceptional sense.

Love, if lacking in the heart, would be a sufficient deficiency to prevent one's salvation, even if he possessed 'all faith' (v. 2).

Love works the greatest miracle of transformation in human hearts, distinguishing it from faith, which exists in some pretty cold fish!" (Coffman, p. 221)

Notice what comes first in the list of the fruit of the Spirit:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:22-26).

"Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:36-40).

First Corinthians — Chapter Fourteen

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:1 “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.”</p> | <p>“Follow after love; yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” (NKJV)</p> |
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FOLLOW — διώκω — *“Metaph. With acc. Of thing, to pursue, i.e., to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire”* (Thayer, p. 153); *“To pursue, prosecute, persecute, but also in a good sense...To follow or press hard after, to pursue with earnestness and diligence in order to obtain, to go after with the desire of obtaining”* (Zodhiates, p. 474); *“Hasten, run, press on...pursue, strive for, seek after, aspire to something”* (Bauer, p. 201).

DESIRE — ζηλόω — *“To burn with zeal”* (Thayer, p. 271); *“To be zealous, filled with zeal, zealously affected whether in a good or bad sense”* (Zodhiates, p. 699); *“Strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly”* (Bauer, p. 338).

PROPHECY — προφητεύω — *“To prophesy, i.e., to be a prophet, speak forth by divine inspiration; to predict...to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort others”* (Thayer, p. 553); *“To declare truths through the inspiration of God’s Holy Spirit whether by prediction or otherwise”* (Zodhiates, p. 1243); *“Proclaim a divine revelation...prophetically reveal what is hidden...foretell the future, prophesy”* (Bauer, p. 723).

Is one to desire spiritual gifts today such as the Corinthians had? One must remind himself that these were miraculous gifts under discussion, and as Stancliff states, the following must be carefully weighed as one studies this chapter.

1. *Spiritual gifts were given to confirm revelation.*
2. *These gifts were transferred by the laying on of the apostles’ hands.*
3. *They do not appear to be taking place today”* [(Stancliff, p. 209) While Stancliff is accurate in his first two points, his third tends to contradict his first two points. His wording seems to indicate there is a possibility miracles may still exist but we have not seen them. Since all revelation has been given there is no more need for miracles. Further, since it took the laying on of an apostles hands to convey the ability to perform miracles, and all of them are dead, then there **cannot** be any miracles today.]

Paul has shown the Corinthians in the last chapter that love is far greater than any spiritual gift of their age. Those gifts will all pass away, but love will continue. He continues his thinking here by telling them to **“follow,”** i.e., earnestly pursue love. This pursuit is a life long endeavor. Notice from Second Peter 5:1-7 that each Christian grace is choreographed with the other one upon the other; and notice which one is last — love. In order for one to have true love, all of these other qualities must

be developed. And it is not a matter of adding one and when it is *“perfected,”* one moves on to the next one. One must always work on *“growing”* in all of these graces. Love is to be earnestly pursued because it is lost if not pursued. Consider a marriage where love is not continually pursued by both parties: soon love dies in such a union. Love is to be earnestly pursued because it increases with time, if pursued correctly; thus, it becomes stronger and more beneficial to self and others. Further, love is to be pursued, even by the Corinthians in an age of miracles, because everyone may obtain it; whereas the miraculous gifts spoken of in these chapters were gifts. As gifts, the pursuit of them would not gain them.

While love is the primary thing which should be sought by all of the Corinthian Christians because of its superiority to the miraculous, it was not wrong for them to desire these miraculous gifts. In fact, Paul shows while they pursued love, they should desire the spiritual gifts. They thought the greatest of these gifts was the ability to speak in languages they had never learned. But Paul shows them the greatest of these spiritual gifts was **“prophecy.”** What was prophecy? As noted in the definitions from the lexicons above, prophecy dealt with the ability to teach and sometimes predict the future under the influence of the Holy Spirit who gave the gift (12:8). Christians should never forget, the primary Biblical idea of prophecy is teaching.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:2 “For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto GOD: for no man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to GOD, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries.” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNKNOWN — The word “unknown” is not found anywhere in this chapter, but was “*added by the translators, to stress that the tongues were languages ‘unknown to the speaker.’ These, however, were certainly known to those present in the audiences, as noted from Acts 2:6-11*” (Jackson, p. 138). “*Nowhere in the Bible does it speak of unknown tongues*” (McGee, p. 161).

TONGUE — γλῶσσα — “*The tongue, a member of the body, the organ of speech...a tongue, i.e., the language used by a particular people in distinction from that of other nations*” (Thayer, p. 118); “*An organ of the body...Metaphorically, speech or language...to speak languages not known to them before, means to speak in or with tongues other than their own native tongue*” (Zodhiates, p. 375); “*Tongue...language*” (Bauer, p. 162).

MYSTERIES — μυστήριον — “*A hidden thing, secret, mystery...a hidden or secret thing, not obvious to the understanding*” (Thayer, p. 420); “*A secret, or esoteric knowledge*” (Zodhiates, p. 1000); “*Secret, secret rite, secret teaching, mystery*” (Bauer, p. 530).

It must be emphasized that the word “**unknown,**” as noted in the above comments, does not appear in the original language. It was placed there by the translators to emphasize a language which was being spoken which those in attendance did not understand. This fact cannot be stressed too much when one considers the false doctrines which concentrate on this chapter, and specifically the word “*unknown,*” to support their use of “*ecstatic*” utterance.

“This verse is designed to show that the faculty of speaking intelligibly, and to the edification of the church, is of more value than the power of speaking in a foreign language. The reason is, that however valuable may be the endowment in itself, and however important the truth which he may utter, yet it is as if he spoke to God only. No one could understand him” (Barnes, p. 260).

Paul is speaking of those times when the church is gathered; thus, he is not saying there is no man on the face of the earth who can understand, but rather there was no one in their assembly who could understand. The word “**understandeth**” literally means “*heareth or hears.*” They may hear the sounds made as one speaks, but they do not glean a meaning from the speech. An example of this is seen in the accounts of Paul’s conversion. Acts 9:7, says:

“the men which journeyed with him stood

speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.”

Then in Acts 22:9, one reads,

“they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of Him that spake to me.”

They heard the sound of the voice, but they did not hear in such a way as to have an understanding of the words. How many have been in a crowd hearing a number of voices, but not understanding what was being said?

While the man speaking in the foreign language may be presenting truths which are valuable and needed, if no one understands what he is saying, his effort is valueless. GOD will understand a man no matter what language of the earth he speaks, but those gathered around him who do not speak his language will be left wondering what is being said; to them he speaks mysterious words, and only leaves them curious as to what he said. (I travel to Indonesia each year to teach, but in order to accomplish anything one of two things must be true: (1) I must learn the language, or (2) I must have an interpreter.)

It should be emphasized, Paul is not forbidding foreign languages to be used in the assembly. Rather he is regulating how they are to be used. If no one can understand what is being said, those words are unprofitable; they do not build up (edify) anyone’s faith.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:3 “But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort.”</p> | <p>“But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men edification, and exhortation, and consolation.” ASV)</p> | <p>“But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.” (NKJV)</p> |
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EDIFICATION — οἰκοδομή — “*(The act of) building, building up...in the N.T. metaph., edifying, edification, i.e., the act of one who promotes another’s growth in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, happiness*” (Thayer, p. 440); “*The act of building, building as a process, also that which is built, the building*” (Zodhiates, p. 1031); “*Building as a process, construction...of spiritual strengthening edifying, edification, building up*” (Bauer, p. 558-559); “*The act of building*” (Earle, p. 240).

EXHORTATION — παράκλησις — *A calling near, summons...exhortation, admonition, encouragement*” (Thayer, p. 483); “*The act of exhortation, encouragement, comfort*” (Zodhiates, p. 1106); “*Encouragement, exhortation...appeal,*

request...comfort, consolation" (Bauer, p. 618).

COMFORT — παραμυθία — "Any address, whether made for the purpose of persuading, or of arousing and stimulating, or of calming and consoling" (Thayer, p. 485); "Exhortation, encouragement. In the NT, consolation, comfort. *Paramuthia* expresses a greater degree of tenderness, at least by word of mouth, than *paraklesis* which carries a more general sense of helpfulness and comfort" (Zodhiates, p. 1110); "Encouragement, esp. comfort, consolation" (Bauer, p. 620).

The person who prophesies teaches GOD'S word to the people in their own language. The one who spoke in tongues had a wonderful gift for mission work, or for a visitor who came from a foreign country who could not speak the local language. To speak a foreign language which no one in the local congregation understood could not edify, exhort, or comfort the congregation. Paul is emphasizing the usefulness of the gift, as can be seen in verses nineteen and twenty-eight. As he will state later, the one who spoke a tongue should maintain silence unless he could interpret what he spoke (v. 5).

What does the one who speaks by prophecy

accomplish? (1) He edifies, i.e., builds up the faith of those who hear him proclaiming the truths of GOD; (2) He exhorts, i.e., encourages them to follow the course of action the truths he proclaims from GOD'S word demands; and (3) He comforts, i.e., encourages them in such a way they can face the troubles and temptations of this life so as to be victorious in Christ. Why is he able to accomplish this? He is able to accomplish this because he speaks in a language the people can understand. If one cannot understand the person speaking, his words cannot build up, and cannot encourage one to follow GOD'S laws, or comfort one in the face of trials.

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| 1 Cor. 14:4 "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." | "He that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church." (ASV) | "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church." (NKJV) |
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This passage, admittedly, offers a small difficulty. The thrust of the verse is clear as the benefit of the whole is to be preferred over the benefit of the one. The question raised here is, how is the person who speaks in another language edified? The context indicates that without an interpreter, the language speaker is to be silent (v. 28). If the one who spoke in another language understood what he was saying, could he not translate his own words to the people? Or possibly, this is one who does not speak the language of his hearers. But if this is the case, since true languages came from the Spirit, why would the Spirit cause him to speak at the assembly where no one could understand him? The Spirit **never** caused one to speak out

as they were doing here (v. 32). The possibility exists that his message may have been one he received at an earlier date, and he was simply showing off his ability. If he truly spoke a message from GOD, then he himself could be edified by his words, but no one else would be edified. The purpose Paul is dealing with is the edification of the whole church in their gatherings. Whether it be the gift of languages (tongues) or prophesying, the goal is to build up the church through the knowledge of GOD's word.

"Perhaps there was some type of emotional or spiritual uplift which caused the speaker to be profited" (Stancliff, p. 211).

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| 1 Cor. 14:5 "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." | "Now I would have you all speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy: and greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying." (ASV) | "I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification." (NKJV) |
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The emphasis in this verse is on learning. The importance and value of tongues is clearly seen from Paul's desire that they could all have the ability to speak in these languages. The whole thought boils down to usefulness. Why does Paul say prophesying is greater than tongues? He says this because it is **more useful** in the congregational

setting. The whole purpose of speaking is to teach GOD's word. If the language cannot be understood, the purpose of the message is not achieved. Therefore, in such situations, the gift of prophecy is far more valuable than the gift of tongues. But, notice the word **"except."** This indicates the gift of tongues, if it could be interpreted by someone, is just

as “great” as that of prophesying. Again, the gifts the Spirit gave were to be useful in **edifying** the church. As long as they were used for this purpose they were to be used.

“If the speaker interpreted, then he prophesied” (Hodge, p. 281).

“However important and valuable the truth might be which he uttered, it would be useless to the

church, unless he should explain it in language which they could understand” (Barnes, p. 262).

It must again be emphasized, Paul is not condemning the use of tongues; he is condemning the **abuse** of tongues.

This passage implies a man might, but not necessarily, have both the gifts of tongue speaking and interpretation (Also see vv. 13-14).

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:6 “Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?”</p> | <p>“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?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?” (NKJV)</p> |
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What makes someone’s utterance beneficial? Benefit can only come if one understands what is being said. Paul has been emphasizing edification, i.e., the building up of the brethren in the most holy faith. This whole context shows no spiritual gift has any benefit unless it is used for edification. What teaching can be imparted if the student cannot understand the words of the teacher?

The apostle uses himself in this text to illustrate what ought to be done among them. As an apostle, he had all of the gifts mentioned in chapter twelve; but he clearly shows that if he used them in a way which did not edify, they

were useless.

“I thank my GOD, I speak with tongues more than ye all: Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue” (1 Cor. 14:18-19).

Since the Corinthians glorified speaking in languages, Paul is asking, “What profit comes from speaking in a language no one understands?”

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:7-8 “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”</p> | <p>“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?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?” (NKJV)</p> |
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UNCERTAIN — —δηλος — *“Not manifest; indistinct, uncertain, obscure”* (Thayer, p. 11); *“Not manifest, not apparent, concealed”* (Zodhiates, p. 80); *“Indistinct”* (Bauer, p. 16).

The Spirit now uses two illustrations to reinforce the idea of sounds being useless unless they can be understood.

The illustration is musical instruments. If one took a harp and tried to pluck a tune, others might be amused at the sounds coming from it, but then would quickly get bored with what was being done, because it would only be noise.

But take the same harp and put it into the hands of a skilled musician, and beautiful melodies would come forth which would fascinate and keep one’s attention for hours. If a speaker speaks in a language which those around him cannot understand, it is useless to them. The speaker may have some very important things to say, if heeded by the listeners, which could greatly benefit them. But if they cannot understand his words there is no benefit. An

illustration of this could be taken from the disaster of the bombing of the Trade Center in New York City (11 Sept. 2001). What if someone had been trying to tell the people in one of those towers not to use a particular staircase because the way was blocked ten floors down? He further instructs them that if they use this particular stair-well they will end up being trapped and will probably die. This would be good, helpful, and extremely valuable information. Suppose he was giving these instructions in Vietnamese; how many would pay attention to him? His information would be good, and valuable, but it would not benefit anyone who heard him unless he understood Vietnamese.

In this text the trumpet was used to illustrate this truth.

In those times, and even in fairly recent times (World War I), the trumpet was used to signal different movements of an army (cf. Numbers 10:1-9). If the bugler played notes which did not make sense to those who heard, the army would simply stand in confusion. But if they had learned

the particular sounds for different commands, and the bugler played those sounds as he was commanded, the army could function in an orderly and useful manner. A sound which could not be understood was useless to an army — so are words which the listener cannot understand.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:9 “So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken? for ye shall speak into the air.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.” (NKJV)</p> |
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EASY TO BE UNDERSTOOD — εὐημος — *“Well-marked, clear and definite, distinct”* (Thayer, p. 262); *“Well-expressed, significant, of good omen, distinguishable by certain marks such as speech in which case it means easily understood, distinct”* (Zodhiates, p. 685); *“Easily recognizable, clear, distinct”* (Bauer, p. 326); *“Clear to the understanding, distinct”* (G. Abbott-Smith; Quote by Earle, p. 240); *“Well-marked, distinct, clear”* (Robertson, p. 182); *“Clear to the understanding, distinct”* (G. Abbott-Smith, as quoted by Earle, p. 240).

Paul now turns from the sounds made by inanimate objects to the sounds made by human voices. As an instrument was needed for sound in the passages just mentioned (pipe, harp, trumpet) so also an instrument is needed to produce sound from a human being. One may have vocal cords, but without the tongue nothing understandable will be uttered. There will be noise but nothing else.

What is the purpose of speech? It is to communicate something which may be understood by another. Therefore, if speech is used which cannot be understood, whether it be by use of a foreign language or words “too big” for the hearers, it is worthless. The idea of worthlessness is found in the phrase, **“speak into the air.”** The world needs to hear the Bible read and it would be good to read the Bible to the masses. But if one went out

into a meadow and began reading the scriptures out loud, would he be accomplishing the goal of taking the gospel to the world? Those who were speaking in the Corinthian assembly in those languages might as well have been in the meadow speaking to the air where no edification or communication was taking place.

“All preaching should be plain, simple, and adapted to the capacity of the hearers” (Lipscomb, p. 207).

Those Corinthians, who were using tongues, were more interested in impressing others with their ability than they were in true worship to GOD. True worship demands praise to GOD and edification of the attendant. Without both of those things in the public assembly the purpose of such had not been fulfilled.

“Speak into the air” — See First Corinthians 9:26.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:10 “There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none of them is without signification.”</p> | <p>“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.” (NKJV)</p> |
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KINDS — γένος — *“Race...the aggregate of many individuals of the same nature, kind, sort, species”* (Thayer, p. 113-114); *“Kind, sort, species”* (Zodhiates, p. 365); *“Race, stock...class, kind”* (Bauer, p. 156).

VOICE — φωνή — *“A voice, i.e., the sound of uttered words”* (Thayer, p. 661); *“A sound or tone made or given forth. Plutarch calls it ‘that which brings light upon that which is thought of in the mind’”* (Zodhiates, p. 1461); *“Voice. Generally, any form of speech or other utterance”* (Bauer, p. 870).

WITHOUT SIGNIFICATION — ἄφωνος — *“Voiceless, dumb; without the faculty of speech”* (Thayer, p. 90); *“Voiceless, dumb, not having the power of speech...Metaphorically, meaning unexpressive, i.e., without expression, not having the power of voice”* (Zodhiates, p. 304); *“Incapable of speech,... incapable of conveying meaning, as a language normally does”* (Bauer, p. 128).

There are many languages in the world. This is brought home each year when this author travels to

Indonesia to do mission work. On the journey Chinese, Malaysian, Indonesian, and many other languages and

dialects are heard. To those who speak those languages, meaning and intelligence are passed from one person to another. Since I must use an interpreter, I often find myself listening to words which have no meaning to me, until the interpreter explains what was said. This is Paul's point. Language has the purpose of expressing ideas or thoughts from the mind of one person to another through the use of words. But if one cannot understand the words spoken, the thoughts of another are worthless. In the Corinthian church, and in any church, where unintelligible sounds are uttered there is no profit.

Because the use of their gift was not profitable, i.e., it did not build up the church, it was useless to anyone but the

speaker (v. 2). Therefore, to speak in a language which did not edify, was a waste of time and breath. In Winder, Georgia, there is a man who stands on the sidewalk on main street every Saturday. He has a Bible in his hand, and is shouting a message out toward the street as the cars pass by. Everyone has his windows rolled up, and no one ever is seen stopping to listen to him. In essence, this man is wasting his breath and time, and is considered by the people as an annoyance, if he is considered at all.

There are many languages in the world and all of them have meaning to those who have learned them. Each particular language should be used in the setting where it provides information to those who hear it.

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| 1 Cor. 14:11 “Therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.” (NKJV) |
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MEANING — δύναμις — *“Strength, ability, power”* (Thayer, p. 159); *“Power, especially achieving power”* (Zodhiates, p. 485); *“Power, might, strength, force”* (Bauer, p. 207).

BARBARIAN — βάρβαρος — *“One whose speech is rude, rough, harsh... one who speaks a foreign or strange language which is not understood by another”* (Thayer, p. 95); *“A barbarian, i.e., a man who speaks a foreign or strange language, a foreigner”* (Zodhiates, p. 322); *“Speaking a foreign language, a strange, i.e., unintelligible tongue...not Greek, foreign, barbarous”* (Bauer, p. 133).

Paul continues to discuss the use of languages in an improper manner. What is the first thought one has when he hears the word **barbarian**? Is it not of an attacking army of cruel, uncivilized people? But this is not the idea of the word at all. As one sees from the word studies

There is no benefit, no communication, if the words spoken cannot be understood. This idea is particularly seen when one considers the word **“meaning”** in this text. As noted above, it comes from the word δύναμις, which refers to strength, power and ability. Zodhiates says that δύναμις especially refers to power which has the ability to achieve something. Language which is not understood cannot achieve the goal of communication or instruction the very things language is meant to achieve. For the Corinthians to speak in their assemblies with words which

above, it simply refers to one who speaks another language and implies that the hearer is not able to understand it. In this text, barbarian carries the idea of one's being a foreigner.

could not be understood was to limit the power of GOD's Word.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

The Gospel is meant to produce results, results which lead to the salvation of souls.

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| 1 Cor. 14:12 “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.” | “So also ye, since ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may abound unto the edifying of the church.” (ASV) | “Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.” (NKJV) |
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EXCEL — περισσεύσειν — *“To exceed a fixed number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure”* (Thayer, p. 505); *“To be in excess, exceed in number or measure. In the NT, to be or have more than enough”* (Zodhiates, p. 1150).

In effect, Paul seems to be saying, if they desired to use spiritual gifts (12:8-10), they should use them only for the edifying (building up) of the church. These gifts were not for any other purpose. Thus, they were to seek to abound (“excel”) in edifying the church in whichever gift they might have. These gifts were not to be used in a personal or selfish manner, or for self glorification, as it

appears many in Corinth were wanting to do. The purpose of these gifts was to edify the church. This thought cannot be overemphasized. Thus, the motive for seeking the gift must be right. One might recall an example of one who sought miraculous gifts for the wrong reason (Acts 8:13-24).

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| 1 Cor. 14:13 “Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.” | “Wherefore let him that speaketh in a tongue pray that he may interpret.” (ASV) | “Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.” (NKJV) |
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“Because tongues are absolutely useless if they are unintelligible utterances which do not communicate anything to others, the glossolalist should pray that he might interpret the tongues in order that the entire church might receive edification....Hence, Paul’s argument throughout this section has been that the church cannot be edified by unintelligible discourse. For this reason, the tongue-speaker, should pray for the gift of interpretation. Otherwise, the church would not be profited by his gift”(Willis, p. 488).

For some there is a problem in this passage, which is expressed in the following words of Stancliff:

“If the person must pray that he may interpret what he has said, he must not understand the meaning of the message himself. It would appear

that God was merely using the tongue of the person as an instrument in the production of the message. The words were not the product of the understanding of the speaker”(Stancliff, p. 215).

However, there is no “problem” here. Many times an interpreter may not fully understand how to communicate an idea to those to whom he is speaking. This context has clearly shown the object was to convey a message which could easily be understood. Therefore the ability to interpret carries with it the idea of presenting the identical truth which was expressed in another language. Further, there may be several languages or dialects in a congregation, making it necessary to give additional translations so everyone could understand the message.

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| 1 Cor. 14:14 “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” | “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.” (ASV) | “For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.” (NKJV) |
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UNFRUITFUL — —καρπος— *“Without fruit, barren...metaph. Not yielding what it ought to yield...contributing nothing to the instruction, improvement, comfort, of others”* (Thayer, p. 21); *“Unfruitful, bearing no fruit”* (Zodhiates, p. 109); *“Unfruitful, fruitless...useless, unproductive”* (Bauer, p. 29).

This verse is considered quite difficult by many, yet it is understandable. First, consider the entire context in which the Spirit has been stressing the need of edification. If any spiritual gift is used which does not edify the body, then what is done is useless; it has no profit. The spirit of the person who prayed using a language was indeed involved, but his understanding of the prayer was unprofitable (unfruitful) to those who heard him pray. It must be remembered Paul has been dealing, and will continue to deal, with the concept of what was done in public gatherings and worship services. He has continually shown the misuse of languages, and this passage is no different (vv. 16-17). Further, some have tried to change this to a private setting and say the person prayed in this

language but did not understand what he was saying. Such an interpretation is beyond the context. One cannot assume the person speaking is to edify the church with his words, but gain no benefit himself? The context continues to speak of what benefits are profitable to the church as it is gathered. Further, notice verse twenty-eight, where a person who did not have an interpreter was to maintain silence and **“speak to himself, and to GOD.”** What benefit is there in speaking to GOD if one does not know what he is saying? Let it be firmly stated, that one is never to be involved in a religious exercise which has no benefit. Understanding is crucial to proper worship and edification, as the next few verses clearly show.

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| 1 Cor. 14:15 “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.” | “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.” (ASV) | “What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.” (NKJV) |
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Since Paul now speaks of an action in connection with what he has just said, one might interpret this as “*What do I do?*” The ASV says, “*What is the conclusion?*” In essence, Paul is stating he will pray and sing with understanding (so as to be understood), because only by doing such can he transmit intelligent

thought and thereby edify the brethren.

Consider this also: Paul is saying that when he prays in these languages, he understands what he is saying. Whether a person thinks the word “spirit” in this passage refers to the Holy Spirit or his own spirit, Paul **understands** what is being said.

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| 1 Cor. 14:16 “Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?” | “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?” (ASV) | “Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say Amen at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?” (NKJV) |
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AMEN — • μήν — “*At the beginning of a discourse, surely, of a truth, truly...at the close of a sentence; so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled*”(Thayer, p. 32); “*Amen, to be firm, steady, trustworthy...In the NT, it indicates affirmation, in truth, verily, it is so...It also means consent or desire, so be it, and as such it concludes prayers*”(Zodhiates, pp. 134-135); “*So let it be, truly, amen*”(Bauer, p. 45).

UNLEARNED — ἄωτος — “*In the N.T. an unlearned, illiterate, man opp. to the learned, the educated*”(Thayer, p. 297); “*A common man as opposed either to a man of rank or education*”(Zodhiates, p. 756); “*Layman, amateur in contrast to an expert or specialist of any kind...an untrained man*”(Bauer, p. 370).

The subject of this verse is the prayer of the previous verse. Using the gift they had of speaking in languages when people could not understand or when there was not an interpreter, is absolutely forbidden in this passage. Why? Because those who heard could not say “**Amen**” at the conclusion of the prayer they did not understand. The use of the word “**amen,**” is to show agreement with what the speaker has said. In essence the hearers have made the speaker’s prayer their own.

was taken for granted the audience would use this word after the public prayer of one speaker, thus making his sentiments their own. Doubtless the Lord expects the disciples to do the same thing after a public prayer today”(Zerr, p. 33).

Notice an implication in this verse. The one praying is not to be alone in his action. He may be the one actually speaking the words, but everyone in the worship service is to be involved. Everyone in this service should be following the words spoken, making this their own prayer. Another implication is that the prayer must be one to which one can say “*Let it be so*” at its completion. One cannot condone an unscriptural prayer.

Considering this passage, it is wrong for one today to lead prayer in the public assembly which cannot be understood by the congregation. But there are other ways to lead a prayer no one can understand than to speak in a foreign language. What about the prayer which is mumbled, or the one which is spoken so softly the audience cannot hear it? There is no difference between such a prayer and the one in which the Corinthians were involved. Those who lead in any act of public worship must speak in such a way as to allow the whole congregation to participate. Anything less is a violation of Paul’s instructions in this passage.

“The manner of Paul’s question implies that it

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| 1 Cor. 14:17 “For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.” | “For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified.” (ASV) | “For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.” (NKJV) |
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WELL — καλᾶς — “*Beautifully, finely, excellently, well...excellently, nobly, commendably*”(Thayer, p. 323); “*Well, good in various senses....As to manner and external character, well, i.e., right, suitably, properly*”(Zodhiates, p. 816); “*Well,*

beautifully. *Fitly, appropriately, in the right way, splendidly*” (Bauer, p. 401).

The word **“well,”** as noticed above, signifies that the one speaking in the foreign language was wording a prayer which was acceptable to GOD. Yet, he should not offer this prayer in the public assembly. Why? Because the person who did not understand what he was saying was not being edified, i.e., he was not being built up or benefitted

by the words. When actions in worship do not edify, they simply should not be done. How is edification accomplished? Edification is accomplished by words. Even faith cannot exist without GOD’s words (Rom. 10:17).

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| 1 Cor. 14:18 “I thank my GOD, I speak with tongues more than ye all:” | “I thank GOD, I speak with tongues more than you all.” (ASV) | “I thank my GOD I speak with tongues more than you all;” (NKJV) |
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Paul was thankful for the ability to speak in foreign languages. Some may have been inclined to accuse Paul of condemning their actions because he could not speak in tongues and therefore was jealous of their abilities. But the truth of the matter is that he was an apostle, who was endowed by the Spirit with the ability to speak in any language he needed. Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles (Acts 9:15). No matter where the Lord sent him, he had

the ability to speak in the language of his audience. The purpose of preaching was not, and is not, to make a flowery speech, whether those who hear can understand it or not. The purpose of Gospel preaching has always been for the understanding of the hearer, so he can be edified in the faith. Paul possessed the opportunity and the ability to use these languages far more than anyone else at Corinth.

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| 1 Cor. 14:19 “Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” | “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.” (ASV) | “yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (NKJV) |
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What is one purpose of the church’s gathering? Edification. But if one cannot understand what is being said there can be no edification. Edification comes only through words (Rom. 10:17); specifically, the words which come from GOD through His inspired messengers. Since words are the medium used to accomplish this goal, they must be understandable.

words, teaching is taking place.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matt. 28:19-20).

Paul says he would rather speak a few words which can be understood than an innumerable number which cannot be understood. Again the emphasis, as Paul’s in this chapter, is edification which can only come about when what is spoken is understood. By understandable

The goal is to teach, not to confuse. The goal is to educate in such a way people will be moved to obey, thus gaining eternity with the Lord.

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| 1 Cor. 14:20 “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” | “Brethren, be not children in mind: yet in malice be ye babes, but in mind be men.” (ASV) | “Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.” (NKJV) |
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First word, UNDERSTANDING — φρήν — *“The mind; the faculty of perceiving and judging”* (Thayer, p. 658); *“Literally, the diaphragm, that which curbs or restrains. Figuratively, the supposed seat of all mental and emotional activity. In the NT metonymically meaning the mind, intellect, disposition, feelings”* (Zodhiates, p. 1453); *“Thinking, understanding”* (Bauer, p. 866).

MALICE — κακία — *“Malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure...wickedness, depravity”* (Thayer, p. 320); *“Wickedness as*

an evil habit of the mind...Evil in a moral sense meaning wickedness of heart, life, and character” (Zodhiates, p. 807); “Badness, faultiness...In the moral sense – depravity, wickedness, vice” (Bauer, p. 397).

Second word, UNDERSTANDING — φρόνημα — *“What one has in mind, the thoughts and purposes” (Thayer, p. 658); “To think, have a mind set. The tendency or inclination of the mind, its bent. It includes the act of the understanding and of the will” (Zodhiates, p. 1455); “Way of thinking, mind(-set)” (Bauer, p. 866).*

Twice in this passage the term **“children”** is recorded. In the original these are not the same word, and have slightly different meanings. The first word **“children”** refers to the stage of youth, whereas the second word refers to an infant. This understanding is important in order to comprehend Paul’s rebuke of them in this verse. In the first part of the verse he is telling them not to act like little children in their understanding. Consider the thinking of children as they look at the value of things. If you place some showy action toy in front of them, and beside it place ten one hundred dollar bills; given a choice, which of these items would they pick? They do not understand true values. This is exactly what the Corinthians were doing with regards to spiritual gifts. They were looking at the

“Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:3-4).

An infant learns to do evil from whatever source that may be. He knows nothing of pride.

Instead of being like young children without a true sense of value, they were to be men in understanding, i.e.,

showiness of these gifts, the glittering side of them if you please. They were like children in their inability to comprehend the true value of the gifts as tools to promote that which was of greatest value — edification.

Next he points out the value of being like an infant. He says to be an infant in the area of malice. Notice the definitions above: they should never desire the hurt or harm of anyone; their minds should not be filled with wickedness or depravity. Yet, their wrong use of the gifts given by the Spirit was indeed hurting some of their brethren. They were filled with wickedness in their pride, thinking in the wrong way about these gifts and how it made them look to those around them.

they were to grow up, be mature in these spiritual matters, understanding the true value of the gifts they had been given.

Much of the denominational world, and some brethren, need to give heed to this passage. They run after what glitters e.g., (entertainment), instead of the teaching which will cause them to be mature.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:21 “ In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear Me, saith the Lord.”</p> | <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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“In the law it is written: “With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,” says the Lord.” (NKJV)</p> |
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This quotation comes from Isaiah 28:11-12, which says:

“For with stammering lips and another tongue will He speak to this people. To whom He said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.”

Willis gives a good history of this passage:

“Isaiah had prophesied the word of GOD to a nation of Israelites who refused to listen to him. The priest and the prophet were drunkards who reeled with strong drink; hence, they totally dismissed Isaiah’s words with the drunken mock that all he says is ‘Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little’ (v. 10). Because the Jews refused to listen to God’s revelation through

Isaiah, God promised to speak to them through a people with stammering lips (i.e., a foreign tongues), namely, the Assyrians. Hence, when Assyria came down and smote the Israelites, the passage was fulfilled. At that time, the Israelites knew that what Isaiah had said was the word of the Lord instead of what their drunken priests and prophets had said” (Willis, p. 496-497).

What is the point of Paul’s quoting this passage? Is it to talk about a judgment on the Corinthians because they neglected to hear GOD’s word? No, the whole context shows these languages were a sign to those who **did not** believe (v. 22). In Isaiah’s time the people who did not believe were going to be shown a sign so they would know the words spoken by Isaiah were indeed the words of GOD. Paul clearly shows in this context the same lesson. Those

who were unbelievers could be convinced Christianity, and what it taught, was from GOD. Yet, there would also be

many who would not believe no matter what sign was shown them.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:22 “Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.” (NKJV)</p> |
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There are two distinct classes of people in view in this verse: (1) those who have not become believers (non-Christians), and (2) those who are believers (Christians). There are also two distinct actions involved: (1) miraculous speaking in tongues (languages), and (2) miraculous prophesying. Notice that both of those activities were called signs. A sign indicates something. One is traveling down a country road and sees a yellow sign with an octagonal red painting in the middle of it, one is warned of a stop sign which cannot presently be seen, but which is nevertheless up ahead. One must prepared to stop. The miraculous endowment of tongues was a sign to the unbeliever; it told him something, specifically, that the religion spoken about by these speakers was in fact from GOD. On the other hand, believers needed something else since they already recognized the true religion. They needed the sign of miraculous prophesying in order to know all they were now being taught was indeed GOD’s word, because there were, and will be, many deceivers.

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision” (Titus 1:9-10).

“This is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist” (2 John 6-7).

The Corinthians were abusing the gifts they had been given. They seemed to focus primarily on tongues as the most important gift, probably having something to do with its showiness. But Paul was reminding them that none of those gifts had any purpose other than to edify (build up) the church, whether they were used in converting non-believers, or in helping believers grow spiritually. Becoming a believer is not enough; one must remain a believer. How is this accomplished? Through diligent study of GOD’s word; each one learning and helping others in their knowledge. Then they had inspired teachers; today each must help the other to grow.

“Believers blessed by God are to use their abilities to promote edification, to convey knowledge, to facilitate understanding” (Jackson, p. 144).

Those who promote false tongues today say they are for the believers, to strengthen and encourage them. But Paul clearly stated tongues are specifically for the unbeliever.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:23 “If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?”</p> | <p>“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?” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?” (NKJV)</p> |
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Notice the phrase **“the whole church be come together.”** This shows Paul is not speaking about a class, or a group which has gathered, but instead the whole church. Thus, he speaks of a worship service and is preparing the ground for what he will say later.

Imagine the confusion involved in the scenario he presents here. The word **“all”** seems to indicate, at the very least, those who were able to speak in languages were all

doing so at the same time (See v. 27). It may also be possible, considering verse twenty-six, that they may have each one been speaking in different languages, all at the same time. Stancliff and his wife had an experience which well illustrates the confusion which would exist, even if everyone were speaking the same language.

“My wife and I were traveling one time. We stopped to worship at a congregation which had a

sign on the front of the building labeling it as a Church of Christ. The worship service began in somewhat familiar manner. Soon afterward, however, a man rose to pray. Then another arose before that one concluded and began another prayer. Then another and another. In a short time there were as many as a dozen persons, both men and women, all praying simultaneously. It was almost impossible to understand what any one of them was saying, even though they were speaking in English. It was complete bedlam” (Stancliff, p. 220).

What if someone in the Corinthian community,

whether they be unlearned or unbelievers, went to a service where all people spoke in these languages? Paul says, and rightly so, they would think they were mad. Rather than having the opportunity to teach them the gospel, they would probably be driven away. Imagine what they would tell their friends and imagine their opinion of Christianity, without ever having heard the gospel? The Corinthians glorified the use of tongues, but Paul shows in a very practical way, if there is no understanding of the words spoken they can do more harm than good. This is true whether one person was speaking at a time, or whether a number were speaking at the same time.

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| 1 Cor. 14:24 “But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:” | “But if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all;” (ASV) | “But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.” (NKJV) |
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CONVINCED — ἰλέγχω — *“To convict, refute, confute, generally with a suggestion of the shame of the person convicted”* (Thayer, p. 202); *“In the NT, to convict, to prove one in the wrong and thus to shame him”* (Zodhiates, p. 562); *“Convict or convince someone of something. Point something out to someone”* (Bauer, p. 249).

JUDGED — • ναικρίνω — *“To judge of, estimate, determine (the excellence or defects of any person or thing)”* (Thayer, p. 39); *“To discern, judge”* (Zodhiates, p. 152); *“Examine and judge, call to account, discern”* (Bauer, p. 56).

Again the contrast is made. In the previous verse everyone speaking in tongues would cause a visitor to think poorly of them or think they were mad. Here those who prophesied would cause visitors to look at themselves and see their sinful condition based on the words spoken by the prophet which they could understand. The visitor is convicted (**“convinced”**) by all. Who is the *“all?”* It is not the whole congregation, but rather the prophets who spoke. The same thing is true of the term **“judged.”** Suppose a *“Mr. Drunkard”* entered a worship service such

as the one in Corinth. The man speaking in tongues may have presented the most wonderful lesson addressed to Mr. Drunkard’s sin, but there was no benefit to Mr. Drunkard because he did not understand what was said. On the other hand, Mr. Drunkard comes to the service and hears the same words spoken by the prophet(s) in words he can understand. The words spoken by the prophet will cause Mr. Drunkard to realize his actions are not acceptable to GOD. The words spoken by the prophet(s) will convict him and judge him.

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| 1 Cor. 14:25 “And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship GOD, and report that GOD is in you of a truth.” | “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.” (ASV) | “And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship GOD and report that GOD is truly among you.” (NKJV) |
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What is it that reveals the secrets of the heart? The Bible says,

“The word of GOD is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked

and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do” (Heb. 4:12-13).

The mind of man can conceal things from itself. One has often heard of those who suffer some great trauma and somehow are able to block the memory of this from their minds. On the other hand, man also seems to be able to block out the perception of one’s deeds as being wrong. But when the light of GOD’s word is shed upon one’s heart, that light will convict one of his sins. Two options follow

the shedding of such light: (1) one can acknowledge his sin, repent and obey Christ, or (2) one can refuse to obey.

For the one who has an honest heart, the revelation of one's sins will cause that person to recognize the terrible condition he is in, and the eternal consequences of one who continues to live in sin. The honest man, seeing his condition, will repent and obey GOD. But none of this can take place until one first hears GOD's word and understands it. The contrast Paul has shown is striking.

On the one hand, the person may hear GOD's word proclaimed, but since it is in a language unknown to him, he cannot understand, and it will not profit him. But when the prophet speaks, the listener hears the word, and understanding it, is convicted of his sins, obeys GOD, and is profited by the experience. In the one case, the visitor would think the speakers were mad (insane, crazy); on the other hand if he understood, he would know that the speakers were true followers of GOD.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:26 “How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification.” (NKJV)</p> |
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The question at the beginning of this verse has the force of asking, *“When Christians come together in the assembly, what are they to do?”* At this point in Paul's letter, some would have probably come to the conclusion tongues should never be used; they might even have drawn the conclusion no miraculous gift should be used. Paul will immediately show that this is not the case. The Corinthians had been using their gifts selfishly, not for the good of the whole. They had created confusion in the assembly rather than clarity.

Paul has consistently shown that if what one does in worship is not designed to build up the church, then one ought not to do it, no matter what it is. One may leave the assembly and say he was not edified. Does this necessarily mean what was done was wrong? Certainly not, because everything can be done according to GOD's will, but if the

attitude of the worshiper is not correct, that person will not be edified. The purpose of edification is not necessarily to make one feel good about himself. It is to build Christians up spiritually, but it may be necessary to tear down sin before proper building can take place.

“To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:...A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up” (Ecc. 3:1, 3).

The old man of sin must die in order for the new man in Christ to live. To be built up one needs reproving and rebuking as well as exhortation with all longsuffering and doctrine (2 Tim. 4:2).

In this verse, and those which follow, Paul gives instructions for conduct in the worship assembly.

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| <p>1 Cor. 14:27-28 “If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; 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.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to GOD.” (NKJV)</p> |
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COURSE — μέρος — *“A part due or assigned to one”* (Thayer, p. 400); *“A part, side”* (Zodhiates, 962); *“Part, in contrast to the whole”* (Bauer, p. 505). The ASV and NKJV use the word “turn” in this passage instead of “course.”

Several rules are given in these two verses regarding the use of tongues. First, the number of those in the public assembly who would be allowed to use this gift is two and at the most three. There may have been a number of people who had this gift, so in any one assembly, at the most only three were to exercise this gift. Second, those who spoke in

tongues were to do so **“by course,”** i.e., by turn. They were to take turns in order to promote orderliness in the assembly. They had apparently been speaking whenever they wanted and any number at the same time. Thayer says that the word **“course,”** means, *“A part due or assigned to one”* (See above). This would seem to indicate an

assignment before the worship service begins. Third, one must interpret what these speakers were saying. Again the purpose is to provide edification. Fourth, if there is no interpreter, then the one who has the gift of tongues is to

The last part of verse twenty-eight has been thought by some to mean he could go ahead and in silence, i.e., through the meditation of his mind, talk to himself and GOD. But it may be that this man should pay attention to what is being taught by others. Sometimes a speaker triggers a thought which one pursues as he continues to hear. This passage is not speaking of such a thing, but rather of one with the ability to speak in another language but for a reason cited, should remain silent. This deals with his waiting until after the assembly is over, i.e., a private setting, to exercise his gift.

Someone in this era might be inclined to say, *“Because one does not have miraculous abilities today, there is nothing for him in this passage, none of this*

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| 1 Cor. 14:29 “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.” | “And let the prophets speak by two or three, and let the others discern.” (ASV) | “Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.” (NKJV) |
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JUDGE — διακρίνω — *“To separate, make a distinction, discriminate...to learn by discrimination, to try, decide”* (Thayer, p. 138); *“From διά, denoting separation, and κρίνω, to distinguish, decide, judge. To separate throughout, completely, used trans. In the mid., to separate oneself. Particularly, to separate oneself from”* (Zodhiates, CD Rom Version); *“Separate, arrange...make a distinction, differentiate”* (Bauer, p. 185).

Paul has shown a difference between speaking in **“tongues”** and prophesying. He has stated that prophesying was of more value in the congregation than speaking in a language the people did not understand. Now, just as Paul limited the tongue speakers, he also limited the prophets to two or three. Remember that the role of the prophet was to speak, to teach, GOD’S will to man. The miraculous nature of these prophets in the context cannot be denied — they spoke by inspiration.

But notice, while a prophet spoke, **“let the other judge.”** Is this speaking of the congregation or the other prophets? It would seem this is the other prophets. The word **“judge,”** means they were to separate or make distinctions in what was spoken; they were to make a judgment about what was being uttered. If the speaker were GOD’S prophet, why should his words be judged? What if one claimed to be a prophet of GOD but taught something contrary to GOD’S word? It would seem this may be the gift of **“discerning of spirits”** defined in chapter twelve, verse ten. Even in this time of the miraculous, they were carefully to check what was being said. Someone may ask, how could a prophet of GOD **“scriptures daily, whether those things were so”**

(Acts 17:10-11).

Please consider, if the early church were taught to examine what the inspired prophets were saying in order to

maintain silence. As mentioned earlier, if the speaker’s words cannot be understood, he is simply speaking into the air and bringing no benefit to those assembled.

applies.” But it does. Christians in every era must maintain order and courtesy in all worship assemblies. GOD demands order in Christian assemblies, because only when order prevails can true edification take place.

speak anything other than truth? This assumes everyone who claimed to be a prophet was indeed a prophet. But notice verse thirty-two, where the prophets are said to be in control of what they said. This proves they were not so overwhelmed by the Spirit that they had no control, i.e., they could not help what they did.

The concept of checking to see if what is taught is indeed the will of GOD is common in the Scriptures.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of GOD: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).

“Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:20-21).

“And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the

confirm their word as being from GOD, should not one do the same thing today? After all, there are no inspired men today, only uninspired men. (It has long been my practice to tell the congregations where I preach not to accept

anything I say just because I say it.) There are far too many who are willing to let the Bible school teacher or the preacher do their studying for them, and just to accept what the teacher is saying. Those who do this exhibit laziness and their conduct in this matter is shameful.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are

ravening wolves” (Matt. 7:15).

“I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

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| 1 Cor. 14:30 “If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace.” | “But if a revelation be made to another sitting by, let the first keep silence.” (ASV) | “But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.” (NKJV) |
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Order is one of the primary considerations involved in these instructions. The fact a new revelation was given to one of the prophets while another was speaking, may indicate the first was not speaking by inspiration. This is consistent with the role of a prophet. The prophet was a teacher who spoke GOD's message to the people. It may have been a message he had been given in the past, and as he went from place to place, he proclaimed it. At these times the words of GOD may not have been directly put

into his mouth, i.e., at the very moment he was speaking.

Obviously such a thing would take place from time to time. What was the one who received the revelation to do while another spoke? Should he keep silent until the other finished? Or was he to make known in some way that a revelation had been given him, so the first speaker could stop and let him speak? Obviously from this text, the first speaker was to make way for the one who had received a revelation while he was speaking.

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| 1 Cor. 14:31 “For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” | “For ye all can prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted;” (ASV) | “For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.” (NKJV) |
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COMFORTED — παρακαλέω — *“To admonish, exhort...to beg, entreat, beseech...to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort...to encourage, strengthen”* (Thayer, p. 483); *“To aid, help, comfort, encourage. Translated: to comfort, exhort, desire, call for, beseech with a stronger force than αἰτέω”* (Zodhiates, p. 1105); *“Call to one's side, summon...appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage...request, implore, appeal to, entreat...comfort, encourage, cheer up”* (Bauer, p. 617).

Those who had the ability to prophesy would not be hindered as long as they spoke one at a time. But, they might not all speak at the same assembly (v. 29). Again, order is commanded.

accomplished because of the confusion involved. Second, prophecy is to **“comfort.”** The ASV translates this word *“exhorted,”* and the NKJV translates it *“encouraged.”* All three of these words together give a good concept of this original word (See definitions above.). There is indeed great comfort, exhortation and encouragement to be found in the proclamation of the gospel which is the goal of the prophet.

Notice also the purpose of prophecy is given in this passage, and it is two-fold in nature. First, it is given so all may learn and the congregation may be taught. If several were speaking at the same time the learning would not be

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| 1 Cor. 14:32 “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” | “and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets;” (ASV) | “And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” (NKJV) |
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SUBJECT — ὑποτάσσω — *“To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection...to subject one's self, to obey; to submit to one's control”* (Thayer, p. 645); *“To place under in an orderly fashion...to subjugate, place in submission...to subject oneself, place oneself in submission”* (Zodhiates, p. 1427-1428); *“Subject, subordinate...become subject...subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey”* (Bauer, p. 848).

“Universally, in the heathen world, the priests and priestesses supposed or feigned that they were under an influence which was incontrollable; which took away their powers of self-command, and which made them the mere

organs or unconscious instruments of communicating the will of the gods” (Barnes, p. 274).

It appears from this context many were speaking in the Corinthian assemblies, whether they were those with gifts

of tongues or the prophets. This caused the confusion which was spoken of earlier, whereby a visitor would consider them to be **“mad.”** Paul showed the brethren there is to be order in the worship service, and such order is a mark of GOD’s servants. As pointed out above by the quote from Barnes, the heathen, or pagans, practiced an out of control religion. Such is not to be with GOD’s people. Today, many of the so called tongue speakers say they have no control over their actions; they just cannot help jumping up and shouting and carrying on. Paul shows such

a claim brands them not as a follower of GOD, but instead a heathen.

This passage clearly shows the prophets were in control when the message was delivered to them. They might not have understood what was implied in the message, but they knew what the message was and could accurately deliver it to the people. The prophet could quit speaking any time he wanted, and one who received a revelation could hold his tongue until a proper time.

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| 1 Cor. 14:33 “For GOD is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” | “for GOD is not a GOD of confusion, but of peace. As in all the churches of the saints,” (ASV) | “For GOD is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” (NKJV) |
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CONFUSION — • καταστασία — *“Instability, a state of disorder, disturbance, confusion”* (Thayer, p. 21); *“Commotion, tumult”* (Zodhiates, p. 110); *“Disturbance...disorder, unruliness”* (Bauer, p. 30); *“A word of the LXX and later Gr., denoting disorder or mutiny”* (Expositor’s, p. 914).

These instructions were given to the Corinthian tongue speakers and prophets because GOD demands order in the worship assembly. As noticed above, the word **“confusion,”** refers to a state of instability, disorder, disturbance, tumult and unruliness. Willis says the word means,

“disorder, unruliness, disruption of the peace of the community” (Willis, p. 511). He further tells us, *“The word was used to describe political insurrections and revolutions; hence, it denotes a state of confusion, conflict and disorder”* (ibid).

The context indicates all of these prophets and tongue speakers were trying to speak at the same time. This would no doubt cause conflict and confusion in the worship service, and as Paul has already shown, would cause visitors to think they were mad.

Peace is to reign in all the churches of our Lord, and

the rules given to maintain peace are for all the churches of Christ. Many have tried to divide the application of the phrase, **“as in all churches of the saints”** with some saying it should apply to what precedes it and some what follows it. But it would seem it applies to any and all of these instructions which are designed to promote peace. GOD has never given one rule for one congregation and a different rule for another. Peace can only be maintained when the same rule of faith is followed.

Regarding peace, Hodge states,

“When men pretend to be influenced by the Spirit of God in doing what God forbids, whether in disturbing the peace and order of the church, by insubordination, violence or abuse, or in any other way, we may be sure that they are either deluded or imposters” (Hodge, p. 304).

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| 1 Cor. 14:34 “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.” (NKJV) |
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SILENCE — σιγήω — *“To keep silence, hold one’s peace:...to be kept in silence”* (Thayer, p. 574); *“To be silent, still, keep silence”* (Zodhiates, p. 1288); *“Say nothing, keep silent...stop speaking, become silent”* (Bauer, p. 749).

CHURCH — ἡ κλησία — *“A gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place; an assembly...in the Christian sense, an assembly of Christians gathered for worship”* (Thayer, p. 195-196); *“Called out,...in the Christian sense, an assembly of Christians”* (Zodhiates, p. 541-542); *“Assembly...of the Christian church or congregation”* (Bauer, p. 240).

SPEAK — λαλέω — *“To utter a sound, to emit a voice, make one’s self heard; hence to utter or form words with the mouth, to speak, having reference to the sound and pronunciation of the words and in general the form of what is uttered”* (Thayer, p. 368); *“To talk at random...of one teaching, meaning to teach, preach, used in an absolute sense”* (Zodhiates, p. 904-

906); *“Speak in contrast to keeping silent...speak and thereby assert, proclaim, say something”* (Bauer, p. 463).

BE UNDER OBEDIENCE — ὑποτάσσω — *“To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection...to subject one’s self, to obey; to submit to one’s control; to yield to one’s admonition or advice”* (Thayer, p. 645); *“To place under in an orderly fashion. To subjugate, place in submission....to subject oneself, place oneself in submission”* (Zodhiates, p. 1427-1428); *“Subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey”* (Bauer, p. 848).

The teaching of this passage is clear and concise, and cannot logically be misunderstood. Paul has forbidden women to teach in the public assembly. The context of this passage is extremely important in order to understand it. Is Paul saying a woman cannot utter a single word in the worship assembly? No, for if such were the case she could not sing, nor could she make the good confession of believing Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living GOD. Those things are commanded of all who are either Christians or those who are about to become Christians. The context shows those who lead in the instruction of the congregation are the ones being discussed in this passage. This would apply to the song leader, preacher, those who preside over the Lord’s table, or anyone leading the congregation.

Why should the woman maintain silence in the worship assembly? Because they are commanded **“to be under obedience.”** The definitions of the word obedience in this passage (see above), carry the idea of placing oneself in subjection to another; to place under the control of another. This coincides with the instructions given to Timothy regarding women in the church.

“Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression” (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

In the passage in First Timothy two reasons are given for women maintaining silence in the assembly. (1) **“For Adam was first formed, then Eve.”** Simply put, GOD made Adam first, thus indicating the priority man was to have. It should probably be considered along these lines that Eve was made to be a helpmeet to Adam (Gen. 2:18). (2) **“Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”** The woman was deceived into believing the devil, whereas the man was not. In looking at the book of Acts, one finds Philip **“had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy”** (Acts 21:9). But the fact is they were not allowed to use these miraculous gifts in the public assembly. If they, having miraculous abilities, could not teach in the public

This does not diminish the sin of Adam in any way, and some believe it makes him more guilty in the fall. Yet GOD takes special note of the deception factor in placing woman under the authority of man.

Then, women cannot lead in the worship assembly because the **“law”** says she must be in subjection. When one goes back to the Old Testament, the principle of the woman’s subjection to the male is indeed a universal law which took effect at the time of the fall in Eden. As a consequence of being deceived and partaking of the forbidden fruit, Eve was told,

“I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16).

It has, since the fall, always been the case that the woman is to be in subjection to her husband. Notice an illustration of this law during the time the law of Moses was in effect in Numbers 30:3-12.

It should be emphasized that the prohibition in this passage is in the worship assembly as the definition of the original word for **“churches”** in this passage indicates. Did women have miraculous gifts? There can be no question they did. In Acts 2:16-18, Paul quotes the prophecy of Joel (Joel 2:28-32), stating,

“this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith GOD, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”

assembly, then certainly no woman can claim the right to do so today!

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| 1 Cor. 14:35 “And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” | “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.” (ASV) | “And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.” (NKJV) |
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SHAME — αἰσχρὸς — *“Base, dishonorable”* (Thayer, p. 17); *“Shameful”* (Zodhiates, p. 101); *“Ugly, shameful, base”* (Bauer, p. 25).

Rather than interrupt the worship service they should ask their husbands their questions at home, i.e., in a private setting. It is obvious from these words some were asking questions during the worship service and these were disruptive, an obvious violation of decorum (v. 33). Some have looked at the word **“husbands”** here, and inferred this means only the wives of those who were speaking. Logically then, if this interpretation be accepted, it would be all right for those women who were widows or unmarried to interrupt the worship service with their questions. Considering this, it is obvious such would not be the case, for it is still a shame for the woman to speak in the worship assembly.

Should women be afforded the opportunity to learn? Absolutely! That is why we have classes which are specifically designed to allow for questions. During those teaching times, anyone may ask questions for the purpose of learning.

“Paul says absolutely nothing about informal teaching situations in which classes are conducted in order that questions and answers may be prompted from the group. Rather, he is condemning the disrupting of the formal assembly by asking questions” (Willis, p. 517).

An implication of this passage is the responsibility of men to lead and teach in their homes. In too many families fathers are not bringing up their children **“in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”** (Eph. 6:4). Sometimes in the church men will neglect their responsibilities and women will reason someone must do it, so they will begin taking the lead in these areas. But as MacArthur correctly states,

“God has established the proper order and relationship of male-female roles in the church, and they are not to be transgressed for any reason. For a woman to take on a man’s role because he has neglected it merely compounds the problem. It is not possible for a woman to substitute for a man in such things” (MacArthur,

The above paragraph does not address whether the woman could teach a man she met on the street, or in the grocery store, et cetera. Further, could she initiate a religious conversation with either a Christian or non-Christian man? Does the Bible give any indication she could do these things? In Acts 8:1-5, one finds the account of the great persecution of the church in Jerusalem.

p. 393).

(At this point I would like to digress to a related subject. I have recently been in contact with those who do not believe a woman can teach a man in a private setting. The most radical of these believe a woman cannot ever teach a man any religious truth, while others take somewhat milder views. Some say she cannot teach a Christian man anything while others would say such a prohibition only deals with her teaching a non-Christian man. Others will say she can teach one man, but not two or more at the same time.)

There is no question regarding a woman’s teaching in the **public assembly** (1 Tim. 2:12); she simply cannot do such! The error, the false teaching, which needs to be addressed has been noted above. Can a woman teach a man? Is it always wrong, under any circumstance, for a woman to teach a man? Is there Bible precedence for women teaching men, where they are not condemned for doing so?

Acts chapter eighteen, gives the account of Apollos being taught **“more perfectly” “the way of GOD”** by the GODLY couple Aquila and Priscilla. Here one finds them equally involved in completing the knowledge of Apollos in religious matters. Obviously it cannot be denied that a Christian woman was involved in teaching religious truths to a Christian man. While those who espouse the false doctrine that a woman cannot teach a man, will accept this fact, they quibble that she was with her husband, therefore she was under his headship and could teach in this situation. The question remains, was she teaching a man or was she not? Further, if the argument is accepted that she could do this because she was under her husband’s authority at this time, then why could she not teach in other situations under the same reasoning? Such false reasoning is dangerous as it would soon allow her to get in the pulpit as long as her husband was present and gave his consent.

Saul had consented to Stephen’s murder and was greatly afflicting the church. This caused the brethren to scatter throughout Judaea and Samaria. It is said Saul was wreaking **“havoc”** on the church, specifically **“haling men and women committed them to prison.”** Verse four tells of those who were scattered abroad (men and women) went everywhere **“preaching the word.”** Notice it does not say

the men and their wives, or the women and their husbands went everywhere... The text simply says **“men”** (generic) and **“women”** (generic), went everywhere preaching. The original word here, for **“preaching,”** is εὐαγγελίζω, which is the word for evangelizing [“To bring good news, to announce glad tidings...to proclaim glad tidings; spec, to instruct (men) concerning the things that pertain to Christian salvation” (Thayer, p. 256)]. The **men** and **women** who were scattered abroad **were** evangelizing wherever they went!

Interestingly, the next verse has Philip going to Samaria where he **“preached Christ”** to them. The word **“preached”** is different from the word **“preaching”** in verse four. This word is κηρύσσω, which Thayer remarks, *“To be a herald; to officiate as herald; proclaiming after the manner of a herald; always with a suggestion of formality”* (ibid, p. 346).

What conclusion can be drawn from all of this? In the formal setting, i.e., the public gatherings, Philip, (a man), preached the Gospel. But the brethren (men and women), in the informal settings, went everywhere proclaiming the

Gospel to whomever would listen to them. The Bible has spoken! Those who advocate a woman cannot teach a man in private settings, or approach a man with a religious conversation, are found to be teaching contrary to the word of GOD and should therefore be marked and avoided (Rom. 16:17).

Some will try to limit the teaching role of women to other women only by citing Titus 2:3-5. To take this position clearly places this latter passage in conflict with those cited above. But there can be no contradiction in GOD’s word, AND THERE IS NOT! The passage in Titus deals with specific things the younger women needed to learn, not the more general area of the Gospel. Who better to teach these young women to love their husbands and children, than the older women? Those who teach that a woman cannot teach a man have manufactured a false argument ignoring what the rest of the New Testament teaches. This is no different from those who look at a passage necessitating faith and proclaiming nothing else is needed to be saved.

It should never be forgotten that the *“great commission”* is for **all Christians**, not for males only. If a woman refuses to teach a man who desires instruction, she has disobeyed the Lord and the blood of the lost individual will be upon her head. First Peter 3:15 **does not say**, **“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear unless you are a woman.”**

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| 1 Cor. 14:36 “What? came the word of GOD out from you? or came it unto you only?” | “What? was it from you that the word of GOD went forth? or came it unto you alone?” (ASV) | “Or did the word of GOD come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?” (NKJV) |
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Directed by the Holy Spirit, biting sarcasm drips from the pen of Paul in this verse. The Corinthians seem to have come to the position they thought they could do whatever they wanted in religion. If they had originated this religion, then they could change it any way they wanted to, just as men do today in their man-made religions.

Notice it is GOD’s word, and the instructions found in it, which are being discussed here. GOD’s word did not begin to be uttered at Corinth; if it had, then it could be that all the other churches were the ones practicing error in these matters. Instead, it appears the arrogance of the Corinthians was in part saying they could do as they

pleased. They seemed to think they could take liberties with GOD’s Word which they had no right to do. Since they had not originated this word, they had no right to change any practice which it dictated.

Had GOD’s word come only to them in these matters? No, GOD sends the same message to Corinth as He does to all the churches of Christ. **“GOD is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints”** (v. 33). This word, this Gospel of Christ, is sent to all who would be the children of GOD, and it is binding upon all who would be recognized as His children.

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| 1 Cor. 14:37 “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.” | “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.” (ASV) | “If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.” (NKJV) |
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ACKNOWLEDGE — ἵππιγνῶσκω — *“To become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly; to know accurately, know well”* (Thayer, p. 237); *“To know fully, as an inceptive verb, to come to know, to gain or receive full knowledge of, become*

fully acquainted with...To know fully in a completed sense, have a full knowledge of" (Zodhiates, p. 624); "Know, understand, recognize" (Bauer, p. 291).

COMMANDMENTS — ἡτολμή — "An order, command, charge, precept" (Thayer, p. 218); "Commandment, whether of God or man" (Zodhiates, p. 594); "Command(ment), order" (Bauer, p. 269).

Some at Corinth were claiming to be spiritual and/or prophets. The idea of spiritual seems to be those possessing miraculous gifts viewed themselves as being spiritual simply because they had these gifts. Others viewed themselves as prophets, teachers. Yet, some of those were neither spiritual nor prophets. How could the church at Corinth know the difference? Paul shows that if they refused to recognize his writings as commands of GOD, then they were not what they claimed to be. The commands of GOD came through the apostles, not through the Corinthians.

John states,

"he that knoweth GOD heareth us; he that is not of GOD heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (1 John 4:6).

Jesus told the apostles,

"He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me" (Matt. 10:40).

To accept the apostles was to accept Jesus, and by extension, to accept the apostles was to accept the Father. On another occasion Jesus told the twelve,

"I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:19).

"Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 18:18).

It was the apostles to whom Jesus made the following promise:

"The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

This being the case, the Corinthians could determine if those among them were truly spiritual or prophets. Anyone who contradicted the teachings of an apostle then, **or now**, is simply deceived or fraudulent. What Paul spoke, by inspiration, are the commands of GOD; and therefore must be obeyed!

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| 1 Cor. 14:38 "But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant." | "But if any man is ignorant, let him be ignorant." (ASV) | "But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant." (NKJV) |
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IGNORANT — • γνοέω — "To be ignorant, not to know...he is not known i.e., acc. to the context he is disregarded" (Thayer, p. 8); "Not to recognize or know" (Zodhiates, p. 73); "Not to know, be ignorant" (Bauer, p. 11).

This verse seems to be a play on words. Paul had adequately presented the truth to them and had confirmed it. Yet some rejected these commands of GOD, therefore, they should be rejected. What should Paul do? He should follow the advice of the Lord who said,

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt. 15:14).

When men intentionally blind themselves to truth, thus determined to follow their own course of action, there is no reason to keep arguing with them. Such a one is not worthy of further attention; to give it is a waste of the precious time GOD has given us.

"He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and

Considering the definition of the word "ignorant," noted above, the RSV may be the best translation of this verse: "If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (RSV).

he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11).

Those who do not love truth are doomed to believe a lie.

"And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause GOD shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. 2:10-11).

"Fellowship cannot be extended to the person

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| 1 Cor. 14:39 "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." | "Wherefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues." (ASV) | "Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues." (NKJV) |
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COVET — ζηλώω — *"To burn with zeal"* (Thayer, p. 271); *"To be zealous, filled with zeal, zealously affected whether in a good or bad sense"* (Zodhiates, p. 699); *"Strive, desire, exert oneself earnestly"* (Bauer, p. 338).

Paul began this chapter by saying, **"Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy"** (v. 1). The chapter has clearly shown that of all the miraculous gifts, the ability to prophesy was greater than all the rest. The reason prophecy is greater than all the rest is because of its unique ability to edify, and edification is the thing most needed by the church (then and now).

Considering what has already been read in these chapters, regarding the behavior of the Corinthians, some

would probably go in the wrong direction with the instructions which have been given. Some would no doubt have argued, *"since prophecy is greater than tongue speaking, then tongue speaking should not be allowed."* But such is not the case, and Paul carefully lets them know even though the gift of prophecy is superior, the exercise of the other spiritual gifts should not be denied to those who had them. (Though tongues is specified, the truth stated here would hold true for all gifts.)

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| 1 Cor. 14:40 "Let all things be done decently and in order." | "But let all things be done decently and in order." (ASV) | "Let all things be done decently and in order." (NKJV) |
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DECENTLY — εὐσχημόνως — *"In a seemly manner, decently"* (Thayer, p. 262); *"Decorously, decently, honestly"* (Zodhiates, p. 685); *"Decently, becomingly"* (Bauer, p. 327).

ORDER — τάξις — *"An arranging, arrangement...due or right order"* (Thayer, p. 614); *"A setting in order; hence, order, arrangement, disposition, especially of troops; an order or rank in a state or in a society. In the NT: Arrangement, disposition, series"* (Zodhiates, p. 1365); *"(Good) order, in order, in an orderly manner"* (Bauer, p. 803).

In the worship assembly, Paul emphasizes the need first to, do things decently. This is the idea of doing things in a way which is tasteful and appropriate. The Corinthians had been acting in a most inappropriate way because of their envying and jealousies. Second, Paul says there must be an order about the worship service. The word **"order"** comes from a military usage which signifies *"an arrangement, a setting in order."* Considering what

he has already taught in this chapter (vv. 27-32), it means everything should be done by turns or one at a time. There is to be a definite orderliness about worship services, one thing at a time being done, so that the services are not envisioned as an unruly mob but as a time of adoration and respect shown to GOD in worship.

First Corinthians — Chapter Fifteen

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:1 “Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;”</p> | <p>“Now I make known unto you brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand,” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,” (NKJV)</p> |
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“Moreover” is a transition word, showing the subject has been changed. Paul will now deal with the most crucial issue of Christianity — the resurrection. Why is this issue so crucial? If there is no resurrection, then everything written by Paul or James or any of the chosen penmen of the New Testament, is meaningless.

He refers to them as brethren, which indicates they had already been taught these things, otherwise they would not be brethren. Paul declared to them the gospel, the good news, which he had already preached to them.

“I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2).

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but GOD gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6).

What Paul was teaching them was the same thing he had taught them at the first (Acts 18:4-15). There was nothing new; he was simply reinforcing what they had

already been taught. This reminding and telling again is something every human being needs. Peter said,

“This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour” (2 Pet. 3:1-2).

It should be pointed out, these brethren had, in the past, accepted (**“received”**) the teachings regarding Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. Further, he says **“wherein ye stand.”** From the context of the chapter, it is clear some of the Corinthians were questioning this doctrine, but such was not true of all and probably the majority of the congregation as this phrase and verse fourteen indicate; **“how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?”** (Emphasis mine, R.K.)

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:2 “By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.”</p> | <p>“by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you; unless you believed in vain.” (NKJV)</p> |
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REMEMBER — κατέχω — *“To hold back, detain, retain...to hold fast, keep secure, keep firm possession of”* (Thayer, p. 339-340); *“Hold fast, retain, or hold down, quash, suppress”* (Zodhiates, p. 850); *“Hold fast”* (Bauer, p. 422).

WHAT — τίτι λόγῳ — *“Literally, with what discourse; which in our version is expressed by the word what”* (Hodge, p. 311).

τίς — *“A certain, a certain one”* (Thayer, p. 625).

λόγος — *“a word”* (Thayer, p. 380).

VAIN — εἶ — *“In vain; without success or effect”* (Thayer, p. 174); *“To no purpose, in vain”* (Zodhiates, p. 511); *“Without due consideration, in a haphazard manner...thoughtlessly (perh. At random) and in disorder”* (Bauer, p. 222).

There are several passages that need noticing before exegesis of the above verses is done:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of GOD, which

Paul had preached the Gospel to them, they had

liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23).

“Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him” (Heb. 5:8-9).

received it and had taken their stand in the Gospel. It is the

gospel which they had accepted which would allow them to be saved. Yet, there is a conditional **“if”** involved in their salvation. They must keep something in their memory. The ASV and NKJV do a better job of giving the meaning of this phrase, which means to *“hold fast.”* What is involved in holding fast to something? It means not to let whatever it is one is holding onto to get away, or slip away. Paul says the Corinthians are saved by holding fast, refusing to let go of, the gospel he preached to them. But holding fast also implies not just remembering, but putting into practice what is believed.

“Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not GOD. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 John 9).

The word **“what”** is very interesting in First Corinthians 15:1, as it comes from τίμι λόγῶ, which Hodge tells says literally means *“with what discourse.”* The words Paul proclaimed (preached) to them, is what will save them **if** they keep these words. Paul also states such words would save them unless **“ye have believed in vain.”** Since they had received his words and stood in them, the word **“believed”** cannot simply be a mental acknowledgment. It must signify a faith which is acted upon. In the next verse Paul tells them what is so vital to believe in order to be saved: the resurrection of Christ. As he will point out, if one does not believe in the resurrection, one’s faith in Christ, heaven, et cetera, had no value for Christians and did not benefit anyone. Christians cannot live a successful Christian life without a firm belief in the resurrection. If there is no resurrection, why believe in Christ as the Son of GOD?

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:3-4 “For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the scriptures.”</p> | <p>“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;” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,” (NKJV)</p> |
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The word **“first”** in this passage does not refer to time, but rather to priority. Paul is concentrating on the most important doctrine the scriptures hold — the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. If those things are not true, then indeed faith is vain (useless, worthless).

The first thing Paul lists here is the death of Jesus. There are those who advocate Jesus merely swooned (passed out, became unconscious), and people only thought He was dead. They then theorize He revived in the coolness of the tomb, rolled away the stone, and went back to His disciples. Question: how could a man who was so badly beaten, had no food or water for three days, who could not carry His cross to the site of His crucifixion, roll away the stone? Further, how could such a man escape the soldiers who were guarding the tomb? (Having been a soldier, if I had been asleep, the noisy rolling away of the stone would have easily awakened me and the other three on guard with me.) The resurrection is key to a Christian’s hope, to his salvation. If there were not a literal death there could be no resurrection. If there were not a literal death, then the Bible is in error, and would therefore be worthless as a guide to heaven. Let GOD be true in His word and every man who says otherwise be recognized as a liar.

“GOD forbid: yea, let GOD be true, but every

Why should the Jews shrink in horror at the thought of a crucified Messiah (1 Cor. 1:23)? The scriptures they professed to believe had prophesied, not a conquering hero at the head of their armies or a king living in an earthly

man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged” (Rom. 3:4).

But notice, it is not just that He died, but that He died as an atonement. Many men die, so dying in and of itself is of no great importance. But when someone dies for others to save their lives (such as the firemen at the Trade Center in New York of September 11, 2001), they are honored and thanked for their service. The Lord died for the sins of the world.

“We also joy in GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement” (Rom. 5:11).

“Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pet. 2:24).

“He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

palace like David, but rather a suffering Savior. A study of Isaiah fifty-three and Psalm twenty-two, shows quite a graphic picture of a suffering Savior. The truth is, the Jews did not believe and still do not believe the very scriptures

they profess to follow.

Next, Paul emphatically states Jesus was buried. He was in the tomb and He was dead, both prerequisites for resurrection. That Christ came forth from the dead is abundantly testified to by the writers of the New Testament, but Paul's appeal is to the prophecies of the Old Testament. Why does he appeal to such to prove Christ's resurrection? Why did the Lord appeal so often to the Old Testament to prove some statement, or to teach a lesson? He did so because the fulfillment of prophecy proves the case! And,

"whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:5-6 "And that He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, He was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep."</p> | <p>"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;" (ASV)</p> | <p>"and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep." (NKJV)</p> |
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The resurrection of Jesus is the topic of this chapter where Paul has said this is what is preached, and it is the same thing the Old Testament scriptures predicted. Now Paul turns to witnesses who saw Jesus die and who saw Him alive after He was buried. One of the great truths which needs to be emphasized is that most of these witnesses were alive at the time this was written. If what was written was a lie, then the witnesses could have contradicted Paul's words. Their testimony was not simply claiming years down the road that such events had happened, i.e., when there was no possibility of checking such claims.

"Throughout history the testimony of responsible and honest eye witnesses has been considered one of the most reliable forms of evidence in a court of law" (MacArthur, p. 402).

Who could be a witness? Only those who had seen Him, who had touched Him.

"That which was from the beginning, which we

In Acts 2:27, Peter quotes David as saying, **"Because thou wilt not leave My soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption."**

He then says in verse thirty-one,

"He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption."

"Fr thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption" (Psalm 16:10).

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He hath put Him to grief: when Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:10).

have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-3).

Not all of the witnesses of which the scriptures speak are listed here, but this list starts with Cephas (Peter). Not much is known of this meeting except what one sees here and an allusion made to it in Luke 24:34, **"The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon."** Why is mention made of this event? Peter denied the Lord, so speculation might lead to the belief it was because of the denial and depths of despair Peter felt over denying Him. MacArthur says,

"Christ did not appear to Peter because Peter deserved to see Him most, but perhaps because

Peter needed to see Him most" (MacArthur, p. 403).
 The term **"the twelve,"** is used as a euphemism for the apostles. It is true that one of them was no longer in existence, yet the term stands for the apostles. There were also over five hundred brethren who saw the risen Christ at the same time. One might be able to fool another, or even a few, but not five hundred at once. Over half of those five

403).
 hundred witnesses were still alive; they had not yet gone to sleep (died).

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:7-8 "After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."</p> | <p>"then He appeared to James; then to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the child untimely born, He appeared to me also." (ASV)</p> | <p>"After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time." (NKJV)</p> |
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BORN OUT OF DUE TIME — *Σκρωμα* — *"An abortion, abortive birth; an untimely birth"* (Thayer, p. 200); *"An abortion, one born prematurely"* (Zodhiates, p. 557); *"Untimely birth, miscarriage"* (Bauer, p. 246).

Who is this James? Probably, it is the Lord's half-brother (who was not an apostle). Notice the term **"the twelve"** mentioned, yet James is singled out here. Yet, it may be the case is similar to verse five where Cephas (an apostle) is mentioned and then the term **"the twelve"** is also mentioned in the same order in this verse. The fact that verse seven uses the phrase **"all the apostles,"** seems to refer to the other mention in this list of the twelve. The first listing (v. 5), probably refers to the first time Jesus met with the apostles and only ten of them were together. This second listing seems to refer to all eleven of them, Judas, of course, having hanged himself.

"Paul is one who from the spiritual point of view was not born at the right time because he had not been a disciple during the lifetime of Jesus. His calling to the apostolic office, which presupposed having seen Christ, could not take place in the normal, orderly, organic sequence, Moreover, his calling is forced as well as abnormal and extraordinary. He is torn from his previous course of life by the powerful intervention of the exalted Christ and set in the Kingdom of Christ. He is thus brought to see Christ and to his apostolic calling by a very different route from that of the other apostles. The main emphasis is on the abnormality of the process, which took place when the risen Lord had ceased to manifest Himself to the disciples" (Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, as quoted by Willis, p. 534).

In verse eight, Paul refers to himself as the last one to whom the Lord had revealed Himself. At the time this was spoken, he was the last; but later John saw Him again while on the isle of Patmos. In the description of himself, Paul says **"as of one born out of due time."** In the original, this phrase is one word, *Σκρωμα*. As noticed in the definitions above, this word primarily refers to an *"abortion, abortive birth."*

The events spoken of here can be studied in Acts 9:3-17; 22:7-9; and 26:15-16.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:9 "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of GOD."</p> | <p>"For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of GOD." (ASV).</p> | <p>"For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of GOD." (NKJV)</p> |
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Why did Paul consider himself to be the **"least of the apostles?"** In his own words, **"Because I persecuted the church of GOD."** Why did Paul labor so hard in service to his Lord? Was it guilt over his former persecution of the Lord and His church? No! Was it "over-compensation" for his years of persecuting, and even having Christians put to death? No! It was because he loved the Lord who gave Himself for humanity, a humanity which included Paul.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of GOD, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead" (2 Cor. 5:14).

When Paul says he is the **“least of the apostles,”** he is showing his great humility (which the Holy Spirit affirms here). Paul was equal to the apostles in power and authority. Paul is expressing his amazement at being chosen by the Lord to do this great work. The humility shown by this once powerful (by earthly standards) human being is truly amazing. Paul viewed himself as the chief of sinners (1 Tim. 1:15), yet by GOD’s grace even he was forgiven and allowed to labor in the Lord’s cause. GOD

used this humble man in His service and caused him to be one of the most powerful proclaimers of His truths the world has ever known.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:10 “But by the grace of GOD I am what I am: and His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But by the grace of GOD I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me.” (NKJV)</p> |
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GRACE — χάρις — *“Properly that which affords joy, pleasure, delight, sweetness, charm, loveliness:...Moreover, the word χάρις contains the idea of kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved”* (Thayer, p. 666); *“Grace, particularly that which causes joy, pleasure, gratification, favor, acceptance, for a kindness granted or desired, a benefit, thanks, gratitude...the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to men finding its only motive in the bounty and benevolence of the Giver; unearned and unmerited favor”* (Zodhiates, p. 1469); *“Favor, grace, gracious care or help, goodwill...that which one grants to another, the action of one who volunteers to do something to which he is not bound”* (Bauer, p. 877).

LABORED — κοπιῶ — *“To grow weary, tired, exhausted, (with toil or burdens or grief)...to labor with wearisome effort, to toil”* (Thayer, p. 355); *“To be worn out, weary, faint”* (Zodhiates, p. 877); *“Become weary, tired...work hard, toil, strive, struggle”* (Bauer, p. 443).

MORE ABUNDANTLY — περισσός — *“Exceeding some number or measure or rank or need; over and above, more than is necessary, superadded”* (Thayer, p. 505); *“Over and above, more than enough”* (Zodhiates, p. 1151); *“Exceeding the usual number or size...abundant, profuse”* (Bauer, p. 651); *“Today we would say, I worked harder”* (Earle, p. 242).

“But by the grace of GOD I am what I am.” Paul understood the concept of GOD’s grace, possibly better than any other man who had ever lived. This understanding is in part because of the extremely honest nature of Paul, who said, **“I have lived in all good conscience before GOD until this day”** (Acts 23:1). He fully understood he had been a persecutor, one who was injurious to the cause of Christ. He understood GOD did not have to give His Son for man’s sins. He understood GOD could have chosen someone else to be the chosen vessel unto the Gentiles. He was fully conscious of the forgiveness GOD had granted him and was thankful for the privilege of serving GOD.

given him to be His representative to the Gentiles, was not

How did Paul show his appreciation for what GOD had done for him? **“His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all.”** The word **“labored,”** in this passage, is κοπιῶ, being the idea of strenuous labor which causes one to be extremely weary, exhausted (see above definitions). The saving grace which GOD showed Paul, the privilege

wasted. Paul labored **“more abundantly than they all.”** Since Paul has been speaking about his apostleship, it would seem safe to assume he speaks of the other apostles here. Does he mean he labored more abundantly than any one of them? Or does he mean he labored more abundantly than all of them put together? The former understanding seems more reasonable.

“Yet not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me.” Paul did not take credit for what was accomplished through his service, for he understood it was GOD who

gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). He knew without GOD’s grace he could have accomplished nothing of importance; so he rightly gives GOD the credit.

“For it is GOD which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

“Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily” (Col. 1:29).

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| 1 Cor. 15:11 “Therefore whether it were I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” | “Whether then it be I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.” (ASV) | “Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.” (NKJV) |
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Paul states the conclusion to the first part of his argument in this chapter. First, it is the same gospel all of the apostles preach, and in particular, the resurrection of Christ and thus the resurrection of all at the time of judgment. The word **“preach”** in this passage is a present tense verb which means the apostles continuously proclaimed these truths. Second, the Christians were Christians because they believed what they were first taught about Christ’s death, burial and resurrection.

There is another point at which this verse hints;

mainly, it does not matter who proclaims the truth. The emphasis is never on the speaker; the emphasis is always on the truth which has the power to save man.

“I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16).

There is no glory to be honestly gained by any speaker of the Gospel, for it did not originate with him, nor did he die for any individual’s salvation.

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| 1 Cor. 15:12 “Now if Christ be preached that He rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” | “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?” (ASV) | “Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?” (NKJV) |
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It should be emphasized, Paul is asking this question after pointing out they had preached the death, burial and resurrection of Christ from the beginning, not just here at Corinth, but everywhere the Gospel was taken. This would mean the Corinthians had initially accepted this doctrine, otherwise they would not now be brethren (Christians). If they now rejected the doctrine which caused them to accept Christ, there was no benefit to them, and they had initially believed in vain. This would not be logical for them.

But the question should also be asked, Why were they having such a difficult problem in accepting the resurrection? Remember, they were Greeks and they had been filled with Greek philosophy all their lives. What did Greek philosophy say about a resurrection? *“A basic tenet of much ancient Greek philosophy was dualism, a concept generally attributed to Plato. Dualism considered everything spiritual to be intrinsically good and everything physical to be intrinsically evil. To anyone holding that view the idea of a resurrected body was repugnant. For them, the very reason for going to an afterlife was to escape all things physical. They considered the body a*

tomb or a corpse, to which, in this life, their souls were shackled...The typical view of dualism was expressed by Seneca: “When the day shall come which shall part this mixture of divine and human here where I found it, I will leave my body, and myself I will give back to the gods” (MacArthur, p. 408).

The resurrection is the rejoining of the soul and body (c.f. James 2:26). The body goes back to the dust from which it came when the soul is separated from it (death).

For there to be a resurrection of the body, the soul must return to it, being united with it again. For those who are alive when the Lord comes, they will already have the soul and body together. But since flesh and blood cannot enter heaven (1 Cor. 15:50), a change must take place in this living body, the same change which will be enacted upon the body which has been raised from the grave.

“Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Cor. 15:51-53).

To preach Christ is to preach the resurrection, and to

preach the resurrection is to preach Christ. One cannot believe one without the other, and to deny one is to deny the other. If there is no resurrection, there is no hope, and it is hope which motivates man in all of his achievements, whether in the physical or spiritual realm. If these Corinthians tried to argue Christ had been raised, but there would be no other resurrection, their argument would be shown to be illogical simply because the possibility of a general resurrection had been established by Christ's resurrection.

“Now if Christ is always preached as having been raised from the dead, how do some among you keep on saying that there is no resurrection of the dead” (Willis, p. 539)?

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| 1 Cor. 15:13 “But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen:” | “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither hath Christ been raised:” (ASV) | “But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.” (NKJV) |
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There is an obvious emphasis on the word **“Christ”** in this context, which is the Greek word for *“Messiah.”* The work of Messiah was to die and be resurrected in order to provide the cleansing man needs from his sins. If He did not come from the grave, then there is no hope. Paul will argue in verses twenty and twenty-three, Christ is the firstfruits of those who slept. If there is a “firstfruit” then there must be more fruit to come.

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him” (1 Thess. 4:14).

“I am the first and the last: I am He that

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| 1 Cor. 15:14 “And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” | “and if Christ hath not been raised, then is our preaching vain, your faith also is vain.” (ASV) | “And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty.” (NKJV) |
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VAIN — κενός — *“Empty, vain; devoid of truth”* (Thayer, p. 343); *“Empty, hollow...fruitless, without usefulness or success”* (Zodhiates, p. 856); *“Empty...without content, without any basis, without truth, without power”* (Bauer, p. 427); *“Void, unsubstantial”* (Expositor's, p. 923).

Paul proceeds to set forth some consequences which logically follow if Christ has not come forth from the grave.

The core of the Christian religion is the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. If there is no resurrection from the dead, then why preach? And if one preached Christ, then his preaching is useless, it has no power, and will not produce something of meaning or worth. Christ taught that the one thing above all else which would prove Him to be the Son of GOD, was the resurrection. Jesus said,

“An evil and adulterous generation seeketh

liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore” (Rev. 1:17-18).

“And the times of this ignorance GOD winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31).

after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth”

(Matt. 12:39-40).

The resurrection He predicted, is the heart of all a Christian believes.

Consider, if there is no resurrection, then why worship services? To worship is simply a waste of time, if there is no resurrection. If there is no resurrection, why study the New Testament, listen to sermons, or even preach? If there

is no resurrection, why partake of the Lord's supper, why pray in the name of Jesus, or sing songs of praise to GOD for the matchless gift of His Son? If there is no resurrection, then why should anyone strive to live a moral life or make any sacrifice? If there is no resurrection, then there is no salvation. Therefore, to believe in Christ and all He has said, is to believe a lie — if there is no resurrection.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:15 “Yea, and we are found false witnesses of GOD; because we have testified of GOD that He raised up Christ: whom He raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not.”</p> | <p>“Yea, 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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Yes, and we are found false witnesses of GOD, because we have testified of GOD that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up; if in fact the dead do not rise.” (NKJV)</p> |
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FALSE WITNESS — ψευδο-μάρτυρ — *“A false witness”* (Thayer, p. 676); *“A lying or false witness”* (Zodhiates, p. 1492).

Not only would their preaching be vain if there were no resurrection, but they would have been false witnesses to proclaim a resurrection. Those men witnessed Jesus Christ in the flesh after His death and burial. But for the sake of the argument, if there really had not been a resurrection, but the apostles were teaching a resurrection, then the apostles would be liars. If they were liars about that, could they be trusted in any other area they taught? Further, why would someone lie about something such as a resurrection, when the preaching of such brought persecution to them? Why would anyone suffer and even die for what they were teaching if it were a lie?

“Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which

cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not? If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things which concern mine infirmities. The GOD and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not”(1 Cor. 11:23-31).

To be sure, there would occasionally be one who would die for a lie, but such is a great **exception** to the rule. Here were thirteen men (apostles), and none of them denied the resurrection.

The phrase **“false witnesses of GOD”** should be examined. All of the commentators which were consulted, who speak specifically to this point, say it is, *“false witnesses against GOD.”* Willis states,

“The phrase emartur‘samen kata tou Theou cannot be properly translated ‘we have testified of God.’ Kata does not mean ‘of;’ rather, it means ‘against.’ The false testimony is against God” (Willis, p. 541).

The law said, **“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”** (Ex. 20:16), i.e., one does not tell a lie against or about one's neighbor. If it were so bad to do this, would it not be just as bad, yea even worse, to tell a lie about GOD? To say GOD said or did anything which He has not said or done, is to speak a lie against GOD.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:16 “For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:”</p> | <p>“For if the dead are not raised, neither hath Christ been raised:” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.” (NKJV)</p> |
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This passage seems to be either an anticipation of, or an actual argument, made by some of these Corinthians in their letter to Paul. Their argument might be phrased like this; *“Christ was risen, but there is no general resurrection.”* But this passage clearly declares one cannot

have it both ways. Either there is a resurrection or

there is not. If there is no general resurrection of the dead, then Christ was not resurrected. The repetition of this passage (v. 13), is an important phrase setting up more

erroneous conclusions if Christ were not raised from the dead.

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| 1 Cor. 15:17 “And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” | “and if Christ hath not been raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.” (ASV) | “And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!” (NKJV) |
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VAIN — μάταιος — *“Devoid of force, truth, success, result, useless, to no purpose”* (Thayer, p. 393); *“Vain, empty, fruitless, aimless”* (Zodhiates, p. 948); *“Idle, empty, fruitless, useless, powerless, lacking truth”* (Bauer, p. 495).

Can there be forgiveness of sins without the resurrection of Jesus? Paul’s answer is an emphatic **“No!”** Why is the Christian faith fruitless and useless if Christ has

not risen; because there is no forgiveness of sins without the resurrection.

“Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with GOD through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of GOD” (Rom. 4:25-5:2).

An understanding of the word **“vain”** in verse seventeen here is absolutely essential. It is not the same original word as found previously (v. 13). This word in verse seventeen points to the results. If the resurrection of Christ is a lie, then there cannot be the result of anyone’s having forgiveness of his sins. Consider another consequence: if belief in Christ does not yield forgiveness of sins and thus the hope of eternity in heaven, then consider those poor Hebrews who gave up the law of Moses for Christianity. If there were no resurrection, then those Hebrews gave up their only hope of salvation.

“The GOD of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath GOD exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins” (Acts 5:30-31).

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| 1 Cor. 15:18 “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” | “Then they also that are fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (ASV) | “Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.” (NKJV) |
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PERISHED — • πόλλυμι — *“To destroy, i.e., to put out of the way entirely, abolish, put an end to, ruin:...to incur the loss of true or eternal life; to be delivered up to eternal misery”* (Thayer, p. 64); *“To be destroyed, perish...to perish eternally, i.e., to be deprived of eternal life”* (Zodhiates, p 230-231); *“Be destroyed, ruined. Perish, die”* (Bauer, p. 95).

Another consequence of the doctrine of there being no resurrection is seen in this passage with regards to the death of those who followed Christ. The term **“fallen asleep,”** is a euphemism for death. Those about whom he spoke died in the Lord as followers of Christ. The word **“perished”** contemplates not merely passing out of existence, but carries the idea of punishment, the eternal separation from GOD. But also consider, if there were no resurrection from the dead, then death would simply be the end. If such were the case, then why not live any way one wants? The atheist believes he can determine how he ought to live, because he does not believe in a GOD who will raise men up and judge them in the last day. When men live any way they choose, ignoring the Bible’s directions, it is because they do not believe there will be a resurrection with eternal consequences for their actions in this world. If there is no resurrection,

would have been unforgiven, and their destiny would be damnation” (MacArthur, p. 413).

“Their faith would have been in vain, their sins

“But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are

asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

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| 1 Cor. 15:19 “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” | “If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable.” (ASV) | “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.” (NKJV) |
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MISERABLE — ἡλεινός — *“To be pitied, miserable”* (Thayer, p. 203); *“Worthy of pity, pitiable, full of misery, wretched, miserable”* (Zodhiates, p. 563); *“Miserable, pitiable”* (Bauer, p. 249).

Without hope there can be no joy. Without hope, those who suffer pain have nothing to which they can look forward. Without hope of eternity, why would the **“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”** (Heb. 11:24-25).

If there is no resurrection, then everyone should do whatever he wants to do, for there are no eternal consequences. If there is no resurrection, it is not only the future which is lost, but also the present. Consider the hours spent in service to GOD, which could have been used to fulfill fleshly pleasures, if there is no resurrection. If there is no hope of eternal life with Christ, then why practice any morals? Further, true Christianity breeds persecution. **“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution”** (2 Tim. 3:12). If there is no resurrection, what a pity for Christians to endure persecution for a hope which does not exist.

“A man who has put everything he is or ever hopes to be on something which is not true, is to be pitied” (Willis, p. 544).

A caution is necessary for those who might believe the

Christian voluntarily deprive himself of so much pleasure in this world? One should not deceive himself into believing there is no pleasure in sinning.

life of a Christian is a miserable existence because of those things voluntarily sacrificed. The Christian life is the happiest life anyone can live. And, if a person who professes to be a Christian is miserable because of what he has given up, then it shows he has not whole-heartedly given himself to the Lord and His service. Such a person cannot expect to live with Christ for eternity.

“If Christ has not been raised:

- Gospel preaching is based on a delusion.
- Christians have believed a lie.
- The apostles were false witnesses against GOD.
- The faith of the Corinthians produced no result; they were still in their sins.
- Those believers who had died hoping in Christ had gone on to the same everlasting punishment as all others” (Willis, p. 545).

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| 1 Cor. 15:20 “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” | “But now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep.” (ASV) | “But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (NKJV) |
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A study of Leviticus 23:9-14 reveals the imagery of the firstfruits upon which this text is based. On the day after the sabbath of the Passover feast the priest waved a sheaf of barley before the Lord. This was done as thanksgiving to the Lord for His bountiful

provisions. But it also symbolized the crop which was about to be harvested, and in fact could not be harvested with GOD's blessings until that heave offering was made. The same principle is now taught to the Corinthians concerning the resurrection of

Christ. His resurrection was a necessity and was in advance of the harvest of souls which was to come.

The passage does not mean Christ was the first person ever to come forth from the grave. The Bible gives a number of examples of people who were brought forth from the dead prior to Jesus' resurrection (Widow's son of Zarephath, 1 Kings 17:22; The Shunammite's son, 2 Kings 4:34-36; Unnamed man cast upon Elisha, 2 Kings 13:21; Widow's son of Luke 7:15; Lazarus, John 11:44; et

cetera). All of those people rose to die again, but Jesus arose never to die. Christ achieved the victory over death which no man had ever achieved (15:55-58). He was the firstborn in that He opened the door for a resurrection of all thereafter, the door to eternal life.

"As the first apple which falls from a tree gives promise of many more to follow, the resurrection of Christ is the first fruit of a vast harvest" (Stancliff, p. 240).

Paul's opening statement in this verse is a declaration of joy that

"our preaching is not vain, your faith is not vain, ye are not in your sins, the dead in Christ have not perished, we are not more miserable than other men. The reverse of all this is true" (Hodge, p. 323).

Christ's resurrection is a guarantee that all will be resurrected.

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| 1 Cor. 15:21 "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." | "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (ASV) | "For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead." (NKJV) |
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This passage relates that man was intended to live forever. But death came because man sinned against his Creator.

"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into

When GOD drove Adam and Eve from the garden of Eden, it was necessary for Him to place a guard of Cherubims to keep man from getting back to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24). 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" (Gen. 3:22).

From all this, one learns the consequence of sin was physical death for the human race. Regarding the thought of immortality, Barnes says this about man:

"He would have remained immortal on the earth, or would have been translated to heaven, as Enoch and Elijah were, without seeing death" (Barnes, p. 293).

Thankfully, the tree of life will be made available again to those who are faithful to GOD (Rev. 2:7; 2, 14).

Paul again speaks of the victory over death about which this chapter speaks so much. Through the resurrection of Christ, death is defeated; hope is

the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

restored.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to GOD, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:14-18).

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| 1 Cor. 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” | “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.” (ASV) | “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.” (NKJV) |
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Some have tried to make this passage teach universalism, i.e., all will be saved in the end. But such a doctrine clearly contradicts other passages, therefore this passage cannot teach universalism.

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves 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 damnation” (John 5:28-29).

This passage has also been determined by some to mean only all those who are in Christ shall be made alive, and saying nothing about the unrighteous. But, the contrast is between death and life. Willis writes,

“Whether the body is raised to eternal damnation or everlasting life is not discussed in this verse” (Willis, p. 549).

Because of the sin of Adam all men were removed from the tree of life, thus insuring they would die. But because of Christ, His resurrection insures all men will be raised from the dead. The word “all” is found twice in this passage, both times referring to men. Why would it mean all of mankind the first time but not the second time? The one man brought death to all, the other brought eternal life to all. This verse deals only with the fact all men will arise from the dead, and has nothing to do with their eternal destination.

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| 1 Cor. 15:23 “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.” | “But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; then they that are Christ's, at His coming.” (ASV) | “But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.” (NKJV) |
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Paul has declared there will be a resurrection of all men, and now he turns specifically to address Christians. The Christians in Thessalonica had

“If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:14-18).

The resurrection is mentioned in the above passage. Those who believe in the resurrection may be comforted that even the dead will be raised to enjoy eternity with the Lord. What was the problem with

problems with the judgment, and there may very well be a similar problem here.

some of these Corinthians? They did not believe in a resurrection. Did they, like some of the Thessalonians, apparently believe when a person died it was all over, so only those who were alive when the Lord came would be with Him for eternity (1 Thess. 4:13-18)? False doctrine and ideas can spread rapidly, and usually when one rears its head there are people everywhere who are quick to grasp it, and even modify it to fit their thinking.

Why would Paul change from the general resurrection of all men specifically to deal with Christians? First, they needed to understand there was an order to the resurrection. No one could arise from the dead, never to die again, until after Christ had come forth. The resurrection of which He speaks is yet future. Second, the doctrine of a resurrection is comforting only to those who belong to Christ. For all others, the thought of a resurrection can only bring discomfort and terror. Could it be, some who were denying the resurrection, and those of any generation who do so, do so because they realize they will not be

living with the Lord if such is true? How falsely comforting it would be for sinners to believe there were no resurrection, or that it had already come, leaving

nothing for the future.

“Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:18).

Third, without a resurrection there is no hope and all Christians need hope to overcome the sinful world in which they live. Fourth, to deny the resurrection is to deny **the faith**, and in effect to deny Christ Himself. Paul did not want them to lose their faith, but rather to fortify it.

When the Lord comes again it is for the purpose of ushering in the judgment.

“And before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:...Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:32-34, 41).

How can any honest man read Matthew chapter twenty-five and then advocate there will be multiple resurrections when Christ comes again?

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:24 “Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to GOD, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to GOD the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.” (NKJV)</p> |
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SHALL HAVE PUT DOWN — καταργέω — *“To render idle, unemployed, inactive, inoperative”* (Thayer, p. 336); *“To render inactive, idle, useless, ineffective,...To destroy, cause to cease, do away with, put an end to”* (Zodhiates, p. 841-842); *“Make ineffective, powerless, idle”* (Bauer, p. 417).

This passage is a death knell to the premillennial doctrines of a coming kingdom. Basically, premillennialism declares that when Christ comes again He will set up a kingdom for one thousand years. But notice what this verse says. First, the end is coming; but what is the end? The Greek studies above, show a time when everything is inoperative,

done away with, destroyed. This fits very well the Spirit’s declaration to Peter:

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein

shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day

of GOD, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat” (2 Pet. 3:10-12)?

When the end of all things comes Christ will deliver up the kingdom to His Father. How can one deliver up something which does not exist? How is it people today will recognize Christ as “King Jesus,” which implies a kingdom over which He rules, and yet deny the kingdom exists? Either the Lord has a kingdom over which He rules or He does not. There are a number of passages which show the church is the kingdom, and that the kingdom exists. Notice only one at this time:

forgiven are in the kingdom. How can people ignore the plain message of the above passage and be considered honest, or sincerely mistaken?

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:12-14).

When Christ delivers up the kingdom to His Father, **“He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.”** Question, how can one put down what he does not have? The passage clearly states Christ has all rule, authority and power. If He has no kingdom, He has no rulership or authority. Does the Bible show a time when He gained all power and authority? After the resurrection, and shortly before He ascended back to His Father, Jesus said: **“All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).** The Father in heaven gave Him this power. But notice carefully, the time is coming when He will give the Father back the authority which He **presently** has. When will this take place? It will take place when the end comes, i.e., the end of time, the judgment.

Notice: (1) It is the saints who have been delivered from the power of darkness and moved into the kingdom of Jesus. (2) Redemption, i.e., forgiveness of sins is found in the church (Acts 2:38, 42)! (3) Those who have their sins

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:25-26 “For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”</p> | <p>“For He must reign, till He hath put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be abolished is death.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” (NKJV)</p> |
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REIGN — βασιλεύω — *“To be king, to exercise kingly power, to reign”* (Thayer, p. 98); *“To reign, rule, be king”* (Zodhiates, p. 327); *“Be king, rule”* (Bauer, p. 136).

DESTROYED — The original word is the same as what is translated **“shall have put down,”** in verse twenty-four.

“The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool” (Psalm 110:1).

the resurrection. It is at the resurrection where the victory of Christ over all man’s foes is consummated. The devil is ultimately subdued when he no longer has the power to tempt or hurt GOD’s people. It is at this time Christ will lay down all authority and power.

“He must reign,” i.e., He must **continue reigning** (present infinitive active) until death has been abolished. But when will death be destroyed, when will it cease its hold on man? This can only be when there are no more bodies in the grave, i.e., the time of

Regarding the phrase, **“put all his enemies under His**

feet," MacArthur tells us,

"The figure of putting His enemies under His feet comes from the common practice in ancient times of kings and emperors always sitting enthroned above their subjects, so that when the subjects bowed they were literally under, or lower, than the sovereign's feet.

With enemies, a king often would literally put his foot on the neck of the conquered king or general, symbolizing the enemy's total subjection" (MacArthur, p. 419-420).

A good illustration of this is found in Joshua 10:22-27, where Joshua had the people put their foot on the necks of the five conquered kings.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:27 "For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"For He has put all things under His feet. But when He says all things are put under Him, it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted." (NKJV)</p> |
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MANIFEST — δ-λος — *"Clear, evident, manifest"* (Thayer, p. 131); *"Plain, evident, manifest"* (Zodhiates, p. 412); *"Clear, plain, evident"* (Bauer, p. 178).

Matthew 28:18 tells when Christ was given all authority in heaven and in earth. The Corinthian passage here shows conclusively that the Father gave Jesus His authority. But in giving Him that authority, there was one exception, the Father was not put in subjection under Him. Even the Spirit seemed to operate under the authority of Christ (John 14:26 – **"My name"**). This is the same situation on a purely earthly level, that occurred when Pharaoh put everything in his kingdom under the authority of Joseph, except for Pharaoh. Thus, Joseph answered to

no one except Pharaoh, as the Son answered to no one except the Father.

"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him" (John 8:28-29).

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:28 "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that GOD may be all in all." (NKJV)</p> |
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SUBDUED — ὑποτάσσω — *"To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection"* (Thayer, p. 645); *"To place under in an orderly fashion"* (Zodhiates, p. 1427); *"Bring someone to subjection"* (Bauer, p. 848).

Willis makes the following comment on this verse;

"When everything has been finally subjected to Jesus, then Jesus will voluntarily give the kingdom over to the Father and Himself be subject to the Father. The fact that Jesus, the Son, is subject to the Father is not contradictory to the deity of Christ. The fact that my wife is subject to me does not deny her humanity; neither does the subjection of

the Son to the Father deny the former's deity...The fact that both the Son and the Father are deity does not prohibit an order of subjection. This verse demands that we understand that Jesus is subject to the Father" (Willis, p. 555).

Why is it so hard for some to consider the future subjection of our Lord to the Father? When He was upon this earth, did He not teach His subjection to the Father?

Upon faithfully fulfilling the Father's purpose (life, death and resurrection), the Father placed all things in heaven and earth under His control, with the only exception being the Father Himself. This context clearly shows He will lay down the authority the Father gave Him at the resurrection, again being subject to the Father. There is a sense, that even in His reign, He is still under the authority of the Father, for the Father was not subject to Him.

Wayne Jackson made a very interesting statement

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| 1 Cor. 15:29 "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?" | "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?" (ASV) | "Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead?" (NKJV) |
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This passage has at times been perverted to mean one can be baptized for one who is presently in the grave, who was never baptized while they walked upon the face of this earth. But those who advocate such purposely ignore the plain teachings of the **"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"** (Mark 16:16).

Even if one could be baptized for one who was dead, it cannot change the unbelief the person had while he lived in this world. If he had believed while on this earth, he would have been baptized. Further, the scriptures clearly show there is no change in a person's status after death. Once one dies there is no going back, there is only judgment either to look forward to or to dread.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

The account of the rich man and Lazarus shows there is no second chance (Luke 16). There was a gulf which separated those in Abraham's bosom from those in Tartarus, a gulf which could not be crossed. Nor could the rich man return to earth for a second chance (reincarnation).

It is believed by some, that there were those in Corinth who practiced proxy baptism. If Paul is making reference to them, it would have to stand that they were also those who were denying the resurrection. Paul's argument would be, Why are these people being baptized for the

on this verse. He said Jesus made a greater sacrifice than is usually realized in His visit to earth. Jackson believes this verse teaches the Son will eternally exist in subjection to the Father.

There is another thought which should be considered here. This passage may refer to a time when the Son regains full Deity again. But it is this author's opinion that the former position stated is correct.

scriptures. One cannot believe for another; how then could one be baptized for another? Can one repent (change of mind) for another? It is clear that both faith and baptism are necessary for one to be saved:

dead when they do not believe in the resurrection? What good, or benefit, can they accomplish by such an action? How inconsistent it would be for one to deny a resurrection and then be baptized for the one in the grave. Paul never taught proxy baptism!

Romans 6:3-4 shows baptism involves a death, burial and resurrection. Paul is speaking in this context about the resurrection. What good would it accomplish to simulate the death and burial of Christ if there were no resurrection? In sin one is dead; one is baptized in order to have life. In a very real sense one is baptized for the dead, the **"dead"** being those who were still in sins. In the act of baptism one is resurrected to **"walk in newness of life."** Why be baptized if there is no life beyond the grave, no hope of eternity with GOD?

Baptism is performed so sins may be forgiven and one may be saved (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). If there is no resurrection, then why is one baptized? What good does it do if one's sins are washed away if there is no new life for one to enter?

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| 1 Cor. 15:30-31 "And why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I | "Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I protest by that | "And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the |
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| protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." | glorifying in you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." (ASV) | boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." (NKJV) |
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JEOPARDY — κινδυνεύω — *"To be in jeopardy, to be in danger, to be put in peril"* (Thayer, p. 347); *"To be in danger"* (Zodhiates, p. 863); *"Be in danger, run a risk"* (Bauer, p. 432).

REJOICING — καύχησις — *"The act of glorying"* (Thayer, p. 342); *"Boasting...Metonymically, the matter or cause for glorying or boasting"* (Zodhiates, p. 854); *"Boasting"* (Bauer, p. 426).

Paul continues his arguments for a resurrection, refuting those who would deny such. The tenor of these two verses involves suffering. In another letter to the Corinthians, Paul spells out some of the suffering he endured because he preached Christ, which of necessity included His death, burial and resurrection.

"Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).

Paul said, **"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh"** (2 Cor. 4:8-11).

With persecutions so constant, there was the

among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23-28).

Indeed, why would anyone suffer as the apostles did unless they were fully convinced of the resurrection? Why put one's self in constant danger for a myth? No, Paul suffered because he knew the resurrection of Jesus had occurred and there would thus be a resurrection of all as the Lord had promised. Paul believed his Lord's promise of a better life where there would be no suffering, pain or tears, and he was willing to endure this life's trials in service to his Lord. Jesus affirmed there would indeed be persecution of saints, simply because His word was taught (Matt. 13:21).

endless possibility of death which Paul and the brethren of that time faced. One is so blessed in this land of America in not having to face this constant danger, yet many times Christians do not take advantage of the freedom's they possess. The persecutions suffered today are so minor compared to what Christians faced in the first century — yet many today are so afraid their neighbors will get angry with them, and no longer be their friends, that they refuse to tell them the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

"As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 8:36).

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| 1 Cor. 15:32 "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts | "If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, | "If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, |
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| at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die." | what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." (ASV) | what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" (NKJV) |
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ADVANTAGETH — **ὀφελος** — *"Advantage, profit"* (Thayer, p. 469); *"Increase, profit, meaning furtherance"* (Zodhiates, p. 1080); *"Benefit, good"* (Bauer, p. 599).

Is this an actual event of which Paul speaks, or is it metaphorically presented to get the idea of great life-threatening dangers? As Coffman points out,

"plausible and weighty arguments may be deployed on either side of the question" (Coffman, p. 262).

For detailed arguments which show both sides of this argument, one should notice such writers as Hodge (pp. 339-340) and Willis (565-566). Barnes tells us,

"It was common among the Romans, and the ancients generally, to expose criminals to fight with wild beasts in the amphitheater for the amusement of the populace. In such cases it was but another form of dooming them to certain death, since there was no human possibility of escape" (Barnes, p. 306).

On the other hand there is here a reference to the Cretians being referred to as beasts in Titus 1:12. Based on all the evidence available, this was a real event and Paul was delivered by GOD in some manner on this occasion, just as GOD delivered Daniel from the den of lions (Dan. 6).

Whichever the case may be, the point revolves around life-threatening events. As human beings think of it, what advantage is there in doing something which causes one constantly to face death? If there is no hope of a better future life, why place oneself in such dangerous situations? If there is no future reward or punishment, then why not develop the philosophy of Hedonism:

"The doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life?" (Webster, p. 385).

In Isaiah 22:13, there is an example of the Israelites, who when faced with what they believed was certain death, instead of mourning, they partied because they reasoned there was no more tomorrow.

If men **truly** believe in the existence of an afterlife, one which was lived in either eternal punishment or eternal joy, there would be a difference in the way most people lived. The fact is, most do not **really** believe in an eternal existence. This is proven by the way people live: more interested in the sensual pleasures of this life than the blessings of an eternal one. Many members of the Lord's church spend far more time entertaining themselves than they do in preparing themselves spiritually for an eternal destination. Many in this age refer to mankind as nothing more than higher forms of animals. If such is the case, then why not act like animals who live only for the moment? If one is going to act like an animal, then why not eat, drink, and enjoy oneself fully in the pleasures of this world? All there is to which such *"animals"* might *"look forward"* in such a scenario is death!

"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of GOD, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward" (Heb. 11:24-26).

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| 1 Cor. 15:33 "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." | "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals." (ASV) | "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits." (NKJV) |
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DECEIVED — **πλανῶ** — *"To cause to stray, to lead astray, lead aside from the right way...to lead into error, to deceive"* (Thayer, p. 514); *"To cause to wander, lead astray...to mislead, cause to err"* (Zodhiates, p. 1165); *"Lead astray, cause to wander...mislead, deceive"* (Bauer, p. 665); *"Misled (seduced)"* (Expositor's, p. 933).

COMMUNICATIONS — **Κοιλία** — “Companionship, intercourse, communion” (Thayer, p. 444); “Originally the word meant being together in company, companionship, but in the NT it means conversation” (Zodhiates, p. 1039); “Association, intercourse, company” (Bauer, p. 565); “Conversations” (Expositor’s, p. 933).

CORRUPT — **φθείρω** — “To corrupt, to destroy” (Thayer, p. 652); “To corrupt, desroy” (Zodhiates, p. 1442); “Destroy, ruin, corrupt, spoil” (Bauer, p. 857).

MANNERS — **ἦθος** — “Custom, usage, morals, character” (Thayer, p. 276); “A habit, custom...in the NT, manner, custom, morals, character. From this word the English ethics is derived” (Zodhiates, p. 708); “Custom, usage, habit” (Bauer, p. 344).

The word **“communications”** in this passage does not refer to speech. Rather, as the Greek studies above show, it speaks of association, companionship, company. The message is clear: those with whom one associates influence one, whether for good or evil. But notice, Paul says **“Be not deceived.”** In the context, this specifically refers to the false teaching about the resurrection which was being taught to the Corinthians. Specifically, it shows that association with the evil men who were teaching such a doctrine should be avoided. The Corinthian brethren may have thought their association with those false teachers would not cause any harm, yet some of the Corinthians were being deceived, led away from the gospel of Christ, and led away from their eternal hope of salvation.

So many want to tolerate those who hold false positions, and think by tolerating them they will win them to faithfulness. But the Bible’s instructions are very clear as to what should be done with the false teacher.

“A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject” (Titus 3:10).

He is to be rejected, not allowed to have influence among the faithful. (I remember a congregation I attended as a youngster, which tolerated a false teacher for about a year and a half. The elders thought this man would not influence others with his doctrine, but he left the congregation taking over fifty of its members with him. What was his false doctrine? He believed and taught he could miraculously heal folks.)

Many think they can associate with the evil people

of this world and not be influenced by them. But such is far from the truth. As Shepherd states in his commentary with Lipscomb,

“It is only when Christians associate with the wicked with the express desire and purpose to do them good that they can rely on the protection of God to preserve them from contamination” (Shepherd, p. 237).

One cannot totally exempt himself from any contact with the world; but one must realize that his role in this life is to convert souls. When one approaches his associations with mankind from this standpoint he will attempt to teach them the Gospel at every opportunity, and such efforts will draw a clear line of distinction between the saved and the lost. There must be a clear distinction between saint and sinner. Far too many are **“deceived”** into believing their friendly associations with the worldly will not affect them; but these need to listen to the Lord’s admonition — **“Take heed lest any man deceive you”** (Mark 13:5).

“Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall” (1 Cor. 10:12).

When one thinks he is too strong to be influenced by evil companionships, and too strong to be induced to participate in evil, he has already begun to fall away from the truth.

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (1 Cor. 5:6).

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| 1 Cor. 15:34 “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of | “Awake to soberness righteously, and sin not; for some have no knowledge of GOD: I speak this to | “Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of GOD. I speak this to |
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| GOD: I speak this to your shame." | move you to shame." (ASV) | your shame." (NKJV) |
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AWAKE — ἰκνήφω — *"To return to one's self from drunkenness, become sober,...Metaphor to return to soberness of mind"* (Thayer, p. 198); *"It means to sober up or become sober from a drunken spell. Used metaphorically meaning to rouse up, awake from a state of stupor, ignorance, delusion"* (Zodhiates, p. 550); *"Become sober...come to one's senses"* (Bauer, p. 243).

RIGHTEOUSNESS — δικαίως — *"Justly, agreeably to right:... properly, as is right"* (Thayer, p. 151); *"Just...as it is fit, proper, right"* (Zodhiates, p. 467); *"Uprightly"* (Bauer, p. 198).

SIN NOT — μαρτάνω — *"To wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin"* (Thayer, p. 30); *"To sin, to miss a mark on the way, not to hit the mark. One who keeps missing the mark in his relationship to God is a sinner. To err, swerve from the truth, go wrong"* (Zodhiates, p. 129); *"Do wrong, sin of offenses against the religion and moral law of God"* (Bauer, p. 42).

The word **"awake"** comes from ἰκνήφω, which refers to one's sobering up from drunkenness or stupor. It is that fuzziness of mind which alcohol causes, not allowing one to see or think clearly. Those who were being deceived were to awake to the deception, to see clearly what was being taught and reject it. Further, they were to be able to see clearly in order to help those in error out of their error, and prevent others from being deceived by it. This would also include the responsibility to withstand those false teachers and help them to see the error of their doctrine.

They were to awake to what was proper and right, so as not to walk outside the commands of GOD. Deception causes one to wander from the right course.

They were to wake up, seeing things as they actually were, and walk away from sin. Why should they stop sinning? They should stop because there **is** going to be a resurrection. Since there will be a resurrection, there will be a judgment day.

But notice why those people denied a resurrection. They denied because they were without knowledge of GOD; they were ignorant of GOD. Further, those who had been deceived were ignorant of GOD, or they would not have succumbed to the arguments of those false teachers.

Notice what Jesus said to the Sadducees, who were arguing there is no resurrection: **"Ye do err, not**

knowing the scriptures, nor the power of GOD" (Matt. 22:29). Ignorance is not to be excused; *"Nor were they to be given greater toleration for this reason"* (Willis, p. 569). Too often when a person holds a false doctrine, people reason that they should be tolerant until the false teacher can learn better. This tolerance occurs because one does not want conflict. Yet notice the harm which has been done to innumerable souls over the years because error was not confronted and stopped when it first appeared. How will anyone learn better if Christians do not confront false doctrine? Leaving error alone will only allow one to become more deeply entrenched in that error, and to lead others into it as well.

What these brethren were doing was a shame to the church. And those who allowed it should be ashamed of their failure to stop error. Intelligent people should be ashamed of being deceived when the facts of the Bible can be so easily seen and understood. The resurrection is a primary doctrine, which if taken out of Christianity, leaves it as nothing more than a hollow shell.

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| 1 Cor. 15:35 "But some man will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" | "But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what manner of body do they come?" (ASV) | "But someone will say, How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" (NKJV) |
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WHAT — ποῦς — “Of what sort or nature” (Thayer, p. 527); “What, of what kind or sort” (Zodhiates, p. 1192); “Of what kind” (Bauer, p. 684).

Two objections are posed for Paul to discuss. How is it possible the dead are raised? And, what kind of body will they have? Behind both of those questions probably lies the Greek belief that the body is evil and so it would not be desirable to have a body in the next life. People wonder how someone who has been burned to death in a fire, and their ashes scattered by the winds can be brought back together for a resurrection. Or, what about the person lost at sea, whose body became fish food, thus scattered all over the ocean; or the person eaten by a group of lions? My friends, cannot the GOD who created all things put a body back together no matter what the circumstances? In fact GOD knows where every molecule He created is (Psalm 159). Does it take more power to bring a body back together than it did to bring everything together in

creation?

Paul will not go into more detail on this subject. Yet, his answer seems to be aimed more at the possibility than exactly what one will be like. In the end, one cannot know what his resurrected body will be like, or what form or kind it shall take. There is a matter of trust here, trusting GOD to give one a suitable body which is adapted for the eternal state. Yet, there are a couple of things that can be known about the resurrected bodies: (1) They will not be flesh and blood, and (2) They will be immortal (vv. 50-51).

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| 1 Cor. 15:36 “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die:” | “Thou foolish one, that which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die:” (ASV) | “Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.” (NKJV) |
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FOOL — —φρων — “Without reason, senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence” (Thayer, p. 90); “Unwise, imprudent, inconsiderate, foolish” (Zodhiates, p. 304); “Foolish, ignorant” (Bauer, p. p. 127); “Lack of sense” (Robertson, p. 195); “Mindless or senseless” (Earle, p. 243).

QUICKENED — ζωοποιέω — “To produce alive, beget or bear living young,...to cause to live, make alive, give life” (Thayer, p. 274); “To make alive...Used primarily in the NT of raising the dead to life” (Zodhiates, p. 705); “Make alive, give life to” (Bauer, p. 341); “Come to life” (Earle, p. 243).

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” (John 12:24).

All around is the evidence of a resurrection, and yet one cannot understand the details of it. Seed, as long as it exists in seed form is dormant, having no life. But when a seed is planted in the ground, it decays and mixes with the soil in which it is found, and a plant comes forth which does not resemble the seed. Then, it produces much fruit. This fruit resembles the seed from which it originally came, but

it is not the same. The point is, it cannot be made alive (quicken) until it dies. All around the intelligent mind has evidence of a resurrection. On the other hand, the **“fool,”** the one “without reason, senseless, foolish, stupid; without reflection or intelligence” (Thayer, p. 90), is incapable of understanding or accepting the available evidence. Or, it could simply be stubbornness which so often has its roots in pride, which keeps one from accepting the obvious.

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| 1 Cor. 15:37 “And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that | “and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, | “And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but |
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| body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other grain:" | but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind;" (ASV) | mere grain; perhaps wheat or some other grain." (NKJV) |
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The simple truth of this passage deals with the fact that the grain placed in the soil does not look like the plant which comes forth, yet one comes from the other. In the resurrected state, bodies will be changed: **"this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality"** (1 Cor. 15:53). What comes forth is determined by what is planted (wheat, barley, et cetera.). Just so, what comes forth at the resurrection is determined by what is planted. One arises either to glory or condemnation according to the "seed" buried in the grave. No one knows what this new body will look like, only that there will be one. One should be happy with this small bit of knowledge, for it is a waste of time to dwell too long upon what kind of body one will have.

MacArthur wrote:
"When Jesus was raised from the dead His glorified body was radically different from the one which died. What came out of the grave was different from what was placed in the grave. It was no longer limited by time, space, and material substance. During His appearances, Jesus went from one place to another without traveling in any physical way. He appeared and disappeared at will, and entered rooms without opening the door (Luke 24:15, 31, 36; John 20:19; etc.). In His earthly body He had done none of these things"(MacArthur, p. 434).

"Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself" (Phil. 3:20-21).

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| 1 Cor. 15:38 "But GOD giveth it a body as it hath pleased Him, and to every seed his own body." | "but GOD giveth it a body even as it pleased Him, and to each seed a body of its own." (ASV) | "But GOD gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body." (NKJV) |
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Still using the example of grain, the Holy Spirit points out GOD's ability to give a body to the planted grain. This is done just as GOD designed it. Each body from whatever grain is involved has a different body, and each body is suited to perform its task. When one views a seed, if one has never seen the plant from which it came, one cannot begin to imagine the way the plant would look if one planted the seed. The same thing is true regarding the resurrection. One can view physical bodies, but there is no way one can visualize what they will look like in the resurrection. But GOD planned the body of each plant, which comes from the seed. He also planned the resurrected

body which comes from the seed of the earthly body. Consider, if a grain of corn is planted, a corn stalk will come from it. Likewise, any vegetable one may name will do the same thing. A corn seed is not planted from which a watermelon plant springs. Why is this so? Because GOD has determined each plant will come only from the seed of that plant (Gen. 1). Consider this application in the spiritual realm. There will be a resurrection, but there will also be a change. This change is likened to what takes place in the planting of a seed. The human body is like a seed which is planted at death, but will rise again. The Bible says the Lord

“shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body”
(Phil. 3:21).

“Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

Involved in this, consider that GOD’s laws are set. As pointed out earlier, the corn seed will only grow into a corn stalk, it will never accidentally change into a

watermelon plant. All of mankind will be given new bodies at the resurrection, which will match the seed planted. If one has lived a life fit for heaven, he will be given a glorious body like the Lord’s present body (1 John 3:1-3). But if not, then he will receive a body fit for destruction in the fires of hell. And there will be no mistakes!

One of the things being emphasized in these verses is the power and wisdom of GOD. He has the power to create a body suited to the fruit which is to be produced.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:39 “All flesh is not the same flesh: but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds.”</p> | <p>“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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of animals, another of fish, and another of birds.” (NKJV)</p> |
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If one laid the flesh of several creatures on a table, by mere observation he might not be able to distinguish between them, or to know from which creature each came. But if a biological examination took place, it would be clear they are different. All flesh is not the same.

“No matter what we may eat, no matter how specialized or unbalanced our diet may be, and no matter what our environment may be, we will never change into another form of life”(MacArthur, p. 435).

But again, notice something pointed out in its environment, can He not do the same for an eternal abode? Can He not bring man’s body back together with the soul no matter the circumstances at the time of death,

connection with the previous verse. Each is after its own, but not only that, each is designed specifically for the environment in which it is found. In this verse, Paul says there is the flesh of men, beasts, birds, and fish. Birds were designed by GOD to operate in a sphere for which man is not designed. The same is true in each of these classifications. Man cannot live under water as does a fish, nor can the fish live on dry ground as the man can. If GOD can design all of these multitudes of creatures, each unique, each suited for

and arrange them into another body suited for either heaven or hell?

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:40-41 “There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from</p> | <p>“There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. 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.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“There are also celestial bodies and terrestrial bodies; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differs from another star in glory.” (NKJV)</p> |
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| another star in glory.” | | |
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The term **“celestial”** refers to what is heavenly, being defined as sun, moon, and stars. **“Terrestrial”** refers to what is earthly. Celestial does not refer to heavenly beings such as angels. The point is the same as the one made earlier: GOD has the power, the ability, to create a glorified body for man as He demonstrated by the glorious creation of all things.

“How filled with conceit and unbelief must be that mortal man, who is himself the creature made by an infinite God, and who must soon stumble into a grave, but who has the arrogance and pride to busy himself formulating postulates about what may be possible or not for Almighty God”(Coffman, p. 264-265).

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| 1 Cor. 15:42 “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:” | “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption.” (ASV) | “So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.” (NKJV) |
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CORRUPTION — φθορά — *“Corruption, destruction, perishing...in a state of corruption or decomposition (of the body at burial)”* (Thayer, p. 652); *“Spoiling, corruption, destruction, ruin, decay, generally a fraying or wasting away...Death, corruption in a natural sense”* (Zodhiates, p. 1443); *“Ruin, destruction, dissolution, deterioration, corruption”* (Bauer, p. 858); *“State of being perishable”* (Earle, p. 244).

INCORRUPTION — • φθαρσία — *“Incorruption, perpetuity”* (Thayer, p. 88); *“Incorruption, incorruptibility, incapacity for corruption”* (Zodhiates, p. 297); *“Incorruptibility, immortality”* (Bauer, p. 125).

In this verse one of the characteristics of the saint’s resurrected body is detailed. It will not be like the present body which is subject to deteriorating and decay. The resurrected body will never die nor decay.

to perish. Before man sinned he had access to the **“tree of life,”** which, as long as man could eat thereof, he could live forever (Gen. 3:22). It was at the time when sin entered the world that mankind, the world and everything in it faced corruption and death.

This present physical body was not originally intended

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| 1 Cor. 15:43 “It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:” | “it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power.” (ASV) | “It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.” (NKJV) |
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DISHONOUR — • τιμία — *“Dishonor, ignominy, disgrace”* (Thayer, p. 83; Zodhiates, p. 286); *“Dishonor, disgrace, shame”* (Bauer, p. 120).

GLORY — δόξα — *“A most glorious condition, most exalted state;...this condition will include not only the blessedness of the soul, but also the gain of a more excellent body”* (Thayer, p. 156); *“In the NT, spoken also of that which excites admiration or to which honor is ascribed”* (Zodhiates, p. 478); *“Brightness, splendor, radiance”* (Bauer, p. 203).

WEAKNESS — • σθένεια — *“Want of strength, weakness, infirmity”* (Thayer, p. 80); *“Weakness, sickness...lack of strength or power”* (Zodhiates, p. 271-273); *“Weakness”* (Bauer, p. 115).

Again notice the idea of planting in the word **“sown.”** What is

planted? Does one “plant” a living body? No, the dead

body is what is under consideration here. The dead body is “dishonorable,” i.e., there is shame and disgrace associated with the decaying body. Such a body is quickly hidden from sight, not just because one does not want to see the decaying process of a loved one, but because as the body decays, the stench becomes offensive to all.

When Jesus said,

“Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days” (John 11:39).

But the dishonor associated with a dead body will change to **“glory”** at the resurrection.

“Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3:20-21).

The **“weakness”** spoken of deals with the lack of strength, power, and infirmity of that which is **“sown”** in the grave. Such a body has no power as to where it is buried and cannot resist burial; nor can it resist the decaying process which begins at death. But the new body given by the Lord does not decay; it is raised in glory by the power of Christ. This body will be full of life, full of vitality, unlike the dead physical body.

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:44 “It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.”</p> | <p>“it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.” (NKJV)</p> |
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For those who would argue that there is no bodily resurrection this verse is devastating. Without a body there is simply a spirit. The risen Lord appeared to the apostles, but they were afraid because they thought the appearance was simply a **“spirit”** (Luke 24:36-43). But notice what Jesus did to assure them He was not simply a spirit: He told them to touch Him and asked for food and ate it. What was He doing? He was proving He had a **body**. When the apostles saw Jesus walking on the water they thought He was a spirit; He reassured them by coming to them; He proved to them a body could walk on water before their fears were eased (Matt. 14:25-31).

The emphasis in this passage deals with the powerless **physical body** which is planted, and the glorious **spiritual body** which will exist after the resurrection. The former has no power, the latter does. The former is corruptible, the latter is not.

“Our spirits now reside in earthly bodies, but one day they will reside in spiritual bodies” (MacArthur, p. 438).

For those who would argue it is impossible to change the material state into an immaterial state,

consider the following as stated by Zerr:

“The universe is divided into three distinct classes, namely, the mineral, the vegetable and the animal. The first is inorganic and the others are organic. Notwithstanding these independent and different existences, the inorganic mineral is absorbed into the vegetable, the vegetable is next absorbed and converted into the animal. If there is a Creator who can establish such laws of change within our own knowledge, why doubt His power to lift the animal to one more stage and convert it into a spiritual state” (Zerr, p. 41)?

“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of GOD, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven”

(2 Cor. 5:1-2).

Since the physical body cannot exist in heaven, a spiritual body must be given in order for the saints to exist there. Thus the obvious statement, **“There is a natural (mortal, RK) body, and there is a spiritual (immortal, RK) body.”**

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| 1 Cor. 15:45 “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” | “So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (ASV) | “And so it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.” (NKJV) |
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The first Adam, is of course, the Adam of Creation (Gen. 1). The second Adam is Christ. The order is important, as can be seen from the context of this passage. Adam was the prototype of all who live a physical existence in this world; whereas Christ is the prototype of all who will live in heaven. Just as Adam had to come first, then Christ, so also the physical existence must come before the spiritual existence. Adam was the beginning of

humanity. Christ is the beginning of an eternal race of believers.

Another thing to be considered is that Jesus is the **“last Adam.”** This indicates there will never be another who holds the same position of Jesus to mankind. There is no new Savior to come; there is no new law giver who will come; there is only Christ.

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| 1 Cor. 15:46 “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” | “Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; then that which is spiritual.” (ASV) | “However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.” (NKJV) |
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Taken in context, this passage appears to be speaking about Adam compared to Christ. Adam was indeed upon this earth before Christ. Adam was the natural man, the progenitor of human life. Christ brought spiritual life.

Death is the separation of the soul from the physical body. So, what is life? Life must be the joining of soul and body. Which came first? GOD made the body of man and then breathed into him the breath of life.

“And the LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Gen. 2:7).

The physical came before the spiritual, whether one speaks of the existence of man or whether one speaks of the physical man (Adam) coming before the spiritual man (Christ).

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| 1 Cor. 15:47-49 “The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from 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.” | “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.” (ASV) | “The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.” (NKJV) |
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EARTHY — χῳϊκός — *“Made of earth, earthy”* (Thayer, p. 669); *“Earthy, made of earth or dust”* (Zodhiates, p. 1478); *“Made of earth or dust”* (Bauer, p. 883).

“And the LORD GOD formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his

nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul....In the sweat of thy face shalt

thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen. 2:7; 3:19).

This passage deals with the origin of the two “Adams.” One was made of the dust of the ground, coming from the physical; whereas the other, Christ, came from heaven being eternal. This being true, the

“From Jesus’ postresurrection appearances we get some idea of the greatness, power, and wonder of what our own resurrection bodies will be like. Jesus appeared and disappeared at will, reappearing again at another place far distant. He could go through walls or closed doors, and yet also could eat, drink, sit, talk, and be seen by those He wanted to see Him. He was remarkably the same, yet even more remarkably different. After His ascension, the angel told the amazed disciples, This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven’ (Acts 1:11). The body the disciples saw after

physical body of man was given to fit his environment, but the spiritual man in the resurrection will have a body fitted for its new environment. The physical body comes from Adam, the heavenly body from Christ.

Regarding the resurrected body of the Lord, MacArthur has these interesting comments:

Jesus’ resurrection is the same body that will be seen when He returns again” (MacArthur, p. 439). (While I am not sure his conclusion follows from Acts 1:11, it is still, I believe, a viable thought.)

“Beloved, now are we the sons of GOD, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:50 “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.”</p> | <p>“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of GOD; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.” (NKJV)</p> |
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The mortal body of man is not suited to live in heaven. The physical bodies now will grow old and decay, but the immortal body will never grow old; it will remain the same for eternity. Physical bodies are made of earthly elements, and those elements will not last forever.

“The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness” (2

Pet. 3:10-11).

To survive in heaven, the body now must be changed to something which lasts forever. Note: The same thing is true of hell. Fire is used to represent hell, but the human, mortal body can be destroyed by such; but in hell the resurrected body will continue to exist forever.

“Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels...These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:41, 46).

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:51-53 “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all 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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.”</p> | <p>“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. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.” (NKJV)</p> |
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MYSTERY — μυστήριον — “A hidden thing, secret, mystery” (Thayer, p. 420); “A secret, or esoteric knowledge...Some sacred thing hidden or secret which is naturally unknown to human reason and is only known by the revelation of God” (Zodhiates, p. 1000); “Secret, secret rite, secret teaching, mystery...A secret or mystery, too profound for human ingenuity” (Bauer, p. 530).

TWINKLING — ὄπῃ — “A throw, stroke, beat” (Thayer, p. 563); “A quick motion, such as a fling or toss” (Zodhiates, p. 1263); “Throwing, rapid movement” (Bauer, p. 736).

IN A MOMENT — —τομος — “That cannot be cut in two or divided, indivisible...in a moment” (Thayer, p. 83); “Indivisible. This is the word from which ‘atom’ is derived, that which cannot be divided. When referring to time, it means an indivisible point of time, an instant, a moment” (Zodhiates, p. 286); “Indivisible because of smallness” (Bauer, p. 120); “This is the Greek word atomos, a privative (negation) and temno, to cut, indivisible: Scientific word for atom which was considered indivisible, but that was before the day of electrons and protons” (Robertson, p. 427).

What is a mystery? As used in the Bible, it speaks of something which cannot be known without the revelation of GOD to reveal it. Some may have asked, “if the dead in Christ are to be changed through a resurrection in order to occupy heaven, what about any of us who may be alive at the last day?” Paul answers this by saying there will be Christians alive at the final day, and they too will be changed.

Paul also tells how quickly this will take place. It will not be like the caterpillar which builds a cocoon and then over time changes and finally emerges as a beautiful butterfly. This change for a new body is going to be instantaneous. The term “**twinkling**” is interesting, since it means a throwing, or rapid movement. Coupled with the word eye, it signifies a very rapid movement of the eye, possibly the idea of blinking. But the word “**moment**” is even more fascinating. As seen in the Greek studies above, this is the word from which the word “atom” comes. The

word itself means something so small it cannot be divided. Now is known that items called atoms today were misnamed by the scientist since one is able to split them now. Think of this term as signifying a split second; a very small fraction of a second.

When will this change take place? It will happen at the last trump. Is this literally a trumpet which shall be blown? In a related passage, the angels are said to be sent forth to gather the elect at the “**sound**” of a trumpet. There will, it seems, be a signal of that great event, but it will happen so quickly there will not be time to say “*Here He comes,*” or to say, “*It is the end.*”

In the text being studied here, it seems that the record is that the Corinthians were concerned about those who might be alive when the Lord came. Their concern is the opposite of what is found in First Thessalonians (1 Thess).

4:13-18). There the people seem to have concern for the dead: Will they enjoy eternity with the Lord if they are not alive when the Lord comes again? Paul assures both the Corinthians and Thessalonians that both the dead and the living, who are faithful to the Lord, will be gathered with Him on that great day.

“I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will GOD bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the

archangel, and with the trump of GOD: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words” (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Why does this change have to take place? It has to take place because flesh and blood cannot enter heaven. The corruptible and mortal must put on incorruption and immortality. Immortality is the lack of death, never dying, living forever. Man's nature has to be changed in order to inhabit the next world. All the dead, whether they be saved or lost eternally, have an immortal nature. The wicked dead will live eternally in a place called hell (Mark 3:29).

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| 1 Cor. 15:54 “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” | “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.” (ASV) | “So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory.” (NKJV) |
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The phrase at the end of this passage is cited from Isaiah 25:8, **“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He**

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Heb. 2:14-15).

take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.”

“And GOD shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away” (Rev. 21:4).

When does the final victory come? It comes when death is forever conquered at the resurrection of all men.

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| 1 Cor. 15:55 “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” | “O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (ASV) | “O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?” (NKJV) |
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DEATH — Ἅιδης — *“Hades...the nether world, the realm of the dead”* (Thayer, p. 11).

“I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will

be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes” (Hosea 13:14).

The word **“grave”** in this passage is the word

Hades, ” which signifies the realm of the dead. The natural result of death (separation of soul and body), is entrance into the realm of the dead. Death is thus pictured in this text as an opponent of man, which may seem to gain the victory. But death cannot keep one in the unseen realm of the dead. Death has no lasting hold upon man. Why is this so? It is so because Christ came forth from the grave, and therein lies the victory.

Though death is an unpleasant experience, it is

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| 1 Cor. 15:56 “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.” | “The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law:” (ASV) | “The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.” (NKJV) |
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What is the sting, the infliction of the pain and agony of death? It is sin. Without sin there would have been no death. **“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of GOD...For the wages of sin is death”** (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). The world was created perfectly; there was nothing in it which marred the perfection of GOD’s creation, until man sinned. Death then passed upon all mankind as a consequence.

How can the strength of sin be the law? Are not GOD’s laws perfect? Does not His law lead man away from sin and toward the perfection of eternity with Himself? Satan perverts the purpose of the law of GOD to bring pain to mankind. It is through the violation of the law Satan seems to gain strength. Without the violation of the law there would be no sin.

“For where no law is, there is no

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| 1 Cor. 15:57 “But thanks be to GOD, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” | “but thanks be to GOD, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (ASV) | “But thanks be to GOD, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NKJV) |
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GOD is the architect of the great salvation given to man. He planned it and sent His Son to accomplish the necessary redemption. But the redemption does not come through man’s own acts, man’s own abilities, or man’s own strength. The victory is only through Christ. Only those who are in Christ have the joy and hope of eternity with GOD.

“Christ gave man the victory over the law, for He nailed it to His cross (Col. 2:14); He gave him victory over sin, for He made atonement for sin (Heb. 7:27); and He gave him victory over death by His resurrection,

nothing more than the sting of a bee for Christians. It is unpleasant for a while, but then the healing power of the Lord takes over. All will be brought forth from the grave; the final victory belongs to the Lord and all of His followers. As the prophet Hosea stated, the faithful have been ransomed, redeemed from the power of the grave. Thus, the words of this verse are a glorious shout of victory — **Christians win through the Lord’s victory.**

transgression” (Rom. 4:15).

“Sin having such power is through the law, wherein the identity of sin, the product of sin, the consequences of sin, are made known. The law reveals what sin is, and what sin does. For one to live in sin, and then to die in sin, means that the wounding Satan hopes for him has been accomplished” (Jackson, p. 166).

Whom does the law condemn? It condemns those who violate it, not those who truly place themselves under the law and obey its precepts.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Rom. 8:1).

which is the earnest of the general resurrection” (McGarvey, p. 159).

Is it any wonder Paul rings out thanksgiving to GOD for all He has done for mankind? Be sure to recognize the awesome grace GOD has shown all, and like Paul, constantly express gratitude for GOD’S blessings.

“Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior, forever, He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood; He loved me ere I knew Him, and all my love is due Him, He plunged me to victory, beneath the cleansing flood” (E.M. Bartlett,

Song "Victory in Jesus").

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| <p>1 Cor. 15:58 "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."</p> | <p>"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord." (ASV)</p> | <p>"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (NKJV)</p> |
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STEDFAST — ἄσπαστος — "Sitting, sedentary, firm, immovable, steadfast" (Thayer, p. 168); "Settled, steady, steadfast. Used metaphorically in referring to the mind and purpose" (Zodhiates, p. 501); "Firm, Steadfast" (Bauer, p. 217).

UNMOVEABLE — • μετακίνητος — "Not to be moved from its place, unmoved; metaph. Firmly, persistently" (Thayer, p. 32); "Unmoveable, firm" (Zodhiates, p. 133); "Immoveable" (Bauer, p. 45); "Greek tense translates, 'keep on becoming steadfast, unshaken'" (Robertson, p. 428).

ABOUNDING — περισσεύω — "To exceed a fixed number or measure; to be over and above a certain number or measure" (p. 505); "To be in excess, exceed in number or measure. In the NT, to be or have more than enough" (Zodhiates, p. 1150); "Be more than enough, be left over...be present in abundance...be extremely rich or abundant, overflow" (Bauer, p. 650).

"Therefore," because of the arguments he has put forth; be **"steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord."** Paul has given Christians the reason why they should be active in the Lord's service. In one sense, he is saying, "Do not quit what you began because the reward is assured for those who remain faithfully active in the Lord's service."

Because there is a resurrection, and therefore a judgment, Christians must remain unmoveable in their faithfulness to Christ. They must take a stand and refuse to be moved. From the American Civil War, there is a story about a battle in which the Confederate side began to waver and finally broke ranks, fleeing from the enemy. But those men had a leader known as "Stonewall" Jackson, who refused to budge. Apparently those soldiers had great respect for him, because as they fled, one looked back and then shouted, "Look, there stands Jackson like a stone wall." Whereupon his soldiers rallied and won the battle. Why did they rally and win the battle? Because one leader stood firm. He believed his position was right and he refused to be moved from it, even if it cost him his life. What a lesson this is for today. As Christians one is not fighting for national honor; one fights for the greatest cause on earth. Christians are fighting for the continuance and growth

of the Lord's kingdom which transcends all humanly devised national borders. One fights for the greatest victory one may obtain through the victory of the Lord over death.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might" (Eph. 6:10).

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness" (Eph. 6:14).

Because of the victory awaiting Christians, one must **"always"** be involved in service to the Lord. What is the service He demands? An **"abounding"** service. In noticing the definitions of the word **"abounding,"** one sees it indicates an overflowing abundance. Faithful Christians do not see how little they can do to get by. Faithful Christians will always be looking for more to do in the Lord's service. Faithful Christians will not retire, resting on the laurels of past achievements. Faithful Christians will always be earnestly striving to reach the goal. Truly, the reward of heaven shows all labors for the Lord in this life are more than worth the service one gives to Him.

The final victory is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus, if one remains **"steadfast, unmovable, always**

abounding in the work of the Lord.”

First Corinthians — Chapter Sixteen

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:1 “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.”</p> | <p>“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:” (NKJV)</p> |
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COLLECTION — λογία — *“A collection: of money gathered for the relief of the poor”* (Thayer, p. 379); *“A collection, usually of money”* (Zodhiates, p. 922); *“Collection of money”* (Bauer, p. 475); The archeologist, Adolf Deissmann, says of this word, *“We find it used chiefly of religious collections for a god, a temple, etc., just as St. Paul uses it of his collection of money for the ‘saints’ at Jerusalem”* (Adolf Deissmann, p. 105).

There are two possible reasons why the saints in Jerusalem were so poor at this time, and the two may actually blend into one. (1) Those Jews who converted to Christianity were considered traitors by their fellow Jews. This means they often lost everything they had, and many times had great difficulty in finding employment. Often this employment was of the very lowest jobs which did not pay well. (2) Agabus had predicted a great famine which would come upon the world:

“In these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch. And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea: Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul” (Acts 11:27-30).

A famine would have been particularly devastating to these Jewish Christians because of the way they were persecuted by their countrymen.

Regarding a collection, the churches in Galatia had been given the same instructions as Paul was giving the Corinthians. These could very well be the churches in Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra (Acts 13:14ff). Now notice, this was not merely a suggestion, it was a command for a collection. Christians must assemble on the first day of the week in order to give as they have been prospered (v. 2). (Side note: What does this do to the so called *“Christian Sabbatarians?”* Do they have their worship service on Saturday, and then gather again on Sunday to take up a collection?) Galatia was one of the provinces of the Roman empire. The pattern is thus set: if the churches in Galatia and at Corinth were all given the same command, then it is a command which must be followed today. When were the Galatians given this

Some have tried to construe the above passage as an *“individual”* passage. But their efforts fall far short of compelling evidence, especially since the letter itself was written to the church. The members of Christ’s body are

command? One has no way of knowing. It may have been through a messenger sent by Paul, or through some writing of which there is no record; or it may have been when he visited them. Nevertheless the command stands.

Regarding this **“collection,”** there have been a number of people who insist that there is nothing said in the Bible about a *“treasury.”* It is the studied conclusion here, based on the word **“collection”** in this verse, and the word **“store”** in the next verse, that those who make such an assertion are absolutely wrong. As quoted earlier from Deissmann, the word is *“used chiefly of religious collections for a god, temple, etc.”* (IBID).

As Willis correctly states, *“The usage of this word is going to have some bearing on whether Paul is giving a charge for a formal collection at the public services or instructing his brethren to put aside a little money each week in a jar at home. The normal usage of the word refers to a collection in the formal sense. Its usage must be the deciding factor in understanding the nature of the collection to be taken at Corinth”* (Willis, p. 596).

There are those who argue the charge of the church regarding benevolence was only for those who had become Christians (cf. notes by Willis, p. 596). (In my travels in Indonesia, the church there sometimes has a problem with people going through the actions of becoming Christians for the purpose of gaining financial support. A *“saints only”* policy, as adopted by some of our brethren, promotes this kind of behavior.) The Bible clearly shows one is to help all men, while placing special emphasis on taking care of brethren in Christ.

“As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Gal. 6:10).

the church, which in essence indicates the *“treasury”* is the church’s treasury. One often states everything he has in this life belongs to GOD, but then some want to excuse their lack of giving by saying that *“some of it is one’s*

personal money and only a portion of it belongs to the Lord." **It all belongs to the Lord!**

Willis is one of those who believes the church may only help the saints. He has thoroughly missed it in this area. He went on to write this interesting comment after writing his thoughts on the "saints only" position:

"This passage has never been used to show all of the scriptural usages of the first-day-of-the-week collection. Instead, it has been used, and properly so, as the only passage in the Bible to tell how churches raised their funds in the New Testament. Other passages imply a common treasury (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:14-16; 1 Tim. 5:9, etc.). We can know how the money in those treasuries was raised only from this passage. We must consult other New Testament passages to understand all the things for which the collection

can be scripturally spent" (Willis, p. 597).

In his discussion, Willis implies buying and maintaining a building as being something which can be paid for out of the church treasury. Question: Where does the Bible imply Christians bought or maintained buildings?

One can read where they used the temple complex, or used the synagogues to teach, and met in individuals homes. But one cannot find where they purchased and maintained a building for the congregation to gather for worship. It would seem to me, if one were going to take the position some of these men take for spending money out of the church treasury, consistency would demand no building could be purchased nor maintained for use as a place to gather for worship. But the Bible does authorize a building's purchase by commanding that saints assemble; saints thus need a place for gathering together.

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:2 "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as GOD hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."</p> | <p>"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." (ASV)</p> | <p>"On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come." (NKJV)</p> |
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EVERY ONE — ἄκαστος — *"Each, every"* (Thayer, p. 192; Bauer, p. 236); *"Each, every one, of any number separately"* (Zodhiates, p. 534).

LAY BY HIM IN STORE — θησαυρίζω — *"To gather and lay up, to heap up, store up"* (Thayer, p. 290); *"To lay, store or treasure up goods for future use"* (Zodhiates, p. 735); *"Store up, gather, save"* (Bauer, p. 361); *"Making a treasury"* (Expositor's, p. 945); *"Treasure up"* (Earle, p. 255).

GATHERINGS — Same as **"collections"** in verse one.

When is the giving to take place? **"Upon the first day of the week."** How many first days are there in a year? As many Sundays as the calendar holds for that year. Who is to do the giving? **"Every one of you."** Each individual is to give. No one can give for another person, just as no one can hear, repent, confess, or be baptized for another (A husband and wife giving one check is based on their being a team which has decided how much to give. It is not an individual matter for them but rather the fact they are one in their giving.). The church is not like a welfare government, which takes an unequal amount from the wealthy and nothing from the poor. In the church, each one is to give. How much is each one to give? Each one is to give **as he has been prospered**. The dollar amount may look like more from the standpoint of actual amount, but often the poor give more proportionately. A good example of this is the widow of Luke 21:1-4. Many are guilty of being like the rich men of Luke 21. They look at the

amount instead of looking at things proportionately. Jesus praised the widow for the two small coins she cast in while condemning the men who put in large amounts. Each person is to decide individually, in the privacy of his mind, how much to give. No one has the right to tell another person the **amount** to give.

When one thinks about prospering, does he only think about the pay check he may have received. Does one consider other ways he has prospered? For instance, how many when they receive statements from their bank account and see the interest they were paid, or stock dividends, cast some of it into the treasury of the church? How many look at the increase of property which they bought and later sold for profit, then give as they have been prospered from that? What about an inheritance, et cetera.? The Bible does not tell Christians how much to give, but it does tell Christians:

"He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man

according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for GOD loveth a cheerful giver. And GOD is able

to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work” (2 Cor. 9:6-8).

Why should a weekly gathering be made? **“That there be no gatherings when I come.”** If **“collection”** means storing up in a jar at home (bank account), and not

the church treasury, then what do those who would advocate such do with **“no gatherings”** when Paul came? If collections were set aside by each individual at home, would there not have to be a general collection taken to see how much was gathered when he came? Paul shows the funds are to be in place when he arrives.

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:3 “And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem.”</p> | <p>“And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem:” (ASV)</p> | <p>“And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.” (NKJV)</p> |
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Paul has charged them with taking up the collection they had promised to help the saints in Jerusalem. Now he speaks of the time when the contribution should be sent.

The first word “your” is not in this text, which has caused two prominent thoughts about what is meant by the phrase **“whomsoever ye shall approve by letters.”** Some believe these were letters of recommendation by the brethren there for those representatives, while others believe they were letters written by Paul. Which ever is the true meaning does not change the wisdom of these letters. Such letters would probably contain not only the names of those involved, but would probably also show from where the funds came and how much money was involved. One should remind oneself of the danger involved in this journey. They did not have cashier checks, credit cards, or money orders, as found in modern society. Thus, large sums of money, usually metals, had to be transported. Such things were hard to conceal and would make a tantalizing temptation for robbers. The danger was great in transporting such wealth as was probably taken to Jerusalem.

Notice also the care which is taken by Paul to avoid any charge of impropriety on his part. He instigated the collection which was taken up, but he did not want to take those funds to Jerusalem, at least not alone. So, he tells them to choose men from among themselves to transport the funds. No one would be able to accuse him of raising this gift for his own personal gain. The principle here is a good one. In congregations today it is very unwise for one person totally to be in charge of the collection of the saints. Never should the treasurer be the only one who counts the money, deposits it, and writes the checks from it. (One congregation where I worked had the policy set in place that two men of the congregation counted the collection, verified their numbers and then gave the money to the treasurer who would deposit it. This policy protected all of those men from false accusations with regard to handling those funds. Further, the check book was reviewed occasionally by several of the men.) No honest treasurer would ever be offended at such measures, for they would only serve to protect him as well as the funds of the congregation.

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:4 “And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.”</p> | <p>“and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.” (NKJV)</p> |
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MEET — —ξίος — *“Befitting, congruous, corresponding”* (Thayer, p. 52); *“An estimate or value. Some believe it refers to a set of scales where the weights bring or draw down the beam to a horizontal level when the weights are equal on each side. Worthy, indicating inherent value as contrasted to timios, worthy from attributed value”* (Zodhiates, p. 199); *“Of things, in relation to other things, corresponding, comparable, worthy”* (Bauer, p. 78).

This verse shows Paul’s willingness, if the brethren saw the need, to go with them in taking their bounty to the brethren in Jerusalem. Some of the commentaries speak of Paul as saying, *“I will go with them if the amount is large enough to be worthy of an apostle.”* From where did such thinking come? There is absolutely nothing in the text which would suggest such a base hunger for personal glory.

In fact, that was Paul’s last trip to Jerusalem, a mission of mercy, yet one which would turn into a great blessing for the spread of the Gospel through his imprisonment and subsequent trip to Rome in chains.

Did Paul go with them to help the poor saints in Jerusalem? Acts 24:17 seems to shed some light on this question. In his defense before Felix, Paul states: **“Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings”** (Acts 24:17).

Regarding Christians’ care for one another in difficult times, MacArthur quotes Aristides, whom he says was an Athenian statesman, saying: *“They walk in humility and kindness, and*

falsehood is not found among them and they love one another. They despise not the widow and they grieve not the orphan. He that hath, distributeth liberally to him that hath not. If they see a stranger, they bring him under their roof and they rejoice over him as if he were their brother. For they call themselves brethren, not after the flesh but after the Spirit and in God. But when one of their poor passes from the world and any of them see him, then he provides for his

burial according to his ability. And if they hear that any of their number is in prison or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs. And if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor and needy and they have not an abundance of necessity, they will fast two or three days that they may supply the needy with his necessary food”(MacArthur, pp. 456-457).

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| 1 Cor. 16:5 “Now I will come unto you, when I shall pass through Macedonia: for I do pass through Macedonia.” | “But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia; for I pass through Macedonia;” (ASV) | “Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).” (NKJV) |
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From Second Corinthians 1:15-16, it appears Paul’s original plan was to make a passing visit to Corinth, then go to Macedonia, and return to Corinth before going up to Jerusalem. From the text, it seems obvious the plans were changed. Why? When one goes back to Second Corinthians 1:23, he learns the reason these plans were changed was in order to spare the Corinthians. It would seem Paul gave them time to make the necessary changes his first letter demanded. If he had gone to them as he

originally planned, he would have had to approach them with harshness because of their sins. But if given time to amend their ways, they could receive Paul with joy.

One of the things noticed here is the planning of Paul. He had carefully thought out those matters, and had set a course of action in order to try to accomplish the greatest good in his efforts. Good planning often leads to success in any venture.

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| 1 Cor. 16:6 “And it may be that I will abide, yea, and winter with you, that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go.” | “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.” (ASV) | “And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go.” (NKJV) |
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BRING — προπέμπω — *“To send forward, bring on the way, accompany or escort...to set one forward, fit him out with the requisites for his journey”*(Thayer, p. 541); *“To send on before, send forward or forth. In the NT, to send forward on one’s journey, bring someone on his way, especially to accompany for some distance in token of respect and honor...Hence, generally to help one forward on his journey”*(Zodhiates, p. 1224); *“Accompany, escort...help on one’s journey with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc., send on one’s way”*(Bauer, p. 709).

Travel in the winter time was a perilous endeavor. The seas became dangerous through great storms and even travel overland was quite risky. In the winter time, many of the ships would no longer sail, but would find a port within which to winter. Such hazards are mentioned in Acts 27:4-20 during the disastrous trip of Paul as a prisoner to Rome. Therefore, Paul makes plans to winter with the Corinthians. But notice the language he used in both this verse and the next one; **“It may be,”** and **“if the Lord**

will.” Paul was constantly aware his plans might be changed, always aware the future might not be as he expected. Paul was quite aware the Lord might not want him in the place he planned to be. For instance, on a previous journey, Paul had planned to go into Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16), but the Spirit of GOD forbade this. Instead he was sent to a new field of endeavors – Macedonia.

The phrase, **“that ye may bring me on my journey whithersoever I go,”** is interesting. The custom of those times seems to have been to go with someone for a short distance as that one was departing on his journey (see definition above). It may also refer to providing one with the necessities he would need on his journey. This help was done out of love and honor for those who were leaving. Paul is looking forward to those brethren at

Corinth bringing him on his way. He is obviously looking forward to the fellowship he will have with them, even with all the difficulties he had faced among them.

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| 1 Cor. 16:7 “For I will not see you now by the way; but I trust to tarry a while with you, if the Lord permit.” | “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.” (ASV) | “For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits.” (NKJV) |
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This passage seems to indicate Paul had formerly made plans to come to them, but had delayed them. The reason for his delay is given in the next few verses where it is learned that numerous opportunities had presented themselves to him at Ephesus, and thus to the Lord’s work.

Some have speculated that he might have delayed going to Corinth because of all the problems they were having. This would give them time to study the letter he was presently penning, giving them time to amend their ways before he got there.

There also seems to be a hint of a lack of time, which would have caused his visit to be a short one if he came at that time. It seems clear he wanted to spend a good amount of time with them, not a short visit. But notice,

Paul knew he must submit to the will of GOD in all things; therefore, he said his plans would take place **“if the Lord permit.”**

“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that” (James 4:13-15).

“This will we do, if GOD permit” (Heb. 6:3).

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| 1 Cor. 16:8-9 “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” | “But I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.” (ASV) | “But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.” (NKJV) |
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EFFECTUAL — ἰνεργής — *“Active”* (Thayer, p. 215); *“Referring to energy, i.e., engaged in work, capable of doing, active, powerful, effective, to be at work, seems to have been used almost exclusively as medical terms referring to medical treatment and the influence of medicine”* (Zodhiates, p. 589); *“Effective, active, powerful”* (Bauer, p. 265).

ADVERSARIES — •ντίκειμαι — *“To be set over against, lie opposite to”* (Thayer, p. 50); *“To oppose...the one lying against, an adversary, opposer”* (Zodhiates, p. 192); *“The opponent, enemy”* (Bauer, p. 74).

The first bit of information gained from this passage is that Paul was living in Ephesus at the time this letter was written. Ephesus was a leading center of worship to pagan gods, such as Diana. The immorality which surrounded the worship of these gods was great, even encouraging temple prostitution of both males and females. And yet, as noticed earlier, even these people would not stoop as low as one of the Christians to commit incest (1 Cor. 5:1), nor would they condone such evil practices.

Verse nine states the reasons why Paul would not leave Ephesus at that time. (1) A great opportunity had been opened to him, and (2) there was great opposition to the Gospel he taught. The term **“door”** is often used to represent opportunity.

“And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that GOD had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:27).

“When I came to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord” (2 Cor. 2:12).

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that GOD would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Col. 4:2-4).

“I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name” (Rev. 3:8).

In regard to what are *“doors of opportunity,”* the thinking can be that some do not diligently seek them. Do

Christians pray for souls to be saved, and to have a part in leading someone to salvation? And do Christians then look as they ought for those open doors? Jesus said,

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Luke 11:9).

A great door of opportunity was opened for Paul at Ephesus, and much good came from it:

“so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). **“So mightily grew the**

word of GOD and prevailed” (Acts 19:20).

But notice the second reason Paul gives for staying at Ephesus — there were **“many adversaries.”** That there would be many adversaries is not surprising. Wherever the Gospel is taught, the adversary will attack. He knows the power of the Word of GOD, and will do all he can to stop it.

“The seed is the word of GOD. Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved” (Luke 8:11-12).

Yet, where there is great opposition, it must be realized that the Gospel is effectively working. When opposition came, those new Christians needed help fighting the battle; thus, Paul would stay with them.

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| 1 Cor. 16:10 “Now if Timotheus come, see that he may be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.” | “Now if Timothy come, see that he be with you without fear; for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do:” (ASV) | “Now if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do.” (NKJV) |
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FEAR — • φόβος — *“Without fear, boldly”* (Thayer, p. 89); *“Without fear, fearlessly”* (Zodhiates, p. 302); *“Without fear, fearlessly...without cause to be afraid”* (Bauer, p. 127).

In First Corinthians 4:17, Paul **“sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord.”** From Acts chapter nineteen, one learns Paul had sent Timothy through Macedonia. Timothy’s job on this trip was to

“bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.”

It would seem obvious that Timothy was sent to teach them even before Paul received their letter and report of them. It also seems obvious that Paul expected his letter to reach Corinth before Timothy could possibly get there; and there was the possibility he would not reach them at all. It seems this may have been the case since Second Corinthians does not mention a trip to Corinth by Timothy, while Titus’ trip is mentioned.

Why would Paul have reason to think Timothy might be in some danger? Is he talking about actual physical danger or possibly that the people would snub him as a youth who knew little? Later when one sees the admonition to Timothy, it seems probably the latter is the case.

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in

conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

These false teachers in Corinth had boldly stood against the apostle Paul, so how much more bold might they be against the young man Timothy?

Notice the basis for Paul’s requesting that Timothy should be treated well, and shown respect. Such respect was not to be rendered because Timothy held some high office or because he came from a notable family. He should be shown respect because of the work he was doing. Timothy was doing the same thing Paul was doing, which was **“the work of the Lord.”**

“Because Timothy was involved in the Lord’s work, he that made his work more difficult would be opposing God. The basis for the respect which is given to gospel preachers is not for their person, but for the work in which they are involved” (Willis, p. 609).

It is also interesting to notice the respect Paul shows for Timothy. Here is an apostle, chosen specifically by the Lord for his work, older and more experienced than Timothy, and one who has the ability to impart spiritual (miraculous) gifts. Yet, he commends Timothy as equal for the work he is doing and as one deserving respect.

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| 1 Cor. 16:11 “Let no man therefore despise him: but conduct him forth in peace, that he may come unto me: for I look for him with the brethren.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren.” (NKJV) |
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DESPISE — ἱξουθενέω — *“To make of no account, to despise utterly”* (Thayer, p. 225); *“To despise, treat with scorn”* (Zodhiates, p. 606); *“Despise, disdain”* (Bauer, p. 277).

CONDUCT — προπέμπω — *“To send before. To send forward, bring on the way, accompany or escort”* (Thayer, p. 541); *“To send on before, send forward or forth. In the NT, to send forward on one’s journey, bring someone on his way, especially to accompany for some distance in token of respect and honor”* (Zodhiates, p. 1224); *“Accompany, escort...help on one’s journey with food, money, by arranging for companions, means of travel, etc., send on one’s way”* (Bauer, p. 709).

The **“therefore”** of this verse points back to the previous one, indicating that Timothy is not to be **“despised”** because he does the work of the Lord. Paul has proclaimed Timothy’s faithfulness and declares he should be treated well. His age, or lack of experience, does not matter as long as he is faithful to his commission of proclaiming the truth of GOD. Brethren need to remember this today when they have a younger man as their preacher; and those who are older preachers need to consider Paul’s example with regards to Timothy.

The idea of **“conduct,”** literally carries the idea of brethren accompanying Timothy as he leaves them. It not only deals with their physical accompaniment, but also includes their help with his needs. Sometimes this help was done for a short part of the journey and sometimes it included the entire journey.

Paul is looking for Timothy to come to him shortly, which Timothy did according to Second Corinthians 1:1.

But who are the **“brethren”** of this passage? Some believe it may have been Erastus (Acts 19:22) and other unnamed brethren who went with Timothy on that occasion. It may be Titus was going to meet with Timothy and they would return together. Or, it may have been some of the brethren at Corinth would accompany Timothy back to Paul. It is not known for sure who those brethren were. One thing needs to be noted; it appears that everywhere brethren went on those mission journeys, if possible, someone went with them. (Note Luke 10:1; Even the Lord sent them out by pairs.) Wherever possible, it would be wise for those doing the Lord’s work to do so in pairs (at least). Not only could they encourage and help one another, but they also could offer a certain degree of protection for whatever enemy may oppose them. There is often safety in numbers against either a physical foe or one who is willing to twist a disciple’s words.

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| 1 Cor. 16:12 “As touching our brother Apollos, I greatly desired him to come unto you with the brethren: but his will was not at all to come at this time; but he will come when he shall have convenient time.” | “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.” (ASV) | “Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.” (NKJV) |
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This letter begins with divisions among the Corinthians, in part, because of their attachments to various leaders (1 Cor. 1:10-12). But Paul shows there is no rivalry between him and those leaders; in fact, the argument is easily made that they are **“perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”** (1:10). The term **“brother”** is a term of endearment; they are of the same family. Apollos was a fellow-laborer.

This passage teaches something about the limitations of authority. Paul was an apostle, and by the thinking of most men, someone in authority has the right to command

Why did Apollos refuse to go to Corinth at this time? There is a great deal of speculation about this matter, but it must be emphasized it is simply speculation. He might have refused to go because of the party divisions which had developed and did not want unintentionally to encourage more of the same. It may have been he, like Paul (16:9), had an important work to accomplish where he was. One simply does not know.

another. But Paul shows authority has limits in the Lord’s church. Whether Apollos went or did not go to Corinth was not a matter of doctrine; he would not be sinning no

matter which course he chose. Paul could urge him to go because **he thought** it was the best course of action to follow, but he had no right to command him to go or stay.

Many elders and preachers would be wise carefully to consider this example of Paul's.

It seems evident Apollos desired to go to Corinth, but deemed it was not appropriate for him to go at that time.

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| 1 Cor. 16:13 "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." | "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong." (ASV) | "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong." (NKJV) |
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WATCH — γρηγορέω — *"To watch...Metaph. to watch i.e. give strict attention to, be cautious, active"* (Thayer, p. 122); *"To watch, to refrain from sleep"* (Zodhiates, p. 384); *"Be or keep awake...be on the alert, be watchful"* (Bauer, p. 167); *"Stay awake"* (Robertson, p. 202).

STAND FAST — στήκω — *"To stand firm; trop. To persist, persevere"* (Thayer, p. 588); *"To stand...to stand firm in faith and duty, to be constant, to persevere"* (Zodhiates, p. 1313); *"Stand firm, be steadfast"* (Bauer, p. 768).

QUIT YOU LIKE MEN — • νδρίζω — *"To make a man of or make brave,...to show one's self a man, be brave"* (Thayer, p. 43); *"To behave oneself with the wisdom and courage of a man, as opposed to a babe or child in Christ"* (Zodhiates, p. 168); *"Conduct oneself in a manly or courageous way"* (Bauer, p. 64); *"Play the man"* (Robertson, p. 202).

BE STRONG — κραταίωω — *"To strengthen, make strong,...to be made strong, to increase in strength, to grow strong"* (Thayer, p. 358); *"To make strong, to establish. In the NT, only in the pass., to be strong, grow strong"* (Zodhiates, p. 885); *"Strengthen...become strong"* (Bauer, p. 448); *"Superior power, mastery"* (Expositor's, p. 949).

The four phrases of this verse make an interesting sermon, and are particularly suited to the Corinthians. When one views the rest of this epistle, one sees the lack of strength they had because they acted like children who did not see the danger in their actions nor thoughts. But Christians today should take these admonitions to heart, for the danger of giving in to evil always exists.

Paul begins this list with **"watch ye."** As noted in the word studies above, the word means to give careful attention to, staying alert, not sleeping. It seems to be a military term for watching for danger which may creep toward one. The devil is not going to stand outside the Christian camp, so to speak, and say *"Here I come, get ready."* Paul warns one to **"put on the whole armour of GOD, that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"** (Eph. 6:11). The Bible gives some specifics regarding the areas in which Christians ought to watch. They are to watch in order to avoid temptations (Mark 14:38). They are to watch for the coming of the Lord (indicating being ready, Matt. 24:42). Elders are to watch for the souls of the flock (Heb. 13:17). The Scriptures also imply that Christians should be watching for false teachers (Matt. 7:15-16; Jude 4).

This deals with the courage which must be exhibited against the enemy who **"as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"** (1 Pet. 5:8). Interestingly, this idea of acting like men occurs in the Old Testament, where the Philistines were afraid of the Israelites because they had brought the ark of GOD into the camp. The Philistines were afraid and their leaders urged them to **"act**

Second, Paul states, **"stand fast in the faith."** To stand fast is to persist, to persevere, not to give up. One who stands fast will not give up when some difficulty comes along, but will in effect be even more determined to complete his objective. In what are Christians to stand fast? — in the faith? This does not deal with personal faith, but **"the faith which was once delivered unto the saints"** (Jude 3). When the faith is under attack, and it will be, Christians will not be

"ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

"Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3).

Third, Paul says **"quit you like men."** Paul is calling for them to be mature, not to act like children.

"Be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men" (1 Cor. 14:20).

like men" and fight (1 Sam. 4:9). Again, remember Joab's beseeching his forces to be **"men"** in facing the Syrians, and when they did, the Syrians fled before them (2 Sam. 10:12). The Bible teaching is to exercise courage against one's foe, the devil, and **"he will flee from you"** (James 4:7). Satan seems to be somewhat of a coward, unwilling to face one head on, but like a bully, fleeing when opposed.

The last phrase Paul uses in this verse is, **“be strong.”** How do Christians gain strength in the physical realm? Does one gain strength by sitting in an easy chair and drinking coffee? Christians know physical strength comes by exercise. The same thing is true in the spiritual realm, **“exercise yourself toward godliness. For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come”** (1 Tim. 4:7-8 — NKJV).

Strength comes from standing against the foe, fighting the battles, and in the end receiving the crown of victory. **“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might”** (Eph. 6:10). How can Christians be strong in the Lord?

“Put on the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against

spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of GOD, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of GOD: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit” (Eph. 6:11-18).

The admonition given to Timothy is pertinent to all who desire to win the final victory: **“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”** (2 Tim. 2:1).

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| 1 Cor. 16:14 “Let all your things be done with charity.” | “Let all that ye do be done in love.” (ASV) | “Let all that you do be done with love.” (NKJV) |
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CHARITY — •γάπη — *“Affection, good-will, love, benevolence”* (Thayer, p. 4); *“Love, affectionate regard, goodwill, benevolence”* (Zodhiates, p. 66).

It would be easy simply to say this verse shows that the over-riding principle in life is to show love in all one does. But this passage is greater than that simple statement; in fact, an entire book could be written about how love is to govern Christian lives. (I will leave that for someone else to write, but consider the following thoughts: When the entire book of First Corinthians is viewed, it becomes obvious the brethren were having a problem truly loving one another and also GOD. How can one truly love GOD and divide the body of Christ as the Corinthians were doing. What principle of love would allow Christians to take a brother to court over some matter which could easily be settled among ourselves? Would love permit one to feast while allowing his brother to go hungry? On and on the list could go, but these latter questions should be sufficient to make the point. But one last consideration; the book of First Corinthians was written to a church with an almost unbelievable number of problems and yet it contains the greatest chapter found on the subject of love in the Bible. Would such a fact imply that where there are great difficulties there **must** be great love?)

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment

greater than these” (Mark 12:30-31).

Why is there no greater commandment than the foregoing two? Because true love would cause brethren never to want to do anything which violated GOD’S will. If one truly looks at GOD as Father, why would he ever want to disobey Him? In fact, the Bible record is: **“If ye love Me, keep My commandments”** (John 14:15). True love is conditioned upon obedience. Therefore, one cannot love GOD if one will not obey Him.

“Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of GOD: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of GOD, when we love GOD, and keep His commandments. For this is the love of GOD, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous” (1 John 5:1-3).

“Now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after His commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it” (2 John 5-6).

One's love for GOD causes one to obey His commandments. One's love for one's fellow man causes him to act in such a way as to do him good and not evil; to

seek his best interest whether he be a Christian or an unbeliever.

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:15 "I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)"</p> | <p>"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)," (ASV)</p> | <p>"I urge you, brethren; you know the household of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have devoted themselves to the ministry of the saints;" (NKJV)</p> |
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BESEECH — παρακαλέω — *"To call to one's side, call for, summon...to admonish, exhort...to beg, entreat, beseech...to console, to encourage and strengthen by consolation, to comfort"* (Thayer, p. 483); *"To aid, help, comfort, encourage. Translated: to comfort, exhort, desire, call or, beseech"* (Zodhiates, p. 1105); *"Call to one's side, summon...appeal to, urge, exhort, encourage...request, implore, appeal to, entreat...comfort, encourage, cheer up"* (Bauer, p. 617).

HAVE ADDICTED — τάσσω — *"To put in place; to station...to place in a certain order, to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint"* (Thayer, p. 615); *"To place, set, appoint, arrange, order. In the NT, used figuratively, meaning to set in a certain order, constitute, appoint"* (Zodhiates, p. 1367); *"Place or station a pers. or thing in a fixed spot...appoint to or establish in an office...order, fix, determine, appoint"* (Bauer, p. 806).

Here one finds a request regarding Stephanas and his household. The first thing he notices is that the knowledge the brethren had of this family and any servants they may have had (A household included not only the members of a family but also any slaves they may have had.). This indicates their labor was great; they were not merely pew warmers, they were actively involved in the work.

Stephanas and his household are called the firstfruits of Achaia. Firstfruits would indicate the first of those which would follow, being of the same kind — Christians. Regarding Achaia, this was first a city state and later by Roman authority became a province. Acts 17:34 tells about Paul's work in Athens, where

"certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them."

We notice Stephanas is not mentioned in this brief list, yet Paul says, **"I baptized also the household of Stephanas"** (1 Cor. 1:16). Since Acts 17:34 records the first converts of Paul in Athens, a part of Achaia, then Stephanas must have been among the **"certain men"** or **"others"** listed there.

Paul next gives Stephanas and his household a great compliment: **"they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints."** The word **"addicted"** means to place in a position, or appoint. They were not placed in the position of taking care of the needs of brethren as were the

"Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Christians cannot give their lives as a ransom for man; but they can give their lives in humble service meant

seven in Acts 6:3, which says,

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business."

Instead, they took it upon themselves; they were self starters in providing for their brethren's needs. **"Let all that you do be done with love"** (v. 14 – NKJV). They loved the brethren and placed themselves in their service. Does this remind one of Jesus' words in Matthew 23:11-12?

"He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Going back to Acts 17:34, one does not find the name of Stephanas. It is probably listed with the **"certain men"** or **"others;"** yet here he is prominently mentioned. Surely it was their humble service that caused the Holy Spirit to recognize them by name in this letter.

There is a great lesson for all Christians in this passage. When they simply do what GOD tells them to do, men may not recognize them, but GOD will honor them as He did this great household. Christians must simply seek to serve, remembering the great service the Lord rendered to them.

to bring man salvation.

"Love never stops reaching out to those who are lost" (MacArthur, p. 480).

Though the word **"addicted"** is not the literal translation of the idea in this passage, it does seem to

convey the concept of what the household of Stephanas was doing. The term **“addicted”** has come to carry a bad concept in modern times where people are said to be *“addicted to drugs,”* et cetera. But being addicted to

something can also be good. Regarding drug addiction, MacArthur states:

*“Drug addiction has three primary characteristics. First of all it involves a strong habit, an overpowering desire and compulsion to take a given drug. Second, it involves a growing tolerance to the drug, so that, in order to maintain the desired effect, larger and larger doses must be taken. The third characteristic is dependence, the state in which the addicted person **must** have the drug in order to function”* (MacArthur, p. 481).

An addiction to the work of the Lord would be a good thing and something to be desired.

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| <p>1 Cor. 16:16 “That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth.”</p> | <p>“that ye also be in subjection unto such, and to every one that helpeth in the work and laboreth.” (ASV)</p> | <p>“that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.” (NKJV)</p> |
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SUBMIT — *ὑποτάσσω* — *“To arrange under, to subordinate; to subject, put in subjection...to subject one’s self, to obey”* (Thayer, p. 645); *“To place under in an orderly fashion...to subjugate, place in submission”* (Zodhiates, p. 1427); *“Subject, subordinate...become subject”* (Bauer, p. 848).

LABOURETH — *κοπιᾶω* — *“To grow weary, tired, exhausted...to labor with wearisome effort, to toil”* (Thayer, p. 355); *“Labor, fatigue. To be worn out, weary, faint”* (Zodhiates, p. 877); *“Become weary, tired...work hard, toil, strive, struggle”* (Bauer, p. 443).

Jesus leaves no doubt about whom He considers to be great Christians.

“Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:26-28).

The house of Stephanas had followed well the example of Paul as a servant, and even more important the example of our Lord. Thus, Paul lifts them up above many in the church there, even with the possibility, as some believe, they were physical slaves themselves.

“Many that are first shall be last; and the last first” (Mark 10:31).

Because of their great service, the brethren in Corinth were to submit themselves to this family. This deals with submission to the example of Stephanas’ family, possibly like a student to a teacher in order to learn how to do something. All Christians are to be servants.

The concept of submission is interesting in the scriptures. Please note the following passages:

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and He is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto

Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing” (Eph. 5:22-24).

Subjection to one’s mate is likened to the church submitting itself to Christ’s authority.

“Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you” (Heb. 13:17).

It is profitable to submit to the authority of godly elders.

“Submit yourselves therefore to GOD. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

By submitting to GOD the devil will be forced to flee from us.

“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by Him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of GOD, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men” (1 Pet. 2:13-15).

Submission to the laws of the land will cause one to be viewed favorably and thus allow one’s influence to promote the cause of Christ.

“Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for GOD resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble” 1 Pet. 5:5).

Pride is a cause of a refusal to be in submission.

In what kind of labor was this household involved?

The original word in this passage shows this is intense

labor which causes one to be tired, worn out, exhausted. Someone once told me, *“if you are not tired at the end of the day, it means you have done nothing and you are worth nothing.”* This may be an oversimplification, but it also stresses the point of extensive labors being necessary. This family was praised because they were faithfully doing exhaustive work in the Lord’s cause on a continuing basis. Also observe that the laborer is worthy of support; the laborer is worthy of being served.

“Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat” (Matt. 10:9-10).

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| 1 Cor. 16:17 “I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied.” | “And I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they supplied.” (ASV) | “I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied.” (NKJV) |
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Paul was happy to see these brethren, who seem to have been an official delegation from the church at Corinth. It may be they brought the letter referred to in this epistle from Corinth to Paul. **“That which was lacking”** does not seem to be something of a physical nature, unless one views the absence of all the Corinthians

as that about which he speaks. In the next verse, they are said to have supplied him with a refreshed spirit. Paul has already, in this letter, expressed a longing to be with the brethren at Corinth. It seems to refresh him to have at least some of these brethren with him.

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| 1 Cor. 16:18 “For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such.” | “For they refreshed my spirit and yours: acknowledge ye therefore them that are such.” (ASV) | “For they refreshed my spirit and yours. Therefore acknowledge such men.” (NKJV) |
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REFRESHED — • *ναπαύω* — *“To cause or permit one to cease from any movement or labor in order to recover and collect his strength...to give rest, refresh; mid. to give one’s self rest, take rest”* (Thayer, p. 40); *“To give rest, quiet, recreate, refresh”* (Zodhiates, p. 156); *“Cause to rest, give (someone) rest, refresh, revive...mid. rest, take one’s rest”* (Bauer, p. 59); *“Describes the restful effect of friendly converse and sympathy”* (Expositor’s, Vol. 2, p. 951).

ACKNOWLEDGE — ¡ *πληρώσκω* — *“To become thoroughly acquainted with, to know thoroughly; to know accurately, know well”* (Thayer, p. 237); *“To know fully, to gain or receive, full knowledge of, become fully acquainted with”* (Zodhiates, p. 624); *“Know, understand, recognize...know exactly, completely, through and through”* (Bauer, p. 291); *“Denotes strictly accurate knowledge, of persons or things”* (Expositor’s, Vol. 2, p. 951).

How was Paul refreshed by these brethren from Corinth? How many times over the years have all been concerned over the welfare of another? When word came with regard to their safety or well being, was there not a burden lifted from all, and thus all were refreshed in spirit?

Paul has clearly shown his concern for those brethren a number of times in this letter. Now they come from

But the question comes, how would the Corinthian brethren be refreshed? First, upon the safe return of these whom they esteemed enough to send in the first place. Travel in those times was often lengthy and dangerous.

Corinth to seek his advice, to learn the answers to their questions, on behalf of the congregation at Corinth. As Willis states,

“The mere fact that the church still thought highly enough of Paul to write to him for his advice and to send three messengers to him to prove that they still loved and respected him” (Willis, p. 615).

Second, through the message Paul sent them in this letter, his care for them is evident; he wants them to go to heaven, even those who have made themselves his enemies.

Upon their return they were to treat Stephanas,

Fortunatus and Achaicus as men who deserved respect and recognition for what they had done as messengers for both the church and Paul. Those who labor faithfully in the Lord, who make sacrifices to serve, should be acknowledged by those whom they serve. In other letters, Paul, says,

“Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who

labour in the word and doctrine” (1 Tim. 5:17);

“We beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves” (1 Thess. 5:12-13).

“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Rom. 13:7).

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| 1 Cor. 16:19 “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” | “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (ASV) | “The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” (NKJV) |
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“Asia here means proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital, and which included the seven apocalyptic churches” (Hodge, p. 371). *“The Roman province of Asia embraced Mysia, Lydia, Phrygia, and Caria, with Ephesus as its capital. In the New Testament, Asia always denotes the Roman province”* (Lipscomb, p. 258).

Aquila and Priscilla are mentioned six times in the New Testament. Two times Aquila is mentioned first (Acts 18:2; 1 Cor. 16:19), and four times Priscilla is mentioned first (Acts 18:18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 2 Tim. 4:19). From all of these passages one learns of their dedication to the truth and also to the apostle Paul, having risked their lives for Paul on one occasion.

One of the great errors of all time has to do with the

place where one gathers as the church for worship. Notice carefully the Holy Spirit’s words: it is **“the church that is in their house”** (Emphasis mine, RK). Christians are the church and the place of meeting is unimportant (John 4:20-24). Over the years there are those who have said that it is wrong to eat in the church building; but here one notices that homes also served as the church building. Could they eat in their own homes? According to some today (being consistent) they could not. Being tent makers, they would have to have a large space in which to work; such space would also be ideal for a gathering of the church. Note also their great interest in the church and their hospitality. They understood the principle that this world’s goods are on loan from GOD and are to be used in His service.

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| 1 Cor. 16:20 “All the brethren greet you. Greet ye one another with an holy kiss.” | “All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss.” (ASV) | “All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.” (NKJV) |
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In this verse Paul is making reference to the greeting of warmth and friendliness which should be exchanged between brethren. Brethren ought to have a special feeling for each other, a sense of closeness which a family ought to have one to another, **“brotherly kindness”** (2 Pet. 1:7). Does one with the right attitude snub his brethren when they meet? Absolutely not! Does one with the right attitude turn and walk the other way so as not to come in contact with their brethren? Absolutely not!

Paul says, **“Greet one another with a holy kiss.”** A **“holy kiss,”** would be one which pleased GOD Who tells the saints to be pure in all things. This would be a kiss

which is chaste in nature, not lecherous; the motive behind it would be pure. The kiss as a greeting was common in those times, and is still practiced widely in that region (Men kissed men and women kissed women in that culture.). It is equivalent to a handshake in our culture. It is easy to see how such a practice could be abused; yet, could not a handshake in our time carry the wrong motive and be done in an impure way?

The admonition here is for brethren to greet one another with the friendliest expressions of love one for another, yet, in such a manner as purity would demand in whatever culture one finds oneself.

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| 1 Cor. 16:21 “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.” | “The salutation of me Paul with mine own hand.” (ASV) | “The salutation with my own hand; Paul's.” (NKJV) |
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“The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle: so I write”
(2 Thess. 3:17).

Apparently, though Paul often dictated his letters, they were personally signed by him to prevent fraudulent letters

from being circulated in his name. There are many pseudo books today which are purported to be the scriptures, but they do not have the proper signature, nor were they written in the right time frame. All fraudulent writings should be immediately rejected.

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| 1 Cor. 16:22 “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.” | “If any man loveth not the Lord, let him be anathema. Maranatha.” (ASV) | “If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!” (NKJV) |
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ANATHEMA — •νάθεμα — *“A thing devoted to God without hope of being redeemed, and, if an animal, to be slain; therefore a person or thing doomed to destruction; a thing abominable and detestable, an accursed thing...a man accursed, devoted to the direst woes”*(Thayer, p. 332); *“A gift given by vow or in fulfillment of a promise, and given up or in fulfillment of a promise, and given up or devoted to destruction for God’s sake; therefore, given up to the curse and destruction, accursed”*(Zodhiates, p. 148); *“What is ‘devoted to the divinity’ can be either consecrated or accursed...object of a curse”*(Bauer, p. 54).

MARANATHA — μαραναθά — *“Our Lord cometh or will come”*(Thayer, p. 389); *“Two Aramaic words meaning ‘our Lord has come.’”*(Zodhiates, p. 943); *“Lord has come, better separated (our) Lord, come”*(Bauer, p. 491)!

The sense of this passage can be translated by the following:

“If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be destroyed when the Lord comes.”

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| 1 Cor. 16:23-24 “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” | “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (ASV) | “The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (NKJV) |
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Paul began this epistle with prayers for GOD’s favor to be upon them, and ends it with the same plea. In between these two verses (1:3 and 16:23) however, one finds some of the strongest rebukes of any letter written to anyone. But these things are not written from the

standpoint of hatred, but because he wants them to stand in a correct relationship with GOD. They are written from a spirit of love for their souls. So it should be with all rebuke, all instructions for correction — Love must be the motivating factor.

Let it be so!

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