



# 1 CORINTHIANS

INSTRUCTOR: **RUSSELL HAFFNER**

**Copyright © 2021 WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL®**

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: [biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org) Phone: (512) 398-5211

Web: [www.wvbs.org](http://www.wvbs.org) School: [school.wvbs.org](http://school.wvbs.org)

# Copyright Guidelines

Copyright © WORLD VIDEO BIBLE SCHOOL®

## **WARNING: SINGLE USER product**

Use of this material is limited to the registered user,  
according to the following conditions.

**Print distribution:** Any number of printed copies can be made by printing or photocopying, and used for Bible classes, seminars or teaching settings. Copies of a course or multiple courses can be printed. Printed copies cannot be used for resale purposes or mass distribution.

**Electronic distribution:** No electronic distribution is allowed, either transmitted or hyperlinked, in part or whole. The electronic version of the course notes is limited to the registered user.

**Course Notes on USB:** The USB version of the Course Notes is limited to the registered user, and may be copied to any device within the registered user's ownership. If the Course Notes are registered to a congregation, then the electronic files may be installed on any computer located on the congregation's property, and be used by any of its members as a resource to study (either in electronic or printed form) while on their premises. However, the copyright does not include making the files available to others through the Internet or other web services.

For any copyright questions, feel free to contact us so we can help.

25 Lantana Lane, Maxwell, Texas 78656

Email: [biblestudy@wvbs.org](mailto:biblestudy@wvbs.org) Phone: (512) 398-5211

Website: [www.wvbs.org](http://www.wvbs.org)

<b>INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>OUTLINE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>EXPOSITION .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1 .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2 .....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>CHAPTER 3 .....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4 .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>CHAPTER 5 .....</b>	<b>60</b>
<b>CHAPTER 6 .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>CHAPTER 7 .....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>CHAPTER 8 .....</b>	<b>94</b>
<b>CHAPTER 9 .....</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>CHAPTER 10 .....</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>CHAPTER 11 .....</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>CHAPTER 12 .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>CHAPTER 13 .....</b>	<b>147</b>
<b>CHAPTER 14 .....</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>CHAPTER 15 .....</b>	<b>166</b>
<b>CHAPTER 16 .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>196</b>

## INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHY

**Instructor:** Russell Haffner

**Biography:**

Russell Haffner currently serves as the director of the WVBS Online Bible School. He graduated from the Southwest School of Bible Studies in 1993. He is also an alumnus of Texas A&M University where he majored in Architecture. He has served as a minister of the gospel for over 30 years. He has spoken on various lectureships and has held several gospel meetings. He has also published articles in numerous lectureship books.

Russell and his wife Dee are blessed with three children - Ross, John and Kati. Ross and John are both graduates of the Southwest School of Bible Studies and currently serve as ministers in the Lord's church. Kati is married to Tony Lopez who is also currently serving as a minister in the Lord's church.

These Course Notes were developed from the WVBS Course Notes produced by Chuck Horner.

## BACKGROUND

### I. CORINTH - THE CITY:

- A. The city of Corinth was originally founded about 1350 B.C. and is one of the oldest cities of Greece.
- B. The Romans conquered it in 146 B.C. completely destroying it.
- C. It was then rebuilt from its ruins in 46 B.C. by Julius Caesar as a Roman colony. He repopulated it with veterans and freedmen.
- D. It was later made the capital of the region of Achaia by Augustus Caesar.
- E. In less than 100 years it had grown to a population of approximately 600,000.
  - 1. Its population soon became multicultural being comprised of Romans, Greeks, Jews and those from eastern Asia. These were adventurous men from all over the world.
  - 2. This made it a very strategic center from which to spread the gospel.
- F. Corinth was located near the isthmus of Corinth that connects the Peloponnese peninsula with mainland Greece. An isthmus is a narrow strip of land with sea on either side, forming a link between two larger areas of land.
  - 1. The narrowest point of the isthmus was, and is, four miles wide.
  - 2. It separates the Saronic Gulf (on the east) and the Corinthian Gulf (on the west).
  - 3. There were two good harbors on the Saronic Gulf:
    - a. Cenchrea
    - b. Schoenus
  - 4. There was one good harbor on the Corinthian Gulf called Lechaeum.
  - 5. The harbors at Corinth were safe while the waters around Cape Malea to the south were very dangerous.

- a. The common sayings of the Greek sailors about sailing around Malea were:
    - 1) "Let him who sails around Malea forget his home."
    - 2) "Let him who sails around Malea make his will."
  - b. How did they handle this problem?
    - 1) They would sail to Corinth and if the boat was small enough it was pulled across the four-mile isthmus on rollers.
    - 2) If the boat was too big it was unloaded and the cargo was transported to a waiting boat on the other side.
    - 3) The Corinthians, being very enterprising, had built a wooden tramway to serve until a canal could be built. The canal was started but was never finished.
  6. This isthmus was of great military importance in that it formed the only line of march for either an invading or a retreating army.
  7. The isthmus was known by several names:
    - a. "The eye of Greece."
    - b. "The bridge of the sea."
    - c. "The gate of the Peloponnesus."
    - d. "The bridge of Greece."
  8. The isthmus had been fortified with one hundred and fifty towers. The citadel rose two thousand feet above sea level on a rock with steep sides.
- G. Luxury soon came to Corinth through trade.
1. The markets of Corinth had representatives from all over the world. They had Arabian balsam, Phoenician dates, Libyan ivory, Persian carpets, Cilician goat's hair, Lycaonian wool and Phrygian slaves.

2. Since Corinth lacked an aristocracy based on the ownership of land, it soon developed an aristocracy of money, along with a fiercely independent spirit.
- H. Recreation in Corinth included the Isthmian Games that was a festival of horse races, athletic contests and musical competitions in honor of the Greek mythological god of the sea (Poseidon). The competitions were held on the Isthmus of Corinth. The Isthmian Games were one of the Panhellenic Games of Ancient Greece. The Panhellenic Games included the Olympic and Pythian games that were held every four years, and the Nemean and Isthmian games that were held every two years.

## II. CORINTH - THE CULTURE:

- A. To call someone a "Corinthian" was actually an insult. To "Corinthianize" meant to defile, to bring to the lowest moral level possible.
- B. The Corinthians were known as being:
1. Intellectually alert,
  2. Materially prosperous and
  3. Morally corrupt.
- C. The Corinthians were as lascivious as they were scholarly. This tells us two things about education:
1. Education, by itself, is not enough.
  2. Education not built upon God's word can be as evil as anything can be.
- D. One of Corinth's largest problems was prostitution.
1. The temple of Aphrodite, which was the goddess of love, was in Corinth. The temple had a thousand female "priests" who sold their sexual favors to the men of the city.
  2. Many other sins were brought to Corinth by the soldiers and sailors who travelled to the city. Corinth was sought out by worldly people because it was so sinful (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
- E. The problem of worldliness.

1. Worldliness crept into the church in Corinth. Proper efforts to keep the church pure had not been made. An attitude of indulgent "open-mindedness" led to the toleration of immorality. Consider these things:
    - a. It was bad when Lot moved his house to Sodom; it was worse when Sodom moved into his house.
    - b. It is good for a boat to be in the water, but it is a bad for water to be in the boat.
    - c. It was good for the church to be in Corinth, but it was bad for Corinth to be in the church.
    - d. In the past God had a temple for His people. Now, He has a people as His temple.
  2. May God help us not to be fashioned according to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2).
- F. What a challenge Corinth presented to Paul! He desired to establish a church of the Lord in one of the most wicked cities of the world.

### **III. THE LETTERS TO CORINTH:**

- A. First Corinthians is the most business-like of all of Paul's epistles. He has a number of subjects he deals with and he presents them in a very orderly fashion.
- B. First Corinthians is a letter of rebuke written by an apostle to correct an imperfect church.
- C. As a result of the two letters Corinth became the recipient of more direct teaching than any other church of which we have a record.
- D. Paul went to Corinth alone and soon made friends with Aquilla and Priscilla who had recently been driven from Rome (all Jews were being expelled from Rome). They were tent makers just like Paul. He needed money so he went to work making tents with them while still preaching the gospel.
  1. Soon Timothy and Titus joined him in his efforts to evangelize giving him much needed support and encouragement.
  2. First, Paul preached to the Jews until they rejected him.

3. Then he spent more of his time with the Gentiles and did not return to the synagogue any more.
- E. Corinth was politically Roman, socially Greek but religiously it was Roman, Greek and eastern Asian, all in one. So, when the gospel came to Corinth it was virtually made available to the whole world.
  - F. These epistles give us a good picture of the life and problems of the first century local congregation. They show that factions (divisions), moral carelessness, lack of reverence, abuse of their spiritual gifts and other doctrinal problems had already set in. Paul's letter to Corinth gives us inspired instructions on how to deal with these problems.
  - G. Despite the fact that the congregation was filled with faults, division was never recommended as the solution. The Corinthian Christians were told to reconcile and end their divisions.
  - H. Paul mentions several major faults in First Corinthians but still calls them the "church of God." Not once did He say they were no longer God's people.
  - I. Paul wrote to them from Ephesus (cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-9; Acts 19:1,8-10).
  - J. The dates of these letters are:
    1. First Corinthians - somewhere between 52 and 57 A.D.
    2. Second Corinthians - within one year after First Corinthians was written.
  - K. Both letters were written by Paul (1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:1).
  - L. The basic message of First Corinthians is two-fold:
    1. Christ, and His gospel, is the solution to every problem and the answer to every question.
    2. Paul encouraged the Corinthians to be faithful to God and His will (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:9; 15:1-2, 58; 16:13-14).
  - M. Having Paul's second letter to Corinth is very helpful for our understanding of his first letter to Corinth. The main motive for Paul's second letter seems to be to express his relief at the good news Titus had brought to him about the improved attitude and actions of the Corinthians.

N. Problems and Solutions.

Each problem was met by the application of spiritual principles, not by some human help or psychological expedient! The inspired word had the solution, not some ecclesiastical council or conference. Note the problems and solutions as supplied by inspiration in First Corinthians:

	Problem	Solution
1.	Divisions and factions	Speak the same things and spiritual maturity (1 Corinthians 1:10; 3:1-9).
2.	In Fornication	Church discipline until the offender repents and is restored (1 Corinthians 5:1-8; esp. four parts of v. 4).
3.	Wrongs done among brethren	Let brethren judge these matters by spiritual rules, face each other and, if need be, suffer wrong (1 Corinthians 6:1-11).
4.	When marriage exists between a believer and an unbeliever	The concern of the believer is to save the unbeliever, not to alienate him or her (1 Corinthians 7:8-17).
5.	Avoiding Fornication	Let them marry and, when married, render to the other his or her due, defraud not (1 Corinthians 7:1-7).
6.	Unmarried virgins	Self-control or lawful marriage (1 Corinthians 7:36-38).
7.	For all matters related to meals, men or worship	Do all to the glory of God and give no occasion for stumbling (1 Corinthians 10:31-32. Look to the biblical example - 10:33; 11:1).
8.	Issues related to spiritual gifts and conduct in worship.	Remember God set the members in the body as it pleased Him and serve by love, which never fails (1 Corinthians 12:18; 13:7).



## INTRODUCTION

### Writer

We should make it clear that God is the author of this book, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). The writer whom God used to reveal this epistle was the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 1:1).

### Language

This letter was originally written in Koiné Greek. The word "Koiné" means "common." This is a fitting name because it was the common language used by the people in that day.

### Date and Place of Writing

It appears that the letter was written from Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8). Paul's first visit to Ephesus was short (Acts 18:19-21), so it is more likely that he wrote this letter somewhere between 52 and 57 A.D. when he spent three years there on his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-41; 20:31).

### Key Verses

1 Corinthians 1:10  
1 Corinthians 1:21  
1 Corinthians 6:19  
1 Corinthians 10:13  
1 Corinthians 11:3  
1 Corinthians 12:13  
1 Corinthians 15:58  
1 Corinthians 16:1-2  
1 Corinthians 16:13

### Key Word

The key word is "body" which is found 46 times in 34 verses (1 Corinthians 5:3; 6:13, 16, 18-20; 7:4, 34; 9:27; 10:16-17; 11:24, 27, 29; 12:12-20, 22-24, 27; 13:3; 15:35, 37-38, 44). In each case the context will determine how the word "body" is being used.

### Key Verse

1 Corinthians 1:10, "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."

## The Purpose of the Letter

1. To teach the brethren the importance of unity.
2. To deal with issues of immorality.
3. To answer certain question which had been sent to Paul from the brethren at Corinth.

## FIRST CORINTHIANS OUTLINE

### Salutation - Greeting (1:1-9)

- I. Information from Chloe (1:10-6:20)
  - A. Party Strife (1:10-3:23)
  - B. Defense of His Ministry (4:1-21)
  - C. Dealing with Incest (5:1-13)
  - D. Dealing with Lawsuits (6:1-11)
  - E. Dealing with Fornication (6:12-20)
  
- II. Information from The Church's Letter (7:1-16:9)
  - A. Marriage (7:1-24)
  - B. Dealing with Virgins (7:25-40)
  - C. Dealing with Idolatry (8:1-11:1)
  - D. Problems in Worship (11:2-34)
  - E. Spiritual Gifts (12:1-14:40)
  - F. The Resurrection (15:1-58)
  - G. The Great Collection (16:1-9)

### Conclusion (16:10-24)

# FIRST CORINTHIANS EXPOSITION

## CHAPTER 1

### **SALUTATION (Greeting) ..... 1:1-9**

1:1. *Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother,*

called to be an apostle - He did not take the office to himself (Acts 9:1-9; 26:14-18; Galatians 1:1, 11-16). Those who claim to be apostles today do so without Bible authority.

through the will of God - Jesus was not alone in the call; He did so because the Father willed the call of Paul as an apostle.

and Sosthenes our brother - Paul is not saying that Sosthenes was a co-writer of this letter. Paul was the inspired writer. Sosthenes may have been Paul's secretary (also called an amanuensis) for the letter to the Corinthians or it could be that Sosthenes is mentioned because he was well known in Corinth as the former ruler of the synagogue (Acts 18:17).

1:2. *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:*

to the church of God - This letter is addressed to the whole church and what is said in the letter is said to the whole church. It is not addressed to certain people or factions; its teachings are for everyone in the congregation. There are many things we should understand about the church:

1. The church is the family of God (1 Timothy 3:15).
2. The church is the one Jesus promised to build (Matthew 16:18-19).
3. The church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 12:27).
4. The church is the promised kingdom (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1; Luke 22:29-30).
5. The church is the product of sowing the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11).
6. The church is the product of people's response to the call of the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).

7. The church is NOT a denomination and NOT a product of the doctrines of men.

The Bible does not support man made churches and denominations and therefore we should not be a part of any denominational group. To denominate means to mark as different. To do this means to change from the original standard. We must not make changes to the original standard - the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6; Galatians 1:8-9; Revelation 22:18-19). The New Testament sets forth the pattern we are to follow today. Our desire should always be to go directly to the New Testament and follow it exactly without any changes. All denominations have made changes to what the Bible says and requires. They should change their beliefs to agree with the Bible.

those who are sanctified - The word "sanctified" means separated from sin and dedicate to God. The Greek word here translated as "sanctified" is a perfect, passive, participle. The perfect tense indicates they have been - and still are - sanctified. They were in the world (the sin-filled city of Corinth) but they were not of the world (John 17:14-18).

They were sanctified by the Holy Spirit through the word. Sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit through the inspired Scriptures (Romans 15:16). The inspired word is the tool used by the Holy Spirit.

<b>The Holy Spirit Uses the Inspired Written Word</b>		
<b>Works</b>	<b>of the Holy Spirit</b>	<b>through the Word</b>
Instructs	Nehemiah 9:30	2 Timothy 3:16-17
Gives Birth	John 3:5	1 Peter 1:23
Quickens	John 6:63	Psalms 119:50
Teaches	John 14:26	John 6:45
Convicts	John 16:8	Titus 1:9
Comforts	Acts 9:31	1 Thessalonians 4:18
Saves	1 Corinthians 6:11	Acts 11:14
Washes	1 Corinthians 6:11	Ephesians 5:26
Sanctifies	1 Peter 1:2	John 17:17
Makes Free	Romans 8:2	John 8:32
Converts	John 16:7-8	Psalms 19:7
Leads	Romans 8:14	Psalms 119:105

in Christ Jesus - This is the relationship which Christians enjoy and this relationship is only obtained by obeying God's plan of salvation by being baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

NOTE: Jesus is named or referred to ten times in the first ten verses. Paul wants the readers to understand that unity is only in Christ.

Called - The "call" is the gospel message which goes out to all (2 Thessalonians 2:14). God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34). He does not arbitrarily choose only some to receive the truth and be saved. God does not choose individuals to be saved, but He has chosen a category of people to be saved. God has predetermined or chosen to save those who obey Him.

To be saints - A saint is a sanctified person (Romans 1:7). They were saints because they had become Christians by obeying God's plan of salvation. All Christians are saints. Many religious groups use the word "saint" incorrectly to represent a special higher class or exalted Christian.

1 Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

with all who in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord - The word "all" even includes us today. Calling on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord is vital! But, what does this mean?

Acts 2:21, "And it shall come to pass that whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

How does this calling on the name of the Lord take place? For the answer we simply need to look to see what Ananias told Saul.

Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

The process of arising and being baptized is defined by the Scriptures as "calling on the name of the Lord." Therefore, when one obeys God's plan of salvation they are "calling on the name of the Lord."

In the Scriptures we find that God's plan for salvation has five requirements.

- a. The first requirement is to **hear** the saving message of salvation (Romans 10:17). In other words, we must learn the truth before we can obey it.
- b. The second requirement is to have **faith** (belief) that Jesus is indeed the Christ the Son of God (John 8:24; Mark 16:15-16).

However, this is not the only requirement. Faith alone will not save (James 2:14, 17, 24).

- c. The third requirement of God's plan is **repentance**. The sinner is required to repent, which is composed of sorrow for sin and a change of will that results in a changed life (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 7:10).
- d. The fourth requirement is **confession**. The sinner is required to confess their faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:10).
- e. The fifth requirement is **baptism** (Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-19; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21). We must be baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of our sins (Acts 2:38).

our Lord, both theirs and ours - "Lord" is used here in the highest sense to indicate Deity. Jesus is the Lord of all (both Jews and Gentiles).

1:3. *Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Grace to you and peace - Paul wishes both "grace" and "peace" to these brethren at Corinth. "Grace" is the standard beginning of a Greek letter and "Peace" is the standard beginning of a Hebrew letter.

"Grace" is God's good will to men. Grace literally means "unmerited favor." It is unearned but not unconditional. It means blessings from God which the sinner does not deserve or merit. Salvation is thus conceived as something given to man, not as a matter of debt, but as an undeserved gift. In short, man cannot achieve heaven by works of merit, but works of obedience are required (Ephesians 2:8-9; James 2:20-26; Titus 2:11-14).

"Peace" is the state of life for the Christian which is peace with God. This is not talking about physical peace (Matthew 10:34; Romans 12:18). Spiritual peace is what Christ brought to mankind (Luke 2:14). God's law shows to man his sin, accuses his conscience, declares the wrath of God and leaves man in depression and guilt. However, obedience to God's

plan of salvation cleanses his sins and places him in Christ (Galatians 3:27) which brings both grace and peace to his life.

1:4. *I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given to you by Christ Jesus,*

I thank my God always concerning you - Paul could be thankful in spite of the dreadful condition of this congregation of the Lord's people.

for the grace of God which was given to you - The Greek word translated as "given" is aorist, passive, participle. The aorist tense denotes an action in the past, so this refers to what God had done for them in giving them salvation from their sins when they obeyed His plan for salvation.

by Christ Jesus - God's special favors (such as grace) are for those who are in Christ.

2 Timothy 2:1, "You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,"

Galatians 3:27, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

1:5. *that you were enriched in everything by Him in all utterance and all knowledge,*

you were enriched by Him - The grace of God had enriched them with spiritual blessings in Christ (2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 6:10).

in all utterance - From the Greek term which means, "the ability to use words for God's glory." Christians at Corinth had been given the miraculous ability to speak in tongues (different languages which they had never studied) to confirm the word (Mark 16:20) and spread the gospel message to others.

and all knowledge - Miraculous gifts had been given to the members of the church so that they would have the necessary knowledge of God's will (1 Corinthians 12:1-11).

1:6. *even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you,*

even as - This phrase means in the same quantity.

the testimony of Christ - This refers to the gospel Paul preached.

was confirmed in you - The word's Paul preached were confirmed by the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:11; 14:10; 16:18; 19:11-12; 20:10-12; 28:5, 8).

Mark 16:20, "And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen."

The Corinthians had also seen the miraculous abilities, which only came through the laying on of the hands of an apostle, given to those who obeyed God's plan of salvation.

Acts 8:18-19, "And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'"

It is important to note that since the ability to impart miraculous gifts was only given to the apostles, it follows that after the apostles died no one ever received these miraculous gifts again. Therefore, when the last apostle died and the last person they laid their hands on died, there was no one on earth who could perform miracles.

Miracles came to an end at the beginning of the second century. They served their purposes and were taken away as promised.

1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

We have the written word of God in its fullness. Paul said that it is all sufficient for our needs (2 Timothy 3:16-17). We need to study it, apply it and live by it until we die. It alone will judge us in the last day (John 12:48).

1:7. *so that you come short in no gift, eagerly waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

you come short in no gift - The congregation at Corinth did not lack any of the miraculous abilities provided by the laying on of the hands of an apostle. The congregation may have been large in number (Acts 18:8), but they were given a proportionate number of members with miraculous gifts (1 Corinthians 12:7-10).

waiting for the revelation - The word "waiting" means that which is performed with constant diligence, devotion and attention. The word "revelation" is from the Greek word APOKALUPSIS. The context seems to indicate that this refers to the final coming of the Lord. The assurance, hope and anticipation of His final coming steadies and strengthens the Christian's life.

Please study the following Greek words for more instruction concerning "revelation":

- a. APOKALUPSIS - Revealed (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)
- b. PAROUSIA - The coming of the Lord (1 Thessalonians 4:15).
- c. EPIPHANEIA - The appearance, brightness (1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4: 1,8).

[For all three words in one verse see 2 Thessalonians 2:8.]

1:8. *who will also confirm you to the end, that you may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

who will also confirm you to the end - This is basically saying that you may be prepared to stand approved by Christ when He comes again. The Greek word translated as "confirm" means to make firm, establish or make secure.

that you may be blameless - To be blameless means innocent of wrongdoing. If we are blameless no charge of guilt can rightfully be made against us (Romans 8:33).

in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ - This refers to the day of His final coming (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 2:2; 2 Peter 3:9-10).

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord."

2 Peter 3:9-10, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up."

1:9. *God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

God is faithful - This means God is completely trustworthy (1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3).

by whom you were called - God is the agent of the call (2 Timothy 1:8-9) and the "call" is the gospel message which goes out to all.

2 Thessalonians 2:14, "to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

into the fellowship of His Son - God had brought the Corinthians into fellowship (union) with Christ. This act of unifying stands in sharp contrast with the divisions and factions which existed in the congregation. In this way Paul introduced the topic of unity before he condemns them for their divisions.

**I. INFORMATION FROM CHLOE ..... 1:10-6:20**

**A. PARTY STRIFE ..... 1:10-3:23**

1:10. *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.*

I plead with you, brethren - The word "plead" is a translation of the Greek word PARAKALEŌ which means to call near to one's side, that is, invite, implore or beseech.

The word "Brethren" suggests that he is pleading as a brother and that they should view each other as members of a family, not as factions. Here he is pleading when actually he had the authority to command (cf. Philemon 8-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:6).

By the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - The phrase "by the name of" means "by the authority of." In this case Paul is speaking with the authority of Christ rather than by his own authority.

That there be no divisions - He pleads for unity. His four points of unity are:

1. Unity of Organization. No divisions (SCHISMA) within the body. In Classical Greek the word SCHISMA was used for actual rips or tears in fabric.

We should also notice that the word "body" in Ephesians 1:22-23 is singular. Man-made churches are not part of the one body (cf. Matthew 16:18-19).

2. Unity of Speech. All speaking the same thing:
  - a. Speaking as the oracles of God (1 Peter 4:11).
  - b. Holding the pattern of sound words (2 Timothy 1:13).
  - c. Abiding in the teaching (words) of Christ (1 Timothy 6:3; 2 John 9).
3. Unity of Thought. Of the same mind by reading the same Book (cf. Philippians 4:8).
4. Unity of Opinion. Of the same judgment by reasoning correctly from the Scriptures.

Perfectly joined together - The Greek word here (KATARTIZŌ) is a medical term for mending, as a bone or a cut or of the whole body (Matthew 4:21; Luke 6:40; Galatians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:10; Hebrews 10:5; 11:3; 13:21 - negative: Romans 9:22). It means to restore something to what it should be.

Same mind...same judgment - Being of the same understanding of the Scriptures they would judge questions and actions according to the same standard and would formulate their judgments accordingly.

1:11. *For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you.*

By those of Chloe's household - Her name means "green" as in a green herb. Nothing more is known of her except what is revealed in this verse. We do not know if the "household" mentioned here refers to her children, other relatives or servants.

There are contentions among you - This comes from the Greek word ERIS, which means contention, strife, wrangling (Titus 3:9). This is said to be a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20) and is the result of false doctrine (1 Timothy 6:4).

1:12. *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."*

Each one of you says - Every member claimed to belong to some group or faction.

1. I am of Paul - He first rebukes those who wear his name, which shows he hates sectarianism even in his own name.
2. I am of Apollos - Apollos was a fellow worker of Paul (1 Corinthians 3:6; 16:12). He was a Jew from Alexandria who had obeyed God's plan of salvation to become a Christian. He was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures. However, he had an incorrect view concerning John's baptism (Acts 18:24). It was Aquila and Priscilla who taught him the word of God more perfectly. After this, he became a great preacher of the truth, first in Achaia and then in Corinth (Acts 18:27-19:1). When Paul wrote this first letter to the Corinthians, Apollos was with or near him (1 Corinthians 16:12) probably at Ephesus. He is also mentioned by Paul in his letter to Titus (Titus 3:13).
3. I am of Cephas - Cephas is simply another name for Peter. Those who claimed his name may have been the Judaizers who falsely assumed that Peter supported their view of binding circumcision on the Gentiles. [For additional information concerning the name "Cephas" please see the appendices - CEPHAS TO HIS FRIENDS, by Jonathan Mcanulty]
4. I am of Christ - These may have been those who simply refused to wear a human name. But since Paul seems to include them with the other parties which he rebukes, this does not seem likely. Therefore, it could have been those Jews who had seen and heard Jesus before obeying the gospel or perhaps people who used the name of Christ in an effort to elevate themselves above other Christians. There is no mention of any doctrinal differences in those who claimed to be followers of Paul, Apollos, Cephas or Christ.

1:13. *Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?*

Is Christ divided? - These divisions logically implied a dividing of Christ. Christ cannot be divided. He cannot be broken up into "different factions."

Was Paul crucified for you? - This implies that Christians should wear the name of Him who bought them and was crucified for them. Paul's question is rhetorical with an implied negative answer.

Were you baptized in the name of Paul? - Being baptized in the name of Paul would be contrary to the great commission (Matthew 28:19) and exalting a man to the level of Deity.

In Matthew 28:19 Jesus commanded, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

1:14-16. *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. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other.*

I thank God - Though many believed and were baptized in response to Paul's preaching (Acts 18:8), Paul personally baptized only a few. This shows we are to wear the name of Him by whose authority we are being baptized, not the name of the one doing the baptizing.

Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other - Paul did not know if there were Christians from other cities currently visiting Corinth who he had baptized. This helps us to understand the limits of inspiration.

1:17. *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.*

Christ did not send me to baptize - The word "send" is from the Greek word APOSTELLŌ which means set apart to be sent forth with a message.

This statement by Paul did not mean that baptism was not important. It is impossible to fully preach Christ without preaching baptism (cf. Acts 19:1-5; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27 and Colossians 2:12).

On most occasions Paul had companions travelling with him who would perform the baptizing of those who believed his preaching. In this way they were helping him in the work he was doing.

But to preach the gospel - This was his main business. The baptizing could be done by his helpers.

Not with wisdom of words - What Paul preached was not a philosophy to be discussed and debated, but a message from God to be believed and obeyed (cf. Mark 16:15-16).

Lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect - The phrase "of no effect" is from the Greek word KENOŌ which means to make empty, to make void, to deprive of force and render vain, useless. This verse implies:

1. The cross was the theme of Paul's preaching (1 Corinthians 2:2).
2. Satisfaction for our sins was made on the cross (Romans 3:24-26).

3. Nothing is to be allowed to obscure the cross and its effect on the hearts of those who hear the preaching.

1:18. *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 the message of the cross - The "message of the cross" is the doctrine (teaching) of the cross which Paul preached.

Foolishness to those who are perishing - To the Greeks the cross was simply the fitting punishment for rebellious slaves and murderers. To the Jews the thought of a crucified Messiah was not rational. The Greek word translated as "perishing" is present tense which literally means those who are in the process of perishing.

But to us who are being saved it is the power of God - The cross reveals:

1. The love of God (John 3:16).
2. The justice of God (Romans 3:26).
3. The value of the blood of Christ (1 John 2:2).
4. The worth of a single soul (Galatians 2:20; Matthew 16:26).

1:19. *For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."*

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise - This phrase is from Isaiah 29:14. The wisdom of the world is without true wisdom. The problem is that man chooses to walk by his own wisdom instead of the wisdom of God.

Jeremiah 10:23, "O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps."

Through the ages God has shown that man's own wisdom is useless. Man must reject the wisdom of the world and seek and submit to the wisdom of God (Isaiah 29:14; Jeremiah 8:9; Romans 1:16.) Paul quotes this passage from Isaiah to convince the Corinthians that it is useless to challenge God to a competition of intelligence!

This quote was used to show several things:

- a. God's plan of salvation is not from man.
- b. God's plan of salvation is unlike anything man's wisdom would produce.

- c. It can be expected that men guided by worldly wisdom will reject and oppose God's plan of salvation.

One example of this is the rejection of baptism. In man's mind it makes no sense that a person would need to be immersed in water in order to be saved. What they fail to realize is that it is not the water that saves them. It is their obedience to God's commands concerning salvation. We are not saved by water, we are saved by the blood of Christ. However, we do not come into contact with the blood of Christ until we obey God's commands by being baptized into Christ.

Romans 6:3-4, "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Acts 22:16, "And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Acts 8:35-36, "Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?'"

- d. The success of God's plan of salvation will surprise and astound those with the wisdom of the world.
- e. Only the humble in mind will receive God's plan of salvation.

1:20. *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?*

Where is the wise? - Paul is asking them, "What has become of the beliefs, philosophies and theories of these so-called wise ones?" The foolishness of their ideas is now clearly known.

Where is the scribe? - A "scribe" was a student and copier of the law of Moses. They were considered by the people to be great intellectuals. However, their failure to understand the coming and teachings of Christ showed their foolishness.

Where is the disputer? - A "disputer" was a debater or disputant. This is a person who reasons with clever but misleading arguments.

Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? -

1. God did not consult these so-called intellectuals when He created and instituted His plan of salvation for man.
2. God's plan of salvation is of such a nature that it appears foolish to them, for it requires them to be humble.

Notice the wisdom in this verse is the "wisdom of this world" not the wisdom of God. God turns the wisdom of men backward and makes their so-called wisdom foolish (Isaiah 44:25).

1:21. *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.*

For since, in the wisdom of God - In this context we must again understand that in some places the word "wisdom" is being used for worldly wisdom while in other places the word "wisdom" is used for God's wisdom.

The world through wisdom did not know God - The world with all of its so-called wise theories failed to gain the wisdom needed to know the one true God.

It pleased God - The word "pleased" is a translation of the Greek word (EUDOKEO) which means to think well of, approve, take delight or pleasure in.

Through the foolishness - The "foolishness" here is the view of those who thought themselves to be so wise - the philosophers and intellectuals of verse 20. They saw God's truth as foolishness.

Of the message - Notice this does not refer to the act of preaching but the message being preached.

To save those who believe - Literally these are the believing ones (cf. Mark 16:16; Acts 5:14; 16:31).

There are some who take this verse out of context to teach that we are saved by faith (belief) only. There is no doubt we are saved by faith, but

we are not saved by faith only! The phrase "faith only" is actually only found once in the Scriptures, which teaches we are NOT saved by faith only.

James 2:24, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only."

Looking at the list below we can clearly see we are not saved by faith only or even grace only. The New Testament teaches we are saved by many things. We are saved by:

- a. Grace (Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8)
- b. Mercy (Titus 3:5)
- c. Jesus' Blood (1 John 1:7; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7)
- d. Works (James 2:24; Acts 10:34-35; Philippians 2:12)
- e. Obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9)
- f. Endurance (Matthew 10:22)
- g. Patience (Hebrews 6:12; Revelation 14:12-13)
- h. The Love of the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10)
- i. Fear (Jude 23; Philippians 2:12)
- j. Faith/Belief (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 16:30-31)
- k. Repentance (Luke 13:3; 2 Corinthians 7:10)
- l. Confession (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10)
- m. Baptism (Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21)

When someone uses the word "only" in relation to the things mentioned above they are being completely illogical and as a result their teaching is false.

1:22. *For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom;*

For Jews request a sign - The Jews requested a sign (miracle) because they were given a sign when God revealed the old law (law of Moses) on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:17-19).

1. The Jews already possessed a God-given law. They needed a sign to show them that the new law (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; James 1:25) was from God. They needed to understand that they could no longer be justified by the law of Moses because it was no longer in effect (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-14).
2. The Jews often demanded signs from heaven (Matthew 16:1; John 6:30).
3. Nicodemus accepted signs and believed (John 3:1-2).
4. Today we have the signs (miracles) written in the Scriptures so that all may believe (John 20:30-31).

Greeks seek after wisdom -

1. Seek - The phrase "seek after" comes from the Greek word (ΖΗΤΕΩ) which means to search, pursue, demand, inquire and ask questions.
2. Wisdom - The Greeks were looking for a system of salvation which would satisfy their understanding - their worldly wisdom.

1:23. *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness,*

But we preach Christ - Jesus did not satisfy their preconceived ideas.

1. He was not a political ruler with great conquering armies.
2. He was not a philosopher renowned for His worldly wisdom.
3. He came as an atoning sacrifice to obtain for man what man is unable to gain for himself - forgiveness of sins.

Crucified - "Christ crucified" is a paradox. "Christ" (Messiah) implies power, glory and triumph while "crucifixion" implies weakness, humiliation and defeat.

To the Jews a stumbling block - The phrase "stumbling block" comes from a Greek word which literally means "the trigger of a trap." The crucifixion was a stumbling block to the Jews because they thought crucifixion was only for slaves and criminals. They expected their Messiah to be a conquering political hero.

To the Greeks foolishness - To the Greeks (Gentiles) the crucifixion was foolishness because it did not suggest the dignity they expected of a savior. They could not see any reasonable connection between a crucified man and a plan to save all men from sin.

- 1:24. *but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.*

But to those who are called - Those who have responded to the gospel's call of salvation (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4).

As stated before (verses 2 and 9) the "call" is the gospel message which goes out to all (2 Thessalonians 2:14). God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34). He does not arbitrarily choose only some to receive the truth and be saved. God does not choose individuals to be saved, but He has chosen a category of people to be saved. God has predetermined or chosen to save those who obey Him. The obedient ones will be saved.

Christ the power of God - In Christ is found the power of God to save man.

The wisdom of God - Christ is the one through whom God revealed His wisdom, which the worldly philosophers call foolishness.

- 1:25. *Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*

The foolishness of God - Once again, the word "foolishness" here means that which men look upon as foolish.

Is wiser than men - God's plan of salvation, which is seen as foolishness by so-called "wise" men, accomplishes the salvation of those who obey. The so-called "wise" men of the world have done nothing. They have not and cannot devise any plan which will save men from sin.

The weakness of God - This refers to that which appears to be weak to those who have worldly wisdom.

Is stronger than men - Some examples:

1. Naaman cured by dipping in the Jordan (1 Kings 5:1ff.).
2. Walls of Jericho brought down by a shout (Joshua 6:1ff.).
3. Jesus cured the blind man with clay (John 9:6ff.).
4. Sins forgiven on the condition of baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16).

In the crucifixion, God "outsmarted" the "wise" men of this earth and therefore nullified their wisdom. Also, He "overpowered" His enemies in the cross with grace and forgiveness. Therefore, He took away their strength (worldly wisdom).

1:26. *For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called.*

For you see your calling - Look at those who have refused the call of the gospel message:

1. Not many wise according to the flesh - These are those who are wise according to human estimation.
2. Not many mighty - These are those who have exalted standing and worldly accomplishments (kings, rulers, political leaders, etc.).
3. Not many noble - "Noble" comes from the Greek word (UGENĒS) which means well-born, high rank, noble families.

In other words, those who depend on worldly wisdom, power or lineage are often not receptive to the message of the gospel.

1:27-28. *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; 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,*

God has chosen the foolish things. Things that appear foolish to the world. God chose (the apostles) men of no learning, wealth, social or political standing to proclaim His message of salvation.

To put to shame the wise - Notice the opposites emphasized in this verse:

- a. Foolish things to shame the wise (worldly wisdom).
- b. Weak things to shame the strong and powerful.
- c. Base things to shame the well-born.
- d. God chose those things which are despised by men.

To bring to nothing - This phrase means to abolish, destroy, make inactive.

Things that are - The "things that are" represent those things cherished by those with a high social standing who exalt themselves and look down on others and the things of others.

1:29. *that no flesh should glory in His presence.*

That no flesh should glory in His presence - No man should glory before God. The word "flesh" in this verse means mankind, humanity (cf. Acts 2:17). God deserves all the glory for our attainments and if we glory in ourselves, we rob God of what belongs to Him.

1:30. *But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God - and righteousness and sanctification and redemption -*

But of Him you are in Christ Jesus - It is only by God's grace that we have the opportunity to be in Christ. God has provided the way to salvation through His Son to those who believe and obey. Obedience to God's plan of salvation (which includes baptism) puts one into Christ (Galatians 3:27).

Jesus Christ - who became for us -

1. Wisdom from God - Through His work and through His revelation by the Holy Spirit man is taught wisdom from above which makes Christians wise unto salvation.
2. And righteousness - Through His sacrificial death man has the opportunity for forgiveness of sins. By obeying God's plan of salvation man is made righteous by the blood of Christ - given a right standing before God (justified).
3. And sanctification - Through His work on man's behalf man has been given the opportunity to be made holy.

We must not think that this verse teaches that the righteousness and holiness of Jesus have been imputed to us any more than we should think that His wisdom has been imputed to us. We are justified and sanctified by His work on our behalf only when we believe and obey His commands (cf. James 2:21-23).

4. And redemption - "Redemption" comes from the Greek word (APOLUTRŌSIS) which is used to describe the act of paying a ransom to gain the freedom or release of a captive. It is a deliverance.

1:31. *that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."*

As it is written - Since all we have and all we are came from God, we are in no position to brag or boast of what we do (1 Corinthians 4:7).

Jeremiah 9:23-24, "Thus says the LORD: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, Nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the LORD, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight,' says the LORD."

## CHAPTER 2

2:1. *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.*

And I, brethren - "Brethren" is a term of affection which emphasizes the family relationship that exists in the Lord's church (Matthew 12:46-50).

When I came - He came to them on his second missionary journey about 52 A.D. (Acts 18:1).

Did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom - The word "excellence" means pre-eminence, superiority or rising above. Paul's preaching was not with enticing and captivating speech as an orator - or - of worldly-wisdom as a philosopher (see verse 4).

Declaring to you the testimony of God - The word "testimony" is from the Greek word (MARTURION) which means "testimony with evidence, a matter of solemn declaration." The testimony was "of God" because God bore witness to the message through miracles, signs and wonders (Hebrews 2:4).

2:2. *For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.*

I determined not to know - It was Paul's fixed and deliberate intention to preach this way, not because of any inability on his part. This determination was also in spite of the fact that he would be accused of ignorance and that his speech was of no account (2 Corinthians 10:10).

Except Jesus Christ and Him crucified - There is emphasis on the word "crucified." If Paul had been a "man-pleaser" or had put tact before truth he would not have mentioned crucifixion. Christ being crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks.

2:3. *I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling.*

I was with you in - Paul was with the Corinthians for eighteen months (Acts 18:11). Paul faced many challenges in his life (Acts 18:9-10; 2 Corinthians 12:7-9; Galatians 4:13).

Weakness - ASTHENEIA, intellectual and moral frailty.

Fear - PHOBOS, fear, solicitude.

Trembling - TROMOS, a condition of mind caused by a realization of the enormity of responsibility.

2:4. *And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power,*

And my speech and my preaching -

1. Speech - LOGOS, the manner of delivery.
2. Preaching - KĒRUGMA, the content.
3. In other words, the manner and content of the sermon.

Not with persuasive words of human (man's) wisdom - Paul did not preach with the charm and captivating oratory that the Greeks preferred.

But in demonstration of the Spirit - The Greek word for "demonstration" occurs only here in the New Testament. It is literally "a showing forth." Paul relied on the truth which was revealed and confirmed by the Spirit, through the miracles he did, to convince his listeners that what he was teaching was from God.

And of power - This refers to the miracles provided by the Holy Spirit to confirm the word (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:4).

2:5. *that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*

That your faith should not be in the wisdom of men -

1. Faith - The word "faith" comes from the Greek PISTIS which is defined as the conviction of the truth. It is belief and trust that comes from hearing the Spirit-inspired word (Romans 10:17).
2. Should not be in - It should not stand on or rest upon.
3. Wisdom of men - The wisdom of men was not then and is not now a true foundation for saving faith (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7).

In the power of God - The gospel (Romans 1:16) as preached by Paul and confirmed by the Holy Spirit (Mark 16:20; John 20:30-31; Hebrews 2:4) is the power of God unto salvation.

2:6. *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.*

**Important Note: The context shows that the words "we" (vs.6), "we" (vs.7), "us" (vs.10), "we" (vs. 12), "we" (vs.13) refer to the apostles in each verse.**

We speak wisdom - The apostles preached the true wisdom from God, not worldly philosophy.

Among those who are mature - The word "mature" in the original Greek (TELEIOS) means "brought to its end, finished, wanting nothing necessary to completeness, perfect (cf. Colossians 1:28).

Not the wisdom of this age - Paul was not proclaiming the worldly wisdom and doctrines of men.

Nor of the rulers - These are those in power, possibly the religious leaders and philosophers of the day.

Who are coming to nothing - This means "which are being brought to an end." They would soon fall and their worldly wisdom would perish.

2:7. *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,*

We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery - The word "we" refers to the apostles. The word "mystery" means that which human wisdom cannot know until it is revealed (cf. v. 10 and Ephesians 3:3-5).

The hidden wisdom - This is from the Greek word APOKRUPTŌ. In this verse it is a perfect, passive participle which means "to conceal from, to keep secret."

God ordained before the ages - The gospel Paul preached was not an after-thought; it had been promised through the prophets of the Old Testament (Romans 1:1-3; Matthew 16:16-18).

For our glory - This is most likely our final exaltation and glorification (Romans 8:17-18; 1 Peter 5:1ff.).

Romans 8:16-18, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be

glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

2:8. *which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

None of the rulers of this age - Those who crucified Jesus.

Knew - They should have known. There had been plenty of evidence given. This was self-inflicted ignorance!

For had they known, they would not have crucified - Pilate's reluctance to punish Jesus is clearly seen in the Scriptures (cf. Luke 23:14-24).

The Lord of glory - See "God of glory" (Acts 7:2); "Father of glory" (Ephesians 1:17). Specifically, this is, "The Lord whose attribute is glory."

2:9. *But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."*

Eye has not seen, nor ear heard - In this verse Paul explains that before Jesus came no man, by human wisdom, understood the great blessings of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord. However, now these blessings had been revealed and therefore they were no longer a mystery.

2:10. *But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

But God has revealed them to us -

1. Us - The word "us" refers to the apostles. This stands in contrast to the rulers of this age.
2. Revealed - "once for all" (Jude 3); after the law (Galatians 3:23-25).

Through His Spirit - The word "God" here refers to the Father working through the third person of the Godhead the Holy Spirit. This clearly shows there is a distinction between the Father and the Holy Spirit. However, this does not contradict the fact that God the Father, God the Spirit and God the Son are one (Romans 3:30; Ephesians 4:4-6; 1 Timothy 1:17; 2:5; 1 John 5:20). The Spirit revealed to the apostles God's will.

There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

We must not view the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as "attributes" of God, for each of these three Persons in the Godhead "are called God." So you see the three Personages in the Godhead are not attributes of God, but they each have all the attributes of God. The Bible tells us there is only one God, and yet there is distinctly God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things - The Greek word translated as "searches" in this verse is much stronger than to just investigate. This same word is used of God searching our hearts (Romans 8:27). This searching is not in order to discover, but rather is an active, accurate and careful examining. The Spirit of God knowing the deep, unrevealed things of Deity, made them known to the apostles; who have made them known to us through the Scriptures.

The deep things of God - Only Deity (one who is omniscient) can understand ("search") the depths of the mind of God. This is therefore proof of the Deity of the Holy Spirit (Romans 11:33).

2:11. *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.*

For what man - This is an illustration to show that no man can know the mind of God until it is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

The spirit of the man which is in him - This is proof that man is more than matter (2 Corinthians 4:16).

The things of God - The "things" refer to the plans, purposes, etc. of God.

No one knows - The Greek word here is perfect tense indicating that no one in the past has ever known, and still no one knows the mind of God unless it is revealed.

Except the Spirit of God - This is said in proof of the Spirit's ability to reveal the mind of God. Notice that it is not said of the Spirit of God "which is in him" as it is said of man's spirit.

2:12. *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.*

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world -

1. We - Once again the word "we" refers to the apostles.
2. Received - In the original Greek this word is aorist tense which refers to an event in the past, probably Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).

3. World - This is a translation of the Greek word KOSMOS which is defined as arranged in an orderly fashion.

That we (apostles) might know - Notice this is a purpose clause meaning, "in order that we might know."

The things that have been freely given - The Greek word here is aorist tense indicating action in the past. The Spirit revealed to them the mind, will, and purposes of God. He freely guided them into all truth.

To us by God - Through the Son by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13-15; 17:8; Ephesians 3:2-6).

- 2:13. *These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.*

These things we also speak - The word "we" refers to the apostles. In the original Greek the word "speak" is present tense which literally means, "continue to speak."

Not in words which man's wisdom teaches - They did not use the words of the scribes and philosophers. This phrase would be translated literally as, "not in the taught words of human wisdom." Notice Paul is saying he uses words, not ideas, given to him by the Holy Spirit. Here we have proof of verbal inspiration (2 Timothy 3:16).

But which the Holy Spirit teaches - This phrase would be translated literally as, "in the taught (words) of the Holy Spirit."

Comparing spiritual things with spiritual - Comparing, or as some versions translate it "combining" spiritual things with spiritual [words]. "Combining" means to join together fitly. In this verse it means combining spiritual ideas with spiritual words. Paul is summing up what he has said before.

"As a result of using words taught them by the Spirit Himself...he and his fellow apostles combine only spiritual words with the spiritual things they preach. Both the spiritual things and the spiritual words that convey them emanate equally from the Spirit, and the apostles combine the two accordingly" (*The Interpretation of 1 Corinthians*, by R.C.H. Lenski).

- 2:14-15. *But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one.*

## The natural man...he who is spiritual -

1. The denominational view of this is Calvinistic. The natural man to them is the unconverted man and the spiritual man is the child of God.
  - a. This is incorrect because the context is telling how the things of God are known to man by revelation (v. 10).
  - b. This is also wrong because it makes a direct operation of the Holy Spirit necessary before a person can understand the will of God.
  - c. This is absolutely wrong because it makes God a respecter of persons in that He gives the Holy Spirit to some and withholds Him from others arbitrarily.
  
2. J. W. McGarvey said, "The natural man is one who lives on the low psychic plane - a carnal, sensuous victim to bodily appetites, has by neglect, let his spiritual faculties become so torpid... that the spiritual things of God become as foolishness to him... But the spiritual man, helped by the indwelling Spirit of God, is enabled to judge of things divine ... But he himself is not judged of carnal men."
  - a. This is also wrong because Paul says the natural man cannot know the things of God.
  - b. Paul says the spiritual man is judged by no man; his word is final!
  - c. This view would also incorrectly allow for some sort of direct operation of the Holy Spirit in giving us nudges, special intuition, special guidance in decisions, etc. outside of and without the written word.
  
3. A third explanation is the natural man is the uninspired Christian. The spiritual man is the inspired Christian.
  - a. This is the correct solution because it is in harmony with the context.
  - b. God reveals things to the apostles and prophets (v. 10).
  - c. They spoke the things revealed to them by the Holy Spirit (v. 13).

- d. The natural man (uninspired Christian) does not receive revelation and does not speak by inspiration.
- e. The inspired (Christian) man [spiritual because he is inspired by the Spirit] does receive and teach these things of God and is to be judged by no man. This means that his word is not to be disputed by any natural (uninspired) man.
- f. In this context both the natural man and the spiritual man are Christians. By extension all non-Christians would also be in the category of the natural man because they do not receive direct revelation from the Holy Spirit.

2:16. *For 'Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?' But we have the mind of Christ.*

For 'Who has known the mind of the Lord?' - (cf. Isa 40:13). The form of this question demands a negative answer. No (natural) man can know the mind of God, only the Holy Spirit (v. 10) who searches the deep things of God. The philosophers and scribes must depend on their own learning of man's limited wisdom. But opposed to this, the apostles and prophets were given the deep things of God by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### CHAPTER 3

3:1. *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ.*

And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual - Paul had just explained to them that they could not learn the wisdom of God without instruction from the Spirit-inspired apostles. However, he could not speak to them as those who were following the teachings of the Spirit, because they were still guided by their fleshly desires and impulses. Paul was forced to treat them as spiritual babies. They were not yet mature disciples (1 Corinthians 2:8; Ephesians 4:13).

But as to carnal - They were still slaves to their fleshly lusts. They were walking after the desires of the flesh, doing the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:16-21, also cf. Romans 8:5-9).

As to babes in Christ - They had been in Christ long enough to have grown out of their immature ways but, like the Hebrews, they were still having to be treated as babes.

Hebrews 5:12-14 states, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For

everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

- 3:2. *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;*

I fed you with milk and not with solid food - Because of a lack of study and application of truth in their lives they were still yielding to carnal thoughts and practices.

- 3:3. *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*

For you are still carnal - The Greek word translated as "carnal" (SARKIKOS) means, "fleshly, having the nature of flesh, i.e. under the control of the animal appetites, governed by mere human nature not by the Spirit of God, with the included idea of depravity."

For where there are envy - This sin (envy or jealousy) is proof of their carnality. The Greek word literally means to "boil." In this verse the word means an envious, contentious rivalry. Paul calls it a work of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21.

We should note that the word "jealousy" is not always used to represent evil for there is such a thing as a godly jealousy (Exodus 34:14, Numbers 25:6-11 cf. Psalm 106:30-31 cf. 2 Corinthians 11:2).

Strife - This word means contention or wrangling and it is also a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

Behaving like mere men - They were living like the world instead of living like Christ.

- 3:4. *For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

For when one says, "I am of Paul" - Notice Paul clearly condemns those who were seeking to wear his name.

And another, "I am of Apollos" - Apollos was a Jew from Alexandria who obeyed God's plan of salvation becoming a Christian. He was an eloquent speaker who was mighty in the Scriptures (Acts 18:24). However, he was not clear in his understanding concerning the temporary nature of John's baptism. When he came to Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla taught him more accurately concerning the Lord's baptism (Acts 18:24-26). After their instruction he became a preacher of

the gospel in Achaia and then in Corinth (Acts 18:27; 19:1). The evidence of his influence in Corinth is that some of the disciples were wearing his name. There is no proof that he approved of this practice.

Are you not carnal? - The wearing of the names of men was evidence of their yielding to their fleshly (carnal) desires. Even today there are those who follow men instead of Christ. A true Christian leader would never allow his name to be used in this way.

There are many religious groups who foolishly chose to be named after men (Lutherans, Calvinists, Mennonites), doctrines (Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists) and nations (Church of England, Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox). The New Testament condemns such nonsense. If we are truly a Christian we will only wear the name of Christ.

3:5. *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one?*

Who then is Paul? - Paul was simply a minister through whom they learned the truth of their sinful condition and need to obey God's plan of salvation. Both Paul and Apollos were merely instruments God had used to bring these people to salvation through obedience to the gospel message they preached (Romans 10:13-17).

As the Lord gave to each one? - Since the Lord gave them their talents and used each as it pleased Him, the men are not to be praised and followed as heads of factions. All the glory belongs to God.

3:6. *I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase*

I planted - This refers to the first work done in Corinth by Paul.

Romans 15:20, "And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation."

Apollos watered - Apollos did a secondary, *but necessary*, work. Young churches should not be left alone to simply survive or perish. We see a great example of Paul strengthening churches in Acts 14:12-23.

God gave the increase - The Greek word translated here indicates continuous blessings from God on both the planter and the waterer. Without God's continuous work, the efforts of Paul and Apollos would have come to nothing, so all the glory still belongs to God.

3:7. *So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.*

Neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters - The conclusion is that man is nothing without God.

**[Important Note for verses 8-15 - Salvation is a conditional gift of God requiring man's obedience. Salvation is by God's grace! (cf. Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8). However, to receive the benefits of God's grace man is required to do works of obedience (not works of merit).**

**In Ephesians 2:8-10 the Bible says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it (*salvation*) is the gift of God, not of works (*of merit*), lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works (*of obedience*), which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." – *The parentheses have been added for clarification.***

**Faith alone has never been enough for righteousness. The demons have faith but they are not righteous (James 2:19). Righteousness requires faith and obedience working together.**

**There is really no reason for the confusion in the religious world today concerning the issue of faith and works. One extreme says faith only and the other extreme says works only. The Bible is clear that neither extreme is correct. God's word teaches that we are counted as righteous when faith and works of obedience combine (Galatians 5:6; James 2:18, 22).]**

3:8. *Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.*

He who plants and he who waters are one - How are they one?

1. They are one in service, which is to God.
2. They are one in purpose, as all believers should be.
3. Although their work was different in respect to when and what they did, they were working toward the same end (the salvation of souls), which should be the goal of all Christians.

Each one will receive his own reward - The Greek word for reward (MISTHOS) denotes that which is given by contract for service rendered, dues paid for work, wages, hire, reward, divine recompense. It could be either in heaven (Matthew 5:12) or in hell (2 Peter 2:13,15).

3:9. *For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building.*

We are God's fellow workers - The "we" in this verse means Paul and Apollos as laborers together in God's vineyard. They and other faithful teachers are God's fellow workers. They are working together with Him. They are teaching what He has revealed and doing what He has commanded.

You are God's field - Literally this is God's tilled field. Paul and Apollos were merely workers in that field and so are Christians today!

You are God's building - God used Paul to lay the foundation (Jesus being the chief cornerstone - 1 Peter 2:6-7); and He used Apollos to lay spiritual stones on that foundation.

3:10. *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.*

According to the grace of God -

1. We are all saved by grace (Romans 3:24; Ephesians 2:8; Titus 3:7).
2. We are called by His grace (Galatians 1:15).
3. Paul was made a minister by grace (Ephesians 3:7; Romans 15:15-16).
4. He labored by God's grace (1 Corinthians 15:10).
5. God's grace is abundant with faith and love (1 Timothy 1:14).
6. God's grace is for all men (Titus 2:11).
7. God's saving grace is conditional (2 Corinthians 6:1).

As a wise master builder - The Greek word for "builder" here is ARCHITEKTŌN. This is the only occurrence of this word in the New Testament. The word comes from TEKTŌN which means "a worker in wood, a carpenter, joiner, builder, any craftsman, or workman." The first part of the word (ARCHI) means "chief."

I have laid the foundation - Paul did the first work that he might not build on another's foundation (Romans 15:20).

Take heed how he builds on it -

1. Preachers and teachers are builders of God's house.

2. They build on the foundation by converting others.
3. They also build by teaching and encouraging Christians.

Paul's warning must not be ignored because there is a great danger in using false teaching or false methods to build upon the foundation he laid.

3:11. *For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

For no other foundation can anyone lay - Since Jesus is the chief cornerstone of the foundation any other "savior" would not be the true Savior (2 Corinthians 11:4). There is not room for another Jesus (neither Buddha, Joseph Smith or any other). Christ is the one and only and anyone else who make himself a "savior" is a fraud.

Than that which is laid - This is a reference to Paul's work mentioned in verse 10.

Than - This is from The Greek word PARA which means alongside or by the side of. No foundation can be laid which compares to Christ. No other person, no other doctrine can be equal to Jesus and His gospel. To preach another is to be anathema (devoted to destruction - cf. Galatians 1:6-9).

3:12. *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,*

Now if anyone builds - Paul mentions six materials, three perishable and three non-perishable.

1. Gold - non-perishable
2. Silver - non-perishable
3. Precious stones - non-perishable
4. Wood - perishable
5. Hay - perishable
6. Stubble - perishable

The building materials in this verse represent converts (those who obey God's plan of salvation when taught by members of the church). Some converts will remain faithful and stand the test of time, while others will fall away.

3:13. *each one's work will become manifest; 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.*

Each one's work will become manifest - Christians cannot know the hearts of those they convert, but each convert's heart will be made known by their future actions.

The Day will declare it - The "Day" is the great day of judgment when the thoughts and intents of the heart, as well as their deeds, will be made known. All will fall into their proper class - either gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or straw.

Because it will be revealed by fire -

1. This could mean the converts are being tried by temptations and trials, the fiery trials of life.
2. This could mean the fires of judgment. This idea for the fire does go well with the "Day" of the preceding clause.

Bible scholars are divided as to which meaning is correct. There are certainly aspects of both views which fit the context. Neither view violates the context of this verse or other Bible passages.

3:14. *If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.*

If anyone's work...endures - Only the gold, silver and costly stone will abide the fire. The wood, hay and stubble will perish. Those who will not endure are those converts who are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God. They are people burdened with cares, riches and pleasures of this world and who bring no fruit to maturity (Luke 8:14).

He will receive a reward - The Greek word translated as "reward" means wages for labor performed and can refer to what one receives in this life or in eternity (Matthew 5:12; 2 Peter 2:13).

3:15. *If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

If anyone's work is burned - This refers to the converts a Christian has made who cannot endure the test of fire.

He will suffer loss - The Christian will lose the reward described in the preceding verse.

But he himself will be saved - His converts may be lost but he can be saved.

1. This proves our reward is different from eternal life. We are rewarded according to our labors (v. 8; Matthew 16:27), but eternal life is a gift to all who are faithful to the end (James 1:12).
2. This is additional proof that the "day" under consideration is the day of judgment.

Yet so as through fire - Some believe they find the doctrine of what they call "purgatory" here. That the saved must go through the refining, tormenting, fire of what they call "purgatory" to be made fit for dwelling in heaven. But neither this nor any other Scripture teaches such a doctrine. What this actually means is "through great difficulty." Peter raises the question, "If the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:18).

3:16. *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you?*

You are the temple of God -

1. You - The Greek word (ESTE) translated as "you" is plural. All the Christians compose the temple.
2. Since all Christians make the one temple, they should not be divided.
3. They should live and teach so as to glorify God.
4. Temple - The Greek word (NAOS) translated as "temple" is used for the Holy of Holies. This is not the Greek word (HIERON) which stands for the whole temple complex.

The Spirit of God dwells in you -

1. The Spirit of God - This refers to the Holy Spirit, the third person of the godhead.
2. You - The only way the Holy Spirit can dwell in the church is in the individuals who compose the church (1 Corinthians 6:19).

3:17. *If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.*

If anyone defiles the temple of God - The Greek word (PHTHEIRŌ) means to corrupt or destroy. The local church is corrupted when it is led away from the

condition of holiness of life and purity of doctrine in which it should stand (1 Corinthians 15:33; 2 Corinthians 11:3; Jude 10).

God will destroy him - This is not physical death, because physical death is appointed unto all men (Hebrews 9:27). This is the second death (Romans 8:13; Revelation 21:8) which is separation from God in eternal punishment. This indicates to us the seriousness of the divisive condition of the church at Corinth.

For the temple of God is holy - How is it holy?

1. It is cleansed by the blood of Christ (John 1:7).
2. It is sanctified by the work of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:16).
3. It is washed with water (Ephesians 5:26; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 10:22).

Which temple you are - In the original Greek the third use of "temple" is not found. The text literally says, "For the temple of God is holy, which you are" emphasizing the holiness Christians must have as the temple.

3:18. *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.*

Let no one deceive himself - This is a warning to those who were making and leading factions (divisions) in the congregation.

If anyone among you seems [thinketh himself - KJV] to be wise in this age - This is aimed at the scribes and philosophers of 1 Corinthians 1:20-25. This worldly wisdom divided the church into factions. Paul commends the wisdom which is from God which unites, but condemns worldly wisdom which divides.

Let him become a fool - Following God's wisdom will make one a fool in the eyes of the world (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:10).

3:19. *For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness;"*

For the wisdom of this world - This refers to the kind of wisdom the high-minded philosophers had and which caused divisions in the church.

Is foolishness with God - It is foolishness in that it cannot bring salvation to man.

He catches the wise - These are the ones who have worldly wisdom. This is a quote from the book of Job (cf. Job 5:13).

In their own craftiness - The word "craftiness" is from the Greek word (PANOURGIA) which means trickery and unscrupulous conduct.

"When the world's schemers think themselves cleverest, Providence catches them in their own toils" (*Expositor's Greek New Testament*).

3:20. *and again, "The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are futile."*

The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise - Once again, the "wise" here are those with worldly wisdom. The thoughts of the "wise" men (Philippians 2:14) are "futile" (vain, empty, useless and void of good results).

3:21. *Therefore let no one glory in men. For all things are yours:*

Let no one glory in men - This is another reference to 1 Corinthians 1:12; 2:5 (cf. Jeremiah 9:23-24).

For all things are yours - Those who were followers of men, who glorified in men, deprived themselves of what belonged to true Christians, so they were made poorer.

3:22. *whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world or life or death, or things present or things to come - all are yours.*

Whether Paul - To cling to Paul is to deprive oneself of Apollos and Cephas. This verse, by extension, equals all Christian teachers. Paul is saying that all Christian teachers are yours (for your benefit).

World - The "world" stands for all that God made and put here for good.

Life - To enjoy and live for the glory of God.

Death - Though an enemy (1 Corinthians 15:26), we shall overcome it through Christ; and it will become the gate through which we shall pass into eternal life.

Things present - This refers to providential happenings which work for our good (Romans 8:28ff.).

3:23. *And you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

And you are Christ's - How were the Christians at Corinth Christ's?

1. By creation (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).
2. By redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19).

3. By consecration (2 Corinthians 8:3).

And Christ is God's - How?

1. He is God's Son:
  - a. In His divine nature (Romans 1:4).
  - b. In His human nature (Luke 1:31-32).
2. God is His head (1 Corinthians 11:3).

**B. DEFENSE OF HIS MINISTRY .....4:1-21**

CHAPTER 4

- 4:1. *Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.*

Let a man so consider us - Once again, the "us" in this verse refers to the apostles (see the "Important Note" for 1 Corinthians 2:6).

As servants - The Greek word (HUPĒRETĒS) translated as "servants" in this verse literally means under-rower or subordinate rower. The word can be used of anyone who is an assistant or gives aid to the work of another.

And stewards - The Greek word (OIKONOMOS) translated as "stewards" in this verse means a slave entrusted with the management of the household and even fellow slaves, but always under the authority of the householder.

A study of similar Greek words:

- a. DIAKONOS, deacon; a servant in relation to his work.
- b. DOULOS, slave; a servant in relation to his master.
- c. LEITOURGOS, a minister or servant. Used of Paul's evangelistic service (Romans 15:16).
- d. OIKETĒS, a household servant.

Of the mysteries of God - The word "mysteries" refers to those things which are impossible for man to know without revelation from God (Matthew 13:11-12).

Ephesians 3:3-6, "How that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other

ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel."

4:2. *Moreover it is required in stewards that one be found faithful.*

It is required - God requires His stewards to be faithful. One cannot go to heaven without doing that which God requires.

One be found faithful - The word "faithful" means trustworthy. Why is a man required to be faithful?

1. Because of his relationship to Jesus.
2. Because he must answer to Jesus for the use of what he has been given in this life.
3. Because if he is unfaithful he dishonors Jesus, who is his Master.
4. Because if he is unfaithful he will cause others to be lost.

4:3. *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.*

It is a very small thing - He is saying it is not overly important. We must not completely disregard human judgment, but we must not be more concerned about man's judgment, than we are about the Lord's judgment.

Or by a human court - The Greek word here (HĒMERA) is literally, "of man's day." The word "day" is sometimes used for judgment (Joel 1:15; 2:1; 1 Corinthians 3:13).

I do not even judge myself - This comes from the Greek word (ANAKRINŌ) which means, to examine, investigate, question. Paul is explaining that he is not the one who should pass sentence on the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of his duty. He is not saying it is wrong to examine our spiritual condition (2 Corinthians 13:5; 2 Peter 1:10-11).

4:4. *For I know nothing against myself, yet I am not justified by this; but He who judges me is the Lord.*

I know nothing against myself - Paul is not aware of being unfaithful in his stewardship (Acts 20:19-20,26-27; 2 Corinthians 7:2; Acts 23:1).

Not justified by this - Paul's assessment of his service to the Lord was not the standard. We should understand that man is not his own final judge. Our hearts could deceive us but God can never be deceived.

He who judges me is the Lord - God will judge mankind and their secrets by the standard of the gospel (Romans 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:1; Acts 17:30-31).

- 4:5. *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; and then each one's praise will come from God.*

Judge nothing before the time - Judging now on the basis of human standards of wisdom is pointless. When the Lord returns all will receive their complete and final judgment (Matthew 25:31-46). This does not mean that all judging is wrong. We are commanded to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24; cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:14).

Until the Lord comes - The Bible has much to say concerning the Lord's return (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10). Who will be there at the Lord's return?

1. The generation of Sodom - about 1,900 B.C. (Matthew 11:23-24).
2. The generation of the queen of the south - 1,000 B.C. (Matthew 12:42).
3. The generation of Nineveh - about 800 B.C. (Matthew 12:41).
4. The generation of Tyre and Sidon - 330 B.C. (Matthew 11:21-22).
5. The generation in the time of Jesus - 30 A.D. (Matthew 11:20ff.).
6. The generation of the Thessalonians - 55 A.D. (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10).
7. All generations and nations of all time - no one knows the date (Matthew 25:31-46).

Bring to light the hidden things - All the secrets of the hearts of men, all the deeds of darkness and all the secret desires and purposes men have refused to confess will be brought to light. Now is the time to seek forgiveness for these things because then it will be too late.

And then - "Then" is an adverb of time meaning not before but very certainly at that time.

Each one's praise - The praise in this verse is praise from God based on a man's faithful service. Some men get more praise than they are due during this life and some get less, but in the judgment, all will get exactly what they deserve.

Will come from God - The praise of "well done, good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21-23) received from God is so precious that it reduces to nothing the value of human praise.

4:6. *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.*

I have figuratively transferred to myself - Paul is saying that he has used his name and that of Apollos, but the rule applies to all parties in the church at Corinth; and even for us today.

For your sakes - To be kind to the individuals and yet to still clearly teach the lessons they so desperately needed.

Learn in us not to think beyond what is written - Paul wanted them to learn not to exalt themselves as heads of factions (divisions) in the Lord's church. But it may also be given as a general warning to not go beyond that which is written in either doctrine or practice.

That none of you be puffed up - "Puffed up" comes from the Greek word (PHUSIOŌ) which means "to inflate, that is, (figuratively) to make proud or haughty." This is said in order to discourage self-conceit expressed in the forming of factions and in the exalting of the leaders of those factions.

4:7. *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 glory as if you had not received it?*

Who makes you differ from another? - This is referring to the various spiritual gifts and knowledge they had received from God through His Spirit. However, the gifts they received were not anything they had accomplished themselves. They had received them through the Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the apostles. There was no reason for them to boast and certainly no justification to divide the congregation into contentious groups.

What do you have that you did not receive? - The miraculous abilities given to them were all gifts from God. Therefore, they had no right to boast or feel superior to others who did not have these things.

Glory - The Greek word here literally means, "to boast."

4:8. *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!*

You are already rich - In this verse Paul is using sarcasm to help them realize the foolishness of their actions. They thought they were superior and no longer needed the leadership of the apostles.

You have reigned as kings - It would seem as if each Corinthian sectarian thought of himself as a king.

I could wish you did reign - Here Paul moves away from his biting sarcasm to express to them his affection for their welfare. He wished they did reign as spiritual kings, because their spiritual maturity was his true joy (1 Thessalonians 2:19; 9:23).

That we also might reign with you! - Once again, the "we" in this verse refers to the apostles (see the "Important Note" for 1 Corinthians 2:6). This phrase demonstrates the unselfishness of the apostle Paul. He would have gladly rejoiced with them had they really been as strong as they thought. If that had been the situation he would have joyfully shared in their accomplishment, seeing he was the one who had brought them the truth and ushered their way into the kingdom.

4:9. *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.*

God has displayed us, the apostles - "Displayed us" is from a Greek word (APODEIKNUMI) which was used of exhibiting gladiators in the arena. This suggests the apostles were to be made spectacles. As men are thrown to certain death for the amusement of the spectators in the arena, so the apostles were doomed to certain death as a result of their labors. In this way they were made a spectacle to both men and angels. Only John avoided a martyr's death.

Men condemned to death - They were doomed like those in the arena.

Spectacle - This is a translation of the Greek word THEATRON, which literally means, "a public show; a man who is exhibited to be gazed at and made sport of, a theater."

Angels - The apostles had authority and qualifications beyond anything the Corinthians could claim. However, Paul was not boasting. The position of the apostles placed them in the greatest danger. They were appointed to suffer even to the point of death for the preaching of the gospel. They would be made a spectacle before heaven (angels) and earth.

- 4:10. *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!*

We are fools for Christ's sake - Once again Paul uses sarcasm to make his point. The apostles were seen as fools in the eyes of the leaders of the various sectarian groups in Corinth.

But you are wise in Christ! - In their own estimation they were much wiser than Paul.

We are weak, but you are strong! - We depend solely on wisdom from above but you think you are competent to take over leadership by the use of worldly wisdom.

You are distinguished, but we are dishonored - They gloried in their own work and dishonored Paul, forgetting what he had done for them. The design of these three sarcastic contrasts was to clearly show their extreme foolishness of self-conceit, self-flattery and self-exaltation.

- 4:11. *Even to the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless.*

We both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed and beaten, and homeless - Like their Master, the apostles often suffered many hardships. However, Paul gladly endured all of these sufferings for the cause of Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28; Philippians 4:11-12; Romans 8:18,23). Those at Corinth who opposed Paul had suffered none of these things.

- 4:12. *And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure it;*

We labor - The apostles were busy working unto weariness (Acts 20:34-35; 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-11).

Being reviled - They had abuse heaped upon them (cf. Matthew 5:11,44; 1 Peter 2:23-24).

We bless - They did good to their enemies (Romans 12:14; 1 Peter 3:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:15).

Being persecuted - They were pursued by their enemies who sought a way to harass and trouble them (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7-12; 11:23-27).

We endure it - They held up to the persecution standing firm (cf. James 1:12; Revelation 2:10).

- 4:13. *being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.*

Being defamed - To be defamed means to suffer public reproach and reviling. The present tense shows that this is the continuous sufferings of the apostles.

We entreat - In all ways they followed the teaching and example of their Master.

In Matthew 5:44-45 Jesus said, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."

1 Peter 2:23, "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."

We have been made as the filth of the world - The word "filth" is the English translation of the Greek word (PERIKATHARMA) which means refuse (trash or garbage) thrown off by cleaning and sweeping.

The offscouring of all things - The word "offscouring" is the English translation of the Greek word (PERIPSŌMA) which means filth which could not be swept, but had to be scraped, as dirt and grease around the galley of a ship. This word is also used for the waste from a sacrifice.

- 4:14. *I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you.*

I do not write these things to shame you - Paul wanted them to understand why he was using sarcasm.

I warn you - Paul's words of warning were as a father to his children (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

- 4:15. *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.*

For though you might have ten thousand instructors - The word for "instructors" or "tutors" is from the Greek word (PAIDAGŌGOS) which means a child-tender, a slave who took the child to and from the teacher and exercised a constant supervision over the conduct and safety of the child. Paul contrasts the conduct of a slave with that of the father to show the Christians at Corinth that his relationship to them was greater than that of others.

I have begotten you through the gospel - This phrase is used of one who, by preaching the gospel, becomes the human instrument of bringing the message of salvation to a lost soul. It is only at the point of baptism that past sins are washed away and one begins their new life (born again - new birth) as a Christian (John 3:3,5 also cf. James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 3:21; Romans 6:3-4).

4:16. *Therefore I urge you, imitate me.*

Imitate me - The Greek word used here (MIMĒTĒS) is present tense which indicates continues action. The Corinthian brethren should continually imitate (follow the example of) the apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 11:1). Christians should always live their lives in such a way that others can follow their example to be faithful.

4:17. *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.*

I have sent Timothy to you - Timothy left Paul before Paul began to write this letter. In 1 Corinthians 16:10 Paul assumes Timothy will not reach Corinth before this letter arrives.

Who is my beloved and faithful son - Timothy is not Paul's natural son, but a child in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2; Philippians 2:19-22).

Who will remind you of my ways -

1. Paul's doctrine (1 Timothy 6:3f; 2 Timothy 3:10).
2. Paul's conduct, manner of life (2 Timothy 3:10).
3. Paul's way of establishing and building up congregations of the Lord's church.

In Christ - Paul's "ways" were always determined by Christ, under His authority. This serves as an example we are to follow today in our work for the Lord.

As I teach everywhere in every church - Paul was consistent in his doctrine and work. This is not surprising since the Lord who guided him is unchangeable (Hebrews 13: 8). He did not direct Paul to teach differently in different places. Churches that differ from those Paul built are not churches of Christ.

4:18. *Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you.*

Now some are puffed up - This is a picture of their conceit because of their worldly learning. They thought Paul was afraid to meet them face to face.

As though I were not coming to you - They were probably boasting that he would not come.

- 4:19. *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.*

I will come to you shortly -

1. This let his enemies know he was not afraid of them.
2. He already had plans to go to Corinth (1 Corinthians 16:5-9).
3. He warned his enemies of what he might do to them (2 Corinthians 13:2-4).

If the Lord wills - Paul's travels were always subject to the Lord's will (Acts 16:6-10; 18:21 also James 4:13-16).

And I will know, not the words of those who are puffed up - To be puffed up is to have pride and vanity, to be proud and arrogant. These were Judaizers and the leaders of the sectarian parties in the church at Corinth.

But the power - Paul would show them his courage and superior power. He was, as it were, challenging them to a "showdown." There were some who claimed to be greater than Paul, while others denied that he was a true apostle sent by God. Paul could clearly show that God was with him by the miracles he was able to do. The enemies of Paul would be proven false when they were not able to do the signs of an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12). They could not measure up to the power of Paul.

- 4:20. *For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power.*

The kingdom of God is not in word - The kingdom of Christ is established and is not maintained by pompous speeches or words of human wisdom, but in power:

1. The power in Paul's time was exercised in miracles (Acts 13:6-12).
2. The power, then and now, to save people is in the gospel (Romans 1:16).

- 4:21. *What do you want? Shall I come to you with a rod, or in love and a spirit of gentleness?*

What do you want? - The decision is up to Paul's enemies.

With a rod? - Paul had the power to bring the rod of punishment upon them if it became necessary (cf. Acts 13:8-11). And he would use this power unless they repented.

Or in love and a spirit of gentleness? - This shows the love of a father for his spiritual children. It is like the gentleness of a nursing mother (1 Thessalonians 2:7-8).

**C. DEALING WITH INCEST .....5:1-13**

CHAPTER 5

5:1. *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!*

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you - The English phrase "sexual immorality" is a translation of the Greek word PORNEIA which means fornication. This refers to any illicit sexual intercourse. Fornication is the broader term which includes any sexual act such as adultery, homosexuality, incest, premarital sex, prostitution and bestiality.

As a general rule, the Greek word MOICHAŌ is used to refer to adultery, which is defined as sexual intercourse with the spouse of another. However, occasionally the Greek word PORNEIA can also be used to refer to adultery (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

Such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - Paul explains that the sexual sin being discussed is too abhorrent and repugnant to even be engaged in among non-Christians. This sin is too vile to even be included in the word "Corinthianize" which was used to describe the sexual wantonness of the Corinthians.

That a man has his father's wife - The Greek word here (ÉKHEIN) translated as "has" is used in the sense of "to have in marriage." This same word is used by John the immerser of Herod (Matthew 14:4). A man having his father's wife was forbidden by the law of Moses (Leviticus 18:8; 20:11; Deuteronomy 22:30; 27:20), and was sinful whether the father was living or not. This act of incest was also a violation of Roman law. Even those who were worldly understood the vile nature of this sin.

5:2. *And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.*

And you are puffed up- Perhaps, they were proud of themselves for being so understanding and forgiving. However, they had no right to forgive what God had not forgiven.

And have not rather mourned - To mourn as for one who was dead would have been a more appropriate response.

Might be taken away from among you - Decent self-respect should have compelled them to discipline this man by removing him from their fellowship.

5:3. *For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged, as though I were present, concerning him who has so done this deed.*

As absent in body but present in spirit - This is another instance of his fatherly care for the congregations he had established. His thoughts were always with them.

Have already judged - In his own mind he had already judged the situation. The Greek word for "judged" (KEKRIKA) is perfect, indicative which indicates Paul had already made his ruling in this case, and his verdict stood.

5:4. *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,*

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ - The phrase "in the name of" means "by the authority of" Jesus and in harmony with His teachings (cf. Acts 4:7, 18; Colossians 3:17).

When you are gathered together - The needed discipline requires the church to be unified in their action.

Along with my spirit - This refers to the apostolic authority of Paul through his teaching.

With the power of our Lord Jesus Christ - This power resulted from Paul's being led by the Holy Spirit and acting under the commission of an apostle given to him by Jesus. This was not the power to hurt people as some have taught.

5:5. *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.*

Deliver such a one to Satan - From this we conclude:

1. That the assembled church has the authority to exclude the unrepentant sinner from its fellowship.

2. To exclude from fellowship of the church is to exclude from the fellowship of Christ (1 John 1:3).
3. To exclude one from the fellowship of Christ and His church is to deliver one to Satan.

For the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved - "Destruction" is from the Greek word (OLETHROS) which means ruin or destroy. "Flesh" is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "of the external ills and troubles by which the lusts of the flesh are subdued and destroyed." The word "flesh" here cannot mean the physical body:

1. The church did not then, nor does it now, have the authority to kill as punishment for sin.
2. If the man was killed while guilty of such a sin, his spirit would not be saved nor would he have the opportunity to repent.

Why would the congregation be told to exclude this unrepentant sinner from its fellowship? This teaches:

1. The purpose of discipline is salvation.
2. The instrument of discipline is the church.
3. The authority for discipline is the inspired Scriptures.
4. The subject of discipline is the unrepentant sinner.
5. The necessity for discipline is the corrupting influence of sin (see verses 6-8).

In the day of the Lord Jesus - This refers to the day of judgment (2 Thessalonians 2:2; 1: 7-10; Philippians 1:6; 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:2).

5:6. *Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?*

Your glorying is not good - People who glory in things of which they should be ashamed are enemies of the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:19).

A little leaven leavens the whole lump - This suggests that even a "little" sin is to be disciplined. Church discipline is a process which includes, teaching, reproving and rebuking with the hopes of repentance before removing fellowship is required. The word "leaven" usually indicates something evil when used as a

figure of speech. It can include both corrupt doctrine (Matthew 16:6,11-12) and sinful practices (Mark 8:15). Also compare Luke 12:1; Galatians 5:9.

Is "leaven" always used to indicate evil? No, take note of how the word is used in the parables concerning the "kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 13:33) and the "kingdom of God" (Luke 13:21).

- 5:7. *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.*

Therefore, purge out the old leaven - "Purge" is from the Greek word (EKKATHAIRŌ) which means to clean completely. The aorist tense of this Greek word gives this a sense of urgency. The congregation should do it now and do it effectively before the whole church is contaminated. The "old leaven" in this situation was the sin of sexual immorality (verse 1).

That you may be a new lump - The Greek word for "new" is often used in respect to time. However, this word can also be used to mean "recently born, youthful, fresh; or figuratively to restore, rejuvenate and revitalize."

For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us - This is a reference to the preparation of the Jews for celebrating the Passover (Exodus 12:3-28). All leaven had to be put out of the house before they could eat the Passover meal (Exodus 12:19). So, the church at Corinth had to put out the leaven of sexual immorality before partaking of Christ.

- 5:8. *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.*

Let us keep the feast - The Greek word here is present tense which means they are to continue to keep the feast, celebrating, praising and honoring Christ in their lives and worship. The life of the Christian should be an ongoing feast of service to God in sincerity and truth. None of the old leaven of worldliness can be retained in the body, the church.

Not with old leaven - The key word here is "old." It is that which belongs to the past, the Christian's former life.

Leaven of malice and wickedness - These qualities are characteristic of an unconverted life.

Unleavened bread of sincerity and truth - "Sincerity" is purity without any mixture of foreign substances which would adulterate pure motives and actions. "Truth" is true in things pertaining to God and the duties of man, moral and religious truth.

5:9-10. *I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 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 world.*

I wrote to you in my epistle - This refers to a letter which, in the providence of God, was not preserved for us today. We can be confident knowing that this letter was not necessary to equip us complete, for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Not to keep company with sexually immoral people - The Greek word for "company" means "to mix up together, to keep company with or to be intimate with one." In 1 Corinthians 15:33 Paul wrote, "Do not be deceived: 'Evil company corrupts good habits.'"

Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world - If we had no connection with the people of the world we could not:

1. Show kindness that we may rescue them from sin.
2. Demonstrate just dealings in the business world.
3. Improve the morals of the community.
4. Do good to all men (Galatians 6:10).
5. Seek to teach them the gospel.

Are their limits to our connection with the people in this world? Yes:

1. We are not to make them our close companions (1 Corinthians 15:33).
2. We are not to partake of their sins (Ephesians 5:7).
3. We are commanded to reprove them for their sins (Ephesians 5:11).

The covetous - To covet means to possess a driving desire to have more. The one who is covetous is greedy of gain, eager to have more, especially those things belonging to others.

Extortioners - This is from the Greek word which means "robbery, to pillage or plunder."

Idolaters - An idol is any object which usurps the place of God. Idolatry includes worship, reverence or excessive devotion for some person or thing. An idol is a thing or person loved more than God, wanted more than God, desired more than God and treasured more than God. An idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas which his idols represent.

You would need to go out of the world -

1. This shows that God does not want us to live in monasteries.
2. Salt must contact that which it saves (Matthew 5:13).

Matthew 5:13, "You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men."

3. Light must be seen to give direction (Matthew 5:14-16).

Matthew 5:14-16, "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven."

5:11. *But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner - not even to eat with such a person.*

Anyone named a brother - This is another way of describing a fellow Christian.

A fornicator - This word is used for "sexual immorality." This includes all illicit sexual intercourse.

Covetous - To covet means to possess a driving desire to have more. The one who is covetous is greedy of gain, especially those things belonging to others.

An idolater - An idol is any object which usurps the place of God. An idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas which his idols represent.

A reviler - A "reviler" is one who uses abusive or railing speech.

A drunkard - This describes one who is intoxicated. In 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 God commands every Christian to be sober which means being free from the

influence of intoxicating beverages. Therefore, this requirement includes every Christian.

Please see the following verses from the book of Proverbs concerning wine:

Proverbs 20:1, "Wine is a mocker, Strong drink is a brawler, and whoever is led astray by it is not wise."

Proverbs 23:20, "Do not mix with winebibbers, or with gluttonous eaters of meat."

Proverbs 23:29-31, "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has contentions? Who has complaints? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who linger long at the wine, those who go in search of mixed wine. Do not look on the wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it swirls around smoothly."

An extortioner - Extortion is having a strong desire to acquire money or things by force. It is defined as the illegal use of one's official position or powers to obtain property, funds, or patronage. It can refer to the act of obtaining something by psychological pressure or by an excessive or exorbitant charge.

Not even to eat with such a person - This prohibits a Christian from eating a meal with a fellow Christian who is currently being disciplined for sin by the congregation. When the church delivers such a one to Satan, each member is to cooperate in the discipline.

Some say this refers only to the Lord's Supper. We know from the context that this is not what Paul is saying. In the passage Paul is making a contrast between our dealings with those in the world and our brethren. We do not partake of the Lord's Supper with those of the world. Obviously, this verse refers to an ordinary meal. In the culture of the day to eat a meal with a man showed him as a worthy equal.

5:12. *For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?*

With judging those also who are outside - The church has the responsibility of judging righteous judgment (John 7:24) so as to provide the correct discipline needed by the members:

1. For correction and sanctification of its members.
2. To gain and keep the respect of the world.

3. For the protection of babes in Christ.
4. This is righteous judgment, not hypocritical judgment (Matthew 7:1-5), harsh judgment (Titus 3:2), self-righteous judgment (Luke 18:9-11) or judging by appearance (John 7:24).

5:13. *But those who are outside God judges. Therefore "put away from yourselves that wicked person."*

But those who are outside God judges - The world needs to be reminded that they must give account of the way they live and it is the duty of the church to remind them.

Therefore "put away from yourselves that wicked person" - The phrase "put away" is a command and, therefore, the duty of the church (cf. Deuteronomy 17:7).

In a moral sense the one who is "wicked" is evil. In a figurative sense the "wicked" one is diseased or blind.

#### **D. DEALING WITH LAWSUITS.....6:1-11**

##### CHAPTER 6

6:1. *Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?*

Dare any of you - This is from the Greek word (TOLMAŌ) which is defined as "to be bold, bear one's self boldly, deal boldly."

Having a matter against another - "Matter" here is that which is a matter of dispute. "Against" is a translation of the Greek word (PROS) which is defined as "one against another, each has something against the other."

Go to law before the unrighteous - This is talking about taking a fellow Christian to court to settle differences.

And not before the saints - The word "saint" is an English translation of the Greek word (HAGIOS) which means "set apart for a holy use." All Christians are saints (1 Peter 1:15-16).

6:2. *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?*

The saints will judge the world - The saved ("saints") will be associated with Christ as judges (Revelation 3:21; 20:4) of the world which is all unsaved people

(John 7:7; 1 John 5:19). This is not the disciplinary judgment of 1 Corinthians 5:12-13, but the judgment of the last day.

David Lipscomb makes the following point:

"What this verse and the next means is a matter of doubt. When, how, and where the saints are to judge the world and angels, is difficult to determine. Macknight holds that the saints are now judging the world through presenting the gospel to it, because by it the world is justified or condemned, as it receives or rejects its teachings. But the judgment here seems to be a deciding, according to that word, who is guilty and who is innocent. Jesus said, 'Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matthew 19:28).

Another position occupied by many commentators is that the saints will be associated with Christ when they reign with Him and when He judges the wicked. The doctrine, they claim, glimmered faintly to Daniel and came as a message of consolation and hope in the time of national suffering and shame, 'and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom' (Daniel 7:22). Christ's people will share His royalty (Romans 8:18; 2 Timothy 2:12) and therefore they will share the government (Matthew 19:28; Luke 22:30), which the Father has committed to the Son (John 5:22). In the great day the saints will intelligently and cordially approve and endorse the sentence pronounced by Christ on the millions on earth. Possibly this approval may be divinely appointed an essential condition, without which sentence would not be pronounced by man upon men, but by men themselves redeemed from their own sins, upon those who have chosen death rather than life. They further claim that it may be that final sentence cannot, according to the principles of the divine government of the universe, be pronounced upon the lost without the concurrence of the saved, that is, without a revelation of the sentence so clear as to secure the full approbation of the saved. If so, the concurrence of the saved is an essential element in the final judgment; and they may truly be said to judge both men and angels. That the sentence which the saints will pronounce is put into their lips by Christ does not make their part in the judgment any less real; for even the Son says, 'I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge' (John 5:30). As summoned by Christ to sit with Him, the saints will approve and endorse the measures of reward to be given to themselves. To appeal to human courts of law was to appeal to men upon whom, as upon all men, they

themselves, amid the splendor of the great assize, will pronounce an eternal sentence.

How and when the saints will judge the world seems difficult to determine, but as a truth it is accepted, and the apostle argues that they are competent to judge the differences arising among themselves."

Are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? - Christians, who in some sense would be judging the world, are certainly capable of judging in any matters of dispute between brethren.

6:3. *Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life?*

We shall judge angels - Some assume the "we" in this verse refers to the apostles. However, the context is dealing with the ability of the saints to judge the disputes that sometimes occur between Christians. Therefore, it must refer to Christians. The angels in this verse are the "angels who sinned" (2 Peter 2:4). Those faithful angels serving God have no need to be judged.

How much more, things that pertain to this life - If Christians will judge the world, and if Christians will judge the fallen angels, then Christians should be able to judge things pertaining to this life (differences between fellow-members of the church). Christians who judge these matters between brethren, must remember that Jesus is the supreme judge.

6:4. *If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?*

If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life - These are common matters, disputes among Christians.

Those who are least esteemed by the church - This is a reference to heathen judges in the city courts who knew nothing of Christian principles of morality and justice. This is written to shame these Christian for going to such judges to settle their differences.

6:5. *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?*

I say this to your shame - Paul is saying they should have been ashamed for doing such a foolish thing.

Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? - Literally, Paul is asking, "Does there not exist among you even one wise man?" There were some in the

congregation who claimed to have wisdom, even beyond that possessed by Paul. However, they were foolishly going to heathen courts to settle disputes.

6:6. *But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers!*

But brother goes to law against brother and that before unbelievers - Certainly, heathen judges were not wiser, fairer and more equitable than Christian judges.

6:7. *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 defrauded?*

An utter failure - The Greek word used here is defined as, "an inferiority to a particular standard, default, failure, shortcoming." This Greek word is only used here and Romans 11:12.

Why do you not rather accept wrong? - It is better for a Christian to endure the mistreatment he thinks his brother is imposing on him, than to bring shame to the church before the secular courts.

Why do you not rather let yourselves be defrauded? - It is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong by taking a brother to court and shaming the church before the world.

6:8. *No, you yourselves do wrong and defraud, and you do these things to your brethren!*

You yourselves do wrong and defraud - How?

1. By not returning good for evil (Romans 12:17-21).
2. By going to law in heathen courts. It is like "hanging out your dirty wash" before the public which causes them to ridicule the church.

Not only were they not enduring wrong and obeying Christ (Matthew 5:40; 1 Peter 2:22; comp. Proverbs 20:22), but they were guilty of engaging in a wrong action against their brethren.

Paul now goes on to explain the dangers of evil actions.

6:9-10. *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, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

The unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God - The "unrighteous" in this context refers to committing the unrighteous act of taking a dispute with a brother to a secular court before heathen judges. Inheriting the "kingdom of God" refers to the faithful Christian's heavenly home (Ephesians 5:5); eternal salvation (1 Peter 1:4-5). Paul now makes a comparison of this unrighteousness with other sins to demonstrate the danger of such an act.

Do not be deceived - Do not be misled by deceivers:

1. Fornicators - This refers to those guilty of any sexual immorality. This is any illicit sexual intercourse. Fornication is the broader term which includes any sexual immorality such as adultery, homosexuality, incest, premarital sex, prostitution and bestiality.
2. Idolaters - The worship of an idol as though it were God. Idolatry includes worship, reverence or excessive devotion for some person or thing. An idol is a thing or person loved more than God, wanted more than God, desired more than God and treasured more than God.
3. Adulterers - An adulterer is a married person engaging in sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse. It also includes an unmarried person who has sexual intercourse with the spouse of another (Matthew 19:9).
4. Homosexuals - This is translated in some versions as "effeminate." The Greek word used here (MALAKOS) is used to describe material that is soft to the touch, soft raiment. However, in this context it describes those men who take on an effeminate personality or features to attract other men for the purpose of unnatural sexual acts.
5. Sodomites - A sodomite is a man who has sexual relations with another man, a homosexual.
6. Thieves - "Thieves" are those who take the property belonging to another.
7. Covetous - To covet means to possess a driving desire to have more. The one who is covetous is greedy of gain, eager to have more, especially those things belonging to others.
8. Drunkards - This describes those who are intoxicated. In 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8 God commands every Christian to be sober which means being free from the influence of intoxicating beverages. Recent studies have shown that, from the very first

drop, consumed alcohol affects a person's inhibitions. The state of drunkenness occurs by degrees and begins with the first drink.

9. Revilers - This word means to attack someone with scornful or abusive language.
10. Extortioners - Extortion is having a strong desire to acquire money or things by force. It is defined as the illegal use of one's official position or powers to obtain property, funds, or patronage. It can refer to the act of obtaining something by psychological pressure or by an excessive or exorbitant charge.

6:11. *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.*

And such were some of you - In view of the past conduct of the Corinthians, we should be impressed with:

1. The power of the gospel to transform lives (1 Timothy 1:12-16).
2. The mercy of God to forgive and adopt repentant sinners into His family.
3. The need for preaching the gospel to the worst sinners.

This backward look into the past lives of the Corinthians should produce in them:

1. Humility, a sense of their unworthiness.
2. Gratitude for what the Lord has done for them.
3. A deep sense of appreciation of the mercy and goodness of God.
4. An eagerness and desire to share these blessings with others.

But you were washed - The Corinthians, through faith in Christ, had died to their sins, been buried with Him in baptism, wherein they were also raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). They had washed away their sins in the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5). Like Paul (Acts 22:16) they had obtained the forgiveness of sins promised in the gospel by obeying the divinely ordained conditions required for the remission of their sins (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38).

You were sanctified - This is from the Greek word HAGIAZŌ which means separated from sin and consecrated to God. A sinner is sanctified by faithful obedience to God's plan of salvation. All who have thus been sanctified are called saints.

You were justified - The word "justified" is the English translation of the Greek word (DIKAIŌŌ) which means "to hold as guiltless, to accept as righteous, to justify; to forgive and treat as if one had never sinned." Notice the order in the verse: washed, sanctified, justified. If one is not washed in the blood of Christ they cannot be sanctified or justified (Acts 22:16).

In the name of the Lord Jesus - All of this has been accomplished in and through the person and work of Jesus Christ. The phrase "in the name of" means by the authority of. This should be kept in mind when looking at such verses as Colossians 3:17.

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

And by the Spirit of our God - The Holy Spirit had sanctified the work of preaching the good news of salvation to the Corinthians (Romans 15:16).

**E. DEALING WITH FORNICATION..... 6:12-20**

6:12. *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.*

All things are lawful for me - "Lawful" is from the Greek word which means "to bring together, to be for benefit, profitable, expedient." Paul is not saying that it was lawful for him to commit sin. All things were lawful if they were in accordance with God's will.

But all things are not helpful - Paul is saying that something could be lawful but not necessarily helpful to others. These actions might not be sinful, but they could cause problems for others and so should not be done.

I will not be brought under the power of any. The Christian must not be enslaved to anything. Such enslavement is idolatry (Philippians 3:18-19). Christians have only one Master - the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Greek there is actually a play on words in this verse. The Greek word translated as "lawful" can also be translated as "all things are in my power." Then this phrase would be translated, "All things are in my power, but I will not be brought under the power of any."

6:13. *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.*

Foods for the stomach - The Corinthians put food and sexual relations in the same class of lawful things. The argument was that God gave us food and a stomach to handle the food so it is lawful for us to use both. God gave us sexual desire and a body for satisfying that desire, so it was lawful to have that satisfaction. However, God limited both of these things:

1. God limited the intake of food by making gluttony a sin (Philippians 3:19).
2. God limited satisfying sexual desires by limiting sexual relations to the marriage relationship (1 Corinthians 7:1-2; Hebrews 13:4).

God will destroy both it and them - Meats and the body are both physical and temporal, so they are to be given less attention than the spiritual man.

The body is not for sexual immorality - Here Paul destroys their parallel. He admits that the body is for food and food is for the body; but he denies the body is for sexual immorality and that sexual immorality is for the body.

But for the Lord - As food is for the body, and the body is for food; so, the body is for the Lord and the Lord is for the body. He gave man his body to use in glorifying Him, not for the sinful gratification of man's sexual desire.

6:14. *And God both raised up the Lord and will also raise us up by His power.*

God has both raised up the Lord - Paul affirms the bodily resurrection of Jesus.

And will also raise us up by His power - As surely as the body of Jesus was raised from the tomb, so surely will our bodies be raised from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:12-19). Food is related to the body only temporarily, but the body is related to the Lord eternally. The body of the Christian will be raised on the day of judgment and transformed into a spiritual body (1 Corinthians 15:42-44).

6:15. *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!*

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? - Christians are united with Christ. Therefore, what they do reflects either honor or dishonor, glory or shame, upon Him. We use our hands and feet to accomplish our purposes and Christ uses Christians to accomplish His purposes.

Shall I then take the members of Christ - The body cannot be used for fornication without its being taken away from Christ.

Make them the members of a harlot? - This is said by Paul to the Corinthians to make them (and us) realize how terrible the sin of fornication truly is.

6:16. *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."*

He who is joined to a harlot is one body - The word translated as "joined" in this verse means, "joins himself or cleaves to" which indicates the individual's responsibility for his own actions.

The two, He says, shall become one flesh - To be one flesh (body) with a harlot is to have the same evil inclinations and passions. They are one in interests and desires. The fact that Genesis 2:24 is used here does not mean the Christian and the harlot become married in the act of fornication. The union of Genesis 2:24 is God-made and is a permanent union; but fornication, though similar, is not God-made and is not permanent.

6:17. *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

He who is joined to the Lord is one spirit - This is a spiritual union. Christians are in Christ and Christ is in Christians so that the thoughts, actions and desires are one. Christ is living in the Christian and the Christian is manifesting the life of Christ in their bodies (2 Corinthians 4:10-11).

6:18. *Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.*

Flee sexual immorality - The Greek word for "flee" here is present tense and therefore means that we should continue (never stop) fleeing sexual immorality. It is an ongoing effort. This is the only safe way to deal with all temptations.

Every sin that a man does is outside the body - In fornication the body is the instrument of the sin and is inwardly, as well as outwardly, involved in the sin.

But he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body - How?

1. He uses his body for its own destruction.
2. He severs his body from union with Christ.
3. He invites horrible diseases into his body.

6:19. *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?*

Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit - The word "temple" is from the Greek word (NAOS) which is defined as the sanctuary of Deity, as opposed to the

Greek word (HIERÓN) which is also translated as temple, but refers to the entire temple complex including the surrounding grounds.

1. A Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit because Christians are the children of God (Galatians 4:6).
2. The Holy Spirit is a gift to the believers who repent, confess their faith and are baptized (Acts 2:38).
3. The Christian's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit because they have obeyed the gospel (Acts 5:32).
4. If the Holy Spirit is not in you, you do not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9).

Whom you have from God - The Holy Spirit is from God:

1. The Holy Spirit is a seal of God's ownership (Ephesians 1:14; 4:30).
2. The Holy Spirit is the earnest (down payment) of a Christian's salvation (Ephesians 1:14; 2 Corinthians 2:22; 5:5).
3. Christians are to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23).

You are not your own - How were these Christians not their own?

1. They were members of the church Jesus built (Acts 20:28).
2. They were redeemed with the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).
3. They were for God's possession (1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:14).
4. They were bought by the Master (2 Peter 2:1).
5. They were purchased unto God (Revelation 5:9).

6:20. *For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

For you were bought at a price - The purchase price was the precious blood of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:17-19 explains, "And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless

conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Glorify God in your body - Paul is telling Christians:

1. Give your body as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1).
2. Give your body as a holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1).
3. It is a reasonable service, since God has done so much for you.
4. It is an ennobling service, it never brings disgrace.
5. It prepares one for eternal life with God and all the redeemed.
6. It is a service unto sanctification (Romans 6:19,22; 13:1).

## II. INFORMATION FROM THE CHURCH'S LETTER.....7:1-16:9

### A. MARRIAGE ..... 7:1-24

#### CHAPTER 7

7:1. *Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*

Concerning the things of which you wrote - Here and following are Paul's answers to a number of questions which the church at Corinth asked him in a letter.

Good for a man not to touch a woman -

1. Touch - This comes from the Greek word HAPTOMAI which means to have unlawful physical intercourse with a woman.
2. Good - This comes from the Greek word KALOS which is defined as ethically good, morally excellent.
3. Paul is saying a single life is good, but it is not to be demanded. God endorses marriage (Hebrews 13:4; Ephesians 5:31-33).

7:2. *Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.*

Because of sexual immorality (fornication) -

1. This is a sin that was very prevalent in Corinth. It was even part of their heathen religion.
2. Each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband on account of the built-in desire for satisfying sexual desires.
3. Not all people are able to easily control their sexual desires. Therefore, it is better to marry than to burn (1 Corinthians 7:9).
4. So, to avoid sexual immorality it is better to marry.

Let each man have his own wife -

1. Own - This means pertaining to oneself; of what is one's own as opposed to belonging to another.
2. Notice that the word "wife" is singular. Polygamy is not allowed under the law of Christ (Matthew 19:4-6; 1 Corinthians 9:5; Ephesians 5:23).
3. This statement is in the imperative mood which makes it a binding command on those who do not have the ability to easily control their sexual desires.

7:3. *Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.*

Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her -

1. Let...render - The Greek word here (APODIDŌMI) is also imperative. It is literally "let him pay." The word means "to pay off" or "discharge what is due."
2. To fail to do this is to expose the wife to temptation and in such a case, if she commits adultery, the husband would not be an innocent party.

Also the wife to the husband - In the marriage union each spouse owes the other fulfillment of sexual desires to prevent fornication. Fornication is defined as any form of sexual immorality.

7:4. *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.*

The wife does not have authority over her own body -

1. Authority - This is from the Greek word (EXOUSIAZŌ) which is defined as to exercise authority over one. This relates to the use of her body.
2. Notice that in verse 3 the husband is mentioned first, but here it is the reverse.
3. The husband and wife are treated equally in this matter of authority over one's own body.

7:5. *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.*

Do not deprive one another - The Greek word translated as "deprive" in the imperative mood. Therefore, it is a command to not keep back or deprive sexual intercourse from a spouse.

Except with consent. This is from the Greek word (SUMPHŌNOS) which literally means "sounding together." It requires the agreement of both parties.

For a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer - The "time" in this verse is aorist tense and indicates a short period of time.

And come together again - This refers to coming together sexually.

So that Satan does not tempt you - Satan is always on the job (1 Peter 5:8-9). Long separation gives Satan the advantage.

Because of your lack of self-control - The phrase "lack of self-control" is from the Greek word (AKRASIA) which means unruly appetite or lustfulness.

7:6. *But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.*

As a concession - The Greek word literally means a knowing together or agreement.

Not as a commandment - Paul is not commanding that a married couple must abstain from sexual activity for a time. The abstaining is a matter for each couple to decide for themselves.

7:7. *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.*

For I wish that all men were even as I myself - Paul's preference is to practice self-control and remain unmarried. He wishes that all men had the same self-control over sexual desires that he had.

But each man has his own gift from God. The gift here is a favor which one receives without any merit of his own. It is used in this verse of the natural gift of self-restraint with regard to sexual desires.

7:8. *But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;*

But I say to the unmarried - The Greek word (AGAMOIS) translated as "unmarried" is plural and masculine. Therefore, this refers to unmarried men.

And to the widows - This refers to women who have lost their husbands and are scripturally eligible to remarry.

It is good for them if they remain even as I am -

1. This statement does not contradict the fact that it "is not good that the man should be alone" (Genesis 2:18). A single life is good in the sense of life being in itself honorable.
2. This is NOT a commandment to remain single.
3. This statement takes into consideration the "present distress" (1 Corinthians 7:26). Paul understood the trials and persecutions Christians were facing at that time and would be facing in the future.
4. Under other circumstances Paul told young widows to marry (1 Timothy 5:14).

7:9. *but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.*

But if they cannot exercise self-control - If they do not have the natural gift of self-restraint with regard to sexual desires.

It is better to marry than to burn with passion - "To burn" means to be continually inflamed. Notice, Paul did not say celibacy is better; he only said it is good (verse 8). He also did not say that celibacy is a holier state.

7:10. *Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband.*

Now to the married I command -

1. The married - The Greek word here (GEGAMĒKOSIN) means "having been and still are married."
2. Command - The Greek (PARAGGELLŌ) means to give a commandment which has been received from a higher source.

Yet not I but the Lord - The Lord is that higher source from whom he received the command. Paul is also referring to Christ's declarations regarding divorce (Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-12).

The phrase "not I but the Lord" is not a distinction between an inspired and an uninspired teaching. Paul is saying that the Corinthians had no need to ask him for instructions in the matter of divorce because they had already received Christ's commands on it.

A wife is not to depart from her husband - The fact that she may be "reconciled" to her husband (verse 11) versus remarrying implies that the word "depart" is not being used in the sense of divorce.

7:11. *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.*

But even if she does depart - "The reference throughout the verse is to separation due to incompatibility of temper, etc., not to legal divorce" (Pulpit Commentary).

Let her remain unmarried - She is not allowed to marry another man.

Or be reconciled - Notice, reconciliation is all that is needed, not remarriage.

And a husband is not to divorce his wife - The word "divorce" is from the Greek word "APHIENAI" which is present, infinitive, active meaning to "send forth." The husband had no right to send forth his wife even when considering Paul's advice about the "present distress" (1 Corinthians 7:26).

7:12. *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.*

But to the rest - This may refer to the rest of the married not treated in verses 10 and 11; or it may refer to the rest of the things in the letter of inquiry.

Not the Lord - This does not mean Paul is giving his uninspired opinion. He is simply saying the Lord did not specifically address this situation. He does not

quote the Lord as he did in verses 10 and 11, but he is speaking as an inspired apostle; and as such it has been bound in heaven (Matthew 16:19).

Matthew 16:19 is in the future perfect tense in the Greek text and should have been translated – "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will **have been** bound in heaven, and whatsoever you loose on earth will **have been** loosed in heaven."

This was a promise that the apostles were going to be inspired by the Holy Spirit to know and teach the truth, not that they had authority to give their own private rules for the church.

If any brother has a wife who does not believe - This differs from the case in verses 10 and 11 where both in the marriage union are Christians.

And she is willing to live with him - "Willing" is from the Greek word (SUNEUDOKEŌ) which means pleased or agree together. The word "live" refers to living in the marriage union.

Let him not divorce her - This is a case where both were unbelievers when they married, but now the husband has become a Christian. In the letter it appears that Paul was asked if the Christian must leave the one who is not a Christian. The word "believer" is used in the sense of an obedient believer, a Christian. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the appendices, DESERTION BY AN UNBELIEVER, Author Unknown.]

- 7:13. *And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.*

And a woman who has a husband who does not believe - It applies to both the husband and the wife. Jesus also made it clear that His commands concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage (Matthew 19:9) applied equally to both the husband and the wife (Mark 10:11-12).

- 7:14. *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.*

For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife - The word "sanctified" here is perfect tense which means the husband has been and is still set apart by the Lord as a fit husband and father. God has recognized this marriage union and still does. So, a believer and an unbeliever may live together as husband and wife with the Lord's blessing. This is no violation of Paul's teaching in 2 Corinthians 6:14-18. This does not mean that the wife's Christianity automatically saves the unbelieving husband.

Otherwise your children would be unclean - If the marriage union was unholy, their children would be unclean, illegitimate.

But now they are holy - The marriage union is of God. Both husband and wife are **sanctified as marriage partners** so the children are holy in the sense of being legitimate.

7:15. *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.*

But if the unbeliever departs - "Unbeliever" is used to describe one who is not a Christian. "Departs" is a translation of the Greek word "CHŌRIZETAI" which means, "if he separates himself." This word does not mean divorce in verses 10 and 11 so it is consistent to interpret here just as we did in those verses.

Let him depart - In this Paul addresses the believer only (1 Corinthians 5:12). The believer is not obligated to force the unbeliever to remain.

A brother or a sister is not under bondage - Notice the believer is described as a brother or sister in Christ.

2. Not under bondage - This is from the Greek (OU DEDOULŌTAI) which is third person, singular, perfect, indicative, passive of DOULOŌ. This is defined as, "to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity in some matter."
3. Notice again that this word is in the perfect tense which means "the believer has **never been** and **still is not** under bondage to the unbeliever." But the believer has been and still is in the marriage bond with the unbeliever. Therefore, the bondage spoken of here is NOT the marriage bond! The meaning is simply that the believer is not so bound to the unbeliever that he/she must give up, leave, Christ to preserve the marriage union. The Christian's bondage to Christ must be maintained even if it means losing a spouse.

Adultery is the only basis God allows for a divorce and the adultery must precede and be the reason for the divorce (Matthew 19:9). If adultery occurs the innocent spouse (not the guilty spouse) is allowed to divorce their guilty spouse and remarry with God's approval. It is not required, but it is allowed. This is the only grounds on which a married man or woman may divorce and remarry according to God's law. Marriage is for life (Romans 7:2-3) with only one possible exception - adultery. The innocent spouse is allowed to divorce their spouse and remarry a biblically eligible mate.

But God has called us to peace - The Christian is obligated to do everything possible, except give up Christ, to live in peace with all men (Romans 12:18-21).

**[For additional information concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage please see the appendices - BONDAGE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 7:15, by Author Unknown and MARRIAGE - DIVORCE - REMARRIAGE, by Roy H. Lanier, Sr.]**

7:16. *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?*

For how do you know...whether you will save? - The believer does not know whether he/she may convert the unbeliever (1 Peter 3:1-2).

7:17. *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.*

But as God has distributed - The Lord in His providence has had something to do with our station in life. The Greek word for "has distributed" means "to assign, bestow, share or impart."

The Lord has called each one - God calls "each one" through the gospel which is preached to all men (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14). This call of the gospel message is not to cause a break in social and domestic relationships which are morally right and Scriptural.

So I ordain in all the churches - "Ordain" is from a Greek word (DIATASSŌ) which is a military term used of those in authority (1 Corinthians 9:14; Galatians 3:19), showing that the apostles had such authority. The phrase "in all the churches" proves this command applies to all the churches (1 Corinthians 4:17).

7:18. *Was anyone called while circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Was anyone called while uncircumcised? Let him not be circumcised.*

Was anyone called while circumcised? - This is a reference to those Jews who had become Christians.

Let him not become uncircumcised - This is a practice referred to often by Jewish writers (see Josephus 12.5.1). The word "uncircumcised" is from the Greek word (EPISPAOMAI) which means to obliterate circumcision by artificial extension of the foreskin.

Was anyone called in uncircumcision? - This is a reference to those Gentiles who had become Christians. Paul tells them not to become circumcised.

7:19. *Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.*

Circumcision is nothing - Whether one is a Jew or Gentile makes no difference to Christ. It was difficult for Jews, especially Judaizers, to accept this rule.

But keeping the commandments of God - This proves circumcision is no longer a commandment of God. This also proves that we are living under a new covenant (Hebrews 8:13; 9:14-18). Circumcision is contrasted with faith in Galatians 5:6. It is contrasted with the new creature in Galatians 6:15.

7:20. *Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.*

Let each one remain in the same calling - Christianity does not require the Jews or Greeks to change their nationality. Nationality has nothing to do with the requirements for salvation.

In which he was called - This refers to the time he became a Christian.

7:21. *Were you called while a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use it.*

Called while a slave? - This refers to being a physical slave of men.

Do not be concerned about it - One can be a Christian serving Christ even while in physical slavery (Philemon 1:10-17).

If you can be made free, rather use it - There is no Greek word for "it" in the actual text. So, we are left with the questions, "What is the slave to use?" Some say the slave should use this as an opportunity to obtain his freedom. However, this explanation does not harmonize with the point Paul is making, that a change should not be sought. From the context it would appear Paul is saying the Christian slave should use his position as a converted slave to glorify God.

In studying these verses, we must keep in mind that slavery was widespread in the Roman world at this time. For example, scholars have estimated 30-40% of the population of Italy were slaves in the 1st century. That would be upwards of two to three million slaves in Italy alone not including the slaves in the rest of the empire which are estimated to be around 10-15% of the total population. [For additional information please see the appendices - DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.]

7:22. *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.*

For he who is called in the Lord while a slave -

1. Called - Remember we are called by the gospel (2 Thessalonians 2:14).
2. In the Lord - The Greek word (EN) translated as "in" would be better translated by the English word "by" in this verse.
3. Slave - This refers to being a bondservant, in slavery.

the Lord's freedman - The Greek word used here is an old word for a released slave. He has been bought with the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18-19).

He who is called while free - This refers to one not in slavery.

Is Christ's slave - What are the implications of this?

1. Christians are obligated to obey Christ.
2. Christians are to glorify God in their body (1 Corinthians 6:20).
3. Christians must give their bodies as a living, holy sacrifice (Romans 12:1).
4. Christians must manifest the life of Christ in their bodies (2 Corinthians 4:10-11).
5. Christians are slaves of the one whom they obey (Romans 6:16).

7:23. *You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.*

You were bought at a price - The price paid for the redemption of men is the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; Titus 2:14).

Do not become slaves of men - The present tense is used here, which literally means "stop becoming the slaves of men." In this Paul was condemning "religious" slavery to men by being followers of men (1 Corinthians 1:12-13).

7:24. *Brethren, let each one remain with God in that calling in which he was called.*

Let each one remain with God in that calling - What does this not mean?

1. This does not justify remaining in an unlawful condition or occupation.
2. This does not mean people can remain in unscriptural marriages. Jesus calls such marriages adulterous unions (Matthew 5:32; 19:9)

and Paul would not tell people to continue to live in adultery (cf. Colossians 3:5-7).

3. This does not mean it is acceptable to remain in a sinful condition. Many of the Corinthian Christians had lived immorally, but they had quit such behavior. They had been washed, sanctified and justified (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

## **B. DEALING WITH VIRGINS 7:25-40**

7:25. *Now concerning virgins: I have no commandment from the Lord; yet I give judgment as one whom the Lord in His mercy has made trustworthy.*

Now concerning virgins -

1. There must have been a question in the letter sent to Paul about the state of virgins.
2. Virgins - This comes from the Greek word (PARTHENOS) which is defined as "a maiden; an unmarried daughter - virgin." This is the same Greek word used to describe Mary (Matthew 1:23).

I have no commandment from the Lord - This simply means the Lord did not touch on this point during His personal ministry (John 16:12-15).

I give judgment - It must be remembered that Paul's judgment was guided by the Holy Spirit.

As one whom the Lord in His mercy has made me trustworthy -

1. In His mercy - In that he was saved from his sins and made an apostle (1 Timothy 1:12-16).
2. Trustworthy - This is from the Greek word (PISTOS) which means "faithful" (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

7:26. *I suppose therefore that this is good because of the present distress - that it is good for a man to remain as he is:*

This is good because of the present distress - Paul understood the trials and persecutions Christians were facing at that time and would be facing in the future.

For a man to remain as he is - "Man" is from the Greek word (ANTHRŌPOS) which is a general term including both male and female. Paul is saying that it

would be good for a man or woman to remain in their present state (if married, remain married; if single, remain single).

7:27. *Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.*

Are you bound to a wife? -

1. Bound - This is from the Greek word (DEŌ) which means to bind as in marriage. This is not the word for bondage as used in verse 15. The Greek word used in verse 15 (DOULOS) is never used of the marriage bond. Whenever the marriage bond is mentioned, the word DEŌ is always used (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:39 then 1 Corinthians 7:15).
2. The form of DEŌ here is perfect tense. This would be translated literally as, "Have you been bound and still are bound?"

Do not seek to be loosed - Literally this means, "seek not a release."

Are you loosed from a wife? -

1. Loosed - Once again this is perfect tense meaning, "Have you been released and still are released?" This could come about by the death of the wife or by divorce because of the sexual immorality of the wife.
2. Paul would not tell a man who was divorced because of his adultery that he even had the option to "seek a wife." This would be contrary to the teachings of Jesus (Matthew 19:9).

7:28. *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.*

But even if you do marry, you have not sinned - Paul is literally saying, "but and if you marry, you have not sinned." This is said of a man who is eligible to marry. He is left to act according to his best judgment. If he is not able to control his sexual desires, he should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with desire (1 Corinthians 7:9).

And if a virgin marries - A maiden (unmarried daughter) is also permitted to use her judgment the same as a man.

Such will have trouble - The "trouble" Paul mentions is the intense persecution against Christians.

But I would spare you - The meaning is, "I am giving you these instructions in order to spare you the suffering of the coming persecution against Christians."

- 7:29. *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,*

The time is short - From the context we can see this is referring to the time of persecution Christians face in this life, not the final coming of Jesus.

Those who have wives should be as though they had none - They should be as dedicated and faithful to God in times of persecution as if they were not married. The persecution of a Christian's wife might tempt him to forsake Christ.

- 7:30. *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,*

Those who weep as though they did not weep - We are not to let our sorrows keep us from our duties to God. Christians must keep in mind the brevity of life.

Those who rejoice - Neither are we to allow our joys to keep us from serving God.

Those who buy - And certainly we are not to allow our possessions or business pursuits keep us from serving God, but rather we are to use them for the glory of God.

- 7:31. *and those who use this world as not misusing it. For the form of this world is passing away.*

And those who use this world as not misusing it - In this verse the things of this world are right things. Paul is addressing those things in this world which are not sinful. The warning is against misusing the good things of this world for one's own pleasure. The Christian must understand that as pilgrims in this world the things of this life are temporary (Hebrews 11:13; 1 Peter 2:11). We must not allow marriage, tears, joy, possessions, or other things of this world to keep us from our obedience and service to Christ.

For the form of this world is passing away - The things of this world (and the world itself) are temporary (James 4:13-16; 2 Peter 3:10).

- 7:32. *But I want you to be without care. He who is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord - how he may please the Lord.*

But I want you to be without care - Paul gives them advice to save them from anxiety.

He who is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord - What advantages does the unmarried man have?

1. He has time that married men do not have for service to God.
2. He has resources married men do not have to contribute to the Lord's work.
3. He is free from mental worries he would have if he were married.
4. He has fewer home obligations than if he were married.
5. There is not the risk of having a worldly spouse who would hinder him both morally and spiritually.

7:33. *But he who is married cares about the things of the world—how he may please his wife.*

He who is married cares for the things of the world - "Cares" come from the Greek word which literally means "divided in mind" which expresses a state of anxiety. This is the same word used of Martha (Luke 10:41). This suggests that husbands should give time and thought to pleasing their wives (1 Peter 3:7).

7:34. *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.*

The woman who is unmarried (the virgin):

1. Unmarried woman - This would include unmarried maidens (virgins) and widows.
2. Virgin - One who has never been married.

Cares about the things of the Lord - See verse 32 for comparison.

1. She has time that married women do not have for service to God.
2. She has resources married women do not have to contribute to the Lord's work.
3. She is free from mental worries she would have if she were married.

4. She has fewer home obligations than if she were married.
5. There is not the risk of having a worldly spouse who would hinder her both morally and spiritually.

That she may be holy both in body and in spirit -

1. Holy - The meaning of the Greek word here is "separated from sin and consecrated to God."
2. Body - Christians are commanded to give their bodies as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1-2).
3. Spirit - This refers to the inner man (2 Corinthians 7:1). The meaning here is that she can give herself completely to the Lord; not being divided in her concern for the Lord by having to give time and thought to a husband and family.

7:35. *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.*

And this I say for your own profit - Paul would always tell the people what they needed to hear.

Acts 20:18-20, "And when they had come to him, he said to them: 'You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house, testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

Not that I may put a leash on you - The word "leash" is a translation of the Greek word (BROCHOS) which is defined as a snare, noose or slip-knot used for lassoing, strangling or hanging. Paul does not want to ensnare the Corinthians compelling them to do what they do not wish to do about getting married.

But for what is proper - The word "proper" means of good standing, honorable or respectable (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:24).

May serve the Lord without distraction - The meaning here is to serve the Lord without divided attention such as family commitments might impose upon one.

7:36. *But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly toward his virgin, if she is past the flower of her youth, and thus it must be, let him do what he wishes; he does not sin; let them marry.*

But if any man thinks he is behaving improperly - To behave in a manner which is unfair or not fitting.

Toward his virgin (*maiden, unmarried daughter*) - There is no Greek word for daughter in this passage but the context demands it.

If she is past the flower of her youth - If she has reached full sexual maturity.

And thus it must be - Literally, this is "and so ought to be" meaning, if her sexual maturity and desire requires marriage. It is as true for an unmarried woman as it is for an unmarried man that it is better to marry than to burn with desire (1 Corinthians 7:9).

Let him do what he wishes - This is also an imperative expressing a command.

David Lipscomb makes the following point:

"If, then, a man thinks he treats his virgin daughter wrong in withholding her from marriage, he must act according to her requirements. That is, if she cannot live satisfied in the unmarried state, let him give her in marriage, and he need not fear that in doing so he does wrong."

Let them marry - This is another imperative. Since fathers arranged the marriages of their daughters in the culture, Paul commands the father to allow the marriage of an unmarried daughter whose sexual maturity and needs require marriage.

7:37. *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.*

Nevertheless he who stands steadfast in his heart, having no necessity - If her sexual maturity is such as it does not require marriage, and he is fully convinced having resolved to keep his daughter unmarried in those perilous times under his own protection and control, then he does well. The circumstances allow for this advantageous decision.

7:38. *So then he who gives her in marriage does well, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.*

So then -

1. He who gives her in marriage - Permits the marriage of his virgin daughter.

2. Does well - The father is commended for allowing the marriage.
3. But he who does not give her in marriage does better - He does what is advantageous or useful.
  - a. Because she could give herself completely to the service of God.
  - b. In view of the persecutions to come.

7:39. *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.*

A wife is bound - This teaching is also found in Romans 7 to illustrate to the Jews that they were no longer under the old law.

Romans 7:1-4, "Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God."

Only in the Lord - There are two possible views on this:

1. This means only within the Lord's prescribed will; i.e. that her proposed mate is eligible for marriage.
2. This means only to a Christian. If she does not marry a Christian:
  - a. She exposes herself to unchristian influences.
  - b. She exposes her children, those she may have and those she may bear, to the influences of an unbelieving husband and father, who is a child of the Devil.
  - c. She has no help in her prayer life.
  - d. She is hindered in making important moral decisions for herself and her children.

[For additional information concerning this issue please see the articles in the appendices - "ONLY IN THE LORD" by Roy Deaver and Guy N. Woods.]

7:40. *But she is happier if she remains as she is, according to my judgment - and I think I also have the Spirit of God.*

She is happier - It is better for her to remain a widow.

I think I also have the Spirit of God - Paul was inspired by the Holy Spirit. The Greek phrase here could also be translated as "I am **certain** I have the Spirit of God." Greek scholars have said the Greek word (DOKEÎN) which is translated as "think" in this verse was not always used by the ancients to express what is doubtful, but often to express what is true and certain. It is certain that what Paul wrote came from the Lord (1 Corinthians 14:37).

**C. DEALING WITH IDOLATRY .....8:1-11:1**

**1. MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS.....8:1-13**

## CHAPTER 8

8:1. *Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.*

Now concerning things offered to idols - Again, this is a reference to the things they had asked in their letter. In the Greek the phrase "things offered to idols" is one word and refers to that portion of the meat which was not burned in sacrifice to the idol.

1. The meat was sometimes eaten in the home of the idol worshiper (1 Corinthians 10:27- 29).
2. At times the meat was sold to a meat market to be sold again.
3. Sometimes the meat was eaten in a feast to honor the false god.

We know that we all have knowledge - This seems to be Paul's way of saying that all Christians know an idol is nothing (1 Corinthians 8:4).

Knowledge puffs up - Knowledge that is not guided by God's love makes one arrogant, conceited and self-satisfied.

But love edifies - Knowledge and love are both essential but love has the ability to build one up. Being built up is far better than being puffed up.

8:2. *And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.*

If anyone thinks that he knows he knows nothing yet as he ought to know - The man who is overly confident in his own wisdom for guidance really knows nothing. He does not know anything in a helpful way in relation to the truth concerning man and God.

8:3. *But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.*

But if anyone loves God - If we do not love, we do not know God. Also, we cannot love God if we hate our brother.

1 John 4:7-8, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love."

1 John 4:20-21, "If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also."

This one is known by Him - The Greek word which is translated as "is known" is perfect, passive, indicative, which means the one has been known and still is known by Him. God knows those who are His (Galatians 4:9).

8:4. *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.*

We know that an idol is nothing -

1. Eating the meat sacrificed to idols was the issue and Paul gives his answer to the problem in verses 7 and 13.
2. It is granted that the idol is nothing, but the man who had before always eaten the meat as an act of worship had difficulty making the necessary distinction.
3. Idols were merely images (created by men) of false gods having no real existence.
4. An idol is a nonentity - the emphasis here is on the nothingness of the idol. It is simply a creation of man, having no real significance in heaven or on earth. One of the Old Testament names for heathen idols is ELILIM which means "nothingness."

There is no other God but one -

1. "There is one God" is a numerical statement (cf. Isaiah 45:5; 46:9; 1 Timothy 2:5).
2. "Our God is one" is a statement of the unity of God (cf. Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29; Romans 3:29-30).
  - a. The Father is God (1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 1:1).
  - b. The Son is God (John 1:1-2; Romans 9:5; 1 John 5:20).
  - c. The Holy Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18).
3. There is only one essence of God (Deity), but there are three Persons within that essence. The Godhead means three distinct Persons - Father, Son and Holy Spirit in one distinct God.

8:5. *For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords),*

Even if there are so-called gods - The KJV does a better job translating this as "For though there be that are called gods." Examples of these so-called gods in the New Testament include Jupiter, Mercury and Diana (Acts 14:12; 19:34). In the minds of the heathens there were many gods and lords.

8:6. *yet for us there is only 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.*

Yet for us there is only one God - What can we say about the one true God?

1. He is the source of all things (Romans 11:36).
2. He is the object of our love and service.
3. He is the Father of our spirits (Hebrews 12:9; Acts 17:28-29).

And one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things - The word Lord here is used in the sense of Deity (Ephesians 4:5). The word "through" (DIA) is indicating agency rather than indicating source which is the Greek word EX. The Father is the ultimate source of all things, but Jesus, the Son, is the agent through whom are all things:

- a. Through Him all things came into existence (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:2).

- b. Through Him all things are upheld (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).

Through whom we live - Christians are what they are through the grace and agency of Jesus. He is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:1).  
Christians are:

1. Redeemed (Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14).
2. Bought (Acts 20:28; Revelation 5:9).
3. Raised from spiritual death to life (Ephesians 2:1).
4. Exalted to heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

8:7. *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 defiled.*

There is not in everyone that knowledge - In verse 1, Paul grants that we all have knowledge so far as mere intellect goes, but some are unable to translate that knowledge into their life-style so as to eat meat sacrificed to idols without engaging in the worship of the idol.

For some, with conscience of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol - Having formed the habit of worshipping an idol while eating the meat which had been sacrificed to an idol, it was difficult for them to change their attitude concerning the true nature of meat that had been offered to an idol.

Their conscience, being weak, is defiled - Knowledge must be distinguished from conscience. Knowledge is the intellect, and conscience is what God has put into man which forbids or allows man to do according to his knowledge. It is not the meat that defiles the conscience, for all meat is clean (Mark 7:19) and created to be received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5); but doing that which the conscience forbids, that defiles (Romans 14:23).

8:8. *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.*

But food does not commend us to God - Food will not give us any better standing with God.

Neither if we eat are we the better - The Greek word translated as "better" means to be preeminent, to excel. Paul's statement is said in order to restrain the pride

of those who can eat with a clear conscience and to curtail the jealousy of those who cannot eat with a clear conscience.

Nor if we do not eat are we the worse - This suggests that those who can eat without a defiled conscience are not to look down upon those who cannot.

- 8:9. *But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak.*

But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours - Personal liberty leads those who are loveless to live for self, regardless of the effects it might have upon others.

Become a stumbling block to those who are weak - The weak one is the one who cannot eat (Romans 14:1-3). The phrase "stumbling block" means the cause of inducing another to sin.

- 8:10. *For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols?*

For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple - The phrase "you who have knowledge" refers to those whose conscience is not defiled by eating meat.

David Lipscomb makes the following point:

"Those who have not freed themselves from conscience of the idol, who cannot eat of the meat sacrificed to it, without worshiping it, seeing one who has knowledge sitting at meat in the idol's temple, would suppose that the strong brother was worshiping the idol, and be led by the example to eat in worship to the idol."

Will not the conscience of him which is weak be emboldened? - Paul is saying that by your act, which does not hurt you, you are leading others to do something which will result in their spiritual destruction (Romans 14:15-23).

Emboldened - This comes from the Greek word OIKODOMEŌ which literally means "to build a house or erect a building." In this context it is used figuratively to describe one who has been influenced or encouraged to do something.

- 8:11. *And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died?*

And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish - This is knowledge without brotherly love. To "perish" means to be spiritually destroyed.

This is actually a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is a question asked in order to create a dramatic effect or to make a point rather than to get an answer. The ESV translates this verse as, "And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died."

The implication is that something which is not a sin in and of itself can become a sin when it leads those who are weak to sin. We are held accountable for our example and its influence on those Christians who have less knowledge.

For whom Christ died - Christ died for all. His death provides the opportunity for salvation to all who will obey.

1. Some teach that Christ died only for those who are randomly chosen to be saved which they call the "elect."
2. If this were true (which it is not) then according to this verse it would follow that those they call the "elect" can perish.
3. This actually nullifies their doctrine of "once saved, always saved."
4. The Bible teaches that God has chosen (as a class of people, not as individuals) to save those who obey Him.
5. The "elect" in the Bible are those who have chosen to be obedient to God's commands.

8:12. *But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.*

Sin against the brethren - An act which shows no love for a brother, shows no love for God (1 John 4:20-21).

And wound their weak conscience - The word "wound" comes from a Greek word which means to beat, strike or smite.

You sin against Christ - Can there be a more grievous sin?

Matthew 25:37-40, "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'"

8:13. *Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.*

If food makes my brother stumble - The word "stumble" means to entrap or trip up. It is to entice one to sin, so as to cause one to fall from grace and perish (cf. Matthew 13:21).

I will never again eat meat - Paul makes this decision on the principle that a brother's eternal soul is worth more than his own personal satisfaction. He was willing to forego his personal pleasure for the salvation of his brother. This is the law of brotherly love. However, we must be clear that this does not obligate a Christian to give up things which are matters of faith; things which a Christian must do to obey the Lord.

## 2. EXAMPLES OF SELF-SACRIFICE.....9:1-27

### CHAPTER 9

9:1. *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?*

Am I not an apostle? - Once again, we see Paul's use of rhetorical questions. Yes, Paul was an apostle, but some denied his apostleship.

Am I not free? - Paul was free to claim the same privileges as the other apostles.

Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? - Paul dates his apostleship from the appearance of Jesus (Acts 9:4; 22:14; 26:16) and other apostles recognized his apostleship (Galatians 2:7ff.). Paul calls Jesus "Lord" in the sense that Jesus is Deity (Titus 2:13). The "seeing" of Jesus by Paul was very significant.

Burton Coffman makes the following point:

"It is important to see in this short paragraph the impossibility of any man's being a true apostle unless he had seen Jesus Christ after our Lord's resurrection, thus being an eyewitness of the resurrection."

Are you not my work in the Lord? - The fact that the Corinthian church was his "work" was proved in many ways:

1. Paul had established (planted) the congregation in Corinth, others watered.
2. Paul had built them on the true foundation - Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10ff.).

3. Paul had confirmed his teaching with miracles (2 Corinthians 12:12).
4. Paul had laid hands on some of them to give them spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 1:4-7).

9:2. *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.*

If I am not an apostle to others yet doubtless I am to you - Paul is saying, "Even if others doubt I am an apostle, surely you cannot doubt because of my work with you."

You are the seal of my apostleship - Much like the seal of a notary, which is put on a paper to attest to its genuineness, so the conversions and spiritual growth of the church at Corinth was a seal confirming the genuineness of Paul's apostleship.

9:3. *My defense to those who examine me is this:*

My defense - "Defense" is a translation of the Greek word APOLOGIA. We get our word "apologetics" from this word. Apologetics is defined as "reasoned arguments or writings in justification of something, typically a theory or religious doctrine."

Is this - The word "this" may refer to what was said before concerning the proof of his apostleship.

9:4. *Do we have no right to eat and drink?*

Do we have no right to eat and drink? - Since Paul has proved his apostleship, he now explains his right to receive support by those among whom he had labored. It had been charged by some that Paul knew he was not a true apostle chosen of Christ because he would not accept support for his labors, but worked with his own hands to support himself and others (cf. Matthew 10:10-11; Luke 10:7; 1 Timothy 5:18).

9:5. *Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?*

Do we have no right to take along a believing wife? - Other apostles took their wives with them and expected sufficient support to care for them. If Paul was an apostle who was married could he not do the same?

As do also the other apostles? - Those who teach against preachers being married should consider this passage. If the apostles of Jesus were married, may not preachers of today follow their example?

The brothers of the Lord and Cephas -

1. This proves the brothers of Jesus (James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas - Matthew 13:55) were married.

David Lipscomb makes the following point:

"Some have endeavored to prove that they were the cousins of Jesus; others that they were the sons of Joseph by a former marriage. These views have been fostered by those who have endeavored to establish the perpetual virginity of Mary. But the natural conclusion from a study of what is said in the Gospels, without preconceived prejudice, would be that Joseph and Mary lived together as husband and wife after the miraculous conception and birth of Jesus, and that these sons were born unto them. This conclusion is supported by the use of the words: 'She brought forth her first-born son' (Luke 2:7); 'And knew her not till she had brought forth a son' (Matthew 1:25); 'before they came together' (Matthew 1:18); and the repeated mention of them in connection with his mother Mary (Matthew 12:46; 13:55; Mark 6:3)."

2. This proves that Cephas (another name for Peter) was married (Matthew 8:14).
3. This proves that man-made religions today who demand that their so-called "clergy" remain unmarried are wrong. Their doctrine is not of God, it is the doctrine of demons (1 Timothy 4:1-3).

9:6. *Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working?*

Or is it only Barnabas and I - This is the only mention of Barnabas being with Paul since their disagreement (Acts 15:39).

Who have no right to refrain from working? - Literally, "Have we not authority to not work at a secular job?" All of these questions have double negatives which implies the affirmative. Paul argues that he had as much right to these things (wife/support) as Peter, the brothers of the Lord and the rest of the apostles.

1. This proves the right of preachers of the gospel to be supported.

2. This proves the obligation of the churches to support preachers.

9:7. *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?*

Who ever goes to war at his own expense? - Literally, "Who soldiers on his own expense?"

Goes to war - The Greek word here means to perform military duty, to serve as a soldier.

Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? - This is further proof that those who preach the gospel should be supported by the church.

Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? - The word "tends" means to feed and to protect. This is the work of a shepherd. To drink the milk refers to the method of payment of shepherds in the East.

Notice: A preacher of the gospel is compared to:

- a. A soldier
- b. A vinedresser (farmer)
- c. A shepherd

And in his work:

- a. He goes forth and contends with the world.
- b. He plants congregations of the Lord's church.
- c. He feeds the Christians spiritual food from God's word.

9:8. *Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also?*

Do I say these things as a mere man? - Paul's question is, "Am I speaking only as a man, without God's authority?" Paul does not limit himself to illustrations from human affairs, he also appeals to the Scriptures.

Does not the law say the same also? - Paul draws from the law of Moses to show that what he is saying now was even sanctioned in the previous law.

9:9. *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?*

You shall not muzzle an ox - Even an ox is allowed to eat some of the grain shelled by his walking on it. Should preachers not be treated as well as an ox?

Muzzle - A "muzzle" is a cover put over an animal's nose and mouth in order to prevent it from biting or eating.

Is it oxen God is concerned about? - Is God concerned for the oxen **only**? If God provided for the brute beasts, has He not provided for His preachers?

- 9:10. *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.*

Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? - This was not written in the Scriptures simply as a provision for the ox, but to teach us the principle that the laborer should be rewarded for his labor.

For our sakes, no doubt, this is written - Paul is not saying that the law of Moses is binding in this case, but that the principle of support for laborers is of God and that congregations ought to observe it.

He who plows should plow in hope - This is another illustration used by Paul to teach that preachers ought to be supported by the brethren.

- 9:11. *If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things?*

If we have sown spiritual things - This refers to sowing the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11) and edifying the brethren.

Is it a great thing if we reap your material things? - In view of the things mentioned, is it unreasonable that preachers should be supported by the brethren (Galatians 6:6-8)?

- 9:12. *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.*

If others are partakers of this right - This suggests that the church at Corinth had been supporting preachers, but some thought that Paul did not deserve support. Literally, "If others have a share of this authority (right) over you, do we not have even more right?"

We...endure all things - The word "endure" means "to bear up against or to put up with." Paul preferred to make a personal sacrifice that he might not hinder the reception of the gospel.

- 9:13. *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?*

Those who minister the holy things - Once again Paul uses an Old Testament example to help them understand his point. The Levites who prepared animals for sacrifice were allowed to partake of the sacrifices.

Those who serve at the altar - This refers to the priests. All priests were Levites, but not all Levites were priests.

- 9:14. *Even so the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should live from the gospel.*

Should live from the gospel - This means that faithful preachers should be supported by the church (Galatians 6:6-8).

- 9:15. *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.*

I have used none of these things - They should not take his refusal of support to mean that he was not an apostle and unworthy of such support. He also wanted them to understand that he was not writing these things for the purpose of getting them to support him.

It would be better for me to die - He would rather die of hunger than to have it said that his work in preaching the gospel and establishing congregations was done for money.

Make my boasting void - His "boasting" (the glory granted to him) was that he could preach the gospel without receiving help from those to whom he preached.

- 9:16. *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!*

For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of - Paul says it was a necessity laid upon him by Jesus Christ to preach the gospel (Philippians 3:12).

For necessity is laid upon me - Having been appointed by the Lord (1 Timothy 2:7; 2 Timothy 1:11) for this very work, he was only doing that for which he was called and so had no reason to glory or boast (Luke 17:10).

Woe is me - Not only could he not glory, but it would displease the Lord if he did not do what the Lord had called him to do. There are none called today in the manner in which Paul was called.

The idea that one needs a miraculous divine calling to serve as a preacher, elder or deacon is nowhere taught in the New Testament. However, there is a "calling" taught in God's word to which all should respond:

2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 states, "But we are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel, for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Notice, this clearly teaches us how people are called to obedience. Not by some vision, dream, feeling or experience. They are called by the gospel. When they hear the good news of God's word they are being called to obey. When they hear the gospel, they should have guilt for past sins and desire to obey the teachings of the Scriptures to obtain forgiveness.

In a similar way when a Christian man learns through his study of God's word about the role and responsibility of a preacher, elder or deacon he may begin to consider his own need to serve Christ's kingdom. He may begin to desire to obtain the qualifications necessary to fill one of these roles. Through the instruction from God's word his understanding and conscience causes him to feel a desire to meet the challenge.

The "calling" is not miraculous today. It is the teaching of God's word. The response to the "calling" is also not miraculous. It is a reasoned, logical reaction to the instructions found in the Scriptures.

9:17. *For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if against my will, I have been entrusted with a stewardship.*

For if I do this willingly - Paul has a personal satisfaction in preaching the gospel without pay and this was his reward.

But if against my will - There is a sense in which Paul did his work of his own will and another sense in which he did not do it of his own will; he did it because the Lord called him and commanded him to preach. This seems to be the sense here because of what follows.

I have been entrusted with a stewardship - "Stewardship" comes from the Greek word (OIKONOMIA) which literally means, "management of a household." Paul

had an important job as a servant of Jesus Christ (Romans 1:1). He had been commanded to preach the gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 26:16-21), and he did so with his whole heart.

He was not commanded by Christ to refuse support for his work, but he made this his practice so he could not be accused by his enemies with seeking gain. He did not want the spreading of the gospel to be hindered by any suspicions concerning his character.

9:18. *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.*

What is my reward then? - Not mere preaching, but doing so without pay. He looked to his Master for his reward (cf. Matthew 20:8; 1 Timothy 5:18; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15).

That when I preach the gospel, I may present the gospel of Christ without charge - The phrase "without charge" comes from the Greek word (ADAPANOS) which means without cost or expense.

That I may not abuse my authority in the gospel - The fact that Paul did not want to "abuse" or to "use fully" his authority to accept money for preaching the gospel is another proof of the right of a preacher to be paid.

1. Paul did not abuse (use fully) his right because:
  - 1) The manner in which he was put in the work by the Lord.
  - 2) He wanted the satisfaction which comes from working without pay.
  - 3) He felt he could win some who might otherwise be lost.

9:19. *For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more;*

Though I am free from all men - Literally, "being free from all men."

1. Paul was "free" (not bound) to any because he was not paid by any.
2. He was "free" from Jewish hierarchy.
3. He was "free" to go where the Lord directed him.

I have made myself a servant to all - I enslaved myself:

1. Paul promoted the spiritual welfare of others.
2. He did it as a servant, not for the pay he could get.
3. He adjusted himself to the needs of others.

That I might win the more -

1. To win Christ (Philippians 3:8).
2. To win more to obey the gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:7-12).

9:20. *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;*

To the Jews I became as a Jew -

1. Paul practiced some Jewish ceremonies as far as he could without violating New Testament law (Acts 18:18; 21:23-27).
2. He refrained from exercising some of the freedoms he had in Christ (1 Corinthians 8:13).

9:21. *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;*

To those who are without law - This phrase was used to designate the Gentiles.

1. The Gentiles were without a written law. The word does not mean "lawless." It was not a written law, but they were still under law to God.
2. Paul disregarded some Jewish customs to avoid offending Gentiles.

(not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ) - Paul says this of himself. Robertson says the Greek construction permits this to be translated as, "Not being an outlaw to God, but an in-law of Christ."

1. All men are under the law of God, whether they know it or not (Romans 7:22, 25).
2. All men are under the law of Christ, whether they accept it or not (Galatians 6:2).

3. All men should obey the law of the Spirit (Romans 8:2).

9:22. *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.*

To the weak I become as weak - Some are weak in faith (Romans 14:1ff.; 15:1-3). We have the duty of supporting the weak (1 Thessalonians 5:14).

I have become all things to all men - The phrase "all things" should **not** be interpreted to mean those things that are sinful or unwise.

1. Paul refused to have Titus, a Gentile, circumcised (Galatians 2:5).
2. Paul consented to the circumcision of Timothy because his mother was Jewish and his father was a Gentile (Acts 16:3).
3. He did this so that he might save some. Again, his personal pleasure was not as important as saving people from sin.

9:23. *Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you.*

Now this I do for the gospel's sake - To do something for the gospel's sake is the same as doing it for Christ's sake.

That I may be partaker of it with you - Paul is referring to those to whom he preached. What does it mean to be a "partaker"?

1. A partaker of its promises.
2. A partaker of its blessings which can come from no other source.
3. A partaker of eternal life - the crowning purpose of the gospel (1 Peter 5:1).

That this is a condition of the preacher's salvation will seem strange to those who care more for the wool than for the sheep; for the praises of the crowd than for souls; for their personal earthly interests than for the eternal welfare of others.

9:24. *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.*

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run? - Paul uses as an illustration here of an athletic competition, much like what one would find in the modern Olympic games.

David Lipscomb provides the following historical information:

"There is here an allusion to the Isthmian games, which took place every second year, at a place on the seacoast about nine miles from Corinth. These games had been one of the chief means of fostering the feeling of brotherhood in the Hellenic race. They were the greatest of the national gatherings; and even when one State was at war with another, hostilities were suspended during the celebration of the games. All competitors in the games had ten months' training, under the directions of competent teachers and under various restrictions of diet. For thirty days previous to the contest the candidates had to attend the exercises at the gymnasium. At the beginning of the festival, they were required to prove to the judges that they were of pure Greek blood, and had not forfeited by misconduct the right of citizenship, and had undergone the necessary training. Only after the fulfillment of these conditions, were they allowed when the time arrived, to contend in the sight of assembled Greece."

But one receives the prize - The prize for such races was a wreath of olive leaves as a crown. This prize is the victor's crown - STEPHANOS (Revelation 2:10; 3:11; 1 Peter 5:1 cf. Matthew 27:29; John 19:2, 5).

Run - The competitors must "run" with determination to win and according to the rules.

That you may obtain it - The word "obtain" is a translation of the Greek word (KATALABĒTE) which means absolutely obtain or completely win. How is the victory obtained?

1. By giving oneself completely to God.
2. By laying aside every weight and sin (Hebrews 12:1).
3. By not giving in to worldly temptations (1 John 2:15).
4. By not becoming weary of well-doing (Galatians 6:9).
5. By denying one's self (Titus 2:12).
6. By looking steadfastly to Jesus (Hebrews 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:58).

Hebrews 12:1-2, "Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the

sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

9:25. *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.*

Competes - "Competes" is from the Greek word (AGŌNIZOMAI) which means "to agonize, to struggle with strenuous zeal to obtain something."

Is temperate in all things - As athletes must exercise temperance (self-control), so also must Christians exercise spiritual self-control according to the law of Christ.

To obtain a perishable crown - The prize athletes receive in a competition are of little value compared to the heavenly crown received by Christians.

But we for an imperishable crown - The Christian's crown is:

1. The crown of righteousness (2 Timothy 4:8).
2. The crown of life (James 1:12).
3. The crown of glory - a glorious crown (1 Peter 5:4).
4. The crown of rejoicing (1 Thessalonians 2:19).

9:26. *Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.*

Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty - The word "uncertainty" is from the Greek word (ADĒLŌS) which means "unclearly." Paul was keeping his eye clearly on the goal.

Thus I fight - The word "fight" comes from a Greek word (PUKTEŌ) meaning "fist," which is used to describe a boxer.

Not as one who beats the air - The phrase "beats the air" could refer to two different things:

1. It could be a boxer who punches into the air in order to train.
2. Or it could be describing a situation when his adversary evades his blow causing him to waste his effort and strength punching the air.

9:27. *But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.*

I discipline my body - This means to treat severely, to knock out, to render senseless to temptation.

Bring it into subjection - I treat it as a slave rather than to be enslaved by it.

Lest...I myself should become disqualified - The word "disqualified" means "unable to stand the test, worthless, counterfeit, reprobate." Having offered eternal life to others by preaching, he may lose his own salvation by not keeping his body enslaved to righteousness (Romans 6:16).

All of the contestants in these ancient athletic games had to have proof that they had undergone extensive training. For thirty days prior to the actual games they had to attend exercises at the gymnasium and fulfill all conditions before they were allowed to enter the games. If they failed in just one qualification, they were disqualified.

### 3. LESSONS FROM ISRAEL ..... 10:1-13

#### CHAPTER 10

10:1. *Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,*

Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware - The word "moreover" ties this to the preceding verses. Paul buffeted his body in order to keep from being rejected. "Unaware" means that he wants them to know this for their own welfare.

He proceeds to show them that although the Israelites were delivered from bondage and miraculously preserved in the wilderness, none (except two) were allowed to enter Canaan.

All our fathers were under the cloud - This was a sign to assure the children of Israel that God was with them. It was a cloud by day which would protect them from the heat of the sun and a pillar of fire by night to give them light.

All passed through the sea - Passing through the "sea" (Red Sea) was assurance of their freedom from Egypt.

10:2. *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,*

All were baptized into Moses - "All" is in contrast to "most of them" (see 1 Corinthians 10:5). "Baptized" comes from the Greek word BAPTIZŌ which

means to immerse or submerge. They were baptized into Moses in the sense that they were committed to his leadership much like Christians today are consecrated to the leadership of Jesus when they obey His plan of salvation being baptized for the remission of their sins.

This experience is called a baptism because the cloud was over them and the water was in a wall on both sides of them. It was an immersion because they were "buried" (hidden) from the sight of the pursuing Egyptians. They were surrounded by water.

1. They were brought by this experience into a new relationship with God through Moses.
  - a. He became their deliverer from bondage.
  - b. He became their lawgiver.
  - c. He became their intercessor between them and God.
2. This is a type of the baptism into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27).
3. When a man is scripturally baptized, Christ becomes:
  - a. His Deliverer (Savior) from the bondage of sin (Romans 6:4, 17-18).
  - b. His King (Ruler) whom he is to obey in his manner of life (Romans 6:4).
  - c. His Mediator between him and God (1 Timothy 2:5).
  - d. His Intercessor through whom he prays to God the Father (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25).

10:3. *all ate the same spiritual food,*

All ate the same spiritual food - This refers to the food given to them from heaven (manna, quails). It is called spiritual because it came from heaven. Jesus is our bread from Heaven (John 6:51) and our water of life (John 4:10, 14).

10:4. *and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.*

And all drank the same spiritual drink - Food and water are used to stand for all their physical necessities. The lesson is that Christians have all their spiritual needs met in Jesus Christ into whom they were baptized.

that spiritual Rock that followed them - The Rock from which the water did flow did not literally follow them, but the water was always available through various means.

Exodus 17:6, "'Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.' And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel."

Numbers 20:8, "Take the rod; you and your brother Aaron gather the congregation together. Speak to the rock before their eyes, and it will yield its water; thus you shall bring water for them out of the rock, and give drink to the congregation and their animals."

And that Rock was Christ - Paul is saying that behind these rocks (Exodus 17:6; Numbers 20:8) the true giver of the water was Christ Himself.

1. The water giving rock represented Christ (the true Rock).
2. This means that Christ was the source of their physical needs just as He is the source of all physical and spiritual needs today.
3. This is also proof of the pre-existence of Christ (John 1:1; 2 Corinthians 8:9).
4. This shows that Christ was with His people under the Old Covenants as well as today.

10:5. *But with most of them God was not well pleased, for their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.*

But with most of them God was not well pleased - Although they were all delivered from Egypt and sustained in the wilderness, all were not allowed to enter Canaan because of their sin. Only two (Joshua and Caleb) were allowed to enter the promised land.

Their bodies were scattered - The Greek word here literally means, "to be strewn down (along the ground), laid prostrate in death."

10:6. *Now these things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.*

Now these things became our examples - They serve as warning examples to keep us from making the same mistakes they made and suffering the same punishment they suffered.

We should not lust after evil things - The Greek word here (EPITHUMĒTĒS) is defined as, "one who eagerly longs for (craves) something."

10:7. *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."*

And do not become idolaters - This refers to the people's sin of making the golden calf (Exodus 32).

And rose up to play - This describes the festive atmosphere of their idolatrous worship which was completely immoral and offensive.

10:8. *Nor let us commit sexual immorality, as some of them did, and in one day twenty-three thousand fell;*

Nor let us commit sexual immorality - The Greek word here is present tense which should be translated as, "Let us not keep on committing fornication." This implies that some of those who were in Corinth were doing so.

In one day twenty-three thousand fell - It should be noted that Numbers 25:9 says twenty-four thousand. This is either a mistake made when copying the original manuscript or both writers were using round numbers.

10:9. *nor let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed by serpents;*

Nor let us tempt Christ - This is a reference to Numbers 2:4-6. The word "tempt" is present tense. It literally means "Let us cease from always tempting the Lord." The Corinthians are warned to not continue the immoral pleasures that some of them once practiced.

10:10. *nor complain, as some of them also complained, and were destroyed by the destroyer.*

Nor complain - This warns them not to complain (murmer).

And were destroyed by the destroyer - The "destroyer" refers to the Destroyer of Exodus 12:23 (cf. Hebrews 11:28).

10:11. *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages have come.*

Now all these things happened to them as examples - Paul once again (verse 6) teaches the importance of learning from examples.

Romans 15:4, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."

They were written for our admonition - They serve as an example to warn us concerning the dangers of murmuring against God. Murmuring shows a lack of faith in the providential care and love of God.

The ends of the ages - The word "ages" comes from the Greek word (ΑΙΩΝ) which is used to describe a period of indefinite duration.

Have come - The Greek word here is perfect tense indicating that the "end of the ages" has already come and is still with us. So, we are in the last "period of indefinite duration" to which all past periods have been a preparation.

Bible history is divided into three ages (or dispensations) - the Patriarchal, the Mosaical and the Christian. In each of these dispensations of time God has set forth certain specific requirements for His people in worship and service to Him.

God's commandments to the Patriarchs under the Patriarchal Age was not the same as to the Jews under the Mosaical Age (law of Moses). Neither were God's commands the same to those under Moses' law as they are to all of us today who must follow the law of Christ.

This was affirmed at the transfiguration (Matthew 17). Christ was transfigured, and Moses and Elijah also appeared. Peter wanted to build three tabernacles, one for each. But the plan was ended by these words of God: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (Matthew 17:5). There was a time when man was to listen to Moses and Elijah, but now man must listen to God's Son. "God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:1-2). We are living in the Christian age and must do the will of Christ.

We cannot be justified by the law of Moses because it is no longer in effect (Romans 7:4; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:13-14), but we are under the law of Christ (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2; James 1:25).

10:12. *Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

Let him who thinks he stands - Pride and over confidence is a great danger.

Take heed lest he fall - The Greek word for "fall" is aorist tense, so it indicates a complete and final fall. The implication is that this fall will be as final as the fall of those in verses 7 to 10.

10:13. *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 will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.*

No temptation has overtaken you - The word "overtaken" means to seize or to get a hold upon.

Except such as is common to man - Your trials are no worse than men have been enduring since time began.

God is faithful - God is trustworthy (worthy of trust). He has promised to guard Christians (2 Thessalonians 3:3), plus Christians are told to pray for deliverance (Matthew 6:13).

Who will not allow you to be tempted - God is always on the job and is stronger than the tempter (1 John 4:4).

Beyond what you are able - With God's help:

1. God knows the ability of each one to bear temptations.
2. This proves that God deals with us individually and implies an adjustment of the deliverance to each particular case (cf. James 1:12).
3. Satan is limited by our ability (with the help of God) to resist.

1 Peter 5:8-9, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world."

James 4:7, "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."

But with the temptation - Literally, at the time of the temptation. This is a part of God's providential care for His children.

Will also make the way of escape - What is the way of escape?

1. This is not a miracle being promised as a means of escape from temptation.
2. The way of escape is provided for in the Gospel - the opportunity of choosing to follow God's way instead of the way of the world.

David Lipscomb makes the following point:

"As temptations vary, so the means of escape also vary. We have in this verse, perhaps, the most practical and therefore the clearest exposition in the Scriptures of free will in relation to God's overruling power. God makes an open road, but then man must walk in it: God controls circumstances, but man must use them. This is where man's responsibility lies."

That you may be able to bear it - It is important to note that if a man falls, God is not to blame. Men sin by satisfying their own lusts (James 1:13-14). Men also sin by not praying for deliverance. Those temptation that cannot be escaped, must be endured. Often the only escape is through endurance.

#### **4. WARNS AGAINST IDOLATRY ..... 10:14-22**

10:14. *Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.*

Flee from idolatry - The Greek word for "flee" is present tense. Therefore, this is a command to "continue to flee" from idolatry. There can be no compromise.

10:15. *I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say.*

I speak as to wise men - There is a Greek word often translated as "wise" (SOPHOS) which means "wise, clever or shrewd in human wisdom." However, the Greek word (PHRONIMOS) translated as wise here means "considerate, thoughtful, prudent and discreet."

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?*

Here we have a reference to the Lord's Supper. Please notice the following passage:

Matthew 26:26-29, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not

drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."

The cup of blessing which we bless -

1. It is called a cup of blessing because Christians "bless" God (give praise and thanks to God) for His mercy in providing an opportunity for redemption from man's slavery to sin.
2. Jesus gave thanks for the cup (Mark 14:23), so the giving of thanks for the cup and blessing the cup mean the same thing.

We bless - Paul was in Ephesus when he wrote this letter, so the church in Ephesus and the church in Corinth blessed the same cup. Therefore, the word "cup" here cannot mean the container. It means the contents, the fruit of the vine.

The communion of the blood of Christ -

1. Communion - The word "communion" means participation, fellowship.
2. Blood - This does not mean that prayer turns the fruit of the vine into literal blood. The fruit of the vine is the emblem which represents the blood, or life, of Christ that was given for mankind. The action in drinking implies that all Christians share alike in the blessings gained by the shedding of the blood of Christ.

The bread which we break - The "bread" represents the body of Christ. The Greek word for "break" is present tense. This means that we continue to break; this is not a one-time event. The Lord's Supper is to be observed on every first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

The communion of the body of Christ - Prayer does not change the bread into the literal flesh of Christ, but the bread signifies the benefits gained for Christians in the crucified body of Christ.

10:17. *For we, being many, are one bread and one body; for we all partake of that one bread.*

For we, being many, are one bread and one body - Notice the "many" partakers as opposed to "one" bread. The "one body" is the church over which Jesus is head (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18).

For we are all partake of that one bread - Again, the church at Ephesus and the church at Corinth partook of "one" bread. First, Paul says "we are one bread;" then he says "we all partake of one bread." "We are one bread" denotes the unity

of all who are in Christ. "We partake of one bread" means that Christians have a common source of all blessings.

10:18. *Observe Israel after the flesh: Are not those who eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?*

Observe Israel after the flesh - Paul uses the Jews under the old law as an example.

Those who eat of the sacrifices - Part of the animal sacrificed was eaten by the offerer and part was consumed by the altar, so the offerer had communion with the altar. To share with the altar was to worship the God who authorized the worship at the altar.

10:19. *What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything?*

That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? - The implied answer is, "No." We should not think that Paul is contradicting what he said in 1 Corinthians 8:4. His point is idol worship is wrong and that one cannot be a worshiper of God and idols at the same time.

10:20. *But I say 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.*

The things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons - The Gentiles sacrificed to idols. Idol worship was a sacrifice to evil spirits, demons. They did not intend to worship demons, but that is exactly what they were doing.

I do not want you to have fellowship with demons - When they ate at the table of idols, they had communion with the demons the same as they had communion with Christ when they ate at the table of Christ.

10:21. *You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord's table and of the table of demons.*

You cannot drink -

1. The cup of the Lord - The fruit of the vine at the Lord's Supper.
2. The cup of demons - This means to participate in feasts in the idol's temple; drink wine in honor of demons.

You cannot partake -

1. The Lord's table - This refers to the Lord's Supper.

2. The table of demons - This is food consisting of meat sacrificed to demons, and other things, eaten in honor of certain demons.
3. The Corinthians must choose only the Lord. They cannot have any participation with these idolatrous rituals and still have fellowship with God.

10:22. *Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?*

Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? - Would one deliberately provoke the Lord to anger? This is a reference to Deuteronomy 32:21 where Moses recounts the sins of the Jews in the wilderness.

Are we stronger than He? - The idea is, "Surely we are not stronger than He!" The Lord has said He will punish transgressors; therefore, it would be foolish to provoke His anger.

## 5. RULES CONCERNING MEATS ..... 10:23-11:1

10:23. *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful; all things are lawful for me, but all things do not edify.*

All things -

1. Are lawful - "Lawful" is from the Greek word which means "to bring together, to be for benefit, profitable, expedient." Paul is **not** saying that it was lawful for him to commit sin. All things lawful are confined to those things that are in accordance with God's will (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12).
2. Not all things are helpful - His example of eating meats from the heathen markets could do harm to others. The area of the lawful is greater than the area of the expedient. Some things are lawful, but not all things are expedient.
3. All things do not edify -
  - a. Concerning the individual - If the individual is not edified by his actions, he would be wise to cease. If his actions do not edify others, he would be wise to cease (Romans 15:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).
  - b. Concerning the church - Christians should be careful to live so as to edify the church.

10:24. *Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.*

Let no one seek his own - This is Paul's rule for edifying others.

Philippians 2:1-4, "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

But each one the other's well-being - Or as some versions have it, "Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor."

David Lipscomb makes the following observation:

"Spiritual good is under consideration, and he warns them to let no man seek his own good to the disregard of his neighbor's good. In neglecting his neighbor's good, he destroys his own. Spiritual good is unlike material good, the more we seek the good of others, the more we promote our own. The more we look to our own good, to the neglect of others, the more we destroy our own good. The more we divide our blessings with others, the more our own blessings grow."

10:25. *Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake;*

Whatever is sold in the meat market - The phrase "meat market" is from a Greek word (MAKELLON) which is of Latin origin meaning a butcher's stall, meat market or place where other articles of food are sold. When an animal sacrifice was made only part of the animal was consumed by the fire. The rest was given to the heathen priests or to the poor or sold in the meat market. A buyer might therefore unknowingly purchase meat which had been offered to an idol.

Asking no questions - The Corinthians were told to ask no questions as to whether the meat had been used in sacrifice to an idol. This shows that the eating of such meat was not wrong when it does not influence others to sin.

10:26. *for "The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness."*

The earth is the LORD'S - This is a quote from Psalm 24:1. The Bible teaches that every creature of God is good and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with prayer and thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:4).

10:27. *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.*

If any of those who do not believe - This refers to one who is not a Christian.

Invites you to dinner and you desire to go - This shows that social participation with unbelievers is not forbidden.

Eat whatever is set before you - This is in the home not in an idol's temple.

Asking no question for conscience' sake - This puts a check on one's conscience. We need not invite trouble by asking questions about things that are allowable.

10:28. *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."*

But if anyone says to you - "Anyone" would include the host, another guest, or even a weak Christian who is also a guest. If told by anyone that the meat had been offered to an idol it should not be eaten.

10:29. *Conscience, I say, not your own, but that of the other. For why is my liberty judged by another man's conscience?*

Conscience, I say - This refers to the conscience of the one who pointed out that the meat had been sacrificed to an idol. If the host pointed out that the meat had been sacrificed to an idol, he would expect his guests to join him in honoring the false god, in which case the meat should not be eaten. Eating the meat which had been offered to an idol might also lead a weak brother to sin by violating his conscience.

Why is my liberty judged? - The phrasing here is as if Paul was asking, "Why do I give you this instruction? Answer, because my liberty is to be governed by the other man's conscience with reference to these types of questions." It is true that, "The earth is the LORD'S, and all its fullness," but why should he use his liberty to eat the meat which had been offered to an idol to cause another to stumble?

10:30. *But if I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for the food over which I give thanks?*

But if I partake with thanks - This means, if I give thanks with a clear conscience (1 Timothy 4:4).

Why am I evil spoken of? - This is based on a Greek word (BLASPHĒMEŌ) that is a stronger word than to just criticize.

For the food over which I give thanks? - The Greek word for "give thanks" is present, indicative meaning the continual practice of giving thanks for food and all other blessings.

10:31. *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God - We glorify God when we live according to His will and do all we do in love. One does not glorify God when his acting on his liberty destroys a weak brother (1 Corinthians 8:11). All should be done to the glory of God.

Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

1 Peter 4:11, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

10:32. *Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God,*

Give no offense - The Greek word here in the active sense literally means "not tripping others by being a stumbling-block."

1. None should give offense by being inconsiderate.
2. However, we should note that some take offense when they have no cause to be offended. Just because they are offended does not mean they are necessarily right.

Either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God - Christians must respect the customs of other cultures when these customs do not violate God's will. There is no need for a Christian to disregard or condemn these non-sinful customs.

10:33. *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.*

Just as I also please all men - Paul was unselfish in these matters (1 Corinthians 9:10-23). He was always striving for the salvation of others.

CHAPTER 11

[As we begin this chapter we should be aware that the division of chapters and verses in the Bible were added by man. The teaching in this chapter is a continuation of Paul's discussion in the previous chapter. We must keep in mind Paul's words in chapter 10 verses 31-33 concerning the Christian's responsibility to recognize the cultural significance of eating meats offered to idols, when he writes, "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, 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." This whole section of Scripture teaches the need for Christians to have respect for the cultures in which they live. There is no need for a Christian to disregard the customs of the society if those customs do not violate God's will. We must keep this in mind as Paul begins his discussion concerning head coverings and hair.]

11:1. *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

Imitate me - This comes from the Greek word (MIMĒTĒS) which means to be an imitator or follower. Christians should imitate Paul in the matter of seeking the good of others in preference to self. Christians should imitate Paul in the matter of glorifying God. This verse should be included in chapter 10.

**D. PROBLEMS IN WORSHIP ..... 11:2-34**

**1. RELATION OF MEN AND WOMEN ..... 11:2-16**

11:2. *Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions as I delivered them to you.*

Now I praise you - Paul begins this section of the letter with words of encouragement.

1. That you remember me in all things - There must have been some statement in the letter the church had sent to Paul to the effect that they remembered him (continued to think about him, his condition and the things he had taught them).
2. Keep the traditions - The word "traditions" here means the precepts, ordinances or doctrines of the Lord Paul had taught them.

11:3. *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.*

I want you to know - Literally this means, "I wish you to know."

The head of every man is Christ - The word "head" is used in this context to mean ruler, one who is superior in authority. Paul uses Christ's relationship to the Father to teach the relationship women have to men. As Christ was subject to the Father, so the woman is to be subjected to the man. But as subjection of Christ to the Father did not mean inferiority in nature (John 10:30), so woman's subjection to man does not imply that she is inferior to man in Christian privileges and blessings. But as Christ was in subjection to the Father's will in preference to His own, so a woman is to be subject to the authority of the man.

11:4. *Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.*

**[This is one of the more difficult passages in the New Testament in large part because, in order to understand it, we need to recognize some of the customs that surrounded the church in Corinth. In these verses, Paul is instructing the Corinthians to practice the customs as dictated by the principles. The principles are eternal. The customs are transitory (temporary). To correctly understand this passage, we need to answer two questions: What are the principles set forth in this passage? What are the customs set forth in this passage? Herein lies the foundation for our ability to properly understand this section of Scriptures. For additional information please see the appendices - 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-16, by Kevin Cauley.]**

Every man praying or prophesying - "Praying" here refers to leading public prayer (1 Corinthians 14:13-17). The act of "prophesying" is speaking or proclaiming the Holy Spirit inspired message to others (1 Corinthians 14:3).

Having his head covered - Most commentaries take this to mean an artificial covering. It would not be wrong to have his head covered at other times, but it should not be covered when he approaches God to pray or proclaims God's prophecies.

Dishonors his head - Having his head covered dishonors his head because it symbolizes subjection to some man. He is proclaiming by his head covering that he is dependent on some earthly head other than his true spiritual head (Christ).

11:5. *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.*

But every woman who prays or prophesies - In the first century there were some women who were given the miraculous ability of prophesy (Luke 2:36; Acts 2:17; 21:9). However, once the full, complete, written revelation of the New Testament was come, then miraculous gifts (including prophecy) were taken away (1 Corinthians 13:8-10).

1 Corinthians 13:8-10, "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. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away."

Dishonors her head - The head of the woman is the man. By not having her head covered she is proclaiming that she is not under any earthly head.

For that is one and the same as if her head were shaved - This would be seen as a disgrace, just as if her head were shaved (cf. Isaiah 7:20).

- 11:6. *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.*

For if a woman is not covered - The word "covered" comes from a Greek word (KATAKALUPTŌ) which is defined as, "to cover up, to veil or cover one's self."

But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered - "Shorn" comes from the Greek KEIRŌ and "shaved" comes from the Greek word XURAŌ. The idea is to have the hair cut close, or to be entirely shaved as with a razor. Paul is not advising women to have their hair cut off. He is saying that if the woman is going to ignore cultural decency to uncover her head while praying and prophesying consistency demands she shave her head. In other words, praying or prophesying uncovered is just as wrong as having her head shaved.

- 11:7. *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.*

For a man indeed ought not to cover his head - When he prays and prophesies.

He is the image - He is like God in that he is invested with authority and dominion.

Glory - This is from the Greek word (DOXA) which means "splendor, the shining forth of those attributes which God has given him (authority and dominion)."

Woman is the glory of man - Woman was made **of** man and **for** man and as a reflection of man, like man was made as a reflection of God.

- 11:8. *For man is not from woman, but woman from man.*

For man is not from woman - This is a reference to creation, man is directly from God.

But woman from man - The woman (Eve) was created as flesh of his (Adam's) flesh and bone of his bone (Genesis 2:18).

11:9. *Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man.*

Nor was man created for the woman - "Created" is from the Greek word that means to be called into being, to create. According to Paul this puts the woman in the place of a helper, to aid man in his duties; to comfort in his affliction; to partake in his blessings.

But the woman for the man - The woman is not to be his slave, but his helper and source of encouragement.

11:10. *For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels.*

For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head -

1. Ought - This is from the Greek word (OPHEILEŌ) which means must. It is a moral obligation placed upon the woman.
2. Symbol - The word "symbol" has been added by the translators. It is not found in the original Greek text. Literally this verse is, "because of this, the woman ought to have authority on the head, because of the angels."
3. Authority - She is to wear the covering when she prays or prophesies to follow the custom, which will show that she recognizes the authority of man over her. Paul does recognize her right to engage in these religious activities, but according to 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 she may not lead in public worship where men are present which would be usurping authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:12).

Because of the angels - This is a difficult phrase to understand with more than one possible explanation:

1. Some have suggested that this means the angels would be offended by improper and immodest conduct on the part of women who deliberately show a lack of submission or the recognition of the authority of man.
2. Others say this serves as a reminder that the angels were cast from heaven for their rebellious (anti-authority) attitude; and women should not follow the same practice of going beyond the limitations imposed upon them by their place in creation.

11:11. *Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.*

Nor woman independent of man - This shows the interdependence of men and women. Neither can accomplish all the purposes of the Lord without the other. Men should not feel superior and women should not feel inferior!

In the Lord - The phrase "in the Lord" means by divine appointment.

11:12. *For as the woman was from the man, even so the man also is through the woman; but all things are from God.*

As the woman was from the man - This refers to the woman (Eve) being made from the rib of man (Adam).

So the man also is through the woman - The woman is "of" (EK) - out of the man. The man is "by" (DIA) - by means of the woman - through birth.

But all things are from God - God is the ultimate source of all things.

11:13. *Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered?*

Judge among yourselves - Paul tells them to judge in regard to their actions. This does not mean he is leaving it up to them to determine what is the right thing to do in these matters. Their actions must be guided so as to not needlessly offend others by violating the customs of their society.

Is it proper - This means "proper" according to the culture and the will of God.

For a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? - In the light of the foregoing arguments it should clearly be seen as improper for a woman to engage in these activities in Corinth.

11:14. *Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him?*

Does not even nature itself teach you - "Nature" refers to natural instinct - a sense of propriety. This indicates something that has been consistently seen in the culture for a long period of time.

If a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him - It is shameful.

11:15. *But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering.*

If a woman...it is a glory to her - That which is shameful on a man is a glory (something which glorifies) for a woman. God has always required a distinction in the dress and appearance of men and women (Deuteronomy 22:5).

Her hair is given to her for a covering - This is a part of what nature teaches us. We understand the custom of women wearing an artificial covering when engaged in prayer and prophesying when we consider the natural covering given to them by God.

11:16. *But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.*

If anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom - This is Paul's way of saying "I do not intend to endlessly argue this question; the matter has already been solved by observing the type of behavior practiced in all the congregations of the Lord's church."

**This whole section of Scripture teaches the need for Christians to have respect for the cultures in which they live.** Christians should not disregard social customs merely for the sake of being different. Christians will automatically be different when they follow what is taught in the New Testament. No special effort is needed to be different (1 Peter 2:9).

Nor do the churches of God - Paul is not saying a man is free to differ in opinion from what has been taught. He means the uniform practice of the churches of God are an added reason for those who are contentious to comply with his teaching. Neither the apostles, nor any of the congregations of God, recognize any such practice of men wearing long hair or women praying and prophesying without a covering.

[Paul is instructing the Corinthians to practice the customs as dictated by the principles. The principles are eternal. The customs are transitory (temporary). For additional information please see the appendices - 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-16 by Kevin Cauley.]

## **2. DEALING WITH THE LORD'S SUPPER ..... 11:17-34**

11:17. *Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.*

Now in giving these instructions - "Instructions" is from the Greek word (PARAGGELLŌ) which literally means "to announce, command or charge."

I do not praise you - This is the opposite of what he said in 1 Corinthians 11:2.

You come together not for the better but for the worse - Their coming together did not serve the purpose God had intended.

Church gatherings can do more harm than good:

- a. If the church comes together to engage in unscriptural activity.
- b. If the church comes together for purely political purposes.
- c. If the church comes together to put on exhibitions of entertainment.

Church gatherings are for worship, edification, to promote piety, harmony, brotherly love and service.

11:18. *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.*

When you come together as a church - The word "church" comes from the Greek word (EKKLĒSIA) which means "a gathering of people called out, an assembly."

1 Peter 2:9-10, "But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy."

I hear that there are divisions among you - The word "divisions" comes from the Greek word (SCHISMA) which means a split or gap, a schism.

11:19. *For there must also be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you.*

Factions - The Greek word here (HAIREISIS) originally meant a choice, opinion, especially a self-willed opinion. Eventually, it came to mean a sect resulting from a self-willed opinion.

That those who are approved - The approval here is approval from God.

May be recognized - It will become apparent (evident) to all who are Christlike.

11:20. *Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper.*

It is not to eat the Lord's Supper - Paul is saying they should have come together to eat the Lord's Supper, but they could not because their state of mind made it impossible to eat in an acceptable manner. Their conduct contributed to this impossibility. Notice it is the "Lord's" Supper which means that which "belongs to" or "pertains to" the Lord (cf. "Lord's day" - Revelation 1:10).

11:21. *For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk.*

Each one takes his own supper ahead of others - They had turned the Lord's supper into a feast similar to what they had done when they were worshipping idols. Here we see how much influence the world can have on the church when the instructions of the Lord are not followed closely.

One is hungry and another is drunk - The poor were left hungry while the rich had abundance. The word "drunk" literally means, "well filled." The rich were "well filled" with food. There was selfishness on the part of the rich and envy on the part of the poor.

Some say this meal was instituted by the Lord to be eaten in connection with the Lord's Supper, but there is nothing in the Scriptures to support this theory and Paul's next comment contradicts this theory.

11:22. *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.*

Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? - The house (home) is the place for satisfying our physical appetite. The first day of the week assembly is the place for the Lord's Supper.

Do you despise the church of God? - "Despise" means to think down upon or against anyone. Their actions showed they had little or no respect for the church. The phrase "church of God" is another way of describing, the church of Christ, the body of Christ, the family of God; that for which Jesus shed His blood.

And shame those who have nothing - This refers to the poor. The actions of the wealthy brethren proved they did not have proper regard or love for the poor.

Shall I praise you in this? - Such actions deserved only rebuke!

11:23. *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;*

I received from the Lord - The "I" in this verse is emphatic. This is a claim of direct revelation (cf. Galatians 1:11-12).

That which I also delivered - This suggests Paul's trustworthiness in handling the revelations he received from the Lord (cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:4).

In which He was betrayed - The Greek word for "betrayed" (PAREDIDOTO) is imperfect tense which literally means "He was being betrayed." Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper while His betrayal was going on!

11:24. *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."*

When He had given thanks - Jesus blessed the bread and gave thanks for the cup (Matthew 26:26-27). We see the same thing in Mark 14:22-23. To "give thanks" means the same as "to bless." But it is common today to hear men ask the Lord to bless the bread or the cup. Jesus did not ask the Father to bless, in the sense of doing something to the bread or the cup. Nor should men do so today! Simply give thanks!

This is My body - Not the physical body as some teach. The prayer does NOT turn the bread into the literal physical body of Jesus. We no more eat the actual body of Jesus than did the apostles when Jesus held the bread in His hand and said, "This is My body."

Do this in remembrance of Me - What should be remembered?

1. Christians remember His pain and suffering.
2. Christians remember His death on the cross.
3. Christians remember His love for the lost.
4. Christians remember the price He paid for the sins of mankind.

Do this - In the Greek this is continuous action, "continue doing this."

11:25. *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."*

This cup is the new covenant - The Greek word here (DIATHĒKĒ) can mean either testament or covenant, but testaments did not require the shedding of blood in sacrifice.

1. The word "cup" is metonymy for the contents. Jesus was not telling them to melt down the actual cup to drink. "Cup" was used to represent the unfermented fruit of the vine that was in the cup.

2. In My blood - Notice. Jesus says it is My covenant sealed with My blood - making His covenant effective by the shedding of His blood (Hebrews 9:15-20).

As often as you drink it - This does not mean the frequency is not specified. It simply means each and every time it is taken on the specified day it is to be done in remembrance of Him. We have apostolic teaching and example which commands the partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2).

11:26. *For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes.*

You proclaim the Lord's death - What is proclaimed?

1. That He died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
2. That in Him we die to sin (Romans 6:1-4, 11).

Till He comes - The Supper is to be taken from Pentecost until the final coming of Jesus. It is to be taken in the kingdom (Luke 22:29-30). Therefore, the kingdom exists from Pentecost to the final coming. If this coming was in 70 A.D. (as some claim), then there is no need for us to take the Lord's Supper now.

11:27. *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.*

In an unworthy manner - In what ways could it be in an unworthy manner?

1. When it is corrupted into a common meal as the Corinthians did.
2. When one does not discern the Lord's body (verse 29).
3. When it is **not** designed to commemorate the death of Christ, as in a marriage ceremony, as some people are doing.
4. When one is thinking of frivolous things; lunch, family matters, business matters, etc.

Guiltily of the body and blood - Those who do so stand before God as did the people who crucified Jesus (cf. Hebrews 6:6).

11:28. *But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.*

Let a man examine himself - "Examine" means "to prove, decide after examination." We also must not overlook the word, "himself." The command is to examine ourselves not others!

11:29. *For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*

Drinks judgment - The "judgment" here means they would expose themselves to God's displeasure and punishment.

Not discerning the Lord's body - They were guilty of this if they did not recognize (understand, value, appreciate) the body and blood of Jesus in the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. The Christians in Corinth had turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal. They were not discerning the Lord's body.

11:30. *For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep.*

Many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep - The word "sleep" in this verse (KOIMŌNTAI) indicates peaceful repose, rather than the punishment of violent death. Therefore, this probably means that as a result of their actions the Corinthians were spiritually unhealthy and "sleepy" (cf. Acts 7:60; 2 Peter 3:4).

11:31. *For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.*

For if we would judge ourselves - The word "judge" here means to examine.

We would not be judged - This refers to being punished by the Lord by being sickly and weak. A proper self-examination would save them from this divine punishment.

11:32. *But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.*

But when we are judged - The word "judged" here means to be examined.

We are chastened by the Lord - In the providence of God, He chastened them that they might repent and be partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:6-13).

That we may not be condemned with the world - This is a warning that Christians can go so far from what is right that they will suffer the same punishment (eternal destruction) with the wicked.

Here again we have proof that the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" is wrong.

11:33. *Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another.*

When you come together to eat - This is addressed to the whole church. This implies that the whole church is to take the Supper together. This puts an end to separate worship assemblies for adults and children. Such foolishness is not authorized.

Wait - The Greek word here (EKDECHESTHE) carries the idea of expectancy, eagerness.

11:34. *But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come.*

If anyone is hungry, let him eat at home - So as not to make the Lord's Supper into a common meal.

1. This does not forbid eating in a building that is also used for worship. If it did, what about the churches that assembled in homes (1 Corinthians 16:19)? What about a preacher eating his lunch at the building?
2. The church and the home are two different institutions, both from God; both having their distinct areas of service, though there is some overlapping.
3. To make no distinction, as was done at Corinth, is to bring the judgment of God upon us.

**E. SPIRITUAL GIFTS .....12:1-14:**

**1. DIVERSITY OF GIFTS..... 12:1-11**

CHAPTER 12

12:1. *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:*

Now concerning spiritual gifts - This may have been an answer to another question in the letter the Corinthians had sent to Paul. The "spiritual gifts" were the miraculous abilities bestowed upon the Christians by the laying on of the apostles' hands. These abilities only came through the apostles.

Acts 8:17-19, "Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'"

I do not want you to be ignorant - Paul wanted them to know and understand these things concerning miracles. There are also many religious people today who are ignorant regarding the purpose and duration of miracles.

1. No Christian should be ignorant of these important issues (Hebrews 5:12-14).
2. We must be willing to learn and accept the truth. Knowledge is for our own good and enables us to keep ourselves as well as others from being led astray into error.

12:2. *You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led.*

You know that you were Gentiles - The phrase "were Gentiles" implies there is no longer Jews or Gentiles in Christ (Galatians 3:28).

Carried away to those dumb idols - The phrase "carried away" means blindly hurried or led. The word "dumb" is from the Greek word (APHŌNOS) which means "voiceless, mute" as opposed to the Holy Spirit who speaks through the inspired Scriptures. Idols were simply the work of men's hands (Isaiah 44:9-20).

Acts 17:29, "Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising."

Psalms 135:15-18, "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them."

However, you were led - They were under the influence of ignorant, unprincipled men who led them away from God rather than to Him for salvation (cf. Acts 13:6-11).

12:3. *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.*

No one speaking by the Spirit of God - To speak "by the Spirit of God" is to speak as moved by the Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). The prophets were passive instruments in the hand of God, being directed in the words they spoke.

2 Peter 1:21, "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

"Moved" is from the Greek word (PHEROMENOI) which is a present passive participle meaning "to bear." Hence, to be borne along as a sailing vessel before the wind.

Calls Jesus accursed - This was the cry of their Jewish enemies in the synagogues. However, if one made such a cry that was proof he was not speaking by God's Spirit. One who is truly led by the Spirit cannot say Jesus is accursed, or that He is the source of evil.

Jesus is Lord - This was the cry of the Christians. History records that when Polycarp, who was a church leader in Smyrna (AD 69-155), was arrested he was told to say "Caesar is Lord," but he continued to say, "Jesus is Lord," until he was put to death.

Except by the Holy Spirit - The Holy Spirit, through the inspired Scriptures, testified concerning Jesus. All the testimony we have of Jesus comes through the teaching of the Spirit. No one can have faith that Jesus is the Christ except by the testimony given in the word of God by the Spirit.

12:4. *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.*

Now there are diversities of gifts - The word "diversities" means distinctions or differences. The Greek word here can also be translated as "distributions" especially when compared with verse 11. The word "gifts" is from the Greek word (CHARISMATŌN) which is defined as a favor received without merit. "Gifts" is used to describe the miraculous abilities given to the first century Christians by the laying on of the apostles' hands.

But the same Spirit - All gifts were received from the same Spirit; so, no Christian should have gloried in his gift, nor should have any Christian felt slighted.

12:5. *There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.*

Differences of ministries - The word "ministries" means "service" in this context.

But the same Lord - It was Jesus, through the Spirit, who enabled some to render these services by the use of their miraculous abilities.

12:6. *And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.*

Diversities of activities - This literally means variety of services.

But it is the same God - One gift works for one purpose, another gift for another purpose, but all gifts are ultimately from God and to be used for His glory.

Who works all in all - Notice that all three persons of the godhead are involved in these gifts. The source is the Father, the medium is the Lord, and the agent is the Holy Spirit.

1. All - The "all" here refers to all spiritual (miraculous) abilities.
2. In all - The phrase "in all" is not referring to all Christians, for there is no evidence that all Christians in the first century had spiritual gifts; but God worked "in all" who had these gifts.

12:7. *But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:*

Is given to each one for the profit of all - Whatever manifestations (gifts) of the Spirit given, were given for the instruction and profit of all. The "profit of all" literally means "to the profiting of all." For the benefit of the church and the Lord's work of saving the lost (cf. Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

12:8-11. *for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 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. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.*

**[For additional information concerning this section please see the appendices THE GIFT OF TONGUES AND MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.]**

Word of wisdom - This was the special ability to wisely apply the information given through the inspiration of the Spirit to teach others.

Word of knowledge - This was supernatural understanding of the information given through inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Faith - This was a miraculous level of faith. This is more than the non-miraculous level or "common faith" (Titus 1:4) that comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

Gifts of healings - This was the miraculous power to heal the sick (Acts 19:11-12).

Working of miracles - These were special powers not involving healings such as control over nature.

Prophecy - "Prophecy" was the ability to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2). The prophet simply delivered God's message to the people. Many mistakenly assume that all

prophecy is the telling of future events (predictive in its nature). However, prophecy can also be the revelation of events which occurred in the past or even in their present circumstances.

Discerning of spirits - This was the miraculous ability to detect false teachers and wonder-workers (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1). This may also refer to distinguishing between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the person speaking. In other words, "Is the person speaking on their own or are they speaking from God?" (See 1 Corinthians 14:29).

Different kinds of tongues - "Tongues" was the ability to speak in a language one had never studied or known (Acts 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:21-25).

Interpretation of tongues - This was the power to translate a language never learned (1 Corinthians 14:12-19, 26-28).

The same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills - This is stated to show the Corinthian Christians how foolish it was to value some miraculous gifts as more honorable than others.

Notice, the apostles did not choose which gift was given to a Christian when they laid their hands on the individual. It was the Holy Spirit who determined which Christian received which miraculous ability. The Holy Spirit knew better than the apostles which spiritual gift each Christian would be able to use best for the profit of the church. Therefore, all Christians who received a miraculous ability did not receive the same gifts, and yet the differences in the various abilities given did not show partiality.

## **2. TEACHING OF CHRISTIAN UNITY ..... 12:12-31**

12:12. *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.*

For as the body is one - This is the human body. It is a working unit, though composed by many members.

All the members...are one body - No member is too insignificant that it should be overlooked. All are necessary to make the body operate as it should.

So also is Christ. This means the body of Christ, the church. The human body is used to teach us several lessons about the spiritual body (the group of people who belong to Christ - Christians).

12:13. *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.*

For by one Spirit - The point Paul is making through this section is that there is only one Spirit. Therefore, there should be no priority given to the importance of the various gifts of the Spirit. Mankind would have never been taught the necessity of baptism if the Spirit had not given this truth to the apostles and other inspired teachers to teach to others. The point is that all who have been baptized (Christians) have received the instruction as a result of the teaching from one Spirit.

All baptized into one body - The word "baptism" is a transliteration of the Greek word (BAPTIZŌ) which means "to dip, plunge or immerse" - not to sprinkle or pour. The descriptions of baptisms in the New Testament show that people went down into the water to be immersed rather than having water brought to them in a container to be sprinkled or poured upon them.

Matthew 3:5-6, "Then Jerusalem, all Judea, and all the region around the Jordan went out to him and were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins."

Matthew 3:16, "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."

John 3:23, "Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized."

Acts 8:38, "So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him."

Immersion (not sprinkling or pouring) is also consistent with the symbolism of being buried with Christ as taught in the Scriptures (Romans 6:1-4; Colossians 2:12).

Into one body - The "body" here is the church (Romans 12:5; Ephesians 3:6; 4:15-16; 5:23; Colossians 1:18, 24). Jesus Christ is the "head" of the body, which is the church, while the "members" of the body are members of the church (Christians).

Colossians 1:18, "And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence."

Colossians 1:24-26, "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His

body, which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints."

Whether Jews or Greeks - People of all nations (Jews or Gentiles) and all levels of society were combined into one body, a unit, by the Holy Spirit through baptism.

Galatians 3:27-28, "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Have all been made to drink into one Spirit - They all partook of (received) one Spirit according to the promise of Acts 2:38. This does not refer to spiritual gifts, for not all members of the church had miraculous gifts.

To drink - The Greek word here means literally, "to be watered" or "to be irrigated."

12:14. *For in fact the body is not one member but many.*

The body is not one member - The "body" is composed of many parts. As physical members have different functions, so members of the spiritual body (the church) have various abilities and functions.

12:15-16. *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 foot should say - The less prominent members of the church are important and to the extent they fail to work, to that extent the body fails to function as it should.

12:17. *If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling?*

If the whole body were an eye - If all members of the church were preachers, song-leaders or elders, the church could not function any better than the physical body could function if all its members were an eye, or a foot, etc. No part of the body is inferior to the other. The point here is the need for and essentiality of all members of the body - otherwise some function within the body would be missing.

12:18. *But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.*

Now has God set the members - Again, God uses the illustration of the physical body. God gave individual attention to each and every part.

Just as He pleased - God exercised His will in setting the various parts of the body in their places. He set each part in its proper place in the body, to fulfill the needed function as He saw fit. If they were all the same part they would not be a body.

12:19. *And if they were all one member, where would the body be?*

If they were all one member - This would destroy the body and its proper functions would be impossible.

This is said to prevent jealousy in those members of the church who were less prominent than others and to prevent pride in those who were more prominent. Since no one member of the human body is expected to perform all the functions of the physical body, we should learn that no one member of the spiritual body (the church) should be expected to perform all the functions of the spiritual body.

12:20. *But now indeed there are many members, yet one body.*

This is said of the human body to teach us lessons about the spiritual body.

12:21. *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."*

The eye cannot say to the hand - This shows the interdependence of one member upon all other members. The eye can see, but it cannot grasp what it sees, so the eye is dependent upon the hand.

12:22. *No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary.*

Members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary - This is said of the physical members to teach that church members with less ability are necessary to the proper functioning of the church and should not be overlooked.

12:23. *And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty,*

Members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor - We give greater care ("honor") to make these less honorable parts more presentable. This may refer to clothing or covering these parts of the body.

Our unpresentable parts have greater modesty - We seek to cover these unpresentable parts.

12:24. *but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it,*

Our presentable parts - This refers to those parts which are pleasing to look upon. The more attractive parts like the face and hands do not need special attention.

God composed the body - The word "composed " means to mix, mingle or blend together. This is what God has done with the members of our physical bodies. He has designed the parts to work together.

12:25. *that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.*

That there should be no schism in the body - The word "schism" means a division or a dissension. The "body" is the church. No member, however feeble or illiterate or obscure, should be despised or regarded as unnecessary or valueless. All members are needed in their places and should not be treated as if they are not part of the one body.

Members should have the same care for one another - This explains the preceding statement. Each member should be moved by compassion for the well-being of all members of the body. The body will be healthy and harmonious when there is mutual care for all members regardless of their prominence.

12:26. *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*

If one member suffers - This illustrates how members are to care for one another.

Is honored - The word "honored" comes from the Greek word which means glorified.

Romans 12:15, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep."

12:27. *Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually.*

Now you are the body of Christ - Paul tells the Corinthian church that they are the body of Christ.

1. "Body" here means that body of people who belong to the Lord. They are Christians:
  - a. By redemption (1 Peter 1:18-19).
  - b. By creation (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16).
  - c. By preservation (Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 1:3).
  - d. By consecration (2 Corinthians 8:3).

Members individually - No one member is a complete body. Each is only one part. Each one has its own place and function in the body of Christ.

12:28. *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.*

God has appointed these in the church - God appointed (set) these in the church for His own use:

1. Apostles - The apostles were the first and highest. They were endowed with all Spiritual gifts. The apostles were sent as ambassadors of Christ, to be witnesses of what he did and taught.

Jesus said to His apostles: "Ye are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48).

Jesus said to His apostles: "And ye also bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning" (John 15:27).

When Judas needed to be replaced, Peter said that he must be one that had "accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21-22).

Also, Paul had to see Jesus after His resurrection and in His glorified state before he could be an apostle. Ananias said to him, "The God of our fathers has chosen you that you should know His will, and see the Just One, and hear the voice of His mouth. For you will be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard" (Acts 22:14-15).

Jesus said to Paul, "But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you" (Acts 26:16).

No one could be an apostle unless he had seen Jesus after His resurrection from the dead. Anyone who claims to be an apostle or even a "witness" today is lying.

2. Prophets - These were those who had the gift of prophecy to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit.
3. Teachers - This refers to Christians who instruct others without the aid of being inspired by the Holy Spirit.
4. Miracles - These were special powers not involving healings such as control over nature.
5. Gifts of healing - This was the miraculous power to heal the sick (Acts 19:11-12).
6. Helps - This is possibly a reference to deacons.
7. Administrations - This probably refers to elders (cf. Hebrews 13:17, 24).
8. Varieties of tongues - This is the miraculous gift of speaking a known language without study.

*12:29-30. 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?*

Are all? - Once again Paul uses rhetorical questions which are questions with implied answers. This technique is used to put increased emphasis on the truth being taught. Each question demands a negative answer. "No," not all members of the church are apostles, not all members of the church are prophets, not all members of the church are teachers, not all members of the church are miracle workers, not all members of the church are healers, not all members of the church speak with tongues and not all members of the church interpret tongues. No one member had all the gifts.

*12:31. But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.*

Earnestly desire the best gifts - Paul valued some gifts more highly than others because they were more profitable for evangelism (1 Corinthians 14:5, 18-19).

Since the Lord determined which Christian received which miraculous ability they should strive to be worthy of the gifts which were more profitable for the church, not which will bring them the most honor.

A more excellent way - Paul also tells them there is a better way. These gifts (miraculous abilities) were temporary and would soon pass away (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). Here Paul begins his discussion on the "more excellent," everlasting way which is doing the will of God out of a pure and loving heart.

### 3. LOVE VERSUS SPIRITUAL GIFTS ..... 13:1-13

#### CHAPTER 13

13:1. *Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.*

#### Tongues of men and of angels -

1. Tongues of men - The Corinthians valued speaking in tongues (miraculously speaking in a known language one had never studied before) more highly than the other gifts. Paul seems to mention tongues first because of the exaggerated importance they had placed on this gift.
2. Tongues of angels - Since the Bible does not tell us what language is used by the angels to communicate with each other it would be pointless to speculate. The point being made is even if one could speak in all the languages of both heaven and earth it would be useless without love.

But have not love - Having love is the essential requirement. What is love? This comes from the Greek word AGAPĒ which means the highest form of love. This kind of "love" includes many things:

1. This includes loving the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40).
2. It includes loving brethren fervently with a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22).
3. It also includes loving those who are spiritually dead in their sins. This means loving them enough to teach them the gospel so they can obey it and be cleansed from their sins by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2).
4. It even includes loving those who would make themselves your enemy and those who would persecute you (Matthew 5:43-46).

I have become as sounding brass or a clanging cymbal - These were instruments that could create a loud sound, but did not produce harmony. These instruments required other instruments to be added to create melody. The spiritual gifts required the addition of love to produce the intended purpose.

- 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, but have not love, I am nothing.*

The gift of prophecy - "Prophecy" is the ability to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2). The prophet simply delivered God's message to the people. Many mistakenly assume that all prophecy is the telling of future events (predictive in its nature). However, prophecy can also be the revelation of events which occurred in the past or even present circumstances.

Understand all mysteries - In the Scriptures the word "mysteries" is used to describe those things no one can know until they are revealed by God (Ephesians 3:3).

All knowledge - The "knowledge" spoken of here is one of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:9). This was a supernatural understanding of the information given through inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

And though I have all faith - The "faith" spoken of here is a miraculous level of faith (1 Corinthians 12:9; Matthew 17:20). This is more than the non-miraculous level or "common faith" (Titus 1:4) that comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).

But have not love - This is love for God, the church, the brethren, truth, everything good and even enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:28, 35; Romans 12:14-21).

I am nothing - Not a nobody, but spiritually bankrupt.

- 13:3. *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.*

Bestow all my goods - The Greek word for "bestow" (PSŌMIZŌ) means "to distribute in small portions so as to do as much good as possible to as many people as possible." "All my goods" means to give all that we possess. When done from a proper motive, the generous act of giving to feed the poor is a great expression of love. However, if it is done for show (to gain the praise of others) it is not love. It should be done to honor God and to bless man in the name of God. The glory goes to God.

Give my body to be burned - A willingness to suffer death for one's faith is seen by the world as the supreme sacrifice. However, if this sacrifice is made to bring honor and acclaim to oneself it has no spiritual value.

But have not love - If the gift is made for any reason other than love, it is hollow and worthless so far as contributing to one's righteousness.

- 13:4. *Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up;*

Love suffers long - This is another way of saying patient (Hebrews 10:36; 12:1).

And is kind - Kindness is being tenderhearted, friendly, considerate, understanding, concerned, gentle, generous, sympathetic, unselfish, thoughtful, compassionate and courteous to others. In Ephesians 4:32 Paul commands, "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."

Love does not envy - The Greek word here for "envy" (ZĒLOŌ) literally means to burn with desire or jealousy.

Does not parade itself - This comes from the Greek word (PERPEREUOMAI) which means to boast or vaunt oneself, to be a braggart (cf. Romans 12:3).

Is not puffed up - The Greek word here for "puffed up" (PHUSIOŌ) is used to convey the idea of blowing or inflating something. In this context it describes one who is proud, haughty or arrogant. It is one who lacks humility (James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5).

- 13:5. *does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil;*

Does not behave rudely - Love is courteous. It is not rude, impolite, insulting, abusive, disrespectful, inconsiderate or ill-mannered (1 Thessalonians 2:10; Titus 2:3-5).

Does not seek its own - Love is not selfish (Philippians 2:3-4).

Is not provoked - "Provoked" is the Greek word (PAROXUNŌ) which means easily exasperated, irritated and aroused to anger (Ephesians 4:26; 6:4). Love helps to control one's anger.

Thinks no evil - Love does not assume evil in the good actions of others. Love does not carefully keep a mental record of the evil others have done or even of those who have mistreated them. Love is always ready to forgive (1 Peter 3:9; Matthew 5:39).

13:6. *does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth;*

Does not rejoice in iniquity - True love finds no pleasure or satisfaction in the sins of others or the evil which comes their way (2 Peter 2:7-8).

Rejoices in the truth - Love rejoices when the truth is taught, defended, possessed and lived (Ephesians 4:25; 5:7-9; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 John 4). It is very dangerous to not have a love for the truth.

2 Thessalonians 2:10-12, "And with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason, God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

13:7. *bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Bears all things - The Greek word here for "bears" (STEGŌ) literally means "to cover." This has led some to think that it means to cover the faults of others; but it actually means to cover their faults as in keeping resentment out and enduring patiently their weaknesses.

Believes all things - This means thinking the best of others. We should give others the benefit of doubt unless we have proof to the contrary. Love is not gullible, but it does not rush to think the worst of others.

Hopes all things - Hope equals desire plus expectation and patient waiting. Love never loses hope that those who are living in sin will one day repent and obey God's plan for their forgiveness.

Those who don't obey God's plan for man's salvation will be lost (John 8:24; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32-33; 28:18-19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21). Those Christians who fall away from the Lord and don't come back repenting of their sins and praying for forgiveness will also lose their salvation (2 Peter 2:20-22; James 5:19-20; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

Endures all things - The idea here is perseverance. It is the attitude of never giving up when suffering hardships (1 Peter 2:19-20; 2 Timothy 2:3).

13:8. *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.*

Love never fails - The word "fails" comes from the Greek word (EKPIPTŌ) which means "to drop away" or "come to an end." It is everlasting.

Love never fails to accomplish good. It remains on the sure foundation. Love is permanent in the system of Christianity, while other things serve their purpose and then cease, such as the miraculous gifts.

Prophecies, they will fail - Paul is telling the Corinthian Christians that the miraculous gift of prophecies will not always be available. The content of the prophecies, however, will not be done away.

1. Here the Greek word for "fail" (KATARGEŌ) means "to render, inactivate, inoperative, with no further power, done away with and abolished."
2. This is the same Greek word used by Paul in Ephesians 2:15 when he explained that the law of Moses had been abolished (Ephesians 2:14-15).
3. The same Greek word is used by Paul in 2 Corinthians to teach that the old covenant had passed away (2 Corinthians 3:11).

Tongues, they will cease - Here the Greek word for "cease" (PAUŌ) means "to stop, quit, come to an end."

Knowledge, it will vanish away - Once again the "knowledge" spoken of here is a supernatural understanding of the information given through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is not saying that man will cease to know anything, but that miraculous knowledge will no longer be given.

Here the Greek word for "vanish away" is once again KATARGEŌ which means "to render, inactivate, inoperative, with no further power, done away with and abolished."

13:9. *For we know in part and we prophesy in part.*

We know in part - The phrase "in part" is being used as opposed to the whole of anything. Their miraculous knowledge, given when needed, was "in part." It was a part of the complete revealed will of God.

Prophecy in part - Their miraculous ability to prophesy, given when needed, was also "in part." It was a part of the complete revealed will of God. When the complete revealed will of God was finished in written form (the New Testament) there was no longer a need for the partial revealed will of God.

13:10. *But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.*

That which is perfect - The word "perfect" comes from the Greek word (TELEIOS) which means "complete." If the Greek word had been translated correctly as "complete" there never would have been so many false interpretations of this verse. This whole section of Scriptures is contrasting that which is partial to that which is complete.

That which is in part will be done away - Here the Greek word for "done away" is once again KATARGEŌ which means "to render, inactivate, inoperative, with no further power, done away with and abolished."

1. All spiritual gifts are included in "that which is in part." Tongues, knowledge and prophecy are named in this section, but the others are included.
2. To be done away means they are no longer in use; they cease to operate.
3. The record of these miraculous gifts remains in the Bible for ongoing proof that the revealed message (New Testament) is from God.

**[For additional information concerning this verse please see the appendices - THAT WHICH IS PERFECT, by Troy Cummings, 1 CORINTHIANS 13:10 by Jerry Moffitt and HAS THAT WHICH IS PERFECT COME? by Gary Workman.]**

13:11-12. *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. 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.*

In this verse we find three illustrations:

1. From childhood to manhood (immaturity to maturity).
2. The mirror is replaced by the "face to face" view.
3. The knowing in part is replaced by the full knowledge of revelation.

All three examples illustrate the same point. Spiritual gifts served during the time of infancy (childhood) of the church. The complete revelation of truth serves in the time of full maturity (manhood) of the church.

I understood - The understanding here is the understanding of a child which does not yet have maturity or depth of reasoning.

Dimly - The Greek word for "dimly" (EN AINIGMA) literally means "in a riddle." It is obscure, unclear, uncertain, unknown, in doubt, vague or hidden.

I shall know - Here the Greek word for "know" (EPIGINŌSKŌ) means to know thoroughly, accurately and fully.

13:13. *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

But now abide - "Abide" is from the Greek word (MENŌ) which means "to remain, abide and not to depart."

Faith - This is "faith" in God's word revealed through the apostles and prophets.

Hope - This is the desire, expectation and patient waiting for the things unseen (Romans 8:24-25).

Love - This is the greatest for it continues in heaven. The unseen aspect of faith will give way to knowledge when we get to heaven and the expectation of hope will end in fulfillment when we get that for which we have hoped (Romans 8:24-25).

#### **4. USE VERSUS ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS ..... 14:1-40**

### CHAPTER 14

14:1. *Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*

Pursue love - The Greek word for "pursue" means to "put into rapid motion; endeavor earnestly to acquire." Why were the Corinthians told to "pursue" love?

1. Because, love is the greatest (1 Corinthians 13:13).
2. Because, love is the most excellent way (1 Corinthians 12:31).
3. Because, the more we love the more we are like God (1 John 4:7-8).

Desire spiritual gifts - The word "desire" is from the Greek word (ZĒLOŌ) which means "to burn with zeal, to desire earnestly." It is an intense desire. The nine "spiritual gifts" are listed in 1 Corinthians 12:8-11.

But especially that you may prophecy - Prophesying was one of the "best gifts" (1 Corinthians 12:31) for it enabled the one who had this miraculous ability to deliver God's word to the people.

As stated before, "prophecy" is the ability to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2). The prophet simply delivered God's message to the people. Many mistakenly assume that all prophecy is the telling of future events (predictive in its nature). However, prophecy can also be the revelation of events which occurred in the past or even present circumstances. This ability could only be given to someone by the laying on of the hands of an apostle.

14:2. *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.*

He who speaks in a tongue - Speaking in a "tongue" was the ability to speak in a language one had never studied or known (Acts 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:21-25).

Not speak to men, but to God - Since all members of the church in Corinth spoke the same language, no one would be able to understand a man speaking in a foreign language. Only God would understand him.

In the spirit he speaks mysteries - The phrase "in the Spirit" means moved by the Holy Spirit (see notes on 1 Corinthians 12:3, 9). In the Scriptures the word "mysteries" refers to those things which are impossible for man to know without revelation from God (Matthew 13:11-12; Ephesians 3:3-6).

14:3. *But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.*

He who prophesies - The one who had this ability was able to miraculously speak God's word to the people as directed by the Holy Spirit:

1. Edification - The prophecies edified (built-up) people in the faith,
2. Exhortation - The prophecies exhorted (persuaded) people to follow after righteousness,
3. Comfort - The prophecies comforted (reassured) people in their faith.

14:4. *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.*

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself - The speaker would edify himself by the use of his spiritual gift and by what he said, but if no one understood the foreign language he spoke it would be of no value to others in the congregation.

He who prophesies edifies the church - In this way Paul shows that prophesying is of greater value than the gift of speaking in tongues.

- 14:5. *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.*

I wish you all spoke with tongues - This was said to keep the Corinthians from thinking Paul was opposed to the use of tongues (speaking foreign languages).

He who prophesies is greater - While the gift of prophecy was not as dramatic as speaking in tongues, it was still a greater gift because it provided benefit to more people in the congregation where few would understand a foreign language.

Unless indeed he interprets - The word "interprets" comes from the Greek word which means to translate. As used in Luke 24:27 it means expound or explain the meaning. This verse tells us that he would be required to explain what he was saying to instruct and build-up those who did not understand the foreign language he was speaking.

The church may receive edification - This is proof that no one was edified by hearing men speak in tongues of unknown foreign languages.

- 14:6. *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?*

If I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you? - This is more proof that the use of tongues (speaking foreign languages) in a place where they all spoke the same language (Greek) would not be a benefit to them.

Unless I speak to you -

1. By revelation - Revelation is God's revealing of divine truth to an apostle or prophet so they could teach that truth to others.
2. By knowledge - This refers to miraculous knowledge which was a gift of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:8).
3. By prophesying - As stated before, "prophesying" is the ability to speak God's word as directed by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2).
4. By teaching - The Greek word here (DIDACHĒ) means instruction, the act of giving instruction, doctrine.

14:7-10. *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? 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. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.*

Things without life - The Greek word translated as "life" in this verse is from the Greek word (APSUCHOS) that refers to the soul. The phrase "without life" literally means without a soul, lifeless.

1. Flute - This instrument was usually made of reeds.
2. Harp - This was a stringed instrument.
3. Trumpet - This was an instrument often used in battle to communicate orders to the troops.

Unless they make a distinction in the sounds - The sound is of no value to the hearers if it is not distinct to carry a message.

How will it be known? - If the sound is not distinct it can carry no message of joy, sorrow or instruction.

Who will prepare himself? - The mere blowing of a trumpet does not tell the soldiers whether to charge or retreat.

So likewise you - Here Paul begins the application of the illustration he has used concerning the sounds of the instruments.

Words easy to understand - A foreign language spoken to people who cannot understand it, though announcing great truths, would be as worthless to the church as the mere blowing of a trumpet, without distinction in sounds, would be to soldiers.

You will be speaking into the air - The sound will go forth, but it will not fulfill its intended purpose because it does not convey the message to the listeners.

So many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance - There are many languages in the world and all languages are of great value to people who understand them. However, if a language is not understood by the listeners it is entirely useless.

14:11. *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.*

If I do not know the meaning of the language - The key is understanding. There is no power in the message if it is not understood. The gift of tongues (miraculously speaking a foreign language) must be understood by the listeners to fulfill God's intended purpose for the gift.

A foreigner - The Greek word translated as "foreigner" (BARBAROS) means barbarian. This word was used to describe one who was not a Greek, or could not speak the Greek language (cf. verse 22).

14:12. *Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.*

Zealous for spiritual gifts - There was nothing wrong with being zealous for spiritual gifts, if their zeal was motivated by a desire to edify the church. However, some Christians in Corinth were seeking these gifts so they could boast or feel superior to other Christians.

Let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel - They should have been seeking to edify their brethren instead of bragging about their abilities to miraculously speak foreign languages.

14:13. *Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.*

Pray that he may interpret - The gifts of speaking in tongues and translating those languages were not the same, so Paul advises tongue speakers to pray for the ability to teach the things they proclaimed so that the use of the gift would have profit to those who did not understand the foreign language.

14:14. *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

But my understanding is unfruitful - If a man leads a prayer with an unknown tongue (language), the hearer who does not understand that language will not get any benefit from that prayer.

14:15. *What is the result 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.*

I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding - Paul explains that he would pray as commanded for his own benefit (Ephesians 6:18), and also with the "understanding" so others could benefit as well.

I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding - The thought here is, "I will sing as commanded in the Scriptures and I will sing so that those who hear can understand."

Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

14:16. *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?*

Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit - The word "bless" means the same as pray or give thanks.

the place of the uninformed say, "Amen" - This would be those who do not know the language being spoken. If the listeners do not understand what is being said they cannot rightfully say "Amen."

1. Place - not a portion of a house, but the position of the unlearned.
2. Uninformed - This comes from the Greek word (IDIŌTĒS) which means "devoid of special learning." The word has been defined as, "A negative of the particular skill, knowledge, profession, or standing over against which it is antithetically set; and not of any other except that alone" (Trench - "Synonyms").
3. Say Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

He does not understand what you say - This is the result of praying or singing in a language which is not understood. Paul uses this as another argument against speaking in tongues where the language spoken is unknown to the listeners.

14:17. *For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.*

The other is not edified - This is an added reason for not miraculously speaking in a foreign language unknown by the listeners.

14:18. *I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;*

I thank my God I speak with tongues - This is another effort to clarify to the people that he is not against speaking in tongues when it is necessary and beneficial.

14:19. *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.*

Rather speak five words with my understanding - The far greater value is to speak that which can be understood.

That I might teach others also - Speaking in a language to a congregation which could not understand that language was both foolish and unfruitful. It would have no benefit. Someone once said, "Teaching does not begin until learning begins."

14:20. *Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.*

Do not be children in understanding - The Corinthian Christians had shown an immature attitude toward the gift of tongues by misusing it and valuing it above all other gifts. They were using it as an attention-getting performance that could fulfill no good purpose.

In malice, be babes - "Malice" comes from the Greek word (KAKIA) which means depravity, malignity, or evil. Concerning malicious thoughts and actions they should be as innocent little children.

This is another verse which teaches against the false Calvinistic doctrine of total hereditary depravity (cf. Ezekiel 18:19-20; Matthew 18:1-4). The Bible teaches that man is not born into this world guilty of Adam's sin. Babies do not have a sinful or depraved nature. Ecclesiastes 7:29 states, "**God hath made man upright;** but they have sought out many inventions."

But in understanding be mature - The Greek word for "mature" (TELEIOS) means full grown or complete in mental and moral character.

14:21. *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.*

With men of other tongues - This is a quote from Isaiah 28:11-12. The application is that those who were unbelievers in the city of Corinth would scoff if they attended the services of the church because they would not be unable to

understand the foreign tongues which some of the Christians were using (verse 23).

14:22. *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.*

Tongues are for a sign - The phrase "for a sign" means this miraculous ability, to speak to an unbeliever in their own language, would be a sign to prove to the listeners that the speaker and his message were from God (Acts 2:1-12).

But prophesying is not for unbelievers - The "unbelievers" were those who were not members of the church. These unbelievers still needed to be convinced that the message was true and from God. They still needed to obey the gospel and be added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47). The gift of prophecy was different. The church would be edified by the prophesying (cf. verse 3). They did not need the sign of the gift of tongues to be convinced of the genuineness of the message.

14:23. *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?*

Therefore, if the whole church comes together - Paul now illustrates his meaning by using a hypothetical case.

Say that you are out of your mind - The gift of tongues was for unbelievers (verse 22), but the gift should be used to speak to the unbeliever in his or her own language. If an unbeliever came into an assembly where many different languages which they did not understand were all being spoken it would appear as madness (cf. Acts 26:25).

14:24. *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is judged by all.*

But if all prophesy - The implication is that those who are prophesying are doing so in a language that all can understand.

He is convinced by all - The Greek word translated as "convinced" (ELEGCHŌ) means "admonished, convicted, rebuked or reprovved." Since the unbeliever understands the words of the gospel spoken by the prophet he is taught concerning his sinful condition and his need for repentance.

He is judged by all - In other words, the preaching helped him to know and understand his true spiritual condition.

14:25. *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.*

Secrets of his heart are revealed - The preaching of the truth causes him to see the sinful things in his heart he has always hidden from others. He begins to understand his true spiritual condition.

That God is truly among you - This is the opposite effect of speaking in a foreign language (cf. verse 23). Common sense would dictate to the Corinthian Christians which manner of speaking is to be used to achieve the desired result.

**[For additional information concerning the next section of Scriptures please see the appendices EXPOSITION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40.]**

14:26. *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.*

How is it then? - Here Paul describes the manner in which the Christians conducted themselves when they assembled together.

1. A psalm - This probably refers to directing the congregation in the singing of a song.
2. A teaching - "Teaching" is from the Greek word (DIDACHĒ) which is defined as "instruction or doctrine."
3. A revelation - A "revelation" is a miraculous message from God delivered to a prophet to speak to the church.
4. An interpretation - This refers to the interpretation of tongues which was miraculous ability to translate a language never before learned (1 Corinthians 12:10).

Let all things be done for edification - This is the overriding general rule to be observed. The following verses tell us how this principle is to be applied.

14:27. *If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.*

If anyone speaks in a tongue - There should be no more than two or three in one meeting and also only one at a time for the sake of good order.

Interpret - This refers to the gift of interpretation of tongues. It was required that one translate the foreign language being spoken into a language that all could understand.

14:28. *But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.*

Let him keep silent - There would be no benefit to the congregation to speak in a language that no one could understand.

Let him speak to himself and to God - The one who had the gift of tongues would understand and God would understand, but the brethren would not be able to understand the words spoken.

14:29. *Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.*

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge - Two or three would be sufficient for any one gathering, and others were to judge (discern) the truth of their words.

1 John 4:1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

14:30. *But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.*

If anything is revealed to another - This was if something was miraculously revealed while the other is speaking. This would prevent confusion and give the latest revelation preference of time. This also shows us that the miraculous gift did not control the person with the gift.

14:31. *For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.*

You can all prophesy one by one - The guidelines given would do several things.

1. The guidelines would prevent confusion.
2. The guidelines would also allow all to learn. This could not happen if all spoke at the same time.
3. Since only two or three could speak at one service, some would have to wait for another meeting to speak.

14:32. *And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

Spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets - The gift of prophecy was controlled by the prophet, rather than the Spirit which spoke through the prophet. The prophet's control was **when** he would speak, not **what** he would speak.

14:33. *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace - Any activity on the part of these Spirit filled men which caused the public to think they were out of their minds or insane is not from God (cf. verse 23).

As in all the churches - The "churches" are the congregations of the Lord's people. There is only one church.

The church you read about in the New Testament was not a denomination. Therefore, the true church today is not a denomination. The members of the Lord's church are just plain Christians – Christians only! The true church follows no creeds because creeds are made to denominate (to separate a specific group of religious people from other religious groups).

The true church belonging to Christ follows the New Testament only, as the guide to salvation, worship and Christian living. To add to God's word or detract from it is to change His word and this is condemned throughout the Bible (Deuteronomy 4:2; Deuteronomy 12:32; Proverbs 30:8; Galatians 1:7-9; Revelation 22:18). Creeds, disciplines, catechisms, etc. are not the Bible. They always add to or take away from the Bible (or both). If they are identical to the Bible we don't need them because we have the Bible.

14:34. *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.*

Let your women keep silent in the churches -

1. The word "churches" here must be taken with its meaning of "assemblies."
2. Silence means the opposite of "speak." They are not to address the mixed, public assembly. This is the same word (SIGATŌSAN) as used in verses 28 and 29 where men were told to cease to address the assembly.

The context demands that we limit the complete silence as to the time and matter. This does not forbid women to sing, confess Christ or confess their sins. It simply means that they are not allowed to address the assembly. [For additional information concerning this issue please see the articles in the appendices - WOMEN PASTORS AND PREACHERS.]

But they are to be submissive - The Greek word for "submissive" is HYPOTASSESTHŌSAN. This is the same word Paul used in verse 32 when he said the spirits of the prophets "are subject to" the prophets. It means to be subordinate or, in the passive, it means to be subordinated. We see several examples of its use in the Scriptures:

1. "That you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us" (1 Corinthians 16:16).
2. "Submitting to one another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21).
3. "Likewise, you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders" (1 Peter 5:5).
4. The idea of inferiority is not in any of these verses.

As the law also says - The "law" here refers to the Old Testament. This is probably not a reference to any one verse, but to the record of the creation of man and woman.

1. Woman is to be a helper, not the boss, of man (Genesis 2:18).
2. Her desire is to be to her husband (Genesis 3:16).
3. Her husband shall rule over her (Genesis 3:16).
4. The reason for this is the order of creation and her sin (1 Timothy 2:12-14).

14:35. *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.*

Let them ask their own husbands at home - "Own" is that which is one's own as opposed to what belongs to another. "At home" could refer to anywhere outside the assembly. This is addressed to the wives of the prophets. And since there were widows, singles and women whose husbands were unbelievers in the church who would not be expected to ask their husbands, we must limit this to the prophets' wives.

It is shameful - The Greek word here means indecent and dishonorable.

For women to speak - This implies that any woman who addresses the public assembly is not being in subjection "as the law also says" and as Paul's teaching demands.

14:36. *Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?*

Or did the word of God come originally from you? - In other words, "Are you the source of the word rather than God?"

Or was it you only that it reached? - This is Paul's way of asking, "Are you the only congregation of the Lord's church to whom God has spoken and do you have the right to set standards of conduct for all of the other congregations?"

14:37. *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.*

If anyone thinks himself to be - This shows that if one "thinks" he is a prophet that does not make him a prophet.

A prophet was one who God would use to reveal His word to others. Prophecy involved teaching (1 Corinthians 14:31, Ephesians 4:11-13) and at times the telling of future events (Acts 11:27-28; 21:10-11). A prophet was only allowed to speak what God told him to speak (Numbers 22:18-20, 38; 23:12).

We know there are no prophets today, because the Bible makes it clear that prophecies would come to an end once the revealed will of God was complete (1 Corinthians 13:8-10). God has completed His revelation by providing all the instruction we need, in written form, in the Bible (2 Peter 1:3; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

There are no prophets today because we do not need prophets. We have the complete revealed word of God. If someone claims to be a prophet today they are contradicting God's word. They are a false prophet.

The things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord - Here Paul affirms that his writings are inspired of God and as such must not be denied, ignored or disobeyed.

14:38. *But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant - If anyone denies, or does not know that Paul's writings, teachings and doctrines are of God, then let him remain ignorant. Paul has nothing more to say to such an individual.

14:39. *Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*

Desire earnestly to prophesy - The gift of prophesy was of greater value because of the teaching and edification it provided to all.

Do not forbid to speak with tongues - Paul is telling the Corinthians that the gift of tongues was from God and was to be used, but it was to be used according to the rules which Paul had given to them.

14:40. *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

Decently - This is from the Greek word which means in a becoming manner that will honor God and His church.

In order - This means in an orderly fashion or in good arrangement.

**[Special Note: Some people in Corinth were denying the resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:12). Therefore, we see Paul addressing this issue in the next chapter.]**

## CHAPTER 15 - SPECIAL OUTLINE

1.	Proof of the Resurrection.....	15:1-11
2.	The Resurrection of Christ is Proof of the Resurrection of All.....	15:12-19
3.	Lessons Learned from Christ's Resurrection.....	15:20-28
4.	Certain Practices Prove Christ's Resurrection.....	15:29-34
5.	Objections to the Doctrine of the Resurrection Answered .....	15:35-49
6.	Victory over Death and Corruption in the Resurrection .....	15:50-58
<b>F.</b>	<b>THE RESURRECTION .....</b>	<b>15:1-58</b>

## CHAPTER 15

### **Proof of the Resurrection (15:1-11)**

15:1. *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand,*

The gospel which I preached - "Gospel" comes from the Greek word (EUAGGELION) which means "the good news or message, glad tidings." The

"good news" is that man now has a way of salvation through Jesus Christ. Man, because of his own sins, was separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Jesus paid the debt for sin that man could not pay.

In Mark 16:15-16 Jesus said, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

Paul said in Romans 1:16, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."

Which also you received - The word "received" means they had heard and responded correctly to the gospel message with their faith and obedience (cf. Acts 2:41; 1 Thessalonians 2:13).

In which you stand - "Stand" comes from the Greek word (HISTĒMI) which means "to stand fast, be firm, endure." If the gospel could be disproved (which it cannot), we would have no ground to stand upon.

15:2. *by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain.*

By which also you are saved - The Greek word for "saved" is present tense which literally means "ye are being saved." The salvation Paul preached goes beyond the salvation from sin received in baptism. Continued obedience is required in order to receive the final salvation (Hebrews 5:8-9; Revelation 2:10).

The Bible teaches that once one hears, believes, repents, confesses and is baptized to become a child of God, he must then remain faithful to the Lord in order to have an eternal home with God in heaven. Those who fall away from the Lord and don't come back repenting of their sin and praying for forgiveness will lose their salvation (2 Peter 2:20-22; James 5:19-20; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

If you hold fast that word which I preached to you - This is proof that eternal salvation is conditioned upon our continuing to hold fast. Notice also that we are to hold fast to what Paul preached, not to the traditions of men.

Unless you believed in vain - If one does not "hold fast" to the word, their faith is vain (without purpose or success). Faith requires action in order to be beneficial. True biblical faith leads one to obedience. If faith does not lead to obedience it is vain faith. Anyone who claims to believe God, and yet does not continue in obedience, has a vain faith. When one adds the doctrines of man to their faith it is also a vain faith.

15:3. *For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,*

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received - The Greek word for "first" (PRŌTOIS) is defined as that which is first in importance, not necessarily first in order of time. The gospel Paul preached was from the Lord (Galatians 1:12; Ephesians 3:3-5).

Christ died for our sins - Christ's death is significant:

1. His death was an atoning sacrifice (Romans 3:25).
2. His death was for sin. When we are baptized into His death for our sins (Romans 6:3) we gain the forgiveness He purchased for us in with His blood His death (1 Peter 1:18-19).
3. His death was also "unto sin" (Romans 6:3,10) and when we are baptized into His death, we die to sin. "Death unto sin" means a termination of our relationship with sin and Satan.

According to the Scriptures - The teaching is according to the Old Testament Scriptures (cf. Isaiah 53:5, 8; Psalm 22).

15:4. *and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,*

And that He was buried - This is a historical fact. Even the enemies of Jesus agree (Matthew 27:62-66). His tomb was guarded by Roman soldiers (Matthew 28:11-15).

He rose again - The Greek word here (EGĒGERTAI) is perfect, indicative, passive, which literally means that He was raised and that He remains raised from the dead never to die again. There have been some resurrections of individuals recorded in the Bible, but unlike Jesus they all died again.

The third day - In Matthew 12:40 Jesus said, "three days and three nights." In Matthew 27:63 it is expressed as "after three days." In this verse it says "the third day." There is no contradiction between these passages. Actually, all three expressions mean the same thing.

Some people are confused by this. Why would Jesus say He would be in His tomb for "three days and three nights" if He was actually buried on Friday afternoon and rose from the grave early Sunday morning? We must understand that when an expression like "three days and three nights" is used it almost never means exactly 72 hours (24 hours x 3 days).

In Bible times, like today, a part of a day was often spoken of as being equal to a complete day (cf. 2 Chronicles 10:5, 12; Esther 4:16; 5:1). If we tell someone today, "I will call you in two days" they do not expect to receive our call exactly 48 hours from when this was said.

In the culture, "the third day," "after three days" and "three days and three nights" all meant the same thing. It is not a contradiction that Jesus was buried on Friday afternoon and rose from the grave early Sunday morning. [For additional information please see the appendices - DID Jesus Rise "On" or "After" the Third Day? by Eric Lyons, M.Min.]

15:5. *and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.*

He was seen by Cephas - "Cephas" is another name for Peter (John 1:40-42). Peter was one of the twelve, but he is mentioned separately because he saw Jesus at a time when he was not with the other apostles.

[For additional information concerning the name "Cephas" please see the appendices - CEPHAS TO HIS FRIENDS (Jonathan Mcanulty)]

Included below is a list of the appearances of Jesus following His resurrection:

1. Mary Magdalene (John 20:1,11-18).
2. The other women (Matthew 28:1-10).
3. Two on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13ff.).
4. Peter (Luke 24:34).
5. Ten apostles (John 20:19-24).
6. The eleven (John 20:26-29).
7. Seven by the sea of Tiberias (John 21:1ff.).
8. Over five hundred (1 Corinthians 15:6).
9. James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
10. The eleven just before His ascension (Mark 14:14-19).
11. Last of all to Paul (1 Corinthians 15:8).

15:6-7. *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. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles.*

Of whom the greater part remain - Of the "over five hundred brethren" most were still alive at the time of this writing and could be asked concerning what they saw. So, the resurrection of Jesus was a fact that could be proved by the testimony of the many witnesses.

In the New Testament the word "witnesses" is a translation of the Greek word (MARTURION) which is defined by *Thayer's Greek Definitions* as "one who is a spectator of anything." It is further defined by *Vine's Dictionary of New Testament Words* as, "one who has seen, heard or knows; to observe." Therefore, in the Bible the term "witness" is used in the sense of someone who has actually seen or observed something (Acts 4:33; 22:15; 23:11).

Religious people today often use the term "witness" incorrectly. We can teach and tell others about the events of Jesus' life, but we are not able to be "witnesses." It is not our testimony. When we proclaim the good news of the Gospel, we are simply passing on to our listeners, the testimony of those who were actual witnesses.

We also do not need to share "testimonies" of what the Lord did in our lives. It's not about us! Let us teach the Gospel to others by using the examples of conversions we find in the New Testament. We should leave "witnessing" to those who actually lived and observed those things during the days of Christ.

15:8. *Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time.*

As by one born out of due time - Paul says last of all Jesus was seen by him. This appearance was when Saul (Paul) was on his way to Damascus to persecute Christians (Acts 9:3-5; 22:6-8; 26:13-15). Paul says he was "born out of due time" because he came after the time of the twelve apostles. He had not been with Jesus during His earthly ministry.

15:9. *For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*

I am the least of the apostles - Paul felt this way because he had once persecuted the church (Ephesians 3:8). He speaks these words out of humility. In no way is he denying his authority as an apostle.

2 Corinthians 11:5, "For I consider that I am not at all inferior to the most eminent apostles."

2 Corinthians 11:23, "Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often."

15:10. *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.*

By the grace of God I am what I am - Paul was called through the grace of God (Galatians 1:15) and God's grace was sufficient for all his trials (2 Corinthians 12:9).

His grace toward me was not in vain - The word "vain" means "empty." Paul is saying that God showed him grace and he responded to God's grace with faith and obedience. Sadly, God's grace in some may be in vain.

2 Corinthians 6:1, "We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

Paul told the Galatians "I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain" (Galatians 4:11) He explained to the Christians at Thessalonica, "For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain" (1 Thessalonians 3:5). This is another verse that teaches the "once saved always saved" doctrine is wrong.

I labored more abundantly - Paul gave himself completely, and suffered much for the cause of Christ.

2 Corinthians 11:23-28, "Are they ministers of Christ?—I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."

Yet not I, but the grace of God - Paul gave God all the glory for what he did.

15:11. *Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.*

Whether it was I or they - Paul speaks of himself and the other apostles, who all preached the same gospel of the resurrection.

So we preach and so you believed - The word "preach" in the Greek is present tense which means "we continue to preach."

### **The Resurrection of Christ is Proof of the Resurrection of All (15:12-19)**

15:12. *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?*

Now if Christ is preached - The Greek here is present tense which literally means, "is being preached." Also, the translation should probably be, "forasmuch" as Christ is being preached or even "since" Christ is being preached.

That He has been raised from the dead - The Greek word for "raised" is perfect tense which literally means He "has been and remains raised." This leaves no doubt that Jesus was raised from the dead. Before His death Jesus said He would "rise again" (Luke 18:33).

How do some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? - How could they deny the resurrection of the dead? There was overwhelming proof of the resurrection:

1. The resurrection of Jesus was being preached.
2. More than 500 people saw Him after He was crucified and buried.
3. He appeared to Saul (Paul) and completely changed his life.
4. The fact that Jesus was raised is positive proof of the possibility of a general resurrection of the dead.

15:13. *But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen.*

But if there is no resurrection - If we claim that resurrection is impossible, we will be forced to deny Jesus was raised. This would contradict the testimony of so many witnesses and the Scriptures.

15:14. *And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain.*

If Christ is not risen - If what these people were saying is true it has consequences. False teachers often fail to see the implications of their foolish theories.

1. Our preaching is vain - The Greek word for "vain" here means empty. If Christ was not risen the gospel being preached by Paul had no value, it was a lie.
2. Your faith is also vain - If Christ was not risen there was also no foundation for their faith. It was worth nothing.

15:15. *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.*

We are found false witnesses - If there is no resurrection, then Paul and all those who were saying they saw the resurrected Christ were liars. The evidence for Christ's resurrection was overwhelming.

1. Jesus had been seen alive by over 500 brethren at once following the crucifixion (1 Corinthians 15:6) The majority were still living and telling others they saw Him alive.
2. Many were willing to die rather than deny their testimony.
3. Paul was suffering for his faith when he could have easily gone to the top of the Jewish system (Galatians 1:14) if he had only been willing to deny Christ's resurrection.

15:16. *For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen.*

For if the dead do not rise - The word "dead" is plural. If there is no general resurrection, it follows that Christ was not raised and more than 500 people have been proven to be liars; and their suffering for their faith is unexplainable.

15:17. *And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!*

If Christ is not risen - There are many consequences if Christ was not resurrected:

1. Your faith is futile - The word "futile" comes from the Greek word (MATAIOS) which means empty, profitless or useless. This is not the same Greek word used in verse 14 for "vain," but it has a similar meaning.
2. You are still in your sins - If Christ is not risen there is no forgiveness of sins.
  - a. If there is no resurrection of Christ - there is no justification (Romans 4:25).

- b. If there is no resurrection of Christ - there is no blood offered for us (Hebrews 9:11).
  - c. If there is no resurrection of Christ - there is no redemption for us (Hebrews 9:12).
3. To still be in sin means:
- a. To be held always in the power of sin (Romans 6:5-11).
  - b. To bear the guilt of sin always, no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:13-15).
  - c. To be exposed to the punishment of sin forever (Revelation 21:8).
  - d. To have no cleansing from the pollution of sin (1 John 1:7-9; Revelation 1:5).

15:18. *Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.*

Then also those who have fallen asleep - The phrase "fallen asleep" is a euphemistic way of describing death. It is called falling asleep to emphasize the temporary nature of death. All of us will spend an eternity somewhere after death - either heaven or hell.

In Christ - They had been baptized into Christ, which is the only way one can be "in" Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

Have perished - If there is no resurrection then they had simply perished and would not have eternal life with Christ (Philippians 1:23).

15:19. *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.*

If in this life only we have hope in Christ - The Bible has much to say concerning the hope we have in Christ (Romans 8:24-25; Hebrews 6:17-20). If Christ was not raised, we will not be raised from our graves; so, this life will be all there is for us.

We are of all men most pitiable - This means we are more "pitiable" (to be pitied) than those who do not suffer for faith in a risen Savior. If there is no resurrection and no eternity of happiness beyond death, why suffer hardships; and what is the point of living moral lives?

### **Lessons Learned from Christ's Resurrection (15:20-28)**

15:20. *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*

But now Christ is risen - This is Paul's conclusion from the overwhelming evidence of Christ's resurrection that cannot be logically denied.

The firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep - The term "firstfruits" (singular) comes from the Old Testament ceremony of waving the sheaf of first fruits of the ripening grain before God in thanksgiving and as a pledge that the balance of the crop would be harvested (Leviticus 23:9-11). The sheaf was at once the pledge and the sample of the entire harvest; it was a part of the harvest to be gathered. So, the resurrection of Jesus was the pledge of God that all who die will be raised. Jesus was the first person to rise from the dead to die no more.

15:21. *For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.*

By man came death - The man was Adam (Romans 5:12). When Adam and Eve first sinned, they were banned from the garden and no longer had access to the tree of life. The "death" in this verse is physical death.

By Man also came the resurrection of the dead - The second "Man" mentioned in the verse is Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth as a man with a physical body (John 1:14; Hebrews 10:5). The "resurrection" spoken of in this verse is the general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29).

15:22. *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive - The phrase "in Christ" means by Him or through His work. Also notice that "all" is the same number who died in Adam.

15:23. *But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

But each one in his own order - "Order" here is from a Greek word (TAGMA) which is a military term and means "division, troop or rank." Christ "the firstfruits" is the first in order of occurrence, then they that are Christ's. This includes Christians and all who will enjoy eternal life, both those who lived before Christ (Old Testament) and who live after Him. Paul makes no mention of the people who are lost in this verse, but we know from other passages they will be raised as well (John 5:28-29).

At His coming - "Coming" is from the Greek word (PAROUSIA) which means "being near, return, presence, the coming, arrival" (cf. Hebrews 9:28; 1

Thessalonians 4:14-17). This proved the resurrection had not already happened, as some were teaching (2 Timothy 2:18).

At His coming - When Jesus returns many things will occur:

1. The saved will meet Christ in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17).
2. The last day is the day of the Lord (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2).
3. The wicked will also be raised (John 5:28-29; 6:40).
4. The earth, and all the works in it, will be burned up on that day (2 Peter 3:10). So, there can be no thousand-year reign after that day as some falsely teach.

15:24. *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.*

Then comes the end - "Then" is an adverb of time; which means "at that time." The word "end" refers to the consummation of all things on this earth.

When He delivers the kingdom to God the Father - The kingdom of Jesus is His church (Matthew 16:18-19; Colossians 1:13-18).

In Matthew 4:17 we see, "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" The kingdom was "at hand" (near), in regard to time, not distance. He told His disciples, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power" (Mark 9:1). The promise Jesus made was that some who were in His audience would see the kingdom arrive during their lifetime. The kingdom existed in the first century. Paul wrote in Colossians 1:13, "He has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son." When Paul said "us" he meant himself and the church at Colossae. Therefore, the kingdom and the church are one and the same. Today many do not believe the kingdom has come and are awaiting its arrival. This would mean that none of the disciples, Paul, or the brethren at Colossae were in the kingdom. However, the Scriptures say that they were in the kingdom. The kingdom is the church and it is here now.

When He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power - Every institution or organization of this earth that exerts rule, authority or power will be destroyed. This is everything that is opposed to God (Revelation 20:7-10, 14).

15:25. *For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.*

He must reign till - This indicates Christ was reigning in Paul's day and He will continue to reign until He has accomplished all His purposes.

He has put all enemies under His feet - This gives us additional information concerning those with rule, authority and power in verse 24.

15:26. *The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.*

Destroyed - Death will be destroyed by the resurrection of all held by death in their graves.

15:27. *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.*

For "He has put all things under His feet" - The "He" in this verse is God the Father. "All things are those things man was given to rule over originally (Hebrews 2:6-8). "His feet" refers to Christ (Hebrews 2:9). Christ became a man in order that He might restore to man that dominion over all things.

He who put all things is excepted - When all things are subjected to Him (Christ), it is obvious that He (the Father) is the exception. The Son is always subject to the Father.

15:28. *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.*

When all things are made subject to Him - "Made subject to" is from the Greek word (HUPOTAGĒ) which is singular, aorist, subjunctive. This indicates a future event, but one which Paul had no doubt would come; nor should we.

Then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him - All will be subject to God the Father.

That God may be all in all - The purpose of the Son's subjection is to show the absolute sovereignty of the Father.

This is not as though the rule of Christ had hindered the attainment of this end, but it had served its purpose to bring about this end as its final destination, the fulfillment of which is the complete "glory" of God the Father.

### **Certain Practices Prove Christ's Resurrection (15:29-34)**

15:29. *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?*

Otherwise, what will they do? - "Otherwise" means if the foregoing arguments are not true, what else is there left for Christians who are suffering for the name of Christ? If Paul's arguments are false, it is not logical for Christians to be looking forward to the future of heaven.

Baptized for the dead: It is said that there are thirty-five different interpretations of this passage. [For additional information concerning this topic please see the appendices BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD by Bobby Bates.] For this study we will only look at the two major views:

1. The first view is from ***A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles***, by David Lipscomb with additional notes by J.W. Shepherd.

**29 Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead ?--** As is apparent to every thoughtful person, this is an earnest argument to prove that Christians will rise from the dead. The purpose, scope, and connection will admit of but one meaning--If the dead rise not, what shall they do who are baptized in the hope of the resurrection? Men are "baptized into Christ," that they may live in him, die in him, and finally be justified and saved in him.

**If the dead are not raised at all, why then are they baptized for them?--** In view of their dying they are baptized in order to their well-being after death. If they are not to be raised from the dead, why are they baptized to fit them for the resurrection? [There is no doubt that the allusion is to some act performed in expectation of future benefit to themselves, which would be lost if the dead did not rise. And the view given here suits the argument and agrees with the context. Foreseeing that faith would cost them the loss of all things, perhaps of life itself, not a few persons, in being baptized, did so, virtually saying with the apostle, "We who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." (2 Cor. 4:11.) The meaning then is: What is to become of those who on being baptized do so knowing that it may prove their death warrant, if the dead rise not?]

2. The Second view is from ***Bible Commentary*** by E.M. Zerr.

*Verse 29. What shall they do.* The pronoun is in the third person, while Paul is writing to the church in general as in the second person. This shows that not all persons in the Corinthian church were practicing this baptism, even as not all were denying the resurrection, as is indicated by the

words "how say some among you" (verse 12). This item must not be overlooked in considering this verse, for any professed explanation of it that would apply to all Christians in general would necessarily be wrong. The word *for* is from HUPER and Thayer defines it at this place, "in the place of, instead of." I shall quote Moffatt's translation of this verse: "Otherwise, if there is no such thing as a resurrection, what is the meaning of people getting baptized on behalf of their dead? If dead men do not rise at all, why do people get baptized on their behalf?" Not all of the brethren in Corinth were practicing this inconsistency of being baptized on behalf of their dead, neither were all of them denying the resurrection (verse 12). But Paul considered it necessary to notice them in his epistle to the whole church, even as he deemed it worthwhile to notice the group that was practicing this "proxy" baptism. The apostle does not endorse the foolish practice, but brings it up to expose their inconsistency.

15:30. *And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour?*

Jeopardy - The Greek word for "jeopardy" here literally means "are in danger."

Every hour - Paul was continually in danger of death (as were many others) because of his faith.

15:31. *I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.*

I affirm - The Greek word here (NĒ) is used to represent the words "I solemnly affirm, or declare."

By the boasting in you - This is not a worldly boasting. The glory Paul felt in them was "in Christ Jesus" not in himself. He gloried in them as his work for Christ. In spite of their many problems, the Corinthian brethren were very precious to him.

I die daily - Paul is saying that the Christians at Corinth were the fruit of his work which had been a daily risk of life for him. In this way he could point to them as fruit and so he truly could say, "I die daily."

15:32. *If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die."*

I have fought with beasts at Ephesus - This must refer to some persecution Paul faced of which we have no details. We should probably not take the word "beasts" as literal since Paul, who was a Roman citizen, would be exempt from such treatment as being thrown to the lions.

What advantage is it to me? - If there is no resurrection, why would he be willing to suffer such treatment?

Let us eat and drink - If there is no resurrection there is no point to life. This phrase was the motto of the Epicureans who did not believe in a resurrection and eternal life afterwards.

The Epicureans had a fable about a fly dying in a pot of honey and saying, "I have eaten and drunk and bathed, and I care nothing if I die."

15:33. *Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."*

Do not be deceived - Paul is saying, do not be persuaded by the false teaching of those who deny the resurrection.

Evil company corrupts good habits - This seems to have been a proverb of the time. It is found in the writings of Menander who was a Greek dramatist (342-291 BC). It is excellent advice for both the young and the old.

15:34. *Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

Awake to righteousness - The Greek word for "awake" is used only here and 2 Timothy 2:26. The word literally means "to come out of a drunken state." The Christians at Corinth needed to wake up from the foolishness of those who were leading them into such error and sin.

And do not sin - Paul is telling them to live righteously in view of the coming resurrection and judgment.

Some do not have the knowledge of God - The Greek word here literally means some "have an ignorance" concerning the knowledge of God. Some were afflicted with this ignorance and were holding on to it willingly. Paul's point is that it would be foolish to keep company with these false teachers and allow them to lead you into sin.

To your shame - It was shameful that some in the church were denying the resurrection of Christ.

### **Objections to the Doctrine of the Resurrection Answered (15:35-49)**

15:35. *But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?"*

How are the dead raised up? - Some may have been asking, "How is it possible that something that is dead can be made alive?"

With what body do they come? - They may have wondered, "How is it possible to resurrect bodies that have been burned or eaten by animals?" They did not understand so they were asking, "If the dead are raised, what kind of body will their resurrected body be?"

15:36. *Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies.*

Foolish one - The one asking the questions is foolish because the same thing is happening in the plant world (sowing seed) and he accepts it without question. Why deny it in the realm of the body?

15:37. *And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain - perhaps wheat or some other grain.*

And what you sow - The grain does not come up unless it dies first. If a man had never seen a seed planted in the ground and he was told that it must be put in the ground and die in order to reproduce itself, he would be as slow to believe it as the foolish one is slow to believe that this body has to die in order for it to become a body fit for the next world.

That body that shall be - A better translation would be, "that shall come to pass." Paul is saying: "What you sow is one body and a different body arises; yet the identity is preserved." The full heads of wheat are different from the wheat seed, but both are wheat.

15:38. *But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.*

God gives it a body - God does this to the grain when planted, so why doubt that He can do the same for our bodies?

As He pleases - This is from the Greek phrase (KATHŌS ĒTHELĒSEN) which means, "even as He willed." God fixed the different types of grain at creation. Each type must permanently assume a form according to God's set purpose. Wheat will always be wheat, barley will always be barley, etc.

To each seed its own body - In keeping with the law given in creation that every seed produces its kind, there is continuity between the seed that is planted and that which comes up. So, there is continuity between the body that is buried and that which is raised in the resurrection.

15:39. *All flesh is not the same flesh, but there is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fish, and another of birds.*

All flesh is not the same flesh - In the animal world, as in the plant world, there is variety. So, the resurrected body may differ from our present body as much as the stalk of corn differs in appearance from the seed that was planted; but the identity is maintained. This is an illustration which runs through verse 40. Paul names four kinds of flesh, men, beasts, birds and fish, to suggest there are different kinds of bodies.

15:40. *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 are also celestial bodies - The word "celestial" means heavenly (sun, moon and stars), while the word "terrestrial" means earthly.

But the glory - The splendor, beauty and dignity of these various bodies differ.

15:41. *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.*

There is one glory of the sun - This is an illustration of the former statement. If God can make the celestial and terrestrial bodies differ, why would men think God cannot make a resurrected body differ from the earthly body? If a man had never seen a caterpillar change into a beautiful butterfly, would he think it possible?

15:42. *So also, is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption.*

So also, is the resurrection of the dead - As there is a change in the seed when it comes up, so there will be a change in the body in resurrection.

The body is sown in corruption - The body returns to the dust from which it was taken (Genesis 2:7; Job 33:6).

It is raised in incorruption - The raised body is not subject to decay. Notice "it" (the body) is both sown and raised; "it" (the body) is raised; not something else. We do not lose our identity at the resurrection.

15:43. *It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power.*

It is sown in dishonor - The Greek word for "dishonor" means a decaying, offensive mass of corruption.

It is raised in glory - The body is raised as a glorious (spiritual) body fit for dwelling in heaven.

It is sown in weakness - "Weakness" is the perfect description for a body without life. It is dead and powerless.

It is raised in power - The raised body has conquered death and is able to live forever. The resurrected body is forever powerful, never subject to weakness again.

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.*

It is sown a natural body - The "natural" body is a physical body which consists of flesh, bones, muscles and blood. The "natural" body is vulnerable to pain, sickness, death and decay. The "natural" body needs food, water, oxygen and rest. It is designed by God to meet the conditions of an earthly existence.

It is raised a spiritual body - The "spiritual" body is not a physical body. It does not consist of flesh, bones, muscles and blood. The "spiritual" body is not vulnerable to pain, sickness, death or decay. The "spiritual" body does not need food, water, oxygen or rest. It is designed by God to meet the conditions of a heavenly existence. It is not designed for an earthly existence.

There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body - Please notice the phrase "there is" which is used twice in this verse. Just as sure as there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The existence of the spiritual body is no more impossible than the existence of the natural body. It is no more difficult for God to give us this spiritual body from the grave than it was for Him to give us the natural body from the womb.

15:45. *And so it is written. "The first man Adam became a living being." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit.*

The first man Adam became a living being - This is a reference to Genesis 2:7. Adam's natural body was made from the dust; and then life was breathed into him.

The last Adam became a life-giving spirit -

1. The last Adam - This refers to Jesus Christ.
2. Life-giving - "Life-giving" comes from the Greek word (ΖΩΟΠΟΙΕΩ) which means "to make alive spiritually."
3. Adam is the head of the natural race. Jesus is the head of the spiritual race and gives spiritual life to all who obey Him, and He will give a spiritual body to them in the resurrection (cf. John 5:21-29).

15:46. *However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, and afterward the spiritual.*

However, the spiritual is not first - This is God's order, the natural first and the spiritual second - from the imperfect to the perfect.

15:47. *The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven.*

The first man was of the earth - Once again, this is a reference to Genesis 2:7 when Adam's natural body was made from the dust.

Second Man is the Lord from heaven - The second man is Jesus Christ. The word "from" is the Greek word that means "out of" heaven (John 8:23; 6:38, 51).

15:48. *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.*

As was the man of dust - Adam was of the earth, so all his descendants are earthy in body.

As is the heavenly Man - Jesus is of heaven and so are all who are born again (those who obey God's plan of salvation). This process of becoming heavenly begins at conversion and is consummated in the resurrection.

15:49. *And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.*

As we have borne the image of the man of dust - The phrase "have borne" denotes a continuous bearing in the Greek.

We shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man - This describes them at the moment of the resurrection and assures these Christians that they will have the same kind of body that Jesus has in heaven (cf. 1 John 3:2).

### **Victory over Death and Corruption in the Resurrection (15:50-58)**

15:50. *Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.*

Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God - This speaks of the natural body of flesh which we all now have which is not fitted for living in heaven.

Nor does corruption inherit incorruption - "Corruption" is the state of our present natural body (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:43-44). "Incorruption" is the state of the Christian's resurrected body (cf. 1 Corinthians 15:43-44).

15:51. *Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed -*

I tell you a mystery - The word "mystery" is used in the Bible to identify something man cannot know without revelation from God.

We shall not all sleep - The word "sleep" is a euphemism for death. It is called "sleep" to emphasize the temporary nature of death. Death is not the end. We will all spend an eternity somewhere after death - either heaven or hell. Therefore, Paul is saying, "We shall not all die (1 Thessalonians 4:14-17). This is not saying that some living then will never die, but that there will be some Christians who are living when the Lord returns.

We shall all be changed - Paul is saying to Christians, we will be changed from natural to spiritual; earthly to heavenly; corrupted to incorruptible; flesh to spirit.

15:52. *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.*

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet - This change will be instantaneous at the last trump when the dead in Christ shall be raised (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

The dead will be raised incorruptible - This is positive affirmation of the resurrection. That which is buried shall be raised. The nature of the resurrected body will be incorruptible.

And we shall be changed - The word "we" includes all the saved, both those who have died and those living at the time of the sounding of the trumpet. They shall be changed as the body of Jesus was changed in the ascension (Acts 1:9-11).

15:53. *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.*

This corruptible - The word "corruptible" describes the physical body with all its weaknesses and limitations.

Must put on incorruption - This describes the heavenly body.

This mortal - The word "mortal" refers to the physical body.

Must put on immortality - The word "immortality" refers to the heavenly (spiritual) body. Notice that this verse identifies the physical, mortal, body as being the one which will be resurrected. But a change from mortal and physical to immortal and incorruptible will take place in the resurrection, like the change of appearance in the seed of a plant takes place in coming up.

15:54. *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."*

"Death is swallowed up in victory" - The word "death" refers to physical death. The Greek word here for "swallowed up" is aorist tense which means it is final and complete. Notice the word "victory" - death is not merely stopped in its devastating work, but its work is undone! The body is more glorious than it ever was!

15:55. *"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"*

Where is your sting? - The word "sting" is applied here as the instrument (sin) used by death to get a victory over the human body to bring it into the grave.

O Hades where is your victory? - This is a triumphant shout of victory over death (Hosea 13:14).

15:56. *The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.*

The sting of death is sin - If there had been no sin, there would never have been any death. The devil brought sin into the world in order to bring death.

The strength of sin is the law - Where there is no law there is no sin, for sin is the violation of the law (Romans 7:7-13; 1 John 3:4).

15:57. *But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Thanks be to God - It is God who gives Christians the victory over sin and death.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ - Jesus gives Christians the victory:

1. Over **sin** by saving Christians from its power and dominion.
2. Over **death** by His entering the realm of death and binding Satan.
3. Over **the grave** by His resurrection.

15:58. *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.*

Be steadfast - The Greek word here is present tense which means keep on being steadfast.

Always abounding - This suggests an abundance of zeal and effort.

In the work of the Lord - The "work of the Lord" is the work He has commanded Christians to do in His word.

Knowing that your labor is not in vain - The Christian's labor is not in vain because Christians labor together with the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:9). If we are God's laborers we will be rewarded in the resurrection.

In the Lord - Many people labor (do good works) but their labor is not "in" the Lord (Matthew 7:21-23). There are only two fields for us to work, the Lord's and Satan's. People who do not labor in the Lord's field should not expect to be rewarded by the Lord!

**G. THE GREAT COLLECTION..... 16:1-9**

CHAPTER 16

16:1. *Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also:*

Now concerning the collection for the saints - There may have been a question in the letter sent to Paul about the collection. The use of the definite article "the" indicates that the subject had been mentioned before.

Collection - "Collection" is from the Greek word (LOGIA) which is defined as "a contribution, collection, or gathering."

Saints - The word "saints" is an English translation of the Greek word HAGIOS which means set apart for a holy use. All Christians are saints (1 Peter 1:15-16). The "saints" in this verse refers to the poor located in Jerusalem (Romans 15:25-26). This was money gathered not just for one time and not for Christians only (see 2 Corinthians 9:13, "unto all men").

As I have given order to the churches of Galatia - The phrase "given order" is from the Greek word (DIATASSŌ) which means "to make a precise arrangement, to command." Paul taught all the churches to care for the poor (1 Corinthians 7:17; Galatians 2:10).

So you must do also - The command is the same for the church at Corinth.

16:2. *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.*

On the first day of the week - In the original Greek (KATÁ MIAN SABBATOU) literally means, "on the first day of **every** week." KATÁ has a distributive force - "every first day." This designates systematic weekly giving rather than one big collection. The first day of the week is significant for several reasons:

1. The first day is the day the Lord rose from the dead (Mark 16:9).
2. The first day is the day the church was established in Jerusalem (Acts 2).
3. The first day is the day Christians were commanded to come together to worship God (Acts 20:7).

Ignatius (who was an early "Christian" writer, 108-140 A.D.) wrote, "No longer keeping the sabbath, but living according to the Lord's day, on which also our Light arose" (ISBE, Vol 3, p. 1919).

Let each one of you - The phrase "each one of you" makes it clear that giving is the duty of every Christian.

Lay something aside - The Greek here literally means, "by itself let him put storing up." Several commentators say this means they were to store their money at home instead of the church treasury. But this is proven false by the fact that Paul wanted it stored in one place so he would not have to collect it when he arrived (2 Corinthians 9:1-5). [For additional information concerning this issue please see the article in the appendices - "IS 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 A COMMAND AND WHERE IS THE CONTRIBUTION FOR THE POOR TO BE PLACED AND STORED UNTIL THE APOSTLE PAUL ARRIVES?" by C.M. Horner.]

As he may prosper - The Greek here literally means, "whatsoever he may prosper in." The giving is to be according to one's prosperity.

That there be no collections - The purpose of this measure is so the collection would be ready when Paul arrived.

When I come - The Greek here literally means, "then whenever I may come." Paul had not set an exact time for his arrival and they were to be ready at any time. Christian giving is to be the outcome of a settled principle not from an occasional impulse. There are many lessons we can learn from verses 1 and 2:

1. The first day of the week was the day of worship for Christians in Corinth, Troas, the region of Galatia and indeed all the congregations of the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 4:17; 7:17).
2. Paul taught Christians to be regular in their giving.
3. Paul taught churches to use their money to help the poor rather than consume it on their pleasures.

4. Several small weekly gifts would likely amount to more than one gift made occasionally.
5. This would also be easier than giving the same amount all at one time.
6. If every member of the church would follow this rule:
  - a. The church would do more.
  - b. Christians would abound in the grace of Christ (2 Corinthians 8:7).
  - c. They would reap a great reward for their liberality.
  - d. The prayers of the poor would ascend to God in their behalf (2 Corinthians 9:12-14).
  - e. Their ability to do good would be multiplied (2 Corinthians 9:10-11).

16:3. *And when I come, whomever you approve by your letters I will send to bear your gift to Jerusalem.*

And when I come - This was proof of Paul's intention to go to Corinth to get the money collected for the poor.

Whomever you approve - This was Paul's way of keeping his actions in matters of money above reproach or suspicion (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:18-21).

To bear your gift to Jerusalem - The Greek word for "gift" (KHÁRIN) is usually translated as "grace."

16:4. *But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me.*

But if it is fitting that I go also - We see in other passages that Paul did go with the men chosen by the churches (Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25-28).

16:5. *Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia).*

When I pass through Macedonia - Paul's intention was to go directly to Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:15-16), continue from there to Macedonia, and then return from Macedonia to Corinth, thus on to the city of Jerusalem. However, this plan was altered (2 Corinthians 1:15, 23). In 2 Corinthians we see him busy on this journey

in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 2:13; 8:1; 9:2-4) and upon the way to Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:1; 12:14; 13:1; cf. Acts 20:1-2).

16:6. *But 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.*

I will remain or even spend the winter with you - It seems that Paul was able to do this (cf. Acts 20:1-4).

You may send me on my journey - This would include preparations for the journey, travel equipment and money for the journey (cf. 3 John 1:5-8).

16:7. *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.*

For I do not wish to see you now on the way - This is repetition of verse 5 for the sake of emphasis, to assure them of his interest in them and his love for them.

16:8. *But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost.*

I will tarry in Ephesus - This is proof that this letter was written from Ephesus. "Pentecost" was the Jewish feast fifty days after the Passover (Exodus 23:16; 34:22; Leviticus 23:15, 22; Numbers 28).

16:9. *For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.*

A great and effective door - The "door" represented an opportunity to serve the Lord. It was "great" as to its extent. It was "effective" as to its results. The Greek word for "effective" means efficient, energetic, adapted to accomplish a thing.

There are many adversaries - In the Greek this is literally, "There are many who are lined up against me."

**CONCLUSION ..... 16:10-24**

**1. CONCERNING FELLOW-WORKERS ..... 16:10-12,15-20**

16:10. *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.*

Now if Timothy comes - Paul had sent Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17). Erastus was with Timothy (Acts 19:22).

1 Corinthians 4:17, "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."

Be with you without fear - Paul was anxious that no one, especially his enemies, would seek to intimidate Timothy on account of his youth and inexperience.

He does the work of the Lord - If they do not think his age deserves respect, his work certainly does! Truth is to be accepted from youth as well as from age.

16:11. *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.*

Therefore let no one despise him - Some of the factions (those calling themselves "of Peter" and "of Apollos" - 1 Corinthians 1:12), might think less of him because they would expect Timothy to favor the group who called themselves "of Paul."

Send him on his journey in peace - Show him the same respect an older man would be shown and help him on his journey (financially and supplies).

With the brethren - The "brethren" Paul is referring to includes Erastus (who was with Timothy), Titus and others were also there (2 Corinthians 12:17-18). Perhaps the brethren chosen by the church to carry this letter were also included.

16:12. *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.*

Now concerning our brother Apollos - Remember there was a faction of the church there at Corinth who had named themselves as followers of him (1 Corinthians 1:12). For more information concerning Apollos please see Acts 18:24-28.

He was quite unwilling to come at this time - Why?

1. Not because of hard feelings between him and Paul, for Paul had begged him to go, indicating a good relationship between them.
2. Not because of the group named for him because he promised to go later when he had the opportunity.
3. This implies that when Paul asked him to go he did not have the ability to do so.

**2. ADMONITIONS ..... 16:13-14**

16:13. *Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.*

Watch - The Greek word here is present tense which means they should keep watching, stay awake! They are to be like sentries or watchmen on guard. They must be alert because the enemies always seek an advantage (2 Corinthians 2:11; 1 Peter 5:8). The Corinthian Christians should always be watchful for false teachers (1 John 4:1-6).

Stand fast in the faith - They are commanded to be well grounded doctrinally, refuse to compromise the truth and be set for the defense of the truth (Philippians 1:16).

Jude 1:3, "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Be brave - This Greek word for "brave" (ANDRIZESTHE) means "to act like a grown man, to have the qualities of maturity."

Be strong - If they would put their trust in God, and do His will, His strength would be with them.

Ephesians 6:10-11, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

16:14. *Let all that you do be done with love.*

With love - This is love for God supreme (Matthew 22:37), love for the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10), love for the brethren (John 13:35; Romans 15:1-2) and love for their enemies so that they would be the sons of God (Matthew 5:44-48).

16:15. *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.*

The household of Stephanas - "Stephanas" was a notable person at Corinth, whom the apostle Paul had baptized, together with his family (1 Corinthians 1:16).

1. The firstfruits of Achaia - "Firstfruits" is a way to describe those who were first converted in the region of Achaia.

2. Devoted themselves to the ministry - The Greek word here means "to devote to a purpose."

Ministry of the saints - This is a way of saying their purpose was to help the poor and afflicted brethren, as well as those who preached the gospel.

16:16. *that you also submit to such, and to everyone who works and labors with us.*

You also submit to such - Paul is saying follow their example; help them, honor them.

16:17. *I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus, for what was lacking on your part they supplied.*

I am glad about the coming of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus - Paul had been the one who baptized Stephanas (1 Corinthians 1:16), but the other men (Fortunatus and Achaicus) are not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible.

For what was lacking - This refers to the "lacking" of companionship felt by Paul while separated from the Corinthians and his inability to communicate directly with them. These three men could refresh him and report to him the things he needed to know concerning the congregation.

16:18. *For they refreshed my spirit and yours; therefore acknowledge such men.*

They refreshed my spirit - Fellowship with brethren, especially those who have not been seen for some time, is both refreshing and encouraging.

Acknowledge such men - These men should be acknowledged for what they did for Paul and for the fact that they carried out the work which the church had sent them to do so well.

16:19. *The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*

Aquila and Priscilla greet you - This was a family who lived in Corinth when Paul worked there (Acts 18:2). They were living in Ephesus when Paul wrote this letter (Acts 18:18-19). They opened their house to the church wherever they lived (Romans 16:3-5).

16:20. *All the brethren greet you. Greet one another with a holy kiss.*

Greet one another with a holy kiss - In the culture of the day, men kissed men and women kissed women. This was the eastern manner of greeting, just as the hand-shake is the manner of greeting in the west.

Paul's command concerning a "holy kiss" was a clear restriction against impure motives during the greeting. If people greet one another with a kiss it must be a HOLY kiss. "Holy" means "pure, sanctified and godly." Such greetings could obviously provide an opportunity for lust or impure thoughts. Paul's command concerning the "holy kiss" was given to regulate a practice already in existence, rather than establishing a new law demanding that all Christian greetings be a kiss.

### 3. SALUTATIONS ..... 16:21-24

16:21. *The salutation with my own hand - Paul.*

It appears that Paul dictated the letter to a scribe, but signed it with his own hand as he did in other letters (2 Thessalonians 3:17).

16:22. *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ - "Love" in this verse is from the Greek word (PHILEŌ) which is defined as "a deep brotherly love." Basically, this is a command to have brotherly love!

2 Peter 1:5-7, "But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love."

Let him be accursed - This is from the Greek word (ANATHEMA) which means "devoted to destruction."

O Lord come - This is actually an Aramaic phrase MARAN ATHA.

1. MARAN means "our Lord."
2. ATHA means "come."

A paraphrase of this verse would be – "If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ may he be accursed by God and may the Lord Jesus return now and seal the curse forever."

3. This means that the one who does not love the Lord may not be punished here and now, but definitely will be when the Lord comes.
4. This is a very strong curse!

16:23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.*

Grace - It is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" since the love of God through Christ is the actual gift to man. The risen Christ is the source of all spiritual blessings (2 Corinthians 12:9).

16:24. *My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

My love be with you - Paul assures them that even after his many rebukes of their actions he continues to love them.

In Christ Jesus - This could mean that he sends his love to all who are in Christ or it could mean that Paul, as one who is in Christ, sends his love.

Amen - "Amen" literally means "so be it." The word "Amen" started as a Hebrew word (Numbers 5:22), which was transliterated into Greek and then eventually into English. The word comes from a Hebrew root word which means "to build up or support; to be firm or faithful, to trust or believe; to be true or certain." It is also used as an adverb at the beginning of a speech to mean "surely, of a truth, truly" (Matthew 5:18; Mark 3:28; John 3:3). At the conclusion of a sentence it is used to mean "so it is, so be it, may it be fulfilled." When the word is used as an adjective it means "firm or true." Some dictionaries claim that when "Amen" is used at the end of a prayer it means approval of what is being said. However, our approval does not make it true. It is more correct to think of it as "this is true, or may it come to pass, or may it be fulfilled."

**FINIS**

<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>196</b>
1:12—CEPHAS TO HIS FRIENDS (JONATHAN McANULTY) .....	197
7:12—DESERTION BY AN UNBELIEVER (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	199
7:15—BONDAGE IN 1 CORINTHIANS. 7:15 (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	206
7:15—MARRIAGE, DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE (ROY H. LANIER).....	208
7:21— DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY? (ERIC LYONS, M.MIN.) .....	244
7:39—ONLY IN THE LORD (ROY DEAVER).....	249
7:39—ONLY IN THE LORD (GUY N. WOODS) .....	252
11:4—1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-16 (KEVIN CAULEY) .....	256
12:8—THE GIFT OF TONGUES (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	259
12:8—MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	262
13:10—THAT WHICH IS PERFECT (TROY CUMMINGS).....	264
13:10—EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:10 (JERRY MOFFITT).....	271
13:10—HAS THAT WHICH IS PERFECT COME? (GARY WORKMAN) .....	280
14:26—EXPOSITION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40 (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	297
14:34—WOMEN - PASTORS AND PREACHERS (AUTHOR UNKNOWN) .....	305
15:4— DID JESUS RISE “ON” OR “AFTER” THE THIRD DAY? (ERIC LYONS, M.MIN.).....	307
15:29—BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD (BOBBY BATES).....	310
16:2—IS 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 A COMMAND AND WHERE IS THE CONTRIBUTION FOR THE POOR TO BE PLACED UNTIL PAUL ARRIVES? (C.M. HORNER) .....	316

## **CEPHAS TO HIS FRIENDS**

By: Jonathan McAnulty

Have you ever wondered why the apostles often seemed to have more than one name?

Let's take the apostle Peter, for example. He is sometimes in the Bible called Peter; he is sometimes called Simon; and he is sometimes called Cephas. All three names are used to refer to the same man, sometimes in close proximity to each other.

For instance, in the book of Galatians, Paul refers to Peter, as Peter in Galatians 2:7, 8. But he calls him Cephas in Galatians 1:13, and Galatians 2:11, 14. This is not the only time Paul calls Peter, Cephas. He does so as well in 1 Corinthians 1:12, 3:22, 9:5 and 15:5. Why the different name?

And why is Peter called Simon in so many other places? In approximately 69 places in the New Testament, in the four Gospels and in Acts, the name Simon is used to identify Peter. (cf. Acts 11:13, etc.)

Peter is the name most often used (well over a hundred times) and is the name used by the apostle himself when penning his own epistles (cf. 1 Peter 1:1) though in his second epistle, he identifies himself as Simon Peter, or Simeon Peter, depending on the spelling. (2 Peter 1:1)

The answer has to do with languages, and perhaps something to do with the reason why God chose the period of time He did for the birth of the church and the initial preaching of the Gospel.

We are told that in many synagogues in Palestine, in the first century, Jewish children were taught to read, write and speak in at least three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. It was also common for Jews to have names for each of these languages. In Peter's case, Simon was his given Hebrew name, the name he grew up with. In John 1:42, when Simon meets Jesus, Jesus gives him a new nick-name: Cephas. Cephas is Aramaic for rock. The Greek equivalent to Cephas is Peter, which also means stone, or rock.

Paul, writing to the Galatians in the Greek language, naturally used the name Peter in some places. This was the name most of the Greek-speaking church would have known him by. However, in private conversation, with his friends, Peter, who was a native Aramaic speaker, most likely called himself Cephas. Thus Paul, when thinking about his close friend and brother, often thought of him as Cephas, the name by which he knew him best.

Though we often think of the apostles as "uneducated," we should recognize that they were multi-lingual individuals who could read and write fluently in several languages. This practiced ability was further supplemented by the miraculous gift of tongues which

allowed them to preach and teach to a wide variety of individuals in that own individual's native language. (cf. Acts 2:7-11)

It was God's plan for His apostles to take the Gospel to the world, and the world all spoke different languages. It was thus necessary for the apostles to each be able to communicate effectively to a wide swath of people. When the apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthian church, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews," and "to those outside the law I became as one outside the law... that I might win those outside the law," we should not overlook the lingual aspects of this approach. (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:19-21)

God wanted the Gospel presented to people where they were, in the place where they lived, in the language they were accustomed to speaking. This is why the books of the New Testament were so quickly translated into other languages soon after they were written, including Coptic and Latin. It was so that men could have the message taken to them in their own language.

## IS DESERTION BY AN UNBELIEVER A GROUND FOR DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE?

(Author Unknown)

*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. 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. 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. For how knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O husband, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.*

As all who are present know, the subjects discussed on this program were assigned to the speakers. So, I am speaking on this subject today, not by choice, but by request. However, I doubt if there is a subject treated in Scripture on which the church of this century needs more enlightenment and discipline than the broad area of divorce and remarriage. However distasteful the subject may be and however distasteful the truth may be to many members of the churches in our brotherhood, it is necessary and profitable for us to present the teaching of our Lord on the various facets of the subject, to contrast the truth with the errors being taught by brethren, and to plead with our people to believe and abide by the truth of God that they may be saved and that they may set the example of holiness before the people of the world.

By way of introduction to my subject, may I suggest that the passage of Scripture I have read in your hearing teaches us that the union of believer and unbeliever in marriage is not necessarily an unholy union. By many good brethren it is thought that Paul forbids such in 2 Corinthians 6:14, calling the union an "unequal yoke." But if such a union is unholy, why does Paul in this context tell the believer to abide with the unbeliever? and why does he say the unbeliever is sanctified in the believer, so that their children are clean?

Next let me say that this context teaches us that peace is to be preferred to enslavement to the unbeliever which would require the believer to give up the Lord to maintain the union. If the unbeliever demands the believer to deny Christ and give up hope for heaven, the believer has but one choice to make, one course to follow. Peace with God is more to be desired than peace with man.

Next, the believer cannot separate from the unbeliever on account of unforeseen hardships caused by living with the unbeliever. Paul clearly teaches that if there is a separation, it must be on the part of the unbeliever. Peter tells the believing wife to be in subjection to the unbelieving husband that he may be gained by her "chaste behavior coupled with fear" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

Next, the context of this passage does not sustain the idea that if a man is called, converted, while living in an adulterous union, according to the teaching of Matthew 19:9, he may continue to live in that union. In this context Paul says, "Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called...let each man, wherein he was called therein abide with God" (1 Corinthians 7:20,24). Many brethren are interpreting these two verses to mean that though one has divorced for trivial reasons, has married again and is said by Jesus to be committing adultery, yet he may abide in that union. Suppose one is living in polygamy when he is called; may he abide in that calling wherein he was called? If one is making his living by gambling and selling whiskey illegally, may he abide in that calling with God? Certainly, Paul would not teach us to abide in an unholy calling or union after we obey the gospel. And Paul's language here cannot be taken to mean such as that.

In the next place, our context deals with two people who were married before they heard the gospel, before Christ was ever offered to them. One of them believed the gospel and obeyed the Lord. If the one who refused to believe and obey will not live with a Christian, he is to be allowed to separate in peace. I think we can never know for sure whether this includes a believer and a non-believer in our society today. Without doubt, it would apply in what we call heathen lands, but I question that it applies in our society where Bibles are so plentiful and where the law of the Lord can be known by all.

My last introductory thought is that the teaching of Jesus on the subject of divorce and remarriage applies to all, believers and non-believers. In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus used the word "whosoever." This includes all who are capable of entering the marriage union. I know it is claimed that since Jesus was talking to Jews only, people in covenant relation with God, that his teaching applies only to covenant people today. But all that Jesus ever taught was directed to the Jews, so according to this position, nothing he ever said applies to alien sinners. The truth is that Jesus taught that the Mosaic easement in Deuteronomy 24 was allowed temporarily because of the hardness of heart among Jews and that he was taking away this easement and placing marriage right back where God placed it in the beginning. And, except for fornication, no one is allowed to divorce a spouse and marry another without committing adultery. If the teaching of Jesus here is not the universal law of marriage, where is the law stated? and what does it include? If this is the Lord's law to Christians only, where is the law for aliens? and what does it demand of them? If the alien is not under a marriage law, they are mating like wild beasts in the woods, which to my thinking is a very sorry conclusion.

Now let us see what Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 7:15. First, his teaching is not directed to a Christian husband and a Christian wife. Verses 10 and 11 contain his instructions to them. They are told that Jesus said, during his personal ministry, that if they cannot live together they may separate, but they cannot marry others. They must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to each other. Since Paul says Jesus taught this, and since Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, and parallel passages, contain all we know of his teaching on this subject, I think we must conclude that it is an inspired commentary on these passages. Brethren will do well to accept Paul's commentary on the teaching of Jesus and be satisfied with it. However, though this teaching is not directed to two Christians

living together as husband and wife, it certainly is in harmony with the law of marriage laid down by Jesus, which he said was the law of God from the beginning - one woman for one man. We cannot conceive of Paul's teaching something on any subject contrary to the teaching of Jesus while he was here on earth. Since everything the apostles taught was given them by Jesus through the Holy Spirit (John 16:12-15), it follows that if an apostle taught something contrary to the teaching of Jesus, it would amount to Jesus contradicting himself.

Next, the teaching of this verse is not directed toward two unbelievers living together as husband and wife. Paul seems to say in 1 Corinthians 5:12-13 that he is not regulating the lives of the people of the world. He said, "For what have I to do with judging them that are without?... Them that are without, God judgeth." However, again, we cannot believe that Paul's teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage, or any other subject, would contradict what Jesus taught when he laid down the law of marriage for all mankind.

Next, this verse of Scripture cannot be used to justify the divorce and remarriage of two who have "fussed and fought like cat and dog" over a variety of personal differences until it is impossible for them to live any longer in the same house. The fact that one becomes extremely difficult to live with does not prove him to be an unbeliever in the sense in which Paul uses the word here. And even if it did, that would not give the believer the right to leave the cantankerous person, for Paul does not teach that the believer may leave the unbeliever.

The teaching of this verse considers two unbelievers living together as husband and wife. This should teach us that God has a law of marriage binding on alien sinners. One in this marriage bond becomes a Christian, and the other is so opposed to Christianity that he refuses to live with the Christian. Paul tells the Christian to let the unbeliever depart, for God has called us in peace. This phrase "in peace" denotes the realm in which Christians must live. If the Christian forces the unbeliever to continue in the marriage bond, there would be no peace. I think this is the reason Paul, in verses 11-12 allows believers to separate. If they cannot live in peace, they cannot cultivate the Christian graces and so might be lost in eternity. It is better for them to live separate in peace than for them to live together in constant war. So, if the unbeliever will not live in peace with the believer, he is to be allowed to separate himself from the believer. In such case, or situation, condition, the believer is not under bondage.

Now, what is the meaning of the phrase "under bondage"? The Greek word is *dedoulotai*, third person singular, perfect indicative, passive of *douloo*. According to Henry Thayer, this word means "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage." And he says its meaning in our text is "to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity, in some matter." This word is used only eight times in the New Testament - in Acts 7:6; Romans 6:18,22; 1 Corinthians 7:15; 9:19; Galatians 4:3; Titus 2:3; and 2 Peter 2:19. The noun form of this word occurs about 125 times in the New Testament. Vine says this word means "originally the lowest term in the scale of servitude, came also to mean one who gives himself up to the will of another." It is the word for bondsman. Thayer

says it is used of a “man of servile condition.” So to be under bondage, as used in our text, means to become a bondsman; to be in a servile condition; to be in the lowest scale of servitude. The noun and the verb occur 133 times in the New Testament, yet not one time, unless our text is an exception, is the word used to refer to the marriage bond. It seems to me that this is a significant fact. In this same chapter in which Paul deals with marriage problems, he does mention the marriage bond. But when he does, he uses another Greek word. The word is *deo* and occurs 44 times in the New Testament. Thayer says the word means “to bind, tie, fasten ...metaphor, to bind, put under obligation; to be bound to one” as wife to husband, and cites the only three times it is so used - Romans 7:2 and 1 Corinthians 7:27,39 as examples of this meaning.

Now, my question is this: why did Paul use the word *deo* twice in this chapter when undoubted reference is made to the marriage bond, and then change to the word *doulo* in verse 15, unless he wished to leave the impression that he was not referring to the marriage bond? In so short a compass, the use of two different words to refer to the same thing would be misleading. So, he makes a conscious effort to impress his readers with the fact that he is not referring to the marriage bond in verse 15. And since the word *doulo*, which is used in verse 15, is never anywhere else used to refer to the marriage bond, may we not safely conclude that he is not in this verse referring to the marriage bond? And since, in every passage where he undoubtedly speaks of the marriage bond, he uses the word *deo*, may we not safely conclude that if he had had the marriage bond in view in this verse, he would have used that word?

But I am told by some that the word *doulo*, as used in verse 15 and translated “bondage” in our version, comes from the word *deo*, which is translated “bound” in verses 27 and 39. That may be true; however, Thayer says, “Most derive it from *deo*, but others from *delo*.” But the fact that one word is derived from another does not mean that the two can be used as synonyms or that they must refer to the same thing. For instance, the word *koiton*, which means a bed-chamber and translated “chamberlain” in Acts 12:20, is derived from *koitee*, which means a bed, or couch, and one time used by Paul to mean sexual intercourse (Romans 13:13). Though *koiton* is derived from *koitee*, according to Thayer, who would say that they are synonyms or that they refer to the same thing? So, though *doulo* may be derived from *deo*, who can say with any degree of reason and assurance that they must refer to the same thing in 1 Corinthians 7?

Since Paul did not have the marriage bond in mind when he said the believer is not under bondage, what did he mean? He simply means that the believer is not so bound to the unbeliever that he must give up Christ to hold the unbeliever. The bond that binds us to Christ is stronger than the bond that binds the believer to the unbeliever. The word *doulo* is used with reference to our being servants (bondsmen) to righteousness and to God (Romans 6:18,22). And the noun form *doulos* is used many times to refer to us as servants (slaves) of Christ (Ephesians 6:6; Rev 7:3). This bond takes precedence over all other bonds. If a man prefers the parental bond to that bond which binds him to Jesus, he is not fit to be the disciple of the Lord. So if the believer prefers the bond which binds him to the unbeliever to that bond which binds him to Jesus Christ, he cannot be the Lord’s disciple; there is no hope of his eternal salvation. So Paul is telling

the believer to hold to Jesus even if it means the loss of the unbelieving companion. Though it may mean a life of celibacy, the Lord will not suffer one to be tempted above that which he is able to bear, but will with the temptation provide the way of escape that he may be able to bear it (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Now, the question arises: Is the deserted believer free to marry another? And the answer to the question i.e, NO! My first reason for this answer is that the idea is not taught in our text. Since the phrase “under bondage” does not refer to the marriage bond, this verse cannot be used to prove that the deserted believer is free from the marriage bond. And if the idea is taught in other texts, I have not found them; no one has pointed them out to me; and it is my firm conviction that no one can point out another passage that teaches that the deserted believer is free to marry another.

Next, the idea that the deserted believer is free to marry another is contrary to Paul’s general statement of the matter. Paul said, “For the woman that hath a husband is bound by the law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man” (Romans 7:2-3). And there is no indication in our text that the deserted believer is an exception to this general rule governing marriage.

Again, this idea that the deserted believer may marry another before the death of the unbelieving husband is contrary to the universal law Jesus gave concerning divorce and remarriage in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. In these passages, Jesus teaches that people who divorce for any reason except fornication and marry others are living in adultery. And may I digress enough to say I have some brethren who say it is impossible for people to live in adultery. However, Paul did not agree with this idea, for he spoke of people who lived in fornication (Colossians 3:5-7). But when Jesus, who spoke as the Father gave him the words (John 12:49-50; 17:8) restored the law concerning-divorce and remarriage to that which was from the beginning, he taught that fornication on the part of one spouse is the only reason for remarriage while the other was alive. This agrees with the teaching of Paul in Romans 7 and in 1 Corinthians 7, where he said they may live apart, but must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to each other.

My last reason why our text does not teach that the deserted believer may marry another before the death of the unbeliever is that if this be true, the Lord deals unequally and unfairly with people in the same situation. During his lifetime, he taught that if a man puts away his wife for any reason, except fornication, and marries another, he commits adultery, and whoever marries her that is put away commits adultery. So if husband and wife cannot get along with each other, and they separate, neither can marry while the other is alive. This places a great hardship, especially on the young and middle-aged, since there are few who will live without sexual companionship. Nevertheless, this is the law of the Lord. Now, if Paul gives the deserted believer the right of another marriage during the lifetime of the unbeliever, he spares the deserted believer the hardship Jesus places upon persons divorced for trivial reasons. Suppose

the lives of husband and wife, both Christians; the husband becomes worldly, falls from grace, becomes mean to his wife and finally leaves her. There is no indication that he was guilty of fornication, so according to Jesus, neither one of them can marry again during the lifetime of the other. The woman is exposed to financial difficulties in supporting the children; she is exposed to the desire for sexual companionship. But according to Jesus, she is not allowed to marry to rid herself of these exposures. However, if Paul taught that the deserted believer is free from the marriage bond and may marry another before the death of the unbeliever, this deserted woman, in exactly the same situation as the divorced woman, does not have to suffer from financial difficulties or from a celibate life; she can marry and be relieved of these difficulties. If this be the case, I affirm that the law of the Lord is harder on the divorced party than it is on the deserted party; it is unequal and unfair. I cannot believe that my Lord would deal thus unequally and unfairly with two classes of people in exactly the same situations. And those who affirm that Paul so teaches are obligated, it seems to me, to show why our Lord would teach that the divorced woman must remain unmarried, but the deserted believer may marry and live happily ever afterward.

In conclusion, may I suggest some goals toward which we should strive. First, we should strive for unity in belief and teaching on this matter of divorce and remarriage. I believe if the Bible is understood, it is understood alike. I grant that some will attain to greater knowledge than others because of ability and application. Some will plumb depths and scale heights which others will never reach because of a lack of study. But if I perceive the meaning of Paul in our text, and you perceive his meaning, we will both believe the same thing. And on a subject which involves the external happiness of people, we should be all the more determined to believe and teach the truth. I commend you brethren in this school for your efforts to find the truth on this subject and put the Lord's teaching in the reach of all who have enough interest in truth to study.

Our next goal is the indoctrination of our young people on this subject. We will likely reach people who are involved in adulterous unions, especially since they can find preachers who are willing to tell them what they want to hear. Paul said the time would come when this would happen; that time is here. But we most certainly can reach and influence our young people. Many of them are searching for truth, and they will accept and abide by it if it is taught plainly in the spirit of love and consideration. Publication of these studies will contribute much towards this end. And I am grateful for the opportunity to make some contribution in the direction of the indoctrination of our young people.

The third and last goal towards which I think we should strive is proper and scriptural discipline of church members who are living in adultery because they either do not know the truth on this subject or because they refuse to live in harmony with the truth on the subject. Paul said, "If any man that is named a brother be a fornicator... with such a one no, not to eat... Put away the wicked man from among yourselves" (1 Corinthians 5:11-13). Discipline is all but extinct among churches of Christ in America. How long has it been since you observed a church withdrawing fellowship from people living in adultery and who refused to conform to the teaching of Jesus? We need much forceful positive

teaching on the duty of churches to discipline members who are living in adultery. If we have no respect for the authority of the Scriptures on this subject, how can we expect our young people to have respect for us or for the Scriptures on subjects where they are involved? No wonder some of them have reached the conclusion that the “oldsters” are not very sincere in their religion. Why should a boy who wears long hair or a girl who dressed immodestly be disciplined when several couples in the congregation are living in adultery and occupy prominent places in the work and worship, but are never disciplined? Why should we expect young people to respect the church as long as these conditions are in almost every congregation and nothing is done about it? In the language of Paul, may I insist, “that already it is time for you to awake out of sleep” and begin to restore New Testament discipline in all churches of Christ that we be not conformed to this world in the matter of morals, and that we show the world that we really do have respect for the authority of the Scriptures in the matter of discipline as well as the matter of baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

I thank you for your patient hearing and pray that the Lord may use this study to his glory and to our edification.

Author, Date and Place of Presentation Unknown

## BONDAGE IN 1 CORINTHIANS 7:15

(Author Unknown)

“Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases.”

### WHAT SOME SAY

This is another verse used by some to say there are more than one reasons where one may divorce and remarry. “Here,” they say, “desertion is given as another reason than that reason in Matthew 19:9.” They therefore argue that the word bondage in 1 Corinthians 7:15 means that the marriage bond is broken in the eyes of God, and that the deserted one may now scripturally remarry. Following are some remarks regarding the above passage.

### THE WORD BONDAGE

The Greek word douloo is used eight times in the New Testament, being translated by the following words: bondage, Acts 7:6; 1 Corinthians 7:15; Galatians 4:3, 2 Peter 2:19; or become servants, Romans 6:18 and 6:22, 1 Corinthians 9:19; or given in Titus 2:3 (in the sense of enslaved to wine, J.M.). It is not a word traditionally used in the marriage context; nor is it ever used to stand for the bond of marriage.

So, it is not a word which talks per se of marriage and divorce. In fact, little is gained by a word study except to show that it is never used in the sense of divorce.

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

This writer believes that the most contextual answer to the above question is that bondage refers to the rule Paul stated in verses 11-13. The one deserted need not attempt to hold the marriage together at any cost. They need not force themselves on the one who departs, to seek after, to hold on. No, if the partner departs, the deserted one may ignore the commandment of verses 11-13. She is not under bondage to continue her reconciliation efforts (v. 11).

### CONTEXT

Not only is this view contextual as regarding verses 11-13, it is also contextual in regard to verse 16, “For how knowest thou o wife whether thou shalt save thy husband?” etc. In other words, right after Paul says they are not under bondage, he immediately (verse 16) gets back on his argument that it is right for a wife not to depart from her husband. His train of thought was not broken by the parenthetical remarks of verse 15. His train of thought is, all along, consistent. They are to remain together, but if one spouse departs, they are not obligated to pursue it. Yet, still, they need to consider that they might convert him. So, the rule of verses 11-13 continues through verse 15 all the way to verse 16. Bondage taken in this sense is therefore the bondage of the context.

## FURTHER OBJECTION

Still, even if the word bondage referred to the marriage bond, it would still be an assumption that it would be scriptural for the deserted one to remarry. That is never permitted in 1 Corinthians 7:15.

## CONCLUSION

So, we had best go back to Matthew 19:9 for Christ's law of marriage, divorce and remarriage. There our Christian duty is well stated.

Author, Date and Place of Presentation Unknown

## **MARRIAGE - DIVORCE - REMARRIAGE**

By: Roy H. Lanier

Man's Happiness on Earth and In Heaven May Be Determined by These Three Words.

### INTRODUCTION

The material in this booklet consists of reprints from former works. The first section is taken from "Houston Lectures" published in 1947. The sermon was preached in the Pierce and Baldwin church house during the "Music Hall Meeting" in which Bro. N. B. Hardeman did the preaching. Bro. Hardeman preached each night in the Music Hall and selected speakers preached each day in the Pierce and Baldwin auditorium. There was such a demand for the publication of these day sermons that I published them and added one sermon by Bro. Hardeman. Five thousand copies of the book have been sold. It will not be reprinted, but since there is continued need for teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage, I am reprinting my sermon on that subject.

An extension of this first section has been made by the addition of three articles from the FIRM FOUNDATION, issues of December 1 and December 8, 1964 and May 11, 1965. It is believed that this material adds greatly to the strength of the position taken and maintained by the writer through many years of preaching and debating the question. It has been our privilege to discuss this question with the ablest students among our people, and we have had no reason to feel that the positions taken in this booklet have suffered in these discussions. The additional material bears the headings DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, I and II and MORE QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE.

The second section of this booklet is composed of a series of articles I wrote in 1949. These articles appeared in the Gospel Advocate of that year and are used here with permission of Gospel Advocate Company. This is a review of a tract entitled "The Marriage Tie" written by H. C. Thomas. The tract has had a wide circulation. Only in recent months I have heard it quoted by a young preacher who has been misled by its teaching. The position set forth by the tract is a common one and appeals to many who have not given the matter serious study.

This makes it necessary that the refutation of the false doctrines be given as wide circulation as possible.

It is hoped that churches will give the booklet a wide circulation. It is especially important to see that all our young people study this subject. There is plenty of material for four study sessions and it would be very profitable if the Sundays of one month be set aside for study of this material by the young people in their special meetings. The material could also be used for special study by adults on Wednesday nights. Parents need to be acquainted with these problems so they may teach their children the truth and save them from unhappy and unfortunate marriage relationships.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

There are few Bible topics on which my brethren hold a greater variety of opinions than on this one which has been assigned to me, and on which it is my duty and privilege to speak on this occasion. Nor are there many subjects of greater importance than this one. Preachers and teachers should realize what a grave responsibility is theirs when they speak on this subject. It is no uncommon thing for untaught and inexperienced men to express their views with all the finality of an oracle, comforting people in sin, and encouraging others to commit sin by forming and maintaining unions which our Lord forbids. The fearful responsibility of speaking on this subject may be realized when we remember that what we say may cause people to form sinful unions which they have not the courage or moral strength to break. So, they may live and die in sin, and be lost in eternity, because they followed our instructions. And when we remember that the eternal destiny of souls is at stake we may be guarded in our statements, being careful to teach only those principles taught by our Lord on this subject. And may the Lord help me at this time to say nothing more than he has taught, and nothing contrary to his teaching; and may he help me to stay free from unreasonable interpretations and applications of his word.

What I conceive to be the teaching of Christ on this subject is contrary to the belief and practice of a great number of people. And as I develop this lesson it will appear that these people are in sin before God and under the condemnation of the Judge of all the earth. Permit me to say that this is not an effort on my part to preach any one "into hell." It is an effort to save people, not to send them to hell. But someone says, "Why preach on such subjects since you know certain people will be offended?" One cannot preach the gospel and let people alone. One cannot preach the Lord's will on baptism and let people alone, for it is people who are to be baptized. One cannot preach on divorce and remarriage and let people alone, for it is people who marry, divorce and remarry. So we preach the will of the Lord on this subject to people who are not involved in sin along this line that we may keep them from sin; and we preach to people who are already involved in sin in this matter that we may recover them from this soul destroying sin.

Let me further suggest that my relatives and your relatives are not excused from this sin simply because they happen to be kin to us. Often people tell me that according to what I teach on this subject their mothers are living in adultery, and they resent even an intimation that such is true of their good mothers. Is a woman exempt from obedience to the laws of God just because she is my mother? or your mother? And is it proof of a lack of love and parental respect for me to believe the word of God when such belief would lead me to recognize sin in my parents? We must remember that God made the laws for man, and that our loved ones are as much subject to God's laws as others, and if they violate God's laws they are in sin. It is better to recognize their sin and try to save them from it than to deny their sins, and pervert the teaching of Christ in an effort to justify them.

## MARRIAGE

The subject assigned me covers too much ground, and involves too much material for me to deal with much of it at length. We are largely agreed on this division of our subject, so I will simply suggest a few things in outline form under this heading.

1. First, marriage is an institution of God given to MAN. It was not given to Adam as an individual, or to him and Eve as a pair. It was given to man, and they were the first to enjoy its blessed provisions. When God had given Eve to Adam to be his wife, he said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they two shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24). That this applies to man generally is true because strictly it was not true of Adam. He did not leave his father and his mother to cleave unto Eve, but man generally does so have to do. Since marriage is for men generally and universally, we conclude that the laws regulating the institution are universal in their application. It is a mistake to think the laws of marriage are applicable only to people in the church. However, the church must conform to the universal laws of marriage given by our Lord. But if the laws regulating marriage are binding only on church members, it would follow that God does not join in matrimony those who are not Christians, and they would be mating like so many animals or varmints, which is an unthinkable position to hold.
2. Marriage is a means of comfort and pleasure of the married pair. Those who wish to study this point further may read Paul's treatment of it in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5.
3. Marriage is for the birth, preservation, and comfort of children. Were it not for the institution of marriage the lot of children would be much harder than it is. The loneliest, dirtiest little urchin who roams the streets and searches the garbage cans for his food presents a fair picture of the condition of all children were it not for the institution of marriage we have from God.
4. Marriage is the institution we have of God for the cultivation of purity and refinement which are so necessary in that society where Christianity flourishes. Were it not for the institution of marriage such conditions would obtain as would make the planting and development of the church impossible.
5. Marriage is also the source of good order and other good qualities which make the nation great. Family life is an index to national life. When the home breaks down; the life of the nation cannot long continue. Righteousness exalts the nation, but this righteousness is inseparably connected with the home.
6. Marriage, as instituted by the Lord, is the union of one man and one woman "until death do them part." After quoting what God said in the

beginning, Jesus commented as follows: "So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6). God did not contemplate divorce; he intended that the union should continue until the death of one of the parties. Men and women, boys and girls, should now look upon the union as lasting; they should enter the union with a firm determination to preserve it at all costs. When people marry with the idea they can get a divorce if they have difficulties, it is almost a foregone conclusion they will be going to the courts to settle their troubles. If people would take their troubles to the Lord instead of the County Judge, more marriages would last until death sunders the bond.

## DIVORCE

1. Since marriage is an institution of the Lord, and the union formed is a work of God, divorce is the destruction of the work of God. The Lord has never in any age of the world allowed man to destroy, or even esteem lightly, his work. It is possible that a person may through ignorance and inexperience form a union which is not wise, and which may bring considerable suffering. But no person is allowed special privileges so that he may for his individual convenience and happiness disregard the law of God which was given for the good and the happiness of all. If one person may do so, all people may do so. But if all people disregard the law of God, God's authority and rule over the universe has been destroyed. For this reason, Jesus said, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
2. Since marriage is a union formed by the most solemn covenant, divorce is the breaking of such solemn agreements and pledges. It has always been considered a sin to be a covenant-breaker (Romans 1:31). People who break their covenants because of inconvenience and suffering which they did not foresee are not worthy of confidence. Divorce is the easy way out of our difficulties; but as usual with such human devices it only brings us into greater and more embarrassing situations.
3. Divorce is one of the things mentioned in the Bible that God hates. God accused the men among the Jews of dealing treacherously with their wives because they put them away to take unto themselves younger and more attractive women. The first wife was called "the wife of thy covenant" (Mal 2:14). This suggests the thought in the above paragraph, that God looks upon the marriage vow as a solemn covenant which is not to be taken lightly. And in conclusion of this matter God said, "Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel" (Mal 2:15-16). This was God's attitude toward divorce in a dispensation when he allowed them to put away their wives for many causes—this he allowed on

account of the hardness of their hearts; what then must be his attitude toward divorce in this dispensation when he is not nearly so tolerant of human desires and demands?

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

This division of our lesson has received by far the greater part of the attention of people in this generation. Divorces are so easy to get that people are actually encouraged to settle their difficulties in the divorce courts. Many counties over the nation report that the number of divorces granted about equal the number of marriage licenses issued. And I believe it is conservatively estimated that the ratio for the nation generally is three to five. Human beings are so constituted that it is difficult to live without sexual relations. God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone, so he created woman to be his companion. Paul said, "But, because of fornications, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto his wife her due: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.... 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" (1 Corinthians 7:2-5). So when divorces are granted, the average person will soon be going back to the court house for a license to remarry. But not all of the people who remarry have a scriptural right to do so, according to the teaching of our Lord.

Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9). This is the law, and it is not difficult to understand; but men have sought out many inventions to escape the force of it. The teaching is this: Those who divorce for any reason except fornication must either remain unmarried, or be reconciled to each other. I know I am right in this interpretation, for it is the one given by Paul (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). And the verse further teaches that when the divorce is granted to the innocent on account of fornication committed by the other, the innocent may remarry. But if the divorce is granted for any reason except fornication, and either party remarries, that party and the one to whom married commit adultery. So if you have divorced your partner, or have been put away by your partner, for any reason other than fornication, and you have married another person, you are now living in adultery. This second union God regards as sinful. In his sight you still are united to the first partner. God joined you to your first partner, but he refused to join you to this second partner. God recognized the first union, but he refuses to recognize this second union, unless the first was dissolved on account of fornication.

Let us now clear the proposition of a number of explanations and interpretations which set aside and make void this teaching of our Lord.

1. First, it is said by some that when Jesus uttered this language he was explaining the law of Moses. It is difficult to see how thinking people can be serious in offering this as a solution of the problem. The very form of the statement makes this explanation impossible. Jesus said that Moses

allowed them to put away their wives, but his teaching was different. This is even clearer in Matthew 5:31-32. There, along with a number of the other clear cut contrasts between the law of Moses and that of Christ, we read, "It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." How can one statement be an explanation of another when the one is put in contrast to the other? That thing is impossible!

And the Lord's disciples understood the teaching of Jesus in this matter to differ from that of Moses, for they said, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry" (Matthew 19:10). They were accustomed to the freedom of the law of Moses, and when Jesus denied them the right to divorce for any cause except fornication, they said it would be better not to marry. So their response to his teaching proves that he was not explaining the law of Moses.

2. Another says this teaching of Jesus was spoken before the cross, while he was alive, so it is not now binding on us. If this teaching of Jesus is not binding now, it never has been binding on anybody and never will be binding on anybody. Jesus did not make laws contrary to the law of Moses and demand that people obey them while the law of Moses was in force. The law of Moses was in force, and Jesus taught people to obey that law, in the very last week of his life (Matthew 23:1-3). We conclude, therefore, that the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19:9 was not binding on anybody before the death of Christ. Suppose it is not binding now. I ask, when will that teaching be binding on people? It will not be binding in the next age, for in that age they neither marry nor are given in marriage (Mark 12:25). So, if the teaching of Jesus in this verse is not binding now, it never was and never will be binding on anybody, and Jesus is found guilty of making an idle statement.

While we are on this point, there are people who say that the exception mentioned in this verse is not allowed now because it is not repeated by any apostle after the cross. Their general rule is this: Any teaching of Jesus uttered before his death must, if it be binding on us, be repeated by an inspired apostle after his death. The rule is of human origin, and without any foundation. And what proves too much proves nothing at all. The statement of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17 is nowhere repeated by an apostle, or other inspired writer, yet all are forced to allow that the rule given is binding on the church today. This fact disproves the rule. If what Jesus said in Matthew 18:15-17 applies now in spite of the fact no inspired writer mentions it this side of the cross, why does not the exception of Matthew 19:9 apply now even though no inspired writer mentions it?

3. Still another says there is no reason for divorce and remarriage on any ground except that which took place before marriage. This view is based on the technical difference between the meaning of fornication and adultery. Fornication, according to this argument, means, "illicit sexual intercourse on the part of an unmarried person." And adultery means, "illicit sexual intercourse on the part of married persons." It is true that the words are so defined, but the writers of the Bible do not so use them. Paul speaks of fornication among the Corinthians because a young man had taken his father's wife. It is allowed by all that this young man married his father's wife. According to the position being reviewed, Paul should have called this adultery. Fornication is a broader term than adultery, and includes other forms of uncleanness. For this reason, the two words are sometimes used in the statement, and there is obviously a difference in their meanings (1 Corinthians 6:9).
4. Another attempt to evade the force of this teaching is the idea that God does not join alien sinners in marriage. The position of people who hold this idea is that the marriage law given by our Lord was given only to the church, and that it is binding on none but the children of God. By them it is believed that people may marry, divorce and remarry as many times as they like before they become Christians; but when they obey the gospel they must live with the partner they have at that time. Aside from having no foundation whatever in truth, this doctrine has ugly implications. This would make illegitimates out of all whose parents were not God's children at the time of their birth. As said before, the law concerning marriage is as universal as man; and the church is to comply with that universal law.
5. Another position with reference to this matter is that the marriage law applies to aliens, and that when they divorce for any cause except fornication and marry another, they commit adultery. But when they see their mistake, they do what is necessary for any other one in error to do for forgiveness, and they will be forgiven of their sin and may continue to live together. To illustrate the doctrine: Suppose an alien divorced for any reason other than fornication marries a Christian, they are, according to this position, in adultery before God. But they wish to get right with God, and turn to the Bible to find that he must believe in Christ, repent of sin, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of sins. And the erring Christian learns she must repent of her sin, confess it to God and the church, and pray for forgiveness. These things they do, and their sins are forgiven. But may they continue to live together? It is granted that their union was sinful from the time it was formed until they repented. Is it now a holy union? Does repentance change an unholy union so as to make it a holy union?

Suppose a man is living in polygamy, and he decides to obey the Gospel. May he continue to live with a dozen wives after his repentance and

baptism? Does his obedience to these commandments of the gospel change his polygamy from unholy relations to holy relations? Polygamy is one form of adultery; living with a person who has been divorced from another for any cause except fornication is another form of adultery. If one may continue to live in one form of adultery after repentance and be pleasing to God, why may he not live in the other form of adultery after repentance and be pleasing to God? Repentance means that one ceases to live in sin. The thief quits stealing when he repents; the drunkard quits his drunkenness when he repents; the polygamist gives up his plurality of wives when he repents; and the one living in adultery with a divorcee must dissolve his adulterous union.

But I am told that this will entail hardship upon innocent children. I know that is true, and I am not unmindful of their sad, pitiful condition; but it has ever been true that sin brings suffering, not only on the sinner, but upon those who are involved on account of various relationships to the sinner. But shall we shut our eyes to sin because some innocent person is about to be hurt? Shall we declare that sin is no longer sin if any innocent party is about to suffer? And does this solve our problems? This is worse than hiding one's head in the sand to keep from seeing danger. This law was made for the happiness of man, and if all would obey the law, all would find happiness. Peace and happiness cannot be found by changing God's law to accommodate wayward man, nor trying to save the innocent from suffering on account of the sins of the guilty.

6. The last of these peculiar positions to be examined is the idea that when two people divorce, the first one to remarry commits adultery, and that this adultery on the part of the first to remarry gives the other the right to remarry, and may do so without committing adultery. This resolves the matter into a game of waiting, and the one who is most patient and determined wins the game. Jesus says, the one who puts away and marries again commits adultery, and this is agreeable to the position now being reviewed. Jesus also says, he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery, and with this the position now under review does not agree. Jesus denies both parties to a divorce the right to remarry, unless the divorce was obtained on account of fornication. The position denies the right to remarry to only one of the parties.

But some one can imagine a grave injustice, and often with good reason. Here is a case: A hard-hearted, brutish man divorces his kind and loving wife for some cause other than fornication; she still loves him and wishes to be his wife and make a home with and for him. But the months, maybe years, roll on, and he loves another and marries again. All hope of a reconciliation fades from the woman's mind. Is she doomed to live unmarried the balance of her days? Jesus says he who marries her commits adultery. And Paul says let them remain unmarried. And I know

of no better answer. A hardship on the woman? I grant it. But shall we set aside a good law, made for the good of all men, to prevent the suffering of one who suffers on account of her relation to the one who violated the law?

But look at this same couple again. Suppose this time that after the cruel man put away his loving wife, she, being forced by economic reasons or by desires of the flesh, married first. It will be granted that she committed adultery. And if one be slow to grant such a conclusion, I remind that one that Jesus declared such in Matthew 5:32. Now, does this adultery on her part give the cruel husband the right to remarry? Such a conclusion I think is both unreasonable and repulsive. It is unreasonable because there is no scriptural ground for it; and it is repulsive because the very act by which he made her an adulteress is used to serve his bestial lusts in giving him the right to remarry, and that with the sanction of God. Our indignation for such brutish actions on his part makes it easy for us to see that he should not be allowed to remarry. But our sympathy for her under such circumstances makes it difficult, and impossible for some, to see why she should not be allowed to remarry. God is sympathetic too, but he does not allow his sympathy to blind his reason, and set aside his laws for the good of all men. To set them side would bring far more suffering upon mankind than is now endured by the innocent who suffer on account of their connections with those who violate the law.

In the first two paragraphs of this section (6) the conclusion is that the “waiting game” is forbidden. However, this solution in turn creates the “running game.” It is also possible that the husband in a scriptural marriage comes home one afternoon and admits to having committed adultery and wants a divorce in order to marry his “new love.” The wife does not want a divorce but wants to work through this and continue in the marriage. After much thought and prayer, she decides to see her attorney and file for a divorce having a scriptural cause. Her attorney advises her to file immediately, she consents and the attorney files the papers by 11 AM that day. She has committed no sin and is now eligible to remarry if she so wishes.

Unknown to her, her husband had already seen his attorney prior to telling her of his adultery and intentions. After he informs her of his intentions he tells his attorney to file the divorce papers and the attorney does so at 10 AM on the same day her attorney files. According to the above theory she would be sinless in remarrying an eligible man if the husband had not filed first. However, since he filed first, she now sins if she remarries. The only difference in her being an adulteress or not is the one-hour difference in filing times. She becomes an adulteress based solely on the fact that he “ran faster” to the court than she did. Through no action of her own she has become an adulteress – is this God’s intent?

In any case the only reason either one involved in the above cases is guilty of adultery is because the original marriage bond is still in force! God has clearly stated that there are only two valid reasons for a dissolution of a scriptural marriage – death or adultery on the part of one of the parties. In the case where a mate is put away unscripturally the original marriage is still in force. If not, there would be no adultery involved in these cases. There is still no other scriptural basis to end the original marriage other than death of one of the parties or adultery on the part of one of the parties. When one of the parties dies the marriage is terminated. When one of the parties commits adultery the other has the right to divorce and remarry. Which of the two “games, “the “waiting game” or the “running game,” fits the Scriptures? Obviously the “running game” is wrong.

The safest way to be absolutely right with God is to remain unmarried in either case. This position violates no law of God and all other things being equal will insure the salvation of the soul. (CMH)

### MAKETH HER AN ADULTERESS

In this connection it will be well to study the language of Jesus in Matthew 5:32. “But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.” And if a woman put away her husband it may as truly be said that she makes him an adulterer. Is every divorced person an adulterer? Does the very act of putting one away make that one guilty of the sin? Certainly not. But a divorced person may be driven by economic necessity to marry. A widow with several children would need someone to provide, and a widower would need a woman to be mother to his children while he made the living. Jesus teaches that the person who demands a divorce and freedom from his troubles, and subjects his partner to this necessity is a party to the sin. In that sense he makes her an adulteress. Again, not many people can live holy lives in the unmarried state (1 Corinthians 7:9). The man who puts away his wife, for any cause except fornication, subjects her to the need of remarriage or a promiscuous sexual life. And the one who demands the divorce shall not go free of any responsibility and guilt. I am sure there is not enough plain teaching along this line among us. Many women whose natures are such that they can easily practice continency divorce their husbands, who have not continency, with no thought or concern for the dangers to which the divorce subjects the husband. Such persons shall not be held guiltless in the judgment; they have made their partners guilty of adultery. Is that not as bad as the sin itself?

### ANOTHER EXCEPTION?

Jesus allows remarriage for one cause, fornication; the innocent party may divorce the guilty and remarry. But there are those who believe Paul added one exception to this rule. It is believed that Jesus did not mention this since there was not need for it during

his lifetime, but when the situation arose Paul was inspired to teach the church that if the believer be deserted by the unbeliever, the believer would be free to remarry. "And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband . . . Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace" (1 Corinthians 7:13,15).

In the first place it is not likely that such a condition could exist today except in heathen lands. The passage deals with two people who were heathen at time of marriage. Later the gospel came to them and one party obeyed the gospel. This would hardly be applicable to people today in America who know God, but either have never become religious or have erred in what they should do to obey God.

Next, this teaching does not apply to a situation where a Christian and an unbeliever have quarreled and destroyed their love for each other over various matters, and as the situation grows steadily worse the one who is not a Christian, walks out never to return. If a man thinks he can by cruel indifference, or any other means, drive his wife, who is not a Christian, to desert him and then remarry on the grounds of the desertion of the unbeliever, he has a big disappointment awaiting him in the judgment.

But it is exceedingly doubtful if the believer, the "brother or sister," mentioned by Paul, was given the right to remarry on the ground of desertion by the unbeliever. Good brethren have affirmed it is true, and have characterized as "absurd" any other interpretation of the verse. But facts are stubborn things, and do not easily yield to the dogmatic affirmations and pompous asseverations of even the most prominent theologians among us.

The teaching of this verse all turns upon the meaning of the word **bondage** in verse 15, "The brother or sister is not under bondage." What does the word mean? Does it mean the same thing as the word **bound** in verse 27? "Art thou bound unto a wife?" And in verse 39, "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth." It is my firm conviction that bondage of verse 15 does not have the same meaning, or refer to the same thing, as the word bound in verses 27 and 39, though I am not inclined to be dogmatic.

My first reason is found in the fact that Paul used a different word for **bondage** in verse 15 from that which he used for **bound** in verses 27 and 39. When Paul said the brother or sister is not under bondage, he used the Greek word **douloo**, which is defined, "To make a slave of, to reduce to bondage; metaphor--to be under bondage, held by constraint of law or necessity in some matter, 1 Corinthians. 17:15" (Thayer). And when he said the wife is bound to her husband, he used the Greek word **deo**, which is defined, "To bind, to tie, to fasten; to throw into chains; metaphor--Satan is said to bind a woman; to put under obligation; with dative of person, to be bound to one, Romans. 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:27" (Thayer).

Some examples of the usage of the two words will help us to determine their meanings. The word **duloo**, used in 1 Corinthians 7:15, is used in Acts 7:6 to bring into bondage; in Romans 6:18,22 to become servants; Galatians 4:3 to be in bondage; and in 2 Peter 2:19 to be brought into bondage.

The word **deo**, used in 1 Corinthians 7:27,39 to refer to the marriage bond, is also used in Matthew 12:29, to **bind** the strong man; in Matthew 16:19 to **bind** duties on earth that would be **binding** on us in heaven; in Matthew 27:2 of the **binding** of Jesus; in Mark 11:2 a colt was **tied**; in Luke 13:16 and Revelation 20:2 Satan is **bound**; and in Acts 10:11 the sheet Peter saw was **tied** at the four corners.

The question I raise is this: Why did Paul use the word **deo** twice in chapter 7 when undoubted reference is made to the marriage bond, and then change to the word **duloo** in verse 15, unless he wished to leave the impression he was not referring to the marriage bond? In so short a compass the use of two different words to refer to the same thing would be misleading and conscious effort to impress his readers with the fact that he was not referring to the marriage bond in verse 15.

Furthermore, the word **douloo** is never used in the Bible to refer to the marriage bond, unless, indeed, it is so used in the verse under consideration. Everywhere the marriage bond is mentioned the word **deo** is used. If the word **douloo** were used in just one place where the reference is undoubtedly to the marriage bond, we would have some ground for thinking it might be so used here. But since it is nowhere so used, and since the marriage bond is mentioned twice in the same chapter by the use of another word, is it "absurd" to conclude that Paul made no reference to the marriage bond?

But I am told by some that the word **douloo**, translated **bondage** in verse 15, comes from the word **deo** which is translated **bound** in verses 27 and 39. That may be true. Thayer says "most derive it from deo, but others from **delo**." But the fact that one word is derived from another does not mean the two can be used as synonyms, or that they must refer to the same thing. For instance, the word **koiton**, which means "a bed-chamber," and translated "chamberlain" in Acts 12:20, is derived from the word **koitee** which means a bed, or couch, and one time used by Paul to mean sexual intercourse (Romans 13:13). This illustration is based on information gained from Thayer's Lexicon. Though **koiton** is derived from **koitee**, who would say they are synonyms, or that they refer to the same thing? So, though **douloo** is derived from **deo**, who can say with any degree of reason that they must refer to the same thing in 1 Corinthians 7?

What then is the meaning of 1 Corinthians 7:15? Remember the parties under consideration were both heathen when they married. Later the gospel came to them, and one of them obeyed and is referred to as the believer. The unbeliever refused to live with the believer, if the believer remained true to the Lord. The unbeliever would enslave the believer, would bring the believer into such abject bondage as to obligate him to give up Christ and finally be lost. Paul says the believer is not in such bondage to the unbeliever in order to maintain the peace of the home. If the unbeliever makes such unreasonable demands, let him depart rather than be in such bondage to him; such

bondage we owe only to our Lord. And this word **douloo** is used to express our bondage to Christ.

My second reason for believing the word bondage does not refer to the marriage bond is that such an interpretation would compel us to believe the Lord does not deal equally with people in like situations. By some it is contended that since the unbeliever deserts the believer, it is absurd to say the believer must remain unmarried; and it is also said that the desertion would leave the believer exposed to the danger of illicit sexual intercourse, or to the necessity of marrying another. I grant that the believer is thus exposed, but is that proof of an incorrect interpretation? If so, we all have been guilty of falsely interpreting Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. When a man divorces his wife for some cause other than fornication, does that not leave her exposed to the same dangers to which the believer is exposed by the desertion of the unbeliever? Are we ready to argue that the divorced woman is free to marry because she is exposed to these dangers? Jesus says she is not free to marry, and that he who marries her commits adultery. If the divorced woman is not free to marry, though exposed to these dangers, why argue that the deserted woman is free to marry because she is thus exposed? And what is the difference between divorcing and deserting? Does not the deserter usually get a divorce? But if the desertion is defined to be leaving without divorce, then I say there is more reason for the deserted woman to remain unmarried than for the divorced woman to do so. For as long as no divorce has been granted there may be reason to entertain a hope of reconciliation. The divorced woman does not have that much ground for a hope of reconciliation with her former mate. So, if any difference is going to be made in dealing with the two, it is reasonable to think greater liberty would be given to the divorced woman. But the interpretation some brethren put on this verse would give the greater liberty to the deserted party. For these reasons I conclude that the deserted believer must remain unmarried, and work, pray, and hope for the conversion of and reconciliation to the unbeliever.

#### “ONLY IN THE LORD”

Another verse which often gives us concern is found in this same chapter. “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” (1 Corinthians 7:39). By some it is thought that the expression “in the Lord” simply means people who believe there is a God, living and supreme. Those not in the Lord are the heathen who worship idols, and all others who believe Jehovah is God are in the Lord. I have never seen sufficient proof to keep me from thinking this is a wild assertion without any foundation. I see no reason for making a difference in the meaning we attach to the phrase “in the Lord” and the phrase “in Christ.” We have always argued, and with complete success, that none are “in Christ” except those who have been “baptized into Christ” (Romans 6:3). If the two phrases are identical in their import, we are forced to conclude that none are “in the Lord” except those who have been baptized into him. This I know to be safe ground, and where the eternal destiny of souls is at stake we cannot afford to stand on anything but safe ground.

Of how grave a sin is one guilty who marries not in the Lord? Is it as serious as marrying a person divorced for a trivial cause? I do not know. Neither am I disposed to speculate on the matter. It is dangerous to speculate, especially when that speculation may encourage someone to disobey the Lord, or to disregard what some have been pleased to call "inspired advice." But why should people wish to marry out of the Lord? A widow who has children should be more concerned for the eternal welfare of her children than she is for her own happiness in this life. That being true she would not wish to subject her children to the influence of the teaching and example of a child of the devil. A person not in Christ is a child of the devil. And a widower with children will not place those children under the constant care and direction of a child of the devil, a woman who is not a Christian, if he loves them as he should.

Often the question is raised about young people who have never been married. Is it right for them to marry those who are not in the Lord? I doubt seriously if 2 Corinthians 6:14 applies to the average marriage, but it is about as much out of place for these to marry not in the Lord as it is for a widow to do so. Do young men wish the children God is to give them to be under the influence of a child of the devil? Do young women wish to bring children into the world to be trained and influenced by a father who is a child of the devil? Only as we view these matters in the light of eternity can we see them and appreciate them as God would have us do. Do the thing you know will please God. Do that which you know will contribute to the eternal welfare of yourself and the children God places in your care.

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, I

Since about one marriage in three ends in divorce, and since divorcees will not remain unmarried, churches are faced with an ever-growing problem. It seems that the majority of churches are refusing to deal with this problem, leaving it to individuals to solve it for themselves as best they can. In some congregations prominent people, even elders, have divorced without scriptural cause and have married again. Certainly no one expects such congregations to stand for the truth on this subject. This is a problem which will never be solved to the satisfaction of all, but the teaching of the Lord must be set forth occasionally in the clearest and most forceful way possible.

A correct understanding of one verse of Scripture is essential to the solution of our problem. In Matthew 19:9 we read, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." This seems so clear and plain that no one should mistake the Lord's meaning, but the fact that there are a dozen different explanations is proof that some of us do not understand him. Some profess to think that Jesus is explaining the law of Moses. If the context is taken into consideration, this will be seen to be a contrast to the law of Moses. Jesus said that Moses allowed men to put away their wives (Deut 24:1-4), but from the beginning it was not so, and then said what is quoted above. His disciples obviously understood the statement to be more exacting than the law of Moses, for they said, "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry" (v. 10). In Matthew 5:31-32, the contrast is made clearer. Jesus

quotes the law of Moses and then says, "But I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress; and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." The words, "but I say" clearly show that what follows is in contrast to what precedes.

Others think that since Jesus made this statement before his death, and it is not repeated in any of the epistles, it is not binding. Why the words, "except for fornication" are not found in any of the epistles when the subject is being discussed, I do not know, but I can prove that this fact does not make the teaching of Jesus void. First, if this exception is not in force now, it never will be in force, and therefore is an idle statement. It was not in force during the law of Moses, which lasted until the death of Jesus. It will not be in force in the next world, for there they neither marry nor are given in marriage. If this part of the statement of Jesus is not in force from his death (or Pentecost) until the end of time, it never was and never will be in force, so it is an idle statement. Next, there are several statements of Jesus which are not repeated in any of the epistles which we all accept as being in force now. "Call no man father" (Matthew 23:9); if your brother does you wrong and won't make it right, "tell it to the church" (Matthew 18:17); the words "maketh her an adulteress" (Matthew 5:32) are not repeated in any epistle; and the statement that if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her, he is guilty of adultery, is not repeated by any inspired man after Pentecost. These things prove that statements of Jesus do not have to be repeated in the epistles to be binding upon us today.

There are others who say that the word "fornication" in Matthew 19:9 refers to illicit sexual intercourse before marriage and not to immorality after marriage. It is true that present day dictionaries so define the word, but the 1960 edition of Webster's New World Dictionary also adds, "In the Bible, (a) any unlawful sexual intercourse, including adultery." The word "fornication" is a broader term than "adultery" and includes all forms of sexual impurity. Paul uses fornication to express the sin of married people in 1 Corinthians 5:1-2. Jesus used the broad term when speaking of the exception, so as to allow divorce for all sexual impurity which occurs after marriage.

In recent years, some brethren have conceived the idea that Matthew 19:9 applies to church members only. They think the teaching of Jesus in the moral realm was intended for his disciples only, and that people outside of the church may marry and divorce all they please, but they must keep the partner they have at the time of their baptism. According to this doctrine, the sinner's sole responsibility to God is to accept Jesus and obey the gospel. If God's moral law is not binding upon them, they cannot sin, for where there is no law there is no sin (Romans 4:15). But Paul said people in the church at Corinth were fornicators, drunkards, thieves, etc. before they were washed and justified (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). If they were guilty of these sins before baptism, the law forbidding these sins was binding on them. A teacher in one of "our Bible colleges" told me they had violated the law of the land, which forbade these things. There are two things wrong with this wise (?) evasion of the truth. First, fornication was not a violation of the state law in Corinth, for it was practiced in their religious temples as a part of worship to heathen gods. Second, Paul lists the sin of covetousness in that same list of

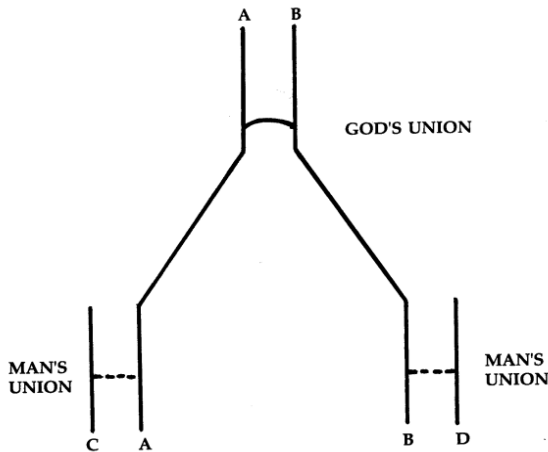
sins committed before baptism, and no state ever passed a law against that sin, and could not enforce it if such a law existed.

Another brother comes up with the idea that remarriage is adultery if the divorce was not for fornication, but that sin is forgiven in baptism like all other sins and the person may continue to live with his partner. If this sin is forgiven in baptism like all other sins, why may he continue in this sin, but must quit all other sins? When one divorces for trivial cause and marries again, he enters an unholy union. The union is unholy in God's sight because God holds him bound to his first partner. Divorce for any cause other than fornication does not destroy the union in God's sight. What God joined, no man can put asunder. Since God joins a man to his first lawful wife, and since divorce for trivial cause does not destroy that union, if the man marries again he is living with one woman while bound to another. That is what makes the second union unholy. Does baptism change the nature of that union? Does baptism cause an unholy union to become holy? Can the polygamist continue to live with six wives after his baptism for the remission of sins? Can the "confidence artist" continue conning people after his baptism? If baptism will make an unholy union holy, why won't it make an unholy occupation holy?

But I am told that this unholy union includes innocent people. The adults did not know the law of the Lord when they divorced and remarried. Children have been born to that union and they will be made unhappy, and their lives may even be ruined by the separation. All this I admit may be true, but my sole responsibility is, what did Jesus teach? I am obligated neither to justify nor apologize for what Jesus taught. It is possible that brethren have forgotten that "the way of the transgressor is hard," not only on the transgressor, but on all associated with him. I feel the same urge to make the way of forgiveness easy for the innocent transgressor and his children, and I find myself wishing I did not have to tell a man what Jesus taught in Matthew 19:9, but do I have the authority to change the doctrine of Christ? None of us claims such authority, but giving this verse an unscriptural interpretation amounts to the same thing, when that interpretation is made for the purpose of making the way of forgiveness easy for people who violate the law in ignorance. Our next article will deal with a positive interpretation of Matthew 19:9.

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE, II

“Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery” (Matthew 19:9). What is the teaching of Jesus in this verse? Perhaps a simple diagram will help us set forth the teaching of Jesus on this troublesome problem.



First, we take it for granted that A and B (the man and woman in this case) were lawful subjects of marriage. That being true, when they complied with the law of God and the law of the land, God joined them so that they became one flesh, and no more two. Next, they were joined by the law of an institution as old as the Garden of Eden. Jesus reminded the Jews that God made male and female and said, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. So that they are no more two, but one flesh.” The Jews reminded Jesus that Moses gave them liberty to put away their wives. Jesus admits that this was done because of the hardness of their hearts, and says, “But from the beginning it hath not been so.” The law of Moses did not abrogate the law given in Eden; it was only a temporary concession for the protection of women. When Jesus said, “It hath not been so,” he used a perfect tense verb (gegonen). The perfect tense “denotes the continuance of past action or its results down to the present” (Word Studies in The New Testament, by M. R. Vincent, Vol. 1, p. 108). See also Beginner’s Grammar of The Greek New Testament, by W. H. Davis, p. 152. Vincent continues, “He means: Notwithstanding Moses’ permission, the case has not been so from the beginning until now. The original ordinance has never been abrogated nor superseded, but continues in force.” The concessions granted through Moses are not retained in the new covenant, but along with the old covenant are taken out of the way, and the original ordinance is stated by Jesus as being in force from the death of Jesus to the end of time.

Next, the parties A and B in our diagram are joined by God until the death of one, with one exception, according to our text. If one of the parties becomes guilty of fornication, sexual immorality, the innocent may divorce the guilty and marry again. The act of fornication does not break the union, for the innocent may forgive the guilty and maintain the union. But if the innocent sees no possibility of repentance and improvement of the guilty party, the innocent one may terminate the union.

There is, however, a difference between terminating the union and a separation. Paul says, "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife departs not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leaves not his wife" (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Paul says this is what the Lord said, so we view this as an inspired commentary on our text and its parallels. Two people may grow apart to the extent that it is difficult, maybe impossible, for them to cultivate the Christian graces, so their salvation depends on their living apart. Since neither has been guilty of fornication, neither of them can marry another. Paul says, "Let her remain unmarried." The Greek word for "remain" is present tense and imperative mode. This means two things. First, she must continue to remain unmarried. Second, the imperative makes this equal to a command. So, she is commanded to continue to remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her lawful husband.

Next, if the parties in our diagram, A and B, divorce for any reason other than fornication, Paul says let them remain unmarried or be reconciled, and Jesus says if A marries C they commit adultery. The Greek word for commit, committeth, is present tense and denotes linear, continuous, action. So, if A marries C, the union is not approved of God and is judged as adulterous. It is an adulterous union because in God's sight A is still married to B. There are some who think that the union of A and C destroys the bond between A and B so that the union of A and C becomes holy and acceptable to God. This I believe to be wrong for two reasons. First, the continuance of an unholy union does not change the nature of the union by the mere fact of its continuance over a period of time. Second, the Lord says that if B marries D they commit adultery; they form an adulterous union. Now, if the marriage of A and C destroys the bond between A and B, why is the union of B and D sinful? The only reason the union of B and D is sinful is the fact that the bond between A and B remains unbroken in God's sight.

There are some who object to the idea that two people can "live in adultery." They have to admit that the first sexual intercourse of A and C is adultery, because Jesus says it is. However, they contend that this act of sin destroys the bond between A and B, and unites A and C in a holy union on the ground of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 6:16. The logical conclusion of this argument is that a man is "one flesh" with the last woman with whom he mates, and the teaching of Jesus against divorce is made foolish. They also have yet to explain why B cannot marry D without sin if the union of A and C destroyed the bond between A and B. But those who say it is impossible for people "to live in adultery" should read Colossians 3:5-7, where Paul names several sins, including fornication, and then says "ye lived in these things." According to Paul, people can "live in fornication", which includes adultery.

Back to our diagram. Jesus teaches that if A divorces B for any reason other than fornication, not only does A commit adultery when he marries C, but "he that marrieth

her when she is put away committeth adultery." If A divorces B, he who marries B commits adultery. As said above, this proves that the union of A and B still exists in the sight of God. This proves that the man-made union between A and C does not destroy the God-made union between A and B. This agrees with Paul's statement (1 Corinthians 7:9-10) that when two people separate (for any reason other than fornication being implied) there are but two courses open to them: 1. remain unmarried; 2. be reconciled to each other. Some good brethren hold the idea that when A marries C, B may declare A guilty of fornication and terminate the original union on the ground of fornication, and then be free to marry D. If this is true, why did Jesus say that he who marries her when she is put away committeth adultery? Both Jesus and Paul teach that when two people separate for any reason other than fornication, they must remain unmarried or be reconciled to each other. Marriage is "until death", except for one reason. Even then there may be a big question mark about the complete innocence of the one who puts away the one guilty of fornication. A person who has not observed the teaching of 1 Corinthians 7:2-5 could not qualify as an innocent party. And there might be other things that would involve one party in the unfaithfulness of the other.

### MORE QUESTIONS ON MARRIAGE

The following questions were directed to me by a prominent preacher. He raised the questions because of some things said in articles appearing in the Firm Foundation the last part of 1964. These questions not only show a lack of information on the part of our preachers, but also show how erroneous the teaching is which is being given to our people generally. This is one reason why we think it necessary to keep teaching on the subject. His questions and our answer follow:

On page 733 we read: "Adultery is an act." We agree. Marriage, however, is a state or relationship, and one that is honorable (Hebrews 13:14). If a man should force a woman to marry him, thus entering a holy and honorable state by a sinful act, would he be required to put her away on the basis of this sinful union, even if she had learned to love him and had borne him children?

On page 785, reference is made to 1 Corinthians 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." Does this not mean that one has married a harlot through his union with her? Did not God honor the marriage of Rahab the harlot to a man of Israel? Quite evidently God honors many unions for which men do not give him credit.

First, let me say that these questions force us to deal with some very delicate matters. There is no sense in dealing with them unless we deal with them frankly, but I hope to avoid being crude and coarse.

The querist wants to know if “a man forces a woman to marry him.... would he be required to put her away? To me this seems like a most improbable, if not impossible, situation; but to the querist it seems a very likely situation. It seems this way to him because he thinks when a man commits rape he has forced that woman to marry him. In proof of this, after quoting 1 Corinthians 6:16, he asks, “Does this not mean that one has married a harlot through his union with her?” A surprisingly large number of brethren with whom I have corresponded on these matters think that sexual intercourse, even without love or intention to live together, constitutes a marriage. In further proof this brother offers the marriage of Rahab and Salmon. But he builds his argument on pure supposition. First, he must assume that Salmon was one of the spies whom Rahab assisted to escape capture. Next, he must assume that Salmon went to Rahab’s house for immoral purposes. And in the third place, he must assume that sexual intercourse is all that is necessary to constitute a marriage. He can’t prove any of his three assumptions, so his argument is not worth very much.

What does constitute a marriage? First, there must be intention to marry. This would include love and desire. I knew a young man who was baptized, not with the intention of obeying the Lord, but to get his sweetheart to marry him. Was he united to Christ? No one who understands the teaching of the Lord would affirm that he became a Christian. Next, there must be a ceremony, some formality recognized by the state. In primitive times this ceremony was very simple, but so far as I can learn, there has never been a time when something of this kind was not required. When two people love each other and desire to be with each other, and when the state requirements are met, they are husband and wife. Sexual intercourse is a privilege and duty (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) of this union, not the act that forms the union. If this is not true, Joseph and Mary lived in very intimate relations before they were married. Joseph took Mary to his home as his wife some months before the birth of Jesus, but Matthew tells us that he “knew her not till she had brought forth a son” (Matthew 1:25). And the word “knew” doesn’t mean to get acquainted.

Now, to 1 Corinthians 6:16. This is a difficult passage, and together with verse 18, I think it is as difficult as any passage in the New Testament. First, we must know what is meant by the word join. Does it mean married? There are two Greek words used for this idea, and Greek texts are not consistent, some using them consistently, while others do not. According to the Received Text, “Kollaoo” is used ten times (Luke 10:11; 15:15; Acts 5:13; 8:29; 9:26; 10:28; 17:34; Romans 12:9), meaning to join one’s self to another for the purpose of his company. It originally meant to “glue together”. Not one time is it used to mean marriage, unless it means that in the passage we are studying, where it is used twice. The other word is “proskollaomai”, which is the same word with a prepositional prefix, “pros”. Marvin R. Vincent, in his great work on Word Studies, Vol. III, p. 402, says, “The compound verb denotes most intimate union.” This word is used only three times in the best texts (Matthew 19:5; Mark 10:7; Ephesians 5:31), where there is no doubt that it refers to marriage. So, on the basis of consistency, I think Paul used a word in Ephesians 5:31, when speaking of marriage, which he would not use in

1 Corinthians 6:16 when he spoke of the union of a man with a harlot. Hence, I think Paul was careful not to give the idea that the man was joined to a harlot in the sense of marriage, but that he was joined, associated, with the harlot in such manner as to embarrass and disgrace the Lord with whom he is joined spiritually.

Next, let us notice the consequences of the doctrine that sexual union constitutes marriage. First, if a man commits rape, the woman is married to him against her will. The brother indicates that he accepts this consequence when he speaks of a forced marriage. If I am mistaken, I'll be glad to make correction. If two young people become inflamed through petting, lose control of their fleshly desires and commit fornication, they are married whether they love one another or not, and whether or not they have any intention of living with one another. This sin is so prevalent among young people today that, if this doctrine be true, no real Christian could have any idea whether he, or she, was keeping company with another man's wife, or another girl's husband. Again, if this doctrine be true, a Christian woman could well have a husband today and tomorrow be living with the husband of a harlot, without the slightest knowledge of her terrible condition. Is God the Author of such confusion?

Next, what is meant by the terms "one body," "one flesh"? Some take this to mean that the union of male and female becomes one flesh in their children, the result of their sexual union. I doubt if this is the meaning. MacKnight, in his comments on this verse, says, "The body being the seat of the appetites and passions, and the instrument by which our appetites and passions are gratified, to be one body with an harlot is to have the same vicious inclinations with her, and to give up our body to her to be employed in gratifying her sinful inclinations.... They shall be one in inclination and interest, and shall employ their bodies as if they were animated by one soul." Over against this "one body," Paul says, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." So, the man and the harlot are "one body...one flesh" in a manner similar to that in which the Christian is "one spirit" with the Lord. Albert Barnes makes a good comment on "one spirit" in these words, "That is, in a sense similar to that in which a man and his wife are one body. It is not to be taken literally; but the sense is, there is a close and intimate union; they are united in feeling, spirit, intention, disposition." The man who is "one spirit" with the Lord is in agreement with the Lord and in fellowship with him. So, the man who is "one body" with the harlot is in agreement with her, in close fellowship. They act as if their bodies were animated by one soul.

Paul's argument is, that the Christian is a member of Christ; it is a shameful thing for us to make a member of Christ to be one body with a harlot, to have fellowship in sinful action with the harlot, to be animated and directed by the soul of a harlot. So I believe that to be "one flesh" with the harlot, or to be "joined to an harlot" does not mean to be married to the harlot.

## DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE--A REVIEW

As long as people have trouble in the family and are inclined to settle their trouble by getting a divorce, there will be need for instruction on the subject. The truth on the subject of baptism must be taught over and over, because there are young people growing up who have never learned the truth, and there are older people who have never obeyed the truth. So, for the sake of young people, as well as for people who because of family trouble are giving this subject serious attention, it is well to restudy the subject. And, too, as long as there are men who teach error on the subject, there will be need for us to teach the truth about it. And there are few subjects on which men differ more widely than on this subject. Sentiment, personal interest, a desire to justify friends or relatives, often influence us on this subject and cause us to take positions we would not otherwise take.

Howard Horton, minister of the University Parkway Church, Baltimore, Md., sent me a tract which has been distributed in that section, asking that I review it. And thinking the things I write for him might be of general interest, I am putting it in the usual form of publication. The tract was written by one H. C. Thomas of Chino, Calif. From certain expressions in the tract and from his general use of the Scriptures, I suppose he is a member of the church, a brother in Christ. There is not anything new in the tract. The positions taken and the arguments made are not new, and they have been refuted many times. Aside from unusually poor grammar, the tract is rather well written; the arguments are well stated, and the positions are clearly developed.

The sole purpose of the tract is to prove that under the gospel, in the Christian dispensation, there is no scriptural reason for either divorce or remarriage. He says: "Divorce and remarriage has no place in the law to the church. It is of the devil, and has its headquarters apparently in the moving-picture industry" (p. 25). Again: "Therefore, divorce is sinful and of the devil, even if they never remarry" (p. 26).

In order to sustain this position, the writer must do something about the statement of Jesus in Matthew 19:9, which reads: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." This plainly allows divorce on the grounds of fornication. So, the writer sets about to take care of this passage in two ways. First, he says that this teaching of Jesus is not repeated by any apostle after Pentecost, so is not binding on the church. Second, he says Jesus was merely explaining the law of Moses on this point. We will study what he has to say on the first point in this article.

#### POSITION STATED

I will give a number of his statements in proof of his proposition in an effort to be more than fair in reviewing his tract. He says: "What he (Jesus) said in the flesh is no part of the new law, unless set forth by the apostles, for it did not go forth from Zion, the church" (p. 5). Again: "Anything the apostles did not give by precept or example cannot be the law of the church" (p. 5). And: "Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is no part of the

new covenant; it is the history of the life of Christ . . . Not a word or a line was given for the law to the church till the day of Pentecost, for there was no church till that day. Every line of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John is history, and not law. By no stretch of the imagination can a man get law out of history” (p. 5). A man has to do some mighty loose thinking to get such a conclusion as the foregoing. We have a historical account of Moses going up into Mount Sinai to receive the law, and we are told what the law was which he was given. And in the book of Acts we have a historical account of the founding and growth of the church. Yet in that historical account we have the two laws of pardon revealed. But again, he says: “Anything Jesus taught under the law is a part of that law, unless set forth by the apostles, as law to the church, on, or after Pentecost” (p. 8). And: “The new covenant begins at Acts of Apostles, and ends with the book of Revelation . . . What the new covenant does not authorize is not a good work” (p. 9). Having laid down this rule, he proceeds to show that no apostle ever repeated the exception which Jesus gave in Matthew 19:9, and concludes that it is no part of the new covenant, law to the church.

#### POSITION REFUTED

If the rule laid down by the man were right, his conclusion would be right. But his rule is not right, and I offer several reasons why it is not, and cannot be, right. First, he says the “new covenant begins at Acts of Apostles.” If that be true, the Great Commission as stated by Matthew, Mark, and Luke is a part of the law of Moses, no part of the new covenant. He realized a difficulty here and tried to remedy the situation by saying that the law of Moses ended at the cross, and what Jesus said after his resurrection is a part of the new covenant (p. 21). But if so, his statement that the new covenant begins at Acts of the Apostles is wrong.

But his rule breaks down completely when we come to the statement of Jesus about how to treat a brother who has sinned against us. Jesus said go to him; if he will not hear you, take others with you; if he will not hear them, take the matter to the church; if he will not hear the church, let him be as a Gentile and a publican (Matthew 18:15-17). Where did an apostle teach this procedure? The man does not live who can find such teaching in the writings of the apostles; yet all must admit that it is a rule, law, to be followed in the church. But a statement made by Jesus under the law is no part of the law of Moses; it is a rule of conduct for Christians in the church. This forever breaks the rule laid down by the writer of the tract.

Again, his rule breaks down even on the subject under consideration. Jesus said that if a man looks upon a woman to lust after her he has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matthew 5:28). Where does an apostle repeat this teaching? An apostle teaches that if we hate a brother we are guilty of murder (1 John 3:15), but no apostle teaches that we are guilty of adultery when we lust after a woman.

Next, Jesus says: "Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress" (Matthew 5:32). Yes, Paul taught that men should not put away their wives (Romans 7; 1 Corinthians 7), but did he teach that a man makes his wife an adulteress if he puts her away for trivial causes? Where does an apostle teach that the husband is responsible for his divorced wife's sin when she remarries, or falls a victim of nature's impulse? This was taught by Jesus under the law, yet it is no part of the law and is a great step in advance of the teaching of the law. Jesus gave it as being something opposed to the teaching of the law, as we shall discuss later. So the idea that things taught by Jesus during his lifetime are not binding today unless repeated by an apostle after Pentecost is not true.

### A PERTINENT QUESTION

In this connection, Brother Horton asks a very practical question: "Was a part of the teaching of Jesus intended to be introductory to, and applicable during, the Christian dispensation? If so, upon what principle can we determine which of his utterances during his ministry are applicable today and which are not? Of course, there is no rule stated in Scripture, or such a question would never be raised; but from a number of examples I think we can arrive at a rather safe conclusion. Jesus did teach people during his lifetime to keep the law of Moses. He said: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe." (Matthew 23:2-3.) Would anyone get the idea from this that we are to obey the scribes and Pharisees? They were the teachers of the law of Moses; they sat on Moses' seat; they exercised his authority. But since Moses is no longer an authority, God no longer speaks to us through him (John 1:17; Matthew 17:3-5; Hebrews 1:1-2), surely all will understand that Jesus was teaching his disciples their duty for their time, and not intending to bind the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees upon all succeeding generations. Again, Jesus told a leper whom he had healed: "Go show thyself to the priest; and offer for thy cleansing the things which Moses commanded" (Mark 1:44). Jesus lived under the law of Moses, and he never at any time taught people to disobey that law. But since the law is taken out of our way (Colossians 2:14), we are no longer under it, and certainly no one would get the idea Jesus intended to bind its precepts on us. So, we would say that the context, together with an understanding of the different laws for different dispensations, will enable us to determine what teaching was local in its application and what was intended to be universal.

Notice the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. The beatitudes come first, and they give the characteristics of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. Would anyone think Jesus was describing a citizen of the old kingdom of Judah, or Israel? He said: "Ye are the salt of the earth." Would anyone think he was saying that of the scribes and Pharisees? Or any of the apostate Jews of his day? Do not all regard that as being said of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven about to be set up, and which was set up on Pentecost? In Matthew 5 there are at least five contrasts drawn between the teaching of the law of Moses and that of Christ. Would anyone think that the teaching of Jesus on that

occasion was intended to be an explanation of the law of Moses, and that it was binding on the people of his day only? Yet much of it is not repeated by any apostle. So again, I say that from the context, together with a knowledge of the different laws for different dispensations, we may safely determine which of the teachings of Jesus were applicable only to the people under the law and which are applicable to the church. If a command was local and national in its extent, as the ones in Matthew 23:2-3 and Mark 1:44, then it may safely be applied to the Jews and considered binding only until the law was taken out of the way; if the command was world-wide and international in its scope, binding regardless of race color, or nationality, we may be safe in saying it is a part of the new covenant and is binding on us at this time.

## SECOND ARGUMENT STATED

As explained before, this study of the subject is occasioned by a tract in which the writer takes the position that the statement made by Jesus in Matthew 19:9 is not binding now, because it is nowhere repeated by any apostle since Pentecost. The next argument with which we deal is that the statements of Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 are explanations of the teaching of Moses on the subject. From the tract we read: "It is very doubtful that Matthew 19:9 in the King James translation is correct; but even if it should be, it did not authorize divorce and remarriage even under Moses' law. It did not authorize anything. It was simply a statement of fact, of what they did under Moses' law, because of hardness of heart" (p. 17). Again: "When Jesus was teaching his disciples in Matthew 5:32, they were up in a mountain . . . In verse 31 Jesus refers to Deuteronomy 24:1, when he said: 'It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement.' In verse 32 Jesus said: 'But I say unto you.' The fact that he used that phrase means only that he was explaining the full meaning of their deeds—something more than what was usually understood. They looked at and understood the civil side. Jesus referred to the moral side when he said (and then quotes Matthew 5:32). That is an explanation of what happened when the terms of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 were carried out. A man who put away his wife for any cause, except whoredom, caused her to commit adultery, for she could marry again, but she defiled the marriage tie. She was still her husband's flesh" (p. 18).

## ARGUMENT ANSWERED

Only those blinded by a theory could get such a meaning out of our Lord's statement. Moses said **that**, but I say **this**. When one statement is opposed to another, it cannot be used as an explanation of it. But let us apply this same mode of reasoning to other statements in the same context. "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21-22). According to the writer of this tract we are reviewing, Jesus meant to explain the law of Moses. That which was said of old time means the

law of Moses. It is equal to saying, "Moses said that, but I say this!" and what Jesus said is not an explanation of Moses, but something different.

Again: "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:27-28). The first statement is from Moses, one of the Ten Commandments; the second statement is from Jesus. Is this second an explanation of the first? When Moses said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," did he really mean to say that a man commits adultery when he looks upon a woman to lust after her? Or is this a principle which goes beyond the law of Moses? Just about every one knows this is different from, and an addition to, the law of Moses; but according to the reasoning of our tract writer, it would have to be taken as an explanation of what Moses said.

Next, we read: "Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all... But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matthew 5:33-37). What did Moses teach about swearing? "When a man voweth a vow unto Jehovah, or sweareth an oath to bind his soul with a bond, he shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth" (Num 30:2). What did Jesus teach? "Swear not at all." Is this an explanation of what Moses taught? According to our tract writer, Jesus explained the teaching of Moses in this fashion. Remember that these examples are coming from the same chapter from which our tract writer got his idea that Jesus explained the teaching of Moses on the matter of divorce.

Again: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:38-39). It was the law of Moses that said: "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." It was Jesus who said: "Turn the other cheek when smitten." Is this an explanation of what Moses taught in his law? According to our tract writer, Jesus was explaining the full meaning of the law. I have given you four examples from this chapter - two come before the teaching about divorce and remarriage and two come after it. Are we not to interpret the one in the middle after the same rule by which we interpret those examples on either side? Now look at the middle.

"It was said also, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 5:31-32). The phrase, "it was said also" refers to the law of Moses, and the statement is found in Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Moses told the people if they refused to live any longer with a wife, give her a writing of divorcement, and the Jews interpreted it to mean "for every cause" (Matthew 19:3). But Jesus restricted the matter by saying men could not divorce their wives for any cause,

“saving for the cause of fornication,” without making them adulteresses. Can this be an explanation of the law of Moses? If it is, then I insist that all four of these other statements of Jesus in this context must be taken as explanations of what Moses meant in the law. The form of teaching in Matthew 19 is the same. There Jesus said: “Moses allowed you to put away your wives, and I say unto you,” etc. If someone thinks there is a difference because in Matthew 5 Jesus said, “But I say,” whereas in Matthew 19 he said, “And I say,” let me remind you that the Greek word is the same in both places. Moses said **that**, but I say **this**. How can **this** be an explanation of **that**?

## CONSEQUENCES AND OBSERVATIONS

But the worst thing about this interpretation is that it makes the law of Moses authorize, legalize, adultery. The writer of the tract admits as much. Hear him: “Having a bill of divorcement in her hand, she could go be another man’s wife. In so doing she committed adultery, but she was in the bounds of the civil law, and none could cause her to be stoned. Both the woman and the man marrying her committed adultery” (p. 15). Again: “Such adultery was permitted by Moses’ law because of injustices by the hard-hearted Jews in driving off their wives” (p. 18). And: “God suffered the hard-hearted Jews to put away their wives; he permitted the divorced wife to marry again, and was defiled (committed adultery) in so doing. That was Moses’ law” (p. 20). Some observations on the foregoing:

1. God allowed, suffered, some things which were not pleasing to him, but he did not authorize any by the enactment of a law. God allowed polygamy, but where is the law which authorized it? On account of the hardness of their hearts God suffered them to put away their wives; he legalized separations for many causes. There was a relaxing, an easing, of the law which obtained from the beginning. When they kept within the law, they were guiltless.
2. People guilty of adultery were stoned (Lev 20). If when a woman was given a bill of divorcement and she married again, she and the man she married were guilty of adultery, why were they not stoned?
3. Our writer says: “Remarriage while the husband or wife is living is to live a life of adultery. They who live an adulterous life will ‘not inherit the kingdom of God’ (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Their lot will be the lake of fire” (Rev 20:14). This is still worse. God enacted a law allowing a man to put away his wife; he allowed the woman to marry another man, and he allowed the man to choose another woman. According to our writer, they were all guilty of adultery; God legalized this adultery. And then God condemned them to hell for doing what he authorized. All this follows if what Jesus said in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is to be taken as an explanation of what Moses taught in his law.

4. But our writer does worse than that, if possible. He says: "The family is the first divine institution on earth. Man has corrupted it. The state government has taken control of it, debauched the sacredness of it, casting it down to the level of adultery, making adultery legal by the law of the land" (p. 23). He seems to have forgot that he had said that Moses made adultery legal by telling the husband to give the wife a bill of divorcement. If the government today casts the divine institution down to the level of adultery by allowing divorce, did not Moses do the same thing when he made adultery legal by allowing divorce? If the government "debauched the sacredness" of marriage today by legalizing adultery, did not Moses debauch the sacredness of it when he legalized adultery? The truth is that Moses did not legalize adultery. Moses relaxed the law to permit divorce for many causes; and the relaxing of the law made a legal relationship which is not now considered right, because the law has been changed. During the Jewish dispensation, while the law of Moses was in force, that relationship was legal, and those who were in it were not guilty of adultery; but since the law of Jesus went into effect, those who divorce for trivial causes and remarry are guilty of adultery. Any position which makes God authorize adultery is wrong. Any position, or explanation of Scripture, which causes God, or his inspired servant, to "debauch" the sacredness of the marriage institution is wrong, unscriptural. Hence, I conclude that the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 was not given as an explanation of the teaching of Moses in the law.

#### JESUS EXPLAINS MOSES?

The writer of the tract proposes to prove that the language of Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is only an explanation of the law of Moses. We now give you a statement from the tract in which he states the teaching of Moses: "Many disregarded the bond of matrimony and the law itself, for they took a multiplicity of wives. They drove them out from home with likely no place to go or way to make a living. And if a woman, in order to have food and shelter, went to be another man's wife, or fell victim to nature, her husband could charge her with adultery, and the law demanded her death. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was written to make it impossible for the husband to hold claim on the wife when he had driven her out of his house. Having a bill of divorce in her hand, she could go be another man's wife. In so doing she committed adultery, but she was in the bounds of the civil law and none could cause her to be stoned. Both the woman and the man marrying her committed adultery (see Matthew 5:32). She was not put away for whoredom; if so, she would have been stoned to death (Lev 20:10). God hated putting away (Mal 2:16). But at that time, it was the best way out for the pure and innocent wives that the hardhearted Jews drove out" (p. 15). It is the opinion of the writer of the tract that Moses taught the same thing in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 that Jesus taught in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, for he contends that in these passages Jesus was merely

explaining the law of Moses. Now let us see what Moses said about it. "When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for this is abomination before Jehovah; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance" (Deut 24:1-4). The meaning of some of these terms must be determined in order to understand what Moses taught.

### SOME TERMS DEFINED

First, what is meant by "some unseemly thing" in her? The Jews were divided as to the meaning of this phrase; but since Jesus has given us the teaching he has on the subject, there is little need to be confused about it. The teaching of Jesus allows divorce and remarriage for only one cause, and the apostles were astonished that he should be so rigid, and said: "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry" (Matthew 19:10). That is, if a man cannot divorce his wife for any cause except fornication, it is better not to marry. Since the teaching of Jesus is more rigid than that of Moses, we must allow the term "unseemly thing" to mean something different.

1. The term "unseemly thing" could not mean adultery; for if the wife was guilty of that sin, she was stoned to death (Lev 20:10). No divorce was required in that case. Evidence was submitted, or she confessed her crime, and she was stoned. This left the husband free to marry again.
2. The term "unseemly thing" could not mean suspicion of adultery; for if a husband had reason to suspect his wife of adultery, the law provided a course to follow. Read Numbers 5 for the test to which the accused wife was subjected. If she was guilty, she was subjected to a most horrible death; but if she was innocent, she was set free and continued to be the man's wife. This "unseemly thing" was something for which the woman was not stoned, and something on account of which she was not subjected to the test for adultery. Therefore, I conclude that the term does not include either of these things.
3. The term "unseemly thing" could not mean that the husband found evidence that he had not married a virgin, for the law of Moses provided a course to follow in such case. If a man took a wife, and then brought a charge against her that he found not the token of virginity, the father of the damsel took the "tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate;" and if the evidence was sufficient, the elders chastised the

man, fined him a hundred shekels of silver, and he was not allowed to divorce her for any cause all his life. But if the man's charge was true, and the damsel played the harlot in her father's house, she was stoned to death (Deut 22:13-21). Since the husband could put away his wife for an "unseemly thing" without going through this course, I conclude that the term does not include this.

It is to be remembered that the law of Moses does not define the "unseemly thing." In the King James Version, the word is "uncleanness," but the Hebrew word is not the same that is used so often for uncleanness. The word in this form does not occur elsewhere, according to Young's Analytical Concordance, so its meaning cannot be determined by usage. But since the things suggested above are not to be included in its meaning, we may safely conclude that it included such things as were unseemly, unclean, unbearable in the husband's sight. This certainly is the sense in which the Jews, including the disciples of Jesus, understood the term.

#### IN WHAT SENSE DEFILED?

But there is another term in this law which needs defining. Moses said when a wife was put away, and she married another, and the second husband put her away or died, the wife could not go back to the first husband, because she was "defiled." The writer of the tract claims that this means the woman committed adultery when she married the second time, even though the law of Moses authorized the second marriage. I have already showed that this interpretation makes Moses, and God, authorize and legalize adultery, and then puts God in the position of sending to hell a woman who did that which is authorized. Brother Horton asks a leading question here: "In Deuteronomy 24:1-4, is the woman considered a sinner in God's sight because she is said to be defiled? Does her defilement relate only to the first husband, or does it relate to all other men? If only the first husband, what do you take to be the reason for such a restriction of her returning to him?"

Several different Hebrew words are translated by the English word "defile," and the Hebrew word here used has several different meanings. So, we must depend on the context for its meaning, being careful not to give it a meaning which will contradict some other passage, or involve God in unholiness. The writer of the tract has given the word a meaning which makes God authorize an adulterous relationship and then send people to hell for living in that relationship. Obviously, such meaning is wrong. The word is used of those who commit adultery (Lev 18:20-23). People who worship idols are said to be "defiled" (Ezek 20:7; 22:3-4). The sanctuary is said to have been "defiled" by the people (Ezek 5:11). Again, certain things were not to be eaten, the things which creep upon the earth, and those who ate such were "defiled" (Lev 11:41-45). And a woman was said to be unclean, or "defiled," for a certain length of time after the birth of a child, and even after she was sick with her impurity, and both the man and the woman were "defiled" for a period after copulation (Lev 15:16-33). Again, the word is used with reference to the

priests going about the dead. They were not to “defile” themselves for any except kin, such as parents, children, or an unmarried sister; “for her he may ‘defile’ himself” (Lev 21:1-4). Obviously, the word “defile” here and in several other places mentioned does not involve any moral impurity. If the Jews ate pork, they were “defiled;” if a priest touched a dead person not near to him he was “defiled;” when the people forgot God and failed to worship him, the sanctuary was “defiled.” But who would say there was an moral impurity involved in any of these cases? So when a woman was given a bill of divorcement and she married another, she was “defiled” as to her first husband so that she might never marry him again; she was “defiled;” it was sinful for him to have her again. But does that mean that she was “defiled” as to the second husband? Or if the second husband exercised his right to put her away by a bill of divorcement, was she defiled as to a third husband? The passage does not teach that she was defiled with reference to anybody except the husband who put her away; and to make it teach that she was guilty of immorality involves both Moses and God for authorizing such.

### REASONS FOR THE LAW

Now to the question? Why was she not allowed to return to her former husband after she was divorced by the second, or after his death? It is said that the Egyptians had a most abominable practice of trading wives, and that this law was made to pre-vent, or at least to restrict, this practice. Though the law seems very loose to us, it must be remembered that it put marriage on a higher moral plane than any of the nations of that day. God’s people have always been required to live by a higher standard of morals than those who are not his people. Moses required more of God’s people than was required of the other nations of their day.

Next, this divorce law, though allowing divorce, was framed in such way as to discourage it. In the first place, it took quite some time to comply with the law; and with the passing of such time, men’s anger subsided, and on second thought many did not put away their wives.

Next, it was necessary to get a scribe to write out the regular form, or bill, and there was both time and expense connected with this. Again, it was necessary to have at least two witnesses to this transaction. Then it was necessary for the husband to put the bill of divorcement into the hand of the woman he was divorcing; he could not have his attorney do that for him. And, too, the fact that she might never be his wife again was intended to make him think seriously before putting her away. So, my answer as to why she might marry a third man, but could never go back to the first, is that this was just another means of discouraging divorce; it was protection to the wife and children.

### NO-DIVORCE THEORY

The writer of the tract under review makes only one argument for his no-divorce theory in the chapter devoted to “Marriage from Pentecost to End of Time.” It runs like this: (1)

Jesus told the apostles to teach and baptize people; (2) he told the apostles to teach the baptized to observe all things he commanded; (3) the apostles taught all that Jesus commanded, yet they did not teach that people might divorce even for the cause of fornication. He gives Romans 7:1-6 and 1 Corinthians 7 as the teaching of the apostles, and in these passages, we are told that a woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives, but that if he be dead she is free to marry in the Lord. The exception is not mentioned. This is a good argument and worthy of consideration.

### THEORY DISPROVED

First, the book of Matthew was written after Pentecost. Matthew gave the teaching of Jesus on the subject (Matthew 19:9), and it was given after Pentecost. However, in former articles I have shown that some of the teaching of Jesus which is binding now is not mentioned in the Epistles written to the churches. Jesus said: "Call no man father on the earth: for one is your Father, even he who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:9). Everyone knows that this is binding today, but where is it repeated in the Epistles written to the churches?

Next, if the exception mentioned by Jesus in Matthew 19:9 is not applicable now, when was it, or when will it be, binding? I have shown that his statement there is not an explanation of Moses, so it was not binding during the lifetime of Christ. Jesus did not make laws contrary to the law of Moses and put them into effect while the law of Moses was binding upon people. If the exception is not applicable now, it will not be until the end of time, for there is to be no change in law before the end of time. That exception cannot be applicable to us in the resurrection for there we are neither male nor female; we neither marry nor are given in marriage. It would be foolish to tell spiritual beings who are neither male nor female that they must not put away their wives, except for fornication. Since the exception which Jesus authorized could not be put in force before the establishment of the church, it cannot be put in force in the next world, we conclude that it is in force now, or that it was a piece of false and foolish legislation on the part of Jesus which he never should have uttered. The church age is the only time the teaching can possibly be applicable, and there is no sound reason why it should not be accepted and obeyed by all who love and respect the Lord.

### WHAT JESUS TAUGHT

But what did Jesus teach on the question? First, Jesus taught that divorce is a great evil, and that it is contrary to God's original intention and plan for man. In his discussion with the Pharisees (Matthew 19:1-9), he reminded them that in the beginning God made one man and one woman, and said the two were one flesh, and that they are no more two, but one flesh. And He warned them that man should not put asunder that which God had joined together. And perhaps we argue over the exception, and various other points, when we should be emphasizing the importance of, and ways to maintain, the union which God authorizes and affects in marriage. Certainly, all who know right from

wrong know that divorce is much too prevalent. People who disregard the Lord's law on the subject are not disciplined as they should be, and the church suffers on that account.

When Jesus put the matter where it was in the beginning, the Jews reminded him that Moses taught otherwise. They said Moses **commanded** the bill of divorcement, but Jesus put it more correctly when he said Moses **suffered** them to put away their wives. From this we learn that Jesus taught that the law given by Moses was in its nature a concession to the Jews, and was so on account of the hardness of their hearts. Next, we learn from this that Jesus considered the law of Moses as temporal in its nature. It was not the original law, nor was it to last longer than the hardness of heart made it necessary. Paul said the law was a tutor to bring the Jews to Christ (Galatians 3:24). So, the divorce law was relaxed, a concession was made, until the Jews could be brought to Christ, to live on the plane acceptable to, and authorized by, him.

Having told the Pharisees why Moses made a concession from what the law of God required from the beginning, he then proceeded to tell them his rule on the question: "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." From this we learn that Jesus allowed divorce and remarriage for one reason only—fornication. The marriage bond is not severed by fornication, but the innocent party may sever it for that reason. The innocent party is not required to sever the bond, but may forgive, and should do so if the guilty one repents and asks forgiveness.

But what about the guilty party who is put away for fornication? Is the guilty one free to remarry without committing adultery? The safest answer I have to this is: I do not know.<sup>12</sup> Many well-informed brethren say the guilty one is as free as the innocent, but they do not offer any passage of Scripture to prove it, and their reasoning on the matter is far from conclusive. If the guilty is free as the innocent, it would seem to put a premium on sin, a reward for it. I am afraid of it; it is far from a safe course.

But there is another thing Jesus taught on the subject, and one which receives too little attention: "Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress" (Matthew 5:32a). Under the law the guilty party was stoned, so there was no putting away on account of adultery, or fornication. One proof that this teaching is applicable in the Christian age is the fact that it was made for people who lived, not under the law when fornicators were killed, but who live under laws not enforced by religious leaders, but by civil authority. Civil authorities do not look upon

---

<sup>12</sup> The author of this book had changed his mind by the time he was teaching this course at the Bear Valley School of Preaching in 1974. His answer to the question was - No! The author believed the guilty party had no right to remarry. Added C. M. Horner WVBS.

fornication as worthy of death, so people are allowed to divorce the fornicator and marry again, whereas under the law of Moses the fornicator was removed by death and the innocent party allowed to marry another.

Next, the one who divorces a partner for any other cause than fornication makes the one put away an adulterer or adulteress. The point emphasized here is the responsibility of the one who gets the divorce. The one put away may have to marry to have food, shelter, and other necessities of life. Or the one put away may not be able to practice continence, so falls a victim to nature's desires and becomes guilty of adultery. Jesus says the one who caused the separation is responsible. Of course, that does not mean that the one who committed adultery has no responsibility, but it does mean that the one who caused the separation shares the responsibility. Women often reach a period in life when they do not care for companionship, and for trivial reasons divorce their husbands who have not the ability to practice continence. Soon the husband either remarries or seeks satisfaction in illicit relationships. Sure, he is guilty and shall bear his iniquity; but let not that wife think she is free from all responsibility. She made him an adulterer. The same is true if the husband puts away a wife who for economic reasons, or otherwise, commits adultery. Proper regard each for the other's needs must be in evidence, or the one who has not that regard is guilty of a sin against the other.

The concluding articles will deal with Paul's teaching on the subject.

#### IS DIVORCE ALLOWED?

The writer of the tract under review titled, "The Marriage Tie," H. C. Thomas, takes the position that it is sinful to divorce a partner, regardless of his conduct. On page 30 we read: "You can get a divorce for most any cause from the state. Christ's law to the church grants none for any cause, not even for fornication... In the teaching of the apostles there is not a word or a thought to justify divorce and remarriage." Then on page 31 we read: "If her husband is alive when she marries another man, it is adultery, regardless of the conduct of her husband, he is one flesh with her for life; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will, only in the Lord."

There are but two passages of Scripture in the Epistles which deal with this point. The first one is Romans 7:2-3. There Paul said: "For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth; but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So then if, while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if the husband die, she is free from the law, so that she is no adulteress, though she be joined to another man." It is not Paul's object in the passage to teach the law of Christ on the subject of divorce and remarriage. He was teaching the Jews that they have been discharged from the law of Moses that they might be joined to Christ, who had been raised from the dead. They had become dead to the law through the body of Christ; death released them from the law, so that they might legally be joined to another. To mention the exception to the law

in this place would not have added anything to the weight, or convincing power, of the argument. Rather it would have clouded the issue, and would have involved him in difficulties. So no mention is made of it. However, this does not at all mean that Paul did not know of the exception, or that he taught against it.

But it is more difficult to deal with the next passage, 1 Corinthians 7. In this chapter Paul was dealing with the subject of marriage and remarriage, and I know of no good reason why he should not have discussed the exception. But the truth of the matter is that he did not do it. He stated the general rule that the woman 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 (v. 39). Again, in verse 10 he said: "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband); and that the husband leave not his wife." Here again it seems that a discussion of the exception would not have been out of place, but it is not included.

#### PAUL QUOTES JESUS

However, there is something of interest about this last passage of Scripture. Paul said it was not what he had to say, but what the Lord said. He then quotes from Jesus, and this quotation is from what Jesus told his disciples after his talk with the Pharisees on the subject of divorce and remarriage. He likely had in mind Mark's record rather than that of Matthew. Mark reports Jesus as saying: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery" (Mark 10:11-12). This is a record of the same conversation in which Matthew reports that Jesus said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery" (Matthew 19:9). Matthew is the only writer who says anything about the exception on account of fornication, and he mentions it twice (Matthew 5:32; 19:9). Since Paul quoted this statement from Jesus, we are forced to conclude that his teaching on this point is not an explanation of the law of Moses on the point, but is a rule, a law, of conduct for people in our dispensation. Since Paul quotes Jesus and makes his teaching binding on people in the church, we are forced to admit that the exception, though not mentioned by Paul, is also binding on us; it is applicable to people in our dispensation. We cannot explain why Paul did not include the exception in his teaching to the church at Corinth, but the fact that he uses the teaching of Christ on the point is positive proof that the whole of the teaching of Jesus on that occasion was meant for the church. We might guess that there was no particular need for teaching on the exception at Corinth at the time Paul wrote, or we might surmise that they were familiar with the gospel as written by Matthew. But such guesses are not worth much. However, the fact that an apostle does not mention a doctrine after Pentecost does not prove that it is not binding on us if Jesus taught it, as we saw in connection with the way to settle offenses as given by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-17, which is not mentioned in any apostle after Pentecost. And

we also found that Jesus taught the responsibility of the one who forces a separation, saying that the one who does that makes the other commit adultery (Matthew 5:32). No apostle writes anything like that after Pentecost, except Matthew in his Gospel. Are we to say that the teaching of Jesus on this point is not true today simply because no such teaching can be found in any of the Epistles? If a man cannot put away his wife for fornication and marry again because such teaching is not repeated in any of the Epistles, we will be forced to conclude that the one who forces a separation has no responsibility for the same reason. So I conclude that the teaching of Jesus which allows divorce and remarriage for fornication is binding now, in spite of the fact that it is not mentioned in any of the Epistles.

According to the position set forth in the tract, that a woman may not divorce her husband regardless of his conduct, a virtuous woman would be forced to live with a man even though he committed adultery every day. God withdrew himself from his people when they committed spiritual adultery (Hos 5:1-7). Surely God does not expect a pure, holy, person to continue to live with one who has abandoned himself, or herself, over to satisfying the lusts of the flesh, one who has abandoned himself, or herself, to an adulterous life.

Again, Paul allows a separation in cases where he does not allow remarriage. He tells the wife not to depart from her husband, but adds that if she departs from her husband, she is to remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). People may become so incompatible that they cannot live together and cultivate the Christian graces; forced association with each other would increase their dislike for each other, and cause them to cultivate unchristian attitudes toward each other, and make them do and say things which are not right. In such cases it is better for them to separate, at least for a time, until they realize the need of each other. In such cases Paul cautions that these separations be not for too long a period lest they be tempted by Satan because of their incontinency.

In conclusion, Jesus taught that there is one exception to the rule that marriage is for life, and none of the apostles ever wrote anything which contradicted this teaching. If his teaching on that point is not binding now, it never was, never will be, and, therefore, was idle talk. Such a conclusion as to anything Jesus taught is unthinkable. Hence, we conclude that the teaching of Jesus that a man may put away his wife for fornication and marry again, or that a wife may put away her husband for fornication and remarry, is applicable now. And we may devoutly wish that none ever have occasion to use this exception.

Roy H. Lanier, SR.  
Originally Published by Lambert Book House  
Box 4007, Shreveport, Louisiana 71104

## DID PAUL ENDORSE SLAVERY?

by Eric Lyons, M.Min.

Thousands of years prior to the establishment of the Lord's Church, and long before Paul addressed the conduct of Christian slaves in the first century, various forms of slavery were commonplace. In fact, virtually every ancient civilization used slaves.<sup>1</sup> Slavery was prevalent enough in Babylon in the 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to be mentioned numerous times in the Code of Hammurabi.<sup>2</sup> The Egyptians enslaved hundreds of thousands of Israelites in the 16<sup>th</sup> century B.C. (Exodus 1; cf. Numbers 1:46). Historians estimate that, by the time Paul wrote his New Testament epistles in the first century A.D., five to eight million slaves resided within the Roman Empire,<sup>3</sup> including 15-25% of the total population of Italy.<sup>4</sup>

### "SLAVERY"—A BROAD TERM IN THE FIRST CENTURY

The English term "slave" is translated from the Greek word *doulos*. Some translations use the term "servant" (or "bondservant"), but *doulos* is best translated "slave" (especially since "in normal usage at the present time the two words ["slave" and "servant"—EL] are carefully distinguished").<sup>5</sup>

So what is meant by "slave" or "slavery"? Americans often envision ancient slavery as the kind of oppressive bondage that was popular among many slave owners in North America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when millions of Africans were stolen from their homelands and shipped across the Atlantic. Certainly, some first-century slavery was similar, but often it was quite different. For example, slavery in New Testament times was not based on race. Many foreign soldiers and their families became slaves after being captured during times of war.<sup>6</sup> What's more, "[s]ome became slaves because they could not pay back the money they had borrowed. The government would also take people into slavery if they could not pay their taxes. There were also many cases of poor people selling their children as slaves to richer neighbours."<sup>7</sup>

Consider the fact that the ancients would likely interpret certain modern American practices as forms of "slavery." For example, hundreds of thousands of Americans who work, labor nearly one-third of every year **for the government**. That is, Americans are **forced** by the government **with the threat of fines and imprisonment** to pay over 100 days wages to local, state, and federal governments every year in the form of taxes. Many Americans hand over more money to the government each year than they spend on food, clothing, and shelter combined.<sup>8</sup> According to irs.gov, U.S. citizens who fail to pay government-mandated taxes can be prosecuted and imprisoned for up to five years. And what about the military draft—"the practice of **ordering people by law to serve** in the armed forces"?<sup>9</sup> To this day, all 18-25-year-old males in the U.S. are required to register with the Selective Service System in case of "a crisis requiring a draft"<sup>10</sup>—a draft in

which thousands or millions of men would be forced to go to war, and possibly die for their country, whether they wanted to or not.

Please understand, I am not suggesting that we should defraud the government, or that we should refuse to submit to its authority if the draft is reinstated. I am simply suggesting that “slavery” was broadly defined in the first century. When people ask questions such as “Did Paul endorse slavery?” we must understand that there were various kinds of slavery in the first century, including some forms that resemble certain practices today which may be generally accepted and morally justified.

#### DEFINE “ENDORSE”

Did Paul “endorse” slavery? The word “endorse” means “to publicly or officially say that you support or approve of (someone or something).”<sup>11</sup> To endorse is to advocate or champion an idea, a thing, or a person. Did Paul “endorse” slavery? Did he champion it or publicly promote it as one advocates a particular product or political candidate? No, at least not the kind of slavery most people think of when they hear the term.

In truth, Paul specifically condemned “kidnappers” (*andrapodistais*) or “menstealers” (KJV) as lawless and insubordinate individuals who practice that which is “contrary to sound doctrine” (1 Timothy 1:10). Danker, et al. defines this kidnapper as a “slave-dealer.”<sup>12</sup> Far from endorsing such activity, Paul groups these men-stealing, slave traders with murderers, liars, and other ungodly sinners (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

Yet, five chapters later Paul wrote: “Let as many bondservants [*doulos*, slaves] as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed. And those who have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather serve them because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things” (1 Timothy 6:1-2). What did Paul instruct Timothy to teach the various Christian slaves in the first century? To respect, honor, and even serve their masters (i.e., to set a good example of Christianity before them).

#### PAUL ENDORSED GODLY SUBMISSION, NOT SINFUL FORMS OF SLAVERY

Paul’s instruction for slaves to honor their masters is perfectly consistent with the rest of God’s Word regarding all Christians submitting to those in positions of authority. To the Christians living in the heart of the Roman Empire, Paul taught: “Let **every soul** be subject to the governing authorities... Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1,7; cf. Matthew 22:21).<sup>13</sup> Similarly, Peter wrote: “Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether

to the king as supreme, or to governors.... For this is the will of God.... Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king” (1 Peter 2:13-17). Was the Roman Empire corrupt in many ways? Certainly. Was a Christian’s submission to Rome a blanket endorsement of the Empire? Not at all. But Christians were (and are) to be humbly compliant.

God expects all Christians to have a spirit of submission. Children are to submit to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Young people are to be submissive to older people (1 Peter 5:5). Wives are to submit to their husbands (1 Peter 3:1-2). Members of local churches are to submit to their overseeing elders who rule over them (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28). Local shepherds are to submit fully to the Chief Shepherd (1 Peter 5:1-4). In short, all Christians, including those in leadership positions, are to “be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (1 Peter 5:5). And, yes, God expects His people to humbly “submit...to every authority instituted among men,” whether to kings or to slave masters (1 Peter 2:13,18, NIV).

### SUBMISSION FOR A HIGHER PURPOSE

God did not create the practice of slavery. Furthermore, Paul’s inspired instructions regarding a slave’s submission to his master were not given because God favors a master over his slave (Galatians 3:28), or because He simply wants some people to have harder lives than others. The specific purpose that Paul gave for Christian slaves submitting to their pagan masters was “so that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed” (1 Timothy 6:1).

Imagine if Christian slave after slave in the first century became less submissive to their masters as they learned more about the equality of all mankind (Genesis 1:26-27). Consider how the reputation of Christianity would have been greatly tarnished in the eyes of the unbelieving world if Paul explicitly taught that all slaves should be set free. As William Barclay noted: “For the Church to have encouraged slaves to revolt and rebel and rise against their masters would have been fatal. It would simply have caused civil war, mass murder, and the complete discredit of the Church.”<sup>14</sup>

God, in His infinite wisdom, commands all men to do their best to make the most for the cause of Christ **in whatever situation** they find themselves. “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. 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” (1 Corinthians 7:21-23). Whether a person becomes a Christian while in slavery or in a terrible marriage, God wants His people to change from the inside out and have a positive spiritual impact on others. **Be obedient** to parents, husbands, governing officials, and yes, even slave owners. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works **and glorify your Father in**

**heaven**" (Matthew 5:16). Rather than giving people reasons to curse Christ and His doctrine, be obedient to all those in positions of authority "for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter 2:13). Be honorable at all times so that you may "put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" and "by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Peter 2:15,12; cf. 3:1-2). In short, "humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 2:6).

#### TAKING PAUL'S TEACHING TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION

Over time, with the spread of Christianity (cf. Acts 19:10,26; 21:20) and with increasing numbers of slave masters becoming Christians, the physical lives of many slaves would have improved dramatically. As slave owners with honest and good hearts learned (1) to love the Lord with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and (2) to love their neighbors (including their slaves) as themselves (Matthew 22:36-40), they would give up "threatening" (Ephesians 6:9). As Christian slave owners contemplated treating others how they want to be treated (Matthew 7:12), they would give their slaves "what is just and fair," knowing that they, too, had a Master in heaven (Colossians 4:1). As slave owners submitted to Christ, they would be transformed by the Gospel, learning to be "kindly affectionate" to everyone (Romans 12:2,10), including all those who served them. In short, far from endorsing sinful slavery, Paul's teachings, **taken to their logical conclusion**, would eventually lead truth-seeking masters and government officials to help bring an end to any kind of cruel, sinful captivity.<sup>15</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> "History of Slavery" (no date), *History World*, [www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41](http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ac41).

<sup>2</sup> "Code of Hammurabi, King of Babylon" (no date), [https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/cu31924060109703/cu31924060109703_djvu.txt).

<sup>3</sup> Walter Scheidel (2007), "The Roman Slave Supply," p. 6, <https://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/pdfs/scheidel/050704.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Scheidel, pp. 3-6.

<sup>5</sup> Frederick William Danker, William Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich (2000), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago), p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> John Simkin (2014), "Slavery in the Roman Empire," *Spartacus Educational*, <http://spartacus-educational.com/ROMslaves.htm>.

<sup>7</sup> Simkin.

<sup>8</sup> Scott Greenberg (no date), *Tax Foundation*, <https://taxfoundation.org/tax-freedom-day-2016-april-24/>.

<sup>9</sup> “Conscription,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscription>, emp. added.

<sup>10</sup> “Who Must Register” (2008), Selective Service System, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090507213840/http://www.sss.gov/FSwho.htm>.

<sup>11</sup> “Endorse,” *Merriam-Webster.com*, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/endorse>.

<sup>12</sup> Danker, et al., p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> All bold text in Scripture quotations has been added for emphasis.

<sup>14</sup> William Barclay (1956), *The Letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Westminster), p. 141.

<sup>15</sup> For a more extensive response to questions regarding slavery, and especially slavery in the Old Testament, see Kyle Butt (2005), “Defending the Bible’s Position on Slavery,” *Reason & Revelation*, 25[6]:41-47, June, [https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub\\_rar/25\\_6/0506.pdf](https://www.apologeticspress.org/pub_rar/25_6/0506.pdf).

<https://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=1262#>  
Copyright © 2018 Apologetics Press, Inc. All rights reserved.

## WIDOWS MARRYING "ONLY IN THE LORD" - 1 CORINTHIANS 7:39

By: ROY DEEVER

1. It is God's plan that the husband and wife be bound together in marriage until separated by death. Hence, Paul says: "A wife is bound for so long time as her husband liveth; ...." But what is the situation if and after her husband dies? What is God's will for the widow? Is it all right for her to form another marriage? Paul answers: "but if the husband be dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord" (verse 39).
2. Obviously, "to whom she will" is not without qualification. She is free to marry only "whom she will" who is eligible to marry her. She might want YOU and YOU are not available! Nobody is at liberty to marry a person who - according to God's law - is not eligible to marry.

And who - according to Bible teaching - is eligible for marriage? (1) Those persons who are themselves qualified to marry and who have never been married, and who are marrying someone who is also eligible for marriage. (2) Those persons who are eligible for marriage (that is, who are marriageable) and who have put away their companion because of the companion's fornication, and who are marrying someone who is also eligible for marriage. (3) Those persons whose companion has died, and who are marrying someone who is eligible for marriage.

3. But, there is another restriction placed upon the widow. She is to marry "...only in the Lord." It is right in the sight of God for her to marry again. She must marry someone who is eligible for marriage. And, she must marry "only in the Lord."
4. Does this phrase "only in the Lord" mean that the widow (under consideration) must marry a man who is a Christian? Does this stricture apply only to the widow? Would it apply also to the widower? Would it apply to the young lady who has never been married? to the young man who has never been married? Would the widow sin if she married some man who was not a Christian? Would the widower sin if he married a woman who was not a Christian? The young woman? the young man? Is there inherent sin in a Christian's being married to a non-Christian? Does the New Testament say anything about this matter? If a Christian sins in marrying someone who is not a Christian, then how can the sinful situation ever be corrected?

Is such a marriage still sinful thirty years after the ceremony? How would one "repent" of such a marriage? Could one simply say "I'm sorry," but continue in the marriage? Would separation be necessary? demanded? What about preachers who preach that such marriages are sinful, but who perform the

ceremonies? What about elderships in relationship to such marriages? Should they see to it that all persons in such marriages know that they are in sin? Should they withdraw fellowship from all persons involved in all such marriages? What about the Christian young woman who married a non-Christian man (many years ago) and which man is now an elder in the church? How is this to be corrected? Must she be sorry she married this man? Must he be sorry that he married this woman?

5. Brethren have generally held (and, I suppose do hold even now) that this verse says that the widow under consideration is to marry a Christian. And let me hasten to emphasize that I would not at any time, under any circumstances, knowingly be guilty of encouraging anyone to marry a person who is not a Christian. I know that it is dangerous for a Christian to marry a non-Christian. In fact, it is my position that it is dangerous for any person to marry anybody - period!

But to say that a thing is dangerous is one thing, and to say that it is sin is something else. I can only say it is sin if God says it is sin. And in this very chapter - chapter 7, verses 12-14 - Paul has stressed that there is no inherent sin in a Christian's being married to a non-Christian.

6. We have generally taken this phrase "only in the Lord" and have applied it to the man the widow was marrying. We have said the verse means she (the widow) is to marry a person who is a Christian. But, to apply the phrase "only in the Lord" to the man she is marrying is to make the phrase adjectival in its modifying force, when in reality it is adverbial in its modifying force. Suppose I say: "The speaking is being done by the man in the house." "In the house" is a prepositional adjectival phrase, modifying "man." Suppose I should say: "The man is speaking in the house." Here, "in the house" is a prepositional adverbial phrase, modifying "is speaking." It should be obvious that I would have no right to take an adverbial phrase and attempt to make an adjectival phrase out of it. Just so, with regard to "only in the Lord." This is a prepositional adverbial phrase, modifying "to be married," and I have no right to attempt to make an adjectival phrase out of it.
7. Furthermore, suppose we assume that "only in the Lord" means the widow is obligated to marry a man who is a Christian. The "only in the Lord" would thus be describing the man - it would not be describing the widow. Suppose the widow were not even a Christian. If (A) this widow is not a Christian and if (B) "only in the Lord" means the man she is marrying is a Christian, then (C) when she marries this man she is marrying "in the Lord" "I can't believe that this is what Paul had in mind.
8. The widow (in this passage) is the one who is in the Lord, and she is the one who is instructed to marry "only in the Lord." Many years ago (1946; Haskell, Texas) I

was studying Revelation 14:13 in my Greek New Testament. The passage says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord..." It struck me with peculiar force that this is the same phrase ('in the Lord'), and it is adverbial in modification. Who was in the Lord? The ones who died (literally, the dying ones). There was no other possibility. Who was in the Lord in 1 Corinthians 7:39? The widow! In Revelation 14:13 what does the phrase mean? Well, it does not mean simply: Blessed are those who have been baptized into Christ, for one can become a Christian and then become unfaithful to the Lord, and be unfaithful to the Lord at the time of death, and in which case he would not be blessed. The meaning is: blessed are those persons who are in the Lord, and who die in His favor, in harmony with His will.

And to marry in the Lord is to marry with the Lord's favor, in harmony with His will. The widow in 1 Corinthians 7:39 - at least so it seems to me - is instructed to marry in harmony with the Lord's will, to be faithful to the Lord at all costs, not to cease to be faithful to the Lord in order to get a husband. And, the totality of the Lord's will on the subject of marriage is not set out in this passage.

9. Many years ago I baptized a young lady who later attended Fort Worth Christian College. In her Senior year she was selected "Miss Fort Worth Christian." This young lady later quit the church IN ORDER TO MARRY A CATHOLIC BOY. I believe she violated 1 Corinthians 7:39. She ceased being faithful to the Lord in order to get a husband.
10. What this passage says to widows, it says to all: Marry in harmony with the Lord's will, and be faithful to the Lord regardless of the cost.

Deaver, Roy, ed.  
"Widows Marrying 'Only in the Lord,'" Biblical Notes Vol. XIV, December 1980; pp. 126- 130.

## WIDOWS MARRYING "ONLY IN THE LORD" - 1 CORINTHIANS 7:39

By: GUY WOODS

"Does 1 Corinthians 7:39 teach that a Christian widow may remarry only if she marries a Christian?" Yes.

On no other matter of biblical teaching known to me is there more agreement among scholars either in or out of the church. With singular unanimity this view has been advocated by writers both ancient and modern, liberal and conservative, the past two thousand years with scarcely a dissenting voice. The disposition to veer from this well-nigh universal body of scholarly opinion and to teach that the apostle does not require Christian widow to marry another Christian, if she marries at all, is a distinction of our day and decade by a small number of brethren now advocating this view in public print and otherwise. In the light of the fact that souls are in the balance and happiness and well-being of many people are dependent on the correct understanding of the inspired writer's affirmation in 1 Corinthians 7:39, it is the obligation of us all to study it thoroughly, prayerfully, and carefully in order that Paul's purpose in penning these words may be clearly seen.

"A wife is bound for so long as her husband liveth; but if the husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." The first clause states the general law of marriage; as we have shown elsewhere herein it is not in conflict with our Lord's statement in Matthew 19:9, where one exception - unfaithfulness to the marriage vow - is given. The marriage bond exists, barring the exception which Jesus included, so long as the parties to the marriage live; when one of them dies, the other is released from the relationship. Specifically, as the apostle asserts, the Christian woman, in such an event, "is free to be married to whom she will..." a statement which, were it not modified by a limiting and restrictive phrase, would permit her to marry any person, in or out of the church, who is also "free" to marry. Appended to the statement of her liberty to marry, however, is the qualifying phrase, "only in the Lord." Paul thus affirms here that (a) a Christian woman, whose husband is dead, may marry again; (b) she may marry "whom she will;" (c) but, her choice must be from among those "in the Lord." This I believe to be the clear and obvious meaning of the writer of the verse under study. Two matters of special significance must be considered in the study of this passage. (1) What is the meaning of the phrase, "in the Lord?" (2) What did Paul mean when he said that the Christian widow "is free to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord?"

The words, "in the Lord" translate the Greek phrase, en kurioo, the preposition en being used with the locative case to locate or position the action as indicated by the verb. The locative case is usually styled the "in" case, the English equivalent being what is signified by the prepositions indicating in, on, among, etc. It is the function of prepositions to establish more clearly the significance of the cases with which they are used; and, in the instance before us, to position the action said to take place in the sphere of the Lord. To be "in the Lord," is, of course, to be in Christ, which means to be

in his spiritual body, the church (Ephesians 1:19-23). Thus, the phrase, “in the Lord,” in 1 Corinthians 7: 39, is a periphrasis for a Christian. Two scholarly sources, of the highest respectability, will suffice to establish this conclusion: Arndt and Gingrich, in their Greek-English Lexicon “Of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature,” define the phrase en kurioo, “in the Lord,” “esp. in Paul or John usage, to designate a close personal relation...be or abide in Christ...gamee-theenai en kurioo marry in the Lord - marry a Christian, 1 Corinthians 7:39.” These scholars unequivocally affirm that Paul’s words, in 1 Corinthians 7:39, mean that a Christian widow may marry again only if she marries a Christian.

Of similar import is Thayer’s definition of the phrase, “in the Lord” as “...that in which any person or thing is inherently fixed, implanted or with which it is intimately connected... So used in the writings of Paul and of John particularly of intimate relationship with God or with Christ, and for the most part involving contextually the idea of power and blessing resulting from that union...of frequent use by Paul are the phrases, ‘in Christ,’ ‘in Christ Jesus,’ ‘in the Lord,’ ingrafted as it were in Christ, in fellowship and union with Christ, with the Lord... the expression is equivalent in meaning to ‘by virtue of spiritual fellowship or union with Christ...’ Finally, it serves as a periphrasis for ‘Christian...’.” Thus, in the view of this eminent lexicographer, to marry “in the Lord,” is simply to marry a Christian!

It is not likely that any other view of this phrase would have been advanced but for an alleged difficulty involving it in Ephesians 6:1, where children are instructed to “obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right.” Those who do not believe Paul enjoins a Christian widow to marry only a Christian in 1 Corinthians 7:39, feels that in Ephesians 6:1, the phrase - “in the Lord,” does not designate a Christian, but means only that the action of the verb “obey,” is in the sphere of the Lord’s teaching. That is, children are to be obedient to their parents as Jesus taught. This is, of course, very true, that such must characterize children; but, this does not necessarily require that the phrase “in the Lord,” be construed in other than its obvious sense. (1) The implication is that these children were not old enough to be Christians, but how do we know they were not? Obviously, Paul was not addressing himself to infants in this passage; and, as 1 Corinthians 7:36-38, and many other passages the scriptures teach, parents exercised control and direction of their children much, much longer than is generally done by parents today. Many writers have positively asserted that these were indeed Christian children. G. C. Brewer, in an article in the Gospel Advocate of January 7, 1943, wrote: “For children to obey their parents “in the Lord” does mean, I think that it is a part of their Christian duty to obey your parents. Because you are ‘in the Lord’ obey your parents.” B. W. Johnson, in “The Peoples’ New Testament with Explanatory Notes,” wrote: “This passage has been thought to imply that all children of Christians are baptized in infancy into the church, but the children addressed are surely not babes, but old enough to hear and obey the apostolic command, and hence old enough to have heard and obeyed Christ.” (Vol. 2; page 204.) This is my view of this passage, and of the phrase “in the Lord,” here.

Were it conceded (which I do not!) that the phrase, "in the Lord" is exceptional in meaning here, it does not follow that such is so in 1 Corinthians 7:39, and, it is a recognized principle of exegesis, that an obscure instance of the use of a word or phrase must not be allowed to determine the meaning of clear and obvious usages elsewhere; but rather the reverse. When we read (Rev 14:13), "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from hence forth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them," do we have any doubt of the significance of the phrase, "in the Lord" here? Do we not all rejoice to believe that what is meant is that all those who die "in the Lord" are faithful Christians? When Paul penned the admonition, "Be strong in the Lord," (Ephesians 6:10), was he not simply urging that we be faithful Christians? The same apostle once wrote, doubtless alluding to himself, "I knew a man in Christ..." Which clearly means "I knew a Christian" (2 Corinthians 12:2). Obviously, to be in Christ, to be "in the Lord," is to be a Christian.

The consensus, of scholarly opinion, to this end, is little short of over-whelming. Astute students of the word, from near the close of the apostolic age, to this hour, with the rarest exceptions, have concurred in the foregoing view. To give them all is far, far beyond our limits here; it is almost to provide a catalogue of the greatest scholars from the first century until now. Among them may be listed Tertullian, Cyrpian, Therodoret, Ambrosiaster and Jerome; Grotius, Olshausen, De Witte, Neander and Weiss; Meyer, Barnes, Clarke, Conybeare and Howson and MacKnight; Farrar, Flatt, Ruchert, Osiander and Hofmann. And so on and on and on - the roll may be greatly lengthened. H. A. M. Meyer, whom our own J. W. McGarvey regarded as the greatest exegete of modern times, said, " 'monon en Kurioo' only in the Lord, not apart from Christ as the specifically determining element of the new union; only in a Christian way, i.e., only to a Christian let her be married." (Commentary on First Corinthians.) Conybeare and Howson, scarcely without peers in their knowledge of Paul and his work and works, translate 1 Corinthians 7:39, "she is free to marry whom she will, provided that she choose one of the brethren in the Lord." (one volume edition, page 396.)

The brilliant (if erratic) F. W. Farrar, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians (in the Pulpit Commentary series) said, Only in the Lord. "The second marriage of the Christian widow must be a holy and Christian marriage. (2 Corinthians 6:14)." Albert Barnes whose commentary on the New Testament though now old but which I regard as still one of the finest expository treatments of the New Testament ever written says, "Only in the Lord." "That is, only to one who is a Christian." (Commentary on First Corinthians.)

Our own literature abounds with statements of similar import. Brethren Lipscomb and Sewell both believed that "in the Lord," in 1 Corinthians 7:39, means Christian. (Queries and Answers, page 432.) Brother Sewell wrote, "So a widow that is a Christian is limited in a second marriage to a man that is a Christian, should she marry again." (Ibid., p. 443.) B. W. Johnson, in his comments on the verse under study, wrote, "In the case of her husband's death, she is free from the marriage bond, and can marry whom she will,

with one limitation - she must marry in the Lord; that is, a Christian. (Notes, Vol. 2, page 97.) G. C. Brewer, in discussing the passage in an article in the Gospel Advocate of January 7, 1943, said, "I am of the opinion that the expression 'in the Lord' in 1 Corinthians 7:39 means a Christian." And, our beloved Gus Nichols, in his usual way by piling scripture upon scripture, in support of that which he teaches, answered the question, "What is the meaning of the phrase, 'in the Lord' in 1 Corinthians 7:39 and Ephesians 6:1?" by answering, in part, as follows: "Perhaps this question grew out of the theory that a widow may marry 'in the Lord' and marry a man who is out of Christ - not a Christian. Christ is the Lord referred to in these passages (Acts 2:36; Philipians 2:11.) If a sinner who has never obeyed the gospel is 'in the Lord,' then such a one is 'in Christ' and saved in his unbelief and disobedience. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature.' (2 Corinthians 5:17.) 'There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:1.) This being true, no sinner is 'in the Lord.' Only Christians are 'in the Lord.' (Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:14; 1 Corinthians 1:20; Colossians 2:5-7.) Those who die 'in the Lord' rest from their labors and go to heaven (Rev 14:13.) How can a sinner be 'in the Lord' when he has never been 'baptized into Christ?' (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:26-28.) The natural and unstrained interpretation of 1 Corinthians 7:39 is that the 'widow' is to marry one in Christ, a Christian. (Gospel Advocate, December 29, 1960, p. 820.)

So, I also affirm and teach.

"Questions and Answers Open Forum Freed-Hardeman College Lectures"  
- Guy N. Woods  
(Henderson, Tenn.: Freed-Hardeman College, 1976; pp. 91-95.)

## 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1-16

By: Kevin Cauley

In 1 Corinthians 11:1-16, Paul gives some ordinances, customs, or signs of authority to women concerning their hair. Would you please explain this passage?

There is perhaps no more difficult passage within the New Testament as this one discussed. In large part this is a difficult passage because in order to understand it, one needs to understand some of the customs that surrounded the church in the city of Corinth. This is indicated in verse sixteen, "But if any man seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." Paul writes this particular passage of scripture to a group of people who are already "in the know" as to the particular situation in which the Corinthian Christians were as far as custom was concerned. On the other hand, Paul makes it clear that there are some clear principles that are involved which are inviolate in regard to the Christian being pleasing to the will of God. This is indicated strongly in verse two, "Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." One must practice the customs as dictated by the principles. The principles are eternal. The customs are transitory. What are the principles set forth in this passage? What are the customs set forth in this passage? Herein lies the basis for our ability to properly understand.

First, there are some very definite principles that are set forth in these verses (2, 3). These principles are contained in verses two and three. These principles are inviolate and Paul expects the Corinthian Christians to respect them. They are that God the Father is the head of Christ; Christ is the head of men; and men are the head of the women. This is not talking about equality, but structure of authority. Christ is equal to the Father, but is subject to Him as pertains to His mission. Women are equal to men, but in the matter of authority, they are to be subject to the decisions of men. This is God's structure of authority and it must be respected under all circumstances.

Second, there were some practices that were common to the first century which reflected this authority structure (vs. 4-6). Failure to observe these practices brought dishonor upon both Christian men and women. However, these practices were part of the culture of the day and in no way reflect any abiding principles. The only principle that we can observe from these practices is that if in our culture we have some practices that reflect God's authority structure, we too must humbly accept those practices as well to reflect our deep and abiding respect for God's will. The practices that were involved at Corinth were the practices of 1) The man having his head covered. 2) The man having his head uncovered. 3) The woman having her head covered, and 4) The woman having her head uncovered. Paul tells us in light of these practices what either dishonored one's authority or honored one's authority. These are verses four through seven. Note the following: 1) A man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his authority. 2) Every woman who prays or prophesies having her head unveiled dishonors her authority. Why are these things the case? They are the

case because 1) when a woman goes about unveiled, it brings shame to her and 2) when a man goes about with a cover on his head this indicates that he does not respect the fact that he is made in the image of God. Why is it specifically the case that a woman who does not wear a veil brings shame upon herself? Why specifically is it the case that when a man wears a cover he indicates that he is not made in the image of God? The answers to these two questions lie in the customs of the culture in which the Corinthian Christians were.

Corinth is located in Greece and thus would be subject to the culture of Greece inasmuch as that culture reflected and respected God's authority structure. Inasmuch as the culture did NOT respect and reflect God's authority structure, then the Corinthian Christians were NOT to follow those examples. What was it about the culture that reflected God's authority structure? First, it was the common practice of the Greek men of that day to wear a cover on their head if they were slaves, but to not wear a cover on their head if they were free. Christians of that day were made up of both slaves and freemen. We have already seen from the letter to the Corinthians that the church had a problem with divisions. One of the divisions that they had and which also affected the way they partook of the Lord's supper in the later part of the chapter was in association to who was a slave and who was free. When in the body of Christ, however, there are no distinctions between slave and free (1 Corinthians 7:22). All are one in Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13) and free. It would, therefore, be disrespectful to Christ as head to indicate such a distinction while in His body. In other words, if a man wore a head covering in the assembly, that would indicate that he was a slave to another man instead of free in Christ. The man who owned him would be honored, but Christ would be dishonored. Hence, all men were to have their heads uncovered so as not to bring dishonor upon their authority, Christ.

As respecting women, their authority is man. There was a custom throughout the ancient world regarding women as well. The International Bible Encyclopedia says, "In NT times, however, among both Greeks and Romans, reputable women wore a veil in public (Plutarch Quaest. Rom. xiv) and to appear without it was an act of bravado (or worse)." In essence the implication is that to appear without the veil would bring shame upon the woman's authority—man. To appear with this veil would bring honor to her authority as well as to the authority structure of God. Hence, it was appropriate for her to wear this veil in respect of God's authority structure. Additionally, there is some evidence that prostitutes of that day flaunted this custom in order to be more appealing to their clientele. The discarding of the veil might lead some men to conclude that she was trying to identify with women of a baser sort. This also would bring disrespect upon God's authority structure in that she would not be showing the proper relationship between men and women in dealing with sexuality, that of husband and wife exclusively. Paul's comments regarding a woman not being covered being the same as if she were shorn, are not to be taken literally. Rather, they indicate the degree to which the woman should go if she were not to respect the authority structure. If she is not

going to wear the veil, then why not go ahead and shave the whole head and take all covering off.

Paul next turns to the application of the principles to the practice in Corinth (vs.7-10). In the context of the culture of Corinth, Paul states the principles of God's authority structure as applied to the customs of the day. A man is created in the image of God. Therefore, he needs to reflect that image in the church in showing his subjection to God — not to other men (as might be the case of a slave). To do this, he must ensure that his head is uncovered. On the other hand, the woman is the glory of the man—she was created out of his bones and to provide help and companionship to him. Therefore, she ought to show this in her behavior as a Christian woman and due to the presence of angels in the worship assembly. (To indicate to one of God's angels in the worship assembly that a woman does not respect God's authority structure is to indicate the same to God.) She shows the proper respect for God's authority structure in this culture by wearing a veil.

From this discussion, however, Paul does not want the Corinthians to get the impression that men are to have an attitude of domination over women so he gives additional admonition in verses 11, 12. Both men and women are of God (vs. 12), so men ought not to think that men can be pleasing to God by rejecting women altogether out of the common worship assembly. And that as far as their relationship to the Lord is concerned, they are equal.

Paul next turns toward some self-evident judgments that indicate God's authority structure as applied in Corinth (vs.13-15). He asks them, based upon their experience and judgment in living in the city of Corinth as citizens what appears appropriate and what does not. The rhetorical question indicates that it was not appropriate for women to pray without a veil. In fact, their own experience in being citizens of Corinth taught them that it is a shameful thing for a man to have long hair, but it is a glory for a woman to have long hair as a covering. The word "nature" here does not necessarily mean that one is born with the specific knowledge that long hair is good for men and bad for women. It merely indicates something that has been habitually observed by the culture for a long period of time. This same phrase is used in Ephesians 2:3 where it is indicated that they were by nature children of wrath. Just as no one is born committing the sin of anger, so also no one is born knowing the difference between long and short hair. It is something that must be taught.

Finally, Paul addresses the possibility that someone might object to these thoughts regarding the application of the principle (vs. 16). As far as the practice of the church is concerned, there is no such custom. The wearing of the veil should not be considered something that is binding upon all churches in all circumstances. If a visiting woman were to pass through the church at Corinth and worship with them, they should not consider it obligatory to bind upon her the same customs that they bind upon themselves.

## **THE GIFT OF TONGUES**

- Author Unknown -

### **I. Terms Defined.**

- A. Gift - not an acquired ability, but an inspired endowment of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11).
- B. Tongues - not “ecstatic” utterances or “unknown” tongues, but understandable languages.
  - 1. In Acts 2:4-11 the tongues are defined because it was a heretofore unknown phenomenon.
  - 2. In Acts 10:44-48 the tongues were not defined because they were then a known phenomenon.

### **II. This gift, as the other miracles, was imparted through the laying on of the apostles’ hands.**

- A. Miraculous power was promised to believers (Mark 16:17).
- B. Believers had to send for the apostles to receive this power (Acts 8:14-19).
- C. Paul desired to impart power to the Romans (Romans 1:11).
- D. Hence, such ability to impart these powers was a “sign of an apostle” (2 Corinthians 12:12).
- E. The same rule held for the twelve men in Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-7).

### **III. Purpose for the gift of tongues.**

- A. Evidence of divine approval (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 12:12).
- B. Provided communication of truth to men of other languages (1 Corinthians 14:12- 26,31; 2:7-13).

### **IV. Limitations of the “tongue speaking” gift.**

- A. Only by those on whom the apostles laid their hands (see II above).

- B. An “inferior” gift (1 Corinthians 14:1,5,19; cf. 20-21). This shows that their use of tongues was a sign of the spiritual immaturity of the church.
- C. Was a language (see I above).
- D. If there was no translator, the speaker was to remain silent (1 Corinthians 14:38). The word “interpreter” properly mean “translator.” For this meaning see John 1:38; Matthew 1:23; Mark 15:34.
- E. Several speaking at once is condemned as confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33). This clearly shows that “ecstatic utterances” were also condemned as they would have done nothing but cause confusion!
- F. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets (1 Corinthians 14:32).

**V. Considering 1 Corinthians 14.**

- A. Though the description might fit “ecstatic utterances,” it also fits “languages.”
- B. Since ecstatic utterances were a part of many heathen religions in the first century, they would furnish no proof to attest to divine origin. In fact, it would have done just the opposite.
- C. Verse 7 - the tongue-speaker had four possibilities of profiting others:
  1. Revelation,
  2. Knowledge,
  3. Prophesying and
  4. Teaching.

Any other uses of tongues were of no profit. Each of these uses demands meaning and translation. Hence, speaking in tongues means speaking in meaningful language.

**VI. The gift of tongues was to cease.**

- A. 1 Corinthians 13:8 - “shall be done away.”

- B. The divinity of Christ and the authenticity of the inspired writings have long since been established and confirmed. Hence, the purpose of tongues (and other miracles) has passed (Hebrews 2:1-4).
- C. The last apostle through whom this power was transmitted has died.

**VII. The evil consequences of a doctrine of “Modern-Day Tongue Speaking.”**

- A. It cuts away the authority of the Bible. One soon learns to depend more on “God’s taking over my mind” and “direct illumination” than on a “thus it is written.”
- B. It is an irrational attempt to add to the “once for all” delivered faith (Jude 3).
- C. It makes the scriptures obsolete, denies the sufficiency of the scriptures and makes authority in religion wholly subjective.
- D. Modern “revelations” such as the heretical Book of Mormon and Pearl of Great Price are the result of “modern miracles.”
- E. Tends to make its adherents illogically critical of a supposed “cold ritual formalism” in the churches who follow the Bible as the supreme authority.

## MIRACULOUS GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Author Unknown -

### I. Terms defined.

- A. The gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 10:45) means the Holy Spirit as a gift from God. Some also understand this to mean that the gift is what the Holy Spirit gives. It matters not which position is taken, the result on spiritual gifts and our response to God and His plan is the same.
- B. Spiritual gifts (Romans 1:11; 1 Corinthians 12:1; 14:1) and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 2:4) mean power or abilities given to men and women by the Holy Spirit.

### II. Gifts of the Spirit listed - 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

- A. Word of wisdom, speech full of God's wisdom.
- B. Word of knowledge, information given through inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
- C. Faith, trusting God to enable one to perform miracles (1 Corinthians 13:2; Matthew 17:20). This is contrast to the "common faith" (Titus 1:4) that comes by hearing God's word (Romans 10:17).
- D. Gifts of healing, power to heal the sick (Acts 19:11-12).
- E. Working of miracles, special powers (Acts 13:9-11; Galatians 3:5; Hebrews 2:4).
- F. Prophecy, not mere foretelling of the future but speaking for God as moved by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:3-5; Acts 21:9; 1 Corinthians 13:2).
- G. Discerning of spirits, the power to detect false teachers and wonder-workers (1 Timothy 4:1-3; 1 John 4:1). This may also refer to distinguishing between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the person speaking (in other words, is the person speaking on their own or are they speaking from God?) See 1 Corinthians 14:29.
- H. Tongues, the ability to speak in languages never studied (Acts 2:6-8; 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:21-25).

- I. Interpretation of tongues, the power to translate a language never learned (1 Corinthians 14:12-19, 26-28).

### **III. Who possessed these gifts?**

- A. Believers (Mark 16:15-20).
- B. Believers on whom the apostles laid their hands (Acts 8:14ff.; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6).
- C. The Holy Spirit determined who would receive a gift (1 Corinthians 12:11).

### **IV. Purpose and termination of gifts.**

- A. To confirm the word in absence of written revelation (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).
- B. "To profit withal," i.e., "for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:7).
- C. Terminated when "that which is perfect" came (1 Corinthians 13:8-12).
- D. Since these gifts were given to the apostles, it follows that after the last apostles died no one ever received these gifts. And when the last person died who had a gift from an apostle, there was no one on earth who could exercise these gifts. Before one today can claim to exercise these gifts, that one must prove that the hands of an apostle have been laid on him.

## "THAT WHICH IS PERFECT"

By: TROY M. CUMMINGS

In recent years, due to the speaking-in-tongues controversy, much has been written about the meaning of "that which is perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Some believe that this refers to Christ himself, who is of course "perfect" in the sense of absolute moral perfection.

Others think that the "perfect" is heaven itself, the final state.

Still others believe that "love" is the "perfect" thing in this passage.

The majority of people think of "perfect" as meaning absolute moral perfection or sinlessness. But this idea is a serious error and misconception, so far as the meaning of "perfect" is concerned as used in the English translations of the Scriptures.

The basic meanings of this Greek family of words translated "perfect," "perfected," etc. are these: "complete; whole; brought to its end; finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness; full-grown; adult; of full age; mature; end; termination; limit; full measure; to complete; to fulfill;" etc. See standard Greek lexicons (dictionaries): Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich; Thayer, Abbott-Smith; others.

In each case the context determines the proper English word for the translation; but all of these meanings revolve around the same basic idea.

The *context* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 makes it clear and certain that the Greek words τὸ τέλειον mean "the complete thing." The neuter gender Greek definite article τὸ used with the adjective τέλειον makes the meaning "the complete *thing*."

"The complete thing" is obviously used in the text in contrast to "the thing in part" (τὸ ἐκ μέρους).

A literal translation of verses 9-10: "For in part we know and in part we prophesy. But whenever may come the complete thing, the thing in part will be done away."

It is unfortunate the many English translations have "perfect" rather than "complete," since "complete" or "whole" is certainly the corresponding word in contrast to "thing in part."

But contextually, what is Paul contrasting when he writes about the thing in part and the complete thing? The *immediate* context makes this clear. Paul is discussing miraculous

spiritual gifts (of the Holy Spirit) - prophecies, tongues and (inspired) knowledge. These are simply samples of the list of gifts in chapter 12:4-11 and 12:28-30.

Certainly, Paul is *not* saying that “prophecies” as God’s inspired revelation would “fail” in their intended purpose; nor is he saying that “tongues” (Languages of Men) would cease to be used in their ordinary use in the world; nor is he saying that ordinary “knowledge” would vanish from the world and leave our minds blank!

Rather, Paul is saying that the miraculous Holy Spirit gifts from God to bring these prophecies, tongues and knowledge would eventually cease to be given to men. The divine communication itself, the body of truth, produced by the operation of these gifts, would of course remain in our possession through the generations.

Why would these miraculous powers cease to be bestowed? Because they served *temporary* purposes in the apostolic days when God established his church and gradually revealed his New Testament body of truth through his chosen inspired men, “confirming” or proving their message by the various miracles: Mark 16:15-18; Acts 1:1-8; 2:1-43; 8:13-20; 10:44-48; Hebrews 2:14; 2 Corinthians 12:12; etc.

Once the “complete” or “whole” body of truth was revealed, confirmed and written, then “the thing in part,” the part-by-part operations, would have filled their purposes and ceased.

Paul specifically tells us what the “thing in part” is: “we *know* in part, and we *prophesy* in part.” Again, it is clear that these are samples of the total number of the spiritual gifts of chapter twelve.

If the various “parts” were *revelation* gifts (“knowledge” and “prophecy”), then the whole or complete thing would likewise consist of the productions of these revelation gifts. The whole cannot consist of something basically different from its various parts. But, since Paul tells us that when the complete comes the thing in part will be done away, we must ask: What will be done away? Will it be the body of divine truth conveyed to us by the operation of these revelation gifts? Or, will it be the miraculous powers working through these gifts which produced the body of truth? Surely, the correct answers to these questions are easy and obvious. The miraculous powers were to cease; certainly not the “complete” body of truth delivered through these powers.

In view of these facts, we can see that the complete thing cannot be Christ himself, nor His final coming, nor heaven, nor love, nor spiritual maturity of Christians, nor anything else except that which has been shown to be in the exact, immediate context of Paul’s point of discussion.

The use of the Greek words translated “perfect” and such like in other passages in the New Testament does not prove that “perfect” (complete) is used in the same meaning in

1 Corinthians 13:10. Each context must be examined very closely to determine accurately what the “complete” idea is in each case.

Neither can the *general* or *secondary* context of “love” in its relation to the spiritual gifts take away the controlling *primary* and immediate context of Paul’s comparison in 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Also, if one tries to make “love” the complete thing in *this* context, he will confuse and contradict Paul’s message at this exact point.

Note carefully that Paul is affirming (in his day) the present reality of “love,” in verses eight and thirteen: “Love never fails.” “And now abideth (remain) faith, hope, love, these three.”

Paul (and other strong Christians of his generation) certainly was a man filled with mature spiritual *love* (2 Corinthians 5:14-15; Galatians 2:20; etc.). But, Paul was also an apostle who was exercising the various miraculous gifts of tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18), prophecy (1 Corinthians 14:37) and such like. But Paul said that when the complete thing came, the thing in part would be done away. If love is the complete thing, then when love came, the thing in part (exercising the gifts of prophecy, tongues, etc.) would be done away. *But*, Paul had both *love* and the practice of tongues and prophecy. Therefore, love cannot be “the complete thing” of 1 Corinthians 13:10.

Notice that the text does not read: “when *he who is* perfect (complete)” may come; rather, whenever may come “the complete thing,” *neuter* gender in Greek - with the Greek article τὸ. This will not allow a reference to Christ himself.<sup>1</sup>

It has been shown that faith, hope and love (v. 13) were present realities in Paul’s day; that love could never fail; and that these three “now abideth (remain).” But in saying this about “these three” Paul is clearly *contrasting* them from the temporary things which were to “fail, cease, vanish away,” and these passing things are specified - prophecies, tongues, (divine) knowledge.

---

<sup>1</sup> This neuter-gender argument on 1 Corinthians 13:10 will stand the test, even though some may think it will not. It is not simply the neuter gender of **Error! Main Document Only**.τέλειον; it is also the very meaningful Greek neuter article **Error! Main Document Only**.τὸ used with **Error! Main Document Only**.τέλειον; plus, the contextual contrast of still another articular (article) neuter word **Error! Main Document Only**.μέρους, “the thing in part.” When Paul wrote in Greek literally: “whenever may come the complete thing, the thing in part will be done away,” he could not have a *person* in mind at that point. One good brother cited the Greek of John 6:37,39 and 1 John 1:1,2 as showing the error of the neuter-gender argument, but this is not correct. The total contextual Greek situation of these passages is altogether different from 1 Corinthians 13:10.

We all agree that faith, hope and love will “abide” (remain) until time ends. Now some today teach that the miraculous gifts of prophecy, tongues, etc. *also* “abide” or remain with us, and will continue with us until time ends. If this is correct, it proves the inspired apostle Paul to be *wrong*, because he clearly *contrasts* the duration of the gifts with the duration of faith, hope and love. But we know that Paul was not mistaken. The mistake is with those today who claim that they speak in tongues and have the gift of prophecy, etc.

Also, “faith” as described in Hebrews 11:1<sup>2</sup> cannot exist in heaven. Neither can “hope” as described in Romans 8:24-25<sup>3</sup> exist in heaven. So “faith” and “hope” must exist in this life before Christ comes; and they will last *until* Christ comes. But if tongues (Spirit-gift of tongues) *also* last until Christ comes, then Paul is wrong in making a contrast between them.

In the New Testament the miraculous gift of tongues came only through the miraculous baptism in the Holy Spirit, such as occurred upon the *apostles* in Acts the second chapter, and for the benefit of Peter the *apostle* (and others) at the household of Cornelius, Acts 10:44-48; 11:1-18; or, through the laying on of the hands of an *apostle*, Acts 19:1-7.

It should be obvious to all concerned that we today do *not* have miracles occurring like those of Pentecost, Acts 2, and those of Cornelius, Acts 10 and 11. Even in the days of miracles these events were so striking and *unusual*, that Peter identified the miracle at the house of Cornelius only with that at Pentecost, “even as on us at the *beginning*.”

Peter would not have made such a statement if such miraculous circumstances accompanied every conversion from Pentecost forward.

Furthermore, we do not have genuine living *apostles* with us today, so that they could lay hands on us to give us the gifts of tongues and prophecy and such like.

Again: *If* tongues and prophecies still abide with us today, we also have *living apostles*. In Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, and verses 28-30, we see that “*apostles*” are listed right along with other miraculous gifts and functions, such as prophecy, tongues, gifts of healings, etc.

*All* of these stand or fall together, if we have *one* of these miraculous endowments today, we have them *all*. If we do not have *living apostles* like Peter, John and Paul,

---

<sup>2</sup> “Assurance of things *hoped for*, and conviction of things *not seen*.”

<sup>3</sup> “Hope that is seen *is not hope*.”

today, we do not have genuine tongue-speaking, prophesying (teaching by divine inspiration), nor instantaneous, miraculous healing.

Again: To contend for present-day apostles, prophecies, tongue-speaking and other miracles is actually to contend, in principle, that God's word is not complete. Why? Because God gave these miracles only for the *revealing, confirmation, and eventual writing* of His inspired Word, the complete New Testament. Naturally, in congregations where these gifts were exercised, there would be edification or strengthening of the Christians, because they had no complete written New Testament and had to depend upon inspired men with their miracles.

*If* these revealing and confirming gifts used in the giving of God's inspired message are still working today, then logically we conclude that God's word is not yet complete and is still being given, part by part.

But which one of the modern tongue-speakers is bold enough to claim that he can authoritatively write Holy Scripture and add it to our Bibles? Or, which alleged "prophet" today can do this?

Jesus promised to his *apostles* (John 16:12-13) to guide *them* "into *all* the truth." Did Jesus fail to do this? No. He guided them into all the truth in the first century when they lived and that leaves *none* to be revealed today by any alleged apostle, prophet, tongue-speaker, healer or such like.

Now we are ready for a study of verses eleven and twelve of our text.

Paul now proceeds to give *three illustrations* of his basic discussion of the *contrast* between the thing in part and the complete thing.

In understanding the meaning of verses eleven, twelve and thirteen, in relation to verses eight, nine and ten, it is very important to see that these last three verses are *illustrations*.<sup>4</sup>

Paul compares his immature ways as a child with his present mature, full grown, "perfect," or "complete" ways as a man. This illustrates the thing in part and the complete thing of verses 8-10.

Next, Paul illustrates his words (vs. 9) "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" by saying: "For now we see in a mirror darkly (literally: "in a riddle"); but then face to face."

---

<sup>4</sup> Especially the part about the child and the man, and the mirror and the face-to-face look.

It is well-known that ancient mirrors were not as good as our present-day mirrors of glass which perfectly reflect our images. Ancient mirrors were usually of polished metals, and at best did not perfectly reflect the image. So Paul is saying the in-part thing (knowing in part, prophesying in part) is the “now” time of seeing in an imperfect mirror darkly; but that “then” (in the future) when the complete thing would come, it would be like seeing someone “face to face.” This is a clear illustration.

For the third time Paul uses “now” to illustrate the in-part thing. He writes: “Now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.” (American Standard Version.)

“Now I know in part” is almost identical with verse 9: “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” This makes it certain that Paul still has in mind his comparison or contrast between the part-by-part, incomplete revelation of divine “knowledge,” and part-by-part “prophesying.”

Paul continues: “But *then* shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.”<sup>5</sup>

Remember that the “now” in Paul’s day was the in-part thing of partial knowledge and partial prophesying, but that the “then” was the future coming of the complete thing when one could “know fully” even as he was “fully known.”

Even in the time when Paul knew and prophesied only in part, certainly God fully knew Paul and all others. But when the complete thing of the whole New Testament revelation came, just as surely we can “know fully” ourselves and God’s will for us as we need to know. The Scriptures furnish us completely unto every good work, and make us “complete,” if we properly use them (2 Timothy 3:16-17; etc.). Jesus has given us “*all* the truth” (John 16:12-13) that pertains unto life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). We can “know fully” to the extent that God desires us to know for our salvation.

But Christians, including even the apostle Paul himself, could *not* “know fully” the entire New Testament revelation in the same way that Christians could know fully when the complete body of truth came.

---

<sup>5</sup> The American Standard Version (and other versions) correctly translates the Greek by “know fully” and “fully known,” rather than simply “know” and “am known” of the King James Version. The apostle purposely uses two different Greek words for *contrast*. He uses the simple verb **Error! Main Document Only.** γινώσκω, “I know,” and then the future tense of the compound verb **Error! Main Document Only.** ἐπιγινώσκω, which means “I know fully,” as Greek professor Dr. A. T. Robertson points out. One loses some of the force of Paul’s contrast if he does not read it as the apostle literally wrote it.

Remember that Paul himself plainly states: “now I know in part”; also, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.”

This exposition of verses 11-12 shows that none of Paul’s discussion and illustrations pertains to the final or heavenly state. The “face to face” reference does not, in this context, refer to our face to face meeting with Christ at his final coming. While we will “know fully” in heaven, that is not Paul’s subject in these verses.

Speaking in tongues, divine knowledge, prophesying, raising the dead, casting out demons, drinking any deadly thing, handling deadly snakes, having living apostles, instantaneous, miraculous healing, writing of Holy Scripture - all these things were confined to the apostolic days.

People today *cannot* genuinely perform these *miracles*.

## EXEGESIS OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13:10

By: Jerry Moffitt

### PART I - BACKGROUND

Every once in a while, due to an immediate controversy, a certain passage of scripture becomes the target of intense investigation. Because we are going through another wave of emotionalism, I am not surprised that key passages concerning the Holy Spirit are getting a Benjamin's portion of attention.

If this passage is pointing toward some distant fulfillment, then tongues and prophecy continue in our day, awaiting the coming of "the perfect." If *perfect* is understood to be past event, then tongues and prophecy have ceased, for "WHEN that which is perfect is come, (THEN) that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13:10).

#### "THAT WHICH IS PERFECT" AND THE DENOMINATIONS

The denominational world, as reflected in their commentaries, has generally taken *perfect* of 1 Corinthians 13:10 to be the future state of things in heaven. Each has his own shade of grey, but in general there is a leaning toward the future state. MacKnight is representative: "But when the perfect gift of complete illumination is bestowed on all in heaven, then that which is partial, namely, the present gifts of knowledge and prophecy, shall be abolished as useless."<sup>1</sup> So also says Barnes, Lenski, Robertson and Plummer, Parry, Clark, Abbott and the Interpreter's Bible. Henry and Barclay hint at this, though they are a little vague.

However, the force of the obvious meaning of the passage, which we shall shortly develop, struggles to surface even in their contrary opinions. And we should not think this view is unanimous, for there is a growing trend toward our brethren's view as the passage enjoys renewed interest. Unger, in 1974, wrote, "This passage, by strict adherence to the context, necessitates interpreting the complete thing as the New Testament Scriptures."<sup>2</sup>

#### "THAT WHICH IS PERFECT" AND THE BRETHREN

Our brethren display the usual concentric majority and periphery of diversity which is characteristic of any group which is allowed freedom to independently search for truth. Yet, the differences evidence the fact that some of us are wrong. We desire to exercise love and forbearance, and we shun a divisive attitude, but let us face it: some of us are wrong when we disagree!

With that thought before us, let us view a representative slice of our brethren's thinking. Campbell takes a different tack to demonstrate the cessation of spiritual gifts,<sup>3</sup> but replying to a question sent to them, Lipscomb and Sewell said, concerning the

interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:10, “The passage, as we think, has reference to the development of God’s revelations to men.”<sup>4</sup> The majority of our brethren, when writing on the subject, come to the same interpretation: V. E. Howard,<sup>5</sup> Franklin Camp,<sup>6</sup> H. Leo Boles,<sup>7</sup> J. Jividen,<sup>8</sup> James Bales,<sup>9</sup> J. D. Thomas,<sup>10</sup> Gary Workman,<sup>11</sup> B. W. Johnson,<sup>12</sup> C. R. Nichol and R. L. Whiteside,<sup>13</sup> Rubel Shelley,<sup>14</sup> Foy E. Wallace,<sup>15</sup> Gus Nichols,<sup>16</sup> Jim Massey,<sup>17</sup> J. Porter Wilhite,<sup>18</sup> Homer Hailey,<sup>19</sup> Gussie Lambert,<sup>20</sup> Roy H. Lanier, Sr.,<sup>21</sup> and others.

As usual, there are a few who disagree. Leroy Garrett takes it as the “perfect gift of complete illumination,” numbly following the lead of Mac Knight.<sup>22</sup> J. W. McGarvey’s interpretation is close to that.<sup>23</sup> John McRay understands “the perfect” to be the “inclusion of the Gentiles into the body of Christ.”<sup>24</sup> Jim Reynolds takes it as the end of the age.<sup>25</sup> Roy Osborne vaguely presents “the perfect” as maturity that is obtained when an immaturity (of a congregation or individual) is laid aside.<sup>26</sup> Carl Spain claims it is the bringing of God’s people to the fullness of spiritual growth and maturity in Christ;<sup>27</sup> Jim McGuiggan argues stoutly that it is love.<sup>28</sup>

## PART II - AN EXEGESIS

### “THE PERFECT” AND THE VERSIONS

To study the various versions, of course, gives us an insight into the meaning of the original Greek and the closest English equivalent, as those who are translators are supposed to be, and usually are, masters of the two languages. It is first noticed that the majority merely amble down the well-trodden path of Tyndale, rarely moving away from his first-word choices, translating the Greek τέλειος by the English *perfect*. Of this class is Weymouth, Goodspeed, Moffatt, The Twentieth Century New Testament, the R.S.V., the T.E.V., King James Version, King James II, New International Version, Jerusalem Bible, The Dartmouth Bible, Modern Reader’s Bible, American Standard Version, New American Standard Version, Century Readings In the New Testament and New Schofield Reference Bible.

Then there are those who break with Tyndale and the King James. Phillips has, “When the complete comes, that is the end of the incomplete.” The New Word Translation is the same, and we find The New English Bible talking of “the partial” and “wholeness,” while The Cotton Patch Version speaks of the “mature” and “immature.”

### PERFECT AND THE GREEK ORIGINAL

Turning to the lexicons, we at once notice that the word does not carry the meaning of “absolute flawlessness.” Τέλιον has more the flavor of “completion.” Arndt and Gingrich say, “Having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect.”<sup>29</sup> He is generally joined in this definition by Robinson,<sup>30</sup> Liddell and Scott,<sup>31</sup> Abbott-Smith,<sup>32</sup> Berry,<sup>33</sup> Vine<sup>34</sup> Vincent,<sup>35</sup> and Thayer.<sup>36</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest goes so far as to say, “In 1 Corinthians

13:10, the word means 'complete' and is contrasted to that which is incomplete."<sup>37</sup> So, we understand right away that we must lose the definition of "utter flawlessness" and get in mind a concept of "completion" if we are to have a precise slant on the passage.

Further investigation reveals that τὸ τέλειον not only has the meaning of "completion" (in certain contexts "mature," "full-grown," "finished," "full," "perfect"), but should bring to mind completion at the end of a process. Thus, Vine says, "signifies having reached its end (τέλος), finished, complete, perfect."<sup>38</sup> Thayer says, "Brought to its end, finished."<sup>39</sup>

Now all this perfectly harmonizes with our usual interpretation of the passage, i.e., that "the perfect" is the complete revelation of God in its final form. That the scriptures are the final result of a process, beginning in the mind of God and concluding with the writings of chosen apostles and prophets is a fact on which we need not labor; all who investigate can see it (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Hebrews 2:1-4; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Peter 2:19-21).

But before we move to the local context, and while we are looking at the original meaning of the word, it is helpful to look at the word by which τέλειος is most often translated, viz., *perfect*. It is my judgment that the word *perfect*, as currently used, is losing the most common meaning which it once had. In middle English *perfect* (once spelled *parfit* or *perfit* before it was conformed to the Latin spelling) readily lended itself to the concept of "completion." It is from Latin, *per*, "thoroughly" and *ficere* or *facere*, "to make." *Per* means "through" and *fact* means "deed."<sup>40</sup> So we have "through the deed" or the process involved in finishing a deed or an act - A COMPLETION. But when we turn to our most reliable dictionary today we find the definition, "without fault or defect"<sup>41</sup> as the second most common usage of the word. "Completion" is way down the ladder at about number eight. Before we draw any conclusions about this, we should note where we got the translation *perfect*. It, of course, is from Tyndale who made the first English version. He translated Erasmus' text, "But when that which is *perfect* is come, then that which is *unperfect* shall be done away." A century later, when The King James Version was written, the usage of Tyndale was evident throughout every page. Some estimate that about one-third of his wording is still in the Authorized Version. Professor Laura H. Wild, speaking of the King James Version says, "But Tyndale was the genius who penetrated to the very heart of the Scripture, finding priceless treasures, then sent it on its way in English waters like a ship laden with life-giving fruits."<sup>42</sup> Now what does all this tell us? One, we suspect that *perfect* of Tyndale and *perfect* of our day have a slightly different nuance of meaning. Today, *perfect* is too easily associated with "faultlessness," while *perfect*, like τέλειος, expressed more the idea of "complete after a process," or "having attained the end or purpose." Two, that explains why so many today think of perfect in 1 Corinthians 13:10 as being associated with heaven, for there, we presume, we will be in our most flawless state.

## PERFECT AND THE CONTEXT

Just here we find the crux and core of the whole matter. There is an obvious contrast between that which is complete and that which is in part. Notice, “But when that which is perfect (complete) is come, that which is in part shall be done away.” We have the complete on one hand and the partial on the other, separated by the adversative *but*. This, as Roy Lanier, Sr. notes, forces us to conclude that the contrasted things are of the same nature and kind.<sup>43</sup> Since the “part” is revelation, the “perfect” is complete revelation.

When my final manuscript on this topic was ready (the complete), my rough draft and notes (the partial) were put away. So it was with miraculous revelatory gifts. They were partial, at least, in organization and form. So, when the completed product came (God’s total revelation, with confirmatory signs appended, in Scripture form), the partial OF COURSE was done away.

As far as I can see, this contextual interpretation is unanswerable. The partial finally added up to the complete. What could be more natural? All the other interpretations mix apples and oranges. For example, in the recent Woods-Hicks debate, Mr. Hicks, of Pentecostal persuasion, took the position that “the perfect” was Jesus. Guy N. Woods pointedly retorted, “If Jesus is the ‘perfect,’ WHO is the ‘PART’?” That is a little hard to answer, for there is an obvious contrast of the two.

## “THE PERFECT” AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The above interpretation clearly fits Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. In this letter we have our first hint that that which is written is to take precedence over and be a standard to judge spiritual utterances (2 Corinthians 14:37).<sup>44</sup> Too, the rest of the writings of Paul also support our interpretation. Paul argues that Scripture is all sufficient to make a man of God complete (2 Timothy 3:16-17). So, spiritual gifts, not being needed, passed away. Also consider that neither heaven, Christ, the final coming of Christ, the end of the age, nor inclusion of the Gentiles in the body of Christ are under consideration in the immediate context. True, they may be perfect in some sense, but not in a contextual sense as far as 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 is concerned. But revelation from God is the exact context. Next, have in mind that revelation IS progressive. The Old Testament looked to the New (Hebrews 1:1-2; 2:1-4; 8:8; 10:1; 10:9; Acts 2:16). Then recall that τέλειος represents the end of a process. So, it follows that the view is compatible with the word itself. We might mention that the final coming of Christ is NOT a process. Again, remember that the ones who had the laying on of the apostles’ hands would have died about the time the Scriptures were being collected and circulated (Acts 8:18; Romans 1:11; 2 Timothy 1:6; 2 Peter 3:15-16). Finally, church history reveals that these miraculous gifts did cease.<sup>45</sup> Therefore the perfect must have come. So, all in all, this interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:10 is supported by the Corinthian letter, the writings of

Paul, the immediate context, the word *perfect* and the rest of the New Testament. Now let us take up objections to the view.

### OBJECTIONS

1. NO HARD-FAST RULE DETERMINES WHEN REVELATION WAS COMPLETE ACCORDING TO THIS INTERPRETATION.<sup>46</sup>

Answer: We have demonstrated that revelation was complete by the time the men on whom the apostles laid hands had died. Surely this is hard and fast enough.

2. IT IS HARDLY APPROPRIATE TO TELL A BROTHER THAT THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS SPEAKING IN TONGUES TODAY WHILE HE IS INDEED SPEAKING IN TONGUES TODAY.<sup>47</sup>

Answer: We should answer in kind: "It is hardly appropriate to tell us gifts have not ceased while they have indeed ceased!" Would we say, "It is hardly appropriate to tell Mohammad he did not talk to an angel when he indeed talked to an angel"?

3. THE CONTEXT OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13 IS ONE OF LOVE, AND THEREBY THE INTERPRETATION OF "COMPLETE REVELATION" IS FORBIDDEN.<sup>48</sup>

Answer: First, the context of 1 Corinthians 13 IS love, but the context of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 specifically is about revelation. "Love" moves a step away from strict adherence to the most immediate context.

4. WE WILL SEE THE LORD FACE TO FACE ONLY IN HEAVEN.

Answer: As James Bales clearly demonstrated,<sup>49</sup> this expression is metaphorical for the complete state of knowledge. Second, by viewing the gospel, we see the glory of the Lord so completely as to be able to take on that same image in a transformation from glory to glory (2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 4:3,6). Third, this phrase is merely a continuation of the "partial-total" contrast of verse 9. Fourth, who says we see the Lord? Who says it is in heaven? Certainly, Paul does not in this context.

5. WE CANNOT KNOW FULLY UNTIL THE NEXT LIFE.

Answer: One, we will not know fully in an ABSOLUTE sense even in the next life. Omniscience is a mark of Deity.<sup>50</sup> Two, we can "fully know" God's wisdom in a mystery, the things which "eye saw not and ear heard not" (1

Corinthians 2:6-9). They have been revealed to the apostles, and the apostles have written (1 Corinthians 2:9-13; Ephesians 3:1-11; Colossians 1:24-28 especially; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Peter 3:14-16; 2 Peter 1:19-21). Third, some in the New Testament are described as knowing fully. The fullest treatment of this is found in Has That Which Is Perfect Come? where Gary Workman shows that Christians can have an ἐπίγνωσις of God's will (Colossians 1:9) until the end (2 Corinthians 1:13), and that it can be increased (Colossians 1:10), even undergoing a renewal process (Colossians 3:10).<sup>51</sup>

6. SINCE PAUL DIED BEFORE THE FULL REVELATION, HE NEVER COULD KNOW FULLY.

Answer: First, much was revealed before it was written and generally made available.<sup>52</sup> Paul might have died possessing revelations which were not yet written. Second, Paul's point is really concerning his readers, not himself. He often included himself in things where it is obvious he really does not belong. His usage is like our editorial we (Romans 6:1).

7. "PROPHECIES" AND "KNOWLEDGE" DO NOT AGREE IN GENDER WITH PERFECT.

Answer: *Knowledge* and *prophecy* are merely representative of all the methods God used to edify, instruct, correct and enlighten the early church. These words should stand as an abbreviated representation, at least, of all the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12, and even that list could be open-ended. But why cannot the "part" be one gender and the "completed thing" another? Even in English we call the deck of a ship an "it" and the ship in total a "she." 1 Corinthians 1:2 is a Greek example where the church of God (feminine) is composed of saints (masculine). Besides, the contrast is between "part" and "complete." They match in gender.

8. THE DISCUSSION IN THIS SECTION IS NOT ONE DEALING WITH A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE.<sup>53</sup>

Answer: Simply read verse 9, "We know in part and prophesy in part." A lack of full revelation is discussed!

9. WHEN THE PERFECT COMES THERE WILL BE FACE-TO-FACE KNOWLEDGE, NOT JUST THE POSSIBILITY.<sup>54</sup>

Answer: Apply that species of reasoning to John 10:27-28 and you help the Baptists prove eternal security. However, the species is faulty. In both

cases, precise issues not really in Paul's or Jesus' minds are presumed to be included in the discussion.

10. COMPLETE REVELATION MIGHT BE POSSESSED WITHOUT IT ENABLING ONE TO KNOW GOD.<sup>55</sup>

Answer: *God* is not in the text. It is presumed. Did they know "God" in part, and prophesy "God" in part? We might also add, even if these gifts were not incomplete in content, they were incomplete in the sense of being in parts, piecemeal, bit by bit. Yet somewhere, somehow, sometime, all God's revelation was to be assembled? It was - in the form of the New Testament Scriptures.

### CONCLUDING REMARKS

I certainly enjoy fellowship with those brethren who have found a different interpretation of *perfect* than I. We close ranks quickly when the church is threatened by the false teachings of Neo-Pentecostalism. But let me say, that in a day when it is almost popular to charge the "old" brethren with being wrong on almost everything, it is my pleasure to affirm that once again, OUR BRETHREN HAVE BEEN RIGHT.

### Bibliography

- <sup>1</sup>James Macknight, Macknight on the Epistles, Vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), p. 140.
- <sup>2</sup>Merrill F. Unger, The Baptism & Gifts of the Holy Spirit, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1974), pp. 141,142.
- <sup>3</sup>Alexander Campbell, The Christian Baptist, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1955), p. 71.
- <sup>4</sup>David Lipscomb, E. G. Sewell, Questions Answered, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1969), p. 543.
- <sup>5</sup>V. E. Howard, The Holy Spirit (Texarkana: V. E. Howard, P. O. Box 1717, 1969), p. 127.
- <sup>6</sup>Franklin Camp, The Work of the Holy Spirit, (Birmingham: Roberts & Son Pub., 1974), p. 76.
- <sup>7</sup>H. Leo Boles, The Holy Spirit, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1971), p. 175.
- <sup>8</sup>Jimmy Jividen, Glossolalia, (Fort Smith: Star Bible Publications, 1971), p. 127,128.
- <sup>9</sup>James Bales, Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues, (Searcy: James Bales, 1970), p. 214.
- <sup>10</sup>J. D. Thomas, Self Study Guide to the Corinthian Letters, (Abilene: Biblical Research Press, 1972), p. 35.
- <sup>11</sup>Gary Workman, Has That Which Is Perfect Come?, (Abilene: Quality Publications, 1971), p. 23.
- <sup>12</sup>B. W. Johnson, The People's New Testament, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co.,

- 1891), p. 114.
- <sup>13</sup>C. R. Nichol, R. L. Whiteside, Sound Doctrine, (Clifton, Texas: Nichol Pub. Co., 1924, Vol. 4), p. 94.
- <sup>14</sup>Rubel Shelley, John McRay, Roy Osborne, Jim Reynolds, Carl Spain, That Which Is Perfect, (Austin: Sweet Pub. Co., 1972), pp. 13,14.
- <sup>15</sup>Foy E. Wallace, Bulwarks of the Faith, Vol . 2 (Oklahoma City: Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Pub., 1951), p. 177.
- <sup>16</sup>Gus Nichols, Nichols-Weaver Debate, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1944), pp. 60, 61.
- <sup>17</sup>Jim Massey, God's Purpose for Miracles and Tongues, (Lubbock: World Mission Pub. Co., 1973), p. 55.
- <sup>18</sup>J. Porter Wilhite, Modern Churches and the Church, (Shreveport: Lambert Book House, 1956), p. 38.
- <sup>19</sup>Homer Hailey, Let's Go Fishing for Men, (Abilene: Chronicle Pub. Co., Inc., 1951), p. 152.
- <sup>20</sup>Gussie Lambert, Christ at Corinth, (Shreveport: Lambert Book House, 1972), p. 70.
- <sup>21</sup>Roy H. Lanier, Sr., The Timeless Trinity for the Ceaseless Centuries, (Denver: Roy Lanier, Sr., 1974), p. 339.
- <sup>22</sup>Leroy Garrett, p. 4 .
- <sup>23</sup>J. W. McGarvey, Commentary on Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, Romans, (Cincinnati: Standard Pub. Co., 1916), p. 132.
- <sup>24</sup>McRay, p. 5.
- <sup>25</sup>Jim Reynolds, p. 10.
- <sup>26</sup>Roy Osborne, p. 8.
- <sup>27</sup>Carl Spain, p. 14.
- <sup>28</sup>Jim McGuiggan, The Book of 1 Corinthians, (West Monroe: William C. Johnson, Inc., 1973), p. 62.
- <sup>29</sup>William F. Arndt, F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, (Chicago: University Press, 1957), p. 816.
- <sup>30</sup>Edward Robinson, Greek & English Lexicon of the New Testament, (London: Gilbert & Rivington Pub. Co., 1836), p. 818.
- <sup>31</sup>Liddell, Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, (New York: Amer. Book Co., 1880), p. 797.
- <sup>32</sup>G. Abbott, Smith, A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark), p. 442.
- <sup>33</sup>George Ricker Berry: A New Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Chicago: Wilcox & Follett Co., 1948), p. 99.
- <sup>34</sup>W. E. Vine, An Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words, (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1966), pp. 173, 174.
- <sup>35</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, Vol . 3 (Grand Rapids: Wm. E. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Reprint 1973), pp. 195,271,391,451.
- <sup>36</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub. House, 1970), p. 618.
- <sup>37</sup>Kenneth S. Wuest, Treasures From the Greek New Testament, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1966), pp. 117,118.

- <sup>38</sup>Vine, pp. 173,174.
- <sup>39</sup>Thayer, p. 618.
- <sup>40</sup>Committee, Oxford English Dictionary, Vol. 7 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), p. 683.
- <sup>41</sup>Committee, Webster's Third New International Dictionary Unabridged, (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriam Co., 1961), p. 1677.
- <sup>42</sup>Laura H. Wild, The Romance of the English Bible, (New York: Doubleday, Dorian & Co., 1929), pp. 195,196.
- <sup>43</sup>Lanier, p. 339.
- <sup>44</sup>F. W. Mattox, The Eternal Kingdom, (Delight: Gospel Light Pub. Co., 1960), p. 101.
- <sup>45</sup>Reinhold Seeberg, History of Doctrines in the Ancient Church, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), pp. 80,108.
- <sup>46</sup>Garrett, p. 3 .
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>48</sup>McGuiggan, pp. 63-64.
- <sup>49</sup>Bales, pp. 217-218.
- <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 218.
- <sup>51</sup>Workman, pp. 15-18.
- <sup>52</sup>Bales, p. 219.
- <sup>53</sup>McGuiggan, p. 63.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid.

**HAS "THAT WHICH IS PERFECT" COME?  
An Exposition of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13  
By GARY WORKMAN**

PREFACE

A comprehension of 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 is important for an understanding of the purpose and duration of spiritual gifts. Another vital passage along this line is Ephesians 4:7-16. But it has not been as controversial since, among other things, it clearly specifies that apostles were to continue along with other spiritually-gifted functionaries and that this would come to an end with the oneness of the gospel. On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 13 has suffered as the playground of would-be charismatics who seek to justify their experiences with the quotation of a Biblical text. It is the conviction of this writer that the two passages are entirely harmonious. God's Word does not contradict itself.

It matters little how long a list of illustrious names can be cited to support a given position on some point of doctrine else we would be forced to concede that the majority is always right. Seeking to explain 1 Corinthians 13 many, including noted commentators, have relied more on supposition than on Biblical exegesis.

It is not the purpose of this treatise to compile and report the thinking of others but to study the text itself. A thorough and accurate exposition can be produced only as a result of careful exegesis combined with lexical and Biblical research of key words. Since this yields a study involving the technicalities of Greek and Hebrew words as well as other grammatical considerations, it seems best to present the material in as simple a manner as possible. Therefore, I have kept references to a minimum and have cited them in an abbreviated form in the text itself.

Unless otherwise indicated, the Scripture quotations are from the American Standard Version of 1901.

THE CONTEXT

Students of the New Testament are aware that many Christians possessed spiritual gifts during that Biblical period which began with the establishment of the church (Acts 2). Jesus had foretold these gifts in Mark 16:17-18. They are stated as fact in Mark 16:20, Acts 2:1-4, 16-18, Hebrews 2:3-4 and a number of other Scriptures.

Paul listed nine such gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11. He then explained how these gifts functioned in the church at that time (v. 28). Then Paul stated that the gifts of "prophecies," "tongues" and "knowledge" would **cease** or **be done away** (1 Corinthians 13:8) and that this would happen "when that which is perfect is come" (v. 10). The

question we are seeking to answer in this booklet is whether or not that “perfect” thing has already come and, consequently, the spiritual gifts done away.

At the outset, we should realize that the passage we are examining in detail (1 Corinthians 13:8-13) is found in the middle of a section dealing with spiritual gifts. Paul began the subject in 12:1 and ended it with 14:40. The main purpose of chapter 12 is to show that the gifts are diversified among the members (see vv. 11, 29 and 30). He then moves his subject on to a further point by saying: “And moreover a most excellent way show I unto you” (v. 31). With those words he introduces the quality of love in chapter 13 as a contrast to spiritual gifts.

In chapter 13:1-3, the inspired writer points out that love in a Christian’s life is more important than such spiritual gifts as tongues, prophecy, knowledge and faith which are mentioned as representative of the entirety of the gifts listed in the previous chapter. This “knowledge” is not ordinary knowledge but that spiritual gift which Paul listed in 12:8. Likewise, this “faith” is not that which every Christian must have as a result of hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17) but that supernatural gift of faith which could enable a person to move mountains (Matthew 17:20; 21:21).

#### VERSE 8

After delineating the various characteristics of love in verses 4-7, Paul then explains that such love is superior to spiritual gifts because “love never faileth” (v. 8) whereas the gifts were to “cease” or “be done away.” “We should notice the difference between “cease” (Greek: *pauomai*) and “be done away” (*katargeo*). The King James Version is a bit confusing because its two renderings of “fail” and “vanish away” in connection with prophecies and knowledge are actually from just one Greek word (*katargeo*), and that word is not the same as the one rendered “faileth” (*pipto*) in connection with love.

**Be done away.** The word *katargeo* is defined (by Kittel’s *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*) as: “to condemn to inactivity,” “to destroy,” “to remove from the sphere of activity.” In the religious sense it means “to make completely inoperative.” Notice these examples:

- (1) Death is to be abolished—*katargeo*—(2 Timothy 1:10; 1 Corinthians 15:26).
- (2) We have been discharged—*katargeo*—from the law (Romans 7:6).
- (3) The old law itself was done away—*katargeo*—in Christ (1 Corinthians 3:14) and by Christ (Ephesians 2:15).

The word has to do with the activity of a thing. For instance, it is not the stated content of the old law that was done away. It could still be read both in Paul's day (1 Corinthians 3:14) and in ours. But its activity or efficacy is gone.

**Cease.** The word “cease”—*pauomai*—means to “stop oneself” (*Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon*). This word is applied to tongues but not to prophecies and knowledge. Tongues were to stop by themselves whereas prophecies and knowledge had to be done away. As an example of this distinction, we read that the sacrifices of the old law could not cease—*pauomai*—(Hebrews 10:2). They could not complete their task so they had to be done away—*katargeo*—(Ephesians 2:15), replaced by Jesus “one sacrifice for sins forever” (Hebrews 10:12). We might make this further observation: In contrast with the Old Testament sacrifices, Jesus' sacrifice has permanent efficacy. Yet the doing of it has ended. It “has ceased to be offered” (Hebrews 10:2) because “this he did once for all, when he offered up himself” (Hebrews 7:27) so that “there is no more offering for sin” (Hebrews 10:18). His task of offering himself has been completed—has ceased—while the effect continues on. Let us summarize this contrast: The Old Testament sacrifices could not **cease** but were **done away**; Jesus' sacrifice has **ceased** but is not **done away** because it will not be replaced. Its consequences are forever.

Likewise, tongues had no replacement. They were a “sign” (Mark 16:17) to the unbelievers (1 Corinthians 14:22), accompanying and confirming the prophecies and revealed knowledge (Hebrews 2:3-4) while being preached by divine inspiration (Mark 16:20). They were able to permanently complete their task and **cease**. Yet the effectiveness of their testimony continues. Such “signs...are **written** that ye may believe” (John 20:30-31). Prophecies and knowledge had to be done away by being replaced with “that which is perfect.” At the same time tongues, as an accompanying sign, would cease.

## VERSE 9

In verse 9 Paul states the reason why these gifts were to be done away, explaining: “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.” Paul uses the words “in part” three times in this section. “In part” is contrasted with “perfect” in verse 10 and with the prefix translated “fully” in verse 12. “In part”—*ek merous*—simply means “partially” (Kittel's *TDNT*). While Paul at that time knew God's will partially through his spiritual gifts, it would later be known fully or completely when all of the parts were put together. A gifted person was still only a member separately or individually—*ek merous*—1 Corinthians 12:27. His gift was not complete in itself. “Each several **part**”—*merous*—worked to build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:16).

So, the gifts enabled each gifted person to know and teach only a part of God's intended revelation to man. His revelation had always come “precept upon precept,... line upon line,...here a little, there a little” (Isa 28:10). No one man was enabled to reveal it all. But these gifts were progressing toward a completion and, because of their

partial nature, would cease when the “perfect” comes. That coming marks the end of them because they are then no longer necessary.

#### VERSE 10

**“Perfect” defined.** To fully understand Paul’s thought here, we must realize that the Greek word translated “perfect”—*teleios*—means: “brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness” (Thayer’s *Lexicon*); “having attained the end or purpose, complete, perfect” (Arndt-Gingrich *Lexicon*); “ended, complete” (Young’s *Concordance*). When referring to people, the word means “full-grown, adult, mature” (Arndt-Gingrich, Thayer). These several definitions of the word may be summarized as **complete** or **mature**.

Now what we have in 1 Corinthians 13:10 is an adjective without a noun. If Paul had included the noun in the text, there would never have been any difficulty in understanding the meaning. Paul just said (literally from the Greek): “the perfect....” So, many have asked: “The perfect **what?**” Well, that is what we must figure out from the context. And if we will be observant, there is no great difficulty in doing that. But we must let the Bible define the terms! We must realize that Paul wrote in **his** language (Greek), not in **ours** (English). We cannot look up the word “perfect” in Webster’s Dictionary and hope to have an accurate definition of Paul’s word. Instead, we must avail ourselves of a Greek-English lexicon or some other authoritative books which will give us definitions of New Testament Greek words. This we have done in the paragraph above.

There are some who assume that “that which is perfect” can only come at the end of the world. So, it has been suggested that Jesus, when he comes again, is “that which is perfect.” An examination of the Greek in 1 Corinthians 13:10 will reveal that this cannot be true. For it is a neuter article which modifies the adjective “perfect” and which tells us that “perfect” is also neuter. Jesus Christ is masculine and is always referred to by masculine terms. He is never spoken of as a thing but as a person. He is a “he who,” not a “that which.” So “that which is perfect” cannot be Jesus or any other person.

Others, realizing that “the perfect” is not a person, have suggested that it is the perfect state of existence in heaven. Their argument is that things in this world and in this life are not perfect and therefore it cannot refer to anything this side of judgment day. The fallacy in this line of thinking is that one is arguing from an assumption—that assumption being a false definition of the word translated “perfect.” It makes no difference how someone today might use the English word “perfect” in his own vocabulary. What matters is how the word is used in Scripture.

**“Perfect” in New Testament usage.** Let us carefully observe how this same word—the Greek word *teleios*—is used and translated in other passages in the New Testament:

- (1) Jesus commanded us not to be respecters of persons in loving our friends and hating our enemies (Matthew 5:44-47) but to be complete or “perfect”—*teleios*—like our heavenly Father (v. 48) in loving friends and enemies alike.
- (2) Jesus said that the rich, young ruler could be “perfect”—*teleios*—if he would (Matthew 19:21).
- (3) Paul said that his preaching was wisdom among those who are “fullgrown”—*teleios*—(1 Corinthians 2:6).
- (4) Paul urged the Corinthians to be “men”—*teleios*—instead of babes (1 Corinthians 14:20).
- (5) In Ephesians 4:13 we read that the body of Christ is to be built up unto a “full-grown—*teleios*—man.”
- (6) When Paul wrote to the Philippians he said (in 3:15) that some of the Christians were “perfect”—*teleios*.
- (7) Epaphras prayed that the Colossians would stand “perfect”—*teleios*—in the will of God (Colossians 4:12).
- (8) The Hebrews were chided for not having progressed to the solid food aspect of the Word of God which, said the inspired writer, is for “fullgrown”—*teleios*—men, described as those who have their senses exercised to discern good and evil (Hebrews 5:14).
- (9) James described the law of liberty as the “perfect”—*teleios*—law (James 1:25).

All of these nine examples refer to the here and now. So, some things here **are** “perfect”—in the Biblical meaning of that word as **mature** or **complete**. We, as Christians, do not have to wait until we get to heaven to be “perfect” in the Biblical sense of this particular word. In fact, as seen in eight of the examples above, we are expected to be exactly that!

Therefore, if we are to have a true understanding of the thought in 1 Corinthians 13:10, we must get it out of our minds that the word *teleios*—translated “perfect”—means sinless or the flawless state of heaven. We are to be mature people in this life adhering to a mature law.

**“Perfect” in context.** Now let us look at verses 9 and 10 together since they together comprise one sentence and one thought. We will be able to grasp the thought much

more easily if we will do our own translating and change the word “perfect” in verse 10 to the word “complete” (since that is its meaning). Verse 9 mentions something that is partial and verse 10 something that is complete. “That which is perfect” is **the completion of** that which is “in part.” But **what** was in part? We need not search for some elusive antecedent of “perfect” or some imaginative interpretation unstated in the immediate context. Such is unnecessary because Paul defines his subject matter in this very sentence! Notice verse 9: “We **know** in part, and we **prophesy** in part.” Paul was not writing about the limitations placed upon human understanding of the perplexities of life and eternal destiny. He was writing about the spiritual gifts of knowing and prophesying God’s will—**the proclamation of the gospel by divine inspiration!**

At the time of Paul’s writing the gospel had not been fully proclaimed. The knowing and prophesying were only “in part.” But divine inspiration looked forward to a completion. There was a day coming when no more knowledge of God’s mysteries would be revealed and no more prophecies uttered because all of God’s intended revelation to man would be complete! So “when that which is perfect is come,” those spiritual gifts of prophecies, tongues and knowledge would be done away and cease forever. This was destined to be fulfilled within the lifetime of Jesus’ apostles for he himself had foretold that the Holy Spirit would guide them into “all the truth” (John 16:13). Before the last apostle succumbed to death, all the truth that God intended to reveal to man had been delivered. It would not be repeatedly given by inspiration down through the centuries of the Christian era because it “was once for all delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3). “That which is perfect” had come when the apostle John laid down the pen of Revelation and finished “the words of the prophecy” (Rev 22:18-21).

#### VERSE 11

**An illustration.** In verse 11 Paul utilizes an illustration to elaborate on the fact he has just stated. It is about a child becoming a man and emphasizes the contrast between infancy and maturity. Just as a child leaves behind his infancy, his limited ways of thinking and acting, to become mature in full-grown manhood, so also the Christian will leave behind the “childish things” of limited spiritual gifts to attain to the “most excellent way” (12:31) consisting of faith, hope and love (13:13). A child thinks, feels and speaks as a child because he does not yet have the knowledge to think, feel and speak on an adult level. But he learns. And as he learns, his infancy is transformed into maturity and childish things are “put away.”

So also, with the Christian: “They shall all be taught of God” (John 6:45). Just as the Mosaic law was a “tutor to bring us to Christ” (Galatians 3:24), so also were spiritual gifts a temporary, educational measure to bring us to maturity. And just as “we are no longer under a tutor” of the old law since it was brought to completion in Christ, so also we are no longer under the tutorship of spiritual gifts since they were brought to completion in the fullness of God’s revealed will. The completed revelation has now been given and made available, superseding and canceling that which was in part.

Sometimes those professing to have spiritual gifts today will say that the gifts enable them to have a maturity beyond what they had previously experienced. We will not attempt to deny that they have been immature, but we will deny that the use of either real or imagined gifts produces such maturity. The church in Corinth had more tongue-speaking, for instance, than any other as far as we have record. Yet it was a church split with factions, lawsuits, fornication, skepticism and drunkenness at the Lord's table! No wonder Jesus said: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign" (Matthew 12:39). Paul said that the Corinthians were not spiritual but carnal (1 Corinthians 3:1), even "babes in Christ," and that their excessive use of tongues was further evidence of their being "children in mind" (1 Corinthians 4:18-20).

Spiritual gifts did not subjectively produce spirituality in the lives of those who were gifted. That was not the purpose of the gifts. When Jesus "gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8), it was so that the gospel might be correctly proclaimed through apostles and other divinely-aided teachers (Ephesians 4:11) and that by the **hearing** of it the saints might be matured and the body of Christ built up (Ephesians 4:12). Thus, by the help of the gifts Christians were protected from doctrinal error (Ephesians 4:14) and enabled to speak the truth (Ephesians 4:15). The use of genuine spiritual gifts was a sign of babyhood. Maturity was to come with the ending of the gifts.

#### VERSE 12

In verse 12 Paul further explains that the reason why spiritual gifts were then existent but would later be put away was because **at that time** ("now"—Greek *arti*— means the immediate present) they could only "see in a mirror darkly." Later they would be able to see "face to face." Such a distinction is another way of stating the difference between knowing "in part" and knowing "fully" as in the second part of verse 12. The change would take place at the time "when that which is perfect is come."

**Face to face.** Possibly the most helpful way of approaching verse 12 is to first consider what "face to face" means. There are some who say that Paul is here speaking about the prospect of our seeing **God** face to face—literally and actually—and that this cannot happen before judgment day. Possibly it was this interpretation of Paul's language that spawned these words in the chorus of a well-known song: "And I shall see Him face to face, And tell the story saved by grace." But notice that Paul does not say that we are going to see **God** face to face, much less that it is going to take place in heaven. Whatever may be the privilege of the saints in heaven, that is not Paul's subject-matter. Paul is writing about how at that time they could see something **dimly** in a mirror that would become **clearer** later. He did not mention either God or heaven in this connection. But even if he had stated or inferred "God" as the object of his seeing, it would not imply heaven as the place of fulfillment. Let us see how the expression "face to face" is used elsewhere in Scripture:

- (1) In Genesis 32:30 Jacob, after wrestling with the angel, says: “I have seen God face to face.” Jacob did not **actually and literally** see God for “no man hath seen God at any time” (John 1:18). But Jacob saw God representatively. In seeing and hearing the angel, he had an intimate and direct encounter with God’s manifestation and revelation. So even to see **God** “face to face” does not necessitate being in his actual presence. The expression is not used in a literal sense.
  
- (2) Deuteronomy 34:10 tells of “Moses, whom Jehovah knew face to face.” And Exodus 33:11 says that “Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend.” But notice that in verse 20 God says to Moses: “Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live.” And in verse 23 he says: “Thou shalt see my back; but my face shall not be seen.” Therefore, Moses did not see God “face to face” in a literal way. The expression indicates an immediate and direct communion with God which Moses **while on earth** was privileged to have.
  
- (3) In Deuteronomy 5:4-5 Moses tells the Israelites that in connection with the giving of the law “Jehovah spake with you face to face in the mount.” Yet the account of that event given in Exodus 19 says that God told Moses: “Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto Jehovah to gaze, and many of them perish” (v. 21). The people didn’t actually see God’s face. They “went not up into the mount” (Deut 5: 5), but they received a clear understanding of his will. “Ye heard the voice of words, but ye saw no form” (Deut 4:12), says Moses. And God told him to say to the people: “Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven” (Exodus 20:22). This was the privilege of people **on earth during this life!**

Thus, we understand that even to see God “face to face” simply indicates a clear reception of his will. Thayer’s *Lexicon*, commenting on 1 Corinthians 13:12, says that the expression means to “discern perfectly his nature, will, purposes”—that is, as far as God has revealed such. Those people of Israel had that experience. God told the Israelites in the Ten Commandments what kind of God he is and what his commands are. And Paul says that those commandments “came with glory so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly upon the face of Moses for the glory of his face” (1 Corinthians 3:7). But he goes on to say that “the ministration of righteousness (the law of Christ) exceeds in glory” (v. 9). Moses had to veil his shining face (v. 13) and a figurative veil was upon the hearts of the people (vv. 14 and 15), meaning that their “minds were hardened” or their understanding was limited. “But,” says Paul, “we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into that same image from glory to glory” (v. 18). In other words, our understanding can be even clearer than theirs!

**See in a mirror darkly.** Paul says that they “see in a mirror darkly” or dimly at that time, but later the image would become clearer—“face to face.” To “see in a mirror” was often a figure of speech which meant “to receive revelation from God.” This was the function of prophets in Old Testament times. In Numbers 12:6 God says: “If there be a prophet among you, I Jehovah will make myself known unto him in a vision, I will speak with him in a dream.” He goes on to say: “My servant Moses is not so...with him will I speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, and not in dark speeches” (vv. 7 and 8). The Hebrew word for “mirror”—*marah*—is the same word that means “vision “as a means of receiving revelation from God. To see a vision was to figuratively see in a mirror. It is this word “mirror” which is found in Numbers 12:6 (and ten other passages) translated “vision.” Virtually the same word (but with different vowel pointing)—*mareh* —is found in verse 8 translated “manifestly” or “apparently.” The rabbis in Midrashic writings always took the word in this verse to mean “mirror” in a figurative sense (see Kittel’s *TDNT*, I, 178f.). They said that the prophets saw God in clouded mirrors, but Moses saw him in a clear one.

Paul says that the Christians of his day were looking into such a clouded mirror. “Darkly” or “dimly” is literally “in an enigma.” This word “enigma” means “a riddle” or “indistinct image” (Arndt-Gingrich, *Lexicon*). A riddle is “an obscure saying” (Thayer’s *Lexicon*). It is the Hebrew counterpart of this word that is found in Ezekiel 17:2 (“Son of man, put forth a **riddle**, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel.”) and also in Numbers 12:8 where it has been translated “dark speeches.” When the prophets of Israel looked into the mirror of divine revelation, it was a clouded mirror—an enigma. They experienced an obscure seeing, hearing and speaking about God and his will. Not so with Moses! He also looked into the mirror of divine revelation, but there were no “dark speeches,” no enigmas, no obscure sayings. His mirror was a clear one. Thus, we may accurately translate the first part of Numbers 12:8 as: “Mouth to mouth I will speak with him, even (in) a mirror, but not in obscure utterances.”

“Mouth to mouth” in the above passage is the equivalent of “face to face” in previously mentioned passages regarding Moses. This verse is the background out of which Paul writes the language of 1 Corinthians 13:12. Thus his meaning is: “Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then we will see in a mirror clearly,” or “Right now we look in an obscure mirror, but when that which is perfect is come we will look in a clear one.” That which is perfect does not take away the **mirror**. It takes away the **enigma** so that the image will no longer appear obscure but “face to face.”

In 1 Corinthians 3:18 Paul says that what we all see in the mirror is “the **glory** of the Lord,” an “image,” and that we are transformed into that image through the work of the Spirit. The glories that were to follow the sufferings of Christ were proclaimed by prophets in Old Testament times, but their prophecies were obscure (1 Peter 1:11). Those men sought and searched diligently (v. 10). Their mirror was clouded. But Peter says those glories “now have been announced unto you through them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit sent forth from heaven” (v. 12).

So, according to Peter, the mirror of God's revelation was in the process of becoming clearer. It is a Christian revelation and "angels desire to look into" it (1 Peter 1:12). Or, as Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Seeing it is God that said, Light shall shine out of darkness, who shined in our **hearts**, to give the light of the **knowledge** of the glory of God in the **face** of Jesus Christ." Jesus the Christ has come! And now, when we look into the mirror of divine revelation, it is **his face** that we see, his will that has been revealed, his law that has been established. And we are to **look into** that perfect law, the law of liberty, and continue in it (James 1:25).

No wonder James uses the illustration of a mirror. It is a term that indicates God's will. We are not to simply behold our natural faces in a mirror (James 1:23), but we are to "receive with meekness the implanted word" (v. 21) by looking into the mirror of the law of liberty (v. 25).

**I know fully.** The second part of verse 12 continues by saying: "Now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known." The ordinary Greek word for "I know" was *ginosko*. This is the word Paul uses in the first part of this quotation. The word by itself does not indicate how well one knows something. But Paul adds the words "in part" so that the reader will be sure to understand that Paul's knowledge was partial at that time.

In contrast, Paul goes ahead to say that later (after the perfect has come) he will know "fully." The Greek word translated "know fully" is *epiginosko* (present tense). This is a compound of the word for "know" which Paul had just used. It is the same word except that the preposition *epi* is added as a prefix. The meaning is intensified somewhat so that the translators of the American Standard Version, the Revised Standard Version, and others added the word "fully" to show the difference. Other words that modern translators have used to emphasize this difference are "clearly" and "completely." The Twentieth Century New Testament translates the verse: "As yet my knowledge is incomplete, but then I shall know in full, as I have been fully known."

Readers of the King James Version would not have reason to notice any distinction, but readers of later translations would. Taking special note of the fact that Paul says he is going to "know fully," some have argued strongly that one can **never** know fully in **this** life. Therefore, they conclude that Paul is writing about the time when this world shall have drawn to a close and the faithful are all in heaven receiving a full revelation of all things. Some translations have taken the liberty to add the word "God" into verse 12. Williams translates: "I shall know perfectly, as God knows me." Knox goes so far as to render it: "I shall recognize God as he recognizes me." Such loose translations as these have given further confidence to those who would place the fulfillment of Paul's expectation in heaven. We should emphasize that it is an unwarranted addition to the sacred Scriptures to put the word "God" into the verse. It just isn't there! And anyone who puts it in is interpreting, not translating. Paul didn't say a thing about knowing

**anything** as well as God knows him, much less that he was going to know **God** that well. Such an idea was the devil's lie to Eve (Gen 3:5) but nowhere promised by God!

Let us not get carried away with personal opinions but remember to let the Bible define the terms. If everyone would make the effort to get Biblical definitions of Biblical words, no one would be arguing that this verse requires heaven for its fulfillment. The word *epiginosko* (translated "know fully" and "fully known") as used in the New Testament means "to become thoroughly acquainted with," or "to know thoroughly... accurately...well" (Thayer's *Lexicon*). It means to "know exactly, completely, through and through" (Arndt-Gingrich *Lexicon*). It does not always indicate something different in meaning than the simple word *ginosko*—"to know." Thus, often it simply means to perceive, understand, recognize, acknowledge or observe.

To say that the compound word means to know something accurately does not mean that the ordinary *ginosko* might indicate knowledge mixed with error. One who simply has an opinion may or may not be correct. In contrast, one who knows has the certainty that he grasps the truth (see Kittel's *TDNT*, I, 690). However, one who knows (*ginosko*) something may or may not have thorough knowledge of his topic, whereas one who knows well (*epiginosko*) does have thorough knowledge of whatever topic is under discussion.

Let us notice how the word *epiginosko* ("know fully") is used and translated in other passages in the New Testament:

- (1) Concerning false prophets Jesus said in Matthew 7:16: "By their fruits ye shall know—*epiginosko*—them."
- (2) Luke tells Theophilus in Luke 1:3,4 that he has written to him "that thou mightest know—*epiginosko*—the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."
- (3) Paul says in Romans 1:32 that the ungodly people he mentions practice their sin while "knowing—*epiginosko*—the ordinance of God."
- (4) Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him take knowledge—*epiginosko*—**of the things which I write unto you**, that they are the commandment of the Lord."
- (5) Timothy was instructed in 1 Timothy 4:3 that meats are "to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know—*epiginosko*—the truth."
- (6) Peter writes in 2 Peter 2:21 that some after "knowing—*epiginosko*—the way of righteousness" turned back from it.

- (7) In 1 Corinthians 6:9 Paul says that he was “well known”—*epiginosko*—by some.
- (8) Paul told the Colossians in 1:6 that they “knew—*epiginosko*—the grace of God in truth.”
- (9) In Matthew 11:27 Jesus says that those who “know—*epiginosko*—the Father” are “the Son and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him.”

The noun form of this word (*epignosis*) is found with the same usage. Christians were able to have an *epignosis* (thorough knowledge) of: God’s will (Colossians 1:9), the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), Jesus Christ (2 Peter 2:20; Ephesians 4:13), both God and Christ (2 Peter 1:2).

Notice that the above Scriptures tell of what Christians are able to do **on earth during this life**. These passages refer to thorough knowledge in **this** life, not to some greater knowledge gained in heaven. Today there are many claiming to have prophetic or spiritual gifts. These are the ones who argue the strongest that one cannot “know fully” in this life, yet they are the very ones whom Paul commands to **know fully** the things he writes (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Paul also said to “acknowledge” or “know fully” (*epiginosko*) the things he wrote **unto the end** (1 Corinthians 1:13), not **after the end!** He further said that the Corinthians **did** acknowledge or know—*epiginosko*—both himself and Timothy “in part”—*apo merous* — (v. 14). Thus it is possible to “know fully” something that is “in part!” In fact, thorough knowledge—*epignosis*—can be increased (Colossians 1:10) so that the gaining of it is said to be a renewal process (Colossians 3:10).

Those who think we should continue to seek after spiritual gifts and wait until we get to heaven for thorough knowledge could well be described in the language of Romans 10:2: “They have a zeal for God, but not according to **knowledge—epignosis.**” For the claim that one cannot “know fully” (in the Biblical sense of the word) during this life has been shown to be a claim that is entirely without Scriptural basis and out of harmony with the definitions of that word in the New Testament.

### VERSE 13

Verse 13 states: “But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

**Now.** The word “now” (Greek: *nuni*) is normally an adverb of time but may become simply a connective when *de* (“but” or “and”) is used with it. In such a case, it has no reference to a time element but is used in a strictly logical sense—to introduce a further thought. Paul uses it this way several times right here in 1 Corinthians (see: 5:11, 12:18,

14:6, 15:20). It is therefore unwarranted to place any temporal emphasis on “now” in our present verse as opposed to some other time. Paul is just introducing his next thought—the things that abide in contrast with the temporary gifts which were to pass away.

**There abideth.** In reading in this verse about faith, hope and love abiding, some have jumped to the conclusion that Paul is saying that these three things will exist forever. We must comment just here that whether Paul means they will exist until judgment day or on through eternity, it does not change the meaning of the preceding verses which we have already dealt with. In either case, that which is perfect comes before judgment day and these three qualities continue on after spiritual gifts end. We are convinced, however, that a careful study of verse 13 and related passages serves only to strengthen that conclusion.

Let us go on to observe the meaning of Paul’s terms. The Greek word *meno*, translated “abide,” has also been translated in other New Testament passages as “continue,” “dwell,” “remain,” “tarry,” etc. This word does not necessarily mean “to continue from now through eternity.” To say that something or someone will **abide** is not to say **how long** the abiding will be. For instance, one might “abide” (*meno*) an hour (Matthew 26:38,40), a day (Acts 21:7), two days (John 4: 40), a few days (John 2:12), many days (Acts 9:43), three months (Luke 1:56) or two years (Acts 28:30).

Therefore, there is no implication in the word “abide” as to how long it will be. It may be just for a little while as the seventh king of Revelation 17:10. It may be until Christ returns as he mentioned in John 21:22-23. Or it may be endless as in the case of the Christian’s eternal possession (Hebrews 10:34). Paul told the Philippians that he was sure he would “abide” with them (Philippians 1:25), but his abiding would end when he would “depart and be with Christ” (Philippians 1:23).

When the word “abide” means endlessly, the words “for ever” are usually attached as in Hebrews 7:24, 1 Peter 1:25 and 1 John 2:17. This is not always the case but often is. And unless there is some clear statement given in the Scriptures that the subject under discussion will exist forever, we should be careful not to say that it will. The New English Bible presumes too much when it renders our present passage: “...there are three things that last for ever...” The words “for ever” are neither stated nor implied in the context. We would do well to remember this warning: “Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar” (Proverbs 30:6).

The idea is that someone or something remains in whatever sphere is under discussion. In 1 Corinthians 13 Christian qualities and gifts **in this life** are under discussion. (Notice that verses 1-8 involve evil, suffering, etc.) Heaven is not even mentioned. Paul takes Christianity as it exists in this world and draws a distinction between temporary gifts and permanent qualities, between that which was to exist for awhile and then be done away and that which was to exist throughout the entire era.

**Faith, hope, love.** In order to determine whether faith, hope and love will all survive the second advent we need to go outside our present passage and examine the teaching of the Scriptures in general. Paul is fond of combining faith, hope and love. This triad is found again in 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8 and Colossians 1:4-5. In 1 Thessalonians 1:3 it is not just these virtues but also their products that are mentioned: "...**work** of faith, and **labor** of love and **patience** (steadfastness) of hope." It is evident that this passage implies nothing beyond this world since beyond this life "no man can work" (John 9:4), there will be "rest from...labors" (Rev 14:13) and the steadfast will have "run the race" (Hebrews 12:1). 1 Thessalonians 5:8 and Colossians 1:4-5 are likewise concerned with our Christian sojourn.

We may be sure that love will exist in heaven for "God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God" (1 John 4:16). Further, Paul speaks of those who love Jesus with an "incorruptible" love (Ephesians 6:24). Instead of "sincerely" as in the KJV, the wording is literally "in incorruption" (Greek: *en aphtharsia*). "Incorruption" is that which applies only to what transcends death into eternal life (Romans 2:7) "when this corruption shall have put on incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:54). In brief, there is absolutely nothing, including death, which "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39).

On the other hand, both faith and hope are confined to this age. Personal faith, subjectively residing in the heart of the believer, was embraced by godly ones of old (for instance, Abraham - Hebrews 11:8) as well as those in the Christian era. While "**the faith**" —the gospel, the new covenant—made its appearance with Jesus (Galatians 3:23) and is here to stay (Jude 3), **personal** faith looks forward to a fulfillment. It looks to the future. It is "the assurance of things **hoped** for, a conviction of things **not seen**" (Hebrews 11:1). It is directed toward remission of sins (Acts 10:43), justification (Acts 13:39), salvation (1 Timothy 3:15), eternal life (1 Timothy 1:16). It is "unto the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39).

While we live in this world "we walk by faith, not by sight" (1 Corinthians 5:7). This faith involves belief, obedience, trust, hope, and faithfulness until "that day" arrives (1 Timothy 1:12) when all of God's promises come true. Then faith shall vanish into sight.

Likewise, hope is limited to this world. The **object** of our hope is "laid up...in the heavens" (Colossians 1:5)—the "inheritance...reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4), the mansions in our Father's house that are ready and waiting for our arrival (John 14:2). But **personal, subjective hope** in the Christian's heart is a thing of **this** life, not of the **next**. Like faith, it looks to the future. It involves expectation, trust and the patience of waiting. It is the confidence that all of God's promises (Acts 26:6) will end in attainment (Acts 26:7). Hope that is set on God (1 Timothy 4:10) and grounded in Christ (1 Thessalonians 1:3) anticipates: salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:8), Christ's return (1 Peter 1:13), deliverance from earthly corruption (Romans 8:21), resurrection (Acts

24:15), glory (Colossians 1:27), seeing and being like Him (1 John 3:2-3) and eternal life (Titus 1:2).

All of these things will be completely fulfilled on the great day of Christ's return. We do not see them just yet and this is why we must hope. **"But hope that is seen is not hope"** (Romans 8:24). Instead, "we hope for that which we see not" (Romans 8:25). Hope is our attitude toward the future when the object is not yet present. It involves steadfastness (Romans 15:4), waiting (Galatians 5:5), expectation (Philippians 1:20), looking (Titus 2:13) and laying hold (Hebrews 6:18).

But hope will come to an end. It will not continue forever. As is remarked in Kittel's *TDNT*: "Faith and hope bear the marks of this defective aeon," and "are both unequivocally and naturally ascribed by Paul to this present era." Because of "the temporary character of *pistis* (faith) and *elpis* (hope), ...love alone is seen to be no longer of this world but to stretch into the future aeon" (*TDNT*, I, 50-51). We must "hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the **end**" (Hebrews 3:6). We must show "diligence unto the fullness of hope even to the **end**" (Hebrews 6:11). That is the moment when hope along with faith becomes reality, sight, possession!

As with knowing and prophesying, it is neither the content nor consequences of faith and hope which must come to an end but rather the action. When eternity unfolds it is no longer a matter of faith but sight, no longer a matter of hope but fulfillment.

**The greatest of these is love.** In verse 7 Paul had said that love bears, believes, hopes and endures all things—that is, all things in this life! This is so because in heaven we will have no more of that. There will be no death, mourning, crying or pain to bear because "the first things are passed away" (Rev 21:4). There will be no unrealized blessings to believe in; they will all have been fulfilled. There will be no expectations with which to hope for they will all have been received. There will be no temptations or hardships which we must endure for they will be gone, endurance will come to an end, and we will be finally and completely saved (Matthew 10:22).

Yet even when all of this is finished, "love never faileth" (1 Corinthians 13:8). Other elements in this defective age are transitory. In the end they will all be pointless. But whereas faith and hope are only human responses, love is also a divine quality. Since we become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1:4) and eventually will "be like him" (1 John 3:2), love will continue on. Love is the only vital force of the Christian to have a future in the world beyond. This is why, though there have been great spiritual gifts, love is the "most excellent way" (1 Corinthians 12:31). And though there are other great, God-directed forces in the Christian heart, Paul can say, "the greatest of these is love."

## SUMMARY

Both the reason for the existence of spiritual gifts and the occasion for their ending are clearly stated in 1 Corinthians 13. It is not the ambiguous passage that some have thought it to be. Following is a summary of what we have learned in this study:

- (1) Tongues were to “cease” their activity, but their faith inducing effect would continue. Their activity would end but not their efficacy. We today believe because such signs were once given.
- (2) Prophecies and knowledge, as representative of all the gifts, were to “be done away” as spiritual gifts because they would be replaced by the fullness of God’s revealed will. They existed in order to provide God’s revelation to man part by part. They ended because the partial gave way to the complete when God’s revelation was finished.
- (3) The adjective translated “perfect” is **never** used to describe something after this life is over but is **always** used of people and things in the here and now.
- (4) “That which is perfect” is the completion of knowing and prophesying God’s will. This completion of the New Testament revelation was fulfilled within the lifetime of Jesus’ apostles as he foretold.
- (5) Spiritual gifts do not produce maturity. The illustration about a child becoming a man shows that maturity (the “perfect”) comes in **this** life **before** one reaches a state of sinlessness.
- (6) The expressions “see...face to face” and “know fully” are **never** used in the Bible as descriptions of some heavenly blessings of God’s people. These are expressions of earthly maturity as God’s Word is clearly unfolded and Christians “understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:17). As the enigmas of the dim mirror were removed through further revelation, God’s Word shined forth clearly—face to face—and Christians were able to know that Word thoroughly or fully.
- (7) **Nowhere** in the Bible is it ever said that Christians will have faith or hope while in heaven. On the contrary, they are **both** said to be **present** substitutes for sight. When “that which is perfect” came, spiritual gifts ceased and were done away. Instead of temporary gifts, it was the permanent elements of faith, hope and love which continued on. And one day when Jesus comes again, faith and hope will be left behind as characteristics of this expectant age while love will endure forever.

And now, while we await that great day, let us seek and cherish: not the incomplete but the complete, not the things of childhood but the things of manhood, not the dark but the

clear, not the partial but the full, not the temporary but the permanent, not spiritual gifts but faith, hope and love.

## EXPOSITION OF 1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-40

- Author Unknown -

In this study, let's not forget one fundamental point in connection with this reading: Whenever we turn to God's book and begin studying regarding woman's work, we learn that they WERE to prophesy, Acts 2:16-17; we learn they DID prophesy, Acts 21:19; we learn they are commanded to teach, Titus 2:3; we learn they DID teach, Acts 18:26 (the Bible, that is). It follows, therefore, clearly and forcefully as a demonstration, that any interpretation of 1 Corinthians 14:26-40 that forbids a woman to teach is false. Let us see just exactly what IS TAUGHT.

The first point is "brethren." "How is it then brethren." It may be PRESUMED that others were present besides "brethren," but not PROVED. As emphasis, "...when YE (brethren) come together." The indication is that none were present except Christians.

"How is it then brethren, when ye come together," point number two, the obvious fact of a "gathering." WHAT KIND of gathering? a gathering of "brethren." This is an UNUSUAL kind of brethren. Why? They didn't have the New Testament as we do. Still, they had to have some means of divine guidance. God gave them that guidance through the means of Spiritual Gifts, the which is being discussed in the 12th, 13th and 14th chapters of 1 Corinthians, and Ephesians 4. None deny this. These gifts were miraculous, and involved apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; and were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; and were to last until the church was become a "full-grown man," (Ephesians. 4) (when the revelation was completed). There were Miraculous Gifts in the early church, and if so, it should be obvious that there had to be meetings in connection with which there was the receiving of the benefits of these miraculous gifts. This seems a simple explanation of this meeting, but whether agreed with or not, does not affect the points to be developed. This meeting described may or may not have been on the Lord's day. There is no reference to the Lord's Supper. Paul had dealt with THAT MEETING (on the Lord's Supper) in the 11th chapter. This is an altogether different kind of meeting in chapter 14. So, we have a gathering, a gathering for the purpose of dispensing with the benefits of Spiritual Gifts. How do we know? The verse indicates as much. "How is it, brethren, when ye come together, everyone of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation." And so, the gathering is for the giving and receiving of these miraculous gifts.

The last part of the verse says simply, "Let all things be done unto edifying." This simply emphasizes the point just made. Paul says, "Brethren, you are very zealous, you are zealous for the spiritual gifts; but seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church." Paul's point is that they had become so concerned about these miraculous gifts that they had forgotten the purpose for which they were given. They desired the gifts as an end rather than as a means to an end. "Let all things be done unto edifying," or "Brethren, use these gifts for edifying the church." The indication is that some were

failing to do so. This is indicated also in verse 12. This is the theme of his discussion; this is the kind of meeting they were having in verses 26 through 40.

The next verse, "if any man speaketh in a tongue;" simply bears out the previous statement. In this kind of meeting, there may be some who had the gift to speak in tongues (languages) which these men (with this gift) had never studied. "And so, if any man speaketh in a tongue, let it be by two or at most by three." This means there HAD to be at least two, but NO MORE THAN THREE. One may say, "That isn't what it means." Maybe this isn't what it means, but THAT IS WHAT IT SAYS!!! Let it be by two or at most by three, and that in turn, and then let one interpret. So we have those who speak in tongues, but there had to be someone there to interpret. Here is another reason it can be known that there was nobody in that meeting except church members, because THE TONGUE COULD BE USED FOR OUTSIDERS WITHOUT INTERPRETATION! (Acts 2), but 1 Corinthians 14:5 says there can be no speaking of tongues so far as the church is concerned UNLESS THERE BE AN INTERPRETER. Therefore, "If a man speak in a tongue, let it be by two or at most by three, and that in turn, and let one interpret." Now watch, "But if there be no interpreter let him (man) KEEP SILENCE in the church." Here, in this meeting, is a condition for a MAN to "keep silence" in the church. If there is no interpreter, let him who would otherwise speak, "keep silence."

Paul now turns to the gift of prophecy. "Let the prophets speak." What is a prophet? We know there is no prophecy without inspiration or revelation. Some, when asked, say, "It means to teach." This is NOT SO. If prophecy means to teach, then what does "teach" mean? We have both in the same connection. There can be teaching without inspiration; but there is NO PROPHECY WITHOUT INSPIRATION! (2 Peter 1:20-21). The word simply means, "pro," in behalf of, for; and "phami," simply means "to speak." A prophet then is a representative of God, who through inspiration "speaks for" God. "No prophecy ever came by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit," 2 Peter 1:21. To PROPHECY involved both INSPIRATION AND REVELATION, and these are those gifts of which Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 12, 13 and 14.

"Let the prophets speak by two or three," he has already said this once, "and let the others discern." Now watch, "But if a revelation be given to another (prophet), let the first keep silence." Now let's get the picture. In this meeting, there is a prophet speaking - speaking by inspiration - God revealing the message to him. There is another prophet sitting over yonder to whom God reveals something. Paul's instruction is that instead of the second prophet rising and speaking while the first is still talking, let the FIRST PROPHET SIT DOWN, so there won't be any "confusion" to which he refers in the same connection. Here is the SECOND condition in which A MAN is to KEEP SILENCE in the church. Why "keep silence"? to AVOID CONFUSION! "For ye (and that YE refers to the prophets, and not to everyone in the meeting); it is an obvious point that no one could prophesy except those with the GIFT OF PROPHECY , "For ye may all prophesy

one by one that all may learn.” Paul further indicates that it can be done - they can speak one at a time, for “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” Simply, if one prophet is speaking but another gets a revelation, it would be an easy matter for the second to jump up and start talking, and each feel the necessity for continuing, and then their confusion could be blamed on the Spirit. Paul tells them the Spirit in this case is “subject unto the prophet.” The reason for this is that, “God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” Surely, it can be now seen that this was a MOST UNUSUAL MEETING. Have you ever been to one like this??

Having given direction how the men were to avoid confusion in the church, in some cases commanding SILENCE, it is a given fact that women can cause as much confusion as men. He says, “Let YOUR women - he has been talking to the prophets. He hadn’t changed the subject. “Let YOUR women (wives of these prophets) keep silence in the church, for it is not permitted for them to speak. “We want to pay close attention to the word “speak.” At this meeting, under these circumstances, at the time and place under consideration in these passages, a woman wasn’t to utter a sound; she couldn’t break the silence. That is the primary meaning of the Greek word “laleo.” In the original New Testament, there are two words translated “speak.” One was “lego”; the other “laleo.” “Lego” is speech behind which there is thought and preparation; intelligent sound. “Laleo” is any noise that breaks the silence. It is used even in connection with the chattering of animals. The Greek word here is NOT Lego but Laleo. A woman in that meeting was not even to BREAK THE SILENCE. She couldn’t even whisper. Still, those who use this passage to teach that a woman should keep silence in the church do not object to her singing. But this is breaking the silence. They don’t object to her confessing her faith in Christ as a baptismal candidate or confession of fault. What is the difference? It is in the KIND OF ASSEMBLY!! In this particular assembly, she wasn’t to utter A SOUND!! NOT ONE!!

“But, they are commanded to be in subjection as also saith the law.” The “they” is still the wives of the prophets. “And if they will learn anything” - anything about what? The answer usually is, “Anything about everything,” but that isn’t what the book says. Remember verse 30 saying, “Ye may all prophesy one by one that all may learn,” so the women could learn by what the prophets told them. Now it becomes obvious that the “anything” in this verse does NOT mean everything. It means ANYTHING ABOUT THE PROPHECY OF HER HUSBAND - or one of the others. Here is the picture: the prophet is speaking, and here’s a woman who doesn’t understand some points in the prophecy. She may think she has a right, especially if she is his wife, to jump up and interrupt his discourse. Paul has even FORBIDDEN OTHER PROPHETS TO DO THAT!! So Paul tells them that if they want to know more, wait ‘till they get home and talk there. The reason for this: “For it is a shame for women to speak in the church.”

Question: “Is it shameful for women to speak in the church, under every situation? Is it shameful for her to sing? Is it a shame for her to confess her faith? Is it a shame for her

to confess her waywardness in the assembly?" We all recognize it is not. This was an UNUSUAL MEETING.

Let's see what we have:

1. This is a very particular kind of meeting. Nothing like it today.
2. Prophets were commanded silence - if there was no interpreter.
  - a. But there are no such prophets as those described.
  - b. Now there are no gifts of interpretation.
  - c. There is no prophet number one to give over to prophet number two.
  - d. Now there are no revelations such as they had.
  - e. There are now no inspired prophets' wives.

The man who says a woman must be silent, based upon that passage, must also say at the same time that EVERY MAN MUST ALSO BE SILENT, because you have both in the same connection. Another thought. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 never did apply to a single girl, nor did it apply to a widow. It never applied to a woman whose husband wasn't a church member, never applied to a woman whose husband had been a church member but had fallen away, never applied to a woman who knew more about the Bible than her husband, nor to any woman except the wives of the prophets in those days of spiritual gifts. How absurd to hear some preacher tell a single girl or widow, "If you would learn anything, you must ask your husband at home!"

Having discussed these passages, someone may raise the question, "Does this mean that this Scripture has no value to us now?" Certainly, there is value to us now. There is the VERY LESSON that Paul was teaching these people, which lesson has been so pitifully neglected because man has paid more attention to conditions and circumstances by which the lesson is taught, than by the lesson itself. The LESSON IS: "God is not a God of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the saints," and "Let all things be done unto edifying," and "Let all things be done decently and in order." These three points are just as binding on the church today as they ever were. What would you think if a preacher taught, "Desire earnestly spiritual gifts," and used this Scripture to prove it. You would say, "Preacher, you are misapplying this Scripture." But some turn right around and try to make this fit and apply to the church today.

But, suppose it DID APPLY NOW. Does this mean it is wrong to have women teaching Bible classes (some classes)? If they applied at all, they would only apply when the

WHOLE CHURCH assembled. Question: "Can there be meetings, religious gatherings, other than those of the WHOLE CHURCH?" Certainly, for you have one in Acts 5. You have a meeting of the church, or a part of it, in which an apostle asked a woman to speak - and she did speak. Is that the whole church? If so, you have authority for a woman speaking in the church. If not, you have authority for a gathering smaller than the church, to which 1 Corinthians 14 can't be applied. In Acts 12 we have a meeting in the home of Mary, mother of Mark. A woman spoke in that meeting. Was that the church? If so, there is authority for a woman speaking in church. If not, you have authority for a gathering other than the church, and to which 1 Corinthians 14 can't be applied. Then in Acts 18 is the record of Priscilla teaching Apollos. Here is a gathering of some kind - with a woman doing the teaching, to which 1 Corinthians 14 couldn't apply, even if it did apply today - which it does not.

Now then, the "anti" brethren ARE NOT IN HARMONY with 1 Corinthians 14 because:

1. They do not forbid women to speak in the church.
  - a. She sings, and the Bible says that is speaking (Ephesians 5:19). (It further says singing is TEACHING, Colossians 3:16.)
  - b. She confesses her faith in Christ, as a candidate for baptism.
  - c. She confesses her faults whenever she goes astray.

There will be no consistency with 1 Corinthians 14 until women are FORBIDDEN to sing or confess in the assembly - but God COMMANDS us to sing. These reasons BESIDE those that governed that assembly Paul spoke of - that they speak "by two or by three," or if "no interpreter," KEEP SILENCE!!! Then again, if 1 Corinthians 14 is a "pattern" for worship, study, etc., why is it that those who insist this to be true are not guided by it when they answer questions of women who are NOT THEIR WIVES? There is NO PROVISION WHATEVER for this. Since this is true, how is it that they ASSUME it to be correct, when they HAVE NO AUTHORITY? (To go ahead and answer any woman, as if she were "a wife," as indicated in the text.) Surely when we try to make this "the pattern," we get into deep trouble.

One may insist, "But it is shameful for a woman to speak in the assembly." If this be true, which assumes the meeting described above to be a regular church assembly, then those insisting on such find themselves in condemnation, for they sing, they confess Christ. This is SPEAKING!!

#### EXPOSITION OF 1 TIMOTHY 2:11-14

Whenever we turn to this study, regarding woman's work in the church, we learn:

1. She was to PROPHECY (Acts 2:16-17).
  - a. She DID PROPHECY (Acts 21:9).
2. Women are commanded to teach (Titus 2:3).
  - a. They DID TEACH (Acts 18:26) (even teaching men).

So, it is an obvious point that any interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-14 that FORBIDS a woman to teach, is a false interpretation. We reemphasize that Acts 18:26 tells us that Priscilla, a woman, taught Apollos, a man. Since this is an approved example, this proves that there is no sin in a woman teaching a man the Bible. Any interpretation of 1 Timothy 2:11-14 that forbids a woman teaching a man the Bible is false. Any interpretation that forbids a woman exercising dominion (cf. 1 Timothy 2:11-14) according to 1 Timothy 5:14, is false. "I desire, therefore, that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household." Here women are COMMANDED to exercise dominion.... And so, we have the obligation of finding out just exactly WHAT DOES this passage teach, and when we have found it, it will be in perfect harmony with every other plain, clear, simple statement on the same subject.

Let us suggest now that this passage is NOT parallel with 1 Corinthians 14. In 1 Corinthians, there is a reference to a particular gathering of brethren for a particular purpose. In this meeting in 1 Timothy 2, there is no reference to the church, and therefore it is of general application. The Christian woman is under the teachings of 1 Timothy 2 whether she be on the street, in the school-room, in her home, in a café or in the church assembly. These points apply to the conduct of Christian women EVERYWHERE. Suppose Paul had in mind the church; then we would be compelled to read, "I permit not a woman to teach in the church." (That would mean she could do so everywhere else.) "Nor to have dominion over a man - in the church." That would mean she COULD HAVE DOMINION OVER A MAN anywhere and everywhere EXCEPT the church. Is there anyone who is ready to say this is what Paul meant? Then, some make the mistake of thinking this refers to "public teaching." Does Paul say, "I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man - IN PUBLIC?" Then she COULD have dominion over a man anywhere and everywhere else! Others have read into this passage "Bible teaching." I permit not a woman to teach THE BIBLE." That would mean she could teach anything else on earth, but the most important thing that the earth knows anything about. Paul doesn't teach this.

The word "silence," rendered "quietness" in the revised version, is NOT the same thing rendered "silence" in 1 Corinthians 14. "Quietness" is the correct translation. There can be quietness in speaking. Have you not heard one say of another, "How quietly he (she) spoke"?

So, just what does the passage say? What does it teach? In Acts 4:18 the council commanded Peter and John “not to teach nor to speak at all in the name of Jesus.” Does that mean that if Peter met John one morning he couldn’t say, “Good morning, John”? Certainly, this is not the point. The point is “in the name of Jesus.” They were not to TEACH in the name of Jesus; they were not to SPEAK in the name of Jesus. There are two verbs, with an adverbial phrase modifying each. The command was that they were “not to teach - in the name of Jesus, nor to speak - in the name of Jesus.” In Acts 8:21, Peter said to Simon the Sorcerer, “Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter.” The adverbial phrase “in this matter” modifies both PART and LOT. The construction of 1 Timothy 2:12 is exactly the same. “I permit not a woman to teach nor to have dominion over a man.” The adverbial phrase “over a man” modifies both the TEACHING and the HAVING DOMINION. The thing, therefore, that is forbidden in 1 Timothy 2:12 is “teaching over a man” or “exercising dominion over a man.” But there is a DIFFERENCE in teaching OVER a man, and teaching a man. This must be obvious, for Priscilla wasn’t condemned when she taught Apollos; she evidently taught him, but not OVER him. Teaching OVER another involves the exercising dominion or usurping of authority. Obviously, Priscilla was careful not to usurp authority while teaching Apollos. Every Christian husband has been taught many things by his Christian wife, but as she taught that husband, she was as much under the instructions of this passage as if she had been in the church assembly. To usurp authority or control him in any way would (and is) have been a direct violation of this passage. A woman can TEACH; she can teach a MAN; but not OVER a man. Does 1 Timothy 2 forbid a woman to teach? It does not! Does it forbid a woman’s exercising dominion? It does not! But it DOES forbid a woman’s exercising dominion “OVER A MAN.”

Titus 2:3, “That aged women likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, TEACHERS - of that which is good.” Is it a sin for a woman to teach? She is COMMANDED to teach. Where is she to teach? The answer usually given is, “At home.” At whose home? In anybody’s home? Can she go to the home of a married daughter and teach? (However, the “at home” is someone else’s idea.) Whom is she to teach? The usual answer is, “Children.” Whose children? If she can teach anyone’s children, there is a Bible class. If someone insists she can teach only her OWN children, then we need to be reminded that Philip’s four daughters who prophesied were VIRGINS; they had no children.

When we make a complete and thorough study of the Bible, we find that so far as woman’s work is concerned, there is only one restriction placed upon her - the fact that she can never, at any time, any place or anywhere or under any circumstances assume or be placed in such a position where she would have dominion or usurp authority over a man -- whether in the New Testament or the Old Testament.

Now let’s consider verse 13. Paul has said, “I permit not a woman to teach nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness.” WHY?? “For Adam was first formed, then

Eve.” This simply means that this is not some new idea that God thought up to go with the New Testament. It has ALWAYS BEEN THAT WAY.

Exodus 15:20 tells us Miriam was a “prophetess.” Numbers 12 indicates that this prophetess TOOK THE LEAD in condemning Moses. This is the attitude God has always condemned. As long as she kept her place, she was honored, but as soon as she stepped out of her place, God smote her with leprosy. Notice Numbers 12: 1, “And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses.” Her name is MENTIONED FIRST. This is the ONLY TIME it is so mentioned. God has never tolerated a woman’s taking the lead.

Judges 4 and 5 tells about a woman by the name of Deborah. She was a judge of Israel. Deborah tells Barak, “It’s God’s will that you go out and engage Sisera in battle, and God will deliver Sisera into your hand.” Barak was a coward, and said, “I’ll go if you go; but if you don’t, then I won’t go.” Here was a great opportunity for Deborah to take the lead. Did she? She DID NOT. She said, “I’ll go with you.” When the battle was won, she said, “God has delivered Sisera into THY hands.” Not MY hands or OUR hands, but “into THY hands.” Later, in Hebrews 11, we read of many of the strong men of God. We have Barak mentioned, but not one thing is said of Deborah.

In 2 Kings 22 we read of Josiah doing everything in his power to bring about a reformation, and among other things, he commanded the temple to be cleansed. In cleansing the temple, Hilkiah the priest, found a copy of the Old Testament. He didn’t understand it. Together with Shephan the scribe, they didn’t understand it. Together they went to King Josiah. Josiah didn’t do any better, but he said, “Take it to Huldah, and God will have her tell you exactly what it means.” God DID inspire Huldah to tell them what it said. Was it wrong for her to do so? If you have in mind they had no place else to go, do not forget that Jeremiah was at that time prophesying. She taught those men, but didn’t exercise authority.

On the resurrection morn, the Lord appeared to Mary Magdalene, and Himself told her to go tell his disciples about His resurrection. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15 when one speaks of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, he is speaking regarding the gospel. Why did she do it? The Lord TOLD HER TO. Did Jesus sin? Did she sin?

Every command of God has an element of EXCLUSION; every command of God has an element of INCLUSION. The INCLUSIVE ELEMENT involves things necessary to do the command, and are called EXPEDIENTS. Anything that is EXPEDIENT is DIVINELY AUTHORIZED. Any time a thing is proved expedient (necessary to carry out the command), the thing is automatically proved divinely authorized. What is an expedient? Anything deemed by the elders not excluded by specific instruction, to be advantageous to doing God’s commands; commands growing out of Approved Example, Necessary Inference or Direct Statement. Bible classes meet that definition exactly and precisely; therefore, teaching the Bible in classes is DIVINELY AUTHORIZED. That’s the authority for blackboard, P.A. system, communion cups.

## **Women - Pastors and Preachers** - Author Unknown -

In our world today, women are increasingly taking the roles of preachers and pastors, but is this the work of God? The question cannot be answered by human traditions, emotions, or opinions. The Bible is the inspired Word of God which answers every religious question so that we may be “thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

### **The Preacher’s Work**

First, the Bible defines each work. A preacher publicly proclaims the gospel of Jesus Christ. A preacher is an evangelists or minister of the gospel and here is his work:

- Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.
- But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry (see 2 Timothy 4:1-5).

Paul was an Apostle and “a preacher” especially dedicated to teaching the Gentiles (1 Timothy 2:7). An evangelist may travel from place to place at times; he also may remain with the same church for several years, teaching “publicly” and “house to house” (Acts 20:20, 31).

### **The Pastor’s Work**

The pastor’s work is entirely different. A pastor is a shepherd of God’s people viewed as sheep. He is also called an elder because of his spiritual maturity and a bishop because he oversees the local church. Pastor (or shepherd), elder (or presbyter), and bishop (or overseer) refer to the same person doing the same work (Acts 20:17, 28; Titus 1:5, 7).

This work involves overseeing and managing all the affairs of a local church:

- Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).
- Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind (1 Peter 5:2).

The unique work of a pastor is not publicly proclaiming the gospel as a preacher. False religions confuse the roles of pastor and preacher. Each local church must have a plurality of pastors, never a one-man pastor (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5).

### **Women Too?**

God’s Word teaches men, not women, are to serve as pastors in a local church and as public preachers of the gospel. The New Testament law of Christ clearly forbids women from taking the roles of public leaders in the church. The apostle Paul stated, “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" (1 Timothy 2:11-12).

Women are not to preach in assemblies with men present or in any other way to exercise places of authority over men. A pastor must be a male: "the husband of one wife . . . one that ruleth well his own house" (1 Timothy 3:1-7). No woman can obey God's Word as a public preacher or as one of the pastors in a local church.

Those who believe the Bible is inspired of God recognize the teaching of the Bible is God's word for all of us. What the Scriptures say about women's role must be taken just as seriously as what the Scriptures teach about redemption. This subject is NOT about the value or equality of women, but it is about different roles. Many women are more intelligent than some men. Many are more devoted to the Lord than some men. The Bible does not teach that women are inferior to men.

The question is not necessarily "can women teach" but rather "in what capacity or setting can women teach?" The teaching prohibited by women in 1 Timothy 2:12 is teaching which would "usurp" authority from the man. Women are permitted to teach women as well as children. However, women are not permitted to teach in such a way which dominates over or takes authority from a man. It is for that reason, as shown forth in the Bible, that women cannot occupy the role of a preacher or pastor. Such is contrary to God's plan and the roles which he has given for women and men.

## DID JESUS RISE “ON” OR “AFTER” THE THIRD DAY?

By: ERIC LYONS, M.Min.

The most frequent reference to Jesus’ resurrection reveals that He rose from the grave **on** the third day of His entombment. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all record Jesus as prophesying that He would arise from the grave on this day (Matthew 17:23; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:22). The apostle Paul wrote in his first epistle to the Corinthians that Jesus arose from the grave “the third day according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:4). What’s more, while preaching to Cornelius and his household, Peter taught that God raised Jesus up “**on** the third day” (Acts 10:40, emp. added). The fact is, however, Jesus also taught (and Mark recorded) “that the Son of Man” would “be killed, and **after three days** rise again” (Mark 8:31, emp. added). Furthermore, Jesus elsewhere prophesied that He would be in the heart of the Earth for “three days and three nights” (Matthew 12:40). So which is it? Did Jesus rise from the dead **on** the third day or **after** three days?

While to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century reader these statements may initially appear to contradict one another, in reality, they harmonize perfectly if one understands the different, and sometimes more liberal, methods ancients often used when reckoning time. In the first century, any part of a day could be computed for the whole day and the night following it (cf. Lightfoot, 1979, pp. 210-211). The *Jerusalem Talmud* quotes rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah, who lived around A.D. 100, as saying: “A day and night are an Onah [‘a portion of time’] and the portion of an Onah is as the whole of it” (from *Jerusalem Talmud: Sabbath ix. 3*, as quoted in Hoehner, 1974, pp. 248-249, bracketed comment in orig.). Azariah indicated that a portion of a 24-hour period could be considered the same “as the whole of it.” Thus, as awkward as it may sound to an American living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a person in ancient times could legitimately speak of something occurring “on the third day,” “after three days,” or after “three days and three nights,” yet still be referring to the same exact day.

The Scriptures contain several examples which clearly show that in Bible times a part of a day was often equivalent to the whole day.

- According to Genesis 7:12, the rain of the Noahic Flood was upon the Earth “forty days and forty nights.” Verse 17 of that same chapter says it was on the Earth for just “forty days.” Who would argue that it had to rain precisely 960 hours (40 days x 24 hours) for both of these statements to be true?
- In Genesis 42:17 Joseph incarcerated his brothers **for three days**. Then, according to verse 18, he spoke to them **on the third day** and released them (all but one, that is).
- In 1 Samuel 30:12,13, the phrases “three days and three nights” and “three days” are used interchangeably.
- When Queen Esther was about to risk her life by going before the king uninvited, she instructed her fellow Jews to follow her example by not eating “for three

days, night or day” (Esther 4:16). The text goes on to tell us that Esther went in into the king “**on** the third day” (5:1, emp. added).

- Perhaps the most compelling Old Testament passage which clearly testifies that the ancients (at least occasionally) considered a portion of a twenty-four hour period “as the whole of it” is found in 2 Chronicles 10. When Israel asked King Rehoboam to lighten their burdens, he wanted time to contemplate their request, so he instructed Jeroboam and the people of Israel to return “**after** three days” (2 Chronicles 10:5, emp. added). Verse 12, however, indicates that Jeroboam and the people of Israel came to Rehoboam “**on** the third day, as the king had directed, saying, ‘Come back to me **the** third day’” (emp. added). Fascinating, is it not, that even though Rehoboam instructed his people to return “**after** three days,” they understood this to mean “**on** the third day.”
- From Acts 10, we can glean further insight into the ancient practice of counting consecutive days (in part or in whole) as complete days. Luke recorded how an angel appeared to Cornelius at “about the ninth hour of the day” (approximately 3:00 p.m.; Acts 10:3). “**The next day**” (10:9) Peter received a vision from God and welcomed visitors sent by Cornelius. “**On the next day**” (10:23) Peter and the servants of Cornelius departed for Caesarea. “**And the following day** they entered Caesarea” where Peter taught Cornelius and his household the Gospel (10:24). At one point during Peter’s visit, Cornelius spoke about his encounter with the angel of God. Notice carefully how he began the rehearsal of the event. He stated: “**Four days ago to this hour**, I was praying in my house during the ninth hour...” (10:30, NASB, emp. added). Although the event actually had occurred only 72 hours (or three literal days) earlier, Cornelius spoke of it as taking place “**four days ago to this hour.**” Why four days instead of three? Because according to the first-century method of reckoning time, a part of the first day and a part of the fourth day could be counted as whole days. Surely one can see how this information aligns itself perfectly with Jesus’ burial taking place on Friday and His resurrection occurring on Sunday. A part of Friday, all day Saturday, and a part of Sunday would be considered **three** days in ancient times, not one or two.

Even though in modern times some may find this reasoning somewhat confusing, similar idiomatic expressions frequently are used today. For example, we consider a baseball game that ends after only completing 8½ innings a “9-inning game.” And even though the losing pitcher on the visiting team only pitched 8 innings (and not 9 innings like the winning pitcher from the home team), he is said to have pitched a **complete** game. Consider also the guest at a hotel who checks in at 8:30 p.m. on Wednesday, and checks out at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday—less than 24 hours later. Did the man stay one day or two days at the hotel? Technically, the guest was there for less than one full day (24-hour period), yet the hotel legally can charge him for two days since he did not leave before the mandatory 11:00 a.m. checkout time. Considering how flexible we are in measuring time, depending on the context, perhaps we should not be surprised at how liberal the ancients could be in calculating time.

Further evidence proving that Jesus' statements regarding His burial were not contradictory centers around the fact that even His enemies did not accuse Him of contradicting Himself. No doubt this was due to their familiarity with and use of the flexible, customary method of stating time. In fact, the chief priests and Pharisees even said to Pilate the day after Jesus was crucified: "Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure **until** the third day" (Matthew 27:63-64, emp. added). The phrase "after three days" must have been equivalent to "the third day," else surely the Pharisees would have asked for a guard of soldiers until the fourth day. Interesting, is it not, that modern skeptics charge Jesus with contradicting Himself, but not the hypercritical Pharisees of His own day.

The idiomatic expressions that Jesus and the Bible writers employed to denote how long Jesus would remain in the grave do not mean that He literally was buried for 72 hours. If we interpret the account of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection in light of the cultural setting of the first century, and not according to the present-day (mis)understanding of skeptics, we find no errors in any of the expressions that Jesus and the gospel writers used.

## REFERENCES

Hoehner, Harold W (1974), "Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ—Part IV: The Day of Christ's Crucifixion," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 131:241-264, July.

Lightfoot, John (1979 reprint), *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker).

## **BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD**

By: Bobby Bates

### **INTRODUCTION**

1 Corinthians 15:29 *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?* There are more than thirty interpretations of this particular verse which in themselves attest to the difficulty of this passage.

We believe a difficult passage must be interpreted in the light of the rest of the Bible. It is absolutely wrong to take a difficult, or obscure passage and build a doctrine around it that is not taught anywhere else in the Bible. But that is what men have done and that is the reason for so many doctrines and interpretations that are foreign to any Biblical theme. So, in discussing the verse before us, we must take into consideration all of the teachings on the same subject.

Furthermore, by considering the other passages that deal with the same subject, we can narrow the interpretation further by determining what "Baptism for the Dead" does NOT mean. In other words, when we determine what it is NOT, we come much closer to discovering what it IS.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. IT DOES NOT TEACH THE MORMON DOCTRINE OF VICARIOUS BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.**

The Mormons teach that one can be baptized for those who died without becoming Christians and thus procure salvation for them. In fact, they keep very careful records of all the dead for whom they have been baptized (relatives, statesmen, scientists, neighbors, friends, loved ones, etc.). One man was baptized for all the Presidents of the United States except three. Why he was not baptized for those is not known, but he must have thought they were pretty bad. At any rate, it is reported that the Mormons have more than five-billion names on record for whom a Mormon has been baptized.

At first the Mormons were baptized for the dead without distinction as to sex, and no records were kept. But Joseph Smith supposedly received a revelation which said that men could only be baptized for men and women could only be baptized for women and careful records must be kept.

But, if the Corinthians were really being baptized for their dead, and God had intended that the practice be perpetuated, then he would have given us the necessary information so we would know how to carry it out.

The Book of Mormon itself teaches against the doctrine of Baptism for the Dead in Alma 34:35: *For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even unto death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked.*

Based upon this writing, it is difficult to see how any Mormon could read it and still believe in the Mormon doctrine of Baptism for the Dead. The Devil has ALL power over them. God has completely withdrawn from them. And, this is the FINAL state. Thus according to their own “sacred” writings, there is no way salvation can be procured for those who stepped out into Eternity unprepared to meet God.

The Book of Mormon furnishes us with more evidence against the Mormon doctrine of Baptism for the Dead. The Book of Mormon purports to contain the “fullness of the everlasting gospel.” However, Baptism for the Dead is not mentioned in it even once. This means then that either Baptism for the Dead is not a part of the fullness of the everlasting gospel, or the Book of Mormon does not contain the fullness of the everlasting gospel.

It may be argued that the Book of Mormon was written to restore those precious truths left out of the Bible, and since Baptism for the Dead is mentioned in the Bible, it was not necessary to restore it. However, the Book of Mormon was supposed to have contained information and practices of the ancient inhabitants of America. Isn't it strange that such an important doctrine would have been omitted altogether? Also, the Bible gives no information as to how such a practice is to be carried out. It seems that if the Book of Mormon had been written to restore the precious truths left out of the Bible, it would have informed us as to how to comply with that command.

There are also a number of Scriptures which disprove this doctrine:

2 Corinthians 5:10 *For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done...* Notice that on the day of Judgment we will receive the things done IN THE BODY according to what WE have done. It may be disconcerting to know that we can do nothing to secure salvation for those who died without it, but it sure is comforting to know that we can do nothing to cause our loved ones who died with it to lose it. But if we can do something to cause dead ones to be saved, why can't we do something to cause dead ones to be lost? What about the man who is baptized for hundreds of deceased people and then loses his faith and turns his back on God? If his baptism could save them, why couldn't his rejection cause them to be lost?

Luke 16:26 *And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they that would pass from hence to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from thence to us.* Even if those who have died could hear the gospel, believe it and repent,

the great gulf is FIXED so that none can cross it. When we read the rest of the passage we notice that Abraham made no mention of any other provisions of salvation. If ever a man needed hope, the “Rich Man” needed it. Abraham could have given that tormented soul a glimmer of hope if he could have said, “Son, perhaps one of your relatives will be baptized for you somewhere down the stream of time.” But instead, Abraham destroyed any hope the “Rich Man” might have had.

John 3:5 *Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* One who is already dead cannot do this.

Proverbs 11:7 *When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish and the hope of unjust men perisheth.* If one dies without salvation, he dies without hope. But if there were the possibility one could do something to procure salvation for departed spirits, they would not die without hope.

Proverbs 14:32 *The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death.* The righteous, of course, are those who are living in accordance with God’s will. A man may be “good” and yet not “righteous” if he is not walking by God’s ordinances (Romans 6:16-19). So only the righteous hath hope in his death.

Isaiah 38:18 *For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.*

Ezekiel 18:20 *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.*

## II. PAUL WAS NOT ALLUDING TO A GROUP WHO PRACTICED BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD.

Some believe there was a group in Paul’s day who was practicing vicarious baptism for the dead. The contention is that Paul cited them as an example without either condemning or condoning their practice. However, there are a number of things wrong with this view.

First, there is no evidence that vicarious baptism for the dead was being practiced when Paul wrote. We know it was practiced centuries later, but only because of a misunderstanding of this text. Chrysostom and Epiphanius who wrote three-hundred years after Paul are our earliest vouchers for such a practice and even then it existed only among one or two heretical sects.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Conquering The Fear of Death by Spiros Zodhiates, Wm. B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1970, pp. 496-7.

Second, it is contrary to common sense to think Paul would cite a false doctrine to the church at Corinth which was plagued with doctrinal problems without showing the fallacy of it.

Third, Paul is presenting evidence in support of the resurrection. How in the name of sound reasoning could a heretical group practicing false doctrine substantiate the truth of ANYTHING?!?! But if someone replies that these were pagans, we hasten to ask how that the practice of pagans who do not believe in God or the risen Lord could be PROOF or EVIDENCE of the resurrection???

The Expositor's Greek Testament (pp.930-1) says that in following up verse 29 with the words of verse 30 (*why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour?*), Paul associates himself with the action of those baptized for the dead, indicating that he and they are engaged in the same behalf. The writer goes on to say that this excludes the interpretation "that Paul alludes to a practice then (it is conjectured) in vogue at Corinth..." "With such a proceeding Paul could not have identified himself, even supposing that it existed at that time in the Church (of which there is no evidence), and that he had used it by way of *argumentum ad hominem*."

### III. WHAT DOES "BAPTISM FOR THE DEAD" MEAN?

The passage in Greek is: Ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν; εἰ ὅλως νεκροὶ οὐκ ἐγείρονται, τί καὶ βαπτίζονται ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν;

Ἐπεὶ is a conjunction which Paul used frequently in his hypothetical propositions from verse 12 onward. Thayer says: "Agreeable to a very common abbreviation of speech, we must often supply in thought between ἐπεὶ and the proposition depending upon it some such phrase as *if it is (or were) otherwise*; so that the particle, although retaining the force of *since*, is yet to be rendered *otherwise, else, or for then...*" So, with this conjunction Paul again picks up the argument from which he digressed in verse 19 and says, *If all that has been previously stated is not true...*

Ἐπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν does not mean that the baptism of people who are alive can benefit those who are dead, because the use of the definite article points to a specific class. If Paul had meant to show that vicarious baptism for the dead could procure salvation for them, he would have said ὑπὲρ νεκρῶν (without the definite article).<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Zodhiates, op.cit., 502; Lenski, op.cit., 689-90.

Οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι is a present passive participle which has the iterative sense as well as a kind of timelessness, making it describe all those who have been, are being, and will be baptized.<sup>8</sup>

We believe, along with a host of others, that Romans 6:3-11 is the natural explanation. Baptism is a death, burial and a resurrection. We die to self, are buried with Christ into his death, and then are raised to walk with him in newness of life. Actually, Paul is saying, "If the dead are not raised, why then are men and women being baptized?" The only reason they have been, are being and will be baptized is in the hope they will be raised from the dead to live with Christ forevermore.

Romans 7:4 *...Ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead...* How were we made dead to the law? Through baptism. How were we joined to the Lord who was raised from the dead? Through baptism.

Colossians 2:20 *If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world do ye subject yourselves to ordinances...*

Colossians 3:1 *If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God.*

Colossians 2:12 *Having been buried with him in baptism, wherein ye were also raised with him through faith in the working of God who raised him from the dead.* Thus, in these passages Paul is depicting a death, burial and a resurrection and shows they take place in the waters of baptism.

We have seen that vicarious baptism for the dead is not taught anywhere in the pages of the Bible (unless it is here in this passage) and that the Bible actually teaches against such an idea. We have seen that it would be illogical, unreasonable and unwise for Paul to use a false idea in support of anything in the strife-torn Corinthian church. When we considered the rest of the New Testament regarding salvation, we found that baptism is associated with a spiritual resurrection now and with the final resurrection when the Lord returns for the last time to claim his people. Therefore, Christian baptism is the only logical, reasonable and Scriptural interpretation of this passage.

But what does Paul mean when he says, *why then are they baptized for them?* Who is the *them* if it is not the dead? Remember the word *for* in this phrase is the Greek word

---

<sup>8</sup>T. R. Applebury, Studies In First Corinthians, College Press, Joplin, Mo., 1963, pp. 278-9.

ὑπὲρ. Lenski and McGarvey take it to mean (in this passage) “with a view to.”<sup>9</sup> Applebury implies it means “concerning,” or “with reference to.”<sup>10</sup> Zodhiates says, “Metaphorically it means in the prospect of death and as a continuance of the testimony of those who have heroically died for the faith.”<sup>11</sup>

Bear in mind also that the use of the definite article in for the dead designates a specific class of “the dead.”

McGarvey says: “The dead are a class of whom Christ is the head and firstfruits unto resurrection. By baptism we symbolically unite ourselves with that class, and so with Christ, and we do this because of the hope that we shall be raised with that class through the power of Christ (Romans 6:5). But if the dead are not raised at all, then why should converts be united with them by a symbolic burial? Why should they be baptized on their account, or with reference to them? If there is no resurrection, baptism, which symbolizes it, is meaningless.

---

<sup>9</sup> Lenski, op. cit., 6689-92; J. W. McGarvey and Philip Pendleton, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Galatians, and Romans, Standard Pub. Co., Cincinnati, Ohio (no date), pp. 152-3.

<sup>10</sup> T. R. Applebury, Studies In First Corinthians, College Press, Joplin, MO., 1963, pp. 289-290.

<sup>11</sup> Zodhiates, op.cit., 505.

## **IS 1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 A COMMAND AND WHERE IS THE CONTRIBUTION FOR THE POOR TO BE PLACED AND STORED UNTIL THE APOSTLE PAUL ARRIVES?**

By: C.M. Horner

A teaching has been put forward that the words “I have given order” in this passage cannot be a command. Also, the place of storage for the benevolent gifts was to be in each individual Christian’s home.

First, let us look and see if the Greek word διατασσο translated as “I have given orders” in the NKJV carries the idea of being a command. Notice the following lexical sources:

### **STRONG’S EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE OF THE BIBLE:**

“to arrange thoroughly, prescribe, institute, appoint, command, give, set in order, ordain.”

### **THE ANALYTICAL GREEK LEXICON:**

“To arrange, make a precise arrangement, to prescribe, to direct, to charge, to command, to ordain, an injunction, institute, ordinance, a mandate, commandment, ordinance.”

### **THEOLOGICAL DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT:**

“To order, to command” among other meanings. Then it states, “We have detailed instructions of the apostle with references to the collection in 1 Corinthians 16:1.” Obviously, this authority believes the instructions in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 carry implicitly the idea of a command.

### **A. T. ROBERTSON:**

Commenting on 1 Corinthians 16:1 he states, “Paul had given orders (diatasa) to the churches of Galatia and now gives them like commands.”

### **M. R. VINCENT:**

He does not even address this word as he must feel the rendering of “give order” or “command” in the standard and accepted English translations is explicit as well as sufficient, and needs no explanation.

VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT WORDS:

"DIATASSO (διατασσο) signifies to set in order, appoint, command."

A GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND OTHER EARLY CHRISTIAN LITERATURE by Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich:

"Order, direct, command" and they then refer to 1 Corinthians 16:1 as an example of using this word.

LINGUISTIC KEY TO THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT by Fritz Rienecker & Cleon Rogers:

"To arrange, to order, to command, to give express commands."

THE NKJV GREEK-ENGLISH INTERLINEAR NEW TESTAMENT:

"I directed."

THAYER'S GREEK-ENGLISH LEXICON OF THE NEW TESTAMENT by Joseph H. Thayer:

"To arrange, appoint, order, prescribe, give order" and then references 1 Corinthians 16:1 as an example of using this word.

JESUS THE CHRIST (SON OF GOD):

Jesus raised the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue from the dead. In relating this incident, the Bible says - "Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given *something* to eat." This word "command" is the same one as used in 1 Corinthians 16:1! What word should we use instead of "command" in Luke 8:55 if "command" does not mean "to give order"?

Galatians 2:9 is used by the proponents of this position to prove that 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 not to be a command. However, the Galatians passage is clearly a command. The whole idea was that those in Jerusalem would not allow the command (supposedly from them) to circumcise the Gentiles be carried out, but taking care of the poor is a command to the church which must be remembered (carried out). The word "remember" does not just carry the idea of keeping something or someone in one's memory. What good would that do if we just think of the poor now and then and do nothing about their situation? The three functions of the church are (1) evangelism, (2) edification and (3)

benevolence. The passage in Galatians 2:9 is a command for Christians to be benevolent!

In much research not one single authority was found that agrees with the idea that 1 Corinthians 16:1 is not a command. Other authorities such as Nicoll, Wuest, etc. have been researched and not one has stated that he believes this is not a command.

Proponents of this position give 2 Corinthians 8:8 and Acts 11:29 as proof that this is not a command. If this word means this passage is a command (and it certainly does) then God is the author of confusion. We cannot accept that because it is definitely error (1 Corinthians 14:33)!

If those same passages prove that this is not a command then the atheists have found the Bible contradiction they have so far been unable to locate.

How are these passages harmonized? Actually, there is perfect harmony here! Let us look into the Bible and understand what is being said.

In reference to the passage in Acts 11:29 – this is nothing more than a relating of facts and has nothing to do with what God has or has not commanded. This passage cannot be used in support of, or denial of, the position that 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 is not a command.

What does 2 Corinthians 8:8 say?

First of all, in verse 7 Paul states, “See that you abound in this grace also.” This is a command and cannot be construed in any other way! So, does Paul contradict himself in the next passage? Never! Incidentally in verse 11 Paul, speaking of their giving, says, “But now you also must complete the doing of it.” “Must” is a word of requirement, a word of necessity, a command!

When Paul says, “I speak not by commandment,” he is speaking of the mode of speaking, not that he has not commanded them for he had already done that a year previously in 1 Corinthians 16. He is saying that he is not speaking as a commanding general (which he has the right to do) but is using the example of others (including Jesus) and appealing to the Corinthian’s love of the brethren.

Let us now see what is being said in 1 Corinthians 16. The following research shows us the truth of the matter on how and where to give. We assume that there is no problem with the first day of the week referring to each first day of the week which is Sunday.

Let us concentrate on the phrase, “let every one of you lay by him in store.”

“Every one of you” referred originally to each member of the congregation in Corinth. Today, by principle and application, it refers to every member of every congregation of the Lord’s church on earth.

“Lay by” is present active imperative, third person singular of the Greek verb “τίθημι.” The idea is “let him keep on setting or placing.”

“By him” is a translation of the Greek word “ἐαυτοῦ” which is third person singular. This is very important! Third person singular is to be translated as “he,” “she,” or “it.” The context determines how the word is to be translated.

For instance, in Acts 8:16 the subject is the Holy Spirit. The American Standard Version translates the passage as “for as yet it was fallen upon none of them.” The King James translates the passage as “for as yet He was fallen upon none of them.” Since the Holy Spirit is a person and not an “it” the King James Version is correct.

The word “ἐαυτοῦ” in our passage is a reflexive pronoun of the third person and may be accurately translated “itself.” This passage then reads “let him keep on placing by itself.” Notice “itself” not “himself.”

Then we have the Greek word “θησαυρός” which means to “lay up,” or “store,” or “a store,” or “a treasury.” Hence, the entire idea of this passage is to “Let him keep on placing by itself in the treasury” - thus, treasuring up that which is contributed. If each person had laid by themselves in their own houses, all the scattered collections would have to be gathered after Paul’s arrival, which is the very thing that he had forbidden in these passages!

The only conclusion is that that which was put aside by each individual on each first day of the week (for this benevolence case) was put into the treasury of the church, but kept by itself as a separate fund to be given to Paul when he arrived.

This is the true meaning and is also attested as such by Bible scholars: J. W. McGarvey, James MacKnight and P. Y. Pendelton.

This passage is a command. A command for each Christian to give into the common treasury on each first day of the week. And those funds which were given for this special need were to be set aside by itself and saved until Paul came to receive them. The reason this fund was to be set aside by itself is so that there would be no need to go about collecting it when Paul came.